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'You cannot fight me with a word': *The Master of Ballantrae* and the wilderness beyond dualism.

Roderick Watson

This paper proposes *The Master of Ballantrae* as a transitional work between Stevenson's earlier texts of landscape, adventure and the ambivalence of character, and a later, darker, and more radically modern vision of existence. In *The Master of Ballantrae* Stevenson draws on familiar techniques of symbolic dualism only to deconstruct them in favour of a vision of life as existential wilderness, which led him to *The Beach of Falesá* and most notably to *The Ebb-Tide*.

> The full truth of this odd matter is what the world has long been looking for...

The very first line of *The Master of Ballantrae* begins with misdirection. Ephraim Mackellar offers to explain everything, and seems to believe that he has done so, but I think that we are left even more in the dark than we were when we began what Stevenson called (on the title page) his 'winter's tale'.

Andrew Lang wrote of 'this elaborate, melancholy, and almost hopeless book', and concluded that it possesses a 'very modern gloom'. (*The Daily News*, 5 October 1889). W. E. Henley enthused about the author's great skill, but he deplored its final effect, calling it 'a masterpiece in grime', and concluding that it left a 'bad taste in the mouth of the reader', leaving one 'in the end with an impression of unreality. You feel as if you had been awakened from a sinister dream. . .'(*Scots Observer*, 12 October 1889.)

What Henley and Lang say about *The Master of Ballantrae* shows that they were close to understanding its true nature. They just didn't like what they saw. Henley sums it up:

> The Master is a romance that differs from the romances of Sir Walter as a black marble vault differs from a radiant palace.

It was meant as a criticism, but it's an acute insight, and it is where I want to begin.

Henley and Lang had trouble with the book for two reasons, and both have to do with what I take to be its deliberately contradictory and ultimately nihilistic nature. First of all: *The Master of Ballantrae* is a romance that subverts romance. And secondly: *The Master of Ballantrae* is a novel deeply given over to dialectical oppositions, in both its theme (the Romantic dualism of a struggle between two brothers who are opposites in temperament) and also in its structural techniques. And yet its final effect is to subvert all such dialectical principles, and we are left with utter, terrifying, blankness. (A rock and two epitaphs in the wilderness.)

I would argue that the 'very modern gloom' of *The Master of Ballantrae* is the first of Stevenson's most mature engagements with existential blankness, and in this respect it prefigures Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (published thirteen years later) and leads directly to Stevenson's finest novel of modernity *The Ebb-Tide*, whose first drafts he and Lloyd Osborne were wrestling with at the very time of writing 'The Master'.[1]

So what is this 'sinister dream'? Let us begin with the novel as a subversion of romance and then consider how it offers a most elaborate structure of Romantic dualism (a seemingly psychological and even a metaphysical struggle between the two brothers) only to subvert that, too. In the process of discussing these two sides to the novel, I hope my third contention will become apparent. That is, that the novel depends at every level on a structural principle of dialectical (or binary) ordering. And yet this strategy, (a fundamental literary device for creating order and meaning), has been subverted at every turn, leaving us in the end with that 'impression of unreality' which so disturbed Henley.

A Romantic Novel Subverting Romance

The first half of the book belongs to the material world of 1745, an extrovert tale of adventure, romance and Scottish Jacobite history. Or rather we are shown the prevailing myth of that history, revealed by Stevenson as nothing less than a sentimental cancer at the heart of the Scottish psyche.

He had already explored such history (in much kinder terms) with *Kidnapped*, published three years earlier. Much has been made of the partnership of Alan Breck and David Balfour and the symbolic claims of the heart and the head or 'romance and responsibility' – drawing no doubt on similar critical claims about the work of Walter Scott. I'm not supporting this critical position, but it's a familiar one, I cite it only to point out that it is certainly not what we find when we turn to *The Master of Ballantrae*.

Yet 'Ballantrae' does seems to offer all the ingredients for a repeat performance, and at first glance the Durie brothers might well be taken for new versions of Alan and David. A closer look, however, shows them to be irreconcilably divided. The house of Durrisdeer has decided, quite deliberately, to take out insurance in what threatens to be a civil war, by joining both sides. It is Henry who sees how shameful this really is

> '...what are we doing? Cheating at cards!' (p. 23)

And who is the head of this family? He is man grown prematurely senile, who sits by the fire reading his books all day, a man blind to the failings of his elder son and careless of the virtues of the younger. He is a man with plans to boost his 'deeply mortgaged' estate by marrying his elder son to a wealthy orphan girl Alison Graeme, who has been entrusted to his care. And when James is presumed dead at Culloden, the old lord sets out to persuade her, by what Mackellar calls 'quiet persecution', to marry Henry, even though she loved James:

> ...the one brother being dead, my lord soon set his heart upon her marrying the other. Day in, day out, he would work upon her, sitting by the chimney-side with his finger in his Latin book, and his eyes set upon her face with a kind of pleasant intentness that became the old gentleman very well. If she wept, he would condole with her like an ancient man that has seen worse times and begins to think lightly even of sorrow; if she raged, he would fall to reading again in his Latin book but always with some civil excuse; if she offered, as she often did, to let them have her money in a gift, he would show her how little it consisted with honour... (p. 27)

The golden guinea flung through the windowpane (smashing the family crest), is later discovered in a holly bush, and the servants who find it spend it on drink. Mackellar calls it 'the root of all the evil'; doubtless remembering a Biblical injunction against the love of money and this seems a fair judgement on old Durrisdeer and his schemes. But that guinea lies at the root of the affair in a different sense, in that all that follows in the novel (and all questions of loyalty) were first decided by nothing more than the toss of a coin.

The 'romantic' image of James, that bold young cavalier for a lost but honourable cause, is equally compromised by his less than gentle treatment of Alison (whose letter he drops into the mire at Carlisle), and his dishonourable treatment of Jessie Broun whom he seduced and left destitute with his child (p. 28). We learn that he was one of the Prince's flatterers, and that in councils of war he 'thwarted my Lord George upon a thousand points'. (p. 26) This was Lord George Murray, a professional soldier, and the ablest of Prince Charlie's counsellors, whose good advice, as a matter of historical fact, we know to have been ignored in favour of the young pretender's own vainglorious preferences. And when we are finally given the Chevalier Burke's account of the Master's behaviour after Culloden, what we discover, reading between the lines, is a tale of the most single-minded and selfish flight. 'I have

always done exactly as I felt inclined' says James as he abandons his fellows on the shore and sails away to safety in the Sainte-Mairie-des-Anges. (Note the name)

And how is this adventure perceived by those at home? We find Tam Macmorland, drinking and weeping and ever sure of listeners as 'the only man in that country who had been out – or rather, who had come in again – .' (Mackellar's dry qualification about coming 'in' again, as opposed to being 'out', is a wonderfully witty grammatical deflation of a whole syntax of Jacobite sentimentality.) In no time at all, Tam is fabricating stories of betrayal, with Henry as a Judas who had promised reinforcements and then changed sides. Jacobite sentiment turns almost immediately to a self-pitying sentimentality, full of references to 'bonnie lads' and 'mony a cold corp amang the Hieland heather!' (p. 27) Jessie Broun, seduced and left with child by the Master, joins the drunken chorus in praise of those now sanctified by a futile death. She throws stones at Henry (who has been sending money for her support), crying 'Whaur's the bonny laddie that trustit ye?' And when he raises his arm to protect his face, she fills the countryside with tales of how she was beaten by him. Even a family servant, John Paul, 'a great professor of piety', believes the tales and treats Henry with contempt, only to be forgiven all when he pulls 'his weeping face' to make lamentation for 'his laddie'. (p. 28, p. 32)

Songs and tales about the Prince in defeat (often referred to as a lost suitor and a 'bonnie laddie') are at the heart of Jacobite romance. In *The Master of Ballantrae* Stevenson paints this tradition as a matter of lachrymose sentimentality, utterly self-serving and, at the same time, profoundly self-deceiving. Three years after writing *Kidnapped*, he has redrawn the fierce pride and the loyalty of Alan Breck into a picture of something positively morbid. In fact he recognises this evolution, by having the Master meet Alan Breck in his travels, only to find it politic to run away from him. (p. 43)

We see the cancer of such romance plainly at work in the house of Durrisdeer, when the old lord and Alison (now married to Henry) refuse to allow him to mend the missing window pane,

which was a representation, after all, of the family shield. Desiring neither the old identity renewed, nor a new identity defined, the pair prefer the mutual seclusion of the chimney-side, where they chatter and weep together, jealous of their private heartache, watched over by blank space (p. 37) – as a comment on the sentimentalised myth of the 45, and in view of how the novel ends, this is a most appropriate heraldry.

Nor should we forget that the pane was broken by the Master's coin – the coin he tossed to decide the fate of them all. Such dedication to random chance is the ultimate wild, romantic gesture, and it is one he will use again. Certainly it impressed the Chevalier Burke when they first met (they toss to decide whether to fight or make friends) and Burke calls it an example of 'how the old tales of Homer and the poets are equally true today – at least, of the noble and the genteel.' (p. 44) Burke has aspirations to be 'noble and genteel' but he is too easily impressed. For someone of the Master's undoubted intelligence the gesture smacks of something much darker and more nihilistic. It is indeed an absurd gesture in the fully philosophical sense of the word, and it seems to invite, from the very first, the chaos, the blankness, the impasse that marks at the novel's end.

The final step in what I have been calling Stevenson's subversion of romance, takes for its source another of his own books, *Treasure Island*, written six years earlier. In this tale of pirates we see the Master of Ballantrae's true character at work again. Ballantrae is charming or cruel, ruthless or pliable, courageous or cowardly, all as the occasion demands. It is this mixture of flexibility and wit, and the non-stop calculation of his own interest above all else, which makes him such a formidable opponent and a born survivor. These qualities will be seen at work again at the end of the novel, during James's adventures in the North American wilderness, but, for the moment, I want to focus on how Stevenson uses narrative technique itself, and then the story's actual physical settings, to comment further on his reappraisal of romance.

First of all, it is a tale told by the Chevalier Burke. If the dull and worthy Mackellar is an appropriate narrator of plain Mr

Henry's trials, then surely the Chevalier Burke is the very man for a yarn of pirate adventure on the high seas? Faced with the pirate Teach's capacity for random and pointless violence, the bold Burke becomes 'Crowding Pat' (fiddling Pat) in order to survive by ingratiating himself with his captors. This vulgar parody of his own Irishness is all the more appropriate in the face of Teach's own vulgar, and indeed positively infantile parody of 'wickedness", as he appears in a cloud of sulphur with his face blackened and his whiskers curled, chewing glass and shouting 'Hell, hell!'. (p. 48) Life under Teach's command (he is not even the 'real' Teach, we are told) is a series of bungled and fruitless pursuits, with episodes of cowardly and brutal cruelty to those who are too slow to escape. Apart from their own indiscipline, Burke observes that '...the most dangerous part of our employment was to clamber up the side of the ship' when they were attacking, and he goes on to note that 'I have even known the poor souls on board to cast us a line, so eager were they to volunteer instead of walking the plank. This... made our fellows very soft.' (p. 52) – Soft or not, and slow in the chase or not, they still put their captives to death, including the one crew (with women passengers) which did offer genuine resistance, until Ballantrae's 'gallantry', as Burke puts it, carried the day (p. 51). And all for what?

> We found many ships and took many; yet few of them contained much money... what did we want with a cargo of ploughs, or even of tobacco? – and it is quite a painful reflection how many whole crews we have made to walk the plank for no more than a stock of biscuits or an anker or two of spirits.
> ...an observation falls to be made: that in this world, in no business that I have tried, do the profits rise to a man's expectations.

Henley complained that the pirates in Treasure Island 'are sober, cleanly, almost respectable mariners, compared to the raving, loathsome miscreants who formed the crew of the Sarah' and

this is exactly the point. Stevenson is retelling his pirate tale in a darker key, and his mature understanding of where romance leads us, can be found in his physical descriptions of where the Master ends up: in the steaming swamps and the shapeless estuaries of the Bermudas; and finally in the night-time terrors and the frozen wilderness of North America. This is the ultimately and wholly appropriate destination for one who decides his fate by the toss of a coin – trackless, inchoate and deceptive:

> Some parts of the forest were perfectly dense down to the ground, so that we must cut our way like mites in a cheese. In some the bottom was full of deep swamp, and the whole wood entirely rotten. I have leapt on a great fallen log and sunk to the knees in touchwood; I have sought to stay myself, in falling, against what looked to be a solid trunk, and the whole thing has whiffed away at my touch like a sheet of paper. Stumbling, falling, bogging to the knees, hewing our way, our eyes almost put out with twigs and branches, our clothes plucked from our bodies, we laboured all day, and it is doubtful if we made two miles. What was worse, as we could rarely get a view of the country, and were perpetually justled from our path by obstacles, it was impossible even to have a guess in what direction we were moving. (p. 64)

In such conditions, which even a map could not resolve, reason, judgement or principles are of little use in deciding one's next step. Burke and Ballantrae encounter a group of Indians who may be friendly or hostile, and which they are and whether to make themselves known or not, would have 'puzzled the brains of Aristotle himself', as Burke puts it. Of course Aristotelian logic is useless in such a case, and the Master, almost in despair and at his lowest point in the whole adventure, makes one last characteristic gesture:

> ...he suddenly plucked out his coin, shook it in his closed hands, looked at it, and then lay down with his face in the dust. (p. 66)

And here, with absolute narrative mastery, Stevenson uses Mackellar to interrupt the Chevalier's story, and to leave the Master so to speak, with his face in the dust, as a final and memorable symbolic comment on those principles of adventure and wilful, selfish romance by which he has chosen to live his life. The subversion is complete.

This brings us to the second part of this essay, to the mystery of the Master's personality, and to Stevenson's teasing use of Romantic dualism, only to subvert it in the end.

A Dualistic Novel Subverting Dualism

As a matter of psychological drama this theme belongs to the second half of the novel, but it can be identified as a structural device in its own right throughout the whole work.

In the passage just quoted we left the Master in a frighteningly unstable physical world. The pursuit of romance has brought him to a place where what looks like 'a solid trunk' is 'whiffed away' at the merest touch, like 'a sheet of paper'. (Like a page from *The Master of Ballantrae*, indeed!) I believe that this is one of the novel's most potent symbolic moments – like the blankness of that broken window-pane, and the 'blankness' of the two epitaphs (without context and lost in a wilderness) at the very end of the tale. To this end I want to make some prefatory comments on blankness and on dualism as one of the rhetorical or conceptual structural devices by which we try to make meaning out of the chaos of experience.

The experience of 'blankness' is to be confronted by something that offers us nothing. It may seem like something we can write upon, upon which we can inscribe meaning as we construct narratives or pursue our personal goals, and yet in itself it is inert unapproachable, unsayable, unreadable, and

ultimately unwritable – a challenge indeed for any writer. The 'inscrutability' of the jungle in *Heart of Darkness* marks one writer's engagement with this blankness in what has become a key text for modern literature. Whether Conrad's jungle symbolises a modern understanding of the unconscious or a buried racism, or a fear of regression to the primeval, or simply the terror of the Lacanian 'real', it defies articulation and can only be hinted at – hence the overdetermined nature of the text, or the rhetorical over-emphasis on unspeakability that Leavis found so intrusive in the novel. Against such shapelessness, Marlow is saved by 'rivets', but neither the Master nor Henry has any such existential foundation. The '45 was mere adventure to James, and the only anchor in the latter part of Henry's life is hatred for his brother, a man already revealed as a fluid and insubstantial figure.

The concept of the double is a familiar trope in the literature of Romantic dualism. It is a structural convention which seeks to deal with the fluidity and the multiple complexity of our inner lives by setting up a more formal system, indeed a binary system, of doubles, dopplegangers, or psychological counterparts. In Dostoyevsky's short novel, *The Double* (1846), the unstable nature of Golyadkin's psyche is symbolised by the appearance of Mr Golyadkin Junior – a petty clerk even more shameless in his divided aspirations to swagger like an independent man, while simultaneously licking the boots of his superiors at the office. In *Crime and Punishment* (1866), Raskolnikov is haunted by an alter ego in the form of the suave Svidrigaylov – a man who revolts him, and yet who seems to fit every one of the young student's theories about being beyond the obligations of law and morality. We have already mentioned Stevenson's own account of the divided Scottish psyche, caught somewhere between David Balfour and Alan Breck. And of course his most famous fable on this theme was published in 1886 as *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*.

This is the context against which we must judge *The Master of Ballantrae*. Again (as was the case with romance) all the ingredients seem to be there. The brothers Henry and James Durie do seem to complement each other, for Henry is 'neither very bad nor yet

very able, but an honest solid sort of lad'; while his other, James, is very able and very bad, not exactly honest, and (as we shall see) not at all solid. Nor can they be separated, for as Henry cries out in despair, even as he thinks that he has killed James: 'Wherever I am, there will he be.' (p. 116) At first sight one might well expect these counterparts to function as thesis and antithesis in a tale, out of which some synthesis or final resolution might derive. But there is absolutely no sign of reconciliation between them, nor does the novel offer any middle ground (any other character, for example), to bridge the gap.

Nor does the narrative structure make it any easier, for the tale comes to us via unreliable secondary characters each of whom shares something of their champion's personality. And yet despite this, in the first half of the novel we think the worse of the Master, even as his exploits are admired by the Chevalier Burke; while in the second half of the book we gain a surer sense of James's charm and his pain, even as recounted by his enemy Mackellar.[2] It is not surprising that readers should suffer an occasional attack of vertigo in this book. So who are these brothers, and what can possibly explain their terrible enmity?

The final literary convention in matters of Romantic dualism is to enlist one's characters in a larger battle between the forces of order and chaos or of good and evil. And certainly (as in every previous convention that this novel has evoked) there is much to support such a point of view: 'He is not mortal' cries Henry of his brother, 'He is bound upon my back to all eternity – to all God's eternity!' Nevertheless, having first suggested it, Stevenson goes on to subvert even this construction. Of course it is not hard to find the Master's literary prototype in saturnine figures of Romantic rebellion or pride. His good looks, his wit and his wickedness have a distinctly Byronic flavour, most notably when 'Mr Bally' lands, mysteriously immaculate, on the shore of the Solway Firth:

> ...a tall slender figure of a gentleman, habited in black, with a sword by his side and a walking-cane upon his wrist... he

> waved... with something of grace and mockery that wrote the gesture deeply on my mind. ...swarthy, lean, long, with a quick alert, black look, as of one who was a fighter, and accustomed to command; upon one cheek he had a mole, not unbecoming; a large diamond sparkled on his hand; his clothes, although of the one hue, were of a French and foppish design; his ruffles, which he wore longer than common, of exquisite lace... (pp. 76-7)

Poor Henry... virtue seems so dull by comparison.

James's pride, furthermore, is nothing less than Satanic, and Stevenson seems to go out of his way to associate him with Milton's great hero-villain: 'He had all the gravity, and something of the splendour of Satan in the "Paradise Lost"' says Mackellar (p. 134), and indeed Ephraim, a religious man, repeatedly refers to Henry as 'my lord' and to James as 'my enemy' seeing him as 'diabolic' or 'devilish' or as a 'serpent' seducing, almost in a sexual sense[3], young Alexander (Henry's son) with tales of romance and adventure. (pp. 137-8) Something of a 'magician' of the elements, James can also 'cast a glamour' (p. 137) on those around him. He confesses to Mackellar that 'I never yet failed to charm a person when I wanted' (p. 159); and a single stern look from him makes the courage run out of the trader Mountain 'like rum out of a bottle' (p. 185). This is a man who seems to keep coming back from the dead, so perhaps it's no surprise that in his final return he should be accompanied by Secundra Dass at his elbow, like some 'familiar spirit' (the words are Mr Henry's) (p. 195). On a more abstract, moral level, James's cry of 'I would not take a blow from God Almighty!' (p. 95) echoes the original rebel angel; and his debate with godly Mackellar on board the ship is no less than a version of the temptation of Christ on the mountain:

> Cast your lot with me tomorrow, become my slave, my chattel, a thing I can command as I command the powers of my own limbs and spirit – you will see no more that dark side that I turn upon the world in anger. I must have all or none. (p. 158)

The Master of Ballantrae is indeed the Master of Lies, and it is undeniably tempting to see him as the very model of Satanic pride.

But I do not think that such a reading can be sustained, despite the fact that Stevenson clearly did favour a Satanic element in his make-up. In a letter to Sidney Colvin, for example, written two years before the novel was completed, Stevenson had this to say:

> ...the Master is all I know of the devil. I have known hints of him in the world, but always cowards; he is as bold as a lion, but with deadly, causeless duplicity.
>
> (24 Dec. 1887)

In a later manuscript, however, he gets a little closer to the true source of such 'causeless duplicity':

> For the Master I had no original, which is perhaps another way of confessing that the original was no other than myself. We have all a certain attitude towards our own character and part in life; we desire more or less identity between the essence and the seeming... and the secret of the Master is principally this, that he is indifferent to that problem. A live man, a full man, in every other part a human man, he has this one element of inhumanity.
>
> Cited by Elsie Noble Caldwell, *Last Witness for RLS*, (Oklahoma, University of Oklahoma Press, 1960), p. 118.

James evinces a total indifference to the need for any identity between 'the essence and the seeming'. Note that he doesn't deny a link between how things are and how they appear; nor does he invert it – crying 'evil be thou my good'. According to Stevenson, he is simply indifferent to it. This is crucially reminiscent of another figure of literary modernity, namely Svidrigaylov in *Crime and Punishment*, who is neither wicked nor good, but simply pursues his own will, indifferent to his effect upon the world, or

its opinion of him. In this respect, perhaps the Master is indeed the worst that might be imagined to haunt Mr Henry, whose sober Scottish Presbyterian values have so much to do with making clear distinctions between good and evil and in the careful management of money and reputation in a stable and fully material world – 'I love order', Henry confesses to Mackellar. (p. 67) Literary critics love order too, and the binary sets of Henry and James, of Jekyll and Hyde, Michael and Lucifer are undeniably seductive. But this is the novel in which Stevenson moves away from the persuasive power of such conceptual or ideological structures to confront a fully modern world view (even perhaps a postmodern one) where such easy distinctions do not and cannot apply. To speak figuratively, we are no longer seeking a balance between the Highlands or the Lowlands, romance and responsibility, but find ourselves instead on that most liminal and spectral of all modern landscapes – the beach at Falesá, or Attwater's lost island, caught on an ebb tide.

