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## Editors

Professor Linda Dryden  
CLAW  
School of Arts and Creative  
Industries  
Napier University  
Craighouse  
Edinburgh  
EH10 5LG  
Scotland

Tel: 0131 455 6128  
Email: l.dryden@napier.ac.uk

Professor Emeritus  
Roderick Watson  
School of Arts and  
Humanities  
University of Stirling  
Stirling  
FK9 4LA  
Scotland

Email:  
rbwatson19@gmail.com

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## Editorial

The essays in this edition of JSS, seem to have divided themselves between two Robert Louis Stevensons – not unfitting, perhaps, for an author so closely associated with the dynamics of duality. We have Stevenson as a European writer, or at least as a writer seen through European critical perspectives, and then there is the Stevenson of the South Seas, whose works contain material and references steeped in cultural expectations and associations that are far indeed from his native shores. Carla Manfredi's essay discusses the ambiguities of authorial perspective in the balance between visual and verbal description in RLS's commentary on photographs of Polynesian life produced by Joseph Strong. This material was to be published as 'A Samoan Sketchbook', perhaps in the *Illustrated London News*, but the project was never completed. Stevenson's commentary survives, but Strong's photographs were presumed to have been lost until Dr Manfredi discovered a similar stock of his Polynesian studies at the Writer's Museum in Edinburgh. This has allowed her to reflect on the critical, cultural and contextual implications of the European gaze at work, as seen in Stevenson's remarks and especially in Strong's photographs.

Jan Gorak's essay on the metamorphoses of power in Samoa, takes us further into the complex politics of the place and Stevenson's own ambivalent and difficult responses to it in *A Footnote to History*, as he offers a critique of colonial exploitation somewhere between light comedy and bitter satire. Sylvie Largeaud-Ortega's essay, on the other hand, draws directly on native culture to re-examine *The Beach at Falesá* in the light of Polynesian myth and Polynesian history to suggest how the tale can be read as a narrative of truly hybridised and syncretised cross cultural meanings.

The shifting authorial perspectives discussed in Manfredi's

essay reappear in Lucio De Capitani's study of textual instability and the fluidity of authorial response to be found in Stevenson's various writings on François Villon. Here, not least because of De Capitani's Brechtian approach, we are back with the European Stevenson, but still engaged as before (and as always) with the nuances and ambivalences of Stevenson's characteristically subtle writing. The European link is continued in Duncan Milne's dialectical analysis of the debate between 'realism' and 'romance' in the Stevenson / James correspondence, with a proposed synthesis, and in Brian Wall's historically contextualised study of split personality, the law, and the social and urban landscape of London as these themes manifest themselves in *Jekyll and Hyde*.

'East' and 'West', so to speak, actually come together in Neil Macara Brown's impressive research on yogic burial and possible Indian sources for Stevenson's investigation of the matter. This essay reveals once again the Scottish novelist's passion for authenticity and, more than that, it allows us to revisit the closing scenes of *The Master of Ballantrae* with a new understanding of specific narrative details that might otherwise have been dismissed as of passing interest or as merely fantastic fabrication. And finally Scottish poet Stuart Paterson's memoir of his time as a Stevenson Fellow at Grez-sur-Loing in France, along with two poems from that sojourn, testify once more to RLS's continuing presence as a creative influence among contemporary writers

On more general matters Professor Stephen Arata has had to report that the next International Stevenson Conference, mooted for the University of Virginia in 2016, cannot now take place. Regretfully it has not been possible to resolve continuing problems to do with funding, venue booking and accommodation. Plans are afoot, however, to host the next International Conference, once again in Scotland, for 2017.

In 2012 Napier University was granted a significant collection of Stevenson books and memorabilia from the estate of the late



Ernest Mehew. Mehew is of course widely recognised as the scholar who made such an extensive and vital contribution to Professor Bradford Booth's edition of the Stevenson correspondence for the Yale *Collected Letters*, and for his own edition of the *Selected Letters*. Over fifty years during his long career as a Civil Servant, Mehew had been collecting works on and by Stevenson, including first editions, rarities, biographies, collections of letters, reference books, critical studies and bound copies of the magazines where Stevenson's work first appeared. This legacy has been bequeathed to Edinburgh Napier, which, under the guidance of Linda Dryden and Richard Dury is also the home of the R. L. Stevenson website. A specially dedicated Stevenson room has now been established to house the Mehew Collection at Edinburgh Napier's newly refurbished Merchiston Campus. The Ernest and Joyce Mehew Stevenson Collection constitutes the largest RLS collection held by any university in Europe.

Finally it remains for us to remind readers that copies of the Stevenson Journal and back numbers as well, can be ordered and bought from our publisher, the University of Stirling, by credit card online. See page 191 for the details. We are already collecting material for Volume 13, so please do keep contributions coming in.

Roderick Watson Linda Dryden

## Robert Louis Stevenson's and Joseph Strong's 'A Samoan Scrapbook'<sup>1</sup>

*Carla Manfredi*

### 1. Fragments of a Photo-Book

According to Stevenson in *A Footnote to History: Eight Years of Trouble in Samoa* (1892), the Island's political situation during the closing decades of the nineteenth century is a 'singular state of affairs': foreigners fight over Samoa's 'money, luxury, and business' like 'a bone between two dogs, each growling, each clutching his own end'.<sup>2</sup> Stevenson's 'dogs' are Germany, Britain, and the United States and their 'bone' is, in part, Samoa's prime land. Unlike the Hawaiian Islands, where the plantation boom was achieved through the labour of indigenous Hawaiians and later with Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino indentured labourers, Samoans resisted – to an extent – foreign land incursions.<sup>3</sup> Confronted with indigenous resistance and in an effort to protect their financial and political interests, European settlers demanded from their home countries a centralised government that would not only enforce local regulations but that would also recognise their land claims. Tension between the three colonial powers escalated and in 1889 an armed conflict seemed unavoidable: the hostility was only diffused when the German foreign minister Count Herbert von Bismarck invited British and American delegations to Berlin. By 14 June 1889 the parties had signed the treaty entitled 'The Final Act of The Berlin Conference on Samoan Affairs', effectively creating a 'joint government by the representatives of the three powers'.<sup>4</sup>

Against this backdrop of a regional colonial contest, David Kalakaua (1836–91) the penultimate Hawaiian monarch struggled to maintain political agency among the Pacific Islands.<sup>5</sup> As part of this effort, on the advice of his Prime Minister Walter Murray Gibson, he sent an Embassy to Samoa in 1866 to gain

support from its chiefs for the establishment of a Hawaiian-led confederation of small independent Polynesian states. The Embassy included the diplomat John E. Bush and his secretary Henry F. Poor, as well as the government-appointed photographer Joseph D. Strong. While Bush and Poor spent several months in negotiations with Samoan leaders and representatives of the colonial powers, Strong photographed the formal and oftentimes informal proceedings.<sup>6</sup> The Embassy was suddenly recalled in 1887 after Kalakaua was forced to sign the infamous Bayonet Constitution that ‘enshrined the fundamental shift in economic and political power from the native monarchy to the American business oligarchy’.<sup>7</sup> On 24 January 1889, as King Kalakaua held on to power by a thread, Robert Louis Stevenson, Fanny Stevenson, Lloyd Osbourne, and Mrs Stevenson were greeted by Joseph Strong and Isobel Osbourne Strong as the *Casco* sailed into Honolulu Harbour.

Strong (1852-99) and Isobel (1858-1853) moved to Honolulu in 1882 after John D. Spreckels – the son of a San Francisco sugar magnate – commissioned Strong to paint the Spreckels’ Hawaiian sugar plantation.<sup>8</sup> The Stronges were well received by the American expatriate community and before long were on friendly terms with the King Kalakaua. In the mid to late 1880s, Strong experienced a period of social and professional success: as the Hawaiian government’s appointed artist and photographer he painted very fine renderings of Hawaiian landscapes and volcano scenes. Today, Strong’s rare paintings are currently held at the Honolulu Academy of the Arts, the Bishop Museum (Honolulu), and the Oakland Museum of California.

Following the travellers’ arrival, Kalakaua hosted Stevenson, and entertained him with lively discussions on Pacific history, the intricacies of regional politics, and Hawaii’s current relationship with the United States.<sup>9</sup> When he gave Stevenson an account of the debacle of his Embassy to Samoa, Kalakaua recognised an opportunity to justify and redeem the political disaster and

asked the writer to lend his famous pen to the nationalist cause: would he write a sympathetic narrative to dramatise Strong's photographs taken two years earlier in Samoa? Commenting upon Kalakaua's bold request, Arthur Grove Day suggests that Stevenson was 'exploit[ed]' and 'enticed into writing an account of the [Samoan] affair that was supposed to be published, along with Joe Strong's photographs'.<sup>10</sup> The claim that Stevenson was 'exploited' and 'enticed' is, perhaps, misleading since Stevenson was apparently already thinking of writing about 'political manipulations in the Pacific, centring on Samoa, with Joe Strong taking photographs to illustrate it'.<sup>11</sup> Leaving aside the obscure reasons for Stevenson's acceptance of the task of writing the narrative for 'A Samoan Scrapbook', the project benefited both the author and the monarch: the latter had his Imperial ambitions justified and commemorated in a flattering light by an internationally renowned author, while the former was afforded the opportunity to delve into new Pacific materials.

On 10 March 1889, Lloyd Osbourne informed the American publisher Samuel McClure that he would soon receive Stevenson's new 4,500-word article entitled 'A Samoan Sketchbook' and 'illustrated with eleven photographs and one drawing'.<sup>12</sup> In his postscript to Osbourne's letter, Stevenson recommended to McClure that 'A Samoan Sketchbook' appear in the weekly magazine *The Illustrated London News* 'where the pictures could come out'.<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately neither Stevenson, Strong, nor Kalakaua ever had the satisfaction of seeing 'A Samoan Sketchbook' appear in print. Although Stevenson's holograph is preserved at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library (MS. 664), Strong's photographs for 'A Samoan Scrapbook', are likely no longer extant.<sup>14</sup> Nonetheless, I have identified another set of Strong's Embassy photographs in an album of commercial Hawaiian pictures at The Writers' Museum in Edinburgh (LSH 824/95).<sup>15</sup> The surviving documents' undeniable limitations – the existing photographs are only related to 'A Samoan Scrapbook' by virtue of depicting

events that occurred during the same period that is narrated – do not deter me from using them to critically examine Stevenson and Strong's (incomplete) photo-literary collaboration; thus, my analysis complements Robert Hoskins' edited collection of newly published (such as 'A Samoan Scrapbook') and, in some cases newly discovered, Pacific writings.

The bulk of this essay is devoted to close-reading Stevenson's ekphrasis of Strong's photographs. In doing so, I argue that Stevenson's narration highlights his concern with competing perspectives and the uncertainty about the veracity, and accuracy of photographs as historical documents. Next, I examine the afterlife of 'A Samoan Scrapbook' by situating it in relation to *A Footnote to History*. In an addendum, I turn to Strong's surviving Samoan photographs and suggest that although a minor collection, his practice remains, nonetheless, a productive case study for considering photography's complex role in Pacific colonial culture.

## **2. Hawaiians in Samoa: 'outlandish' and 'droll'**

'A Samoan Scrapbook' is a generic curiosity that combines Stevenson's pithy personal and second-hand observations about contemporary Pacific customs with a small and hodge-podge repository of Samoan legends, and an account of some recent colonial politics. The text's thematic incoherence is partially mitigated by taking into account the fact that the manuscript was the basis for a photographically-illustrated pamphlet; indeed, 'A Samoan Scrapbook' is not a formal treatise but is rather a miscellany structured around Strong's (absent) photographs. Regardless of the fact that 'A Samoan Scrapbook' occupies a minor and obscure place amidst Stevenson's unpublished Pacific writing, it provides us with some crucial insights into how he approaches the photographic medium. 'A Samoan Scrapbook' is less about the photographic objects themselves, but concerns the figure of the photographer and the latent possibilities offered

by the activity of photography during cross-cultural interactions. The possibilities of engagement that are offered by photographic acts begin to manifest in their end products.

Before launching into his discussion of missionary work, Stevenson begins 'A Samoan Scrapbook' by asking his reader to 'glance through the photograph book of the ill-starred Hawaii mission to Samoa' and to 'hear, as he goes' some 'running, after-dinner commentary'.<sup>16</sup> He will return to this subject after providing his reader with a vacillating conception of missionary work.<sup>17</sup> Christian missions, according to Stevenson, have nowhere more than in the Pacific 'succeeded so well, effected changes so considerable or been so loudly blamed'.<sup>18</sup> Drawing on his first-hand experience, he uses the London Missionary Society's (LMS) presence in Tahiti as an example of a beneficial and enduring legacy: 'I had the opportunity of observing that which they had built. The founders were gone, like the Romans; and their work survived them in the form of an autonomous and active native church.' For Stevenson, the missionaries' metaphorical erection of the 'native church' mirrors the monumental Roman ruins that dot Europe's landscape; likewise, as the departed 'founders' of Christianity in Polynesia, the LMS carries on the civilizing mission of the Roman Empire.

Stevenson's representation of the LMS in Tahiti can be considered in light of his 1893 'Missions in the South Seas', in which he re-visits 'the question of the missionary' and attempts to redress the 'prejudice against missions in the South Seas'.<sup>19</sup> The stakes are high for Stevenson, since he situates missions as part of the spread and advancement of Western civilization: he juxtaposes the enlightened agenda of the 'new class of missionaries' with the violent methods of previous 'radical' missionaries. The sharp distinction between different generations of missionaries, although well informed, does not hold up when applied to 'A Samoan Scrapbook', since the LMS's work in Tahiti would fall, in terms of dates, under the 'radical' category. Thus

Stevenson's characterization of missionaries can be seen to be inconsistent across different texts. The important difference between 'radicals' and new missionaries is that the former are motivated by a desire for cultural and societal 'revolution', while the latter 'develop that which is good, or is capable of being made good in the inherent ideas of the race' and then, only 'gradually obliterate [the worse]' (p. 108). Here, the 'radicals' are associated with subversive and violent political action, and they seek the forcible overthrow of an entire system, while the new, conservative missionaries encourage the natural maturation of a certain 'opinions' and 'habits' and dissuade – until 'obliterat[ion]' (p. 107, p. 108) – less desirable ones. Thus, according to Stevenson, the 'true art of the missionary' consists in finding the Islanders' inherent 'moral water power'; a few lines later he urges missionaries to witness the 'moral force reservoir in every race' and to 'expand', 'change', and 'fit that power' to 'new ideas and to new possibilities of advancement'. Unlike, their 'radical' predecessors, the 'new class' of missionaries extract a 'native' moral economy akin to the motive power created through hydraulic devices in order to usher Islanders into the modern world. In this model missionaries carry on the work of the industrial revolution and the technological progress of the West.

Stevenson's exposé about missionary practice transitions into a discussion of Samoa's persisting old and incongruous superstitions.<sup>20</sup> Stevenson retells Strong and Poor's oral accounts of two Samoan legends, which are themselves based on information provided by their Samoan informants. Stevenson recounts that while Strong was in Samoa, 'that home-land of thrilling superstitions', his attention was drawn to a particular waterfall and overhanging rainbow. According to his servant, this rainbow signifies that a devil, who, dwells in a nearby stone house, is drinking from the waterfall. Intrigued, Strong sets out to locate the legendary devil's abode, but is abandoned by his guide, who explains that the search is unsafe for a Samoan. Despite the treacherous ter-

rain, the intrepid Strong continues his trek, only to abandon the search after several hours of struggling against the tropical vegetation.

Strong's failure to find the devil's house is supplemented by the account of Poor's success in identifying another legendary place called 'the *Fale o le Fee* or House of the Cuttlefish' (p. 60). Although Poor is, like Strong, 'deserted by another trembling native guide' he nonetheless succeeds in finding the remains of the ancient house of worship. The architectural 'singularity' of the *Fale o le Fee* strikes Poor as he approaches the house and is confronted by 'a great open archway'. Questioning the purpose of this arch, Stevenson speculates: 'Did the cuttlefish bring it with him (when he landed) from the depths of the sea?' The mysterious provenance of the arch remains shrouded in 'silence', but 'clear native testimony was received' regarding the utility of the place:

the cuttlefish (it appears) was a deity whom it was good to behold, but perhaps not very canny to approach; and it was through the arch that worshippers of old, drawing near with their offerings, enjoyed one glimpse of the gigantic squid, clinging, with hateful arms, about the centre pillar of his dwelling. (pp. 60-61)

The section on Samoan legends comes to an abrupt close, with a similar ambivalence to that which characterised the conclusion on missionaries: 'there is no accounting, at least, for taste in deities.'

Half-way through his narrative, Stevenson comes full circle. Describing the cuttlefish's house reminds him of gaudy Catholic chapels, prompting the observation that 'out of all Polynesia, it is only in the Kingdom of Hawaii that catholic missions can be said to prosper wholly'. This direct reference to Hawaii supposedly reminds the author that 'this is the photograph book of the



Hawaiian embassy', the story of which is 'both interesting and droll, if it could be told'. Before beginning his narrative proper of the Embassy, Stevenson introduces the *dramatis personae*: King Kalakaua and his Prime Minister Gibson, both men are 'deeply interested in the Polynesian race, conceiving it capable of self-government' and their German opponents, who are guilty of rapaciously 'snapping up' islands. Next, he outlines Kalakaua's decision to send an Embassy to Samoa and the temporary victory that is scored over the 'meddling' (p. 62) Germans when Mr Bush, the head of the Embassy, succeeds in establishing 'a deed of confederation' with the Samoan King Laupepa. The lavish celebration that ensues from the signing of this deed degenerates into a scene of wild inebriation, which Stevenson assumes is a result to the uncommonly strong Hawaiian kava; in any case, many of the celebrants are found the next day asleep and sprawled on the ground.<sup>21</sup>

Stevenson then turns his attention to 'Tamasese the rebel', the young Samoan chief who, tired of his 'dwindling rebellion' is secretly negotiating with the Hawaiian Embassy. When the Germans catch wind of Tamasese's covert meeting with the Hawaiians, Mr Brandeis, the German consul, marches his troops into Tamasese's village and erects fortifications. Tamasese and Poor, nevertheless, continue their negotiations. At this point in the narrative, Stevenson cautions his reader that it is difficult for him to do justice to the complicated series of events surrounding the meeting 'under several chapters' (p. 65). Thus, he takes the opportunity to remind his reader of 'the *dramatis personae*' and their locations:

Mr Poor [hiding in a nearby house], impatiently awaiting the conspirators; Tamasese and his cabinet, blocked in the village, and no less impatiently striving to escape to their appointment; Mssr Brandeis and [Vice-Consul] Sonnenschein [...] straining every nerve to keep the par-

ties separate; and Mr Strong himself in a most anomalous position in the midst. (pp. 65-66)

Stevenson's reference to a '*dramatis personae*' and stage-like directions of where his characters/actors are physically positioned in this political drama highlight the impression of the conflict's theatricality. He develops this metaphor a few lines later by comparing the events to 'scenes' that 'ranged from melodrama – as when a pistol was not very wisely called in operation – to the highest level of comedy, as when Mr Strong suddenly discharged his proficiency in German'. For Stevenson, the chaotic action is presented as a mixed-genus scene: a character misfires a pistol – its ineffectiveness suggesting it is a harmless prop – and Strong's sudden verbal explosion – his 'discharge' of language proving more effectual than the pistol – of German.

During the tragicomic altercation Poor is imprisoned and in retaliation, a troop of armed Samoans return and free the Hawaiian secretary. The following day, when Poor approaches the German consulate to seek an explanation for the previous night's events, he is assured that Germany played no role in the goings-on. Stevenson cites – presumably with Poor's assistance – the statement of the German consul: 'you have been repeatedly warned not to trust yourself among these savages' (p. 67). Stevenson reflects pithily on this warning: 'As a matter of fact, Mr Poor, who shares some of that astonishingly "savage" Polynesian blood, was a great deal safer among Samoans than you and I in the good city of London'. In one sweep, Stevenson demystifies a precept of colonial ideology: not only are foreigners safer in the darkest corner of the Empire than they are in an enlightened metropolis, but the mixed-race Mr Poor is far nobler than pure-blooded German officials.

The failure of the Hawaiian Embassy signals 'the end of the photograph book – and of my article' and Stevenson leaves his reader with the following bit of didacticism: '[o]ur own hands are

not as long washed, that we can afford any extravagant festival of self-complacency. The Germans, in this corner, are our juniors; they will soon learn better: only we should help them to learn' (p. 68).

Despite their apparently tangential nature, Stevenson's report of the two Samoan legends, and his transcription of Strong's account of the Hawaiian Embassy actually possess an analogous comparative structure. Since both accounts are specifically said to be the result of oral transmissions, Stevenson's authorial status is effectively destabilised. The juxtaposition of recent Samoan history (described in theatrical language) with legendary accounts highlights the fictional aspects of the Hawaiian Embassy, which emerges as yet another Pacific Island tale, one that is 'so strange and mixed, and [with] people so oddly characterised'.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, it is important to recall that the Samoan legends are integral to the account of the Hawaiian Embassy, since the legends and the search for their real existence is carried out by Strong and Poor, both in Samoa as part of the Embassy's mission. The transition from the mythic accounts of the Embassy occurs, ostensibly, because of Stevenson's own musings on the analogous gaudiness of the cuttlefish's house and Catholic churches, which prosper only in Hawaii. Stevenson draws a connection between the ancient and authoritative, though ridiculous, cuttlefish and its equally gaudy and half-existent house, and the modern Hawaiian state, authoritative and important among the Pacific Islanders, though ridiculous and gaudy in the sphere of Euro-American politics. This connection underscores that the story of the Hawaiian Embassy can be considered in the same vein as the legendary stories narrated by Strong and Poor, especially because Strong and Poor were also Stevenson's sources for the events of the Embassy. Thus, the narrative content of the 'A Samoan Scrapbook' appears as a pair of analogous Island tales, narrated by Europeans to Stevenson, and fit for his anthropological inter-

est in the narrative and cultural life of the Pacific.

### **3. Strong's photographs**

The accounts of the two Samoan myths and the Hawaiian Embassy do not comprise the entirety of 'A Samoan Scrapbook'; they are set against the backdrop of Stevenson's descriptions of Strong's Samoan photographs. Although the physical photographs are not included in the manuscript, Stevenson must have had them before him as he composed the manuscript, since he refers to them directly with the letters '(A)' to '(M)'. Not only is 'A Samoan Scrapbook' aborted, but it also strikingly fragmented: Strong's photographs, which were intended to be published alongside Stevenson's text, are only present in the narration as absent referents. For the contemporary reader, therefore, Stevenson's descriptions effectively narrate, and thus re-create Strong's (im)material photographs.

While the convivial opening of 'A Samoan Scrapbook' suggests that the text is intended to be a leisurely, 'after-dinner' entertainment involving passing glances and passive hearing, this seeming equilibrium between illustration and narration goes off-kilter when Stevenson's narration, as we shall see, calls into question the transparency and objectivity of Strong's photographs.

The photographs are more than components in an intrepid scheme to document the events of the Hawaiian Embassy: Stevenson's text appropriates the photographs – regardless of the fact that they are missing – and reads them as products of the photographer's experience of Samoan encounter. The author, therefore, refuses to merely transcribe the surface details of the photographs, treating them instead as objects that provide insight into the experience and psychology of multiple subjects.

Stevenson's glossing of individual photographs exposes the instability of photo-textual collaboration: on several occasions his narration extends beyond the content of Strong's actual prints. He constructs, for example, a bucolic scene of Samoan

church attendance based on five of Strong's pictures:

In these five pictures [(A), (B), (C), (D), and (E)] the long line of subscribers to the church come laden with their gifts of every sort and of every degree of liberality and measures, down as low as a piece of rare wood or even a single banana [...] there are yet other offerings, such as a stone on the branch of a tree, which can be only regarded as symbolical. ('A Samoan Scrapbook', pp. 57-58)

The distinction between the photograph's content, Stevenson's interpretation of the photograph, and any additional information Strong may have provided Stevenson is not readily available to the reader; it seems likely, however, that the extreme detail of the passage, as well as the interpretation of what constitutes 'symbolical' offerings, is either Stevenson's literary invention or derives from Strong's oral account. The photographic representation of Samoan divinity students is accompanied by Stevenson's comment that they are 'not students only; they are toilers; they till the ground, each in his own support [...] it is hoped that each may carry along with him, not alone spiritual guidance, but the example and the methods of productive industry'. These two passages simultaneously treat the photographs as visible evidence of Samoan religious mores and as pictures that capture and convey a sense of the complex interiors of experiential subjects.

Continuing his 'commentary' of Strong's photographs, Stevenson remarks that 'After so much that we have heard of the missionary, it is good to see these people unashamed in their own costume' (p. 58). He refers to photograph (D), in which 'the pastor's daughter' has 'modestly concealed her breasts'. Stevenson provides a narrative surrounding this gesture of modesty. The girl shields herself as a direct response to Strong's presence, and more specifically 'in honour of that one-eyed and unfamiliar spectator, the camera' (p. 58). Here, Strong's vision collapses

into that of the camera, which is figured as a monoptic voyeur. The girl's modesty does not arise from religious observance since 'as soon as the photograph was taken, the young lady of the vicarage would drop her veil, and reappear in her natural costume of a single petticoat' (p. 58). Stevenson's narrative represents the camera and the photographer as an intruder upon an otherwise bucolic scene of Islander worship. The ambiguous role of the photographer is evoked in yet another photo-narrative:

This is the photograph book of the Hawaiian embassy, and politics come naturally in [...] Here is [the gunboat *Kaimiloa*] (G) at her moorings in Apia bay. And would you suspect the photographer of some political design? For the day is the 20<sup>th</sup> June, 1887; and behold the *Kaimiloa* trimmed for the Queen's Jubilee and veiling herself with the smoke of a salute; while the German war-ship, *Adler*, in the background lies silent and undraped. "The camera cannot lie, Joseph"; but was one ever more insidiously employed? (pp. 61-62)

Stevenson's direct address to Strong will be recycled in *In the South Seas* when he remarks that it is an 'old melodrama principle that "the camera cannot lie, Joseph"'<sup>23</sup>, though there it is deployed in the context of the Gilbert Islanders' reaction to a magic lantern show. In the above passage, Stevenson's rhetorical move reveals that the photographer has done far more than simply document the Hawaiian and German warships; instead, the photograph contributes directly to Hawaiian propaganda by literally foregrounding the monumental *Kaimiloa* and including the German *Adler* in the background. The adjective 'insidious' refers to the treacherous and deceptive behaviour of the camera and extends to Strong who seems to participate in a clandestine project. Stevenson positions himself as an astute reader of images, one who recognises the now well-rehearsed paradox of

the photographic image: while Strong's photograph of the war-ships is evidence, its meaning is more than an objective record. Nevertheless, Stevenson's rhetoric is disingenuous, since the writer too has been employed to record the Hawaiian Embassy; the 'insidiously employed' camera of Strong serves to gloss over the fact that Stevenson's pen is also working for a political end.

Stevenson's careful reading of the politics of the photograph carries through to the following passage, which describes the Germans and Samoans:

(L) in front of the rebel palace, Tamasese seated on a mat between his wife and Amatuanae, another of the ministry standing respectfully at his back. Mr Sonnenschein, quite a dashing and buccaneer-like figure in his dark sash, and Mr Brandeis (of whom even the camera seems to have been afraid) composing his spirits with tobacco. ('A Samoan Scrapbook', p. 65)

A contrast is established by Stevenson's narrative of the photographic event between the Samoans and the Germans: Tamasese is depicted as a domestic leader, flanked by his wife and minister who stands 'respectfully' behind him. The Germans are represented as interlopers into Samoan civic culture: Mr Sonnenschein and his colleague Mr Brandeis are frightening colonial 'buccaneer-like' pirates, whose presence barely conceals a threat of violence directed toward the personified camera.

The issue of photo-textual collaboration emerges during Stevenson's discussion of Christian missions in Polynesia. Stevenson directs the reader's attention to:

(A) a protestant church with *some part of* the attentive congregation; (B) a group of Sunday school children fresh from school, (C) *a view of a part of* the seminary for native pastors showing a few of the students – divinity

students – in their summery tropical attire, and some of the houses where they live during their term of study. (p. 57, my italics)

This passage is followed by, '(D) a full-fledged native pastor, a very worthy fellow, *I am told*, standing before the door of – *what shall we say?* – the vicarage, with his daughter by his side' (my italics). The distinction between the writer and the photographer becomes blurred when Stevenson claims that he is simply recounting events: the phrase 'I am told' implies that the content of these descriptions has been provided by Strong; thus, the reader is forced to acknowledge the photographer's co-presence. Furthermore, the parenthetical 'what shall we say?' ambiguously evokes both the conventional use of the plural pronoun, as well as Stevenson and Strong's joint inability to properly identify the building in a collaborative process of failed interpretation. Moreover, the use of the pronoun 'we' conflates Stevenson's and Strong's points-of-view. A similar effect is achieved in the description of the photograph (E): '(E) [is] a *partial view* of the annual convocation of the church, where progress is reported, *zeal refreshed*, and the contributions of the various districts brought together' (my italics). In the description of Islanders' 'zeal' the reader cannot discriminate between what might actually be Strong's eye-witness account and whether Stevenson reads this 'zeal' into the photograph. These ambiguities destabilise a single authorial perspective. This conflation of perspective is reinforced when Stevenson remarks that photograph (A) is only 'some part of', and that (C) is merely 'a view of a part of', and (E) 'reports' only a 'partial view': Strong's camera, therefore, is a powerful recording tool, but it inevitably omits some information. Stevenson conflates Strong with his photographs, since both man and image 'tell' and 'report' back to him so that he can extrapolate and provide a narrative. Thus, while the photographs – like Strong – provide an overall impression of the



Samoan congregation, their scope remains limited and it is the author's task to fill in the missing pieces. Stevenson asserts his authorial importance by implying that the photographs require his interpretation and intervention, in order to be saved from a lack of total meaning.

Although Strong's 'partial view' only captures one part of a larger scene, Stevenson insists that the photographs, nonetheless, provide a 'fair and very favourable' account of the Samoan church because they are 'simply random photographs taken with a design entirely artistic, for the effect and not the subject' (p. 58). This is misleading since Strong's exact intentions as he was taking these photographs cannot be known and Stevenson obfuscates their political context. While the subject matter of the photographs was perhaps not extensively planned, the use of 'random' and 'artistic' conveys a sense of haphazard and aimless wandering. Furthermore, 'fair' and 'favourable' are ambiguous: perhaps 'fair' conveys Stevenson's aesthetic appreciation for the pictures, but the adjective may also refer to the fact that the photographs provide forensic proof of the current state of the Samoan church. Likewise, 'favourable' refers doubly to the photographs' pleasing and agreeable features as well as indicating an approving opinion or interpretation. This commentary represents Stevenson's sense that Strong's photographs contain both an aesthetic appeal and a documentary purpose. Although Stevenson often suppresses the images' instrumental function – as documents of Hawaiian intervention or political influence – and stresses their pleasure and effect, he does rely on the photographs' indexical authority when convenient; for instance, in order to support his claim that the Samoan church is thriving, he points to one of Strong's photographs and asserts that 'the busy scene at the convocation testifies to a genuine popular interest' (p. 58). The use of 'testifies' evokes the familiar Victorian belief that as an instrument of positive evidence 'the camera cannot lie' and must be an unimpeachable witness.

Although 'A Samoan Scrapbook' was never published, Stevenson re-purposed the narrative for a section in *A Footnote to History* entitled 'The Hawaiian Embassy'. As Roslyn Jolly notes, it was not unusual for him to recycle 'previous writings' for 'certain portions of [*A Footnote*].'<sup>24</sup> In fact, the first three chapters of *A Footnote to History* were, he informed Sidney Colvin 'drafted two years ago'.<sup>25</sup> *A Footnote to History* begins in 1882 and describes Samoan factional rivalries and then proceeds to narrate the German-provoked civil war of 1887-1889. The remainder of the text covers events from 1889 to 1892, focusing on the botched attempts at implementing the Treaty of Berlin. Within this larger context, 'The Hawaiian Embassy' provides some of the necessary political background to the main focus of *A Footnote to History* and establishes one of the central themes of Stevenson's Samoan history: German conniving and untrustworthiness. 'The Hawaiian Embassy' appears in Chapter III: *Sorrows of Laupepa, 1883 to 1887* and is the second of three 'incidents'<sup>26</sup> that Stevenson deems to be of historical importance. Of course, Kalakaua's Embassy to Samoa did represent an important moment in Hawaii's struggle for regional influence, but it is also likely that Stevenson thought to include it in *A Footnote to History* because he had already written the narrative – recorded from Kalakaua's, Poor's, and Strong's oral and photographic testimonies – two years earlier. The relationship between 'A Samoan Scrapbook' and 'The Hawaiian Embassy' illustrates Stevenson's method of returning to earlier writings and treating them as original sources, a mini and dynamic archive of Samoan history upon which he could then draw. For instance, *A Footnote to History* was initially meant as an additional section for *The South Seas*, however, not long after he had started writing, Stevenson repurposed it as 'a separate opusculum on the Samoan Trouble'.<sup>27</sup> He explained to Burlingame that he had been 'forced into volume form'<sup>28</sup> because of the accumulation of materials.

The section retains some of the most vivid descriptions from

its pre-text, but downplays the role of Strong as his collaborator and principal eye-witness testimony while also effacing the narrative role of the latter's photographs. The alteration in Stevenson's depiction of Strong is all the more surprising since it is at odds with how Stevenson otherwise alludes explicitly to his sources throughout *A Footnote to History*. Whereas in 'A Samoan Scrapbook' Strong emerges as a key player in the Embassy, and as an accomplished and thoroughly professional photographer, in 'The Hawaiian Embassy' he is referred to in passing and vaguely as 'an American painter' who is 'attached to the embassy in the surprising quality of "Government Artist"'.<sup>29</sup> While Stevenson correctly identifies Strong as the Hawaiian court's commissioned artist, his specific contribution to the Embassy was as the official photographer. Moreover, Stevenson's reference to Strong's 'surprising quality' remains somewhat ambiguous, and must refer to the unexpected juxtaposition of an American artist working for a foreign government alongside diplomats. While the biographical context should not over-determine our reading, nonetheless, it is worth reminding ourselves that the composition of 'The Hawaiian Embassy' coincided roughly with the disintegration of their personal relationship.

Stevenson's characterization of King Kalakaua and his Prime Minister Gibson differs in each version of the Embassy narrative. 'A Samoan Scrapbook' credits Kalakaua and Gibson for being committed political mavericks who are 'deeply interested in the Polynesian race, conceiving it capable of self-government, and regarding, as an evil perhaps almost unmissed, the continual scrapping up of South Sea islands by European powers'.<sup>30</sup> In contrast, *A Footnote to History* depicts the pair as not only impractical – Kalakaua is, after all, 'the most theoretical of men' – but also as quasi-delusional figures who are 'filled with visionary schemes'.<sup>31</sup> Stevenson's change of view with regards to Kalakaua was perhaps the result of an altered political climate: at the time of 'A Samoan Scrapbook' Stevenson was still 'firmly bound to the

[Hawaiian] royalist cause'<sup>32</sup> but by the time he started work on *A Footnote to History*, Kalakaua's reign had come to an end with his death in California in 1891.

### **3. Strong's Samoans**

Joseph Strong's photographs represent a departure from the familiar narratives that constitute the bulk of Samoa's photographic history. Unlike the overwhelming tendency of commercial photography to produce, reiterate, and reinforce racial/cultural stereotypes about Islanders, Strong's images have the potential to unsettle monolithic claims about colonial photography, in which the medium functions solely as an articulation of colonial power and authority. By looking past this generality about colonial image production and attending to historical specificities, photographs become more than merely 'univocal, flat, and [an] uncontestable indexical trace[s]'<sup>33</sup> of history. In fact, photographs are revealed as highly 'textured artifact[s]' that encourage the viewer 'to assume many possible different standpoints – both spatial and temporal – in respect to [them]' (p. 5). This approach to the colonial archive is particularly relevant to studies concerned with the Pacific region, since colonization, when it occurred at all, was far from being a consistent or homogenous phenomenon. Unsurprisingly, historical studies of Pacific exploration and settlement have 'generated a mass of information that is various and local' that can best be understood as 'moments of cultural entanglement'.<sup>34</sup> When they acknowledge these entangled moments (ie., colonial situations in which cross-cultural encounter is not unidirectional), scholars are increasingly attuned to the variables and differences between particular photographic practices. The result has been the interrogation of those highly influential, yet broad, postcolonial discourses (ie., the concept of the colonial gaze, the binaries of colonised/coloniser, and object/subject) with particular reference to colonial photography and its untidy history. Some critics

caution that cross-cultural comparisons risk over-determining the instrumentality of photography and its potentially oppressive gaze on the indigenous Other. Instead, an alternative approach has developed from photography's unique paradox: when the capture of light on film produces an image of what has been placed before the camera it simultaneously produces an excess of visual information. Since the camera lens does not and cannot 'discriminate', or 'filter'<sup>35</sup> out certain information, it ensures an excess of detail, which is vulnerable to alternative interpretations. Indexicality, therefore, ceases to be a guarantee of stability, closure, and identifiable veracity; rather the photograph presents multiple signifiers and offers opportunities for unfixing its represented subjects.

