UNIVERSIDAD COMPLUTENSE DE MADRID

FACULTAD DE FILOLOGÍA

Departamento de Filología Inglesa



TESIS DOCTORAL

A teological approach to the essays of Robert Louis Stevenson

Aproximación teleológica a los ensayos de Robert Louis Stevenson

MEMORIA PARA OPTAR AL GRADO DE DOCTOR

PRESENTADA POR

José Luis Miras Orozco

Directora

Margarita Ardanaz Morán

Madrid, 2019

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Medallion of Robert Louis Stevenson by Augustus Saint-Gaudens. 1887, Indianapolis. Museum of Art.

VOLUME ONE

A mis queridos de todos los días de mi vida. A mi familia -en especial a mis padres, Gloria y José Luis, a mis hermanos Gloria, Blanca y Mateo, y a mis sobrinos Pablo y Nora -por la inusitada e inexplicable paciencia con que me (re)querían de vuelta de esa otra maravillosa ficción que alienta Stevenson. Con ellos y por ellos todo lo puedo. Sin ellos nada alcanzo.

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved of these days and of all the days in my life, my family; -specially to my parents, to my siblings and to my nephew Pablo and my niece Nora-, for all their patience and forberance when they required me while I was transported to that somewhere else of everything Stevenson.
To them my love and gratitude are boundless.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

So many friends and acquaintances fed my enthusiasm on this project, throughout the years, that I fear the tremendous discourtesy of inadvertent omission. Besides enormous debts to the findings of pioneers of the best Stevensonism, such as Ernest Mehew, Roger Swearingen, Alan Sandison, David Daiches, Jenni Calder, and Barry Menikoff, who indisputably shed light on and helped sharpen my views, I have learned much from the works of more recent Stevensonian scholars like Richard Dury, Roderick Watson, Lesley Graham, Jean-Pierre Naugrette, Richard Ambrosini, Robert Louis Abrahamson, Caroline McCracken-Fresher and Linda Dryden, among many others, as from their valuable contributions in the biannual International Stevenson Conferences.

I am particularly grateful to my tutor Margarita Ardanaz for her long standing support, intuitive insight and sound advice; to James Flath, for kindly revising both the ongoing and late drafts of this dissertation so that any infelicity of prose here is my sole fault-; to Marciano Escutia for his encouragements; to Svetlana Maliavina, whose innovative work on the delighted traveller that was Vasily Petrovich Botkin, opened new avenues in my research; and to Gustavo Sánchez Canales for his constructive criticism. I have been especially fortunate to have these dear colleagues by my side. Without their knowledge, encouragment and inspiration this study would hardly have been completed.

I am deeply indebted to the memory of the late Medardo Fraile[1], master of the short story, translator and dear friend, and to his delightful wife Janet and daughter Andrea for all the stimuli they brought while introducing me to and guiding me through many of the endless beauties and joys of Scotland, Stevenson's homeland.

So much for the intellectuals debts, however inadequately recognized here, in the notes, and in my select list of works cited.

---

[1] Fraile held the chair of Spanish Language and Literature at Strathclyde University in Glasgow, and is the author of nearly a hundred books of short-stories, articles and literary criticism. Together with his wife Janet, he made a wonderful translation of Stevenson's *Weir of Herminston*. His selected stories appeared in English -*Things Look Different in The Light.* London: Puskin Press, 2014- translated from the Spanish by Margaret Jull Costa.

I am obliged to the librarians at the following institutions in which I worked for their assistance and kindness and for giving me access to some Stevensoniana not found elsewhere: the National Library of Scotland, -who regaled me with the thrilling experience of holding many of R.L.S.'s MS in my hands-; the Advocates Library, the Central Library, the Lady Stairs's House in Edinburgh, the Edinburgh University Library and the Michell Library in Glasgow, the Bodleian Library and the English Faculty Library at Oxford, and the British Library.

I express my thankfulness to Peter Welburn and John and Felicitas MacFie, my hosts at the National Library of Scotland[2] and the Stevenson House[3] at 17 Heriot Row, Edinburgh, respectively, for their enthusiasm and support.

Special gratitude goes to the late Emilio Lorenzo Criado[4], former member of the RAE, philologist, scholar and translator, for his valuable revision of my translation of *Father Damian.* Also to Roger Swearingen who courteously answered my inquiries with his illuminating suggestions.

---

[2] The National Library of Scotland holds the collections which, in Stevenson's time, used to belong to the Advocate's Library in Edinburgh, which Louis used -between 1875 and 1880- in his "determined practical research for specific projects..." whenever he felt the need to return "to familiar favourite areas: French history, Scottish history, Scottish poetry and a range of fiction" (see Norquay, 2007:20).

[3] 17 Heriot Row, is a private property run by the MacFies, not a museum. The first museum on Stevenson was in his birthplace, 8 Howard Place, Edinburgh. Items on display were later moved to The Writers' Museum at Lady Stair's Close in the Lawnmarket, Edinburgh, where they are exhibited in the basement, while the upper floors are dedicated to Robert Burns' and Sir Walter Scott's memorabilia.

[4] Any Spanish philologist is indebted to the early scholarly efforts of "Don Emilio", as he is remembered, for his pioneer work as the founder of the Studies of Modern Germanic Languages in my *alma mater.*

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PREFACE

All that we know, think of, or comes as dreams,
in a manner becomes ourselves

(William Hazlitt)

PREFACE

My interest in Robert Louis Stevenson was sparked, at an early age, while reading one of his adventure stories, or "romances"[5] -as he liked to call them-, which unlike with most children was not *Treasure Island,* but an old Spanish copy of *Kidnapped.*

I was much gratified, in later life, to discover Stevenson's preference for David Balfour over Jim Hawkins[6]. The notion that this work of fiction bears both topographical and historical exactitude excited my curiosity spurring me to travel, both in space and time, to most of the places depicted in the novel and further to many of Stevenson's haunts in Scotland and elsewhere. Still at a young age, a mere serendipituous act landed me in the complicated, and yet utterly engrossing island of his treasure: I had discovered that far from being the dilly-dallying master of children literature, as he was labelled, Louis was, already in his youth, a crafty versatile writer who applied himself, very consciously, to his art. I had found that unique, intimate, dialogic voice in his essays. Floundering in the shallow waters of my emerging English, I coaxed myself to carry on and feast on his collected essays till I knew that I had a friend on my shelves to whom I could always turn to for guidance, instruction and joy.

I continue to inhabit Stevenson's prose and verse this day. Still, when I decided to pursue my postgraduate studies I was swayed by two thoughts. First, I was well aware of the many pitfalls threatening to overshadow any critical work on an author whose sensitivity has been woven into mine from my earliest childhood. Second, the understanding that I was to write my dissertation on, surely, one of the most anti-academic writers ever daunted me even more than other complications derived. Stevenson, veritably, cleared out from the scholarly, which was one of the predominant

---

[5] Yeats called Louis "the chief of Romantic writers" (quoted in Eigner, 1966:233). Barbara Fuchs averts, "romance is a notoriously slippery category. Critics disagree about whether it is a genre or a mode, about its origins and history, even about what it compasses" (Barbara Fuchs, Romance. New York; London: Routledge, 2004:1). The old French word, as used in many of his essays -for instance see "A Gossip on Romance", or "Victor Hugo's Romances"- meant for R.L.S. more than the novel of incident from the time of Defoe onward. With his exactitude of language, he never conceded that the romance was oppositional to the novel of character of the reaslists, either. As will be demonstrated in due course in this study, Stevenson's romance is a more complex and unique notion, a re-casting and a move "towards a modern aesthetic, which involves a noticeable moral and psychological problematisation of romance's adventure element" (Di Frances, 2011:32).

[6] The heroes of *Kidnapped* and *Treasure Island*, respectively.

discourses in his time. His essays are studded with references to almost every aspect of life of almost any culture, revealing a deep knowledge and a mind perpetually alert.

The realization, in the initial stages, that the subject of my research was the product of a mind much imbibed with thought, wit and erudition, suggested an almost insurmountable complexity. For, it was only through deeper levels of study that an awareness of such notions as Calvinism, Jacobitism, and those dark episodes of Scottish history performed by the Covenanters -central to the understanding of our author and of his work- was attained.

Further difficulties arose from the veritably overwhelming amount of mandatory material, by then, scattered in a considerable quantity of magazines and publications of the day, only accessible at newspaper libraries in old microfilm reels, and in second hand volumes that have not been reprinted.

Particularly unsettling was the absence of serious criticism and critical annotated editions of Stevenson's works which is still as pending as it is imperative[7].

It was Henry James, in one of his brilliant and eloquent letters, who adumbrated that Stevenson was becoming a myth, and that the man who suffered would soon overshadow the mind that created. And so, the student of Stevenson comes, sooner or later, to be entangled in that web of eulogy, which takes him to read a dozen of biographies, in which literary criticism is replaced by hagiographism or mere gossip on the man.

Vast reshapement and significative improvement was added towards the end of the drafting process with the incorporation of Stevenson's letters as published, in eight volumes, by Yale. Laying my hands on such monumental treasure trove, collected and edited by Bradford A. Booth and Ernest Mehew, was very instrumental to corroborate my findings and ground them firmly in that "study" by both Stevenson the man and the writer which cannot possibly be surpassed, full of magic, vivid, bouncing off the page. This dissertation might well be amongst the first to do so.

---

[7] At the time of writing, two volumes of the New Edinburgh Edition have, however, appeared in print under the auspicies of Edinburgh University Press, to wit, *Weir of Herminston* and *The Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mr Hyde.*

NOTE ON THE PRIMARY SOURCES

NOTE ON THE PRIMARY SOURCES

Throughout this study, every reference to *oratio recta,* i.e. all quotes from Stevenson's original essays and other writings, as I do extensively, are taken from *The Tusitala Edition of The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson* (London: William Heinemann, Ltd. In Association with Chatto & Windus; Cassell & Co, and Longmans, Green & Co. 1924. XXXV vols.), which remains the canonical edition. -Henceforth "T", followed by the volume number before and the page number after a semicolon- .

Likewise, excerpts from Stevenson's correspondence, widely quoted here, come from *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994-95. ed. Bradford A. Booth and Ernest Mehew. 8 vols.), veritably the unique and easily accessible repository of everything Stevenson, in his own voice, and with the witty and illuminating comments by the two scholars. -From now on, "L", in the same manner as with the Tusitala edition-.

The keen reader is here referred to the first chapter in the bibliography where I offer a detailed account of the publication history of each individual work as from the most comprehensive and scholarly record to date, *The Prose Writings of Robert Louis Stevenson: A Guide.* (Hamden, Connecticut. Archon Books. 1980. By Roger G. Swearingen).

At the time of writing there is no existing critical annotated edition of the works of Robert Louis Stevenson. Not even a textually reliable edition of his complete works. Since, much of what he wrote, including his essays, has long been out of print. For, as Jeremy Treglown asserted (Treglown 1988:xxi), "it is not the job of the many published selections to date, to establish an ideal text". The project has lately been undertaken by Edinburgh University Press[8].

The Stevenson researcher contemplates with bemused resignation the six successive editions of the complete works; their virtues and their blemishes; their rigor besmirched by slips, omissions and indefensible miscontructions.

---

[8] Two volumes of the *New Edinburgh Edition* have so far appeared in print, to wit, *Weir of Herminston* and *The Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mr Hyde.*

The Tusitala edition is not free of these betrayals. Adopting it as the canonical edition is, at most, an academic expedient based on its accessibility and its handiness, and a recognition of its few merits. Ample evidence of its many disloyalties will be made manifest in the following pages, among which the Delphic, bumptious forewords by his stepson Loyd and by his widow Fanny. Thus, when quoting Stevenson's poems I have preferred to use Janet Adam Smith's (1950) comprehensive edition -widely appreciated by scholars- for all the poems but those in Scots which come from the new edition by Lewis (2003) -which identifies "many variants and the editorial procedures of a succession of RLS's literary associates who claimed to be fulfilling his intentions or acting on his authority".

Disparities and incongruities in the Tusitala, and amongst the different editions, have been solved by delving into the, once more, scholarly, fully dependable volumes of his correspondence, wonderfully edited by Booth and Mehew. Since, as any conscientious reader of Stevenson never fails to notice, he was the first honest critic of his craft to which he applied himself both sedulously and seriously.

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

> The great affair is **to move;** to feel the needs and hitches of our **life** more nearly.."
>
> (Tus. 17: 178. Emphasis added)

Thus concludes a passage extensively quoted from *Travels with a Donkey in the Cévennes* (1879), a delightful volume written in a "graver tone", "filled with inextinguishable longing and regret", and "the pain (...) of separation from his dearest by the breath of a continent and an ocean" (Balfour [9], 1916: 114-115).

In "Aristotle on the Animate: Problems and Prospects," one of the recent philosophical works attempting to produce a satisfying account of what it is to be alive, Richard Cameron, reminds us that Aristotle "defined life in teleological terms, holding that **teleology -the intrinsic ends, goals or purposes of something that is alive**-(emphasis mine), is essential to the life of living things"[10].

I find this quote strikingly fitting to what I mean by "a teleological approach" in my title. And yet not as settled as the use St.Agustine makes of the term in *On Christian Doctrine.* Here, the graceful Christian philosopher of unsettled times, advocates the liberal arts as a means of persons reaching their true destiny, *telos* (Greek, "end") which is not the accumulation of knowledge, far less the vain achievement of a utilitarian aim, job or whatever. No, it is a sense of fulfilment based on the relational, on a life-giving principle, which should govern contemporary academy.

While much recent scholarship on Stevenson foregrounds time and spatial boundaries, this thesis examines the three *teloi* or purposes *alive* in our author's writings and in their causes: (i) the search for a sense of personal **identity** that would facilitate the understanding of both "the self" and "the other"; (ii) the look for **ethical views** distinct by reason of his individuality that would unfetter him from conformity; (iii) the

---

[9] Graham Balfour was Stevenson's second cousin on his mother side. He visited Vailima -R.L.S.'s home in Samoa-, in 1892, stayed over a year and became the first official biographer of his literary cousin. As Alanna Knight states his work is "necessarily inhibited by the fact that at the time of writing Fanny Stevenson was still very much alive" (Knight, 1985:9). After their affair in France and before they married, Fanny had to go back to the States, the young Stevenson could not possibly follow.

[10] Richard Cameron, "Aristotle on the Animate: Problems and Prospects," *Bios: Epistemological and Philosophical Foundation of Life Sciences*, Rome, February 23-24, 2006.

hunt for some **aesthetics** that would enable his experimentation and take him beyond traditional concepts and established modes.

Hence, if any critical approach is but an attempt to paint a personal, well-documented vision or interpretation of a writer's *oeuvre*, bringing him back to life, then I shall try to demonstrate in this thesis that Tusitala was continuously reinventing himself as he searched for a more personal Montaignian element in his essays. I shall try to show that he rebelled against the moral rigidities, the philistinism and the complacency of "the unco guid"[11], the "respectability" of the Victorians, in a desperate quest for his independence. I shall attempt to illustrate how Stevenson strove to reconcile the imaginative with the real in his writing, to create a kind of "fictional realism" with which he would combat the oppressive pessimism of the decadents, brandising his delicate debonair style as his sole weapon.

The present dissertation also aims to acknowledge and to make accessible Stevenson's essayistic works and the most recent scholarship on them, but to do so from my own critical perspective.

A hundred and twenty odd years from Stevenson's death, I consider it timely to write here a humble remonstrance [12] against the regretable exclussion of the essay from academic studies. Thus, I deem it instrumental to offer a humble proposal for its inclusion in the literary class. In such ambitious pursuit, I seek to, if not restore the genre to the central place it once occupied, at least, to expound, based on my extensive use of Stevenson's essays in the classroom, how and why I firmly believe on the plentiful benefits brought about by their pedagogical use. As I defend in these pages, it comes as ironic and implausible, that the genre to which we are much indebted should be obliterated, precisely when reading competence has been prioritised since the implementation of the "Bologna Declaration". At the very time when literary subjects are constrained, the essay, in its conciseness, in its neatness, in its intimate tone, has much to offer that would be fruitful and rewarding.

---

[11] In his "Address to the Unco Guid, Or The Rigidly Righteous" (1786), the Scottish Bard, Robert Burns, lashes the hypocritical behaviour of the conventional middle-classes.

[12] I here allude to the title of one of Stevenson's greatest literary essays with which I shall be dealing at length in chapter V of this dissertation.

I have gratefully made use of both *oratio recta* and *oratio obliqua.* i.e. of authorial and of scholarly evidence. Conversely, I have rejected many of those works -mostly in the form of biographies, reminiscences and memorabilia- Stevensonians rightly branded as "hagiography", which also includes that "seraph in chocolate"[13], that bland sentimentalism which started the Stevenson legend shortly after his passing.

The works under study are those which, to my understanding, best reflect Stevenson's essayistic talent. Passing comments, analysis of his letters, poems and other works will be added as necessary. I have not attempted to offer exhaustive critical readings of Stevenson's works of fiction. The curious reader will find most of the finest scholarly approaches to Stevenson's romance listed here amongst those of his non-fictional prose.

Similarly, I have tried not to put an unwarranted gloss on Stevenson's life by concentrating narrowly on a few biographical efforts -Just like travels "in the footsteps of Stevenson"[14], biographies on the great Scot constitute almost a "by-genre". Louis was, by turns, a poseur, an aventurer, a bohemian, an "amateur emigrant", a pilgrim, a member of the literati. Thusly, I have done my best to write a sincere celebration akin to a censorious observation of his non-fiction based on close study.

I have written in the confidence that interest in Stevenson's essays is not and should not be restricted to scholars wishing to revitalize what has always been vibrant on the page, to bring back in vogue what never failed to be serenely relished. The premise of this study is that the essays apply to and can be appreciated and enjoyed at almost any age by the keen reader. It is a conviction I hold as deeply as I believe in the many pleasures offered by the arts not just by that of writing.

---

[13] Willliam Ernest Henley(1849-1903), author of "Invictus", was introduced to RLS by Leslie Stephen. They became intimate friends and collaborated on some drama projects. However, their friendship came to an abrupt end when Henley accused Fanny of plagirising. In his review to Graham Balfour's biography of RLS, Henry launched a bitter attack rightly attempting to destroy the myth and sentiment that had developed since Stevenson's death, this "Seraph in Chocolate, this barley-sugar effigy of a real man" -"Ex Libris. RLS", The Pall Mall Magazine, 25 (December 1901), 505-14-.

[14] Ever since the publication of John Buchan's (1898) "'The Country of Kidnapped" for The Academy; and of Hammerton's (1903) *In the track of RLS and Elsewhere in Old France.* New York: E. P. Dutton. (Also 1907: Bristol/London: J.W. Arrowsmith/ Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent), there has been a steady proliferation of writings revisiting the places associated with our author and following the topography of his works. For a detailed list, see http://www.robert-louis-stevenson.org/richard-dury-archive/footsteps.html (Last visited March 2018).

The first three chapters provide a framework, a backdrop on which and from which the tapestry of Stevenson's genius will, hopefully, be better perceived in its most salient virtues, and still in the not so noticeable ones.

Chapter 1 investigates the ever elusive notion of "the essay", the subtleness of its charm, the intimacy of its serpentine style, and its development throughout the ages.

Chapter 2 examines the no less evasive issue of what the foremost English, Scottish and American essayists brought forth, endevouring to ascertain the proximity and the distance at which Stevenson "travelled" in his constant new steerings. I am not blind to the fact that Stevenson's *oeuvre* is intimately connected with other literary traditions. His interest for the classics goes beyond his unquenchable enthusiasm for Horace, to include Marcus Aurelius, Martial, Virgil, Juvenal and Cicero. For a while, he was more excited by the French literary scene than by the English. Yet neither of these last two are contemplated here due to space contraints.

Chapter 3, closes in on the matter of Stevenson's reputation as an essayist. With luck it will shed light on how the popularity of his *romances* contributed to the disregard of his non-fiction. On the damage done, abetted by Stevenson's own disingenious declarations; by his overridding myth; by the adverse effect of some widespred illustrations of his works; by the marketable disloyalties of cinema adaptations; by the deleterious academic adoption of his essays; by the modernists' offence; by the overlook of some literary giants. It provides insight and offers proposals as to how each of these pernicious effects can be -and could have been- put to rights, same as into the latest scholarly efforts intending to reinstate and revalue his essays.

Chapter 4 discusses the travel genre, its evolution and its critical and theoretical approaches from a teleological standpoint.

Chapter 5 focuses on RLS's engagement with the discourse of travel. I have adopted three categories which Stevenson didn't care about, nor did he ever conceived as such, just for the clear exposition of a work of cautious academic mien as this propounds to be. In the first part I reveal how vital moving along the landscape and changing scenery were for Stevenson in the quest for his identity. In the subsequent sections to this chapter, I show how Tusitala's writings, in general, and his essays, in

particular, coalesce around the contested meaning and value of *mobility*, and analyse how his ethics and his aesthetics hing on the kinetic. I am well aware, however, as a critic said, that ethical and aesthetic thoughts overlap: for not even non-fictional *narrative* can "represent the whole truth and moral precepts cannot guide conduct – in both cases, reality is too personal and various".

Had it not being for the usual space constraints, I would also have considered the insurmountable overlappings, intersections and complex interweavings between his essays and his novels and stories, just as those between his essays and his poems.

Finally, two appendixes will prove instrumental in furthering my research and adding to my overall conclusions.

Appendix A looks at the first Spanish publishing efforts, determining how ahead Stevenson's fictive universe was of his non-fictive space among his Spanish readers, and how inclined they were to this more intimate encounter with the author.

Appendix B reveals how Stevenson's ethics were based on the particularized, not subject to any dogmatism, but expounded on, in both senses, a moving and persuasive highminded morality based on circumstance and individuality. My translation of his "Father Damien: An Open Letter", is but a rendering amongst the many that can be proposed; yet it will hopefully illustrate the need to calibrate and to perceive that unique generous and independent voice, that graceful style.

AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

"For my part, I travel not to go anywhere, but to go. I travel for travel's sake. The great affair is to move; to feel the needs and hitches of our life more nearly; to come down off this feather-bed of civilisation, and find the globe granite underfoot and strewn with cutting flints. "

(*Travels with a Donkey.* T 17: 178)

AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

The so-called “attack on the humanities”, the pooling of departments compelled to share disimilar objectives, perspectives and interests; the closing of branches of studies that always proved both clarifying and productive have generated vast controversy. New critical views and methodological analysis have turned scholarly prospects aside from what never ceased to be looked at in favour of what is thought needs to be looked at. Reasons beyond the academic have propitiated both fresh approaches and new regard, yet they have also overridden and neglected. As in the art of translation, something must be lost, something must be gained, and there must be some kind of compensation for what cannot be regained. If literary studies continue to lose status in favour of the experimental sciences, perhaps time is ripe to compensate by balancing the current with the former, the innovative with the traditional, the known with the unexplored. And thus, same as the experimental sciences make progress through serendipity and other new findings, the humanities must continue to make progress by opening new avenues; yet also by treading on those built long ago. And here is were the essay can and should play a big part .

The ambitious aim of this work is, thus, to put forth a resolute proposal and a plea for the inclusion of the genre in the curricula as pertinent and crucial to the study of literature. Gropping toward that very goal, and grappling with the wonted dismisal and unexpected dissent, is the awareness that “essaying” conveys far more than merely an “attempt to”. That *belletrism* is but a quality and a type, for there is far more to feed on than just the aesthetic value of an essay. That the essay is thoughtful and witty, that it invites and incites us readers, is of its essence and at its very nature. That the “I” of the essay presents himself both as the man who suffers and the mind that creates, and is vastly more recognizable than the “I” of the novel, the play, or the poem is both evident and accepted. In a world made vague by confused identities, political nationalisms, relativism and globalisation, the voice *in* the essay, the voice *of* the essayist, has much to say that will be vital and compelling if we are but willing to lend an ear.

Robert Louis Stevenson clearly pondered on what he received and responded to the challenging, intimidating and forceful discourse that surrounded him. He did it in a riveting way, which was very much his.

Placing his essays against the background of his inheritance, and leaning on the vast amount of evidence provided by his extensive correspondance, I seek to make apparent the shape and the countours of Stevenson's thought, of his ethics and of his aesthetics. Following the thread that, to my understanding, best and most naturally, brings everything together, *mobility*, I seek to restore his essays to their formidable value and relevance; to their singularity as looking well-ahead of his time, forseeing what was to come not just in the world of literature.

Amongst the more attainable objectives I set out to reveal a new Stevenson at variance with the jejune, oversimplified view of his work by the Modernists, and to rescue his essays from the censorious evaluation that condemned him to the nursery, lowering his prolific work to the status of juvenile yarns and ghosty tales by the fireside.

I will attempt to present the intricacies of his polimorphous work, the complexities of his *oeuvre* made still more conclusive in his non-fiction.

An analysis of Stevenson' most representative essays and travel books, will, hopefully, demonstrate how the great Scottish author used these narratives to first, detach himself from the sentimental clichés and comforts of group identity, -while remaining an acute observer-; second, to integrate a highly personal, articulate and innovative theory of art; and third, to expound his versatile, never doctrinaire, ethical principles.

On a more practical perspective I sought to answer a focal question in my pedagogical calling, based on my own findings in the successive literary classes I have been privileged to teach, in our department, throughout the years. Namely, do literary essays promote a more penetrating and discerning reading? And then, most predictably, does such a reading of literary essays serve to stimulate better writing on the part of our students? I discuss these two, in some depth, in chapter three, where I deal with the academic adoptations of Stevenson's work. Yet I wish to advance my humble response to the question with an emphatical "absolutely!". Stevenson's writings can help our

students enhance their reading and writing skills in English. Essays like, “On Falling in Love” or “An Apology for Idlers”, have never failed to procure both insightful discussions, and engrossing analysis of figures such as the crafty use of chiasmus, cadence, etc. among our students.

Having taught writing for some years, I set out to put my ideas into practice in a sort of unconventional way. However, continuity was increasingly affected by the short terms resulting with the implementation of the grades (2009-2010) after the signature of the Bologne Declaration. Therefore, very much like Jekyll himself, I decided to be my own guinea pig, gulp the potion down, commit myself to my writing, and wait to see what would happen. Whether or not there is a trace of the Stevensonian style in these pages the “outsider” is to judge. For the “insider” is never able to appreciate what lies without. Or, as Chesterton put it, we run the tremendous risk of seeing something for the first time after we look at it for the thousandth time.

About my methodology, I was much tempted to proceed thematically, topographically or chronologically as biographers, critics and scholars usually do, to single out, the most salient topics, scenery, and events related in the essays. Notwithstanding, I soon became aware that none of these would do for a systematised approach and a clear exposition. But would result in a poor imitation of the capable and formidable work, however sporadic, already at hand. I was equally aware that the application of any of the critical approaches addressed in 4.3 would prove inoperable to convey the whole breath and depth of RLS’s writing, its complexity.

It did not escape me that trying to categorize the essays would garble their very intent, for Stevenson did never think of such while writing them. There was a much larger principle governing his creative force. A sturdy independence coming from that feeble nature. A driving force pulling him in that resolved, brave direction. An impulse to look back at what went before, yet also to pull forward to the new.

Then came the realization that Stevenson was the supreme adventurer and that he was, primarily, adventurous in his literary pursuits. The remembrance of the ease with which he would open a new work and the change of scenery he needed to close it. The sudden “revelation” that *Kinesis* was the all-embracing principle in his art same as in his being. And that this principle governed three teleologies, three purposes justifying that

continuous dynamism, the search for identity in a muddly changeable world; the quest for singular, personal aesthetics; and the urgent need of some ethics honest to the self and free from any dogmatism.

Therefore, I opted for the teleological, which would, hopefully, serve to fathom and to set forth the whole purpose of RLS in composing his essays, while setting their brilliance and virtues free from shallow static interpretations.

I am well aware of the various pitfalls and overlappings attending such a method, yet, I am amply persuaded that these, by quantity and consequence, amount to far less than those faced by the frequent approaches with which I am too familiar.

CHAPTER 1

CHAPTER 1-

UNRAVELING THE ESSAY:
A FREE LITERARY GENRE

It is a common, almost universally acknowledged procedure in writing a paper on any specific subject, to begin by defining our field of study. Common and sort of ungraceful we might add, for by treading at the heels of the so called "literary criticism", and its traditional approaches, we impose restrictions which, in some cases, come to be hardly surmountable. And this is no less true when trying to define a literary genre as free and independent as the essay. From a wider literary approach and attending to the primeval meaning of the term as offered by the O.E.D., we must avow that by essay, we understand: "The action or process of trying or testing", thereby making it equivalent to the verb “to assay” of the same etymology; and that it was in this sense that the word was first used by Montaigne, who, in 1580, gave the modest title of *Essais* to his famous collection of desultory papers. And here is where we come to the root of an endless debate, for there is no agreement in the answer to the following question: Was the charming Frenchman the creator of a new genre, or just its coiner? We shall put forward our own opinion on the matter in due course. By now, suffice it to say that this literary form defies definition.

To this problem should be added another one, which, to a certain extent, could also serve to explain it: its devaluation. For, from the highest position in the literary world and prestige of its practitioners in the Renaissance and Neoclassical times, we come to the prominence it still had in Victorian England[15], and from there to the diminished status it holds today. And this besides the great efforts made in the last century by the Bloomsbury Group, and such notable contributions as those by Virginia Woolf and T. S. Eliot. Many seem to be the causes for this underestimation. First, the inadmissible exclusion of the essay from serious literary studies. Second, its identification with prosy technical writings, scholarly articles and its excessive classification as entertainment more than as reflective writing. Moreover, the delusive

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[15] For reasons of space, I will only address the essay as a genre within an Anglo-Saxon framework. For the reader interested in the essay outside this framework, consult Pritchard (1932) and Lopate (1995) among others.

assumption that the genre deals with fact and is devoid of imagination, of creation, and therefore, considered trivial instead of genuine art. And finally, the difficulties inherent in distinguishing between essays and popular journalism, not to mention the regreattable modern connotation of the term which makes it equivalent to the word "composition". This devaluation also speaks of the natural evolution of the literary form throughout the centuries, of its openess, of its capacity to conform itself to new ideas and new times. Interestingly, the essay flourishes in times of turmoil and in revolutionary periods. A clear example can be found in the fact that anthologies and encyclopedias are far more interested in Goldsmith the novelist and the playwright, than in Goldsmith the essayist. We all remember his *The Vicar of Wakefield*, and even *She Stoops to Conquer*, because they figure in our curricula, but have never a thought for the delightful pieces included in *The Bee,* just because we have never been introduced to them. And so, after rummaging libraries and bookshops, he who has an appetite for English Essays, has to content himself with a few Bacons, some Burtons, perhaps one or two Addisons, and a couple of Johnsons. He may search for some racier and more palatable kind of prose: a Hazlitt, a Lamb, a De Quincey, a Pater or a Stevenson. Look where he will, he won't find them.

At least one thing seems to be certain, for though devalued, the essay continues to be extensively read, and is in fact the most popular genre together with the novel. There also seems to be an agreement on the notion that, both the essay and the novel, are modern literary forms in direct opposition to ancient ones like the epic, the drama, the oratory, or the epigram, which came down to us from the Greeks, and about which earlier beginnings we know little. There is further accordance on the fact that the genre is a product of the Renaissance, and that it means a clash between the old concept of the universe and the new one, a challange of conventional wisdom, an examination of received ideas. The emergence of this new prose style also reveals a shift in the mind, for, as Chesterton asserted, "the medieval man thought in terms of the *Thesis*, where the modern man thinks in terms of the *Essay"*[16] -that is to say, whereas the medieval man did not bother to think at all unless he could come to a conclusion, "the modern man only essays" or attempts to come to it-. So, the genre means a disdain of the Aristotelian logical deduction, and an embracing of inductive reasoning; the substitution of

16. "On Essays", contained in *In Defense of Sanity.* 2011, p.21.

argument by experience represented by the advance of science. This is a solid reason for the inclusion and explotation of the genre in both the literature and the language classroom, since students can benefit from its discursive eloquent force to produce their own creations after a reflecting reading.

In its development throughout history, the essay incorporates new styles and forms, so that from the more or less clear fixed structure it had in its beginning, we come to the elaborate, almost all-inclusive arrangement we know today. Thus, the term applies to any miscellaneous writing in prose, to any nonfictional prose. And in such an ambitious encompassing, the genre acquires that Protean quality which makes its definition sound rather contradictory; or should we say... redundant? For we can only essay a definition of the essay. Still, *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, in its 1988 edition, ventures:

> A literary composition of moderate length, dealing in an easy cursory way with a single subject, usually representing the writer's personal experience and outlook.[17]

Which not only ignores more than a few characteristics, as that it must not be dull, or the fact that it does not claim to be a complete exposition of a subject, but also sounds rather simplistic, i.e. it is valuable only as a description of a particular taste, but not of its whole flavour-. That's why when wrestling with the problem, critics usually focus on the etymology of the word. This is what the chubby, ruddy, enormous controversalist Gilbert Keith Chesterton, always ready for his bit of forceful and ingenious proselitizing, does in his definition of the elusive genre:

> The Essay is like the Serpent, smooth and graceful and easy of movement, also wavering or wandering. Besides, I suppose that the very word Essay had the original meaning of "trying it on". The serpent was in every sense of the word temptative. The tempter is always feeling his way, and finding out how much other people will stand. That misleading air of irresponsibility about the Essay is very disarminng though appearing to be disarmed. But the serpent can strike without claws as it can run without legs. [18]

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[17] Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1988. Macropaedia, vol. 4. pp.562-3.

[18] . Ibid., “On Essays", contained in *In Defense of Sanity*. p. 201

And if we don't know if he finally managed to butcher the serpent, at least he clearly bound Proteus, in that he succeded in offering a comprehensible, though metaphorical, explanation on the nature of the essay. In that special ability of his to get to the gist of everything, Chesterton points out what I think is the main quality of the genre: its meandering force, the ease with which it flows its own course unrestrained. Far from restraining it, Chesterton contributed to its liberty, for his essays are often an amalgam of different genres delicately woven together -take for instance his "The Perfect Game," included in the delightful volume *Tremendous Trifles*, which perfectly combines the short story with the essay and even with the fable or brief moral article.

Let us make an abstract of the composite elements of this complex literary form taking into account the most useful definitions one could lay his hands on - not with the intention of binding it, for, as Chesterton, one is happy with its independence-, yet, with the purpose of writing a humble reappraisal of this disparaged genre.