Stevenson's comment on the Master's indifference goes to the heart of James's terrifying fluidity. From such a point of view, everything is relative, and indeed might just as well be under the influence of chance. He has a particularly chilling and calm conversation with Mackellar, just after the aged servant has failed to murder him:

> 'Life is a singular thing', said he, 'and mankind a very singular people. You suppose yourself to love my brother. I assure you it is merely custom. Interrogate your memory; and when first you came to Durrisdeer, you will find you considered him a dull, ordinary youth. He is as dull and ordinary now, though not so young. Had you instead fallen in with me, you would to-day be as strong upon my side. (p. 156)

There is a scepticism here as profound as that of David Hume (if a good deal more cynical) for was it not Hume who proposed that even the apparently binding laws of cause and effect might be no

more than a matter of repeatedly observed impressions made upon us, a matter in other words (and Hume's words), of 'custom'. 'I have always done exactly as I felt inclined', (p. 45), and 'I go my own way with inevitable motion', (p. 78), the Master said to Burke and then to Mackellar on earlier occasions, and indeed nothing seems able to withstand such a shameless, fluid and flexible progress. Mackellar senses this about him (for a moment), during their voyage, when he glimpses an 'impudent grossness' under 'the veneer of his fine manners'. And then he sees something else:

> ...and sometimes my gorge rose against him as though he were deformed – and sometimes I would draw away as though from something partly spectral. I had moments when I thought of him as a man of pasteboard – as though, if one should strike smartly through the buckram of his countenance, there would be found a mere vacuity within. (p. 148)

This passage is a striking precursor to the same moment of recognition that afflicts Marlow in front of Kurtz in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Faced with the severed heads which Kurtz has set up around his house Marlow reflects:

> ...the wilderness had found him out early... I think it had whispered to him things about himself which he did not know, things of which he had no conception till he took counsel with this great solitude – and the whisper had proved irresistibly fascinating. It echoed loudly within him because he was hollow to the core. (*Heart of Darkness*, p. 148)

These echoes are, I believe, fully intertextual, and very revealing. The brickmaker of the Central Station shares the same distinguishing condition in a passage that might almost be a direct quotation from *The Master of Ballantrae*:

> I let him run on, this papier-mâché Mephistopheles, and it seemed to me that if I tried I could poke my forefinger through him, and would find nothing inside but a little loose dirt, maybe. (*Heart of Darkness*, p. 92)

Retold now in psychological terms, the 'man of pasteboard' passage is an exact counterpart to that lost landscape in the Adirondacks, where solid logs turn to dust at a touch. Both are matter but also insubstantial, both are essentially hollow.

A similar fluidity and a similar terror of amorphousness appears in Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, when Jekyll meditates on the hellish energy of Hyde which is also something paradoxically 'inorganic', as if 'the amorphous dust gesticulated and sinned' as if something that was 'dead and had no shape, should usurp the offices of life.' And the same horror of the shapeless and the inert can be found in the imagery which Stevenson ascribes to the intractability of matter at its most basic in the essay 'Pulvis et Umbra' – Dust and Shadow – published in 1888 just as *The Master of Ballantrae* was appearing. Stevenson's aim in this extraordinary essay is to make the triumph of man's spirit all the more remarkable given his origins as nothing less than a 'disease of the agglutinated dust'. 'What a monstrous spectre is this man...?' he asks, and sees him indeed as '...a thing to set children screaming', except that the human spirit raises us above the brute indifference of the Kosmos. Yet the blank indifference of matter is always there for him as the final horror, an existential horror akin to Sartre's nausea in a universe without God.

Meanwhile our rotatory island loaded with predatory life, and more drenched with blood, both animal and vegetable, than ever mutinied ship, scuds through space with unimaginable speed, and turns alternate cheeks to the reverberation of a blazing world, ninety million miles away.

So the blankness of the Master, his fluidity and vacuity is not the face of the devil, but simply an encounter with the wilderness of matter. This is no Manichaean confrontation with the power of darkness, but a recognition instead of spectrality, of nothingness,

of an existential and moral emptiness. Such emptiness is akin to Eliot's 'Hollow Men' and to what Hannah Arendt called 'the fearsome word and thought-defying banality of evil'[4] – a much more modern insight (indeed it is the insight of modernity) than the comfortable binary sets of Romantic or Gothic dualism. And this too is the symbolic point that the novel is making by way of the Master's continual resurrection. The Master seems to die no less than three times in the course of the novel and we, like Henry, begin to fear that nothing can kill such an insinuating, intangible, word-defying, paradoxically essenceless essence.[5] (Everything is a weapon in James's quest to prevail, even his own degradation. It turns out, for example, that when poor Henry thought he was witnessing his brother in extremity, working as a tailor, he was confronting only another gambit intended to embarrass himself. The Master laughs and gives up the pretence, seemingly giving Henry the best of it for once, although in fact he has further corrupted the poor man, by giving him such an unhealthy appetite – 'I grow fat upon it' – for gloating revenge.)

From such a position, we cannot say that the Master speaks for Romantic disorder as opposed to the staid virtues of his brother Henry and the whole inheritance of lowland Scotland. But neither can we claim that he speaks for darkness as opposed to light.

He speaks for whatever suits him, whenever it suits him, and with whatever it takes to get his way – courage, cowardice; charm, terror; loyalty, treachery; pride, humiliation; honesty or deceit, all are the same to him, and we have seen him use them all in the course of his adventures, simply as tools to get his own way. 'Oh! there are double words for everything', he says to Mackellar, 'the word that swells, the word that belittles; you cannot fight me with a word!' (p. 158)

The Master follows his own will, and everything else in the universe, that whole system of verbal and moral differences and distinctions by which we order our own perceptions and beliefs, is simply incoherent to him, and even inchoate in his eyes. For him the signified is always and wholly in subjection to the signifier – and the signifier can be changed. If one word or one identity

offends or inconveniences, then change it for another – (Jacobite/ Loyalist; pirate/ gentleman; sophisticate/mountain man). 'There are double words for everything... you cannot fight me with a word'. And that 'me', in symbolic terms, stands for something akin to what Peer Gynt (in another key text of early modernism) encountered as 'the Great Boyg' whose motto was 'go round about', a force of the solipsistic self, formless, and inoppugnable, another version, indeed, of the heart of modern darkness. In such a universe rational distinction and judgement are no help at all. One might as well spin a coin. And the natural setting for such an amoral, visionless vision, is the wilderness. This is not the familiar trope which offers us a 'moral wilderness' as opposed to 'cultivated landscape', for that would be to erect another binary set. The Master's wilderness is free of all such constructed meaning. It is simply, a trackless place, unmapped, undifferentiated, spectral, blank.

This is the final reason for the novel's setting on the ocean, in the Bermudas, and in the primeval American forest. And this is the final meaning of that symbolic landscape where everything is 'whiffed away' at one's touch, 'like a sheet of paper'; where the Master lies (if only for a fleetingly symbolic moment), with a coin in his fist and his face in the dust. Here too, I think, is the symbolic reason behind the icy cold that seems to follow him in the key scenes which witness his second and then his third and final death. It is the Master's isolation that takes him far beyond all human warmth. It is indeed a kind of suspension and a model for death itself – the very death that he rehearses so many times in the novel.[6]

If we seek a dialectical order to this novel, some sense of thesis, antithesis and synthesis, we will seek in vain, despite the book's dependence on symbols of binary opposition, and the Master's own roots in the literary conventions of Satanic rebellion and Romantic dualism. His true heraldry is the heraldry of that blank windowpane. And the true moral of the tale is equally blank, for although Mackellar thinks he has explained 'the full truth of this

odd matter'; we are left with only an inscribed boulder, lost in the wilderness.

Stevenson's engagement with that wilderness was to reach its finest expression in the deceptively beautiful shorelines of the South Seas, with *The Beach at Falesá* and especially *The Ebb-Tide*.[7] But the first steps towards those symbolic shores were taken by two Scottish brothers in *The Master of Ballantrae*. The spectral unreality of the Adirondack woods became the mirrored shore line of Attwater's lost island in *The Ebb-Tide*, where the 'fringe of cocoa-palm and pandanus extended desolate, and made desirable green bowers for nobody to visit, and the silence of death was only broken by the throbbing of the sea.' (p. 74). Here Herrick, cast adrift from his past, meets all that he or the mature Stevenson finally knows of a universe without a devil, and without God too.

There are no satanic or sacred counterparts in *The Ebb-Tide*, nor can the three protagonists of the first half of the novel be called evil, unless evil can be said to reside in the weak, the hungry, the petty, the ineffective and the immature. (And once again Hannah Arendt's words spring to mind.) God and the devil are not at war in this trackless place, although the last vestiges of that ancient duality are replayed in Stevenson's prose in a teasing deconstruction of all such easy tropes and symbols. So it is that we are once again reminded of the Master's Teflon spirit when Attwater, in the grip of a truly Calvinist zeal, likens God's grace to a diving suit which will let the wearer 'come up dripping and go down again' in the sordid affairs of the world (which is to say: pillaging pearls from the sea bed) 'and all the while the fellow inside as dry as toast.' (p. 88) If there is a god on this terrible island (presided over by the inscrutable whitened icon of a ship's figurehead and the Union Jack) it is Attwater himself, who became 'a judge in Israel, the bearer of the sword and scourge; I was making a new people here; and behold, the angel of the Lord smote them and they were not!' (p. 90). And if there is a devil it is the petty selfishness that passes between the unholy trinity of Herrick, Davis and Huish, until that moment when Huish decides to throw the vitriol at Attwater, the moment as Stevenson puts it

when 'the devil . . . looked out of Huish's face' and Attwater shoots him dead. But by this stage we are in no doubt that this is just a figure of speech, a metaphorical devil – or at the very most 'Satan' has been evaporated, to be revealed as no more than petty human weakness, greed and spite. In either case, this cruel and sordid moment is scarcely the victory of God (or Michael) over Lucifer, and the atheist Herrick has the right of it when he regards Captain Davis with contempt, as he crouches canting and praying on the beach at the end of the tale, a reformed Christian, a 'pet penitent'. If Attwater's diving suit metaphor is a shattering critique of the Calvinist concept of grace, the whole book goes further still, to undermine the oldest of dualisms by deconstructing, in effect, the very concepts of 'God' and 'the devil' alike.

Coda

There is one final mystery in *The Master of Ballantrae*, of course, and that is to seek the origin of such enmity and 'causeless duplicity'. This question was there from the very start, and I don't think that Stevenson offers us an easy answer, or even, perhaps, an answer at all, despite his teasing hints of a diabolic presence. (How else would one expect Mackellar and Henry Durie to speak of the unspeakable, after all? They are both products of Scottish Calvinism, and a deeply dualistic Scottish religious tradition, which tends to see all opposition, or even just what it doesn't understand, as 'the work of the devil'.) There is one hint which the book does offer, however, and it takes us back to the beginning of things, to first principles – to the book of Genesis, in fact, from where it interrogates nothing less than the concept of God Himself.

In the very first reported exchange between the two brothers, we hear James refer to Henry as 'Jacob': 'Would you trip up my heels – Jacob?' said he, and dwelled upon the name maliciously.' (p. 24) The relevant verses from the Bible invoke to Isaac's plea to God to give his barren wife Rebekah a child:

And Isaac intreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren, and the Lord was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived.

And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to inquire of the Lord.

And the Lord said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be the stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.

And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold there were twins in her womb.

And the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau.

And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob: and Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them.

And the boys grew: and Esau [James] was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob [Henry] was a plain man, dwelling in tents.

And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison; but Rebekah loved Jacob.

(Genesis 25, 21-28)

Only a couple of points remain to be made but perhaps they will serve to reveal a last insight into Stevenson's profoundly modern scepticism.

Firstly, the Biblical model tells us that these brothers were born to be in conflict. There is no necessary moral scheme behind it,

it is simply a given of the text itself.[8] Furthermore, these are key verses in Calvinism's understanding of original sin, election and predestination. (Fionn MacColla, for example, makes telling use of them in his novel *Move Up, John*, p. 105.) In this respect it is no less than the prime mover, God himself, who sets all in motion – curing Rebekah's barrenness only to give her two sons fated to be at war with each other. But to our modern eyes (and to Stevenson's mature judgement) such causeless enmity – far from being the will of God (and certainly not a product of the devil), is nothing more (or rather, nothing less) than a confrontation with 'Providence' or, more brutally, with chance, with contingency, with nature, with the wilderness of mere being.

Attwater has seen this wilderness most clearly, though his madness is to call it 'religion': 'religion is a savage thing, like the universe it illuminates; savage, cold, and bare, but infinitely strong.' (pp. 89-90) This is the universe that Stevenson glimpsed in 'Pulvis et Umbra' and he had an early vision of it in the short story 'The Merry Men' (1881) when he saw it as a hostile void, a 'charnel ocean'.[9] It is this universe which is the ultimate theatre of the brothers' rivalry, and this is the meaning embedded in those recurring images of night and cold. This too is the final context of the Master's character and the Master's indifference: in a world conceived of as a trackless place, a place beyond words and beyond the familiar tropes of dualism, a place of being without meaning: an undifferentiated, undifferentiable, wilderness.

End Notes

1. According to Roger Swearingen, *The Master of Ballantrae* was written between December 1887 and May 1889 (published 1889), while *The Ebb-Tide* (then called 'the Pearl Fisher') was being drafted in the Spring of 1889, before being set aside for *The Wrecker* (summer 1889 to January 1890). By *1890 The Ebb-Tide* was half done, but set aside until picked up again in February 1893 and completed in June of that year (serialised November 93 to February 94) and published in July 1894.

2. The paradoxes multiply: for when Burke suggests an act of cowardice on the Master's part, Mackellar is at pains to disbelieve it (p. 66); and on the home front, sober Henry's case is supported by the drunken Macconochie, while the cad James finds a fan in the pious John Paul. (A similar instability is generated in Hogg's incomparable *Confessions of a Justified Sinner*; but unlike the earlier text, neither of the protagonists in 'Ballantrae' is given a voice of his own.)
3. He compares the little boy to 'Eve', and likens James to Aeneas wooing Dido.
4. Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem. A Report On The Banality Of Evil* (London, 1963). My emphasis.
5. Stevenson's essay on the genesis of The Master mentions this succession of resurrections as one of the most compelling elements in his original inspiration.
6. Consider the existential force of another passage from 'Pulvis et Umbra': 'And as we dwell, we living things, in our isle of terror under the imminent hand of death...'
7. *The Wrecker* has its own vision of commercial greed and exploitation in the South Seas (among many other settings) but it reads more like a black comedy on capitalism, self-improvement and the naivete of young men, closer in spirit to 'The Misadventures of John Nicholson'.
8. Stevenson plays his own subversive variations on the Biblical model, for his brothers are not twins; it turns out to be the younger (Henry) who serves the elder; and James lies when he accuses Henry of being like Jacob, for when Henry finally strikes him, it is James who confesses 'I have hated you all my life.' (p. 95)
9. See Roderick Watson, 'Introduction' Robert Louis Stevenson, *Shorter Scottish Fiction* (Canongate Books: Edinburgh, 1995), pp. xi-xiv.

R. L. Stevenson and the Ethical Value of Writing for the Market

Richard Ambrosini

Treasure Island marked a departure not only from the themes, but also from the implied audience of Robert Louis Stevenson's previous experiments with fiction. In August 1881, announcing this 'change of tack' in a letter to W. H. Henley, Stevenson could not refrain from chiding his friend, who had repeatedly voiced his worries about the risks of betraying the promise of literary achievement he had shown in his personal essays, travelogues, and short stories. He was now working, Stevenson explains in the letter, on a 'boys' adventure story' having a particular publisher in mind, which he felt was ideally suited for the project. He asks: 'would you be surprised to hear, in this connection, the name of *Routledge?*' (*Letters:* II, pp. 244-5) – at the time a by-word for literary mass-production, following the great success of this publisher's 'Railway Library', a series of cheap reprints of 'classics' aimed at commuters. Today, at the end of a century in which less than a dozen critical monographs in English have been written on Stevenson – while Routledge has become a superpower in the academic publishing world – the joke would more likely work the other way around. It is easy to imagine a literary editor at Routledge telling a colleague in the Sales and Marketing Department that he is thinking of accepting for publication a monograph, and asking: '...would you be surprised to hear, in this connection, the name of *Stevenson?*'

Stevenson adopted, for *Treasure Island* and his other novels, psychological strategies and narrative techniques derived from the sub-genres of popular literature in order to induce in his upper-class readers the pleasure-creating effect which was for him the principal aim of fiction (but not of the other forms of writing in which he had excelled so far). This paper will argue that

Stevenson's experiments are grounded on his view of the market as a testing-ground for his ideas on fiction – a view ultimately based on his ethically-informed notion that writing was a profession. His openness toward the challenges posed by the publishing market led to several of the twists and turns which characterise his literary career, and to statements set forth in some of his essays which have scandalised the upholders of a reputed sacredness of the 'artistic' novel. But in fact, never did the market become the creative horizon of his writing. He might have failed at times while walking the line dividing entertainment and art, but this does not mean – as I hope to demonstrate – that he compromised the artistic and moral integrity which guided his attempts.

The irreconcilability between the choices Stevenson made when he started writing novels and the aesthetic and ideological premises which shaped the formation of a Modernist canon was the main cause of the 'Fall of Stevenson' diagnosed by Leonard Woolf already in 1924 (Maixner [ed.] 1981: pp. 514-8). In analysing some of the key moments in his confrontation with the challenges of the market, this paper will also try to explain why these moments have furnished in the past as many arguments employed to describe Stevenson as a writer who betrayed his artistic vocation by catering to the masses' tastes. Refuting these arguments is important not simply in view of a belated re-evaluation of Stevenson, but because by so doing his case may provide us with a chance to rethink some of the most ingrained mechanisms of validation and authorisation operating in our discipline.

It is no coincidence that Stevenson's gradual marginalization coincided with the rise of English Studies, the new discipline which systematised the key tenets of the Modernist movement, combining them with Matthew Arnold's educational theories (Baldick, 1983) and a new militancy aimed against what Josh Ortega y Gasset defined as 'the revolt of the masses' (Carey, 1992: pp. 3-22). In Great Britain, Modernism was largely a reaction against the new, vast reading-public, hungry for newspapers, romances and sub-genres, created by the 1870 Education Act, which had introduced compulsory primary school education. At

the turn of the century, an élite of writers and intellectuals took on the task of preserving, by means of difficult techniques and obscure narrative languages, values supposedly endangered by the voracious appetites of the newly literate masses. At the same time, in Great Britain and the United States, some major universities began to offer courses in 'Modern Fiction' which provided users' instructions for the artistic novels and obscure poetry written by the Modernists – thus guaranteeing 'the survival of the best fiction' (Keating, 1989: p. 456). With the appearance then, in the twenties and thirties, of a new generation of English professors, a moral urgency and idealistic motivation was brought to the rescue from oblivion of works written outside commercial circuits. Already the title of F. R. Leavis' first book, *Mass Civilisation and Minority Culture* (1930), is a clear indication of the 'us/them' polarization underlying the juxtaposition between popular sub-literature and 'high' literary artifacts which had a crucial role in the establishing of a professional élite that considered literature to be important not only in itself, 'but because it encapsulated creative energies which were everywhere on the defensive in modern "commercial" society' (Eagleton, 1983: p. 32).

Once set in its cultural and historical context, the demise of Stevenson's critical fortune appears almost as an inevitable price to be paid, once the new caste of professional literary scholars elevated writing fiction from the status of work to that of artistic creation. This demise was at first largely the result of a 'reflex action' against the shameful commercial operation conducted by Stevenson's family and friends; but it went beyond that, to become, with Frank Swinnerton's 1914 *R. L. Stevenson: A Critical Study*, (Swinnerton, 1923), 'the response of a generation with different values, sensibilities, and critical attitudes' (Maixner [ed.], 1981: pp. 42-3). But it was not simply a matter of change in tastes. Stevenson had been a model-writer for the first-generation holders of Chairs in English Literature at Oxford and Cambridge: Sir Walter Raleigh (Merton Chair, Oxford, 1904), author of one of the first major studies on his style (1895); and Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch (King Edward VII Professor, Cambridge, 1912), who wrote

the final chapters of *St. Ives*, a novel Stevenson left unfinished at his death (see Gross, 1992: p. 194, p. 200). These quintessential late-Victorian men of letters' reputations had been made in the field of literary journalism – and their successors in the academy later rebelled against what they (rightly) perceived as their amateurish approach to literary criticism. Now that literature had been freed from the market, the men whose profession it was to teach it gained a new self-awareness of having become professional readers. As a result, ironically, they could no longer accept that a writer could be a professional: he had to belong to the empyrean world of art, which the professors were modelling according to their critical premises. And in that world there was no space for Stevenson, the professional writer beloved by amateur professors.

Chief among the reasons why the formation of a Modernist canon came to coincide with the decline of Stevenson's critical status was the adoption of the Modernist preconception toward the mass literary market as a measuring stick to gauge Stevenson's relative *gravitas* or *levitas*. But if his attitude toward the market (the dangers and potentialities of which he discovered, when he was already an established figure in Great Britain, during his first stay in America) varied from that of other contemporary writers, it was in part because of the emotional investment involved in his decision to become a writer, at the cost of breaking away from the tradition of the Stevensons, who had been lighthouse builders for three generations. Still in 1886, when his American publisher Charles Scribner committed the *faux pas* of calling Stevenson's father a 'sea-light inspector', he unwittingly called upon himself a fierce reprimand on the part of the son, who responded by listing the achievements of his father, and ending: 'I might write books till 1900 and not serve humanity so well; and it moves me to a certain impatience, to see the little, frothy bubble that attends the author his son, and compare it with the obscurity in which that better man finds his reward' (Swearingen [ed.], 1995: p. iii). The inner conflict he felt over abandoning his father's work, so useful and beneficial to mankind, in order to pursue his artistic vocation,

lasted throughout his entire life and found expression in one of his best poems:

> Say not of me that weakly I declined
> The labours of my sires, and fled the sea,
> The towers we founded and the lamps we lit,
> To play at home with paper like a child.
> But rather say: *In the afternoon of time*
> *A strenuous family dusted from its hands*
> *The sand of granite, and beholding far*
> *Along the sounding coast its pyramids*
> *And tall memorials catch the dying sun,*
> *Smiled well content, and to this childish task*
> *Around the fire addressed its evening hours.*
> (*Thistle XVI*: p. 152)

If the aspiring young writer succeeded in taking this step it was only because he had convinced himself, as he wrote to his cousin Bob, that 'I am entering a profession... which must engross the strength of my powers and to which I shall try to devote my energies' (*Letters*: I, p. 166). Later in his life, in replying to the attacks and criticisms of Henley and other friends, he would always reaffirm this his basic tenet – that writing ought to be a profession which enables a person to support himself and his family. And therefore, novel-writing could be defined as a commercial transaction through which the novelist exchanges the pleasure he derives from writing for the money paid by the reader to receive, in turn, pleasure from reading.

