

Journal of  
Stevenson Studies  
Volume 13



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## Editorial

Films, comics and essays – four of the studies in this volume could be said to be exploring the furthest reaches of Stevenson's legacy, from how he has been received in the popular culture of the twentieth century, to the genre that first made his international reputation in the nineteenth century only to have, perhaps, the smallest readership in the twenty-first.

Steve Joyce charts the ways in which the *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* has been adapted (strangely indeed) in the early years of silent cinema. Relatively few prints of these films have actually survived but Joyce's research draws on a wide range of printed material from advertisements, notices, trade journals and contemporary reviews. It is a bizarre and fascinating insight into how Stevenson's most enduring tropes of duality were interpreted, not to say mutated, in the early years of cinema and theatre adaptation. William Jones takes up the tale with his account of how *The Black Arrow* was adapted for Classics Illustrated comic books in the 1940s and 60s. Regular readers will remember Jones's study of the Classics version of *The Master of Ballantrae*, which was published in *JSS* in 2007.

Richard Dury and Burkhard Niederhoff take us back to Stevenson's early writing in the form of his essays and short fiction. Niederhoff's revealing analysis of 'Will o' the Mill' argues for a telling connection between this fabular tale and the aestheticism of Stevenson's early essays. Richard Dury's study makes a strong case for the importance of those essays – rather sadly neglected by many 20th and 21st century readers and critics. Dury's fine close reading of 'Forest Notes' places these 'thematically linked lyrical fragments' in the philosophical and conceptual context of impressionism as it was being manifested in the visual arts at the time, aided by Stevenson's subtle and constantly changing focalisations, which aim to catch both the nature of our inner life and what he called 'the dazzle and confusion of reality' in

the world around us. One of the most exciting prospects in *The New Edinburgh Edition* (see page 210) will be the volumes dedicated to Stevenson's essays (Dury is one of those editors) and the critical insights and new appreciations those works will deliver.

Emma-Lee Davidson's essay sets *Treasure Island* in the context of popular imperial fiction for boys, a genre which Stevenson subtly destabilises even as he seems to meet its parameters, and she finds further evidence for this by comparing the text of the serial publication with its subsequent appearance in book form. Sebastian Williams's 'Contaminated Salts and Volatile Ethers' takes a similarly new-historical contextual approach to the matter of drugs in *Jekyll and Hyde*, by looking at the 1868 Pharmacy Act, the professionalisation of medicine, and the 19<sup>th</sup> century's anxieties about the prescribing and consumption of potent substances.

Neil Macara Brown continues his researches into Stevenson's often strikingly eclectic source material by exploring some of the factors that inspired the shipwreck and opium smuggling episodes in *The Wrecker*. Brown pursued a similar trail in volume 12 of this journal with his essay on the contemporary literature of tantric mastery and suspended animation as it featured in *The Master of Ballantrae* and the wild forests of North America.

We are delighted to report that the next International Stevenson Conference will be taking place at Edinburgh Napier from 5–8 July 2017. Readers will have had the call for papers and full details of this by the time we go to press, see page 209. The topic is to be 'Robert Louis Stevenson: New Perspectives', a theme aimed at encouraging new connections and new contexts in our continuing engagement with Stevenson's work. It seems appropriate to bring the Stevenson conferences home again, and this will make four such meetings in Scotland – two at Stirling and now two at Napier.

As for the *Journal of Stevenson Studies* we are making plans

to withdraw from print format in order to have its future publication freely available as an open access journal online, beginning, if possible, with volume 14. At this juncture it seems appropriate for me to pass the editorial task to another scholar. With co-editor Linda Dryden I have overseen the production of twelve issues since volume one was launched at Stirling by Dr Eric Massie, with six of these produced in the years since I retired. I will continue to be available as a consultant editor, especially during the handover period, but I do think that a younger academic colleague should have the opportunity and the benefit of an editorial role that has brought me so much enlightenment and satisfaction as well as new friends and colleagues over the last eleven years. With this in mind, it seems equally appropriate to thank two such colleagues, as Professor Kathie Linehan and Dr Jenni Calder have decided to stand down as members of the Journal's Editorial Board after many years of invaluable support. We look forward to a wider readership – and an expanding citation index – as we move towards future production of the *Journal of Stevenson Studies* in its new electronic format.

Roderick Watson  
Linda Dryden



## Reading 'Forest Notes'

*Richard Dury*

### **A defence of Stevenson's essays**

Writing about Robert Louis Stevenson's long essay 'Forest Notes' is no easy task in the absence of any obvious model or tradition to follow: critical studies of essays are few and far between. The first professional university literary critics had little interest in the essay form, partly because of associations with the critics and writers from whom they wished to distinguish themselves: i.e. the non-professional critic, custodian of 'genteel values',<sup>1</sup> a middle-aged male in a tweed jacket 'maundering on about the delights of idleness, country walks, tobacco, old wine and old books'.<sup>2</sup> In addition, and in contrast to the novel or the poem, essays simply do not seem to require explication: '*Essays are readable*; often they do not require interpretation [...] They are clear enough, plain enough'.<sup>3</sup> And, as a third reason for critical neglect, they are not fully inside the literary system, or if inside, are considered a minor genre.

Studies of Stevenson's essays share in this relative neglect. Though admired and enjoyed by many readers, they are somehow left aside by critics. The monograph that marks the recent revival of Stevenson studies, Alan Sandison's *Robert Louis Stevenson and the Appearance of Modernism* published in 1996 lacks a chapter on the essays (fully compensated for by two later articles),<sup>4</sup> as does the otherwise excellent *Edinburgh Companion to Robert Louis Stevenson* published in 2009.<sup>5</sup> It is a general blindness: three current Wikipedia category listing pages dedicated to British, Scottish and English essayists and even a fourth general 'List of essayists', all lack links to his name.

Stevenson's essays are variously fitted into a story of his development that sees them as inferior to his more famous works of fiction, or as preparations for them. It seems to have been aspects



of style that led to an easy classification of the essays as inferior. David Daiches in his 1947 monograph sees them as ‘often too much the deliberate display of craftsmanship without any underlying imaginative compulsion to transform the work into a serious piece of literary art’ and condemns ‘The Lantern Bearers’ for its ‘pretentious and perhaps at the same time commonplace philosophizing’,<sup>6</sup> and Irving Saposnik in 1974 talks of ‘an elaborate and overly self-conscious style [...] and a posturing meant to resemble wisdom’.<sup>7</sup> Both writers quote the words ‘sedulous ape’ and are not amused.

Others have seen Stevenson’s fiction as an advance on the essays, as fiction allows the expression of things not possible in the ‘lesser’ genre. Two critics have taken as a test case a comparison between Stevenson’s essay and his short story about François Villon, both written in 1877.<sup>8</sup> Cinzia Giglioni in 2007 sees the essay as showing unresolved conflict between artistic admiration and moral condemnation, while the short story accepts psychological complexity without any difficulty.<sup>9</sup> Villon’s message in the short story (that morality is a product of circumstances) is accompanied by a plurality of points of view, typical of literary understanding. Lucio De Capitani in 2015 sees the same interesting difference between the two works but does not ascribe it to the superior possibilities of literary narrative but to Stevenson’s divided concerns: ‘for morality and ethics on the one hand, and for ambivalence on the other hand’.<sup>10</sup> He associates these two concerns, respectively, with essays and fiction: in the former Stevenson endorses ‘Victorian conceptions of ethics and morality’ (quoting here Robert Kieley’s 1965 Stevenson monograph), while, ‘in his fictional work he is acknowledged as a master of the disturbing representation of ambiguity’ (p. 43). In the essay on Villon ‘Stevenson takes the role of the authoritative, truth-telling narrator’ while the narrative voice in the short story is ‘increasingly polyphonic’ (p. 66) and allows us to share Villon’s ‘perspective and anxieties’ (p. 68). De Capitani

thus makes a similar judgment to Giglioni, though for him the difference is not quite so absolute: 'Fascination and ambivalence do indeed surface rather often' in the text of the essay, especially towards Villon the artist, but with the crucial difference that the essay finishes with a final condemnation.<sup>11</sup>

The conclusion to make seems clear: Stevenson wrote his short story on Villon immediately after the essay and was able to free himself from Victorian morality, thanks to the possibility of empathetic identity that is easier in fiction (through dialogue and access to the thoughts of characters) than it is in the essay (dominated by the single voice of the essayist). This interpretative frame can then be fitted onto Stevenson's literary career: the essay writer maturing and developing into the successful writer of fiction – a model adopted by Daiches, where he takes Stevenson's essay writing as 'a particularly self-conscious form of literary apprenticeship, in which he was endeavouring to develop a style and assert himself as a professional writer'.<sup>12</sup>

And at first sight, what Giglioni and De Capitani say is right: the essay on Villon, and especially its conclusion, is harshly critical and very different from the ambiguous end of the short story. At the end of the essay Stevenson says that the *Large Testament* is a work of 'unrivalled insincerity', and that Villon was sincere only about two things: 'an undisguised envy of those richer than himself' and 'a deep and somewhat snivelling conviction of the transitory nature of this life and the pity and horror of death'. He sums up with: 'Certainly the sorriest figure on the rolls of fame'. And yet, on consideration, there is an ambiguity in the adjective 'sorry' as used here: it could mean 'wretched, pathetic; poor' (*OED* 4.a) and so characterise an individual who provokes a degree of compassion, as in 'The sorriest wight may find release from pain' in Robert Southwell's poem 'Times Go by Turns'. Stevenson's final sentence certainly has the *form* of a clear black-and-white judgment (on the model of sentences like 'the wisest king in the history of France') but it turns out to be more nuanced

than the reader expected: 'the sorriest figure on the rolls of fame' is someone to be pitied who has yet achieved much.

The essayist is not entirely 'an authoritative, truth-telling narrator' either, but also an investigative historian, judging the new evidence recently discovered by Auguste Longnon about Villon's life, and using a creative writer's skills and freedom to recreate scenes and interpret motivations. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that Stevenson is repeatedly condemnatory, apparently secure of the moral ground he is standing on. This is rather unusual in his essays in general, where tolerance, sympathy and an independence from conventional morality are more frequent. Perhaps he was over-influenced here by the confident polemical style of Carlyle and Hazlitt. Characters who are brutally honest about their convictions held a certain fascination for him, as we see from Lord Braxfield in 'Some Portraits by Raeburn' and Adam Weir in *Weir of Hermiston*. Perhaps in this essay he was acting out that part. In any case, the tempting test case of the two works on Villon does not give a fair picture of the essays in general. The character studies of Braxfield and Weir have much in common, though one is in an essay ('Some Portraits by Raeburn') and the other in a novel. The essay 'Charles of Orleans', from the year before the Villon essay, is a more balanced and nuanced portrait, not to mention 'Samuel Pepys' from 1881, where Stevenson enters into a fully sympathetic relationship with his far-from-perfect subject. Narrative fiction is not the only genre through which we can understand others.

A similar interpretative frame to that of Giglioni and De Capitani is adopted by Julia Reid in her important, indeed ground-breaking 2006 monograph on Stevenson and evolutionary psychology and evolutionary anthropology.<sup>13</sup> In Part I of her study, Stevenson's celebration of romance, in his essays, as appealing to still-active primitive states of consciousness is contrasted with his adventure fiction, which 'dramatizes the resurgence of primitive appetites in more problematic terms'

(p. 53). Comparing views of naval heroism celebrated in 'The English Admirals' (1878) and inferred in *Treasure Island* (1883), Reid remarks that:

where the essay is uncomplicatedly affirmative, the novel is more problematic (as is so often the case with Stevenson) and insinuates a measure of doubt about patriotic endeavours. Invocations of Englishness are playfully undermined [...] The novel also collapses the distinction between heroic admirals and dastardly pirates. (p. 38.)

It is difficult to disagree with much that Reid says: the essay does celebrate the stirring effect of stories of naval heroes (in ways that make the modern reader a little uncomfortable), yet it is also about other things: how such stories appeal to the imagination and help us face a difficult existence, and how what looks like heroic acts are performed by individuals for their own sake, simply because they like 'a period of multiplied and intense experiences'. I agree with all of Reid's commentary, but, as with Giglioni and De Capitani, I do not see the need to judge between essays and fiction. If we take Stevenson's essays as a whole, his praise of romance is most frequently in terms of the pleasure of the reading experience (and the memories of this that remain), and there is no obvious contradiction between this point of view and writing fiction that exposes 'adventure's darker side' (p. 10). The idea that 'the cult of heroic manliness might rejuvenate an ailing modernity' belongs more to Lang, Haggard and Saintsbury (pp. 10, 16–17): the merchant-clerks in 'The English Admirals' and the bank clerk from Peckham in 'The Manse' are not transformed into warriors by stories of sea-captains or of their own adventurous ancestors but are made better able to face their dull and difficult lives.<sup>14</sup>

Glenda Norquay, in a recent article, does not find the essays offering a simpler or more optimistic message in the case of 'A

Gossip on a Novel of Dumas's', which is not only a celebration of invigorating romance but also an elegy for vanished youth.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, Roslyn Jolly points out that while Stevenson presents 'trusts' as legal institutions of which modern Westerners could be proud in the essay-like Hawaiian chapters of *In the South Seas*, he came to a more subtle and complex understanding of how alien these legal forms could seem to one with a different legal heritage in his fable of cultural collision and mutual incomprehension, 'Something in It'.<sup>16</sup> The question about essays and fiction is too complicated to resolve here: fiction may well have some resources at its disposal not available to the essay, but any strong opposition of the two is mistaken, and anyway the essay itself may have its own resources not available to fiction.

Gigliani, as we have seen, explains this apparent opposition in genres by suggesting that fiction is more suited to empathetic understanding of others, and it is undeniable that the essay is tied to the world-view of one person, the essayist. On the other hand, the essay in its typical form is a record of thinking around an aspect of existence from different points of view, as Stevenson does repeatedly in his own essays. In addition, the essays are full of short narratives and characterisations that surely allow an empathetic understanding.<sup>17</sup> And the fiction, too, is full of essayistic passages: not only the moral dialogues in the early short stories but right through to *Weir of Hermiston*, where the narrator's passing comments occasionally remind one of the essayist.<sup>18</sup> As Alan Sandison says 'Stevenson the essayist is wholly inseparable from Stevenson the novelist'. He makes the point that narrative also simplifies life, by arranging events in a linear progression with a resolution, while essays, in contrast,

allow their author to expand and to express a more diverse mental and moral universe [...] In them he can probe the vagaries of human behavior, philosophize, challenge orthodoxies and traditional practices, conduct

experiments, re-define his own moral system, even extract moral and literary value from the exercise of a wit which may, at first glance, seem like mere caprice.<sup>19</sup>

Far from seeing Stevenson's essays as an apprenticeship and a necessary first stage in a literary career, we can see the characteristics of the genre as particularly well-suited to Stevenson's own world-view. In 'Lay Morals' (1879) he emphasises how all phenomena are in constant transformation like the shadows of a great forest 'tumultuously tossed and changing', with the observing individual constantly changing too: 'you yourself are altered beyond recognition. Times and men and circumstances change about your changing character, with a speed of which no earthly hurricane affords an image'.<sup>20</sup> This view of the chaotic nature of things seems close to that of Ulrich in Robert Musil's *The Man without Qualities*: 'no thing, no self, no form, no principle, is safe, everything is undergoing an invisible but ceaseless transformation'. And, significantly, Ulrich concludes that the best way of understanding such a state of affairs is the essay: 'It was more or less in the way an essay, in the sequence of its paragraphs, explores a thing from many sides without wholly encompassing it [...] that he believed he could most rightly survey and handle the world and his own life'.<sup>21</sup> In Stevenson's essays, too, we find a typically shifting viewpoint: a constant variation of subjects, of temporal and spatial focus and of perspective, as his prose imitates the changing phenomena that he is describing.<sup>22</sup> An essay where such shifts of viewpoint are particularly frequent is 'Forest Notes'.

### Reading 'Forest Notes'

I would now like to look more closely at Stevenson's longest personal essay, 'Forest Notes', written over several months in the second half of 1875 and published in the *Cornhill Magazine* in May 1876.<sup>23</sup> It predates all his major works including the

early travel books, and belongs to the period that many would regard as his apprenticeship, interesting only for what it led up to. Although it has never received any kind of sustained critical attention, it is a remarkable piece of writing. To try to justify this opinion, I now will attempt a commentary on selected parts of each of its six subtitled sections, followed by a bringing-together of some of its most interesting aspects.

### *On the Plain*

The first section of the essay starts in an unusual way: 'Perhaps the reader knows already'. With the word 'Perhaps', the essay leads us into the world of the uncertain. Both this word and the immediate address to the reader are rather unusual at the entrance to the text.<sup>24</sup> The assumption that reader and writer already know each other, makes the reader feel in the middle of discourse that has started some time before, and initiates a feeling of disorientation.

The first sentence continues with the object of the verb and announces the theme of this first section 'the aspect of the great levels of the Gâtinais, where they border with the wooded hills of Fontainebleau'. Note that we are assumed to know this forest-edge part of the plain, and, helped by the name Fontainebleau (which we probably do know), we are happy to enter the game and play the part of someone to whom these names and locations are familiar.

In the next two sentences the viewing eye moves in sequence from rocks and trees dotted here and there in the middle ground to the horizon where details 'blend and disappear':

Here and there, a few grey rocks creep out of the forest as if to sun themselves. Here and there, a few apple-trees stand together on a knoll. The quaint undignified tartan of a myriad small fields dies out into the distance; the strips blend and disappear; and the dead flat lies forth open and

empty, with no accident save perhaps a thin line of trees  
or faint church-spire against the sky. (p. 117.)

The details 'blend and disappear' in one of Stevenson's typical three-part sentences divided by two semicolons, where the repeated theme of fading away of 'fields', 'strips' and 'flat' and the repeated near-synonyms 'empty', 'thin' and 'faint' emphasise the increasing featurelessness of the landscape as it approaches the horizon – the long line of which is appropriately described in the third and longest part of the sentence.

The active part played by the reader in communication is emphasised by the word 'accident' used in an unfamiliar way (meaning 'irregular feature'), though it is easily understood in context and its use here can be worked out from associated meanings. Concerning the reader's participation, Stevenson says in 'Lay Morals': 'The speaker buries his meaning; it is for the hearer to dig it up again; and all speech, written or spoken, is in a dead language until it finds a willing and prepared hearer.'<sup>25</sup> The metaphor shows an insight into the active role played by the listener and reader in communication, reminiscent of Montaigne's remark in 'On Experience' that 'Speech belongs half to the speaker, half to the listener', in an image of on-going process (admittedly more dynamic than Stevenson's) of two tennis players, where 'the receiver moves and makes ready according to the motion of the striker and the nature of the stroke'.<sup>26</sup> Stevenson actually only once uses this metaphor of digging up the message: his most frequent model of communication is one where 'sympathy', or fellow feeling, is activated to be 'of the same mind' as the other. As Robert-Louis Abrahamson interprets this: 'We do not struggle to *dig up* the other person's meaning; we just try to *dig* that person'.<sup>27</sup>

Sympathy and willingness are needed to take the phrase 'a quaint undignified tartan' in this three-part sentence as meaningful (and not just an attempt to disorientate with opaque lan-



guage). And if readers are willing to enter the game and search for meaning, they will probably interpret 'quaint undignified' as something close to 'picturesque'. While 'quaint' contributes the idea of 'irregular', the adjective 'undignified' is more problematic. Normally applied to a person, it means 'lacking in necessary dignity'. Here, however, the application to a landscape and the context of celebration and praise makes us take it more as 'with no pretence at all to dignity or exalted status', i.e. modest, homely, outside the world created by hierarchical society. Like, in fact, the typical rural subjects of the Barbizon painters (or the humble Scottish life evoked by the choice of 'tartan').<sup>28</sup> So, why not use the simple word 'picturesque'? This must be because that word comes complete with an aesthetic of its own and is often used unthinkingly, while the built-up meaning of 'quaint undignified' shows an attempt to express a feeling: maybe a confused impression but one that is felt and which the writer is attempting to translate into words.

The phrase 'a quaint undignified tartan' also, we might say, paints 'R.L.S.' into the picture through this typical and easily perceived stylistic element.<sup>29</sup> Later in the essay, Stevenson paints himself into the picture in another way, when he mentions in passing 'a man in velveteen' sitting with the others in the sunny inn courtyard who calls for a vermouth (p. 121). Of course the writer is continually present, as we presume (this being an essay) that all the sights and events related were experienced by him. However, the 'man in velveteen' (which must remind us of Stevenson's famous 'velvet coat') is observed from the outside only (with no thoughts or perceptions ascribed to him), rather like like a self-portrait inserted in the corner of a fresco.

The first paragraph ends with some peasant farmers observed at sunset: 'A blue-clad peasant rides home [...] Another still works with his wife in their little strip' (the present tense renders unclear whether this is a precise memory or a collage of typical observations). This then provides the link to the remaining part

of 'On the Plain', an evocation of the life of peasants on the Forest edge near Barbizon in the past: their subjection to the local Seigneur and their situation today, with the Seigneur's former castle now dilapidated but bustling with peasant families; their subjection in the past to the king in everything to do with the Forest; the damage done by hunters – with a vivid historical present tense evocation of a day's hunting from the point of view of the hunters and of the peasant; then a return to a past-tense narrative about the Forest as refuge in hard times, with brief evocations of wars and marauding soldiers. The final paragraph is a more conventional overview of associations of the Forest with kings and great historical events – though all in Stevenson's rhythmical and energetic prose.

### *In the Season*

The second section begins with Barbizon, though it is only referred to as 'a certain [...] village', following the convention of essays and lyric poems to provide few or no documentary details for what are typical and shared experiences:

Close in to the edge of the forest, so close that the trees of the *bornage* stand pleasantly about the last houses, sits a certain small and very quiet village. There is but one street, and that, not long ago, was a green lane, where the cattle browsed between the door-steps. (p. 121.)

The sequence is like a cinematic zoom: the edge of the forest – a village – the street, followed by a device more easily achieved in writing: a brief shift back to the past, compared to the present view. This opening by an impersonal observer does not prepare us for the first shift of perspective as the paragraph proceeds:

As you go up this street, drawing ever nearer the beginning of the wood, you will arrive at last before an inn where art-

ists lodge. To the door (for I imagine it to be six o'clock on some fine summer's even), half-a-dozen, or maybe half-a-score, of people have brought out chairs, and now sit sunning themselves and waiting the omnibus from Melun. If you go on into the court you will find as many more, some in the billiard-room over absinthe and a match of corks, some without over a last cigar and a vermouth. The doves coo and flutter from the dovecot; Hortense is drawing water from the well; and as all the rooms open into the court, you can see the white-capped cook over the furnace in the kitchen, and some idle painter, who has stored his canvases and washed his brushes, jangling a waltz on the crazy tongue-tied piano in the *salle-à-manger*. (p. 121.)

Suddenly the subject is *you*, but we can adjust to that: 'As you go up the street' is like a guide book giving instructions. It seems like an indefinite or hypothetical *you* equivalent to the third person *one*, which includes the speaker and also the audience in a general way. Or is this an autobiographical monologue, with the writer talking to himself about a memory, and so equivalent to the first person? And yet *you* (in contrast with *one*) can never shake off the feelings of direct address: the reader feels involved in some way. This use of the second person therefore adds to the indeterminate nature of the narration: the person going up the street is the remembering writer, is anybody, and is also the reader, invited to imaginatively enter the experience.

Then Stevenson playfully changes the rules. From what might be guide-book instructions, suddenly we are in a specific evoked scene, possibly a particular memory, which the reader accepts as close to reality, only to find it immediately undermined and presented as created by the writer, who appears (unexpectedly, parenthetically) with, 'for I imagine it to be six o'clock on some fine summer's even'. This is one of the few uses of the first person singular pronoun in the essay, which all refer to the narrator-I,

never to a narrated-I: in fact, all the experiences of the writer are narrated as *you*, *we*, *he* or *they*. At this point, an apparently stable and definite textual world (forest, village, street, inn, and inn-door) is undermined by a metanarrative comment that collapses all this into a mere imagined world. And not only imagined, but also indefinite: the people sitting outside the door are 'half-a-dozen or maybe half-a-score' – a comment which might reflect the genuinely vague impression of an observer, but after the writer's cheeky intervention in parentheses the reader will suspect there is no observed and remembered scene but only one in the process of being created in the text.

The next sentence returns to what could be guide-book instructions ('If you go on into the court'), but what you find is now no longer a permanent architectural structure, but a moment in time in a space containing a varied group of people, some relaxing at the end of the day, others preparing dinner. After the cinematic zoom and the subjective travelling shot up the street and through to the court, the observing eye now pans round this enclosed space and looks through doorways into the rooms around it, discovering as it does so a series of individuals engaged in different activities. After another passage (immediately following the one quoted above) with observation of more individuals, but focussed now on speech, conversation and interaction, a new paragraph begins with the entrance of the innkeeper: 'À table, Messieurs!', cries M. Siron, bearing through the court the first tureen of soup' (p. 122). The actors in these scenes, the young painters no more than the innkeeper, are only briefly characterised through what they do or say (with occasional mention of clothing): yet we learn a great deal of M. Siron from his decisive announcement and the stately 'bearing' of the tureen.

There follows a paragraph of the high-spirited youthful company at dinner time, during which the writer once more false-foots the reader:

And under all these works of art so much eating goes forward, so much drinking, so much jabbering in French and English, that it would do your heart good merely to peep and listen at the door. (p. 122.)

The reader has got into the frame of participating imaginatively in the experience, but now he is reminded he is *not* there. He is invited to imagine how he *would* enjoy observing the scene from the doorway, where ‘would’ places the act in the non-factual world – if you were able to observe the scene (but you aren’t) it would do your heart good. There is a certain campish humour here in the way the writer gives no sign of noticing his continual shifts of perspective involving the reader.

The third paragraph involves another shift of perspective: a hypothetical narration in the first person plural: ‘Perhaps we go along to visit our friends at the other end of the village [...] Or [...] sometimes a picnic is proposed [...], we file down the long alley [...] We gather ferns [...] And then we go home in the moonlight morning’ (pp. 122–3). Then, with another ‘Perhaps’ in the middle of the paragraph, the perspective changes once again: from the shared experience and group identity, including the writer and others and potentially also the reader, to an uncanny experience of an individual separated from the group at night, narrated in the third person:

As he follows the winding sandy road, he hears the flourishes grow fainter and fainter in the distance, and die finally out, and still walks on in the strange coolness and silence [...], until suddenly the bell rings out the hour from far away Chailly, and he starts to find himself alone. (p. 123.)

The bell causes the walker to stop:

And as he stands rooted, it has grown once more so utterly silent that it seems to him he might hear the church bells ringing the hour out all the world over, not at Chailly only, but in Paris, and away in outlandish cities, and in the village on the river, where his childhood passed between the sun and flowers

The separation of this individual from the group, where all was shared activity and good feeling, is thrown into sharp relief by the switch to the third person singular and our access now to the secret thoughts of the walker. The second section ends with the forest dissolving and the walker thinking of other far-off bells, both imagined and remembered, a sentence which moves from a 'rooted' time and place to a vague and varied temporal and spatial world of the mind.<sup>30</sup>

### *Idle Hours*

The third section of the essay returns to the *you*-subject, which now seems to involve the reader a little more, as there is a parenthetical metanarrative comment ('as I say') from the narrator, who is unlikely to be reminding himself about his own memories:

And yet in itself, as I say, the strangeness of these nocturnal solitudes is not to be felt fully without the sense of contrast. You must have risen in the morning and seen the woods as they are by day [...]; you must have felt the odour of innumerable trees at even (p. 124.)

This third section describes the woods by day and the typical activities and observations of those staying at the inn: starting with waking up and breakfast, and continuing with observations on the dogs of Barbizon and the 'evil creatures' of the woods.

These opening paragraphs are followed by one of the most memorable passages of the essay: three paragraphs and a con-

cluding snatch of speech introduced by 'Perhaps you may set yourself down in the bay between two spreading beech-roots with a book on your lap' (pp. 125–7). Here, *you* now more clearly refers to the writer (since this single experience must belong to him, despite its presentation as typical), though it could still also include the reader (in the sense of 'perhaps this could happen to you as it happened to me'). A friend arrives and asks if he can paint you, as you sit reading against a tree; you cannot see the picture emerging from the canvas and being dappled with flecks of sun that move like butterflies, but 'out of emulation with the painter' you prepare a rival description of the scene in words (very probably the words we are now reading). In the clearing, where the sunlight is violent, and colours peculiarly bright, there are odd boulders and juniper bushes. Someone sings an old song of a lover reminding his mistress of passing time, and the song's cadence will be remembered in very different places in future. Your friend says you can get up now. And so the episode ends, and the section is concluded with evocations of the light and scents of the end of the day, and the painters packing up and leaving for the inn.

The narration is of apparently specific actions performed by a single person (so no longer typical actions by anyone), hence the effect is very close to that of the writer remembering to himself. Then, in another playful move, the narrator says 'you cannot watch [the painting taking shape]': this is no longer an action by the imagined actor (as in 'you reply', or 'you see') but a metanarrative comment from the writer, then followed by a description of the painting as it evolves on the canvas, foregrounding the power of words (hence the present action of the writer) to create an ekphrastic description in which the painting comes to life.

But what is particularly remarkable about this passage is the way memory and imagination fuse in an extra-temporal reverie. In 'A Chapter on Dreams' (1888), Stevenson was later to argue for the insubstantiality of memories:

the past [...] is lost for ever: our old days and deeds, our old selves, too, and the very world in which these scenes were acted, all brought down to the same faint residuum as a last night's dream, to some incontinuous images, and an echo in the chambers of the brain. Not an hour, not a mood, not a glance of the eye, can we revoke; it is all gone, past conjuring.<sup>31</sup>

He argues that 'these air-painted pictures of the past' are indistinguishable from remembered dreams, and here in 'Forest Notes' he places memories on the same level with the work of the imagination: both having the same status as present mental activities creating in a non-real world outside of time. The memories of the afternoon are mixed with the unseen but imagined painting that comes to life, and finally with the song that becomes the object of involuntary memories in the future

There is a falling flourish in the air that remains in the memory and comes back in incongruous places, on the seat of hansoms or in the warm bed at night, with something of a forest savour. (pp. 126–7.)

Once again (as with the involuntary memories provoked by the bell) we have an unexpected expansion of the spatial and temporal frame. In the present case the unexpected expansion forwards also unexpectedly places much further back the rest of the narrative of the forest.

### *A Pleasure Party*

The last three sections I will deal with only briefly, not because they are less interesting, but because many of the features of the essay I wish to comment on in the summarising section have already been illustrated. The fourth section of the essay has a first person plural subject (as in the second section) and continues



the general use of the present tense, but differs from the other sections in being for the most part a single linear narrative and with no playful interruptions by the writer or changes of perspective. The overall impression is that of a group of young people who 'fuse [...] into a jolly fellowship' (p. 129), with a few brief mentions of returning individuality or sadness. The exception is the last paragraph where two of the company return to Barbizon on foot and are caught in heavy rain. Their sharing of the uncomfortable experience combined with a sense of isolation from the others is shown by a switch to a third person plural subject (even though one of them must include the essayist).

### *The Woods in Spring*

This section opens with another variation in the use of *you*: 'I think you will like the forest best in the sharp early springtime' (p. 132). Here the writer, making a rare appearance as *I* outside parentheses and in the first word of the section, seems to be advising the typical reader and continues to do so with, 'you will do well to keep a rug about your knees'. But the section soon evolves, still maintaining a *you* subject, into something more like autobiographical dictation. Events and thoughts are distanced into a unreal world (with 'perhaps', 'may' and 'if'), yet they clearly belong to the narrator ('for you remember in your boyhood something akin to this spirit of adventure'). The whole problematic idea of a simple and unchanging identity actually becomes one of the experiences described:

The loneliness of these coverts is so excessive, that there are moments when pleasure draws to the verge of fear. You listen and listen for some noise to break the silence, till you grow half mesmerised by the intensity of the strain; your sense of your own identity is troubled; your brain reels, like that of some gymnosophist poring on his own nose in Asiatic jungles; and should you see your own

outspread feet, you see them, not as anything of yours, but as a feature of the scene around you. (p. 134.)

This strangeness is again emphasised by a switch to the only section of third-person past-tense narrative in the essay. It is introduced by the last appearance of the writer as *I*: ‘and if I tell you of what once happened to a friend of mine, it is by no means to tantalize you with false hopes; for the adventure was unique’ (p. 135). The *you* now can only be the reader, but it is soon clear that ‘a friend of mine’ is the writer, playfully pretending to hide from the reader. The episode that follows is of a meeting with a strange family ‘in a remote uncanny glen’, who looked like waxwork figures engaged in activities and who strangely did not acknowledge the presence of ‘this friend (who shall be nameless)’. The latter, gripped by ‘a growing disquietude’, finally ran from the scene.

### *Morality*

The final section starts with a fairly conventional paragraph about all those who have praised the Forest of Fontainebleau, before changing to a *you* subject which now seems very much the writer remembering aloud and advising himself about the best choice of action after this formative experience in the Forest. It mixes observations on the Forest’s restorative power and the way it encourages you to ‘break all the network bound about your feet’, with reminders of the world outside: ‘the land of gin and steam-hammers’ (p. 139). It is an unexpected mixture (like a final discord in music) of celebration combined with the thought that life ends in ‘a shovelful of phosphates’ (pp. 138–9). The Forest teaches us to love ‘a life of change and movement in the open air’, and this (in a long imagined sequence) might lead you to travel contentedly on foot round Europe for the rest of your life. You will predictably end as a waif and outcast with failing health – and yet ‘this will seem the best’ in exchange for freedom from ‘all

this talk of duty that is no duty'. After a passage about our feeling that we too might, like the age-old stag, elude the arrows of Death in the Forest, the essay ends with praise for the sense of freedom given by the vast Forest, so strong that if from a hill you see a factory chimney on the horizon, you may be calmly reminded of 'a world out yonder where men strive together with a noise of oaths and weeping and clamorous dispute' (p. 140), but only by an effort of the imagination.

### **Thoughts on 'Forest Notes'**

'Morality' contains the essayist's own ethical conclusions: the Forest teaches us to enjoy a simple life ('exercise and slumber, long fasting and full meals'), makes us conscious of the body ('The air penetrates through your clothes, and nestles to your living body'), and frees us from the aggressive competitiveness and social obligations of the world outside (which 'fall away from you like a garment'). The essay itself also helps the reader to understand aspects of the personality, consciousness and perception, and at the same time heightens the awareness of reading as an experience involving both reader and writer.

One of the obvious features of this essay is its experimentation with different grammatical subjects, sometimes associated with interior focalisation and sometimes exterior. The essay becomes an experiment in representing the individual's varying sense of subjectivity: sometimes sharing experiences and consciousness in a group, sometimes aware of himself as a single personality; aware of his consciousness, or seeing himself from the outside. The essay shows us that the self that we narrate is not only different from the present self, but also constantly changing in conscious self-awareness, in feelings of being individual or of sharing of consciousness with others.

At the same time, the writer and the reader form a pair linked by the pronoun *you* which usually refers to the writer as he remembers himself in the past, but invites identification on

the part of the reader, or refers to anyone in typical actions so more easily includes the reader: there is an oscillation between a subjective *you* (close to *I*) and an objective *you* (close to *one*). In this relationship via the pronoun of address, the writer is notably playful: the reader's imaginative participation in the narrated actions is first encouraged then unexpectedly made difficult or impossible.

Stevenson's frequent use of present-tense *you* narration in this essay, even though in a series of informal narratives and anecdotes not stories, creates a text of a type that is rare before the twentieth century. One of the earliest clear examples is Nathaniel Hawthorne's short story 'The Haunted Mind' (1835), about a nightmare, also the subject of another early example, the Lord Chancellor's song in *Iolanthe* (1882) ('When you're lying awake with a dismal headache').<sup>32</sup> The *we* narration also used here is another rarity, especially in its uncertain imaginative inclusion of the reader in the second section ('In the Season'), which concerns typical or repeated events, first with a *you* subject and then with *we*.

The use of second person present-tense narrative is, as Brian Richardson puts it, 'admirably suited to express the unstable nature and intersubjective constitution of the self', but it also has another important function: it 'offers new possibilities of creative representation, particularly for revealing a mind in flux'.<sup>33</sup> Memories narrated in the present tense are presented as in the act of being remembered and fuse with present imaginative thought. Stevenson's evocations exist in a floating temporal and social space, mixing the actual with the possible and the imagined, corresponding to the common state of reverie, which, according to Gaston Bachelard, involves interaction between 'facts and values, realities and dreams, memories and legends, projects and chimeras'.<sup>34</sup> In these reveries, Stevenson escapes from structured time, just as in his use of *you* and *we* he escapes from single identity.

The unstable nature of the personality behind these memories is emphasised by the general lack of any names for the actors in the various scenes. Names would have started to turn the essay into a story with characters; and the condition of namelessness contributes the experience of a free, floating and undefined self.<sup>35</sup>

As with the use of *you* and *we* narration, the essay's exploration of reverie is also exploited in a playful way. The narration switches from being an apparently truthful representation of memories, to being merely typical, to being created (though still reliably close to the truth) by the writer as he writes. This forces the reader (who also has to attend to the writer's unusual word-choices) to adjust their interpretative frame at points where the writer mischievously renders previous expectations invalid, as when a description at the beginning of the second section, apparently based on permanent features of the landscape, is followed by 'for I imagine it to be'.

Although the reverie-like nature of much of 'Forest Notes' shares something with 'interior monologue', for the most part we are following the thoughts of the writer as he writes. The writer allows himself breaks and juxtapositions, but does not record the jumps of involuntary memory, except where he follows the thoughts of the benighted walker (and his involuntary thoughts stimulated by hearing the bell across the fields) and of the painter's friend in the sunny clearing (who hears the haunting song and will later remember it in far-off places).

Grammatical subjects and their reference, a subjectivity that varies between a shared and a single identity, an uncertain relationship between present and past identities, the mixture of reliable memories and the work of the imagination: Stevenson sees a world of constant variation and changing impressions, lacking in permanence. As he puts it in 'A Humble Remonstrance' (1884), we are faced with 'the dazzle and confusion of reality' which we perceive in a 'welter of impressions, all forcible but all discreet'.<sup>36</sup> This constant change in phenomena and our perception of them

is embraced in this essay in a celebration of the floating, unstructured life of bohemian artists, enjoying the moment in relaxed recreation and animated conversation. The description of young artists at the inn and then of the 'pleasure party' to Grez forcefully convey the joy of being with friends, peacefully sharing the same simple pleasures. Both also tinge the picture with briefer moments of sadness or discomfort, which show that the joy (like all aspects of the constantly changing world of the essay) is not a permanent condition.

Another interesting aspect of the essay that did not come up in the previous commentary is its general orientation towards psychological observation: the psychology of dogs (pp. 124–5), the desire for solitude after a noisy social outing (p. 129), the self-delusion that we might escape death (pp. 139–40), the workings of involuntary memory<sup>37</sup> (pp. 123, 126–7), and feelings of uncanniness (pp. 123, 134, 135–6).