The first ingredient which is needed is "a written literary composition"; which would include articles, papers, dissertations, monographs, scientific studies... but would leave behind the lecture, the speech, and other public addresses, and fall in the capricious mistake of calling something by a name when it is read aloud, and by another when it is published in book form.

The second one is that this composition needs be "in prose"; and truly, essays usually appear in this form, but that would obviate two sure circumstances: that good prose, like good poetry, develops itself from a central poetic image; and that in the rhetorical tension it generates between the essayist and the reader, the best essays are lyrical. Coleridge at one place has said that the opposite of prose is not poetry but verse, meaning, of course, that as poetry, prose can equally be used as a vehicle for the arousing of emotions, and therefore maybe it is, in its essence, poetical. Indeed, there is a disturbing essayistic quality in Romantic poetry, which is best exemplified in Wordswoth's "Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey", a meditative conclusion to his *Lyricall Ballads* described as: "an attempt to set out his mature faith in nature and humanity". The same applies to Browning's "How it strikes a Contemporary", which is in fact a fascinating description of the true essayist. And what about Popes's *Essay on Man*? Could it not be defined as a desperate endeavour to

support the old hierarchic organization of the world? Have we forgotten it was under the patronage of Steele's *Spectator* -that shrine for the periodical essay- where he tested his early pen? And the final blow for the strict terminologist: are we deaf to the melodious cadences of the following lines with which Sir Thomas Browne closes his *On Dreams*, in a startling anticipation of Freud?:

> If some have swooned they may have also died in dreams, since death is but a confirmed swooning. Whether Plato died in a dream, as some belive, he must rise again to inform us. That some have never dreamed, is as improbable as that some have never laughed. That children dream not the first half-year; that men dream not in some countries, with many more, are unto me sick men's dreams; dreams out of the ivory gate, and visions before midnight.[19]

In a further attempt to fetter the shrewd genre, scrupulous critics defend these compositions must be "of moderate length", and argue the longer ones should be called "treatises". We may thus wonder why is it that Locke has *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* as the title of his most famous and voluminous work. It may well be for reasons of subject matter, or even for structural reasons, but not for its extension, that we consider it a philosophical treatise today. And the same could be posited on Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy,* and a myriad of other classics of the Rennaisance. And still, who can deny their essayistic value and the relevance they had for the subsequent prose? And if we call Milton's *Aeropagitica,* "a short treatise", where are we to draw the line? And, once more, what about the collections and anthologies? The essays contained may be brief, notwithstanding, the book can be "as thick as leaves in Vallambrosa[20]", as the saying has it. Another scruple, about this constraint, is that extension is not at odds with enjoyment; we may read Boswell's *Life of Johnson* -a book which can be rightly claimed to be an essay on the Augustan Age, as we shall defend later on- and go all through its three volumes with the same relish.

As a natural process in the human being basing our knowledge on the phenomena perceived we owe classification to Aristotle and to phenomenologists such as Edmund

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[19] Sir Thomas Browne: "On Dreams", contained in "Modern English Essays", vii, p. 15.

[20] A citation from memory. The actual passage is, ""Thick as the Autumnal Leaves that strow the Brook/ In *Vallambrosa*, where the Etrurian shades/High overarch't imbow'r.... (*Paradise Lost,* I.299-304).

Husserl. Yet classifying has its risks, especially when we classify a work of art. If we proceeded this way, if we were to agree with severe classifiers, our next step would lead us to disregard *El Quijote*, or *Vanity Fair*, as treatises on delusion and conceit, respectively.

I do believe it is in the way the author handles his subject where we can find a valuable element for reasonable discrimination. And here is where we come to the fourth of our recquirements, for this literary written composition in prose, of moderate length, must deal "in an easy cursory way with a single subject". Once more, the definition poses important questions: What do we understand by "an easy cursory way"? Why "a single subject"? Let's propose an answer to both of these, and see if we can get a somewhat definite idea of what it is that an essay does, or tries to do. If we take the word "cursory" in its etymological meaning -Lat. “currere”-, we are rightly alluding to that gentle flowing of this type of prose as mentioned above. But cursory denotes "superficiality", "haste", "quickness", "a slovenly manner", what would lead us to the naïve thought that the essayist writes as it comes, paying no attention to style when in fact, essay-writing has always been considered belletristic. It would also fall in the clumsy assumption that essayists do not revise, and my spine chills at the thought that Sir Thomas Browne could write his *Hydriotaphia,* straight away, without faltering, at least once, for a certain word in a certain passage of his masterpiece. Even Shakespeare himself revised, how else could the existence of different Folios be explained? But revision is not necessarily opposed to spontaneity; you may revise and revise and your work might still be spontaneous. For spontaneity is not in the expression of ideas, but in their conception. Furthermore, it is just because it shows the liveliness of its author's mind, that a text comes to be spontaneous. The adjective "easy", also speaks against the sometimes lofty style of these compositions. And what is still odder, this partial definition is, in its formulation, strangely inconsistent. It might be considered pretentious to reject such an authoritative opinion, but by defending "a single subject" for the essay, we deprive it of precisely the same quality described: its "cursory way", or to put it in other words: its digressive power, its facility to move from one topic to another with tremendous ease. It is this flexibility which characterizes the genre, it is this, the unprogrammed form of the essay, that makes it more relaxed than the formal academic dissertation. That's why we take Locke's *magnum opus* and other philosophic,

metaphysic, or scientific works, to be treatises, not because of their very many pages, but because they deal systematically with one subject in a theoretical nondiscursive manner. Whereas an essay, by its very nature, does not explain what it is trying to do. It needs not reach a comprehensive conclusion, it will characteristically stop at the middle course and leave us wondering whether it has really done it. It is this that makes it touch almost every aspect of life and thought in the same unresolved mood and dialogic vein.

And now for the last component offered by *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*: The essay must presumably represent, or at least it "usually" does represent, "the writer's personal experience and outlook". Well, all writing does so, whether implicitly or explictly, for we still write from our own experience even when we imitate. The point is not what we do, but how we do it. This is a question of style, and style is another of those indefinable words. Besides that, an aesthetic discussion of the term would be out of place here, and leave the writer of these lines at a loss, for his own notions on the matter are scarcely settled. But he'll still venture a little further on, to sustain -carried by the common sense that "we all do things in our own way"- his belief that style and person are pretty much the same, and that when we make a quiet and inspired reading of an author -which is very rarely due to the rush and ruckus of modern life- we almost meet him; just as we miss him when, for the absurd and commercialy established arbitrariness of a date, we go on a pilgrimage to the places with which he is intimately associated.

Be it as it may, it is true that of all genres, the essay is the one in which the writer's personality is often more tangibly expressed. That's why many essayists are also novelists or poets. And, no doubt, both poetry and fiction can serve to give way to an idea, to express an author's view by way of imagination; but none of them compares with the bare disclosing allowed by the essay. Some Victorian novels reveal a tension in the obscure personality which runs parallel to these overt, relaxed presentations by the same author. But, of course, we are not to take everything for granted. Because the essayist can use a mask or adopt a pose, and because the essay also provides a satisfactory field in which the author may cultivate his imagination. This is consistent, I hope, with what I said when, analysing the definition by *The Encyclopaedia Britannic*a,

I defended it was valuable only as a taste, but not for the full flavour. And this taste is that of the "personal essay", which we shall describe later on, while dealing with the English essay tradition. It is also consistent, I hope, with what has been stated about its popularity. For it is the intimate tone of the form, that *solitude à deux* between the reader an the author, that atmosphere of informal conversation with a friend, which permeates the best essays, that makes them so attractive. It is the half-meditative, half-colloquial personal tone which makes this kind of writing so charming. And the charm of the essay will always depend on the charm of its author as will its appeal. And the fact that it usually appeals to different audiences simultaneously is another of its essential characteristics omitted by our definition. The educated general reader, desirous of confronting his ideas with prestigious writers; the professional, searching for innovation or refinement; the casual reader, with a zeal for the elegant jugglery and piroutting of words... they all benefit from this pleasant, dialogic reverie.

The following quotation from Virginia Woolf's "The Modern Essay", refers to what we have discussed just now: the essayist's ability to draw us out of ourselves in a kind of interaction.

> Everything in an essay must be subdued to that end. It should lay us under a spell with its first word, and we should only wake, refreshed, with its last. In the interval we may pass through the most various experiences of amusement, surprise, interest, indignation; we may soar to the heights of fantasy with Lamb or plunge to the depths of wisdom with Bacon, but we must never be roused. The essay must lap us about and draw its curtain across the world.[21]

An irrefutable truth, for the best essays enthrall us from the beginning right to the end. But the great essayist and letter writer does not give us the formula for this enchanment. Perhaps because she wants to keep it to herself; but probably, the only reason is that there is no formula at all, that there are no particular rules governing the genre, save that it must develop itself through an essayistic centre, and give a clue to the personality of the author in an amusing way. The essay is thus like Emerson's "Circle", in that it grows and grows swallowing everything, every aspect of life it finds on its path. And its structure is circular, in that it returns to where it started: to that

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21. "The Modern Essay", included in *The Common Reader*, by Virginia Woolf. Hogarth Press, 1925.

inconclusive testing of its subject matter. Another possibility is that which considers the existence of those governing principles, of which, the writer is unaware, or pretends to be unaware, so that the spell is not broken. This will lead us to that enigmatic property of the essay. The novelist, the poet, the playwright, they may all be omniscient narrators; not the essayist. For in the lightness of his style, in that certain ease and playfulness of his complacent tone, in his apparent leisure and liberty, the good essayist never professes to know more than his readers. He may sometimes pontify bluntly, he can even be didactic on ocassion, but when he does so, he is in a communicative friendly mood, and taking his readers into his confidence by an affectionate pat on his shoulder, he resumes his delicate tone.

There is still a question which remains unsolved, and this is it: What has the essayist done in the meantime? For we are not to believe foolishly that he had no purpose in mind. Well, he has filled our baskets with different fruits, and the rare thing is that we all find more than one of our liking. Whether we are looking for reflective entertainment, for detailed and skillfuly administered information, instruction, comfort or edification, we are happy with these permanent rendezvous provided by the essays, and eager to meet our favourite authors at the roadside.

CHAPTER 2

CHAPTER 2

OLD FRIENDS ON THE SHELVES: ESSAYISTS AND THE ESSAY TRADITION

2.1 THE ENGLISH MASTERS

In our discussion on the essay, in chapter one, I mentioned its "Protean quality", its ability to make excursions and incursions in other literary forms; its power to assume different shapes as if “a genie”, rather than a genre. I also offered a general overview of the essay specifying that for reasons of space I would only focus on the essay as a genre within the Anglo-Saxon tradition. In this chapter, I will address the English masters analyzing mainly the style-related issues. We shall thus expatiate on that shifting property while dealing with the different types of essays. And indeed there is not a proper -nor a more convenient- basis for this study than English literature.

France has claimed to be, with Montaigne, the homeland of the form; and no doubt there is an essayistic current running from the great personal seventeenth century moralists like Pascal and La Rochefoucauld, and philosophers like Montesquieu or Voltaire; to more self-conscious essayists like Saint-Beauve, Renan, France, Gide and Valèry; and hence to Cocteau, Prévost, Sartre and Camus among many others. In the United States, the literary form was definitely established by Emerson, Thoreau and Lowell, in what Matthiessen called the "American Renaissance" -though its roots could be traced back to the accesible writings of Jefferson and Franklin, and even beyond to the Puritanic thought represented by Edwards and Mather- to reach the last century through Wendell Holmes's humorous essays; William James's pragmatism; literary and social critics like Babbitt, Tate, MacLeish or Mumford; journalists like Mencken; and even the Beats and the Confessionals for their self-centered poetry and other miscellaneous writings.

In Germany, this flexible prose did not make its official debut till the nineteenth century, when, influenced by Emerson, Herman Grimm introduced the name. And though Romantic poets like Heine created brilliant essayistic prose, Humbolt wrote exemplary scientific articles, and Schopenhauer perfected the philosophical essay,

because of the thoroughness of their abstract philosophy, and their too lyrical structure, German literature cannot be said to posses a pure essayistic tradition.

Spain also developed a taste for the genre, which could justly be considered to have been initiated by San Isidoro de Sevilla in his *Etimologias*, and continued by Garcilaso's (The Inca) corageous prose style, Gracian's Jesuitical writings, and Jovellanos's erudition; to come down through Larra and other Romantics, to the mastery showed by our political and philosophical essayists of the late nineteenth and early-middle twentieth century -Ganivet, Ortega, Unamuno, Madariaga, Marañón, Santayana...; even though this last wrote in English-.

But, surely, no country shows a more varied and consistent tradition of essay writing than Britain. It would first seem that the English temperament is contrary to the intimate disclousure meant by the genre. We have all read about the Anglo-Saxon phlegm, represented by such recurring proverbs as “give your tongue more holidays than your mind”, or “don't wear your heart upon your sleeve”. We know, from our friends and acquaintances, that they rarely “give the game away”, and that “action speaks louder than words”. But we have always suspected that there was something more, somewhere. And as the Elizabethans had "dramatic release" as a device with which to liberate dramatic tension, we are tempted to think English essayists saw, in the openness and liberty of the young genre, a powerful instrument with which they could get rid of their innermost troubles, contributing, at the same time, to the welfare of their fellow-countrymen by providing them with both entertainment and instruction.

Critics have been content to believe that it was Florio's exquisite translation of Montaigne, a work which appeared towards the end of Queen Elizabeth's time (1603), that sparked off the tradition. And no doubt, it had the effect of setting up the form as an easily recognized genre in prose. Here is where we come back to that endless debate previously commented upon: Did Montaigne inagurate the essay, or did he just coin the term? Let us cast an inquisitive eye over his work so that we get to an appropiate answer to this question. It was at Bourdeaux, in 1580, that his collection of papers was first published. The edition contained two books of fifty-seven and thirty-seven chapters, which more than actual chapters were

> antike workes, and monstrous bodies, patched and huddled up together of divers members, without any certain or well ordered figure, having neither order dependencie, or proportion, but casual and framed by chance.[22]

In his preface, the author made a declaration of intentions. He showed his determination to "endeavour" a sincere study of himself by exposing the innermost traits of his personality:

> My wish is to be seen simply in my own fashion, natural and ordinary, unstudied and without artifice: for it is myself that I am painting. Here you will find my faults drawn to the life, my imperfections and my natural form displayed, so far as regard for public decency permits me.[23]

And what is more, he was determined to do it by means of a

> ..natural, simple, an unaffected speech... so written as it is spoken, and such upon the paper, as it is in the mouth, a pithie, sinnowie, full, strong, compendious and material speech, not so delicate and affected, as vehement and piercing...[24]

And in his words, we have a perfect definition of his charming personality, which is at the same time a perfect definition of his style, for as mentioned somewhere else, style and person are pretty much the same. But we have something more, we have a blatant attack on earlier forms of prose, for to the self-assuredness, artificiality, and closed structure of former compositions, Montaigne opposed the temptativeness, spontaneity and openess of his revolutionary *Essais*. To the prevalence of words, he confronted his commitment to subject matter; to the detached tone, the intimacy with his readers. Though honest, his style owed much to Plutarch's *Moralia*, a series of writings -more than sixty pieces- on topics of general interest in the form of dialogues or informal converstions among members of his family. It was from this and other

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[22] From Montaigne's "Of Friendship"; quoted in "The Essay and Discovery", contained in Butrym's "Essays On the Essay", p.79.

[23] Quoted in Newbolt's "Essays and Essayists", p. xii.

[24] . Ibídem, p. xv

books such as *Parallel Lives*, that Montaigne drew the celebrated method of revealing character by means of the anecdote and the comment. The use of the quotation from ancient authors -as from his favourite Manilius-, not as irrefutable proof, but as a discomfiting element in direct contradiction with the writer's opinion, was a popular practice in the Renaissance. Other classics as Thucydides's funeral orations on Pericles, Seneca's stoic letters, Plato's dialogues, or Cicero's oratory, provided him with a treasure trove of essayistic prose. That Montaigne was not the first essayist is also demonstrated by the existence of modern precedents -though of a very different nature- as Castiglione's *Il Libro del Cortegiano* (1528), or even Machiavelli's *Il Principe* (1532).

2.1.1 The personal essay

Thus, Montaigne shaped his style by combining elements from his predecessors, to create the personal essay, an ethical, speculative and autobiographical writing, grounded in humanistic thought, which was to captivate the mind of his long train of descendants through the centuries. He chose *Essais* as the convenient title for this new taste. But there were other compositions with an essayistic quality, which bore other names (the homily, the sermon, the oratory, the fable, etc). Years later, Francis Bacon, introduced the term in English literature on the front page of his *Essayes*, published in 1597. He even offered an explanation of the new word, which is quoted by the O.E.D:

> For Senecaes epistels are but **Essaies** -that is, dispersed Meditations-.... "Essaies"[25]

And the fact that Bacon borrowed the elusive term from Montaigne led to the platitude that he was his follower. Nothing could be farther from the truth; for though they both shared a skeptical attitude towards life, and a disdain for elaborate prose, if there is a style opposite to Montaigne's, that is definitely Bacon's. An overview of their essays promptly reveals differences. The Englishman brooded over a topic to reduce his conclusions upon it to an aphorism -an undeveloped form of the essay?-, which makes his compositions look like a string of proverbs beaded together more than like

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[25] Oxford English Dictionary. Second Edition. Prepared by J. A. Simpson and E.S.C. Weiner. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1989. Vol. 5. p. 399.

discursive writings. His economy of diction like his austerity, is showed in such grave titles as "On Truth", or "Of Ambition", which cannot be paired off with the relaxed "Of Readie or Slow Speech", or even with the sardonic "That we should not judge of our happiness until after our Death", by the Frenchman. In his majestic eloquence Bacon allowed for some loftiness of style with which he gave force to his dogmatic and impersonal tone, something which Montaigne never did, because of his devotion to the personal and intimate. We may say, following Eco's terminology, that the *Essais* are an *opera aperta*, while the *Essayes*, are conclusive. This also speaks, conspicuously, of the difference in their methods, where we find the *dianoia*, face to face with the *noesis*, that is, the opposition between the acquisition of knowledge by discursive reasoning (Montaigne), rather than by intuition (Bacon). That's why Bacon's moral essays can also be described as scientific prose, while the adjective that comes to our minds when thinking about Montaigne's, is "autobiographical".

2.1.2 Moral essays

Another platitude to undo is that which considers Bacon to be the father of the English Essay. Though it is true that he was the first great essayist in English, it is no less true that there are some important precedents within the tradition. These we may call “experiments”, or “essays towards the essay”, attempts to work that discursive vein out of which the essay was developed; for there is a predisposition to the genre even in Chaucer and Caxton. And what about the soliloquy? Is it not in its essence essayistic? In Hamlet we have the perfect and more acute essayist, though he was Bacon's contemporary.

There are others English writers who may rightly be considered Montaigne's followers, for they wrote in the same informal way. This is the case of Abraham Cowley, the man who nauralised in English the friendly private manner of the Frenchman. Cowley's *Discourses by way of Essays* (1668), provided an excellent exponent of the Montaigne-like familiar commentary and self-analysis, which became very popular in the seventeenth century. The main ingredients of his prose which justify this identification are his clear natural style and his unfailing charm. In Cowley we also

find friendly anecdotes alternating with teasing comments on the social life; yet, unlike Montaigne, his tone is too light to carry ideas far; so that from his pages, we get more entertainment and companionship than instruction. He is much closer to the Frenchman in the essay "Of Discourse", or even in his bold "Of Myself", published at the time of the Restoration, where he dwells on his early efforsts at poetry and even quotes from these first attempts. In the naturalness with which he uses the "I", he reminds us sometimes of Bacon. Still before him, the Elizabethan Sir William Cornwallis may rightly claim descent from the great humanist, for his *Essayes* (1600-1601) are also an inward journey of self examination.

2.1.3 The treatise

In our survey of the English essay, we come to its fisrt mutation: the treatise, which though perfected by Locke at the time of the Glorious Revolution, had two of its more prestigious practitioners in Jacobean England, and during the Civil Wars. In the looseness of their style, their charm and open-endedness, the philposophical and metaphysical writings of Robert Burton and Sir Thomas Browne contributed to the rejection of the early Elizabethan pompuous prose, and in this sense, they could rightly be considered to follow in the stepts of Montaigne. Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), is really a rare book; remembered for the theory of the four humours it exposes, which was of much use to explain some characterizations in Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama. No doubt, it provided one of the earlier contributions to the development of psychology as a science. But it is something more than a scientific treatise, it is a work of enormous erudition; a perfect description of the nature of the true essayist -for of all four bodily fluids, it is precisely "black bite", or “melancholy” which runs through his veins-. Furthermore, because its prose is so flexible, it is indeed a pivotal work of the Renaissance. Browne's is a case of a very peculiar colour; in him we have more the stylist or rhetorician than the philosopher or theoriser. In *Lives of the Poets*, Johnson considered Sir William Temple, "the first writer who gave cadence to English prose";[26] he presumably forgot the majestic style, the musicality and harmony of Browne's

[26] James Boswell, *Life of Johnson.* Book III p.256

diction; or imperious critic, he couldn't stomach his inoffensive self-complacency. It is this light egotism -this nobility of sentiment- that reminds us of Montaigne and makes us read *Religio Medici* as Browne's melancholic confession of his faith, rather than as a speculative tract on the conflicts between scientific intuition and religious dogmatism. This is also consistent with that contempt he displays through his book for the uncertainties of life, just as with his delight for paradoxes, which betrays the fideist and hides the scientist. Browne asserted that he wrote “thi treatie” for "his private exercise and satisfaction"[27], and had no intention to publish it. We may imagine with what a relish Emily Dickinson devoured its pages. In *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, better known as *Enquiry into Vulgar Errors* (1646), the essayist comes closer to Montaigne, in that he systematically evokes many superstitions of the sort described by the Frenchman in his "Apology".

It is, however, in his *Hydriotaphia* or *Urn Burial* (1658), where Browne wields all his weapons in a more mature way. Here is where we find those images in quick sucession, that alliterative music, that sound quality of his words, that joy for melodious improvisations, which makes him one of the greatest prosists in English, and a masterful pioneer of the prose poem announcing the excellencies of Milton's "Paradise Lost" -though in blank verse- and even of De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*.

2.1.4 The topical essay

We have seen how the early English Essay made no bounds about its deliberate moral purpose, and how Bacon's compositions were mainly aphoristic. Another form, the topical essay, as practiced by John Selden and Lord Clarendon, but initiated by Bacon, was much appreciated after the Civil Wars. Seldon's *Table Talk*- a title which was to be borrowed by Hazlitt- is a collection of "the excellent things that usually fell from him". In his liking for proverbial wisdom showed in maxims as: "Humility is a virtue all preach, none practise and yet everybody is content to hear"[28], Selden, echoes Bacon's

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[27] Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici* xiv.

[28] *Table Talk: Being the Discourses of John Selden, esq.* Edinburgh: Fair-Bairn & Anderson, 1819.p.166.

"Of Ambition". Lord Clarendon's "Essay", in which he reflects upon business, men and manners, though less wise and charm, could be read along with those of Cowley mentioned above, because of his passionate quest for self-improvement.

2.1.5 The character essay

Still within the seventeenth century, there developed a popular literary exercise known as “the character essay” -a kind of acute brief portrait of various familiar types, close to the sketch, created by Theopharstus- which brought a new interest into Essay-writing, and set the fashion of introducing fictional characters into essayistic prose. This was to be improved, later on, by the periodical writers of the Augustan Age, and urge the aparition of the biography as a derived genre. One of its main practitioners was Joseph Hall, whose *Characters of Vertues and Vices* (1608), was extensively read in Jacobean England. Hall, was also the author of *Occasional Meditations*. Still better known is Sir Thomas Overbury, in whose *Characters* we meet the milkmaid, tinker, soldier, yeoman or franklin, and the clown or plain-countryman... Here, the reader holds in his hands honest thought, which is always something more than mere words huddled up together in bombastic sentences, as wanted by the early Elizabethan oratory.

2.1.6 The sermon, the homily and other religious writings

A form of the essay, which is perhaps the most primitive, is that of **t**he sermon, the homily and other religious writings. These are native in England, for their germ can be traced back to Wycliffe and his Lollards at the time of king Richard II's reign, and even a few years before in Tyler's harangues which brought forth the Peasant Revolt of 1381. The Protestan writings of Calvin, and the 95 theses Luther nailed to the church door at Wittemberg, are in their essence, religious essays. Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* (1534), provided an early example of these forms, which remained in the mind of British Puritans for centuries. Thus, Puritanism had a powerful effect on early Stuart prose, when, at the peak of its enthusiasm, devotional manuals like Dent's *Plain Man's*

Pathway to Heaven were widely read. This religious fervour is also proven by the publication of the King James Bible in 1611; and indeed in the sonority of its words in its cadences, in the turn of its phrases, there is no other text which has more intensively influenced English prose since its very beginning. Besides John Donne's devotional poetry and sermons written in a clipped style, other divines, like Jeremy Taylor, devised an elaborate prose of rhetorical periods which was harshly critized. Yet no artist seemed to have more passionately captivated his readers like John Bunyan. His *Pilgrim Progress* (1678) is not only one of the great religious tracts, but, as literary authorities tell us, because of its perfect description of British rural life, its innovative fictional realism, and its striking use of dialogue in the English of the common people, Bunyan may rightly be considered the founder of the English novel. In Christian's dangerous and allegorical journey to the Celestial City we have an implicit defense of a plainer prose, fit for the purpose of faith, which Bunyan understood should always be above ornament and affectation. This tendency was followed by Latitudinarians like Tillotson and other preachers of the reestablished church, who searched for a clear style with which to make their sermons accesible. Some modern essays like Chesterton's *Orthodoxy*, of a very different character, however, could be interpreted as belonging to this tradition.

2.1.7 The pamphlet and other political essays

This prose form is very close to the treatise -in fact, the word “tract” applies indistinctively to both types-. Again extension, rather than matter or purpose, is what distinguishes them. The form was presumably created by the Elizabethans, but did not reach literary canon until Milton perfected it in his *Aeropagitica*, at the time of turmoil which brought about the English Civil War. The pamphlet seems to be intimately connected with satire, and it is precisely in one of the outstanding practitioners of this last form, Swift, that it had its heyday. Before that, the secretary would have to learn style from his employer, for it is with Sir William Temples's *Miscellanea*, and particularly with the four essays included in its second part, that political oratory definitely contributed to the development of English prose. But pamphleteering is also

associated with a more relevant phenomemon: the apparition of periodical writing and periodical literature during the period of Queen Anne. A time better known as the Augustan Age of English literature, because it was then that the seeds sown bursted into flower producing a vast array of genres. It was then that the new prose was fully naturalised and began to be used for its wider public and purposes. But it was also a time of strong political dissension, partisanship and patronage, and patrons showed in pamphleteers a powerful tool with which to anihilate their adversaries. John Dunton is credited as the father of English journalism. His *Atheniam Mercury*, a single sheet paper, ended the closed printing season -five years before the expiry of the Licensing Act- by publishing brief essays on social, ethical, and intellectual topics in favour of the middle classes. Still before him, others like Sir Roger L'Estrange's *Observator*, discussed problems of the day in a violent party spirit.

But it is when Dunton passed the baton to his brother-in-law, the great Daniel Defoe, that the true pamphleteer was born. *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters* (1731), an attack against High Church extremism, brought him imprisionment in Newgate, where he redoubled his efforts to start his remarkable *Review*, the forerunner of the *Tatler* and *The Spectator.* In *Giving Alms to Charity* (1704) he condemnned indiscriminate magnanimity; in *Reasons Against the Succession of the House of Hanover* he questioned the ascension of George I to the English throne; in *What if the Pretender Should Come?* he weighted the possibility of a second Stuart Restoration. In all these, he urged moderation, humanity and goodness on his readers, by means of a convincing and unaffected language, and a somewhat obscure irony that first decived then imflamed his oponents. Besides *Robinson Crusoe* and other novels in which he announces Fielding and Richardson, Defoe also wrote countless of essays and journals, travel books, and political satires. He was not only the father of the English novel, but the creator of a new prose. His influence spans from his own time down to the Victorians and even beyond to the twentieth century. Swift, along with other members of the Scriblers Club, such as Gay or Arbuthnot, signalled the transition from essayist to occasional writer. In his *Examiner*, he displayed a more trenchant irony. His masterpieces *The Battle of the Book* and *A Tale of a Tub*, show his genious for creating symbolic situations by means of imagination. And in *An Argument Against Abolishing Christianity*, as in his most famous *Gulliver's Travels*, he gave prose an inimitative

ironic force. Mandeville was also another important satirist; in *The Fable of the Bees*, a series of essay commentaries he added to his satirical poem *The Grumble Hive*, he made a realistic description of social behaviour in a clear and sardonic style. Among the myriad of examples of this pseudogenre we should mention Burke's *Letter to a Noble Lord,* Mill's *Principles of Political Economy* or Carlyle's *Lectures On Heroes, Heroworship, and the Heroic in History*.

2.1.8 The periodical essay

The periodical essay meant the triumph of morality and the conscious rejection of partisan attitudes and political excesses. The political man is now substitued by the sensible man, and the writer's intention is not to gain the support of his readers for either the Whigs or the Tories, but, as Addison wrote in the Spectator:

> For my own part, I could heartily wish that all honest men would enter into an association for the support of one another against the endeavours of those whom they ought to look as their common enemies, whatsoever side they may belong to.[29]

This urge for a brotherhood of honest, sensible men, began with Captain Steele's launching of his periodical *The Tatler*, in 1709. The project, was to combine the latest foreign news with the latest gossip from tea-tables and chocolate houses, in a sheaf which was to come out on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays for the convenience of the post -that is, post-coaches leaving London for the country-. Its range was announced in the famous motto from Juvenal:

> Whatever man do, or say, or think, or dream,
> Our motly paper seizes for its theme.[30]

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[29] *The Works of the Late Right Honorable Joseph Addison, Esq.* V.III. Birmingham: John Baskerville. 1761. p. 66.

[30] "Quicquid agunt Homines nostri Farrago Libelli", in Shawn Lisa Maurer'sProposing Men: Dialectics of Gender and Class in the Eighteenth-century English Periodical. Stanford: Stanfords University Press, 1998. p.242.

Little by little, news was left out of these delightful pages due to the colaboration of Joseph Addison, who understood that the paper would have a larger circulation because of this exclusion and contribute to the prevalence of commonsense, good manners, decency, faith and virtue at the same time. But at a deeper level of understanding, this omission was only of foreign intelligence, for there is no other period in English literature where domestic issues were more fastidiously analysed. Besides that, neither Steele nor Addison could withhold their reasonable Whiggism. Their aim was to improve while entertainning by means of a familiar style. And there was never a more skillful formula for such a purpose. The Club idea -obtained from Defoe's *Mercure Scandale*, a little diversion with which he finished each of his *Review* numbers, was borrowed by Steele and Addison in their respective Trumpet and Spectator Club. By this device, they introduced their readers to a series of characters -Sir Andrew Freeport and Sir Roger de Coverly as the protagonists- whose dimensions were developed in the subsequent issues, providing a vivid portrait of easily recognised social-types.

Vices and follies were thus exposed to the public eye, and truth, innocence and honour recommended as the chief ornaments of life. The idea was so succesful that within months new periodicals emerged like bees from a hive. *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* were followed by *The Guardian*, *The Englishman*, *The Freeholder*, etc, on which these two geniuses worked in brilliant partnership, or individually after their famous split, and by a myriad of imitators as well.

In their strict moralising, the essays of Addison and Steele, could be rightly considered to have their spiritual ancestry in the Puritanic writings of the previous century. Macaulay praised Addison's simple, beautiful, clear and expressive style in the following words: “Never, not even by Dryden, not even by Temple, has the English language been written with such sweetness, grace and facility”.[31]

These qualities make us mindful of that mistrust of *belles-lettres* shown by the Puritans, which ran parallel to their mistrust of images. Addison's sometimes excessive sermonizing was harshly criticized by Mandeville, who accused him of being a parson

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[31] *Macaulay’s Essays on Addison and Milton*, The University of Michigan: Digitalized 2007. p.43.

in a tye-wig. Something similar to what a century later, Stevenson did, when objecting to Samuel Pepys, he referred to him as "our little sensualist in a periwig"[32].

But this was just one note in the tune, for like Steele, Addison was also capable of a certain lighteness of touch, and an affectionate humour, which foreshadows Goldsmith and even Lamb. All in all, the main contribution to the development of the essay by these pioneers of periodical writing lies in their creation of a social prose made for clarity, simplicity and good taste and their incorporation of sensibility in literature. They were also responsible for the apparition of reviews and magazines in the following decades.

After *The Guardian*, the periodical essay was practised by inferior hands until it was revived in the 1750s and 60s with a personal note by the masterful pens of Johnson and Goldsmith. *The Rambler* papers, written in the manner of *The Spectator*, showed, nonetheless, a very different style; for Johnson had little confidence in plain speaking, and his purpose -unlike Addison's- was not to instruct, but to persuade. Their tone was too grave and gloomy to gain the public's favour and his pages never did sell well at all. He was accused of pedantry, but though somewhat turgent, his language often rose to beauty by means of an original imagery. He tried again the form with his *Idler*, a column he contributed to *The Universal Chronicle*, where he displayed a much lighter touch, and which Boswell called "a perpetual vigilance against the slightest degree of falsehood".[33] Nevertheless, his greatest triumph lay in the freshness which with he instilled Augustan Prose, through the contempt with which he attacked folly, ignorance, pretension and debauchery. Boswell's *Hypochondriack* -a series of papers in imitation of Johnson's *Idler,* now shamefully neglected- is hilarious to the point of being caustic.

Goldsmith's contribution to periodical literature is, in my opinion, more invigorating. In his *The Bee,* a delightful volume of miscellaneous essays and verses, he condemned the immoralities of the age in a compassionate way, full of humour and humanity, which well justifies the assertion that "Addison does not receive until he is dressed and powdered; while Goldsmith will talk to you in his dressing gown".[34]

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[32] "Samuel Pepys", *Familiar Studies of Men and Books.* T.27.

[33] James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson,* LL. D. By James Boswell, Esq. The First [-fourth] Volume, Volume 3. Oxford: Talboys and Wheeler 1825. p. 116

[34] . cf. W. E. Williams, p.13.