Certainly, one should resist the temptation of evoking a Presbyterian matrix to explain every cultural phenomenon in Scotland; but in this case, we have the testimony of the Scottish writer and critic, Edwin Muir, who in condemning Stevenson for his 'boyish irresponsibility' sets it however in the context of the Calvinistic influence on Scottish literature. In a country, he writes, whose culture is almost exclusively religious, 'conscience finally becomes a matter concerned with only two spheres, the

theological and the crudely material. There is no soil on which an artistic or imaginative conscience can grow, and no function for the novelist therefore except that of a public entertainer' (Muir, 1982: pp. 229-31).

Given the preeminence of the novel as a form of art – dating from the late-Victorian age – the significance of Muir's specifying 'no function for the novelist' might easily be missed. For Stevenson, however, who published his first novel on his thirty-third birthday, the distinction between artistic prose and novel-writing was very vivid. Paradoxically, he felt free to use the sub-genres of popular literature precisely because his identity as an artist in words was not founded on novelistic practice but on a literary prose both elegant and free of an explicit moral burden. When Stevenson, in his mid-twenties 'came into his fantastic critical and popular prominence', he contributed to the style-vogue brought about at first by Walter Pater and George Saintsbury, 'well beyond the confines of academic appreciation' (Merritt, 1968: p. 27). His first travel book, *An Inland Voyage* (1878), was adopted at Eton for translations from English into Latin, and a society at Oxford chose the slim volume as 'the "best specimen of the writing of English of this century"' (Maixner [ed.], 1981: p. 8). This success – and its clear class connotations – should be borne in mind when one considers the virulent criticisms Henley and other friends voiced against Stevenson's choices when he turned novelist.

And yet, the reasons for these choices were already implicit in the role Stevenson assigned to fiction in a series of essays written in the seventies. In several of these essays, Stevenson elaborated on the notion that the value of fiction lies first and foremost in its potentiality to bring new life to myth. His first opportunities to state publicly these views were a review-essay on Victor Hugo and a review of Lord Bulwer-Lytton's *Fables in Song*, both written in 1874. In the former, he structures his argument in such a way that an equivalence emerges between the artistic quality of Victor Hugo's novels and what he defines as their 'epical value' (*Thistle XIV*: p. 26); in the latter, the short-story form is described as a post-Darwinian version of classical fables. In the very same

months, in 'On the Movements of Young Children' he focuses on the playing of children that exemplifies a beauty that 'turns... upon consideration not really aesthetic', and of 'a sincerity, a directness, an impulsive truth... that shows throughout all imperfection... a reminiscence of primitive festivals and the Golden Ages' (*Thistle XXII*: p. 98). When he himself started creating narratives, his main effort was to develop the myth-making potentials of fiction.

Stevenson's most cogent discussion of this view of fiction can be found in 'A Gossip on Romance', an essay he wrote in February 1882 – significantly, at the time when he was deciding to rewrite *Treasure Island* for an adult readership. The problem for the novelist, he claims here, is how to evoke in the reader that 'sympathetic pleasure' which is proper only to 'epoch-making scenes' capable of conferring on the page 'the quality of epics' (*Thistle XIII*: pp. 332-3). One sentence in particular of 'Gossip' – 'Fiction is to the grown man what play is to the child' (*Thistle XIII*: p. 340) – has attracted endless criticism; but once set in its proper context it means that fiction can express all its evocative power only if it touches something ancestral in the human soul: the reading-model he set out in 'Gossip' was founded on a pleasure which was 'infantile' in an orthogenetic, not phylogenetic sense.

Five years later, in another essay, 'Pastoral', Stevenson reformulated the same idea to illustrate the difference between novels and romances. Novels, he writes, 'begin to touch not the fine *dilettanti* but the gross mass of mankind, when they leave off to speak of parlours and shades of manner and still-born niceties of motive, and begin to deal with fighting, sailoring, adventure, death or child-birth'. It is not *Masterman Ready* or *The Coral Island* he has in mind, but *Far From the Madding Crowd* and *Anna Karenina,* and the subliminal echo evoked by 'ancient outdoor crafts and occupations, whether Mr. Hardy wields the shepherd's crook or Count Tolstoi swings the scythe'. It is these scenes, Stevenson concludes, which only have the power 'to lift romance into a near neighbourhood with epic' (*Thistle XIII*: p. 238).

The publishing market which exploded in the seventies to meet the demands of the 'gross mass of mankind' became for Stevenson a further testing ground of the universal quality of romance. In his most extended reflection on the reasons behind the success of working-class fiction – his 1888 essay 'Popular Authors' – he constantly refers to the analogy drawn by Victorian anthropology between proletarians and children in order to explain to his bourgeois readers the wish-fulfillment mechanisms underlying popular fiction. (The same analogy proved useful when it came to assess the intellectual development of the South Sea islanders, which he considered to be equivalent to that of a fifteen-year-old European.) By so doing he was playing on an inveterate mental habit which in the same years brought about one of the most fascinating socio-cultural phenomena of the Victorian age: the re-emergence of the term 'penny dreadful' – coined in the thirties for the gory Gothic tales which were the first examples of working class fiction in England – to define the boys' adventure stories extolling the gestes of bloody outlaws (i.e. the direct competitors of *Treasure Island*).

It was precisely because Stevenson's notion of fiction was founded on the imperative of attaining a universal appeal that he could not ignore the questions posed by his feeling – as he wrote to a friend a few weeks after completing 'A Gossip on Romance' – that 'we all live in a clique, buy each other's books and like each other's books; and the great, gaunt, gray, gaping public snaps its big fingers and reads Talmage and Tupper [a compiler of commonplaces called *Proverbial Philosophy* and an immensely popular American preacher]' (*Letters*: III, p. 297). It is no coincidence that this awareness led to his becoming a novelist after his first stay in America – an experience that added a new moral urgency to what had been, up to then, theoretical considerations on the potentialities of fiction.

Stevenson had left for the United States in the summer of 1879 to win back the woman he loved, after she had returned to her husband in California. He disappeared from his Edinburgh home, with very little money, and had to travel in a second-class

cabin, in the steerage of an emigrant ship. This voyage marked for Stevenson an exit from his social sphere. In a sort of log book which he kept during the crossing, and which was to become *An Amateur Emigrant,* he recorded his discovery of the 'Labouring mankind', their misery and their nobility, which, he wrote, 'I had never represented... livingly to my imagination'. Once in America, to his London friends who implored him not to betray his artistic vocation in that land which they considered the epitome of vulgarianism, Stevenson replied that in working on *An Amateur Emigrant,* 'My sympathies and interests are changed. There shall be no more books of travel for me. I care... not a jot for the picturesque or the beautiful, other than about people' (*Letters*: III, p. 60). The 'Unknown Public', evoked with apocalyptic tones by Wilkie Collins and many other Victorian writers (Keating, 1989: pp. 401-2) started losing the undistinguished feature of the masses, and acquiring the human traits of individuals with common needs and aspirations. This is why in his letters from the Unites States we find a new commitment: he would try to offer to a suffering mankind the same relief that he, as a chronic invalid had found in *Arabian Nights* or *Les Trois Mosquetiers.* (*Letters:* III, pp. 61-2). His fascination with popular fiction allowed him to investigate the mechanisms underlying the pleasure of reading, from which he derived a model largely based on the sub-genres of the adventure novel. And the first result of this work was *Treasure Island,* in which he reduced to a zero degree of essentiality conventions and narrative strategies taken from adventure stories, producing a purity of forms that conferred upon his narrative a mythical quality.

One year after his return to Scotland, we find Stevenson intervening publicly with an article in the *Fortnightly Review* the organ of the Victorian progressive intelligentsia – to censure the levity with which certain writers declared they wrote novels only to make money. In this article, 'The Morality of the Profession of Letters', we find an urgency previously unknown in his public voice. He feels he must clarify the moral basis from which a young aspiring writer should move, and the reasons why in writing for

the great public one has to contrast the 'public falsehood' of journalism – so much more dangerous now that, 'The total of a nation's reading, in these days of daily papers, greatly modifies the total of the nation's speech'. If he brings as an example American reporters or Parisian *chroniquers,* he explains, it is not because they are 'so much baser' than English journalists, but because they are 'so much more readable... [and] ...their evil is done more effectively, in America for the masses, in [France] for the few that care to read'. The lesson he has drawn from his experiences in the United States is that whatever motivations lie behind the decision to write for the general public – and whatever the talent of a journalist, a novelist, or a poet – since the 'art of words' has become by now 'the dialect of life', that art 'comes home so easily and powerfully to the minds of men; and since that is so, we contribute, in each of these branches, to build up the sum of sentiments and appreciations which goes by the name of Public Opinion or Public Feeling' (*Thistle XXII*: p. 278). As a result, the artist in words is faced with a moral duty which obliges him to be aware of his public role – and to be at the same time both accurate and morally impartial in his writing.

Other novelists – such as Joseph Conrad – would have later appealed to a greater verbal precision or fidelity to facts (Ambrosini, 1991: pp. 47-9, pp. 56-63) – but only to emphasize the distance between an increasingly elitist literature and the world of newspapers and popular fiction. Stevenson, the celebrated standard-bearer of prose stylism, approached instead the novel-form as a way of contrasting the rising power of the media. In so doing, he sought a way to intervene in the new reality created by the changes in the literary market without renouncing his aesthetic and ethical principles, but rather reformulating them in order to find a new, more effective role for the artist in words. In trying to reconcile the various metamorphoses Stevenson underwent in his Protean literary career, it is crucial therefore to find an interpretative frame that explains choices which appear so unlikely given the nature of his literary debut. But once the ethical significance of writing for the market is taken into consideration,

these choices are as many indications of his awareness of the transformation the writer's role was undergoing at the end of the nineteenth century.

Two factors have contributed to this awareness going largely undetected: Stevenson's resorting, in order to revivify myth, to particular sub-genres which have relegated his treatment of romance into the precincts of 'children literature'; and his addressing the issues raised by the market after his return to the United States in the summer of 1887 – a move which, as Paul Maixner notes, 'marked the decline of his critical fortune' (1981: p. 30). In both instances, crucial moves in the evolution of his novelistic practice were met with critical gestures which eventually damaged his reputation.

If *Treasure Island* was sent to a boys' paper – and not to Routledge – it was, ironically, as a result of the first critical judgment to which it was subjected. A few weeks after the letter to Henley quoted above, the Scottish author and scholar Alexander Hay Japp, visiting Stevenson in the cottage in the Highlands where he was working on the story, heard the writer reading a chapter to the congregated family, and – transforming the game into reality – suggested that he would take the fifteen chapters written so far to a friend of his, the editor of *The Boys' Own Paper.* There are a number of reasons why in Great Britain at the time, writing an adventure story having an adolescent as a protagonist did not interfere with the author's prestige. Especially, given that the version of *Treasure Island* published in book form in 1883, far from being a commercial venture, was an artifact worthy of the darling of the literary world that Stevenson still continued to be. For a few more years, Stevenson went on creating novels and short stories which were all revisitations of different sub-genres, all characterized by a hyper-literary language which allowed him to reconcile class identity and writing practice. He could afford to do so – his father supported him, and the reviewers coddled him, as long as he did not step out of the market niche he had obtained for himself in Great Britain.

All this changed with the success of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, from which Stevenson himself recoiled in horror – 'There must be something wrong in me, or I would not be popular' (*Letters*: V, p. 171) – although in abstract he had argued in favor of writing for 'the gross mass of mankind'. Little did he know yet what it meant to 'be popular'. He would discover it one year later when, after his father's death, he left Europe and returned to the United States. Not only was he lionized by the press, but the American papers started competing with lucrative offers for collaborations. Joseph Pulitzer offered him ten thousand dollars for a weekly column in the *New York World*, and eight thousand dollars for the serial rights of his next book-length story (three times more than what he had earned with his first six novels), but he refused. Faced with such a commodification of his literary fame, Stevenson reacted with uneasiness and almost distaste, and sought asylum in a log cabin in the woods around Saranac in upstate New York. He agreed to write twelve essays for *Scribner's Magazine*, his American publisher's monthly, which brought in a contract for 'barely' three thousand five hundred dollars – which to him appeared as 'princely sums', while for any established American author it would have been nothing but 'peanuts' (McLynn, 1994: p. 281). Aside from the twelve essays for 'Scribner's', in Saranac Stevenson also wrote the opening chapters of *The Master of Ballantrae* and started revising a story by his stepson, Lloyd Osbourne, which became in his hands *The Wrong Box*.

The popular press's '"creative" promotion', as Maixner notes, 'of a popular myth, legend or fable out of the admittedly interesting circumstances of his life' (1981: p. 30), damaged Stevenson irrevocably back in Great Britain. Stevenson's reception in the US offered to British reviewers a chance to voice criticisms which were also being made in private by some of Stevenson's closest friends. In that redoubtable Edinburgh institution, *Blackwood's Magazine*, for example, Mrs. Oliphant transformed her review of 'Underwoods' (a collection of poems which came out after Stevenson had moved to the United States), into an opportunity to rap the American upstarts on their knuckles for daring to

decide the value of a British author: 'that is the cause of it all', she writes, 'America which thrusts in her little reputations upon us' (quoted in Maixner [ed.], 1981: p. 284). And Stevenson had just arrived in the US. When later she reviewed *The Wrong Box* (1889), Stevenson's only 'American' novel, she defined him a 'rash young man' to whom 'much applause has, we fear, turned his head', and cautioned her countryman from trying to ingratiate the American public, whose applause, 'though it is sweet', has 'a certain idiocy in its roar'. Among the American cultivated classes, added Mrs. Oliphant, one may find the most refined taste in the world, but certainly, 'the caterers for the American literary market do not belong to these high circles, and the overtures and incitements which they offer to a successful author are, when he is moved by them, too apt to lead to folly' (quoted in Maixner [ed.], 1981: p. 31). But then *The Master of Ballantrae* appeared, and reconciling the idea that Stevenson had written his masterpiece in the US with the lamentations over the folly of his catering to the taste of the American masses proved impossible for Mrs. Oliphant and other scandalized reviewers. She had to admit that she was 'grateful and joyful now to find him in his right name' – and Stevenson commented: 'Mrs. Oliphant seems in a staggering state: from "The Wrong Box" to "The Master" I scarce recognise either my critic or myself' (Maixner [ed.], 1981: p. 360).

The twelve essays for 'Scribner's' have not attracted much critical attention, but once they are examined in the light of the author's views on the market they reveal the crucial importance of the year Stevenson spent in the US. If we leave aside three essays deriving from older material and two written for specific purposes[1], the remaining seven constitute a coherent corpus of writings that express the perplexities of an upper-class British writer concerning his adjustment to the American publishing market. In the first two essays, 'A Chapter on Dreams' and 'The Lantern Bearers', he anticipates themes which will return in the other five: respectively, 'what role does a writer's awareness of his market play in artistic creation?' And, 'how can fiction awaken the scintilla of poetry present in each individual and not become

instead a mirror-game between a naturalistic conception of reality and the reader's rationality'. The third essay, 'Beggars', starting from the reminiscences of two beggars presented as prototypes of different ways of being an artist, ends with an invective against the selfishness of the bourgeoisie, and the hypocrisy of institutional charity, offered, he writes, 'in the hope of getting a belly-god Burgess through a needle's eye!' – and adds, 'O, let him stick, by all means; and let his polity tumble in the dust; and let his epitaph and all his literature *(of which my own works begin to form no inconsiderable part)* be abolished even from the history of man!' (*Thistle XV*: p. 277, emphasis added). In the fifth and sixth, 'Gentlemen' and 'Some Gentlemen in Fiction', what begins as a parlor-game on what it means to be a 'gentleman' gradually acquires a more interesting focus, when he proceeds to examine the 'verbal puppets' (*Thistle XIV*: p. 370) created by some of the major English novelists, in an attempt to understand what kind of novels does a gentleman write.

The most interesting of these essays is 'Popular Authors', a reflection on the mechanisms which allow hack writers to represent the daydreams of ordinary people. Implicit in this reflection is the issue of whether a gentleman-writer can reach the millions by adopting the conventions of popular fiction – and at what price, given the class connotations implicit in the distinctions between high and low literature. Such was the erudition that Stevenson displayed on the topic of popular fiction, that after completing the essay he wrote to the editor of 'Scribner's': 'I am ashamed of it. I am doubting whether you should only give me half-fare for it, as a failure... as a calamity'. But after having covered his head with ashes, he finishes off the letter by admitting that 'the point is fine' (*Letters*: VI, pp. 162-3). (That 'Popular Authors' reflects Stevenson's own uneasiness in this phase of his career is confirmed by his decision to add it to the original plan of the twelve essays after beginning work on another 'ungentlemanlike' project: *The Wrong Box*. The result was a self parody of his own status as successful novelist, in which his uneasiness is also expressed through his metafictional treatment of the related themes of

money and popular fiction, obsessively interweaving throughout the narrative.)

Half way through his last essay for 'Scribner's', 'A Letter to a Young Gentleman Who Proposes to Embrace the Career of Art', Stevenson admits to his having 'little sympathy with the common lamentations of the artist class', who pretend to 'give the public what they do not want, and yet expect to be supported'. And he adds: 'It is doubtless tempting to exclaim against the ignorant bourgeois, yet it should not be forgotten, it is he who is to pay us, and that (surely on the face of it) for services that he shall desire to have performed'. It is, for Stevenson, 'a question of transcendental honesty', which has nothing to do with commercial aims, since, as he admonishes the 'young gentleman', 'If you adopt an art to be your trade, weed your mind at the outset of all desire to money'. In fact, the 'idealism in honesty' which should guide the aspiring writer is that 'the end of all art [is] to please' (*Thistle XIV*: pp. 284-5).

But Stevenson obviously had problems in reconciling trade and pleasure. And this is the reason why, in pursuing his argument, he could not refrain from conceding that to 'live by pleasure is not a high calling', because:

> it involves patronage, however veiled; it numbers the artist, however ambitious, along with dancing girls and billiard markers. The French have a romantic evasion for one employment, and call its practitioners the Daughters of Joy. The artist is of the same family, he is of the Sons of Joy, chose his trade to please himself, gains his livelihood by pleasing others, and has parted with something of the sterner dignity of man. (*Thistle XV*: p. 285)

Read in its immediate textual context – and in the context of the other essays written expressly for 'Scribner's' – Stevenson's provocation appears as an extreme attempt to reconcile the double claims of his strongly felt work ethics and artistic ideals. Unfortunately, however, the comparison not only obscured his

argument; it also provided his contemporary and future detractors with a terribly effective weapon. Fourteen years later, when Joseph Conrad had to defend himself from his agent's repeated scolding – and his reminders of Stevenson's greater professionalism – he replied that he did not envy his forerunner, even if he was punctual, because, he wrote, 'I am no sort of airy R.L. Stevenson who considered his art a prostitute and the artist as no better than one' (to James B. Pinker, January 8, 1902, in Karl and Davies [eds], 1986: II, p. 371).

Controversies over the essay, in fact, began even before its publication. Will Low, an American painter whom Stevenson had met in France in the Seventies, was so scandalized when he read an early draft of the 'Letter to a Young Gentleman' that he wrote a reply, 'Letter to the Same Young Gentleman', which appeared together with the essay in the August 1888 issue of *Scribner's Magazine*. Three years later, Stevenson dedicated *The Wrecker* to Low, and appended to the novel an 'Epilogue', addressed to his friend, ostensibly to explain why his name appears 'on the stern of our poor ship'. Especially, Stevenson admits, given that, 'If you were not born in Arcadia, you linger in fancy on its margin; your thoughts are busy with the flutes of antiquity, with daffodils, and the classic poplar, and the footsteps of the nymphs, and the elegant and moving aridity of ancient art'. It may come to a surprise to him, then, to discover he is the recipient of 'a tale of a cast so modern: – full of details of our barbaric manners and unstable morals; – full of the need and the lust of money... of the unrest and movement of our century'. The painter owes this doubtful compliment to his being 'a man interested in all problems of art, even the most vulgar'; and this is why, Stevenson adds, he feels he might be interested in knowing about the 'genesis and growth of *The Wrecker*' (that is, its progression from 'novel of manners and experience' to Dickensian 'police novel') and the 'theory' behind it (*Thistle X*: pp. 494-7). Low had been incapable of viewing the ideas set forth in the 'Letter' as part of an attempt Stevenson was making to enlarge the scope of his work, both in terms of technique and of readership. By the means of a tongue-in-cheek

rhetorical ruse, the writer is in fact setting forth in the 'Epilogue' a metafictional counterreply to his friend's hasty condemnation. His later experiments with fiction in the South Seas, he felt, were validating his search for new tools, suited for rendering the 'barbaric manners and unstable morals' of the contemporary world.