Strong's photographs represent a historically-specific case of colonial photography: the Hawaiian government, an indigenous entity, intervened in Samoan affairs in an attempt to extend its sphere of influence and, in the process, employed an American photographer to record diplomatic proceedings with Samoans. It is inaccurate to speak of Strong's photographs serving a 'colonialist agenda', insofar as his photographs cannot be fitted into a system that classified and categorised colonial subjects. Indeed, the case of Strong and the Hawaiian government foregrounds the limitations of a homogenous 'colonial photography', and more specifically the lack of 'an internally consistent, and univocal "body" or archive of Samoan images'.<sup>36</sup> Instead, Strong's photographs are potential subversions of the critical narrative that constructs a passive, available, indigenous subject, and one who was compliant under a Euro-American regime of visual surveillance and control.

By the close of the century thousands of photographic representations in the forms of postcards, travel brochures, government reports, illustrated travelogues, and portraits of Samoa (and other Pacific Islands) were being purchased, sold, traded, and circulated around the world. In addition, anthropological

representations of colonial Others had filtered down into popular photographic practice. Unlike the highly popular studio photographs of 'primitive types' posing against backdrops of rain falls and dense foliage, Strong's Samoan subjects – male, female, old, and young – are shown in the midst of outdoor work or as hosts of political gatherings. The subjects are certainly not 'posing' for the camera, but they have halted and stood momentarily still before its lens. The palpable tension between the photographer and his subjects suggests that Strong encroached into the space of his subjects or intruded into their activities. Indeed, none of the Samoans smile benevolently, shyly or passively towards the photographer and his camera; instead many seem to have either been taken off-guard or actively avoid eye-contact, or glare sulkily indifferently.<sup>37</sup> These photographs are far from evoking the 'dreamy romantic primitivism'<sup>38</sup> of Samoa that characterises much of Apia's vibrant commercial photography trade of the 1880s. In this period, Apia boasted three successful commercial photographers: the New Zealander John Davis, his apprentice Alfred Tattersall, and their partner Thomas Andrew. Although their works have been described as both 'routine'<sup>39</sup> and limited to the discourse of primitivism, they nevertheless constitute the bulk of the archive for Samoa and thus eclipse Strong's lesser-known and alternative representations. In contrast to studio portraits or to photographs of Samoan Belles, Strong's pictures stress the oftentimes tense experience of cross-cultural encounter. The picture captioned 'Samoan natives' (see fig.1.), for instance, depicts four boys sitting in a semi-circle on the grass around a bowl while they scrape out the taro leaves that are laid out in the foreground. Strong must have been seated or crouched down in order to take this shot straight-on. His intrusive physical proximity might be the cause of the boys' angry glares. Only one child continues to work intently with this back turned to the photographer – is he even aware of the photographer's presence? In any case, Strong interrupts them in the midst of their work:

the one on the far right is hunched over his knees and chewing a blade of grass, while the boys sitting opposite are scraping a leaf.

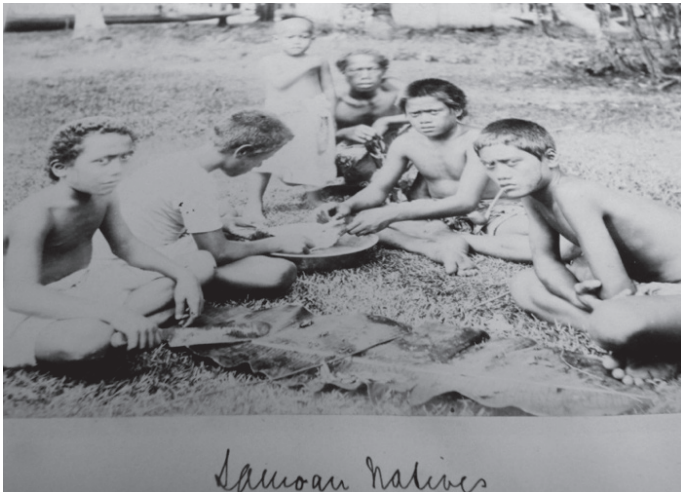


Fig.1. 'Samoa Natives'



Fig.2. 'Hut Native in Samoa'



Fig.3. Detail 'Hut Native in Samoa'

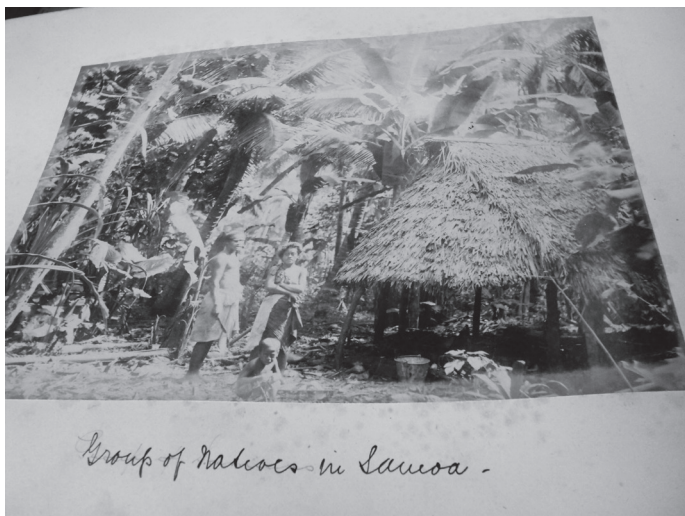


Fig.4. 'Group of Natives in Samoa'





Fig.5. Detail 'Group of Natives in Samoa'



Fig.6. Detail 'Group of Natives in Samoa'

Their companion holds his hands over the bowl and fingers the mixture.

Similar expressions of irritation, discomfiture, or reluctance appear in 'Hut Native in Samoa' (see fig.2.). Here, a bare breasted woman in a grass skirt stands at a three quarter profile in front of a thatched house with her arms drawn behind her back as she looks away from the camera. To her right are two female children, the youngest of whom stands in the middle in a cloth skirt and glances up at the camera, also with her arms behind her back. Beside her is an older, adolescent girl sitting cross-legged; her half-closed eyes avoid the camera and stare towards an undefined space, behind or beside the photographer (see fig.3.). These averted gazes reappear in 'Groups of Natives in Samoa' (see fig.4.), in which a man and a woman are shown working in front of a thatched roof house with a small child crouching in front of them. The man, holding a large knife, does not face the camera; the woman, however, does, though her crossed arms partially cover her bare chest (see fig.5.). The Islanders are off-centred in the viewfinder and seem to have been interrupted in their work – even the little boy appears surprised as he looks up from his bunch of sticks with his mouth agape (see fig.6.).

Strong's images were produced under the auspices of a

Hawaiian government that was attempting to establish itself as a hegemonic power. On 8 March 1886, the Hawaiian monarch Kalakaua recognised the 'the great strategic advantages' of European nations who possessed Pacific islands, and claimed that those 'groups of island not yet annexed were those which, in the nature of things, should come under the influence and authority of the Hawaiian Government'.<sup>40</sup> This citation effectively summarises Hawaii's *realpolitik*: in order to compete with Euro-American powers in the region, the kingdom worked in the gaps that were left open by the colonial powers. Kalakaua's phrase 'the nature of things' appeals to an essential, shared, cultural, and ethnic identity: Hawaii could claim Samoa because the Samoans were a natural extension of Hawaiians. The fraught photographic encounter between the American-Hawaiian photographer and his subjects potentially undermines Kalakaua's propaganda for a pan-Polynesian people: instead of embracing the Hawaiian delegates, the figures appear confrontational and cold. This impression of inscrutability is reinforced by their lack of frontality – their bodies resist legibility, and thus manipulation and interpretation. In fact, the Samoans' furtive looks, sideways bodies, and interrupted movements attest to an ongoing process of engagement between the subjects and the photographer; indeed, for the viewer of Strong's candid pictures the relationship initiated by photography remains incomplete or only partially performed.

Strong's photographs, while a minor and limited archive of Samoan colonialism, challenge us to articulate a critical perspective that recognises both the particular and the two-sided aspects of colonial encounters and histories. While the photographic recording of indigenous people can always be categorised under the rubric of exploitation and the 'colonial gaze', the unusual context for the production of Strong's photographs – they represent the interaction between two nominally independent indigenous powers – asserts the complexity of the apparently simple photo-

graphic index. Strong's photographs are simultaneously the gaze of a colonial agent, the documentary lens of the colonial archive, but also the gaze of another indigenous power, whose claims to ethnic solidarity undermine any definitive reading of power relations in these images. Assuredly, the removal of the photographs from their intended context – as part of a Hawaiian political project – and their insertion into an album of commercial tropical photography, presents them as a collection of colonial artefacts. By re-integrating, however tentatively, Strong's photographs to the conditions of their production and their political purpose, we generate an alternative perspective that does much to expose the difficulties and the nuances of reading colonial photographs.

## NOTES

- 1 This article would not have been possible without the help of Denise Brace from The Writers' Museum (Edinburgh) who provided me with considerable access to the Robert Louis Stevenson Collection. All photographs have been reproduced with the permission of the City of Edinburgh Council Museums & Galleries: The Writers' Museum. The figures that appear in this article are from the author's personal collection.
- 2 Robert Louis Stevenson, *A Footnote to History: Eight Years of Trouble in Samoa*, ed. by Malama Meleisea (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996), p. 13, henceforth cited in text.
- 3 Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa* (Suva: University of the South Pacific, 1987), p. 100.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 101.
- 5 For a full account of King Kalakaua's plan for a Polynesian confederacy see Ralph S. Kuykendall *The Hawaiian Kingdom Volume III 1874-1893: The Kalakaua Dynasty* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1967), pp. 306-13.

- 6 Gavan Daws notes Strong's presence in the Embassy, but does not mention his photography: '[Strong] was to paint views of Polynesian places and people.' See Gavan Daws, *Shoal of Time: A History of the Hawaiian Islands* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1968), p. 236.
- 7 *The Columbia Documentary History of the Asian American Experience*, ed. by Franklin Odo (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), p. 81.
- 8 For more on Strong's career as a painter see Barbara Lekisch, *Embracing Scenes about Lake Tahoe and Donner: Painters, Sketch Artists, and Illustrators, 1855-1915* (Lafayette: Great West Books, 2003), p. 159.
- 9 For more on Kalakaua's political career and international status see Niklaus R. Schweizer, 'King Kalakaua: An International Perspective', *The Hawaiian Journal of History*, 25 (1991), pp. 103-20.
- 10 Arthur Grove Day, *Travels in Hawaii: Robert Louis Stevenson* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1991), pp. xxi-ii.
- 11 Jenni Calder, *Robert Louis Stevenson: A Life Study* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 269.
- 12 *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. by Bradford A. Booth and Ernest Mehew, 8 vols (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1994-95), VI, p. 267.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p. 267.
- 14 Alison Nordström and Casey Blanton observe that 'Strong produced several full-plate photographs of Samoan dance, ceremonies, and daily life, as well as a number of striking portraits which were assembled under the titled Samoan Scrapbook, but never published'. See *Picturing Paradise*, ed. by Alison Nordström and Casey Blanton (Daytona Beach: Daytona Beach Community College, 1995), p. 25.
- 15 This photograph album belonged to the Scottish photographer Louis Wilson (the son of the prominent photographer George Washington Wilson and owner of the extremely successful photography firm, G. W. Wilson). A brief MS. note included inside the cover of the album reads that 'some photographs [were] taken by Louis Wilson of G. W. Aberdeen, 1889'. In addition, a pencil note written by William J. Hay (who lived and worked at Edinburgh's John Knox House) on the inside of the front fly-leaf states that: 'Some of the photos in this Album are by my old friend Louis Wilson of G. W. Wilson,

Aberdeen who went to Hawaii for his health in 1889. The one of the Hawaiian is certainly his as he took it to replace the rejected negative that showed the R.L.S. group in the foreground. This information I had from himself'. The first pages of Wilson's album display *carte de visite* of Hawaiian royal figures such as Princess Ruth, Dowager Queen Emma, and Princess Likelike. These are followed by dozens of photographs of Honolulu's Iolani Palace, the Hawaiian Hotel, and Kapiolani. Strong's photographs comprise a small proportion of the album's overall content: beginning on p. 72, they are pasted on the verso side of the thick cardboard pages and are interspersed at regular intervals.

- 16 Robert Louis Stevenson, 'A Samoan Scrapbook' in *Sophia Scarlet and Other Pacific Writings*, ed. by Robert Hoskins (Auckland: AUT Media, 2008), p. 57.
- 17 For a thorough discussion of Stevenson's criticism and support of missionary work in the Pacific see Ann C. Colley, *Robert Louis Stevenson and the Colonial Imagination* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2004).
- 18 'A Samoan Scrapbook', p. 57.
- 19 Robert Louis Stevenson, 'Missions in the South Seas' in *Sophia Scarlet and Other Pacific Writings*, pp. 107-12; henceforth cited in text, p. 107.
- 20 Stevenson, 'A Samoan Scrapbook', p. 59, henceforth cited in text.
- 21 In *A Footnote to History* this anecdote is repeated almost verbatim, p. 29.
- 22 *The Letters*, vol. VII, p. 196.
- 23 Robert Louis Stevenson, *In the South Seas*, ed. by Neil Rennie (London: Penguin Classics, 1998), p. 94.
- 24 Roslyn Jolly, *Stevenson in the Pacific* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), p. 78.
- 25 *The Letters*, vol. VII, p. 198.
- 26 Stevenson, *A Footnote*, p. 26.
- 27 *The Letters*, vol. VI, p. 345.
- 28 *Ibid.*, p. 366.
- 29 Stevenson, *A Footnote*, p. 30.
- 30 Stevenson, 'A Samoan Scrapbook', p. 61.

- 31 Stevenson, *A Footnote*, p. 28.
- 32 Grove Day, p. xix.
- 33 *Photography's Other Histories*, ed. by Christopher Pinney and Nicolas Peterson (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), p. 5.
- 34 Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 130-31.
- 35 Pinney, p. 6 and p. 7.
- 36 Leonard Bell 'Eyeing Samoa: People, Places and Spaces in Photographs of the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries' in *Tropical Visions in an Age of Empire*, ed. by Felix Driver and Luciana Martins (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), pp. 156-174. (p. 161).
- 37 I do not discuss all ten photographs in this essay. They appear, in LSH 824/95 as follows: 'Group of natives in Samoa', 'Making Treaty in Samoa', 'Hut native in Samoa', 'Grass hut & natives Samoa', 'Samoan chief', 'In Samoa', 'Natives eating poi', 'Samoan natives', 'In Samoa', 'Samoan chief with his wives'.
- 38 Alison Nordström, 'Photography of Samoa: Production, Dissemination and Use' in *Picturing Paradise*, ed. by Alison Nordström and Casey Blanton (Daytona Beach: Daytona Beach Community College, 1995), pp. 11-39 (p. 28).
- 39 Leonard Bell 'Eyeing Samoa: People, Places and Spaces in Photographs of the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries' in *Tropical Visions in an Age of Empire*, ed. by Felix Driver and Luciana Martins (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), pp. 156-174. (p. 161).
- 40 Cited in Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, p. 322.

## Stevenson's Samoa and the metamorphoses of power

Jan Gorak

### I

Although recent commentators are almost unanimous about Stevenson's absorption in historical concerns, his sole historical work *A Footnote to History: Eight Years of Trouble in Samoa* (1894) has commanded relatively little attention. Stevenson himself can take some blame for this. A writer who tells his readers right away that he may have swollen an affair that would merit 'a few lines in any general history' into 'the size of a volume or large pamphlet' may be accused of courting rejection.<sup>1</sup> Predictably, his initial readers were quick to pick up the cue. The weight of the nineteenth-century periodical press bore down on Stevenson, asking why the author of *Kidnapped* had devoted three hundred pages to the political events of a backwater that Britain had twice refused to make a protectorate even when colonizing fever ran high.<sup>2</sup>

This essay will argue that Stevenson's 'footnote' demands the twenty-first reader's attention on several counts. First of all, contemporary historians pay much more attention to small nations than they did when Stevenson wrote. In a globalised politics, the relationship between centre and periphery is of major significance and both terms need to be taken into account. Second, historians now acknowledge that, in Lionel Gossman's words,<sup>3</sup> history is as much signification as any other extended prose text. Consequently, Stevenson's essay will repay attention for the unusual combination of perspectives and stylistic registers it brings to the study of its 'eight years of trouble'. Finally, Stevenson's style brings him to a distinct vision of power, a subject that is central to his own canon

and to that of late nineteenth-century culture.

## II

Stevenson's letters follow his shifting views of Samoa and how he might translate these into narrative history. Not long after his arrival, he assured the sceptical Sidney Colvin that, beneath the frequently farcical turn of events in Samoa, he could detect a more serious logic. He predicted 'war [...] bankruptcies [...] famine. Here, under the microscope, we can see history at work.'<sup>4</sup> The catastrophic turn of Samoan events moved in a direction opposite to J. A. Froude's *Oceana* (1886), where protectorates and colonies were the answer for the overcrowded cities and resentful residents of the metropolis. The microscope, Stevenson's chosen instrument for his inspection of Samoa, acknowledges the validity of the scientific ambitions voiced by Comte or Buckle, who scanned world history in search of the general rules for human amelioration.<sup>5</sup> However, the general rules Stevenson detects in the Pacific are less reassuring than theirs. His history shows a West intoxicated with its own power and ready to enforce it with violence, not an enlightened zone committed to transferring its expertise for universal benefit and the scrutiny of its own assumptions.

Samoa reinforced Stevenson's conviction that 'I really have some historic sense, I feel it in my bones' (L7: 183). He consulted a wealth of sources as he reviewed his options for composition, admitting cheerfully that 'a *Historia Samoae* [...] might be useful to the islands – and to me' (L7: 182). Edward A. Freeman's *Old English History for Children* (1879)<sup>6</sup> stimulated him to reflect on the direction of 'general Aryan history' (L7: 183) and the battle between civilizations he had witnessed in Scotland. In Samoa, did he witness these battles fought all over again? Was the South Pacific the unlikely source for the general history his Western contemporaries devoured so eagerly? Stevenson was soon congratulating himself that: 'By this time I do begin to know something of life in the XIXth century, which no novelist either in France



or England seems to know much of' (L7: 192). Was the 'human comedy' incomplete without the inclusion of places like Samoa?

From Edward Burlingame, his editor at Scribner's, he received any number of the new historical volumes: Renan's complete works, Adams's *Historical Essays* (1891), and Taine's *Origines de la France Contemporaine* (1888) (L6: 84, L7: 189, 434). He was a critical reader, reflecting that 'Renan is quite a Michelet and as far as general views, and such a piece of character painting, excellent.' However, he protested that 'His method is sheer lunacy. You can see him take up a block which he had just rejected, and make it the corner stone: a maddening way to deal with authorities, and the result so little like history that one always blames oneself for wasting time' (L8: 88).

Stevenson knew that the historian's importance could not rest on the importance of the events he charted. No historical work could reach its audience without the self-conscious application of the artist's concern with shape and form. He judged Renan's method defective here and he recoiled from Michelet's grandiose *character painting*. Excited by the unprecedented possibilities he encountered, he wrote to Burlingame that:

Here is for the first time a tale of Greeks – Homeric Greeks – mingled with moderns, and all true; Odysseus alongside of Rajah Brooke, *proportion gardée*, and all true. Here is for the first time since the Greeks (that I remember) the history of a handful of men, where all know each other in the eyes and live close in a few acres, narrated at length and with the seriousness of history. Talk of the modern novel; here is a modern history. And if I had the misfortune to found a school, the legitimate historian might lie down and die, for he could never overtake his material. Here is a little tale that has not *careted* its *vates* (L7: 196).<sup>7</sup>

Like Homer, Stevenson would treat of a *handful of men, where*

*all know each other*, a society of traditional loyalties with its own well-established forms of address and conflict. Yet his allusion to the *vates sacer* of Horace's *Odes* indicates how he saw his actors were swept into imperial matters and battles even if they persisted in obliviousness. This was a *modern history* as well as a traditional one. The situation in Samoa could not be pressed into the conventional moulds devised by *the legitimate historian*. Stevenson's challenge was to devise a specific style for a new subject matter.

However, his reservations persisted. Like Flaubert reflecting on the Paris Commune or Nietzsche berating the new technocratic Germany, Stevenson admitted that his subject matter repelled him even as it fascinated him. 'The worst thing in the South Seas' he confided to Sidney Colvin 'is that the moral tone of the whites is so low; the natives are the only gentle folk [...] My first visit to Apia was a shock to me; every second person the ghost of himself and the place reeking with infection' (L7: 199). European Samoa did not tolerate criticism, and it substituted malicious gossip for the exchange of ideas. Most damaging of all was its complacency about imminent dangers: 'We sit and pipe on a volcano, which is being stoked by bland, incompetent amateurs' (L7: 150).

He clarified his ambivalent point of view in a long letter to Henry James:

It is likely that this epoch of gaiety in the South Seas will soon cease; and the fierce white light of history will beat no longer on yours sincerely and his fellows here on the beach. We ask ourselves whether the reason will more rejoice over the end of a disgraceful business, or the unregenerate man more sorrow over the stoppage of the fun [...] You don't know what news is, nor what politics, nor what the life of man, till you see it on so small a scale and with your liberty on the board for stake [...] I am an Epick writer with a k to it, but without the necessary genius (L7: 449).

Stevenson's historical imagination moves at full speed here. He had no doubt that *the white light of history* shone on the events he saw unfolding, however remote Samoa might be. It is not Samoa that is the backwater, but Europe, since it is in places like Samoa that a new vision of European power actualises. But in what mode should he cast this new phase of history?

Although Stevenson entertained an image of himself as prosecuting counsel and judge of a European disgrace, he was not yet sure what was unfolding before his eyes. He could not escape the conviction that there was something comic and farcical about world history viewed from Samoa, something that called for *an Epick writer with a k*. Stevenson might have found one of literary history's best-known instances of this phenomenon in Alexander Pope's *Postscript* to his translation of *The Odyssey*.<sup>8</sup> Here he would have read praise for Cervantes's Don Quixote 'as the perfection of the mock epick'.<sup>9</sup> One can see that Stevenson's presentation of German consul Theodor Weber as a 'knight-errant' (*FH*: 107) or Laupepa as 'the whip-top of competitive advisers' (*FH*: 291) recalls Cervantes's readiness to use his ridiculous protagonists and events as symptoms of historical change. In Stevenson's world, as in Cervantes's, the disconnection between private person and public function is everywhere, with results that are locally comic but cumulatively disastrous.

Maybe most significant of all, the idea of an 'epick' or mock epic reflects, like the description of his work as 'a footnote', Stevenson's uncertainty about the seriousness of the scene he is witnessing and reconstructing. This is a scene that offers, as he submits to James, *a disgraceful business*, another proof of *unregenerate man* and his follies. 'The white light of history' shines on the events he narrates and exposes the shame of the Great Powers. But is the sum of these events a farce whose protagonist is the birth of the modern state? Some of the greatest nineteenth-century authors – Flaubert in *Sentimental Education* (1869), Twain in *A Connecticut Yankee at the Court of King Arthur* (1889), Nietzsche in *Untimely*

*Meditations* (1873-76), most famously of all Karl Marx in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852) – were unsure whether they were witnessing a farce or a tragedy in the birth of the modern state. As he watches the annexation of a world where *all know each other* by a brutal impersonal machine, Stevenson begins to write a new kind of history, half tragedy, half farce, that belongs with these works.

The letters written as Stevenson composed *A Footnote* show him not so much closing in on his subject as turning it round and round like a kaleidoscope in the hope of detecting its shape. We can see Stevenson imposing and withdrawing a variety of frame-works on his material: it is a chronicle ('eight years of trouble'), an act of public duty (the preface emphasises his pamphlet will be 'of [...] service to a distracted country'), a mock-epick (Stevenson's battle scenes, where warriors are worsted by kitchen maids, often resemble pages torn out of Cervantes and Fielding), an exercise in neo-Roman rhetoric (consider Stevenson's last appeal to Kaiser William). Yet within a restless and fast-changing work, two significant threads call for our fullest analysis. The first is Stevenson's view of Samoan-Western manners, viewed with Voltairean mockery and the second is his grave inspection of the nature of the modern state and its German promoters. These threads will be followed in the rest of this essay.

### III

Modern historians<sup>10</sup> concur in seeing slightly more than eight years of trouble behind the events Stevenson narrates in his 'footnote'. They prefer to speak of a larger wave of change that descended on the island with the arrival of John Williams and his squad of Wesleyan missionaries in 1830.<sup>11</sup> J. W. Davidson ties Williams's mission to a much larger alliance between Christianity and commerce that included Livingstone in Southern Africa. R. P. Gilson sees Williams as setting in motion an uneasy early 'multi-cultural community'. Malama Meleisea positions him as the first

of a succession of visitors eager to dominate Samoa in the guise of modernising it. These historians are unanimous that Williams's arrival only worsened pre-existing conditions of internal strife and led to full-scale land alienation by the 1880s, as Stevenson's narrative opens.

Stevenson is not so much silent as economical about these developments. His own focus falls on the operations of Theodor Weber, the representative of the Deutsche Handels- und Plantagen-Gesellschaft (the German Trading and Plantations Company, henceforth DHPG) that became the reigning power in Samoa at this time. Through Weber's labours and leverage, DHPG had acquired over three hundred thousand acres for itself by the 1880s. Stevenson underlines the company's inhumanity and its political manoeuvring, but touches only briefly on the Lackawanna agreement of 1881 and the subsequent land commission charged to explore the validity of rival ownership claims. The agreement also secured the proclamation of Laupepa as the King of Samoa. Since the notion of a supreme monarch was foreign to Samoan political traditions, his term was limited to seven years. After this Tamasese, a deputy and rival, would serve as king. The German's most dangerous adversary, chief Mataafa, was shunted to the sidelines under the terms of the new agreement.

R. P. Gilson emphasises that the monarch's sovereignty was never very real. Collection of taxation remained in the hands of district governors and traders continued to arm warring native factions. Certainly, the plight of the Samoans did not improve. Reduced to labourers on their own lands, subject to demands for a centralised governance at variance with their own traditions, spurred to raise their efficiency to Western expectations and penalised heavily when they did not, spurned when they sought British or American protection, few Samoans in the 1880s were convinced that the promises of salvation and prosperity Westerners had brought half a century earlier were being fulfilled. Discontent largely took the form of repeated theft and vandalism, but there

were perpetual rumours of rising support for chief Mataafa, who Samoans hoped might lead more robust resistance to Western powers.

Stevenson narrates how increasing crime on company property led to renewed calls for action against the culprits. At this point, the German plan to establish Laupepa as puppet monarch, a plan condoned by British inertia and American inconsistency, begins to become comprehensible.<sup>12</sup> The king found himself harried into agreeing that Samoan nationals convicted in a mixed court of non-capital offences against German-protected persons should face German punishment. (The DHPG, Robert Mackenzie Watson notes, had thoughtfully built its own jail for this very purpose.) Having expanded German economic power immeasurably, Weber now sought to begin tightening its hold on the judicial sphere. A year later, Laupepa and Tamasese were again urged to submit to the creation of a new governing council that would curb their own powers still further.

Such is the necessary background for the story Stevenson tells. His first pages point to a radical distinction between European and Samoan society: 'We have passed the feudal system; they are not yet clear of the patriarchal. We are in the thick of the age of finance; they are in a period of communism' (*FH*: 1-2). One of these societies is outward-looking, dynamic, the other trapped in its own ways. The accident of technological innovations in navigation brings them together. It is easy to see where Stevenson's sympathies lie. The Samoans are 'hard to understand' (*FH*: 2). As he scans the Samoan dictionary he discovers that 'for the real noble a whole private dialect is set apart.' No wonder that 'We leap at once to the conclusion that he is hereditary and absolute' (*FH*: 3). Yet in fact, the chief's privileges are largely confined to the conversational. In the parliament itself, he 'sits usually silent, a kind of a gagged audience for village orators' (*FH*: 4). What to us appears despotism is in fact impotence.

After remarking 'the special delight' of the Samoan people in

collective festivity, Stevenson inspects the extensive vocabulary for their communal pleasures. Again, the results are not what we would predict. He finds this vocabulary to be shot through with danger: "The same word (*afemoeina*) expresses "a long call" and "to come as a calamity"; the same word (*lesolosolou*) signifies "to have no intermission of pain" and "to have no cessation, as in the arrival of visitors"; and *soua*, used of epidemics, bears the sense of being overcome as with "fire, flood, or visitors" (*FH*: 12). How can any peoples' conviviality be such a pleasure and such a curse? Stevenson's first answer is simple and steeped in the Protestant ethic. The Samoans are a race of charming idlers and the prosperity of a single Samoan is seen as an opportunity for the financial or material amelioration of all the others. His fuller answer effectively stretches the length of the book, and tacitly invites us to see the arrival of Western power as the death-knell for Samoan sociability.

Stevenson's view of settler mores makes a stark contrast. Where traditional Samoa is steeped in sociability for its own sake, its newcomers are barely civil. Stevenson takes us through Apia, a city that is the thoroughfare of Western commerce and whose residents are potentially the beneficiaries of a finely tuned system of industrialised agriculture. He promises his reader that 'he will find more of the history of Samoa spread before his eye [...] than has yet been collected in the blue-books or white-books of the world'<sup>13</sup> (*FH*: 20-1). Yet, among the Westerners, Stevenson and his readers find themselves in no signs of neighbourliness running to excess: 'One merchant warns you against his neighbour; the neighbour on the first occasion is found to return the compliment: each with a good circumstantial story to the proof.' In Apia, 'Commerce, like politics, is here narrowed [...] and becomes as personal as fisticuffs' (*FH*: 27).

The one exception to this rule, the beautifully maintained, enviably productive and incontestably powerful organization of the DHPG that 'has its chief seat in Apia bay' (*FH*: 28) in fact confirms it. After admiring the view of this magnificent machine, Stevenson

confides that: 'It is said the whip is very busy on some of the plantations; it is said that punitive extra-labour, by which the thrall's term of service is extended, has grown to be an abuse; and it is complained that, even where that term is out, much irregularity occurs in the repatriation of the discharged' (*FH*: 31). Occasionally a German consul protests against this officially sanctioned ferocity. Such officials never last long. It is suddenly much less clear that 'we have passed the feudal system' while the Samoans linger in the dark ages.

The other Western powers, Stevenson wryly remarks, 'figure [...] as the three ruffians of the elder playwrights' (*FH*: 38). They do not intervene in any cruelty, marking the suspension of Western humanitarian considerations in Samoa. In fact, the mistreatment of the natives sets the tone for the manners of the settlement: 'Patriotism flies in arms about a hen; and if you comment upon the colour of a Dutch umbrella, you have cast a stone against the German emperor' (*FH*: 34). Such a comment signals a switch of direction in Stevenson's work. In his early pages, it seemed that he equated Samoa with a sublime silliness and the West with unglaorious seriousness. *We get things done* was the implicit subtext. But it is evident that there is also something violent and barbarous in what the Germans have brought to Samoa.

A second highway journey prompts Stevenson to recall the precedent of Honolulu where 'convicts labour on the highways in piebald clothing, gruesome and ridiculous'. The Dickensian or Hugoesque implications of poor wretches destroyed by a pitiless system are not what they seem. Stevenson adds: 'It is a common sight to see the family of such an one troop out, about the dinner hour, wreathed with flowers and in their holiday best, to picnic with their kinsman on the public wayside' (*FH*: 42-43). Will the inexorable German will to power and punishment fare any better in Samoa? Unlike the Hawaiian authorities, the Germans are willing to press their position more fiercely. Soon they cast out the puppet king Laupepa for his deputy king Tamesese, who is



promptly equipped with a 'military adviser', Louis Brandeis, an ex-army officer and company employee. Brandeis subsequently acts as premier after Tamesese ousts Laupepa. Measures like these provoke intensifying Samoan resistance. They also invalidate the autonomy of political, legal, and economic spheres that Western civilization at home rests on. In Samoa, economic interests, or Conrad's famous 'material interests' from *Nostromo*, dominate completely.<sup>14</sup> They stock a puppet king and a puppet civil service and, in time, a docile press.

However brutal the Germans might be, Stevenson consistently renders war, commerce, governance, the entire apparatus of a colonial administration, as comedy, 'as epick with a k in it'. At first this appears a concession to Samoan sociability and formality, forces that can absorb Western aggression. Women and the clergy secure automatic exemption from the rigors of battle, a custom that, like so many Samoan niceties, has unintended consequences: 'Women [...] are suffered to pass between the hostile camps, exchanging gossip, spreading rumour, and divulging to either army the secret councils of the other' (*FH*: 9). In its indigenous version war does not interrupt everyday life, but simply raises its display and ostentation to a higher level: 'Feasts precede battles, fine dresses and songs decorate and enliven the field; and the young soldier comes to camp burning [...] to distinguish himself by acts of valour and [...] to display his acquaintance with field etiquette' (*FH*: 9-10). Stevenson's view of Samoan life establishes it as a culture of play and display, in contrast with the backroom plotting and sudden violence of its German rival. This at first seems inextinguishable. Just before the battle of Matauutu, Mataafa's men await their foes in the bushes. Suddenly 'a silly lad, in mere lightness of heart, fired a shot in the air. My native friend, Mrs. Mary Hamilton, ran out of her house and gave the culprit a good shaking: an episode in the midst of battle as incongruous as the grazing cow' (*FH*: 137). In such a milieu, surely the German fury will be dissipated? However comic the spectacle of Samoa at war might be, the episode func-

tions as part of Stevenson's unfolding strategy of challenging his audience to ask 'Who are the barbarians here?'

For an interval, it appears that the Samoan propensity for comedy will infect the casual manners of the Europeans as the farcical presentation of war and battle Samoan-style spills over into the presentation of other spheres and other nations. Europe enters a zone of farce once it presses to control Samoa. The young American consul, Harold Sewall, forgets to bring a scrap of paper on his way to an interview with the German consul Becker, as he might in a farce by Sardou. As Sewall returns to retrieve it, Becker seizes his opportunity to suspend the governing council of Apia. The British consul, De Coetlogon, an old soldier whom Stevenson views affectionately, triggers another incident when he forgets to excuse himself from a prior dinner engagement with Knappe, the German consul. After Knappe has been kept waiting in his dinner jacket, he releases the full force of German gunboat diplomacy. Stevenson repeatedly presents Commander Leary, the American captain of the *Adams*, as a military officer usurping diplomatic functions only to perform them with the slapstick of a music hall comedian. 'Over all his doings,' Stevenson observes, 'a malign spirit of humour presided. No malice was too small for him, if it were only funny' (*FH*: 121). Leary brings down all the machinery of Western military power to avenge the assault on the theft of pigs owned by one Scanlon, who may or may not have been an American citizen – at this point hostilities between the powers make it impossible to decide, Stevenson decides. He is sure enough of Leary's identity, however, and provides a crushing thumbnail sketch of the seriocomic quest for retribution undertaken by this 'artist in mischief' (*FH*: 152). The mood of farce and identity-confusion is contagious. When the Germans decide to arrest Cusack, the editor of the *Samoa Times*, and to install 'another printer of the name of Jones,' the results are predictable: 'They were shown the wrong man, and the blows intended for Cusack [...] hailed on the shoulders of his rival Jones' (*FH*: 237).

As such incidents multiply, Samoa assumes the shape of a performance of *HMS Pinafore*. The sense that native Samoans inhabit a ridiculous place whose old-fashioned courtesies are inadequate to modern conditions gives way to the sense that the whole apparatus of colonial administration, with its pompous official notes from consul to consul, solemn dinner parties, imposing titles, and battleships waiting in the wings is ultimately hollow. But why is this? As Stevenson continues, it becomes clearer that this farce is not so much an offshoot of the Samoan comic gift, but attributable to the German readiness to bend all the administrative and political apparatus to the service of the DHPG. Tools of the company, Stevenson's colonial administrators are hollow men, like Conrad's 'pâpier-maché Mephistopheles' in *Heart of Darkness*, on whom Marlow reflects: 'It seemed to me if I tried I could poke my forefinger through him'.<sup>15</sup>

Nowhere is this truer than in Stevenson's presentation of Becker, the German consul and company stooge. Becker is a decisive signal that Stevenson's mockery has turned sour. His history gives us new insights into the nature of German power. When he considers Becker's case, Stevenson moves into the judge's seat. He introduces his miscreant as 'Sir Becker the chivalrous' (*FH*: 96), a Quixote whose mock epick qualities inflict very unfunny disasters. In no time at all, 'the knight-errant Becker had killed all confidence in Germans at the root' (*FH*: 107). After 'Sir Becker's high feat of arms' in punishing native theft and indiscipline, discontent escalates. When his policies of deception and aggression lead to warfare, Becker's response 'is equally timid and rash, equally offensive and inoffensive' (*FH*: 192). He strains to knit back together alliances 'he had so lately and so artfully thrown down'. Yet this is futile, for 'if Becker saved his goose, he lost his cabbage' (*FH*: 141). Becker serves as the perfect illustration of the rule that the wrong person will always be found for any vacant public office in Samoa. He also perfects the role of the public official appointed purely for the purpose of implementing DHPG policy. Stevenson's verdict on

him, that 'If the object of diplomacy be the organisation of failure in the midst of hate, he was a great diplomatist' (*FH*: 174), tilts the balance on his interpretation of the European contribution to the history of Samoa from the mock-epic to the catastrophic. The case of Becker shows us Stevenson abandoning comic complicity with native good nature for the severest judgment of Western aggression.<sup>16</sup>

With the presentation of the puppet-king Laupepa, it becomes definitely clear that Stevenson's target is the civilization that the Great Powers have brought to Samoa. If Weber is the avenging scourge of the Samoans, Laupepa is the sacrificial victim of the new form of power exported by the Germans. By titling his chapter 'The Sorrows of Laupepa' Stevenson nods to the *sturm und drang* of *The Sorrows of Werther* (1774).<sup>17</sup> But there is an undertow that this strand of his history marks out Western adventurism in Samoa as an episode in the history of human melancholy. Stevenson's technique is very different here, and he solicits our participation in Laupepa's own extended humiliation at the hands of the German authorities. We are no longer strolling through Apia with an educated and droll companion of our own circle, nor even watching an authoritative judge deliver a verdict. Instead we see the arrival of Western violence under Samoan eyes.