But truly, the most outstanding phenomenon brought out by the swift development of the Press in the eighteenth century, is the enormous proliferation of new forms of prose, which found in the periodicals an invaluable framework. These are in their essence essayistic, for they are attempts to gain different purposes, be it a description of an author's genious, the spirit of a nation, or the main traits of an amazing personality.

2.1.9 The critical essay

The critical essay is perhaps one of the most relevant of these subgenres, in that it made the evolution of prose easier. In Johnson's words Dryden was "the father of English criticism"[35]. In his *Essay on Dramatic Poesy*, he searched the classics and French contemporaries for a modern English drama. In *Apology for Heroic Poetry*, he defended the use of a bold methaphorical style as suitable for higher purposes. In the preface he appended to *Fables Ancient and Modern*, he paid a sympathetic tribute to Chaucer. Always showing an unflagging interest and a deep love of great literature, always eager to explore new techniques and principles, Dryden wrote in a sceptical, undogmatic and clear way, which helped establish a plain easy prose. His frank criticism, based on personal commentary, was followed by Addison's popular essays on *Paradise Lost*, his discussions on the ballad form and his praise for Pope's early verse.

2.1.10 The literary biography

These efforts were succeded by Johnson's magisterial critique included in his inimitable *Life of the Poets*, in which warm biographism goes hand-in-hand with perceptive judgement. The literary biography, was a form much practised in the seventeenth century; Walton's *Lives*, and Sprat's *Cowley*, provided earlier examples. But Johnson added a freedoom of style and a felicity of illustration which, being rare, prepared for the genial criticism of Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*, and even for Hazlitt's great insight, as shown in his passionate *My First Acquaintance with Poets* and *The Spirit of*

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[35] *Lives of the English Poets*, ed. G. B. Hill, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905).p193.

the Age. The eminent Victorian Mathew Arnold created a new concept of literary appreciation which he extended to a criticism of life. His reaction to the maladies of his time is best exemplified in *Culture and Anarchy*, where he showed a serene detachment and an amiable temper. Pater's *Appreciations* is not only a product of an impressionistic critic, but also the work of a great styler. Later on, T. S. Eliot would perfect a pseudo-poetic and didactic criticism.

2.1.11 The historical essay

Intimately associated with the annals and chronicles of the Middle Ages, the historical essay recquires great expertise and a well stored mind. The genre was a favourite of the Augustans, who were always eager to examine their society in search of improvement. In addition, partisan attitudes led to new interpretations of English history. In its penetrating study of character and its superb rhetoric Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion*, presented an excellent model. To this should be added Whiggish pamphlets like those by Defoe mentioned above, until we come to a more serious historical literature with Hume, and specially with Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. A masterpiece which meant the regeneration of the genre, Gibbon's controversial analysis of Christianity is a monument erected to prose in English. His sonorous pure style inspired Carlyle's *French Revolution*, Macaulay's romantic *History of England*, and even Trevellyan's almost poetic historiography. Dickens' delightful *A Child's History of England* and Chesterton's fabulous *A Short History of England* provide other notable examples.

The transition from the portrait of a nation to the portrait of a remarkable personality, whether depicted by himself or by another, was an easy one. This is usually done in essay form, but it can well be in verse, as in Wordsworth's *Prelude*. The diary and the anecdote could be considered undeveloped precedents of the biography and autobiography, which like the memoir, the portrait and other reminiscences, are all personal prose. Again we have to retrace our steps to the seventeenth century to find early instances. From Pepys's vivid account of events in his diaries, and the spiritual confessions of Puritans as Bunyan's *Grace Abounding*, we come to the literary

biographies just referred, and hence to the abundant personal writings of the Age of Prose. To Johnson's short but admirable *Life of Richard Savage*, followed Gibbon's *Autobiography*, in which he charmingly describes the conception and composition of his *magnum opus*. But in the last decade of the century there appeared a work, which remains unrivalled due to its special character. Boswell's *Life of Johnson* is something more than the most faithful record of a life, it is also an incomparable picture of pre-Romantic literary England by an arch and fascinating genious. The familiar essayists with whom we shall deal later on served as a bridge between a personal style reminiscent of Montaigne's and the absorbing biographism of the Victorians. Among these last worthy of mention are Gaskell's *Life of Charlotte Brönte*, Lochhart's *Life of Sir Walter Scott* and Maitland's *Leslie Stephen*. Later efforts were those made by Newman's *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, Chesterton's *Autobiography* and his *Life of Dickens*, and Strachey's *Eminent Victorians.*

2.1.12 The essay of travel, the journal, the travel sketch and the reportage

These are all forms deeply rooted in the English prose tradition. In fact, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* is an account of a pilgrimage, and we know these journeys were not motivated solely by religion. The sixteenth century saw the creation of the Grand Tour, a leisurely trip through the major cities of Europe undertaken by young aristocrats as an essential part of their education. Some wrote detailed accounts of their adventures which became very popular. In *Tour Thro the Whole Island of Great Britain,* Defoe made a lively description on the character of his nation, which is also an eulogistic guide to London. In the eighteenth century, with the advent of the French Revolution, there was an interruption of the vogue; but it flourished in its first half, in the comic and self-revealing journals of James Boswell. Roguish idoliser, his *Account of Corsica* was defined by Walpole as, "a dialogue between a green goose and a hero"[36]. To this followed *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides,* which is more a circunstantial work devoted to recording Dr. Johson's actions and sentiments than a picturesque description.

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[36] These remarks were made by Thomas Gray in a letter to Horace Walpole, February 25, 1768. See *Horace Walpole's Correspondence.* ed. W.S. Lewis and others (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937-), xiv, p. 174.

The book may be read as a complement to Johnson's entertaining *A Journey to the Western Isles of Scotland*, in which he offers his observations on Scottish landscape and architecture, same as on the traditions and character of the Scots themselves. The fascinating *Journal to a Voyage to Lisbon*, a much neglected volume, is a remarkable exploration of the relations between literature and life written by a declining Fielding. Then came Sterne's unconventional *A Sentimental Journey*, a book which brought a revolution on travel-writing, as proved by the scores and hundreds of subsequent works modeled upon it. It also meant a turn from "the Splenetic Traveller", who does not record what he sees "but discolours every object he passes by, writing nothing but the account of his miserable feelings"[37], to "the Sentimental Traveller", who feeds his eyes and mind on what he contemplates with a keen interest. Yet surely the genre had its heyday in the Victorian Age, when roads could be trodden at relative ease and safety after the industrial revolution, and the advances in transportation and the growth of wealth made globetrotting possible. Amongst the countless examples we should mention Butler's *Alps and Santuaries of Piedemont*, Burton's *Pilgrimage to El-Medinah and Mecca* -also a great anthropological and linguistic work-, Borrow's *Lavengo* and Frances Trolope's *Domestic Manners of the Americans.* Thus, the form is intimately connected with the autobiography; as in a more recent instance, that provided by Greene's *Travels with My Aunt*.

2.1.13 Letter writing

Closely associated with the journal, letter writing is one of the nost attractive forms of personal literature. In former centuries, letters and essays were hard to tell apart. The practitioners of the periodical essay resorted to their correspondence whenever they wanted to attack a folly, silence a rival, or support a view. Goldsmith wrote his *The Citizen of the World* in a series of imaginary letters, and he even chose that form for his *History of England*. Years later, Richardson would develop the epistolary novel, naturalizing this pseud-genre, and allowing for the incursion of fiction in what was

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[37] Sterne's own words as quoted in Sterne, "A Sentimental Journey", pg xiii (See bibliography), and altered to fit my purpose.

supposed to be factual. The letters gave a sense of immediacy, a veracity which was new, and initiated a literary tradition which led to the Victorians and beyond. Sterne's *Journal of Eliza*, a work defined as "semi-fictitious rather than real autobiography",[38] served as another excellent model.

But the eighteenth century was also a time of great correspondents, and the development of letter writing was one of the manifest features of the period. It was then that the best intimate chronicles appeared. Lady Mary Montagu's *Letters from the East* is an honest record of her personal views of contemporary society and literature. Her economical style gave a feminine touch to this type of prose, which may be observed in the sensitive manner of Shenstone, or even in the natural missives of Cowper. But it is in Walpole and Gray that we find the most amusing and original correspondents. The former made a witty, lively and brilliant chronicle of his century which remains unparalleled. As for the latter, he combined his gifts as a poet with his subtle humour to paint a meticulous portrait of his friendly personality. Through the hasty journals of Dorothy Wordsworth, Keats's challenging and intelligent correspondence and Lamb's fascinating epistles, we come to such massive work of scholarship as the magnificent edition of the letters of George Eliot, or even those of Dickens'. The modern open-letter, is even closer to the essay, as in Stevenson's superb libel in defense of Father Damian. Amongst the many examples of more contemporary letter-writing we should mention those by Lawrence and Woolf.

2.1.14 The novel

We come now to the flagship of all prose forms: the novel. A summary exposition on the evolution of this genre would be out of place here; so we shall say just a few things, to pintpoint a couple of circunstances which seem to be overlooked by modern critics. First, that fictional prose has systematically displaced the essay from serious consideration. Second, that there is a crosscurrent of influence among the practitioners of these two forms, so that both genres meet at certain places and their development runs parallel: the development of the English prose with the Augustans. An outstanding

[38] cf. Ibídem, pg. 130

episode in the history of English literature seems to support the view that the beginning of the novel -or, to be more precise, of modern prose fiction- is intimately associated with the emergence and evolution of the essay as a literary genre; for *Robinson Crusoe*, the work which started the tradition, owes much to Steele's account of the lonely misadventures of Alexander Selkirk, in the island of Juan Fernández, an essay he published in *The Englishman*, on December 1713. The device known as "stream of consciousness" testifies to what some critic has termed “the essayfication of the novel”. And indeed, fiction and non-fiction are so inextricably entwined nowadays, that they cannot be told apart. Undoubtedly this explains why so little scholarly inquiry has been done on the matter.

2.1.15 The familiar essay

The final landmark in the development of the genre is that provided by the familiar essay. Again, the form of this revolutionary composition was subjected to the growth of the Press. In the last decade of the eighteenth century, it was plain that the periodical essay, with its peculiar combination of serious moralizing and light comic touch, did not agree with the demands of the new society. The Romantic mind brimmed with independence and nonconformism urging for new horizons. There was a clash with Addison's idea of a commonwealth of sensible honest men. Urbanity versus rurality, that was at the core of the spiritual battle fought after the French Revolution, and it was the latter which won the day. The rigid structure of the periodical essay, with its few pages of brief critiques and social comments, gave way to the reviews and magazines as ripe forms of modern journalism. *The Edinburgh Review* was the pionner. It allowed its contributors a wideness of scope previously unheard-of. The main one being, that they could now live by their pens and devote themselves entirely to their art. Like Romantic poets, Romantic essayists answered to these recquirements and innovations by offering the innermost traits of their personalities, in long papers, where autobiography alternates with non-technical comments on every aspect of life, in a relaxed intimate tone. *The London Magazine*, a liberal monthly, continued the pattern established by its predecessor, to publish the most notable work by the three most notable practitioners of

this form: Lamb, Hazlitt and De Quincey. But though these masters shared the same pages of the celebrated periodical, their themes and methods were more than slightly different.

Lamb meant a reaction against the Neoclassics, in that he looked back to the elaborate style of the earlier seventeenth century. His *Essays of Elia*, and *Last Essays of Elia,* are written in the form of personal confidences, sometimes reminiscent of Montaigne, under the pseudonym of an Italian clerk by that name who worked with him. In these he deals with countless themes, which serves him as a pretext to return to his central idea: the analysis of his own personality; so that we may say, he was imvolved more in a mood rather than in a topic. Lamb's ultimate aim was to show how the simplest and commonest experiences teem in emotional humour. And he accomplished it by unfolding some eccentricities of his rhetorical style -such as unexpected turns of phrase, intended incongruities, luminous puns, archaic words, etc.-, which he used in combination with his delicate and apparently uncontrolled method. He put so much of himself in what he wrote, that he is more intimately known to us than any other figure in literature, unless it be the prickly Dr. Johnson. Besides that, there is a certain tenderness and ingenuity in his prose, which makes him one of the most dearly loved amongst the English men of letters.

Of all styles none more opposite to Lamb's than that of Hazlitt. He rebelled against any floweriness in literature. While others, with Lamb, looked for ornament with which to clothe their more naked confessions, Hazlitt was always in quest for naturality, for what he called a "plain, point-blank speaking", which should have the spontaneity of good talk. In his famous "On the Familiar Style", which coined the term, Hazlitt explained the main rudiments of his type of essay-writing. The essayist must be direct and clear without being offensive or overemotional; he must choose his words carefully, attending not to their impressive value, but to their most widely recognised meaning; his sentences should be balanced if he wants to give a poetic quality to his writing; he must avoid ambiguity and be guided by his desire to communicate effectively; and, above all, he must never be self-indulgent in expression. Hazlitt wrote in this style upon a wide variety of themes. He is better known and remembered for his critical appreciations of literature as in "Lecture on the English Poets", "The Plain Speaker", or those on painting like "Sketches of the Principal Picture Galleries in

England"; or even the "Life of Titian" he collaborated with Northcote. His essays on politics, for instance, "Advice to a Patriot" and "Reply to the Essays on Population" are pervaded by an elegance of tone and a deep sympathy for his subject. Still, he published many other writings worth mentioning, such as "A Life of Napoleon", almost forgotten due to the nature of the biographee; "Notes on a Journey in France and Italy", a travel essay; "Letter to William Grifford, Esq.", a pungent counterattack; and his autobiographic *Liber Amoris*, in which he revealed his love affair with Sarah Walker, a publication which caused a stir. Hazlitt's method was no less unconventional than his style. Unlike Lamb, his essays do not follow a unified structure, but work by accumulation, stopping at a middle course before reaching a conclusion. The young Stevenson, our affectionate child of the North, himself a fervent reader of Hazlitt's, would say of him, some decades after his death, "We are mighty fine fellows, but we cannot write like William Hazlitt". An assertion we shall enlarge on in our next chapters.

De Quincey kindles other interests. He partakes with Lamb's casting of his mind to the past in search of foundations for his style. His ornate prose full of cadences and sound, brings echoes of such superb rhetoricians as Browne and Taylor. And though he sometimes surpasses them in the musicality of his long sentences, there is a certain disquietness in his diction which is not in Lamb, much less in Hazlitt. In his themes he is more a decadent than a Romantic; thus, in *Murder as One of the Fine Arts* we find many arguments which were to be defended later on by Wilde. The fame of his *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* -that superb work of honest autobiograpy has unjustly overshadowed the rest of his versatile production. His gift for acute criticism was proved in the impressive "On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth", and in is discussions on "Rhetoric" and "Style". He also proved to be a great biographer in the brief memories he left of Lamb and Wordsworth. Besides applying the art of music to prose in an inimitable way, De Quincey brought another innovation to English Literature: the rare use of imagery he displayed in the dark, nightmarish and morbid episode of his phantasies that served him as a center around which he organized his writings.

As a conclusion to this chapter, we should point out that the essay is the genre which is more open to experimentation and research, for it continues to be unexplored. The multiple forms it has adopted throughout the centuries speak eloquently about that Protean quality mentioned above while attempting a definition. Its evolution runs parallel to that of fictional prose with which it is intricately blended in a kind of hotch-potch of crisscrossing genres and subgenres.

2.2 The Scottish Pundits

The hotch-potch of crisscrossing genres and subgenres above referred to, gave a liberty which did not compare with the strictness of its Whig counterpart,[39] offering their contributors a good opportunity to exercise their imagination. In Scotland, after a brief period of minor writers who wrote dull tales of travel and adventure, William Blackwood turned to the three editors who brought the fortune of *Blackwood Magazine*. This started with *Noctes Ambrosianae*, a pungent satire on the leading literary and political personalities of the day, serialised from 1822 onwards. The text had the form of a witty conversation on diverse subjects, by imaginary characters who spoke in the language of the Old Testament. The harassing literary attacks were directed against the Cockney School of Poetry (Leigh Hunt's circle), against Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* and even against poor Keats. These caused such an outrage, that the anonymous editors[40] left the magazine and fled the city. This was not, nonetheless, the end of *Blackwood*. In the following years it published some contributions by such figures as De Quincey and John Galt. But by the time Stevenson was born, no trace of its former lustre remained. Mrs Margaret Oliphant had started writing her novelettes, biographies and criticism (Stevenson included), and Blackwood, as other Scottish

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[39] Hence Scott's dislike for the Edinburgh Review, in which he remained only a year, when, in search for more congenial ambiences he started writing for the London Quarterly Review; and the move of the former to the same city in the 1820's.

[40] Namely: James Hogg, better known as "The Ettrick Shepherd", a great writer who provided Scott with valuable material for his "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Borders", the author of the aforesaid "Confessions of a Justified Sinner", and the one responsible for the derisive article on Leigh Hunt; John Gibson Lockhart, perhaps the most original of them all, Scott's son-in-law and his great biographer; and the diabolic "Christopher North", John Wilson's pseudonym, possible the one who lashed Keats.

publishers, finding himself unable to compete with his London counterparts, started office in the English capital.[41]

In the meantime, a group of poets known as *the Spasmodic School* had taken the lead. So called not because they were subjected to brutal convulsions, but because of the erratic nature of their verse, full of chaotic imagery and exaggerated passion, it included P.J. Baily, Sydney Dobell and Alexander Smith. These dealt with the spiritual existence of a poet-hero who strives through all manner of strange events in a quest for the secrets of the universe. But that vein was promptly choked up by William E. Aytoun, a member of the Balckwood group whose imaginative poem "Firmilian or the Student of Badajoz" (1854) put an end to the spasmodic popularity of the Spasmodic poets. Still some of these succeded as prose writers, as was the case of Alexander Smith, whose *A Summer in Skye* continued the great Scottish tradition of travel writing including a fascinating description of Edinburgh in winter.

Another group, *the Keilyarders*, filled up the gap of fifty years since Scott's death -their fame well entering the twentieth century with Barrie, A. Swan, and S. R. Crockett[42] with their sentimental and marketable picture of rural Scotland as an almost claustrophobic miscrocosm -hence its name which is the Scots for "cabbage garden"-.

In 1827, Adam Black adquired the copyright for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and established it at Edinburgh. But by the 1880's the firm moved to London. In the 1870's, Conan Doyle took his admirable fictitious pair South to Portsmouth and to London.

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[41] At the time of Stevenson's death in Samoa, 1894, Balckwood published serialised Trollope, Stephen Crane, Wilde and Conrad.

[42] James Matthew Barrie stumbled (physically) with Stevenson one afternoon on Princess Street, as retold by himself in his memoirs, from them on, there was a nice frienship between the two revealed by their mutual appreciation and correspodence. But as other Kailyarders, Barrie stumbled (methaphorically) when they interpreted Stevenson's liberal morality, his attack against the rancid conventionalities and hypocrises of the middle classes, his desperate defense of youth, to fit their own Whiggish purposes. Stevenson was, of course, not unaware of this. Annie Swan was the author of *Aldersyde*, a sentimental novel which had an unexpected success, she took residence in London very early. Samuel Rutherford Crockett was the author of *The Stickitt Minister*, a novel dedicated to Stevenson, which dedication gave way to one of the most moving poems of nostalgia for Scotland: "Blows the wind today... (See "Collected Poems", p. 283).

And this is approximately how the literary map of Edinburgh looked like in the years previous to Stevenson's birth and those of his youth. The city had evidently lost its intellectual glitter. All efforts were in vain to revive the glorious past of Scotland, even its regretted past, of which, the new one was less than a shadow. The city still retained its cultural glamour -it will always retain it- in the form of the multiple publishing houses and booksellers with made it bookish, its theatres and its university. Were we to read the accounts of what some eminent women and men of letters who visited the city in those years -Dickens, in 1834; Charlotte Brönte, in 1850; Harrier Beecher Stowe, in 1854...- found there, they surely would paint a picture -though well crafted- similar to this we have sketched, almost "scratched", here.

After the death of all the Victorian giants by the 1870's[43], and the subsequent disappearance of the three-decker novel, the young Louis, who was already an apprentice when he was in his diapers, did not have any strictly contemporary model in which to shape his style. As he himself asserted in his last years, he never trusted the Blackwood group: "I had sworn a great oath that they should never have anything from mine." Still he had some elements in common with them, for they also showed a deep love for truth, wit and style, and a hatred for pharisaism. With the Kailyarders his differences were still more accentuated for their literature showed an excessive liberality with which he could not comply if he wanted to be independent.

What about the European trends? They were no less disconcerting. The pessimism of Schopenhauer mentioned above, against which young Louis measured his Spinoza, had also pervaded literature. Baudelaire's *Les fleur du mal* had scarcely begun to wither, Flaubert had just introduced *Madame Bovary* to the world, when Zola came hasting along a path, his mirror in his hand. And to cling to the metaphor, what could an optimist like R.L.S. do but to cast a stone at it?[44] He saw his best university friends -Charles Baxter, Walter Ferrier and Walter Simpson[45]-fading into the haze of alcohol -Ferrier died of if at a very early age- while the philosophy of renunciation preyed on

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[43] 1870, marks the year in which Dickens died. And the same should be noted here about other "eminent Victorians".

[44] As he actually did in his "A Humble Remonstrance", though he was very much drawn to realism as his last works show.

[45] All three belonged to the upper middle class. Simpson was a baronet whose father own his fame and titled to the discovery application of chloroform as an anesthetic.

his generation. There was the old Scottish school: the philosophy of common sense inagurated by Thomas Reid and further developed by Dugald Stewart;[46] which served as a reaction against Hume's scepticism and the subjected idealism of Berkeley. Maybe it could also serve as a shield with which to protect himself against the piercing German philosophy, against that pessimism which was paradoxically identified with culture.

What could Louis do? Where could he turn to? Just as he knew he had to look forwards if he wanted to escape the asphyxiating Calvinist radicalism,[47] he knew he had to turn his face, to look backwards, in search of inspiration.

In a first movement in that direction, he found what he knew had always been at his back: the Scottish tradition represented by the vernacular poets. From these he had already obtained his bitter hatred for middleclass hypocrisy, as portrayed in Burns' "Hollie Willie's Prayer", a satire against that strange blending of orthodoxy and immoderate potations. Much more than Burns, RLS had that rare virtue for enlivening everything he touched; but there were many things in Burns that Stevenson did not like[48], and these he corageously attacked in one of his perceptive essays.[49]

Allam Ramsay he also read with a keen interest, just as many other representatives of the great Scottish poetic genius. But there was one poet with whom he always felt a curious kinship, one with whom he identified to the point of declaring cheerfully that he was a reincarnation of him: Robert Fergusson (1750-1774).

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[46] A curious issue which deserves serious study is the fact that this philosophy took root at Harvard and Princeton, and so firmly that, as some scholars have suggested, Emerson's self-reliance and Thoreau's civil disobedience, could be rightly considered to be the offsprings of this Scottish doctrine which thus came back to our continent as if rebounded, cloathed in trasatlantic furs. Stevenson was much interested in Thoreau, and wrote on him, but did not approve of his contemplative life.

[47] Stevenson felt a special kinship with Hawthorne. He drew parallels between New England Puritanism and Scottish Calvinism. He would surely have admired Emily Dickinson and had a great sympathy for her. So there was also a deep reflection concentrated in the Scottish past and in the contemporary "remnants" of Puritanic thought.

[48] Namely, Burns' squalid attitude towards women, his gross greed for them. Stevenson understood the complex position in which women found themselves and rebelled against their subjugation. He wrote two essays on Burns, the first was dropped out by "The Britannica", the second, a larger study, was included in *Familiar Essays on Men & Books*. In this he mantained he found in The Scottish Bard "something of the vulgar bagnmanlike professional seducer". After his death, he was denied a monument in Edingurgh because Scots thought he had slandered Burns.

[49] Make reference to the title here and to Prinipal Sharp's if I wish to.

Stevenson liked to talk about “the three Roberts of Scotland” -Robert Fergusson, Robert Burns, and Robert Louis Stevenson-. He was much drawn to the tragic brevity of that youth's life, his exact predecessor in a century. A potent symbol of the Edinburgh underground who celebrated the filth, the smell, the drunkness, and the carnal inclinations of Auld Reekie's[50] citizens, Fergusson was always on the mind of the young Stevenson, though Louis never concealed his disapproval of Fergusson’s vices. Perhaps it was from him that he took the two essential elements of his Bohemia: drinking -though our author preferred claret and wine to whisky, and drank in moderation- and talking -he was an excellent talker always quick in the repartee. It has been suggested that had this intoxicated writer of vivid poetry lived another twenty four years, he would have subscribed many of the things his fellow countryman wrote a century later on their city, and that there are anticipations of our writer in some dry caustic lines like these which follow:

> Na, rather gleefu' turn your face
> Forsake hypocrisy, grimace;
> And never have it understood
> You fleg mankind frae being good [51] *(fled, from)*

Stevenson felt that Fergusson had been much neglected -as he still continues to be-, and that Burns had not shown a readiness to acknowledge everything he owed to this urban poet. But there were other things Louis drew from the Scottish literary tradition. One of these was what Chesterton called his healthy instinct for the actuality of positive evil[52]. And this is very true, for there is in Scottish literature, as in Scottish folklore, what may be termed as a "diabolic tradition", a clear perception. A notion that the devil is all around ready to prey on us. In Scotland the devil was sensed in this way; as an old friend, as someone who lives with us. Hence the friendly names by which he is called: "Auld Nickie", "Auld Horny", "He o' the cloven hooves”... This is intimately related to Hutcheson's[53] belief that people have a knowlege of good and evil without

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[50] For an explanation of the name, see note 435.

[51] cf. *Poems by Allam Ramsay & Robert Fergusson*, ed. by A. M. Kinshorn & A. Law, Scottish Academioc Press, 1974, p. 147.

[52] c.f. G.K. Chesterton, *The Victorian Age in Literature,* p. 149.

[53] Another philosopher of common sense, yet clarify with more biographical data.

and prior to a knowledge of God. Burns' "Tam O' Shanter", is deeply rooted in this principle. But to Stevenson this was a too simple one. He reversed it, he sustained not that the wickedest creature can mask himself under a respectable appearance, but that the wickedest creature can be a respectable man at the same time.

This is absolutely unthinkable in any other country with deep religious thought. When we talk about Stevenson's nostalgia for Scotland, we shall mention some Calvinist virtues he retained, but he also retained some vices. Two of them have already been suggested here, his deep, too deep concern for the evil side of human existence, and his sometimes playful attitude to death. The third one is that melancholy which assaulted him from an early age and caused him to frequent the Cannongate cemetery -where Fergusson lies buried- and, above all those of Grefriars and Warriston he visited with his nurse.

But Stevenson's Scottish background also provided him with many other valuable weapons he would use dexterously against **the monstruous philosophy of stagnancy and timidity** of the miscreant realist. For this was the Calvinist tradition that we have analysed so far and this only added pessimism to pessimism. Another tradition with which Scotland will always be associated is that of Jacobitism. And Jacobitism means *romance*, and RLS always thought that it was immoral to neglect romance. But to be a romancer he needed a style. This he was resolved to get by turning his head back to Scottish romantic literature, and to the English Essay tradition. These, together with his wide and attentive readings from other literature, supplied the grindstone on which he sharpened his style. Now, with these and his trenchant optimism -not panglossian as some critics described him-, he could sing his most famous ditty against the fastidiously respectable, against the spleenetic decadents, -"Drink and the devil had done for the rest. -Yo-ho-ho..." [54] Here is where his whole creed lies, and this, one of his most fervent admirers understood, "But a man there was, to rescue us from the Desert of Realism- one gallant Scotsman, the adored of us all, hopeless beyond our imitation, who kept the flag of Scott flying and carried it till he fell".[55]

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[54] *Treasure Island.* T.2:7.

[55] Sir Arthur Thomas Quiller-Couch. *Studies in Literature.* v.3. G.P.Puttnam's sons, 1930. p.225

Stevenson's philosophy is thus based upon action, upon movement, upon courage. No place for Dame Prudence here. Oddly enough, the healer who weaved that incredible web, that make-believe, was a man who remained bed-ridden for almost his whole existence.

Have we succumbed to the myth, to the romantic legend of the sick adventurer? Who not? But we have partly retold it here for it is so consistent with everything he wrote, so consistent with his personality, that it is impossible to dissociate one from the other. BreadwinnerWe have retold it because all these elements recurr in the whole Stevenson canon. They are in short stories such as "Thrawn Janet", "Will o' the Mill", or "The Pavillion on the Links". They are in such romances as *Kidnapped*, *Treasure Island, The Master of Ballantrae*, or *The Weir of Hersmiston*. And they are definitely in all his essays.

2.3 The American Revivalists

The word "revivalists" added to the title of this wee section, might be taken as inappropriate, at best, misleading. Yet it conveys the very sense of what I perceive the great American essayists did. They revitalized and refreshed the Protean genre in their new perspectives and projections. There is a customary double approach by scholars, critics and anthologists. There are those who draw on the anthithesis between "American literature" and "English literature" to, seemingly, exclude the great American essayists from the wider scope of the essay tradition in English. Conversely, other critics and practitioners include the American authors of the discursive form right within the noble roll of those who largely contributed to the literature in English, as their shared mother-tongue. The latter feel that the literature of a language is indivisable regardless of national considerations[56]. The former, dwelling on the distinctive outlook

[56] See for instance John Gross (1991) and Lydia Fakundiny (1991) whose selections include both traditions, British and American, in the same sections as part of the very same inheritance.

on life and social atmosphere, judge that there is "an intangible", "an indefinable" flavour which distinguishes one tradition from the other[57]; one which makes Twain distinctive from Chesterton, Irving from Lamb, whatever their mastery. This last view links with what Howells objects to those who defend that American authors in exile had drawn their inspiration from England[58]. American literature was "a condition of English literature" and was "independent even of our independence"; that's to say, distinctively American. Either way, the truth is that the American essayists are as loyal to the essay tradition, in English, as the British are. That in both traditions the essay insists on remaining unvaried in its enormous variety. It insists on assuming one constant form, which is the chameleonic form, to avoid answering questions in its dialogic discursive zest. It insist on being its author in its more intimate tone. If it is undeniable that the wealth of the British essay is much larger and varied, it is not less undeniable that the American essayist descends from the likes of Bacon, Hazlitt or Goldsmith. Just as the Americans trod at the heels of the British[59], while presenting their discursive meditations the British trod at the heels of Montaigne. Having veered form British essayists to American and back to British in a literary hopscotch, I tend to agree with the common assertion that the familiar style is enforced by the American essayists by their use of everyday words rather than the more antiquated ones by the British. I seem to agree with the opinion that there is a more resolved flee from affectation and pedantry on the part of the Americans, coupled with a stronger determination to maintain an apparent simplicity, a less solemn more jaunty conversational tone. These characteristics are, notwihstanding, neither more nor less abiding than those of the British.

Having, thus, the same ancestors, American essayists steadily added their own peculiarities in each period that would shape the ideas the modern nation upholds and reveres. These are firmly associated, amongst other, with democratic sensibility,

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[57] This perspective sort of pigeonholes such collections as William Morton Payne's *Leading American Essayists*. New York: H.Holt & Co, 1910; Brander Matthews' *The Oxford Book of American Essays.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1914; Pritchard's (1929); and other more recent like Lopate's (1994) who, dealing with the personal essay, includes two separate chapters under the headings "The Rise of the English Essay" and "The American Scene".

[58] The case of Longfellow is obliterated by that of Washington Irving. They first met in Madrid, Longfellow had been sent over to Europe to study European languages and to incorporate their literary traditions. He was on his way back to America with a full bagagge.

[59] Amongst the myriads of examples there is that of Thoreau's "Walking", which links, topically and formally with Hazlitt's "On Going a Journey".

self-expression and individuality, optimism and the strength of the emerging nation. There has been much debate on the matter of who would be the initiator, the continuator of the tradition in America and when this would have taken place.

There are those who see annalists and historians like Winthrop and Sewall, and theological writers like Cotton Mather, as forerunners of the genre. These see the seeds of the British tradition putting out shoots in *The History of New England* (1630-1649), *The Selling of Joseph* (1700) and *Magnalia Christy Americana* (1702), respectively. They support their view in the fact that these early writers refer constantly to the future nation that "shall reap the liberty which these Colonies have planted".

Others take these colonial writings -in their constant narrow note on the historical and religious- as separate from the mainstream of the essay, taking them to be closer to the philosophical *treaty* or the *tract*[60]. Following that trend, they support the idea that it was the triumph of American independence that brought an idiosyncratic mood by which the American essay diverges from the course of its British counterpart as the elder brother diverges from any association with his younger sibling in the playground. They see in the representational federal value of the American Constitution the manifest fruition of the essay. Hence, far from *transplanted* as a full-grown Minerva[61], the genre was the result of two hundred years of maturation and experimentation. Revolutionary literature brought an end to the isolation of the Colonial writer. Writers of the essay-form, now pay publishers to see their works in print. They now know which hooks to use for their compositions and have little or no doubt as for the topics, contents, and useful information they are to include. Prose writers of the Revolutionary period sought to be practical, to be intent on solving the wordly problems rather than the spiritual yearnings of the previous age. They were fixated on producing a literature of democracy. They believed that the shift from a widely theological interest to the canny "philosophy of common sense" would put an end to any political strife. Revealing their individuality and making the subject they expounded more immediate, they hoped to come closer to the hearts of men by appealing to their sense of justice and their love of

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[60] In fact Sewall's work here mentioned is hailed as, probably, "the first antislavery *tract* published in this country" (Brander Matthews *The Oxford Book of American Essays.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1914, p. 28.)

[61] I here take liberty to make this jocular comment aided and abetted by Jefferson's humorous phrase "an assembly of demigods" when alluding to the leaders of the Colonies as called to order by Washington in Philadelphia, in 1787. Ibid. p. 91.

freedom. Those ideals were quintaessential in Paine's[62] *Common Sense* (1775), Jefferson's *The Declaration of Independence* (1776), or Franklin's "The Temple of Learning" (1722). These writers reveal not only their individuality, they make the subject they expound more immediate, more human and interesting. Their work answers to the call "join or die"; to bring together the multitudes out of the foundational states and factions into a new nation granting peace and harmony.