A further aspect that did not come up before is the relation between 'Forest Notes' and the art of painting. After publication, Andrew Lang wrote to Stevenson, 'I like your paper in the Cornhill very much, it is like Deschamps Gallery – a lot of French pictures of different schools'.<sup>38</sup> By this he means that the scenes and descriptions marked by different stylistic choices have some affinity with contemporary French painting. The 'Deschamps Gallery' refers to the gallery of the Society of French Artists in New Bond Street (managed by Charles Deschamps), and specifically to the current 1876 summer exhibition, which included scenes and landscapes of Fontainebleau Forest by Barbizon painters (Corot, Millet, Rousseau), and works by the related Impressionists, including a boating scene by Manet and dancing class scenes by Degas, and also night pictures by both schools: Millet's 'Starry Night' and Whistler's 'Nocturne in Blue and Gold'. It was in (mainly negative) reviews of this exhibition that the word 'Impressionist' was first used in English.<sup>39</sup>

The essay can be seen as a series of 'sketches' or 'studies'

such as those practised by the young artists of the essay when they talk of 'motives' (by which they mean *motifs*: subjects for painting *en plein air*).<sup>40</sup> It is not a series of imitations of actual paintings, although the two peasants in the first section standing on the darkening plain at dusk and raising their heads against the still-bright sky are clearly inspired by Millet's already famous 'Angelus' – which in fact Stevenson may well have seen, as it was included in the summer exhibition of the Society of French Artists in London in 1872<sup>41</sup> and he was in town at that time. Reminiscent of a type of painting is the description (at the end of 'A Pleasure Party') of the partly-lighted company around an outdoor table at Marlotte: 'The candles flare in the night wind, and the faces around the punch are lit up, with shifting emphasis, against a background of complete and solid darkness'. This reminds one of groups around a table in many *chiaroscuro* paintings, such as Joseph Wright's 'The Orrery'. The subjects of some of Stevenson's descriptions are similar to those chosen by contemporary French artists: his descriptions of the Forest in various lights and seasons correspond to forest scenes by painters of the Barbizon school, and his scenes of relaxed and classless recreation are a typical choice of subject for the Impressionists. Even the 'factory chimney defined against the pale horizon' in the last paragraph was a provocative anti-Academic detail included in the distance in several Impressionist landscapes.<sup>42</sup>

As in 'An Autumn Effect' (1875), Stevenson also alludes to painting techniques: for example the junipers that are 'daubed in forcibly' against the contrasting background, the 'background of complete and solid darkness' behind the candle-lit drinkers at Marlotte, and the 'purple haze of twigs' on the leafless branches in spring (pp. 126, 130, 133). Stevenson here joins the young painters in their attempt to understand visual impressions and translate them onto canvas. By using their terminology and alluding to their methods he is trying to achieve a direct perception of the world as painters do, to see things 'distinctly

and intelligently'.<sup>43</sup> His attention to the appearance of the forest in different seasons and lights seems inspired by the Barbizon painters and Impressionists in their studies of the effects of light and atmosphere. Like the painters, Stevenson's attempt at direct perception is not of any permanent reality, but of a world that is constantly changing: in the light and seasons, but also by the changing observer. And since he is working in words he can also record visible movement: the 'flecks of sun' being painted on the canvas that 'flicker hither and thither like butterflies of light' and the faces 'lit up, with shifting emphasis'. Stevenson's mixture of memories and imagined reality, of single and shared identity, of past and present, of objects and impressions has some affinities with Impressionist art, where shadows and things, reality and reflection are given no representational distinction; details are without sharp contours, and reality is denied its solidity and weight. Sight and sound impressions also emphasise the moving, changing nature of phenomena, for example, the trees 'streaming up like monstrous sea-weeds'; and the wind on the leaves 'like the noise of a train' or 'the breaking of waves', and all the other sounds and movements that break the stillness of the woods in spring (pp. 134-5).

'Forest Notes', with its collage of fragments of ordinary experience touched with emotion, is reminiscent of the poetic cinema of Terence Davies and Terrence Malick. Though narrative runs through the essay (there are sequences, beginnings and ends, causes and effects), it is broken up into short scenes, and made unfamiliar by its stylistic choices. The essayist contemplates meditatively and stimulates the reader's thinking, as in a poem. The series of remembered impressions and episodes from different seasons and occasions are mostly narrated in the present tense, mixing moments of conviviality and an intersubjective self with moments of individual alienation. The result is a thematically linked series of lyrical fragments, for which comparisons are difficult to find. Even an essay such as Virginia Woolf's 'Street



Haunting: A London Adventure', which is narrated in the present tense with a first person plural subject, is different in its strong narrative line and the way in which all the fragments cohere as a stream of thought running through the mind of the essayist protagonist. 'An Italian Dream' in Charles Dickens' *Pictures from Italy* is a similar series of impressions, but it is narrated in the past tense with a first person singular protagonist and gives a linear account of a day in Venice from arrival to departure.

This essay was important for Stevenson. He worked on it, off and on, from April 1875 to early January 1876. It was his longest and his first familiar essay for the *Cornhill Magazine* – a notable performance, and a memorable reading experience. It was the first of his works to be signed 'R.L.S.'.

#### NOTES

- 1 Ned Stuckey-French, *The American Essay in the American Century* (Columbia, MO, 2011), pp. 14–15.
- 2 Graham Good, *The Observing Self: Rediscovering the Essay* (London: Routledge, 1988), p. vii.
- 3 G. Douglas Atkins, *Reading Essays* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2008), p. 10.
- 4 Alan Sandison, *Robert Louis Stevenson and the Appearance of Modernism* (London: Macmillan, 1996); Alan Sandison, 'Masters of the Hovering Life: Robert Musil and R. L. Stevenson', in *Robert Louis Stevenson. Writer of Boundaries*, ed. by Richard Ambrosini and Richard Dury (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), pp. 315–26; and 'Proust and Stevenson: Natives of an Unknown Country', in *European Stevenson*, ed. by Richard Ambrosini and Richard Dury (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), pp. 147–70.
- 5 *The Edinburgh Companion to Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. by Penny Fielding (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010).
- 6 David Daiches, *Robert Louis Stevenson: A Revaluation* (Glasgow/Norfolk, CT: MacLellan/New Directions, 1947), pp. 148, 167.
- 7 Irving S. Saposnik, *Robert Louis Stevenson* (New York: Twayne,

- 1974), p. 21.
- 8 'François Villon, Student, Poet, Housebreaker', written in spring 1877, and 'A Lodging for the Night', written in spring and summer of the same year.
  - 9 Cinzia Giglioni, 'Un racconto per conoscere meglio il mondo, "A Lodging for the Night" di R. L. Stevenson', in *Le trame della conoscenza. Percorsi epistemologici nella prosa inglese dalla prima modernità al postmoderno*, ed. by Marialuisa Bignami (Milano: Unicopli, 2007), pp. 79–87.
  - 10 Lucio De Capitani, 'The playwright, the moralist and the poet: a Brechtian reading of Stevenson's writings on François Villon', *Journal of Stevenson Studies*, 12 (2015), 53–79 (p. 53), henceforth cited in text.
  - 11 Gordon Hirsch, in contrast, sees Stevenson as fascinated by an ambivalence already contained in the title, 'François Villon, Student, Poet, and Housebreaker', and, while mixing praise and criticism, is finally clearly drawn to this 'playful and ironic' figure with his 'unfathomable – sometimes seemingly contradictory – motives': Gordon Hirsch, 'The rejection of dichotomous thinking in Stevenson's literary essays', *JSS* 6 (2009), 81–96 (p. 86).
  - 12 Daiches, p. 148. In this situation, it is unsurprising that studies of Stevenson's essays are few and far between. Some signs of a revival in interest can be seen; (i) studies especially of the literary essays by Richard Ambrosini: Richard Ambrosini, *R. L. Stevenson: la poetica del romanzo* (Roma: Bulzoni, 2011) which analyses Stevenson's letters and essays as evolving together with his narrative works as a theory of fiction, and a series of articles in English and Italian on aspects of Stevenson's essays; (ii) Glenda Norquay, *R. L. Stevenson on Fiction: An Anthology of Literary and Critical Essays* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999); and (iii) publications associated with the new Stevenson edition: *JSS* 12 (2012) dedicated to Stevenson's essays, and the first of five volumes of essays, *Essays I: Virginibus Puerisque and Other Papers* edited by Robert-Louis Abrahamson, soon to be published, which contains a 35 page introduction 'Stevenson as Essayist' written by the four essay editors.
  - 13 Julia Reid, *Robert Louis Stevenson, Science and the Fin de Siècle* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), henceforth cited in text.
  - 14 The opposition between simple and more complex world-views

- occurs at other points in Reid's study: between 'Pulvis et Umbra' and *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (p. 95) and 'The Foreigner at Home' and *Kidnapped* (p. 127). I will not look at these in detail, as the essay vs. fiction opposition does not play a structural role in this fine study, the 'Conclusion' section to which (pp. 174–7) does not mention it at all.
- 15 Glenda Norquay, 'Robert Louis Stevenson and Stanley J. Weyman: Reviving Romancers or Aging Adventurers', *English Literature in Transition* 55.ii (2012), pp. 176–194 (p. 185).
  - 16 Roslyn Jolly, *Robert Louis Stevenson in the Pacific: Travel, Empire, and the Author's Profession* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 55, 57.
  - 17 Cinzia Giglioni in an article of 2003 emphasizes the similarities and the mutual exchange between the two genres: the essays contain many brief narratives, and share with the fiction a similarity of lexis, style, and dialogic relationship with the reader. In both essays and fiction, she says, we can see the same emphasis on the pleasure of the text, the same stylistic use of omission and the same appeal to deep instincts and desires. – Cinzia Giglioni, 'Il sottile confine tra saggistica e narrativa: Robert Louis Stevenson e i saggi "avventurosi"', in *Il gioco dei cerchi concentrici*, ed. by Carlo Pagetti and Francesca Orestano (Milano: Unicopli, 2003), pp. 89–103.
  - 18 For example, the commentary on 'catchwords' in ch. 1, and of the surviving Scottish clan spirit in ch. 5 (Tusitala 16, pp. 12–13, 53–4).
  - 19 Alan Sandison, 'Masters of the Hovering Life', in *Robert Louis Stevenson. Writer of Boundaries*, p. 325.
  - 20 Robert Louis Stevenson, 'Lay Morals and Other Ethical Papers', in *Ethical Studies. Edinburgh Picturesque Notes* (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1924) Tusitala 26, pp. 11, 12.
  - 21 Robert Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, trans. Sophie Wilkins and Burton Pike (New York: Knopf, 1995), I, pp. 269, 270. For the affinities between Stevenson, Robert Musil and Roland Barthes, see Sandison, 'Masters of the Hovering Life', pp. 317–25.
  - 22 Richard Dury, 'Stevenson's essays: language and style', *JSS* 9 (2012), pp. 60–4.
  - 23 Robert Louis Stevenson, 'Forest Notes' in *Further Memories*, Tusitala 30, pp. 117–40; henceforth cited in the text by page number.
  - 24 Thackeray addresses the reader in the first sentence of several of his 'Roundabout Papers', but this is to a reader who has already followed

his monthly *Cornhill* essays. It is possible that other texts before Stevenson started with 'Perhaps', but both features must be rare openings for a piece of writing.

- 25 Tusitala 26, p. 5.
- 26 Michel de Montaigne, *The Complete Works*, trans. Donald M. Frame (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), p. 1016.
- 27 Robert-Louis Abrahamson, 'Doing Battle for the Truth: Stevenson's Struggles with Communicating Knowledge', in *Knowledge Dissemination in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Marina Dossena and Stefano Rosso (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), p. 130.
- 28 See Leslie Graham (1996), 'Home from home? Nineteenth-century Scottish travellers in France', *Actes du Colloque Réciprocités, pays francophones-pays anglophones, Le Mans, 1994* (Le Mans: Publication de l'Université du Maine), pp. 169–72.
- 29 'R.L.S.' was used for Stevenson's signature for the first time at the end of 'Forest Notes' and was then used exclusively for the *Cornhill Magazine* until he stopped writing for it in 1882.
- 30 Readers with biographical interests may see a possible reference in the 'village by a river', to the manse and garden at Colinton.
- 31 Tusitala 30, pp. 41–2.
- 32 See Brian Richardson, *Unnatural Voices. Extreme Narration in Modern and Contemporary Fiction* (Columbus, OH: Ohio University Press, 2006), p. 17–18; for marginal earlier examples of present-tense *you*-narratives, see Monika Fludernik, 'Introduction: Second Person Narrative and Related Issues', *Style* 28.3 (1994), pp. 293–304).
- 33 Brian Richardson, *Unnatural Voices*, pp. 36, 35.
- 34 Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Reverie: Childhood, Language and the Cosmos* (Boston, Beacon Press, 1971), p. 104.
- 35 'I love the early morning. [...] There's so much lightness everywhere, so much gaiety! [...] At this time of day I have no way of knowing who I am. I have no name, no job, expect nothing, want nothing. I just walk along the streets, I breathe. [...] nobody has a name here. It's as if there were no thoughts, no language, just all these things' (J. M. G. Le Clézio, *L'inconnu sur la terre* (Paris: Gallimard, 1978), pp. 173–4; my translation).

- 36 Robert Louis Stevenson, *Memories and Portraits*, Tusitala 29, pp. 135, 136.
- 37 This reminds us of the involuntary memory described in Proust, T. S. Eliot and others. Involuntary memory was first described by Hermann Ebbinghaus, in *Über das Gedächtnis* (1885); translated by Henry A. Ruger and Clara E. Bussenius as *Memory: A Contribution to Experimental Psychology* (New York, 1913). The term itself ('la mémoire involuntaire') was first used by Marcel Proust in a newspaper interview (*Le Temps*, 12 Nov 1913).
- 38 *Dear Stevenson: Letters from Andrew Lang to Robert Louis Stevenson with Five Letters from Stevenson to Lang*, ed. by Marysa Demoor (Leuven: Peeters, 1990), p. 41.
- 39 Kate Flint (ed.), *Impressionists in England: The Critical Reception* (London: Routledge, 1984), pp. 37–8; *OED*, 'Impressionist' 1.a and 1.b. Stevenson, however, had used the then rival term 'impressional' for the first time to refer to modern French landscape painting in 'An Autumn Effect' published a year before.
- 40 A *motif* is a 'subject for painting' or a 'subject for painting *en plein air*', as *peindre sur le motif* means 'to paint directly from the subject', without preparatory drawings, a distinctive practice of the painters of the Barbizon School and then of the Impressionists.
- 41 *Academy*, 1 June 1872, pp. 204–205.
- 42 Both Manet and Monet include a factory chimney, sometimes smoking, in views of the river at Argenteuil in the early 1870s; the relaxed and youthful company of Stevenson's inn courtyard reminds us of such paintings as Renoir's 'Ball du moulin de la Galette' of 1876.
- 43 'An Autumn Effect', also in *Further Memories*, Tusitala 30, p. 70.

## The miller as artist: 'Will o' the Mill' and the aestheticism of Stevenson's early essays

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### I

In April 1893, Isobel Strong recorded a discussion between her stepfather Robert Louis Stevenson and Graham Balfour, a visitor at Stevenson's Samoan residence who would later become the writer's first biographer. The subject of the conversation was one of Stevenson's tales:

*'Will o' the Mill* made a great impression upon Graham Balfour in his youth, and he declares that his character and life are moulded upon that story. Louis repudiated the tale altogether, and says that Will's sentiments upon life are "cat's meat."

'Conversation at table:

*'Palema* [Graham Balfour]. It is the best thing on life that has been written this age.

*'Louis*. Rather remarkable how little stock I take in it myself.

*'Palema*. If you had stood by your words I would have gone down on my knees to you. But how did you come to write what you don't believe?

*'Louis*. Well, I was at that age when you begin to look about and wonder if you should live your life –

*'Palema*. To be or not to be?

*'Louis*. Exactly. Everything is temperament. Well, I did the other fellow's temperament – held a brief on the other side – to see how it looked.

*'Palema*. Mighty well you did it too.

*'Louis*. No doubt better than I should have done my own side!<sup>1</sup>

The point of departure for the present essay is the discrepancy between the author's values and the philosophy of the tale. To put it in the words of Graham Balfour: 'But how did you come to write what you don't believe?' Stevenson himself replies that the tale is a *jeu d'esprit*, a rhetorical exercise in presenting the opposite point of view. To my mind, this reply fails to do justice to the complexity of his thought. Stevenson's beliefs were never monolithic, and they also underwent considerable change in the sixteen years between the story's composition and the discussion recorded in Strong's journal. When Stevenson told Balfour in 1893 that he had expressed 'the other fellow's temperament', he did not sufficiently acknowledge to what extent he shared that temperament when he wrote the tale in 1877.<sup>2</sup> He could present the opposite point of view so well because he had a considerable amount of sympathy for it. Tracing this sympathy in Stevenson's early essays will be the principal task of this article. Before accomplishing this task, however, I will give an introduction to the tale (part II), point out the ideas of Stevenson with which the tale is at odds (part III), and discuss the attitude that the tale takes to its protagonist (part IV). In the final part, I will give an answer to Balfour's question, showing that the tale has an affinity with some of Stevenson's early essays – in other words, that Stevenson wrote what he believed in the seventies.

## II

'Will o' the Mill' is one of Stevenson's earliest published stories. It appeared in the January number of the *Cornhill Magazine* in 1878, preceded only by 'An Old Song' (*London*, February to March 1877) and 'A Lodging for the Night' (*Temple Bar*, October 1877). The story is set in a mountain valley, presumably somewhere in the Alps. As the narrative mode tends towards the abstract and the allegorical, avoiding realist detail, the setting is not located with any precision in real-world geography. Stevenson himself

indicates as much when he states that ‘the scenery is a kind of hash-up of the Murzthal in Baden and the Brenner Pass in the Tyrol, over which I went when I was twelve’.<sup>3</sup> Will is a miller, as the title suggests, and he also owns an inn located at a pass across the mountains Stevenson is best known for his novels of action and adventure, but in this case his protagonist is unusually passive, for Will becomes increasingly sceptical about the possibility of satisfying his desires and realizing his plans and concludes that contemplation is wiser than action.

Will’s maxim is illustrated in two main episodes entitled ‘The Plain and the Stars’ and ‘The Parson’s Marjory’. The first is about his longing to leave the mountains, which dates from the first time that his father takes him to a nearby summit. Will is overwhelmed by the view of the mountain valley and the plain at its bottom:

From that day forward Will was full of new hopes and longings. Something kept tugging at his heart-strings; the running water carried his desires along with it as he dreamed over its fleeting surface; the wind, as it ran over innumerable tree-tops, hailed him with encouraging words; branches beckoned downward; the open road, as it shouldered round the angles and went turning and vanishing faster and faster down the valley, tortured him with its solicitations.<sup>4</sup>

However, Will’s desires are checked when he talks to a fat young traveller who assures him that visiting the plain will neither improve his life nor change it in any significant way. After asking Will to look up at the nocturnal sky, the traveller suggests that the plain imagined by Will is just as unattainable as the stars – hence the title of this episode, ‘The Plain and the Stars’. Will learns his lesson and stays at the inn even when the death of his parents allows him to leave. The road to the plain remains a road



not taken.

In the second episode, Will falls in love with Marjory, the parson's daughter, who is staying at Will's inn with her father while the parsonage is being renovated. Marjory reciprocates his feelings, and the two seem to be well on their way to marriage – until he finds her in the garden picking flowers. Will's comment on this activity becomes a turning point in their relationship:

'You wish to possess them [...] in order to think no more about them. It's a bit like killing the goose with the golden eggs. It's a bit like what I wished to do when I was a boy. Because I had a fancy for looking out over the plain, I wished to go down there – where I couldn't look out over it any longer. Was not that fine reasoning? Dear, dear, if they only thought of it, all the world would do like me; and you would let your flowers alone, just as I stay up here in the mountains.' Suddenly he broke off sharp. 'By the Lord!' he cried. And when she asked him what was wrong, he turned the question off, and walked away into the house with rather a humorous expression of face. (p. 73.)

By the end of his speech, Will seems to have realised that his argument against visiting the plain and picking flowers also applies to marrying Marjory. He concludes that they might leave their relationship just as well where it is, in a state of contemplation rather than consummation. When he attempts to communicate this view to her, Marjory interprets it, understandably enough, not as the general philosophical statement that it is but as a rejection of her person. Smarting from disappointed love and hurt pride, she leaves the inn and eventually marries someone else.

The argument against action is made primarily through parables. The fat traveller labels his comparison of the stars and the plain explicitly as such: "Can you apply a parable? [...] It is not

the same thing as a reason, but usually vastly more convincing” (p. 67). Will shows that he has adopted the traveller’s habit of thinking in terms of parables when he interprets the picking of flowers as a lesson against consummation and marriage. Further parables are centred around the two squirrels, one turning around endlessly in its cage and the other sitting philosophically over its nuts (*ibid.*), the old man who has worn out four pairs of iron shoes in a vain search of the eternal city (p. 63), and the fish who do not follow the current of the river down to the plain but keep their heads turned upstream (pp. 60, 64). A parable of sorts is also contained in the title, ‘Will o’ the Mill’. While the river flows down to the plain, an image of Will’s longings, the mill-wheel keeps turning but remains stationary. It transforms the linear movement of the river into a cyclical one, an image of Will’s decision to stay put. The word *will* is ambiguous; it may refer to wishes or desires but also to the ability to keep these in check. Both meanings apply to Stevenson’s protagonist. The rhyme of *will* and *mill* suggests that he has mastered his desires because he has learnt the lesson of the mill-wheel.

The parables in ‘Will o’ the Mill’ are indeed somewhat paradoxical. Traditionally, the parable and the related genre of the beast fable have a pragmatic or ethical orientation. They distinguish good or wise from bad or foolish conduct, and they are meant to present this distinction in such a clear and vivid fashion that all sorts of readers will be urged to prefer the former to the latter. In ‘Will o’ the Mill’, the ethical genre of the parable becomes strangely self-defeating. Instead of teaching good action, it suggests the futility of action as such. This is a point to which I will return below.

### III

Will’s passivity is at odds with the poetics of action that Stevenson puts forward in some of his essays, especially in ‘A Gossip on Romance’, which was composed a few months after

*Treasure Island* in 1882 and reflects the experience of writing a novel of adventure for a young audience. Stevenson begins the essay by recalling the way he read as a boy, immersing himself in the fictional world and relishing the action more than anything else: 'Eloquence and thought, character and conversation, were but obstacles to brush aside as we dug blithely after a certain sort of incident, like a pig for truffles'.<sup>5</sup> Elsewhere in the same essay, Stevenson deplores the lack of plot in contemporary fiction: 'English people of the present day are apt, I know not why, to look somewhat down on incident, and reserve their admiration for the clink of teaspoons and the accents of the curate. It is thought clever to write a novel with no story at all, or at least with a very dull one'.<sup>6</sup>

Admittedly, Stevenson also allows for another type of fiction in 'A Gossip on Romance'. He distinguishes the romantic or pictorial type, which is based on plot, from what he calls the dramatic type, which focuses on character and conduct, on moral problems and 'on the passionate slips and hesitations of the conscience' ('A Gossip on Romance', Tus. 29, p. 121). But even in this second type of fiction, the plot plays a significant role. It may not involve a hunt for hidden treasure or similarly adventurous pursuits, but it still revolves around a choice between different courses of action. It is about 'what a man shall choose to do' (ibid.), not about doing nothing. Instead of dwelling on a road not taken, it focuses on the decision which of several roads to take.

Stevenson's ethics also favour action over abstinence. In 'A Christmas Sermon' (1888), he states: 'We are not damned for doing wrong, but for not doing right; Christ would never hear of negative morality; *thou shalt* was ever his word, with which he superseded *thou shalt not*' (Tus. 26, p. 68). Stevenson finds this positive morality not only in the Gospels but also in the novels of Alexandre Dumas, where it is embodied in D'Artagnan, one of Stevenson's favourite literary characters: 'In a man who finds all

things good, you will scarce expect much zeal for negative virtues: the active alone will have a charm for him; abstinence, however wise, however kind, will always seem to such a judge entirely mean and partly impious' ('A Gossip on a Novel of Dumas's' [1887], Tus. 29, p. 116). In 'Reflections and Remarks on Human Life', a posthumously published series of notes on ethical topics, he likewise disparages a morality based on negations – 'I do not care two straws for all the *nots*' (Tus. 26, p. 83) – and praises courage as the principal virtue: 'Courage is to be cultivated, and some of the negative virtues may be sacrificed in the cultivation' (ibid. p. 90). In his personal life as well, Stevenson attempted to follow the maxim that action is preferable to inaction, that risks should be taken rather than avoided. In May 1889, he travelled to the leper colony of Molokai near Hawaii. Towards the end of the journey, he noticed that a nun who was also going to the colony to care for the lepers was crying. Moved to express his sympathy on the one hand, and reluctant to address a stranger on the other, he decided to speak. 'Partly, too, I did it', he wrote to his wife, 'because I was ashamed to do so, and remembered one of my golden rules, "When you are ashamed to speak, speak up at once"'.<sup>7</sup>

#### IV

Stevenson himself explains, as we have seen, the discrepancy between Will's views and his own by treating the tale as a *jeu d'esprit*. An alternative solution is to read 'Will o' the Mill' as a cautionary tale or satire that exposes its protagonist as flawed. This is the approach taken by Arthur Quiller-Couch, who argues that Will is not represented as a rural sage but as a timid fool:

[A]s procrastination begets timidity, when the time comes he shirks even the adventure of marriage, and poorly disappoints the honest girl who is ready for him. So he lives and vegetates; but there is one adventure, one voy-

age, that no man may shirk. There arrives at length a passenger who tells him this, and that the time has come. The passenger's name is Death; and with him at length Will of the Mill sets forth upon his travels. [...] Is it [the tale] not built upon the moral idea that excess of cautious wisdom is a disease of the soul, paralysing manhood?<sup>8</sup>

In other words, 'Will o' the Mill' presents an example to be shunned rather than to be followed. Not everyone, however, shares this view of the tale. Edwin Eigner, one of the most discerning critics of Stevenson, is well aware of the discrepancy between Stevenson's activism and the passivity of his protagonist; nevertheless he states that '[t]he philosophy of the idler probably gets its most favorable presentation in "Will o' the Mill"'.<sup>9</sup> Henry James emphasises the open-ended, non-judgmental quality of the tale; in his view, it neither exposes nor endorses Will's attitude:

[I]n *Will of the Mill* there is something exceedingly rare, poetical and unexpected, with that most fascinating quality a work of imagination can have – a dash of alternative mystery as to its meaning, an air (the air of life itself), of half inviting, half defying you to interpret. [...] The story is in the happiest key and suggests all kinds of things: but what does it in particular represent? The advantage of waiting, perhaps – the valuable truth that, one by one, we tide over our impatiences. There are sagacious people who hold that if one does not answer a letter it ends by answering itself. So the sub-title of Mr. Stevenson's tale might be 'The Beauty of Procrastination.' If you do not indulge your curiosities your slackness itself makes at last a kind of rich element, and it comes to very much the same thing in the end. When it came to the point poor Will had not even the curiosity to marry; and the author leaves us in stimulating

doubt as to whether he judges him too selfish or only too philosophic.<sup>10</sup>

James's comment is as astute as it is eloquent. A reading that considers the tale an anatomy of failure misses its ambiguity. Take, for instance, the final episode in which Death, who is personified as a traveller, takes Will on a journey down to the plain. Quiller-Couch suggests that the episode amounts to a refutation of Will's philosophy: since he has to travel to the plain anyway, he should have left much earlier when he could take the initiative himself, instead of later when he has no choice in the matter. However, the ending can also be read in a different manner. If, in the allegorical terms of the tale, travelling means death, Will was perhaps wise to remain in the mountains. If he had taken the road to the plain earlier, he might have died literally or spiritually at that point. Marjory, too, lies on her deathbed only a year after she decides to marry. She experiences the fate of the flowers she picked – a parable whose meaning was perceived by Will but not by Marjory herself.

Reading 'Will o' the Mill' as a cautionary tale, as an exposure of a flawed protagonist, is thus not a viable solution. Nor is it compatible with Stevenson's own words in the discussion recorded by his stepdaughter. After all, he does not say that he satirised the other fellow; he claims that he presented the other fellow's temperament better than he would have done his own. The problem remains that, in 'Will o' the Mill', we have a sympathetic or at least an impartial representation of a point of view that seems opposed to that of the author.

## V

As we have seen, the discrepancy between the author's views and the philosophy of the tale becomes especially obvious if one focuses on Stevenson's ethics, which is very clear in its preference for positive over negative virtues. However, we have also

seen that the ethical genre par excellence, the parable, becomes self-defeating in 'Will o' the Mill'. Thus it would appear that an ethical approach will not take us very far in analysing the tale and in explaining its discrepancy with the views of the author. An alternative approach is suggested by an episode in *The Wrecker* (1891-92) in which the protagonist Loudon Dodd, who is also the narrator, and the half-educated lawyer Bellairs talk about the book that the latter is holding in his hand. This is Goethe's novel *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, about which Bellairs has some misgivings:

[T]hat is a novel I picked up some time ago. It has afforded me great pleasure, though immoral.'

'O, immoral!' cried I, indignant as usual at any implication of art and ethics. (Tus. 12, p. 284.)

While Bellairs holds the Victorian belief that fiction ought to serve a moral purpose, Dodd insists on the aestheticist view that art is an end in itself and not subordinate to ethical concerns. This view stems from the time when he was a student of sculpture in Paris, cultivating a bohemian lifestyle and worshipping art in the *Quartier Latin*. Dodd's experiences in Paris and Fontainebleau are loosely based on Stevenson's own (the author even put himself and his cousin Bob into the novel as minor characters named Stennis *frère* and Stennis *ainé*). Like Dodd, Stevenson was attracted to aestheticism as a young man. In his later writings, aestheticism is usually qualified or balanced by other concerns; in *The Wrecker*, for instance, Dodd goes through a phase of intense devotion to art before he is pushed into a career of venture capitalism by his friend Jim Pinkerton.<sup>11</sup> But in some of Stevenson's early essays, such as 'Ordered South', 'An Autumn Effect' and 'Roads', aestheticism is as prominent and as unqualified as in the writings of Walter Pater or Oscar Wilde.<sup>12</sup> These are the essays I will focus on because they do not contradict 'Will o'

the Mill' but connect with it in interesting and illuminating ways.

In late 1873, Stevenson was examined by the English physician Andrew Clark, who strongly recommended that the emaciated young Scotsman should seek a warmer climate.<sup>13</sup> Stevenson spent the winter months at the Riviera and wrote about his experiences in the autobiographical essay 'Ordered South', which was first published in *Macmillan's Magazine* in May 1874. This is how the essay begins:

By a curious irony of fate, the places to which we are sent when health deserts us are often singularly beautiful. Often, too, they are places we have visited in former years, or seen briefly in passing by, and kept ever afterward in pious memory; and we please ourselves with the fancy that we shall repeat many vivid and pleasurable sensations, and take up again the thread of our enjoyment in the same spirit as we let it fall. (Tus. 25, p. 61.)

The opening sentences indicate the main focus of the essay. It is not about illness or health, about cures or medicines. The main focus is on the appreciation of beautiful places, on the 'vivid and pleasurable sensations' to be gained from the observation of Southern scenery. Health – or the lack of it – is only relevant insofar as it affects this kind of perception. 'Ordered South' thus reads like a sequel to a text published one year previously, the 'Conclusion' of Walter Pater's *The Renaissance*. In the 'Conclusion', Pater praises aesthetic experience as the supreme goal in life:

The service of philosophy, of speculative culture, towards the human spirit, is to rouse, to startle it to a life of constant and eager observation. Every moment some form grows perfect in hand or face; some tone on the hills or the sea is choicer than the rest; some mood of passion or



insight or intellectual excitement is irresistibly real and attractive to us, — for that moment only. Not the fruit of experience, but experience itself, is the end. A counted number of pulses only is given to us of a variegated, dramatic life. How may we see in them all that is to be seen in them by the finest senses? [...] Of such wisdom, the poetic passion, the desire of beauty, the love of art for its own sake, has most. For art comes to you proposing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments' sake.<sup>14</sup>

In Stevenson's 'Ordered South', the initial expectation of the enjoyment of Mediterranean scenery is disappointed when the invalid finds that he has lost his capacity for aesthetic perception. Illness has dulled his senses: 'He is like an enthusiast leading about with him a stolid, indifferent tourist. [...] His life becomes a palsied fumbling after notes that are silent when he has found and struck them' (Tus. 25, pp. 63-64). The aesthetic quality of the experience that the invalid is looking for is suggested by the metaphor; failing to perceive the views in the way he used to do is like a futile attempt to strike a note on a musical instrument. After a period of dullness, however, the invalid suddenly recovers the lost capacity:

Some day he will find his first violet, and be lost in pleasant wonder, by what alchemy the cold earth of the clods, and the vapid air and rain, can be transmuted into colour so rich and odour so touchingly sweet. Or perhaps he may see a group of washerwomen relieved, on a spit of shingle, against the blue sea, or a meeting of flower-gatherers in the tempered daylight of an olive-garden; and something significant or monumental in the grouping, something in the harmony of faint colour that is always characteristic of the dress of these southern women, will come home to

him unexpectedly, and awake in him that satisfaction with which we tell ourselves that we are the richer by one more beautiful experience. Or it may be something even slighter: as when the opulence of the sunshine, which somehow gets lost and fails to produce its effect on the large scale, is suddenly revealed to him by the chance isolation – as he changes the position of his sunshade – of a yard or two of roadway with its stones and weeds. ('Ordered South', Tus. 25, p. 65.)

The invalid perceives the scene like a painter. He discovers the significance of a grouping, appreciates the harmony of colours and produces an effect by choosing a different scale. Humans are included in the scene, but not as people to talk to or to interact with. They appear as visual components of the scenery and are not fundamentally different from weeds or violets.

In his analysis of perception as a kind of internal painting, Stevenson comes very close to anticipating Oscar Wilde's paradox that 'Life imitates Art far more than Art imitates Life',<sup>15</sup> that our perceptions are governed by the patterns that we have learnt from pictures. In another early essay, 'An Autumn Effect', which appeared in *The Portfolio* in April and May 1875, he writes: 'For it is rather in nature that we see resemblance to art, than in art to nature; and we say a hundred times, "How like a picture!" for once that we say, "How like the truth!" The forms in which we learn to think of landscape are forms that we have got from painted canvas' (Tus. 30, p. 70). In the same essay, which describes a walking tour in Buckinghamshire, he gives frequent examples of this kind of perception, as in the following passage, in which an experience is cast in moulds derived from both painting and literature:

It was pitch-dark in the village street, and the darkness seemed only the greater for a light here and there in an

uncurtained window or from an open door. Into one such window I was rude enough to peep, and saw within a charming *genre* picture. In a room, all white wainscot and crimson wall-paper, a perfect gem of colour after the black, empty darkness in which I had been groping, a pretty girl was telling a story, as well as I could make out, to an attentive child upon her knee, while an old woman sat placidly dozing over the fire. You may be sure I was not behindhand with a story for myself – a good old story after the manner of G. P. R. James and the village melodramas, with a wicked squire, and poachers, and an attorney, and a virtuous young man with a genius for mechanics, who should love, and protect, and ultimately marry the girl in the crimson room. ('An Autumn Effect', Tus. 30, p. 75.)

Wherever he walks in Buckinghamshire, the narrator of 'An Autumn Effect' transforms life into art. Perceptions are turned into paintings, people into characters, and an event such as a young woman holding a child on her knee into the starting point of a plot.

The protagonist of 'Will o' the Mill' is like the invalids and walkers of Stevenson's early essays in his spectator attitude, in his preference for observing over participating. An incisive episode in the formation of this attitude occurs when his father takes him to the nearby summit with the splendid view:

The sun was near setting, and hung low down in a cloudless sky. Everything was defined and glorified in golden light. Will had never seen so great an expanse of country in his life; he stood and gazed with all his eyes. He could see the cities, and the woods and fields, and the bright curves of the river, and far away to where the rim of the plain trenched along the shining heavens. An overmastering emotion seized upon the boy, soul and body; his

heart beat so thickly that he could not breathe; the scene swam before his eyes; the sun seemed to wheel round and round, and throw off, as it turned, strange shapes which disappeared with the rapidity of thought, and were succeeded by others. Will covered his face with his hands, and burst into a violent fit of tears; and the poor miller, sadly disappointed and perplexed, saw nothing better for it than to take him up in his arms and carry him home in silence. (Pp. 61-62.)

At this point, of course, Will still translates his fascination with the view of the plain into a wish to travel down to it. However, it is hard to see how the intensity of the emotion that Will experiences when he views the plain from afar can be bettered by any experience on the plain itself. Later on in the story, Will has realised this, as he shows in one of his dialogues with Marjory: “Because I had a fancy for looking out over the plain, I wished to go down there – where I couldn’t look out over it any longer” (p. 73). The futility of going down to the plain is also suggested by the answer that Will receives from his father when he asks where the river flows once it has passed the mill.

‘It goes down the valley [...] and turns a power of mills – six-score mills, they say, from here to Unterdeck – and it none the wearier after all. And then it goes out into the lowlands, and waters the great corn country, and runs through a sight of fine cities (so they say) where kings live all alone in great palaces, with a sentry walking up and down before the door. And it goes under bridges with stone men upon them, looking down and smiling so curious at the water, and living folks leaning their elbows on the wall and looking over too’. (Pp. 60-61.)

The plain is not fundamentally different from the mountains.

The kings live in solitude and isolation just like Will, and the pedestrians on the bridges are contemplating the river just like Will. An aestheticist touch is added to the passage by the juxtaposition of 'stone men' and 'living folks'. Of the two, the former, i.e. the works of art, are endowed with greater interest and intensity; they are 'smiling so curious' at the water, while the latter are just looking at it in a casual manner. Will resembles the stone men on the bridge: he does not move from his station and he observes the river all the more intently and perceptively for this very reason.

Like the river, the road at which the mill is situated functions as an image of Will's longing to leave: '[T]he open road, as it shouldered round the angles and went turning and vanishing faster and faster down the valley, tortured him with its solicitations' (p. 62). This description reads like an echo of Stevenson's first paid publication, an essay entitled 'Roads', which appeared in *The Portfolio* in 1873. The final paragraph of this essay also describes the sense of anticipation evoked by a road:

And now we come to that last and most subtle quality of all, to that sense of prospect, of outlook, that is brought so powerfully to our minds by a road. In real nature as well as in old landscapes, beneath that impartial daylight in which a whole variegated plain is plunged and saturated, the line of the road leads the eye forth with the vague sense of desire up to the green limit of the horizon. Travel is brought home to us, and we visit in spirit every grove and hamlet that tempts us in the distance. ('Roads', Tus. 25, p. 188.)