Once he moved to the South Seas, Stevenson's awareness of the interdependence between the novelist and the market led to his decision to settle in Samoa, rather than in some remote island, 'because of its position on the mail route between Sydney and San Francisco, which enabled a relatively direct correspondence with both America and Britain' (Smith, 1997: p. 16). And yet, his South Seas works prove that this awareness did not become a capitulation to money-making. Instead, he refused to render in exotic colors the world of the islands and dedicated himself to an anthropological treatise and a history of the colonial wars in Samoa. And when he returned to fiction, he found for the first time the courage to rebel against the laws of the publishing market and their custodians in the boardrooms of publishing houses in Great Britain and the United States. The results were the two first colonial novels in English literature, *The Beach of Falesà* and *The Ebb-Tide.*

In conclusion, even though Stevenson was – given his social class, tastes, and implied readership – an upper-class writer, once he became a novelist, he chose to walk the fine line dividing entertainment and artistic self-expression, addressing a number of questions concerning the mechanisms and conventions of literary mass production. His experiments with the sub-genres of popular literature led him to contaminate his pure prose with sensational plots, and by so doing he ended up contradicting the hierarchization of literary forms which we have since then learned to consider as natural. This is why he may represent a central figure for rethinking our conception of the study (and teaching) of literature as a defense of the artisticity of the word. Certainly, today the role of the media is far more pervasive and powerful than in his own times, but it is also true that our discipline, thanks

to new approaches and new methodologies, has acquired a greater self-assurance, and can enlarge its boundaries without feeling the need to perform ritualistic exorcisms. Rather than crying out for Stevenson's re-evaluation, therefore I think it would be more useful to draw a lesson from his exclusion from the canon, in order to set forth a transitionary model – alternative to that set up by Modernisn – from the Victorian to the twentieth century novel (and other narrative forms, such as cinema, or tv fiction). The motivations behind his double challenge to the market and to his literary peers can then be extremely relevant for those of us who still believe in the value of studying literature, now that we have to face further challenges ahead.

End Notes

1. Epilogue to *An Inland Voyage*, *Contributions to the History of Fife: Random Memories* and *The Education of an Engineer: More Random Memories* were French and Scottish materials dating from the previous decade, while *A Christian Sermon*, was commissioned for the December issue, and *Pulvis et Umbra* is a set-piece – a 'Darwinian sermon' (*Letters*: VI, p. 60) which marks a return to his earliest exercises in stylistic prose.

E.J.B. and R.L.S.:
The Story of The Beinecke Stevenson Collection.

Vincent Giroud

The greatest of all Stevenson collectors, Edwin John Beinecke was born in New York City in January 1886, the second of the four sons of Johann Bernhard Beinecke and Johanna Elisabeth Weigle. On his mother's side, the family origins were Balingen, Württemberg. His father, of mostly Westphalian stock, was born in the Rhineland town of Elberfeld and emigrated to New York in 1865 at the age of nineteen. Bernhard Beinecke's rise to fortune, from driving a butcher's wagon to the wholesale meat business, was nothing short of dazzling. In 1876 (he was then thirty) his company supplied meat to the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition. By 1890, when it absorbed three of its chief competitors, it could be described as the most successful produce venture in New York. Ben Beinecke – as he was known – then moved into banking. He was one of the founders and first directors of the Plaza Bank, later to become the Manufacturers Hanover Trust Company, and one of the early directors of the Germania Bank (rebaptized Commonwealth Bank in 1918), which in 1927 merged into the Manufacturers Trust Co. Even more successful was Ben Beinecke's career in the hotel management business. In 1890, at the age of forty-four, he was a founding partner of the Hammond Real Estate Co., one of the earliest hotel chains in America, which ran the Plaza Hotel in New York. It was at his instigation that the hotel was demolished in 1905 to be replaced by the present building. He became the president of the operating company of the Plaza. He was also involved in the construction of the Copley Plaza in Boston. It was in his New York Plaza apartment that Ben Beinecke died in 1932.

The family of Ben Beinecke's wife, whom he married in 1875, had emigrated from Germany in the wake of the 1848 revolution and operated a company called the Metropolitan Dye Works in

New York. The Beineckes spoke German at home and their children grew up bilingual. There were seven of them, one of whom died in infancy.

One is used to thinking of the Beineckes as three brothers (perhaps because of the text engraved on the bronze door that greets the visitors to the library which bears their name) but there was a fourth, the first-born, Bernhard Jr., who, after working for a while in his father's hotel business, moved West, first to Montana and eventually to Southern California. Of the two daughters who reached adulthood, one (Alice) emigrated back to Germany and the other (Theodora, known as Theo) fell into depression following the death of her daughter and committed suicide by throwing herself from the window of her Plaza apartment in 1940. Shorlty after this family tragedy, the hotel was sold to Conrad Hilton.

Like his elder and his younger brothers, E.J. Beinecke first went to school in Manhattan and then attended the Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, one of the most exclusive of the New England private schools. From that period dates a rather Stevensonian anecdote recorded by his nephew Bill (William S.) Beinecke in his memoir, *Through Mem'ry's Haze*, privately published in spring 2000:

> Edwin Beinecke was in the Class of 1903 and had lived in one of the large Victorian rooming houses along Main Street. A student in that house named Leeds was given a pistol as a gift from his father, and as Leeds was looking at his new present, he said to my uncle, "You know, I bet you I could hit you with this." My uncle replied, "I bet you fifty dollars you can't." Fifty dollars was a fortune in those days, particularly for a boy. "All right," said Leeds, "let's go out in the driveway." Uncle Edwin went outside, put his hands on his hips, and said, "Go ahead and shoot." Fortunately Leeds didn't dare but fired three shots in the air instead, and Uncle Edwin collected the fifty dollars. My father used to shake his head when he told that story, because Leeds might very well have tried to wing Uncle Edwin's ear and shot him

> in the head by mistake. It was an early indication of Uncle Edwin's iron daring and steely nerve – qualities that would be amply displayed in his business career.[1]

Once again following in the footsteps of his brother Ben, Edwin Beinecke entered Yale in 1903 as a member of the class of 1907. It was in the 1890s that Yale began to rival and to some extent supplant Columbia as the university of choice for the well-to-do New York families. (At the time of writing, a third-generation Beinecke is on the Yale Corporation, the university's governing body, and at least three fourth-generation Beineckes have already graduated.) Two years later, however, he left the university without graduating to enter the George A. Fuller Construction Company, which was just undertaking the building of the new Plaza Hotel. This was one of the most ambitious architectural projects in New York to date; more than five decades later, the same George A. Fuller Company built Gordon Bunschaft's equally ambitious Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. E.J. Beinecke quickly rose in the company from assistant material clerk to assistant to the president, and later to chairman of the board. In 1909, he married Linda Louise Maurer, a fellow New Yorker. They had two children, Sylvia (later Mrs John N. Robinson), born in 1910 and Edwin, Jr., born in 1913.

Between 1921 and 1923, E.J. Beinecke was president of his father-in-law's business, Henry Maurer & Son, manufacturers of firebricks. Besides the Fuller Company, he served as chairman of the boards of the U.S. Realty & Improvement Company, the Plaza Hotel Company, and the Patent Scaffolding Company. His many directorships included those of Manufacturers Trust (a position he held for 35 years), the Hoving Corporation (department store operators), the Bonwitt-Teller department stores, Tiffany's, Savoy Plaza, Inc., the Waldorf Astoria Corporation, Curtiss Wright, and quite a few more. But it was the Sperry and Hutchinson Company, where he became a director in 1918, with which he remained most closely associated until the end of his life. Incorporated in 1900, S. & H. was immensely successful, Fritz (Yale 1909), was elected

to the board two years after him and their younger brother Walter (Yale 1910), joined them in 1922. By January 1923, the Beineckes had assumed complete control of the company and E.J. Beinecke became chairman of its board, a position he retained until his retirement in 1967.

Having served during the First World War both in the American Red Cross and as a captain in the US Army, E.J. Beinecke returned to service in October 1942. He was first appointed regional executive, then deputy commissioner of the American Red Cross in England, where he remained until December 1943. One of his chief responsibilities was to set up Red Cross service clubs for the well-being of American servicemen involved in combat, first in North Africa, then in continental Europe. For his distinguished World War II service, he was awarded the Medal of Freedom in 1947, the most prestigious honour awarded to civilians in the United States.

From 1908 until the end of his life, E.J. Beinecke was an active member of the New York freemasonry, in which he attained the highest grade in 1965.

In the 1930s, E.J. Beinecke had purchased a house in Greenwich, Connecticut, which he duly named Skerryvore in Stevensonian devotion. When it was destroyed by fire in 1936, E.J. Beinecke, who never learned to drive a car, went to Europe with his wife on one of the early flights of the 'Hindenburg' Zeppelin (which exploded and crashed the following year) and had the house rebuilt during their two-month absence. Over the years, he made Skerryvore one of the most famous gardens in New England with some eleven-thousand rhododendron and azalea shrubs planted on its grounds. It was in nearby Mt. Kisko that he died on 21 January 1970.

E.J. Beinecke's collecting interests were by no means limited to Robert Louis Stevenson, nor even to bibliophilia: his collection of enameled German glass and stoneware was donated in 1957 to the Corning Museum of Glass in south central New York State. Interestingly, the first mention of his name in the Yale University Library Gazette is not in connection with Stevenson: the April 1946 issue contains a note by the great Yale bibliographer

Donald G. Wing, recording E.J. Beinecke's gift of several Boswell and Johnson titles as well as a Book of Hours printed in Paris in 1491-92. Indeed, in later life, he developed a strong interest in early books and manuscripts, and the Yale Library owes to his generosity many of its finest acquisitions in this area: some forty Elizabethan and Restoration plays in 1949; four years later, a collection of sixty-nine incunabula; and some of Yale's most renowned illuminated medieval manuscripts. It was E.J. Beinecke, in the spring of 1964, who presented Yale with one of its great treasures, the so-called Nancy manuscript of Antonio Pigafetta's account of Magellan's voyage around the world, and the following year an even more famous acquisition, known as 'Thomas More's Prayer Book,' also came to Yale through his generosity and that of his brother Fritz.

Like Harry Elkins Widener, another great Stevenson collector, E.J. Beinecke discovered the Scottish writer when he was an undergraduate. He later recalled having owned a set of Stevenson at Yale (possibly the Thistle edition, twenty-four volumes of which were published by Scribner's between 1895 and 1899) and reading with delight *Treasure Island* and *Kidnapped*. But it seems that it was his discovery of Father Damien in 1927 that prompted him to collect Stevenson. In the words of Gertrude Hills, whom E.J. Beinecke hired as his personal librarian in late 1931 or early 1932, 'As he closed the pamphlet, admiration for and curiosity about the writer impelled him to seek to own not only everything written by, but also everything written about him'. This was achieved to a large degree in the course of a lively buying campaign, particularly active in the years 1929-32, on both sides of the Atlantic, chiefly through the agency of Maggs Brothers in London and Thomas J. Gannon, Inc. in New York, or in the auction rooms. At the Jerome Kern sale in 1929, which is still remembered for the extraordinary prices it set, the same year as the Wall Street crash, E.J. Beinecke was the successful bidder on several items, such as the issue in cloth of *New Arabian Nights* (Beinecke, 325), the first American edition of *In the South Seas* (Beinecke, 526), and the first French edition of *Treasure Island* inscribed to Mrs Will H. Low (Beinecke, 248). It was

also at auction that he acquired the manuscript of *The Wrong Box* (Beinecke, 7186) at an American Art Gallery sale in March 1930.

E.J. Beinecke was equally eager in his attempts to negotiate by private treaty with individual collectors, such as Charles Glidden Osborne of Marlow-on-Thames, most of whose exceptional Stevensoniana, acquired chiefly from his wife May, the widow of Francis S. Peabody, eventually entered the Beinecke collection. Contacts were initiated when E.J. Beinecke visited England in September-October 1935. Hills herself examined the collection on a trip to England in the fall of 1938 and a first purchase (including *Penny Whistles*) was concluded in December of that year. E.J. Beinecke then tried to persuade Osborne to sell him the rest of his collection, but negotiations stalled over the price of a group of 120-odd letters from Stevenson to Colvin ('two thousand pounds and not a damn cent less').

Institutions were also approached. In 1936, E.J. Beinecke entered into discussions with the Savile Club in London, which led, later that year, to one of his most spectacular acquisitions. Known then as 'The Savile Club Gift', it consisted of close to two-hundred and fifty letters from Stevenson to his lifelong friend and business adviser Charles Baxter, together with additional correspondence and manuscripts which had been deposited at the Savile Club in 1906 when Baxter, to quote Hills, resisted 'the temptation to sell them after an "astral" visitation from the author begging him not to'.

At Christmas 1939, E.J. Beinecke, 'in response to many requests by visitors', had a twelve-page description of the collection written by his librarian and privately printed in Washington, D.C. by the Saint Albans Press. Though modest by comparison with the future six-volume catalogue of the collection by George L. McKay, Hills's booklet provides a useful overview of the collection as it stood ten years or so after its inception. It then included, as noted by Hills, all but about twenty of the numbers recorded in the seven parts and appendices I and Ia of Prideaux's bibliography revised in 1917 by Mrs Luther C. Livingston, in addition to many items not recorded by Prideaux. It was in fact E.J. Beinecke's intention at the

time to publish his own Stevenson bibliography. The project is mentioned as early as 1932 in Hills's correspondence preserved in E.J. Beinecke's files in the Beinecke Library, and it was presumably one of the main reasons why he recruited her. In January 1938, the Reverend A.E. Claxton (whom we remember as one of Stevenson's bêtes noires in Samoa) wrote to E.J. Beinecke that he hoped to see his 'great book on R.L.S.' before he died. And in 1939, Hills notes hopefully: 'In due course the bibliography, now in preparation, will reach the printer's hand'. What did reach the printer's hand shortly thereafter was another, fifty-page booklet by Gertrude Hills, *Robert Louis Stevenson's Handwriting*, published in New York in 1940 under the imprint 'The Edwin J. Beinecke Collection', and illustrated with facsimile reproductions of fragments of handwritings from the collection, not just Stevenson's, but also Thomas Stevenson's, Sidney Colvin's, W.E. Henley's, Fanny Stevenson's, Lloyd Osbourne's, and Isobel Strong's. As for the projected bibliography, the research begun by Gertrude Hills was eventually used by McKay for his catalogue, which in effect has superceded Prideaux.

Among the bibliographic treasures singled out by Hills in her 1939 booklet are the collection of documents relating to the cruise on the Equator (Beinecke, 504); the copy of *Penny Whistles* annotated by Stevenson with additional comments by Sidney Colvin and Henley (Beinecke, 191, the Peabody-Osborne copy); the copyright issue of *The Beach of Falesà* (Beinecke 563); the trial issue of *The Beach of Falesà* and *The Bottle Imp* published together (Beinecke, 564, also from the Peabody and C.G. Osborne collections); *The Bottle Imp* as published in Samoan by O Le Sulu Samoa (Beinecke, 1086); the copyright issue of *In the South Seas* (Beinecke, 523); the first issue of *The Charity Bazaar* (Beinecke, 3); *An Appeal to the Clergy* (Beinecke, 11); *The Hanging Judge* (Beinecke, 441); and the trial issue of the copyright edition of the poem *Ticonderoga* (Beinecke, 464). Little did Hills and Beinecke know (they never did) that the last item was a Wise forgery: indeed it had been exonerated by John Carter and Graham Pollard in their 1933 *An Enquiry into the Nature of Certain Nineteenth Century Pamphlets*. The definitive exposure did not come about until 1983, when Nicolas Barker and John Collins published

their Sequel to 'An Enquiry'... *In Addition to Ticonderoga*, of which they manufactured two more 'issues' (Beinecke, 465 and 466), T.J. Wise and H.B. Forman produced six other faked Stevenson editions, all of which found their way into E.J. Beinecke's library.[2]

Hills's 1939 booklet reports the presence in E.J. Beinecke's collection of 'over forty volumes' from Stevenson's library, including his set of Wordsworth's Poems (Beinecke, 2607) and his 'Martial' (Beinecke 2558). It also lists various images of Stevenson. The main one is the oil portrait by Girolamo Nerli which E.J. Beinecke acquired in 1932. The Sienese-born Nerli, who emigrated to Australia and New Zealand, painted Stevenson from life in Samoa in August-September 1892. The painting exists in three versions, the other two being in the National Portrait Gallery of Scotland and in the Lord Guthrie Collection at the Robert Louis Stevenson Club in Edinburgh. E.J. Beinecke's is now thought to be a later copy painted by Nerli between 1902 and 1904.[3]

In 1934, E.J. Beinecke had acquired the charcoal sketch done by John Singer Sargent in preparation for his two oil portraits of Stevenson. To these were added the bronze medallion by Augustus Saint-Gaudens and his oblong plaster model for the monument in St. Giles Cathedral in Edinburgh – later supplemented by a plaster model of the medallion, which Professor Frank Hersey of Harvard gave to E.J. Beinecke in 1942; the bronze head by Allen Hutchinson (and, subsequently, his cast of Stevenson's hand); the duplicate of Gutzon Borglum's 1915 plaque for the veranda of the Stevenson Cottage at Saranac Lake;[4] and, just acquired in the spring of 1939, the bronze statuette of Stevenson, seated, by John Tweed.

Besides the manuscript of *The Wrong Box*, Hills lists manuscripts of seventeen poems (among many more), including 'To the Hesitating Purchaser', the verse dedication of *Treasure Island* (Beinecke, 7060), 'To Andrew Lang' from *Ballads* (Beinecke, 6992), and 'The Land of Story Books' from *A Child's Garden of Verse* (Beinecke, 6488).[5] As for autograph letters from Stevenson, apart from the Savile Club Gift, E.J. Beinecke had amassed by 1939 a large number of family letters (Stevenson to his parents and other

relatives, notably to his cousin Robert Alan Mowbray Stevenson) and more than one-hundred and fifty letters to Sidney Colvin and Frances Sitwell, among them a number of 'Vailima letters' retained by Colvin in 1913 when he sold part of the correspondence to Harry E. Widener's grandfather with a view to their presentation to Harvard. Other important correspondences represented in the collection as of 1939 were letters from Stevenson to Mr and Mrs Walter Ferrier and Mr and Mrs Charles Fairchild. Scarcely less important are the letters sent over a period of more than thirty years by Fanny Stevenson to her confidante Mrs Virgil Williams as well as her letters to Sir Sidney and Lady Colvin. Also mentioned by Hills are Thomas Stevenson's 1879-1880 letters to Colvin, letters from Henry James and Graham Balfour, and much correspondence from Henley. Finally, Hills notes the presence of transcripts of letters from Colvin to Baxter, spanning the years 1879-1894. According to McKay, these were presumably made when the originals were in the possession of Edward Verall Lucas in the early 1920s: they were later joined by seventeen holograph letters from Colvin to Baxter, all from the year 1899.

'The preservation of the Beinecke Collection as a whole is assured,' writes Hills at the end of the booklet; 'it is finally to be placed where all who admire Robert Louis Stevenson as an author or a man may come into more complete and truthful contact with him and his work than formerly has been possible.'

This statement is both cryptic and tantalizing since it appears that no formal connection existed at the time between E.J. Beinecke and the Yale University Library. In fact, E.J. Beinecke's files provide clear evidence that by the summer of 1939 his intentions were to donate or bequeath his Stevenson collection to the New York Public Library, whose lawyers were already discussing with him the terms of a gift.

That E.J. Beinecke's Stevenson collection eventually came to Yale was due primarily to the friendship he formed shortly thereafter with a remarkable man, James Tinkham Babb (1899-1968). A member of the Yale class of 1924, J.T. Babb was the university's assistant librarian from university librarian,

the position he occupied until his retirement in 1965. He was himself a collector (of William Beckford in particular, but also of Joseph Conrad and William McFee), but it has been said that he was above all a collector of collectors – for the greater glory of the Yale Library. Like E.J. Beinecke, he was a passionate fisherman and to the friendship which developed between them (and with E.J. Beinecke's younger brother Fritz) Yale owes not only the gift of the Stevenson Collection but also the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, which was officially opened on 11 October 1963. Its first librarian, Herman Warwell Liebert (1911-1994), known familiarly as Fritz, was a member of the Yale class of 1933. A Samuel Johnson collector, he returned to Yale in 1948 to become Babb's assistant and in 1955 succeeded Chauncey Brewster Tinker, Yale's first Keeper of Rare Books, as curator of the Rare Book Room in the Sterling Memorial Library. He too developed with E.J. Beinecke and his younger brother a long-lasting friendship.

The opportunity for Babb to become acquainted with E.J. Beinecke was evidently provided by the exhibition of Stevensoniana from the latter's collection which was held at the Grolier Club in the fall of 1941. No catalogue or checklist was apparently published and no documentation (except a handful of labels) seems to have survived from that event, not even the remarks made by E.J. Beinecke at the opening on October 23. What is clear is that even before he left for England in the fall of 1942, E.J. Beinecke had made up his mind to give his collection to his alma mater and had begun a close association with the Yale Library, which was consecrated in 1946 when he became a trustee of the Yale Library Associates; he remained one until his death. The following year, he was one of the twenty-seven donors who contributed to the purchase by Yale of the 'Bay Psalm Book'.

If by 1939, E.J. Beinecke's Stevenson collection was probably the largest ever assembled, some major additions were made during the next decade, beginning in 1940 with the manuscript *Silverado Diary* (Beinecke, 6844) and the *St. Ives* manuscript (Beinecke, 6804). The former was eventually presented by E.J. Beinecke to the Henry E. Huntington Library in San Marino.

The ties that E.J. Beinecke renewed with Yale in no way diminished his collecting appetite. In fact, from the mid-1940s onwards, many additions to his collection were made directly for Yale or by the University with his financial support. In 1944, the Chaucer Head Book Shop in New York offered for sale as one lot an important group of material still in the possession of Stevenson's stepdaughter Isobel Strong (since 1914 Mrs Edward Salisbury Field) and her son Austin Strong, who had started making overtures to E.J. Beinecke, via the Parke Bernet Galleries, in the fall of 1941. This formed in effect the largest amount of Stevensoniana to come on the market since the 1914-16 Anderson Galleries sales following the death of Fanny Stevenson. It contained more than one-hundred and thirty letters from Stevenson to his parents, autograph notebooks, copybooks, and miscellaneous drafts and manuscript fragments, about fifty letters from Fanny Stevenson to Thomas and Margaret Stevenson, various letters addressed to Stevenson and his parents, memorabilia (such as Stevenson's penknife and cigarette holder and a pair of candlesticks from Vailima), and one-hundred and twenty volumes from the library at Vailima, including books by members of the Stevenson family and the copy of *Edinburgh* with a presentation inscription from Margaret Stevenson to Fanny and some annotations by Stevenson (Beinecke, 24). In 1946, a further three-hundred French books from Vailima were purchased from the same New York bookstore. In 1947 came the manuscript of 'The Go-Between' (Beinecke, 6255), the 1893 watercolour portrait by F.P. Spence, and yet another group of letters from Stevenson to his mother.