However, it is in the so-called national, creative period, corresponding to Romancitism in Europe that we find the discursive genre blooming as the proper form to deal with the tremendously quick changes and developments represented by the growth of the nation through the incorporation of territories and the advancing frontier; the dramatic increase of the population by the colonization of the Great West; the industrial development of the East and the enormous expand of commerce and wealth. This is the era Matthiessen called "The American Renaissance". The age of Irving, Bryant, Cooper, Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Melville, Whitman and Poe. Which literary pursuits were bent on the expression of individuality; on harmonizing with nature; on emphasizing the moral and the spiritual dimension of man. In a word, on creating a literary tradition that would be disctinctively American. The anecdote by which Emerson brought Whitman "to the boil" after much "shimmering" while walking together in Boston Commons, the one according to which Whitman would emerge as the first national poetic voice of America, would have worked in the other direction to make of Emerson the most prominent essayist of the nation. No matter how unfixed his philosophy and partly drawn from the British Romantics, his " Self-Reliance", "Nature", and "The Over-Soul" appear in most anthologies. So do Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience" and, above all, *Walden* which can be taken to be lengthy essays expounding his views on politics, natural histoty and environmental issues. Poe's "The Philosophy of Composition" and "The Poetic Principle" are key to the understanding of his theory of writing as blatantly opposed to the "spontaneous creation" through inspiration of the British Romantics. These essays also emphasize the importance of art, of the creative spirit, for society and for the individual. The artist should find ways to

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[62] It is worth noting here that after all his epigrams and incitations to charge, "Ye that dare oppose not only tyranny but the tyrant, stand forth!", Paine was in favor of union with England. It was only after the battle of Bunker Hill that he declared, "the country was set on fire around my ears, and it was time to stir". (Ibid. quoted on p. 148).

express his self-awareness and self-expression. Another theme incorporated to the well-varied mainstream of the American essay is that of abolition as in Douglass's "The Destiny of Colored Americans".

The rise of realism put an end to the romantic moods which faded away with the U.S. Civil War, just as the period of innocent optimism gave way to one of total exhaustion. The themes dealt with by the essayists were tightly connected with the transformation of America into a big strong industrial nation. The strength required by the citizens under those rough circumstances of precipitous changes; the ravages of war; urbanization and its alienation... Mark Twain's "Advice to Youth", "On the Decay of the Art of Lying"; Henry Adams's "A Law of Acceleration", and Louisa May Alcott's "Death of a Soldier" are good representations of the more reflexive and descriptive style that would later originate the experimentation of modernist essays like Scott Fitzgerald's "What I Think and Feel at 25" or Joan Didion's "The White Album". These bring the American tradition back to its beginning, for essayists use orality in an effort to grasp the different situations and moods to which the people are subject. We must remember that Emerson's essays were largely based on his lectures and speeches.

CHAPTER 3

“At every word a reputation dies”
(Alexander Pope *Rape of the Lock*, iii.16)

CHAPTER 3

NURSERY VERSE, BOY'S YARNS AND "BOGEY TALES"? A HISTORICAL REVISION OF THE VAGARIES OF A REPUTATION: THE STATE OF THE QUESTION

Once examined the evolution of the essay as a genre throughout the history of literature in English, this chapter aims to be a revision of the critical appreciation of Stevenson's work. This is more than a twice-told tale. It is one either retold, -as in nursery verse-, crammed with one-sided censure when not defamatory innuendos, or recast, -grotesquely-, as a boy's yarn of the invalid child[63]; and then again reinterpreted as a "bogey tale",[64] -not precisely "fine", and of no precise intention. It is one too rarely done with honesty.

Stevenson has been both sentimentally lauded and preternaturally condemned for his **experimentation**. Likewise, his **versatility** has been glossed over to favour this or that genre, in which he excelled, to the detriment to others he practiced with equal virtuosity.

Consider the fact that it was his fiction that attracted all the attention, while his other prose writings, -the concern of this study-, were dealt with with fickleness instead of being treated as if they were the buried treasure of his romances[65].

It all speaks, pedantically, of deprecation at midcourse never slightly approaching the end of the tale. For it is in the nature of indisputable talent to be subject to such vagaries, such angry swells of seas as his forefathers -lighthouse builders[66]- had to fight.

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[63] Stevenson was made feeble and feverish by a pulmonar condition which had him confined to bed most of his lifetime. "My Bed is A Boat" from *A Child Garden of Verses,* (Tus 22:16) is the best expression of this touching image of the sick child.

[64] As he relates in "A Chapter on Dreams", Stevenson "had been racking his brains for a plot. His wife Fanny woke him up from what she thought was a nightmare to be reproached with the words: "Why did you wake me? I was dreaming a fine bogey tale". (L 5: 129 n.2.) "Bogey" as used here in its adjectival value in Scots, makes us mindful of a shape looming in the fog.

[65] I use the author's favourite term to make reference here to his fiction, his defence of "romance" against the realists that were drumming their ideas into the creative force of the century.

[66] R.L.S. came from a long line of lighthouse builders. For a full retelling see "Records of a Family of Engineers" (Tus.19) and Bella Bathurst's (1999). In *Underwoods,* xxxviii (Smith 1950: 144)(Lewis 1988:98) Stevenson gives us the stunningly beautiful metaphore of his art as a lamp lit to provide joy just as the towers founded by "the labours of my sires".

Yet, it was as an essayist that he set out on his wanderings, meeting his fictional characters by the roadside as he went. It is that quality of the consumate essayist that is begining to be sung of and celebrated; only recently, however.

The truth is that the most perceptive and delicate retelling of this skewed story -far more so than the "canonical" by Stevenson's cousin[67]- is that by J.C. Furnas in the last couple of appendixes to his authoritative biography of Louis, *Voyage to Windward*. Especially, in the first he wisely entitled "The Dialectics of a Reputation". (Furnas 1952: 375-391). That discerning, honest narrative records all "events" up to 1952, where it concludes abruptly, never to be retaken.

But this last statement may be misguiding for, as usual, the most perceptive and succint way to refer to the vagaries of his reputation comes from Louis himself. In an early essay he penned on François Villon, "certainly the sorriest figure on the rolls of fame [68]", he writes.

> A little while ago and Villon was almost totally forgotten; then he was revised for the sake of his verses; and now **he is being revived with a vengeance in the detection of his misdemeanours**. How unsubstantial is this projection of a man's existence, which can lie in abeyance for centuries and **then be brushed up again** and set forth for the consideration of prosperity by a few dips in an antiquary's inkpot! **This precarious**

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[67] Graham Balfour *Life of Robert Louis Stevenson* (1901); a source scholars call "indispensable", as Balfour knew the family personally and had access to documents since lost.

[68] "François Villon, Student, Poet, Housebreaker". *Cornhill Magazine* 36 (Aug 1877). Included in *Familiar Studies of Men and Books* (1882).Tus 27. Alexander Japp (1905) states that R.L.S. had a fondness for tramps and bestowed special pains on Villon, "the poet-scamp" to whom he leant brotherly. Stevenson wrote "A Lodging for the Night", on the honest villain, at about the same time. Still, while the story shows Villon a sort of victim and the brave artist who doesn't cover up the unpleasantness of life, the essay shows he was out of sympathy with his subject who does little to promote "the enjoyment of the world" (cf. L 2:43). His final judgement came in his preface to *Familiar Studies,* "I am tempted to regret that I ever wrote on this subject... because I regarded Villon as a bad fellow... I saw nothing but artistic evil." (Tus 27:xxi, reprinted 1917). Swearingen reminds us (1980: 27) that August Longnon's biography of Villon had come out earlier in the year. Stevenson was also drawn to Charles Godfrey Leland's work on Villon, since Leland, one of those fascinating forgotten writers of the XIX century, had a passion for the French libertine. It was Villon's snivelling attitude and self-pity that young Louis deprecated. In his classic *François Villon,* (1928), Wyndham Lewis wrote, "I have revered (Villon) since that day of my boyhood when I first lighted on R.L.S.'s essay". Yet, Robert Lynd in "Old and New Masters" (1919:98) says Villon was, "for all this, not the utterly vile person that Stevenson believed", nor was his poetry "mere whinning and whimpering of genius which occassionally changes its mood and sticks its fingers to its nose", but rather, "the confession of a man who had wandered over the "crooked hills of delicious pleasure," and had arrived in rags and filth in the famous city of Hell. In any case, Villon had become for Louis an emblem of the shakiness of fame.

> **tenure of fame** goes a long way to justify those (and they are not a few) who prefer cakes and cream in the immediate present.
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> (Tus. 27: 119)

Whether or not Louis had a sweet tooth is out of the question. The issue here is that he was reflecting on his incipient popularity; he was envisioning his fame four years away. A few pages farther on, he develops on Providence with foresight.

> Many a man's destiny has been settled by nothing apparently more grave than a pretty face on the opposite side of the street and a couple of bad companions round the corner.
> (Tus 27: 123)

He could see it all coming, still with that indomitable playful spirit that characterized him.

A composite account of the salient critical appraisals to date is what is called for here. And yet, as Furnas rightly alerts us:

> I am not confident that synthesis will descend on the figure that Stevenson now cuts in literary eyes, though I heartily wish it may and consider that, if it does not, the fault will lie with inadequate readers, not with Stevenson. In his case one can be sure only that antithesis has done its worst. If his reputation is ever to turn inside out, digest all his tenable achivements, slough off accretions wished on him by the changing years, and become a new and vigorus organism, it must happen soon.
> (Furnas 1952: 376).

And so, the coming pages are aimed at determining whether or not this vigour has taken place, is taking place, or will be taking place shortly with this small contribution at the forefront.

Rather than follow the critics, who tread the consensual route that breaks the long history of his appreciation into four periods[69], -which would fall out of our scope here for spatial reasons-, we will take a shortcut and venture to pinpoint the smearing

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[69] These are, 1- In his lifetime and on his wake, (so to say up to 1894). 2- The first twenty years (1894-1914). 3- The reaction (1914- late1940s), and 4- The reinstatement (1950s -1990s), fitting enough for “an analysis of some thoroughness and depth” (Furnas 1952: 377).

landmarks and the cleansing watersheds, -adding the latest scholarly efforts to our baggage-, as we go along.

To do so, I will make apparent the maladies that had the sick child bedridden together with the valuable insight that contributed to restore his health, most especially, and temporally, nevertheless. Rather than follow the punctual chronology of his debunking and of his revaluation, I will outline his career as an essayist, the real object and purpose of this study, rather than get lost in the jumble of general criticism on him. For, it is on that foundation that I seek to build.

To do so properly, I shall list and number the main ingredients that, from a critical perspective, sidelined and neglected "this broth of a boy", in the old Irish use [70], making him regrettably languish in the shadows for a long time. Now he must come to light.

3.1 The demise of the essay as a literary form

The opening chapter served as an "elegy" on the fall in the popularity of the essay as a literary genre, providing ample evidence of that neglect. What is consequential here is that, as revealed by the coming doleful titles and corresponding dates, this disaffection with the personal, honest and conversational genre began to take place before, during and after the four periods mentioned. Here are a few instances to ponder: "The Passing of the Essay," (1894), "The Old-Fashioned Essay," (1902), "The Lost Art of the Essay" (1935), "On Buring the Essay" (1948),"A Gentle Dirge for the Familiar Essay" (1955)[71]. These connote how simultaneous, how intertlocked the fibers of both reputations were knitted. And yet, while other essayists were swept away in one and the same storm with the breezy genre, as Jeremy Treglown asserts, passages from Stevenson's essays have "entered the language"[72], have become part of our fabric. Our familiarity with quotes like "To travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive", "The most beautiful adventures are not those we go to seek" or, "If it is for fame that men do

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[70] An antiquated Irish expression for "Very lively, full of spirit, optimistic".

[71] See references under Repplier, Howells, Drew, Eaton, and Fadiman, respectively.

[72] C.f.Treglown (1999: xv) in the "Collected Essays" section of the bibliography.

brave actions, they are only silly fellows after all", illustrate, as Lesley Graham (2012: 313) brilliantly argues "not only the enduring relevance of Stevenson's essays but also their susceptibility to being cherry-picked for telling phrases". They are also very eloquent of his ability to nurture the enjoyment of the world.

3.2 The "sedulous ape" and "My First Book": Stevenson's disingenious declarations.

No quote is more apposite to our purpose that this from old Pope. "At every word a reputation dies" (*Rape of the Lock*, iii.16). For, the first damage was done by Stevenson's own inauspicious claim that he had played "the sedulous ape"[73] on his favourite authors. This image was "chased to death"[74] by frivolous biographers, critics, reviewers, and anthologists who decontextualized it as if referred to the mature author, rather than to the apprentice; or misinterpreted it as if reprehensive to his mind, rather than taking that sentiment as his own[75].

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[73] "Wherever I read a book or a pasasage that particulrly pleased me, in which a thing was said or an effect rendered with propriety, in which there was either some conspicuous force or some happy distinction in the style. I must sit down at once and set myself to ape that quality... **I have thus played the sedulous ape** to Hazlitt, to Lamb, to Wordsworth, to Sir Thomas Browne.. (...) But enough has been said to show by what arts of impersonation, and in **what purely ventriloquial efforts I first saw my words on paper**". "A College Magazine", Edinburgh University Magazine (1887). Tus 29: 29-30.

[74] Prideaux (1903: vi), in the first comprehensive account of the collected works, tells us of his weariness with the phrase. Commenting on the "strenuous novitiate through which he (R.L.S.) passed while preparing himself for the duties of authorship", he acknowledges that, although "saturated himself with the essence of the greatest figures in Enlgish literature", Stevenson's style was "individual", and he was "the imitator of none", (Prideaux, 1903: vi).

[75] See for instance, Cornford (1899:43), "Well, it (the sedulous ape) was undoubtedly the way, **and the only way, for Stevenson,** since he deliberately elected to become a perfect writer before he could, in the nature of things, have anything particular to say".
Specially irksome is Japp's -a scholar of Thoreau- (1905:161) comment that Louis, "with all his art and fine sense of verbal music, rather misses it. The sedulous ape sometimes disenchants as well as charms; for occasionally a word, a touch, a turn, sends us off too directly in search of the model; and this operates against the interest as introducing a new and alien series of associations". And Hammerton's spite and untruth (1910:175), "He has told us how imitative was the training to which he subjected himself in boyhood; and he is still, in his first books of travel, criticisms, and stories, 'playing the sedulous ape,' as he phrased it **imitating very eclectically and originally, but still imitating.**.. (...) In 'Treasure Island,' masterpiece though it be, he is still imitating, parodying, pouring his genius into a ready-made form."
For one of the first anthologies quoting the unfortunate passage see Broadus and Gordon (eds.) (1918: 581).

Only four years after Louis's death, Burton averted against that misconception: "The Philistine can never get over or around Stevenson's indiscreetly frank avowal of his own literary methods, whence we hear now he "slogged at his trade" and "played the sedulous ape" to great writers during his novitiate... Those who insist that Stevenson was an accomplished, graceful technician... should be directed especially to certain sentences in the paper... deserving the higher accent of italics." (Burton 1898:22). He knew Stevenson "passed (his) days in toil" (Tus 2: xxiv) and was extremely self-conscious of his art.

One of those philistines, a very determined one, was **Chapman**[76], who Furnas (1952: 380) tells us, "supplied the extreme case of using Louis' theory of writer-training as a club to beat him with. Because Stevenson had recommended playing "sedulous ape" to writers of quality, this strident voice accused him of being merely "the most extraordinary mimic that has ever appeared in literature". Maixner (1981:494) quotes Chapman's petulance, "The instinct at the bottom of all mimicry is self-concealment".

Another discerning critic exerted himself in an attempt at redress, "How carefully he labored to attain excellence in the art of writing is too well known to need repetition. Misjudgment has unfortunately followed the misinterpretation of his use of the phrase "sedulous ape" in connection with his training in composition. Stevenson is never the mere copyist. A copyist has no ideal beyond the exact reproduction of his model. Not even his severest critic would allege this to be true of Stevenson" (Fr. Snow 1911: xi).

Too late, it had already stained. A strong critical effort would be needed to turn it all into the merest blemish. Even more so when, in the next few decades, detractors and other fault-finders collected the sufficient amunition from Stevenson's levity about himself to take a dim view of him and his work.

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[76] John Jay Chapman (1892-1933), American critic, essayist and reformer who visited the Stevensons in August 1885 with a letter of introduction from Henry James. James wrote to Fanny: "Do you remember young Jack Chapman... Three months ago he *burnt* off, bodily, by holding it, his left hand, into the fire... so that the arm had to be amputated, to punish himself for having done something which he considered that he had been slightly dishonoured...The *trait* will strike Louis" (L 5: 427 n.6).

Specially vitriolic were the "efforts" made by he that "commanded" the charge of the heavy anti-Stevenson brigade, **Swinnerton**.[77] This critic yawpped his way through the entire body of his work patronizing about his style and accusing him, **sedulously,** of lack of originality. These and other similar charges were answered, not by a Stevensonian, but by a genuine lover of Stevenson, G.K. Chesterton who will make himself apparent, enormously so, in this study. Let us dismiss Swinnerton for now, with Furnas' comment (1952: 380) that his work "falls again and again into writing identifiable yards away as watered-down Stevenson and nothing else".

But "**the charge of the sedulous apery**" rather than abate was "raised to that of empty stylism" in a second wave, this time championed by **Professor Rice** and taken up by biographer **J.A. Steuart**.

The former condemns immitation as a method, declaring these "monkey-tricks", these "arts of impersonation" (R.L.S.'s own wording) the source of "all the faults of Stevenson's literary art" (Rice, 1916:57). And taking it as "a confession of faith" calls it "an amazing and unnatural doctrine" and marvels that "looking back over his apprenticeship years" our author still believed "such habits and methods to be essential and usual influences in the acquisition of craftsmanship" (Ibid, 88-9).

The latter, Steuart granting that most authors, "at any rate in these late time, begin with imitations", admits that "the stronger the native talent the quicker is the imitative stage passed". But then he objects that Louis "lingered in it until late in his career, as though he lacked the sure instinct of genius either for style or subject" (Steuart, 1924: 88-9).

And the same must be posited about Stevenson's open frankness about his own fiction. It appeared to be symptomatic of the disfavour that particular work of his was to fall into in the *echelon* of the academic world. It felt as if Stevenson was inviting

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[77] Frank Swinnerton, *Robert Louis Stevenson: A Critical Study.* (1914). Also to notice the pretentious subtitle, which as Richard Dury says, "is deliberately chosen to show an intellectually rigorous approach and to distinguish it from earlier readings of Stevenson's life and 'personality'". (The Robert Louis Stevenson Website at www.robert-louis-stevenson.org.) (This visit, March 2012).

inferior tushery[78] on his production, -for indeed a lot of trash got published even on his most celebrated writings-. Thus, in "**My First Book**: Treasure Island",[79] Louis is out of modesty mendacious about his stature as an essayist.

> I am not a novelist alone. But I am well aware that my paymaster, the great public, regards what else I have written with indifference, if not aversion.
> (Tus 2: xxiii)

As Lesley Graham contends, "In reality, the essays garnered extremely high praise during the author's lifetime and for several decades after his death a period during which he was regarded by some above all as a brilliant writer of essays. The essays were generally well received on publication both when they first appeared in periodicals and when collected in the volumes (...) and (were) even more highly regarded as Stevenson's fame as a writer of fiction grew" (Graham 2012: 315-6).

We then wonder why would Stevenson, towards the end of his life, have pronounced *Treasure Island* his "first book," blotting out his six previously published volumes from his *oeuvre*; whence this disdain, and why would Stevenson be willing to tarnish books that had been critically acclaimed and dear to him[80]. Further on, he alludes to "the succession of defeats (that) lasted unbroken till I was thirty-one" ("My First Book: Treasure Island", Tus 2:xxiii). The essay was written while cruising in the Pacific in spring or early summer 1893. It was then that he sensed the lack of public interest in his new material on the South Seas, as we shall see in the next chapters, so he would be making a covert defense of his travel books. I thus hold with Buckton (2007:49), "the neglect of his travel writing in "My First Book" is a screen to deflect attention from the actual vitality of travel in Stevenson's corpus of works".

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[78] Affected style as coined by Stevenson himself, from "tush" -an excamation of disapproval.

[79] Contributed to Jerome K. Jerome's magazine *The Idler,* 6: 297-309 (August 1894).

[80] Namely, *An Inland Voyage* (1878) *, Edinburgh Picturesque Notes* (1878)*, Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes* (1879)*, Virginibus Puerisque* (1881)*, Familiar Studies of Men and Books* (1882), and *New Arabian Nights* (1882). Of which, to note the first three are travel books, the fourth and fifth collected essays and the sixth is fiction.

In his magnanimity, Louis did not wish to discourage those proposing to embrace the career of art[81]. Spencer held to his theory which, carried into diligent practice should teach an intelligent and sympathetic person to write "in proportion as he had knowledge of the mental wear and tear of his reader". So why shouldn't Stevenson have his own?

It was this literary joke and such needless declarations as these which venomous unperceptive critics, harboring grudges for imagined wrongs, took in their hands to seemingly undermine all those years of hard work. Those not well acquainted with the author would take it as a glaring form of self sabotage, for it very much looked like it. Those who take pleasure just in his novels should meet the high-spirited joking, the self-mocking Louis of his extraordinary and wide correspondence[82]. What such critics might have done with that wealth of derisive laugh on himself is, indeed, a very disturbing thought.

3. 3. The bland eulogizing of "The Seraph in Chocolate": The cult of Stevenson.

Another "accretion wished" on our author, a more pernicious one by far, was that brought forth by the countless fond "memoirs", "reminiscences" and "recollections" written by those professing to have known, met or conferred with Louis. Be it by reason of their poor quality, be it by their lack of rigor, these have been systematically excluded so that they are not registered in our bibliography. Even those touched upon here, though dependable given that the writer figures amongst Stevenson's correspondents[83], have no real bearing for any serious critical approach and are therefore entered only as

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[81] See his "Letter to a Young Gentleman Who Proposes to Embrace the Career of Art", March or April 1888, (Tus 28: 3-11), here paraphrased.

[82] Stevenson's letters (see the monumental work by Booth and Mehew, 1994-95) are crammed with drawings, practical jokes and "irresponsible gaiety" (cf. Swearingen about the first time published *The Hair Trunk* 2014: xiii) about himself as a browse of any of the eight volumes reveals. See for instance his playful elegance on *The Black Arrow ,* "Tush! a poor thing!" (L 4:129).

[83] For a list of "the main correspondents", see Booth and Mehew, 1994. (L1: 28-72) and Alana Knight (1985:1-255 & 279-313).

references in this chapter. Furthermore, they are often, inconsequential, done in an oversensitive or lackadaisical fashion and, as a result, short-lived.

It is rather deplorable that the family and friends, together with some hearty associates, should be the ones to blame for this new assault on our author's literary reputation, but that happened to be the case. For, it was in many ways this "uncritical adulation" (Maixner, 1981:1) that orchestrated **the cult of Stevenson the man, reducing rather than increasing the power and appeal of his extraordinary work.** Furthermore, these extravagant praise, these pledges of love and sympathy, were predictably the stem of the antagonism of the reaction. To deal with the landmarks of these tributes would be burdersome to write and unforgiving to read. It will be much better to mull over those reflections arising from those which are no "blazing nonsense" (Terry 1996: 51).

Authoritative biographers[84] state it was Henley,[85] Stevenson's friend and collaborator, who started the "debunking" tradition with his caustic review of the recognized biography[86] in The Pall Mall, Dec.1901., in which he bitterly remarked that family and friends had transformed the real Stevenson into a "Seraph in Chocolate", (a) "barley-sugar effigy of a real man". In a sense, he was right, though partly, for Henley was being disloyal to Louis after a serious quarrel they had had[87].

David Daiches (1973:78) calls it not just "a protest that Balfour's picture was not "my old, rioutous, intrepid, scornful Stevenson at all", but a bitter accusation against Louis of vanity, affectation, unscrupulousness and condescension".

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[84] Cf. for instance, Furnas (1952:247-261); Daiches (1973:7-80); Bell (1992:213-217) and Gray (2004:104-6) here quoted.

[85] William Ernest Henley, (1849-1903) author of the popular "Invictus", -whose "maimed strength and masterfulness... begot John Silver" (Tus. 32: 242)- met young Louis in the Edinburgh Infirmary where Henley had come for treatment after the amputation of one foot for tuberculosis of the bone. Stevenson would carry his favourite armchair on his shoulders all the way up through the streets of Edinburgh to sit and converse with his new friend, whom he would later portrait as Burly in the essay "Talk and Talkers".

[86] The first biographical effort; by Stevenson's cousin, Graham Balfour's 1901. See n.5 above.

[87] Henly accused Fanny, Stevenson's wife, of the diabolical crime of plagiarizing Kattherine de Mattos -the sister of Louis's cousin and great friend Bob Mowbray Stevenson- in the short story "The Nixie". This and other quarrels led to the "breaking off relations with my old friend Henley: a wretched milestone on the wayside of life, which leaves me in the state of a fish with a hook in his throat: any little movement of thought catching me with a pang or at least a prick". (L8:210).

Gray (2004:107) agrees with others that Henley's attack was motivated underneath by "a smouldering resentment against Fanny who had in some sense taken away from Henley the Lewis of his youth".

Bell (1992:215) talks of Henley's "pathetic malice and jealousy", and contends that the poet had "nursed his wrath for years and it had blistered in his heart"... "and had lost whatever quality Stevenson first saw in him."

Furnas (1952:247) affirms, "damage was the greater because the facts were long locked up in a file of the pertinent Henley-Stevenson letters that Baxter preserved for posterity".

Chesterton [88] (1927: 13-33), possibly the most ingenious commentator on Louis, calls these "deprecations" not "a reaction against Stevenson" but "a reaction against Stevensoniana". For in these "we heard Stevensonian sentiments repeated in violation of all Stevensonian rules". Chesterton deliberatly omits an outline of the life of Louis, "because I find that it has cut across and confused the very sharp and lucid outline of his art". Instead he proposes "to review his books with illustrations from his life; rather than to write his life with illustrations from his books", since, "**the habit of talking too much about his life has already actually led to thinking far too little of his literature.**"

Uppermost in our considerations here is the fact that it was the family and friends who, partly, shipwrecked his reputation editing his works with "ameliorations" (omissions, amputations[89]...) of the original, their comments and notes in the introductions, etc., and with more than a whiff of fantasy and falsehood in their

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[88] Gilbert Keith Chesterton (1874-1936) wrote several books and numerous articles on R.L.S.. Besides those gathered in our bibliography, see for instance, 'Stevenson", a review of Baildon's 1901, in *Twelve Types*. 1901. London: Arthur L. Humphreys and 'The Characteristics of Robert Louis Stevenson', in Chesterton & Nicholl (1902). His 1927 ground-breaking monographic study answers each and every charge by Swinnerton superbly. Chesterton also brings up the great Scot in his discussion of *The Victorian Age in Literature.* The Scotsman would have much appreciated the Englishman's judgement, for they had quite a lot in common beyond their mutual fondness for toy theatres. The first chapter of his study mentioned above is, precisely, called "The Myth of Stevenson".

[89] Sidney Colvin was indelicate to include the letters the family thought unsavoury (disputes with his father, his bawdiness as a student at Edinburgh University, his love letters, his Bohemianism..) A flagrant case was that of "The Amateur Emigrant", which publication the closer circle continued to delay and suppress, so much so that around 30% of the original was omitted in the Edinburgh Edition. As R.L.S.'s mentor and literary advisor, Colvin was a demanding critic.

accounts [90]. All, perhaps, motivated not so much by their desire to revive his image but to protect the lucrative popularity of his novels. They surely thought it would be easier to secure his reputation as a writer of fiction, of romance, rather than as an essayist. The former would not be controversial and, veritably, more palatable for the "respectable" Vitorian readership.

McLynn (1993: 255 & ff.) is specially harsh on Fanny and Lloyd[91] in this and other respects. He is surely right when he accuses the Osbournes of being untruthful. He thus quotes Nellie Sanchez's [92] "statement that R.L.S. burned the first draft (of *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*) and started again because Fanny pointed out that he had "missed the point of the allegory", as "clear nonsense" and "a transparent attempt to explain away Fanny's philistinism".

Elwin (1939:148)., giving credit to such a pie in the sky, adds with insight, "But probaly Fanny neither realised the reason for his anger nor understood the conception of the story"... (for) masqueraded "in the guise of a mere thriller, is one of the most shrewd and daring satires on respectability".

Yet that the wife and the stepson would bloom themselves, boast their merits as first reader and as collaborator, is made apparent in their provocative allegations in the prefatory notes to the Tusitala volumes. And, even more blatantly in Lloyd's *An Intimate Portrait of R.L.S.* where he has the audacity to maintain it was he who drew the map and conceived the idea of what would in time be *Treasure Island* (Osbourne, 1924:30-33). Louis himself tell us the true story, though (see L2:168-71, 174-75).

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[90] Of the eight collected editions published in the first thirty years (1894-1924), we must be specially alert to the prefatory material by Fanny Stevenson and the faulty transcription by Lloyd in the Second Vailima Edition. Even the celebrated Tusitala Edition is not fully reliable, considering that Henley was among the editing team and "it was done with the approval of Lloyd who also dictated the contents and the order of the series and got the royalties". (See Richard Dury's "Collected Editions of Stevenson's Works", in The Robert Louis Stevenson Website -www.robert-louis-stevenson.org-.) It is also significative that almost every single volume offers a preface by the wife or/and the stepson. Similarly, some critics consider the Pentland Edition and the Edinbugh Edition to be devious and untrustworthy, just because they were edited by Gosse, Baxter and Colvin, respectively, -who, except for Gosse-, belonged to the inner circle of Louis's friends and would thus, consciously, be far more protective of the man than of his works.

[91] Lloyd Osbourne (1868-1947), was the son of Sam and Fanny Osbourne, Stevenson's stepson and his collaborator in *The Ebb-Tide; The Wrecker* and *The Wrong Box.* Many of his reminiscences and descriptions of the author are reproduced as prefaces in the Tusitala edition with the subheading, "Stevenson at Thirty-Two", "Stevenson at Forty", etc.

[92] Nellie Vandegrift Sanchez, to whom R.L.S. dedicated *Prince Otto*, sung the praises of her sister in *The Life of Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson* (1920).

To the point here is their part in contributing to the expansion and disemination of the myth of Stevenson. Which of the two balloons got most of their breath is hard to determine; I am led to believe the former did, though. Among the endless instances of the latter, that certainly hit the reader's fancy aggrandizing the legend, Fanny narrates the following incident in her preface to the biographical edition of *Lay Morals And Other Papers* of about the time they spent in the Marquesas.

> I remember one afternoon, at Anaho, when my husband and I... sat down on the sand to rest awhile, a native man stepped out from under some cocoanut trees regarding us hesitatingly as though fearful of intruding. My husband waved an invitation to the stranger to join us, offering his cigarette to the man in the island fashion. The cigarette was accepted and after a puff or two, courteously passed back again according to native etiquette. The hand that held it was the maimed hand of a leper. To my consternation my husband took the cigarette and smoked it out. Afterwards when we were alone and I spoke of my horror he said, "I could not mortify the man. And if you think I *liked* doing it! That was another reason; because I *didn't* want to. [93]

Lloyd, the beloved stepson -in actuality a loafer rather than a man of talent,- gives us the following account, claiming that he had discovered the manuscript of an unpublished essay "in a bundle of old papers", he asserts that:

> Then in the dim, halting way things recur to me, I began to recall its history. It had been adjudged too cynical, too sobre in tone, too out of keeping with the helpful philosophy always associated with R.L.S. (...) We seem to be going against the wishes of the author, who had evidently been content to leave it in oblivion, yet on the other hand it appears wrong to keep so fine an effort, and one so brilliant and grimly humours, from the many who would find pleasure in it . (Tus 28: 12n.)

We thus have here two sides of the myth at the forefront, the utterly sympathetic man with a deep sense of morality, the self-conscious laborious writer modest about his achievements. So far, one is ready to agree with the myth-makers. Still, Swearingen, always clarifying, tells us the essay (”On the Choice of A Profession”) was not left in oblivion, but twice rejected in favor of "A Letter to a Young Gentleman" (Swearingen, 1980:39).

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[93] See the entry to 1911 in the Collected Essays section of our bibliography.

These exercises in hagiography constitue an even more extravagant by-genre than the recent "In the Footsteps of Robert Louis Stevenson"[94]. A vast amount of them were collected, with some tact and taste, in three volumes of Stevensoniana we shall draw attention to but briefly as their breadth and quantity is beyond the scope of this study. The first, Hammerton's *Stevensoniana* (1903) shall be referred to in due course. The second, *The Bookman* (1913) extra number on R.L.S., -an extraordinary copy nonetheless, with plenty of previously unavailable illustrations-, contains sincere eulogy like Gosse's[95] "An Early Portrait", which reads:

> But one was there, the stripling of our crew
> Cynthius by name, a tall and nimble wight,
> **Most indiscreet he was**, though kind and true;
> In strange adventures both by day and night
> This restless being took his sole delight;
> And oft we quaked to mark his aspect sly,
> As hand on hip, deep in the evening light,
> He taught those townsfolk, with an earnest eye,
> Of things that never were in **earth or se or skye.**
> (The Bookman, 1913:32)

Yet there are also exaggerations and the inane use of the language of the Gospel as if testimony of Jesus by one of His Apostles.

> Thus **it came to pas**s that Robert Louis Stevenson, then entirely unknown to fame, would occasionally drop into our garden and sit at the feet of the philosopher and listen with rapt attention and appreciative smiles to his conversation awhile, a native man stepped out from under some cocoanut trees regarding us hesitatingly.
> (Alice Gordon, The Bookman, ibid: 74)

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[94] The heading refers to those books by travellers who retrace R.L.S.'s steps, in Scotland and elsewhere, carried both by topographical and biographical interest, and use the trip as a springboard for their own views. Among them, H.J. Moors's *With Stevenson in Samoa* (1910), Clayton Hamilton, *On the Trail of Stevenson,* (1916) and Ann Roller Issler, *Stevenson in* Colorado (1939). See also Sarolea (1924); McLaren (1950); Holmes (1985); Rankin (1987); Bell (1994) and Cairney (2004).

[95] Gosse, Sir Edmund William (1849-1928) a scholar and frequent correspondent, collected "Personal Memories of R.L.S." (Century, July 1895), *Biographical Notes on the Writings of R.L.S.* (London, 1905) for the Pentland Edition (1906-7) and penned a recollection of his friend's mercurial nature in *Critical Kit-Kats* (1896). Goose was visiting at Braemar at the time Louis worked on *Treasure Island.* His *Father and Son,* (1907) is a moving portrait of his father.