In the further course of the paragraph, Stevenson points out that the expectations created by a road can be deceptive. As in 'Will o' the Mill', there is an awareness that the fulfilment may not live up to the promise. However, the essay does not end on a pessimistic note. Instead of dwelling on the eventual disillusionment, the

concluding sentences emphasise the experience of the view:

Every little vista, every little glimpse that we have of what lies before us, gives the impatient imagination rein, so that it can outstrip the body and already plunge into the shadow of the woods, and overlook from the hill-top the plain beyond it, and wander in the windings of the valleys that are still far in front. The road is already there – we shall not be long behind. It is as if we were marching with the rear of a great army, and, from far before, heard the acclamation of the people as the vanguard entered some friendly and jubilant city. Would not every man, through all the long miles of march, feel as if he also were within the gates? ('Roads', Tus. 25, p. 189.)

The passage shares the image of the hill-top and the plain with 'Will o' the Mill'. It also provides a rationale for Will's passivity. The glimpse or vista that a road provides is an end in itself. If we experience the road aesthetically or imaginatively, we do not need to follow it. We can stand on a hill-top and feel as if we had entered the city in the plain at the same time. This is an attitude that we find in 'Will o' the Mill' just as much as in 'Roads'.

I would like to conclude by pointing out a final connection between 'Will o' the Mill' and the early essays, in particular 'Ordered South'. As we have seen, the invalid of this essay cultivates aesthetic perception, develops a spectator attitude and disconnects himself from activity and participation. All of this results in a readiness for death, which is rather peculiar, given the fact that this highly autobiographical essay was written by a 23-year-old:

In this falling aside, in this quietude and desertion of other men, there is no inharmonious prelude to the last quietude and desertion of the grave; in this dulness of the

senses there is a gentle preparation for the final insensibility of death. And to him the idea of mortality comes in a shape less violent and harsh than is its wont, less as an abrupt catastrophe than as a thing of infinitesimal gradation, and the last step on a long decline of way. ('Ordered South', Tus. 25, p. 68.)

Will, too, is ready for death. When he is invited to other places, he replies, "I am a dead man now: I have lived and died already" (p. 80). That these are not empty words is shown in the final episode, entitled 'Death'. When the allegorical visitor reveals his identity, Will remains undaunted. He calls Death his "only friend" (p. 86) and states that he has been waiting for him for many years. Death, in turn, also reveals a special affinity with Will. "I have been yearning for you as if you were my own son" (p. 85), he tells Will, and the two walk away from the inn arm in arm.

For the republication of 'Ordered South' in *Virginibus Puerisque*, Stevenson wrote a final note which begins, 'To this essay I must in honesty append a word or two of qualification; for this is one of the points on which a slightly greater age teaches us a slightly different wisdom' (Tus. 25, 'Note', p. 71). The note, which was written in late 1880, is just as autobiographical as the essay itself, which was composed seven years earlier. What Stevenson qualifies in this note is not the argument in general but its conclusion, the invalid's readiness for death. As a recently married man and father of two stepchildren, Stevenson emphasises the importance of social ties, from which he infers the obligation to cling to life. Moreover, he now uses terms like duty, regret or betrayal – an ethical vocabulary that is completely absent from the essay itself:

He, as a living man, has some to help, some to love, some to correct; it may be, some to punish. [...] [T]he better the man and the nobler his purposes, the more will he be tempted to regret the

extinction of his powers and the deletion of his personality. To have lived a generation, is not only to have grown at home in that perplexing medium, but to have assumed innumerable duties. To die at such an age, has, for all but the entirely base, something of the air of a betrayal. A man does not only reflect upon what he might have done in a future that is never to be his; but beholding himself so early a deserter from the fight, he eats his heart for the good he might have done already. ('Ordered South: Note', Tus. 25, pp. 71-72.)

The note appended to 'Ordered South' resembles the comments that Stevenson made in 1893 when he bluntly rejected Graham Balfour's enthusiasm about 'Will o' the Mill'. In both cases Stevenson indicates his distance from an earlier stage in his development as a man and as a writer. In the note, however, he shows greater understanding for his former self, for the different wisdom taught by a younger age. It is this sort of understanding that I have attempted to create for 'Will o' the Mill' by connecting it with the aestheticism of Stevenson's early essays. If we imagine the miller as an artist, as a fellow spirit to the invalids and walkers in such essays as 'Ordered South', 'An Autumn Effect' and 'Roads', then the tale no longer seems to be such an anomaly but can be seen instead as an integral part of Stevenson's œuvre.

## NOTES

- 1 Isobel Strong, 'Vailima Table-Talk', in *Memories of Vailima*, ed. by Isobel Strong and Lloyd Osbourne (New York: Scribner's, 1902), 5-104 (pp. 45-46). Graham Balfour was called 'Palema' or 'Pelema' because Isobel Strong's son Austin jokingly referred to him as 'Blame Balfour'; 'Blame' was turned into 'Pelema' by the Samoans. See Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. by Bradford A. Booth and Ernest Mehew, 8 vols. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994-95), vol. 7, p. 388.
- 2 Information concerning the composition and publication of Stevenson's writings is taken from Roger G. Swearingen, *The Prose Writings of Robert Louis Stevenson: A Guide* (London: Macmillan,



- 1980).
- 3 *Letters*, vol. 6, p. 47. To the best of my knowledge, there is no Murztal in the Baden region of Germany; presumably Stevenson refers to the Murgtal.
  - 4 Robert Louis Stevenson, 'Will o' the Mill', in *The Merry Men and Other Tales* (London: Heinemann, 1924), Tusitala 8, p. 62, henceforth cited in text.
  - 5 Robert Louis Stevenson, 'A Gossip on Romance', in *Memories and Portraits*, Tusitala 29, p. 119.
  - 6 *Ibid.*, p. 124. References to Stevenson's writings other than 'Will o' the Mill' will be to the Tusitala edition (35 vols, London: Heinemann, 1923-24) and will be given in text with titles where necessary, volume number and page number(s).
  - 7 *Letters*, vol. 6, p. 307.
  - 8 Arthur T. Quiller-Couch, 'An Answer to Moore', in *Robert Louis Stevenson: The Critical Heritage*, ed. by Paul Maixner (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), pp. 479-80.
  - 9 Edwin M. Eigner, *Robert Louis Stevenson and Romantic Tradition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 52.
  - 10 Henry James, 'Robert Louis Stevenson', in *Literary Criticism*, ed. by Leon Edel, 2 vols (New York: Library of America, 1984), vol. 1, pp. 1246-47. Robert Kiely follows James in arguing that the presentation of the protagonist and his passivity is ambivalent; Kiely sees Stevenson's essential activism balanced by an awareness of his own weakness as an invalid in *Robert Louis Stevenson and the Fiction of Adventure* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964), pp. 154-62. James Walt makes Henry James's lengthy comment on 'Will o' the Mill' the point of departure for a convincing argument that the tale inspired James to write 'The Beast in the Jungle'; he provides a comparison between the two stories in 'Stevenson's "Will o' the Mill" and James's "The Beast in the Jungle"', *Unisa English Studies: Bulletin of the Department of English*, 8 (1970), 19-25. A similar comparison of 'Will o' the Mill' and Anton Chekhov's 'The Black Monk' is made by Neil Cornwell in 'Two Visionary Storytellers of 1894: R. L. Stevenson and Anton Chekhov', in *Beauty and the Beast: Christina Rossetti, Walter Pater, R. L. Stevenson and Their Contemporaries*, ed. by Peter Liebrechts and Wim Tigges (Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1996), pp. 171-85; however, Cornwell himself admits

that Chekhov probably did not know Stevenson's tale, and the parallels he identifies are neither precise nor illuminating.

- 11 On the autobiographical dimension of *The Wrecker* and on the contrast between aestheticism and capitalism in this novel, see William Gray, 'Stevenson's "Auld Alliance": France, Art Theory and the Breath of Money in *The Wrecker*', *Scottish Studies Review*, 3 (2002), 54-65.
- 12 The aestheticism of the early essays is touched upon by Liz Farr, who focuses on the concept of the picturesque in 'Stevenson's Picturesque Excursions: The Art of Youthful Vagrancy', *Nineteenth-Century Prose*, 29 (2002), 197-225. Jennifer Hayward contrasts the aestheticism of the early travel writings with the more realist approach of the travel writings based on Stevenson's journey to the US in 1879-80; see "'The Foreigner at Home': The Travel Essays of Robert Louis Stevenson', *Journal of Stevenson Studies*, 9 (2012), 233-70.
- 13 J. C. Furnas, *Voyage to Windward: The Life of Robert Louis Stevenson* (London: Faber and Faber, 1952), pp. 79-80.
- 14 Walter Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry*, ed. by Adam Phillips, The World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 152-53.
- 15 Oscar Wilde, 'The Decay of Lying', in *Oscar Wilde: The Major Works*, ed. by Isobel Murray, The World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 239.



## The obscure cinematic lore of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde: an updated silent era filmography

*Steve Joyce*

### **Introduction**

Mention of silent film in conjunction with *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* inevitably evokes thoughts of the famous 1920 film starring John Barrymore. Yet there were a multitude of other cinematic adaptations. This article will not analyse the Barrymore film, but will discuss instead those many other lesser-known pictures. There were theatrical adaptations, too, of course during the 1890s, with performances starring the great Richard Mansfield, and Mansfield's own competitor Daniel Bandmann, and also the touring troupe of Luella Forepaugh and George F. Fish. It is not surprising that their popularity should extend to the screen, and some of the produced films of this period were drawn directly from these stage counterparts while many others found at least some inspiration in them.

The great majority of silent pictures have gone for eternity, and in fact only six of the 'Jekyll and Hyde' films here discussed (see bibliography) have survived. Given this and the paucity of contemporary published coverage, it is small wonder that myths and dubious factoids have been so often propagated. Professor Charles King, now of the University of Nebraska Omaha, back in 1997 was the first, perhaps, to correctly critique the vintage Jekyll and Hyde filmography by noting the 'frequent contradictions in the credits listed in available sources'.<sup>1</sup> Even so, in a number of instances, there is very little surviving detail about storylines, critical reception, etc. Nevertheless, prompted by the new millennium's improved access to sources, in discussing the films involved, this article attempts to take a fresh look at this material, based whenever possible upon available primary written texts, first-hand accounts, direct viewings, etc. Informed

opinion, when used, will be indicated as just that.

With so many movies, at least indirectly, playing off the popularity of the 'Good and Evil Within One Person' theme, the films covered in this essay must be limited. Adapting the methodology used in Professor King's work, inclusion criteria will be defined as: (1) Silent films playing tribute to the R.L.S. novella by name in title or content; or (2) films featuring a human physical transformation induced by pseudo-scientific means. This second condition disqualifies an almost countless string of movies whose storylines depend upon individuals sporting dual natures induced by hypnosis, a blow to the head and the like. This procedure will hopefully lay the groundwork for still further study and even more discoveries on the subject.

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### *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (1908, USA)*

(Director) unknown. (Actors) unknown. (Company) Selig Polyscope.

King (p. 14) has '(d) Otis Turner' and '(a) Hobart Bosworth' but these participants cannot be verified by an extensive survey of primary sources. The story-line, in all likelihood, is taken from the 1904 Fish and Forepaugh play: an act-by-act summary of the film in the *Moving Picture World* (7 March 1908) corresponds closely to the stage-play script. See Luella Forepaugh and George F. Fish, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde or A Mis-spent Life - A Drama in Four Acts* (New York: Samuel French, 1897).

On 7 March 1908 the *Moving Picture World* announced the appearance of the first filmed *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* with words of praise: 'we now have one of the few exceptionally clever

productions which impress the onlooker with every feeling of deep emotion, drama and tragedy enacted by the original company.' The production was, however, not technically innovative. It would be a while until theatre-bound filming techniques were gradually replaced by advanced camera shots and sophisticated editing methods. In a period in which directors filled their screen as though it was little more than a proscenium stage, the Selig Polyscope Company, in creating this initial Jekyll and Hyde film, went one step further (or back, depending on one's point of view). They literally cranked the camera in front of a condensed live performance of the play itself (complete with a rising curtain).

William Nicholas Selig (nicknamed the 'Colonel'), like the great French film pioneer Georges Melies, performed magic tricks. After travelling the country in the 1890s practicing his trade, Selig (again like the Frenchman) caught wind of the Lumiere brothers' prototype film equipment. Subsequently, he developed his own Selig Standard Camera and a projector known as the Selig Polyscope from whence eventually came his company's name.

As the subject matter for his pictures evolved from Chicago area 'actualities' and brief skits, so did his business strategy. The Colonel built up a vast library of novels and plays for which he alone possessed the filming rights. *Photoplay* (February 1918) later reported:

If not actually the first to see it, he [Selig] was really the first to have the courage of his convictions, for he went out into the book market and let the publishers and authors laugh at him – and sell him film rights for from \$25 up. One hundred dollars was a big price then.

Overwhelming evidence points to the 1897 Fish and Forepaugh play as the basis for Selig's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Certainly, this wouldn't be the only instance that the duo's adaptation had

found mass media consideration. During the first decade of the twentieth century, even as the Fish and Forepaugh travelling company still made the rounds with the show, a performer named Len Spencer recorded lines from the final transformation dialogue verbatim on multiple occasions.<sup>2</sup> In 1928, the play hit the New York airwaves via station WJZ. Still later in 1940, when MGM forged embryonic plans for a Jekyll / Hyde movie starring Robert Donat (soon to be replaced with Spencer Tracy), the studio heads deemed the Fish / Forepaugh work a valuable enough prize to be purchased along with rights to two (1920, 1931) esteemed Paramount Jekyll / Hyde screenplays.<sup>3</sup>

The cinematic and theatrical renditions split the action into four acts. In Act I of both, the romance of Dr Jekyll and the Vicar's daughter buds in the church garden, Jekyll is first transformed and the Vicar is murdered. Act II finds Jekyll in the law offices of Utterson. When by himself, Jekyll begins to imagine visions of the gallows. Hyde visits Dr Lanyon in Act III and reveals his alter ego. Back in Jekyll's laboratory in the final act, Hyde poisons himself to kill the hated Jekyll.

No affairs of the heart appear in Stevenson's prose and the presence in the picture's first act of a Vicar's daughter specifically named 'Alice' seems uniquely attributable to the contributions of Fish and Forepaugh.<sup>4</sup> Internet sites and books on the subject differ as to the identity of the actress portraying the Alice character as well as that of others in the cast. Some references make the case that the theatre group itself was filmed while others imply members of the growing stable of Selig's own actors and actresses took on the chore. The truth may never be uncovered for sure. In any event, *Moving Picture World* (7 March 1908) had this to say:

The leading role and character part executed by the man who plays the double life of Dr. Jekyll – at times Mr. Hyde – is convincing that no greater display of ability to fulfil this role could be shown by any actor. The other charac-

ters prove, by their able support, that the entire dramatic cast is one that does justice to the book itself.

The anonymous thespian portraying filmdom's very first Jekyll to Hyde transformation likely forewent any use of camera tricks. If so, instructions given in the published play undoubtedly provided his cue:

Dr. Jekyll is played straight, and is dressed in full black suit with Prince Albert coat, wears dark wig with long hair; wig is so arranged that it can be brought over so part of the hair can be brought over the eyes. Prince Albert coat is made with pleat down back, centre. The pleat will vary from four to five inches at the collar to about eighteen inches at the tails. [...] At commencement of change the footlights are half lowered, making stage partially dark. Dr. Jekyll writhes as though in physical pain; assumes crouching position; during this with one hand he pulls portion of the wig which is brought forward and falls in a tangled mass over his forehead and eyes, at the same time with other hand he releases button or hook which releases pleat and causes coat to hang like loose gown, thus concealing the fact that the character is standing in crouching position. Green medium calcium is invariably used for Hyde. [...] The character of Jekyll is played natural, without effect, and as easy as possible. Mr. Hyde is a dwarf; speaks in jerky manner, and aspirates his words.

Subsequent pieces in the *Moving Picture World* addressed the pros and cons of viewing the film cum play.<sup>5</sup> Positive feedback came from a movie department head for a conglomerate of entertainment houses via an interview (reprinted from the *New York World*) in the 8 April 1908 issue. After beginning the discussion on another film the executive enthused:



It was remarkable how closely the spectators followed the plot. We have had equal success with a reduced version of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and we intend hereafter to present other plays in motion pictures.

(Tantalizingly, the main thrust of the article discussed the possibility of recording live performances via a combination of the 'cinematograph and phonograph', a sight and sound process presumably considered for 1908's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* but never utilised).

In an *MPW* editorial (10 October 1908), a scribe calling himself just 'M' voiced his perceived problems with the growing industry. Singled out were *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and similar examples, which according to him, made for 'clever plays' but had been 'presented in motion pictures in a way that the public do not understand them'. Concluded 'M', 'the spectators cannot follow the plot'.

The very next year, Selig Polyscope would see fit to enter into the Jekyll / Hyde fray once more.

### ***Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1908, USA)**

(Company) Kalem. (?)

King (p. 14) has '(d) Sidney Olcott' and '(a) Frank Oakes Rose' but, once more, these participants cannot be verified by a survey of primary sources nor, in fact, can the existence of the film itself.

It is doubtful that this film was ever even made. A number of secondary sources list the short either without citation or by citing prior secondary sources; no secondary sources that actually cite primary sources can be found and the names of participants may have originated as educated guesses. In the later part of the first decade of the twentieth century, Kalem faced a lawsuit for copyright infringement. A plausible explanation for the supposed existence of an early Kalem Jekyll / Hyde film could be due to a misinterpreting of articles of the day. See, for example, *Variety* (21 December 1908) and *Billboard* (23 May 1908) enu-

merating other films (all based on theatrical works) in possible violation due to the Kalem suit. *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* found itself among them; but so did films now known to be from other studios besides Kalem including Selig Polyscope, which had, of course, created *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* earlier in 1908.<sup>6</sup>

### ***A Modern Mr. Jekyll (1909, USA)***

(Director) Kenyon. (Actor) Henry Arthur Barrows (?). (Company) Selig Polyscope.

This is a different work from the Selig 1908 version as has been demonstrated by Mark Griep in his Chemistry Movies Blog. <[http://global.oup.com/us/companion.websites/9780195326925/pdfs/2\\_GriepBlog\\_26July09.pdf](http://global.oup.com/us/companion.websites/9780195326925/pdfs/2_GriepBlog_26July09.pdf)>.

Griep speculates that Henry Arthur Barrows was an actor in the film and that Kenyon was the director. A handwritten cutting continuity from the Selig Papers held by the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences cryptically refers to someone named 'Barrows' without explanation of whether this named an actor or a character. It further lists the producer (which probably back then did, in fact, signify 'director') as 'Kenyon'.

In the 'modernised' Selig account, the mischievous main character farcically morphs into just about anything *but* his evil self. After conning a mysterious 'mystic fluid' away from a reclusive chemist, he passes a bad check (lampooning an incident in Stevenson) and eludes the constable by converting himself into a Woman, a Horse and Buggy, a Pancake, a 'Dago', a 'Jew Rag Picker', a Girl on a Swing and a 'Dude'. The tables are turned in the finale when the police use the liquid to place him in a prison uniform complete with bars around him.<sup>7</sup> As a comedy, the short film represented the times, for *A Modern Dr. Jekyll* found its raison d'être in its camera tricks and hoped the resultant humour was sufficiently entertaining. The inclusion of a 'Dago', a 'Jew Rag Picker' and a 'Dude',<sup>8</sup> offensive in this millennium, no doubt triggered additional crude laughs a century ago. The *New York Dramatic Mirror* (11 January 1910) noted that besides the 'clever transformations', the film had 'limited interest'. However, *Moving Picture World* (31 December 1909) countered with a

prediction that the comedy would 'set the audience laughing and keep them at it until the picture ceases.'

Erroneous speculation that the film consisted of a re-titling of the Selig Jekyll and Hyde film of 1908 likely emerged from the British publication *Kinematograph & Lantern Weekly* (17 February 1910) which, curiously enough, had only these brief words to say: 'An ingenious adaptation of Stevenson's classic, replete with adventurous incident and sensation. Certain of general appreciation.' At least the film made its mark in the brevity department by unfolding its humour in only 471 feet of film, sharing a reel with another Selig offering called (and here the brevity ends) *Through the Hood River Valley and Along the Columbia River to Oregon*. In the United States, the release date was 20 December 1909.

### **The Duality of Man (1910, U.K.)**

(Company) Wrench.

*Kinematograph & Lantern Weekly* (17 February 1910) introduced this film as 'An intensely dramatic film based upon the story of Stephenson [sic]'. It closed out by predicting that *The Duality of Man* would, 'appeal to the lovers of the highly sensational' while supplying what little plot (or any) points are known about this British adaptation from the all but forgotten Wrench Film Company.<sup>9</sup> Formally released in the UK on 23 February 1910 to the tune of a mere 580 feet of film, *The Duality of Man* still crammed in enough action to do justice to the Jekyll / Hyde drama. After drinking the potion, Hyde enters some gardens where 'high play is indulged in', steals some bank notes and attacks an elderly man. By switching identities, Hyde eludes detectives. Jekyll then meets his soon to be bride Hilda as well as her father. Despite witnessing Jekyll turn to Hyde and, worse yet, kill her father, Hilda chooses to shield Jekyll from the authorities. Her attempts are in vain; Hyde poisons himself as the police arrive. In publicising this film '*Kine Weekly*' adroitly referenced

the ongoing London performance of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* by H. B. Irving at the Queen's Theatre.<sup>10</sup> Having made the connection, the publication neglected to mention that film and play, other than basics, bore no real similarity.

***Robert Hyde's Double Life a.k.a. L'homme aux deux visages (1910, France)***

(Director) unknown. (Actor) Monsieur Dulac of the Théâtre de la Porte St.-Martin. (Actor) Monsieur Cargues of the Théâtre du Palais-Royal. (Actor) Madame Bertin of the Théâtre du Gymnase. (Actor) 'Little' Sutter of the Théâtre Réjane. (Company) Lux.

*Robert Hyde's Double Life* was the British Empire's preferred title for the French original, *L'homme aux deux visages*, measuring 201 meters, released on 22 July 1910 by the Lux Company of France (*Cine-Journal*, 16 July 1910).<sup>11</sup>

*The West Australian* (15 and 17 August 1910) identified the Parisian artists taking part in the film.

A quote from the *Wairarapa Daily Times* (of New Zealand; 15 September 1910) justifies this entry's tenuous inclusion in our filmography: 'Robert Hyde's Double Life is founded on the famous book by Stevenson.' The film may well have tangentially been 'founded' on Stevenson's book, and its title might include the name 'Hyde', but it falls far short of being a faithful version. The story begins with Robert Hyde, dedicated husband and father, presenting some jewellery to his wife and a gift to his little daughter. However, there is a second side to Hyde; he fences stolen goods from scoundrels. One of his clients (read 'thieves') hands him some jewellery that looks very familiar. He grills the thief on the matter, hears of his family's robbery and murder and then strangles the man. Hyde returns home, sees his loved ones' bodies and collapses dead on the spot of grief and guilt.<sup>12</sup> A British paper, *The Derby Daily Telegraph* (10 August 1910), spoke of *Robert Hyde's Double Life's* 'many graphic incidents'. Among them, no doubt, were the on-screen display of not one but several grisly murders: Mrs Hyde, Hyde's daughter and the thief.

***Den Skaebnesvangre Opfindelse (1910, Denmark)***

(Jekyll / Hyde) Alwin Neuss. (Company) Nordisk.



Marguerite Engberg,<sup>13</sup> with access to Nordisk company records, has provided additional credits: (Director) August Blom. (Scriptwriter) August Blom. (Producer) Ole Olsen. (Cameraman) Axel Sørensen.

Engberg also provides acting credits as taken from those records or from visual identification of actors appearing in several existing stills of the film: (Actor) Emilie Sannom. Holger Pedersen. (Actor) Ella la Cour. (Actor) Victor Fabian. (Actor) Rigmor Jerichau. (Actor) Julie Henriksen

Production values seem to have improved considerably since the first Jekyll and Hyde picture. *Moving Picture World* (24 September 1910) commented on a film it titled 'Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde or A Strange Case':

We do not wish to compare the production with that of another firm that did it two years ago, for two years in the matter of picture making is a big handicap when it comes to comparison, especially with American films.<sup>14</sup>

In actuality, however, the publication was discussing a Danish work, *Den Skaebnesvangre Opfindelse* (translated as 'The Fatal Invention') by Nordisk Film. Not many, aside from cognoscenti in the movie industry, could have known that the Great Northern Film Company, to whom *MPW* attributed the film, was in fact the U.S. distribution arm of Nordisk. Reviews reflected good work by both leading man Alwin Neuss and Director August Blom. For instance, *MPW* had this to say:

The technical qualities of this particular film are quite above criticism. The light is perfect, the detail sharp and clear, the picture has a surprising depth for studio work, and the hand of the artist is visible at all times. The characters are entirely natural. Even Mr. Hyde himself is not so overdrawn that he becomes an impossibility.

The *Moving Picture News* (also on 24 September 1910) similarly approved:

The transformation of the good-looking doctor into the disgusting animalistic brute, which is his other self, is a perfect marvel of photography. [...] The film is one that must be closely watched, as it is instinct with deft and subtle touches which are amongst the chief beauties of a fine piece of work.

A British film magazine called the *Bioscope* (8 September 1910) listed the film properly under its Nordisk banner (although it did Anglicise the title to merely 'Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde') and was equally complementary: 'This strange and mystic story of Dr. Jekyll is here portrayed and loses nothing of its weird and dramatic appeal'.

The story unfolds in not unfamiliar manner. 'Jekyll is a rich young man, fond of the study of occult science' who discovers a

potion that changes 'the mental, moral and physical makeup of a man'. Hyde 'commits all manner of horrible outrages'. After a while, the changes take place without chemical assistance. Jekyll sends an assistant out for an antidote and names Hyde as his heir as meanwhile his future bride Maud 'is terribly grieved at his extraordinary conduct in the way of disappearance'. But things may not be what they seem, for the faithful Maud is standing by Dr Jekyll in his chair when he awakes from what has turned out to be a terrible nightmare.<sup>15</sup>

The same work bore yet other titles, in other countries: *L'invention fatale, ou Le Docteur Jekyll et Mr. Hyde* (France), *L'invenzione fatale, o Il Dottore Jekyll e il Signor Hyde* (Italy), *La invención fatal, o Jekyll y Hyde* (Spain) and in Germany it was called *Ein seltsamer Fall* (translation: 'A Strange Case').<sup>16</sup>

As we shall see shortly, 'Ein seltsamer Fall' was to become one of the titles of a later film with Alwin Neuss once again as the leading man.

### **Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde (1912, USA)**

(Director) unknown. (Jekyll / Hyde) James Cruze. (Jekyll only - some) Harry Benham. (Actor) Marguerite Snow. (Actor) Marie Eline. (Company) Thanhouser. Released 16 January 1912.

King (p. 15) has '(d) Lucius Henderson' but research has not uncovered a primary source listing that credit. Ned Thanhouser, President at Thanhouser Company Film Preservation, Inc., informed the author that, in fact, the 'Director credit is unknown, although Henderson was one of the primary directors for Thanhouser in this era'. He also mentioned that, 'I've been looking at Thanhouser actors and films for 30 years so I can attest to the characters identified' in regards to all of the participants except for Harry Benham whose role was revealed in *Famous Monsters of Filmland* (October 1963).

According to the *Moving Picture World* (27 January 1912), the quality of Jekyll and Hyde films continues to progress: 'There have been several other pictures of Stevenson's great novel [...] The picture is more effective, in its own way, than any of the others that this reviewer has seen.' (In any case, Thanhouser's take on the story is the first that we can assess for ourselves as it is the

earliest extant version.) Contemporary comments singled out the metamorphosis from Dr Jekyll to Hyde. *The Morning Telegraph* (21 January 1912) commented on the:

double exposure and other tricks of the camera effecting the changes of the character of Dr. Jekyll to Mr. Hyde, and vice versa, in a way quite impossible in stage presentations.<sup>17</sup>

Several days later, *The New York Dramatic Mirror* (24 January 1912) remarked:

In making the change from one character to the other the actor, of course, had the advantage of the motion picture camera before which to make his change, but his work in this film is a thoroughly artistic achievement and one of great force and merit.<sup>18</sup>

Even as late as 1917, the *Poverty Bay Herald* (of New Zealand; 28 February 1917) informed viewers: 'A specialty in this feature is the transposition of the leading performer from one character to the other.' Publicity stressed both the film's shock value and its subtlety as these entries from *Moving Picture World* (13 January 1912) demonstrate:

A swallow of the drug makes him a beast who would destroy all within his reach and another swallow restores him to his normal balance. But one day the drug-bottle breaks, while he is in the evil state, and he can't GET the OTHER swallow! – Advertisement (p. 86).

The present production of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde is not one that is calculated to inspire horror or dread in the spectator. Of course, much appears that will convey



emphatically the terrible change that the drug wrought in Stevenson's wonderful character, but the emphasis is made with a finesse that is typical of the New Rochelle manufacturer. – Announcement (p. 126).

Coverage in *Moving Picture World* (24 February 1912) continued when a writer signing his name 'QUIZZ' stated:

The Thanhouser 'Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde' follows the play rather than the book. The hopelessness of a play without a single woman in the cast appealed to the dramatist who made the Mansfield version and the love interest was written in.

While that's true enough and although the Cruze film and the Richard Mansfield play shared other aspects, many other adaptations had also included a love interest.

The career of James Cruze, the advertised star, was still ascending at the time and he soon became a widely discussed motion picture actor. *Reel Life* (5 September 1914) applauded: 'Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde was one of the strongest pieces of acting Cruze ever did.'<sup>19</sup> Author Robert Grau, however, did not agree:

[...] When it came to Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Mr. Cruze was wholly miscast. [...] His Jekyll was too goody-goody to seem real; while the kindly, ingratiating personality of the player was scarcely concealed in his conception of the monster Hyde.<sup>20</sup>

An actor named Harry Benham received no mention for his participation in this movie anywhere for a good fifty years, until, that is, he himself revealed his un-credited role as Hyde in *Famous Monsters of Filmland* (October 1963):

As Cruze & I were the same size, we could wear the same clothes & wig but we did not use the same false teeth! We had separate sets, which we kept attached with the same powdered mastic that denture wearers use today. What I remember most about the making of the picture is that we were constantly changing clothes, after about every scene.

As for exactly which scenes belonged to Mr Benham, the debates continue to this day.

### **Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde (1913, USA)**

(Director) King Baggot. (Jekyll / Hyde) King Baggot. (Actor) Jane Gale. (Actor) Howard Crampton. (Actor) William Sorrell. (Actor) Matt Snyder. (Company) I.M.P.

King (p. 15) has '(d) Herbert Brenon' but research has uncovered that King Baggot both starred in and directed the film. See *Moving Picture World* (30 August 1913). Additional actors are identified in *Moving Picture World* (1 March 1913). Jane Gale played Jekyll's fiancé. Matt Snyder played her father. Howard Crampton and William Sorrell played the doctor, Lanyon, and the lawyer, Utterson, respectively.

In looking back on his 1913 film, King Baggot was quoted in *Photoplay* for February 1916 as claiming that 'the best work of his six screen years with Universal is Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde'. Coincidentally, that time span included several other doppelganger themed titles such as *The Double* (1910), *The Breakdown* (1912) and *His Other Self* (also 1912). However, all were more pedestrian in nature than his Stevenson spawned *piece de resistance*. Baggot was widely praised for his definitive dual role. For instance, the *Moving Picture World* (1 March 1913) critiqued:

In these two reels King Baggot holds the center of attention all the way. In his portrayal of the good Dr. Jekyll and the bad Mr. Hyde, this dual identity so singularly interwoven, this strange creation of Robert Louis Stevenson's, the leading man of the Imp Company outdoes himself.

The same publication, a week later on March 8, echoed 'King Baggot gives us a masterly presentation' while noting the superior effects that the screen allowed 'real dissolving view as the drug begins to manifest its influence' versus the 'crude facial manipulations employed on stage'. The *New York Dramatic Mirror* (5 March 1913) also praised King Baggot's acting but had reservations about his directing:

Probably the plot as it stands carries out the purposes of the producers, in that it gives the gist of the story as completely as possible. However, we cannot enthuse over it. [...] Some of the photography is not of the best, and some of the studio settings could be improved.

The UK's *Bioscope* (19 June 1913) noted that 'a few additional sub-titles early in the film might be helpful to those who have not read the novel.' Viewers, both now (the film still exists) and then, might be inclined to agree with this last statement. In one early scene, Jekyll, Dr. Lanyon and the lawyer, Utterson laboriously converse for an entire minute. The only hint of the dialogue comes from an overly succinct title card explaining that Jekyll is being ridiculed by the other two for his 'unheard of experiments'.

The *Ogden Standard* (Utah, 25 September 1915) advertised the two-reeler as 'taken from the famous play by Richard Mansfield', but with a female lead named 'Alice', we might suspect that it owed more to the somewhat less renowned Fish and Forepaugh script. In any case, both plays share plot points not found in the novel and this commonality, in turn, found its way into movie. The movie proved crowd-pleasing. The *Moving Picture World* (30 August 1913) noted that it was 'going strongly in the British Isles' while from New Zealand came a report in the *Wairarapa Daily Times* (13 November 1913) of a 'large and enthusiastic audience at the T.P. Electric Theatre'. Popularity in the U.S. led to a reissue of the production two years later.<sup>21</sup>The

film length was alternately listed as 1,939 feet and 2,060 feet. In at least in one state, censors modified the reels.

### ***Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (1913 USA)***

(Director) Frank E. Woods. (Jekyll / Hyde) Murdock J. McQuarrie. (Company) Kinemacolor.

King (p. 15) states '(pc) Kineto-Kinemacolor' and that the film is from the U.K. However, subsequent research has proven that to be false. See, for example, the *New York Dramatic Mirror* (18 June 1913 p. 26), which also reveals Frank E. Woods's role as a director. See also *Motion Picture Story Magazine* (October 1913) for Murdock J. McQuarrie's acting role.

With so many Jekyll and Hyde films already made, not surprisingly the *New York Dramatic Mirror* (18 June 1913, p. 31) used a bit of one-upmanship in stating: 'There have been a number of pictures of Robert Louis Stevenson's story of a dual identity, but no one has utilised the wonderful possibilities of it as has M. J. McQuarrie.' *Kinematograph and Lantern Weekly* (26 June 1913) praised Murdock McQuarrie's key sequences: 'The changes from Jekyll to Hyde and *visa versa* are very skilfully effected'. The publication supplemented this text with two photos taken from the film that, although made blurry by the years, show that McQuarrie's make-up job came complete with elongated fingers not unlike those later employed by John Barrymore in 1920. On the rest of the cast, '*Kine Weekly*' added: 'Those taking part act with a thorough realisation of the meaning and power of the story.'<sup>22</sup> The effects team ensured that McQuarrie transitioned from Jekyll into Hyde in obligatory fashion. However, this time around the chemical elixir, photographed via the Kinemacolor process, rivalled for attention in the transformation scene. As Jekyll mixed a red liquid with another fluid, the result turned white on the screen and the subsequent addition of a powdered substance then coloured the concoction green. (This is not far from what happens in Stevenson's book where the potion starts with a 'reddish hue', then changes to 'dark purple' and finally to a 'watery green'.)

Newspaper announcements promoting local theatres played up the colour novelty as typified by the *Uniontown Morning Herald* (Pennsylvania, 1 July 1913): 'Of special mention are the scenes in which the mixing of the drug is presented [...] This would be impossible for any other company but Kinemacolor who are noted for impersonating nature in its production.' In more general terms, the *Schenectady Gazette* (New York, 14 July 1913) claimed 'No real stage ever put on this wonderful story with the reality and vividness which Kinemacolor gives it'. Not every theatre came equipped with Kinemacolor Machines. Evidence from the *New York Dramatic Mirror* (18 June 1913, p. 26) suggests that viewers seemed interested in the spectacle where available and, in fact, it had 'broken records at several of the Fox houses'. On page 31 of the same issue, the *NYDM* critiqued: 'It is only fair to Director Frank E. Woods to give him a large share of the credit for a masterly production'. Woods' citation as a director appears somewhat odd; most of his work consisted of screenwriting, and indeed, in his later days, he actively participated in both the Writers Club and the Screen Writers Guild. Even so, the screenplay can have required little effort since the two-reeler followed a typical Jekyll and Hyde story line. To wit, Jekyll takes a chemical mixture, Hyde commits villainous deeds, Jekyll encounters spontaneous drug-free transformations, the antidote is depleted, and suicide is the outcome. Nonetheless, the *Trenton Evening Times* (New Jersey, 6 January 1913) was duly impressed 'Every care possible has been taken to make this a masterpiece photographically and follow as closely as possible the story contained in Mr. Stevenson's wonderful book', although the presence of Jekyll's bride to be (Dr Lanyon's daughter) might give us cause for doubt.

The film is often thought to have originated in the United Kingdom. However, film pioneer Charles Urban had merely distributed *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* there via the Kinetograph Company. Thus, it became known in some quarters as a 'Kinetograph'.

Kinemacolor' film. In reality, the film was created by The Kinemacolor Company of the United States and was listed as such in many American publications of the day.<sup>23</sup> Sadly, this, the first colour *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, is long lost. It would be many a year before a serious made-for-theatre colour production would again be attempted.

### ***A Modern Jekyll and Hyde (1913, USA)***

(Director) unknown. (Actor) Robert Broderick. (Actor) Irene Boyle. (Actor) Robert Ellis. (Actor) William R. Dunn. (Cameraman) Orestes A. Zangrilli. (Company) Kalem.

King (p. 15) has '(d) Robert Broderick' but that cannot be substantiated. Per *Moving Picture World* (17 January 1914): Robert Broderick *did* play Smith, Irene Boyle played Nora, Robert Ellis played Roger and William R. Dunn played Hykes.

Per the *Motion Picture Studio Directory and Trade Annual* (1916), Orestes A. Zangrilli was the cameraman.

Promotional advertisements for this picture were both honest and somewhat deceitful. An advertisement in the *Connersville Evening News* (Indiana, 1 January 1913) warned its readers: 'Kalem Two Reel Drama. *A Modern Jekyll and Hyde (This is not the Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde Picture)*' and refused to cash in on other cinematic offerings by similar names. On the other hand, the *Townsville Daily Bulletin* (Queensland, Australia, 8 April 1914) trumped the film up as 'an adaptation of R. L. Stevenson's work'. Title aside, the picture actually involved no characters named 'Jekyll' or 'Hyde'. Instead, the story revolved around one Jethro Smith, his daughter Nora, Nora's beau Roger and a gang member called 'Hykes'. Smith leads two lives; pretending to be an upright citizen, he actually leads a pack of criminals. Along the way, Hykes battles Smith for supremacy, Nora is held up by Hykes and Roger saves the day. Things come to a head when Hykes and Smith shoot it out. Smith is killed but Nora is spared learning of her father's embarrassing secret.<sup>24</sup> A review in *Motion Picture News* (10 January 1914) complained 'The action is most melodramatic, yet fails to appeal.' A week later *MPW* (17 January

1914) while acknowledging that *A Modern Jekyll and Hyde* had 'pretty backgrounds', 'good sets', was 'fairly acted' and had 'excellent photography' also added 'This story is too slight to be every effective' and judged the film as 'frankly melodramatic and in no sense a psychological study.'

***Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde Done to a Frazzle a.k.a. Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (?) (1914, USA)***

(Director) unknown. (Jekyll / Hyde) Charlie de Forrest. (Company) Warners / Starlight / Superba. (?)

In a write-up headlined 'Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde Done to a Frazzle (Warner's)', *Moving Picture World* (21 November, 1914) wrote succinctly: 'A single reel burlesque not so much of the great play as of life and of other pictures. The sheer nonsense of it all is the reason of the fun. Very fair offering'. No other information found its way into the anonymous commentary on this Jekyll and Hyde parody.

Fresh after the 'Frazzle' announcement, came another a mere week later in the *Motion Picture News* (28 November 1914) for a work entitled simply *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and attributed to the 'Starlight' brand. 'A burlesque on the story of Stevenson's and very cleverly put on' stated *MPN*. Again, neither synopsis, character descriptions nor cast listing accompanied the account but at least we learn that there were 'mechanical effects galore', the 'story never lags', 'one laugh follows quickly on the heels of another' and the 'final scene is especially novel'. It has been pointed out in recent years that the *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* parody may well be *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde Done to a Frazzle* of the week prior guised under a different title.<sup>25</sup> Starlight, in fact, released their films through Warner's Features (later United Film Service).

In fact, the picture in question may have had not *two* faces but somehow, actually *three*. The documentation is far from reliable, but there is regular mention made of a *Superba* (a company

known for one reel comedies) *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* in *Motion Picture News* (5, 19 & 26 December 1914). This was merely one line in *MPN*'s weekly 'release dates for ready reference' listing. However, the given release date was *not* in December but rather November 23. Given the proximity of that date to the Warners and Starlight announcements of the prior month, and taken in conjunction with the fact that Superba's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* was *also* noted as released by *United Film Service / Warner's Features, Inc.* these entries may well be referring to the same film. Another small puzzle piece from a blurb in *Alton Evening Telegraph* (Illinois, 18 March 1915), printed when the film finally made the rounds in that locale, reveals that Superba's offering was 'A screamingly funny comedy' and featured Superba mainstay Charlie De Forrest. Alas, no prints of the film(s) are known to exist in order to straighten the record and untangle the published confusion with certainty once and for all.

***Ein seltsamer Fall a.k.a. Sein eigener Mörder Fall*  
(1914, Germany)**

(Director) Max Mack. (Scriptwriter) Richard Oswald. (Actor) Alwin Neuss. (Actor) Hanni Weisse. (Actor) Lotti Neumann. (Company) Vitascopie.

Credits for Max Mack, Richard Oswald and Alwin Neuss taken from translated introductory cards of the film itself. Credit for Hanni Weisse given in a program printed for *Sein eigener Mörder* (undated). Lotti Neumann can be identified visually by viewing the existing footage.

A second film called *Ein seltsamer Fall* (see prior entry for *Den Skaebnesvangre Opfindelse* 1910, Denmark) also starred Alwin Neuss but this time the production came directly from Germany. Complicating things further, this picture originally went by the title of *Sein eigener Mörder* (translation: 'His Own Murderer') when first filed with the German censors. The reason for the picture's censorship re-registration as *Ein seltsamer Fall* remains a mystery. However, based upon existing evidence, it was only as *Ein seltsamer Fall* that the movie circulated in German theatres.



*Ein seltsamer Fall / or Sein eigener Mörder* ranks third eldest in terms of surviving Jekyll / Hyde footage. However, that claim must be qualified one since not all of it remains and much of what does is in poor shape. In 2004 the Munich Film Museum restored the film as far as possible by inserting digitally altered still frames in lieu of the heavily marred opening scene, replacing title and caption cards, reproducing the original tinting and adding explanatory text for the missing portions.<sup>26</sup> Unhappily the segment where Neuss in his laboratory mixes the chemicals to turn him from millionaire Fred Siles into his notorious alter ego Frank Allan, although viewable, suffers from severe decomposition.

Story-wise, *Sein eigener Mörder* deviates from the norm; it's even darker. Siles takes his betrothed<sup>27</sup> from inside a formal society party to outside in the garden. Instead of displaying the expected amorous words and actions, however, he takes off his engagement ring and abruptly hands it to her explaining 'I won't make you unhappy. I'm only interested in my experiments. Take it back; the rose needs sun and light, but at my side there's only cold and darkness.' Later, Siles is forced to temporarily remain Allan after his formula for the antidote blows out of the window. In the interim, he purchases a seedy pub and he hooks up with the prostitute, Eliza (played by Hanni Weisse). A second soiree is to be held at Siles's house and at the last minute, in hopes of joining his guests, he succeeds in reproducing the cure from memory. However, the remedy soon loses its effect; he's taken for a thief and Eliza guides him thru the back alleys to safety. Eliza, jealous after spying upon him looking at the photo of another woman, notifies the police who are searching for the unknown murderer of Siles. They knock on Allan's door but he escapes through a passage; this time it's the police that Eliza guides in the hunt. Tracked back to his lab, a chemical fire buries him in the house. At that point, the picture takes a page out of Neuss's prior film: a partygoer pops a cork and the crowd laughs at him over his

snooze. It was all a dream.

Scriptwriter Richard Oswald is sometimes assumed to have lifted his own 1908 play *Ein seltsamer Fall* (yet a third work with the name) when crafting the 1914 film. If so, besides changing the names around, he altered it greatly. His earlier work included plot points not found in the picture; e.g. the Jekyll character never breaks off the engagement, the Jekyll character names the Hyde character in his will, the Hyde character poisons himself, etc.

### ***Horrible Hyde (1915, USA)***

(Director) Jerold T. Hevener. (Actor) Jerold T. Hevener. (Actor) Eva Bell. (Scriptwriter) Epes W. Sargent. (Company) Lubin.

King (15) lists '(d) Howard Hansell'. However, *Motion Picture News* (14 August 1915) reveals that Jerold T. Hevener directed as well as taking on the male lead. The same *MPN* issue also lists the other known credits.

'An amusing farce dealing with an actor made up as the terrible Hyde' touted an advertisement from the *Star and Sentinel* (Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, 13 January 1916). As for whether it was as amusing as advertised, the *Lubin Bulletin* filed for copy-right on 4 August 1915 with the following description:<sup>28</sup>

Reginald Claverhouse is an actor. He has not been working lately and owes a board bill. When she demands her pay, he begs hard and gets off for this time. He secures an engagement in stock and the first play is to be 'Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.' He has played the part before and he hunts up the false teeth that are a large part of the Hyde makeup. The landlady, looking through the transom is almost scared to death. He sees that she is afraid of Hyde and carries around the false teeth as protection. Instead of paying his bill he could even borrow from her if he wanted to. Then comes the opening night and the landlady is in the audience. She realizes that she has been tricked and

when he comes home there is a heartrending scene and she even takes his teeth away from him.

A review in the *Moving Picture World* (28 August 1915) was complimentary: 'E. W. Sargent has founded an amusing half-reel farce [...] Jerold T. Hevener is excellent as the actor.' What E. (Epes) W. Sargent had 'founded' was, in fact, the scenario – one likely crafted to parody sequences found in many a serious production in which Hyde takes up his own lodging. Hevener directed in addition to taking the main role. Eva Bell performed as Hevener's foil, the landlady.<sup>29</sup> Based upon the only known surviving scene (a photograph accompanying the copyright), Hevener comes across as quite frightening while 'Pretending to Kill the Child' (the photo's caption); this is in spite of the comedy angle. At 500 feet of film, *Horrible Hyde* shared a reel with another Lubin product, *Relentless Dalton*.

### ***Miss Jekyll and Madame Hyde (1915, USA)***

(Director) Charles L. Gaskill. (Scriptwriter) Charles L. Gaskill. (Actor) Helen Gardner. (Actor) Paul Scardon. (Actor) J. H. Lewis. (Actor) Edward Elkas. (Actor) Marian Wolfe. (Actor) Gladden James. (Actor) Roland Osborne. (Company) Vitagraph.

Charles L. Gaskill's credits are documented in *Moving Picture World* (3 July 1915). The *Hutchinson News* (Kansas, 24 August 1915) provided a list of actors and their roles: Helen Gardner played Miss Jekyll and Madame Hyde, Paul Scardon played Baron Stann, J. H. Lewis played Henry Jekyll, Edward Elkas played John Daggerts, Marian Wolfe played Robert Mayhew, Gladden James played Horace, Roland Osborne played Paul.

Vitagraph's one paragraph copyright registration (17 May 1915) for *Miss Jekyll and Madame Hyde* inexplicably contained a great deal of promotion such as 'Not only for deep students of characters and characterizations, but also for those who simply wish to witness an absorbingly entertaining Photodrama'. More expected, local newspapers heralding upcoming performances pitched in a likewise manner. As an example, Warsaw, New York

residents read this temptation in the *Western New Yorker* (3 July 1915): 'We feel we have made a wise choice in selecting this Vitagraph picture for presentation to our patrons.' Film trade journal hype from the *Moving Picture World* (3 July 1915) even deemed 'The drama is full of interest and power.'

A forthright reviewer known only as 'E.' in the *New York Dramatic Mirror* (30 June 1915) blasted the three reel Vitagraph Broadway Star production as:

being very ineffective, and though Helen Gardner interprets a difficult dual role in a manner that is thoroughly admirable, still when it is all ended one is forced to conclude that it is an enormous amount of wasted energy

E's final verdict was that *Miss Jekyll and Madame Hyde* 'leaves the impression of a hodge podge of conglomerate nothingness'. The plot begins with a young girl named Madeline, straight out of a convent, whose father, Henry Jekyll, wants her to wed a crooked political boss named John Daggerts. Her father's motive, which is to obtain the governorship, is not enough for her to abandon her real love, Robert Mayhew. However, Daggerts holds documents that could incriminate the would-be governor and uses them to coerce her to change her mind. In a dream, the Devil appears to her and suggests a way out: if she loses her virtue and purity, the boss will lose interest. Enter Baron Stann, who (in her dream) takes her to an extravagant dance salon. The plot thickens and thins as a new suitor, Horace, falls for her only to meet ruin and death. The dream ends with Madeline seeing herself aged and forlorn. She awakens to discover that her father, who after finding out about her sacrifice to save him from disgrace, has died from grief. The good news is that Daggert has also died (this time of fright) after trying to shoot Stann (who really is the devil!) repeatedly to no effect. Madeline Jekyll and Robert Mayhew are free to go their way. It is difficult to see how the

*Evening Herald* (Klamath Falls, Oregon, 28 August 1915) could advertise this convoluted storyline as ‘taken from the well-known play of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde except that part is so portrayed by a woman’. In any event, despite some scenes that might have been considered moderately racy at the time, in Pennsylvania the State Board of Censors granted their approval, helped, no doubt, by the fact that the story was mainly cast as a dream.

***Luke’s Double* (1916, USA)**

(Director) unknown. (Actor) Harold Lloyd. (Company) Pathe.

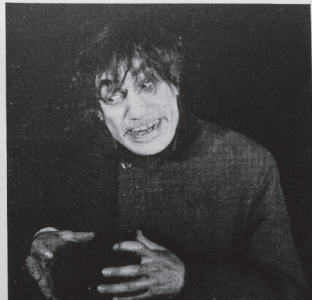
The *Motion Picture News* (29 April 1916) introduced its write-up for *Luke’s Double* with ‘Luke becomes literary and lies down to read Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde’. Parodies need not, of course, be very faithful to their sources and *Luke’s Double*, in spite of its allusion to Stevenson, proves the point. The plot, such as it is, is duly described:

He [Luke] falls asleep and dreams he has a double who constantly gets him into trouble. Theft, flirtation and assault by this double are visited upon Luke, who takes the punishment for everything, until a squad of policemen lead him away to the station house. Then he wakes up to find it only a dream.

*MPN* noted that ‘a bit of clever make-up, which looks almost like double exposure is a diverting feature of this comedy’ while *Moving Picture World* (12 February 1916), which referred to the film as *Lonesome Luke’s Double*, zeroed in on the star’s antics: ‘Harold Lloyd must be made of India rubber. The way he suffers himself to be kicked all over the map, hit on the head with a mallet and fall down a dizzy flight of stairs is marvellous.’ The ‘Lonesome Luke’ comedy series was made by the Rolin Film Company of Los Angeles for Pathe.

***Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* originally titled *The Monster and the Man* (1920, USA)**

(Director) unknown. (Producer) Louis Mayer. (Scriptwriter) Frank Beresford. (?) (Jekyll / Hyde) Sheldon Lewis. (Actor) Harold Forshay. (Actor) Alexander Shannon. (Actor) Leslie Austin. (Actor) Dora Mills Adams. (Actor) Gladys Field. (Company) Pioneer.



SHELDON LEWIS

This favorite of the screen is shown here in the dual rôle he portrays in his forthcoming production "The Monster and the Man" scheduled for early release

King (16) has '(d) J. Charles Hayden' but notes the possibility that George Edwardes Hall was the director. Research has found neither possibility conclusive and has uncovered a third possibility to be Jack O'Brien.

Louis Mayer is listed as the producer on the Copyright Registration (16 April 1920). Other documents indicate possible alternate spellings such as 'Louis Meyer' and 'Lewis Meyer'. Frank Beresford is credited with the scenario and continuity for *The Monster and the Man* but no known sources so credit him under the released title of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.

Actors names are taken from introductory title cards from the film, which is extant.

Statements like one from *Photoplay* (July 1920) (which began 'The version of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde with Sheldon Lewis playing the harassed soul who gave himself up to the devil, hurriedly aroused by Jack Barrymore's appearance in the same rôle') would give the impression that Sheldon Lewis was somehow late arriving on the Jekyll and Hyde scene. Nothing could have been

farther from the truth. Twenty years earlier, he had received these glowing words from the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* for his performance of the dual role on stage:

Mr. Lewis does not suffer by comparison with Mansfield [...] In several details Lewis is better qualified to do justice to the late Mr. Stevenson [...] We have a Jekyll here not so robustly 'good' as Mansfield's. This Jekyll is a spare and stoop-shouldered bookworm, the intellectual delver into the mystic sciences of the soul, a somber student with lofty ideals and a thread of love; this Hyde is repulsive but not slimy; it startles by brutal boldness rather than makes one creepy. This Hyde has fangs that make the hideous countenance that of a ghoul. The transitions from one character to the other are made in full light in plain view of the audience.<sup>30</sup>

Comparisons with the iconic Richard Mansfield continued some six months later albeit somewhat tempered in the *Richmond Times* (28 June 1901):

When an actor undertakes the dual role of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde he naturally invites a comparison with Richard Mansfield [...] There were minor flaws in the work of Mr. Lewis that time would eradicate, but taken as a whole, it was a splendid piece of acting.

Although comparisons with Mansfield were surely inevitable for any stage performer of the era starring in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, it's interesting to note that Sheldon Lewis often crossed paths with Mansfield's rival Daniel Bandmann. Both had been members of the Donnelly Stock Company. Indeed, in the early 1900s, Bandmann still performed in the Jekyll / Hyde role(s) for that company. See, for example, the *New York Times* (15 October

1901) and the *New York Dramatic Mirror* (11 May 1901). The prolific Lewis, active in any number of plays during the first decade of the last century, still found time to reprise the role(s) in such locales as Seattle (February of 1905) and Rochester, New York (April of 1908).<sup>31</sup>

Sheldon Lewis began his movie career in 1914 with Pearl White's serial, *The Exploits of Elaine*. In that, he performed a Jekyll-to-Hyde-like transformation (of sorts) in the final episode from the respectable attorney Perry Bennett to the villainous, hunched-over Clutching Hand. It wasn't until 1919, however, when teasers for a true Jekyll and Hyde filming with Lewis began making the industry rounds:

Lewis Meyer has placed Sheldon Lewis under contract as a star [...] 'The Monster and the Man,' the first Sheldon Lewis picture, has just been finished. It is completed and distribution arrangements are in the course of arrangement. The scenario and continuity were done by Frank Beresford [...] Jack O'Brien did the directing. – *Moving Picture World* (24 May 1919).

Sheldon Lewis is busy trimming and assembling his recent feature, [...] In this picture, Mr. Lewis portrays a double character, a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde impersonation. – *Moving Picture World* (7 June 1919)<sup>32</sup>

In an interview with Sheldon Lewis headlined 'A Chat with a Would-be Villain' for the *Theater Magazine* (June 1919), one Rose Cummings revealed where all of this was heading.<sup>33</sup> Two photographs featured Mr Lewis, one as he would appear as Jekyll in the 1920 film and the other as Hyde, right down to the garb worn. Both photos were captioned: 'This favorite of the screen is shown here in the dual role he portrays in his forthcoming production *The Monster and the Man*.' Nevertheless, no film



called *The Monster and the Man* was ever exhibited at the time and the question remains as to why the Lewis film, obviously later known as *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, was not released until well into the next year. That answer was revealed in *Variety* (31 January 1920):

It looks like a rush of 'Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde' productions as soon as the Famous Players-Lasky releases its production starring John Barrymore.<sup>34</sup> The Pioneer is ready with a feature in which Sheldon Lewis is starred.

Holding back the Sheldon Lewis *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, distributed as it was on the 'States Rights' system, would have been a simple decision. News later broke via *Exhibitor's Trade Review* (3 April 1920) that the Barrymore film, scheduled for a June 1920 release, had been bumped to an earlier (28 March 1920) timeframe and, sure enough, a week after *ETR* (10 April 1920) announced the opening of Lewis's own effort. On 16 April 1920, the 'hurriedly aroused' movie finally received copyright. Those copyright records list Louis Mayer (note the spelling variation; not to be confused with the Louis B. Mayer of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer fame) as the producer.

The director's credit remains a mystery. Despite the aforementioned *Moving Picture World* naming Jack O'Brien, additional evidence in the *Motion Picture News* (7 February 1920) and *Motion Picture Studio Directory* (1921) would tend to indicate J. Charles Hayden and George Edwardes Hall respectively.

The Sheldon Lewis *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* turned the storyline around in a number of areas. From the book, Utterson (with a new first name of 'Edward'; played by Harold Forshay), Dr Lanyon (Alexander Shannon) and Danvers Carew (Leslie Austin) are all present. Lanyon's wife portrayed by Dora Mills Adams and his daughter, Bernice (Gladys Field), are, of course, new additions. The film rates as a 'B' level, lower budget produc-

tion but is not without merits when taken on its own terms, even if the plot does come across as somewhat strained at moments. *Exhibitor's Trade Review* (22 May 1920) explained:

The knitting together of the separate adventures of the dual types into a coherent tale is a difficult task and the narrative naturally breaks abruptly at times, but the continuity, on the whole is preserved as well as could be expected.

The picture ended with a now predictable 'it's all a dream' climax and the *Moving Picture World* (24 April 1920) pointed out its disappointment in the parlance of the day: 'It may be said that this new version [by Sheldon Lewis] is not consistent in mood at the end [...] This sudden conversion from impending tragedy needs an inspired treatment it has not received'. In the final tally, the result led the *New York Morning Telegraph* (3 July 1920) to put it thusly: 'Lovers of melodrama will find plenty to their taste in the Pioneer production of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde'.

The film met with good opening turnout in New York and Boston<sup>35</sup> and after its release, Lewis still (creatively, at least) had plenty of Jekyll and Hyde left in him. Even as audiences acquainted themselves with his portrayal on screen, plans broke for a revival of the play starring Lewis and wife Virginia Pearson.<sup>36</sup> In the late 1920s, he essayed the role once more in front of live Californian audiences. The *Gridley Herald* (2 May 1928) wrote of Lewis's appearance at the Senator Theater in Chico, California thusly: 'Sheldon Lewis, the movie star, will offer his late success that has taken up many weeks on the Orpheum circuit called Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde'. The *Bakersfield Californian* (20 April 1929) reported his booking as the 'headline attraction' at the Niles Theater with 'Mr. Lewis presents his own version of the famous play Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hide [sic]'. His work at Barkers Brothers Auditorium was duly noted in the *Los Angeles Times*

(24 August 1930) which advertised “The Play Shop presents Sheldon Lewis in impersonations from Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde”. Circa 1932, Lewis’s Jekyll / Hyde screen career began anew in an obscure one-reel talkie from Ardelle Studios. Impacted by the Great Depression like so many others, Sheldon Lewis later found work as a member of a federally funded Los Angeles county relief administration drama project. In the 1920 mini-biography of Lewis, Carolyn Lowrey deemed *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* to be Sheldon Lewis’s ‘greatest triumph’.<sup>37</sup> It could be said to be the defining role of his life.

***Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (1920, USA)***

(Director) unknown. (Jekyll / Hyde) Hank Mann. (Producer) Morris Schlanck. (Company) Arrow Film Corporation.

Producer and Production Company identified in *Moving Picture World* (5 June 1920)

The year 1920 was a banner one for Jekyll and Hyde films. Therefore, it probably amazed no one when the *Boston Globe* (July 4 1920) noted:

There was another Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde film besides John Barrymore’s [...] The widespread publicity resulting from the appearance of the two pictures doubtless encouraged a third company to feel that a burlesque would be appreciated. So Hank Mann has been put forward.

In 1920, Mann cranked out comedies every two weeks. Thus, no single one of them received extensive coverage and only disjointed bits and pieces are actually known about this particular production. We do know that the short was two reels and, on at least one occasion was referred to as ‘*A Burlesque on Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*’.<sup>38</sup> The comedy played in out of the way locales such as Paris, Kentucky; Oswego, New York; Steubenville and Sandusky, Ohio; Iowa City; Cumberland, Maryland and Ada, Oklahoma as a filler for routine programmers.<sup>39</sup> It, per *Cine-*

*Mundial* (September 1920), also exhibited in Mexico (coinciding with south of the border showings of the Sheldon Lewis film). One line ‘also showing’ advertisements in the smaller markets set the publicity norm and, when the footage displayed in larger ones, things hardly improved. In a relative media blitz, California’s Bay Area citizens were informed via the *Oakland Tribune* that ‘Hank Mann furnishes a roaring comedy in Jekyll and Hyde, a side splitting travesty on the famous play’ (8 November 1920) and ‘Hank Mann in Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde gives an excruciatingly funny travesty on that famous play’ (10 November 1920). No plot summary is known to exist, but one fuzzy photo survives in the *Motion Picture News* (3 July 1920) presenting the star of the show as Jekyll seated and surrounded by several other people. Mann had a long career; by 1920 he was already well known for appearing in the legendary Keystone Comedies and for work in his own Hank Mann Comedies.

***When Quackel Did Hide a.k.a. When Dr. Quackel Did Hide (1920, USA)***

(Director) Charles Gramlich. (Screenwriter) Charles Gramlich. (Actor) Charlie Joy a.k.a. Charles Gramlich. (Actor) Blanche Wilcox. (Actor) Tom Findlay. (Actor) C. R. Churchill. (Actor) James Renfroe. (Company) Gold Seal.

Acting credits for Charlie Joy and directing and writing credits for Charles Gramlich identified in *Exhibitor’s Trade Review* (3 July 1920). The fact that Charlie Joy was actually a pseudonym for Charles Gramlich uncovered in the *Miami Metropolis* (18 July 1920).

Credits for Blanche Wilcox found in both the *Miami Metropolis* (17 June 1920) and the *Miami News* (17 June 1920).

Credits for Tom Findlay, C. R. Churchill and James Renfroe taken from introductory title cards from the film itself which is partially extant. Tom Findlay played Sir George ‘Kerchew’, C. R. Churchill played Mr ‘Uttermum’ and James Renfroe played Doctor ‘Laudunum’.

Both the *Miami Metropolis* (17 June 1920) and the *Miami News* (17 June 1920) in identical promotional copy made certain that readers were aware that John Barrymore’s film was playing

in the city simultaneously with *When Quackel Did Hide*.<sup>40</sup> Naturally, they urged the public to view both. As for the genesis of Charles Gramlich's comedy, the two papers accommodated with either the truth, a fabricated hype story or a bit of both:

When Charles Gramlich and W. T. Carter went to New York six weeks ago they saw the first showing of John Barrymore in Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde [...] Mr. Gramlich who has played the character of Dr. Jekyll on the speaking stage, decided to return to Miami and produce a travesty on Jekyll and Hyde.

Notwithstanding these claims, it seems likely that any actual stage performance by Gramlich (a.k.a. Charlie Joy) as Jekyll / Hyde was mainly set up as a publicity stunt. For as the *Metropolis* (14 March 1920) several months earlier had trumpeted:

The entire Gold Seal movie company will be seen in parts of the pictures they have appeared in, and they will be seen in real life. One of the plays to be presented during the Gramlich engagement will be Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Robert Louis Stevenson's weird story.

Within weeks, plans were afoot by the Aywon Film Corporation to distribute *When Quackel Did Hide* in other locations as well as Miami, and journals like the *Exhibitor's Trade Review* (3 July 1920) announced the developments:

The comic travesty on Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde which Nathan Hirsh, president of The Aywon Film Corporation, announced that he would soon have ready for release, has been completed, and territorial rights are now being contracted for. 'When Quackel Did Hide', which is the title of the take-off on the original photodrama, is said by

the producers to be one of the most laughable films ever made. It is in four reels. The leading role is enacted by well-known comedian, Charlie Joy. Both Mr. Hirsh and the producers, the Gold Seal Corporation, predict that 'When Quackel Did Hide' will prove the comedy success of the year.

Towards the end of the year, the State Rights arrangements continued to develop and, along the way, 'Quackel' became listed as a *five-reeler* as the *Motion Picture News* (6 November 1920) reported:

A number of contracts were drawn up this week by Nathan Hirsh, president of The Aywon Film Corporation, covering state rights territory on [...] When Quackel Did Hide [...] a highly amusing travesty on the well-known drama in which Charlie Joy and his Miami Beauties appear in a five reel laugh provoker.<sup>41</sup>

Whether the film was registered at four reels or five is moot in the twenty first century. Cut-down versions put onto 8mm and 16mm for the collectors' market are all that circulate now and the full-length film is gone, along with any scenes featuring the 'Miami Beauties'.<sup>42</sup>

The character Quackel, in keeping with the farcical tone, is played as overly goody-goody. The story begins with Kerchew, Uttermum and Laudunum greeting their saccharine companion with 'Here comes Henry now – I can almost see the halo around his saintly dome'. Piously hating himself for it, Quackel agrees to join the group at a local watering hole. Numerous gags ensue at the pub, the hospital and so on. The show, on several occasions, lampooned prior, more serious cinematographic efforts. In one sequence, 'Hide' attacks a young lad (who is actually an adult in children's clothing) only to pay restitution to a child actor

dressed up as the attacked youth's father. In another, it spoofs the transformation scene with a title card bearing the words 'Just a moment's intermission, folks, while Hide changes back into Quackel'. This later incident resonates strongly for anyone who has viewed the many 'legitimate' transformations that were effected via a quick cutaway.

***Happy Hooligan in Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Zip (1920, USA)***

(Company) Bray.

King (p. 16) has '(d) Gregory La Cava' and notes that other sources cite 'Bill Nolan'. Neither credit can be verified and both may well be speculation.

The first animation attempt to cash in on the Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde mania came on a single reel. Clearly made to be program filler, an advertisement in the *Joplin Globe* (of Missouri; 18 September 1921) exemplified the place that 'Zip' had on the Jekyll / Hyde totem pole by placing it at the end of a bill headlined by 'Singers, Dancers, Comedians and Girls'. The Copyright Records (11 December 1920)<sup>43</sup> for *Happy Hooligan in Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Zip* provides just about everything else that is known about this cartoon comedy:

Happy is seated in his garden studying out the formula for a new drink he is engaged in brewing. Gloomy Gus sees a sign on a tent reading 'WILD MAN WANTED TO PLAY THE PART OF ZIP.' He confers with manager and goes to see Happy. He comes upon Happy just as Happy has discovered the great new drink and is shouting wildly 'I have it, I have it.' Gus says 'You have what, you have what?' Happy replies Fogola the new soft drink. Congratulations. The recipe: 1 Fog, 1 horseshoe, 1 tomato, 1 cake yeast. Happy and Gus go to the river and wait for a fog which they collect in bottles. Gus steals a shoe from a horse and gets a tomato from a vendor who throws it at him. The [sic] get a cake of yeast and start to make the brew. Gus

wants Happy to take the first taste. Happy says 'It's great Stuff.' It makes his hair grow and soon he has more whiskers than a Bolshevik. It gives Gus an idea and Happy gets the job as Zip the Wild Man.

As Happy Hooligan aficionados are well aware, by 1920 the good-natured hobo had enjoyed a two-decade career in the comic strips (his original home), on stage and in film (both with real life actors and animated ones). 'Zip' is lost but other Bray products featuring the dirt poor but ever-charitable Happy remain eternally endearing.

***Der Januskopf* a.k.a. *Schrecken* (1920, Germany)**

(Director) F. W. Murnau. (Cameraman) Karl Freund. (Cameraman) Karl Hoffman. (Actor) Conrad Veidt. (Actor) Magnus Stifter. (Actor) Margarete Schlegel. (Actor) Gustav Botz. (Actor) Margarete Kupfer. (Actor) Willy Kaiser-Hehl. (Actor) Bela Lugosi. (Company) Decla-Bioscope.

Credits are taken from articles in *Kinematograph* (5 September 1920; by Ludwig Bauer) and *Marmorhous-Lichtspeile* (1920; by H. U. Dorp) except for Bela Lugosi's participation which can be confirmed visually from existing film stills.

Little known because of its foreign roots and lost status, *Der Januskopf* nevertheless rates as the true 1920 artistic rival of John Barrymore's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Like Barrymore who was renowned in the States, Conrad Veidt who was equally famed in Europe, logged a virtuoso performance. The *Kinematograph* (5 September 1920) recorded:

The lean, intelligent face of Conrad Veidt who plays Dr. Warren with sparkling authority, transforms almost imperceptibly into an odious, unkempt visage with bent over body, becomes a completely different person.

Although the picture originated from Germany, names were anglicised; thus, 'Jekyll' is referred to as Dr Warren, a London



MD and PhD. As in the seminal Stevenson exposition, Warren develops an elixir that changes him physically and personality-wise (as well as the antidote to switch him back). In lieu of 'Hyde', Warren assumes the name of 'O'Connor' for his evil self. Just how sinister he becomes is displayed in a shocking twist not found in any American renditions of the story: O'Connor not only viciously beats a man to death but he rapes Grace, the daughter of his friend ('Laue').

O'Connor inhabits a flat in the Whitechapel district of the city; thus, the picture waxed even more terrifying by evoking comparisons with the infamous Jack the Ripper case of the late 1880s. Those familiar with the details of the case at that time might recognise another connection between the Whitechapel murders and the Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde mythos for indeed, Richard Mansfield, the definitive theatrical actor in the role during that period, was himself once considered a suspect during his tenure on the London stage.<sup>44</sup>

Even as Warren, sinister urges begin to come over our lead character, and so he must compulsively take the potion to transform himself. This need comes at shorter and shorter intervals and, equally discouragingly, requires larger and larger doses to induce the temporary cure. When the counteragent becomes all but depleted, Warren / O'Connor enlists Laue to fetch the final remaining amount from his laboratory. After O'Connor swallows the liquid and returns to his good self, evil nonetheless occurs, for Laue dies of fright and his daughter goes mad. Warren / O'Connor is left no option but to commit suicide, leaving a note to explain the whole affair.

Reception was universally favourable. The *Film-Kurier* (29 April 1920) exclaimed:

Conrad Veidt enacted this double role. He played and lived this role like no other German actor could [...] One is excited and captivated, even if he knows the develop-

ments of the story, one wants to see how he portrays the growing hardships.

(The magazine also added an amusing anecdote relating how Veidt's barber even needed special instructions after one shooting session in order to return his shaggy hair to something acceptably fashionable.) Another German periodical, *Die Lichtbild-Bühne* (1 May 1920), picked up on the movie's thinly veiled antecedents:

Conrad Veidt brought an admirable virtuosity to the character of Dr. Jekyll [sic]. On one side a commendable gentleman, on the other side a criminal, who was compelled to carry out abominable deeds.

Both publications continued their praise in later issues. From the *Film-Kurier* (27 August 1920): 'How this assignment was dealt with bore witness to Conrad Veidt's excellence [...] He gave an outstanding performance for which writer and director should be grateful'. *Die Lichtbild-Bühne* (28 August 1920) reiterated its prior stance with 'Conrad Veidt should be praised for his unsurpassed performance'. When the film played in the Netherlands under the title of *Het Geheim van Dr. Warren* (translated as 'The Secret of Dr. Warren'), *De Film-Wereld* (no. 42 1920) reported that when Veidt took on the role of O'Connor he did so in such an expert manner 'that nothing in Dr. Warren was recognizable'. Alas, this film is 'lost' but highly sought after, in part because of reviews like the above and, in part because of the all-star creative team of *Der Januskopf*. Not only could the movie boast of Conrad Veidt's presence but it also featured talent such as director F. W. Murnau, cameraman Karl Freund and future genre standout Bela Lugosi in a small role as a butler.

### ***Dr. Pyckle and Mr. Pride (1925, USA)***

(Director) Percy Pembroke. (Actor) Stan Laurel. (Actor) Julie Leonard. (Cameraman) Edgar Lyons. (Title Cards) Tay Garnett.

Credits are taken from introductory title cards from the film itself which is extant except for a few scenes at the end. Note that some video copies of the film list Harry Sweet as the director. Film historian, Richard M. Roberts has informed the author that this is due to a poor reconstruction of the title cards and that Percy Pembroke is indeed the director.

Luckily a viewable version of *Dr. Pyckle and Mr. Pride* exists since the Copyright Registration (9 October 1925) as printed below was limited in scope:

In 'Dr. Pyckle and Mr. Pride', Stan Laurel once again returns to the type of burlesque which he originated and which has made him famous. This latest subject being a burlesque on Stevenson's immortal 'Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde'.

Although copyrighted in October, *Dr. Pyckle and Mr. Pride* was officially released on 30 July 1925, several months before copyright according to the *Film Daily* (20 September 1925).

In 'Pyckle', Stan Laurel easily proves his ability to be funny even without long-time partner Oliver Hardy. In Ollie's stead, Julie Leonard provides the comedic foil for a good portion of the show. It's difficult to determine what their relationship is. Sometimes she appears to be Dr Pyckle's assistant but when Pyckle shoos her away, only to quickly apologise and give her a peck, there appears to be something more going on. She alternately dotes over Pyckle and his strange idiosyncrasies and, when Laurel is Mr Pride, she isn't afraid to give him an effectively funny whack on the head. Naturally, Stan Laurel himself was the star of the production, playing the sad sack in both roles. The humour starts when he sits on some spilled acid only to reappear with a pillow on his backside. The slapstick doesn't let up as chemicals explode on his baffled face and it hits a crescendo when, after discovering the secret formula, he deliberates over whether to take the potion, paces, stumbles out a second story window and is shocked that

the liquid is no longer in its container but down his throat. Going through gyration after gyration, he finally switches into the equally befuddled Mr Pride.

Pride's later transgressions, horrifying enough in the original story, were cockamamie enough that the whole thing passed the British Board of Film Censors with nary a hitch. *The Film Daily* (26 July 1925) rightly recounted:

The sequences in which Pride roams the streets and wreaks his evil deeds are the funniest of the picture. The deeds are most unexpected, such as stealing a child's ice cream, tripping up a policeman, bursting a bag over a lady's head, etc. and cause Pride to jump with glee. Laurel's work in these scenes is excellent.

'C.S.S.' in *Moving Picture World* (8 August 1925) expressed a similar opinion:

Instead of being cruel and fiendish, Mr. Laurel makes Mr. Pride mischievous and childish [...] should prove entertaining especially to patrons who like to see burlesques of familiar stories.

In the early 1960s, *Dr. Pyckle and Mr. Pride* got recycled in the T.V. show *Fractured Flickers*. Extracts from the film found their way into about a third of the episodes but were used most frequently in the reoccurring 'Minute Mystery' segments with Stan (from 'Pyckle') as detective Sherman Oaks. Ridiculous voice-over dialogue accompanied the spliced together action – a sad misuse of an entertaining original.

Although the silent era occurred about a century ago, new information (or even an occasional film) continues to turn up. The goal of this article is to build a foundation for the integration of future discoveries, not least because these films deserve to be remembered.

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*Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, dir. by King Baggot (IMP, 1913), survives complete.

*Sein Eigener Morder*, dir. by Max Mack (Vitascope, 1914), surviving footage only.

*Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, dir. unidentified, (Pioneer Film Corporation. 1920), survives complete.

*When Dr. Quackel did Hide*, dir. by Charles Gramlich (The Gold Seal Film Corporation. 1920), surviving footage only.

*Dr. Pyckle and Mr. Pride*, dir. by Percy Pembroke, (1925), survives but several seconds of the ending are missing.

*Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, dir. unknown, (Ardelle Studios. c 1932).

Len Spencer, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, recording, Library of Congress.

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*Fractured Flickers*, (Jay Ward Productions, 1963.)

## NOTES

- 1 Charles King, 'Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde', *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, Volume 25, Issue 1, 1997, 9-20, p. 12.
- 2 E.g. a 1904 Victor 10-inch disk, an Edison 'Gold Moulded' cylinder, a 1905 Columbia Phonograph Company wax cylinder and a 1908 Columbia Graphophone Company 78 rpm. Several of these are extant, unlike the Selig film.
- 3 The radio show was announced in *Brooklyn Standard Union* (6 October 1928). MGM's plans were revealed in the *New York Times* (11 March 1940).
- 4 Other seminal Jekyll and Hyde plays such as the ones performed by Richard Mansfield, Daniel Bandmann and H. B. Irving made use of the names 'Agnes', 'Sybil' and even 'Laura Jekyll' respectively.
- 5 The later issues of *MPW* never indicated the film under discussion as categorically the Selig one. However, with *MPW* listing Selig's production week after week in its 'Latest Films' section and with no other Jekyll / Hyde films so listed (let alone derived from a play), the assumption is justified.
- 6 One of the films named by *Billboard* was *Monte Cristo* by Selig Polyscope from the beginning of 1908. The original suit against Kalem was in regards to copyright violations for *Ben Hur*. Other films named by the two publications as being in possible violation were produced by Edison, Lubin and Vitagraph as well as several other titles by Kalem.
- 7 Gleaned from the handwritten cutting continuity from the Selig Papers. It should be noted that one scribbled word *appears* to be 'cookey', a somewhat outdated word for a type of 'pancake'.
- 8 This latter carries a derogatory 'dandy-ish' sense as opposed to the current vernacular.
- 9 Research has uncovered little coverage in the British film trade

journals (and no mention in American ones). The *Bioscope*, for instance, chose to neither summarise nor review *The Duality of Man* and merely afforded it a one-line entry along with scores of other pictures in its 'Films Released during February' section.

- 10 H. B. Irving performed in a version of the play written by Joseph William Comyns Carr for H. B.'s father, the great Henry Irving. Irving the Elder had never performed in the play but H. B. picked it up and dusted it off years after it was written. For more on the topic, see Martin A. Danahay and Alex Chisholm, *Jekyll and Hyde Dramatized: The 1887 Richard Mansfield Script and the Evolution of the Story on Stage* (Jefferson, N.C: McFarland, 2004).