1949 can be singled out as the annus mirabilis of E.J. Beinecke's Stevenson collection. In May and in November, the remainder of the manuscripts in the possession of C.G. Osborne came up for auction at Sotheby's in London. At the first sale, E.J. Beinecke acquired for Yale the letters from Stevenson to Colvin and no small amount of miscellaneous manuscript material, such as four pages from the manuscript of *The Master of Ballantrae* (twenty pages of which are now at Yale). The second sale included the holograph

drafts of the *Inland Voyage* (Beinecke, 6452) and *The Amateur Emigrant* (Beinecke, 5956) as well as many manuscripts of poems and several notebooks. Still in 1949, the Rosenbach Company in Philadelphia sold to E.J. Beinecke the manuscript of *Catriona* (Beinecke, 6078, an earlier version than the one in the Widener Collection) and a considerable number of manuscripts, including *Monmouth* (Beinecke, 6587) and the incomplete intermediate draft of *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, originally in the collection of Harry Glemby (Beinecke, 6934). E.J. Beinecke had already acquired separately four individual pages of the manuscript of the later version of *Jekyll and Hyde*: these he presented in 1952 to the Pierpont Morgan Library, which already held most of it. And at the same time, the Morgan introduction, chapters 1 and 2, and most of chapter 3 to complement their manuscript, an earlier draft than the Yale version; the latter is entitled 'The Justice-Clerk' and is chiefly in the hand of Isobel Strong (Beinecke, 7116).

The following year a large group of letters and manuscripts owned by Katharine Osbourne, the widow of Stevenson's stepson (who had died in 1947) was purchased from the San Francisco bookdealer Warren R. Howell.

E.J. Beinecke's first donations to Yale from his Stevenson collection were made without any publicity. Thus, the presentation of the twelve bound volumes of the Savile Club Gift was announced as an anonymous gift in the April 1948 issue of the library Gazette. One year later, the anonymity had disappeared when the April 1949 issue reported the gift of the proof copy of *The Beach of Falesà* and thirteen early letters from Stevenson to his cousin Bob, 'finely bound in full morocco'. In 1950, two-hundred and fifty titles (not annotated) from the library at Vailima were transferred to Yale. (McKay, who limits himself to books from Stevenson's library containing inscriptions or annotations, lists one-hundred and thirteen in his 1952 volume; thirty-six more figure in the 1964 Addenda volume. The present number in the Beinecke Library is close to five-hundred.)

The gift of E.J. Beinecke's entire Stevenson collection to Yale was made in 1951. The deed of gift is dated February 13 and

is in the shape of a letter to James Babb: 'Dear Jim, tomorrow my chauffeur will deliver to you seven cases of Robert Louis Stevenson manuscripts embodying novels, poems[,] essays, letters, etc., in which R.L.S.'s various items made their first appearance in print. The total shipment is twelve cases. [...] A considerable number of the manuscripts are already yours through gifts of the manuscripts themselves or through gifts of money to be used for the purpose of purchasing others. I now make a gift of the balance of the manuscripts to the Yale University Library.' This gift was officially announced by the University on 16 May 1951; articles reporting the donation appeared in the *New York Times* for 17 May 1951 and in the *New York Herald Tribune* for May 21. An exhibition, arranged by Marjorie G. Wynne, was held in the Sterling Memorial Library from 18 May until 24 September of that year. Its opening on 18 May was marked by a lecture by David Daiches, who was then teaching at Cornell University. Later in the same year, this lecture was privately printed in New York, a publication evidently commissioned by E.J. Beinecke, under the title 'Stevenson and the Art of Fiction' (Beinecke, 1275). 'There is no doubt,' Daiches says in his opening remarks, 'that Yale will become the Mecca of all those who are anxious to get new and first-hand information about Stevenson, and to study afresh his life, his personality and his work. (...) From now on, there will be no excuse for anybody's perpetuating the false notions about Stevenson's life and character that have been so current among both enthusiasts and iconoclasts. The substantial truth about Stevenson, both as man and as artist, can now be fully determined at Yale.'

On the same day, 18 May 1951, appeared the first part of the catalogue of the collection, 'A Stevenson Library: Catalogue of a Collection of Writings by and about Robert Louis Stevenson, Formed by Edwin J. Beinecke'. Its compiler, George McKay, then librarian of the Grolier Club, had been working on it since the summer of 1948: in effect, he succeeded Gertrude Hills, whose trace we lose after 1941. The catalogue bears the imprint of the Yale University Library. The three volumes originally planned grew to six. Volume one was devoted to 'Printed Books,

Pamphlets, Broadsides, etc.' as was Volume two, which came out in 1952. Volume three contained 'Autograph Letters by Robert Louis Stevenson and his Wife', whilst Volume four was 'Letters to and About Robert Louis Stevenson', in 1958; Volume five, 'Manuscripts by Robert Louis Stevenson and Others,' in 1964; and Volume six ('Addenda and Corrigenda;) in 1964. A twenty-page description of the collection by Marjorie Wynne, who became the curator of the collection from its arrival at Yale until her retirement in 1987, was published in the library Gazette for January 1952: a comparison with Hills's 1939 account reflects the collection's impressive growth.

McKay's catalogue was prepared independently from the Yale Library. It was not even done in New Haven. The items described in Volumes two to six, including the manuscripts, were simply shipped to the Grolier Club when needed and returned to the Yale Rare Book Room once the work was done (such were the days). This mode of proceeding resulted in two consequences. The first is that the catalogue is an inventory but not a locator. McKay's numbers are not shelfmarks. It is true that when cards were produced for the items shelved in the Rare Book Room, those numbers were recorded (and are now preserved in the online records as part of the ORBIS catalogue, though, at this stage at least, not in a searchable field). But the fact is that the entire printed collection was not retained in the Rare Book Room. Of the seven-hundred and thirty-six items recorded by McKay in the first volume, five-hundred and nine were kept, at least one-hundred and sixty-one were sent to the general stacks of the Sterling Memorial Library, where it is to be hoped that they still are, and even though E.J. Beinecke's bookplate is affixed in them, the library cards that were produced for them bore no mention of their provenance or the corresponding McKay number. Furthermore, thirty or so duplicates, generally listed by McKay as 'another copy' or 'a third copy', were disposed of by the Rare Book Room and are now either in private hands or in other institutions (and it would be interesting to know whether they still have the Beinecke bookplate). No manuscripts, of course, were 'disposed of', but

McKay's descriptive system has created difficulties which every scholar who has worked on the collection is familiar with. To sum up, McKay decided to catalogue the manuscripts as abstract bibliographic entities rather than bibliographic objects. In other words, his catalogue regroups manuscripts of poems, and assigns them sequential numbers, no matter whether they were alone on a single leaf, or on the reverse of a sheet with an unrelated draft of the verso, which in turn was assigned a totally different number in the sequence, or even in a notebook that might contain thirty drafts or more of various poems or verse fragments: to that single notebook is attached not one, but thirty different McKay numbers! This not altogether happy situation is the one we all, librarians and scholars, have had to live with since. Plans are currently being made for an online version of the manuscript component of the Beinecke Stevenson collection which will both incorporate McKay's numbers while providing a better sense of the physical location of the items.

After its transfer to Yale, E.J. Beinecke continued to enrich the collection, as often as not at the deft prompting of Babb, Liebert, and Marjorie Wynne. In September 1952, Austin Strong died. A few months later, Chaucer Head offered for sale on behalf of his widow the final portion of Stevenson's papers still in the hands of his family. It included one-hundred and ten letters from Andrew Lang, about ninety letters from W.E. Henley, forty-two letters from Henry James (among them his twenty-six-page letter of condolence to Fanny), and further correspondence from Charles Scribner's Sons, Colvin, Fleeming Jenkin, George Meredith, Auguste Rodin, Walter Simpson, Leslie Stephens, John Addington Symonds, more notebooks, miscellaneous manuscripts, and memorabilia, including locks of R.L.S.'s hair in 1854 and 1894.

Additions, large and small, to the collection in the 1950s and 1960s are chronicled in the library Gazette: in 1953, *The Silverado Squatters* inscribed by Stevenson to his mother (Beinecke, 231), *Underwoods* inscribed by Stevenson to Dr Dobell (Beinecke, 7227), *A Child's Garden of Verse* inscribed by the illustrator Charles Robinson (Beinecke, 201), and the bronze medallion by

Saint-Gaudens; in 1954 an 1891 letter from Stevenson to Baxter, which had apparently gone astray, and one to his parents, a variety of manuscripts purchased at Sotheby's, London (among them a sixty-eight-page corrected typescript for the 'Eight Islands' section of *The South Seas*, (Beinecke, 6436) and an important collection of material from Scribner, including seventy-one letters to Stevenson from Charles Scribner and E.L. Burlingame, and the proofs for *The Wrong Box* (Beinecke, 7589); in 1956, the manuscript of 'The Body Snatcher' (Beinecke, 6020); in 1960, the Gutzon Borglum plaque; in 1962 a ten-page letter to Baxter dated September 1 [1890] (Beinecke, 7939); in 1962 a presentation copy of *Ballads* (Beinecke, 7598); in 1963, Austin Strong's manuscript account of his life at Vailima, together with a collection of photographs, some annotated by Stevenson.

It seems that E.J. Beinecke seldom resisted the entreaties of his Yale librarians. 'I am glad,' he wrote to Marjorie Wynne in September 1956, 'that you liked the manuscript of "The Body Snatcher". Don Wing [Donald G. Wing, Yale's senior cataloguer and the author of the short-title catalogue of books published in English between 1641 and 1700] bludgeoned me into buying it and now that the bruise is almost healed I am glad he did.'

One important item entered the collection in 1964 not through the intermediary of E.J. Beinecke but that of his brother Fritz: the large tapa cloth which once hung in a special room at Vailima and now adorns the west side of the lobby of the library. It was made from Paper Mulberry bark in 1890 by the Samoan natives in the backyard of the first cottage built by Stevenson on the island, and presented to him in honor of the house. Since the natives had never seen a house with windows, these are the principal decorative motif of the tapa. Stevenson later gave it to a Sea Captain in gratitude for some favor and the Captain, in turn, presented it to the father of Dr Gregory Stragnell, who in 1947 gave it to Mr and Mrs Stratter Day of Short Hills, New Jersey, from whom it eventually came to Yale at Fritz Beinecke's urging.

That E.J. Beinecke maintained an active interest in the collection's growth and well-being until the end of his life is

amply documented in his correspondence with the Yale Library. The only sign that his collector's appetite may have been waning is that Marjorie Wynne failed to arouse his interest in purchasing from the University of California, Los Angeles, a group of ca. 25 manuscripts, mostly poetic, in the spring of 1966. These all came from the Peabody-Osborne collection and had been acquired in 1949 at Sotheby's. When the U.C.L.A. Library, then in financial difficulties, decided to deaccession them, Yale was first approached by Wilbur Smith, head of the U.C.L.A. special collections. The high asking price, especially compared with the 1949 values, must have been a factor, combined with the consideration that the poems had all (or nearly all) been published, first by Hellman in 1916 and lastly by Janet Adam Smith in 1950. In any event, E.J. Beinecke declined to purchase what must have been one of the last substantial collection of R.L.S. manuscripts and they were sold piecemeal by Sotheby's later that spring.

In a 1939 letter to Gertrude Hills in which he discusses the final disposition of his Stevenson collection, E.J. Beinecke made two points very clear. The first was that the collection deserved to be housed in a building of its own. The second was that once it had left his ownership the collection should not be considered closed, but, on the contrary, regularly enriched by additions from other sources. In the fullness of time, those two wishes have been carried out, both in a metonymic and a literal sense: the Beinecke Library (as E.J. Beinecke's Stevenson collection was once known) has found its permanent home in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, where it continues to grow for the present and future benefit of Stevenson scholarship.

Works Cited

Besides the various publications quoted above, this account is based on information gathered in part from the Beinecke Family Records compiled in twenty-one albums by Fred L. Mayer for presentation to E.J. Beinecke Jr. on his sixtieth birthday in 1973 and donated to the Beinecke Library by his widow following his death in 1982. I

have also relied on material from the still unprocessed collector's files of E.J. Beinecke, which contain a wealth of information on the history of his Stevenson Library. Finally, I have greatly benefited from the personal reminiscences and comments of Marjorie G. Wynne, to whom I wish to convey my gratitude, as are grateful to her the many Stevensonians who have used the Beinecke Collection over the years. The bracketed Beinecke numbers throughout refer to McKay's catalogue, A Stevenson Library...

1. Beinecke, William S. with Kabaservice, Geoffrey M.; *Through Mem'ry's Haze: A Personal Memoir*, (New York: Prospect Hill Press, 2000), p. 49.
2. The spurious Edinburgh 'Ticonderoga' has evidently not lost all its cachet since a copy was available for sale at the 1997 New York Antiquarian Book Fair, priced at $850 with no mention of its tainted origin. On 'Ticonderoga', see also Lewis, Roger C.; *Thomas James Wise and the Trial Book Fallacy*, (Aldershot, Hants: Scolar Press, 1995), pp. 214-218.
3. See Peter Entwisle, Michael Dunn and Roger Collins; *Nerli: An Exhibition of Paintings and Drawings*, (Dunedin: Dunedin Public Art Gallery, 1988), especially pp. 50-51 and pp. 131-132.
4. In the 1920s Borglum sculpted a bust of Bernhard Beinecke: see Beinecke, *Through Mem'ry's Haze*, p. 7-8.
5. One of the manuscript poems, listed by Hills as 'I Have Been Young,' is in fact a fragment of 'Dark Women' (Beinecke, 6137). I am grateful to Roger Lewis for identifying it.

Ghost Writing: Stevenson and Dumas

Glenda Norquay

The material available on Stevenson's activities as a reader – the frequent demands in his letters home for a particular book, or usually a list of books – his comments on those books as he read them, his literary productions as reviewer and essayist, even the borrowing records in the Advocates Library – make him a particularly rich field in which to trace the intertextual dynamics between reading and writing practices.[1] Stevenson's desire to adapt, imitate, experiment in different genres, to play – in the unfortunate phrase that has returned to haunt his writing – 'the sedulous ape', or more positively, as Italo Calvino suggested, to write the kinds of books he would have liked to read',[2] makes him an even more interesting case through which to explore the relationship between a reader's writing and a writer's reading. As Calvino implies, the recreation of particular narrative pleasures was a powerful motivating force in Stevenson's fiction, and in his essays, with their reflections on the work of other novelists, Stevenson extended his sophisticated articulation of pleasure and desire.

My concern, however, is not with the identification of 'sources and influences' interesting as that might be; nor do I want to work with the model of 'misprision' advanced by Harold Bloom, in which the 'strong' poet swerves from or kills his forefathers[3]; for a number of reasons this combative image of the 'intellectual' reader does not appear appropriate to Stevenson who, as others have suggested, tends to present himself as eclectic, if not indiscriminate, in his reading tastes. Moreover, the complexity of writing-reading relations, as Paul Ricoeur has pointed out, cannot be compared to the speaking-answering dynamic of dialogue:

> Dialogue is an exchange of questions and answers; there is no exchange of this sort between the writer and the reader.

> The writer does not respond to the reader. Rather the book divides the act of writing and the act of reading into two sides, between which there is no communication. The reader is absent from the act of writing; the writer is absent from the act of reading. The text thus produces a double eclipse of the reader and the writer.[4]

Perhaps the most useful image of the fluid and complicated relationship between reader and text is to be found in Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life*, in which he considers what we might call the practices of the 'general' rather than intellectual reader – and in many of his most interesting essays on fiction Stevenson constructs himself in exactly this role, although it is only one of several parts he plays. The reader, de Certeau, suggests:

> Insinuates into another person's text the ruses of pleasure and appropriation: he poaches on it, is transported into it, pluralises himself into it like the internal rumblings of one's body. ...Words become the outlet or product of silent histories. The readable transforms itself into the memorable: Barthes reads Proust in Stendhal's text, the viewer reads the landscape of his childhood in the evening news. The thin film of writing becomes a movement of strata, a play of spaces. A different world (the reader's) slips into the author's place. This mutation makes the text habitable, like a rented apartment.[5]

This model of writing, with its dual play of pleasure and appropriation, attractively avoids fixity of the text or of the reading process, thus freeing the idea of a process of exchange.

De Certeau continues with yet another memorable image: readers are travellers; they move across land belonging to someone else, like nomads poaching their way across fields they did not write...[6] This concept of the reader as poacher, as traveller, engaging in a process of bricolage, collecting bits and

pieces, which are then transformed in use and function, finds a particular resonance in relation to Stevenson. In one of the many biographical celebrations of his life, *Last Witness for Robert Louis Stevenson* (1960), Elsie Caldwell describes his wanderings around the Scottish countryside, talking to the locals of the history of their area, and comments: 'He was merely vagabonding, consciously or unconsciously seeking health in the open air because of that insistent call of starving lungs.'[7] Vagabonding for Stevenson is not only an image he favours in his poetry but also becomes both a physical and a literary activity, as he travels within texts, transforming them for his own purposes.

These depictions – the reader as poacher, the (perhaps slightly less 'transgressive') reader as vagabond – offer then, a framing image of Stevenson's relationship to the texts he read, and it is that dynamic that forms the basis of this essay. The complexity of such 'ruses of pleasure and appropriation' can be clearly demonstrated by focusing upon the textual strategies of one of Stevenson's own essays. Stevenson's essays theorizing fiction have been neglected on two accounts: what he has to say seems always to be overshadowed by Henry James; and even if what he has to say is recognized, the complex methods used to say it are rarely appreciated. 'A Gossip Upon a Novel of Dumas's', one of several essays produced in the late 1880's, reveals both the sophistication of Stevenson's perception of the reading process, and the subtlety of his textual strategies.[8]

While Ricoeur may assert that the exchanges of writer and reader cannot be compared to dialogue, some kind of relationship is nevertheless established between the activities of reading and writing even if it is not one of 'communication'.[9] Indeed, for Stevenson, texts not only speak to him, but he, in a certain sense, seeks to speak back to them. Gaston Bachelard offers a more helpful consideration of the reader as writer: attempting to trace this complicated relationship between reading and writing he suggests that in relation to those texts we admire, and re-read: we become, in a sense, ghost writers, in the very act of reading: 'In this admiration, which goes beyond the passivity of contemplative

attitudes, the joy of the reader appears to be the reflection of the joy of writing, as though the reader were the writer's ghost.'[10] Moreover, he suggests, when those texts that we most admire, that we feel most engagement with and sympathy for, are also those that we recognize as flawed, the relationship is further complicated and, to an extent, liberated: the dynamic by which reading becomes a means both of nurturing and repressing the desire to write is subtly altered: 'All readers who have a certain passion for reading, nurture and repress, through reading, the desire to become a writer. When the page we have read is too near perfection, our modesty suppresses this desire. But it reappears nevertheless.'[11] Describing the style of Alexander Dumas, in the novel of his he most loved, Stevenson talks of it as being: 'with every fault, yet never tedious; with no merit, yet inimitably right'.[12] Both the text and the authorial figure of Dumas may be seen then as performing for Stevenson exactly that function described by Bachelard: repressing yet nurturing the desire to write, engaging the reader in a complex process of admiration and estrangement.

The essay itself, written in 1887, after what Furnas describes as a 'foul winter' for Stevenson in which his father is declining and he is coming to terms with the death of Fleeming Jenkin, reflects a general and long-standing admiration of Dumas.[13] As he admitted to Henley, whom he had urged to write a biography of the author: 'Dumas I have read and re-read too often', and he makes frequent reference to the writer in his essays and letters.[14] Indeed in January and February 1886, when Henley and Stevenson are planning a collection entitled 'Masterpieces of Prose Narrative', most of Stevenson's letters to Henley are dominated by his agonizing over which piece of Dumas to include in the anthology. (He even goes so far as to write to George Saintsbury for advice, remembering an article Saintsbury had written eight years earlier for the *Fortnightly Review*.)[15] It is clearly important to him that Dumas is well represented. Stevenson loved Dumas for a number of reasons: he figures large (in every sense) in Stevenson's imagination, both as a literary model and as a person. As Henry James, noted, 'It is...my impression that he prefers the author of "The Three Musketeers"

to any novelist except Mr. George Meredith...I should go so far as to suspect that his idea of the delightful work of fiction would be the adventures of Monte Cristo related by the author of Richard Feverel.'[16]

The focus of Stevenson's particular admiration is that novel he read again and again, and to which he devoted 'A Gossip upon a novel of Dumas's': *The Vicomte de Bragelonne*. The more famous romance, *The Three Musketeers*, was first serialized in *Le Siècle* 1843-4 and the musketeers saga was then continued in a number of volumes. Under the title of *The Vicomte de Bragelonne* Stevenson appears here to refer to the last three Musketeer novels, now published as *The Vicomte de Bragelonne*, *Louise de la Vallière* and *The Man in the Iron Mask*. What made that final musketeer adventure, serialized between October and January 1850 such a significant site for re-reading? What ghostly writing activity did this novel promote in Stevenson? And, if we look for Dumas in Stevenson, what can we see of Stevenson in Dumas for, as de Certeau writes: 'Barthes reads Proust in Stendhal's text; the viewer reads the landscape of his childhood in the evening news.'[17] Dumas's fiction, it could be argued, does find a place in Stevenson's own writing through 'influence': we might find elements of it in the late and unfinished romance, *St Ives: being the adventures of a French prisoner in England*, in which a French narrator and a prison escape are relocated in Edinburgh and Swanston; much could also be said about the relationship between the Musketeers saga and *Kidnapped* and *Catriona*, about their shared tropes and concerns – the complications of romantic ideas of heroism, the tension between honour and pragmatism, the interconnections of dress and performance, the concern with masculinity and with male bonding, action and violence, the importance of islands and the traversal of distance, but it is in some respects more interesting to look at the essay itself and the ways in which it becomes a space in which Stevenson reconstructs his role as a reader, and reads himself as a writer.