The author of *Peter Pan* adds a lachrymose tone that links R.L.S. to Scott and to Burns.

> "Scotland's Lament"
> (.....)
> I've ha'en o'brawer sons a flow,
> My **Walter** mair renown could win,
> And **he that followed at the plough**
> But Louis was my Benjamin.
> Ye sons wha do your little best,
> Ye writing Scots, put by the pen,
> He's deid, the ane abune the rest,
> I winna look at write again.
> (Sir J.M. Barrie, ibid 147)

The third, *I Can Remember Robert Louis Stevenson* (ed. Masson, 1922) constitues a sort of "biographical mosaic, depicting very clearly the character and life-story of the man". Fragments like this emphasize the legend.

> ...and above all, that magic power he had of winning the delighted affection, the immediate confidence, of men and women of the most various sorts and conditions, always ex- cepting those hide-bound in starched propriety or conventional officialdom, whom he had a scarce less unfailing power of putting against him at first sight...
> "Notes of Persons and Place", by Sir Sidney Colvin (In Masson 1922:88)

Colvin[96], it is important to remember, prepared the first publication of the letters as collected in the last volumes of the Tusitala edition (Tus, vls. 31-35). Introducing them to the readers he hoped they will get...

> some echo, far away indeed, but yet the nearest, of his talk -talk which could not possibly be taken down, and of which nothing remains save in the memory of his friends and impression magical and never to be effaced. (Tus 31:22).

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[96] Sir Sidney Colvin (1845-1927), a life-long friend of Louis, was Slade Professor of Fine Arts at Cambridge, then Curator of Prints at the British Museum. Our author called Colvin's residence in the East wind of the museum, "The Monument". And Sidney himself, "The Garden Angel" who "insists on raking out at night with a big stick and a white great-coat tally-ho-ing down the street" (quoted in Furnas: 186). They met in Surrey in 1873. See his *Memories and Notes of Persons and Places,* and "The Death of Mr Robert Louis Stevenson". Pall Mall Gazette. 19th Dec. 1894.

Masson's volume offers another "saintlike" vision of our hero.

> There sits Louis, as smug and complacent as any old type *de bourgeois*. I have not the least doubt that he fondly imagines that one of these days they will be publishing all of his dinky, private correspondence "the Letters of R. L. S." in boards.' And Louis joined as heartily as any one in the laugh which the sally raised.
> ("With Stevenson at Grez" by Bridge Harrison. Masson 1922: 185).

This excessively laudatory tone can also be appreciated in the mythic language of titles like "As seen in Passing", or "Stevenson's Shrine: The Record of a Pilgrimage" included in Hammerton's *Stevensoniana.*

In tune with this immoderate echoing of praiseful words is **"the charm of Stevenson**" which also contributed to the legend. This has been a perpetual presence ever since it appeared in an unsigned review in 1878, "*An Inland Voyage* is a book among ten thousand *charming* in itself, and *charming* in an even greater degree by reason of the glimpses it affords of its author's personality", (Quoted in Maixner, 1981:47)[97].

Apparently, Louis's *charm* and graciousness captivated everybody for, as Terry shows from ample sources (1996: 51), "Consistent throughout these recollections is a man at ease with himself and the world, agreeable, tolerant, boyishighly enthusiastic, delightful to be with, a strong-souled individual with great zest for living" (Terry: xvii).

The downside of it was brilliantly pointed out by Kiely since...

> .. Charm became in the eyes of most critics an unforgivable fault. For the first wave of Freudians, he was too reticent in his treatment of sexuality; for the social moralist, his preaching was a self-indulgent mingling of the bourgeois and the idiosyncratic; for the new critics... his prose was a gaudy mixture of other writer's styles. What had once looked like versatility appeared to new generations as dilettantism. What had once seemed booked, experimental and invigorating, appeared stale and pretentious". (Robert Kiely, 1977: 461).

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[97] Later meaningful occurances are (1) Lang's fraternal (1897:71) "His gallant and cheery stoicism were already with him; and so perfect, if a trifle overstudied, was his style, that one foresaw a new and *charming* essayist".(2) Saintsbury' recognition calling Louis' work, "a combination of literary and story-telling *charm* that perhaps no writer except Mérimée has ever equalled" (Sainstbury 1896:340). (3) Hammerton's, "He was the most *charming* of companions brilliant, witty and fascinating (Hammerton, 1910: 71). (4) Even the acerbic E. F. Benson (1925:81) uses the trite adjective in his apathetic appreciation of R.L.S., admiting "some quality in him far more divine and august than mere mental *charm...* a love of beauty as intense as any that the highest genius of the race have known, combined with a passionate desire to communicate it" .

Before attempting a rebuttal of the assertions in the last sentences, -the purpose of the coming chapters-, we must agree with Japp's forceful argument by which,

> To have created a school of idolaters, who will out and out swear by everything, and as though by necessity, at the same time, a school of studious detractors, who will suspiciously question everything, or throw out suggestions of disparagement, is at all events, a proof of greatness, the countersign of undoubted genius, and an assurance of lasting fame. R. L. Stevenson has certainly secured this (Japp , 1905: 794).

It is, indeed, very telling that Low[98], and above all, James [99] did not lavish such praise at least until the end of his life.

Be as it may, this copious material, whether heartfelt or insencere, loyal or unfaithful was made superfluous if not utterly futile, after the publication of Stevenson's correspondence by Yale. Here we meet Louis without shadows, in full shape, talking to us, in his own voice, as if we were on the receiving end. Indeed the best way to get to know RLS is to find a peaceful corner and read his works. For no Victorian writer makes himself so porwefully apparent in his books. But no! As Japp perceptively states-, "subjectivity was uppermost, modifying, filtering, shaping place and people" (Japp, 1905:xxi).

In truth, if it was the Stevenson clan that gave the impetus, more paradoxical was the fact that Louis, with his love of make-believe, had laboriously promoted, sometimes inadvertently, the myth about himself, especially at the beginning. Some Edinburghers still claim an ancestor, supposedly a fellow student of Stevenson, who never mingled

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98 The artist Will Low, (1853-1932), became friends with R.L.S. while in the colony of American painters in Barbizon. In his *A Chronicle of Friendships,* (1908) he wrote, "... It was undoubtedly this attractive power which R.L.S. held so strongly through life; and which, gentle though it may have been held no trace of dependence or weakness" (Quoted in Knight 1985:111). His last adulation was in "Stevenson and Margarita" (1922). Louis dedicated the Epilogue of *The Wrecker* to Low.

99 Henry James (1843-1916) first met the Stevensons in Bournemouth in 1885, becoming a frequent visitor since then. Louis had a big blue armchair which became "Henry James's Chair". Their close friendship and strong mutual admiration is documented in Adam Smith's (1948). Louis's "A Humble Remonstrance" is a riposte to James's "The Art of Fiction". James also, deplored ,"The achieved legend and history that has him for subject has made ... light of their subject and their claim to represent him" (Quoted in Maixner 1981: 2). James corresponded with Louis until the latter's death. In his letter to Goose, he wrote, "of what can one think save of this ghastly extinction of the beloved R.L.S.? It makes me cold and sick -and with the absolute, almost alarmed sense, of the visible, material, quenching of an indispensable light" (The Letters of H.James, ed. Leon Edel, v.iii. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974-84:95).

with him because he was considered a rebel and a bohemian[100], "branded a lightweight and something of *a poseur* (Japp, ibid., xx)*"*. This new shelling against the author was also fired at will[101]. About his first books, critics and biographers have, arguably, the opinion that Tusitala was acting as if he had no awareness of his public at all. They accuse him of putting on masks even as late as in the autobiographical collection *Memories and Portraits* (1887). In these essays about Scotland as distinct from England, about the "daft-like laddie" in Edinbugh, about the passing of his best friend, on his zest for *being* an author, on the benefits of good conversation... besides tremendous courage, unflagging optimism, loyalty and a catholic apetite for life, he provides an aura about himself unrelated to his fame, unexplained by his success.

Louis's self-deprecation was misinterpreted. As critic Fakundiny says about Addison's Spectator, "speculating goes hand in hand with "rambling", (Fakundiny, 1991:13). In other words, the essayist is defined by his sauntering[102], by his pondering on what he contemplates. It is by every new avenue into the self that the essayist inhabits the world he describes and responds to it energetically. Moreover, it is fit to point out here, a *personal* essay must show concern with style, for the style is the person and, for that reason the person is not to be interpreted as a *poseur*, nor should his work be considered a platitude to undo.

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[100] He was known as "Velvet Coat" by then, owing to the green tattered jacket of that same material with which he scorned the conventional. He had fallen under the influence of his elder cousin Bob, whom Thomas Stevenson, R.L.S.'s father, blamed as a damnable influence and as the immediate cause of his son's agnosticism. By that time, Stevenson wrote, he had killed his father's early morning whistling. He loved his dad dearly, though; see "Thomas Stevenson" (T29:65).

[101] Together with his "lightness of touch", which Grant Allen, one of the first critics on Stevenson, admired - "the phrase would, ironically, be the point of attack" (Maixner, 1981:51-57)- the charge of affectation was levied ceaselessly when the bland eulogizing was still droning on. For, as Furnas tells us, "reading Stevenson was soon aesthetic slumming and the "Seraph in chocolate" gave place to a pretentious and clandestinely lecherous poseur who happened to posses some personal bravery" (Furnas, 1952:386). Later on, Swinnerton would raise the "achieved" legend of contrived expression to dismiss R.L.S. as 'a writer of the second class'. Critics were obtuse to overlook Louis's conciousness of his craft.

[102] In "Walking", and essay that owes much to Hazlit's "On Going a Journey", Thoreau, explains the origin of the term; "I have met with but one or two persons in the course of my life who understood the art of Walking, that is, of taking walks, -who had a genius, so to speak, for *sauntering*: which word is beautifully derived "from idle people who roved about the country, in the Middle Ages, and asked charity, under pretence of going *à la Sainte Terre*", to the Holy Land, till the children exclaimed, "There goes a *Sainte-Terrer",* a Saunterer,- a Holy Lander" (Quoted in Lopate 1995:480)

And if the certain condescension of his early writings melted away pretty soon, it is conspicuous in his letters, where his concern with his art and reputation often gives way to that playful attitude about his own personality which helped to create his myth. Witness the following excerpt from a letter to Crokett[103] dated 17th may 1893:

> Do you know where the road crosses the burn under Glencorse Church? Go there, and say a prayer for me : *Moritus Salutat*. See that it's a sunny day; I would like it to be a Sunday, but that's not possible in the premises[104]; and stand on the right-hand bank just where the road goes down into the water, and shut your eyes, and if I don't appear to you! well, it can't be helped, and will be extremely funny. (L 8: 76)

Indeed declarations like this contributed to the cult, if only because a few fervent readers of Stevenson, this included, got there to conjure up his ghost to no avail. "I have thought myself so vividly into the life of Robert Louis Stevenson that he lives in my imagination like an old friend", says Cairney[105] in his study *The Quest for Robert Louis Stevenson* (2004: 187). And, Rankin[106], more *à propos,* recognises that fleeing his country and his mind nurtured and gave power to his work, so that the efforts to derive the art from the life became a reductive attack on art itself. For, "you could take the writer from the man and still be left holding the full-blown cloak of romantic myth that flourished... a stirring legend for the Victorians and Edwardians." (Rankin, 1987: 7).

Very true, yet side by side with that possessiveness in the tributes by his contemporaries, amid those hiperbolic expressions of reverence there came enthusiastic praise from authoritative voices like that of Quiller-Couch[107] in his famous declaration,

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[103] Samuel Rutherford Crockett (1860-1914) was a novelist R.L.S. admired much. Being also Scottish they shared their fascination for many of the scenes of Stevenson's early life, and for Scottish history. It was a phrase in a dedication by him which inspired Louis's opening lines "Blows the wind today, and the sun and the rain are flying, /Blows the wind on the moors today and now,/ Where about the graves of the martyrs the whaups are crying,/My heart remembers how... (See Adam Smith, 1950:283).

[104] Being in a staunch Presbetyrian country, the Sabbath must be kept, R.L.S. implies.

[105] Johh Cairney is an actor, writer and lecturer from Glasgow who has played R.L.S. in one-man performances and girded the world visiting every R.L.S. site.

[106] Hailed as "a wizard of digression and cross-refence", Nicholas Rankin is a freelance journalist, broadcaster and feature-maker for BBC World Service, author of the acclaimed *Dead Man's Chest, Travels after Robert Louis Stevenson.*

[107] Sir Arthur Thomas Quiller-Couch (1863-1944) was no penny-a-liner, but a respected academic at King Edward VII, Cambridge, who wrote the concluding chapters of *St. Ives*, a novel left unfinished by Louis's sudden death in December 1894.

"Put away books and paper and pen, Stevenson is dead. Stevenson is dead, and now there is nobody left to write for"[108]. Raleigh's [109], in his early important study of the author he hailed as "a finished literary craftsman... playing with his tools," whose power over romance steemed from the fact that "his childhood never ended"[110]. And Lang's[111], "I have known no man in whom the pre-eminently manly virtues of kindness, courage, sympathy, generosity, helpfulness, were more beautifully conspicuous than in Mr. Stevenson, none so much loved -it is not too strong a word- by so many and so various people."

Other less reliable voices talked of "Stevenson's dependence upon the approval of an audience"; -as if an artist could break free from that-. Of his "less ambition, less exalted intentions" which would have "freed him of the artist' vanity and thus made him less sensitive to adverse criticism"; -his formidable letters testify to the opposite-. Of his finding himself in the uncomfortable position of "living up to the critics' idea of what he should accomplish" (cf. Maixner, 1981:5); -as if our author had to justify work he knew would not be approved of by his admirers to placate his supporters.[112]

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[108] Arthur Quiller-Couch, "Robert Louis Stevenson" (Lecture at the Royal Institution May 17, 1895. Cambridge: C.U.P., 1923-4:88, a reprint of the 1896 original in *Adventures in Criticism*, London: Arnold).

[109] Sir Walter Raleigh, was Professor of English Literature at Liverpool, then at Menton Chair, Oxford. Upon meeting Bob Stevenson, he wrote to Gosse telling him that he "had learned more from Bob (pastors and masters included) than from any single person I ever met", and dedicated his *Milton* (1900) to Bob. (L1:38).

[110] See Walter Raleigh's "Robert Louis Stevenson" (1895).

[111] Andrew Lang (1844-1912), was a Scottish scholar and folklorist who struck a deep friendship with Louis through Colvin in Menton. He was first unimpressed, he was later to name him "the most ingenious and refined writer of his generation". Stevenson dismissed Lang as "too good-looking, deliate, Oxfordish... a la-de-dady Oxford kind of Scot." (Quoted in Knight, 1985:104). The short passage above is from 'Recollections of Robert Louis Stevenson', North American Review, Feb. 1895. Repr. In *Adventures Among Books*. London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1905. See also "Mr. Stevenson Works" in *Essays in Little,* (Lang, 1897).

[112] *In the South Seas* constitutes a clear instance of Stevenson not following the dictates of profit, critical perceptions, and expectations by his readership. He first took, then turned down, McClure' s- also an ex-patriate Scot- hugely lucrative offer for a weekly contribution in his magazine in favor of Scribner's more realistic one, and for a free choice of his subject matter. He took no heed of Colvin's advice as instilled by Fanny -"Louis has the most enchanting material that anyone ever had... and I am afraid he is going to spoilt it. He has taken into his Scotch Stevensonian head, that a stern duty lies before him, and that this book must be a sort of scientific and historical impersonal thing... What a thing it is to have a "man of genius" to deal with. It is like managing an overbred horse. Why with my own feeble hand I could write a book that the whole world would jump at" (Fanny Stevenson to Sidney Colvin, L6, 304).

Louis certainly thought of his art as an obligation to others, as will be shown in the coming chapters. And yet, he was wide awake to and aware of "the monster of public infatuation" (Maixner, 3), for it was essentially infatuation about the man who suffered, coupled with detachment from the mind that created. And it all sprang, in a great deal, from our author's readiness to partake of his affairs, even with the more personal ones, with his public. That said, his concern for his craft, together with his self-consciousness, did not allow for such concessions beyond those he was naturally inclined to, as his letters steadily reveal[113].

Everything considered, this unwieldy body of material, these "overtones of canonization" (Furnas: 375) with no academic pretension, these lacklustre execrations, -as I maintain-, are worth preserving if only to ease and enable, by providing contrast, the kind of criticism that will restore Stevenson's essays to the stature they so much deserve. There is no need to deprecate. The sincere reader of his letters will always be able to gauge Stevenson's reaction to those judgements in the author's rejoinder.

If we are to appraise the work, we should better not embark ourselves on a pilgrimage in search of the surrogate Apostle, but rather on a critical adventure in quest for a discerning estimation of his work.

3.4. "Puffed and tallowy urchings wearing rumpled bedsheets[114]": the adverse effect of namby-pamby illustrations.

In the contemplation and enjoyment of art, there are at least two moments, that of the first encounter and that of the last "departure". The former, -if art, still more "high art"-, usually shakes our foundations, confounds, perhaps entrances us in its aesthetics impact; the latter remains with us in our recollections taking us beyond the immediate and conscious to countless associations, inviting thought and, if any luck, deep reflexion.

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[113] See for instance, (L 5: 234) "I think the public should know nothing from behind the scenes, until the man himself is out of reach of hurt".

[114] I borrow this inspired phrase full of pique from the always eloquent Furnas, "Bellitingly, dilutingly and sweetishly the pleasant letters from the lean man to "the children in the cellar" helped the emphasis swoon over to "Of speckled eggs the birdie sings", illustrated by ... Charles Robinson -the perpetrator of those *puffed and tallowy urchings wearing rumpled bedsheets* and carrying large initial capitals. But wrath is pointless." (Furnas, 1952: 378).

Stevenson's works present a whole array of illustrated editions as baffling as the laudatory accounts just sketched. Baffling and disturbing to a long time admirer of Tusitala [115]. Since, if they illustrate his works "successfully", they fail to illustrate his own aesthetic principles. How did that happened?

It was all caused, to my mind, by too close a knowledge now, then blatant ignorance of the particular work on the part of the draughtsman, paired with the cult for the author, and too little understanding of his aesthetics.

The second bit is the object of the coming chapters, so to the first.

For reasons of space, the scores of illustrated editions published are not included in this study but can be found in any reference section of the best biographies and scholarly works.

We have already referred to some paradoxes that damaged our writer's reputation. We now face a bigger inconsistency. For, to my knowledge, there is no study documenting that compelling intersection between his literature and the visual impact of the illustrations that, assumedly, contributed to the popularity of his tales and novels. No research has been carried out on the artistic value of the subsequent woodcuts -favoured by American illustrators- and paintings -favoured by British artists-, of their appropriateness, their merits and shortcomings, other than their benefit in increasing their circulation[116]. No study has been undertaken considering both their creative and, above all, **their interpretative value**.

This endevour is twofold since on the one hand there are those works sketching his homes and haunts, on the other those decorating, "reinforcing" his more popular narratives.

One of the artists who first illustrated R.L.S.'s life, both with discernment and delicacy, was Walter Hale in Clayton Hamilton's (1923), where he gives us fanciful drawings of those places for ever associated with Louis yet rarely heard of before him, Colinton, The Pentlands, Pitlochry, North Berwick, Menton, Antwerp, Le Puy... Even of Castillo de Torija, Guadalajara, which Stevenson never visited for he never set foot in

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[115] This was the name native Samoans gave Louis, "The teller of tales", in their vernacular. I shall use it as an alternative from now on.

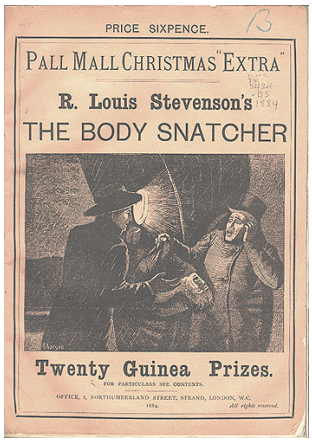
[116] Gasson's (1977) *The Illustrated Rober Louis Stevenson,* although thoughtful and wide-ranging in his introduction, does not deal with the issue at any length.

Spain. But he used his experience of Spanish background in California as the imagined setting for one of his best yarns, *Olalla*. A frown on the editor for sparing us a note about Hale, who had done his fieldwork and whose talent is now sold at auction. Since that fitness for sharp motives, that neatness of outline reminds us of Stevenson's own sketches in his Cevennes notebook.



Left to right, plate of Menton from the jetty, by Hale in Hamilton's (1923:42); "Chateu Beaufort from Goudet-sur-Loire", R.L.S.'s drawing from his sketchbook (*The Cevennes Journal,* 1978:81) making plain the many-sidedness of his genius.

Most often it was those illustrations of his "adventure stories", or "boys's yarns", as they were soon branded, that readers raved about for that pluck, undaunted vivacity and persuasive cinematic value that makes them spring off the page as if it were. These are too profuse, too frequently reproduced and celebrated, and thus need not be commented on, nor do they need to appear on these pages; but for the crafty ones.



No discordant note was struck by the engravings and etchings of his horror stories, other than, some, in their galvanizing greyness led to misinformed comparisons with Poe. Nothing of that sort. Stevenson's *bogey tales* are never *dreich*[117]. For, as Chesterton stated, his characters bring light to gambol in the gloaming, while Poe's are paralized to be enveloped in darkness. A peek at the original to our left will do for a puff of that chilling wind.

[117] I use here a word in Scots very much found in Stevenson, (for instance, "I think you will say yerself it is a *dreich* business!" (*Catriona,* a sequel to *Kidnapped*). It means hard to bear out of dullness, dreary, protracted.

At a glance it would look like Tusitala was fortunate to count with skilled book-illustrators, still widely recognized today, like Walter Crane and Jessie Willcox Smith; not so much, as I here contend, with Charles Robinson. These, and men like William Hole, W.L. Metcalf, and H.M. Paget [118] , "provided de backbone to late-Victorian illustrated books;" such was the "constistently high standard of skill and technique"; besides, "they seem to have read and understood the text they are illustrating" (Gasson, 1977:xxviii).

It may also look, from Louis's self-deprecation, like he was diffident about illustrations for his works. In a letter to Henly, September 1881, he writes.

> I don't get illustrated -a blessing; that's the price I pay for my copyright. I'll make this boy's book business pay; but I have to make a beginning. When I am done with *Young Folk*s, I'll try Routledge or some one.. I feel pretty sure *The Sea Cook* will do to reprint, and bring something decent at that.[119] (L3: 229)

These preconceptions are inaccurate. I wish to float here the suggestion that Stevenson belongs with those authors with the sharpest consciousness for the value and the impact that visual arts make on a popular audience, for whom they were writing and to whom they wished to entertain. Also, that he was enormously concerned about the interpretation of his works by illustrators.

He was very unlucky with some of the illustrative work on his creations published during his lifetime. Because he was often away from publishing centres given his continuous travelling, he had to rely on his associates and trust to the tastes of his publishers who would select the syndicated illlustrator available.

Evidence of these assertions is manifest both in his correspondence and in his essays. Thus, in an early letter to Colvin, dated 1878, commenting on Crane[120]'s sketch for *An Inland Voyage,* we can hear young Louis cry,

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[118] It is worth pointing here that Walter Crane's marvellous frontispieces of both *An Inland Voyage* and *Travels with a* Donkey*,* were done for the first edition of each work and thus in Stevenson's lifetime (See Louis' letter to Crane, L 2: 247); same as Hole's, Metcalf's and Paget's on *Catriona, The Wrecker* and *The Black Arrow,* respectively. Whereas Willcox Smith's, C. Robinson's and M. Soweby appeared posthumously. I omit biographical notes on these artists which would add nothing of relevance to our discussion.

[119] The author refers here to what would laterly become *Treasure Island,* which was serialized in the magazine *Young Folks* with *The Sea Cook* as its original title.

[120] Walter Crane (1845-1915), artist and book illustrator, particularly of picture -books for children. See (L 2:246 n.) and footnote 107 above.

...but it should be a river, not a canal, you know, and the look should be "cruel, lewd, kindly", all at once. (L2: 246).

And in a late one, 1892, venting his displeasure about an illustrated edition of *The Wrecker*[121].

> And now let me (cleanse) my soul on the subject of W.L. Metcalf. Hole broke (down may) the devil take him. Doubtless Metcalf is an excellent black and white artist; but as an illustrator of my books, let me (have) no more of him. **All the points in the story are missed**. The series of little pictures of chance interviews in rooms might have illustrated any story (or nearly any story) that ever was written. **The different appearances (all wrong) that he has given to my Captain Wicks[122] would make (the head) of any reader spin**... I will give Mr W.L. Metcalf two-and-sixpence and a new umbrella. (L7: 340-1; emphasis added).

And, to Henley, from Davos many years earlier -in 1881- expressing his wish for an illustrated book version of *Treasure Island*[123].

> In five weeks, six at the latest, I should have a complete proof of TI. It will be from 75 to 80,000 words; **and with anything like half good pictures, it should sell**. **I suppose I may at least hope for eight pic's? I aspire ten or twelve...** (L3: 253, emphasis added).

His self-criticism, his acuteness and insight told him that good illustrative work, perceptive of his sensitivity, showing understanding of the story and of its purpose, should make all the difference in the Victorian market.

He was right. Contrary to what is commonly believed, it was not the tale about pirates on a hunt for buried treassure; the blind buccaneer tramped by the horses hooves; the old poor nimble "savage" long time marooned and dreaming of cheese, "toasted mostly"; not that one. It was the yarn of the Middle Ages that had the upper hand. For *The Black Arrow*, be it by reason of the increasing popularity of its author, be it by its romantic setting, was far more successful than *Treasure Island;* even though the former yarn followed the latter as they were both syndicated for the same magazine,

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[121] *The Wrecker.* Illustrated by William Hole and W.L. Metcalf. Cassel & Co, London, Paris, and Melbourne, 1892.

[122] Alias Captain Kirkup of the *Grace Darling*, in *The Wrecker.*

[123] It was published in book form in Britain in 1883, but not with a single plate or illustration.

Young Folks. More meaningfully, even though its author wrote disapprovingly about it -but for the usual, playful, vague tone in his correspondence-.

> Colvin, Colvin, Colvin (...) your remarks on *The Black Arrow* are to the point. I am pleased you liked Crookback; he is a fellow whose hellish energy has always fixed my attention (...) Some day, I will retickle the *Sable Missile,* and shoot it, *moyennant finance*, once more into the air; I can lighten it of much, and devote some more attention to Dick o' Gloucester. **It's great sport to write tushery.** (L4:198-9, emphasis mine).

The United States being the country that first published an illustrated edition of *Treasure Island* and of *The Black Arrow,* according to Swearingen, it would seem contradictory that Stevenson should rail against American artists like Merrill[124] in his correspondence and, in his silence therein, about Alfred Brennan and H.M. Paget, for he thought they undercut his writing. How? Unlike these illustrators, Lionel Edwards[125] had little interest of showing facial features which adds to **Stevenson's deliberate elusiveness**. I believe that Louis would have approved of these water colors and white drawings, still even of those horses prominently featured; for they capture the appropriate age -accurate clothes, etc- and serve the narrative purposes of his writing.

We also have his scrupulous appreciations of some of the artists that collaborated with him. They reveal his foresight about the importance of their work, for it was that particular draughtsman he praises that added to the success of the publication. In 1885, Louis writes to his father,

> An illustrated *Treasure Island* will be out next month. I have had an early copy, and t**he French pictures[126] are admirable.** The artist has got his types up in Hogarth; he is full of fire and spirit, can draw and can compose, and **has understood the book as I meant it,** all but one or two little accidents, such as making the Hispaniola a brig. I would send you my copy, but I cannot; it is my new toy, and I cannot divorce myself from this enjoyment**.** (L5:145, emphasis added).

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[124] Roberts Brothers edition of *Treasure Island*, Boston: 1884, contained four illustrations by Frank Thayer Merrill which Stevenson disliked. See also (L6:40) quoted on page 114.

[125] *The Black Arrow: A Tale of the Two Roses.* Illustrated by Lionel Edwards. J.M. Dent, New York:1957.

[126] This alludes to the French edition of 1885, containing 24 illustartions by the French artist George Roux (1850-1929). Tusitala wrote a short essay in praise of Roux's illustrations (MS Yale) perhaphs intended for the *Magazine of Art* (See Swearingen 1980:63). See Charles Caum in *La isla del tesoro. Estudio gráfico y literario* for a thorough visual treatment of *Treasure Island*

This is concomitant with an unkown, at least overlooked, “curiosity”. In 1886, RLS wrote a rejoinder to the editor of the Times censuring “a strange account of M Rodin” who was called “the Zola of sculpture”. This is utterly wrong, Stevenson defends, for Zola is “a lover of the ignoble, dwelling complacently in foulness, and to my sense touched with erotic madness”, while Rodin’s statues “live and speak things worth uttering”. Then he ventures to predict “this man will take a place in the heart of the people” (L5:311). The citation is apt as showcasing his keen judgement and his far-sighted view.

Much about our author’s estimation of the illustrative work of his classics and of his instinct about it come from his letters. Further evidence will be gathered from his essays as we conclude. For the time being and in keeping with my analysis here we will dwell on a couple of those illustrated editions posthumously printed as mentioned above. Not because it is a long story but because it was made a forlorn one.

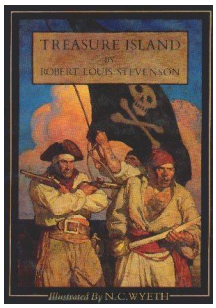
As stated in the preface, it is in the pupose of this thesis to demonstrate that Tusitala based both his ethical and his aesthetical visions on the notion of *mobility*, dangling somewhere between Heraclitus’s idea of human existence as *flux*, and Parmenides’ view that *being* immediately implies *motion*. From that standpoint, we will be able to judge the suitability of those illustrations rather than by any subjective perspective, no matter how sentimental or uncompromissing.

Of all the editions giving a totally inappropriate and thus, misleading interpretation of what Stevenson meant by his art, none is more fallacious than Charles Robinson’s pusillanimous, gaudy drawings in pen and ink for *A Child Garden of Verses* [127]. It will be objected that we are dealing with another genre. Granted! That Stevenson advances quite another, still not incoherent, projection of himself in each of his books. Agreed! That one is plain and the other is coloured. True! And yet, what is the effect on the reader of the following two placed side by side?

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[127] Ironically, Robinson managed to launch his career by the tremendous popularity of this book published in London in 1885. He later illustrated fairy tales, *Alice in Wonderland* and Grimm’s stories. Himself a writer, besides a book-illustartor, perhaps he tried to bring his own imagination into the illustrations rather than work through a close reading of Stevenson’s text.

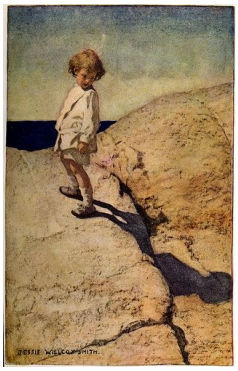
(Left to right, front cover of *Treasure Island* by Wyeth[128](Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911); Charles Robinson's plate in the 1896 London edition of *A Child Garden of Verses.*





No perspicacity is needed to feel exasperated with the second for spreading the image of the sick child full of woe, in melancholic stupor, lamenting his misfortune in a warm cocoon of love. Tansforming the poems into unvaried *envois*. Taking us far away from the *advocatus iuventutis* in *Virginibus Puerisque*. Placing self-pity where there is meant to be unflinching pluck, undaunted curiosity, daring adventure. For that was how Louis conceived it while at Hyères[129]. And that is the RLS we readers admire, ebullient, energetic, uplifting.

The same is to be posited about Jessie Wilcox Smith's illustration of the celebrated "My Shadow" (first picture to the left below). Instead of the wee boy jumping out of bed, bouncing and landing on the other side of the wall, Wilcox gives us the image of the child contorted as he contemplates his shadow, stuck like a mussel to its rock as he seems to be. And in her visual interpretation of "The Land of Counterpane" (the one in the middle), the child is not playing battle with his lead soldiers but he is sound asleep. The illustartor, not a punster, has missed the counter-"pain" of it all.







[128] N.C. Wyeth also made the illustrations for the 1920 Scribner's edition of *The Black Arrow*, which had an immediate long lasting impact and are still intensively remembered.

[129] A renowned resort for consumptives in the Provence, where the Stevenson lived (September 1883-January 1884) in a Swiss chalet, where he wrote *A Child Garden of Verses*, and started *The Black Arrow,* confined in bed, spitting blood, forced to write with his left hand (from writers' cramp) and in full darkness (from ophtalmia).

Crane's frontispiece of *Travels with A Donkey* (last to the right) in which we find the author in the foreground in his famous invention, the "sleeping sack"[130], smoking a fag; then goading his donkey towards the background to greet some monks in a monastery, before fusing into the horizon, provides a huge contrast with these apathetic depictions, these namby-pamby images, feeble and effeminate in behavior and expression. Their "loveliness" and artistic merits don't matter since they don't lead us to the wanderer by circumstance and by temperament, the self-enjoying and forbearing R.L.S..

In my view, these two artists had the child either trapped "In the house of Eld", or headed to "The Land of Nod" [131].

It is only fitting that the informed admirer of Stevenson should condemn such ineffectual recreations as a gross distortion of the truth. We have just heard him lambast these ill-suited designs. The image of Louis frowning at such bland halted, motionless representations is plainly visible as can be seen in a letter to Charles Scribner from Saranac Lake in 1887. We have already seen Louis fixated on his maps, and we have vast evidence of his fondness for carthography [132].

> I have but one complaint. Where is the map of *Kidnapped*? I must have my map, when you next issue it: a book of mine without a map, ye Gods! ... Should you get *Treasure Island* **remember to sack the disgusting American illustrations**; and get from Hetzel, Roux's very spirited pictures -the very best of which Cassell omited to reproduce! (L6:40, emphasis added).

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[130] Stevenson, as a good Scot, is credited with having invented this convience later indispensable to Scouts and campers. "This child of my invention was nearly six feet square, exclusive of two triangular flaps to serve as a pillow by night and as the top and bottom of the sack by day. I call it "the sack", but it was never a sack by more than courtesy; only a sort of long roll or sausage, gree waterproof cart cloth without and blue sheep's fur within" (T17:146).