Stevenson begins in the mode of comic epick, telling us that 'Sheet of Paper' is 'the literal meaning of *Laupepa*' (*FH*: 75) and briskly consigning the king to the ranks of the 'heavy, well-meaning, inconclusive men' (*FH*: 47-48) of whom Samoa has such a surfeit. Stuebel, a German consul whom he assures us the Samoans regarded highly, soon 'decided Malietoa Laupepa to be a man impossible to trust and unworthy to be dealt with' (*FH*: 49). Even at the end of the book, Stevenson will admit that this most unlikely ruler 'is not designed to ride the whirlwind or direct the storm, rather to be the ornament of private life.' Such a testimony establishes the king as the most spectacular instance of the lack of fit between function and person in Samoa. Yet the emphasis on

Laupepa's delicacy accumulates to a point where it mutates into a criticism of the reflex brutality of the regime that has displaced him and his people. The king is 'as patient as Job, conspicuously well intentioned, of charming manners; and when he pleases, he has one accomplishment in which he now begins to be alone – I mean that he can pronounce correctly his own beautiful language' (*FH*: 308). If Laupepa is as patient as Job, the DHPG is as violent and arbitrary as Jehovah, and skill with language and good manners are no qualifications for the new violent dispensation it inaugurates.

As the German dissatisfaction with Samoan discipline increases, 'the two chiefs began to change places like the two scales of a balance' (*FH*: 51). While Weber arms Tamasese and allows him to raise his own flag, he ejects Laupepa from his seat at Mulinulu. When the chief tries to raise his flag in Apia, 'Dr Stuebel appeared himself with ten men and an officer from the cruiser Albatross; a sailor climbed into the tree and brought down the flag of Samoa' (*FH*: 52). Government doing the business of industry; industry usurping the power of government; the humiliation of rulers appointed by a congress of the Great Powers; a violence and panic that converges on any symbol, however trivial; perpetual war, not commercial prosperity, all these displace the elaborate ceremony and extended civilities that Stevenson introduced us to in Samoa.

When Laupepa is captured and sent into banishment, Stevenson seizes the opportunity to make his voyage of exile an object lesson on the scale of Germany's colonial politics and to expose the invisible industrial masters it serves. This episode radiates from Laupepa's point of view, a perspective that routs the confident condescension of Stevenson's opening pages. As he accompanies the chief to each new location, Sydney, Cape Town, the Cameroons, Hamburg, Bremen, and finally Jaluit, on the Marshall Islands, the reader silently registers the enormity of European control and deceit. In Australia, the Germans conceal Laupepa from the British in order to protect themselves from diplomatic protest.

In Cape Town they promise him that his destination is Germany: he finds himself instead in the Cameroons. The governor assures him of his hospitality: "My house is not yet finished, but when it is, you shall live in one of my rooms" (*FH*: 82). Only slowly does Laupepa realise the nature of this Western hospitality: 'In one part of this house, weapons of the government were hung up; there was a passage, and on the other side of the passage, fifty criminals were chained up, two and two by the ankles' (*FH*: 82). Again Stevenson delays Laupepa's recognition to the furthest limits of plausibility. Finally, the king realises that European hospitality is as bogus as the offices it bestows so liberally: "Although they gave me no light [...] I could see I was in a prison" (*FH*: 83). Where Stevenson's Samoa was a place of open and endless discussion with no practical consequences, the Germans have established a chain of secret prisons across the world. Theirs is not the charismatic power of the master of Ballantrae or the urbane mockery of Attwater in *The Ebb-Tide*, but the carcereal regime's power to control movement.

Laupepa's voyage through Dover, Hamburg, and Bremen gives him a worm's eye-view of a progressive Western civilization's railway stations and omnibuses. His own destinations are invariably prisons, until, in a darkly satirical stroke, he reaches 'that Red Sea of which they had learned so much in their Bibles' (*FH*: 84). Williams's promise of commerce and Christianity as the source of Samoan prosperity and redemption is fulfilled in captivity. At each stage of Laupepa's journey, Stevenson takes Western civilization further and further from its professed civilizing objectives even as he shows it slowly encircling the world. Laupepa experiences the fruits of that civilization as an early candidate for extraordinary rendition as we know it in the twenty-first century.

At the end of the book, Stevenson returns to the peripatetic mode that earlier proved so devastating of the Western civilizing claims. He installs himself at Mulinnu in 1893. Having begun as a lexicographer, he ends as an actuary and provides a quick inventory of the cost to Samoans and settlers of the new, neutral regime

installed after the Berlin conference. This saw the formation of an administration headed by a Swedish Chief Justice and his advisors and aided by a German president. Not only is this apparatus financially ruinous (the President and his staff cost eleven a half times more than the king and six times more than Brandeis's administration), but it makes no effort to extinguish the arbitrary form of violence now rife in the islands. Stevenson narrates the attempts to kidnap Laupepa's rival Mataafa and the German President's collusion in a plot to dynamite a jail housing Mataafa's sympathisers. The perspective here is closer to the Swift of *The Examiner* (1710-11) than the 'under Samoan eyes' method of the Laupepa episode. By simply balancing the books, Stevenson shows the lack of practical benefits promised by the alliance between Christianity and commerce Williams initially brought to Samoa. His deadpan manner of recording abduction and explosion in the name of preserving the *pax Germanica* reaches the outer limits of absurdist satire.

By a final irony, Laupepa's restoration renders him a prisoner in his own country. Stevenson points us to his 'palace', a slum dwelling in a district otherwise completely in Western possession. This is in itself a bitter humiliation in a culture where, as Stevenson observes, a man's status depends on the grandeur of his residence. Laupepa's movements are no longer his own and neither are those of his visitors: 'Intending visitors to the palace must appear before their consuls and justify their business. The majesty of buried Samoa was henceforth only to be viewed (like a special collection) under special permit' (*FH* 308). Stevenson's satire has undercut the authority of the European diplomatic apparatus to expose a colonial administration that exists solely to service the demands of industrial power by any means considered effective.

#### IV

The publication of *A Footnote to History* brought no acknowledgment of the dangers Stevenson's history dramatised. Yet within

three years, W. E. Henley, his one-time collaborator, would publish a series of articles in *The New Review* by Ernest Williams that voiced very similar fears to Stevenson's own. Williams's weapons were statistical rather than rhetorical and they were trained exclusively on Germany not Germany in the South Pacific. But Stevenson acknowledged, in a way that Williams did not, that Germany was not the sole culprit in the games of power both authors saw in formation. From Samoa he discerned the Great Powers entering into a new phase of history, one where violence and imprisonment displaced the old commitment to self-criticism and inquiry. From this viewpoint, and from the perspective of Stevenson's lifelong concern with power, *A Footnote to History* appears to be a more significant work than has often been acknowledged.

#### NOTES

- 1 Robert Louis Stevenson, *A Footnote to History: Eight Years in Samoa* (New York: Scribner's, 1907), p. 107. Further page references to this edition are given in the text and identified as *FH*: and the page number.)
- 2 Roslyn Jolly, *Stevenson in the Pacific: Travel, Empire, and the Author's Profession* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2004) has a very full discussion of the early reviews of *A Footnote to History* and an authoritative account of its engagement with the complexities of nineteenth-century colonial administration. Other significant discussions of the historical dimensions of this work include Ann Colley, *Robert Louis Stevenson and the Colonial Imagination* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2004) and Oliver Buckton, *Cruising with Robert Louis Stevenson: Travel, Narrative, and the Colonial Body* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007).
- 3 Lionel Gossman, *Between History and Literature* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990).
- 4 Bradford A. Booth and Ernest Meheew, eds. *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), vol. 7, p. 100. Further references to this edition will be made within the text and given in the form L: with volume number and page number.
- 5 Auguste Comte appeared in a popularizing translation by Harriet



Martineau published in two volumes as *The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte* (London: Chapman, 1853). See also Henry Thomas Buckle's *A History of Civilization in England* (London: Longmans Green, 1873), 3 volumes.

- 6 Edward A. Freeman, *Old English History for Children* (London: Macmillan, 1869). This volume has been reprinted many times.
- 7 Stevenson refers to the lines from Horace's *Odes* Book IV.9, lines 25-9: 'There were brave men before Agamemnon: but these are all driven into the long night, unknown and unwept for because they lack (*carent*) a sacred poet (*vate sacro*).' See *Horace: Odes and Epodes*, ed. by Paul Shorey (Boston: Sanborn, 1910), p. 107.
- 8 See Alexander Pope, 'Postscript', in *The Iliad and The Odyssey. Translated by Pope. A New Edition in Four Volumes* (London: Bathurst, 1783).
- 9 See Pope, p. 274.
- 10 In preparing this essay I have drawn on J. W. Davidson, *Samoa mo Samoa: The Emergence of the Independent State of Western Samoa* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1967); R. P. Gilson, *Samoa 1830 to 1900: The Politics of a Multi-Cultural Community* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1970); Malama Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa: Traditional Authority and Colonial Administration in the Modern History of Samoa* (Suva: University of the South Pacific, 1987); and Robert Mackenzie Watson, *History of Samoa* (Wellington: Whitcomb and Tombs, 1914).
- 11 John Williams, *A Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South Sea Islands* (London: John Snow, 1837). See also Gilson, pp. 124-37, for another take on Williams's influence.
- 12 See Gilson, pp. 373-82.
- 13 The Blue Books and the White Books were the official government reports presented to Parliament and Privy Council. Foreign Office Blue and White Books often contained diplomatic exchanges between the nations or territories involved, sometimes carefully selected to secure support for government policies. The name came from the colour of the paper used for the cover of the reports.
- 14 Joseph Conrad, *Nostromo*, ed. by Martin Seymour-Smith (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990), p. 100.
- 15 Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, ed. by Robert Kimbrough (New York: Norton, 1971), p. 26.

- 16 It is worth remembering that Gilson's sombre coda on the actions of the Great Powers: 'Even [...] in 1895, Apia had no regular wharf, no public school, no fire-control equipment, no proper footpath. But there were five different courts in which a case of common assault might be heard', Gilson, p. 404.
- 17 Stevenson would most likely have read Goethe's *Werther* in *German Romance*, trans. Thomas Carlyle and R. D. Boylan (Edinburgh: William [and] Charles Tait, 1827).

## The playwright, the moralist and the poet: a Brechtian reading of Stevenson's writings on François Villon

*Lucio De Capitani*

Far from being a real-life schizophrenic and model for *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, Robert Louis Stevenson was nevertheless a problematic literary personality. It is no chance that nowadays Stevenson is best remembered for his achievements in two different – and to an extent contrasting – genres such as popular fiction and essay writing. Stevenson had his place within the literary establishment as a master stylist of the essay before he started experimenting with popular forms<sup>1</sup>, and, although in his essays he actually defended his romances from a theoretical standpoint against the supporters of the novel, he was not entirely at ease with his position in between high and popular culture. Most significantly, he could not help confiding to Edmund Gosse: 'There must be something wrong in me, or I would not be popular'.<sup>2</sup>

Stevenson's anxiety about his literary status, however, highlights the fact that his production seems to be born of two different concerns, namely for morality and ethics on the one hand, and for ambivalence on the other hand. In his essays Stevenson can be considered a Victorian 'happy moralist',<sup>3</sup> often relying on common sense, while in his fictional work he is acknowledged as a master of the disturbing representation of ambiguity for his ability to question in a subtle way the accepted notions of good and evil. For instance, Henry Jekyll's actions are depicted as morally despicable, but, at the same time, the text undermines the stability of Victorian conceptions of ethics and morality; in his essays, however, Stevenson endorses these very conceptions.

The presence of this problematic dualism is particularly evident when one compares the essay 'François Villon: Student,

Poet, Housebreaker' and the short story 'A Lodging for the Night', both written in 1877, at a very early stage of Stevenson's career. Both works deal with the fifteenth century poet François Villon, the first *poète maudit* of French literature and definitely a controversial figure. Villon was not only a poet, but also a thief and a murderer; blasphemous and brilliant, sarcastic and vital, 'this gallows-bird was the one great writer of his age and country, and initiated modern literature for France',<sup>4</sup> Stevenson remarks in the essay. Stevenson was both attracted and repelled by Villon, and in both texts the poet stands out as a highly ambivalent figure. A comparison between these two works is particularly interesting. The subject matter is basically the same, therefore it is possible to observe with clarity the different attitudes, literary strategies and narrative voices that Stevenson deploys in his essays and in his fiction respectively. More importantly, considering the close relationship between the essay and the short story, in this context such differences are likely to be quite deliberate. This allows us to make some guesses as to why Stevenson decided to interrogate a complex figure such as Villon by using two different approaches simultaneously, and on the contrasting imperatives of morality and ambiguity that characterise Stevenson's writing as a whole.

In addition, the short story and the essay bring to light some revealing analogies with Bertolt Brecht. The German playwright had read Stevenson in his youth, and he always held him in great esteem. His admiration is undisguised, for instance, in his enthusiastic praise of *The Master of Ballantrae* in 'Glossen zu Stevenson', published in 1925 – he defines Stevenson's work as 'the outstanding example of an adventure novel in which the reader's sympathy for the adventurer himself (the sole sustenance of all other adventure novels) asserts itself only with effort'.<sup>5</sup> It is significant that Brecht should comment on Stevenson's ability to problematise the reader's sympathy, as it is precisely on this point that a closer analysis reveals some affinities between Stevenson's narrative technique and Brecht's theory of epic theatre.

‘François Villon: Student, Poet, Housebreaker’ and ‘A Lodging for the Night’ are particularly suited to establish a comparison between the two authors, because Brecht also dealt with Villon at a certain point of his career, when he rewrote some of Villon’s poems as songs in *Die Dreigroschenoper* (*The Threepenny Opera*, 1928), bending the poet’s cynical criticism of society towards a more political direction. We cannot be certain that Brecht actually read Stevenson’s essay and short story, although he was possibly familiar at least with the latter, which was translated into German in 1918.<sup>6</sup> At any rate, the two texts really seem to anticipate Brecht’s interpretation of Villon’s poetry.

In ‘François Villon: Student, Poet, Housebreaker’, Stevenson deals extensively with Villon’s life and with his artistic and criminal career. His source is the French scholar Auguste Longnon, whose book *Étude biographique sur François Villon*,<sup>7</sup> according to Stevenson, finally managed to shed some light on the mysterious life of the poet. In this ‘sudden bull’s-eye light’ (p. 89) cast on Villon, however, there is a form of ironical retribution. Stevenson immediately reminds his readers of a passage of Villon’s major work, ‘Le Testament’ (‘The Testament’), in which the poet bequeaths his spectacles to the hospital for blind paupers:

Item, I leave to the Fifteen Score [the hospital]  
whom we might also call the Three Hundred  
(of Paris, now, not of Provins,  
for it’s to them I feel indebted) –  
they shall have, with my full consent  
my big spectacles (but not their case)  
to sort out, at [the cemetery of] the Innocents  
the good men from the miscreants.

[...]

When I consider all these heads

heaped up in the charnel houses:  
they were Magistrates of Petitions  
or Comptrollers of the Chamber  
– or they were all poor peddlers!  
I can call them one as well as the other;  
bishops or lamplighters,  
I can't see any difference.<sup>8</sup>

Stevenson points out that, as we can understand from this passage, Villon believed that in death everybody, the lamplighter as well as the bishop, disappears into the anonymous uniformity of the mud. It becomes impossible to distinguish between good and evil even with the best pair of spectacles – that is why we might as well leave the futile task to the blind. However, the poet's confidence in oblivion as the ultimate fate of man was to be disappointed.

Centuries after his death, says Stevenson, Villon has been brought under the spotlight at last, to be finally judged by history:

A pair of critical spectacles have been applied to his own remains; and though he left behind him a sufficiently ragged reputation from the first, it is only after these four hundred years that his delinquencies have been finally tracked home, and we can assign him to his proper place among the good or wicked. (p. 89.)

It is immediately clear that Stevenson intends to take a moral stance. Certainly he deploys a brilliant, enjoyable style and a good degree of humour, consistent with the refined conversational style that is generally expected from a nineteenth century essayist.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, he overtly takes on the role of the righteous moralist, adopting a critical attitude towards Villon right from the beginning of the essay. Clearly also Stevenson is about to wear the critical spectacles and to observe the poet with attentive

and inquisitive eyes.

Throughout the essay, Stevenson makes no attempt to find positive or redeeming features in Villon's life. He displays irony, bitterness, and even emotional involvement, but there is never indulgence for Villon's dissolute existence, let alone romantic idealisation. For instance, after the introduction, he describes with a half-mocking tone the Paris of the late Middle Ages, most notably the chaotic and corrupted university system in which Villon is educated. The portrait is particularly harsh, especially when Stevenson comments on Villon's academic career:

The burlesque erudition in which he sometimes indulged implies no more than the merest smattering of knowledge; whereas his acquaintance with blackguard haunts and industries could only have been acquired by early and consistent impiety and idleness. He passed his degrees, it is true; but some of us who have been to modern universities will make their own reflections on the value of the test. (p. 91.)

Here, as in many other passages, Stevenson endeavours to detach himself from the object of his study and to judge him impartially from an ethical and aesthetical point of view.

An important part of this process of detachment consists in rationalizing and explaining the controversial and ambivalent aspects of Villon's personality, to rescue the reader from a moral and epistemological impasse. For example, shortly afterwards, Stevenson discusses whether Villon is really to be trusted when he deploys emotion in his poetry. His answer is rather outspoken: '[Villon's] sentiments are about as much to be relied on as those of a professional beggar; [...] he comes towards us whining and piping the eye, and goes off again with a whoop and his finger to his nose (p. 91)'. What prompts Stevenson's reaction are two stanzas from 'Le Testament', in which the poet bequeaths his

library to the adoptive father, Guillaume de Villon:

Item, to my more-than-father,  
Master Guillaume de Villon,  
more tender to me than a mother  
to an infant fresh from swaddling clothes  
(he's rescued me from many a jam  
and this current one won't make him glad;  
so I ask him, on my knees,  
that he let me face it alone),

I give my library, including  
*The Epic of the Devil's Fart*  
as copied out by Master Guy  
Tabarie,<sup>10</sup> who is an honest man.  
It's under the table in loose quires,  
and although it's rudely made  
its substance is so notable  
it compensates for any faults.<sup>11</sup>

Stevenson points out that the contrast between the seemingly well-meaning display of affection and the unbecoming content of the library must be read either as a vicious attack by an ungrateful scoundrel against a benevolent and pious father-figure, or as the proof of an 'unbecoming complicity' (p. 92) between the two. At any rate, these two stanzas epitomise a recurring pattern in Villon's work – a supposedly sincere appeal to the reader's sympathy and compassion is followed by particularly bawdy or roguish lines.

Stevenson, therefore, warns the reader that, whenever he perceives an outburst of sentiment in Villon's poetry, he should remember that the poet is actually a 'professional beggar', whose made-up emotions are methodically constructed to gain sympathy and indulgence. Seeing Villon this way dismisses any



sentimental or romantic reading of his life and art – he cannot be redeemed by the naïve compassion the reader might happen to feel as Villon narrates his misfortunes or shows his emotional side. Stevenson employs the image of the professional beggar to emphasise Villon's pettiness and opportunism whenever he displays sentiment in his work, so that the reader may gain an increased degree of detachment towards the poet.

The essay, however, is not a systematic attack on Villon. Stevenson's words actually reveal an unmistakable fascination for the French poet, despite the ironic and judgemental tone he adopts. Consider, for instance, this passage, in which Stevenson imagines Villon's descent into the criminal world:

For a man who is greedy of all pleasures, and provided with little money and less dignity of character, we may prophesy a safe and speedy voyage downward. Humble or even truckling virtue may walk unspotted in this life. But only those who despise the pleasures can afford to despise the opinion of the world. A man of a strong, heady temperament, like Villon, is very differently tempted. His eyes lay hold on all provocations greedily, and his heart flames up at a look into imperious desire; he is snared and broached-to by anything and everything, from a pretty face to a piece of pastry in a cookshop window; he will drink the rinsing of the wine cup, stay the latest at the tavern party; tap at the lit windows, follow the sound of singing, and beat the whole neighbourhood for another reveller, as he goes reluctantly homeward; and grudge himself every hour of sleep as a black empty period in which he cannot follow after pleasure. Such a person is lost if he have not dignity, or, failing that, at least pride, which is its shadow and in many ways its substitute. (p. 93.)

The point Stevenson wants to make is quite Victorian –

Villon's inclination towards earthly pleasures and his lack of dignity seal his fate. However, he also spends considerable energy in depicting Villon's yearning towards every physical sensation, his seething desire for new experiences and his desperate joy for the pleasures of life. There is no attempt to hide the disturbing charm of this 'man who is greedy of all pleasures'.

Fascination and ambivalence do indeed surface rather often in the text. Yet, they are always counterbalanced by a number of strategies. For instance, shortly afterwards, Stevenson discusses the infamous period in which Villon was expecting the death sentence and, in the meantime, composed one of his greatest poems, 'Le Ballade des Pendus' ('The Ballad of the Hanged') – a graphic and gruesome description of death by hanging sung by the executed men themselves, combined with a touching call for pity and forgiveness. The Ballad's third stanza – which Stevenson quotes in the French original in his essay, and is possibly the most intense passage of the poem – goes as follows:

The rain has soaked us through and washed us clean  
and the sun has dried and blackened us.  
Magpies and crows have cored out our eyes,  
trimmed our beards and plucked our eyebrows.  
We never get a moment to rest:  
this way and that as the wind shifts direction,  
it swings us at its whim continually,  
more needled by birds than a darning thimble.  
No, ours is a club you should not rush to join,  
but pray to God that he absolve us all.<sup>12</sup>

Stevenson reacts to Villon's ballad – one of his most famous poems, which in fact Brecht rewrote<sup>13</sup> – with sympathy and even emotional involvement:

He wrote a ballad, by way of epitaph for himself and his companions, which remains unique in the annals of mankind. It is, in the highest sense, a piece of his biography. [...] Sharp as an etching, written with a shuddering soul. There is an intensity of consideration in the piece that shows it to be the transcript of familiar thoughts. It is the quintessence of many a doleful nightmare on the straw, when he felt himself swing helpless in the wind, and saw the birds turn about him, screaming and menacing his eyes. (pp. 100-101.)

Stevenson's involvement, however, seems to be more connected with the mysteries of artistic creation rather than with the predicament of the prisoner. He shows a softer side because he remains, at least in part, in the realm of literary criticism. He certainly feels more sympathetic towards the artist than towards the criminal; and perhaps it is not irrelevant that this ballad represents one of the few occasions in which Stevenson acknowledges some degree of sincerity in Villon ('Here is some genuine thieves' literature after so much that was spurious', p. 101). Whatever the case, sympathy is perceivable, but it is mediated by a critical perspective. It does not compromise Stevenson's position as a moral guide.

The final section of the essay is a deliberate attempt to provide the reader with moral guidance in the form of a comprehensive artistic and psychological profile of Villon. After having praised Villon's 'Le Testament' – 'A hurly-burly of cynical and sentimental reflections about life' in which 'he could draw at full length the portrait of his own bedevilled soul, and of the bleak and blackguardly world which was the theatre of his exploits and sufferings' (p. 103) – Stevenson describes the peculiar *Weltanschauung* that we can draw from this remarkable poem:

The world to which he introduces us is, as before said,

blackguardly and bleak. [...] In our mixed world, full of green fields and happy lovers, where not long before, Joan of Arc had led one of the highest and noblest lives in the whole story of mankind, this was all worth chronicling that our poet could perceive. His eyes were indeed sealed with his own filth. [...] High purposes and brave passions shake and sublimiate men's spirits; and meanwhile, in the narrow dungeon of his soul, Villon is mumbling crusts and picking vermin. (p. 104.)

Stevenson would rather throw his lot with 'high purposes and brave passions' than with Villon's sordid life. The detachment of the moralist and critic from his object of study is particularly pronounced in this passage. Villon's art is great, but Stevenson refuses the very ideological premises of Villon's poetry and explicitly condemns his way of life. No romantic idealisation is possible.

In particular, Stevenson stresses how Villon's poetry can only generate a shallow kind of pathos, which is ultimately artificial. This lack of sincerity has serious aesthetical and moral implications: 'On a first reading, the pathetic passages preoccupy the reader, and he is cheated out of an alms in the shape of sympathy. But when the thing is studied the illusion fades away' (p. 104). We are to appreciate Villon's energy, vitality, and stylistic ingenuity; he is, no doubt, an exceptional artist. However he is, in the end, contrived and inauthentic. It is no chance that in this very passage Villon is called again 'professional beggar'.

According to Stevenson, Villon is capable of absolute sincerity in two things only. Firstly, in 'the undisguised envy of those richer than himself' (p. 105). When Stevenson comments on this aspect, his Victorian moral vigour rises to a climax:

Poverty, he protests, drives men to steal, as hunger makes the wolf sally from the forest. The poor, he goes on, will

always have a carping word to say, or, if that outlet be denied, nourish rebellious thoughts. It is a calumny on the noble army of the poor. Thousands in a small way of life, ay, and even in the smallest, go through life with tenfold as much honour and dignity and peace of mind, as the rich gluttons whose dainties and state-beds awakened Villon's covetous temper. (p. 105.)

Stevenson refers to two lines from 'Le Testament' ('Hardship makes men go astray / and hunger drives the wolf from the woods'<sup>14</sup>). Interestingly, he seems to disagree with the very argument that Villon – as a character – makes in 'A Lodging for the Night', namely that only when the poor have something to eat can the privileged start reproaching them for their lack of moral integrity. This is also more or less the core of Brecht's political reading of Villon's poetry in *Die Dreigroschenoper*, which boils down to the well-known Brechtian adage 'food is the first thing, morals follow on'<sup>15</sup>. In the essay, however, this idea is overtly dismissed as hypocrisy, a blatant self-justification, although it should be noted that Stevenson strengthens the allure of Villon's point by reproposing the poet's powerful image of the hungry wolf.

The other aspect in which Villon is sincere is 'a deep and somewhat snivelling conviction of the transitory nature of this life and the pity and horror of death' (p. 105). For Stevenson this is a key feature of Villon's art, as the poet is able to find 'his truest inspiration [...] in the swift and sorrowful change that overtakes beauty' (p. 105). However, Villon's genius cannot be separated from his pettiness: 'It is a poor heart, and a poorer age, that cannot accept the conditions of life with some heroic readiness' (p. 106). Once again, the emotional involvement prevails only in the form of literary criticism, and the judgement on Villon's human qualities is disenchanted.

Stevenson's final words epitomise the stylistic devices and the

ethical-aesthetical tensions that characterise the essay. His verdict on Villon is trenchant: 'A sinister dog, in all likelihood, but with a look in his eye, and the loose flexile mouth that goes with wit and an overweening sensual temperament. Certainly the sorriest figure on the rolls of fame' (p. 106). Stevenson's attraction for Villon manifests itself through the presence of compelling images and descriptions – here we have the mysterious look in Villon's eye and his 'loose flexile mouth', just like in the previous passages we were presented with the portrait of the 'man greedy of all pleasures' and with the figure of the hungry wolf. Nevertheless, the very last sentence of the text is an authoritative, assertive and final moral judgement on the poet. It is clear that Villon's 'proper place among the good or wicked' has been found, and the result is quite obvious. The *poète maudit's* predicament does not generate true sympathy – morality and common sense prevail.

Stevenson's verdict in the essay, however, should now be compared with his representation of Villon in 'A Lodging for the Night'. The short story is set in a cold winter night, and the poet is initially portrayed in a small tavern in the company of other bandits. In this first passage Villon shows his sarcastic and caustic side, as he makes fun of the rest of the gang. After one of the bandits, Theverin Pensete, is murdered by another, Montigny, the remaining thieves are forced to leave the tavern. Villon wanders through the frosty streets of Paris, reflecting on life and death. At a certain point he realises he has been robbed while he was leaving the tavern, and is forced to ask for shelter from an old nobleman, the lord of Brisetout.

Once inside Brisetout's house, the two have a heated conversation on honour and virtue. Villon maintains that stealing can be justified, since people like himself are forced to steal out of necessity. He compares commoners' thefts with soldier's looting; the latter rob poor people of their belonging and are generally unpunished for their actions. The nobleman, on the other hand,

sets himself as an example of righteousness, and asks Villon to renounce all his subtleties and repent. Villon, however, is in no mood for being lectured by a rich, privileged man. He informs his host that he should not be dismissed as an honourless rascal, as he did at least restrain himself from murdering and robbing Brisetout, even though he had the chance to do so with ease. It is the last straw: Villon has to leave the nobleman's house at once. The short story ends with Villon, standing in front of Brisetout's door, thinking to himself: 'I wonder what his goblets may be worth'.<sup>16</sup> It is not clear whether he is planning to steal the goblets, or has already taken one or is simply regretting the cost of his honourable behaviour.

If we considered only this small summary of the plot, there would be perfect consistency between the two portraits. They would be no more than variations on the same theme. Indeed many aspects of Villon's portrayal in 'François Villon: Student, Poet, Housebreaker' can be found in 'A Lodging for the Night' and are useful to understand the character as he is presented in the short story. For instance: we find once again Villon's cynicism and sarcasm, and his unorthodox sense of justice – which Stevenson in the essay suspected to be mere self-indulgence – dominates the conversation with Brisetout; lastly, the fascinating aspects of his personality and his ability to reflect with hopeless bitterness about the human condition are clearly present throughout both versions.

There is, however, a crucial difference between the two texts. At the end of the essay the reader, guided by the authoritative voice of the moralist, has the impression that the controversial aspects of Villon's art and life have been somehow resolved. Ambiguity is still there, but is kept under control, because a moral centre has been established and readers can overcome the moral impasse that Villon's contradictions represent. On the other hand, at the end of the short story, we are not quite sure what to think. Instead of being led towards a solution, we are left in doubt. This effect is

achieved mainly through a radical change in the way the narrative voice works. While in the essay Stevenson takes the role of an authoritative, truth-telling narrator, in the short story this mode is just one of the different stances adopted by the narrative voice, which becomes increasingly polyphonic. As a consequence, it is almost impossible for the reader to determine a fixed ideological standpoint from which he can tackle the narrative.

Stevenson's use of a polyphonic narrator can be read in terms of Mikhail Bakhtin's conceptions of heteroglossia and dialogism. Bakhtin claims that 'at any given moment of its evolution, language is stratified not only into linguistic dialects in the strict sense of the word [...], but also [...] into languages that are socio-ideological'.<sup>17</sup> Language is hybrid – or rather, heteroglot – as every utterance is the expression of many linguistic, social and ideological forces. This multiplicity finds its artistic representation in specific literary forms, most notably the novel and other artistic-prose genres connected to it. Such texts present, therefore, an intrinsic internal tension, as 'all languages of heteroglossia [...] are specific points of view on the world' and 'as such they all may be juxtaposed to one another, mutually supplement one another, contradict one another and be interrelated dialogically'.<sup>18</sup> A novelist's words are charged with a plurality of tones and intentions, generating internal dialogue and conflict.

Stevenson relies on a similar dialogic principle in his short story. 'A Lodging for the Night' is characterised by an ambiguous narrative style in which a variety of conflicting and interrelated voices and languages emerge. Bakhtin, in this sense, functions as a useful starting point, providing us with a theoretical background and critical categories – and the terms and concepts that I use, such as polyphony, hybridization and plurality of narrative voices, are indeed of Bakhtinian origin. It should be noted, however, that I refer first and foremost to Brecht's theory of epic theatre to comment on Stevenson's technique. The reason for this is not just that Brecht and Stevenson share mutually illumi-



nating methodological and poetical concerns, but also because, in some crucial aspects, Stevenson's technique is a better fit to a Brechtian rather than Bakhtinian framework.

The short story starts with a certain judgemental tone that echoes the essay's narrator:

Yet there was a small house, backed up against the cemetery wall, which was still awake, and awake to evil purpose, in that snoring district. [...] Within, behind the shuttered windows, Master Francis Villon, the poet, and some of the thievish crew with whom he consorted, were keeping the night alive and passing round the bottle. (pp. 318-319.)

Expressions such as 'evil purpose' and 'thievish crew with whom he consorted' immediately suggest a firm moral starting point from which the narrator recounts the scene. During the tavern scene the narrator does not show much sympathy for the members of Villon's gang. Each bandit is described in grotesque and ironic terms. Poignant examples are the monk Dom Nicholas, whose face is 'covered with a network of congested veins' (p. 319), the about-to-be-killed card player Theverin Pensete, with 'his little protuberant stomach [that] shook with silent chucklings as he swept in his gains' (p. 320), and Villon himself, on whose face 'the wolf and pig struggled together' (p. 319). The thieves are not friends, but rather a gang of opportunistic and violent men, brought together by a common interest but by no real bonds. Villon is depicted as he mocks all his companions in one way or another, using his wit and sarcasm to provoke and offend. The narrator, in short, describes the gang with the same detachment, irony and slight repulsion as the essayist.

Such stance, however, is not consistently carried out till the end of the narration. After Theverin Pensete is killed, the focus shifts from the gang in its entirety to Villon walking alone through

the frozen streets of Paris, and the narrative voice becomes more sympathetic towards the poet. In the tavern scene he was certainly the most appealing character, but not one to whom we could actually relate. Now that Villon is left by himself, the narrator allows us to enter his mind and share his own perspective and anxieties. The narrator's voice and Villon's inner thoughts alternate and partly overlap in this section. For instance:

Villon cursed his fortune. Would it were still snowing!  
Now, wherever he went, he left an indelible trail behind  
him on the glittering streets; wherever he went, he was  
still tethered to the house by the cemetery of St. John;  
wherever he went, he must weave, with his own plodding  
feet, the rope that bound him to the crime and would bind  
him to the gallows. The leer of the dead man came back to  
him with new significance. He snapped his fingers as if to  
pluck up his own spirits, and, choosing a street at random,  
stepped boldly forward in the snow. (p. 326.)

Using the free indirect speech, in sentences such as 'would it were still snowing!', Stevenson tries to bridge the gap between the narrative voice and Villon's own thoughts. For instance, in the passage quoted above, the narration is structured around Villon's concern for his safety and tries to transmit the same urgency to the reader. The reader, having access to the character's thoughts, is arguably invited to develop some kind of identification with Villon.

As the narrative unfolds, the relationship between the narrator and the protagonist changes again, and the two perspectives become more and more hybridised. At a certain point Villon spots a patrol coming in his direction. In order to evade it, the poet enters a porch where he finds the body of a dead woman. He notices that she died without spending her two remaining coins. Villon's reflection at this point are particularly poignant:

In her stocking, underneath the garter, Villon found two of the small coins that went by the name of whites. It was little enough, but it was always something; and the poet was moved with a deep sense of pathos that she should have died before she had spent her money. That seemed to him a dark and pitiable mystery; and he looked from the coins in his hand to the dead woman, and back again to the coins, shaking his head over the riddle of man's life. Henry V of England, dying at Vincennes just after he had conquered France, and this poor jade cut off by a cold draught in a great man's doorway before she had time to spend her couple of whites – it seemed a cruel way to carry on the world. Two whites would have taken such a little while to squander; and yet it would have been one more good taste in the mouth, one more smack of the lips, before the devil got the soul, and the body was left to birds and vermin. He would like to use all his tallow before the light was blown out and the lantern broken. (pp. 329-330).

On the one hand, this really looks like an emotional and moving moment in the narration. On the other hand, we know that Stevenson – in the essay – warns his readers against Villon's sentiments, which are the same as those of a professional beggar, and are not to be trusted. Besides, Villon is not reflecting on the woman's death in itself, but on the fact that she died without spending the little money she had – expressions like 'deep sense of pathos', 'dark and pitiable mystery' and 'the riddle of man's life' might sound excessively grand and lofty, considering Villon's strictly materialistic approach. All these reflections on the cruelty of the world could be interpreted as another self-justification, considering that Villon is about to loot the corpse. We may legitimately interpret this passage as an ironic commentary of the narrator, who exposes Villon's hypocrisy by allowing him to indulge in self-serving pathos.