- 11 This connection has been pointed out by Doctor Robert Kiss. He also noted to the author that, coincidentally, *L'homme aux deux visages* was used as the title for French distribution of the 1913 German film *Der Andere*.

No better example could be made to demonstrate the consequences of adhering to strict criteria in classifying these films than the exclusion of *Der Andere* (which often gets discussed as a Jekyll and Hyde picture) and the inclusion of *Robert Hyde's Double Life* (which hardly makes anyone's Jekyll and Hyde shortlist).

- 12 Synopsis reworded from accounts in *The Bioscope* (14 July 1910), the *Poverty Bay Herald* (of New Zealand; 3 January 1911) and *The Daily News* (of Perth, West Australia; 15 August 1910).
- 13 Marguerite Engberg, *Registrant over danske film. Bind II: 1910-1912* (Copenhagen: Institut for Filmvidenskab, 1977), p. 102.
- 14 One would have to assume that the other firm of two years ago would have been from Selig Polyscope.
- 15 Synopsis taken from identical summaries in *Moving Picture News* (17 September 1910) and *Moving Picture World* (24 September 1910). Very likely both originated from studio-generated material.
- 16 My thanks go to Doctor Robert Kiss for providing this information and other background material.
- 17 Quoted in David Bowers, *Thanhouser Films: An Encyclopedia and History* (Portland: Thanhouser Company Film Preservation, Inc., 1999), CD.
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 Ibid.

- 20 Cited in *The Theatre of Science; a Volume of Progress and Achievement in the Motion Picture Industry* Broadway Publishing Company; New York, London, Paris (1914).
- 21 *Moving Picture World* (21 August 1915 and 4 September 1915).
- 22 It has been claimed in a number of printed sources that McQuarrie had an un-credited bit role in 1931's famed *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* starring Fredric March.
- 23 My thanks for this explanation go to Luke McKernan, Lead Curator at the British Library and an expert on early British film.
- 24 Synopsis from a lengthy account in *Moving Picture World* (17 December 1913).
- 25 As told to the author by Mark Griep, Jekyll and Hyde film historian and co-author with Marjorie Mikasen of *ReAction! Chemistry in the Movies* (2009, Oxford University Press).
- 26 Confusingly enough, even though it was as *Ein seltsamer Fall* that the film made the rounds in Germany, it was an original negative entitled *Sein eigener Mörder* that was restored.
- 27 Unnamed in the film footage itself, she is referred to as 'Germaine' in a program printed for *Sein eigener Mörder*. The actress who played the part was Lotti Neumann.
- 28 Not only did the Bulletin serve double duty as a copyright registration, its text was also circulated for publicity purposes to at least one of the film trade journals of the time, e.g. *Moving Picture World* (7 August 1915).
- 29 Billie Reeves is sometimes mentioned as appearing in the cast. On that topic, Joseph P. Eckhardt, Lubin scholar and biographer (*The King of the Movies: Film Pioneer Siegmund Lubin*) expressed his informed opinion to this author: 'I tend to think this is not true or he would have at least been mentioned in the bulletin, as he [Reeves] was one of Lubin's major comedy stars at the time and was being heavily promoted'.
- 30 Date unknown; reviews from the *Post-Dispatch* and other St. Louis papers were reprinted in the *New York Dramatic Mirror* (29 December 1900) which itself announced a 5 January 1901 opening of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* with Sheldon Lewis at The Liberty.
- 31 As revealed in the *New York Morning Telegraph* (12 February 1905) and the *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle* (12 April 1908).

- 32 *Exhibitor's Trade Review* (24 May 1919) like the *Moving Picture World* of the same date also mentioned Sheldon Lewis, Lewis Meyer, Frank Beresford and Jack O'Brien in a similar report on *The Monster and The Man*. Likewise, *Motion Picture News* (31 May 1919) and even *Photoplay* (August 1919) substantiated MPW's reporting.
- 33 *Theater Magazine* published by Louis Meyer and Paul Meyer. Louis Meyer, Sheldon Lewis, Frank Beresford and Jack O'Brien all had ties to Virginia Pearson Photoplays. Meyer was V.P.P. company president.
- 34 The announcement for the production of the John Barrymore film was made months earlier. See, for example, *Wid's Daily* (10 October 1919) and *Motion Picture News* (8 November 1919).
- 35 *Exhibitors Trade Review* (17 April 1920).
- 36 See *Variety* (23 April 1920) and the *New York Tribune* (16 May 1920).
- 37 Carolyn Lowrey, *The First One Hundred Noted Men and Women of the Screen* (New York: Moffat, Yard and Company, 1920), p. 98.
- 38 See *The Lockport Union-Sun and Journal* (of New York; 16 September 1920) and *Who's Who on the Screen – 1920 –* by Charles Donald Fox and Milton L. Silver.
- 39 *The Bourbon News* (11 March 1921), *The Oswego Daily Palladium* (24 December 1920), *The Steubenville Herald Star* (4 September 1920), *The Sandusky Register* (7 November 1920); *The Iowa City Press-Citizen* (2 November 1920), *The Cumberland Evening Times* (12 August 1920), *The Ada Evening News* (21 December 1920).
- 40 Special appreciation needs to be expressed at this point to Robert Kiss for providing all of the press clippings from the Miami papers used in this section.
- 41 This was not the first time that *Motion Picture News* listed the film as five reels instead of four. An advertisement in the 21 August 1920 *MPN* peddled 'A five-reel burlesque on the famous drama Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde [...] Five thousand feet of laughs screams and real fun [...] From the House of Hits [...] AYWON FILM CORPORATION'.
- 42 Thanks to Richard M. Roberts, film historian, for the background.
- 43 Somewhat oddly, the first mention in the trade journals occurred well before that. See *Wid's Film Daily* (23 January 1920), which has only the barest of references.
- 44 See Danahay and Chisholm, *Jekyll and Hyde Dramatized*.





## *The Black Arrow, Classics Illustrated, and the hybrid adaptation style*

*William B. Jones*

Of all of Robert Louis Stevenson's novels, none is as packed with cut-to-the-chase, cliffhanging – indeed, one might say, comic-book – action as *The Black Arrow: A Tale of the Two Roses*. The story was immensely popular when it was serialised in *Young Folks* in June–October 1883, far outdistancing in reader response the author's earlier *Treasure Island*, which had appeared in the same weekly paper in 1881.<sup>1</sup>

Still, Stevenson and his wife Fanny regarded *The Black Arrow* as a mere potboiler beneath his abilities. In a letter to W. E. Henley in late May 1883, the author dismissed the adventure story he was writing as 'a whole tale of tushery.'<sup>2</sup> Stevenson used this term in referring to the stylised, antiquated, yet accessible dialogue he had created for his novel, set *circa* 1460–61 during the Wars of the Roses.

In a letter to his friend William Archer, dated 27 March 1894, the author declared: 'I find few greater pleasures than reading my own works, but I never, O, I never read *The Black Arrow*.'<sup>3</sup> Indeed, Stevenson had refused to allow the novel's publication in book form until 1888, when Charles Scribner's Sons of New York made him an offer so good he couldn't refuse.<sup>4</sup> The author playfully dedicated the novel on its hardcover publication to his 'Critic on the Hearth,' his wife Fanny, noting that *The Black Arrow* was 'the only book of mine that you have never read – and never will read.'<sup>5</sup>

But many others did read the novel, the popularity and modern-classic status of which was confirmed by the publication in 1916 of an N.C. Wyeth Scribner's illustrated edition. The novel became standard school fare in the first half of the 20th century as evidenced by editions issued by Thomas Nelson and Sons,

Collins, World, and other school-market publishers.

Given the novel's regular appearance on middle-school reading lists, it was not surprising that by mid-century the story would find its way into the immensely popular, relatively new sequential-art medium known as the comic book, which was then in what has come to be called its "Golden Age." Albert Kanter's Gilberton Company series, *Classic Comics* (renamed *Classics Illustrated* in March 1947), was the obvious vehicle.

From the series' inception, the publisher intended the adaptations in *Classic Comics/Classics Illustrated* to serve a dual purpose, as explained in an open letter "To Our Readers" in *Classic Comics* No. 1, *The Three Musketeers* (October 1941): 'It is not our intent to replace the old established classics with these editions of the "CLASSIC COMICS LIBRARY," but rather we aim to create an active interest in those great masterpieces and to instill a desire to read the original text' (CC #1, inside front cover).

Between 1941 and 1971, the *Classic Comics/Classics Illustrated* line of comic-book adaptations of literature, with 169 titles in the U.S. series alone, became the most successful and widely distributed publication of its kind.<sup>6</sup> International editions reached millions of readers in more than twenty-four countries with editions printed in at least thirteen languages.<sup>7</sup> In the U.S. main series, under Gilberton (1941–67) and Frawley Corporation (1967–71) ownership, most titles were reprinted at least once.

Three eras in the evolution of *Classics Illustrated* adaptation can be roughly outlined, although individual scriptwriters' approaches differed considerably within those periods. Gilberton scriptwriter Alfred Sundel, who adapted some thirty titles for the U.S. *Classics Illustrated* series and many more for the series' British and European licensees, summed up three methods of adaptation of classic fiction or nonfiction that were used at different times between 1941 and 1962, when U.S. new-title production ceased:

As for adaptations, I suspect there are 3 kinds. 1. Faithful. 2. Interpretive. 3. A hybrid of the first two.... I deeply respected the author's rights and did not change anything. I didn't want to let the author down in any way, since I was working away on my own writings.<sup>8</sup>

Using the categories outlined by Sundel, the three eras in *Classics Illustrated* adaptation might be loosely defined as Interpretive (1941–1944), Hybrid (1945–1956), and Faithful (1957–1962). These periods roughly correspond to the script sources (freelance, contractual, in-house) between the years 1941 and 1962.

Gilberton added *The Black Arrow* to the *Classic Comics* line as issue No. 31 in October 1946. [Fig. 1.] It was the second Stevenson adaptation in the series (after No. 13, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*) and appeared before either *Kidnapped* (No. 46) or *Treasure Island* (No. 64) – a circumstance that speaks to the title's popularity at the time. At the time, *Classic Comics* were printed in a fifty-six-page format (comic adaptation, author biography, filler items), having been reduced in 1943 under wartime paper restrictions from the sixty-four pages of the initial twelve titles.<sup>9</sup>

After the name of the Gilberton series was changed to *Classics Illustrated* in March 1947, all of the earlier books except for the first dozen 64-page issues were shortened in reprint editions to 48 pages. After a single *Classic Comics* printing, *The Black Arrow* was reissued with the same catalogue number under the *Classics Illustrated* logo in September 1948; the cover title lettering was changed and the sky colour modified, while the story itself was trimmed from fifty-three to forty-six pages. A painted cover replaced the line-drawing cover in March 1956. From 1946 to 1968, *The Black Arrow* went through a total of fourteen printings in the U.S. series.<sup>10</sup>

The 1946 fifty-three-page comic-book adaptation was illustrated by Arnold Lorne Hicks (1888–1970), who had provided

illustrations for other *Classics*, including No. 13, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (August 1943); No. 23, *Oliver Twist* (July 1945); No. 28, *Michael Strogoff* (June 1946); and No. 29, *The Prince and the Pauper* (July 1946). Born in the year *The Black Arrow* was published in book form, Hicks was something of a transitional figure, representing an older generation of artists in the lively postwar comics-art marketplace.<sup>11</sup> His renderings of Dick, Joanna, Sir Daniel, and other characters belong as much to the style of early twentieth-century book illustration as to comics.

Jerry Iger's Fiction House comics-art-shop team of Ruth A. Roche and Thomas T. Scott scripted *The Black Arrow* for *Classic Comics*. Both Iger and Kanter considered the Stevenson title one of the finest comic books their joint efforts had produced.<sup>12</sup> Roche was a pioneering female figure in the male-dominated 1940s New York comic-book industry.<sup>13</sup> She and Scott had collaborated on the earlier *Classic Comics* No. 24, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (September 1945), while Roche had also adapted No. 25, *Two Years Before the Mast* (October 1945), and No. 26, *Frankenstein* (December 1945).<sup>14</sup>

Roche and Scott provided a textbook example of what Al Sundel called the 'hybrid' approach to comic-book literary adaptation in *The Black Arrow*. The 'Hybrid' style of Roche and Scott's script was in keeping with the generally more flexible Gilberton editorial policies from 1945–56. In contrast, during the 'Faithful' era of *Classics Illustrated* adaptations (1957–62), Alfred Sundel developed a sure sense of proportionality in his textual pruning. Each section of a work was allotted its space within the forty-eight pages of the comic book; each page in his scripts, as in the 1961 revised *Classics Illustrated* edition of No. 9, *Les Misérables* (March 1961), was a self-contained unit with its own narrative arc.

A review of the appended chart showing a page-by-page breakdown of the *Classic Comics* adaptation of *The Black Arrow* reveals an asymmetric structure. Roche and Scott appear to have

been driven by the need to set forth exposition and establish the relationship between Richard Shelton and Joanna Sedley/Jack Matcham. Hence, the novel's 'Prologue: John Amend-All' occupies the first six pages of the comic book, and Book I, 'The Two Lads,' extends through the next fourteen pages, to page 20 in a fifty-three page adaptation. Book II, 'The Moat House,' fills the next twelve pages, through page 32. The remaining three Books are squeezed into pages 33–53, with Book III, 'My Lord Foxham,' receiving shortest shrift at four pages.

Despite the structural imbalance, *Classic Comics* No. 31 reads fluidly. Roche and Scott followed the story straightforwardly and mostly faithfully from beginning to end. Sir Daniel's shifting Lancaster-York loyalties are presented with efficient clarity, as are the marriage stakes for Joanna and Dick. There are no interpolated scenes and few dialogue enhancements such as 'Ahhh!' or 'Taste a Lancaster death, knave!' (CC #31, 3, 47.) Oddly, however, Ellis Duckworth's *nom de guerre* John Amend-All is given as 'John Amends-All.' (CC #31, 4, 5.)

Stevenson's 'tushery' is frequently paraphrased: Dick's statement as he shoots Jack's struggling horse in the fen – 'Shalt not lie there to drown by inches!'<sup>15</sup> – becomes 'This is a better death than drowning. And a quicker one!' (CC #31, 10.) In Book II, Chapter II, "The Two Oaths," Sir Daniel's warns Sir Oliver:

"This lad beginneth to irk me like a wasp. I have a need for him, for I would sell his marriage. [...] If that ye can swear your innocency with a good, solid oath and an assured countenance, it is well; the lad will be at peace a little, and I will spare him. If that ye stammer or blench, or anyways boggle at the swearing, he will not believe you; and by the mass, he shall die."<sup>16</sup>

Roche and Scott simplify the threat thus: 'This lad is worth money to me alive! But he doth irk me. If ye will not swear and

put his fears at rest, then I shall get rid of him!’ (CC #31, 24.) Note that ‘doth’ is added, ‘irk’ is retained, and ‘the lad will be at peace a little’ is replaced by ‘put his fears at rest,’ which still conveys the period flavour.

Some matter is moved or compressed for narrative economy. For example, on page 36, which covers Book III, Chapter III, Panel 5 incorporates Lord Foxham’s charge to Dick Shelton, from Book III, Chapter VI, that he deliver certain notes to Richard of Gloucester. Indeed, Roche and Scott omitted entirely Book II, Chapters IV–VI, which comprise the episode of the stolen vessel *The Good Hope*; the character of Arblaster and the insight into Lawless’s past life as a seaman are dropped from the abridged storyline.

In their 1946 fifty-three-page adaptation, Roche and Scott did not attempt to soften the rough edges of Dick’s character. He is shown, for instance, bullying Jack in a dispute over warning Sir Daniel’s men about an impending ambush and taking back his crossbow – a windac in the original text – by force. (CC #31, 15.) He dispassionately views the bodies of the men hanging at the order of Richard Crookback. (CC #31, 46.) Particularly worthy of attention are the seven pages cut by the editors for the 1948 second printing of *Classic Comics* No. 31 (and all subsequent twelve printings); five have a substantial bearing on the reader’s perception of Dick, while two convey helpful missing information.

Three panels on deleted page 12 [Fig. 2] depict Dick falling into the river in Book I. Chapter III, and being rescued by Jack/Joan; they are balanced by three panels in which Dick looks after the exhausted Jack and offers food. In deleted page 17 [Fig. 3], Dick and Jack witness the death of Sir Daniel’s man Selden at the hands of the outlaws and are confronted by one of Duckworth’s men, who has been ordered to ‘take [Richard Shelton] alive.’ The action spills over to deleted page 18 [Fig. 4], where Dick, misinterpreting the man’s intentions (unlike the episode in the novel), stabs him in the heart in what appears to be an act of self-

defence. This pair of violent pages, taken from Book I, Chapter V, probably disappeared in response to the anti-comics crusade was getting underway in 1948.<sup>17</sup>

Two deleted pages that were probably seen by the Gilberton editors as simply prolonging Book II, Chapter IV, 'The Passage,' actually served to explain how Dick and Joan were able to escape the dead end in Sir Daniel's moat house; without those pages, the sequence lurches forward. Bennet Hatch appears in the last two panels on deleted page 27 [Fig. 5] and offers advice on escape. On deleted page 28 [Fig. 6], the protagonists discover the messenger Throgmorton's rope, which enables Dick to drop into the moat and make his way to the forest. The final pair of deleted pages again presented Dick as a killer not overly concerned his violent act. On page 39 [Fig. 7], Richard, disguised as a monk and concealed behind a tapestry, dispatches Lord Shoreby's spy, who has discovered evidence of his presence. Deleted page 40 [Fig. 8] deals with Lawless's removal of the inconvenient corpse. Whatever Stevensonian dualism survived in the comic-book hero as scripted by Roche and Scott was significantly diminished by the 1948 cuts.

With all its defects (including the unknown colourist's penchant for turning the outlaws' Lincoln green to maroon), the *Classic Comics* top-heavy hybrid adaptation of *The Black Arrow* made Stevenson's literary stepchild accessible to millions of young readers. Many of these eventually would follow the publisher's admonition not to miss the 'added enjoyment of reading the original.' And, in a curious variation on the *Young Folks* phenomenon, *The Black Arrow* would outsell the *Classics Illustrated* edition of *Treasure Island*.<sup>18</sup>





Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 4

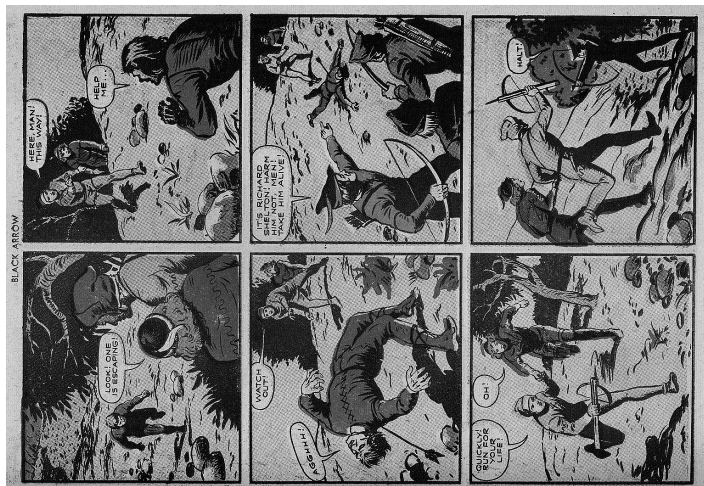


Fig. 3







**APPENDIX***Classic Comics* No. 31 Chapter Breakdowns and Omissions by Page

- 1 Narrative box overview
- 2 'Prologue: John Amend-All'
- 3 'Prologue: John Amend-All'
- 4 'Prologue: John Amend-All'
- 5 'Prologue: John Amend-All'
- 6 'Prologue: John Amend-All'
- 7 Bk. I ('The Two Lads'), Ch. I ('At the Sign of the Sun in Kettley')
- 8 Bk. I, Ch. I
- 9 Bk. I, Ch. I [panels 1-4]; Bk. I, Ch. II ('In the Fen' [panels 5-6])
- 10 Bk. I, Ch. II
- 11 Bk. I, Ch. III ('The Fen Ferry')
- 12 Bk. I, Ch. III; page 12 deleted in September 1948 *Classics Illustrated* forty-eight-page edition and all twelve subsequent reprints (1949-1968)
- 13 Bk. I, Ch. III [panel 1]; Bk. I., Ch. IV ('A Greenwood Company' [panels 2-5])
- 14 Bk. I, Ch. IV
- 15 Bk. I, Ch. V ('Bloody as the Hunter')
- 16 Bk. I, Ch. V
- 17 Bk. I, Ch. V; page 17 deleted in September 1948 *Classics Illustrated* forty-eight-page edition and all twelve subsequent reprints (1949-1968)
- 18 Bk. I, Ch. VI ('To the Day's End'); page 18 deleted in September 1948 *Classics Illustrated* forty-eight-page edition and all twelve subsequent reprints (1949-1968)
- 19 Bk. I, Ch. VI [Panels 1-2]; Bk. I, Ch. VII ('The Hooded Face' [panels 3-6])
- 20 Bk. I, Ch. VI
- 21 Bk. II ('The Moat House'), Ch. I ('Dick Asks Questions')
- 22 Bk. II, Ch. II ('The Two Oaths')
- 23 Bk. II, Ch. II
- 24 Bk. II, Ch. II
- 25 Bk. II, Ch. III ('The Room Over the Chapel')
- 26 Bk. II, Ch. III [panels 1-4]; Bk. II, Ch. IV ('The Passage' [panels 5-6])
- 27 Bk. II, Ch. IV; page 27 deleted in September 1948 *Classics Illustrated* forty-eight-page edition and all twelve subsequent reprints (1949-1968)
- 28 Bk. II, Ch. IV; page 28 deleted in September 1948 *Classics Illustrated* forty-eight-page edition and all twelve subsequent reprints (1949-1968)
- 29 Bk. II, Chap. V ('How Dick Changed Sides')

- 30 Bk. II, Ch. V
- 31 Bk. II, Ch. V
- 32 Bk. II, Ch. V
- 33 Bk. III ('My Lord Foxham'), Ch. I ('The House by the Shore')
- 34 Bk. III, Ch. I
- 35 Bk. III, Ch. II ('A Skirmish in the Dark')
- 36 Bk. III, Ch. III ('St. Bride's Cross'; panel 5 incorporates Foxham's charge to Dick in Bk. III, Ch. VI)  
[Bk. III, Ch. IV–VI, encompassing the episode of *The Good Hope*, were omitted entirely in Roche and Scott's adaptation]
- 37 Bk. IV ('The Disguise'), Ch. I ('The Den')
- 38 Bk. IV, Ch. II ('In Mine Enemies' House')
- 39 Bk. IV, Ch. II; page 39 deleted in September 1948 *Classics Illustrated* forty-eight-page edition and all twelve subsequent reprints (1949–1968)
- 40 Bk. IV, Ch. III ('The Dead Spy'); page 40 deleted in September 1948 *Classics Illustrated* forty-eight-page edition and all twelve subsequent reprints (1949–1968)
- 41 Bk. IV, Ch. III
- 42 Bk. IV, Ch. IV ('In the Abbey Church')
- 43 Bk. IV, Ch. IV
- 44 Bk. IV, Ch. V ('Earl Risingham' [panels 1–4]); Bk. IV, Ch. VI ('Arblaster Again' [panel 5]); Bk. V ('Crookback'), Ch. I ('The Shrill Trumpet' [panel 6])
- 45 Bk. V, Ch. I
- 46 Bk. V, Ch. I
- 47 Bk. V, Ch. II ('The Battle of Shoreby')
- 48 Bk. V, Ch. II [panels 1–4]; Bk. V, Ch. III ('The Battle of Shoreby (*concluded*)' [panel 5])
- 49 Bk. V, Ch. IV ('The Sack of Shoreby')
- 50 Bk. V, Ch. V ('Night in the Woods: Alicia Risingham' [panels 1–2]); Bk. V, Ch. VI ('Night in the Woods (*concluded*): Dick and Joan' [panels 3–5])
- 51 Bk. V, Ch. VI
- 52 Bk. V, Ch. VI [panels 1–4]; Bk. V, Ch. VII ('Dick's Revenge' [panels 5–6])
- 53 Bk. V, Ch. VII [panels 1–5]; Bk. V, Ch. VIII ('Conclusion' [panel 6])

## NOTES

- 1 John Sutherland, 'The Composition and Publication of The Black Arrow' in Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Black Arrow: A Tale of the Two Roses*, ed. J. Sutherland (London: Penguin Classics, 2007), p. xxxix.
- 2 Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson, Volume Four, October 1882–June 1884*, ed. by Bradford A. Booth and Ernest Mehew (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), letter 1108, to W. E. Henley [Late May 1883], p. 129.
- 3 Stevenson, *Letters, Volume Eight, January 1893–December 1894*, letter 2716, to William Archer, 27 March 1894, p. 260.
- 4 J. C. Furnas, *Voyage to Windward: The Life of Robert Louis Stevenson* (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1951), p. 267.
- 5 Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Black Arrow: A Tale of the Two Roses* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1888), p. v.
- 6 William B. Jones, Jr., "Hello, Mackellar": Classics Illustrated meets *The Master of Ballantrae*, *Journal of Stevenson Studies* 4 (2007), p. 250.
- 7 William B. Jones, Jr., *Classics Illustrated: A Cultural History*, Second Edition (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2011), p. 279.
- 8 Alfred Sundel, E-mail to author, 29 October 2014.
- 9 Jones, *Classics Illustrated*, p. 13.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 322.
- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 42.
- 12 *Ibid.*, p. 44.
- 13 Trina Robbins and Catherine Yronwode, *Women and the Comics* (New York: Eclipse Books, 1985), p. 52.
- 14 Jones, *Classics Illustrated*, p. 321.
- 15 Stevenson, *The Black Arrow*, p. 36.
- 16 *Ibid.*, p. 111.
- 17 Jones, *Classics Illustrated*, p. 165.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p. 325.



## ‘The game is up’: the evolution of *Treasure Island* as imperial critique

Emma-Lee Davidson

Stevenson has been dismissed by many as a teller of tales with little or no political agenda. Some critics however have acknowledged the South Seas tales and later non-fiction writings of Stevenson as ambivalent, and at times hostile representations of imperial endeavours. In *Robert Louis Stevenson and the Colonial Imagination*, Ann C. Colley argues that much of Stevenson’s later writing responded directly to the political realities of the South Seas, remarking that his ‘political imagination was as complex as the situations it engaged.’<sup>1</sup> Roslyn Jolly describes Stevenson’s later work as his most overtly political, suggesting that the South Seas non-fiction texts ‘best represent Stevenson’s new sense of writing as action in the world’.<sup>2</sup> This work was often highly critical of colonialism. Jolly notes that his late novella *The Ebb Tide* ‘shows how Stevenson preceded Conrad in working out a narrative mode that overlaid extreme realism with symbolism and a kind of dreamlike imagistic excess to explore the nightmare of imperialism.’<sup>3</sup> Patrick Brantlinger also maintains that Stevenson explored empire with as much scepticism as ‘writers more often celebrated for their anti-imperialist outlook such as Conrad.’<sup>4</sup> Oliver S. Buckton argues that while ‘Stevenson’s early romance, *Treasure Island*, is open to readings that identify a critique of colonial adventure in the narrative [...] his later South Seas writings are far more trenchant in their use of evidence of the devastating impact of colonialism’.<sup>5</sup> Nonetheless, Diana C. Stevenson states that ‘*Treasure Island* (1883) has received less serious attention from postcolonial critics than it deserves.’<sup>6</sup> This article aims to show that in *Treasure Island*, Stevenson succeeds in producing and refining a text which in spite of dismissal, even by the writer, as ‘a story for boys;’<sup>7</sup> with no need of psychology or



fine writing' offers a strong critique of empire. The central argument will be reinforced by reference to literature of the time, taking into close consideration the context of *Young Folks* magazine where it was first published, and by examining changes that were made between the serialisation and book presentation.

In the final thirty years of the nineteenth century the British empire grew at an aggressive pace. The extent of British imperial possessions increased by 4.75 million square miles, including the annexation of thirty-nine new areas.<sup>8</sup> Andrew S. Thompson notes that '[t]he growing strength of imperial themes in British political debate was already evident in the 1870s as Disraeli invoked the empire in a direct appeal to the political nation.'<sup>9</sup> This evolved into what became known as New Imperialism, 'the cultural conviction, rooted in political discourse but broadly diffused through the media of popular culture, that the Empire was the source and proof of Britain's glory.'<sup>10</sup> The growth and maintenance of the empire was justified as an imperative, necessary for economic growth of the country while there was panic in the air about domestic issues.

While the middle classes of Britain grew richer and were perceived to be more decadent, the fear of their degeneration was given ideological basis by contemporary thinkers such as Edwin Ray Lankester. He writes in 1880 that 'we have to fear lest the prejudices, preoccupations, and dogmatism of modern civilisation should in any way lead to the atrophy and loss of the valuable mental qualities inherited by our young forms from primeval man.'<sup>11</sup> Much nineteenth century British literature expresses these concerns. Businessman and politician Cecil Rhodes declared that '[t]he people have found out that England is small, and her trade is large, and they have also found that other people are taking their share of the world, and enforcing hostile tariffs.'<sup>12</sup> This attitude was wholly reflected in the literature of the time, both in the manner of its distribution and popular themes. There was an explosion of print culture and literary

material produced in order to meet the increasing demand of a growing reading public, and these materials were often concerned with empire. There was a wealth of literature designed for mass consumption which aggressively asserted the dominance of the British male, his superiority over his colonial subjects, and his strength in overcoming the inherent dangers of colonial settings. Yet Stevenson was one of the first writers to use the adventure fiction genre as a means of exploring, and ultimately undermining, the supposed integrity of British institutions and values when removed from their usual social context.

Brantlinger outlines the predominant relationship between literature and empire at this time:

[t]he history of the Empire becomes a moral allegory or melodrama, pitting white heroes, the representatives of Anglo-Saxon courage, integrity and industry, against black villains and cowards [...] it also turned violence and rapacity into virtues, treating acts of aggression as acts of necessity and self-defence.<sup>13</sup>

Empire and colonialism in many ways facilitated the narrative of British literature. Edward Said argues that '[t]he prototypical modern realistic novel is *Robinson Crusoe*, and certainly not accidentally it is about a European who creates a fiefdom for himself on a distant, non-European island.'<sup>14</sup> It has been proposed that *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) in particular 'indicates the ways in which British colonial history made the genre of the novel possible.'<sup>15</sup> The novel's protagonist is shipwrecked on an island from a slaving ship after leaving Britain for adventure. On the island Crusoe plots against its indigenous cannibal population, and converts Friday (a Native American whom he frees from them) to Christianity. By the end of the novel he has returned to England, wealthy, after successfully learning to survive and dominating the island. Through his adventure, Crusoe becomes a

beacon of British manhood: resourceful, resilient, and capable of carrying out the mission civilisatrice, as shown by his successful conversion of Friday.

*Robinson Crusoe* in turn inspired 'Robinsonades', a host of texts which followed in its template. Works such as *The Swiss Family Robinson* (1812), *Masterman Ready* (1841), and *The Coral Island* (1858) ratified the tropes of the adventure fiction genre, which included travel to an overseas location; the embodiment of British values by a protagonist who survives in the foreign location, often with opposition from inhabitants of the islands; the ultimate assertion of the superiority of the British protagonist; and the triumphant return to England after the protagonist has grown from the experience, and either literally or symbolically reenters society. These elements each promote imperialistic ideas, where we might understand imperialism to mean 'thinking about, settling on, [and] controlling land that you do not possess, that is distant, that is lived on and owned by others.'<sup>16</sup>

There were many boys adventure stories published in the same volumes of *Young Folks* as *Treasure Island* which similarly asserted or implied British cultural superiority and celebrated empire. Tales such as W. Jameson's 'Grace, A Story of India,' and the unattributed stories 'A Red River Adventure,' and 'Trapping a Maneater.' 'Grace, A Story of India' and 'Trapping a Maneater' share a paternalistic view of the Indian population. In 'Grace,' the Indian Rebellion of 1857 serves to expose the fundamental untrustworthiness of the ungrateful Indians for whom the British have implemented education and other social structures. Grace saves an Indian, Reza Kasim, from execution for a theft after it transpires that he saved her life during the Rebellion. Reza is a traitor/freedom fighter who is captured after 'his wild daring was no match for British pluck.'<sup>17</sup> He gives up his political position because he is enamoured of Grace. By the end of the narrative he forgoes all trace of political opposition and returns to his place

as Grace's servant. Despite his earlier disobedience, after being saved by Grace, he is represented as content in this subordinate position. 'Trapping a Maneater', also set in India, is told from the perspective of a British traveller who finds himself taking charge of building railways. The Indian characters are presented in a patronising manner: 'These Hindoo labourers always become very much attached to a foreman who treats them well. They are quick to understand orders, and have very mild, affectionate dispositions.'<sup>18</sup>

Further to the racist caricatures of the Indians, the overall arc of these narratives involves the taming of the wild by the British character. The tiger is defeated as a result of a trap which uses by way of bait a doll of the protagonist's design made to look like a 'Hindoo worker'.<sup>19</sup> As a result of his labours he feels entitled to the tiger's skin, but this is taken by his visiting bosses in a plot device that implies the exploitation of the protagonist. No connection is made to the unexplored exploitation of the Indian characters. 'Our visitors went back to Madras on the express disgusted – but took the tiger's skin. I rather thought that it belonged to me. We had no further trouble there with tigers'.<sup>20</sup> The story exemplifies a fairly standard domestication narrative: the white man has conquered the wilderness.

Distinguishing itself from the paternalism of 'Grace' and 'Trapping a Maneater,' 'A Red River Adventure,' set in the United States, represents non-white characters as dangerous and degenerate. The narrator notes: 'Two more villainous countenances I never saw. One was a negro, as black as ink, and the other a mulatto, with kinky hair, and a face that would have secured a conviction for murder before any unprejudiced jury in the country.'<sup>21</sup> The contradiction in this statement appears to be completely lost on the speaker, and the author too. The moral of 'A Red River Adventure' is laid out in the final line: 'When you become hunters, boys, try the forests, mountains, and plains of Canada, where you can fancy yourselves not utterly cut off from

British civilization'.<sup>22</sup> Although this story is not set in the empire it is representative of the sense of cultural superiority which was more and more violently asserted as the century went on.

As is fundamental to the adventure fiction genre, the main threat in *Robinson Crusoe*, 'Grace', 'Trapping a Maneater', and 'A Red River Adventure', manifests itself through a native force in the imperial or would be imperial precinct. This is one respect in which *Treasure Island* departs from the established formula, offering a far more nuanced expression of the genre. In *Robinson Crusoe*, the protagonist is stranded on the island he comes to domesticate accidentally, as if to foreshadow Sir John Seeley's infamous remark that Britain seemed 'to have conquered and peopled half the world in a fit of absence of mind.'<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, Stevenson's gentlemen and pirates make a deliberate effort to travel to the island in order to reap its hidden treasure. There are no 'natives' and despite the presence of dangerous creatures, there are no attacks. In fact the threat posed by a rattlesnake is only perceived retrospectively: 'Little did I suppose that he was a deadly enemy, and that the noise was the famous rattle.'<sup>24</sup> What is immediately dangerous to Jim and his crew are the people who arrive with them and, more strikingly, the dangerous impulses within themselves. *Treasure Island* as with Stevenson's later works, most famously *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, is thus concerned with the danger within. As Diana Loxley remarks, in *Treasure Island*

[t]he problem of order and instability is represented by the threat of lawlessness and criminality internal to the system of European cultural identification, that is, issuing from within its own ranks as opposed to the threat posed by a racial, territorial or cultural otherness from the outside.<sup>25</sup>

The only figure to be found on the island is himself a British

citizen. Marooned there, and as the deck hand on Flint's ship Jim's counterpart, Ben Gunn is horrifying to Jim: 'Silver himself appeared less terrible in contrast with this creature of the woods' (p. 75). The initial image of this man is more frightening than the leader of the pirates. Divorced from society, he is evidence that all men who seek adventure have the potential to meet his fate. He is not a Robinson Crusoe, nor an ideal of British manhood: he is a British character who has barely survived the colonial enterprise.

The internal threat of criminality is represented by the pirates but, crucially, it is facilitated by the gentlemen. Silver's crew man the *Hispaniola* with the approval of Trelawney, who remains completely unaware of the threat that they pose until it is too late. The voyage is dominated by Silver but happens with the consent of the gentlemen characters. Trelawney allows himself to be controlled: 'Between Silver and myself we got together in a few days a company of the toughest salts imaginable [...] Long John even got rid of two out of the six or seven I had already engaged' (p. 38). Jim is the only crew member who suspects Silver is not the respectable character that the others believe him to be, because he matches the description of the pirate who had terrified Billy Bones. Yet, Jim's doubts are assuaged by Silver's appearance: 'I thought I knew what a buccaneer was like – a very different creature, according to me, from this clean and pleasant-tempered landlord' (p. 42). The problem of recognising a pirate is referenced more subtly elsewhere. Silver notes that his leg was amputated by 'a master surgeon [...] Latin by the bucket [yet] hanged like a dog, and sun-dried like the rest' (p. 57). Stevenson's pirates can be skilled and educated, and functioning members of society. Silver's appearance and temperament are that of a decent citizen. He does not perform a contradictory role as both leader of the pirates and a landlord. In occupying these roles simultaneously, Silver exemplifies the threat internal to British society.

In addition to the ability of Silver and his crew to blend in with the gentlemen, the gentlemen show that they have the capacity to act like pirates. There is a deep irony in Trelawney's implicit admonishment of the pirates' greed: 'What were these villains after but money? What do they care for but money? For what would they risk their rascal carcasses but money?' (p. 32). He then makes clear his own similar motivation: 'We'll have favourable winds, a quick passage, and not the least difficulty in finding the spot, and money to eat – to roll in – to play duck and drake with ever after' (p. 34). Jim also shows the capacity for treasure worship. The care he takes in listing the different monies suggests reverence and he notes his desire: 'I think I never had more pleasure than in sorting them' (p. 186). That all of these monies are brought together to be counted, collected, sorted and possessed by an English boy shows a wider desire for conquest. Jim's delight in possession, experienced by all of the British men who arrive on the island, exposes rather than endorses the capitalist drive behind the imperial project.

We might assume the gentlemen to be exemplary members of society, in particular Livesay, who is both a judge and a doctor. The episode in the Admiral Benbow in which Livesay commands the acquiescence of Bones is proof of his stately authority. He tells Bones matter-of-factly, '[i]f you do not put that knife this instant in your pocket, I promise, upon my honour, you shall hang at the next assizes' (p. 7). On land this authority is unquestionable, but after they have left the British Isles Livesay is no longer in command, and becomes in some ways a failed father figure to Jim. Sandison notes that '[t]hroughout the book Jim's acceptance of Livesay's authority is instinctive if tacit, but at [his] reproof [...] Jim becomes a boy again – and a repentant one at that – and bursts into tears.'<sup>26</sup> But away from the security of land, it is Livesay who behaves in an ungentlemanly manner. In the face of danger Jim is strong, behaving in a way more befitting a gentleman than a boy, regardless of his display of emotion. He

keeps his word despite his fear, while Livesay encourages him to run away and abandon duty:

‘Whip over, and we’ll run for it.’