[131] I make reference here to (i) **the ulcered fettered child** of R.L.S.'s sad fable, fearful of his uncle the catechist (See T5: 86-92), (ii) **the sick child, alone, escaping to a dreamy land,** fully unable to recall his nocturnal adventures in the day, of the popular poem in *A Child Garden of Verses*. (T22:8-9). These two are among the few more melancholic pieces Stevenson wrote.

[132] Another instance, among the endless in his correspondence, is found in a letter to Colvin on the idea of including a map in *Treasure Island*, "all such information is given to one glance of an eye by a map with a little dotted line upon it". (Letters 7:157)

Or even in his semi-playful anger in this to Will Low, years earlier, which reads as if he had written it today.

> We live in a rum age of music without airs, stories without incident, pictures without beauty, **American wood-engravings** that should have been etchings, and dry-point etchings that ought to have been mezzotints. **I think of giving them literature without words;** and I believe if you were to try invisible illustration it would enjoy a considerable vogue. (L5:28, emphasis mine).

Notwithstanding these acerbic comments, there was no real prejudice against American artists at all. In fact, publishers in The States took much more heed of our author's desires regarding the illustrations that were to appear in his books. Charles Scribner was especially willing to take Stevenson's advice, as attested in the correspondence. Brittish publishers were not that ready to comply. In their reticence, more than one or two illustrations was considered a lavish display. This view is corroborated by the fact that *The Black Arrow* was first published by Scribner's and Sons with a frontispiece by Low [133] , Stevenson's friend, an American, and eleven illustrations by Alfred Brennan; while the first English edition was not illustrated[134].

Howard Pyle was another American artist Tusitala admired, on November 1887, he "even proposed to Charles Baxter that this firm (Scribner) reissue it (*The Master of Ballantrae*) with illustrations by Pyle: "And if you will do your part, I will do mine and write a preface" (Swearingen 1980:120).

The issue now is, how can we be sure of what he would have liked himself, which would have been his own choices for his posthumous editions? Here is where his essays come very *ad rem* in their so personal a tone.

Henley had begun, -in the good days of friendship-, (see n. 25 above about "The Nixie" quarrel)-, to edit the *Magazine of Art*, which new issue, Furnas (1952:186) tells us, "meant a monthly "cricket" -brief and often acid comment from Louis on each item

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[133] About Low, see n. 98 above. About the many virtues Louis found in Roux's drawings, see n. 126 above.

[134] See Swearingen 1980:84.

in the number". Apparently, Henley valued these "crickets" highly, since, together with those by Lang, Sainstbury and Bob Stevenson[135] they brought an end to the stale flavour of its previous conservative editorship, urging for a less moral tone and encompassing the latest developments in the plastic arts. Aiming at a middle class readership devoted to the arts, and aware of the lattest trends, the magazine had the pretension of a serious publication. A look at the exquisitely beautiful pages is a sheer delight by reason of both the acute critical commentary and the outstanding prints reproduced.

Louis contributed six pieces which are of the essence on my discussion of **this squandering of his advanced notions and postulations**. For it is in them that he explores the interrelationships between literature and the visual arts, the combined possibilities of the illustrated text, and its use to reflect on the importance of the imagination in the creative process.

The first two essays under the telling heading, "Byways of Books Illustrations", review and critique, not the literary texts, -namely *Bagster's Pilgrim Progress,* and *Two Japanese Romances-,* but, precisely the value of the illustrations accompanying them in that particular reprint[136]. The remaining four are, "A Modern Cosmopolis", "A Note on Realism", "A Penny Plain and Twopence Coloured", and "Fontainebleau: Village Communities of Painters". [137]

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[135] Robert Allan Mowbray Stevenson (Bob) (1847-1900), Louis's cousin and beloved friend, to whom our writer introduced to Colvin like this, "You know me now. Well, Bob is just such another mutton, only somewhat farther wandered and with perhaps a little more mire on his wool" (See L1:35) was an art critic and student of painting at Windermere Colege, then Cambridge, who accopanied R.L.S. during many of his journeys in France. He is portraited as the brilliant conversationalist Spring Heel'd Jack in the essay "Talk and Talkers". Thomas Steveson deemed him an atrocious influence and blamed him of his son's sudden declaration that he had become an agnostic. We see Bob as the original of "The Young Man with the Cream Tarts" (I suddenly land on the *double entendre* in the last word), as Paul Somerset in *The Dynamiter,* and in the many essays about a shared childhood. As the great Mehew tells us "his articles gained him a considerable reputation as an art critic for the *Pall Mall Gazette, The Studio,* and the *Art Journal.* He crowned his reputation as a critic with his sudy of *Velasquez* (1895)" (L1:37).

[136] *Byways of Book Ilustrations: Bagster's Pilgrim Progress.* The *Magazine of Art,* 5, n.s. part 16 (February 1882), 169-74. and *Byways of Book Illustartion: Two Japanese Romances.* The *Magazine of Art,* 5, n.s. part 25 (November 1882), 8-15. (Swearingen 1980:71 & 77). Both reprinted in T 28 (153-164) and (197-207) **without the original illustrations.**

[137] These appeared also in the *Magazine of Art*, as referred respectively, in number n 6, n-s. part 31 (May 1883), 272.76; n 7 (November 1883), 24-8; same number as before part 42 (April 1884), 227-32; and again in number 7, in two bits, (i) n.s. part 43 (May 1884), (ii) part 44 (June 1884), 340-45. (See the corresponding entries in Swearingen, 1980).

To consider his ideas from this new perspective will help us explore Stevenson's aesthetic theories -in the next chapter- and calibrate the damage caused by these camp, these lifeless namby-pamby representations, still beloved by the uninformed reader. Since, as I shall reveal, he is so well ahead in his assumptions, so innovative, that we fail to realize they were formulated in the nineteenth century!

An analysis of these essays at some length is made fully unnecesary here; we would swerve from my aim in this section, which is no other than to bring into focus how **the artistic representations of a literary work can lead, as they led, to a misconception of the whole aesthetic theories of the writer and to undermine their value.** Besides, too much detail on them would bring forth some overlapping and serve as a spoiler of what there is to come in the corresponding subsection to this dissertation.

Most especially in the case of "A Note on Realism", which, as I shall demonstrate in the next chapters, figures amongst the three essays in which Stevenson, brilliantly, puts forwards the aesthetic principles governing his *oeuvre*. It might be taken as inconsistent that this gem should be placed together with those punctual reviews of books recently printed, however interesting and relevant. It is not so, as we shall see. But related to the fact that of all six, this is the only essay in the *Magazine of Art* without illustrations.

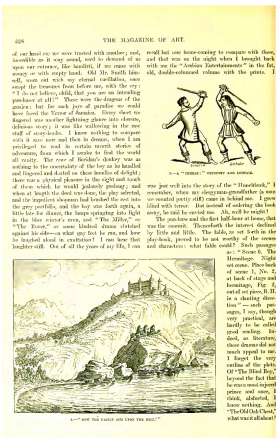
The articles belong to that period in which Tusitala was reshaping and redefining his understanding of romance, of literature in general, in conjunction with the pictorial arts.

A glimpse into the contents of the magazine, and of Stevenson's six articles conveys the impression that there is no thread linking these seemingly heterogeneous compositions and yet, as I hope to show, they are of a piece. Again, a few words upon this remarkable essay will do as apposite to our issue here rather than to the detailed exposition of his aesthetic theories which shall be dealt with, in due course, together with "A Humble Remonstrance", and "A Gossip on Romance".

All three essays should be taken as a passionate *cry* for *romance*, -for purely imaginative prose that ought to be preserved from the contemporary -in R.L.S.'s perspective- ominous attack of the obsessive realists who craved just for the only artistic

representation competing with life-. All three exhort us against **the enormous mistake of confusing emphasis on detail with true art** -for true art is always selective, to the point, and it enhances dramatic tension rather than the incidental-. All three engage us in a deep reflection on **the need of romance to rely on provocative imagery** -for it is this visual impact that catches the reader's eye sparkling the dramatic moment making it, thus, *memorable*-. Many of those principles were already more than just "hinted at" in the six essays for the *Magazine of Art.*

In his review of *Bagster's Pilgrim Progress,* -neither Henley, nor Stevenson apparently knew who the illustrator was, for he is referred to as "he"-, Louis wrote.



whoever **he** was, the author of these wonderful little pictures may lay claim to be the best illustrator of Buynyan. They are not only good illustrations, like so many others; but they are like so few, good illustrations of Bunyan. Their spirit, in defect and quality, is still the same as his own. The designer also has laid down and dreamed a dream, as literal, as quaint, and almost as apposite as Bunyan's; **and text and pictures make but the two sides of the same homespun yet impassioned story**.
("Bagster's Pilgrim Progress", Tus. 28:153-4, emphasis added).

In that of "Two Japanese Romances", he gives us valuable "snippets" of his developing views while commenting on the unique illustrations printed in the volume. From his words profuse evidence is gathered of his enthusiasm for these Japanese woodcuts representing the romances in a way that is anything but realistic. As early as in 1874, he addresses Bob in a letter, telling him,


BYWAYS OF BOOK ILLUSTRATION.
TWO JAPANESE ROMANCES.*

Now just the other day I came across Japanese art, practically speaking for the first time, and it did seem to me as if here was **something at last that fetched me**" (L2:64, emphasis added).

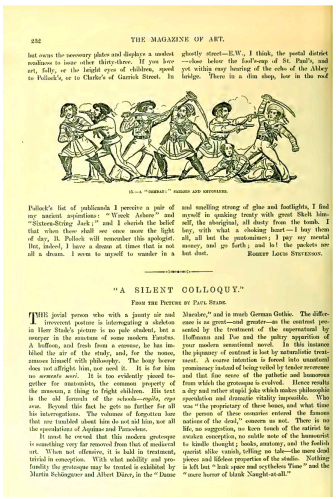
... The eye of the Japanese is as quick to single out as his hand is dexterous to rest content. **The mass of incidental information which goes to the making of modern European landscape** .-the difference of planes, the intricacy of outline, the patience effort after a combination of local and general color -**contrasts strikingly with the few learned touches** by which a Japanese

will represent a mountain or a city. **The Oriental addresses himself singly to the eye, seeking at the same time the maximum of effect and the minimum of detai**l. ("Two Japanese Romances", T28:206-207, emphasis mine).

In the light of such judicious, fresh, comments -and of the plasticity of the illustrations embracing them- I cannot but wonder why the editors of the successive "complete works" decided to spare us the pictures and the woodcuts thereby making incautious readers lose Stevenson's plot and point. These would have been still more conspicuous had his texts appeared hand in glove with them as in their original.

And the same must be argued about the other three. In "A Penny Plain and Twopence Coloured", Stevenson recalls his childhood delight with his "Skelt'", his toy theatre, pairing those memories with intutive reflections on the marvellous evocations those **cardboard** characters had on "Smout[138]."

(But) **when all was painted, it is needless to deny it, all was spoilt...**.. Indeed, out of this cut-and-dry, dull, swaggering, obstrusive and infantile art, I seem to have learned the very spirit of my life enjoyment; met there the shadows of the characters I was to read about and love in a late future... adquired a gallery of scenes and characters with which, in the silent theatre of the brain, I might enact all novels and romances; **and took from these rude cuts an enduring and transforming pleasure** ("A Penny Plain and Twopence Coloured. T29: 106, 109, emphais mine).


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but owns the necessary plates and displays a modest readiness to issue other thirty-three. If you love art, fully, or the bright eyes of children, speed to Pollock's, or to Clarke's of Garrick Street. In Pollock's list of publications I perceive a pair of my ancient aspirations: "Wreck Ashore" and "Sixteen-String Jack;" and I cherish the belief that when these shall see once more the light of day, St. Pollock will remember this apologist. But, indeed, I have a dream at times that is not all a dream. I seem to myself to wander in a ghostly street—E.W., I think, the postal district —close below the footwang of St. Paul's, and yet within easy hearing of the echo of the Abbey bridge. There in a dim shop, low in the roof and smelling strong of glue and footlights, I find myself in quaking treaty with great Skelt himself, the aboriginal, all dusty from the tomb. I buy, with what a choking heart—I buy them all, all but the pantomimes; I pay my mental money, and go forth; and lo! the packets are but dust.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

"A SILENT COLLOQUY."

FROM THE PICTURE BY PAUL STAHL.

THE jocial person who with a jaunty air and irreverent posture is interviewing a skeleton in Herr Stahl's picture is no pale student, but a sweeper in the sanctum of some modern Faustus. A buffoon, and fresh from a exercise, he has imbibed the air of the study, and, for the nonce, amuses himself with philosophy. The bony hearer does not affright him, nor need it. It is for him as *memento mori*. It is too evidently posed together for anatomists, the common property of the museum, a thing to fright children. His text is the old formula of the schools—*cogito, ergo sum*. Beyond this fact he gets no further for all his interrogations. The volumes of forgotten lore that are troubled about him do not aid him, nor all the speculations of Aquinas and Pumckace.

It must be owned that this modern grotesque is something very far removed from that of mediæval art. When not offensive, it is bald in treatment, trivial in conception. With what nobility and profundity the grotesque may be treated is exhibited by Moritz Schlesinger and Albert Dürer, in the "Danse Macabre," and in much German Gothic. The difference is as great—and greater—as the contrast presented by the treatment of the supernatural by Hoffmann and Poe and the paltry apparition of your modern sensational novel. In this instance the poignancy of contrast is lost by naturalistic treatment. A coarse intention is forced into unnatural prominence instead of being veiled by tender reverence and that fine sense of the pathetic and humorous from which the grotesque is evolved. Hence results a dry and rather stupid joke which makes philosophic speculation and dramatic vitality impossible. Who can "the proprietary of these bones, and what time the person of these counsles entered the famous notices of the dead," concern us not. There is no life, no suggestion, no keen touch of the satirist to awaken conception, no subtle note of the humourist to kindle thought; books, anatomy, and the foolish querist alike vanish, telling no tale—the mere dead pieces and lifeless properties of the studio. Nothing is left but "leak space and scytheless Time" and the "mere horror of blank Naught-at-all."

Well, the essay, Swearingen tells us, **has simply never been reprinted with the original illustrations**, "nor was Stevenson's paragraph discussing them near the end of the essay" (Swearingen, 1980:85). The editorial team did the wrong thing when they included the piece in *Memories and Portraits*. For, among these "biographical" pages, there are more than a few tidbits on the visual nature of the romance, same as on the

[138] One of the nicknames used by Margaret Isabella Balfour Stevenson, Louis' mother, meaning "young fish" in Scots, to refer to her child (also, "Baron Broadnose", and "Maister Sprook") as she notes on her diary about R.L.S. at the age of one: "Smout gives up his forenoon sleep and calls books "oufs" becasue he expects to find pictures of dogs in them". (See Nash, ed. 1922:41)

many virtues and pitfalls governing the illustrated text. For, as I shall contend, **Stevenson's essays defy categorisation**. Then, once again, why were they omitted if the author himself makes direct reference to the "rude cuts" themselves? And still, the illustrations are numbered[139]?

Let us now turn, sketchily, to the remaining two pieces. To wit, "A Modern Cosmopolis" and "Fontainebleau: Village Communities of Painters". A few quotes will be cited but no images will be displayed. Yet, unlike the editors, with a reason proposed. Stevenson conceived the former as the second bit of a two part essay bearing the overall title of "The Old and New Pacific Capitals", of which "Monterey" was to be the old, and "San Francisco" the new. Here the Tusitala edition is cosistent with placing the article in Tus., 18, the volume which is fully devoted to recording Stevenson's experience of America together with *The Amateur Emigrant*, *Across the Plains*, and *The Silverado Squatters*.

> The coast is rough and barren... On the south the loud music of the Pacific sounds along beaches and cliffs, among broken reefs, the sporting place of the sea-lion. Dismal, shifting sandhills, wrinkled by the wind, appear behind. ("San Francisco", Tus 18:143)

The latter is collected in *Further Memories*, in conjunction with "Forest Notes" and alongside other accounts of his travels in Scotland, England, France and Switzerland.

> The beauty is not merely beauty; it tells, besides, a tale to the imagination, and surprises while it charms. Here you shall see castellated towns that would befit the scenery of dreamland; streets that glow with colour like cathedral windows; hills of the most exquisite proportions; flowers of every precious colour, growing thick like grass .
> ("Fontainebleau", Tus 30:100)

The reader will wonder, why am I deliberately obviating the corresponding illustrations, dismissing them as ill-suited, while commenting on their interplay with the text.

I here maintain, that added to the unbefitting designs damaging his reputation, there is a more hurtful effect: that of the unsuitability of any design whatsoever. To "decorate" the wonderful prose exhibited in the previous excerpts is to undermine it, to

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[139] Fortunatelly, the editors of the New Edinburgh Edition are very sensitive to this flaw and have announced that these original illustrations shall be printed alongside their corresponding text.

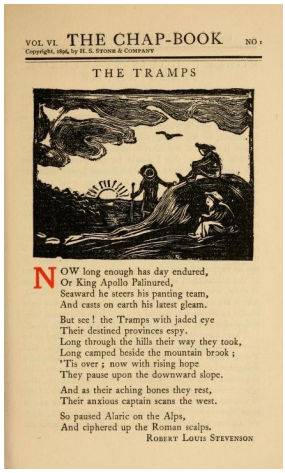
empty it of its evocative power, by providing distracting detail. Those kind of passages defy any artistic representation, any marriage between image and text, -often doomed to failure in the case of Stevenson-.

This takes us back to "A Note on Realism", to the incongruity, on the face of it, of finding this fully theoretical essay next to those "presumable" reviews. And this is were Henley, as editor, stroke, for once, home. For the *Magazine of Art* essays are far more than just fleeting considerations on a book recently printed. They are awash with insightul notions on that armonious tension between visual arts and literature. They emphasize this idea of the intermarriage of illustration and text. And, as Norquay (2007: 89) argues they create "a primary visual engagement with the drawings of Skelt's characters as well as the narrative".

A glimpse at the words highighted in the texts here quoted attests to Stevenson's sagacity and concern. He knew he was not immune to the attack, and yet the force of his unique prose was not making his style susceptible to that unwholesome effluvia.

This is not to deny that artful illustrations suggested new narrative possibilities to him, for, as Hill contends, "R.L.S. demonstrates a highly refined critical sense of the equivalences and affinities of the sister arts, and how new modes of representation, such as contemporary French painting or the newly encountered art of Japan, could enrich outdated trends of both painting and writing". (Hill 2012, JSS 9: 94)

Hill is also very right when he says, "Stevenson conceived much of his creative work with potential illustration on mind, and in the early 1880s was forming theories about how image could relate to text in an illustrated work". (Ibid,. 95).


VOL. VI. THE CHAP-BOOK NO. I

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THE TRAMPS

NOW long enough has day endured,
Or King Apollo Palinured,
Seaward he steers his panting team,
And casts on earth his latest gleam.

But see! the Tramps with jaded eye
Their destined provinces espy.
Long through the hills their way they took,
Long camped beside the mountain brook;
'Tis over; now with rising hope
They pause upon the downward slope.

And as their aching bones they rest,
Their anxious captain scans the west.

So paused Alaric on the Alps,
And ciphered up the Roman scalps.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

This is consistent, from an ethical standpoint, with the fact that Louis had experimented with woodcuts himself to illustrate his *Moral Emblems*[140], (see right for an example).

[140] A selection of poems, illustrated by R.L.S., and pullished by S.L. Osbourne & Co., Davos Press, 1882 ("private printing venture of Stevenson and his stepson" (Knight, 1985:129). Colvin, we know from the letters, finally relented to Louis's insistance that it be, integrally published in the *Edinburgh Edition*, 1898 ,were it was finally reproduced in facsimie in the Appendix volume, and later, in the subsequent collected editions (T22:172-20) with the original cuttings (L8: 383. n.5).

But what is to note here is that he drew the sketches then used them as a stimulus to contextualize the acompanying poems! He was the quintessential artist.

Can it be made any plainer in these "crude woodcuts" where, says Hill "The poems and pictures are inseparable, because the poems refer to the pics, and the pics make no sense without the poems" (?) (Ibid.).

Yes, it can. In a letter to Henley, February 1883, he wishes he could be a good illustrator, for no one could possibly understand what he was at better than himself:

> Ah, if I could only draw! I see the blame thing so clearly in outline; and if I try to put it down ... (L4:73).

And to his cousin Bob, he wrote, much earlier,

> ... you could see what imaginative truth we sacrifice, to say nothing of decorative effect, by our limping, semi-scientific way of seeing things. (L2: 64).

Again and referring to the Japanese woodcuts, but fully applicable to those designed by Louis himself, Hill clarifies,

> **it is this sparseness that R.L.S. admires. It avoids the mistake of imbuing a metaphorical tale with detail that doesn't appear in the text, and further of distracting the reader from the primary textual source.** Such techniques, Stevenson considers, help to drive narrative and weave together moments of the plot. (Hill 2012, JSS 9: 97, emphasis added).

In a similar way Glenda Norquay, touching on Stevenson's notion of *romance* and his theories of reading, stresses that our author demurred the deadening effect of realism with its focus on character.

> **the more clearly they (the characters) are depicted,** the more widely do they stand away from us, **the more imperiously do they thrust us back into our place as spectator**. (Norquay, 2007:103, emphasis mine).

This is tantamount to realizing that Stevenson's conception of fiction is always dynamic giving prominance to incident; that our author seeks the kind of involved active "pleasured general reader" with whom he identified; that he was as concerned with the relationship between the word and the world as he was between the word and its visual representation. To put it otherwise following Hill, Louis was aware that as words illustrations must foreground the role of the reader as questioning the

representational authority inherent and guaranteed within the text. Thus, our writer gives very little descripton of his characters features.

Of course, this raises an immediate question: in that elusiveness and vagueness of his creations, how do we visualize these figures in the landscape? How can the publisher make the right editorial decision when the writer himself gives us as little details as possible? Hyde has no face. Long John Silver has "a face as big as a ham". Where do we go for that? If Stevenson came almost to hate his illustrators why didn't he give details in writing?

And a further even glaring incongruity: how come later in life he not only didn't want that sparseness of characterization in combination with singular dramatic action any longer, but insisted on accuracy on the part of the illustrations? In September 1892 he writes to Gordon Browne[141] from "Vailima Plantation", his final residence.

> ... you have done some exceedingly spirited and satisfactory illustrations to my story "The Beach of Falesá", and I wish to write and thank you expressly for the care and talent shown. Such numbers of people can do good black and whites! So few can illustrate a story, or apparently read it! You have shown that you can do both and your creation of Wiltshire is a real illumination of the text. **It was exactly so that Wiltshire dressed and looked, and you have the line of his nose to a nicety. His nose is an inspiration.** Nor should I forget to thank you for Case, particularly in his last appearance. (...) But the great affair is that **you have been to the pains to illlustrate my story instead of making conscientious black and whites of people sitting talking. I doubt if you have left unrepresented a single pictorial incident**. (L7:375-376. emphasis added).

My answer to both questions, as I will enlarge and conclude in chapter 5, is that everything, absolutely everything Stevenson is based on his operating principle of *mobility,* amply represented by the terms *kinesis*, *vagabonding*, *transgressing*, *cruising,* and *breaking boundaries*[142]. As his quest to define his own identity and his ethics, his aesthetics were far from static, they were perpetually on the move with him. The shift

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[141] Gordon Frederick Browne (1858-1932), son of the Dickens illustrator Hablot K. Browne ("Phiz"); was a prolific contributor of illustrations for magazines. His illustrations for "The Beach of Falesá" were reprinted in *Island Nights' Entertainments* and in 1913 he illustrated a separate edition of "The Paviliion on the Links" (see L7:375 n. 1).

[142] For *vagabonding* see Norquay's (2007) where she also employs the term *transgressing*. For the notion of *cruising* see Buckton's (2007). The *breaking boundaries* idea is exploited in Ambrosini and Dury (2006).

from his work prior to his quest in the Pacific and his South Sea books records and reveals an ever evolving and experimental Louis continually adapting his new ideas. Many are the Stevenson scholars who mark his seafaring as the transition towards realism in our author. This is in line with many declarations in his letters. For instance, on May 16th 1893 Tusitala addresses Colvin,

> ... It is my great wish that this (*The Ebb-Tide)* might get into the *Illustrated London* News for Gordon Browne to illustrate. **For whom, in case he should get the job, I give you a few notes**. A *purao* is a tree growing something like a fig with flowers. He will find some **photographs of an old marine curiosity shop in my collection**, which may help him. Attwater's settlement is to be entirely overshadowed everywhere by tall palms; **see photographs of Fakarava:** the verandahs of the house are 12ft wide. Don't let him forget.... (L8: 65-66, emphasis added).

It comes as a rare curiosity from Louis himself that he wished to use Lloyds photographs and his own for later editions of *Kidnapped* and his later fiction and that he should campaign for Browne although the latter never visited the Pacific. Even more so that the artist still managed to capture the topography and the botany with tremendous accuracy. As Booth and Mehew noted, "in the event *The Ebb*-Tide was serialised in *To*-Day November 1893-February 1894, with attrocious illustrations" (by "W.H"). Louis himself would vent his rage about such conspiracy. "Criticising the crude black-and-white sketches" by Alfred Brennan in *McClure Magazine* he said,

> See most carefully to prevent any of Brennan's cursed illustrations ever apearing again. The same remark applies to the unhung ruffian who made a public ass of himself in *To-day*, or whatever it is called. I warn you (meaning Baxter) to be careful of this, in particular about Brennan, for I know how McClure pushes him. (L8:266).

Amongst the most deplorable flaws of Brennan's unprofessional shoddy work breaking Stevenson's principles for illustrations as shown on these pages, there is Artwater's physical presentation failing to be coherent with the lofty unpredictable presence in the text; and Captain Tom really not looking like the fearsome headman we neatly remember. Besides, the port depicted gives us no feel of the Pacific, it could be any port in the world other than Tahiti.

We have outlined here four toxic maladies debasing Tusitala's literary reputation: (i) the "injurious" effect of namby-pamby illustrations; (ii) the poor editing through omission of fully relevant artworks central to Stevenson's discussion of his aesthetic views[143]; (iii) the inclusion of distracting imagery fully inoperable and destined to undercut and contaminate his impressive prose; (iv) the vastly misconceived and inaccurate representations of his more realistic novels.

Stevenson could easily have been vaccinated, by his close circle, against the whole three; against the cynical glee of those labelling him as a "minor" writer of the second class, relegating him to the nursery, shoving him onboard with his pirates, casting him into a nightmare later to be retold in consciousness.

As I acknowledge, once more R.L.S.'s last word is the most pertinent.

> Pictorial art in the West is still following fasle gods, literary gods; it strains after passion, which is beyond its purpose and beyond its capacity to communicate... (T28:207)

[143] These essays, as Swearingen reminds us with Hill were always meant to appear alongside the illustrations. "Scholars and Stevenson enthusiasts alike" are interested in seeing "the imagery that so fired his imagination as a boy, to bear witness to part of the vibrant visual culture that shaped his literary imagination in later life" (Hill, 2012:114).

3.5 Blatant disloyalties of cinema adaptations: some diabolically clumsy cases.

Stevenson died right before the advent of that new form of art we call, today, "the cinema." The very special way Tusitala moves his characters turning them into "figures in landscape", as a critic put it; his thrift and precision of style; his fleeing from the three-decker Victorian novel, -even more so, from the detailed realism of the decadents-, speak clearly of the fascination he would have felt for motion pictures and for the many possibilities of a filmscript.

We are then here presented but with the one vision, for all the film versions of his works appeared posthumously.

Stevenson based his craft on the image projected through action rather than on psychological characterization. His novels are "filmic". His scenes could be cut up with scissors and shot. His essays, more especially his early ones, were described as "picturesque" owing to his enormous capacity to recreate the atmosphere of a place as the background to his thought. This is even more obvious in "A Gossip on Romance", on which we shall dwell in the coming chapters.

> The right kind of thing shall fall out in the right kind of place; the right kind of thing should follow; and not only the characters talk aptly and think naturally, but all the circumstances in a tale answer one to another like notes in music. The threads of a story come from time to time together and make a picture in the web; the characters fall from time to time into some attitude to each other or to nature... This then, is the plastic part of literature; **to embody character, thought or emotion in some act or attitude that shall be remarkably striking to the mind's eye**. (T28:123, emphasis mine).

These words read, shockingly, like sound pieces of advice offered to a film-maker. They speak undauntedly against those static illustrations, those stagnant images nailed in the nursery, contravening and defying **the whole dictum of Louis' art, "kinesis"**. To state, that the cinema, by reason of its nature, came to the rescue offering the author the very platform he needed to enable a wider understanding and appreciation of his works is, nonetheless, pettifogging and inexact. There are, no doubt, some excellent film versions of his classics, ponderously celebrated by cinema reviewers and, more notably

and aptly by Stevenson scholars[144]. Yet, as our most reliable authority, together with Swearingen, J.C. Furnas, voices

> **Films have even more to answer for in the sabotage** of the third Stevenson item still high in public awareness; though perhaps not one in ten who has seen a film version of *Jekyll* knows who wrote it... Resistance as well as ignorance may enter here...
>
> (Furnas, 1952:378, emphasis mine).

Our critic's opinion is duly sketched. For, very much like in the previous subsection about publishers and their namby-pamby illustrations and other mishandlings of his essays and poems, **the film industry has deliberately mangled Stevenson's stories for over a century now.** Unlike the former, the latter story is well documented[145].

And yet like it, and because of it, the nature of my work here precludes both extensive ennumeration and careful consideration of those too many "apelike horrors perpetrated... in scenarios smoky with sex in the interpolated orgy scenes". All these money-making, notwithstanding its few merits, boomed Louis "on the basis of sensational effects" and "creeping renown" (...) "to identify him with literary *genres* of low prestige. Grave observers prone to mistrust popularity and virtuosity found this hard to overlook. Stevenson was hardly cold in his grave when the first peevish exceptions to his literary apotheosis were entered". (Furnas, ibid. 379)

In a technological era that has made visual representation vapid by reason of intemperance of effects, a mention of those marcescent film versions attached to the stem of "adaptations"; of but a few "scenes" concomitant with that disparagement on

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[144] For instance, Robert Wise's 1945 film version of *The Body Snatcher,* casting Boris Karloff as Gray, Bela Lugosi as Dr MacFarlane, and Russell Wade as Fettes, is still hailed as "a rare artistic achievement". Robert Stevenson's 1960 Disney adaptation of *Kidnapped*, starring an excellent Peter Finch as Alan Breck, is highlly appreciated for its fidelity to the original and the resemblance of the characters "to their literary counterpart".

[145] In 1984, McFarland Incorporated published an in-depth study of Stevenson's cinematic legacy, *Robert Louis Stevenson: Life, Literature and the Silver Screen*, by the prestigious film critic, Scott Allen Nollen, together with a thorough discussion and demonstration of how Stevenson's stories have been misinterpreted by Hollywood. References to such disfiguring are also found in William Luhr and Peter Lehman's reflective *Authorship and Narrative in the Cinema.* New York: G.P. Putnams's Sons, 1977, and in the many interviews with directors who like Rouben Mamoulian -see *The Film Journal,* 2:2 (Jan-Mar 1973): 36-44- adapted Stevenson's novels.

the big screen must suffice. Scenes rather than stills, for a still is not the film, same as an illustration is not the novel.

Among the most blatant felonies those of odd titles bringing the action to recent events; transferring settings; deviating too grossly to be labeled "inspired by"; making everything pale by comparison with their barely recognisable originals [146].

Fortunately, these illusive and allusive derivative works appear on screen but rarely, and are not easy to find. And yet, some, like Dylan Thomas's screenplay based on *The Beach of Falesá,* -"the first realistic South Seas story; I mean with real South Sea character and details of life" (L7:161)-, have never been produced[147] no matter how interesting for both the literary enthusiast and the academic.

Countless are the cinema versions of Tusitala's classics. Prof. Dury, of the University of Bergamo[148], lists over a hundred items -leaving aside those of *Treasure Island* and *The Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mr Hyde,* to which we shall dedicate the coming paragraphs-. Of these, twelve entries are of *The Black Arrow*, some seventeen of *Kidnapped* and *The Suicide Club*. With a few exceptions, they document how much the cinema industry has been drawn to the imaginative force and the filmic value of the writer's fiction. Yet also, how incurious it has shown itself to his travel books and other non-fictional works that are equally absorbing and susceptable of

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[146] That is the case, for instance, of the 1972 experimental TV Italian production of Giacomo Battiato's rendering of *The Dynamiter*, which appeared under *Dentro la casa della vecchia signora*. Of Peter Stewart's 1947 *Adventure Island* for Paramount which is but a work of "fabrication and caricature" of *The Ebb Tide*. Of Jesús Franco's 1987 *Lago de las vírgenes*, casting Eduardo Fajardo and Lola Gaos, loosely based on *The Isle of Voices.* Of the TV mini-series in Giorgio Moser's 1966 *Aventure di mare e di costa,* supposedly "inspired" by *The Bottle Inn*, yet not as abominable as the most recent, 2005, BBC production by Brendan Maher of *Kidnapped* and its sequel, *Catriona,* shot in New Zealand. Still more censurable, by reason of its much wider distribution is *The Strange Door,* Joseph Pevney's 1951 production for Universal International, with such stars as Charles Laughton and Boris Karloff, which was set to adapt Stevenson's story *The Sire of Maledroit's Door.* (The RLS.Web, www.robert-louis-stevenson.org last access, Sept 2012).

[147] Dylan Thomas' 1959 *The Beach of Falesá,* a filmscript by Dylan Thomas. Biarcliff Manor, NY: Scarborough House.

[148] See The RLS Web, in n. 73 above, which gathers all material previously developed by Dury.

adaptation. We are glad, notwithstanding, that no biopic on Stevenson has been filmed to date, other than documentaries and dramatizations on his life and works[149].

Coming to the flagships of Stevenson's fiction, *Treasure Island* and *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, the filmed versions quickly multiplied. However, most of these are based on humdrum stage adaptations rather than on Louis' originals[150]. Of these, T. R. Sullivan's dramatisation of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* with Richard Mansfield[151] in the double act, at the Madison Square Theatre, New York, on 12th September 1887, is of greatest importance, since family members actually attended what was the first production in that city and Louis tells us about it in his letters.



Once again, reading his comments on his works in his marvellous correspondance is to vouch for that uncommon self-consciousness and foresight about his books. He consistently proves himself his more outstanding and yet stinging critic.