This is not, however, the only possible reading. We may also perceive the passage as painfully serious in its urgency and bitterness. The kind of truth it reveals is not noble, and Villon may be slightly melodramatic. Yet there is indeed a sense of cruelty and injustice in the fact that the woman died before tasting the small, trivial pleasure that the two coins could have bought her. What makes this passage so ambiguous is that, unlike the previous part of the short story, it is very difficult to decide whether the narrator invites us to participate in Villon's reflections, and whether he shares his views, as far as emotional involvement is concerned – in other words, it is not easy to decide whether the passage must be interpreted ironically or sympathetically. Moreover, it is not even clear which words belong to Villon's own thoughts, and which ones belong to the narrator's perspective.

This section establishes a highly ambivalent relationship between the character and the narrative voice, and in this sense it is indeed very Brechtian. As we mentioned earlier commenting on Brecht's response to *The Master of Ballantrae* in 'Glossen zu Stevenson', the German playwright was particularly interested in Stevenson's ability to force his readers – even within the supposedly uncomplicated framework of the adventure novel – to face an ambivalent emotional response towards his characters. It is no accident that Brecht's theory of epic theatre was to be based on a very similar dynamic.

Let us consider this passage from Brecht's *Kleines Organon für das Theater* (*A Short Organum for the Theatre*), his best-known theoretical work, from 1942. Speaking of the role of the actor in epic theatre, Brecht states:

At no moment must [the actor] go so far as to be wholly transformed into the character played [...] He has just to show the character, or rather he has to do more than just get into it; this does not mean that if he is playing passionate parts he must himself remain cold. It is only that

his feelings must not at bottom be those of the character, so that the audience's may not at bottom be those of the character either. The audience must have complete freedom here.<sup>19</sup>

By asking the actor to show the character, rather than interpreting the role in a traditional sense, Brecht defines acting as a narrative process. This is often intended as an emotional detachment from the character in order to enhance the didactical element of the performance. However, Brecht states that the premise of this way of acting is not a diminished level of emotional involvement, but a different degree of identification with the character. The actor must find a common ground between himself and the character, enriching his interpretation with an outside awareness that overlaps with the character's own consciousness. This is possible because there is no complete identification with the character and the actor remains, at the same time, himself.

Therefore, in order to understand Brechtian characters, one must be able to contemplate at once both the reality of the character and the reality of the actor, embodied in a single individual on the stage. This ultimately implies the blending of empathy and detachment, as the character is constantly scrutinised by an external, rational perspective. Such method does not override emotional involvement, but emotion should never be caused by an unthinking identification with the character, as the transformation is never complete. The actor must remain in between. The public, being free from the burden of compulsory identification, is also implicitly charged with the task of making sense of the whole process.

As an example, let us consider one of the main characters of *Die Dreigroschenoper*, namely Peachum the 'King of the Beggars'. This ruthless businessman forces all the beggars in London to work under his wing and teaches them – in exchange for considerable shares of their 'income' – how to behave in

order to evoke compassion and obtain alms from the passers-by. In the 'First Threepenny Finale Concerning the Insecurity of the Human Condition', Peachum sings:

Let's practice goodness: who would disagree?  
Let's give our wealth away: is that not right?  
Once all are good His kingdom is at hand  
where blissfully we'll bask in His pure light.  
Let's practice goodness: who would disagree?  
But sadly on this planet while we're waiting  
the means are meagre and the morals low.  
To get one's record straight would be elating  
but our condition's such it can't be so.<sup>20</sup>

Peachum of course can be dismissed as a hypocrite, who claims he would like to be good but cannot be so, because of the unfortunate circumstances of life. However, if we interpret these words as those of the actor, we understand that Peachum's cynicism offers an insight to be taken seriously. The world is indeed a cruel place where men are forced to kill each other to survive. Ultimately, this passage points the finger not only at those who find excuses for their cruelty, but also at those who can afford morality because they have the material means to choose between good and evil.

In the short story, particularly in the passage mentioned above, Stevenson uses a very similar technique. We are presented with Villon's point of view but his reflections are hybridised with the narrator's, just as the Brechtian character is narrated by the actor. Thus, we are forced to reflect critically both on the character and on his words, as it remains unclear whether each sentence is meant to be pronounced by the character or is a commentary by the narrator. The narrator, on the other hand, never takes a clear-cut position explicitly. He might even side with the character and share his point of view. Once the border between

character and narrator blurs, the meaning of each sentence doubles and ambiguities multiply.

Bakhtin's dialogic principle is certainly at work within this hybrid, ambivalent language; however, it should be noted that although Bakhtin's conception of linguistic stratification does imply ideological and social conflict, it affects mainly the stylistic and verbal level of a given text. It does not necessarily involve the reader in an ethical controversy. Stevenson, on the other hand, systematically resorts to polyphony to stage complex moral issues, in which the problem of whether the reader should sympathise with the character plays a crucial role, mirroring Brechtian poetics and his technique of representation.

Stevenson, like Brecht, aims at doubling the perspective to put the reader in a status of moral ambiguity and epistemological uncertainty. This mechanism – in this case – enables us to read a supposedly hypocritical character as a potential source of wisdom, because his words benefit also from the narrator's awareness and consciousness. Are we to interpret sentences such as 'It seemed a cruel way to carry on the world' as a joke, a self-justification, a superficial comment, a moral truth or a disenchanted consideration on the human condition? Needless to say, all these alternatives are possible.

Stevenson deploys strategies to enhance the ambiguity of the narration also in the short story's final sequence, the conversation between Villon and Brisetout on honour and virtue. The dialogue is the climax of the short story, as it dramatises the ideological confrontation at the core of 'A Lodging for the Night'. However, exactly at this point, the narrator virtually disappears. He simply reports the actions of the characters and only makes a few comments. Due to the large proportion of dialogue and the lack of narrative intervention, this part of the short story is strikingly theatrical, an impression which is further enhanced by Villon's manner of interaction with Brisetout – he taunts the nobleman with the witty, popular irreverence of a Shakespearean fool. Such

a theatrical turn, however, ensures that the two positions are staged without any guidance from the narrator's side.

This is made even more complex by the fact that both positions are greatly controversial. Villon maintains that a rich lord and former warrior has no right to reproach a poor thief, as both the thief and the soldier commit morally despicable acts, but the soldier is protected by a patently unjust honour code. In doing so, Villon is very argumentative. A particularly poignant example of the poet's rhetorical power is the following section of the dialogue:

'You may still repent and change.'

'I repent daily' said the poet, 'There are few people more given to repentance than poor Francis. As for change, let somebody change my circumstances. A man must continue to eat, if it were only that he may continue to repent' (p. 342.)

Stevenson's Villon, with his sagacity and verbal resourcefulness, is particularly effective in supporting his claims. He relentlessly brings down idealistic abstractions to the material reality of life. The social and political implications of his argument really seem to anticipate Brecht in polemical vigour. Indeed 'food is the first thing, morals follow on' sums up Villon's argument in the short story perfectly, reinforcing – along with the overall theatricality of the passage – the connection between Stevenson's rewriting and Brecht's later practice.

Nevertheless, we also know what Stevenson's public persona thought of his character's argumentations: 'It is a calumny on the noble army of the poor', as he said in the essay, meaning that being poor does not necessarily doom people to dishonesty and sin, and certainly does not justify their crimes. Moreover, Villon's assumption that Brisetout must be a hypocrite just because he is wealthy is equally unfair. On the other hand Brisetout's argu-



ments are not entirely convincing either. When he reminds Villon that he is 'disregarding another appetite in [his] heart' (p. 345) and claims that material suffering and social status are irrelevant when compared with spiritual salvation, he seems blissfully unaware of his ideological rigidity and his personal privilege. In the end neither character can be fully embraced without incurring contradiction or further moral dilemmas. Instead of suggesting a solution, the narrator remains silent, displaying 'the chaste compactness which precludes psychological analysis'<sup>21</sup> that Walter Benjamin considered one of the distinguishing characteristics of the master storyteller.

The style of the short story is deliberately fragmentary and heterogeneous, so that it is very difficult to determine the relationship between narrator and character. Stevenson is consciously using a versatile and protean narrator who sometimes criticises Villon, sometimes seems to sympathise with him, sometimes even borrows his character's voice, and sometimes simply remains a silent spectator of the action. Due to this instability and blurring of boundaries, the narrative voice moves between empathy and detachment, and refuses to provide explicit answers to moral problems, which are thus forced on the reader.

It is a technique Stevenson will continue employing throughout his career. Indeed, all of his major works – *Treasure Island*, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, *The Master of Ballantrae*, his South Sea writings – involve unreliable narrators, polyphony, multiple perspectives, or an ambivalent dislocation of ethical standpoints. Stevenson will frequently ask the reader to go beyond a surface reading and to actively participate in the construction of the text's meaning, thus carrying out a decentring of narrative authority that anticipates the modernist approach to fiction. It is worth noting that Stevenson, in 1877, at such an early stage of his career, should already be employing a writing technique that prefigures the ethical and aesthetical concerns of his mature fiction.

'A Lodging for the Night' becomes particularly interesting when its stylistic devices are played against those employed in 'François Villon: Student, Poet, Housebreaker'. The short story deploys a variety of strategies to enhance epistemological and moral ambiguity, but the essay attempts to rationalise and downplay the very same aspects of his subject matter. The two texts are thus connected in a dialectical relationship. Furthermore Stevenson's work in this respect goes beyond Bakhtin's theoretical framework. Bakhtin's heteroglossia implies the presence of a dialogic tension *within* the language and style of a given literary text. But the polyphony we encounter in the short story confronts the external, autonomous dimension of the essay, which relies on radically different epistemological and moral premises. By creating a dynamic interplay between these genres, Stevenson forces the reader to adopt two epistemologically different standpoints at the same time – just as Brecht's plays make a simultaneous and paradoxical appeal both to empathy and to detachment.

Stevenson's diptych might be said to merge different literary genres into a single, albeit heterogeneous, reflection upon the figure of François Villon. Stevenson asks the reader – in Spinoza's words – 'not to mock, lament, or execrate but [...] to understand human actions',<sup>22</sup> presenting him, in Alex Thompson's words, with 'a work whose moral complexity stems directly from the effort to bypass the pointing of moral lessons'.<sup>23</sup> Yet, at the same time, Stevenson also exhorts the reader to actually take sides whenever a moral question presents itself. The negative – in Keatsian terms – knowledge of ambiguity and the practical knowledge of shared morality become inextricably intertwined, in order to respond, simultaneously, to complementary epistemological and moral needs. Ultimately, Stevenson creates an ethical system that encompasses ambivalence, which he urges the reader to acknowledge and also to play a part in such complexity.

## NOTES

- 1 Richard Ambrosini, 'History, Criticism, Theory and the Strange Case of Joseph Conrad and R. L. Stevenson', in *Robert Louis Stevenson and Joseph Conrad: Writers of Transition*, ed. by Linda Dryden, Stephen Arata and Eric Massie (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2009), pp. 15-29 (p. 18).
- 2 Robert Louis Stevenson, 'To Edmund Gosse', in *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. by Bradford A. Booth and Ernest Mehew (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 8 vols, V, pp. 170-172 (p. 171).
- 3 Robert Kiely, *Robert Louis Stevenson and the Fiction of Adventure* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. vii.
- 4 Robert Louis Stevenson, 'François Villon: Student, Poet, Housebreaker', in *Familiar Studies of Men and Books* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), pp. 89-106 (p. 103), henceforth cited in text.
- 5 My translation of 'das außerordentliche Beispiel eines Abenteuerromans, in dem die Sympathie des Lesers zu dem Abenteuerer selbst (von der allein doch alle anderen Abenteuerromane leben) sich erst mühsam durchsetzen muß'. Bertolt Brecht, 'Glossen zu Stevenson', in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 18 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1976), pp. 24-26 (p. 26).
- 6 'A Lodging for the Night' was first published in German translation in Robert Louis Stevenson, *Quartier für die Nacht / Will von der Mühle. Zwei Erzählungen* (Leipzig: Insel-Verlag, 1918). See Deutsche Nationalbibliothek, [http://www.dnb.de/DE/Home/home\\_node.html](http://www.dnb.de/DE/Home/home_node.html), accessed 9 March 2015.
- 7 Auguste Longnon, *Étude Biographique sur François Villon* (Paris: Menu, 1877).
- 8 François Villon, *Poems*, trans. by David Georgi (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2013), p. 143.
- 9 Giovanna Mochi, 'La prosa del romanticismo: i saggi', in *Storia della civiltà letteraria inglese*, ed. by Franco Marengo (Torino: UTET, 1996), pp. 522-541 (p. 522).
- 10 Guy Tabarie (or Tabary) was one of Villon's accomplices and fellow thieves. He is mentioned in 'François Villon: Student, Poet, Housebreaker' and appears as a character in 'A Lodging for the

Night'. In both instances Stevenson describes him as a dim-witted and pathetic man, constantly in awe of more charismatic figures like Villon. Needless to say, he was *not* an honest man, despite Villon's claim in this line.

11 *Poems*, p. 85.

12 *Poems*, p. 175.

13 The ballad is one of Villon's poems that Brecht re-elaborated for *Die Dreigroschenoper*, combining 'La Ballade des Pendus' with another work by Villon, 'La Ballade de Mercy' ('The Ballad of Forgiveness'). It is Mackie Messer, the anti-hero of the play, who sings the song, when he is about to be hanged towards the end of the third act. Mackie combines the plea for forgiveness to his 'fellow men' – taken from 'La Ballade des Pendus' – with another, more disturbing appeal to the inhabitants of the underworld – thieves, prostitutes, psychopaths – and, most importantly, with a bitter and violent attack to 'those filthy police employees' who would 'chuck me crusts to stop my hunger' – a rhetorical strategy Brecht takes from Villon's 'La Ballade de Mercy'. Brecht, of course, is more explicitly political than Villon, for the figures he evokes delineate a much more precise social pattern of oppression and injustice compared to Villon's original poem. This is a good example of how Brecht manages to bring out the latent political side of Villon's poetry. See Bertolt Brecht, *The Threepenny Opera*, trans. by Ralph Manheim (London: Penguin, 2007), pp. 79–80.

14 *Poems*, p. 39.

15 *The Threepenny Opera*, p. 57.

16 Robert Louis Stevenson, 'A Lodging for the Night', in *New Arabian Nights* (Rockville: Wildside Press, 2009), pp. 317–346 (p. 346), henceforth cited in text.

17 From 'Discourse in the Novel' (1935) in *The Dialogic Imagination*, cited by Pam Morris, ed., in *The Bakhtin Reader: Selected Writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev, Voloshinov* (London: Arnold, 1997), p. 75.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 115.

19 Bertolt Brecht, 'A Short Organum for the Theatre', in *Brecht on Theatre: the Development of an Aesthetic*, ed. by John Willet (London: Eyre Methuen, 1977), pp. 179–205 (pp. 193–194).

20 *The Threepenny Opera*, p. 34.

21 Walter Benjamin, 'The Storyteller', in *Illuminations*, (New York:

Schocken Books, 2007), pp. 83-109 (p. 91).

- 22 Baruch Spinoza, 'A Political Treatise', in *The Chief Works of Benedict De Spinoza: A Theological Political Treatise and A Political Treatise* (New York: Dover Publications, inc., 1951), pp. 286-387 (p. 288).
- 23 Alex Thompson, 'Stevenson's Afterlives', in *The Edinburgh Companion to Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. by Penny Fielding (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), pp. 147-159 (p. 156). Thompson's statement refers to *Treasure Island*, but it is certainly applicable to 'A Lodging for the Night' and, I would argue, to most of Stevenson's fictional works as well.

## Robert Louis Stevenson's 'voyage of discovery' in *The Beach of Falesá* (1893): an exploration of Pacific history and culture

*Sylvie Largeaud-Ortége*

### Introduction

Stevenson's Pacific fiction is deeply steeped in Pacific island culture. The author was indeed eager to vindicate the resilience of the islanders' native culture, against the sweeping 'fatal impact' argument that claimed that Pacific peoples were doomed to extinction whenever they encountered 'more advanced' Western societies.<sup>1</sup> This essay focuses on Stevenson's *The Beach of Falesá* – which, to many readers and critics, is his Pacific masterpiece – and more specifically on its central passage, defined by its homodiegetic narrator (narrator and protagonist) as his 'voyage of discovery'.<sup>2</sup> My argument is that this 'voyage of discovery' is not only an exploration of the island bush, but more importantly, an allegorical exploration of the past. Referring to Pacific historical and ethnological studies, I will attempt to show that Wiltshire's 'voyage' may indeed revisit, first, the history of contact, that is to say the history of European 'Discoverers'<sup>3</sup> and missionaries in Oceania. Then, it explores the ancient history, and even the cosmogony, of pre-contact Oceania and of its genuine discoverers, the Polynesians. It may also be a 'voyage of discovery' into the future of Oceania, with a new type of a white man in the Pacific – a bold late-nineteenth-century foray into syncretism and cross-culturalism.

*The Beach of Falesá* is a first-person narrative told by Wiltshire, a British trader, some twenty years after the events described. Apart from two missionaries (one of them itinerant), the only other white man in the village is Case, a rival trader. Case immediately tricks Wiltshire into marrying Uma, an island girl who turns out to be tabooed. Consequently, Wiltshire's busi-

ness is shunned by all, and he is an outcast in the village. So he employs his plentiful leisure time in finding out more about both his rival and his wife. About his rival, Wiltshire learns that Case has wrought himself a reputation as a secular and spiritual chief endowed with dreaded powers. For that purpose, Case has built himself a secretive place of worship up in the mountain and, as a result, climbing up Case's taboo mountain has imposed itself as a native rite of passage for all young men in Falesá. Incidentally, Wiltshire also finds out that Case is the one who has decreed Uma taboo. What does Wiltshire learn about Uma? Although he does not hide his racial prejudices, he finds to his surprise that he truly loves his native wife, and that his feelings are reciprocated. Uma teaches him about island culture and, however strongly he denies it, he gradually adheres to native beliefs and values.<sup>4</sup> For example, when Uma tries to dissuade Wiltshire from setting upon his 'voyage of discovery', telling him that Case's mountain is alive with evil spirits, Wiltshire scoffs at her – but her tales do stick to his mind, and serve as guidelines to his journey. I therefore suggest briefly analysing Uma's tales before turning to Wiltshire's 'voyage of discovery' proper.

### Uma's tales

Uma's tales are twofold. First, she tells of Fanga-anaana, and then the tale of Kamapua. Fanga-anaana literally means 'the haven full of caves' (p. 48) in Samoan, and in Hawaiian it sounds like *'anā'anā*, the word for 'witchcraft'. This is in accordance with the setting of Uma's first tale: a remote beach tucked away beneath numerous caves in black basalt cliffs, which is the den of supernaturally gorgeous 'women-devils' (p. 50). The female evil spirits, or *aitu* (p. 47), seduce a group of adventurous young men who have landed on the beach by boat, and they drive all of them but one into fatal madness. Uma's tale illuminates a sweeping native belief, that one is bound to encounter *aitu* whenever

one strays away from the social circle, away from the safety of the village, into the wilderness and into the dark<sup>5</sup>. Indeed, darkness refers to the times of original creation, the times of the *Pō*, when all was night and only gods existed. In those primal times, everything was sacred, or taboo – the word ‘taboo’ itself comes from the pan-Polynesian *tapu*, meaning ‘cut off’, i.e. ‘sacred’.<sup>6</sup> As is stated in the *Kumulipo*, the oldest Hawaiian creation chant, in the *Pō* ‘the god enters, man cannot enter.’<sup>7</sup> The same applies to Fanga-anaana.

Only one of the daring Polynesian youths is saved on Fanga-anaana: his name is Lotu, which in the Pacific was the word for ‘Christian worship’, in Stevenson’s time. Lotu hides away from the *aitu* and prays ‘all the time’ (p. 49) to resist temptation. This suggests that the whole scene may also illuminate, in an oblique way, a part of Christian history in the Pacific. It may be an allegory of missionary arrivals in Oceania – the landing of pious Christians on pristine secluded beaches, their welcoming by gorgeous-looking bare-breasted women who were deemed the very images of evil temptation, and whom missionaries could only resist through intense prayer. So it might be said that this first tale on paronomastic *aitu-Lotu* turns out to be about Christians just as much as about pagans.

Uma’s second tale relates her own encounter with an *aitu*. It takes place similarly in a dark and secluded place, and the tale’s moral is the same: one should keep clear of such places and remain within the safety of the social circle. The syncretism is the same, too: the *aitu*, who this time is half man, half boar, may be identified as Polynesian god Kamapua, whose name literally means ‘child’, *kama*, and ‘pig’, *pua*. Kamapua is a god who, Proteus-like, keeps undergoing metamorphoses. In that respect, Kamapua may stand for Wiltshire himself since, as narrator, Wiltshire is a master of metamorphoses: he transforms Uma’s beliefs into superstitions, and he transforms her tragic tales into slapstick comedies: ‘At that she ran, and the pig ran after her,



and as the pig ran it holla'd aloud, so that the place rang with it' (p. 50). As both narrator and character, Wiltshire himself keeps changing: he says he does not believe Uma's tales, yet he is careful to relate them in minute detail, and during his 'voyage of discovery', he finally declares that he believes in *aitu*. Kamapua may actually refer to Wiltshire's partial metamorphosis into a new type of a white man in the Pacific, as I will now try and demonstrate.

### **Wiltshire's 'voyage of discovery' into the history of Westerners in the Pacific**

Wiltshire climbs up Case's taboo mountain to find out about Case's 'place of worship' (p. 48), or 'church' (p. 47). Wiltshire's arduous uphill progress may be seen as a parody of the Stations of the Cross<sup>8</sup>. Indeed, starting from 'the beginning of the desert' (p. 51), he sets out 'across' – teasingly, a homonym of 'a cross'? – into the bush, following 'the path of [Case's] disciples' (p. 54), through an undergrowth so deep and daunting that the atheistic hero admits he 'plumped on [his] knees and prayed out loud' (p. 53). He thus plods on 'by main force' (p. 54) through ten Stations altogether.<sup>9</sup> At the last Station, 'right at the top of the hill' (p. 54), he ends up in 'a cave' (p. 55). Inside this cave, the light of revelation shines on the object of his quest: instead of the Holy Shroud, 'a pantomime mask' covered in 'luminous paint' (p. 55).<sup>10</sup>

The fact that Christ's Way of the Cross should be parodied tends to confirm Wiltshire's point that Case is a fraud. In fact, the so-called church, the pilgrimage and the rite of passage, all are bogus. The first finding in Wiltshire's 'voyage of discovery' is that Case's religion is, literally, a masquerade. From a historical perspective, Case might stand for the self-styled missionaries thoroughly analysed by Jolly in 'Piracy, slavery, and the imagination of empire in Stevenson's Pacific fiction': although they had been sent by no official church or missionary society, these scattered men nevertheless set upon evangelising Pacific natives.

Like Case they were outlaws, many of them fanatical, and most, like Case, despotic.<sup>11</sup>

Arguably, one might also see Case as a magnified illustration of the official missionary work's impact on Pacific islands. Case disrupts the villagers' customary laws and social structure; he divests native chiefs of both their secular and spiritual powers, their *mana* – which is 'a part of the original divine that gives a chief, or *alii*, his necessary efficiency'.<sup>12</sup> In an analogous manner, however well-intentioned they were, official missionaries introduced new religious and cosmological orders, and their actions ended up reshaping the whole political, economic and social organisation of Oceania. Obviously, Case's disruptions are far worse than most authorised missionaries' because he is, to boot, a notoriously unrepentant murderer. In *The Beach of Falesá*, the two official white missionaries are indeed presented as benevolent characters, whatever their shortcomings. However, Stevenson himself once compared missionary enterprise to 'soul-murder'; in a letter to an aspiring missionary, he emphatically wrote: 'remember that *you cannot change ancestral feelings of right and wrong without what is practically soul-murder*'.<sup>13</sup>

Wiltshire's 'voyage of discovery' may also be seen as a metaphorical sea-voyage, as is prompted by the nautical imagery: 'trees going up like the masts of ships, and ropes of liana hanging down like a ship's rigging' (p. 51). In that respect, it might be argued that Wiltshire is going further back in time, to revisit the history of the first Western contacts with Pacific islanders. Indeed, upon their very first landings, 'Discoverers' like Captains Wallis and Cook and their crews, being so utterly alien, are said to have been viewed by Polynesian people as some kinds of emissaries from gods.<sup>14</sup> However, as soon as the islanders realised that these 'Discoverers' were simply human, they devised means to take advantage of them (most often, venal sex in exchange for material goods). About a century later, Case has led the islanders into believing that he has supernatural

powers – a misunderstanding he has deliberately orchestrated, unlike the ‘Discoverers’ who just let it happen. And as soon as Wiltshire debunks Case, like the Polynesians, he contrives a way to secure his own material fortune out of the fallen deity. What emerges, once again, is the universality of the situation: the real late-eighteenth-century Polynesians, and the fictional late-nineteenth-century Englishman, react similarly to phoney deities. Wiltshire’s story merges with Pacific islanders’ history.

Wiltshire, however, can hardly be said to be a mouthpiece for the islanders. He has only his own axe to grind, and is loudly contemptuous of the natives whom he likens to children: ‘Just go back to yourself anyway round from ten to fifteen years old, and there’s an average Kanaka’ (p. 55). Through him, however, Stevenson may be said to lay the foundations of a critical revisitation of the history of Westerners in the Pacific. Contact is no longer presented as fatal impact, but as shifting balances of power between double-dealers on both sides, Polynesian and Western.

### **Wiltshire’s ‘voyage of discovery’ into ancient Pacific history**

Wiltshire’s ‘voyage of discovery’ may also be said to retrace the navigations, not only of the European ‘Discoverers’, but also, much further back in time, to the genuine discoverers of Pacific islands – the early Polynesians, whose outriggers sailed out from South-East Asia, and landed on Pacific islands as early as the second millennium before Christ.

These original settlers of Pacific islands built places of worship, or *malae*, which were of the very kind Wiltshire discovers in the bush:

I came on my nose over a pile of stones [...] made [...] long before the whites came. [...] There was a wall in front of me [...]; it was tumbledown and plainly very old, but built

of big stones very well laid; and there is no native alive today upon that island that could dream of such a piece of building. (pp. 53-4).

About the 'idols' that Wiltshire sees on the *malae*, he comments: 'if ever they were made in this island, the practice and the very recollection of it are now long forgotten' (p. 54). To his mind, these 'figures' must come from 'islands up West' (p. 54), i.e. the very first islands – Fiji, Samoa, Tonga – to have been settled by early Polynesians sailing from nearby South-East Asia. The figures Wiltshire faces may represent relics left by the original Polynesians.

Upon entering the *malae*, Wiltshire becomes susceptible to Polynesian pagan beliefs, which is his second finding. After rejecting his fellow white man's (fake) church, he finds that he adheres to the natives' (now, to him, no longer fake) beliefs. He confesses that he 'fully expected to see a handsome young woman sitting somewhere in the bush', that he 'had made up [his] mind to see an *aitu*', and that he 'called to mind the six young ladies that came, with their scarlet necklaces, out of the cave at Fanga-anaana, and wondered if they sang like that' (p. 52). He now acknowledges that his own tale and Uma's are entwined, and so are their mutual primitive fears of the place. Wiltshire has strayed away from the village, and he finds out that the dark jungle around him teems with spirits: 'the whole place seems to be alive and looking on' (p. 51). He testifies that 'there came a sound of singing in the wind that I thought I had never heard the like of. It was all very fine to tell myself it was a bird; I knew never a bird that sang like that' (p. 52).

Wiltshire leaves behind Case's fake taboo, and fully steps into what Polynesians hold as a genuinely holy, or *tapu*, place. Wiltshire's progress may be observed through the evolution of his feelings as the narrative proceeds. Earlier in the narrative of *The Beach of Falesá*, when Wiltshire does not yet know that he

is a victim of Case's fake taboo, he admits that, in the village, he feels scared, because he is all alone among villagers who are shunning him for reasons he cannot fathom – a fear which seems rational enough, by Western standards. Now during Wiltshire's later 'voyage of discovery', in the jungle, under the genuine *tapu*, he feels scared again, but this time it is because he is alone among supernatural beings – not a rational fear any more, by Western standards. This illuminates Wiltshire's metamorphosis: he now adheres to Polynesian primal beliefs. Paradoxically enough by Western standards – but quite logically by Polynesian standards – this new feeling of isolation among spirits, signals the end of his isolation among the villagers. To a certain extent, Wiltshire has 'gone native'. In that respect, his voyage has been one of self-discovery.

### **Wiltshire's 'voyage of discovery' into Pacific cosmogony**

It may be argued that Wiltshire goes back in time even further than ancient history, for he seems to reach the original times of creation, the *Pō*, or primal night. In the *Pō*, 'the god enters, man cannot enter';<sup>15</sup> not dissimilarly, on the taboo mountain, "Man he go there, no come back" (p. 46). Like the *Pō*, the mountain is so dark that on 'the brightest kind of a day it is always dim', and its jungle is such chaos that 'a man can see to the end of nothing' (p. 51). Out there life and death cannot be told apart: 'mumm[ies]' are alive and 'butterflies [flop] like dead leaves' (p. 51); in the same way, in the *Pō*, life and death are one and the same in endless night. In the *Pō*, primal parents Mother Earth and Father Sky are one and inseparable, continuously embracing each other; in the chaotic jungle, nature seems to be similarly undividable: 'whichever way he looks the wood shuts up, one bough folding with another like the fingers of your hand' (p. 51).

In order that there should be light,<sup>16</sup> the most daring of Mother Earth and Father Sky's sons, the god Tane – whose name means 'Man' in pan-Polynesian – endeavours to tear his parents apart

from each other. So Wiltshire seems to struggle in his wake:

[I] stuck my knife between my teeth, walked right up to that tree, and began to climb. [...] The undergrowth was thick in this part; I couldn't see before my nose, and must burst my way through by main force and ply the knife as I went, slicing the cords of the lianas and slashing down whole trees at a blow. (p. 53)

Finally, as in Tane's progress, there is light: 'the leaves [began] to toss and switch open and let in the sun' (p. 51). Tane then buttresses the sky up above the earth, not unlike Wiltshire who, at the end of his ascent 'steep as a ladder', over 'wall', 'big stones', 'boulders' and 'rocks' (pp. 52-4), eventually 'dig[s] off the earth with [his] hands' to find 'the roof of a cellar' (p. 54).

Tane then makes his mythical home in the open sky, which is the tenth sky. Bearing in mind that Wiltshire's Stations of the Cross are ten in number – and not fourteen as in Christian dogma – it may be argued that Wiltshire's pilgrimage is as much or more in conformity with native mythology than with the Christian faith. Wiltshire may be said to work his way up through Tane's nine skies, and this time, it is not a fake rite of passage devised by Case nor a parody of a pilgrimage: it is Wiltshire's arduous passage in the footsteps of Polynesian mythical founders. He reaches the tenth sky where, according to Polynesian myths, knowledge is handed over to mankind's select few. Wiltshire may be one of them, as he is revealed in his new identity: he is a new type of a white man, who feels closer to the islanders than to his fellow whites. This dramatic change of perspective is illuminated by his remark about an Aeolian harp which has been put up there by Case: 'I believe they call the thing a Tyrolean harp, whatever that may mean' (p. 53). The malapropism, the expression 'whatever that may mean' and above all, the use of 'they' referring to his fellow native English-speakers, seem to indicate that Wiltshire

has become estranged from his own culture. 'They' no longer designates the Polynesians, but a type of a white man like Case, whom he has grown alien to. At this juncture, otherness seems to have changed sides.

### **Wiltshire's 'voyage of discovery' into the future of the Pacific**

That Wiltshire has partly metamorphosed into a new type of a white man is confirmed by the intradiegetic narration,<sup>17</sup> telling the story some twenty years later, when it is disclosed that he, Wiltshire, has finally settled down in the Pacific to stay. He has become the father of a bi-racial family, and fondly cares for Uma and their children. Contrary to Case, who is of the older type, Wiltshire has settled down in Falesá for the love of his Polynesian family, however unsuccessful his trade in Western goods might be. For the first time in the history of Pacific literature, a white hero makes a Pacific island his permanent home. For that matter, it might be argued that through this narrative, late-nineteenth-century readers of *The Beach of Falesá* were allowed to make their own 'voyage of discovery' into Oceania. For the first time, they were shown a Pacific island that was more than just an exotic setting for Western visitors or a profitable place for transient traders: it was a place for its own sake.

One may wonder, however, why Wiltshire, a white man, should be given the privilege to enter the *malae*, to tread in the wake of god Tane, and to have access to divine knowledge – instead of a native character. One might suspect Stevenson, the author, of doing just what he reproaches Case, his character, with: usurping the islanders' *mana*. The fact is, however, that when Wiltshire enters the *malae*, it has clearly long been abandoned by the islanders: it is 'tumbledown' (p. 54), and has been taken over by Case. In the aftermath of Western influence and the depredations of Case, its *mana* has gone dormant and its *tapu* is weak – but not extinct. This strongly suggests Stevenson's

divergence from the fatal impact argument. Wiltshire's 'voyage of discovery' is a stepping stone to the *malae*'s revival: Wiltshire paves the way for the combined efforts of Maea, the rising native chief, and Tarleton, a white missionary, to bring it back to life, as indeed happens later on in the narrative. Upon Wiltshire's second visit to the *tapu* mountain, once he has killed Case in self-defense, they all pray together on the *malae*:

Presently, I saw a party come stringing out of the path, Maea in front, and behind him a white man with a pith helmet. It was Mr. Tarleton [...].

They buried Case upon the field of glory [...] and Mr. Tarleton prayed [...]. [Then] he took down my evidence, and Uma's, and Maea's, wrote it all out fine, and had us sign it; and then he got the chiefs and marched over [...] to seize Case's papers. (p. 69)

Once Wiltshire has rid the village and the *malae* of Case (the usurping chief and fake priest), he leaves them accessible for others, native and white together, to practice new kinds of worship and secular ruling.

Tarleton, the missionary, looks very colonial in several instances through the narrative, and keeps a firm control of things secular and spiritual on the island. But a short study of toponymy might help to examine the character further. When Mr. Tarleton first appears in the narrative, in Falesá, he is on his way from Papa-Malulu to Fale-Alii (p. 35). To start with Papa-Malulu: in Samoan, *Papa* is Mother Earth's name, and *malulu* means 'tender', 'soft'; Papa-Malulu thus evokes Mother Earth's womb. It might therefore be construed that when Mr. Tarleton makes his – grandiose – first appearance in the narrative, it is as if he were emerging from Mother Earth's womb, just as founding Polynesian deities did in cosmogonic times.<sup>18</sup> The place where Mr.



Tarleton is bound to, *Fale-Alii*, means the ‘King’s house’. Kings in ancient Polynesia were descendants of gods, and their representatives on earth. So, when Mr. Tarleton travels from Mother Earth’s womb to the King’s house, he might be seen as a kind of emissary of the islanders’ spiritual and secular powers. It must be remembered that Mr. Tarleton is, in Wiltshire’s words, ‘partly Kanakaized, and suck[s] up with natives’ (p. 34). Later on in the narrative, after Wiltshire’s ‘voyage of discovery’, Mr. Tarleton gets down from the *tapu* mountain and takes the chiefs ‘to seize Case’s papers’. He thus seems to act as an intermediary for the restitution of secular native powers to Polynesians. Mr. Tarleton assists the local chiefs in resuming the secular power they had been robbed of by Case – he leads them back, metaphorically, to *Fare Alii*. It must be observed, nevertheless, that Mr. Tarleton fails to help the chiefs regain their former spiritual powers. Those remain in the hands of Namu, his native pastor. In that respect, Mr. Tarleton’s moves might be said to encapsulate missionary history in Oceania. Before contact with the West, there were two kinds of Polynesian chiefs: the *tulafale*, who wielded political power, and the *alii*, who wielded supreme sacred power. In the nineteenth century, sacred power was relinquished to missionaries, and the *alii* were left with the political.<sup>19</sup> Most missionaries relied upon native chiefs and the hierarchical powers already in place to spread the Gospel and, like Mr. Tarleton, they had a tolerance for syncretism.