‘Doctor,’ said I, ‘I passed my word.’

‘I know, I know,’ he cried. ‘We can’t help that, Jim, now’

(p. 168).

Stevenson does not set up binary oppositions between characters but offers a more nuanced approach, thus challenging the implicit authority of men in positions highly regarded in civilised society, such as doctors and captains. Livesay is not ‘Silver’s polar opposite.’<sup>27</sup> In a recent essay Alexandra Valint explores the full extent of their similarity, stating ‘Dr. Livesey is, like Silver, a man capable of lying, betrayal, and ruthlessness.’<sup>28</sup> On the island, when his own life and Jim’s are at risk, Dr. Livesay abandons duty. Robert Irvine asserts that ‘late-nineteenth-century adventure stories often use their remote or exotic settings to confirm the naturalness of social hierarchy’ but notes that *Treasure Island*, ‘refuses to offer any clear-cut confirmation of the natural superiority of the gentleman.’<sup>29</sup> Through the deconstruction of binaries between pirates and gentlemen, Stevenson in fact suggests an innate anarchism that is only kept in check (and even then not always) by societal structures.

Outside of the law, on the island, notions of duty are divorced from their meaning. Silver’s tautological ‘dooty is dooty’ is used ironically, before his true pirate identity is revealed, as a grumbling acceptance of getting back to work (p. 45). Life and death situations make the civilised and gentlemanly notions of duty irrelevant. But these life and death situations are brought about not as a result of an external force that the characters face on the island, which could symbolically stand for the imperial frontier. Rather, it is the promise of treasure that drives gentlemen and pirates from civilisation to the uninhabited island, and which



causes them to plot against each other.

The idea of internal tensions on a national scale comes to light in the ironic invocation of national symbols. The desire for wealth and the drive to conquer that motivates empire is exposed, and the symbols draw attention to the ways in which the narrative dismisses allegorical readings of British triumph over foreign forces, or domination over foreign lands. The *Hispaniola* shares its name with an island that contemporary audiences would know had been occupied by Britain in the late eighteenth century. The island Hispaniola has a long history of colonial rule by French and Spanish empires. The ship *Hispaniola* is taken, at first by stealth and then by force, by Silver's crew. The pirate flag marks the domination: 'the Jolly Roger – the black flag of piracy – flying from her peak' (p. 100). The capture is part of the game, and so the seized allegiance renders imperial endeavours to gain land a childish pursuit.

The parallel to the Jolly Roger, the Union Flag, is further ironised in the novel. The act of running the British flag 'seemed mightily to relieve' Smollett after the death of Redruth (p. 96). Yet Redruth does not die in service of his country; he dies in search of treasure. While in other literature of the time a search for treasure may be equated with a capitalist enterprise and so a national duty, Stevenson subverts and problematises this narrative. Draping the flag on Redruth's body is inappropriate. The boundaries between national duty and piratical actions of treasure hunting are blurred when Smollett unironically states that Redruth was 'shot down in his duty to captain and owner' (p. 97). The symbol of imperial domination is thus weakened, and Smollett's use of 'owner' is telling.

The Union flag later becomes a totem for danger, making the gentlemen a target: 'the house is quite invisible from the ship. It must be the flag they are aiming at. Would it not be wiser to take it in?' Trelawney asks (p. 97). Smollett refuses. He raises the flag to oppose the pirates, as if to say that they are counter to all that

is British. Yet, they share many of the same qualities and failings. Critics have noted that this incongruity is represented by Jim, whose parents' inn is named after Admiral Benbow but who is himself named for privateer and slaver Sir John Hawkins. By the former 'Stevenson in effect associates him with these supposed English virtues, draping him in the Union Jack. But by naming him after Sir John Hawkins, Stevenson also evokes a counter-narrative that suggests far more conflicted ways of characterizing Englishness.'<sup>30</sup> Though Jim may be symbolically draped in the Union Jack, within *Treasure Island*, the national symbol of the flag is misused: as an ill-fitting noble gesture, or else flown without regard for the danger it brings. Flying the flag may have led to the death of one of Smollett's crew, but he chooses national pride over practicality, thus exposing the folly of empire.

The flawed or even failed authority figures of Smollett and Livesay exemplify a more general criticism of imperialism within the novel. The imperial frontier frequently figured in nineteenth century literature as a proving ground for boys to become men, and symbolised the 'natural' dominance of the British male. In *Treasure Island* there are no successful examples of this phenomenon. Authority figures in the text are continually undermined by the presence of another character: Billy Bones is afraid of his superiors; Silver fears the memory of Flint, who never appears; Smollett's authority is undermined; Livesay tells Jim to abandon his duty; and Jim's father is almost completely absent and when he does appear it is to show his cowardliness. In one episode he is contrasted almost immediately with Billy Bones, 'the sort of man that made England terrible at sea' while Jim's father 'never plucked up the heart' to ask for money that Bones owes him (p. 6).

Jim is uncomfortably aware of the human weaknesses of both gentlemen and pirates in the book. When a stranger arrives at the Admiral Benbow (Black Dog come to deliver the black spot), 'it rather added to [Jim's] fears to observe that the stranger was

certainly frightened himself' (p. 11). From the beginning Jim acts in an adult manner. He worries about protecting his sick father from disturbances and chastises his mother, who puts both their lives in danger, 'obstinately unwilling to be content with less [money than she was owed]' (p. 23). Jim goes to the island in many ways an already mature character. When he leaves he is traumatised. The adventure fiction trope of a boy becoming a man through an excursion to the imperial frontier is only complete when it involves the successful assimilation of the character back into British society. Jim is not successfully assimilated. He looks back upon his experience with fear, having left the treasure island to his 'inexpressible joy' (p. 188).

Crusoe, like many adventure fiction figures who came after, returns to Britain triumphant having left his island adventure behind. Stevenson diverts from this framework. Rather than Britain, the sanctuary Jim arrives at from the island is in Spanish America. Stevenson paints a multi-cultural, cosmopolitan hub:

It was just at sundown when we cast anchor in a most beautiful land-locked gulf, and were immediately surrounded by shore boats full of negroes, Mexican Indians, and half-bloods, selling fruits and vegetables, and offering to dive for bits of money. The sight of so many good-humoured faces (especially the blacks), the taste of the tropical fruits, and above all, the lights that began to shine in the town, made a most charming contrast to our dark and bloody sojourn on the island (p. 189).

Stevenson juxtaposes the political reality of Spanish America, which is positively represented, with the symbolic British imperial frontier of the island, whereupon a struggle for treasure and domination is staged. The language may be outdated but the sentiment is clearly intended to be joyous, a far cry from the representations of people of colour contained in the *Young*

*Folks* stories. There is no relationship of colonial possession; Stevenson's characters merely pass through. This passage occurs on the journey home, the remainder of which is summarised 'to make a long story short, we got a few hands on board, made a good cruise home, and the *Hispaniola* reached Bristol' (p. 189). On his return, however, Jim is tormented by nightmares of the island: 'the worst dreams that ever I have are when I hear the surf booming about its coasts' (p. 190). Reality and dreams are confused in these closing lines. Just as he offers the most sustained depiction of a locatable political reality of Spanish America, Stevenson takes us back to Jim's dark visions of the island.

Stevenson's most profound challenge to the discourse of imperial literature is the deconstruction of the adventure fiction genre. This becomes more apparent through analysis of the textual changes made between the serialisation and the published book. Passages were added which draw attention to the retrospective nature of the narrative, in order to emphasise Jim's lasting terror of his adventure. The presence of overt violence, which characters had previously relished, is diminished and represented in a far more neutral manner. There were further alterations made to the language to limit moral judgements, and comments which referred to a larger European context were removed.

The first significant addition is the prefatory poem, 'To the Hesitating Purchaser.'<sup>31</sup> As a paratext to the book it functions as an opening gambit, to showcase the text's value to prospective readers. The poem uses the conditional 'if,' and the flattery of 'wiser youngsters' to seduce the reader: a subtle manipulation in the style of Silver (l. 1, 8). It contextualises *Treasure Island* in the tradition of adventure fiction and romance to claim, ironically as it turns out, that Stevenson's tale will be 'retold / exactly in the ancient way' (ll. 5-6). The invocation of the names Kingston, Ballantyne and Cooper proposes that Stevenson's story is to take up the mantle of their adventure fiction. The poem is making an argument for the romance of adventure fiction, in an age in

which fiction had grown increasingly didactic.

Despite its persuasive tactics, however, the poem purports to allow the reader to take the text as they find it, to go on an adventure or to leave it, as announced by the repetitions of 'So be it' which accompany each option (ll. 9, 14). The poem, like the text which follows, allows its meaning to spring up from around itself. That it is addressed '[t]o the hesitating purchaser' links reader and buyer, in the age of consumerism of which *Treasure Island* is both critical and celebratory. The final lines of the poem forewarn death for adventure fiction if it cannot entice readers to buy it. If *Treasure Island* cannot satisfy the appetite of the 'studious youth' for tales of high adventure and gold then it has not completed its objective. The poem also draws attention to the historical setting of the book, which separates it from adventure texts set in contemporary political realities. In setting up expectations of a Crusoe-like adventure, the poem therefore encapsulates a double movement in Stevenson's text. *Treasure Island* simultaneously engages with the 'boys own' adventure narrative while deconstructing imperial agendas for which it has been traditionally appropriated.

This paratext of *Treasure Island*, then, suggests a concern about the ethos of adventure fiction which is apparent throughout the novel. Another key paratext with colonial significance is of course the map. In *Cruising with Robert Louis Stevenson: Travel, Narrative, and the Colonial Body*, Oliver S. Buckton argues that the map is representative of the book's status as commodity-text (literature designed for mass consumption), and indicative of Stevenson's experience with travel writing. 'The map', Buckton states 'is a key object in the expansion of empire, providing a grid of knowledge and power that allows the colonizing peoples to claim possession of the colonised.'<sup>32</sup> The critical function of the map in *Treasure Island*, Buckton argues, is to cause 'grown men to become adventurous boys eager to abandon their responsible duties and go in quest of buried treasure and

imperial plunder'.<sup>33</sup> Though it is not only Jim and his companions who embark upon this enterprise. As an accompaniment to the text, the map implicates the reader. The reader has agency to observe the map and dominate the space. In 'My First Book', Stevenson describes how the map begot the story: 'As I pored upon my map of "Treasure Island," the future characters of the book began to appear there visibly among imaginary woods'.<sup>34</sup> In citing the map as 'the chief part of my plot', Stevenson confirms that the narrative and the colonial enterprise are inextricable.<sup>35</sup>

In chapter seven of the first book publication of the text, there is an added passage which describes Jim's fascination with the map. This serves to remind the reader of the retrospective nature of the text and to establish Jim's exploratory impulses, especially in contrast with his domestic situation:

I brooded by the hour together over the map [...] in all my fancies nothing occurred to me so strange and tragic as our actual adventures. (p. 37)

Displaced from his own home Jim is already in a liminal space. That he surveys the map in the housekeeper's room reminds us of this. Jim displays a strong imperialist urge to conquer and dominate. He wants not only to explore the island but to climb to its highest point, and look out on it in its entirety, to contain it under his gaze. Jim imagines the island as a space filled with dangerous foes to be defeated, 'savages' or 'dangerous animals' p. (37). Like the reader, he expects a typical colonial setting appropriate for an adventure. The inclusion of this passage subtly connects the imperialistic urge with the events that later occur on the island, and serves to underline Jim's lasting feeling of fear. The turn of the narrative from Jim's preconception of the island to his present position as narrator creates a sense of foreboding in the reader; we are being prepared for a dangerous adventure more troubling than a simple fight against the innate forces he

imagines could be waiting for him on the island.

Despite its nature as a tale of high adventure played out on a mysterious island weeks away from England by sea, the setting of *Treasure Island* is still distinct from many other adventure texts. In a typical adventure text the island setting would be tropical, as in the Robinsonade tradition, peopled with 'natives' for the hero to fight or civilise. Stevenson's island has, as John Seelye argues in his introduction to the 1999 Penguin edition, recognisably North-American landscape features and is empty, but for a marooned British citizen.<sup>36</sup> However, highly educated guesses aside, the island is never definitively located; Stevenson purposefully avoids situating it in a political reality. Bradley Deane argues that

Stevenson's cultural influence through *Treasure Island* was to remap the imperial frontier as a self-sufficient playground, not a place on which the moral laws of Britain are impressed, but as a kind of 'Better Land' in which they can be escaped, a place better men might visit on a holiday jaunt enlivened by bloodshed.<sup>37</sup>

Yet, what occurs on the island is far from a 'holiday jaunt.' As the changes to the narrative between *Young Folks* and the first edition bring into focus, Stevenson's framing of the narrative as a retrospective which Jim is bade to tell by his crew mates, shows that he is reluctant to relive the experience through the telling of it. This framing device is present in the serialisation, but reinforced in the published book edition through longer introspective passages. This suggests that the initial intent of the narrative device was only fully realised in the later version. It also serves to further destabilise the authority of the gentlemen, who do not tell their own tales, excepting Livesay's interjection in chapters 16-18.

Some changes show that the initial text of *Treasure Island*

was more closely related to the texts it appeared alongside than the published book edition. In *Young Folks* Livesay remarks that 'there was no time to cry over spilt milk; if they had begun the killing, it was plain enough they would go on – Hawkins now, the rest of us as soon as possible.'<sup>38</sup> In the book edition the presence of overt violence, handled with frequency and flippancy in the serialisation, is diminished. The throwaway nature of Livesay's comment in *Young Folks* makes him seem much colder than in the later version. Also worthy of note are the subtle changes made to limit deontological value judgements from the text. Livesay recalls that 'Jim Hawkins had slipped into a boat and was gone ashore with the rest'(p. 87) in the book edition, but in *Young Folks* 'the rest' reads as 'the evil ones,' (19:571, 167) and another 'evil ones' later in the same chapter was removed. A similar change is made from 'gaoler-prisoners' (19:571, 167) in *Young Folks* to 'scoundrels' (p. 87) in the book, and 'gaolers turned prisoners'(19:571, 167) to 'very faint hearted seamen' (p. 89). The language used in *Young Folks* reinforces binaries which Stevenson later takes care to erase. Robert Kiely argued that '[t]o try to speak seriously of good or evil in *Treasure Island*, is almost as irrelevant as attempting to assign moral value in a baseball game.'<sup>39</sup> In the earlier version, however, there was more scope for morality mapping.

Further effort to avoid sociopolitical constructions and judgements is evident from changes to the narrative in chapter twenty-two, in which a large passage present in *Young Folks* is absent from the published book edition. It makes reference to a larger sociopolitical context through Livesay's microcosmical analogy: 'Seven dead out of a score of men engaged on either side makes thirty-five per hundred, and, let me tell you, there are no drilled troops in Europe that would stand a loss so heavy' (19:574, 191). By referring to European armies the narrative risks sounding like a battle between good and evil. The reader is therefore more likely to see the gentlemen as good and the pirates as 'the enemy'



in a more defined, politically loaded way, but Stevenson's revision blurs the boundaries between them.

The retractions from the published book edition of *Treasure Island* exemplify Stevenson's 'excellent gift of silence', which Arthur Conan Doyle characterises in his essay 'Mr. Stevenson's Methods in Fiction' as an exercise in self-effacement.<sup>40</sup> This allows the story to be prioritised above all moral and political agendas, the prevalence of which Doyle bemoans in writing of the period. For certain popular writers of the century, such as Dickens, the two were inextricable. Stevenson himself saw little place for didacticism in fiction, as evidenced by his essays on the subject. In 'A Gossip on Romance' he notes that '[t]here is a vast deal in life and letters both which is not immoral, but simply a-moral.'<sup>41</sup> By prioritising incident over the casting of moral judgments, Stevenson allows his reader to occupy a space that is to some extent removed from socially constructed binaries of good and evil. However, this is not to say that Stevenson did not wish to convey some kind of morality with his tale. Kiely's baseball game simile is inaccurate, implying that after the game is over life is fundamentally unchanged as the activity offers only a fleeting exhilaration. In *Treasure Island* this is not the case. After the events on the island Jim has discovered something about himself and about life. At the beginning of his tale Jim is subordinate, following the orders of the adults. In the final pages he is in a position to judge them as equals, or even inferiors. This is reinforced throughout by virtue of the narrative for Jim is the one who tells the story.

Stevenson's reduction of deontological emphasis is evident in the removal of passages which are overtly didactic. In the serialised text Livesay tells Jim, 'If you were at home, and had done it in play [...] you would never so much as have observed it; but you got it in battle, forsooth, and it's a wound in consequence' (19:574, 191). This note on relativism makes clear the importance of context in altering our perceptions. It simultaneously suggests

the (perhaps falsely) raised stakes of the adventure while drawing attention to the lack of physical damage done to Jim. That this line serves no plot purpose could account for its disappearance. But we can look to 'A Humble Remonstrance' for further explanation. Stevenson writes that

to be too clever, to start the hare of moral or intellectual interest while we are running the fox of material interest, is not to enrich but to stultify your tale. The stupid reader will only be offended, and the clever reader lose the scent.<sup>42</sup>

This passage makes apparent Stevenson's primary interest: to tell the story, above all other agendas. However, it also suggests that while Stevenson is uninterested in moralising to his readers there is something else going on beneath the surface, 'the scent' for the 'clever reader' to pick up on. This is not a case of an absence of morality, understanding morality to 'signify the realm of human meaning, values and quantities, rather than in the deontological, anaemically post-Kantian sense of duty, law, obligation and responsibility.'<sup>43</sup> It is only this latter sense of morality that Stevenson approaches with caution. Ian Duncan notes that '[Stevenson's] transparent style is the consummate technique of a narration that finds the world intransigently fragmentary and senseless [...] the correlative of the opacity of the world.'<sup>44</sup> This scepticism is overt in Stevenson's essays, and it is the canvas on which his fiction is painted.

Stevenson's aversion to didacticism appears in his writing as an approach which, as Ian Duncan observes, chooses to explore its subject matter on a horizontal plane of meaning rather than through allegorical depth like Conrad.<sup>45</sup> The evolution of the text from serial to novel form also evidences Stevenson's endeavour to imply an anti-imperialist tone while never using his characters as a mouthpiece even as he employs a genre that was overtly pro-

empire to create a story that is sceptical of imperialism and its triumphalist agendas.

Stevenson's final subversion of the adventure fiction genre is that there is no triumph in *Treasure Island*: Silver escapes and Jim is left traumatised. By the rules of adventure, Silver, the main antagonist, should die in the end. The desire for this kind of neat ending is evident in the recent adaptation of *Treasure Island* by the National Theatre, in which Silver dies crushed under the weight of the island's gold. That he does not in the original is indicative of the nuance in Stevenson's attitude towards morality. Thus Silver can break the rules of the game, in Stevenson's eyes, because the rules are no longer in play, or because the game itself is fundamentally flawed. In the end he refuses the role of loser; 'in spite of daily rebuffs, [he] seemed to regard himself once more as quite a privileged and friendly dependent' (p. 187). Silver's earlier admission that Jim has had the best of him acknowledges that if this was playing, it is certainly over now: 'I know when a game's up, I do' (p. 157). *Treasure Island*, in its subversion of the adventure fiction genre, and in the framing of its narrative as a retrospective told by a troubled protagonist, shows that the game is up indeed.

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## Contaminated salts and volatile ethers: *Jekyll and Hyde* and the Pharmacy Act

Sebastian Williams

In a letter to a friend dated February 1880, Robert Louis Stevenson described his love of popular novels by comparing them to drugs: 'I take them like opium [...] a drug'.<sup>1</sup> His novella, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, relies on the transformative effect of drugs, chemicals that remain largely unknown to the reader aside from the descriptions of their colours and reactions. Critics such as Lilian Furst, Susan Zieger, and Debbie Harrison have explored the role of such medicines in the novel, and public anxieties about addiction at the time.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, contextualising the novella in relation to the 1868 Pharmacy Act also reveals an increasing uncertainty about the professionalisation of doctors and pharmacists, including their growing control of the drug industry. Though Stevenson's narrative may be read as a moralising tale about the dangers of addiction, *Jekyll and Hyde* also communicates a developing debate about the validity of orthodox medical professionalism which arose at the *fin de siècle*. In this essay, I argue that Jekyll's self-experimentation with a transformative drug and its accidental chemical consistency demonstrate a growing ambivalence towards doctors, specifically their newly-acquired authority over drugs. While groups such as the Pharmaceutical Society attempted to distinguish between useful and harmful drugs, between qualified and unqualified professionals, Stevenson's novella reveals the inability to make such clear distinctions. In doing so, *Jekyll and Hyde* also illustrates the ulterior professional motives that may have been behind the wave of medical and pharmaceutical regulations in the nineteenth century.

The 1868 Pharmacy Act is often regarded as the first law to extensively regulate the sale of drugs in nineteenth-century



Britain.<sup>3</sup> As described by *The Lancet* in an issue from November 14, 1868, there were two principal components: to restrict the sale and dispensing of drugs to 'men who are qualified to deal in such dangerous articles' and to develop a schedule of items labelled 'poisonous'.<sup>4</sup> This act specifically outlines which drugs are dangerous and to what degree, making such distinctions by creating a two-part schedule. While drugs such as arsenic and strychnine were deemed Schedule One poisons, drugs like chloroform and opium were regarded as Schedule Two poisons. The Pharmaceutical Society was also given the right to update these schedules, adding or removing chemicals that were more or less deemed dangerous to the public. Most notably, the body of the 1868 Act is also foregrounded by a statement which claims: 'it is expedient for the Safety of the Public that Persons keeping open Shop for the retailing, dispensing, or compounding of Poisons [...] should possess a competent practical Knowledge of their Business'.<sup>5</sup> In other words, the 1868 Pharmacy Act gave authority to the Pharmaceutical Society to determine which sellers were legitimate and which drugs were deemed harmful to society on the basis that these actions were performed on behalf of public safety.

Following the legislation of this act, opium consumption at home decreased from 140,000 pounds in 1868 to 90,000 pounds by 1870.<sup>6</sup> While opium use fluctuated in the following years, there is evidence to suggest that the 1868 Act not only affected the sale, but also the public perception of Schedule Two poisons – at least initially. Referring to the impact of the law, Virginia Berridge notes that 'medical and pharmaceutical professions made a significant contribution to the altered perceptions of opium use [...] There was an increased concern about the availability of the drug, and that this should be in the hands of professional men'.<sup>7</sup> Though opium was the very last drug added to the list, a drug which had permeated Britain for several decades, public perception was greatly altered by labelling it as an unsafe

poison. However, aside from public health, ongoing professional rivalry between members of the General Medical Council and the Pharmaceutical Society<sup>8</sup> – as well as competition between fellow pharmacists, druggists, and chemists – brought to light other motives behind such regulations as general interest in public safety clashed with what seemed to be professional self-interest. While the rhetoric of the 1868 Act claimed these regulations were developed to protect the public, Berridge notes that there were also fierce professional battles over the highly lucrative industry of drug-making, distribution, and sale.<sup>9</sup>

As a physician, Henry Jekyll may initially seem little affected by many of the stipulations of the 1868 Act. However, as Berridge notes, the Pharmaceutical Society did retain some power outside of the reach of other medical professions, including the ability to self-regulate and to develop and update a schedule of poisons.<sup>10</sup> Also, despite the fact that Jekyll is a medical doctor, it is important to note that he is mostly concerned with engineering his experimental drugs, and spends little time attending to patients. Thus, in several ways, Jekyll is conflated with both doctor and drug-maker in the novella, the epitome of authority in the eyes of the Pharmaceutical Society. Early in the text, the narrator describes Jekyll's lengthy list of qualifications: 'in case of the decease of Henry Jekyll, M.D., D.C.L, LL.D., F.R.S., &c., all his possessions were to pass into the hand of his "friend and benefactor Edward Hyde"'.<sup>11</sup> Highlighting the education and qualifications of Jekyll, this passage demonstrates the professional contrasts between Jekyll and his alter-ego Mr Hyde. Jekyll's titles – Medical Doctor, Doctor of Civil Law, Doctor of Law, and Fellow of the Royal Society – place him in the highest level of medical professionals, a hierarchy rigidified by laws such as the 1858 Medical Act.<sup>12</sup> As outlined by such medical regulations, Jekyll should ideally demonstrate an extensive knowledge of medicine with the purpose of preserving public health. However, this perspective of Jekyll slowly degrades as the novella progresses, revealing the

ambivalent and often contradictory representations of medical professionalism.

Though the basis of these laws was the notion that 'men who are qualified to deal in such dangerous articles' would do so for the sake of public safety, Jekyll's self-experimentation with drugs serves to undercut that authority. These moments are perhaps best revealed in 'Henry Jekyll's Full Statement of the Case':

I knew well that I risked death; for any drug that so potently controlled and shook the very fortress of identity, might by the least scruple of an overdose or at the least inopportunity in the moment of exhibition, utterly blot out that immaterial tabernacle [...] But the temptation of a discovery so singular and profound, at last overcame my suggestions of alarm. (p. 58)

In this passage, Jekyll admits to the dangers of self-experimentation but proceeds after temptation overwhelms him. It is only through an ethical lapse, as well as a lapse in scientific objectivity, that Jekyll continues with his experiments. In addition, his motives for concocting a new drug are not necessarily for the benefit of public health, but rather to divide and distinguish between Jekyll's 'dual nature' (p. 56). Perhaps more troubling, Jekyll also suggests that he engaged in deviant actions before becoming Hyde,<sup>13</sup> and simply seeks a way to avoid scrutiny: 'Hence it came about that I concealed my pleasures' (p. 56). While the rhetoric of the 'Full Statement' at first suggests the doctor is probing deep and universal mysteries of Nature for the sake of scientific progress, it later appears that he simply seeks a mere avatar to hide his deviant desires and to preserve his status. In other words, his experiments are motivated by self-interest, as opposed to genuine concern for public health.

This notion is further evidenced by Enfield's encounter with Hyde after he tramples a small girl. While the apothecary and

Enfield fiercely react to Hyde, he remains calm as they attempt to reprimand him. Their first instinct is to threaten to tarnish Hyde's reputation, an effective countermeasure: 'If he had any friends or any credit, we undertook that he should lose them'. Hyde simply responds that, '[n]o gentleman but wishes to avoid a scene' (p. 5). Lilian Furst argues that Jekyll's concern, and ultimately Hyde's concern, with his reputation has implications in light of medico-historical research. The division between public and private in medicine arose out of the 'public apprehension of the research laboratory',<sup>14</sup> often forcing doctors to work privately to conceal themselves while at the same time wearing a public face. This double-consciousness is in many ways related to the medical regulations that distinguished between qualified and unqualified individuals. Because of the air of authority wielded by doctors, Hyde's deference is further informed by Jekyll's status as a doctor. By drawing attention to this double-life, Stevenson destabilises myths that would apply to almost all medical professionals at this time.

Debbie Harrison asserts that the undermining of Jekyll's professionalism, especially by the doctor's drug addiction, reveals a growing scepticism about the integrity of doctors at the *fin de siècle*. For Harrison, the doctor often appeared as a rational middle-class male, the epitome of the professional. However, in other instances 'the doctor was also regarded in a more sinister light [...] [t]he doctor and grotesque violence, it seemed, were conflated in the popular imagination'.<sup>15</sup> While Harrison's main focus is the medico-Gothic writing style of *Jekyll and Hyde*, she does briefly note that the troubled nature of self-experimentation and the iatrogenic addiction in the novella also call into question the integrity of the doctor.<sup>16</sup> Such drug use creates an air of tension in the novel, 'when the doctor is no longer an objective analyst but becomes implicated in the very condition he is seeking to cure'.<sup>17</sup> The tendency for excess and desire undermines the traditional role of the doctor, and Jekyll's character can be seen

slowly degenerating as the story progresses.

Interestingly, Harrison alludes to the Medical Act of 1858 and the 1868 Pharmacy Act, but later dismisses them. She argues it is clear the second half of the nineteenth century became a period 'in which major new drugs were introduced, including morphine, cocaine, and heroin', and that the Pharmacy Act grew out of this atmosphere. Strikingly, however, Harrison ends her discussion of regulations by remarking that the Pharmacy Act was not especially effective.<sup>18</sup> This dismissal is not only highly debatable,<sup>19</sup> but it also fails to take into account ongoing regulations and the issues surrounding them. *Jekyll and Hyde*, as I argue, can be read as part of the discourse surrounding drugs and regulations at the time. Despite this oversight, Harrison's essay effectively shows how *Jekyll and Hyde* communicates the growing scepticism towards the integrity of doctors, an idea that can be further supported by examining pharmaceutical systems and laws.

Jekyll's drug use certainly does cast doubt on his effectiveness as a doctor, often conflating medical research and addiction. In 'The Last Night', Poole, Jekyll's servant, becomes concerned for Jekyll's health and sanity after he begins calling out for medicine:

'Bless me, Poole, what brings you here?' he cried [...] 'is the doctor ill?'

'Mr Utterson,' said the man, 'there is something wrong [...] I think there's been foul play'. (p. 37)

Jekyll's servants become alarmed at his strange behaviour. Later, as Jekyll cries out for the drug, his addiction becomes more apparent: 'All this last week (you must know) him or it, or whatever it is that lives in that cabinet, has been crying night and day for some sort of medicine and cannot get it to his mind' (p. 40). An issue of the *Chemist and Druggist* from March 20, 1885 discusses a proposed amendment to the 1868 Pharmacy

Act, pushing for stricter regulations in lieu of the resurgence of opium addiction. Cited as the Poisons Bill of 1885, this amendment evidences a growing concern about addiction, specifically attempting to ‘prevent the sale of what may be called “medical poisons”’.<sup>20</sup> Proprietary medicines were left largely untouched by Section 16 of the 1868 Pharmacy Act and were exempt from virtually all regulation. Not only does the Poisons Bill of 1885 reveal that the drug debate was still raging during the writing and publication of *Jekyll and Hyde*, but it also implies that what many doctors and pharmacists may have been labelling as ‘medical poisons’ or ‘medicine’ were later considered dangerous compounds.

Although addiction is widely understood as a disease in modern society, Susan Zieger notes the concept largely developed following medical regulations in the mid-nineteenth century. Before this time, addiction was often attributed to moral failing, appearing as a bad habit rather than a serious physical disease. Additionally for Zieger, discourses on addiction and homosexuality were closely tied, and, because homosexuality was essentially outlawed in Britain, Jekyll’s addiction is associated with illegal activity.<sup>21</sup> Whether or not Jekyll is actually a homosexual – something that remains unknowable throughout the text – is beside the point: ‘Stevenson’s story consistently represents Jekyll’s signature ritual as a combination of moral failing, compulsion, and illness – the same overlapping conceptual rubrics applied to the new “conditions” of homosexuality and addiction at the *fin de siècle*’.<sup>22</sup> Medicalisation during the nineteenth century (i.e. the 1858 Medical Act and 1868 Pharmacy Act) places addiction alongside ‘diseases’ like homosexuality, indicating that Jekyll’s moral failings influence the reader’s perspective of his status. Although I am in no way suggesting that readers take such moralistic interpretations on homosexuality seriously, it does take on new meaning when historicised in relation to nineteenth-century medicine. Again, Jekyll’s addiction and other deviant

behaviour undermines his expertise and qualifications, blurring the boundaries of the medical authority that the Pharmaceutical Society and General Medical Council strove to validate.

Daniel Wright is one of many critics who seek to frame Jekyll's addiction in relation to the psychology of habit forming. Wright complicates an overly simplistic moral reading of the novella, asserting that the narrative also draws attention to the 'denial of addiction' and the cultural implications of drug use.<sup>23</sup> For Wright, 'to assume Jekyll represents human "good" while Hyde represents that which is "evil" is to forget that Hyde is but the consequence of Jekyll's experiments in forbidden science'.<sup>24</sup> Though Wright's primary goal is to frame the psychology of Jekyll's addiction, he points out several ways readers have often overlooked Jekyll's own failing as a (medical) professional. His self-experimentation is a 'forbidden science' – not necessarily the transcendentalism Jekyll describes.<sup>25</sup> While Wright's method of grafting theories of psychology and addiction onto Jekyll's character is in some ways troubling,<sup>26</sup> he highlights the cultural significance of the chemicals in the novel. In their book *Guinea Pig Doctors*, Jon Franklin and John Sutherland are among many medical historians who argue radical experimentation was necessary for advancement, noting '[doctors'] reasons for doing so grew out of an age in which they live and work [...] [they were] frustrated by the elaborate rules of the multilayered science and health bureaucracy'.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, critics like Wright and Harrison remind us that such radical experiments also created uncertainty about medical objectivity and integrity.

Jekyll's location in the city also raises suspicions about his moral character. Unlike Lanyon, who is located in Cavendish Square, Jekyll lives in a less-reputable area: 'a certain sinister block of building thrust forward its gable on the street [...] Tramps slouched into the recess and struck matches on the panels; children kept shop upon the steps; the schoolboy had tried his knife on the mouldings' (p. 3). Tied to an image of decay, Jekyll's own

personality is called into question by his surroundings. Andrew Smith argues that Dr Jekyll can be read as a representative of the male middle-class, a social identity that had begun to lose stability at the end of the century: 'the role of the gentleman was progressively undermined in this period [...] Jekyll, Lanyon and Utterson lead lives that had been hollowed out of all moral and social significance and consequently they are represented as alienated Gothic figures'.<sup>28</sup> While Smith suggests this reading may account for the lack of women in the narrative, it is also important to note that medical and pharmaceutical legislation still granted an unprecedented degree of power to middle-class men during this period, even as they worried about its abuse.

The distinction between the words 'medicine' and 'poison' also began to blur with an increase of regulations. In *Doctoring the Novel*, Sylvia Pamboukian notes that 'poison, in Victorian culture confronts [...] the shifting meaning of medical goods'.<sup>29</sup> Describing the implications of using various words, Pamboukian indicates the influence regulations like the 1868 Pharmacy Act had on cultural perception and language:

Calling a substance a poison alters its commercial potential, its accessibility, and its status by attaching negative connotation to it. At the same time, the developing pharmaceutical profession demanded that poisons be dispensed by licensed druggists alongside medicines, a connection that seems to complicate *poison* as a pejorative [...] As legislators endorse or restrict given uses for a particular chemical, they also profoundly affect individuals and groups, professionalizing some and criminalising others.<sup>30</sup>

The use of phrases like 'medical poisons' in lieu of simply 'medicine' in the Poisons Bill of 1885 and the frequent use of the word 'poison' in the 1868 Pharmacy Act reveal the ways legislators



attempted to alter perceptions about drugs.

The language used in *Jekyll and Hyde* may therefore underscore various aspects of the pharmacological debate. Interestingly, the word 'poison' never appears in the narrative, despite being commonly used by legislators and pharmaceutical professionals.<sup>31</sup> The interplay of various words for Jekyll's drug supports the notion that such distinctions between 'good medicine' and 'bad medicine' are in many ways arbitrary: as Derrida notes in 'Plato's Pharmacy', *pharmakon* is the word for both poison and medicine.<sup>32</sup> Derrida's writing emphasises the inherent ambiguity of language, illustrating oversimplified and irrational oppositions such as poison/remedy.<sup>33</sup> The claim for indeterminacy that lies at the heart of 'Plato's Pharmacy' might be said to be equally central to Stevenson's understanding of human identity as it is revealed through the actions of Jekyll's potion. For Pamboukian, 'poison is created, not as a self-evident entity defined by scientists, but through cultural processes in the public sphere'.<sup>34</sup> In *Jekyll and Hyde*, the doctor's perspective of the drugs reveals a similar sentiment: 'The drug had no discriminating action; it was neither diabolical nor divine; it but shook the doors of the prisonhouse of my disposition' (p. 60). The drug, according to Jekyll, is neither good nor evil, as the Pharmaceutical Society might assert; rather, it is the use of the drug that ultimately defines its character.

Christopher Toumey argues that the lack of detail about Jekyll's drug follows in the tradition of Gothic mad scientists, a trope that attempts to undermine rational science. Scientific knowledge becomes a dangerous entity when presented in this manner, and the ambiguity of creation scenes, highlighted by Jekyll's vague ingredients, shift the focus from objective knowledge to moral or emotional responses. Toumey notes that the 'pharmacology of Dr Jekyll has barely any physical details but many ambiguous references to a mysterious salt. Yet this irrational way of representing the paraphernalia of science has a very

important effect. It empties the rationalism out of the tangible evidence of science'.<sup>35</sup> In the end, Toumey asserts that the mad scientist is a wholly irrational approach to science; however, one can expand Toumey's evidence to better understand the ways *Jekyll and Hyde* challenges authoritative knowledge. Jekyll's concoction may be vague precisely because Stevenson's focus was not on the drugs themselves; notions of 'poison' and 'dangerous drugs' are mere constructions. The distinction between poison and medicine in this novella is heavily distorted, thus presenting something of a challenge to the Pharmaceutical Society's attempts to make just such distinctions.

The instability of such definitions was also recognised as a prominent issue in the mid-nineteenth century. In an address during the 1858 meeting of the British Medical Association, Pamboukian writes, many medical professionals took issue with the 'unstable nature of *Materia media* [...] complaining about the lack of medical pharmacological knowledge about popular drugs'.<sup>36</sup> Professionals like Robert Christianson continued to argue for the need for dedicated pharmacists with adequate knowledge of the drugs that were being distributed in Britain at the time. Similar to the rhetoric of the 1868 Pharmacy Act, Christianson is among many in a long line of medical professionals who believed that one could distinguish between 'qualified and unqualified' individuals. In addition to the self-experimentation in *Jekyll and Hyde*, the contaminated salt supply at the end of the novel calls into question Jekyll's supposed knowledge of *Materia medica*:

My provision of the salt, which had never been renewed since the date of the first experiment, began to run low. I sent out for a fresh supply, and mixed the draught; the ebullition followed, and the first change of colour, not the second; I drank it, and it was without efficiency. You will learn from Poole how I had London ransacked; it was in

vain; and I am now persuaded that my first supply was impure, and that it was that unknown impurity which lent efficacy to the draught. (p. 71)

In this passage, it is not Jekyll's moral character that is called into question, but rather his expertise. The reality of his drug-induced transformation is that it occurred by mere accident, despite any supposed knowledge he may have had.