In 1889, Louis writes to Longman from Honolulu, in his usual half-acrimonious, half-playful tone:

> Yours received with news of your **brilliant feats of war against the man, Mansfield**. I have had some experience of him in his native lair (though I believe as a matter of history the man's Irish) and I can appreciate the high nature of your task. His agent was I thought -if posible-worthy of him: a tougher grain of the wood, only wanting polish I should like to put up statues of both of them... (L6:260, emphasis mine).

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[149] Of these, John Archer's BBC Scotland production of "Stevenson Travels", 1994, is to be complimented for being evocative, effectively rendered and well-researched. For a full chronological list, see the "Documentaries" section of The R.L.S. Website as below.

[150] Richard Dury lists no less than fifty of the first, and some hundred and twenty of the second. (The RLS Website at www.robert-louis-stevenson.org). Still, we must bear in mind these include loose "adaptations", recreations, parodies, elaborations and spin-offs, of the original. For a chronological listing of "particularly aesthetically and culturally significant English-language stage, film and television adaptations" of *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, see Linehan, 2003:170-180; Brian Rose, "*Jekyll and Hyde" Adapted: Dramatization of Cultural Anxiety*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1996; and Charles King, "Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde: A Filmography." *The Journal of Popular Film and Television*, 25:1 (Spring 1997:9-20).

[151] Mansfield was the American star actor of the day, he asked the writer Thomas Sullivan to adapt the novel for the stage. It was the performance and interpretation that laid the foundation for subsequent dramatic treatments (See C. Alex Pinkston, JR's "The Stage Premiere of Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde" in Linehan, 2003: 157).

There was something amisss about Richard Mansfield's production of *Dr Jekyll* in London in August 1888. In a letter to the editor of the *New York Sun,* Louis had written:

> From Mr Sullivan (the author of Mr Mansfield's version) I have met with every civility, and from Mr Mansfield himself I am now in receipt of monthly cheques. The version is fully authorised by me. (L6:125).

So, what happened to be the trouble? What were these "brilliant feats of war" against Mansfield?[152] As usually, the answer is provided by R.L.S. in a letter, to Bocock[153] he wrote...

> Your prominent dramatic critic, writing like a journalist, has written like a braying ass; what he meant is probably quite different and true enough -that the book is ugly and **the allegory** too like the usual pulpit fudge and not just enough to the modesty of facts.. Hyde was... not, Great Gods! a mere voluptuary. There is no harm in a voluptuary; and none, with my hand on my heart and in the sight of God, none -no harm whatever - in what prurient fools call "immorality". **The harm was in Jekyll because he was a hypocrite -not because he was fond of women;** he says so himself; **but people are so filled full of folly and inverted lust, that they can think of nothing but sexuality**. The Hypocrite let out the beast Hyde, who is no more sexual than another, but who is the essence of cruelty and malice, and selfishness and cowardice: and **these are the diabolic in man -not this poor wish to have a woman; that they make such a cry about**... (L6:56, emphasis added).

He knew that the "allegory", if such, was going to be wrongly represented even when he could still not possibly think of cinematic versions. This first dramatisation was enough to provoque his distrust. He was right, for the passage quoted above might well serve as the most straight to the point, perceptive criticism of the three best known adaptations of his novella for the screen, those starred by John Barrymore (John

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[152] Mehew conjectures there was some trouble with the shared royalties on the play (L6: 260, n.1); although a closer look at the letters suggest a less vague reason as I contend.

[153] The MS of this letter -Mid-November 1887, from Saranac Lake, is located in the Hungtington Library (call number 2114), San Marino, California. John Paul Bocock, was an American essayist, novelist and poet who begun corresponding with R.L.S. shortly after Stevenson came to America. It is important here to notice that Stevenson is responding here to to a report Bocock had sent on the reception given to the Sullivan-Mansfield stage adaptation which had played at New York's Madison Square Theatre from September 12 to October 1, 1887. (See Lineham, 2003:86 n. 7.)

Robertson's 1920 -see picture below), Frederic March (Rouben Mamoulian's 1931) and Spencer Tracy (Victor Fleming's 1941).

The true Stevenson admirer will find these, no matter how popular and celebrated, among the most baleful and disgusting to watch. All three interpret nebulous Mr. Hyde as Jekyll's repressed sexual drive. All three see in the scientism of this highly respectable man his "trick" to unleash and to satisfy his sexual appetite leaving his reputation still intact. As Linehan contends, "Stevenson vents (here) his exasperation with Victorian prudery that equates sexual appetite with evil, and thereby fails to see that Hyde's cruelty stems not from Hyde's drive for sex, but from Jekyll's drive for concealment".[154]



In other words, it is Jekyll's hypocrisy that RLS finds repugnant. He would, surely, be as indignant about these films as he is in this letter at the insinuation that sexual desire is intrinsically evil. It is Hyde's cruelty trampling "calmly over the child's body and" leaving "her screaming on the ground" that is diabolical; it is his cowardice murdering Carew that is utterly evil.

Another fabrication common in the three films is the inclusion of female characters deliberately conceived to add a strong sexual content. These are both as salacious as they are sordid; and none of them appears in the original. Two examples will do.

Fleming's version casts Ingrid Bergman as prostitute Ivy Peterson -who was not even conceived by Stevenson- just because Hollywood wanted to give the young voluptuous actress of the recent "Intermezzo", a part in the production. Among other deceptions there is the sequence of sexual fantasies Jekyll undergoes in his incomplete transformation. Overtaken by some paroxysm of athletic-like seizures,



[154] Katherine Linehan, "Sex, Secrecy, and Self-Alienation in *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. In Jones, 2003. Reprinted in Linehan 2003:204-213.

we see an elegant Spencer Tracy transmogrified into a dishevelled Spencer Tracy much closer to a brute than to the devilish monster.



Mamoulian's casts Rose Hobart as Muriel Carew, Carew's daughter and Jekyll's fiancée, -also invented- the kind of unattainable lady whose natural desires are restrained by her rigorous father; which would trigger Jekyll's latent urge to murder Carew and to gratify, as Hyde, his sensual pleasures with Ivy Pierson, a night performer and prostitute. The seduction scene in which Ivy removes her clothes behind a blanket was taken as a sign, by a censor, to cut some ten minutes which would be later restored in the video version. As professor Dury[155] notes, it was "the many innovative cinematic ideas", such as "diagonally split screens, voice-overs (for thoughts), spinning camera and wipes for scene transitions" that made it so popular. So much so, that Nollen still calls it "one of the classic American cinema's true masterpieces"[156] regardless of its many abominations.

And it was not just Hollywood, for Continental cinema-makers adhered to these shifts and modifications, both perpetuating and accentuating them. Of these, surely the most repulsive is Borowczyk's *Docteur Jekyll et les femmes* (1981), which Guy Barefoot says constitutes "a further case of the story being transformed so as to fit the conventions of the time... this strand of post-1960 European cinema demanded not love interest and comic relief but a display of, and often assault on, the female boby". Borowczyk, -Barefoot goes on to assert-, was unscrupulous "to claim that his version was based on Stevenson's original notes which he had discovered while undertaking research at Oxford University." [157] He later dismissed the story as a gag.

Film versions make the classic a big case addition, aside from Jekyll's transforming potions and his miscalculations there is no intimation in R.L.S.'s original that Jekyll was doing drugs unlike Conan Doyle's hero overtly smoking marijuana.

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[155] The R.L.S. Website, as before.

[156] Scott Allen Nollen, "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde", in Nollen, 1994: 179.

[157] Guy Barefoot's "Lost and Found in Translation and Adaptation: Walerian Borowczyk and *Docteur Jekyll Et Les Femmes* (1981) in Ambrosini and Dury (2009:244-5).

Among these machinations, run mostly by the greed of money-making and to compete with other remades, the most spurious to Stevenson's conception and treatment of the story is that disclosing, from the outset, that Jekyll and Hyde are not two independent beings but that they embody the same and only man[158]. The enormous G. K. Chesterton had pointed, way before these irruptions onto the screen, that Stevenson was under attack from "the Post-Victorian mudslingers"

> ... those anonymous authorities in the newspapers, who dismiss Stevenson with such languid grace, will say that there is something quite cheap and obvious about the idea that one man is really two men and can be divided into the evil and the good. Unfortunatelly for them, that does not happen to be the idea. **The real stab of the story is not in the discovery that the one man is two men; but in the discovery that the two men are one man.** After all the diverse wandering and warring of those two incompatible beings, there was still one man born and only one man buried. Jekyll and Hyde have become a proverb and a joke; only it is a proverb read backwards and a joke that nobody really sees.
>
> (Chesterton, 1927: 51, emphasis added).

Chesterton was right, Stevenson constructed the novella meticulously so that there is no intimation of such hellish duplicity in his pages, no spoiler as there is in the fleeing images thrust onto the screen. The novella cannot be read afresh, because its motive is too well known. The mystery is solved and more than sparsely given out in the very first minutes. But in the original the truth is revealed only when we reach the very last pages of the final chapter, "Henry Jekylls's Full Statement of the Case". That is where the real punch against the too many false virtues of the dogmatic, philistine and prude Victorian society lies. It is, precisely, that dreadful game on ambivalence that cinema makers overlooked. They were vastly possessed by the ghostly yarn, too intent on their Freudian interpretations to grasp the subversive critique. It was easier to lose the poignant argument to "adapt" the beasty tale.

All of these "pecadillos", and many such more, where already present in the earliest version mentioned here, to wit, Robertson's 1920 for Paramount, where, Dury tells us, Carew "suggests Jekyll should "go on the town", and encourages an exotic dancer to seduce him"; "Barrymore's Jekyll is the first to indulge in sexual depravity

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[158] In this respect, in Mamoulian' s version, at least Jekyll changes to a youthful, exuberant and primitive Hyde in the last scene before being shot by the police (The R.L.S. Website).

and lacks the virtuous justification added by later Hollywood versions"[159]. And still again Nollen states, though it "deviates considerably from the novella, yet it… ranks as one of the definitive interpretations of a Stevenson work" (Nollen, 1994:183).

We could point to many more recent cinema versions of the great story about the "vivisection of a soul"[160] to the same critical comment: that Stevenson was well alert for all these ominous representations were already present in the stage adaptations of his day. Further evidence added to that in his correpondence is the following excerpt from an interview, in which Stevenson, complains about these "forerunners to this trend",

> ... Dr. Jekyll should be the central figure and not Mr. Hyde, but on the stage the first character is made subservient to the second, which was not my idea at all. [161]

These melodramas, especially the "long-running Sullivan-Mansfield version[162] overshadowed competing serious stage adaptations in the years that followed, becoming a central influence on the many silent film versions[163] created in the early twentieth century"... And through its popularity, it took "a further leap in the era of sound films". (Linehan, 2003: 150).



The audience who contemplates these adaptations and has some familiarity with the books, surmises that something is not quite right with them. Though captivated by Stevenson's stories, in which he found the vehicle for his popular recreations,Victor Fleming's 1934 *Treasure Island*, for MGM, with an annoying Jim (Jackie Cooper) is described by Nollen as "maudlin" and full of "Holywood hokum" (Nollen, 1984: 417).

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[159] Ibid. The R.L.S. Website at www.robert-louis-stevenson.org.

[160] Charles Warren Stoddard, "Submerged in Billows of Bedclothes", in Terry, 1996: 90.

[161] Interview arcicle contained in *Monterey Stevenson Museum Scrapbook*, 2. p. 64.

[162] Mansfield toured Britain and performed the play for twenty years till his death in 1907.

[163] For instance, *When Quackel Did Hyde* (Charles Gramlich, 1920), and *Dr Pyckle and Mr Pride* (Percy Pembroke, 1925). Of this Naugrette, says, "comic effects and sexual innuendos overlap when a repellent Mr Pride keeps on assaulting people in the streets with a series of phallic objects" ("The Strange Cases of Doctors Haeckel and Jekels", in Ambrosini and Dury, 2009: 172).

Furnas condemns, very rightly, Byron Haskin's 1950 Disney production of *Treasure Island*, -with Robert Newton playing Long John Silver and Bobby Driscoll as Jim Hawkins- which he says, "has taken the worst beating"... "casting Jim as a child instead of a vigurous youth in mid-teens and particularly distinguished itself by carefully throwing away the story's best sound-film scenes, such as the squawking of the parrot in the dark blockhouse, Ben Gunn's imitating Flint's dying hail, and Billy Bones singing *Fifteen Men* in the inn parlour" (Furnas, 1952: 458, n.8).



Script-writers show a vast ignorance of Stevenson's stance as an author, of the Scottish Calvinist tradition he strove to leave behind, and, above all, of his essays.
In "Lay Morals"[164], they would have found what Louis really meant. The danger is not to be "tormented by a very imperious physical desire" which is "a physical need, like the want of food or slumber". This is adequate inasmuch as we don't become hypocrites and fall on the "one declension which is irretrivable and draws on the rest. And this is **to lose consciousness of oneself"**... (T26:28, emphasis added).

In "Reflections and Remarks on Human Life"[165] R.L.S., gives us his musings in a strikingly beautiful paragraph that accounts both for the use of violence in *Treasure Island*, he had been unsparingly accused of, and for "love's capacity to promote psychic self-unification and **moral self-awareness**" (Linehan, 2003:208).

> ... And while I may still continue by my inconsiderate or violent life to spread far-reaching havoc throughout man's confederacy, I can do so no more, at least, in ignorance and levity; one face shall wince before me in flesh; I have taken home the sorrows I create to my own hearth and bed; and though I continue to sin, it must be now with open eyes(T26:89) .

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[164] Swearingen, tells us the essay was first published in the Edinburgh Edition, 2 (1896), 313-77 which included different drafts corresponding to, at least, "two separate efforts on this work" which was started as early as in 1879, then retaken in 1883. T, 26:1-49, does not include some 7 pp. still unpublished and "conflates the various versions". (Swearingen,1980:41).

[165] "Fragment XIII on *Results of Action* ends at mid-phrase; with the editorial note, (1978?). (Cf. T26:90). But Swearingen clarifies, "Notes originally from his notebook... among various pending projects, probably written during the spring of 1880 in San Francisco" (Swearingen, ibid: 50) Right before marrying Fanny Osbourne, an American divorcee ten years his senior, at the home of a Presbyterian Minister in May.

3.6 Deleterious academic adoptation: a pedagogical proposal.

In the previous subsection, I have shown how the damnable effects of even the most celebrated film adaptations were already perceptible -before Stevenson's death- in the long-running drama versions that skipped to the silent movies, then to "the talkies".

In the coming pages I shall dwell on the hazards to which the essays were exposed when they were set as academic examples in America and in Britain.

As ever, Furnas is expressive in his anger.

> ... It was rather like giving a novice-machinist a chronometer to reproduce. True, many of the models on whom he broke himself to pen and paper were subtler still. But **subjective choice, however bold, is different from academic prescription, and the consequences were mostly unfortunate**. Youngsters with literary futures usually revolt against school examples and may never find for themselves, in the teeth of negative conditioning, that prim school texts of Burke and Hawthorne **actually make most rewarding reading.**
>
> (Furnas, 1952:377, emphasis added).

In the light of these cogent arguments, I deem it consistent with my aims to **ground my ideas here first, on Stevenson's innovative theories in which he chose to present himself as *reader*** rather than literary master or authoritative critic[166]; **second, on my own experience in the successive literary classes** I have taught throughout the years, in which I added the essay in general and some essays by Stevenson in particular to the consensual readings in the syllabus. Even more so, although the present study is eminently literary, I deem it in-keeping to offer my pedagogical findings here carried by the deep conviction that they actually served and will continue to *serve the purpose*.

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[166] This self-identification of our author with the general reader is made apparent in his preface to *Familiar Studies of Men and Books* in which Louis declares, "In truth, these are but the readings of a literary vagrant" (Tus 27: xii). It is also in his letters, for instance, in 1884, Louis wrote to Henley: "I send you a book which (or I am mistook) will please you; it pleased me... Dumas I have read and re-read too often... I want a book to begin in a good way: a book, I guess, like *Treasure Island*, alas! which I have never read, and cannot though I live to ninety" (L4:307). And it is even more explicit, as I will show in due course in this study, in very many of the essays -for instance, "Child's Play" (1878), "A Penny Plain and Twopence Coloured" (1884), "Popular Authors" (1888) and "The Lantern-Bearers" (1888), among others- in which responding **dynamically** to the written text as a source for pleasure occupies the central focus of his critical writing. Stevenson scholars R. Ambrosini (2003), S. Arata (2004) and Glenda Norquay (2007) have offered brilliant analysis on this aspect of the writer as "pleasured reader".

The proposal contained in the coming pages, underlines, once again, how the study of Stevenson' essays continues to be enormously relevant after a hundred and twenty odd years in still another cultural dimension. It shows how tremendously useful they are in promoting the development of a number of competences in the classroom. For, as many of us have felt, one thing is to feed students a text vibrant both by reason of its style and contents to encourage open discussion, but it is quite another to make fresh students wade their way through a text and to ask them to ape a style too erudite for them either in the literary or in the composition class. It is impractical to say the least.

Yet that this was practiced long before Stevenson's days is proven by scholarly anthologies of which Chalmers' *British Essayists* [167], in 45 volumes, is as much quoted as it is monumental. Starkweather's *Essays of British Essayists, including biographical and critical sketches*[168]*,* once mandatory reference, also contributed to reify the oblivion into which the essay had fallen.

Brewster's *Representative Essays on the Theory of Style*[169] is an interesting classbook in that it contrasts the different conceptions of style by R.L.S.'s contemporaries: (i) as the precise expression of an idea; (ii) as effective expression underlining Spencer's famous phrase "the economy of the reader's attention"; (iii) as revelation of the grandeur of the writer, etc. Brewster opposes the view of strict academics like Frederic Harrison, who in his "An Address to the Bodley Literary Society"[170] contended that style cannot be aped or taught. But he also declared it "technical excellence" and pedagogically valuable in so far as it inspires students to pay more heed to harmony and grace. However, Brewster fails to see that by "technique" Stevenson implied *pure aesthetics*, which is made even more obvious in "A Letter to a

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[167] An indefatigable literary man born in Aberdeen, Alexander Chalmer's *British Essayists*, with biographical and historical prefaces and a general index appended, was edited in Boston by Little Brown and Company in 1855.

[168] New York: The Colonial Press, 1900. Chauncey C. Starkweather was an American author whose books, aslo on American essayists, are still commercialized, yet no information on him is found other than he was a fervent orientalist of Presbetyrian extraction.

[169] William T. Brewster, A.M. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1905: 15-28.

[170] Printed in The Nineteenth Century, June, 1898, and in Ruskin, Mill, and Other Literary Estimates, 1900.

Young Gentleman Who Porposes to Embrace the Career of Art"[171]. Yet Brewster acquitts himself when he addresses students in "Notes and Questions" (pp. 337-339); asserts the author quoting from Stevenson's "On Style in Literature: Its Technical Elements"*[172]* (p.ix); and he includes the essay.

*Essays English and American,"*With Intoductions and Notes", contains a prefatory note that reads, "In the essay on "Truth of Intercourse", he gives us a fine example of his graceful and tactful moralizing", and in "Samuel Pepys", he provides "a penetrating interpretation of one of the most amazing pieces of self-revelation in the anals of literature." [173]

Foremost to our issue under discussion here is *The Oxford Stamp and Other Essays. "*Articles for the Educational Creed of an American Oxonian", a compendium of theoretical pages offering guidance in the art of writing to novice students [174]. Of which, chapter viii, "Robert Louis Stevenson's Darkening Counsel" is entirely dedicated to our author as a "carefully selected" model at work to teach "the American youth how to write". Aydelotte states...

> "...No author is so frequently quoted to the aspiring high-school student or the sulky Freshman. **Now and then the long-tired undergraduate rebels.** I have heard a big Sophomore composition class at Harvard which finally came **to the point whereby they would stamp whenever Stevenson's name was mentioned,** as at the mention of the Ladies of Yale". (Aydelotte, 1912: 340, emphasis mine).

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[171] This fabulous piece (1879) is inextricably linked to "On the Choice of a Profession" (1888), and "Popular Authors" (1888) in that these essays are among those that ground Stevenson aesthetics in "the inexpugnable fortress for the true practitioner" (Tus. 28:6), the pleasure-giving principle, which involves "Perceiving recondite merits very hard to attain, **making or swallowing artistic formulae**, or perhaps falling in love with **some particular proficiency of his own,** many artists forget the end of all art: to please." (Tus. 28: 7, emphasis added).

[172] *The Contemporary Review,* 47 (April 1885), 548-61. T 28. See also L3:29-30, 40.

[173] The Harvard Classics. New York: P.F Collier and Sons Company, 1910:286.

[174] By Frank Aydelotte, Professor of English Literature in the Massachussets Institute of Technology. New York: Oxford University Press. Reprinted in "The English Journal", Indiana University, Bloomington: Indiana. vol. 1., no. 6 (Jun, 1912), pp. 340-350. The author states the classbook represents "not merely the theories of a student at Oxford, but also the experience of ten years of practical application of these ideas in elementary and advanced courses at Indiana University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology" (v.).

The question attendant is... why didn't it work? If they did not learn to write, was it because Stevenson was wrong? Was it, perhaps, because the tutors failed to follow him adequately? Maybe Louis meant it as a practice directed to the self with no tutelage and so fully inapplicable to a class of some twenty youths?

Surely, Stevenson at twenty-one[175] had gone much further in his reading than the fresh students and sophomores to whom his method was commended; and vastly more so than the ordinary graduate attending our literary classes nowadays[176]. His was a far more careful and enthusiastic appreciation and it bore the mark of genius rather than just industry in his early determination to become an author.

As clarified, he did not reap his style by aping the best qualities in his admired masters, no matter how sedulously he worked to polish his tools. He conquered *le mot juste,* that enormous capacity pointed by the enormous Chesterton in *The Victorian Age in Literature* [177] just as he did conquer many other virtues in his unique writing.

It is indeed stimulating to read Aydelotte say he did not mean to condemn Stevenson for "what I have called his literary consciousness...a form of humility" that "has the loveliness of that virtue, along with its danger of **perversion into something stagnant...** He did not get all of his words nor all of his cadences from books... Stevenson's essays "amaze at the number of colloquial phrases, smacking of the soil, which will cause the foreigner to stumble". (Aydelotte, 1912:342, emphasis mine).

A study of those American textbooks long gone makes one mindful of that learner who, after taking a writing workshop, of about a week, complained that he could still not write in the manner of Conrad, Yeats or Dickinson!

This is not a fourth of what those pedagogical demagogues ignored, while attempting to apply "Stevenson's method" to students proposing to embrace the career of art. The most excruciating of all is that considerations of his style totally overlooked

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[175] The age young Louis was at when he contributed "the sedulous ape essay", "A College Magazine" to The Edinburgh University Magazine in 1871. (cf. Swearingen, 1980: 115).

[176] The sceptical reader can take a browse at the staggering catalogue of Stevenson's books found in his library for a proof of his intelligent, wide interest and a realization of the real thinker he was. (cf. http://robert-louis-stevenson.org/169-robert-louis-stvensons-library/ at the R.L.S. Website (last visited, October 2013). A perusal of his essay "Books That Have Influenced Me", (T28:3-16) and of his letters will also be descriptive of what is meant here.

[177] "...the rather vague Victorian public did not appreciate... the French finish and fastidiousness of his tyle; in which he seemed to pick up the right word up on the point of his pen, like a man playing spillikins" (Chesterton, 1913, 1955 reprint, pg. 150).

that there is *wit*, philosophy, an eager curiosity to understand something of the mystery that confronts us all... What Louis calls the "green sickness" of his youth. Graham Balfour, dealing with the "sedulous ape period" (1867-1873) notes in the "canonical" biography [178]:

> "... He had begun to work out for himself his own views of life: his religion and his ethics, his relations to society and his own place in the universe.... Strictly sincere with himself, he could never see things in their merely conventional aspect.... his senses were importunate, his intellect inquiring, and he must either find out his own way, or, as he might well have done, lose it altogether." (Balfour, 1901:61).

And so, freshmen and sophomores needed to be allowed to find their own way, even when presented with such estimulating examples as those propounded by the great author. They needed to create avenues into their own ideas, for it is ideas that make a writer, not just style.

Thus, by making their students ape Stevenson's phenomenal qualities, professors using these classbooks never scoped out the author's discernment and vision, denying him his enormous power to *think* and *see*.

> "And yet he took "infinite pains, spent his whole lifetime, in trying to express his thoughts, in order that he may teach his fellows truly and fully, not falsely and partly, what he has to teach" (Aydelotte, 1912:345).

Lack of space bars making all this extensible to "a few" anthologies for the class that apperared in Britain also listing Stevenson's work, like for instance, an excerpt of his unfinished novel *Weir of Herminston* and the great essay "Aes Triplex", in Broadus and Kemper's *English Prose from Bacon to Hardy*[179].The introductory pages read,

> " helping students to grasp the distinguishing mark of a writer's work we have placed at the head of each group of selections a passage in which the author speaks of his own work, his aims, his methods, or his training." (Broadus and Gordon, 1918:vii).

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[178] Graham Balfour, Stevenson's much younger cousin by his mother's side, had come to spend a month with Louis in Samoa. He stayed more than a year and had ample time to write his frist-hand impresions on his literary relative. *The Life of Robert Louis Stevenson,* London, Macmillan, 1896, is the first official biography of Stevenson. However, it is "necessarily inhibited by the fact that at the time of writing Fanny was still very much alive" (Knight, 1985:9).

[179] Broadus , Edmund Kemper and Gordon, *English Prose from Bacon to Hardy.* R.K. London: Oxford University Press, 1918.

And very like in the United States, others did about the same much earlier like James Ferguson's colossal *The British Essayists with Prefaces, Biographical, Historical and Critical,* or Thomas Berguer's *British Essayists* .[180]

Enough has been adumbrated upon the matter of the vacuous academic adoption of Stevenson's non-fiction, let Furnas have the last word on it.

> "**Academic anthologists** were significantly prone to give their readers the dulcet experiment of *An Inland Voyage* instead of the sturdier skill of *Silverado*[181]. **Such sins of tunnel-vision ended in exhibiting Stevenson as incarnating gay wholesomeness, as wholesomeness was then understood, as the rising generation inevitably gagged at it".** (Furnas , 1952: 377-8, emphasis mine).

Such "sins" could have been avoided not so much by well advised selection, as Furnas suggests, but by paying close attention to **the advanced theories put forthward by Louis himself in his essays** in which, as Norquay avers, Stevenson explicitly addressed and demostrated "a similar conscious engagement with the nature of readerly activity". In other words, the simplest most apparent answer to the questions raised above as to why those pedagogical applications -here referred to- did come short of the expectations by the academics is that no model of writing shall ever be productive in the creative writing class unless the learner first develops a "consciousness of himself as a reader", for as Norquay suggests,

> "...Stevenson (is) not only interesting as **a literary theorist** but also as a strange and fruitful "case" for developing a more nuanced understanding both of the broader network of cultural and historical pressures shaping literary consumption (...) and t**he specific complexities which contribute to the formation of a "reader**" (Norquay. 2007:8, emphasis mine).

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[180] *The British Essayists with Prefaces, Biographical, Historical, and Critical*, by James Ferguson, Esq. In forty volumes. Second Edition. London: J. Richardson and Co, 1823. *British Essayists with Prefaces, Biographical...* by Rev. Lionel Thomas Berguer, Fellow Extraordinary of the Royal Medical Society of Edinburgh. In forty-five volumes. London: Hanover Square, 1823.

[181] As we shall deal with in due course, *An Inland Voyage* and *The Silverado Squatters* are two of his best known books of travels, recording his canoe trip in Belgium and France with his crony Sir Walter Simpson (September 1876; first published in 1878); and his stay with Fanny as a newly wedded couple in a derelic Silverado mine infested with rattlesnakes, north of Calistoga, on the slopes of Mt. St. Helena, California. (May 1880; first published in 1883).

This assertion can be still more simplified by declaring that it is only a good reader that can make a good writer. Before taking our students to write, we should make sure that we teach them to *read* so that they reveal a potential response to the text. For that is the first skill to conquer.

And so, the pedagogues who applied those **inert methodologies** have been responsible for the fate of the essay which has remained unrecognized by the academic curriculum. As with the cinema-makers -referred above- their faulty standpoint could have been rectified by **a more dynamic use** and enthusiastic knowledge of his writings. An omission painfully felt by those of us who *sense* how carefully Tusitala ferreted out his ingenious theories and squirrelled them away in his essays.

No detailed exposition of Stevenson's aesthetics is made necessary here which would thus, overlap with the notions I deal with in the last chapter of this dissertation. In like manner, no detailed account -in the form of a lesson planning- of my own pedagogical findings -while including Stevenson's essays in the second language literary class- shall be needful given the literary character of the present dissertation.

Let us rather take a glance at what he himself tells us, then ponder on, (i) whether or not his effusive remarks about reading invite us to enter **the book as a house full of atavistic pleasure**; (ii) whether or not Stevenson's approach to fiction was grounded on **the reader-response model he anticipated** and continuously hammered out throughout his life; (iii) whether or not his own reading -and theories on reading- involved **escaping the boundaries of the self to encounter the other** and base value on personal experience rather than on the conventional [182]; finally (iv) whether or not these principles would have **a rewarding pedagogical applicatio**n electrifying our students "into an instant unflagging activity, founded on a wide and eager observation of the world, and make them direct their ways by a superior prudence, which has little or nothing in common with the maxims of the copy-book." ("Walt Whitman", Tus 27:59)

In everything Tusitala wrote there is that playful relationship with the reader which encourages close reading for pleasure rather than as a task. In the essay "Pastoral" (1887), later collected in the autobiographical volume *Memories and*

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[182] We, Stevensonians, owe the brilliant exposition of these and other valuable ideas to the Stevenson scholars, Ambrosini, Arata, and Norquay, and to the editiors of *Robert Louis Stevenson: Writer of Boundaries* (2006), among others.

Portraits, Louis makes a sudden engrossing enquiry into *the joy of reading* while offering his reminiscences of his early days in the Pentland Hills near Edinburgh.

> "...The fortune of a tale lies not alone in the skill of him that writes, but as much, perhaps, in **the inherited experience of him who reads**; and when I hear with a particular thrill of things that I have never done or seen, it is one of **that innumerable army of my ancestors rejoicing in past deeds.** Thus novels begin to touch not the fine *dilettanti* but the gross mass of mankind..." (Tus 29: 49; emphasis mine).

Thus our author attributes an **anthropological dimension**-"inherited experience"- to the capacity of reading for pleasure. So it is not the individual reader conscious about himself, but his predecessors -"that innumerable army-" that work unconsciously within himself towards an enjoyable interpretation[183]. Reflecting upon that exchange between past and present, Stevenson, interestingly, unsettles the idea of the reader as a separate individual identity.

In another essay "Popular Authors"-of about the same time of composition (1888)-, recalling his fondness for the tales included in the "penny-press" he read devoutly as a child, Stevenson adds flesh to his theories on the power texts must exercise engaging the young to "cheerfully migrate for the time of reading".

> Let us try to remember how fancy works in children; with what selective partiality it reads, leaving often the bulk of the book unfinished, but fixing on the rest and living it;and what a passionate impotence it shows -what power of adoption, what weakness to create... They long, not to enter into the lives of others, but to behold themselves in changed situations, ardently but impotently preconceived. (Tus 28:30)

The reverie here described prefigures Bachelard's words, "In the child's reverie, the image takes precedence over everything else. Experience comes only later...The child sees everything big and beautiful. The reverie towards childhood returns us to the

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[183] Richard Ambrosini goes further to declare that Stevenson's "entire approach to fiction was grounded on an "anthropologically informed reader-response model", which he kept modifying throughout his life as he searched for the atavistic pleasure found in narrative forms for children, "uneducated readers", and South Seas Islanders". (See Ambrosini and Dury -eds- 2006, p.xix).

beauty of the first images."[184] Nothing of consistence will come out of a text if the young reader is not swept off his feet through a process of self-identification. Unless he is fully absorbed in the text **he has chosen** it will bring little or no benefit to him at all.

This idea is reinforced in the late "Random Memories: Rosa Qua Locorum" (1893), an unfinished essay about his "childish recollections" in which Louis calls back to mind the literature that inspired him as a child and the fascination procurred by the sonorous words in the stories of the Covenanters[185] his nurse, "Cummy"[186], used to read him.

> ... In the passages already adduced, I detect and applaud the ear of my old nurse; they were of her choice, and she imposed them on my infancy, reading the works of others as a poet would scarce dare to read his own; gloating on the rhythm, dwelling with delight on assonances and alliterations... the vigour and the continual opportunities of my nurse triumphed... (Tus 30:5).

Meantime, Stevenson has taught us another important lesson. To the issue of selecting ourselves he has added presentation strategies which would ensure that "dwelling with delight" on the part of the reader/student. The resonance of words and their powerful ability to take us beyond their immediate representational value takes central stage in **his theories of reading pleasure.**

The same idea is contemplated from the author's side in "The Morality of the Profession of Letters" (1881) an essay -Swearingen (1980: 194-195) tells us- related to the unpublished "On the Value of Books and Reading".

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[184] G. Bachelard, *The Poetics of Reverie: Childhood, Language and the Cosmos,* trans. D. Russell (1960). Boston: Beacon Press, 1969, p.

[185] These were gory tales about the signatories of the National Covenant in 1638, who opposed the view by the House of Stuart that a king could be, in his own right and from his infallibility, the spiritual head of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Louis planned seven stories set on those times of religious strife, "A Covenanting Story-Book", of which only "Thrawn Janet" survives. We also have an outline, in his notebook, of a book of 185 pages "to be titled "Covenanting Profiles" which would cover the careers of various Scottish Covenanters" (See Knight 1985:258 and Swearingen 1980:33).

[186] Alison Cunningham, daughter of a fisherman from Fife, across the Forth, came to take care of Louis when he was three. Stevenson dedicated *A Child's Garden of Verses* to "my second mother". He also gives us a portrait of her love and care for the sickly child in "Memoris of Himself", "she was more patient than I can suppose of an angel; hours together she would help console me in my paroxysms". She died in Edinburgh in 1910.