Unlike Case, Wiltshire has no spiritual or social ambitions: he is a trader and the father of a family, no more – or at least, that is as much as he is willing to admit. In the heart of darkness he finds himself a pagan but, unlike Conrad’s Kurtz, he does not get engulfed by the heathen wilderness of the jungle. Kurtz’s voice vanishes into some unfathomable archaic past, and gets lost in the multiple layers of embedded narratives. Wiltshire’s voice, in contrast, is the dominant voice at all the levels of the narrative – intradiegetic and metadiegetic<sup>20</sup> – a possible fantasy of colonial

mastery, one might argue. This fantasy, however, is debunked by Stevenson's utterly comical depiction of Wiltshire as both a protagonist who stubbornly remains a racist, and a narrator who blindly fails to see through himself and to acknowledge his own partial metamorphosis into a new, hybridised type of white man in the Pacific. The tale Wiltshire tells in *The Beach of Falesá* ends on an open question about the future: 'I'd like to know where I'm to find the whites?' (p. 71). It sounds like Wiltshire's befuddled confession of his own and Westerners' colonialist limitations, but might also be seen as Stevenson's call for a better dialogue with a universal Other.<sup>21</sup>

### Conclusion

Wiltshire's 'voyage of discovery' may reflect Robert Louis Stevenson's own progress in the Pacific. Like Wiltshire – although with much more eagerness – the author went deeper and deeper into the discovery of Pacific culture. In advance of anthropologist Levi-Strauss, he was convinced that Western culture had no claim to superiority over native culture, but that cultures were universal, differing only in their perspectives. As Wiltshire finds in his 'voyage of discovery': '[t]his is mighty like Kanakas; but, *if you look at it another way*, it's mighty like white folks too' (p. 54; my italics). Like Wiltshire, Stevenson did not mean to take *mana* from the natives either. His writings might just be stepping stones for the islanders to try to build for themselves a postcolonial future in Oceania.

In opposition to the fatal impact argument, Stevenson argued that Polynesians were fully alive, and adapting to modern circumstances. Since contact with the West could not be avoided, Oceania had perforce to deal in multiculturalism and syncretism. This is illustrated by Stevenson's novella, which intertwines pagan and Christian beliefs, oral tales and written narratives, Polynesian and British voices. The title of the novella itself, *The Beach of Falesá*, combines English and Samoan words, 'the

beach' referring to the profane white trading community, and *fale sā* meaning 'sacred house'. This suggests that although the tale may have multiple and contradictory meanings, according to one's spiritual and cultural perspectives, yet all may still unite into one single, syncretised and cross-cultural narrative. Wiltshire's 'voyage of discovery' may be Stevenson's invitation for Western readers to make their own voyages of discovery into Pacific culture.

## NOTES

When no translator's name is given, quotations from works in French have been translated by myself.

- 1 For further information on the fatal impact argument, see Rod Edmond, *Representing the South Pacific. Colonial Discourse from Cook to Gauguin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
- 2 Robert Louis Stevenson, *South Sea Tales* (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 1999) p. 51, henceforth cited in text.
- 3 Because the true discoverers of Pacific islands were Polynesian, the word 'Discoverer' when applied to late eighteenth- early nineteenth-century European voyagers, is written between inverted commas.
- 4 For a fuller account of Uma's initial teachings, see Sylvie Largeaud-Ortega, 'Stevenson's "little tale" is "a library": an anthropological approach to *The Beach of Falesā*' in *Journal of Stevenson Studies*, vol. 6, 2009, 117-35.
- 5 For further information on the opposition between Polynesian social versus natural places, see Serge Tcherkézoff, *Faa Samoa, une Identité Polynésienne. L'Anthropologie comme Dialogue Culturel* (Paris: L'Harmattan, Connaissance des Hommes, 2003).
- 6 It is only much later, under Western influence, that the word 'taboo' came to mean 'private' and 'prohibited'.
- 7 *The Kumulipo, a Hawaiian Creation Chant*, trans. and ed. by Martha Warren Beckwith (Honolulu: the University Press of Hawaii, 1951), p. 59.
- 8 In a poem that Stevenson wrote at the same time as *The Beach of Falesā*, 'The Woodman', he compares the same uphill progress which inspired Wiltshire's tale of his 'voyage of discovery', to the ascent

- of ‘Golgotha’, *Songs of Travel*, XXXIX, in *The Collected Poems of Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. by Roger Lewis (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), p. 195 ff.
- 9 For a closer reading of these stations, see Sylvie Largeaud-Ortega, *Ainsi Soit-Île. Littérature et anthropologie dans les Contes des Mers du Sud de Robert Louis Stevenson* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2012), pp. 389-392.
  - 10 To add insult to injury, this luminous paint is the same Stevenson’s wife used for her pigs and fowls: ‘I do not believe the missionaries will approve of my means of protection [to prevent the pigs and fowls being stolen to feed the native chiefs]. I took the round top of a small cask and painted upon it a hideous head with great eyes and a double row of pointed teeth. Instead of hair, flames radiate out from the head. These flames, the iris of the eyes, and the pointed teeth I have painted in luminous paint’ in Robert Louis and Fanny Stevenson, *Our Samoan Adventure*, ed. by Charles Neider (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1955), p. 57.
  - 11 Attwater, in Stevenson’s *The Ebb-Tide*, is another type of the despotic self-styled Pacific missionary. For a further analysis of this topic, see Roslyn Jolly, ‘Piracy, slavery, and the imagination of empire in Stevenson’s Pacific fiction’, *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 35.1, March 2007, 157-173, and Largeaud-Ortega, ‘Stevenson’s *The Ebb-Tide*, or Virgil’s *Aeneid* Revisited: How Literature May Make or Mar Empires’, *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 41.3, September 2013, 561-593.
  - 12 Serge Tcherkézoff, *Faa Samoa, une identité Polynésienne. L’anthropologie comme dialogue culturel* (Paris: L’Harmattan, Connaissance des Hommes, 2003), p. 220.
  - 13 *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. by Bradford A. Booth and Ernest Meheew, 8 vols (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), VIII, 326. (Stevenson’s italics)
  - 14 Anthropologist Sahlins argues that this is the reason why Captain Cook was murdered in Hawaii: Hawaiians took him for an envoy of Lono the god of fertility, as his landings coincided with the start of the time of plenty, Makahiki. When the coincidence went awry, they dispensed with a god that was apparently running amok and proving a threat to the order of things. See Marshall Sahlins, *How ‘Natives’ Think: About Captain Cook for Example* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995).

- 15 Beckwith, p. 59.
- 16 For a fuller account of this creation myth, see Teuira Henry, *Ancient Tahiti*, B. P. Bishop Museum Bulletin, vol. 48, Honolulu, Hawaii, 1928.
- 17 Intradigetic: at the narrating, or framing narrative, level. See Gérard Genette, *Figures III* (Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1972).
- 18 In Tahitian, the words *Papa-Malulu* sound very much like *Papa-mauruuru*, which means 'thanks to Mother Earth': this might infer that Mr. Tarleton has been paying tribute to Papa, or Mother Earth.
- 19 Tcherkezoff, p. 222.
- 20 Intradiegetic level: the narrating level; metadiegetic level: the narrated level. See Genette, *op. cit.*.
- 21 For a detailed analysis of Stevenson's outstanding treatment of Wiltshire's ambivalences as narrator, see Largeaud-Ortega, *Ainsi Soit-Île*, pp. 462-489.

## Realism and romance: Henry James, Robert Louis Stevenson and the Victorian literary form

*Duncan Milne*

### **Introduction: the art of fiction**

The critical emphasis on the formal innovation of the modernist period has tended to overshadow the fact that the later Victorian period was also characterised by intense and self-reflexive consideration as to the nature of writing. Far from being a period of complacency, as later critics were to typify it, the late-Victorian period was a time of self-consciousness and even anxiety as to the proper role, mode and function of fiction in society.<sup>1</sup> The Victorian habit of literary self-analysis reached its peak in the 1880s with a public exchange between Henry James and Robert Louis Stevenson on the contesting merits of realism and romance in the novel, published in a series of articles in *Longman's Magazine* in 1884.<sup>2</sup>

James and Stevenson, for all their superficial differences of style in writing and character in life shared, as Robert Kiely notes, a feeling of 'professional admiration and close friendship'.<sup>3</sup> They had first met in 1879, and while the American author had initially been dismissive, describing Stevenson as 'a great deal (in an inoffensive way) of a *poseur*', in time he warmed to Stevenson, becoming one of his closest friends and most frequent correspondents.<sup>4</sup> The disjunction between Stevenson, already established by certain strands of Victorian criticism as a writer solely of undemanding adventure fiction, and James, the author of rarefied and precise prose, led J. M. Barrie to state that their friendship could be 'conciev[ed]' in an image of 'Mr. James as a boy in velveteens looking fearfully at Stevenson playing at pirates'.<sup>5</sup> This imagery fed into perceptions of their debate: with James, poised and self-aware, championing realism and

Stevenson, voluble and charismatic, defending romance, so that the public debate they engaged in may seem to entail the conflict of two irreconcilable elements. However, the friendship between these two seemingly disparate writers is reflected in the way in which they see fruitful connections between their different ways of writing. This article will follow the context and terms of the debate on realism and romance, in both Victorian and modern critical discussions, and it will consider James and Stevenson's unique contribution and the synthesis developed from their attempt to reconcile the supposedly immutable differences involved.<sup>6</sup>

The spur for the debate between James and Stevenson was a lecture given by Walter Besant on the 'Art of Fiction' on the 25th April 1884.<sup>7</sup> Besant's lecture considered the novel as a didactic medium, 'a school in which manners are learned', which 'converts abstract ideas into living models'.<sup>8</sup> These models must, Besant avers, 'be real, and such as might be met with in actual life, or, at least, the natural developments of such people as any of us might meet; their actions must be natural and consistent; the conditions of place, of manners, and of thought must be drawn from personal observation'.<sup>9</sup>

James responded to Besant's notion of fiction's responsibility to be grounded in 'the real' by writing a piece for *Longman's Magazine* expanding on the theme, in which he cited *Treasure Island*. Stevenson responded with 'A Humble Remonstrance', arguing for the value of 'romance' against stricter realism.<sup>10</sup>

As Janet Adam Smith acknowledges, 'critics [...] rarely couple the names of Henry James and Robert Louis Stevenson': Henry James had, by the mid-twentieth century, been safely immured within the unassailable walls of high literature in the Great Tradition, while Stevenson had been banished to 'the nursery or schoolroom'.<sup>11</sup> But the critical consensus of the 1880s placed Stevenson on much the same rank as James, despite the former's commercial and popular success.<sup>12</sup> As Peter Keating notes,

'Stevenson's theories on the art of fiction were just as acceptable as his practice'. To this audience: there was no gap in credibility between the authors.<sup>13</sup>

Furthermore, it is inaccurate to suppose that the debate between James and Stevenson was as oppositional as some critical work has suggested, work which represents James's 'realism' and Stevenson's 'romance' as two armed camps, each defended with absolutist zeal.<sup>14</sup> Rather, as will be demonstrated below, 'The Art of Fiction' debate was characterised by reciprocity and relativism. As James himself notes, 'the [realist] novel and the romance, the novel of incident and that of character – these separations appear to me to have been made by critics and readers for their own convenience [...] but to have little reality or interest for the producer'.<sup>15</sup> None the less, for all the fact that the boundary between them is thoroughly permeable, realism and romance are recognizably distinct as forms, or perhaps, paradigms. This article will attempt to define and describe the range and limits of these forms, and to contextualise the movement to later literary modes, while acknowledging the instability of these terms, particularly in the context of Stevenson's polymorphous and liminal writing.

### **The origin and form of Victorian realism**

The valorisation of verisimilitude in fiction, that is, the notion that the highest aesthetic or moral worth of a work of fiction is its representation of a 'credible' simulacra of a possible reality, can be argued to be contextually specific to the Anglophone world of the nineteenth century. As Pam Morris remarks, the 'aesthetic evaluations of realism are frequently informed by or entangled with views on the development of the Enlightenment, the expansion of capitalist production and the emergence of modern mass culture'.<sup>16</sup> The deeper ideological significance of realism as a preferred mode thus arises in a culture that is newly expansive and materialistically rationalist. As George J. Becker notes, the



cradle of Realism was 'the ferment of scientific and positivist thinking which characterised the middle of the nineteenth century'.<sup>17</sup> 'Realism' Becker continues, 'really did constitute a fresh start because it was based on a new set of assumptions about the universe'.<sup>18</sup> 'The major current of the age', to appropriate Zola's phrase, was thus formed of a recursive reinforcement of values as materialistic positivism influenced the new realism of novels, and those same novels represented materialistic positivism in their narratives.<sup>19</sup> The *zeitgeist* is always a social construction of implied and explicit value judgements and the preference for realism adheres to, reflects and reinforces this. As such, Becker notes, the 'claims about the nature of reality and [the] evaluative attitude towards it' which realism carries with it means that 'it is [...] a term that is frequently invoked in making fundamental ethical and political claims or priorities, based upon perceptions of what is "true" or "real"'.<sup>20</sup>

Notions of realism as depicting a constitutive and objective reality would come to be fiercely contested in the twentieth century, most influentially in the Western academy by the post-structuralist movement, which denied the existence of a unitary ontological truth upon which ethical positions could be founded, but also by new schools of realism which challenged Victorian assumptions on the location of truth or on its interpretation as producing social imperatives. If post-structuralism was revolutionary, these latter approaches could be said to be evolutionary, building upon, reconfiguring and appropriating existing forms. As such, they are willing to assess the qualities of Victorian realism in a historically informed manner. Thus, the 'humanist critic' Eric Auerbach and the 'Marxist' critic György Lukács, two otherwise disparate figures, can both, as Pam Morris notes, 'identify two defining achievements of nineteenth-century realism: first, the perception that individual lives are the location of historical forces and contradictions and second, the serious artistic treatment of ordinary people and their experience'.<sup>21</sup>

This sense of 'writ[ing] out of a historicised imagination' is scarcely expressed in 'The Art of Fiction': indeed, although James talks of realism as affording the writer access to 'all life, all feeling, all observation, all vision', in practice James's vision seems largely restricted to 'the clink of teaspoons and the accent of the curate', in the words of Stevenson's estimation of realism.<sup>22</sup> But, as Morris remarks, Victorian writers in the English tradition (among whom James must be included, despite his American origins), while 'articulat[ing] a less explicit sense of history than writers like Stendhal and Balzac' instead 'represent social forces of change at deeper structural levels or by means of symbolism and imagery'. Morris goes on to contend that 'the development of [these] writerly techniques of indirection and suggestion is a distinguishing feature of British realism [...] perhaps a creative dividend of the moral puritanism which forbade writers the direct expression of many aspects of human experience'.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, as Julia Reid observes, James's 'Art of Fiction' 'was a nuanced defence of literary realism, of novels which attempted to produce "the illusion of life"', and James applied the same level of subtlety in characterising the romance form with which it was contrasted.<sup>24</sup>

Frank Swinnerton, in detailing the terms of the debate between James and Stevenson summarises the distinction thus:

[Realism] must not be regarded as describing here an accumulation of detail or a preference for unpleasant subjects [...] Realism, as the word is here used, is applied only to work in which the author's invention and imagination have been strictly disciplined by experience and judgement, and in which his direct aim has been precision rather than the attainment of broad effects<sup>25</sup>

Realism, then, is contrasted to romance principally in terms of its focus: detail contrasted to scope. For all that, this framing of

the debate could be argued as placing romance as a reaction to, or even as a simplification of other forms of narrative expression. To correct this potential imbalance, romance must be considered in its own right as a new form emergent in a particular social milieu.

### **The reaction of romance**

If, as described above, realism, and the new philosophies of materialism which underpinned it, were the dominant zeitgeist of the British mid-Victorian period, Robert Louis Stevenson is at risk of being seen as at best out of step with his time, and at worst as a reactionary retreating into an historical past to evade the social realities of his own time.<sup>26</sup> In reality, however, romance was every bit as dependent on new and specific social and scientific contexts as realism was. The romance, with its themes of adventure, wonder and exploration, rather than being a reaction or backlash against the constrained material norms of Victorian life was responding vigorously to new trends which had come to underpin both public and private life in the late nineteenth-century. Romance is predicated on the exotic, and new geopolitical and scientific discoveries fuelled new speculations and provided new zones of adventure for the form. So, for example, the expansion of Britain's empire and the exploration of the interior of the African continent, as represented by Britain's annexation of Burma in 1885 and David Livingstone's 1864 expedition to find the source of the Nile, informed the narratives of romance, whether they be the sentimental orientalism of much of Kipling's short fiction or the fantastical projections of an imagined Africa, exemplified by H. Rider Haggard's *Alan Quatermain*.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, the first flourishing of psychoanalysis opened up fields of interiority that were explored and figuratively represented by romance fiction, as seen in the manner in which Stevenson's own *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* emblematises the research of William James.<sup>28</sup>

Patrick Brantlinger notes that 'the cause[s] of the upsurge in romance writing toward the end of the century are numerous, complex, and often the same as those of the upsurge of occultism', suggesting that the excursive exoticism of contact with new cultures and the incursive exoticism of the new insights of psychology represented in Romance fiction were feeding into a resistive response to the static ontology of materialist realism which had been the norm in Victorian discourses of knowledge up to this date. Indeed, Brantlinger continues by saying that 'the new romanticism in fiction is frequently explained by its advocates [amongst whom Stevenson is included] as a reaction against scientific materialism as embodied in "realistic" or "naturalistic" narratives'.<sup>29</sup>

The new tendency to a fiction of romance, then, emerged as a counter-trend in Victorian Britain, only to shift to a position in which it was, as Nicholas Daly states, 'an important part in British culture'.<sup>30</sup> Significantly, Daly sees the key contribution made by romance as its formulation of a 'narrative theory of social change'. Thus it is that romance, rather than being reactionary, is laden with reformatory or even revolutionary potential, with strange new territories and psychological truths allowing for the reimagining of social configurations and the refiguring of absolutes as being culturally and temporally contingent, much as Science Fiction would do in the succeeding century.<sup>31</sup>

Stevenson's part in making romance central as a Victorian cultural form is closely tied to the theories expressed in 'A Humble Remonstrance' and his other pieces collected posthumously in *Essays in the Art of Writing*.<sup>32</sup> Peter Keating, in commenting on 'the attractiveness of Stevenson' as a writer notes his 'possession of two highly-developed qualities which are rarely found together: he was an aesthete and a writer of exciting stories'. That is to say, Keating continues, 'in an age which was becoming obsessed with the need to separate Art from Entertainment, Stevenson spoke and acted on behalf of both'.<sup>33</sup> The crux of Stevenson's famous

claim that 'man's one method, whether he reasons or creates, is to half shut his eyes against the dazzle and confusion of reality' is that the 'source of [art's] power'<sup>34</sup> rests on the synthesis of 'High' and 'Low' cultural forms thus described by Keating. The possibilities of this synthesis, what might be termed its social efficacy, is likewise treated in Stevenson's argument that 'life is monstrous, infinite, illogical, abrupt and poignant' and 'the novel [...] is a work of art [which] exists, not by its resemblances to life [...] but by its immeasurable difference from life'.<sup>35</sup> The vision here is essentially of a way to redeem life through art, to support what a contemporary of Stevenson described as a 'militant optimism', which rallies thought to an elevated ideal despite the 'manifold ills of circumstance'.<sup>36</sup>

In a perceptive analysis, Kenneth Graham notes this element of Stevenson's work, remarking that he 'would seem to belong, and belong quite ostentatiously, to the Idealist camp'.<sup>37</sup> Graham links this quite explicitly to James, 'the cautious realist of "The Art of Fiction"', who gestures towards idealism as a defence against the unconstrained frankness of Zola's more earthy form of realism, Naturalism. But, for Graham, Stevenson's idealism is 'more whole-hearted' and 'more clear' than that of James, in that it is not hampered by a narrative restricted by verisimilitude to Victorian domestic realities.<sup>38</sup> The field of adventure, substituting its unconstrained potentialities for Naturalism's unconstrained frankness, can more readily depict moral ideals, or embody abstractions, be they in the metaphoric doubling of 'Markheim' or the disruptive symbolism of the resurrection of James Durie in *The Master of Ballantrae*.

Tellingly, Kenneth Graham was not the only commentator to make this link between Stevenson's writing and an elevating idealism. A similar sentiment expressed in Margaret Moyes Black's notoriously coy and inaccurate biography of Stevenson more clearly highlights a distinction which led some to prize romance as a superior mode. 'In an age', Moyes Black writes, 'when a realism

so strong as to be unpleasant has tinged too much of latter-day fiction Mr Stevenson stood altogether apart from the school of the realists'.<sup>39</sup> Here, then, we have the heart of the matter: while James saw the moderate or 'cautious' Victorian realism which he championed as being distinct from Naturalism in vital ways, this difference was not recognised by a significant section of the reading public to whom all realism was the 'strong realism' of Zola.<sup>40</sup> In the 1880s, the National Vigilance Association pursued a programme of campaigning for the suppression of 'indecent' fiction, which extended as far as the (successful) prosecution of Henry Vizetelly for the publication of works by Zola.<sup>41</sup> In the atmosphere generated by these activities, realism was coming to be seen as a suspect genre.

Stevenson was secure from this damning association, for if, as Keating observes, 'the experimental range of his work worried his admirers, there was still at the heart of it *Treasure Island*, *Kidnapped*, *The Black Arrow* and *The Master of Ballantrae*. They were the perfect antidote to naturalism'.<sup>42</sup> While this is a deeply reductive approach which ignores complexities of style and content in these works which prefigured certain significant new approaches to literature in the early twentieth century,<sup>43</sup> Keating here highlights a perception of Stevenson's adventure fiction as being simplistic, stereotyped and escapist. This was a view which came to prevail strongly in the early modernist generation, and did much to harm Stevenson's reputation as being a 'serious' or significant writer amongst this milieu.<sup>44</sup> One of the voices which joined the chorus of attacks against the 'pretence' and 'tedious virtuosity' of romance in general, and Stevenson in particular, was E. M. Forster, who railed against *Treasure Island* as an 'insincerity', unknowingly echoing the terms of the 'Art of Fiction' debate.<sup>45</sup> The irony is, however, that elsewhere Forster praises the 'fantastic-prophetical' which 'compels us to an adjustment' to accept 'something that could not occur'.<sup>46</sup> This, arguably, is exactly the aim that Stevenson envisages for the romance

in 'A Humble Remonstrance' and 'A Gossip on Romance': the envisaging of another possible society in another place or time. It was this element of romance which developed into the still more adventurous fields of speculative fiction – 'scientific romance', to use the term first applied to such works, with fiction such as H. G. Wells's *The Island of Dr. Moreau* showing clear signs of literary inheritance from Stevenson's later fiction.<sup>47</sup>

It is telling, then, that Wells, the most significant proponent of the genre of scientific romance, 'took public issue' as Keating notes, 'with Henry James's claim that "art competes with life"', just as Stevenson had before him. Keating adds, however, that 'unlike Wells' Stevenson 'did not call for fiction to involve itself directly in life, or for it to reflect the chaotic unorganised quality of life'.<sup>48</sup> In contrast, Stevenson has a belief in what Keating terms 'organicism': that is, in the 'well-written novel' as a unified and contained object, 'echo[ing] and re[echoing] its one creative and controlling thought'.<sup>49</sup> The effect of this iteration of the purpose of the book is, ideally to, absorb the reader entirely in the novel: 'we should gloat over a book', Stevenson writes, 'be rapt clean out of ourselves and rise from the perusal, our minds filled with the busiest, kaleidoscopic dance of images'.<sup>50</sup> Julia Reid recognises the same standards in 'A Humble Remonstrance', observing that:

Stevenson's essay overturn[s] the hierarchy between intellectual and sensual literature, suggesting that the romance was just as valuable as the 'novel of character'. His celebration of novels which appealed to the 'sensual and quite illogical tendencies in man' was partly a strategic move of self-defence against James's criticism of *Treasure Island*, but also indicated a revaluation of unconscious dreams and desires.<sup>51</sup>

It is in this that Stevenson provided romance's most significant contribution a changing literary culture that was moving

away from the 'deadened' forms of Naturalism.<sup>52</sup> The paradigm shift effected by Stevenson in which the submerged elements of a person, the 'illogical tendencies' and 'unconscious dreams and desires' become a valid basis for cultural exploration would prove to be fertile ground. If it can be agreed that 'Stevenson casts romance as a cultural curative, the restorative for a modernity whose sickness stems from its repressed instinctual life', then a strong link to Freud's theories of repression emerges, with the romance narrative being a means to sublimate or vicariously experience the socially unacceptable will to violence which Freud's model holds is a secret primal desire in each psyche.<sup>53</sup> Likewise, if as Daly has it, 'the romance as Stevenson theorises it is an attempt to move away from the contemplative pleasures of contemporary realism in order to recapture the immersive reading experience of childhood' and to 'offer us a thoroughgoing holiday from our own intellectual nature, from the very limits indeed of our own subjectivity', we see prefigured Jung's notion of a collective unconscious, a shared awareness accessible through subconscious forms which transcend the typical contingencies of our quotidian perceptions.<sup>54</sup>

This, of course, is not to suggest that Stevenson was consciously so visionary in his estimation of the potentials of the romance form. Rather, he recognised that 'idealism' had distinct limits. As such, although he claims that 'the immediate danger of the realist is to sacrifice the beauty and significance of the whole to local dexterity, or, in the insane pursuit of completion, to immolate his readers under facts', he equally recognises that 'the danger of the idealist is [...] to become merely null and lose all grip of fact, particularity, or passion'.<sup>55</sup> It is telling that these lines were written at the same time as Stevenson was wrestling with perhaps his least convincing novel. To Stevenson, *Prince Otto* perfectly illustrates 'the difficulty of being ideal in an age of realism' for he came to think that 'the unpleasant giddy-mindedness, which spoils the book and often gives it an air of wanton unreality and



juggling with air-bells', arose not from its divorce from reality, but came instead 'from the too great realism of some chapters and passages [...] which disprepares the imagination for the cast of the remainder'.<sup>56</sup>

Stevenson, then, far from being the best example of the romance as a style fundamentally opposed to realism was advocating a synthesis of the two, seeing them as mutually informing and benefitting each other. 'A Gossip on Romance' contains a description of *Robinson Crusoe* which notes that it 'is as realistic as it is romantic'.<sup>57</sup> It is this faith that 'true romantic art [...] reaches into the highest abstraction of the ideal' and yet also 'does not refuse the most pedestrian realism' which informs Stevenson's own particular style in fiction, distinguishing it from the more naïve forms of romance which arose in response to his earlier work.

### **False dichotomies: the realism in romance**

Stevenson had developed his idea that 'all representative art, which can be said to live, is both realistic and ideal; and the realism about which we quarrel is a matter purely of externals' a year before his supposed dispute with James on the subject in 1884.<sup>58</sup> 'This question of realism', as Stevenson elaborates, is 'not in the least degree the fundamental truth, but only the technical method, of a work of art. Be as ideal or as abstract as you please, you will be none the less veracious'.<sup>59</sup> That is to say, realism and romance alike are fabrications, and yet both can share a figurative or representational truth more meaningful than what mere verisimilitude of 'realistic' environments or storylines can provide.

This broader idea of truth was a key element of Stevenson's work, and vital to understanding the distinction he made between realism and romance. As Jenni Calder observes, Stevenson 'had no interest, or for a long time thought he had not, in a Zolaesque accurate recording of reality, but the nature of reality is never-

theless fundamental to his writing.<sup>60</sup> Rather than representing an untempered form, with romance in direct and antithetical opposition to the realist novel, Stevenson, particularly in his later narratives, writes a deceptive blend, which despite showing the strong colouring and 'exotic' locations of romance is increasingly influenced by realist and even Naturalist tropes. These are employed in the pursuit of a greater artistic or moral 'Truth'. So, for example, much of the minatory atmosphere which underpins the allegorical impact of *The Ebb-Tide* depends upon a forensic focus upon squalor and the kind of sensational details of violence that Stevenson once found so distasteful in Zola, to whose work he explicitly compared it.<sup>61</sup> However, an emphasis on physicality and discomfort is a remarkable presence in all of Stevenson's romance fiction. A fine instance is the 'flight in the heather' episode in *Kidnapped* which vividly conveys the 'tediousness and pain' which Alan Breck Stewart and David Balfour suffer,<sup>62</sup> and this marked emphasis on privation contrasts sharply with the tendency of romance fiction to sanitise and make anodyne the consequences of the violence and exertion so central to their plots. Indeed, to one anonymous contemporary reviewer, this 'distressing aspect' made the novel fitter to be compared to *Anna Karenina* than to a typical romance.<sup>63</sup>

Furthermore, as Julia Reid notes, 'even *Treasure Island*, a classic of the romance revival, examines adventure's darker side – its implication with aggressive imperialism and violent masculinities', as vividly depicted in the thirst for acquisition of the characters and the mercurial violence of the paternal figure of Long John Silver. Indeed, as Reid continues, 'Stevenson increasingly sensed that the energies unleashed by romance might be destructive rather than invigorating'. It is this 'rejecti[on] of the idea that the cult of heroic manliness might rejuvenate an ailing modernity' which culminates in *The Ebb-Tide*, Stevenson's most radical re-writing of the romance.<sup>64</sup> That is to say, what Reid terms 'the rejection of romance' in Stevenson's earlier fiction,

leads '*The Ebb-Tide* [to] move beyond romance' to embrace 'new literary modes including a naturalistic realism'.<sup>65</sup> In doing this 'it undertakes a radical politicization of the romance genre, as it identifies adventure's primitive energies with the brutal imperialist creed of heroic masculinity'.<sup>66</sup>

This final point is very significant in considering the cultural significance of the romance, in that, in Reid's paraphrase of Elaine Showalter, 'the romance revival was rooted in misogyny'.<sup>67</sup> Telling, as Nicholas Daly observes, is how the notion that 'romance is a gendered genre' was determined in the Victorian period, and how 'pervasive in the critical accounts is the assumption that the romance is a more healthily masculine form than the realist novel'. This was deeply connected to the 'contemporary discourses of degeneration' which saw Great Britain to be in a process of atavistic decay, rapidly declining from its physical apex due to its separation from a life of hardy endurance and conflict.<sup>68</sup> This decline was described in terms of 'emasculatation' and 'feminisation', with the hardy and bloody past of the race being contrastingly manly. Thus *Treasure Island* can be said to display a 'clearly [...] violent and aggressively masculine fantasy' in its quest narrative, that may equally be said of all of Stevenson's early romance fiction.<sup>69</sup> As such Stevenson's description of the 'universal' fantasies which his romance is said to satisfy, the idea that every child has 'imbrued its little hands in gore, and [...] triumphantly protected innocence and beauty' is, as Reid notes, 'unmistakably gendered'.<sup>70</sup>

This element can be strongly linked to Stevenson's well-known and early identified aversion to representing female characters.<sup>71</sup> However, to Stevenson himself the potential issue with representations of gender lay not in his adherence to romance convention, but in the fact that he intruded realism into it. As he wrote to the critic Edmund Gosse, 'with all my romance, I am a realist and a prosaist, and a most fanatical lover of plain physical sensations plainly and expressly rendered'.<sup>72</sup> It is in realism that

there is 'peril': 'were I to do love in the same spirit as I did (for instance) D. Balfour's fatigue in the heather; my dear sir, there were grossness ready made!'.<sup>73</sup> Stevenson, then, rather than blithely reinforcing romance ideals was carefully navigating the appropriate boundaries of his realism, investigating how far his realist precision could proceed, while being distinctly aware of the context of his literary milieu, policed and determined by the standards of Mrs Grundy, that archetype of rectitude and prim moral values.<sup>74</sup>

### **Towards new forms**

In the words of Peter Faulkner, 'divergent and often conflicting ideas about art and culture are characteristic of the end of the nineteenth century'.<sup>75</sup> The debate between Stevenson and James on the nature of fiction was integral to the development of this new phase of literary self-consciousness which was to bloom into the myriad new movements and forms which characterised the *Fin de Siècle* and later the modernist period. Moreover, the debate anticipates the polysemous definitions of the modernist method by being far more reciprocal and indeterminate than is often supposed. As Caroline McCracken-Flesher puts it, 'critical tradition has preferred to read Stevenson through binaries derived from his debate with James, yet neither James nor he reductively privileged either romance or realism'.<sup>76</sup> Instead, both authors favour a synthesis between the objective and the mediated, the empirical and the emotional, which would become the core *weltanschauung* of literary modernism.

As such, the increasing inflection of realism into Stevenson's romances, shows, in Julia Reid's words a 'transition from dreams of adventure to disenchantment' as 'the meaning which he attributes to the romance genre shifts' and 'adventure becomes increasingly dystopic, and a much more politicised reality begins to emerge'.<sup>77</sup> In other words, 'Romance was [...] becoming for some a more serious literary form'.<sup>78</sup> The development of 'a far

more complex literary form' from a genre which had once found its most suitable place for publication in the boy's story papers of the middle of the century is a significant development, and one aided by the willingness of Stevenson both to take the form seriously, and to defend it vigorously in the public sphere. It was this advocacy, and the development of the form which it allowed that led to 'rise of [the] new romance' in the late nineteenth century, with a concomitant decline in the popularity of the realist novel.<sup>79</sup> The presence of the 'politicised reality' in this new variety of romantic fiction was inherited by key proto-modernist and modernist writers, most obviously Conrad, whose indebtedness to *The Ebb-Tide* has been well documented.<sup>80</sup>

If this can be seen as an instance of the dissociation of 'the arts [...] from nineteenth-century assumptions' which is, in Reid's words, part of the 'historical process' of modernism, so too is the modulation of realism, a recognition and rejection of Zola's notion of 'scientific' fiction, with its pretensions to empirical objectivity.<sup>81</sup> The alteration of James's style from such works as *A Portrait of a Lady* (1881) to the ambiguously supernatural and intensely subjective *The Turn of the Screw* (1898) perhaps represents a parallel to the modification of Stevenson's fiction as his career progressed. Arguably, the origin of this alteration lay in the 'Art of Fiction' debate: it is significant that James's 1888 revision of his original article removes the statement that art should 'compete with life', a phrase directly challenged by Stevenson in 'A Humble Remonstrance'.<sup>82</sup>

## Conclusion

The debate between Henry James and Robert Louis Stevenson is an episode in literary history fundamental to understanding the changing aspect that fiction was seen to wear in the nineteenth-century. Beginning as a valourisation of a particular form in preference to another, the various interchanges ended up by forming a dialectic in which both Stevenson and James arrived at

a synthesis that recognised the sympathy between these modes and how each was inflected with elements of the other. In absorbing this knowledge, Stevenson was able to extend his practice of problematising the simplistic gratification of masculine fantasies of violence that characterised much mid-Victorian romance. Realism, with its emphasis on verisimilitude and exactness of physical description, informed a project, begun at least as early as *Treasure Island*, to darken the romance with the realities of violence and the truth of colonial appropriation, which would have its climax in the deeply effective 'colonial naturalism' of *The Ebb-Tide*. George Bernard Shaw described Stevenson's work as fiction where the 'romantic hero [is] mocked by reality': the refinement of exactly this idiosyncratic style may be said to date from his debate on the meaning of the novel with Henry James in the 1880s.

#### NOTES

- 1 See, for example E. M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962), p. 161; Peter Faulkner, *Modernism* (London: Methuen, 1977), pp. ix-xi.
- 2 See Glenda Norquay's introductory note to Robert Louis Stevenson, 'A Humble Remonstrance' in *R. L. Stevenson on Fiction: An Anthology of Literary and Critical Essays*, ed. by Glenda Norquay (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), pp. 80-91 (p. 80).
- 3 Robert Kiely, *Robert Louis Stevenson and the Fiction of Adventure* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964), p. 13.
- 4 Henry James, 'To T. S. Perry, 14 September 1879' in *The Letters of Henry James*, ed. by Leon Edel, 4 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974-84), II, pp. 254-256 (p. 255).
- 5 Gavin Ogilvy [J. M. Barrie], 'Gavin Ogilvy [J. M. Barrie] on Stevenson, 'British Weekly', 2 November 1888, V, 9' in *Robert Louis Stevenson: the Critical Heritage*, ed. by Paul Maixner (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), pp. 323-328 (p. 324).
- 6 It should be noted here that the term 'romance', while used in the debate between Stevenson and James as though it refers to a discrete

and distinct form, is actually multivalent and may denote a great range of styles, modes and genres of writing depending upon the context in which it is used. The term, as used in this debate refers to what would now be described as 'Late-Victorian Romance' or 'New Romance'. For a discussion of the evasiveness of romance as a generic signifier and for a strong working definition of Late-Victorian Romance, see Anna Vaninskaya, 'The Late-Victorian Romance Revival: A Generic Excursus', *English Literature in Transition* 51:1 (2008), 57-79 (pp. 57-61).

- 7 Walter Besant, 'The Art of Fiction' in Walter Besant and Henry James, *The Art of Fiction* (Boston: Cupples and Hurd, 1884), (pp. 3-43) (p. 3).
- 8 Ibid., p. 10.
- 9 Ibid., p. 18.
- 10 Janet Adam Smith, 'Introduction' in *Henry James and Robert Louis Stevenson: A Record of Friendship and Criticism*, ed. by Janet Adam Smith, (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1948), pp. 9-47 (pp. 24-25).
- 11 Ibid., p. 9; see for example, F. R. Leavis, *The Great Tradition: George Eliot, Henry James, Joseph Conrad* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962), pp. 43-60.
- 12 See Paul Maixner, 'Introduction' in *Robert Louis Stevenson: The Critical Heritage*, pp. 14-35.
- 13 Peter Keating, *The Haunted Study: A Social History of the English Novel 1875-1914* (London: Fontana, 1991), p. 347.
- 14 See for example, Pam Morris, *Realism* (London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 9-20.
- 15 Henry James, 'The Art of Fiction' in Walter Besant and Henry James, *The Art of Fiction* (Boston: Cupples and Hurd, 1884), pp. 51-85 (p. 70).
- 16 Morris, p. 10.
- 17 George J. Becker, 'Modern Realism as a Literary Movement' in *Documents of Modern Literary Realism*, ed. by George Becker (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963), pp. 3-38 (p. 6).
- 18 Ibid., p. 18.
- 19 Ibid., p. 24.
- 20 Morris, p. 2.