In the course of the 1887 essay Stevenson makes clear what he admires about Dumas as a man and a professional writer: his

amazing energy, his rate of production, his appetite for success and for life, are all strongly attractive to him. As a novelist, Dumas's handling of plot, the characters he creates, the use of dramatic incident, and his rather variable success in creating female characters (a problem he was all too familiar with himself) drew Stevenson to him. At several points in the essay, therefore, Stevenson adopts a comparative approach, positioning himself very much as an author writing about a fellow 'craftsman', a tactic which is most clearly manifested in his aside on this troublesome business of delineating heroines: 'Authors, at least, know it well; a heroine will too often start the trick of "getting ugly" and no disease is more difficult to cure. I said authors, but indeed I had a side eye to one author in particular with whose works I am very well acquainted, though I cannot read them, and who has spent many vigils in this cause, sitting beside his ailing puppets and (like a magician) wearying his art to restore them to youth and beauty.'[18] The technique here, of developing increasingly overt references to his own status as writer and as author of the essay, is a common one for Stevenson in his essays, and particularly obvious in 'A Chapter on Dreams'.

Coexisting, however, with this explicit acknowledgement of his own 'writerly' interest, is Stevenson's fabrication of himself as a reader and the essay consistently plays upon these two different levels of response. Moreover, as do most of Stevenson's literary essays, this one contains a narrative within the disquisition; in this case, the story of how the young reader forms an acquaintance with the book and his subsequent revisiting of it. His experience of the novel then is situated not only in relation to his own experiences as a writer but also to key moments of his development as a reader. It is in the depiction of scenes from the novel on dessert plates in a hotel in Nice that he first makes acquaintance with the figures from the Musketeers story – and the significance of this othering, through the pleasurable associations of France, of holiday, perhaps even of pudding should be noted.[19] (We might also consider the extent to which the association of French literature with pleasure might be read into his dislike of Zola and, continuing in culinary

metaphor, 'the rancid school of realism'.[20]) But he was already, he admits, familiar with the name of d'Artagnan through reading a novel of Miss Yonge's. The novel in question has been identified as *The Young Stepmother*, in which one of the younger male characters is caught reading 'one of the worst and most fascinating of Dumas's romances', becomes terrified that his father will find out, and is advised that 'there are some exciting pleasures that we must turn our backs on resolutely. I think this book is one of them.'[21] Not unfamiliar with a censorious paternal presence, this image of transgressive pleasure must surely have spoken to Stevenson, and offered a 'frame' with which to approach the text. And when he acquires a copy himself again there is an undercurrent of the illicit in it being 'one of those pirated editions that swarmed for a time out of Brussels, and ran to such a troop of neat and dwarfish versions.'[22] Again there are overtones of alterity in the associations of pirates and dwarves.

It should be noted, however, that he does not include in these recollections the judgments expressed in a letter to Bob Stevenson written in 1866:

> I have read Bragelonne. The conversations are certainly wonderful, but the strength of the plot is frittered away and the whole story is lengthened out to a most unconscionable and dreary extent. The strength of Porthos and the furiously acute intellects of Aramis and d'Artagnan are singularly overdone. There are too many conversations in which the latter braves the King, and when he has thoroughly failed in his object, succeeds all at once by shamming that he is going to stick himself, or throwing up his situation. Had I been Louis, I should have had his brains blown out for one half of the cheek which he gives.[23]

This critical insight is not part of the narrative of 'reconstructed' readings we find in the essay, which takes a far more positive tone. It is also ironic, given his initial depiction of the book as dangerous, that the reason Stevenson offers for his continuing

enthusiasm is a defense of its morality. The morality which, he acknowledges, may not appeal to everyone, nevertheless offers a model of 'truthfulness', to be found in particular in d'Artagnan: 'his conscience is void of all refinement, whether for good or evil; but the whole man rings true like a good sovereign.'[24] Of course, as with his highly 'moral' list of reading in 'Books which Have Influenced Me', we might not want to take such rectitude at face value, but as a defensive strategy it is significant that he also feels the need to claim an educative value for the book.[25] At first reading, however, Dumas is exciting, dangerous, 'other', so the essay again plays two different responses against each other: the desire for dangerous pleasures and the articulation of 'moral value'.[26]

His next recalled reading pulls the novel more firmly to his personal and domestic self, although an element of estrangement is still evident: reading it alone while in a cottage in the Pentlands, it is described as part of the comforts of home, along with dog, slippers and warmth, which await him on his return from the cold countryside. But even within this domestic interior, he experiences a kind of bifurcation of place, one familiar to any reader, as he moves between fictional location and place of reading:

> ... would rise from my book and pull the blind aside, and see the snow and the glittering hollies chequer a Scotch garden, and the winter moonlight brighten the white hills. Thence I would turn again to that crowded and sunny field of life in which it was so easy to forget myself, my cares and my surroundings: a place busy as a city, bright as a theatre, thronged with memorable faces, and sounding with delightful speech.[27]

The oppositions of moonlight and sunlight, silence and noise, solitude and throng, reflection and performance, are clear but the explanation of 'forgetting himself' and his cares through the book seems an unsatisfactory way of accounting for that striking sense of disruption and dislocation described, by which the world of the

novel brings into being, through a process of chiaroscuro, a more sharply etched and more alienating world of the reader.

Stevenson is, of course, addressing an important aspect of the reading process that others have tackled in more technical terms. Writing of this business of 'involvement' with the literary in his book *Frame Analysis*, which stresses the 'mediated' nature of all experience, the sociologist Erving Goffman notes: 'the matter of being carried away into something – in a word, engrossment – does not provide us with a means of distinguishing strips of untransformed activity from transformed ones: a reader's involvement in an episode from a novel is in the relevant sense the same as his involvement in a strip of "actual" experience.'[28] Stevenson's view of the world outside his text is in some ways more 'unheimlich' and less 'real' than the fictional world to which he returns.

From a more obviously literary engagement with narrative analysis, Wolfgang Iser also talks of what he calls 'entanglement' in a text: this, he suggests, carries several effects simultaneously:

> While we are caught up in a text, we do not at first know what is happening to us. That is why we often feel the need to talk about books we have read – not in order to gain some distance from them so much as to find out what it is that we were entangled in... The more "present" the text is to us, the more our habitual selves – at least for the duration of the read – recede into the "past"... This does not mean, however, that these criteria of our past experience disappear altogether. On the contrary, our past still remains our experience, but what happens now is that it begins to interact with the as yet unfamiliar presence of the text. ...[29]

Drawing on John Dewey's ideas from *Art as Experience*, Iser sees the conjunction of new and old as a 'recreation in which the present impulsion gets form and solidity while the old, the 'stored' material is literally revived, given new life and purpose through

having to meet a new situation'.[30] But through an awareness of discrepancies in these gestalten, Iser suggests, the reader is also detached from his own participation in the text: 'The ability to perceive oneself during the process of participation is an essential quality of the aesthetic experience: an observer finds himself in a strange halfway position: he is involved, and he watches himself being involved.'[31] Although in his description of reading in the Pentlands Stevenson appears to polarize escape into the warmth of fiction and the reality of the cold world outside, the effect of that description upon the reader is quite different. In this section of the essay, through a complicated negotiation of the present of the text with a number of his past reading selves, Stevenson enacts for his readers that very process of engagement and observation of engagement, of participation and detachment described by Iser: the tale becomes part of his familiar world, but also makes that world – through the activity of reading – other. The essay, moreover, becomes actively engaged with two fictionalized worlds while simultaneously reflecting on the processes of engagement.

Characteristically, Stevenson both plays out, and critiques through his performance, the pleasures of the text. Beyond that layering effect however, the moment also brings into play another dimension of his relationship with Dumas's novel, for in the narrative recollection of experience there is also an element of nostalgia, of going back to the past, of revisiting and reviewing the pleasures it contained, pleasures which were then less informed by his own literariness ('I understood but little of the merits of the book') and were somehow more 'innocent'.[32] Nostalgia is, of course, central feature of this part of the Musketeers series and Stevenson loves *The Vicomte de Bragelonne* in particular because here the musketeers are old, placed in a new and changing society, clinging to what are increasingly seen as outmoded values, remembering past glories and a previous innocence. Writing about reading Dumas also allows Stevenson both to become an 'innocent' reader again, and to view with detachment, his earlier reading self – which as I have indicated, is already a selective and fictionalized self.

Significantly, it is also nostalgia that forms part of the appeal of Dumas himself, a figure whom he refers to most of the time in his letters as 'Old Dumas' (as opposed to the way in which he talks about the 'Master Balzac'.)[33] Nostalgia operates not just in the association with a literary figure who played a part in his past, but also in his construction of Dumas as an 'excessive' writer who was less 'cautious' in his profession than the denizens of Stevenson's literary milieu had become, who belonged to an older and more exciting world: 'Chastity is not near his heart; nor, yet, to his own sore cost, that virtue of frugality which is the armour of the artist'.[34] Dumas then is both more 'productive' but also less 'professional' in his profligacy than Stevenson's fellow writers; again this perspective allows Stevenson both to acknowledge and denigrate his own status as a 'professional' writer. This dynamic between pragmatism and passion is, as Stevenson notes, also played out in the novel between the characters of Fouquet, the charismatic, generous, yet corrupt, superintendent of finance, and Colbert, his pragmatic and calculating replacement. It is Stevenson's own observation on the depiction of Fouquet – 'Dumas saw something of himself and drew the portrait more tenderly' that points to how we should 'read' his own presentation of (and identification with) Dumas.[35]

From that time on, he tells us he has returned to the book often, and has just 'risen from my last (let me call it my fifth) perusal, having liked it better and admired it more seriously than ever.'[36] But now the relationship has changed again: from being either a writerly compatriot of the author, or an avid reader of the text, Stevenson now presents himself as being 'read' by this novel: 'Perhaps I have a sense of ownership, being so well known in these six volumes. Perhaps I think that d'Artagnan delights to have me read of him, and Louis Quatorze is gratified, and Fouquet throws me a look, and Aramis, although he knows I do not love him, yet plays to me with his best graces, as to an old patron of the show.'[37] So while Stevenson possesses the book he is also a possession of it; he has become, he suggests, its ideal reader – perhaps an implied reader, perhaps Riffaterre's super reader – for whom the

characters perform at their best. He has become, as it were, the point at which these characters are most themselves, offering a coherence to the novel, a reinforcement of identity. Any more thinking along such lines, he observes, and he will become like George IV at the Battle of Waterloo and 'may come to fancy the Vicomte the first, and Heaven knows the best, of my own works.'[38] (George IV liked to claim that it was through his efforts Napoleon was defeated.) In his joy of reading Stevenson does not indeed appear to have become the reader as the 'writer's ghost.'

From his confidence in this role, Stevenson then goes on to enumerate the values of the novel, of the character of d'Artagnan, and of the 'ventripotent mulatto' Dumas himself, before concluding with the point that one of the most striking features of the novel is that it educates by anticipating the end of life, seeing beyond the present moment to failed ideas, to the death of friends: 'to read this well is to anticipate experience'.[39] (And Stevenson, as he has demonstrated, reads well.) Looking forward himself, the essay does not go 'beyond' the novel towards 'experience' but ends instead with anticipation of another reading, a reading that will lead forward into a world of familiar romance but also fresh possibilities: 'Yet a sixth time, dearest d'Artagnan, we shall kidnap Monk and take horse together for Belle Isle!'[40] The piece closes therefore with the novel still open for re-reading, returning us – revived as it were – to the fiction and away from the author of the essay.

There is however another complex process of revivification being enacted in this piece of writing. Theorists of the phenomenology of reading frequently depict the central relationship between writer and reader in terms of life and death: Ricoeur writes: 'to read a book is to consider the author as already dead, and the book as posthumous. For it is when the author is dead that the relation to the book becomes complete and, as it were, intact.'[41] While Alberto Manguel states: 'The primordial relationship between writer and reader presents a wonderful paradox: in creating the role of the reader, the writer also decrees the writer's death, since in order for a text to be finished, the writer

must withdraw, cease to exist.' Even de Certeau describes a process of exchange in terms of a usurping of roles: 'a different world, the reader's, slips into the author's place.' In this essay, by describing his consumption – and continued, active consumption – of *The Vicomte de Bragelonne,* Stevenson is repeating, enacting again and again, that closure of writing, that 'death' of the author, of which Manguel and Ricoeur speak. Yet the essay itself revives, gives life, in two ways: it recreates for us d'Artagnan, and what he is for Stevenson – 'none love I so wholly' he writes, and while we read that d'Artagnan stands before us again, animated not only by the character invested in him by his author but by the virtues accorded, read into him, by the literary persona of Stevenson. Dumas, too, it 'brought to life', a figure taken out of his text, placed again on what the essay calls 'the battlefield of life', and invested with all the qualities – 'the great eater, worker, earner and waster, the man of much and witty laughter, the man of the great heart and alas! Of the doubtful honesty' that no portrait has yet done justice to. Of course, in the very act of 'reading' d'Artagnan, Stevenson is also writing the death of Dumas as author and, in putting words on the page depicting Dumas, is enacting his own 'death' by giving life to his readers. It is entirely fitting, therefore, that the novel he selects for such special treatment, is a novel about the death of friends, is a novel about the breaking of bonds, of also, to an extent, letting go of beliefs and ideals. It is also appropriate that it is a novel in which the eponymous hero is no hero, is someone who – because he is boring – becomes for the reader a blank: 'I may be said to have passed the best years of my life in reading these volumes and my acquaintance with Raol has never gone beyond a bow.' *The Vicomte de Bragelonne*, which may at first seem a novel that speaks to the thematic interests of Stevenson and may usefully be read in that way, also becomes the site in which the dynamic of reading and writing, recovery and loss can be played out. In that final gesture, 'yet once more, dearest d'Artagnan', Stevenson attempts to return to being a reader, yet his words fix him as writer, and liberate us into being his readers – and at the same time, the ghosts of his writer.

Stevenson's short essay presents therefore what we might call a performative analysis of the act of reading, but also produces a piece of text which ensures that the reader will seek a return to the words of not one, but two writers. 'A Gossip Upon a Novel of Dumas's' is characteristic of many of Stevenson's essays on fiction: deceptively simple in its enthusiasm, seductive in its delightful 'plot', but with a highly sophisticated structure which allows Stevenson to play out and reconcile a number of different roles as writer, reader and critic.

End Notes

1. This paper is part of a larger project presenting a series of case studies in which the processes of 'narrative exchange' between Stevenson's reading and writing are explored.
2. Calvino, Italo; *Introduction to 'I Nostri Antenati' (Our Ancestors),* (London: Picador, 1980), pp. vi-vii.
3. See Bloom, Harold; *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry,*(Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).
4. Ricoeur, Paul; *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, ed. and trans. Thompson, J. B., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 146-7.
5. de Certeau, Michel; *Practice of Everyday Life*, tr. Rendall, Steven, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984; 1988) p. xxi.
6. Ibid, p. 174.
7. Caldwell, E. N.; *Last Witness for Robert Louis Stevenson*, (Oklahoma: Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1960), p. 74.
8. Stevenson, R. L.; 'A Gossip Upon a Novel of Dumas's', *Memories and Portraits* (London: 1887), Tusitala 29, Repr. ed. Norquay G.; *R. L. Stevenson on Fiction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999). All page references are to this edition.
9. Ricoeur, P; *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, ed. and trans. Thompson, J. B., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p146.

10. Bachelard, Gaston; *The Poetics of Space*, tr. Jolas, Maria; (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), p. xxii.
11. Ibid. xxii.
12. Stevenson, R. L.; 'A Gossip Upon a Novel of Dumas's', p. 122.
13. It is difficult to date the essay. Swearingen suggests spring/ early summer of 1887. There is no mention of it in the list of essays originally to be included in *Memories and Portraits*, although it appears on a second list submitted in August. (See Nash, Andrew; 'Two Unpublished Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson', *Notes and Queries*, 245:3, September 2000.)
14. Mehew, Ernest; *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson,* vol. IV, Letter 1287 (June 1884), p. 307.
15. Mehew, Ernest; *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, vol. V: see Letters 1524, 1539, 1544, 1545, 1546. He also wrote to George Saintsbury (Letter 1536) asking his advice on the subject. Saintsbury had published a long essay on Dumas in the *Fortnightly Review,* 1 October 1878. Henley had also written an article describing Dumas as a 'master of modern art' in the *Saturday Review,* November 10 1883.
16. James, Henry; 'Robert Louis Stevenson', *Century Magazine*, April 1888, written in 1887 and shown to Stevenson in the autumn.
17. De Certeau, Michel; *The Practice of Everyday Life*, tr. Rendall, Steven; (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984; 1988) p. xxi.
18. Stevenson, R. L.; 'A Gossip On a Novel of Dumas's', p. 121
19. 'My acquaintance with the Vicomte began, somewhat indirectly, in the year of grace 1863, when I had the advantage of studying certain illustrated dessert plates in a hotel at Nice', Stevenson, R. L.; 'A Gossip On a Novel of Dumas's', p. 119.
20. 'To afford a popular flavour and attract the mob, he adds a steady current of what I might be allowed to call the rancid', Norquay G; 'A Note on Realism', 1883, p. 67.
21. Yonge, Charlotte M; *The Young Stepmother,* (1857-60), Chapter IV.

22. Stevenson, R. L.; 'A Gossip On a Novel of Dumas's', p. 119
23. *Letters,* Vol. I, Letter 36, November 1866, p. 112.
24. Stevenson, R. L.; 'A Gossip On a Novel of Dumas's', p. 124.
25. 'Books Which Have Influenced Me', *British Weekly,* 13 May 1887, 28:11, pp. 17-19.
26. It would be simplistic to understand this as part of a 'Scottish duality'; the explicit construction of such oppositions, however, does seem to acknowledge a negotiation of different literary hierarchies.
27. Stevenson, R. L.; 'A Gossip On a Novel of Dumas's', p. 119.
28. Goffman, Erving; *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience,* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975), p. 346. (But see also James, William; *Principles of Psychology* Vol. 2 (New York: Dover, 1950), pp. 292-3, on *Ivanhoe*).
29. Iser, Wolfgang; *The Act of Reading, A Theory of Aesthetic Response,* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987) pp. 131-2.
30. Ibid. 132, quoting Dewey; *Art as Experience,* (1934; 1958) p. 60.
31. Ibid. 134.
32. Stevenson, R. L.; 'A Gossip On a Novel of Dumas's', p. 119.
33. 'This I think is a term of endearment, and not simply a distinction of Dumas pére'.
34. Stevenson, R. L.; 'A Gossip On a Novel of Dumas's', p. 123.
35. Stevenson, R. L.; 'A Gossip On a Novel of Dumas's', p. 124.
36. Stevenson, R. L.; 'A Gossip On a Novel of Dumas's', p. 120.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. Stevenson, R. L.; 'A Gossip On a Novel of Dumas's', p. 125.
40. Stevenson, R. L.; 'A Gossip On a Novel of Dumas's', p. 125.
41. Ricoeur, Paul; op cit., p. 147.

He, I say – I Cannot Say I: Modernity and the Crisis of Identity in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde.*

Richard J. Walker

> Modern bourgeois society with its relations of production, of exchange and of property, a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer, who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells.
>
> (Marx and Engels: pp. 85-86).

In his essay on identity, history and modernity, 'Nietzsche's Cattle', Francis Barker describes the eponymous cattle of the German philosopher as wandering in a 'bucolic pastoral', without any apprehension of a past or future'; for Barker they are therefore freed from any 'historical burden of responsibility' for either of these temporal locations. Barker equates the cattle with the fragmented and decentred disidentical subject of modernity: the bucolic environment offers a form of happiness, a blissful ignorance that voids the subject of 'any sense of the temporal complexity of the present'. In short Nietzsche's grazing cattle, like the disidentical subject, are happily devoid of a 'sense of history' (Barker: p. 93). At risk of playing somewhat loosely with Barker's instructive essay, his understanding of the dislocated and disidentical subject, certainly in nineteenth century modernity, is one that I would like to take to task: Matthew Arnold, for example, in his lyric 'Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse' (1855) is profoundly and self-consciously aware of the historical displacement of the disidentified subject, finding himself 'Wandering between two worlds, one dead, / The other powerless to be born' (Arnold: p. 89). Arnold is a nineteenth century figure who I will return to in the course of this paper and whose writing informs my assessment

of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* in interesting ways. For the present Barker, like many other critics, traces the origins of the emergence of the western individual to the work of Rene Descartes. Descartes' writing asks important questions that haunt the literature of duality in the nineteenth century: what is the relationship between mind and body, are they distinct entities, if so are we (whatever that may be) divided or unified beings? Descartes' questions posit this problem of potential self-division in intriguing configurations, particularly when we consider that the emergence of the Cartesian equation ('Cogito ergo sum') which apparently constructs and affirms self-hood brings its own crisis of identity in the form of a disidentical doppelganger. Barker, in his skeptical interrogation of the emergence of the 'modern' individual, argues that:

> one of the persistent and central problems with this history of identity is...that as soon as the punctual and self-possessed individual appeared on the stage of history, so did his opposite, the dispersed and fragmented disidentical, alienated, critical persona whose existence consisted at best in an unstable play of masks and guises. Descartes... emblematises the problematic. In one sense he is the author of the self; in another sense the Cartesian subject is already deeply divided in and from itself. It is not only separated from its body, but from that self which it utters as self at every moment that it confirms its self-hood by self-pronunciation (Barker: p. 95).

What Barker suggests is that concurrent with the construction of a unified autonomous self in modernity we witness the emergence of its alter ego: the 'fragmented disidentical' self. The Cartesian equation is ambivalent in essence; as much as Descartes suggests the notion of an autonomous self, this coherent subject is deeply divided. This division is not only manifest in a body-mind opposition, but also in the very summoning, uttering and confirmation of self-hood; in short to speak the self is to objectify

and therefore split the self. The result is a cunning if fragmented hall of mirrors, one where self reflects and establishes difference with self simultaneously. Like Marx and Engels' bourgeois sorcerer in *The Communist Manifesto* – an important document for later modernity – the Cartesian cogito, summoning up self-hood by means of an incantation, is no longer in control of the powers that it has called up by its spell. This complex interaction between illusion, reflection and division is crucial to the literature of duality in the nineteenth century.