Jekyll's lack of knowledge, illustrated by the contaminated salt supply and his inability to reproduce the results, further stresses the ambivalence towards medicine and pharmacy at the *fin de siècle*. As evidenced by the 1868 Pharmacy Act and the Poisons Bill of 1885, legislators relinquished control of the distribution and labelling of drugs to the Pharmaceutical Society on the basis that experts understood the nature of dangerous chemicals. Jekyll's research interests may have appeared out of date in the late nineteenth century, and were likely rooted in vitalism: 'And now, you who have so long been bound to the most narrow and material views, you who have denied the virtue of transcendental medicine [...] behold!' (p. 55). Dr Lanyon, whose authority is shown by his home located in 'Cavendish Square, that citadel of medicine',<sup>37</sup> disagrees with Jekyll's medical approaches: 'Lanyon, – you are one of my oldest friends; and although we have differed on scientific questions' (p. 49). As M. Jeanne Peterson discusses in *The Medical Profession in Mid-Victorian London*, medical education shifted drastically following the wave of regulations such as the 1858 Medical Act.<sup>38</sup> While physicians like Jekyll traditionally had a classical and theoretical education, by the 1880s education included an increased focus on anatomy (with dissection), physiology, chemistry, *Materia medica* (pharmacy), forensic medicine, clinical medicine, surgery, diseases of women, and hospital practice among other areas.<sup>39</sup> Though not necessarily lacking efficacy, the transcendental medicine Jekyll refers to associates him with a 'mad scientist' persona, with a forbidden

science that would likely be seen as outdated.

Jekyll's scientific approach is constructed as a bad science, as lacking engagement with scholarship developed during the nineteenth century. Allen MacDuffie argues that Stevenson, who was well-versed in engineering, understood Jekyll's flawed vision of energy transference, especially in relation to thermodynamics: 'the experiment in self-division is badly engineered, but it couldn't have been well engineered'.<sup>40</sup> MacDuffie's work is unique in the way it examines a specific scientific approach, engaging with the novel from the lens of thermodynamic theory as opposed to simply discussing 'Science' in general. The work of engineers like Peter Guthrie Tait was particularly influential on Stevenson's work, and MacDuffie notes that Jekyll's methods were designed to be inherently unsound.<sup>41</sup> The doctor fails to understand the reality of energy transference, especially the dispersal of heat in relation to the second law of thermodynamics, and therefore his potion becomes ineffective. Not only does MacDuffie reveal Jekyll's flawed vision and lack of understanding and therefore undermining his expertise, but thermodynamics can also be tied to chemistry. If one understands chemistry as the science of reactions, the significance of energy transfer becomes paramount: '[Jekyll] measured but a few minims of the red tincture and added one of the powders. The mixture, which was at first of a reddish hue, began, in proportion as the crystals melted, to brighten in colour, to effervesce audibly' (p. 54). Though Jekyll's concoction is a carefully mixed and balanced chemical solution, it relies on systems of total reversibility, a concept that Stevenson and many readers would recognise as inherently flawed in relation to concurrent theories on thermodynamics.

Ultimately, Stevenson's novella participates in the drug debate at the end of the nineteenth century by illustrating the arbitrary nature of discourse surrounding drugs and chemicals, as well as the difficulty in distinguishing between competent professionals and quacks. Jekyll's self-experimentation and addiction desta-

bilise several myths about the medical community, especially the myths that many pharmaceutical and medical laws were founded upon. Jekyll's moral character is called into question, and his expertise becomes increasingly unstable as the novella progresses. At the close of the narrative, Jekyll's much vaunted professional expertise is cast into doubt. He has failed to grasp the true nature of his chemical solution, including the underlying reality of energy transference, and the true recipe for his transformative drug will never be known. Thus Stevenson's story recognises the fears that led to the passing of the 1868 Pharmacy Act, while at the same time undermining that Act's confidence in professional standards and the ability of professional men to implement them.

#### NOTES

- 1 Quoted in Susan J. Wolfson and Barry V. Qualls, 'Introduction', *Robert Louis Stevenson's The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Acton: Copley, 2000), ix–xxxiv, p. xxxiv.
- 2 See Susan Zieger, *Inventing the Addict: Drugs, Race, and Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century British and American Literature* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 2008) and Lilian Furst, *Medical Progress and Social Reality: A Reader in Nineteenth-Century Medicine and Literature* (Albany: University of New York, 2000).
- 3 The full title of the bill was 'An Act to Regulate the Sale of Poisons and Alter and Amend the Pharmacy Act 1852'. The Pharmacy Act of 1852 and the 1815 Apothecary Act also affected pharmaceutical regulations, but the 1868 Pharmacy Act was the first to limit sales, and it represents a culmination of other smaller bills passed up until that point.
- 4 'The Pharmacy Act of 1868', *The Lancet* (14 November 1868), 649–50, p. 649.
- 5 'An Act to Regulate the Sale of Poisons, and alter and amend the Pharmacy Act, 1852, Also Called the 1868 Pharmacy Act', *The Statutes of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland: 1807–1869*, (London: His Majesty's Statute and Law Printers, 1868), 581–89, p. 581.

- 6 Source: Registrar General's Reports: *Violent deaths 1863-1911*.
- 7 Virginia Berridge, *Opium and the People: Opiate Use and Drug Control Policy in Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century England*, revised edition (New York: Free Association Books, 1999), p. 113.
- 8 The General Medical Council was established by the 1858 Medical Act, one of the most significant medical regulations passed in the mid-nineteenth century.
- 9 See Berridge, p. 117. There seems to have been an extended grab for power by both pharmacists and medical doctors, both of whom were attempting to eliminate the unregulated sale of medicine and health care.
- 10 Ibid, pp. 115-16.
- 11 Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, ed. by Susan J. Wolfson and Barry V. Qualls (Acton: Copley, 2000), p. 9, henceforth cited in text.
- 12 The 1858 Medical Act enforced a hierarchy of positions with a concise system of regulations and testing standards. A physician like Jekyll would be held near the top of many cultural, legal, and professional systems.
- 13 See J. Jack Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (New York: New York University Press, 2005). Halberstam's concept of 'queer time' was largely developed from discussions on *Jekyll and Hyde*, including the notion of Gothic deviance.
- 14 Furst, p. 138.
- 15 Debbie Harrison, 'Doctors, Drugs, And Addiction: Professional Integrity In Peril At The Fin De Siècle', *Gothic Studies*, 11.2 (2009), 52-62, pp. 53-54.
- 16 Ibid, p. 53. The term 'iatrogenic' refers to illness or disease, including addiction, caused by medical treatment. To a degree, I argue Jekyll's self-experimentation can be seen as iatrogenic.
- 17 Ibid, p. 54.
- 18 Ibid, p. 55.
- 19 As evidenced earlier, by 1870 opium usage had decreased by nearly a third. Here, Harrison questions the efficacy of the act by referring to the loopholes that failed to regulate proprietary drugs; however, I would argue the 1868 Pharmacy Act became the foundation for later

- drug regulations. In fact, an amendment to the act did later address the proprietary drug issue in 1891, and the Pharmaceutical Society was consistently updating and reviewing its schedules.
- 20 'A Bill Intituled [sic] An Act to Regulate the Sale of Poisons, Also Called the Poisons Bill of 1885', *Chemist and Druggist* (20 Mar. 1885), *U. S. Archive*, 175-87, p. 17).
- 21 Zieger, p. 158.
- 22 Ibid, p. 181.
- 23 Daniel L. Wright, "'The Prisonhouse of My Disposition": A Study Of The Psychology Of Addiction In Dr. Jekyll And Mr. Hyde', *Studies In The Novel*, 26.3 (1994), 254-67 (p. 255).
- 24 Ibid, p. 255.
- 25 'The direction of my scientific studies [...] led wholly towards the mystic and the transcendental' (p. 57).
- 26 To an extent, Wright casts himself as an analyst, engaging in popular psychology to 'diagnose' Jekyll. I find this approach troubling, as it seems an oversimplification and misuse of psychoanalytic approaches, especially because it elides virtually all social, historical, and personal contexts.
- 27 Jon Franklin and John Sutherland, *Guinea Pig Doctors: The Drama of Medical Research Through Self-Experimentation* (New York: William Morrow and Co, 1984), p. 19.
- 28 Andrew Smith, *Victorian Demons: Medicine, Masculinity, and the Gothic at the fin-de-siècle* (New York: Manchester University, 2004), p. 79.
- 29 Sylvia A. Pamboukian, *Doctoring the Novel: Medicine and Quackery from Shelley to Doyle* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2012), p. 99.
- 30 Ibid, p. 99.
- 31 The word 'medicine' is used four times, twice referring to drugs and twice referring to it as an institution. 'Drug' is used most often to refer to Jekyll's experiment, and it is used a total of thirteen times. 'Draught' is used six times; 'liquor,' 'ether,' 'salt,' and 'phosphorous' are also used when referring to parts of the solution.
- 32 Jacques Derrida, 'Plato's Pharmacy', in *Dissemination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 72.
- 33 Ibid, p. 97. Derrida argues that 'not only can *pharmakon* really mean *remedy* and thus erase, on a certain surface of its functioning, the

ambiguity of its meaning. But it is quite obvious here, the stated intention of Theuth being precisely to stress the worth of his product, that he turns the word on its strange and invisible pivot, presenting it from a single one, the most reassuring, of its *poles*.'

34 Pamboukian, p. 100.

35 Christopher Toumey, 'The Moral Character of Mad Scientists: A Cultural Critique of Science', *Science, Technology, and Human Values*, 17.4 (1992), 411-37 (p. 414).

36 Pamboukian, p. 105.

37 Ibid, p. 10. Cavendish Square was often regarded as the home of some of the century's most prominent medical geniuses.

38 Jeanne M. Peterson, *The Medical Profession in Mid-Victorian London* (Berkeley: University of California, 1978), p. 60.

39 Ibid, p. 62.

40 Allen MacDuffie, 'Irreversible Transformations: Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and Scottish Energy Science', *Representations*, 96.1 (2006), 1-20, p. 15.

41 Ibid, p. 3.





## Speculating on *The Wrecker*: some sources surveyed

*Neil Macara Brown*

Stevenson called *The Wrecker* a 'panorama'. His restless, global novel of money, men and manners was inspired by the mystery surrounding the *Wandering Minstrel*, wrecked on Midway atoll in 1888,<sup>1</sup> but its scope was lengthened to give sway to the 'tone of the age, its movement, the mingling of classes in the dollar hunt [and] the fiery and not quite romantic struggle for existence with its changing trades and scenery'.<sup>2</sup>

From survivors of the *Minstrel* Stevenson heard two differing accounts of the disaster from both Captain Walker and his first officer, Captain Cameron, which will be reviewed regarding their influence on the story. However, the spectral scenes set on the dazzling sands of Midway Island, where the brig, *Flying Scud*, lay 'pencilled on heaven' (p. 193), when Loudon Dodd arrived hellbent on salvaging her, will be seen to rely greatly on descriptive passages in workaday navigation guides.

To fortify the yarn, Stevenson filled-in his weave with colourful scenes from his experiences in France, California and New South Wales. How accurately he depicts aspects of the American and Australian scenes – the San Francisco picnics, and the 'Remittance Man' and railway works – will be shown through reference to contemporary journal accounts. Similarly treated, also, will be the arcane business of opium smuggling, around which much of the action in *The Wrecker* revolves.

### **Shark-fishing in Pacifica**

In April 1889, when Stevenson was at Honolulu, the survivors of a barque called the *Wandering Minstrel* were, according to Fanny Stevenson, 'dumped, penniless, on the wharf'.<sup>3</sup> Fitted out by the Shark-Fishery Company of Hong Kong, under Captain

Walker, the ship had been wrecked on Midway Island in 'unusual and mysterious' circumstances fifteen months before. The 'several thousand dollars' saved from the wreck, were, she said, demanded by Captain Johnson of the rescuing ship, *Norma*, as his price for taking off the castaways. Both Walker and his story, with their 'many discrepancies and evasions', Fanny Stevenson found 'far from convincing': surely shark-fishing could not be 'the sole object' of the cruise, for the wages promised to the crew were 'far beyond the usual rate of payment' (p. xvi).

Stevenson, who heard the story from Walker at Honolulu in June 1889, told Charles Baxter:

I am going down now to get the story of a shipwrecked family, who were fifteen months on an island with a murderer: there is a specimen.<sup>4</sup> The Pacific is a strange place, the nineteenth century only exists there in spots; all around it is a no-man's land of the ages, a stir-about of epochs and races, barbarisms and civilisations, virtues and crimes.<sup>5</sup>

The undercurrents of this tale and later South Seas stories were already troubling Stevenson, who, according to Fanny, 'tried in vain to solve the mystery' (p. xvi). It remained 'more or less in his mind', however, and soon after, while on the *Equator* cruise, with his stepson, Lloyd Osbourne, he began 'inventing the plot of *The Wrecker*' (p. xviii). Stevenson recalled that the pair had been 'amused with several stories of the sales of wrecks', on an evening aboard the schooner off the lonely Johnstone Atoll, until one of them had asked: 'What a tangle it would make if the wrong crew were aboard. But how to get the wrong crew there?' (p. 404). Then they recalled the proposition made by Johnson to Walker – which was 'almost tantamount' to the ultimatum of Captain Trent of the *Flying Scud*, to the shipwrecked crew of the *Currency Lass* in the story – and the 'scaffolding' of the tale was

‘put together’ that night (p. 404).

In July 1890, when the Stevensons were cruising on the *Janet Nicoll*, off Piru in the Gilbert Islands, one of the *Minstrel* castaways came aboard.<sup>6</sup> Captain Cameron had sailed as first officer on the return voyage of the *Minstrel* to Hong Kong, after trouble between Walker and his officers had, at Honolulu, caused the intervention of the British consul. On arrival, Cameron was to ‘report to the British authorities in detail what had occurred on the passage’, as there were official doubts about the real purpose of the voyage.<sup>7</sup> (The suspicion that opium had been unloaded off Honolulu was the explanation for the large amount of money on board.) After eight months shipwrecked on Midway, Cameron left with two others in a small boat, and, after forty-two days and over fifteen hundred miles, reached Mille in the Marshall Islands. He was later charged by Walker for not reporting that there were starving castaways still left on Midway, a charge he ‘vehemently’ denied to Stevenson, saying he had ‘at once delivered a letter’ written by Walker.<sup>8</sup> From Cameron Stevenson ‘tried to get a hint of how and why the [*Minstrel*] was wrecked, but failed’; learning only he had left an account of the wreck, along with the log kept on the boat, on the Marshalls, which they were soon to visit. Cameron gave Stevenson a ‘signed order’ for the manuscript, but Fanny Stevenson thought ‘very little, if any, of it was true’, and the manuscript itself, ‘apocryphal’.<sup>9</sup>

### **Cameron’s lament**

Captain Cameron states that, at Piru, Stevenson was ‘greatly interested’ in his story of the loss of the *Minstrel*, and also that he gave him a ‘note’ for the Crawford company manager at Jaluit, in the Marshalls, requesting access be granted to his notes on the wreck held in its safe. (These are not mentioned by Fanny Stevenson in her brief record of their stay there a week after.) Stevenson ‘already had heard’ Walker in Honolulu, and from both accounts ‘derived much material’ for *The Wrecker*, Cameron

claims. However, he knows nothing of a shipmaster demanding payment for the transport of castaways from Midway Island, yet maintains this part of the plot was 'founded on fact' – though it did 'not necessarily follow' that Stevenson had the *Minstrel* affair 'in mind' (*Odyssey*, p. 354).

Cameron had doubts about the *Minstrel* and the intentions of its master from the start. Most of the crew – a 'choice bunch of cutthroats' and 'scrapings of every port in the Orient' – were mutinous.<sup>10</sup> The stores were overabundant, being 'sufficient [...] for three *Wandering Minstrels*' (*Odyssey*, p. 242). Large pressing machines for extracting seal oil were useless, as 'only a few hair seals' were to be found in the islands; cases of Florida water 'to suppress nasty odors' rendering oil from shark livers, ridiculous (*Odyssey*, p. 243). Most disturbing was the indifferent attitude to marine safety, which Walker first displayed at the French Frigate Shoals, tarrying and picnicking, although there was no safe anchorage on the reef, and where the sharks were too small for fishing. Cameron wondered:

Else, why should he have discussed the construction of a schooner from the wreck of the *Minstrel* if she came to grief? Why did he harp on the sufficiency of the gear and tools for such a purpose? We could sail to South America, he rambled on, and sell the schooner (*Odyssey*, p. 248).

At Midway, preparations for fishing went ahead; much gear landed at Welles Harbour. However, while towing to a safer anchorage in the lagoon, Cameron was amazed when Walker suddenly dropped anchors before entering, choosing to remain in exposed waters. Soon, a storm smashed the windlass, as the riding pawls had been unshipped – and been ordered left alone – by Walker. (He had done likewise at the Frigates, assuring he had ridden out two typhoons at Hong Kong without them.) Although Walker 'commended' him for rigging 'such an effective riding

substitute', Cameron was now sure the captain realised that he had 'penetrated his scheme' – 'nothing less than to lose the vessel in such a manner that he could not be brought to book.' He was now 'convinced' Walker did not want to return to Hong Kong, his expedition a failure, with six of the nine months, allotted 'to make good his promises of fabulous wealth', having passed: 'No wonder he would have welcomed a fortunate accident', Cameron declares. After another, sudden, unexpected order led to Cameron being injured, he 'accused him pointblank of attempting to wreck the ship' (*Odyssey*, p. 271.) This is presumably why Nares states to Dodd, when they are chewing over the question of the wreck of the *Flying Scud*: 'Looks as if [Trent's] brought her here on purpose, don't it?' (p. 215)

Exposed to the north-west winter gales and dragging anchor on 'a flat and rocky bottom, covered with a heavy silt of sand', the ship was lost in a storm. Orestes-like, Walker asked Cameron "What should we do?" Faced with a 'ragged reef, foaming with heavy breakers' on his lee, the stern 'well up to the wind', Cameron's first expedient: "Set the lower topsails, slip the anchors, and run inside the lee of the boulders, where the water is smooth, and drop the spare anchor", was dismissed 'after much consideration', as "impossible of success with our crew." Walker claimed that it would be "Too desperate", because "the bark would sag upon the reef before gaining headway." Cameron's second suggestion "Slip the cables and run!" – to the sand beach, where not much damage would be caused by the rocks in the little swell, and the ship re-floated later – was also ignored. Cameron lamented:

No man of decision and courage would have hesitated. But Walker still protested. He refused to attempt everything that promised salvation: he and he alone was to blame for the ensuing catastrophe. (*Odyssey*, pp. 272–5).

The last resort was to cut away the masts, securing the spars to give a jury rig after, thus relieving the hull, which, even if driven on the reef, would hold long enough for them to take to the boats. To this Walker gave his ‘unqualified rejection’, saying: “We might weather the storm.” Even when bound to go on the rocks and break up, he preferred ‘to remain on board rather than risk landing in a boat’ (*Odyssey*, pp. 275–8). Only when well up on the reef, with a smooth sea to port offering a lee for launching the boats, did Walker prepare his family to leave, before the *Minstrel* was finally lost.<sup>11</sup>

### **Marked about Midway: fathoming the nautical guides**

‘The books were the first to engage our notice’, says Loudon Dodd, picking over the contents of the cabin of the brig, *Flying Scud*, lying on the lonely, raging reef at Midway in the Pacific (p. 214). Among popular novels, detective stories, *belles-lettres* and others, were several pilot guides:

Findlay’s five directories of the world – all broken-backed [...] and all marked and scribbled over with corrections and additions [...] and an Admiralty book of a sort of orange hue, called *Islands of the Eastern Pacific Ocean, Vol. III*. which [...] showed marks of frequent consultation in the passages about [...] the place where we then lay – Brooks or Midway (p. 214).<sup>12</sup>

The directories were referred to by Stevenson, jestingly, in a letter to his editor at Scribner’s Sons, E. L. Burlingame, when answering accusations of anachronism: ‘whoever reads them but myself, and Clark Russell, and sundry old particular and pickled skippers, who are little likely to verify the date of Hoyt’s directory or the *Admiralty Book of the Islands Vol III*’, (*Letters*, 6, p. 411.)<sup>13</sup> Indeed, Stevenson enjoyed these greatly, advising his Edinburgh lawyer friend, Charles Baxter: ‘Persons with friends

in the islands should purchase *Findlay's Pacific Directories*: they're the best of reading anyway, and may almost count as fiction', (*Letters*, 6, p. 385.)<sup>14</sup>

When Dodd approaches Midway in the *Nora Creina* to begin wrecking, he surveys the barren scene:

The two islets within began to show plainly – Middle Brooks and Lower Brooks Island, the Directory named them: two low bush-covered, rolling strips of sand, each with glittering beaches, each perhaps a mile or a mile and a half in length, running east and west and divided by a narrow channel (p. 194).

Here, Dodd is referring to Findlay, not the 'Admiralty book', which calls them the Midway Islands – Eastern and Sand Islands. Both, however, give their lengths as 1¼ and 1½ miles, respectively (*Findlay*, p. 1118 and *Pacific Islands*, p. 171).

Both directories begin with the discovery of Midway in 1859 for the U.S.A., by Captain Brooks of the *Gambia*, adding how it had been 'utilised since by the Pacific Mail Company, who intended to form a depot here for their Trans-Pacific steamers, in preference to Honolulu' (*Findlay*, p. 1117 and *Pacific Islands*, p. 76.)<sup>15</sup> They continue with the 1867 survey, conducted by Captain Reynolds, U.S.S. *Lackawanna*, for the Bureau of Navigation.<sup>16</sup> Findlay, however, also prints the account of the expedition surgeon-naturalist, S. D. Kennedy (*Findlay*, pp. 1120–22). Reynolds is concerned mainly with landmarks and navigation, but observes on two occasions that Sand Island has a beach of coral sand of 'dazzling whiteness', and the glare from that of Eastern Island, is 'very trying to the eyes' (*Pacific Islands*, p. 171). Stevenson borrows from both Reynolds and Kennedy in *Findlay*, but of the *Pacific Islands* book, specifically, Nares mentions: 'The Admiralty man gives a fine picture of our island [...] He draws the dreariness rather mild, but you can make out he knows the



place.’ (p. 214)

While entering the passage to the lagoon on the *Nora*, under Captain Nares, Dodd remarks ‘the breakers were already close aboard, the leadsman at his station, and the captain posted in the fore cross-trees to con us through the coral lumps of the lagoon’ (p. 195). These features, and the measures to avoid them, are noted by Reynolds: ‘There are many coral lumps in it, with from 1 or 2 fathoms water over them; otherwise the soundings are regular, over a wide sandy bottom’ (*Findlay*, p. 1119). Then, on entering the lagoon itself the *Nora*, as Stevenson has it, ‘shot at racing speed betwixt two pier heads of broken water’ (p. 195). These ‘pier-heads’, their hanging nature wonderfully drawn by Stevenson, are marked prosaically as ‘breakers’ on the modern chart.<sup>17</sup> When slowly making further way into the passage: ‘the lead began to be cast, the captain to bawl down his anxious directions, the schooner to tack and dodge among the scattered dangers of the lagoon’ (p. 195). Eventually, however, the *Nora* finds safer passage, and ‘anchor[s] off the north-eastern end of Middle Brooks in five fathoms water’ (p. 195).

Reynolds in his account concurs: ‘Inside the bar, the depth for anchoring is from 5 to 7 fathoms, white sand’ (*Pacific Islands*, p. 172). This depth of water, though – according to the modern chart – lies only north-east of Lower Brooks (Sand) Island, not Middle Brooks (Eastern) Island, where it is often less than one fathom deep, so perhaps some literary licence must be granted to Stevenson in this respect.

Later, ‘idle curiosity’ takes Dodd and Nares ashore to Middle Brooks (Eastern) Island. Unable to penetrate its thick vegetation, they ‘saunter’ round the beach: ‘A flat beach surrounded [the island] on all sides; and the midst was occupied by a thicket of bushes, the highest of them scarcely five feet high, in which sea-fowl lived’ (p. 202). This compares with Kennedy’s description of ‘South’ Island, as he calls it: ‘The vegetation of the island consists entirely of shrubs, herbs and coarse grasses; none of the shrubs

are over 3 to 5 ft. high' (*Findlay*, p. 1121). In contrast, Reynolds describes Lower Brooks as a 'sand heap', where 'vegetation is just commencing [...] in the shape of detached clumps of shrubs around portions of its edge' (*Findlay*, p. 1121).

The cacophonous 'sea-fowl' which Dodd finds 'innumerable as maggots', in first approaching Midway, are the most striking and unchanging, if seasonal, feature of the atoll (p. 194). Reynolds lists: 'Tropic birds, men-of-war hawks, and gulls swarm upon these islands. A few curlew and plover are the only land birds met with' (*Findlay*, p. 1120). The naturalist, Kennedy, however, amplifies:

Immense numbers of sea-birds are constantly hovering over and alighting upon these islands. The bushes and surface of the ground are thickly covered with their nests; while the young birds, unable to fly, are so numerous as to make it difficult to walk any distance without trampling upon them (*Findlay*, p. 1121).

Hence the despair of Dodd and Nares at trying 'to strike' through the thicket, where:

it were easier to cross Trafalgar Square upon a day of demonstration than to invade these haunts of sleeping sea-birds; the nests sank, and the eggs burst under footing; wings beat in our faces, beaks menaced our eyes, our minds were confounded with the screeching, and the coil spread over the island and mounted into the air (p. 202).

The beach they saunter along, instead, is 'strewn with bits of wreck and drift: some redwood and spruce logs, no less than two lower masts of junks, and the stern-post of a European ship' (p. 203). This description, give or take a timber, owes its source to Reynolds:

On the N.E. beach of Middle Brooks Island a broken lower mast of a ship was lying [...] On the East beach and on the bluff occasional drift timber is to be met with, and some lumber, mostly spruce and redwood. [...] On the lagoon side of the other island two lower masts of junks were stranded (*Findlay*, p. 1120).

The mention of 'the stern-post of a European ship' is interesting, as both Cameron and Walker recall 'part of the stern' of the *Wandering Minstrel* being washed ashore, although at different stages of shipwreck – the following morning and two months, respectively – and each bringing different bounties from the sea (*Odyssey*, p. 284 and *Walker*, p. 56).

Earlier in the novel, Captain Trent of the *Flying Scud* was reported in the (imaginary) *Daily Occidental* as finding 'a literal sandbank, surrounded by a coral reef, mostly submerged. Birds were very plenty, there was good fish in the lagoon, but no firewood; and the water [...] obtained by digging, brackish (p. 128). His findings tally with the accounts in *Findlay*, where Kennedy specifically notes:

The lagoon is full of fish, seals, and turtle. The [...] common hair seal [...] is not of much commercial importance. The fish belong principally to the mullet, perch, and mackerel families [...]

The water of some of the wells now dug might be used in an emergency, and doubtless by sinking properly constructed wells to a sufficient depth, perfectly potable water may be found (*Findlay*, p. 1122).

That the fresh water on Midway available to the *Flying Scud* went 'quite bad', is not borne out by Kennedy (p. 128): 'water, taken from wells dug to depths of from four to seven feet [...] becomes better adapted to drinking after standing some time' (*Findlay*, p.

1121). The *Occidental* article also tells how, in anchoring, Trent 'found good holding-ground off the north end of the larger bank [Sand / Lower Brooks Island] in fifteen fathoms water; bottom sandy, with coral patches' (p. 128). This passage likely derives, in part, from Reynolds: 'This entrance [to Welles Harbor] is about three-quarters of a mile wide, and from its northern edge to the N.W. rocks there is a bed of coral from 1 to 16 fathoms, showing above water in one place, with occasional breakers' (*Pacific Islands*, p. 171).

There is one other sailing directory upon which part of Stevenson's tale depends: Hoyt's *North Pacific Directory*, which the *Occidental* reports as having 'misled' Trent into putting in at Midway, by informing him that there was a coaling station on the island (p. 128). Fetching 'Hoyt's Pacific Directory' from his berth on the *Nora*, Nares declares: 'I got that book on purpose for this cruise.' He turns to Midway Island, and reads aloud the account, which 'stated with precision that the Pacific Mail Company were about to form a depot there [...] and that they already had a station on the island' (p. 215). However, 'Hoyt' is not a nautical guide: it is the *Pacific Coast Insurance Directory*, published by F. T. Hoyt at San Francisco in the latter decades of the 19th century.<sup>18</sup> Was Stevenson mistaken over the actual content of 'Hoyt' here? Or did he, surprisingly, confuse this periodical with the official *Pacific Coast Pilot*.<sup>19</sup> Perhaps, in having to introduce another directory for plot purposes, Stevenson used the half-remembered *Pacific Directory*. 'Whoever reads them, anyway?' he would probably say.

### Picnics and pioneers

Comedy in *The Wrecker* comes in 'Pinkerton's Hebdomadary Picnics' – 'soon shortened, by popular consent to the Dromedary' – the weekly steamer excursions in San Francisco Bay, seen as providing easy money for little outlay by Dodd and Pinkerton (p. 106).<sup>20</sup> In making light of them, Dodd, tongue-in-cheek, claims:

‘our picnics, if a trifle vulgar, were as gay and innocent as the age of gold’ (p. 106). On the contrary, many citizens found picnics more ‘Hoodlum’ than Hebdomadary; they long provoked civic opposition in the Bay Area for attracting, and then not controlling the wrong sort of picnickers – those who liked more than one glass, or relished a fight.

In his early Sunday morning pre-picnic routine, Dodd stands among ‘the admiring public on the wharf’, waiting to hear the ‘strains’ of the ‘Pioneer Band’ play the picnickers aboard the steamer:

[T]hey were German and punctual – and by a few minutes after the half-hour, I would hear them booming down street with a long military roll of drums, some score of gratuitous asses prancing at the head in bear-skin hats and buckskin aprons, and conspicuous with resplendent axes (pp. 102–3).

How very well Stevenson recalled such shenanigans, is revealed in ‘The Early Picnic’, a contemporary report from the *Daily Alta California*:

This annoying legacy from the Rhine land, this obnoxious competitor of the unholy nuisance of Salvation Army drums and heathenish sound torturing [...] brayed forth in unmolested exaltation more or less attuned by beer; this pioneer of hoodlum orgies and devastator of suburban resorts, in all the cheap finery of brass and plumes, bore eloquent testimony that the picnic season of 1884 is like its predecessors to bear witness to the fact that San Francisco is not yet civilized, and its governing power is not yet alive to metropolitan dignity.<sup>21</sup>

Little wonder that small communities came to dread such pic-

nics as hundreds, with clannish or national allegiances, arrived on steamships or railroad cars. In those promoted by Dodd: 'the public began to descend [...] by the carful at a time; four to six hundred perhaps, with a strong German flavour, and all as merry as children' (p. 103). Later, Dodd is disingenuous regarding picnic destinations, saying: 'the scene of our picnic is always supposed to be uncertain' (p. 103). However 'those particularly pleasant place[s] on the Saucelito or San Rafael coast', he mentions, were regularly overrun by picnics (p. 103). When Dodd is recognised as a weekend picnic leader, Judge Morgan tells him: 'I have the misfortune to own a little box on the Saucelito coast' (p. 142).<sup>22</sup>

A burning issue locally from 1870–90, picnics were already hot social topics by the spring of 1871:

The annual picnic season has commenced, and [...] the annual accompaniment of 'Hoodlum' annoyance to excursionists – this year more flagrant than ever before. These ruffians well know that when on board a boat on the Bay, out of the jurisdiction of the County of San Francisco, the officers accompanying the excursion have no more power to act in quelling a disturbance which they (the 'Hoodlums') may create than any other citizens. It was the knowledge of this fact which emboldened the cowardly bubbles on the surface of the scum of society to perpetrate the outrages they did on the excursion of the Shields Guard on Sunday week [...] Let each picnic party in future, before it proceeds on its excursion, employ the requisite number of officers to cope with disorderly characters, and have these officers deputized by the Sheriff of the county in which the picnic is to be held. There can then be no question of jurisdiction, and the 'Hoodlums' can be nipped in a budding row on the bay, put in irons, placed in the 'cole-hole', and squelched as effectually as though they

were within a hundred yards of the police centre of the city  
(*Daily Alta*, 19.4.1871).

Lack of supervision was obviously the sticking point. Stevenson portrays 'H. Loudon Dodd' in the roles of 'manager and honorary steward'.<sup>23</sup> He is all things to all picnickers throughout the day, as master-of-ceremonies, comedian, conductor, singer; always keeping up a 'giddy badinage':

[S]ee me circulate among the crowd, radiating affability and laughter, liberal with my sweetmeats and cigars. I say unblushing things to hobbledehoy girls, tell shy young persons this is the married people's boat, roguishly ask the abstracted if they are thinking of their sweethearts, offer Paterfamilias a cigar, am struck with the beauty and grow curious about the age of mamma's youngest who (I assure her gaily) will be a man before his mother (p. 103).

Picnic hoodlums changed their tactics, though, in 1871, according to 'The Hoodlums Again':

They do not engage on raids now so much on the picnic parties as on the unoffending people who occupy the locality [...] Farm houses are subjected to bombardment and country saloons delivered over to pillage. [...] societies and organizations which make suburban excursions, owe it to themselves to prevent the rowdy element from attaching itself to them (*Daily Alta*, 27.3.1871).

For 'suppressing this evil', the 'Black Snake' was claimed to be 'entirely efficacious' (*Daily Alta*, 27. 3.71). However, five years later – and by now a red hot chestnut – 'More Use for the Whipping Post', says:

As water is to the thirsty soul, so is the picnic season to the hoodlums. [...] Emerging from their Winter dormancy, their aspirations after nature take them to the gregarious gardens of youth, where policemen do not enter and Sheriffs are scarce. Here our hoodlum is himself again. He 'spars' his whiskey and other necessities if he can, confiscates them if he dare, and pays for them if he must. Chivalry enters largely into the school of his design, and takes form in reprising another hoodlum's 'calico', after the deserted wretch has been to the trouble and expense of producing the damsel on the ground. This is a favorite pastime, but somewhat feudal in its features and essential character, and in the exciting game of numerous contentions and rencontres. In this enterprise the hoodlum finds field for the display of intrigue and diplomacy, and achieves his sublimest triumphs; if we except that master exploit indigenous in the hoodlum nature – capturing a huckster's effects and whipping the owner (*Daily Alta*, 27.3.1876).

Three days later, the 'pioneer hoodlum picnic sentence' – no less – was given by Judge Louderback to Archy Gaynor, 'convicted of several misdemeanors growing out of his return trip from Fasking's Gardens [Alameda] last Sunday' (*Daily Alta*, 30.3.1876). Respite for citizens came, however, in spring 1877:

Thus far this season the hoodlum element has been less conspicuous on these occasions than last year, when the roughs, to a great extent, took forcible charge of many of the Sunday excursions. No notable instance of that kind has yet been reported (*Daily Alta*, 16.4.1877).

Again, in April 1878, four picnics, held on the previous day, were noted as passing off without trouble – German Fusilier



Guards at Damon's Grove, San Francisco cadets at Badger's Park, Workingmen at Shell Mound, and Independent Rifles at Scheutzen Park, Alameda, where:

the absence of the 'hoodlum' element, who usually patronise Sunday picnics, was noticeable, and no person of questionable appearance was admitted to the grounds. Captain Cautus and his officers deserve great credit for their management of the picnic (*Daily Alta*, 1.4.1878).

A popular pastime at this and other picnics was a shooting competition; failing, 'considerable raffling was done for prizes' (*Daily Alta*, 1.4.1878). A different shooting, however, happened in 'Picnic and Pistol':

At the Printers' picnic yesterday, at Belmont, a hoodlum row occurred which will probably result fatally to Jeremiah Stanton. Early in the day a difficulty took place between different members of the Eighth-street and the Mission gangs of hoodlums, which Dave Condon and Stanton, as the champions of the crowds, undertook to settle. They met on the dance platform, and were about to commence hostilities, but they were ejected by the floor managers. Off the platform the leaders faced each other, and Stanton advanced upon Condon, who backed away and told the former to keep off; but on being followed a few steps further, he drew a pistol and fired a shot at Stanton. The managers of the picnic disclaim any relations with the parties of the affray (*Daily Alta*, 19.4.1880).

In this context, Dodd's choice of *Just before the Battle*, ('mother, I am thinking most of you, / While upon the field we're watching / With the enemy in view.'), sung at one 'memorably dull' picnic may not be entirely co-incidental, given the reputation of

these events (p. 107). Inevitably, with all this desecration of the Sabbath, the church eventually had to have its say:

[I]n San Francisco Sabbath-breaking is most gross and flagrant in the Sunday picnic just now in full blast. It is claimed by those, who uphold these cheap excursions that they provide a necessary and beneficial outing to thousands of those who toil while other and wealthier classes rest, and that, in fact, they are a good to the city, in that those who attend them are given an opportunity for harmless rural relaxation. But the testimony of residents in suburban towns is all against the Sunday picnic. Observation shows that two-thirds of these cheap excursionists are hoodlums of the worst sort. Their example to and effect upon the youth of the towns they visit are alone sufficient to condemn them without argument (*Sacramento Daily Union*, 8.5.1889).

Such 'harmless rural relaxation' was never to be the same after the earthquake and the fire of 1906; in 'With the Picnic Throngs of Other Days' the *San Francisco Chronicle* on 9 July 1916, reminisces:

A Sausalito picnic was justly famous for its hilarious adventures afloat and ashore. A gallant craft, the *Princess*, made the run from Meiggs wharf, and the company owning her was a regular Santa Claus to its patrons. Her master was a big-hearted son of Neptune, who sprung himself in every joint to give his patrons a good time. Often in going over he took them outside the Heads and around Seal Rocks and a mile or so in the north of Lime Point, steaming sideways all the time. [...] On the return trip, which was by starlight, the genial master mariner jarred up against Arch Rock to see if any castaways were cling-

ing to it, and later in a sportive way nosed into Alcatraz and blew a whistle just to wake up Uncle Sam's sleeping sentinels, so he facetiously put it.

No wonder Loudon Dodd groans 'Singular how a man runs from Scylla to Charybdis!' when presented with the *fait accompli* of Jim Pinkerton's sketch picnic advertisement declaring, amongst other elasticities, '*Home again in the Bright Evening Hours*' (p. 102).

### **Larrikins and landslides**

'The Remittance Man', the chapter set in Australia, takes its title from the term used to describe a young blood deported from England by an aristocratic family, embarrassed socially by the erring scion of their noble house. In the tale, the artistically-bent spendthrift, Norris Carthew, having been sent down from Oxford, and unsuccessfully planted in the diplomatic service, had squandered his capital gambling, and was to be paid a quarterly allowance by a lawyer in Sydney: 'Eighteen days after he landed his quarter's allowance was all gone; and he [...] began to besiege offices and apply for all manner of incongruous situations' (p. 321). Advanced a shilling or so each morning, he spent each day and night in the large public park known as the Domain where, with hundreds of others he sheltered:

now on a bench, now on the grass under a Norfolk pine, the companion of perhaps the lowest class on earth, the Larrikins of Sydney. [...] His bed fellows [...] lay sprawled upon the grass and benches, the dingy men, the frowsy women, prolonging their late repose (p. 322).<sup>24</sup>

Already indifferent to his fate and embracing the 'formula' that 'Nothing really mattered', before coming to Australia, Carthew soon 'didn't care a hang' about the horrors he saw during the

day – and heard nightly – from ‘the loitering women [and] the lurking men’ (p. 323). From this ‘dyngerous lot’ he was saved by an unemployed shop assistant, Hemstead, who asked him pointedly: “‘I suppose you’ve no tryde?’” and then “‘Well, what do you think of the ryleways, then?’” (p. 324)

Having no trade, and having to knuckle-down to manual work, was the greatest stumbling-block to men-of-class making a future in the Antipodes. According to Edward Ellis Morris, Professor of English at Melbourne University:

Australia [...] is a good place for bringing people to their true levels by the speedy application of the doctrine of natural selection. If any man have a theory to be born a gentleman is enough, and that men remain in the state of life to which they were born, a short residence in Australia will soon make havoc of his theory. There is not the least chance for caste there; rises and falls are much more rapid and much more complete than in the mother country. In England the shiftless, helpless man, born in to the position of a gentleman may be prevented from sinking [...] by the pride if not by the kindness of his friends. (‘On Sending Out to Australia’, *Longman’s Magazine*, V, 2, June, 1883, p. 177.)