- 21 Ibid., p. 79.
- 22 Cited by Morris, p. 79, see Robert Louis Stevenson, 'A Gossip on Romance' in *Memories and Portraits* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1895), pp. 247-274 (p. 258).
- 23 Morris, p. 79.
- 24 Julia Reid, *Robert Louis Stevenson, Science and the Fin de Siècle* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 18.
- 25 Frank Swinnerton, *Robert Louis Stevenson: A Critical Study* (London: Martin Secker, 1914), p. 147.
- 26 An implication already being made in the early period of Stevenson's career: see William Archer, 'Robert Louis Stevenson: His Style and His Thought', *Time*, November 1885, 581-591 (p. 587).
- 27 See Rudyard Kipling, *Life's Handicap: Being Stories of Mine Own People* (London: MacMillan & Co., 1899); H. Rider Haggard, *Allan Quatermain* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1887).
- 28 See Bruce Mazlish, 'A Triptych: Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Rider Haggard's *She*, and Bulwer-Lytton's *The Coming Race*', in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 35, 4, October 1995, 726-745 (pp. 740-742); Robert Louis Stevenson, *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1886); see William James, *The Principles of Psychology* (New York: H. Holt and Company, 1890). William was, of course, the brother of Henry James.
- 29 Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988, p. 231.
- 30 Nicholas Daly, *Modernism, Romance and the Fin de Siècle: Popular Fiction and British Culture 1880-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 5.
- 31 Daly, p. 5; see also Raymond Williams, 'Utopia and Science Fiction', *Science Fiction Studies*, No. 16 Vol. 5 Pt.3 (1978), <http://www.depauw.edu/sfs/backissues/16/williams16art.htm> [accessed 16 June 2015].
- 32 Robert Louis Stevenson, *Essays in the Art of Writing* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1905).
- 33 Keating, *The Haunted Study*, p. 347.
- 34 Stevenson, 'A Humble Remonstrance' in J. A. Smith, ed, pp. 91, 93.



- 35 Ibid.
- 36 C. T. Winchester, 'Biographical Sketches and Notes' in *A Book of English Essays*, ed. by C. T. Winchester (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1914), pp. 295-405 (p. 400).
- 37 Kenneth Graham, 'Stevenson and Henry James: A Crossing' in *Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. by Andrew Noble (London: Vision Press, 1983), pp. 23-46 (p. 29).
- 38 Graham in Andrew Noble, ed., p. 29.
- 39 Margaret Moyes Black, *Robert Louis Stevenson* (London: Charles Scribners Sons, 1898), p. 90.
- 40 Graham in Andrew Noble, ed., p. 29; Moyes Black, p. 90.
- 41 Becker, 'Pernicious Literature' in *Documents of Modern Literary Realism*, pp. 350-351.
- 42 Keating, p. 347.
- 43 See, for example, Roderick Watson, "'You cannot fight me with a word': *The Master of Ballantrae* and the wilderness beyond dualism' in *Journal of Stevenson Studies*, 1 (2004), 1-23 (p. 2).
- 44 See, for example, Leonard Woolf, 'The Fall of Stevenson', from 'Nation and the Athenaeum' 5 January 1924, in *The Critical Heritage*, p. 518. This estimation has been challenged by later scholarship, perhaps most notably in the work of Alan Sandison, which seeks to elevate the value of Stevenson's writing by identifying the affinities between his style and the techniques of the early modernists who so summarily dismissed him (Alan Sandison, *Robert Louis Stevenson and the Appearance of Modernism* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996)).
- 45 E. M. Forster in *Aspects of the Novel*, p. 163.
- 46 Ibid., p. 103.
- 47 Brian Stableford, *Scientific Romance in Britain 1890-1950* (London: Fourth Estate, 1985), p. 9; Linda Dryden, *Joseph Conrad and H. G. Wells: The Fin-de-Siècle Literary Scene* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 42.
- 48 Keating, p. 347.
- 49 Stevenson, 'A Humble Remonstrance' in J. A. Smith, ed, p. 92.
- 50 Stevenson, 'A Gossip on Romance' in *Memories and Portraits*, p. 247.

- 51 Reid, *Robert Louis Stevenson, Science and the Fin de Siècle*, p. 18.
- 52 Jenni Calder, 'Introduction: Stevenson in Perspective' in *Stevenson and Victorian Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981), p. 4.
- 53 Reid, p. 24; see also Sigmund Freud, *Five Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* (London: Penguin, 1995), pp. 28–29.
- 54 Daly, *Modernism, Romance and the Fin de Siècle*, p. 18.
- 55 Robert Louis Stevenson, 'A Note on Realism' in *The Art of Writing and Other Essays* (London: Cassell and Company, 1884), p. 28; see also C. G. Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 43.
- 56 Robert Louis Stevenson, 'Letter 1550: To Charles Warren Stoddard' in *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. by Bradford A. Booth and Ernest Mehew, 8 vols (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994–1995), V, 203.
- 57 Stevenson, 'A Gossip on Romance', p. 264.
- 58 *Ibid.*, p. 23.
- 59 Stevenson, 'A Note on Realism', p. 24.
- 60 Calder, *Stevenson and Victorian Scotland*, p. 7.
- 61 Oliver S. Buckton, *Cruising With Robert Louis Stevenson: Travel, Narrative and the Colonial Body* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2007), p. 269.
- 62 Robert Louis Stevenson, *Kidnapped* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1921), p. 192.
- 63 See 'An Unsigned Review', *Saturday Review*, 7 August 1886 in *The Critical Heritage*, p. 239.
- 64 Reid, p. 10.
- 65 All in Reid, *Robert Louis Stevenson, Science and the Fin de Siècle*, p. 10. To others, this 'move beyond romance' prefigures or even represents an example of literary modernism: see, for example, Roderick Watson, 'Modernism' in Caroline McCracken-Flesher, ed., *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Robert Louis Stevenson* (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2013), pp. 69–75 (p. 72–73).
- 66 Reid, p. 53.
- 67 Reid, p. 31; see Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and*

*Culture at the Fin de Siècle* (London: Virago, 1992), pp. 80-82.

68 Daly, p. 18.

69 Reid, p. 35.

70 Stevenson, 'A Humble Remonstrance', p. 94; Reid, p. 35.

71 A fact, indeed, recognised and excused by Henry James: see Henry James, 'Robert Louis Stevenson' in Adam-Smith, ed., *A Record of Friendship and Criticism* p. 127.

72 Robert Louis Stevenson, 'Letter 2408: To Sidney Colvin' in *Letters*, p. 284.

73 Ibid.

74 Mrs. Grundy was a familiar figure in the idiom of Stevenson's period, as attested by references to her in contemporary reviews of Stevenson's fiction. See 'Catriona and the Daemonic', from an unsigned article, *Glasgow Herald*, 23 September 1893 in *The Critical Heritage*, p. 437; and in Stevenson's poetry as 'Grandam Grundy', from 'A Valentine's Song' in Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Complete Poetry of Robert Louis Stevenson* (New York, Neeland Media, 2011), p. 213.

75 Peter Faulkner, *Modernism* (London: Methuen, 1977), pp. 5-6.

76 Caroline McCracken-Flesher, 'Literary Criticism' in *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Robert Louis Stevenson*, p. 5.

77 Reid, p. 43.

78 Dryden, p. 24.

79 Ibid.

80 See for example, Eric Massie, 'Stevenson and Conrad: *The Ebb-Tide* and *Victory* Revisited' in *Robert Louis Stevenson and Joseph Conrad: Writers of Transition* ed. by Linda Dryden, Stephen Arata and Eric Massie (Lubbock, TX: Texas Tech University Press, 2009), pp. 30-38.

81 Emile Zola, 'The Experimental Novel' in Becker, *Documents of Modern Literary Realism*, p. 169.

82 Reid, p. 18.

## Tuned in to Radio RLS

*Stuart A. Paterson*

### **Greze-sur-Loing, 20-11-2014**

Without wishing to sound like a Big Brother House inhabitant, I've been living at Hotel Chevillon for nigh on 3 weeks now. 3 weeks ago this coming Saturday, just after midday, I fell out of the Paris-Montargis train at Bourron-Marlotte, completely unaware of what to expect, still a bit groggy from 3 days of travel & humming a rucksack roughly the same size & shape as Stevenson's donkey Modestine. I didn't want to fly, since all it does is fill me with dread for weeks beforehand – the actual flight itself is usually an anti-climax lightened only by the knowledge that it'll be over soon (though not unexpectedly soon, one hopes) & you'll magically walk back out of the plane into a world completely different from the one you left a few hours before, like travelling in a Tardis with duty free & no leg room. I have to agree with Stevenson; it's about the travelling itself, the getting there, the experience of the journey. This is why I love going anywhere by train. You get to see where you are, how it changes, what awaits you. And you can take your own drink on a train. I also agree with RLS when he says that 'There are no foreign lands. It is the traveller only who is foreign'. What a great way of looking at it, & just one more reason to love the heart & generosity of the man.

I'd been in Manchester from Wednesday until Friday morning, and then trained it down to London to catch the Eurostar from St. Pancras to Gare du Nord. I'd decided I'd like a night in Paris before making my way 70km south to Greze-sur-Loing, to acclimatise myself a bit to France, get a bit of Parisian culture down my thrapple & have a night's break from trains. This was both a wise &, in hindsight, slightly silly thing to have done. Wise, because I'd booked a hotel in Montmartre not too far from the

stunning & imperious cathedral of Sacre-Coeur & the artists' village up on the hill. Silly, because I'd booked the cheapest hotel I could find. Booking cheap accommodation is a good idea if you've been there before & know what to expect. Usually in the winter, in the likes of Oban or Mallaig, when tourists are scarce & room prices much lowered. But this was Paris.

Hotel Bervic sits just off the intersection of two of the busiest boulevards not only in Paris but, I now believe, the whole world. This was the scuzzy end of Montmartre, the busy end, populated by the sort of desperate mix of cultures & people who probably look up the hill at Sacre-Coeur & sneer at its grandiloquence & beautiful appeal. To that end, I probably slept for a total of 4 hours, serenaded to sleep by the constant wail of sirens & car horns, gently awoken by the grunt & thunder of RER trains & early morning traffic jams. But only after tramping up the 200-odd steps to gawk at Sacre-Coeur like the rest of the heaving crowds at 9 at night, wander round the deserted village, look down on the brightly-patterned & vast tapestry that is a major city at night. By Saturday morning, I was frazzled in a way that only heaving cities can make you frazzled after you've lived in the middle of nowhere for the past 2 years, & really quite desperate to jump on the train south from Gare de Lyon. Did I mention that my room was up 6 flights of stairs? Just as well that I was carrying the donkey & not the donkey carrying me.

After negotiating the Metro to Gare de Lyon, a railway station that makes the Hampton Court Maze seem simple, I eventually got to Bourron-Marlotte after an hour travelling mainly through forest & town. The director of Hotel Chevillon picked me up & brought me the 2 miles to Grez-sur-Loing. She is Bernadette Plissart, employed by the Stiftelsen Foundation to oversee the running of the place, & a lovely little bird of a woman, a curious & engaging mixture of charm & slightly baffled professionalism. The village itself, while only a surprisingly short walk from a major trunk road, was as picturesque as the photos had sug-

gested, I'd walked its streets on Google Earth, but you can't go for a pint or talk to local cats on Google Earth. It's a village but was previously designated a town, the French equivalent of our royal burghs, centuries ago. There's the 12th century Tour de Ganne, the 17th century bridge at the bottom of the garden, a plethora of streets named for writers & artists from around the globe who lived, worked & visited here over the past two centuries, an ancient church, a superb boulangerie & the surreal experience that is Le Bar Relais, run by Ernesto Fawltly & where RLS drinks to this day. (Don't let the fact that his name is Gilles & that he's a mushroom picker fool you by the way. It didn't fool me for a second.) Like RLS, I'm now almost a regular, & am greeted with handshakes & a muted expectation that I'll pay 10 Euros for a large measure of the Lagavulin which Ernesto keeps out on display like the mounted head of a 16-pointer. He's started giving me free shots just to encourage me, so I'll play that one out for as long as I can.

Hotel Chevillon itself was built in 1860 & served as one of the village's coaching houses until the early 20th century, when it eventually fell into disrepair & decrepitude, ending up being used as a store house until it was rescued by the Stiftelsen Foundation in the early '90s, & re-opened in 1993 as a retreat for artists & writers of all persuasions. They've done a bob-on job of restoring it too, a mixture of preserved features, including the original hall stairway, with modern comforts. My apartment has a bedroom, sitting room & shower room, with a view onto the garden & the river. It's cosy without being over-modernised. You always get a feel of the age & atmosphere of the place throughout the building & its grounds. There's a reasonably large library too, filled with mainly Scandinavian books, although there's a small Scottish section. I came across books donated by Louise Welsh & Jules Horne, & even found myself in a *New Writing Scotland* from years back. Yesterday, in the sitting room, I found a German bible printed in 1703, & the walls are covered in paintings by famous

Swedish & Finnish artists. At least I assume they're famous & I assume they were here at some point. Stevenson was strangely absent, except in the library, so I've donated my framed print & RLS now stands in miniature in the sitting room gazing out benignly from behind a fruit bowl. If you're ever here, pop in & say hello to him. Either here or at the bar, of course.

The first week & a half were spent soaking it up, having Cheryl, my partner, over for a marvellous few days, travelling about to Fontainebleau, Paris, Auxerre, beautiful local villages such as Moret-sur-Loing and Moncourt-Fremonville. But writing was always my intention, especially writing something for RLS's birthday on the 13th, & I felt as if fragmented bits of poem were germinating away in the back of my mind, little wisps of rhyme & line, hints of bigger things, not yet quite ready to show themselves. And now they're beginning to appear & I'm glad about that. It took 10 days to tune in, turn in & try not to drop out & now there feels like some sense of belonging, of not being foreign. I've been walking around the local area in both village & woods, round lakes & parks, popping into the odd bar & getting caught up in the odd game of boules. And at night, with no TV or traffic or trains, it's nice to sit with the other residents, drink wine, and marvel at the brief & pleasing intersections of lives brought together by art & writing & humanity. And then to go upstairs, open the window, listen to the night & get lost in what it means to really be here.

## Tacot des Lacs

*Grez-sur-Loing 24-11-2014*

These are not the woods I'm used to. Here,  
Trees are polite, straight & slim, stand yards  
Apart in tall respectful gatherings,  
Give each other room, thin arms held high  
To let you pass beneath an ever-present  
Canopy of sky, conduct the pulse of  
Autumn's heartbeat of the leaves  
Expiring quietly as they kiss the ground.

I'm loath to make much noise myself, aware  
Of scutterings in thin undergrowth,  
Sudden ducks & dives of things going about  
The fearful business of tiny lives,  
A distant, constant murmuring of water  
Neither near nor far, occasionally a dog,  
Muffled yelps of disaffected youth, a cough of car.

No birds sing, not a one, a thing I find  
Quite strange & stand awhile, wait, think  
Perhaps I'm wrong, that maybe I'm the cause  
Of held collective breath, they'll start their song  
After I've gone, but no, there's nothing,  
Not one chirp or screech or warning note,  
No thuggish chattering of sparrows, soft-called  
Beckonings of cushie-doos, yap of magpies,  
Explosive blasts of shrill surprise.



Woods without birdsong – like reading of Stevenson  
Walking to Grez from Barbizon,  
A film of images gliding across the silent  
Stage of thought, his words, his very footsteps  
Sent scattered & panicking into history's  
Heavens by a single, hopeful shot.

## On the occasion of Robert Louis Stevenson's 164th birthday

*Grez-sur-Loing, 13-11-2014*

A strange thing, you'd think, taking a framed print  
For an evening of banter & drink  
But here, where plans were made, travels mapped,  
Love found loitering in late Spring shade  
Two centuries back, we will walk out on your birthday,  
Man & print, to Le Bar Relais.

In mid-November the weather seems  
To be trying hard to remember you,  
Day upon day of sun & that sort of hypnotic light  
Which tempts dragonflies to lazy flight,  
Mesmerises the world into thinking  
We're a lifetime of seasons from winter.

Last week, after hours of floundering through  
Nearby woods, I found a path home &  
Rather magically, a tiled sign announcing  
Chemin Robert Louis Stevenson  
Complete with portrait –your body trees,  
Your face made of futures, en route to Grez.

You'd come this way in 1876  
From Barbizon, walked miles through forest  
And met your future wife at Hotel Chevillon.  
I walked you home, updated you on Scotland,  
The Referendum, heard your resigned sigh,  
Was glad to know that you'd have voted Aye.

Tonight, Louis, we'll show them who's boss,  
Slap imaginary shoulders, put right the world  
To when it was, down Normandy Calvados  
And when midnight comes walk to the old bridge,  
Drink the river, unpaint the moon,  
Meet each other this beautiful side of never.

**Editor's Note**

The Robert Louis Stevenson Fellowship is administered by the Scottish Book Trust, supported by Creative Scotland. It is an annual award, open to up to four applicants (who must be published writers living and working in Scotland) granting each of them a month long stay at the Hôtel Cheillon International Arts Centre at Grez-sur-Loing in France. Residencies are for June, July, August and November each year with accommodation in a self-catering studio apartment and a bursary of £300 per week. Travel costs are also paid for.

Grez-sur-Loing is situated at the edge of the Forest of Fontainebleau, about 70 kilometres south of Paris. It has strong connections with Robert Louis Stevenson who first visited in 1875 and indeed he met his future wife Fanny Osbourne at the Hôtel Cheillon. Stevenson found both the place, and its well-established community of writers and artists, highly attractive and he returned for three successive summers.

In those days Grez-sur-Loing was a popular creative destination for artists from America, England, Scotland and Ireland. It was particularly popular with Scandinavians in the 1880s and by the end of the century Japanese artists arrived to found what was to be a Japanese impressionist movement. The Scandinavian connection persists, for the Hôtel Cheillon is run by the non-profit Stiftelsen Foundation in Sweden, who restored the building and opened it for its present purposes in 1994, with links to art-funding organizations throughout Europe.

<http://www.scottishbooktrust.com/writing/scottish-book-trust-training-awards/the-robert-louis-stevenson-fellowship>

## Yogi in the woods: reading *The Master* between the pines<sup>1</sup>

*Neil Macara Brown*

In 'The Genesis of *The Master of Ballantrae*' Stevenson said the 'centre-piece' he 'hit upon' was 'a singular case of a buried and resuscitated fakir'.<sup>2</sup> The idea had gripped him on a cold, atmospheric night at Saranac, New York, in December 1887, when, moved by his third or fourth perusal of *The Phantom Ship*, he wished to emulate the worldwide canvas unfurled in that gothic tale. Casting around for a 'familiar and legendary subject', like 'The Flying Dutchman' used by Captain Marryat to bring his readers more quickly on board, he recalled the story of the fakir told by his uncle, Dr. John Balfour, formerly a medical inspector-general in India. How much of this far from plain tale Stevenson actually remembered is unknown, but he was at his usual pains during the planning of a novel to ensure its factual accuracy: this meant finding first-hand, witnessed accounts wherever possible.

Accordingly, one of the wants that Stevenson sought that December was '*The Best Book on Indian Conjuring*'.<sup>3</sup> This vague request, despite its clarification as '*Hindu-Indian*', seemingly stumped his New York publisher and librarian, Charles Scribner. For soon after, desperate to begin his novel on a firm footing, Stevenson harangued his London bookseller, James Bain: 'It is highly important for me to get, as soon as possible, all the available information as to the people in Hindustan who are buried alive' (*Letters*, VI, 93). Whether or not Stevenson ever conjured anything Hindu is unknown, but likely sources are posited below, based upon how both burial preparations and resuscitation methods are presented in the novel. (Helpfully, as will be seen, Stevenson himself appears to hint at a title in the text.) In support of the general argument, associated readings of some

incidents of the story are also made.

### **A hair-raising tale?**

Near the end of the saga, Sir William Johnson, the Indian superintendent, and his wilderness party including Henry Durie and his grieve, Mackellar, surprise Secundra Dass digging sacrilegiously in the grave of the Master. In his defence, the Indian ascetic frantically explains how he had buried James Durie alive to escape the murderous intentions of the earlier party of voyagers, guided by Mountain the trader, who were hell-bent upon stealing his treasure. Hurrying to disinter the Master, who had already lain over a week in the cold ground, Secundra blurts out some of the methods required in the resuscitation process, as well as the most important final preparation for burial itself: he demands Johnson 'light a fire' and help him 'rub'; and, increasingly agitated, informs the mystified man: "I teach him swallow his tongue" (pp. 230-1). Swallowing the tongue, applying warm water, and rubbing of the limbs are all vital parts of the fakir burial and revival processes to be documented below.

When the 'deadly white' face of the Master is uncovered, Mackellar remarks that his ears and nostrils are 'plugged' – an important final preparation before burial alive, also detailed below (p. 231). This peculiarity had been remarked previously by Mountain in his 'Narrative' as being 'according to some Oriental habit of Secundra's' (p. 216). Notably unremarked by Mountain, though, was why, when the body was laid in the earth, it was done 'wrapped in a fur robe, with only the face uncovered'. This should have been seen as an unusual circumstance on two counts: a fur robe was valuable in more ways than one, and, presumably, some sort of even the roughest covering for the face, such as brushwood, would have been readily to hand. Plainly, none of the party had any inkling of what Secundra and the Master were about: both of them successfully concealing their design throughout. Mackellar also relates that despite the lengthy burial, 'corruption had not

approached him'; and saying that, strangely to the observers – as the Master had been shaved 'as smooth as a baby' on burial – 'his lips and chin [were] mantled with a swarthy beard' (pp. 231-2). This last point, however, runs contrary to similar observations, noted below, where both hair and nails are said to have ceased growing during fakir interment. Here, either Stevenson was in error, or he was adumbrating that the Master, despite later appearing to show flickering signs of revival, would not survive his resurrection.

Secundra long continued attempts at reanimation: 'still the Indian rubbed the limbs and breathed in the mouth of the dead body' – another stage in the observed process of re-awakening. He finally admitted defeat, however, declaring that the climate was too cold, compared to that of India, for success (p. 233). Indeed, was it to try to offset this cold earlier, that Secundra, when the voyagers were exploring the woods to no avail for the treasure, was 'the while lying on his master's grave'? (p. 217) To this end also, perhaps, Pinkerton was buried 'hard by the Master'; he was the first of the group to be 'secretly butchered' and 'scalped' – it was thought – by a lone renegade brave dogging the party. However, that the murders were just as likely to have been committed by Secundra himself is suggested here, as the interpretation of so many of the events in the story, like those blueprinted in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, are seemingly made deliberately unclear.<sup>4</sup> (According to Mountain, Secundra only survived a similar fate because he was thought insane.) The next slaughter, that of Hicks, the drunken shoemaker, would have been made by Secundra on the same calculation that he would also, even by these rogues, receive Christian burial alongside the Master; such did not take place, though, as the party panicked, abandoned the body, and fled the scene as soon as possible. In the flight, Secundra continued to the last to 'stagger forward with a mattock on his shoulder' – firm evidence of his dogged determination to return to the grave – while the others, oblivious of

this telling fact in their desperation to escape death, 'were casting away their very food and weapons', so as to lighten their journey (p. 218). Secundra would never have willingly left the grave; he would have picked off the rest of the party one by one in the same way as he had Pinkerton and Hicks, had they remained in the area, no matter what, in their craze to find the treasure.

After much trying to revive the Master, Secundra at one point 'uttered a small cry of satisfaction', and Mackellar 'thought' he could himself 'perceive a change upon the icy countenance'. The next moment he 'beheld his eyelids flutter; the next they rose entirely, and the week-old corpse looked me for a moment in the face.' (The Hindu belief in metempsychosis, where the soul at the time of death quits the body and migrates to another, could be intended here.) That is all that Mackellar claims to have seen, although he adds that others present later declared that '[the Master] visibly strove to speak, that his teeth showed in his beard, and that his brow was contorted as with an agony of pain and effort' (p. 232). This observation, a case of coming events casting their shadows before, chillingly reprises the description of the Master made by Chevalier Burke on their parting in the woods some years earlier, near to where he would later die: 'Ballantrae turned to me with a face all wrinkled up and his teeth showing in his mouth, like what I have read of people starving' (p. 58). The description of his teeth in a rictus grin corresponds with the observation regarding those of the fakir being 'jammed so fast together' on exhumation, given by Captain Boileau in his account noted below. This was all Mackellar saw indeed, for he was, as he says, 'otherwise engaged': when the Master opened his eyes, and fixed them on Mackellar, Henry Durie dropped down dead – a distraction which, if one subscribes to metempsychosis, perhaps saved Mackellar's soul, rather than Henry's, being taken

over by the Master (p. 232).

### **Capt Osborne's journal**

The Master himself, when unburdening his woes to Mackellar on their voyage to America, possibly gives away the title of a source for the fakir burial. Foreshadowing the end of the novel, he says 'I know the world as few men know it when they come to die – Court and camp, the East and the West; I know where to go, I see a thousand openings' (p. 190). The title in question is *The Court and Camp of Runjeet Singh*, a self-illustrated journal by The Hon. W. G. Osborne, a member of the mission led by Sir William Macnaghten in 1838 to the court of the Sikh maharajah Ranjit Singh, 'The Lion of the Punjab', at Lahore, which contains a description of the famous fakir burial.<sup>5</sup>

In his account, Captain Osborne tells how the monotony of mission camp life was broken by the arrival of the celebrated 'Burying Faqueer' (whose name was Haridas). Present at one of his resurrections had been Captain Wade, the political agent at Ludhiana.<sup>6</sup> He told Osborne that General Ventura, with the maharaja and his sirdars, had buried Haridas ten months earlier in a specially built vault.<sup>7</sup> For some time before his interment Haridas had conducted a 'regular course of preparation', which was 'too disgusting to dilate upon' (Osborne, p. 125). (This, as noted by Honigberger below, involves cleaning out the alimentary canal by swallowing a strip of linen many yards long and then regurgitating it; and also using an enema while sitting in a vessel of water up to the armpits.) The final preparations involved stopping his ears, nose, and all other orifices, except for his mouth, through which it was possible for air to enter his body. Then, having been stripped and put in a linen bag, he turned his tongue back to close his gullet, and 'immediately died away into a sort of lethargy' (Osborne, p. 126). The bag, closed and affixed with the seal of the maharajah, was placed in a small wooden box, which was also locked and sealed, and put into the vault where earth was



thrown and trodden over it. Finally, a crop of barley was sown above, and guards placed around. On disinterment, Wade found Haridas to have no perceptible pulse in either his wrist or heart. Someone, with difficulty, forced back his tongue into its proper position by inserting a finger into his mouth, and continued to hold it until it gradually returned to its normal place. Wade also found the top of his head to be ‘considerably heated’, although all the other parts of his body were cool and healthy in appearance (Osborne, p. 128). Warm water was then poured over him, and he became as well as ever in two hours. Later, Haridas stated that during interment his thoughts and dreams were delightful (presumably through *yoga-nidra*, or ‘yogi sleep’ – the deepest lucid state while maintaining full consciousness); and that it was painful for him to be awakened from his lethargy. He added that his nails and hair ceased growing, contrary, as already noted, to the case of the Master when he was disinterred.

### **Dr MacGregor’s discourse**

Osborne also relates another interment and resurrection of Haridas – after ‘forty days and forty nights’ – as witnessed by Dr MacGregor, which appeared in the appendix to a medical topography of Ludhiana (Osborne, p. 131).<sup>8</sup> He said that after warm water was poured over Haridas, a hot cake of ‘otta’ (aromatic pulse meal) was placed on the crown of his head. Next, a plug of wax was removed from one of his nostrils, and someone breathed strongly through it. The mouth was then opened, and both the tongue, which had been ‘closely applied to the roof of the mouth’, and the lips were ‘anointed’ with ghee (clarified butter). All the while no pulse was felt in the wrist, even although the body temperature itself was ‘much above the standard of health’ (Osborne, p. 132). After his legs and arms were extended, and the eyelids lifted, the limbs were well rubbed and a little ghee was also applied to the eyelids. His eyeballs ‘presented a dimmed, suffused appearance, like those of a corpse’ (Osborne, p. 133).

Signs of returning life then showed, his pulse became perceptible at the wrist, and the unnatural temperature of his body rapidly diminished. 'He made several ineffectual efforts to speak, and at length uttered a few words, but in a tone so low and feeble as to render them inaudible' (Osborne, p. 133). Normal speech returned slowly, and soon he both recognised and spoke to Ranjit Singh and others present.

In a discourse upon the physiology of the case, which he states was difficult, if not impossible, to explain on physiological principles, MacGregor gives further information regarding preparations undertaken by Haridas before burial:

[T]his man gradually overcomes the power of digestion, so that milk received into the stomach undergoes no change. He next forces all the breath in his body into the brain, which is described as thereby imparting the feeling of a hot coal to the head; the lungs now collapse, and the heart, deprived of its usual stimulus, [...], 'shuts up shop'. Having thus disposed of digestion, assimilation, respiration, and circulation, all the passages of the body are next stopped, the legs and thighs are crossed, the hands and arms are pressed to the sides; in short the man presents the same appearance as when his box was opened. (Osborne, pp. 137-8).

### **Dr Honigberger's account**

Fakir digestion is also noted by John Martin Honigberger, the Transylvanian physician to Ranjit Singh during 1829-49, in his *Thirty-Five Years in the East*. He was, however, absent in Europe at the time of interment.<sup>9</sup> Honigberger was told how Haridas, 'a few days previous to his experiments, took some kind of purgative and subsisted for several days on a coarse milk regimen' (Honigberger, p. 133). Instead of food on the day of his burial, he slowly swallowed 'a rag of three fingers in breadth

and thirty yards in length', and then, in the presence of those assembled, extracted it so as to remove all foreign matter from the stomach (Honigberger, p. 134). Regarding the tongue, he was told that such fakirs had their *fraenulum linguae*, its attachment inside the mouth, cut and entirely loosened, and that it was made prominent through drawing and lengthening it by rubbing it with butter mixed with 'some pellitory of Spain'; thus it could be laid back to cover the orifice of the back part of the *fosses nasales* (nasal cavities) when about to cease breathing, and so keep air closed up in the body and head (Honigberger, p. 133).<sup>10</sup>

The order of the revival process is finely detailed by Honigberger:

On his exhumation, one of the first operations is to draw his tongue into its natural position; after this a warm aromatic paste, made from pulse meal, is placed on his head, and air is injected into his lungs and also through the ears, from which the plugs are withdrawn. By this operation, the pellets in the nostrils are driven out with considerable force and noise, and this is considered the first symptom of his resuscitation. Friction is then strenuously applied all over the body, and at length he begins to breathe naturally, opens his eyes, and is gradually restored to consciousness'. (p. 134).

### **Lt Boileau's narrative**

Wade also refers to Haridas previously having 'exhibited at Jessulmere with success', an account of which he says is in the *Personal Narrative* of Lieutenant Boileau lately published.<sup>11</sup> Boileau declares that before his arrival at Jessulmere (Jaisalmer) in Rajasthan, Haridas had been buried alive for a month near his eventual campsite there. The exhumation of Haridas, which was not witnessed by Boileau, took place on 1 April 1835 in the presence of Esur Lal, one of the ministers of the Muharawul, who had

overseen the interment. Haridas had been buried in a small stone structure about twelve feet by eight, built into the west edge of the bank of a large water tank. In its floor was a hole about three feet square in size into which he had been 'placed in a sitting posture sewed up in a linen shroud, with his knees doubled up toward the chin, his feet turned inward toward the stomach, and his hands also pointed inward toward the chest'.<sup>12</sup> The inside of the masonry lined cell was floored with many folds of woollen and other cloth, so that ants and other insects would be less able to bother him. On top were placed heavy stone slabs, some five or six feet long and several inches thick, to prevent escape; the door was built up, earth plastered over all and guards mounted. On exhumation, a *munshi* (secretary) to Captain H. W. Trevelyan of the Bombay Artillery arrived in time to see the bag enclosing Haridas being ripped open. He reported that Haridas had been taken out in a 'perfectly senseless state, with his eyes closed, his hands cramped and powerless, his stomach very much shrunk, and his teeth jammed so fast together that the by-standers were obliged to force open his mouth with an iron instrument in order to pour a little water down his throat.' Haridas gradually recovered his senses, and when Boileau spoke to him, he conversed 'in a low, gentle tone of voice', saying surprisingly that Boileau might bury him again for a year if he wished.

Boileau describes the burial method thus:

This individual is said to have acquired by long practice the art of holding his breath for a considerable time, first suspending his respiration for a short period, as during the time that one might count fifty, and gradually increasing the intervals to one hundred, two hundred and so on [...]; and he is, moreover, said to have acquired the power of shutting his mouth, and at the same time stopping the interior opening of the nostrils with his tongue [...] As a further preparation for his long burial, [he] abstains from

all solid food for some days prior to his interment, taking no other nourishment than milk, which is believed by the natives to pass off almost entirely by the urethra, so that he may not be inconvenienced by the contents of his stomach or bowels while pent up in his narrow grave; nor is his mind perfectly at ease after his restoration to the light of day, until some part of the food which he may take subsequently to that event is passed in a natural and healthy manner, so as to assure him that his system is in good order, and that no portion of his intestines have mortified. His powers of abstinence must be wonderful to enable to do without food for so long a period, nor does hair grow during the time he remains buried, – at least such is the common report; and I do not remember to have seen any beard upon his chin, although even a week's cessation from shaving would produce a considerable crop on any ordinary native. (Boileau, p. 43.)

On another occasion, Boileau claims that Haridas was suspended for thirteen days enclosed in a wooden chest, a method more preferable to him, as the box was visible on all sides and also better protected his body from insects or vermin while he remained insensible. He describes Haridas as 'rather a young man, apparently about thirty years of age', whose native village was near Karnal in Haryana, north of Delhi; and who 'generally travels about the country to Ajmer, Kotah, Indor, &c., and allows himself to be buried for weeks or months by any person who will pay him handsomely for the same.' (Boileau, pp. 42-3).

### **Trader Mountain's narrative**

Although none of the 'regular course of preparation' noted by Osborne features overtly in the account of the burial of the Master, that the process was indeed carried out can be seen from focusing in the text upon the behaviour of the Master and the

apparent misinterpretation of his actions by his companions. As preparations had to be conducted secretly, Stevenson was able to omit much of the process, except for those details, like the plugs seen on disinterment, which were by their nature last-minute affairs. However, during the campfire 'disputation' about leadership – initiated by the Master himself before he first sickened 'early in the night' – Mountain remarks him 'lying on his back, with his hands knit under his head and one knee flung across the other, like a person unconcerned in the result' (*Ballantrae*, p. 213.) Mountain also observes that when matters went against the Master being leader of the party, he 'rolled carelessly upon one side, which was done [in his opinion, according to Mackellar] to conceal the beginnings of despair upon his countenance' (p. 214). Perhaps not so, though, for when the Master rolls over on to one side, he could be seen to be completing the *Savasana*, or 'corpse pose' in yoga. This involves firstly adopting a sitting position which leads to the relaxation of the pelvis and legs, thereby then lying as flat on the back as is comfortably possible, and performing various exercises in an ordered way. These include using the hands together to 'lift the base of the skull away from the back of the neck and release the back of the neck down toward the tailbone'; and also to '[b]roaden the base of the skull too, and lift the crease of the neck diagonally into the center of the head'.<sup>13</sup> Was this was why the Master had 'his hands knit under his head'?

On completion of the exercise, the yogi must 'first roll gently with an exhalation onto one side, preferably the right', before taking two breaths, and with another exhalation press hands against the floor, lifting the torso, and dragging the head slowly after'.<sup>14</sup> The 'one knee flung across the other' by the Master would merely conform to his own personal comfort in adopting the position, which can be altered to some extent in order to accommodate individual physical or age-related needs. However, it can also be seen as being related to one of the preparations for burial alive – 'the legs and thighs are crossed' was one of the observations

made by MacGregor. The whole process – perhaps the most important part of yoga practice, which is intended to rejuvenate the mind, body and spirit – relaxes the body, calms the brain, relieves stress and depression, reduces headache, fatigue and insomnia, and also helps to lower blood pressure. The physiological benefits derived from *Savasana* include decreases in the metabolic rate and consumption of oxygen, both among the necessary prerequisites for yogic burial alive. This could be why the Master seemed to Mountain ‘like a man unconcerned in the result’ of the ‘disputation’ (p. 213). Indeed, stress-relief would have been beneficial for him at this stage, for Hastie, the fallen divinity student blinded by thought of the treasure, who thought his star ascendant around the campfire with regard to leadership of the party, in his ignorance of what the Master was about, claimed erroneously that ‘the truth was just this, Mr. Durie was damnably frightened and had several times run off’ (p. 214).