The duality intrinsic in the modern subject unfolds in more recent developments in modernity. Marshall Berman, in describing a 'second phase' of modernity, by which he means one which 'begins with the great revolutionary wave of the 1790s', argues that the experience of modernity involves an 'inner dichotomy...[a] sense of living in two worlds simultaneously'. This dichotomy, which echoes and resituates Matthew Arnold's alienation alluded to earlier, incorporates a consciousness of 'living in a revolutionary age, an age that generates explosive upheavals' yet remembering 'what it is like to live, materially and spiritually, in worlds that are not modern at all' (Berman: p. 17). This sense of division in nineteenth century modernity is intensified when we consider the experience as represented by writers of the time. Matthew Arnold, in the 'Preface' to the *Poems* (1853), what Isobel Armstrong calls his 'brilliant but limited diagnosis of modernity and its problems' (Armstrong: p. 492), describes a malaise in modern culture of the nineteenth century where 'the dialogue of the mind with itself has commenced; modern problems have presented themselves'. Arnold spells out an inner division in the creative subject epitomized by 'doubts' and 'discouragement' which is almost Cartesian in its objectifying of the mind and the establishment of a dialogue with it (Arnold: p. 115). Dualism is of course not just the province of cultural discourse; Alfred Wigan, in *The Duality of the Mind* (1844), is one of many doctors of madness in the mid-nineteenth century who explore the possibility of a state of self-division; Wigan speaks of:

> [D]elusions (that) are familiar to every medical man conversant with insanity. Two contradictory and incompatible convictions. Here is no defective government of moral or sensual propensities, but two distinct acts of the thinking powers destructive of each other. It seems to me absolutely impossible to conceive any other explanation than the possession of two distinctive minds – results of two distinct origins of thought (p. 26).

This accumulation of instances of dualism can also be traced in the often contradictory ideas of degeneration theory found at the close of the century. Without entering too closely into an area that is fraught with all sorts of inconsistencies, degeneration theory posits a binary equation dependent upon establishing a difference between the normative and the 'deviant', a homogenized collective of quite evidently discrete groups from the criminal to the decadent artist. What is significant here is that many of the symptoms of degeneration, in particular 'hysteria and neurasthenia', are as applicable to the 'urban condition', as William Greenslade puts it, of the supposedly ordinary bourgeois city dweller of the fin de siecle (Greenslade: p. 18).

What becomes clear is that the dualism implicit in the emergence of modernity, from Descartes onwards, by no means involves the establishment of a stable or clear-cut series of binary oppositions. The ubiquitous presence of doubles in Gothic and Sensation fiction of the nineteenth century is evidence that duality renders any sense of determined, coherent or autonomous identity fluid. Indeed Judith Halberstam, in her analysis of nineteenth century Gothic in *Skin Shows*, argues that the genre dramatises the fragility of duality. For her 'the monsters of the nineteenth century metaphorised modern subjectivity as a balancing act between inside/outside, female/male, body/mind, native/foreign'. The Gothic makes effective 'mincemeat of any notion of binaries' and, like degeneration theory, becomes unlocated in nature – a contradictory site of discourse (Halberstam 1: p. 179). This blurring of boundaries in nineteenth century modernity can be

taken further and pushed into the hemisphere of a 'High' contra 'Low' debate about culture, for the populist and sensational tone of late nineteenth century Gothic fiction echoes and troubles 'high' cultural discourse. Indeed the morbid and inward ruminations on self-division found in Stevenson's 'shilling shocker' arguably crystallise Arnold's disillusioned description of modern culture's introspective learnings towards the 'dialogue of the mind with itself'. Moreso Arnold's famous lyric of 1852, 'The Buried Life', apparently slips into Gothic territory. Here Arnold's compulsion towards seeking an 'authentic' buried self finds itself bound up in all manner of masks and disguises, one where to reveal this buried self is met with 'blame'. In short the quest to seek a 'genuine self' in the 'crowded streets' of the modern metropolis – that symbol of nineteenth century modernity – is reliant upon an 'unspeakable desire', suggesting the transgressive and taboo elements that characterise the Gothic (Arnold: p. 84-85). Ultimately Arnold's 'high' cultural lyricism calls to mind the late nineteenth century Gothic tropes of shame, guilt and the instability of identity intrinsic to having a buried life. As Oscar Wilde puts it in his 'Preface' to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, '[t]hose who go beneath the surface do so at their peril' (Wilde: p. 22).

What emerges with regard to the uncertain nature of identity in modernity and the blurring of boundaries between the apparent binary opposites of duality is that fluidity is a central feature in nineteenth century constructions of self-hood. Indeed fluidity is arguably the key to the experience of modernity both in terms of constructions of identity and the way in which this is represented. For Charles Baudelaire – symbolist poet and devotee of the peripatetic flaneur who figures so often in fin de siecle Gothic fiction – the defining aesthetic for modernity can be found in 'the ephemeral, the contingent' as he puts it in his essay 'The Painter of Modern Life' (p. 2). In addition, Marx and Engels, in *The Communist Manifesto*, state in a now familiar phrase, that '[a]ll that is solid melts into air...and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses, his real conditions of life and his relation with his kind' (p. 83). Marshall Berman, in his interrogation of Marx and

Engels' maxim, sums up both perspectives effectively in stating that these notions of insubstantiality define 'the distinctive quality of modern life'; indeed '[f]luidity and vaporousness will become primary qualities in the self-consciously modernist painting, architecture and design, music and literature, that will emerge at the end of the nineteenth century' (p. 144). The monstrous Hyde of Stevenson's *Strange Case*, doubling and troubling stable identity as he does, and eminently able to melt into the ephemeral air of a foggy late nineteenth century London, would seem to epitomise a crisis of identity in modernity in interesting and dynamic ways.

Stevenson's fictional meditation upon a possible crisis of identity clearly steps aside from the 'bucolic pastoral' of disidentity found in Francis Barker's reading of Nietzsche. *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* is emphatically located in the urban metropolis of late nineteenth century London and frequently deals with the impact that this environment and its institutions have upon identity. Indeed some of Stevenson's most evocative writing can be found in his descriptions of the modern city. In a passage, where the lawyer Mr Utterson takes Inspector Newcomen of Scotland Yard to Hyde's lodgings in Soho after the murder of Sir Danvers Carew, Stevenson depicts morning in the metropolis:

> It was by this time about nine in the morning, and the first fog of the season. A great chocolate-coloured pall lowered over heaven, but the wind was continually charging and routing these embattled vapours; so that...Mr Utterson beheld a marvellous number of degrees and hues of twilight; for here it would be dark like the back-end of evening; and there would be a glow of a rich, lurid brown, like the light of some strange conflagration; and here, for a moment, the fog would be quite broken up, and a haggard shaft of daylight would glance in between the swirling wreaths. The dismal quarter of Soho seen under these changing glimpses, with its muddy ways, and slatternly passengers, and its lamps, which had never been extinguished or had been kindled afresh to combat this mournful reinvasion of darkness,

> seemed, in the lawyer's eyes, like a district of some city in a nightmare. The thoughts of his mind, besides, were of the gloomiest dye; and when he glanced at the companion of his drive, he was conscious of some touch of that terror of the law and the law's officers which may at times assail the most honest. (p. 48)

Like so many descriptions of the nineteenth century city (the opening of Charles Dickens' *Bleak House* springs to mind), what defines the metropolis is fog. This fog, in conjunction with the flickering of the Soho gas lamps and the wind which consistently shifts and reconfigures the cityscape, gives the environment a shifting, insubstantial and unreal feel. In effect the 'embattled vapours' of fog that mark the city call to mind the 'fluidity and vaporousness' that constitute the defining aesthetic of modernity as described by Berman. This sombre and threatening environment, with its emphasis on darkness and dilapidation, becomes an appropriate setting for brutal murder, and one where the criminal can disappear into impenetrable fog. In short the metropolis, certainly in its more insalubrious parts, is like 'some city in nightmare'. In such a sinister and disorientating location the effects upon the individual are transparent: Utterson's thoughts, echoing the sable appearance of the city itself, are of the 'gloomiest dye'. Furthermore, the city induces a deluded sensation of guilt as Utterson becomes 'conscious of some touch of that terror of the law' that can affect even the most honest. In many ways Utterson becomes the victim of the prevailing and morbid city sicknesses of the late nineteenth century experienced by both respectable, bourgeois individual and degenerate type, namely neurasthenia, hypochondria and nervous paranoia. He may be innocent but he circulates in an environment that presumes and therefore actively induces the emergence of guilty secrets. In the labyrinthine contradictions of this fluid, indefinable and yet defining setting, the criminal Hyde thrives, quite literally able to hide himself from his pursuers.

Compared to many Gothic villains, particularly in doppelganger narratives, Hyde's presence in *The Strange Case* is unequivocal; the various testimonies in the text, not least Jekyll's own, attest to Hyde's material manifestation. As a result the monstrous in Stevenson's text is no ambivalent presence that can be explained away and therefore contained as the product of a fevered imagination, but a tangible thing that can be communicated with and, as *The Strange Case* goes on to prove, attract the attentions of the law. Yet the Gothic clearly performs a metaphoric function, opening up a series of interpretative possibilities when reading monstrosity, particularly as monstrosity itself taps into anxieties that are themselves fluid, determined as they are by modes of thought – social, cultural, political, scientific, or otherwise – that are dominant at a particular moment. As Judith Halberstam puts it, in her succinct reading of the monstrous, '[m]onsters are meaning machines... [t]hey can represent gender, race, nationality, class, and sexuality in one body' (pp. 21-22). Stevenson's Hyde is clearly one of the most resonant of these 'meaning machines'; like Frankenstein's creation he is stitched together from a variety of different parts, here critical perspectives, and at the same time defies, through this multiplicity of meanings, clear classification. Indeed Hyde, like Bram Stoker's Dracula after him, has inspired a veritable industry of academic readings: whether embodiment of barbaric primitivism intruding upon fin de siecle London, the urban individual 'gone native', the repressed progeny of late nineteenth century hypocrisy, Semitic stereotype, atavistic throwback or androgynous deviant it is clear that Hyde seems to function as an alter ego that both reflects and disrupts the notion of the normative and respectable bourgeois individual at the end of the nineteenth century, in a way similar to that in which the disidentical self disrupts the autonomous and apparently coherent self in the emergence of the individual during early modernity.

What seems to be apparent is that Hyde speaks more about the fears and anxieties of the fin de siecle bourgeoisie than monstrosity. Nonetheless Hyde remains, appropriately enough, a deeply contradictory figure – both evolutionary throwback or trace

of civilization's barbaric origins and a peculiarly modern monster. He is, paradoxically given his unlocated nature, evidently at home in the modern city, particularly as the modern city is itself deeply contradictory. Stevenson notes that Jekyll's home/laboratory, from which Hyde is seen to emerge, is found in:

> ...a square of ancient handsome houses, now for the most part decayed from their high estate, and let in flats and chambers to all sorts and conditions of men: map-engravers, architects, shady lawyers, and the agents of obscure enterprises. One house, however, second from the corner, was still occupied entire; and...wore a great air of wealth and comfort. (p. 40)

The area is shabby genteel, it is 'ancient' and 'handsome' yet 'for the most part decayed'; in addition it is occupied by the respectable Dr. Jekyll, but decidedly unrespectable and even unspecified practices are taking place in immediate proximity to his house. Such an inconsistent environment suits and is reflected by Hyde who, as Jekyll points, is 'younger, lighter, happier' and 'livelier' than him and yet bears 'an imprint of deformity and decay' (pp. 83-4). Indeed the contradictions of Hyde largely reflect the city as a whole.

Initially it is Hyde-as-a-criminal who appears particularly at home in the fin de siécle metropolis. The reader's first encounter with Hyde consists of an account of an event given to the lawyer Utterson by his relative and companion Richard Enfield. The account is indirect and Hyde's first appearance becomes almost anecdotal:

> I (Enfield) was coming home from some place at the end of the world, about three o' clock of a black winter morning, and my way lay through a part of town where there was literally nothing to be seen but lamps. Street after street, and all the folks asleep – street after street, all lighted up as if for a procession, and all as empty as a church – till at last

> I got into that state of mind when a man listens and listens and begins to long for the sight of a policeman. All at once, I saw two figures: one a little man who was stumping along eastwards at a good walk, and the other a girl of maybe eight or ten who was running as hard as she was able down a cross-street. Well, sir, the two ran into one another naturally enough at the corner; and then came the horrible part of the thing; for the man trampled calmly over the child's body and left her screaming on the ground. It sounds nothing to hear, but it was hellish to see. It wasn't like a man; it was like some damned juggernaut. I gave a view halloa, took to my heels, collared my gentleman, and brought him back to where there was already quite a group around the screaming child. He was perfectly cool and made no resistance, but gave me one look, so ugly that it brought out the sweat on me like running. (Stevenson: p. 31)

The scene as described by Enfield is eerie enough – it is the middle of the night yet the streets are 'lighted up as if for a procession', however within this environment there is nobody to be seen. Such an atmosphere seems to be particularly effective in leading Enfield's thoughts to crime because he 'begins to long for the sight of a policeman'. The subsequent criminal act is, as a result, appropriately strange and difficult to locate; what Enfield sees is a 'little man...stumping along' and a young girl who was 'running as hard as she was able' towards him; 'naturally' they collide. It is, in itself, an understated occurrence; indeed it 'sounds nothing to hear'. Nonetheless the account transcends its initially subdued anecdotal impact; although it may sound insignificant, Enfield states that it 'was hellish to see' as the small man trampled calmly' over the body of the girl 'like some damned juggernaut'. What we are presented with is a profoundly problematic event. Enfield is forced to justify relaying it by privileging seeing the collision over merely talking about it, and Utterson has to take his word that it is sufficiently strange to recount. Its impact lies in its contradictory nature: the streets are at first completely deserted

and then crowded, the small man 'stumping along' becomes an impassive 'juggernaut', the apparently sadistic trampling is undertaken 'calmly' by a composed gentleman who nonetheless offers Enfield a look ugly enough to disturb him. The account of the event is inconsistent enough to prevent Utterson and the reader arriving at a clear impression of its – and therefore Hyde's – nature. David Punter argues that the crime is unsatisfactory in nature; understated to such a point that it is not easy to picture, it 'does sound nothing to hear...[i]t does linger in the memory, but only because of its strangeness' (p. 4). Stephen Heath also notes the uncertain qualities of Enfield's story, stating that '[o]n the face of it...it would sound something to hear; the report in the text, however, has no confidence and so it can end up sounding nothing, prompting Enfield's unease' (p. 93). In effect it is not so much the trampling that Enfield objects to but Hyde itself.

Perhaps the most unsettling feature of the account lies in Hyde's own composure during the whole affair. It is this calmness which is uncanny for it betrays nothing in terms of motive or emotion; it is an act of manifest indifference. The other criminal act explicitly attributed to Hyde is the murder, again by trampling, of Danvers Carew; the description of this provides a marked contrast with the trampling of the girl:

> The old gentleman (Carew) took a step back, with the air of one very much surprised and a trifle hurt; and at that Mr Hyde broke out of all bounds, and clubbed him to the earth. And next moment, with ape-like fury, he was trampling his victim under foot, and hailing down a storm of blows, under which the bones were audibly shattered and the body jumped upon the roadway. (Stevenson: p. 47)

As instances of trampling, these two violent acts obviously echo each other. However it is the difference between the two crimes that is significant, the first is performed calmly and indifferently, the second with an 'ape-like fury' as Hyde breaks 'out of all bounds'. This disparity problematises attempts to define Hyde's

criminality; the first is understated and therefore unsettling, the second obviously psychotic, a full-blown murder, yet neither has an apparent motive. In many ways what Hyde embodies is Foucault's homicidal maniac: it is uncertain if Hyde is criminal or insane, both acts suggest both interpretations, as a result the easiest way to contain him is as that 'entirely fictitious entity' of nineteenth century psychiatry, the homicidal maniac whose 'crime...is nothing but insanity' and whose 'insanity...is nothing but a crime' (Foucault: p. 132). What does occur though is that Hyde becomes an appropriately modern monster for the nineteenth century, representing anxieties about the effects and symptoms of modernity. In short, individual identity can be lost or at least troubled within the structures, institutions and symptoms of modernity. It is this anxiety that Stevenson's *Strange Case* would seem to address, the fragility of identity within the nineteenth century experience of modernity.

At the heart of the novel lies the reasoning behind Jekyll's compulsion to instigate the emergence of the ultimately monstrous and murderous Hyde. The explanation that Stevenson gives Jekyll in his testimony suggests an instance of clear-cut, of consequently illusory, dualism. The creation of Hyde is based upon Jekyll's consciousness of conflicting imperatives within himself; Jekyll states that:

> ...the worst of my faults was a certain impatient gaiety of disposition, such as has made the happiness of many, but such as I found it hard to reconcile with my imperious desire to carry my head high, and wear a more than commonly grave countenance before the public. Hence it came about that I concealed my pleasures; and that when I reached years of reflection...I stood already committed to a profound duplicity of life. Many a man would have even blazoned such irregularities as I was guilty of; but from the high views that I had set before me, I regarded and hid them with an almost morbid sense of shame. It was thus rather the exacting nature of my aspirations, than any particular

> degradation in my faults, that made me what I was and... severed in me those provinces of good and ill which divide and compound man's dual nature. (Stevenson: p. 81)

In many ways the stimulus for the emergence of Hyde is unspecified, the closest that we come to it being Jekyll's description of an 'almost morbid sense of shame'. What is apparent though is that his experiment arises from an acute awareness of the oscillation between public and private – a desire to appear to have a 'grave countenance' in the sphere of the former and yet to be conscious of a certain 'gaiety of disposition' that, although he accepts it can make other men happy, contradicts the public inclination. Stevenson's depiction of this dilemma is reminiscent of Arnold's *The Buried Life* with its contrast between an internal, authentic self and the external, disguised self, a dichotomy that is effectively mirrored in a Gothic context though Jekyll's wavering between public and private. Due to his 'high views' and 'imperious desire' to appear respectable, Jekyll takes to concealing or repressing his pleasures, regarding them as shameful. Guilt, consequently, is at the heart of his sense of self, yet guilt inspired by the nature of his 'aspirations' rather than any 'particular degradation'. It is this consistent vacillation, between public and private, external and internal, and social respectability and pleasure that leads Jekyll to arrive at the conclusion that human beings have a 'dual nature'. That said, what would really seem to define this conclusion is the nature of social expectations, albeit ones generated by Jekyll himself. A form of conditioning with regard to identity is in operation, and one from which Jekyll deviates in his creation of Hyde.

The experiment with Hyde is designed to unshackle Jekyll's moral instinct from his propensity for pleasure. Jekyll takes the analysis of his condition further, stating that:

> Though so profound a double-dealer, I was in no sense a hypocrite; both sides of me were in dead earnest; I was no more myself when I laid aside restraint and plunged

> in shame, than when I laboured, in the eye of the day, at the furtherance of knowledge or the relief of sorrow and suffering. And it chanced that the direction of my scientific studies, which led wholly towards the mystic and the transcendental, reacted and shed a strong light on this consciousness of the perennial war among my members. With every day, and from both sides of my intelligence, the moral and the intellectual, I thus drew steadily nearer to [the] truth...that man is not truly one, but truly two. I say two, because the state of my own knowledge does not pass beyond that point...and I hazard the guess that man will be ultimately known for a mere polity of multifarious, incongruous and independent denizens. (Stevenson: pp. 81-82)

Stevenson depicts Jekyll's dilemma in a discrepant way; Jekyll describes himself as a profound 'double-dealer' yet 'in no sense a hypocrite'. As a result the beginning of the collapse of an integrated and cohesive identity starts to take place as binaries begin to break down. This fragmentation can be detected in the comparison between the public self, who labours 'at the furtherance of knowledge or the relief of sorrow and suffering', and the private self who cast off 'restraint and plunged in shame'. Jekyll states with regard to this comparison that 'I was no more myself' in either environment; the primary reading of this point of comparison is that neither self is more authentic than the other, yet it also suggests that an integrated sense of identity is being lost – Jekyll by implication is no longer himself. What Jekyll deduces is significant; he states that the human is not a unified entity 'but truly two', yet adds the reservation that 'I say two, because the state of my own knowledge does not pass beyond that point'. In this context the individual becomes a fundamentally fragmented being, consisting of 'multifarious, incongruous and independent denizens'. In spite of this apparent splintering of identity, Jekyll's scientific predicament revolves around his desire to divide the self of public duty and that of private pleasure:

> If each, I told myself, could but be housed in separate identities, life would be relieved of all that was unbearable; the unjust might go his way, delivered from the aspirations and remorse of his more upright twin; and the just could walk steadfastly and securely on his upward path, doing the good things in which he found his pleasure, and no longer exposed to disgrace and penitence by the hands of this extraneous evil. It was the curse of mankind that these incongruous faggots were thus bound together – that in the agonised womb of consciousness these polar twins should be continuously struggling. (Stevenson: p. 82)

This statement reveals the extent of Jekyll's hypocrisy. Initially his intentions seem to be morally sound; he desires to create 'separate identities' in order that the upright self can perform the 'good things' synonymous with the 'exacting...aspirations' of the moral instinct. However, this moral intention merely shadows the main rationale for the experiment which is Jekyll's desire to avoid the 'disgrace and penitence' that private pleasure induces. In effect Jekyll's scientific ambition merely masks an indulgent wish to eradicate the guilt and 'morbid' shame that haunts his need to wear the 'grave countenance' of his public life.

This shifting to and fro – between public and private selves, moral, intellectual and scientific paradigms, and varieties of motivation – leads to a profound consciousness of the insubstantial qualities of self-hood and in particular those of the body. Jekyll finds that:

> I began to perceive more deeply than it has ever yet been stated, the trembling immateriality, the mist-like transience, of this seemingly so solid body in which we walk attired. Certain agents I found to have the power to shake and to pluck back that fleshly vestment, even as wind might toss the curtains of a pavilion. (Stevenson: p. 82)

Jekyll's perception of the 'transience' of the body indicates the fragile and insubstansial nature of the self in a way that echoes Marx and Engels' maxim – '[a]ll that is solid melts into air'. This perspective is supported by other accounts of the appearance of Hyde, the figure who renders cohesive identity fluid. Utterson, in a dream inspired by Enfield's story, pictures a face that 'baffled him and melted before his eyes' (pp. 37-8) and Dr Lanyon, in an account where he witnesses the transformation of Hyde back to Jekyll, finds that 'his features seemed to melt and alter' (p. 80). Jekyll's discovery also initiates a correspondence between shifts in identity and the city itself, a position which consolidates the suggestion that Hyde is eminently at home in the urban metropolis. Stevenson's city, in the description cited earlier, is shrouded in a fog that is constantly in a state of flux, shaped and re-shaped by the wind just as the body, for Jekyll, becomes 'mist-like' and can be changed 'even as wind might toss the curtains of a pavilion'. Similarly, Jekyll notes in the early stages of his experiment that Hyde 'would pass away like the stain of breath upon a mirror' (p. 86). In effect the body becomes like the city and the city like the body. This correlation is emphasised in another description of the urban environment by Stevenson:

> The fog still slept on the wing above the drowned city, where the lamps glimmered like carbuncles; and through the muffle and smother of these fallen clouds, the procession of the town's life was still rolling in through the great arteries with a sound as of a mighty wind (pp. 53-54).