Moreover, the writer stresses, if Australia is to be successfully settled and developed:

[I]t is important that the right people should come. [...] Almost any able-bodied man or woman who has a distinct business or calling. [...] the undoubtedly wrong person is the man who says he can do anything [...] and who is fitted only to be a clerk. In every town [...] there are scores of these – bank clerks, or [...] would be bank clerks, who like town life and prefer a black coat (Ibid., p. 178).

The other 'Remittance Man' in the novel is Tom Hadden, a partner in the *Currency Lass*: '(known to the bulk of Sydney folk as Tommy) was heir to a considerable property, which a prophetic father had placed in the hands of rigorous trustees. The income supported Mr. Hadden in splendour for about three months out of twelve; the rest of the year he passed in retreat among the islands' (p. 329). The original for this character was Jack Buckland (1864–97), a fellow voyager of Stevenson's on *Equator*.

Stevenson undoubtedly saw for himself how the ground lay locally for the 'Remittance Man'. Such a waste of potential is evident in 'Young Englishmen in Australia. A Dismal Picture', which deplores 'the utterly reckless way in which young men are drafted off from England:

Not a steamer reaches [...] without bringing scores of these unfortunates [...] The situations they occupy [...] are potato-peelers at inferior hotels, washers-up at six-penny restaurants, billiard-markers, and similar menial and degrading positions. Let anyone take a turn along the Yarra and the wharves in Melbourne, or through the Domain in Sydney, and he will find new chums by the score. In all the cities, and in the bush towns [...] they are the outcasts of our civilisation, without money and without a trade. [...] in either Melbourne or Sydney I could get 1,000 young men at forty-eight hours notice to work for me at 10s. a week and food. (Anon., as printed in *Western Daily Press*, 6 Jan 1891.)

Being a billiard-marker had been the fate of Hemstead, whom Carthew, after working as a navy, encountered again in the Domain. Hempstead, now resigned to reading the *Dead Bird* sporting weekly, blamed his fall on 'the depression in tryde': "I tried bein' a billiard marker. It's no account; these late hours are

no use for a man's health. I won't be no man's slave'" (p. 328). Billiard-markers and 'remittance men' were identical in the Antipodean eye. Their immediate failure in a competitive labour market is described in 'A Downward Career':

[T]hey bring out with them, say 100 pounds, and then the riot that has caused their migration quickly shows itself, and [...] why they were fired out. They put up at the best hotel, bring letters of introduction [...], wear patent leathers and an eyeglass, and go through their small hoard in magnificent style. [...] they descend to 'apartments', thence to the cheap boarding-house, and so on down to the Domain [...] where they may be found in every stage of squalor, dirt, and wretchedness [...] vermin and rheumatics (*Western Daily Press*, 6.1.1891).

A suggestion to the British government that 'out-of-works' should, as late as 1896, be transported by the Navy, prompted 'Wanted, a Livelihood':

'The Remittance Man' is a curious study in the haunts of his kind in Sydney and Melbourne. [...] On the days when he receives his money, through the Post Office, or through a friend of the family, who is trusted, he fetes his companions like a prince. Perhaps some old scores are paid off, but the greater proportion of the money is liquidated in gross pleasures, and seldom is any start made towards a regenerative life. [...] the 'Remittance Man' is an incurable species of homebred ass. He is too vain to stoop to work in the first instance, and probably been taught little but vice before emigrating. He still harbours ridiculous notions of gentle birth and dignity of station and family, and although he gets laughed at in general, he seeks out the society which is congenial to his nerves and childishness,

and remains intoxicated with his own importance and the ignominy of work. ('Tatler': *Leeds Times*, 7 March 1896.)

In the same, a plea that a young country, which had stopped criminal transportation to its shores, should be spared the continuing evil of the similar curse of 'the remittance man', concludes:

It may be taken for granted that the Australians will scowl on emigration from this country of the broken-down type. They do not welcome even good, sober, and capable mechanics, because there is no work apparent for them. [...] The mere gentleman without money in his purse is a positive curse. His manners and evil are corrupting, and he rarely develops into utility. The Australians are now anxious to fill up Australia as they want it and not as England does, and who can blame them? We ought to keep our cripples at home, and leave them to the Salvation Army (*ibid.*, 7.3.1896).

Carthew found his salvation as a navvy, working on engineering works on the terraces of the railway line, rounding the steep headland at South Clifton; urgent operations required by landslips caused during heavy rains. This episode was based on actual events, occurring shortly after Stevenson arrived in Sydney on 15th February 1890. Lured by his own engineering background, he may even have visited the works, where Carthew: 'after a tedious journey, and a change of trains to pass a landslip, [...] found himself in a muddy cutting behind South Clifton, attacking his first shift of manual labour' (p. 325). Similarly, Stevenson, if indeed he visited, as he seems to suggest in his 'Epilogue', would have changed trains at North Clifton. However, his 'I saw Carthew's squad toil in the rainy cutting' is ambiguous; equally so, his 'or heard from the engineer of his "young swell"' (p. 405).

Were these insights or inner voices? Did Stevenson happen to meet this engineer at a club or hotel in Sydney? These scenes were likely at least partly imagined after reading news reports – given the extreme weather and his poor health in Sydney. Indeed, Carthew remarks: ‘For weeks the rains scarce relented’ (p. 325).

The week after Stevenson arrived, a report covering the Clifton district says:

Rain continued almost incessantly all day, and at times fell heavier than previously during the present downpour. [...]

The railway line is [...] much affected, there being small slips at Stanwell, South Clifton, Austinmer, and Bulli [...] Mr. Walter Shellshear, district engineer, inspected the line to-day. [...] Every effort is being made to maintain the traffic uninterrupted. A strong easterly wind rose this evening, causing a nasty sea. There is no appearance of the rain abating (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 22.3.1890).

The engineering works involved a massive drainage system in shale deposits to collect surface water and discharge it again where solid strata was found; five brick tunnels, with access shafts for maintenance, had to be built between North and South Clifton. Carthew describes the scene:

The whole front of the mountain slipped seaward from above, avalanches of clay, rock, and uprooted forest spewed over the cliffs and fell upon the beach in the breakers. Houses were carried bodily away and smashed like nuts; others were menaced and deserted, the door locked, the chimney cold, the dwellers fled elsewhere for safety (p. 325).

An official report details matters somewhat less racily:



The country is formed of boulders, earth, and debris that at some period has come down from the mountain range adjacent, and therefore has no solidity. Above the cliff south of Clifton it is reported the strip of land above the sea and at the base of the mountains has, during the recent rains, slipped perceptibly towards the ocean. At Clifton some time back the residents were alarmed by a slip, which lowered the elevation of some houses by launching them, with the land on which they stood, nearer the sea. ('New Drainage System', *Illawarra Mercury*, 11 March 1890.)

A week later, the 'sensational reports in some of the metropolitan papers', to this effect, are denied: '[In their] thorough inspection of the country nothing was detected indicating tendencies to an avalanche, or that the country showed "signs of movement seaward"' (*Illawarra Mercury*, 18.3.90). – It seems that Stevenson either consciously exaggerated for literary effect, or he was otherwise misled. According to the novel the dramatic incident in which the train gingerly negotiates the track alongside the work squad, while being rocked by an earth movement – which Carthew declares he 'will remember till he dies' – took place at 'the dangerous cornice near North Clifton' (p. 326):

Along the terraced line of rail, rare trains came creeping and signalling; and paused at the threatened corner, like living things conscious of peril. [...]

The engineer was there himself; he paled as he made the signal: the engine came at a foot's pace; but the whole bulk of the mountain shook and seemed to nod seaward, and the watching navvies instinctively clutched at shrubs and trees [...] the train passed unscathed (p. 325-6).

Nevertheless, this scene does in part, resemble an actual report of the derailment of a passenger engine tender at the same spot:

The place where the accident occurred is about 200 yards south of the North Clifton station. [...] Mr. Shellshear, district engineer, was on the engine at the time of the derailment, directing the speed. The engine at the time was proceeding at an extremely low rate of speed, and the condition of the way, and the fact that a carriage afterwards left the rails, illustrated that no precaution within the power of exercise by those in charge of the train could have averted the accident. There being a number of men comprising a flying gang, employed in the emergency work of reforming the earth brought in from the slips, present upon the scene of the accident, they were immediately set to work with the engine's lifting-gear to replace the derailed tender, and nearly two hours had elapsed ere that task was complete. The train was started, and after the leading carriages had passed safely over the difficult point at which the tender ran off the forward wheels of a saloon carriage left the rails, and the train was again brought to a standstill (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 15.3.90).<sup>25</sup>

### **Drugs on the Marquesas**

The possibility of finding smuggled opium in the wreck of the *Flying Scud*, excited Dodd and Pinkerton, leading them to bid so rashly at its sale in San Francisco. Opium, though, is first mentioned in the 'Prologue – In the Marquesas'. There (years after the main action), by now 'Millionaire' Dodd, cruising in his own bespoke vessel, meets various members of the local club, among them 'the opium farmer' (p. 9). Opium first fetched up in the Marquesas with the Chinese, but it was the 'French Government, for 40,000 francs, [which] licensed an opium farmer'.<sup>26</sup> In a matter-of-fact manner, another clubman remarks: "There's a good

deal in opium” (p. 10). This is a droll response, indeed, given the great differences in prices paid to smugglers in the islands compared to that on the west coast of America.

Dependency on opium was a major factor in a drastic population decline in the Marquesas and other islands:

In the Marquesas, where the use of the drug is considerable among the natives, and especially the women, they are rapidly diminishing in numbers, and it is feared the result will be the same in Tahiti. [...] The sole right to sell opium is put up for sale by auction every two years. The farmer is allowed to sell only 1,100 lbs. per annum, and that to Chinese alone. The cost of opium in San Francisco is about 16s. per lb.: in Tahiti it is sold for over 5 pounds.<sup>27</sup>

When Dodd finds only a small amount of opium on the wreck after tearing it apart, he declares: ‘By the last San Francisco quotation, opium was selling for a fraction over twenty dollars a pound; but it had been known not long before to bring in as much as forty in Honolulu, where it was contraband’ (p. 227). Moreover, Pinkerton tells Dodd: ‘I had hoped you might have peddled that opium through the islands, which is safer and more profitable’ (p. 147). Dodd, though, when embarking on his fool’s errand after the wreck, reflects: ‘to smuggle opium is an offence particularly dark, since it stands related not so much to murder, as to massacre’ (p. 164).

Attitudes in San Francisco towards opium importation were mixed, if not downright confused in 1888, when Stevenson passed through the city. In December 1887, the United States District court judge had decided the 1880 treaty forbidding the Chinese to import opium was ‘not self-executory, and that Congress not having adopted the necessary legislation, there [was] nothing to prevent the business being carried on’.<sup>28</sup> Legal imports of the drug to the city were also steadily increasing:

[A] big shipment of opium [...] has just landed [...] from Hong Kong – two hundred cases weighing 8,200lbs. The duty [...] on this drug is \$10 per lb. [...] this landing must have netted Uncle Sam the snug sum of \$82,000 dollars [...] importation of opium into this country shows a steady and large increase. In 1885 2,344 cases were consumed [...], in 1886, 2,857, and in 1887, 3,362 cases.<sup>29</sup>

To check the ‘vicious habit’ of opium smoking among the Chinese immigrants, it is noted that Uncle Sam imposes a heavy tax, ‘but not at his own expense’:

Smuggling of opium is therefore rife, and from present disclosures the heathen Chinese is not the only offender against the Customs. Revelations show that a number of millionaires are turning a dishonest dollar by engaging in the debasing opium traffic and tricking the authorities. There is the usual sensation, which will blow over with the usual indifference to exposures of ‘smartness’.<sup>30</sup>

For ‘millionaires’ read ‘Dodds’? Several British newspapers bluntly spelled the situation out: ‘The opium gang is more powerful than ever in San Francisco. They have schooners of their own, which run in and out of San Francisco under the guise of seal-hunting schooners.’<sup>31</sup>

Shark-fishing was another cover adopted, but any boat touching China was suspect: the record-breaking barque, *C. D. Bryant*, was confiscated at Honolulu when sixty tons of opium were discovered hidden in the lazarette. Captain Lee ‘was not inclined to say much’ about the seizure:

He said it was a most unjust law, made in the interest of the Chinaman who has the monopoly of the opium trade there. [...] takes the ground that it is an outrageous law

which confiscates a vessel because opium is found on board. 'I know nothing about it [...] A man can go on my vessel and smuggle opium and then the bark is to be confiscated. [...] Does the United States Government seize the big China steamers when \$20,000 worth of opium is found on board? [...] I do not think Uncle Sam will allow such a law as that at Honolulu to run much longer.' (*Daily Alta*, 29.4.1889)

The lazarette, a store between decks – 'crowded' with teas and silks on the *Scud* – often held contraband (p. 221). However, there were far more ingenious hiding-places, especially on steamers:

The spare boilers are frequently used, and in such vessels as the *City of Peking* and the now wrecked *Tokio* the hollow iron stringers of the ship were for a long time made the receptacles of contraband opium. [...] The hollow iron masts of the steamships were early utilized by the smugglers in the same way. A small hole was cut in the mast and the opium lowered by means of a string clear down to the keel of the vessel. The hole in the mast was then so carefully repaired that it would escape any but the most painstaking and almost microscopical observation. In 1882 or 1883 a large amount of opium was seized concealed in the masts of steamships (*Daily Alta*, 24.5.1887).

When, during the auction of the wreck, Dodd twigs that opium must be on board, he says: 'I knew that scarce a ship came in from any Chinese port, but that she carried somewhere, behind a bulkhead, or in some cunning hollow of the beams, a nest of the valuable poison' (p. 137). Bulkhead concealment is illustrated by a large seizure on the steamship *Oceanic*, about 1885:

In the bow a piece of iron had been cut out and a quantity of opium stowed away in a space ten or twelve inches wide between the bulkhead and the water tank. The piece of iron was then replaced and fastened by false bolts, which could be quickly removed (*Daily Alta*, 24.5.1887).

Ripping the wreck of the *Flying Scud* apart for contraband, with Captain Nares, Dodd says:

The hold was ceiled throughout; a part [...] had been lined [...] with inch boards; and between every beam there was a movable panel into the bilge. Any of these, the bulkheads of the cabins, the very timbers of the hull itself, might be the place of hiding. It was therefore necessary to demolish [...] a great part of the ship's inner skin and fittings, and to auscultate what remained (p. 221).

As we know, opium was finally found in the 'mats' (boluses) of rice, making up the bulk of the hold in the *Flying Scud*. ('Opium is often found done up in mats of rice or masquerading as extra stores' – *Daily Alta*, 24.5.87). Then, Dodd says that Nares 'drew forth, and slung at his feet, a papered tin box' (p. 226). ('Sometimes the opium was put into watertight cans, covered with oilcloth' – *Daily Alta*, 24.5.87). 'These are five-tael boxes, more than two pounds,' Nares says, referring to the Chinese weight measure equal to approximately to 30 grams, and indeed from several instances reported by the San Francisco press the 'five-tael box' appears to have been the standard packaged size for smuggling prepared opium.

### Landfall

In *The Wrecker* Stevenson's direct use of authentic sources can clearly be seen in the actions and descriptions set on Midway atoll. While much of the narrative undoubtedly derives from

aspects of his personal travels and experiences, it is clear that the bright factuality of these has been supplemented by the social concerns to be found in the contemporary newspapers and journals he read, most notably in their frequent commentaries on the 'Remittance Man' and the opium trade. These episodes in the novel, show how well that source material was reworked, and they provide examples, of the author's almost total recall. Stevenson combined this rich material (albeit sometimes anachronistically, and perhaps at too great length), with his own personal experience to make the narrative of *The Wrecker* ring resoundingly true especially in its minor background details.

Thanks to Richard Dury and Roger G. Swearingen for their kind assistance.

#### NOTES

- 1 Built and registered at Peterhead in 1875, the 376 tons barque was originally owned chiefly by local shareholders. Caught in a typhoon leaving Yokohama in 1884, and adjudged a constructive total loss (some owners were not fully insured, and several thousand pounds loss was borne by the original shareholders), she was sold to a Chinese by the underwriters. Repaired and refitted at Peterhead, she was then sent to Hong Kong. (*Peterhead Sentinel*, 7.5.1889.)
- 2 Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Wrecker*, (London: William Heinemann, 5th imp., 1928), Tusitala Edition vol. XII, 'Epilogue', p. 404; p. 405, hereafter cited in the text.
- 3 'Prefatory Note by Mrs R. L. Stevenson', *ibid.*, p. xvi.
- 4 Apparently Adolph Jorgensen was accused of murdering Captain Jacobsen of the *General Seigel*, which was wrecked in 1885, and marooned by his shipmates when they left for the Marshalls. Captain Cameron (see n. 7) said he was unaware of either Jorgensen, or the *Seigel's* fate, before reaching Midway; however, 'Captain Walker, on reading the Siegle [sic] murder case, offered a free passage on his vessel, to a duly authorized officer of the law, to Midway Island, to arrest the man Johnson [sic], in the interests of Justice' (*Daily Bulletin*, 9.12.1887). Captain Frederick Douglas Walker (b. Ireland 1848, d. Victoria, B.C. 1916), his wife, Elizabeth and their three sons,

Frederick, Henry and Charles were also on board. Captain Charles Johnson claimed he was 'chartered' by Walker to Honolulu; Walker said it was 'by agreement' (*Daily Bulletin*, 8.4.89).

- 5 *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. by Bradford Booth and Ernest Mehew (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), vol. 6, pp. 410–11; hereafter, *Letters*, vol., page number.
- 6 See *The Cruise of the 'Janet Nichol' Among the South Sea Islands. A Diary by Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1915), pp. 119–20.

- 7 *John Cameron's Odyssey*, transcribed by Andrew Farrell (New York: Macmillan, 1928), p. 241, hereafter cited as *Odyssey* in text. 'Captain J. Cammeron [sic] formerly of the lost steamer *Planter* and afterwards commander of the schooner *Emma*, has shipped as Chief Officer of the *Wandering Minstrel*' (*Daily Bulletin* 2.12.1887).

John Cameron (1850–1925), born at Fort William, Argyll, Scotland, lived latterly, much respected, at Honolulu, but died in Japan, before seeing most of his life narrative as rendered by Farrell.

Doubts about the *Minstrel's* purpose arose because she lay offshore at Honolulu, from 23 November (leaving next day was Walker's intention) until 10 December – despite needing repairs. In 71 days from Hong Kong, he had weathered a typhoon 300 miles off Formosa en route the French Frigate Shoals: 'nothing of serious moment occurred except the breaking of parts of the patent steering gear and damaging a quantity of provisions', (*Daily Bulletin*, 24.11.87).

- 8 Just how much the *Minstrel* story grew legs is shown in 'Strange Suspicions' as recounted in the *Daily Pacific Commercial Advertiser*: [Captain Walker's] story [...] does not tally with the statement made by [...] Captain Cameron [...] He was next heard of in Tacoma, from where he answered an advertisement [...] by General Manager Murray of the South British Insurance Company, asking [...] the whereabouts of this vessel [...] stating that [it] had been lost down South America way. [...] two citizens in Honolulu, friends of Cameron [...] received letters, saying that he had set up a hotel at Port Townsend on a bonus of \$1,000 he had received from Capt. Walker. [...] / Neither Manager Murray, nor Secretary Stringer believed the *Wandering Minstrel* was wrecked. [...] Captain Walker [...] had taken on board in Honolulu enough food supplies for three years, though he knew he would not be absent more than four



months. / The explanation [...] is that on arrival at [Midway], the captain, his family and crew disembarked with provisions, supplies, etc., while Captain Cameron [...] navigated the *Wandering Minstrel* to some South American port. There he sold her, and, putting the proceeds in his pocket, he sailed for Portland and Washington. [...] he had no intention of dividing with Captain Walker, who [...] characterized him in Honolulu as a villain of the deepest dye (*Daily Pacific Commercial Advertiser* 12.6.1889 – reprinted from *San Francisco Call*, 30.5.1889). Manager A. S. Murray had offered a 'Reward' in the *Commercial News*, in March 1889, for 'later information' about the vessel after it had left Honolulu in December 1887 (*Hawaiian Gazette*, 12.5.1889).

- 9 *Cruise of the 'Janet Nichol'*, p. 120.
- 10 Regarding the mutinous crew: 'By request of Major Woodhouse [consul], Deputy Marshal Pahia, Captain Tell, and five policemen, went out to the bark, lying off port, to arrest the crew this afternoon. [...] Captain Walker, in instructing the police as they were about to go out, said: "If the sailors draw knives on you, lay them out instantly."' 'Eight men were put in irons and left aboard, while two, probably ringleaders, were brought ashore.' (*Daily Bulletin*, 9 and 10.12.1887 resp.)
- 11 Walker was exonerated of blame by a British Naval Court, held at Honolulu on 10-11 April 1889. (Board of Trade Wreck Report for 'Wandering Minstrel', 1889; online @Port Cities Southhampton.) A brief account of his travails on Midway is in Captain F. D. Walker: *Log of the Kaalokai* (Honolulu, *Hawaiian Gazette*, 1909, pp. 54-62), his record of a survey conducted of Lisiansky and the outlying islands for the Hawaiian monarchy in 1891; hereafter *Walker* cited in text. This time at the French Frigates Walker caught sharks, 'as many as eighty per night' over three nights (*Walker*, p. 17).
- 12 'Findlay's five directories', for the great oceans of the world – the North and South Atlantic, North and South Pacific, and Indian Ocean – were compiled by the geographer / hydrographer, Alexander George Findlay F.R.G.S. (1812–75). Copies of the last three, with one for the Mediterranean Sea, were supplied to Stevenson by the publisher, S. S. McClure, at Saranac, New York, in 1887. 'The North and South Pacific volumes, much used and worn out by Stevenson on his own voyages, were sold at the Anderson Gallery Sale of his books in 1914–15; his marked copy of the North

Pacific is inscribed with his address, 'Yacht "Casco", Anaho Bay, Marquesas Islands', and his South Pacific copy both dates and notes events of his trip in the margins. The relevant volume owned by Stevenson is *A Directory for the Navigation of the North Pacific Ocean* [...] (London, R. H. Laurie, 3rd ed., 1886); hereafter *Findlay* cited in text.

The 'Admiralty book' is *Pacific Islands, Vol. III. (Eastern Groups.) Sailing Directions for the Tubai, Cook, and Society Islands; Paumotu or Low Archipelago; Marquesas, Scattered Islands near the Equator, and the Sandwich Islands*. (Published by Order of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, London: Printed for the Hydrographic Office, 1885); hereafter *Pacific Islands* cited in text. It is not known if Stevenson owned a copy.

- 13 For 'Hoyt' see n. 18.
- 14 Compare Stevenson's remark, eating breakfast at Vailima, 'reading an old *Annual Register* as a novel' (*Letters* 7, p. 121).
- 15 The Pacific Mail Company, with \$50,000 U.S. government funding, attempted to excavate a 600x250x25 feet channel into Midway lagoon in 1870; the work was abandoned after six months. The supply ship, *Saginaw*, subsequently was wrecked on Ocean Island; the rescue party from Honolulu included Stevenson's son-in-law, J. D. Strong, as artist.
- 16 The full report is 'Letter of the Secretary of the Navy communicating [...] information in relation to the discovery, occupation, and character of the Midway islands [...]' *Index to the Executive Documents printed by Order of the Senate for the Second Session of the Fortieth Congress of the United States of America 1867-68* (Washington: Government Printing House, 1868, v.2, 79; 13p.). Captain Brooks called Midway 'Middlebrooks'.
- 17 Hawaiian Islands Midway Islands Nos. 19481 & 19482, online at NOAA Office of Coast Survey.
- 18 *Pacific Coast Insurance Directory* (San Francisco: F. T. Hoyt, 419 California Street, 1890); note says 'third volume' – online at Hathi Trust. *Pacific Coast Insurance Directory* (San Francisco: F. T. Hoyt, 419 California Street, 1890); publisher's note says 'third volume' – online at Hathi Trust. Frederick Thomas Hoyt, b.1856 New York, a marine & fire insurance agent (U.S. Census 1880); arrived in California, 1877 (Sacramento Daily Union, 30.1.1877).

- 19 *Pacific Coast. Coast Pilot of California, Oregon, and Washington*, by George Davidson. (Washington: United States Coast and Geodetic Survey, 4th ed., 1889); a later edition was entitled *Directory for the Pacific Coast*.
- 20 Pinkerton's 'sketch advertisement' boasts 'MONSTER OLIO OF ATTRACTIONS' (p. 102). Compare the *Daily Alta*, from 1880: 'Hawley, Buisley, and the Lilliputian Queen, and Monster Olio at Woodward's [Gardens] Today and Tomorrow' (12.6. 1880); 'The Great Acrobats and Monster Olio Company at Woodward's today' (4.7. 1880). Also [Baldwin Theatre] 'The play of the Galley Slave and a monster olio will be given' (6.9. 1881); [...] 'a monster olio will be the attractions' (11.9.1881).
- 21 *Daily Alta California*, 24 March 1884; hereafter *Daily Alta* in text.
- 22 'Santa Rosa is discussing the means to protect itself against the hoodlum element which visits that city during the picnic season' (*Sacramento Daily Union*, 2 April 1889).
- 23 Note that 'H. Loudon' is almost an anagram of 'Hoodlum'.
- 24 The day Stevenson arrived, according to H. C. Cato in 'An All-Night Tour of the Sydney Parks' (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 February 1890) there were 768 homeless persons (432 in the Domain alone) on night of 10–11 February.
- 25 Walter Shellshear (1856–1939), born in London; brought up in Glasgow, where he studied engineering; emigrated to New South Wales in 1879; engineer for railways, Sydney metropolitan district, 1882 ff. Part of the Clifton incident, the 'vessel in distress', on the sea below – 'close in' – was probably conjured by the *Waratah* collier; at North Illawarra jetty in 1887, she broke her mooring – fouling her propellor – and drifted aground helplessly over rocks in a heavy sea.
- 26 Frederick O'Brien, *White Shadows in the South Seas* (New York: Century, 1919), p. 162.
- 27 'Opium in the Pacific', *Canterbury Journal*, 30 June 1888. The price quoted seems at odds with that of Dodd for San Francisco (see below), given the average exchange rate in 1870–90 was one pound sterling for five dollars. Should '16s.' be \$16 – taking it near to Dodd's figure of \$20?
- 28 'The Opium Trade at San Francisco', *Lloyd's Weekly London Newspaper*, 1 January 1888.
- 29 'Notes from the United States. By a Blackburn Man', *Blackburn*

*Standard*, 18 February 1888.

30 *Sheffield & Rotherham Independent*, 1 March 1888.

31 *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* (among others), 5 March 1888.



## Review

David Floyd, *Street Urchins, Sociopaths & Degenerates: Orphans of Late-Victorian and Edwardian Fiction* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2014), 264pp, hbk. £90.00. ISBN 978-1-78316-010-5.

Taking the figure of the orphan in the fiction of the years from 1880 to 1911 as its subject, this study develops a seemingly rather specific theme into a far-reaching and, at times, eclectic overview of the fiction of the period. Floyd characterises the long nineteenth century as being ‘the century of the orphan’ and to adduce evidence for this claim he finds orphans at the centre of a broad and diverse range of Victorian and early twentieth-century texts.

The strongest chapters in the book deal with the state of being parentless in late-Victorian and Edwardian children’s literature, locating in these works submerged anxieties about changes in social structures and ambiguous responses to the Empire. Floyd notes the remarkably frequent use of the Empire to effect parental loss or estrangement in these novels, with, for example, parents dying in India in both *The Secret Garden* and *A Little Princess*. His claim that there is a ‘remarkable ubiquity of orphans in the literature of the period’ is, however, somewhat belied by the absence of literal orphans in the texts he considers: Mowgli, Kim and Peter Pan are parentless, but not through death; the emotionally ameliorative potential of reconciliation and reunification is always offered. Despite the questions this raises being somewhat under-resolved, there are a number of valuable and perceptive insights made regarding these characters. Floyd is particularly strong on the Gothic nature of the figure of Peter Pan, highlighting themes of hedonism and even malice in his

depiction that often go overlooked by more superficial analyses.

The book is not always as convincing as in these chapters: the extension of the study to incorporate not only those who are literally parentless, but those who 'deny [...] filial obligations' through 'self-imposed exile' leads to some surprising inclusions, and to a certain loss of coherence to some of the arguments made. The reasoning behind the choice to study certain characters in the context of orphan-hood is not always persuasive, and in losing the coherence of the theme the choices of texts studied feels less diverse than disparate. Floyd, applying this comprehensive definition, finds a number of such nominal orphans in Stevenson texts.

Key to Floyd's argument as to the orphans of the fin-de-siècle tending towards 'a kind of aberration, even monstrousness' is the grotesque Gothic orphan Hyde. Floyd builds very successfully on prior work, such as that by Alan Sandison, which has seen images of fatherhood and parental control in the relationship between Jekyll and his 'offspring' Hyde. Floyd finds in Hyde's behaviour a series of 'very specific symbolic functions' that dramatise inter-generational conflict. Floyd develops this reading to produce a sophisticated analysis that both incorporates, and expands on notions that *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* is replete with imagery of Oedipal conflict. The assault on the child, the moment of Hyde's shocking irruption into Stevenson's narrative is, for example, argued to be an expression of 'generational anxiety'. Floyd weakens his case here somewhat by over-determining this point and describing the act as a 'symbolic 'disengagement from moral obligation or ethical responsibility for the prospect of prosperity', but the wider case still stands, and Floyd persuasively links the theme of violently 'disrupted domestic spaces' into similar readings of the orphans-by-alienation who feature in H. G. Wells's *The Invisible Man* and Arthur Machen's *The Great God Pan*. In so doing, Floyd illuminates a striking confluence between texts often linked only by their superficial similarities

in terms of genre.

*Treasure Island* is also addressed in detail by Floyd, and the text is again used to attempt to unify the interpretation of a number of other texts, the most notable work to which Stevenson's novel is compared being *The Island of Dr Moreau*. In contrast to the chapter on the Victorian Gothic, this section demonstrates the potential for widely selected texts and broadly defined terminology to undermine rather than enhance readings of the sources discussed. While, as elsewhere, perceptive interpretations are made on the themes which underlie the depiction of the relationships of the characters in the novel, the attempt to unite Wells and Stevenson by applying these equally to *The Island of Doctor Moreau* fails to convince. The inclusion of the Wells text here seems inappropriate to the subject, and risks distracting the reader from Floyd's analysis of masculine relationships in *Treasure Island*: a great pity when the said analysis is of such high quality, being both comprehensive and clear sighted.

In sum, *Street Urchins, Sociopaths & Degenerates* is an ambitious work, but it is in its ambition that its chief flaw lies: the attempt to accommodate too broad a range of texts under the ambit of a rather specific subject at times jeopardises the clarity of the argument being made. Despite this, the book is rich in incisive and lucid analyses of the specific texts under consideration. When a unifying argument is successfully made (as in the chapter on the 'rebellious orphans' of the fin-de-siècle), the value of Floyd's perceptive and fruitful study becomes abundantly clear.

Duncan Milne

Edinburgh Napier University





## 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.

**Emma-Lee Davidson** graduated from the University of Aberdeen in 2015 with an MA in English Literature (First Class Hons). In 2014 she was awarded a Carnegie Trust Vacation Scholarship to research Stevenson at the National Library of Scotland and Museum of Edinburgh. She currently lives in London and researches independently.

**Richard Dury** taught for many years at Bergamo University where he taught history of the English language. He has been closely involved in the biennial series of Stevenson Conferences since 2002, and founded the original RLS website in 1996 at Bergamo University which subsequently migrated to Napier University in Edinburgh, where he maintains an editorial and consultant role. 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*.

**William B. Jones** is an independent scholar, writer, teacher, and attorney. He is the author of *Petit Jean: A Wilderness Adventure* (2016) and *Classics Illustrated: A Cultural History, 2nd Ed.* (2011); the editor of and a contributor to *Robert Louis Stevenson Reconsidered: New Critical Perspectives* (2003); and a contributor to the forthcoming *Oxford Handbook of Adaptation Studies*, ed. T. Leitch (2017). Between 2003 and

2014, Bill wrote more than 100 introductions for titles in the revived *Classics Illustrated* series.

**Steve Joyce** is a life-long science fiction enthusiast with a keen interest in silent film. He is co-author of *American Silent Horror, Science Fiction and Fantasy Feature Films, 1913-1929* (2012), researcher on *Down from the Attic: Rare Thrillers of the Silent Era Through the 1950s* (2016) and has written for various publications such as *The Newsletter of the North American Jules Verne Society*, *Scarlet – The Film Magazine*, *Blood 'N' Thunder* and others. He resides in Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A.

**Burkhard Niederhoff** is Professor of English Literature at the University of Bochum, Germany. He is the author of two books on comedy and of *Erzähler und Perspektive bei Robert Louis Stevenson* (1994), a narratological study of RLS. In addition, he has published articles on modernist fiction, on various aspects of the long eighteenth century, and on Canadian Literature. He is currently at work on a critical edition of RLS's early short stories for *The New Edinburgh Edition*.

**Sebastian Williams** is a PhD student in the Department of English at Purdue University. His interests are wide ranging, though he mostly concentrates on late Victorian and Modernist fiction. He studies the history of science, medical law, and media, including the ways these subjects influence literature in both form and content. Sebastian also teaches an introductory course on academic writing for incoming freshmen, and he has worked for the past several years as a content writer for a digital marketing company.

# Call for Papers

## ‘Robert Louis Stevenson: New Perspectives’

**Edinburgh Napier University 6–9 July 2017**

The Centre for Literature and Writing (CLAW) at Edinburgh Napier University is delighted to be hosting the international Robert Louis Stevenson conference in July 2017. Under the title ‘Robert Louis Stevenson: New Perspectives’, the conference committee seeks papers on all aspects of Stevenson’s life and works.

As well as papers that discuss Stevenson and other writers, other cultures and a range of related contexts, we are keen to encourage contributions that challenge traditional approaches to Stevenson’s works. Though new perspectives on Jekyll and Hyde are welcome, it is the aim of the conference to broaden its scope beyond this well-trodden literary terrain. To that end we welcome proposals for papers that cover areas of literary studies that have connections with Stevenson, however tenuous, as well as papers that consider some of Stevenson’s lesser-known works, and works that have received scant critical attention. As Scotland is the location of this conference, papers on Stevenson and Scotland would be very welcome.

It is anticipated that the conference will begin on the afternoon of Wednesday 5 July and end at lunchtime on Saturday 8 July. Friday afternoon will be free for delegates to explore Edinburgh.

There will be two special plenary speakers:

- *Nigel Planer*: actor, novelist, playwright and travel writer
- *Louise Welsh*: Professor of Creative Writing at Glasgow

University, and award-winning author

Please send abstracts of no more than 300 words to Dr Lena Wånggren at Edinburgh Napier University by **Tuesday 31 January 2017**:

[l.wanggren@napier.ac.uk](mailto:l.wanggren@napier.ac.uk)

# 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 2017 will follow *Weir of Hermiston*, edited by Gill Hughes, and *Essays I: Virginibus Puerisque*, edited by Robert-Louis Abrahamson, both of which are fully finished and at second proofs stage for all 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 and her thorough understanding of Borders history and literature. *Essays I: Virginibus Puerisque* with its Explanatory Notes, cross-referencing to letters and other works by Stevenson, and full account of composition will be an essential volume for scholars, and its forty-page overview of 'Stevenson as Essayist' by the four essays editors will be an essential starting point for any future studies.

Close behind *Essays I* will be *Essays IV: Uncollected Essays and Reviews 1868-1879*, edited by Richard Dury, containing a number of previously unpublished essays and fragments, and now practically ready for delivery; and *Essays III: Memories and Portraits*, edited by Alex Thomson. 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 2018.

Two other forthcoming volumes now being set in type for first proofs are the *Fables* and *The Amateur Emigrant*. Bill Gray's volume *Stories IV: Fables. Island Nights' Entertainments* includes Stevenson's *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 contains 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'. Julia Reid's edition of *The Amateur Emigrant*, based on Stevenson's 1880 manuscript with gaps supplied from the earliest printed editions, has also been set in type and is ready for first proofing and changes.

Meanwhile work is under way on several other volumes: *St Ives*, *Kidnapped*, *The Dynamiter*, and *The Wrecker*. Glenda Norquay has visited the USA for her research *St. Ives*, studying MSS and letters in the Beinecke Library, Princeton and the Huntington Library in Los Angeles, while the MS is being 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, on authorship attribution. Anouk and her Masters students have conducted a detailed analysis of the evidence, and their findings – an updated version of which will appear in the volume – can be read at <http://thedynamiter.llc.ed.ac.uk/>. Andrew Taylor has started work on *The Wrecker* and has collated all the witnesses.

More on progress can be found in the EdRLS blog at <http://edrls.wordpress.com/>.

Richard Dury, Penny Fielding

## Stevenson: Notes and Queries

*The New Edinburgh Edition of the Collected Works of Robert Louis Stevenson* and the *Journal of Stevenson Studies* invite brief essays, bibliographical information, and/or Notes and Queries, relating to any of the following:

- The whereabouts of uncatalogued material
- Unpublished biographical information
- Supplementary material and emendations to Swearingen's *The Prose Works of Robert Louis Stevenson*
- Information on Stevenson's collaborations
- Details of Stevenson's relations with publishers, both financial and personal
- Distribution and sale of Stevenson's work in Britain and the USA
- Archive collections and printed guides relating to the magazines in which Stevenson published
- Information and opinions on different editions published during Stevenson's lifetime
- The production of illustrations
- Early reception of individual works (reviews not collected in *Maixner's Critical Heritage*)
- Mentions of Stevenson's works in letters or diaries of contemporaries, etc.

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# RLS

## WEBSITE

**[www.robert-louis-stevenson.org](http://www.robert-louis-stevenson.org)**

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.

Listing past and current scholarly work on RLS, as well as the full texts and a significant proportion of all the available photographs and images, this site reaches a world-wide audience, many of whom cannot travel to the places where such items are located. Back numbers of the *Journal of Stevenson Studies* are also posted on this site in full-text format.

The site is established at the Centre for Literature and Writing (CLAW) at Edinburgh Napier University with support from Edinburgh and Stirling Universities, literary trusts like the Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature, the Writers' Museum of Edinburgh, and Stevenson enthusiasts, museum curators and academics around the globe. It offers a significant contribution to the growing reputation of RLS as an important literary figure and personality of the late nineteenth century



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