During this campfire episode, Mountain says that the Master ‘had set himself in the brightest place, and kept his face there, to be the centre of men’s eyes: doubtless on a profound calculation.’ This, as he says immediately before, had the effect of throwing all the others into relative darkness, and so ‘the firelight scarce permitted anyone to judge, from the look of his neighbours, with what result of persuasion or conviction’ the Master made upon the others (p. 213). However, in making himself the focus of attention, it is suggested that the Master thereby also indelibly impressed his countenance upon the others before he supposedly became ‘sick’ in the night, and so allowed him some considerable leeway in the falsification of his facial appearance, which is described as of a ‘waxy whiteness’ at burial, by Mountain, and a ‘deadly white’ at resurrection, by Mackellar (p. 216; p. 231). This pallor is not remarked directly in any of the medical and military accounts already quoted, but can be inferred from Dr. MacGregor’s description of how Haridas enabled his body to close down his vital functions, making him look the same at both

burial and resurrection.

### **The Master's last expedient**

When the Master, threatened with murder by the company, first pretended that he was sick in camp, he cleverly played upon the vanity of the much-disliked Hastie, who fancied he had some medical skill. He, ignorant of any real diagnosis either way of the true condition of the Master, duly announced his imminent demise to further increase his standing among the others. Although 'manifestly worse' on the second day, the Master still played for time. On the third, however, when, in 'the hazard of his last expedient', he announced himself to be dying, he perhaps still hoped that, having revealed the location of the cache, greed would hasten their departure (p. 215). Their continued presence, thinking that it was 'still possible it was a fraudulent sickness', and that the Master might escape during their absence, made him decide to move into the next and final phase of his burial preparations. At that time, Mountain thought the Master 'seemed extremely low, spoke scarce above a whisper, and lay much of the time insensible' (p. 216.) Later, when asked by Henry Durie what he had died of, Mountain said he did not know, and invested Hastie with superior medical knowledge by claiming "Hastie even never knew. He seemed to sicken natural, and just pass away": a classic case of two minds in effect combining in their ignorance to create a composite third purporting to know more than either of them (p. 222).

### **Search for the Master**

During the journey to find his treasure, the Master and Secundra, supposedly fearing murder, fell behind or aside several times from the rest of the party in what appeared as attempts at escape. These interludes, however, allowed ample time for such burial preparations that could not be conducted without raising the curiosity or suspicions of the others. The Master alone disap-



peared into the woods early one morning, after an evening when he had 'eaten with unusual heartiness and drank deep, doubtless from design' (p. 209). This was his last big meal before burial; a lack of appetite later, after suffering the effects of such surfeit would not be thought unusual, and go unremarked by the others. However, his long absence from the rest of the party would also enable an at least twelve hour fast, of the kind advocated in *Ayurveda*, the traditional Hindu medicine, which re-balances the body through better digestion, assimilation and elimination, and thus gives better nourishment. On rejoining the party back in camp late in the day, however, when explanation of his absence was called for, he cried, "Meat first and public speaking after," no doubt to get some pretence of eating over as soon as possible before the final preparations for burial, as much as to have less opposition from men who had full stomachs. Indeed, the 'disputation' over the leadership of the party immediately followed a 'hasty meal' (p. 212). The Master, still supposedly suffering from his surfeit, would not be expected to indulge heartily.

On the previous evening, the over-eating and consequent physical collapse, on ground seemingly hidden from sentry view behind his tent, had enabled him to slip away into the woods – not to escape outright as was thought, but, it is suggested, to outwit the company temporarily so as to conduct some of the mental and physical preparations for burial. The manner of his supposed collapse might suggest the result of a purgative, such as noted by Honigberger: during the night, the Master had quit his tent 'audibly mourning and complaining, with all the manner of a sufferer from surfeit'. For some while, Secundra publicly attended on his patron, who at last became more easy' (p. 209). Eventually, he supposedly fell asleep in his buffalo robe out of sight on the ground behind. (Was, too, the act of sleeping outside his tent on the 'frosty' ground done to acclimatise for the bigger sleep that was to come?) At dawn the robe was found to be empty and the Master, having 'travelled with surprising energy

for a pedestrian so unused' over wet ground, as a 'strong thaw' had 'set in' – perhaps an indication of his superior mental and physical stamina from yogic training – was finally tracked down by Mountain near noon.<sup>15</sup> He found the Master sitting on the edge of a little clearing 'with his arms folded and his back to a huge stone'. On the stealthy approach of Mountain, who himself suggests that in doing so he may have made a little noise, the Master 'raised his head and gazed directly at that quarter of the thicket where his hunter lay'. "[H]e just looked my way like a man with his mind made up, and all the courage ran out of me like rum out of a bottle." Then, when the Master looked away again, 'and appeared to resume those "meditations" in which he sat immersed before the trader's coming', Mountain slunk stealthily back and returned to seek the help of his companions (pp. 210-1). Here it is suggested that the Master was interrupted in a trance while preparing himself for his future burial through *samadhi*, or yogic meditation; he soon snapped out of it, though, gaining the upper hand by surprising his pursuers through suddenly appearing among them (another yogic feat, perhaps mirrored by his sudden arrivals and departures at Durrissdeer) and giving himself up as though nothing was amiss, before any attempt at his capture could be made.

### **Curious incident of the Master in the night**

The Master had been surprised before in a somewhat similar pose to his sitting, trancelike, in the woods. This was in the 'Adventure of Chevalier Burke in India', which Burke describes as an extraordinary incident, 'one so astonishing that I protest I cannot explain it to this day.' The curious incident occurs when Burke, with his Indian 'cipaye'(sepoy), fled at what must be intended as the fall of Pondicherry and its French forces under Count Lally, to the British in 1761. Desperately seeking shelter and supplies, they climbed over a wall into the garden of a house late at night. There, they spied two men, the Master and Secundra, seated on a

verandah on either side of a dimly lit lamp, who were both 'cross-legged, after the Oriental manner', and 'bundled up in muslin like two natives'. Having hailed the Master from a distance in the moonlight and informing him of his plight, Burke states: 'He turned, started the least thing in the world, looked at me fair in the face while I was speaking, and when I had done addressed himself to his companion in the barbarous native dialect. (pp. 134-5). The upshot was that the Master, whom Secundra declared understood no English, seemingly blanked Burke and ignored his demands for food and clothing, repeating several times, through Secundra as intermediary, the question 'how you come in a garden'. The Master 'never moved a muscle, staring at me like an image in a pagoda', Burke claims. Secundra is described by Burke as 'of an extraordinary delicate appearance, with arms like walking canes and fingers like the stalk of a tobacco pipe', an archetypal picture of an Indian ascetic, who, having withdrawn from society willingly suffers physical deprivation to satisfy his spiritual needs (pp. 135-6).

That the Master was, at the very least, being taught meditation is suggested here. Yet the incident of the Master pretending not to know Burke is belaboured by Mackellar in his footnote to Burke's manuscript, as if the explanation was to be found in the Master either having 'some very natural complaint of what he supposed to be an indiscretion' on the part of himself or Henry Durie, or having read the letter written by Burke from Troyes, regarding 'the revolution in [the Master's] fortunes' (p. 136). Moreover, that this scene was inserted only because Stevenson had read the memoirs of Lally and wanted to square the stage of his novel along the global lines of *The Phantom Ship*, is unlikely.<sup>16</sup> Neither can it have been created just to introduce Secundra, nor even to background the thoughts of Mackellar as to why Burke was blanked by the Master. The motive for inclusion was to show just how Eastern, the Master had become, dressed as he was, sitting indistinguishable from his servant (master?), Secundra,

and engaged on some spiritual path or other. But why is 'garden' repeated more than once? This is perhaps simply an allusion to those illustrations of yogis, which, more often than not in early histories, are shown seated in the garden of enlightenment, earthly delights, or suchlike. That the Master only addresses Burke through Secundra suggests that he was, at that stage, under his total guidance, and had temporarily resigned all his individual being to him as his guru or spiritual master.

### **Staying the blow**

Another instance of the remarkable balance and physical control of the Master, despite his age, comes when, on his voyage to America with Mackellar, they sit together on the poop deck in the swell after a storm. Mackellar, who had been holding on for dear life with both hands to the grating of the cabin skylight, just before his unsuccessful attempt to kick the Master overboard, says:

He was quite capable of choosing out a graceful posture, even with no one to behold him but myself, and all the more if there were any element of peril. He sat now with one knee flung across the other, his arms on his bosom, fitting the swing of the ship with an exquisite balance, such as a featherweight might overthrow. [...] Whether from my own uncertainty or his incredible quickness, he escaped the thrust, leaping to his feet and catching hold at the same moment of a stay (pp. 171-2).

Then, after their standoff, the otherwise unimaginative Mackellar adds a wonderful piece of description: 'With that he made off up the sliding deck like a squirrel, and plunged into the cabin' (p. 172). Here the Master shows the same speed and agility later remarked of him on the morning of his supposed escape in the woods from the treasure party. The sitting posture adopted

by the Master on the poop, too, is remarkably like that of a yogi. In this respect, the trade of tailoring taken up by the Master while at Albany is notable: sewing was traditionally done seated cross-legged on the floor: when he worked, he sat 'tailorwise' (p. 183).

### **Brief statement of the case**

Whether Stevenson received any printed sources about fakir burial or not, while writing *The Master*, cannot be determined conclusively either one way or the other. Aspects of both the burial and revival process, corroborated in fakir burial accounts, are used in the text sparingly and only to the extent that the narrative requires. These could have been recalled by Stevenson from the vivid story told by his uncle. Indeed he had a long, and many would say a phenomenal memory, something well known to readers of his essays and letters; moreover, his uncle, as a medical man, was very unlikely to have left out any of the unusually rich details. The error (if indeed it was one) about beard growth on the corpse of the Master suggests that Stevenson could not have had the works of either Osborne or Boileau, which both mention this peculiarity. Their exclusion only leaves the possibility of him having either seen or heard details of the work of Honigberger, the most recent of the three accounts. This is perhaps significant as being the only one that notes a purgative as part of burial preparations – but only if that is what Stevenson implies in his telling of this ever compelling story.

### NOTES

- 1 With thanks to Richard Dury for reading and commenting on the original draft.
- 2 Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Master of Ballantrae: A Winter's Tale*, Tusitala Edition Vol. 10 (London: William Heinemann Ltd, 5th imp. 1927), p. xxiii; hereafter cited in text.
- 3 *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. by Bradford Booth and Ernest Mehew, 8 vols (New Haven and London: Yale University

- Press, 1995), VI, 82; hereafter, *Letters*.
- 4 Julia Reid, in her *Robert Louis Stevenson, Science, and the Fin de Siècle* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), concludes similarly about Secundra, saying 'the scalping which they attribute to "Indian bravos" is the work of Dass, probably under James's instruction' (p. 136).
  - 5 The Hon. W. G. Osborne, *The Court and Camp of Runjeet Singh* (London: Henry Colburn, 1840); military secretary to the Earl of Auckland, Governor General of India, Osborne's record of events and impressions in the Punjab, 19 May to 13 July 1838, also has a sketch of the Sikh State. Hereafter cited in text. Extracts from this text, 'Impositions of the Indian Faqueer, who professed to be alive and resuscitated in ten months', appeared in the *Lancet* (Vol. 1, No. 862, 7 March 1840, pp. 885-8) in reply to H. M. Twedell, Esq., Bancoorah, East Indies, 'Account of a man who was buried alive for a month, and then exhumed alive' (Vol. 28, No. 715, 13 May 1837, p. 257-9). The latter is written in the form of a letter from Lieutenant A. H. Boileau (see below). Osborne's book was declared 'very trashy and not over delicate' and 'boldly pirated' (*Calcutta Review*, VI, 1844, 457); its account of Haridas was reprinted by both the *London Telegraph* and *New York Times* on 22 August 1880. Stevenson does not appear to have been aware of this latter source.
  - 6 Sir Claude Martine Wade (1794-1861), functionary on the Sutlej, who by his tact and amiable disposition won Sikh esteem and affection (*Sikh Encyclopaedia* online). Famed for forcing the Khyber in 1839, his account is in *A Narrative of the Services, Military and Political, of Lt.-Colonel Sir C. M. Wade, C.B. From the date of his appointment to India, in 1809, to that of his return to England, in 1844; with an appendix of official documents* (Ryde, Isle of Wight, 1847).
  - 7 Jean Baptiste Ventura (1792-1858), an Italian colonel formerly serving under Napoleon; from 1822 he re-organised the Sikh infantry on European lines (*Sikh Encyclopaedia* online).
  - 8 Dr William Lewis MacGregor, principal physician to Ranjit Singh and the superior of John Martin Honigberger (see below). MacGregor wrote *The History of the Sikhs; Containing the Lives of the Gooroos; The History of the Independent Sirdars or Missuls; And the Life of Runjeet Singh*, 2 vols., (London: J. Madden, 1846).
  - 9 John Martin Honigberger (1795-1865), *Thirty-Five Years in the*

*East. Adventures, Discoveries, Experiments, and Historical Sketches, relating to the Punjab and Cashmere* (London: H. Bailliere, 1852) pp. 130-5, hereafter cited in text.

- 10 The 'pellitory' is Spanish chamomile, or Mount Atlas daisy (*Anacylus pyrethrum*), used in *Ayurveda*, traditional Hindu medicine; its root oil is a toothache relief which also promotes free flow of saliva, enabling the tongue to be laid back.
- 11 Alexander Boileau, Engineers, was a topographical surveyor who served as first assistant to the Great Trigonometrical Survey of India under George Everest: 'an unmitigated disaster wherever he was deployed' according to John Keay in his *The Great Arc*, (London: Harper Collins, 2000); he went AWOL after an unfortunate incident with volatile flares in 1834 and was discharged. His tour of the Western States was made in the train of the then Lieutenant H. W. Trevelyan.
- 12 Lieutenant A. H. E. Boileau, *Personal Narrative of a Tour through the Western States of Rajwara, in 1835; comprising Beekaner, Jesulmer, and Jodhpur ...* (Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1837), pp. 41-2, henceforth cited in text.
- 13 'Corpse Pose: Savasana', *Yoga Journal* (online).
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Superior stamina was also shown by Secundra in beating the Johnson party back to the grave.
- 16 *Memoirs of Count Lally, from his embarking for the East Indies, as Commander in Chief of the French Forces in that Country, to his being sent Prisoner of War to England, after the Surrender of Pondichery* (London: Charles Kiernan, 1766). Stevenson sought from *Scribners*, c.16 December 1887, 'a good book on the French in India - Lally, and these fellows' (*Letters*, VI, 82).

## ‘The Situation was apart from ordinary laws’: culpability and insanity in the urban landscape of Robert Louis Stevenson’s London

### *Brian Wall*

Recent criticism of Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* frequently focuses on the psychological complexity of the narrative itself and of its unfortunate title characters; as Julia Reid has observed, ‘critics have resolutely rehistoricised the novella, examining how its imagination of psychological disintegration engages with a host of *fin-de-siècle* concerns.’<sup>1</sup> As Roger Luckhurst<sup>2</sup> and Robert Mighall<sup>3</sup> have separately documented, a reciprocal relationship existed between Stevenson and the early practitioners of psychology in the late nineteenth century. Stephen Arata uses Frederic Myers’s accounts of French psychiatrist Eugène Azam’s two most celebrated cases of multiple personality, ‘Félida X’ and Louis Vivet, to assert, ‘for most late Victorian thinkers, the multiplex personality was not an aberration but a condition common to us all.’<sup>4</sup> Likewise, Nancy Gish frames Pierre Janet’s theory of dissociated consciousness, articulated in a 1906 lecture at Harvard University, as ‘the most compelling framework for understanding Stevenson’s representation of duality,’<sup>5</sup> and Patrick Brantlinger and Richard Boyle link Cesare Lombroso’s study of ‘mental “ata-vism”’ to Stevenson through his friend James Sully.<sup>6</sup> While she cautions that ‘Stevenson’s familiarity with psychological debates about “multiplex personality” is questionable,’ Reid similarly notes that ‘Jekyll’s account resonates powerfully with cases of multiple consciousness, which in the 1870s and 1880s were being explored in French evolutionist psychiatry and discussed for British audiences by Myers and others.’<sup>7</sup>

This trend towards psychologising the *Strange Case* becomes



problematic when it turns to the question of criminal culpability. Citing Henry Maudsley's *Responsibility in Mental Disease*, Reid suggests, 'Jekyll attempts to avoid responsibility for Hyde's murder of Carew [...] an evasion which taps into vexed debates about criminal responsibility and insanity.'<sup>8</sup> Norman Finkel and Steven Sabat<sup>9</sup> have taken this debate literally, arguing that, under contemporary legal and psychological understanding, a defendant suffering from an analogous 'split-brain' madness would not be able to successfully plead the insanity defense. Others have taken it more symbolically and found discordant takeaways: Mighall utilises Daniel Tuke's 1885 discussion of 'moral insanity' to argue that a figure like Hyde 'is a reversion to a primitive type,'<sup>10</sup> while William Veeder, on the other hand, describes Hyde as an archetype of modernity, representing the phallic aggression of the son against the father where '[p]articulate men then direct their longings toward both satisfying and trying to overthrow this Standard so that they can seem to occupy a Throne that is actually only mythical and forever out of reach.'<sup>11</sup> Depending on the critic, Hyde models mankind's degenerative past or symbolises the destructive potential of its chaotic future.

While these critical readings are crucially insightful in many ways, two elements of these arguments require further refinement. First, rather than embracing the question of criminal culpability, Stevenson seems to deliberately sidestep the issue by crafting a character that falls outside the parameters of the insanity defense under the controlling formulation of the *M'Naghten* Rule.<sup>12</sup> Second, Stevenson's use of the tropes of late nineteenth century Gothic fiction in his depiction of the London cityscape complicates Mighall's linkage between atavism and modernity as a trope of *fin de siècle* Gothic fiction. In this essay, I argue that the psychological fissure of Henry Jekyll and Edward Hyde is analogous to Stevenson's fictionalised London cityscape, which pulls apart binaries to reveal a complex amalgamation of apparent prosperity and ephemeral poverty. This linkage between divided

city and divided self allows Stevenson to utilise the concept of mental illness to sidestep rather than embrace insanity as a possible excuse for Jekyll's criminal culpability, as Jekyll's body is literally divided in a way that renders the question of culpability legally moot.

### **Urban division, population expansion, and the failure of property law**

In noting the obvious duality of Stevenson's title character and geography, some critics have gone a step too far by treating both the divided figures of Henry Jekyll and Edward Hyde and Stevenson's London as binary, Janus-like opposites. Linda Dryden, for example, writes of 'the contrasts contained within the metropolis that Stevenson exploits in his gothic tale of duality: Jekyll's respectable home and Lanyon's comfortable fireside oppose Hyde's Soho residence.'<sup>13</sup> This critique was also pervasive amongst contemporary critics of London's divided standards of living. Despite persuasive demographic information, such as Charles Booth's maps, showing an intermingled rather than bifurcated capital, the overlap between rich and poor was, in the words of Deborah Weiner, 'lost in a pervasive single image of the East End'<sup>14</sup> in which 'the middle class residents of the West End were able in their rhetoric to relegate the population of the East End to the status of foreigner, even a wild race. The East End remained for decades the "abyss" in the consciousness of outsiders, explored by those with the courage to trespass into the unknown.'<sup>15</sup> By tapping into contemporary concerns about the limited housing supply for a massive population and the implications of modifying existing structures to accommodate new residents in crafting his version of this 'abyss' for his *Strange Case*, Stevenson's London reflects the intermingled and disparate nature of the actual city rather than an easily divided binary.

By the 1880s, London's burgeoning population had stretched the limits of its housing supply. Gareth Stedman Jones marks the

underdeveloped rail networks of the 1880s and the commercial expansion of central London as reasons for this overcrowding; 'On the one hand the failure of the railway companies to provide enough cheap and conveniently-timed workmen's trains had prevented a sufficient influx into the suburbs of workmen who could otherwise have afforded to do so. On the other hand the lack of any significant industrial decentralization tied poorly-paid workers to the central area.'<sup>16</sup> Sharon Marcus observes that, despite the swelling demand for mass accommodation, 'the enormous increases in London's population did not translate into purpose-built apartment houses but instead into the urban and suburban expansion of single-family housing stock.'<sup>17</sup> This was not a mere oversight, but a deliberate choice, as government officials, urban planners, and residents alike viewed the concept of mass housing prevalent in Paris as unbefitting the British capital. As Michael Jenner argues, 'the suspicion of flats was also part of the strongly anti-urban sentiments of the Victorians who, although they made London the world's largest and most powerful metropolis, recoiled from their own creation and sought refuge in a suburban illusion of a lost world of pastoral innocence.'<sup>18</sup> This sense of 'pastoral innocence' tied into the strong linkage between home ownership and national identity; any 'suggestion that Londoners renounce the single-family house as the ideal building type contradicted decades of writing to the contrary – in housekeeping manuals, government documents, architectural journalism, and social commentary. To be English was to live in a house, and to live in a house was English.'<sup>19</sup> Attempts to alter the status quo by providing mass housing were therefore attacked on both ideological and moral grounds: 'In addition to condemning the apartment house as a deviation from national standards, writers on urban housing warned of the dire moral effects apartments had on their inhabitants.'<sup>20</sup> This moral concern was linked to the perceived importance of the crucial independence of individual families in Victorian England; critics highlighted the 'real con-

cern that the communal entrance represented an unacceptable intrusion on the privacy of the family and a potential danger to its morals.<sup>21</sup>

The reality, however, did not match the rhetoric. Rather than promoting a city of atomised families occupying single-family dwellings, London's prevailing architectural preferences instead exacerbated the existing problem. In 1878, architect William H. White cited topographical and statistical maps showing that although London's homes displayed the facades of private houses, internally they were divided into apartments: within central London 'the great mass of the residents were lodgers. The neighborhood of the Strand is almost entirely rented by tenants and sub-tenants, who occupy a storey, a set of rooms, or a single room' of a building that was 'originally a private house.'<sup>22</sup> As Lynn MacKay demonstrates, 'What this meant in practice was severe overcrowding in the housing stock that remained in central London. The Strand district medical officer noted in 1858 that inmates at Pentonville Penitentiary received 800-900 cubic feet of air in their cells. Rooms in old houses in the Strand district, now the homes of the poor, allowed from 164 to 310 cubic feet of air per occupant.'<sup>23</sup> Homes that had formerly comfortably housed one affluent family were now divided between multiple groups, leading to the same problems planners feared would come with purpose-built mass housing. Efforts such as the Artisans' and Labourers' Dwelling and Improvement Act of 1875<sup>24</sup> purportedly provided for the demolition of housing deemed to be unsuitable and the construction of new housing, but delegated privileges to individual property owners rather than empowering any governing authority. This instead 'caused a rash of speculation in the insanitary areas of London,'<sup>25</sup> making 'the most profitable method' of gaining rents 'to subdivide and overcrowd.'<sup>26</sup> Jones cites the Royal Commission's 1881 report, which documented 'there are some good houses, where some good families were brought up, where they used to keep their carriages; they retire

into the country, and those houses are let out to a family in each floor, there is a continual outgo of good people, and an in-come of working people.<sup>27</sup> MacKay cites Donald Olsen for the proposition that 'Down to the twentieth century most working-class Londoners lived in homes that had not been built with them in mind; down to the nineteenth century all of them did.'<sup>28</sup>

In addition to failing to provide adequate housing for the working class, splitting up formerly unified homes into separate flats was seen to create a sense of fracture and disunity; the same building, formerly a cohesive home for a stabilised family unit, now housed a combination of families, individuals, and commercial enterprises. Some builders experimented with communal forms of housing intended to add an air of fashion and respectability to this apparent architectural necessity, such as the mansion blocks of Victoria Street and the Albert Hall Mansions, 'but the notion of collective living did not immediately set a trend.'<sup>29</sup> The formerly unified houses became what Sharon Marcus has called 'the haunted house,'<sup>30</sup> exemplifying the failed utility of single-home unity in the British capital. The flight of the wealthy from the core of the capital, as well as the accommodation of the influx of new Londoners at the expense of the old guard, was seen as a symptom of the 'mass moral and spiritual corruption' that accompanied the mass population of London.<sup>31</sup>

Although Henry Jekyll's residence may initially seem to embody the national ideals of unified home ownership, it in fact vividly demonstrates the divided nature of the city. Stevenson describes his street as 'a square of ancient, handsome houses, now for the most part decayed from their high estate and let in flats and chambers to all sorts and conditions of men: map-engravers, architects, shady lawyers and the agents of obscure enterprises.'<sup>32</sup> The hallmarks of the neighborhood's fall from its former glory are largely attributed to its increased accessibility: as the old homes have been broken up and 'let in flats and chambers,' the homes have accordingly 'decayed from their high

estate.' This cheapening of property value has undoubtedly led to the exodus of the formerly respectable, opening the gate for the influx of 'shady lawyers' and other undesirable characters.

In contrast to his new and disreputable neighbours, however, Jekyll's home is 'still occupied entire' and 'wore a great air of wealth and comfort' (p. 42). Here, Stevenson's wording creates the appearance of linking Jekyll's capacity to maintain sole, undivided ownership of a single-use home with both financial security and social respectability, although the descriptive 'wore' belies that impression. It appears irrelevant to Utterson's narration that the 'agents of obscure enterprises' may produce more monetary value in one small room than Jekyll's experiments generate from his spacious laboratory, or that three 'shady lawyers' may live and work in a smaller space than an uninhabited room in Jekyll's cavernously empty dwelling. Jekyll's home does not produce, nor does it create; instead, it *wears* the impression of prosperity without doing anything to perpetuate it.

Much as Edward Hyde 'wears' the façade of Henry Jekyll as a convenient cover for his crimes, the air of respectability surrounding Jekyll's home masks its true nature as one of Sharon Marcus's 'haunted houses,' both as his place of business and as his residence. The first role of the house – Jekyll's home as surgery and laboratory – is limited by his decision to forgo medical practice in favour of radical experimentation. As Lanyon dismissively details, Jekyll has long since departed from treating patients in favour of developing his compound, which Lanyon derides as 'a series of experiments that had led (like too many of Jekyll's investigations) to no end of practical usefulness' (p. 73). This decision means that Jekyll's practice now treats only a single patient: himself. Similarly, his compound is not intended for widespread distribution or sale: Jekyll's focus is purely personal rather than medical.

Jekyll's home as residence, while temporarily 'occupied entire,' seems inevitably destined to follow in the broken-up footsteps of

the neighbouring houses. As a bachelor, Jekyll has no son or heir upon whom to bestow title to his carefully preserved home. The successors designated in his will are similarly 'unproductive,' as Utterson is similarly an elderly bachelor and Hyde, of course, has no children. Utterson, despite serving as Jekyll's executor, does not believe his friend's estate planning to be sound. 'This document had long been the lawyer's eyesore. It offended him both as a lawyer and as a lover of the sane and customary sides of life, to whom the fanciful was the immodest' (p. 37). The 'air of wealth and comfort' of Jekyll's home serves therefore as both a mask concealing a far shadier enterprise than those of his map-engraving and litigating neighbours and the failure to propagate his family line.

Jekyll's home becomes the legal locus of his attempt to rectify his physical 'unproductivity' by creating a legal heir through his transforming draught. Lanyon's disapproval of Jekyll's 'unproductive' experiments doubles the 'unproductive' nature of Jekyll's home, which cannot be handed down to a son and appears destined for the division into flats endemic to his neighbourhood. His experiments, however, also provide the cure for this problem: by creating a younger and separate self, Jekyll is then able to legally transmit his property to Hyde, ordering that 'all his possessions were to pass into the hands of his "friend and benefactor Edward Hyde"' (p. 37). In this regard, Utterson fills the same disapproving legal role that Lanyon does in medicine. His embrace of the 'sane and customary sides of life' is not yet an explicit rejection of Hyde as Jekyll's double, as Utterson is not yet privy to the secret of Hyde's creation, but stems from the circumvention of ordinary terms of property distribution and inheritance.

Importantly, the will is a holographic document of Jekyll's creation rather than a professional testament crafted by Utterson, as the lawyer, 'though he took charge of it now that it was made, had refused to lend the least assistance in the making

of it' (p. 37). Here, Utterson's refusal to participate in the creation of the will indicates the unsettling ramifications of Jekyll's attempt to circumvent inheritance law by making himself his own beneficiary, although his willingness to execute the terms of the document complicate that resistance. Even though Jekyll has no physical heir, Utterson seems to prefer the legal fiction of conventional intestate distribution by allowing the property to descend to any descendant, no matter how attenuated, rather than to grant it to a suspicious outsider with only a tenuous claim to the estate.

Stevenson inverts the ostentatious façade of Jekyll's home in his depiction of Hyde's Soho hideaway, which both reinforces and rebuts the prevailing presumption of East End decay, which 'stood for all that was sordid and frightening in the Victorian city.'<sup>33</sup> Indeed, on first glance Hyde's Soho appears as blighted as Jekyll's aristocratic square seems affluent. Utterson's viewpoint acts as the narrative window through which Soho is observed, casting the 'East End as a foreign land, beset with danger for the inexperienced explorer.'<sup>34</sup>

Utterson's narrative certainly reflects the voyeurism of the wealthy urban explorer, as he disparagingly notes the 'muddy ways,' 'slatternly passengers,' 'gin palace,' 'low French eating house,' and 'many women of many different nationalities passing out, key in hand, to have a morning glass' that compose the 'blackguardly surroundings' that mark his carriage journey (p. 48). Utterson's mode of transportation is crucial to this depiction: until he arrives at Hyde's home, this is purely a superficial impression derived from observing the streets from the safety of his carriage. As Lynda Nead observes, 'The streets of the city were the most visible signs of its progress or degeneration. They were sites of passage, communication and transaction of business, and to many of those involved in the debates about the condition of London its streets were its major defect.'<sup>35</sup> These streets were popularly depicted as 'ill-smelling, filthy, dark and



noisome places [...] uproar in the streets and courts was also the norm and had various sources. Rows and fisticuffs were, according to contemporary observers, distressingly common.<sup>36</sup> Utterson's voyeurism matches the standard assumptions about the causes of poverty which social reformers such as Charles Booth attempted to correct; as Booth wrote in 1892, 'Vice, drink, and laziness, themselves closely bound together, fill also a great place in connection with sickness and lack of work – or we may reverse this and show how sickness and lack of work, and the consequent want of proper food, end in demoralisation of all kinds, and especially in drink.'<sup>37</sup> This dirty, decayed, and violent version of the East End seems perfectly calibrated for someone of Hyde's diabolical character; as Dryden asserts, 'Soho remains in a perpetual state of murky twilight, its inhabitants more like spectres than solid forms [...] in Soho, criminal activity is tolerated and flourishes; it is the nature of place, as reflected in the swirling mists that obscure and envelop vice and crime. Hyde belongs here, among the degenerate population who will ask no questions, or turn a blind eye to his activities.'<sup>38</sup>

The actual East End and Stevenson's Soho, however, are not as monochromatic as they may appear; much like Jekyll's ostensibly refined square, Hyde's neighbourhood is more complex than it seems at first glance. Despite the voyeuristic descriptions of urban journalists and explorers, the East End was not a uniform block; as MacKay observes, 'London's crowded streets may have been overwhelming, both in terms of noise and sheer numbers of people and vehicles, but it was not a city of anonymous multitudes. Rather, it teemed with small neighbourhoods consisting of a street, a court or an alley or two.'<sup>39</sup> This does not mean that the 'gin palaces' and 'slatternly women' of Utterson's depiction did not exist; rather, the streets created an impression of uniformity that, as Stevenson demonstrated, mask the actual heterogeneity of London's dangerous spaces. Hyde's landlady serves as the initial illustration of this concept, as she 'had an evil

face, smoothed by hypocrisy; but her manners were excellent' (p. 48). This false impression is matched by Utterson's sojourn into Hyde's quarters, which 'were furnished with luxury and good taste' (p. 49). Just as the façade of Jekyll's home obscures the horrible truth of his experiments and creates a false impression of enduring posterity, so too does the disreputable exterior of Hyde's neighbourhood mask respectability, wealth, and 'good taste' within. This creates a façade within a façade, as the clash between internal respectability and external vice mirrors Soho's proximity to London's fashionable geographic locations; as Mighall argues, 'Soho's relation to respectable London resembles Hyde's relation to his more upright twin Dr. Jekyll. Surrounded by the higher districts of May Fair and Pall Mall, Soho's relation to respectable London is therefore a topographical replication of the Hyde within the Jekyll.'<sup>40</sup> Additionally, I would argue that the inside of Hyde's lair is indicative of the deceptively ambiguous nature of the seemingly monochromatic East End, showing the Jekyll within the Hyde as much as it reveals the Hyde within the Jekyll. The preservation of some part of Jekyll within Hyde furthers the 'fanciful' nature of the will, which has allowed Jekyll to maintain at least some portion of himself as his own heir.

Stevenson's London demonstrates a complicated intermingling of wealth and poverty, frequently living shoulder-to-shoulder and hiding behind a façade of squalor or respectability. While Hyde's brutal rampages are tied to these surroundings, environmental factors only partially answer the question of Jekyll's resulting criminal capability. Considering an application of the insanity defense to Jekyll illustrates Stevenson's more complex take on accountability, as the failure of the urban landscape and civic institutions are explicitly linked, but not solely responsible, for his destabilisation.

**Dissociative identity disorder and the *M’Naghten* standard**

Stevenson studied law at the University of Edinburgh, where he would have learned the Scots law version of the insanity defense. The Scots version is grounded in the commentaries of Baron Hume, who held that the defendant must suffer from a mental disorder that amounts ‘to an absolute alienation of reason.’<sup>41</sup> Stevenson also spent time at the Inns of Court in London, however, and doubtless would have been aware of the *M’Naghten Rules*, the English formulation of the insanity defence created by the House of Lords following the case of Daniel M’Naghten, a Glaswegian who thought he was shooting at Sir Robert Peel, but instead killed Parliamentary secretary Edward Drummond. Following M’Naghten’s acquittal by reason of insanity under the old ‘right-or-wrong’ test and the resulting public outcry, the House of Lords published the following formulation:

the jurors ought to be told in all cases that every man is presumed to be sane, and to possess a sufficient degree of reason to be responsible for his crimes, until the contrary be proved to their satisfaction; and that to establish a defence on the ground of insanity, it must be clearly proved that, at the time of the committing of the act, the party accused was labouring under such a defect of reason, from disease of the mind, as not to know the nature and quality of the act he was doing; or, if he did know it, that he did not know he was doing what was wrong.<sup>42</sup>

There are four key elements to this test: 1) the defendant must have defective reason, 2) the source of defective reason must be a disease of the mind, and the result of that defective reason must be that the defendant *either* 3) does not know the nature and quality of his actions, *or* 4) does not know that what he is doing is wrong. As the *Strange Case* occurs in London (and, as

Stevenson may have noted with a particular irony given his and M’Naghten’s shared Scottish heritage, English law still applies to Scots who kill in England), the *M’Naghten* formulation would have applied over the Scots version of the defence.

Real life attempts to psychologically diagnose a defendant for the purposes of proving legal insanity are heavily disputed, and contemporary debates about the insanity defence question the efficacy of such diagnoses in criminal trials: as Christopher Slobogin has argued, ‘Any test for insanity, whether it focuses on affective appreciation, volitionality, or irrationality, is a futile attempt to define a particular type of blamelessness: “controllessness.”’<sup>43</sup> A literary application of the planks of the defence to characters such as Jekyll and Hyde, on the other hand, is less futile: while Stevenson invokes the terminology of dissociative identity disorder as the ‘disease of the mind’ with which his characters are afflicted, he carefully preserves Jekyll’s criminal culpability by maintaining cognition and volition.

Psychological approaches to Henry Jekyll and Edward Hyde have focused on the Victorian construct of ‘multiplex personality,’ known colloquially as multiple personality disorder or, in contemporary psychological terms, dissociative identity disorder (DID). The connection between popular psychology and fiction is not accidental: linking Stevenson’s manipulation of the uncanny as anticipatory to Freud’s insistence on the context of the real, Arata asserts that ‘*Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* is a good instance of a Gothic work whose episodes of uncanniness emerge from “the world of common reality.”’<sup>44</sup> While the body of contemporary research on dissociative identity disorder is relatively minute compared to that of other psychological disorders such as depression and schizophrenia,<sup>45</sup> it carried a prominent place in psychological literature of the 1880s.