Stevenson compares the city to a body with arteries; it is in this vast and macrocosmic body that the pleasure-seeking self of Jekyll, like Charles Baudelaire's dandy flâneur as described by Walter Benjamin, can find 'a refuge... among the masses of the big city', and into which Hyde enters circulation (Benjamin: p. 66). What is evident is that the shifting and shifty buried self emerges in a city submerged in fog, and flows through its arterial streets in a form that is as transient and 'mist-like' as the environment itself.

It is the consistent intrusion of the elements, symptoms and aesthetics of nineteenth century modernity that renders Stevenson's Gothic vision distinctive and which points to the symbolic resonance of the relationship between Jekyll and Hyde. Arguably Jekyll's compulsion to 'create' Hyde stems from his overwhelming feelings of guilt with regard to pleasure and from a desire to appear publicly respectable; in many ways Hyde's nature and characteristics are determined by the latter predilection. Indeed the fragile egotism intrinsic to Jekyll's sense of public self and identity can be attributed to the status of the scientist in the later decades of the nineteenth century. In *The Communist Manifesto* Marx and Engels note that:

> The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honoured and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage-labourers. (p. 82)

Jekyll, as 'physician' and 'man of science', finds himself a 'paid wage labourer' in two contexts and therefore doubly stripped of his halo. In many ways his experiment with Hyde, designed to allow him to walk on the 'upward path' doing 'good things', becomes an attempt to reclaim the lost halo of the physician who was previously regarded with 'reverent awe'. This desanctification of the scientist is a significant issue in contextualising and attempting to arrive at a reading of the metaphoric monster in Stevenson's novel because, ironically enough, it is through the emergence of Hyde that Jekyll seems to become explicitly stripped of his halo. The process can be detected in Jekyll's own description of events; referring to his motives with regard to inducing the transformation into Hyde he notes that:

> Had I approached my discovery in a more noble spirit, had I risked the experiment while under the empire of generous or pious aspirations, all must have been otherwise, and from these agonies of death and birth I had come forth an angel instead of a fiend. (Stevenson: p. 71)

Jekyll, acknowledging the flaws in the reasoning behind his scientific ambition, indicates the manner in which he is stripped of his halo. This decanonisation is stressed when Utterson breaks into Jekyll's laboratory after his death; among the debris of Jekyll's profession, Utterson is:

> ...amazed to find ...a copy of a pious work for which Jekyll had several times expressed a great esteem, annotated, in his own hand, with startling blasphemies (p. 71).

The implication is that Jekyll, in his antisocial guise as Hyde, has provided this blasphemous gloss upon the 'pious' text. In many ways what the hypocritical Jekyll does, in his attempts to divert his own impious inclinations, is create the transient Hyde to hide his own uglier self and thus regain his halo. However, if we consider that the monstrous alter ego of Jekyll emerges in a cultural and social climate preoccupied with the notion of degeneration, Hyde represents what William Greenslade calls a 'permanent secularised "fall" from grace' (p. 16); the emergence of Hyde effectively symbolises Jekyll's irrevocable desanctification. It is no wonder then that in Enfield's anecdotal encounter with Hyde the location perversely reflects the moral vacuum in which Jekyll's halo is lost, for the streets of London are 'as empty as a church'.

In spite of his efforts to present an appropriate gravitas to the public, the loss of Jekyll's halo is of fundamental significance when the emergence of Hyde is considered. Regardless of his supposed moral intentions, Jekyll becomes a 'wage-labourer' in the complex matrix of capitalism in the nineteenth century. However, through the creation of Hyde the baser aspects of this process can apparently be filtered off and Jekyll assumes that he can follow the 'upward path'. Marshall Berman, in his reading of Marx, indicates the way in which modern experience in the nineteenth century is divorced from any conception of transcendental or spiritual value under capitalism:

> Nothing is sacred, no one is untouchable, life becomes thoroughly desanctified...modern men and women may well stop at nothing, with no dread to hold them back; free from fear and trembling, they are free to trample down everyone in their way if self-interest drives them to it. (p. 115)

In effect Hyde encapsulates this modern product of capitalism, 'thoroughly desanctified' and therefore prepared to 'trample down' everything in his way, thus allowing Jekyll the ultimate spurious pleasure of 'doing...good things'. Judith Halberstam argues that the inability of other characters in Stevenson's novel to positively identify Hyde suggests that he 'cannot be classified, he has no place in the order and history of things' (p. 67). However, if we consider Berman's resonant reading of the modern bourgeois individual as one 'prepared to trample down everyone in their way', Hyde is very much inside history, an idea that seems to contradict Francis Barker's conception of the extra-historical disidentical self. As Jekyll's control over a cohesive identity erodes, Hyde emerges as bourgeois 'self-interest' incarnate, rather than the Savage Other or atavistic throwback suggested by many critics. This is evident when Marx and Engels' reading of identity within modernity is reflected upon; what distinguishes the 'bourgeois epoch' from prior historical moments is 'uninterrupted disturbance of all social relations, everlasting uncertainty and agitation' (p. 83). For Berman this environment dictates that identity must 'take on the fluid and open form of this society', and that the modern individual 'must learn to yearn for change', to 'demand (it), actively to seek (it) out and carry (it) through'. Compulsive transformation of identity is at the core of the bourgeois experience for Marx and Engels as far as Berman is concerned, a notion that can be detected in Jekyll's apprehension of the 'mist-like transience' of the human body. Identity becomes fluid in such a context as Hyde begins to epitomise an uncontrollable lust for transformation. Given his scientific leanings towards the 'mystic and transcendental', Jekyll becomes the bourgeois sorcerer of Marx and Engels, no

longer in control of the occult powers summoned by his spells. What Jekyll has basically summoned up is the dark alter ego of bourgeois individualism, the self-interested, ruthless, destructive and protean Hyde. It is a creation that Jekyll is unable to control, for he notes of his hold over a cohesive identity that:

> ...in the beginning, the difficulty had been to throw off the body of Jekyll, it had of late gradually but decidedly transferred itself to the other side. All things therefore seem to point to this: that I was slowly losing hold of my original and better self, and becoming slowly incorporated with my second and worst. (Stevenson: p. 89)

Transformation of identity becomes a relentless, uncontrolled and compulsively addictive process for Jekyll, reflecting the fluidity of identity that Berman detects at the root of the modern experience. In addition, just as Jekyll becomes the bourgeois conjurer, caught through the loss of his halo in the 'gigantic means of production and of exchange' created by industrial capital and unable to control the powers that he has summoned up, Hyde embodies the diligent bourgeois individual's doppelganger: the dandy. This identification again locates the disidentical Hyde as the epitome of bourgeois self-interest. Richard Dellamora notes that the dandy:

> As a popular phenomenon is middle-class...Dandyism was associated with middle-class uppityism...dandyism also reflects a loss of balance between the dual imperatives of leisure and work incumbent upon Victorian gentlemen. The dandy is too relaxed, too visible, consumes to excess while producing little or nothing. (pp. 198-9)

In spite of the many correspondences established between Hyde and bestial or primitive behaviour, ones emphatically opposed to this 'relaxed' archetype, Hyde can manifestly be read as middle-class dandy. With the transformation from Jekyll to Hyde becoming increasingly biased towards the latter, the pleasurable

and indulgent 'gaiety' that Jekyll attempts to conceal in Hyde becomes more and more evident, suggesting the imbalance in imperatives that the dandy epitomises. Hyde can consequently be read as the unbalanced, uncontrollable and parasitic opposite of Jekyll's 'paid wage-labourer'; he 'consumes to excess while producing little or nothing'. This reading of Hyde as the dark side of bourgeois progress does not necessarily need to contradict other interpretations of Stevenson's representation of monstrosity; nonetheless, as Judith Halberstam points out, there is a clear affinity between the nineteenth century Gothic text and its immediate socio-economic climate, and it is this affiliation which allows a multiplicity of meanings to emerge:

> The ability of the Gothic story to take the imprint of any number of interpretations makes it a hideous offspring of capitalism itself. The Gothic novel of the nineteenth century...(is) obsessed with multiple modes of consumption and production, with dangerous consumptions and excessive productivity, and with economies of meaning. (p. 3)

What we have is another series of interpretative mirrors: just as Jekyll reflects Marx and Engels' bourgeois sorcerer whose spell has spun out of control due to the excessive demands of production and exchange, the multiple readings of Hyde evoke the 'multiple modes of consumption and production' and the 'dangerous consumptions and excessive productivity' of capitalism. Consequently Hyde represents a microcosmic and metonymic version of the nineteenth century Gothic novel, a 'hideous offspring of capitalism itself'. Just as Hyde can be equated with the modern metropolis in a variety of different concatenations, and the city (as capital) can be equated with capitalism, ultimately Hyde himself ends up evoking aspects of bourgeois capitalism.

Capital is at the heart of Stevenson's troubling of identity. Indeed, the relationship between Jekyll and Hyde becomes one that is based upon money; Jekyll notes in his testimony that, after

achieving success with his transformation into Hyde, 'I next drew up (a) will...so that if anything befell me in the person of Dr Jekyll, I could enter on that of Edward Hyde without pecuniary loss' (Stevenson: p. 86). This will perplexes Jekyll's friends and colleagues; they suspect, unsurprisingly, that Hyde is blackmailing him and, in a phrase that conflates both social status and capital, Utterson's main concern is to 'save his (Jekyll's) credit' (Stevenson: p. 73). However, Hyde's relationship with Jekyll's money is far more complex than a mere hint of parasitic blackmail. Jekyll takes a house for Hyde in Soho. This property, when discovered by Utterson and Inspector Newcomen, proves significant:

> Mr Hyde has only used a couple of rooms; but these were furnished with luxury and good taste...At this moment, however, the rooms bore every mark of having been recently and hurriedly ransacked...on the hearth there lay a pile of grey ashes...From these embers the inspector disinterred the butt end of a green cheque book, which had resisted the action of the fire...A visit to the bank, where several thousand pounds were found to be lying to the murderer's credit, completed his gratification. (Stevenson: p. 49)

Another contradiction can be found here: the boorish, philistine Hyde occupies an apartment that is furnished with 'good taste' and yet which is located in Soho. As with Jekyll's own house, the effect is again one of inconsistency: Hyde inhabits the disreputable part of London, yet his apartment is tastefully furnished. If Hyde stands in for the unbalanced middle class dandy who consumes to excess', then the apartment is an appropriate location for his adventures, indicating visible opulence and yet offering no evidence of work or diligence. However, what is most significant is the relationship between Hyde and capital itself. Newcomen, upon finding the bank funds lying to Hyde's credit, claims that he can now catch Carew's murderer because 'money's life to the man' (Stevenson: p. 50). A complex relationship between Hyde, identity, capital, and the city is established. What Newcomen

suggests is that Hyde's self-interest is motivated by material greed; after all, as sole beneficiary to Jekyll's will, he is 'heir to a quarter of a million stirling' (p. 48) However, there is also the suggestion that Hyde is symbolically made of money – that identity and money are interchangeable things for him. In this sense Hyde, like capital, circulates through the arteries of the metropolis in indefinable ways. Similarly, the fragmented ashes and the butt of the cheque book found in the hearth of the Soho apartment have melted into air. If Hyde, as bourgeois self-interest incarnate, is symbolically made up of capital then, as well as circulating in the blood-stream of the city, he is, like the ashes found in his hearth, capable of melting into air. What we return to is the incident of the trampling of the young girl that introduces the reader to Hyde. As noted already, Marshall Berman's reading of Marx suggests that in a disanctified mode of existence the modern individual is 'free to trample down everyone in their way if self-interest drives them to it'. However, the trampling itself possesses an interesting financial dimension which suggests that the freedom of 'self-interest' can prove to be a spurious quality; everything has its price. Hyde, when apprehended after the trampling of the girl states '[i]f you choose to make capital out of this accident...I am naturally helpless. No gentleman but wishes to avoid a scene...Name your figure' (Stevenson: p. 32). For Hyde the trampling is tied up with financial interest, something that involves the making of a profit, and he therefore establishes himself as 'gentleman' in a fiscal marketplace of competing cash interests. Ironically Stevenson's own description of his text as a 'shilling shocker' allows him to make capital out of Hyde's 'accident'.

Duality in Stephenson's *Strange Case*, does not result in a series of clear binaries, confirm the original self, or ultimately liberate the 'upright' public self as Jekyll hoped it would. Instead what we witness ultimately is the fragmentation of identity. This collapse of self-hood is represented in terms that evoke inheritance and familial relationships. In one of his final moments of insight, Jekyll, using the third person to indicate his sense of distance from self, states:

> He had now seen the full deformity of that creature that shared with him some of the phenomena of consciousness, and was co-heir with him to death: and beyond these links of community...he thought of Hyde, for all his energy of life, as of something not only hellish but inorganic. This was the shocking thing; that the slime of the pit seemed to utter cries and voices; that the amorphous dust gesticulated and sinned; that what was dead, and had no shape, should usurp the offices of life. And this again, that the insurgent horror was knit to him closer than a wife, closer than an eye; lay caged in his flesh, where he heard it mutter and felt it struggle to be born; and at every hour of weakness, and in the confidences of slumber, prevailed against him, and deposed him out of life. (Stevenson: pp. 95-6).

This description of a network of relationships is extraordinarily complex. Jekyll renders Hyde even more uncanny by referring to himself in the third person and therefore to Hyde as the objectified and apparently externalised 'it' and 'that creature'. In addition, the equation between Hyde and capital becomes more resonant through the depiction of the former as 'inorganic'; like blood both circulate through the metaphoric arteries of the city, yet both are ultimately inorganic and inhuman (quite literally in-human in Hyde's case). The result is an uncertain and disorientating oscillation between human and inhuman, living and dead, dominant and subordinate. However, it is in the familial relations established by Stevenson that Jekyll's disintegration and Hyde's polymorphous subversion are most explicit. Hyde, as the 'unjust' twin of Jekyll's original scientific experiment, the beneficiary of his will, and as his rival for consciousness is described, in terms reminiscent of sibling rivalry, as the 'co-heir' to death who seeks to 'usurp the offices of life'. The intimacy of their association is stressed with Hyde regarded as 'closer than a wife'. Most disturbingly Jekyll perceives Hyde as 'caged in his flesh, where he heard it mutter and felt it struggle to be born'. The relationship has already been described in parent-child terms; as Jekyll puts it

he 'had more than a father's interest; Hyde had more than a son's indifference' (Stevenson: p. 89). However, here Hyde becomes a monstrous embryo locked in Jekyll's body in a representation that blurs gender boundaries; the 'mist-like transience' of the human body apparently extends to rendering Jekyll maternal. As much as Jekyll tries to objectify Hyde, keeping him at arms length, he is also an internalised thing, troubling the Cartesian equation between mind and body because Hyde would seem to be the equivalent Descartes' authentic and internalised 'thinking' self, a problem that is compounded by the fact that Jekyll cannot decide if Hyde is physical or non-physical. Jekyll's sense of inner-division and disintegration results in an inability to speak the self that echoes and almost parodies the cogito of Descartes. In a statement of chilling self-negation and awareness of disidentification, he can only utter of Hyde '[he], I say – I cannot say, I' (Stevenson: p. 94). Stevenson's description of Hyde as embryo, as disturbing as it is, is ultimately an apposite one. As noted already, Judith Halberstam describes the Gothic novel as the 'hideous offspring of capitalism itself'. Similarly David Punter, reading the Industrial Revolution as 'some kind of birth trauma', views the bourgeoisie as 'the child of a curious miscegenation of class' that stems from this birth (p. 205). In this context the simultaneous emergence of the Gothic novel and of the industrial bourgeoisie in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century provides an explicit instance of doubling. If Hyde, by the fin de siécle can be read as metaphorising bourgeois self-interest to such a point that capital is literally 'life' for him, then, as Gothic monster, he also effectively dramatises this interaction between literary genre and social class. In Hyde Stevenson creates a monster who, at home as he is in the city, unlocatable in such a way that he eminently lends himself to the variety of meanings that monstrosity generates. However, as monstrous and disidentical doppelganger, it is in his interaction with capital, his unseen circulation through the city, and his indulgent self-interest that the fragility of bourgeois identity in the nineteenth century is exposed.

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The Campness of the *New Arabian Nights*

Richard Dury

A strange text, Stevenson's *New Arabian Nights* (NAN) is a difficult text to classify not only in the context of its time but also, at first sight, in the contexts of the author's works: to Lang (1891: p. 25) it seemed the work of another, 'like the work of a changeling'. The NAN stories, written between March and September 1878, come in the very middle of the period of Stevenson's sunniest, most charming and debonair authorial persona, the voice of Mozartian poetical lightness of *An Inland Voyage* (written 1877), *Viginibus Puerisque* (written 1876-9), *Familiar Studies of Men and Books* (written 1874-81), of *Edinburgh: Picturesque Notes* (1878) and *Travels with a Donkey* (written from December 1878 to January 1879).[1]

The stories themselves have eluded definition by both early and later commentators: they contain 'weird and elusive forms of humour, in which the analytic mind loses itself' (Bunner, 1883/ Maxiner, 1980: p. 120); 'no one form of comedy may be sufficient to describe all of the collected tales' (Saposnik, 1974: p. 66).

Descriptive terms applied to all or some of the stories vary a great deal as though in an unsuccessful attempt to pin down an elusive and changing essence: to Lang they are 'freakish' (1895: p. 25), to Saintsbury 'fantastic... extravagant... preposterous' (Maixner, 1980: p. 107); other contemporary reviewers see them as 'magnificent extravagance', 'grotesque romances', 'far-fetched and improbable... even silly and frivolous' (Maixner, 1980: p. 109, p. 117, p. 118). Saposnik (1974: pp. 68-9) characterises them as 'midway between fantasy and reality' and then as 'melodrama... farce... fantasy' and Sandison (1996: p. 118) as a 'virtuoso mix of light hearted parody, irony and burlesque'.

It is my proposal that the term 'camp', used as a critical term,[2] may cover many of the qualities just listed and so give us an economical way of discussing this strange text. I am not the first to sense this association. Vanessa Smith (1994: p. 23) says of 'The

Suicide Club' 'it takes no feats of hyper-interpretation to see this trio of camp tales as a parable of the homosocial'. Tom Hubbard (1995: p. 39) sees NAN as in the 'genre of genial camp... eccentric manipulations of late-Victorian reality'.

Sandison (1996: p. 100) calls NAN 'a text which, from beginning to end, constantly calls attention to itself: posing, impersonating, playing stylish tricks', and this he calls 'the spirit of the dandy'. It is clear that 'camp' and 'dandyism' are close allied, yet I would prefer the term 'camp' to 'the spirit of the dandy' for several reasons: dandyism, first of all, we can see as a nineteenth century phenomenon connected with Romanticism (and Wilde can be seen as already imitating earlier cultural forms),[3] and while it can be rendered a broader term, it is by stretching it; camp, on the other hand, exists both before and after Stevenson and does not need to be widened in meaning – it is therefore a more appropriate term for discussing connections of Stevenson with subsequent cultural phenomena and semantically more economical.

The question 'what is camp?' is a little like the question 'what is Zen?' – the question one should not answer, since both refer to elusive phenomena and attempts to define are doomed to failure.[4]

The term is commonly used to refer exclusively to effeminate upper-middle-class homosexual identity, which we can see as arising after 1895 when a typical Wilde-like behaviour (in dress, gestures, speech) was adopted by homosexuals. The performance of these codes of behaviour becomes known as 'camp' (Meyer, 1994: p. 105).

However, an exclusively homosexual association of camp attempts to give a stable and definite meaning to a concept centred on instability and indefiniteness and to a word that seems to have been current for some decades before the Wilde trials[5]. The restored complexity of meaning adopted (from Cleto, 1999) in this paper is centred on the idea of self-conscious performance. Camp involves 'an engagement with the orthodox, but in a way that is 'theatricalised', the performer is:

> ...at the centre of the ritual and its ideology... and at the same time substantially outside of the system of values which construct and infuse it. What emerges is a powerful sense of the provisionality of all appearance... a provisionality which allows for dramatic playfulness in the process of self-representation (Grantley, 1996: p. 224).

This performance takes place on temporary stages, 'camp' itself can be seen as a building 'whose walls are erected, dismantled and moved elsewhere, as soon as their performing ends are accomplished' (Cleto: p. 36), it is an 'ephemeral apparatus' that creates 'a dressing-up party space' for camp performance (ibid. p. 33).[6]

Along with the idea of the unique and continuous self, camp undermines other categories of serious dominant culture and replaces them, – temporarily[7] – with playful 'multiplicity, diversity, instability, change and surface' (Cleto, 1999: p. 13). One fundamental aspect of conventional culture chosen for such undermining is that of clear gender distinction: by confusing and reversing what the dominant culture tries to maintain (earnestly but absurdly) as a basic clear distinction, the camp performer not only suggests that gender is a construct but questions all fixed binary oppositions.[8] Other oppositions called in questions by incongruous mixtures and reversals are 'original' vs 'copy', 'identity' vs 'difference', and 'natural' vs 'artificial', 'sacred' vs 'profane', 'high art' vs 'low art'.

The camp performance does not try to be taken as natural, but brings itself forward *(il se campe)* and so becomes associated with incongruity, exaggeration, artifice and extremity (cf. Bergman, 1993: pp. 4-5), and as a result with parodies of popular genres that use conventions of strong feelings, sharply defined personalities and clear sentiments (as in modern camp parodies of horror films). The exaggeration may be (paradoxically) quite subtle and confined to the foregrounding of style and form or of perfect aristocratic style of manners.