While the precise diagnostic measurements of the disease have varied, there is a general consistency between the principles articulated by Azam and Janet and the modern provisions of the

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). The DSM provides four criteria to help medical professionals diagnose dissociative identity disorder:

- 1) Two or more distinct identities or personality states are present in the individual,
- 2) These distinct identities take over the individual's behaviour recurrently,
- 3) The 'main identity' is unable to recall important personal information, and this inability is too severe to be attributed to mere ordinary forgetfulness, and
- 4) The disturbance is not an outcome of substance abuse or of a general medical condition.<sup>46</sup>

These criteria are similar in many ways to those observed by Victorian psychologists in the 1880s. Azam's Félicité X, normally 'reserved, melancholy, and timid,' would often 'fall asleep and awake gay, active, and free of her otherwise frequent illnesses [...] when she awoke in her presumed "natural" state, it was without memory of the second.'<sup>47</sup> She also became sexually active under the control of her second personality; this came as a complete shock to Félicité, who later discovered that she was pregnant but had no memory of any contributory events.<sup>48</sup> Frederic Myers called this second state 'markedly superior to the first [...] Félicité's *normal* state was in fact her *morbid* state: and the new condition, which seemed at first a mere hysterical abnormality, brought her at last to a life of bodily and mental sanity.'<sup>49</sup>

As psychological diagnosis is only one part of the legal concept of insanity, even if Jekyll's transformation into Hyde is the result of multiplex personality or dissociative identity disorder, this does not settle the question of his legal culpability. Although his motive is possibly self-serving, in his own 'Full Statement of the Case,' Jekyll expresses the belief that he is not legally at fault for the actions during transfiguration: 'Henry Jekyll stood at times

aghast before the acts of Edward Hyde; *but the situation was apart from ordinary laws*, and insidiously relaxed the grasp of conscience. It was Hyde, after all, and Hyde alone, that was guilty' (p. 83, my emphasis). Although Jekyll's statement may scramble to justify his own legal innocence despite a conviction of his own moral turpitude, that analysis may be technically correct.

While Jekyll and Hyde appear to satisfy the first two elements of a dissociative identity disorder diagnosis – two distinct identities that alternate control – the last two elements are more problematic. Depending on the nature of Jekyll's compound, the fourth criterion – dissociation may not be induced chemically – may take this case outside the realm of DID. Stevenson is not overly detailed on the exact nature of the draught; as Donald Lawler notes, 'Stevenson's emphasis is not on scientific process but rather on those effects of transformation more fantastic than experimental.'<sup>50</sup>

The third criterion – loss of memory by the main identity and control by a secondary identity – adds a more concrete complication. In contrast to the loss of recall experienced by patients such as Félicité X, Jekyll explicitly states that this amnesiac effect does not occur when Hyde is in control: 'My two natures had memory in common' (p. 85). While 'Henry Jekyll's Full Statement of the Case' is likely psychologically problematic, it does make clear that both Jekyll and Hyde share memory and awareness; although only one personality takes physical form at any given moment, both sides are equally cognizant and remember the other's actions. This was evident from Hyde's first appearance, as Jekyll recalls, 'when I looked upon that ugly idol in the glass, I was conscious of no repugnance, rather of a leap of welcome' (p. 81). Although Hyde is physically in control, Jekyll retains his ability to look back through Hyde's eyes.

It seems evident by the failure of these third and fourth elements that Jekyll's bizarre experiment has taken his condition beyond the bounds of dissociative identity disorder. Rather than

multiple personalities inhabiting a unitary and consistent physical form, something entirely different occurs. As Jerrold Hogle explains, 'What makes Stevenson's best-known *doppelgänger* story such a "Strange Case" is not the reflection of part of the self in a different person (more conventional than "strange" in gothic fiction by 1886). It is the fact that refiguration occurs in and across a single body.'<sup>51</sup> When transformation occurs, two entirely separate physical and legal entities are created. These separate selves do not comfortably fit into late nineteenth-century psychological categories; 'the gothic relationship between Jekyll and Hyde is more complicated than the Stevensons themselves could have guessed without knowing the twentieth century.'<sup>52</sup>

These complications are reflected in Lanyon's and Utterson's inability to properly diagnose Jekyll's malady, and also serve as a commentary on their ultimate failure as archetypes of the medical and legal professions respectively. Lanyon initially feuds with Jekyll due to his perception of the latter's excessive flights of fancy; as he tells Utterson, 'He began to go wrong, wrong in mind' (p. 38). After receiving Jekyll's letter, he writes 'I made sure my colleague was insane' (p. 72). He further describes Jekyll's notes as 'a series of experiments that had led (like too many of Jekyll's investigations) to no end of practical usefulness [...] The more I reflected, the more convinced I grew that I was dealing with a case of cerebral disease' (p. 73). For Lanyon, mental illness, while an unfortunate calamity, at least is a rational explanation for his former friend's irrational behaviour. He sees Jekyll's turn from scientific medical study to 'the mystic and the transcendental' (p. 78) as the turn of a distended mind, which fits his rational understanding of human psychology as articulated by his real life medical analogues.

The truth about Jekyll, however, is far worse than Lanyon's diagnosis of mental illness. Instead, as he observes Hyde transforming back into Jekyll before his very eyes, Lanyon's reaction is far more akin to that of an asylum patient than one who treats

mental illness: “O God!” I screamed, and “O God!” again and again’ (p. 77). Lanyon’s shock is not limited to his repeated shriek in the moment; the trauma of beholding the transfiguration is fatal to the esteemed physician. Lanyon’s closing letter to Utterson indicates, ‘My life is shaken to its roots; sleep has left me; the deadliest terror sits by me at all hours of the day and night; I feel that my days are numbered, and that I must die, and yet I must die incredulous’ (p. 77). Unlike a readily diagnosable and easily explicable standard Victorian case of multiplex personality, the strange case of Jekyll’s scientifically implausible but undeniably verifiable transformation shocks Lanyon into an early grave – yet he remains ‘incredulous.’ Lanyon cannot cognitively accept Jekyll’s transformation despite his firsthand experience of it. In a sense, he is too grounded in his own sense of the ‘real’ to comprehend the existence of the fantastic and terrible phenomenon that Jekyll has presented, leaving his solid medical training undone at the altar of the ‘unscientific balderdash’ (p. 38) he had so contemptuously dismissed.

Unlike Lanyon, Utterson is relatively uninterested in the clinical nature of Jekyll’s aberrant behaviour, focusing instead on the legal ramifications of Jekyll’s increasingly bizarre choices. His suggestion of Jekyll’s inhibited mental capacity also comes in his professional role, as he decries his friend’s will, which gives all of his property to the enigmatic Hyde, as ‘madness’ (p. 37). Unlike Lanyon, Utterson is given no opportunity in the narrative to voice his reaction to the revelation of Jekyll’s dual identity: although Stevenson does not record Utterson’s reaction to Jekyll’s final statement, in a chilling way, Utterson’s utter silence at the end of the novella may speak for itself, allowing Jekyll’s strange case to close without a defence from his attorney. Interestingly, it is also important to remember that Jekyll is not Utterson’s only legal client in the story, as he also represented the murdered Sir Danvers Carew: ‘Carew was my client, but so are you’ (p. 50). While Utterson could not have known it until the revelation of



Jekyll's final statement, he unknowingly represented both the victim of a crime (as well as, presumably, his heirs) and, as the executor of a will in his favour, his killer, Edward Hyde. This conflict of interest would mean that, ethically, Utterson would need to decline representing either party. His failure – or perhaps inability – to act or comment at the end of the novella, therefore, may additionally signify Utterson's duty to recuse himself, suggesting an institutional inability to function in the strange circumstances of Stevenson's strange case.

While the implications of Stevenson's reconfiguration of multiplex personality have important ties to property law and are psychologically noteworthy, they are also crucial in determining Jekyll's culpability under *M'Naghten*, which is necessary in determining Jekyll's credibility when he claims that 'it was Hyde, and Hyde alone, that was guilty' (p. 83). As stated above, even if Jekyll is deemed to suffer from a 'disease of the mind,' the insanity defence would only apply if he could demonstrate that he either a) did not understand the nature and quality of his actions, or b) did not understand that what he was doing was wrong. As the narrative plainly indicates, Jekyll and Hyde are not confused about the nature of their actions. Although the crimes are actually committed in the person of Hyde, Jekyll vicariously experiences both his named and unnamed crimes and, at least initially, glories in the respite from his professional and pious face:

I was the first that could thus plod in the public eye with a load of genial respectability, and in a moment, like a schoolboy, strip off these lendings and spring headlong into the sea of liberty [...] The pleasures which I made haste to seek in my disguise were, as I have said, undignified: I would scarce use a harder term. But in the hands of Edward Hyde, they soon began to turn toward the monstrous. (p. 83)

Although Jekyll's initial pleasure dissipates into terror, the nature of Hyde's actions have not changed, but only the degree to which they shock Jekyll's moral sensibility. Both Jekyll and Hyde clearly understand when Hyde's actions have crossed the line between decadent pleasure seeking and criminal degradation. At the murder of Sir Danvers Carew, Hyde 'tasted delight from every blow' and 'had a song upon his lips,' while the post-transformation Jekyll 'with streaming tears of gratitude and remorse, had fallen upon his knees and lifted his clasped hands to God' (p. 87).

To satisfy the *M'Naghten* requirements using dissociative identity disorder, the theory behind the defence is that the control personality, or 'real' person, cannot be held legally accountable because another personality was in control, and the primary personality was not aware of and cannot remember the alternate's action. In Jekyll's case, however, Jekyll has both full memory and full capacity to understand Hyde's actions, and he acknowledges his own fault: 'no man morally sane could have been guilty of that crime upon so pitiful a provocation; and that I struck in no more reasonable spirit than that in which a sick child may break a plaything. But I had *voluntarily* stripped myself of all those balancing instincts [...] Instantly the spirit of hell awoke in me and raged' (p. 87, my emphasis). Here, Jekyll presents an interesting dichotomy. His actions in the person as Hyde serve as *prima facie* evidence of his lack of 'moral sanity,' which suggests insanity and a lack of culpability. This moral turpitude, however, is due to his 'voluntary' and volitional decision to remove his 'balancing instincts;' finding Jekyll or Hyde insane would negate the autonomy required to voluntarily strip away those balancing instincts.

While Jekyll would probably not be protected by the insanity defence, it would still be difficult to find a legal doctrine that would allow for his criminal conviction for the actions of Edward Hyde. Ironically, while Jekyll is most likely more criminally

guilty than a genuinely insane defendant under *M'Naghten*, he is far less likely to be prosecuted – at least, not in the form of Henry Jekyll. Legally, Jekyll's 'Strange Case' is truly strange. Simply stated, Jekyll and Hyde are not just two distinct personalities like those of Fêlida X, but two completely different distinct physical beings. The 'smaller, slighter, and younger' (p. 81) Edward Hyde is so physically different from his counterpart that Jekyll has the freedom, when he wishes 'to doff at once the body of the noted professor,' to drink his compound and 'assume, like a thick cloak, that of Edward Hyde' (p. 82). This guise serves a double purpose: initially conceived as a mask for Jekyll to keep him 'safe of all men's respect, wealthy, beloved,' it eventually becomes a shield for Hyde, 'the common quarry of mankind, hunted, houseless, a known murderer, thrall to the gallows' (p. 89). As the law has no structural provision to convict a man for the crimes he commits in another physical form, the transforming draught legally emancipates Jekyll from the threat of prosecution despite his likely culpability under *M'Naghten*.

### **Conclusion**

Stevenson's use of the dual entropic forces of modernity and the primeval allow us to consider the alignment of post-traditional inheritance urban demographics with the insanity defence. While Jekyll would probably not have been able to plead not guilty by reason of insanity for the murder of Sir Danvers Carew, Stevenson's London suggests that he operates under a sort of 'culpable insanity,' a madness which does not diminish his criminal responsibility and is inextricably tied to the landscape itself, which has become estranged from the traditional protections of property law. This London, which architecturally and individually represents the uneasy coexistence of traditionally dichotomised attributes of good and evil, subjects the supposed aristocratic bastions of legality and virtue to a modern entropy.

NOTES

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- 3 Robert Mighall, *A Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction: Mapping History's Nightmares* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
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- 5 Nancy Gish, 'Jekyll and Hyde: The Psychology of Disassociation,' *International Journal of Scottish Literature*, 2 (2007), 1-10 (p. 1).
- 6 Patrick Brantlinger and Richard Boyle, 'The Education of Edward Hyde: Stevenson's "Gothic Gnome" and the Mass Readership of Late-Victorian England' in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde After One Hundred Years*, ed. by William Veeder and Gordon Hirsch (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1988), p. 273.
- 7 Reid, p. 96.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Norman J. Finkel and Steven R. Sabat, 'Split-Brain Madness: An Insanity Defense Waiting to Happen,' *Law and Human Behavior*, 8.3 (1984), 225-52.
- 10 Mighall, p. 148.
- 11 Jerrold E. Hogle, 'Children of the Night: Stevenson and Patriarchy,' in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde After One Hundred Years*, p. 165.
- 12 As discussed below, the House of Lords created the *M'Naghten* Rules in 1843 in response to perceived inadequacies in the insanity defence.
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- 15 Weiner, p. 9.
- 16 Gareth Stedman Jones, *Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship Between Classes in Victorian Society* (London: Verso, 2013), p. 217.
- 17 Sharon Marcus, *Apartment Stories: City and Home in Nineteenth-Century Paris and London* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1999), p. 83.
- 18 Michael Jenner, *London Heritage: The Changing Style of a City* (London: Penguin, 1988), p. 229.
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- 23 Lynn MacKay, *Respectability and the London Poor, 1780-1870: The Value of Virtue* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2013), p. 65.
- 24 Artisans' and Labourers' Dwelling and Improvement Act of 1875, 31 & 32 Vict., c. 130 (1875).
- 25 Jones, p. 200.
- 26 Jones, p. 210-11.
- 27 Jones, p. 211.
- 28 MacKay, p. 65.
- 29 Jenner, p. 229.
- 30 Marcus, p. 5.
- 31 Dryden, p. 255.
- 32 Robert Louis Stevenson, *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (Toronto: Broadview, 2005), p. 42; henceforth cited in text.
- 33 Weiner, p. 9.
- 34 Weiner, p. 8.
- 35 Lynda Nead, *Victorian Babylon: People, Streets and Images in Nineteenth-Century London* (London: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 16.
- 36 MacKay, p. 57.
- 37 Charles Booth, *Pauperism: A Picture and the Endowment of Old Age: An Argument* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1892); reprinted in *Poverty and the Poor Law*, ed. by Robert Humphreys (Houndsmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 136.

- 38 Dryden, p. 260.
- 39 MacKay, p. 61.
- 40 Mighall, p. 151.
- 41 Baron David Hume, *Commentaries on the Laws of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Bell and Bradfute, 1797), p. 37.
- 42 *M'Naghten's Case*. 8 ER 718. 1843.
- 43 Christopher Slobogin, 'An End to Insanity: Recasting the Role of Mental Illness in Criminal Cases,' *Virginia Law Review*, 86.6 (2000), 1199-1247 (p. 1237).
- 44 Arata, p. 57.
- 45 Colin Ross, 'Dissociative Identity Disorder,' *Current Psychosis and Therapeutic Reports*, 4 (2006), 112-16 (p. 112).
- 46 Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 300.14.
- 47 Gish, p. 5.
- 48 Ibid.
- 49 Frederic W. H. Myers, *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death* (Cambridge: Pilgrim Books, 1992), p. 37.
- 50 Donald Lawler, 'Reframing *Jekyll and Hyde*: Robert Louis Stevenson and the Strange Case of Gothic Science Fiction,' in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde After One Hundred Years*, p. 250.
- 51 Hogle, p. 163.
- 52 Lawler, p. 249.

## Uncollected Stevenson (4)

This section of the *Journal* features previously uncollected notes, articles and fragments from Stevenson's output, some of which will be included in the New Edinburgh Edition of his work. Each piece is put into context by its contributor and Stevenson students, scholars and researchers everywhere are encouraged to submit similar material that they may have come across in their research.

### Wallace's *Russia*

#### *Robert Louis Stevenson*

*Russia*. By D. Mackenzie Wallace. (London: Cassell, Petter, and Galpin, 1877.)

It is curious how content we are to remain ignorant if our ignorance has only a name to go by. Curiosity is easily pacified with a sop. We all knew that Russia was called Russia. We had even a more or less distinct idea of its shape, as an area of certain colour in the map. Nay, there were certain points upon the outskirts of this vast Empire with which we had really some intelligent acquaintance. We had seen many pictures of the Crimea in the illustrated papers, and had read Mr. Kinglake. We had some notion of the city on the Neva, of Peter and Catherine, of the knout, of conspirators drowned below the ice, and fabulous domestic murders in high places. But north and south, between St. Petersburg and Sebastopol, away out eastward, where it dies out into fabulous Thibet, we had little to go upon but a few children's tales. Forests and steppes, *moujik* and *tarantass*, a great howling of wolves, and a vague idea of cold and darkness – in the middle of all these the Kremlin of Moscow blowing up – and there you had the Russian Empire.

And now, quite suddenly, we have all to set to work – or rather set to pleasure – and out of Mr. Wallace's two thick volumes collect a whole army of details to animate this big, blank, green place in the map. Stout Cortez on his peak in Darien, staring at the new-found Pacific, was not more romantically startled. The world is larger and considerably stranger than we had previously imagined. The heaviest and most jaded reader will infallibly kick up his heels on being turned loose into so fresh a pasture. It is considerably more exciting than a Curate-and-Tea-Party novel; and, at the same time, it gives that solid sense of edification which can only be attained, in the present century, from the perusal of works with a more or less decidedly economical import.

Mr. Wallace is very economical, and I daresay very correct; but the impression one carries away from a perusal of his book, for all its solidity and seriousness, is one more of excitement than of edification. Although the author himself seems to have only a very limited sympathy for the picturesque, he notices things with so impartial and clear an eye, that he often chronicles picturesque points without being very perfectly aware that they are so. And the whole moral, material, and political atmosphere of the book is so strange and unfamiliar to our Western ways of thought that there is often an element of picturesqueness in quite abstract matters. The most commonplace things, if they are in an unnatural confusion, begin to put on an air of dreamland, and fill us with admiration and uneasiness. And what can be more truly wrong-side up, what more confused and more confounding, than the features of Russian life as they appear before us in Mr. Wallace's volumes? Two contrary civilisations struggling together, or melting one into the other, make a sort of twilight, peopled, like that other no-man's-land which separates night from day, with monstrous shadows and equivocal appearances. What are we to think of an Empire where the most absolute autocracy co-exists with the most advanced and doctrinary democracy in Europe, where political formulæ are to-day put



sweepingly and violently into action, and to-morrow the whole population lie sunk in Oriental apathy, where the peasants are so mediævally superstitious that you shall hear of a man praying one saint to help him to rob the jewels from the image of another, and yet Buckle's *History of Civilisation* is a common book in country cottages, where, at the periodical division of land, you find the people clamouring that they have been given too much, and where there is so little ambition that the village eldership, bronze medal and all, has to be thrust willy-nilly on the deprecating nominee? Out of such materials as these a shrewd, clever, impartial man like Mr. Wallace, though he were twice as prosaic, could not fail to make a picturesque and romantic book. We may try as we will to feel a social philosopher all over, and concentrate our mind on economics; but in spite of ourselves we are carried away by interests less severe and far more human. The condition of the Bashkirs, for instance, hanging in the wind between the pastoral and the agricultural life, is no doubt remarkably curious; and yet we remember more distinctly, we think, and certainly with greater pleasure, the engaging figures of Mehemet Zîán, who was so delighted with maps, and poor Abdullah, the Tartar troubadour, who represented the Grub Street element upon the steppes of Russia. The *russification* of Finnish villages, again, is quite an important social progress; and all that Mr. Wallace has to say upon this head is well worth reading and reflection. But what a different and much more delightful interest we take in this little passage, which involves the eternal difference between man and woman: –

They (the women) are much more conservative than the men, and oppose much more stubbornly the Russian influence. On the other hand, like women in general, when they do begin to change, they change more rapidly. This is seen especially in the matter of costume, which has more importance than learned ethnologists are wont to sup-

pose. The men adopt the Russian costume very gradually; the women adopt it at once. As soon as a single woman gets a gaudy Russian dress, every other woman in the village feels curious and impatient till she has done likewise.

That is the kind of matter that touches everybody under the fifth rib. There is nothing frivolous or abstract about that; it is the very stuff of history. Lastly (although this is perhaps a lower flight), there can be no comparison between the most curious details of communal organisation, and that one little incident of the Circassian who spoke broad Scotch and was named after Dr. Abercrombie. It would be somewhat exciting to find a castaway on a desert island, to see Saul among the prophets, to detect Mr. Whalley stealing out of a confessional, or angels walking among men as in old days. But for honest astonishment, I can think of nothing to match that most extraordinary hybrid.

It is unnecessary to say that Mr. Wallace is clever. He can see out of his eyes; he can think of what he has seen; he shows, by apt comparisons, that he is not one of those people who only waken up when they are told to expect something remarkable, but has given his attention to the aspects of life at home as well as in Russia. Nothing, for instance, could be happier than his remark on the partial dishonesty of the peasants in the matter of rope, iron, and the like. 'The peasant's notions of property with regard to such articles,' he says, 'are very similar to those of servants in many other countries with regard to eatables.' That is exactly the spirit in which books of travel should be written; it is by bringing out these touches of nature that the whole world is forced to recognise its kinship, and such comparisons both give pleasure and do good. Indeed, we are fortunate in Mr. Wallace's disposition. Not many men could have wrestled so patiently with dry facts and figures, and yet retained sufficient lightness of mind to notice how Finnish women change their costume, and English servants confiscate preserves.

With all this, he writes in a flat, plain, rather rustic style. He seems conscious of this defect himself, and sometimes tries to enliven matters with a hang-dog, apologetic air that circumvents his purpose. Hence another spring of innocent satisfaction to his readers. For in this way a man of very inferior parts, with a slightly sharper sense of style, may enjoy the inimitable pleasure of patronising his betters.

## Notes on Stevenson's book review 'Wallace's *Russia*'

### *Richard Dury*

In the years from 1874 to 1878 Stevenson was the young writer about town, enjoying the company of other young writers and painters, making useful contacts, frequently travelling between Edinburgh, London and France. In the 1870s he published a total of forty-three essays and essayistic articles and reviews in eight different periodicals.

In July 1875, while in London on the way to Barbizon with Sir Walter Simpson and staying at the Savile Club, he bumped into Robert Glasgow Brown, his old University friend and co-editor of the *Edinburgh University Magazine* (L2: 154). Brown was then editor of the weekly magazine *Vanity Fair*, and it was probably on the occasion of this meeting that he persuaded Stevenson to become a contributor for a brief period in November and December 1875.

When shortly afterwards Robert Glasgow Brown left the editorship of *Vanity Fair* to found a rival weekly, *London: the conservative weekly journal of politics, finance, society, and the arts*, Stevenson helped him out again, with contributions to the

first seven issues, from 3 February to 17 March 1877. Stevenson always disliked journalism because the writing had to be done under pressure and there was no time to shape and to perfect the writing. In this case, an additional problem was that Stevenson did not get on with Glasgow Brown: in a letter of February 1877, he complains of short-notice work and says 'I cannot have any more of these barbarous five-minute's orders' and 'I must ask you not to put me again in the same position'. He is replying to a letter (we gather from Stevenson's words) in which Brown was not pleased with Stevenson's work and expressed himself in such a manner that leads the latter to say 'you have no possible excuse for writing rudely to me'. Brown's bitterness seems to have been partly due to Stevenson's accusations that Brown's news-about-town section ('The Whispering Gallery') contained old news already printed elsewhere (L2: 201-2).

Stevenson was to return to write some accomplished work for *London* in the following year in order to help his friend W. E. Henley, now the full editor of the magazine (following the early death of Robert Glasgow Brown). His seven contributions in 1877 were less important, but nevertheless of interest: a satirical article about financial scandal ('A Salt-Water Financier', see *JSS* 7, 2010, 143-9), a story published as a 'feuilleton' in four episodes ('An Old Song'), three essayistic reports from Paris (two on the life of art students, and one on the Paris Bourse), and two book reviews, the second of which is republished here: 'Wallace's *Russia*'.

The book reviewed is of interest as it may have been one of the models for Stevenson's 'The South Seas' project, published selectively and posthumously as *In the South Seas*: it is a 'big book' (in 'two thick volumes') about a large area of related cultures, written for the general reader but with attention to ethnology (a term, with its derivatives, often used by Wallace) – though also to giving pleasure, through the observation of universal traits that make the reader understand a sympathetic affinity with others.

As Stevenson says, in a phrase that could also apply to his South Seas book: 'it is by bringing out these touches of nature that the whole world is forced to recognise its kinship'.

Stevenson's authorship of the unsigned review published here is testified by a letter in *The Scotsman* (7 Dec 1944), about how Stevenson met Wallace in a club and started talking about the book, upon which the latter revealed his identity as the author. Internal clues include 'a Curate-and-Tea-Party novel', a phrase also found in 'The English Admirals' (also written in 1877). It was published in *London* on 24 February 1877 and has not been subsequently reprinted, and will be included in the forthcoming volume on the New Edinburgh Edition of the Works of Robert Louis Stevenson *Essays 4: Uncollected Essays and Book Reviews 1868-1879*.

### **Explanatory notes and commentary.**

Donald Mackenzie Wallace (1841--1919), after studying metaphysics, ethics and Roman law at universities in Britain and on the Continent, then went to live in Russia for almost six years (1870--75) and in 1877 published his 2-volume study of Russia, 'the most important English-language work on Russia in the nineteenth century'.<sup>1</sup> In it he describes and analyses Russian society and institutions, based on personal experiences, interviews and local documents: 'Wallace was fascinated by Russia and particularly the situation of the post-emancipation peasantry on rural areas. He travelled throughout the countryside, observing everything from the quality of the land and agricultural techniques to peasants' work habits'.<sup>2</sup> He maintains an interest in ethnology while not forgetting the general reader (he writes, 'If the voyage is made about the end of September [. . .] the ethnologist will have a still better opportunity of study', but also 'However great the ethnographical variety on board may be, the traveller will probably find that four days on the Volga are quite enough for all' – Wallace I, p. 9). Chapters are partly thematic ('The Towns

and the Mercantile Classes', 'Social Classes'), partly geographical ('In the Northern Forests', 'Foreign Colonists on the Steppes'), and partly based on personal anecdote ('Travelling in Russia', 'A Peasant Family of the Old Type').

### Paragraph 1

*Mr. Kinglake*: Alexander William Kinglake (1809--91), the celebrated author of *Eothen*, also wrote *The Invasion of the Crimea* in 8 volumes (1863--87), of which the first five volumes had been published at this time.

*the city on the Neva ... Peter and Catherine ... the knout ... conspirators drowned below the ice ... fabulous domestic murders in high places*: the city on the Neva: St. Petersburg; Peter and Catherine: Peter the Great (tsar 1721--25) and either Catherine I (his wife and successor 1725--27) or Catherine II (the Great, 1762--96); the knout: knotted whip used (until 1845) for corporal punishment, often leading to death; conspirators drowned: after the suppression of the Decembrist uprising of 1825 against Nicholas I; fabulous murders: for example, Peter III, deposed by his wife Catherine the Great and then assassinated shortly after his accession in 1862.

*moujik ... tarantass*: moujik: peasant; tarantass: low four-wheeled carriage.

*the Kremlin of Moscow blowing up*: Napoleon blew up parts of the Kremlin before his retreat in 1812.

### Paragraph 2

*Stout Cortez on his peak in Darien, staring at the new-found Pacific*: an allusion to 'On First Looking into Chapman's Homer' (1816) by John Keats: 'Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes | He star'd at the Pacific [. . .] | Silent, upon a peak in Darien'.

*a Curate-and-Tea-Party novel*: The same term is used in 'The English Admirals' written a few months later in 1877 ('It is not over the virtues of a curate-and-tea-party novel, that people are abashed into high resolutions'; Tusitala 25, 94); in 'A Gossip on Romance' (1882), Stevenson comments on the popularity of such stories, characterized by 'the clink of teaspoons and the accents of the curate' (Tusitala 29, 124).

### Paragraph 3

*admiration*: wonder, astonishment, surprise (archaic, *OED* (1884), now rare, *OED* online).

*the most absolute autocracy co-exists with the most advanced and doctrinary democracy*: 'In "the great stronghold of Caesarian despotism and centralised bureaucracy," these Village Communes, containing about five-sixths of the population, are capital specimens of representative Constitutional government of the extreme democratic type' (Wallace, *Russia* I, pp. 192--3).

*Buckle's History of Civilisation*: Thomas Henry Buckle's unfinished *History of Civilisation in England* (vol. I 1857, vol II 1861) adopts an empirical method to history, seeing human actions as governed by laws discoverable by statistics. Wallace remarks that 'Several times I encountered peasants in this region who had a small collection of books, and twice I found in such collections, much to my astonishment, a Russian translation of Buckle's "History of Civilisation" !' (I, p. 167).

*The condition of the Bashkirs*: The Bashkirs are an Islamic people from either side of the southern Urals; they are described by Wallace II, ch. 21, 'The Pastoral Tribes of the South'.

*Abdullah, the Tartar troubadour, who represented the Grub Street element*: 'His dress was of a richer and more gaudy material, but at the same time more tawdry and tattered, than that

of the others. Altogether he looked like an *artiste* in distressed circumstances' (Wallace II, p. 42).

#### Paragraph 4

*touches everybody under the fifth rib*: strikes everybody, speaks directly to everybody; 'to smite under the fifth rib' is a Biblical phrase meaning 'to give a mortal blow' (2 Samuel 2. 23; 3. 27, 4. 6).

*Dr. Abercrombie*: Dr John Abercrombie (1780--1844), the foremost physician in Edinburgh of his time, philanthropist and philosopher; the anecdote is in Wallace II, pp. 109--11.

*to find a castaway on a desert island, to see Saul among the prophets, to detect Mr. Whalley stealing out of a confessional, or angels walking among men as in old days*: examples of interesting but unlikely experiences. King Saul finds himself among prophets in two Old Testament stories, at which onlookers exclaim 'Is Saul also among the prophets?' (1 Samuel 9. 3--10. 11); George Walley (1813--1878) was a virulently anti-Roman Catholic M.P., so unlikely to visit a confessional; 'when angels walked among men' refers to an early age of closer contact with the divine, when, for example, Abraham was visited by Angels in the form of men (Genesis 18. 2), cf. 'the primal condition of the race, when God and His angels walked amongst men' (William Howitt, *A History of the Supernatural ... demonstrating universal faith* (1863) I, p. 144).

#### Paragraph 5

*He can see out of his eyes*: In 'An Apology for Idlers' (written in June 1876), Stevenson says that 'true education' is obtained by 'an intelligent person, looking out of his eyes and hearkening in his ears' (Tusitala 25, p. 54).



## NOTES

- 1 David C. Engerman, *Modernization from the Other Shore: American Intellectuals and the Romance of Russian Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), p. 25.
- 2 Adele Marie Barker and Bruce Grant, *The Russia Reader: History, Culture, Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), p. 218.

## Contributors

**Neil Macara Brown** is a former Edinburgh community worker. With Richard Dury and Roger Swearingen, he compiles the online database of RLS's library. In September 2013 he stumbled hot-foot through the Cevennes in the hoof-steps of that Donkey. Currently, with Tweeddale Museum, he is researching RLS's visits to Peebles, where he has lived for the last fifteen years.

**Lucio Capitani** is a PhD student at the Ca'Foscari University of Venice. His research interests include Indian writing in English, world literature, theatre studies, anthropology, as well as the works of Robert Louis Stevenson, particularly in a comparative and anthropological perspective. In 2013 he translated into Italian the play *Frost/Nixon* by Peter Morgan for the Elfo Theatre of Milan.

**Richard Dury** taught history of the English language for many years at the University of Bergamo. While there, in 1996, he founded the original RLS website, which has since migrated to Napier University in Edinburgh, where he maintains an editorial and consultant role. Since 2002 he has been closely involved in the biennial series of Stevenson Conferences. Now retired, he is able to devote himself to the New Edinburgh Edition of Stevenson, for which he is editing a volume of uncollected essays and also, with Robert-Louis Abrahamson, *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*.

**Jan Gorak** is Professor of English at the University of Denver, Colorado. He has published books on metafiction, Raymond Williams, Frank Kermode, and canon-formation. He has edited an edition of Northrop Frye on 20<sup>th</sup> century culture and his most recent publications are on T. S. Eliot as prophetic poet in *The Edinburgh Companion to the Bible and the Arts* and on Muriel Spark's hidden history of Peckham in *Scottish Literary Review*.

**Sylvie Largeaud-Ortége** is associate professor of literature in English at the University of French Polynesia, Tahiti. She has published a book on Stevenson's Pacific fiction, *Ainsi Soit-Île* (Honoré Champion, 2012) and scholarly articles and book chapters, including 'Who's who in "The Isle of Voices"?' in *Victorians and Oceania* (Ashgate, 2013) and 'Stevenson's *The Ebb-Tide* or Virgil's *Aeneid* revisited' in *Victorian Literature and Culture* (Cambridge University Press, 2013). She is currently co-editing a *Loxias* special issue on 'Stevenson and Polynesian Culture'.

**Carla Manfredi** serves as a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. She is currently working on a monograph that provides the first comprehensive study of Stevenson's Pacific Island photograph collection. This book offers a detailed examination of Stevenson's photographic and intellectual engagement with Pacific colonial discourses, but also resituates his photographic activities within the local histories of visual representation in the Marquesas, Tahiti, Samoa, and the Gilbert Islands.

**L. Duncan Milne** is a PhD candidate and a member of the Centre for Literature and Writing at Edinburgh Napier University. He is currently working towards a thesis on the mediation and development of Robert Louis Stevenson's critical reception. His research considers Stevenson's work in reference to cultural determination, theories of national identity and 'the thresholds of interpretation' in literary texts.

**Stuart A. Paterson**, born 1966, has been a past recipient of an Eric Gregory Award. *Saving Graces* was published in 1997 by Diehard while he was Dumfries & Galloway's writer-in-residence. He received a Robert Louis Stevenson Fellowship from the Scottish Book Trust in 2014. *Border Lines*, a collection of Galloway poems, is published by Indigo Dreams in 2015. Stuart has just been appointed the Scots Language Centre's Virtual Poet-in-Residence.

**Brian Wall** is a Post-Doctoral Teaching Fellow at the University of Edinburgh. His research focuses on transatlantic depictions of law in nineteenth-century British and American fiction.

# The New Edinburgh Edition of the Works of Robert Louis Stevenson

General Editors: Stephen Arata, Richard Dury, Penny Fielding  
and Anthony Mandal

THE NEW EDINBURGH EDITION OF THE WORKS OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON continues to progress. The first volume, *Prince Otto*, edited by Robert P. Irvine, was published at the beginning of 2014. Early in 2016 will follow *Essays I: Virginibus Puerisque*, edited by Robert-Louis Abrahamson, and *Weir of Hermiston*, edited by Gill Hughes, both of which are fully finished and at first proofs stage for many sections. *Weir of Hermiston* is based on a fresh transcription of the manuscript and benefits from Gill Hughes's many years of experience as editor for the EUP Hogg Edition. Close behind *Essays I* should be *Essays III: Memories and Portraits*, edited by Alex Thomson, and *Essays IV: Uncollected Essays and Reviews 1868-1879*, edited by Richard Dury. The second volume of Uncollected Essays, edited by Lesley Graham (*Essays V*, which gathers the twelve *Scribner's Magazine* essays together for the first time) and *Essays II: Familiar Studies of Men and Books*, joint-edited by Abrahamson and Dury, should follow in 2017.

Another volume with sections presently being set in type for first proofs is *Stories IV: Fables. Island Nights' Entertainments*, edited by Bill Gray. This volume will collect the *Fables* in the first transcription of the manuscript since 1895, together with the two fables Colvin did not include and in an ordering that reflects Stevenson's last intentions. The second part of the volume includes the three supernatural tales that Stevenson instructed

to be collected under the title 'Island Nights' Entertainments': 'The Bottle Imp', 'The Isle of Voices' (transcribed from the manuscript) and 'The Waif Woman'.

Meanwhile work continues on several other volumes: *The Amateur Emigrant*, *St. Ives*, and *Kidnapped*. Julia Reid has been working on the *Amateur Emigrant* MS at Yale and has transcribed the manuscripts; Glenda Norquay has also visited the USA, working on *St. Ives*, looking at MSS, letters etc. in the Beinecke Library, Princeton and the Huntington Library in Los Angeles while the MS is transcribed at Edinburgh; and Caroline McCracken-Flesher is working away at *Kidnapped*, having now finished a transcription of the manuscript. Penny Fielding is editing *The Dynamiter* and has been working with Anouk Lang, a Digital Humanities specialist, and her masters students to see if stylometry can help the editor with authorship attribution.

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Richard Dury, Penny Fielding

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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](mailto:sda2e@cms.mail.virginia.edu)

Richard Dury: [richard.dury@t-r.it](mailto:richard.dury@t-r.it)

Penny Fielding: [penny.fielding@ed.ac.uk](mailto:penny.fielding@ed.ac.uk)

# RLS

## WEBSITE

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Funded by a grant from the Carnegie Trust.

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](http://www.robert-louis-stevenson.org) is a 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 situates Stevenson firmly in Edinburgh, focusing on the city's, and on Scotland's influence on his writing, while also recognising the international dimension to his work and readership.

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**Volume 11** in 2014 contained essays from the Sydney conference among others, Hilary J. Beattie, Letitia Henville, David Howard, Nathalie Jaëck, Caroline McCracken-Flesher, Ashleigh Prosser, Alan Sandison.

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