> The writer has the chance to stumble, by the way, on something pleasing, something interesting, something encouraging, were it only to a single reader. He will be unfortunate, indeed, if he suit no one. He has the chance, besides, to stumble on something that a dull person shall be able to comprehend; and for a dull person to have read anything and, for that once, comprehended it, makes a marking epoch in his education. ("The Morality of the Profession of Letters", Tus 28:60)

Thusly, it is not so much the ability to create a masterpiece. It is the capacity to incite and entice, to involve and embrace, to delight and edify the reader. More recent theorists have proved Stevenson right. In *The Pleasure of the Text* (1975), Barthes goes on to defend that a list of food can be read in such a way that it would become enticing. "The novelist, by citing, naming, noticing food (by treating it as notable), imposes on the reader the final state of matter, what cannot be transcended, withdrawn".[187] And Bloom -dealing with the spiritual but rarely- states in *How to Read and Why* (2000) that "reading well is one of the great pleasures that solitude can afford you, because it is, at least in my experience, the most healing of pleasures"[188]. Which makes us mindful of what our writer declares in one of his extraordinary letters:

> When I suffer in mind, stories are my refuge; I take them like opium; and I consider one who writes them a sort of doctor of the mind... We want incident, interest, action: to the devil with your philosophy. When we are well again, and have an easy mind, we shall peruse your important work; but what we want now is a drug. (L3:61-62)

Besides this cleansing, Bloom will later assert in *Where Shall Wisdom Be Found*, reading feeds our soul attending "to its needs for beauty, truth, and insight", so that we can come to terms with "the self". [189]

It is very telling that apart from very few of the previous and of the subsequent essays mentioned here all others appear among his autobiographical papers in most of the complete editions -the Tusitala included-. It reveals both the risks of categorizing and judging the reflective polymorphic and prolific work of our author on whimsical impressions and facile generalisations. For example, in "The Lantern Bearers" (1887) a really absorbing essay, Louis remembers his childhood games in North Berwick, at the

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[187] Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text.* New York: Hill and Wang. 1975, p. 45.

[188] Harold Bloom, *How to read and Why.* New York: Touchstone/Simon and Schuster. 200, p. 19.

[189] Harold Bloom, *Where Shall Wisdom Be Found?* New York: Riverhead Books, 2004.

time a seaside resort for the wealthy. Amongst them his favourite past-time was the meetings with his cronies by night. There they would gather by the dim light to reveal sudden glows from the lantern they carried hidden underneath, and "delight themselves with inappropriate talk".

> The essence of this bliss was to walk by yourself in the black night; the slide shut, the top-coat buttoned; not a ray escaping, whether to conduct your footsteps or to make your glory public: a mere pillar of darkness in the dark; and all the while, deep down in the privacy of your fool's heart, to know you had a bull's-eye at your belt, and to exult and sing over the knowledge. ("The Lantern Beares", Tus. 30:34).

As a result of the "autobiographical" label imposed, of that reckless categorizing by the editors, critics have steadily failed to see the trope and parallel in the essay -to my mind- one of the most captivating, **insightful *critical pieces*** *on the lure of fiction* and so, **on the hidden gift of reading and on its many pleasures derived**. Since, for Stevenson, these sudden glows symbolize the abounding possibilites of imagination our world offers us. For Stevenson the hidden lanterns embody the joy at sensing we partake of that edifying secret, of that consoling ability. The perceptive, engrossing reading with which to illuminate our dark nights.

Also to notice in the last quote is the fact that it opens to a moral -never moralizing- reading by which the lantern would represent *belief* and the glows *honesty*. All the same, critics let pass this circumstance equally inadvertently. Even though -as we know- ethics and aesthetics frequently overlap in Stevenson. To such critics I point -once again- to the unassailable words in his correspondence. In early March 1886, addressing Symonds[190] from Skerryvore, his house in Bournemouth, on reading *Crime and Punishment* -Louis writes:

> *Raskolnikoff* (the title in which Dostoevsky's classic appeared in German) is the greatest book I have read easily in ten years; I am glad you took to it. Many find it dull; Henry

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[190] Louis befriended the English critic and poet John Addington Symonds (1840-93) in a clinic for the consumptive at Davos. He wrote of "the beautiful companionship of the Shelley-like man, the eager gifted wife and the boy, for whom they both thought in all their ways and hours". He would later dedicate his volume of Goliardic songs to Stevenson, who would portray Symonds as the "Opalstein", the brilliant conversationalist in his essay, "Talk and Talkers"(1882). Symonds, however, did not endorse this appreciation and even resented it, though it was true.

> James could not finish it: all I can say is, it nearly finished me. It was like having an illness. James did not care for it because the character of Raskolnikoff was not objective; and at that I divined a great gulf between us and, on further reflection, the existence of a certain impotence in many minds of today, which prevents them from living *in* a book or a character, and keeps them standing afar off, spectators of a puppet show. To such I suppose the book may seem empty in the centre; to the others it is a room, a house of life, into which they themselves enter, and are tortured and purified. (L5: 220-221)

And three years earlier:

> As I live, I feel more and more that literature should be cheerful and brave-spirited, even if it cannot be made beautiful and pious and heroic. We wish it to be a green place. (L4:251).

Harder to swallow is to find "A Gossip on Romance" and "A Humble Remonstrance" included in Tus.29, under the heading "Memories and Portraits. Memoirs of Himself. Selections from His Notebook". This veritably obscures the fact that the two essays -together with "A Note on Realism"[191]- are, precisely, the three in which Tusitala discusses his aesthetic principles.

Space constraints keep me from dwelling on these flagships of his theories -however pertinent to our discussion here-. Notwithstanding, they will be dealt with, scrupulously, in the last chapter on this dissertation. A paragraph will suffice as a further indication of Stevenson's main "law" in his insight on the arts: that of giving pleasure.

> In the highest achievements of the art of words, the dramatic and the pictorial, the moral and romantic interest, rise and fall together by a common and organic law. Situation is animated by passion, passion clothed upon with situation. Neither exists for itself, but each inheres indissolubly with the other. This is high art; and not only the highest art possible in words, but the highest art of all, since it combines the greatest mass and diversity of the elements of truth and pleasure. ("A Gossip on Romance", Tus 29:125).

It is of service to the young learner in the literary class to acknowledge what a critic has called the desired "interplay of motion and stasis", represented here by "passion" and "situation", respectively. For in that complex relationship Louis establishes with his engaged reader lies the whole truth about writing and reading.

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[191] This, however, is happily collected in Tus 28: 69-74, in the section headed "Essays in the Art of Writing".

No literary form -Louis argues- is fitter and closer to that aspiration than *romance*, in which the reader is consciously engaged while actively playing the hero. This is concomitant with what influential literary theorists like Northrop Frye would substain much later. In his analysis of myths and archetypes the acclaimed Shakespearian critic defends romance as the genre in which there is a "search of the libido or desiring self for a fulfilment that will deliver it from the anxieties of reality but will still contain that reality" [192]. An idea that takes us back to the assertion -in my aims- that Tusitala reconciled the imaginative with the real, and forth in his **foreseeing the emergence of psychoanalytical interpretation.**

Stevenson advances these and many other worthy theories of reading in his essays, evincing not only how deeply and restlessly he reflected upon his art, yet also how ahead of twentieth century perceptions he was. This is obvious as early as in the complex "Child's Play" (1878) about which, Norquay brilliantly declares, "The child's energetic engagement becomes an alternative to the vitiated passivity of the adult reader" (Norquay, 2007:98)

> To the grown person, cold mutton is cold mutton all the world over; not all the mythology ever invented by man will make it better or worse to him; the broad fact, the clamant reality, of the mutton carries away before it such seductive figments. But for the child it is still possible to weave an enchantment over eatables; and if he has but read of a dish in a story-book, it will be heavenly manna to him for a week. (Tus. 25:106).

A final quote will do for the ample, clear evidence shown, in his essays, on our author's unconventional and pioneering theories of reading also built up from his letters, which neither critics nor pedagogues took the time to explore.

> The most influential books, and the truest in their influence, are works of fiction. They do not pin the reader to a dogma, which he must afterwards discover to be inexact; they do not teach. They repeat, they rearrange, they clarify the lessons of life; **they disengage us from ourselves, they constrain us to the acquaintance of others;** and they show us the web of experience, not as we can see it for ourselves, but with a singular change — **that monstrous, consuming ego of ours being, for the nonce, struck out**. To be so, they must be reasonably true to the human comedy; and any work that is so serves the turn of instruction.("Books Which Have Influenced Me" (1887), Tus. 28:62. Emphasis added).

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[192] Northorp Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays.* Princeton. Princeton University Press, 1957. pp. 63-64.

Although referred to his fiction, -in the archetypal image of Jekyll living the life of Hyde to escape from the *self*- the quote applies equally to his non-fictional writings. Rather than producing an "arid" treatise on literature Louis would cram his essays with readers alive "performing acts of reading and rereading", as Norquay rightly puts it. Identifying with them, rather than with the literary master or the prestigious critic, he offers self-representations **full of dynamism** in which images of himself as general reader alternate with that of the writer bound to meet the demands of "the beast whom we feed". As Louis Abrahamson argues, "The cheerful banter and emotional effusion of R.L.S.'s own remarks about reading are encouragements **to face the challenge and the purifying ordeal of escaping the boundaries of the self**" (See Ambrosini and Dury -eds. 2006:xix. Emphasis mine).

And Stephen Arata contends, RLS was "against the notion of the attentive reading... his "commitment to stylistic perfection was wholly in the service of pleasure, of literature as play, of reading as idleness"... (Ibid, 2006:11).

It was the experiences he gathered and the lessons he learned from such encounters with his readers -in his essays- that helped him build up a series of reading-models he would later apply to his fiction. A thorough treatment of them is out of place, here, for reasons of space. There are still more to be found in essays like, for instance, "A Penny Plain and Two Pence Coloured" or "A Gossip on a Novel of Dumas's". And even in fables like "The Reader" which will be dealt with in chapter V of this thesis.

On my part, mindful of these and other advanced principles -on reading- offered by Stevenson, I set out to investigate their possible pedagogical application in the successive second language literary classes I have been fortunate to teach for our department throughout the years. What I found came to be more revealing and fruitful than I could have expected. I realized that the inclusion of the essay in a general course on literature -in English in the Spanish university currila- is not only desirable but imperative, for -at least- four reasons. (i) It is definitely **suitable and pertinent** given that the consensualized readings offer all the genres but leave out the essay, which, ironically contributed greatly to the evolution of the language and of its literature through its development in the periodicals. (ii) The essay -being shorter than the novel- proves in its discursive, same as in its inconclusive nature, very **manegable** in the literary class. (iii) Because the essay normally brims with literary allusions, it also facilitates both an **integrative and a comparative analysis**, thanks to which, students

of literature -within a Spanish context- are stimulated to discover other writers about whom -and by whom- they shall read little or nothing in the course of their university studies. (iv) As Bloom declares, "I have only three criteria for what I go on reading and teaching: **aesthetic splendor, intellectual power, wisdom**"[193](emphasis added). A fond reader of essays myself, I very much believe that there is no other genre that grants the acquisition of those three values as much as the essay does.

This craving for the inclusion of the essay -and of Stevenson's essays- in the literary class might be considered a whimsy, given the prominence that the academic world vouchsafes to the novel and the play, and -in a lesser manner- to the poem. To such illness such prescription. In the same way, we in the teaching profession are given to hesitation and concern like any patient and yet forced to comply with what is prescribed by the educational authorities. From this perspective, it comes as ironic that the report *Teaching Reading in Europe: Contexts, Policies and Practices* should emphasize precisely, "A wide range of reading skills, including digital reading" as "essential for an individual's personal and social fulfilment, for taking an informed and active part in society and exercising full rights of citizenship" [194]. Apart from the ever present utilitarian goal, related to the competitive labor market, there is the humanistic perspective very much sought after by the truly vocational reader/learner. Once again, it veritably comes as ironic that reading competence, prioritised since the implementation of the "Bologna Declaration" in the academic year 2010-2011 -thereby replacing the former Licenciatura en Filología Inglesa with Estudios Ingleses -Grado- in many European universities- should have systematically curtailed any "fair" proportion between non-literary and literary texts to the detriment of the latter. From there, a lack of interest for the other modern genre -together with the novel- was but a step away. A very implausible one. For, who is to deny that the essay has done more -vastly more- than the novel for the evolution of literature in most cultures?

Moreover -in a technical world full of distractions-, lengthy texts not being particularly favoured in the literary class, and proven impractical in their full extension due to time constraints, a sensible combination of genres such as the short story, the

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[193] Harlod Bloom, *Where Shall Wisdom Be Found?* New York: Riverhead Books, 2004. p 1.

[194] This document issued in Brussels, in 2011, by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency is available at http://eacea.ec.europa.edu/education/eurydice -last visited March 2012-.

poem, and the essay is to be advocated. Special care should thus be taken while creating the syllabi to ensure not only that the most representative texts, but also the most enticing and motivating ones are selected. For, in the present state of the humanities, fostering reading as a pleasant activity should come hand in hand with academic rigor.

This is also consistent with that shift to a student-centered approach proposed by the European Commision intending to improve student's "key competences". Defined as the "knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will help learners find personal fulfilment and, later in life, work and take part in society" these competences include the so-called "horizontal skills" and the "transversal competence". "Learning to learn", "cultural awareness" and "creativity", figure among the former; while the latter refers to "the acquisition of an ability to make well-grounded assessments of cultures and literatures written in English" [195]. These comes as godsent given the growing aversion to English teaching materials increasingly devoid of any cultural reference. And, even more so, they come hand in glove with my plea for the inclusion of the essay in the second language literary curricula.

In my pedagogical proposal I shall steer clear of other essayists -and their essays- I have constistently -and constructively- used in my sessions, such as William Hazlitt's "On Going a Journey", Oliver Goldsmith's "On National Prejudices", Henry James' "First Impressions of London", R.B. Cunninghame Graham's "Success", Mark Twain's "About Barbers" and G.K. Chesterton's "On Running After One's Hat" among some others. So doing, I will be able to concentrate, solely, on the veritable uselfulness, rewarding experience and reading pleasure Stevenson's essays have invariably supplied our students of Introducción a los Textos Literarios en Lengua Inglesa -both in the Grado de Lenguas Modernas and that of Estudios Ingleses- in the successive academic years.

I shall omit allusion to "learning to learn" out of spatial and personal reasons. Among which, the fact that I don't particularly favour "spoon-feeding". Regarding "cultural awareness", *The European Framework of Reference for Language: Learning, Teaching and Assessment* (2001) states that "knowledge, awareness and understanding

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[195] I owe these and further considerations such as these -in the coming paragraphs- to Professor Sánchez Canales (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid) in his groundbreaking, forthcoming study under the title, "Teaching Jewish American Literature in a Spanish Context."

of the relation -similarities and distinctive differences -between the "world of origin" and "the world of the target community" produce an intercultural awareness."

Some scholars have rightly called attention to **that fascinating crossover between literary and cultural studies** R.L.S.'s texts present. For instance, Ambrosini and Dury state that -from marginal romancer- our author "gradually emerged, rather, as *a liminal writer, a cultural actor* who is opening door after door locating himself on a number of thresholds connecting -and dividing- the realm of literature with the world of experience, politics, and history" (2006: xiv, emphasis added). Hayward (2012:263) contends that "His (Stevenson's) narrative persona often inhabits the space of the *unhomely*, the *uncanny location* produced by "extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiations" (Emphasis in the original). This is clear in all his work, even more manifest in his travel writings, where his **hunger for movement**, his avid desire to escape his Presbetyrian upper-class constraints, took him to cross multiple cultural boundaries and to suppress multiple supercilious distinctions. In them, we meet a Stevenson carried by what a critic calls "the dynamics of cross-cultural exchange". Passages like the following from "The Foreigner at Home"[196], have steadily procurred our students with the cultural awareness prescribed by the European Educational authorities.

> England and Scotland differ, indeed, in law, in history, in religion, in education, and in the very look of nature and men's faces, not always widely, but always trenchantly. Many particulars that struck Mr. Grant White, a Yankee, struck me, a Scot, no less forcibly; he and I felt ourselves foreigners on many common provocations. A Scotchman may tramp the better part of Europe and the United States, and never again receive so vivid an impression of foreign travel and strange lands and manners as on his first excursion into England. The change from a hilly to a level country strikes him with delighted wonder. Along the flat horizon there arise the frequent venerable towers of churches. (...) The warm, habitable age of towns and hamlets, the green, settled, ancient look of the country; the lush hedgerows, stiles, and privy path-ways in the fields; the sluggish, brimming rivers; chalk and smock-frocks; chimes of bells and the rapid, pertly-sounding English

[196] Written around 1881-82 and published in *Cornhill Magazine,* 45 (May 1882), 534-41.-Swearingen tells us-, this fascinating piece about Scotland versus England perception, brims with "promptings to reflection" -like linguistical and literary differences and other interesting trates- inviting open discussion of British issues, such as the Scottish drift towards independence, Brexit, etc.

speech — they are all new to the curiosity; they are all set to English airs in the child's story that he tells himself at night... (Tus., 29: 4-5).

This early comparison between the landscape and the culture he traversed and those of his native land was soon followed by a myriad of cultural crossings as this **wayward** [197] traveller moved along the landscape beyond boundaries. Gordon Hirsch points out that, in *An Inland Voyage*[198] Stevenson explores "**deracination and marginality**" while "he consciously identifies with the people who share his sense of wanderslust or bohemianism whom he meets along the way" (Hirsch, 2001: 2, emphasis mine). Excerpts from this and from his subsequent *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes*[199], worked in class, have evinced their **vast effectiveness in that new endevour commended by the educational authorities**. As Hirsch contends, R.L.S.'s main concern here is the matter of religion. He treats the whole topic in what "amounts to an extended meditation on religious differences and a plea for mutual toleration and respect". (Hirsch, 2001: 3). Illuminating on the historical and social culture of France, Stevenson invites reflection on the long-time disputes between Protestants and Catholics by drawing parallels between the two cultures; for instance Scotland-Covenanters, France-Le Camisards[200]. The ferocious dogmatism of the latter, Louis thought, resembled that of the Scottish Covenanters, the religious fanatics of his homeland who rallied against the Stuarts.

The need of texts that will foster **cultural awareness** in our students, is even more noticeably met in the third liminal position in which R.L.S. found himself in his trip to

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197 In a 1892 review in The Academy, Richard Le Galliene offered a serious and considered view of the essay as a genre, adding "The essayist is essentially a son of Shem (a traditional ancestor of the Shemites, a wanderer), and his method is a wayward travel of gypsy. He builds not, but he pitches his tent, lights his fire of sticks, and invites you to smoke a pipe with him over their crackling. While he dreamingly chats, now here and there, of his discursive way of life; the sun has gone down, and you begin to feel the sweet influences of the Pleiades". (Quoted in Maixner, 1981:386). Galliene exchanged lettters with R.L.S,. (See, for example, L,5: 247-8.)

198 A record of the canoe trip he took in Belgium and France with his friend, Sir Walter Simpson in September 1876, first published in 1878, it is the first work by Stevenson in book form.

199 In September-October 1878, Louis undertook a 12-day, 120-mile across the Cévennes Mountains in Southern France, with a mouse-colored she donkey he named Modestine, as his sole companion. Although still too close -both temporally and spatially- to Scotland, the book is overfilled with anecdotes and "culture shock", disintictively felt and wittily reflected.

200 Le Camisards, were the French protestans who -opposing the government of Louis XIV following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes- rose in armed revolt -in the early years of the XVIII century- right in the region Stevenson crossed with his donkey.

America in 1879-80[201]. His essays became more tenacious, his observations more straightforward. Fewer rhetorical flourishes gave way to **an honest struggle with personal and cultural identity** in reportage-like pieces such as "Steerage Types", "Fellow-Passengers", or "The Old Pacific Capital" from which the following lines, used in class, are indicative of that property.

> An Indian, stone-blind and about eighty years of age, conducts the singing; other Indians compose the choir; yet they have the Gregorian music at their finger ends, and pronounce the Latin so correctly that I could follow the meaning as they sang. The pronunciation was odd and nasal, the singing hurried and staccato. "In sæcula sæculoho-horum," they went, with a vigorous aspirate to every additional syllable. I have never seen faces more vividly lit up with joy than the faces of these Indian singers. It was to them not only the worship of God, nor an act by which they recalled and commemorated better days, but was besides an exercise of culture, where all they knew of art and letters was united and expressed. And it made a man's heart sorry for the good fathers of yore who had taught them to dig and to reap, to read and to sing, who had given them European mass-books which they still preserve and study in their cottages, and who had now passed away from all authority and influence in that land — to be succeeded by greedy land-thieves and sacrilegious pistol-shots. So ugly a thing may our Anglo-Saxon Protestantism appear beside the doings of the Society of Jesus. (Tus., 18: 141-2).

This overt self-denial reveals how America -like France earlier on- enabled R.L.S. to reinvent himself. Far from the Presbyterian bourgeois conformity of his native Edinburgh, his inquisitive conscience searched for some light that would free him from indifference and intolerance. Being enormously reflective about his art, he well knew that an **awareness of change, of cultural difference**, would free him from any innoble feeling that would condem his work to provinciality, to any form of **stagnation.**

In a covert allusion to Louis' famous sentence, "For my part, I travel not to go anywhere, but to go. I travel for travel's sake" (Tus. 17: 178), Alex Clunas asserts, "it is the going that matters because the journey reproduces the flux of living".

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[201] Stevenson sailed from Greenock to New York aboard the Devonia, an immigrant ship, as a steerage passenger, 7th-17th August 1879. Then, by train, from New Jersey to Monterey, California, 18th-30th August 1879. It was a truly miserable crossing that left him at death's door. The first leg of the journey is retold in *The Amateur Emigrant* -Edin Ed 3. Tus 18- but it was withdrawn, in 1880, by his cronies in London deeming it would damage Louis' reputation- while his experiences on the second appeared in *Across the Plains* (1883.)

Stevenson does not want to place himself in the centre of the new experience, but "in this flux". It is through movement that he gains that detachment from the "inner constraints and obligations" [202]of his own culture. Jonathan Raban has rightly called the essays contained in *The Amateur Emigrant* "the most graphic and searching first-hand account of nineteenth century emigration".[203] It is these essays and those in *The Silverado Squatters*, springing out of immediate experience [204], -rather than fiction, no matter how crafty, still plot-based- that best **encourage our undergraduates to step out of the** *self* **into a marginal position that will prepare them to understand and to embrace** the *Other*. The following excerpts provide an excellent example of a text that is useful for shaking a young conscience out of a limbo-like state into a courageous, sensible, and fruitful engagement with life:

> Some of my fellow-passengers, as I now moved among them in a relation of equality, seemed to me excellent gentlemen. They were not rough, nor hasty, nor disputatious; debated pleasantly, differed kindly; were helpful, gentle, patient, and placid. The type of manners was plain, and even heavy... and I thought gentleness lay more nearly at the spring of behaviour than in many more ornate and delicate societies. I say delicate, where I cannot say refined; a thing may be fine, like ironwork, without being delicate, like lace. There was here less delicacy; the skin supported more callously the natural surface of events, the mind received more bravely the crude facts of human existence; but I do not think that there was less effective refinement, less consideration for others, less polite suppression of self... (*The Amateur Emigrant,* Tus., 18: 59-60).

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[202] Clunas, Alex, "Out of My Country and Myself I Go": Identity and Writing in Stevenson's Early Travel Books", Nineteeth-Century Prose 23, no. 1 (1996): 54-73.

[203]Raban, Jonathan. *Hunting Mister Heartbreak: A Discovery of America*, New York: HarperCollins / Edward Burlingham Books, 1991. pg. 17.(Emphasis added). Besides the passage quoted in the coming page, the next one is most revealing of the documental value stressed by Raban: "We were a company of the rejected; the drunken, the incompetent, the weak, the prodigal, all who had been unable to prevail against circumstances in the one land, were now fleeing pitifully to another; and though one or two might still succeed, all had already failed. We were a shipful of failures, the broken men of England. Yet it must not be supposed that these people exhibited depression. The scene, on the contrary, was cheerful" (*The Amateur Emigrant,* Tus., 18:10).

[204] It is worth noting here that in his dedications R.L.S. makes rerefence to both works as "these sketches" (Tus., 18: xix and 153). Also to remember the fact that *The Amateur Emigrant* is but a third of his whole American experience. The second, *Across the Plains -Longman's Magazine* 1883, then in book form 1892- describes the train leg of his long westward journey to reunite with Fanny. Although it documents with a fascinating insight what emigrant travel must have been like, it is quite grim to use in the classroom. The third, *The Silverado Squatters - Century Magazine,* 7 November, 27 December 1883, then in book form a year later- , recounts his frontier life with Fanny and with Lloyd as newlyweds -"squatting" in a three-room cabin in an abandoned camp mine- in the Napa Valley, May-July 1880.

Here, besides his recurrent sympathizing and understanding of the oppressed and despised -the North-American natives, the blacks, the Jews, the Chinese... "the amateur emigrant" in general-, R.L.S. draws comparisons with the Scots in **a quest for empathy**, for identification with the life of others.

> The redbreasts and the brooks of Europe, in that dry and songless land; brave old names and wars, strong cities, cymbals, and bright armour, in that nook of the mountain, sacred only to the Indian and the bear! This is still the strangest thing in all man's travelling, that he should carry about with him **incongruous memories.** There is no foreign land; it is the traveller only that is foreign, and now and again, by a flash of recollection, lights up the contrasts of the earth." (*The Silverado Squatters*, Tus., 18: 190. Emphasis mine).

Here, he returns to his preocupation with identity themes such as **the effect of change imposed,** or **the risks of losing the sense of** *self* while leaving home behind. It is in this respect that these and the coming lines should be read to our students, not framed by any nationalistic exacerbation.

> I wrote that a man belonged in these days to a variety of countries; but the old land is still the true love, the others are but pleasant infidelities. Scotland is indefinable; it has no unity except upon the map. (Tus., 18: 172).

However, it was in **his fourth**[205] **liminal position**, while he cruised the Pacific islands[206], that R.L.S. reaped **that extraordinary awareness about loss of cultural memory** on the part of the native islanders due to the incursions of colonial powers. As

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[205] A quick recap of liminality in the life and works of R.L.S. shall not be amiss here. Our author crossed four main boundaries, the first took him to England from Scotland, the second to France, the third to America, and the fourth to the South Seas. There are not many writers with that wide, that vast -still unassuming- experience. Not many so well-equipped to dwell on personal and cultural identity with that liberality of his. And -very probably- **none better chosen to infuse that same spirit in new generations of readers!**

[206] Stevenson and his entourage -his wife Fanny, his mother Isabella, and his stepson Lloyd- took three voyages in the South Seas. On the first one they sailed from San Francisco -in June 1888, onboard the Casco, a schooner- on a six months cruise visiting the Marquesas and Tahiti -where our author fell seriously ill-. On the second - in June 1889 onboard the Equator, a cargo ship, with Fanny, Lloyd, and Joe Strong, Bell's husband, i.e. Fanny's son-in-law by her first husband- they sailed from Tautira to the Gilbert Islands, Butaritari and Apemana reaching the Samoan Islands in December of the same year. It is then that our author first considered remaining in the South Seas for the rest of his life. The third voyage, a return cruise with Fanny and Lloyd -they set off in April 1890 onboard the steamer Janet Nicoll- sailed them away to the Marshall Islands, the New Herbrides and to the French colony of New Caledonia, before bringing them back to the island of Upolu, Samoa, in an attempt to restore his health by sailing which he found tremendously salutary.

Ann Colley and other Stevenson scholars have shown, "he was more interested in witnessing and experiencing the complex and, at times, mundane nature of the cultural exchanges between the Europeans and the native". It was his **"fascination with the cross-cultural dynamic** that could occasionally eradicate the presumed differences between the two societies and even **defy or subvert confidence in colonial authority** by weakening and undermining it while at the same time bringing about the downfall ofindigenous cultural practices."[207] (Emphasis added). His letters to the periodicals testify of his "sudden swings of mood and approach" (Farrell, 2017: 183):

> But so soon as the whites are in a considerable body, the work of decivilisation proceeds merrily. I said "decivilisation", but if you insist on it, I will say "debarbarisation". At least, it is a process towards the worse[208].

In all his Pacific writings, his realistic novella "The Beach of Falesà" (1892); his two novels *The Wrecker* (1892) and *The Ebb-Tide* (1894); his South Seas ballads "The Song of Rahéro" & "The Feast of Famine" (1890); his "shilling shockers".[209] The Bottle Imp" (1891) and "The Isle of Voices" (1893); his journalistic report on the colonial situation in Samoa, *A Footnote to History* (1892); and above all, his day-to day cultural, anthropological, sociological, historical and personal impressions during his sea voyages recorded in *In the South Seas* [210](1891)... In all these, I write -besides numerous poems, fables, essays and other sketches and fragments[211]- Stevenson was finding

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[207] Colley, Anne C. (2010). 'Robert Louis Stevenson's South Seas Crossings'. In U. C. Knoepflmacher and Logan D. Browning (eds). *Victorian Hybridities: Cultural Anxiety and Formal Innovation*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press. Pp. 129-43.

[208] Quoted in Farrell, 2017, pg. 183, and n. 73. as published in the *Presbyterian,* Sydney.

[209] -R.L.S.'s own term for fantastical yarns, the ones Borges really admired.

[210] Samuel Sidney McClure(1857-1949) -an American enterpreneur who had come to the USA from Ireland as a poor immigrant boy- initially commissioned R.L.S. to write a series of "fifty letters from the Pacific on subjects of his own choice". The offer, however lucrative, was rejected when our author cancelled the serialization after the 34th letter, on the grounds that working on assigment would undermine his ambitious project. Stevenson never received the sum. For a detailed account see (L6:13, n.1) and Swearingen (1980: 134-143). The essays first apperared, in 1891, bearing the title '*The South Seas: Life under the Equator: Letters from a Leisurely Traveller'.* The Sun [New York]/. Later as *'The South Seas: A Record of Three Cruises',* Black and White [London] (Feb-Dec 1891).They were published as a volume in 1896; and later, in that same year, in the more popular *In the South Seas* (ed. S. Colvin), London/New York: Chatto & Windus (Edin Ed 20)/ Scribner's (1896). Additional material and re-arrangements appeared in the Swanston Ed 18 (1912), Vailima Ed 26 (1923), and Tus 20 (1924).

[211] See for instance the poem "The Woodman" (Tus., 22:161-164) and "Ticonderoga" and the fable "Something in It" (Tus., 5: 97-100)

sensitive ways to represent a distant culture to his readers. In a prodigious literary output, he was creating hybrid genres that would **advance their understanding** of the pernicious impact of Western ways in the lives of the peoples he met in the South Seas. Neil Rennie judges *In the South Seas* to be "a classic of Pacific writing" and refers to Joseph Conrad's admiration for the work[212]. And yet, while our students are acquainted with Conrad to the point of becoming "Conradian" themselves, they are not exposed to the Stevensonian sensibility from which the Polish moralist drew much. Unlike Conrad, the European elite failed to perceive **that salient dimension of R.L.S.'s Pacific writings: their inter-culturality**, "the diverse forms of encounter among traders, sailors, missionaries, beachcombers, Chinese servants... Germans, British, and American officers, and the indigenous populations" (Colley, 2004: 93). By placing all these works in "contact zones"[213] Stevenson was able to represent a complex reality that would unsettle the ever-present Western imperialistic ideology. It is, trully, phenomenal that these writings should still prove a great antidote against relativism and globalisation, two maladies already foreseen by Tusitala in his struggles with personal and cultural identity. Some of these essays I have used to that good wholesome, pedagogical intent laid down by the European educational authorities. They should -very probably- be offered in toto, rather than as excerpts or chapters from an individual volume. For the time being, witness the suitability of the fragments -such as the next- shored against our "ruins".

> To cross the Channel is, for a boy of twelve, to change heavens; to cross the Atlantic, for a man of twenty-four, is hardly to modify his diet. But I was now escaped out of the shadow of the Roman empire, under whose toppling monuments we were all cradled, whose laws and letters are on every hand of us, constraining and preventing. I was now to see what men might be whose fathers had never studied Virgil, had never been conquered by Cæsar, and never been ruled by the wisdom of Gaius or Papinian. By the same step I had journeyed forth out of that comfortable zone of kindred languages, where the curse of Babel is so easy to be remedied; and my new fellow-creatures sat before me dumb like images. Methought, in my travels, all human relation was to be excluded; and when I returned home (for in those days I still projected my return) I should have but dipped into a picture-book without a text. Nay, and I even questioned if my travels should be much prolonged; perhaps they were destined to a speedy end;

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[212] Neil Rennie, "Introduction" to *In the South Seas* [London: Penguin, 1998], pp. xxx - xxxi).

[213] See n. 252 below.

perhaps my subsequent friend, Kauanui, whom I remarked there, sitting silent with the rest, for a man of some authority, might leap from his hams with an ear-splitting signal, the ship be carried at a "rush, and the ship's company butchered for the table.

There could be nothing more natural than these apprehensions, nor anything more groundless. In my experience of the islands, I had never again so menacing a reception; were I to meet with such to-day, I should be more alarmed and tenfold more surprised. The majority of Polynesians are easy folk to get in touch with, frank, fond of notice, greedy of the least affection, like amiable, fawning dogs; and even with the Marquesans, so recently and so imperfectly redeemed from a blood-boltered barbarism, all were to become our intimates, and one, at least, was to mourn sincerely our departure.
(*In The South Seas,* Tus., 20:8-9).

More, much more, may be gathered on the effective and edifying use of Stevenson's essays to promote cultural awareness amongst our undergraduates. Let us, now turn, briefly, to **the second skill as commended by the European Commission: that of creativity.** Many, very many are the essays that may be used to promote the creative impulse, for instance, "My First Book: Treasure Island" (1894, Tus., 3:xxiii-xxxi) and "On the Enjoyment of Unpleasant Places" (1874, Tus 25: 175-182). In the former, Tusitala offers an account on the composition and publication of his most acclaimed *romance*. In the latter, he draws on his own remarks -derived "chiefly form his visit to Wick in September and October 1868" (Swearingen, 1980: 15)- to dwell on the fitness of inauspicious, uninviting places for the sake of literary inventiveness. Furthermore, beguiling topic essays like "The Philosophy of Umbrellas" or "The Character Of Dogs", are strongly suggestive of parallel texts by our students.

A further circumstance needs be added as promoting the felicitous use of the essay to encourage students of English Studies towards producing their own creations. The teaching of English language, literature and culture, entails instructing our students -at the Universidad Complutense- not just in the appreciation and analysis of literary texts, in English, together with the foremost critical approaches; same as in the canonical, the ethnic literatures or in that of minorities as pertaining to subjects like "Introducción a los Textos Literarios en Lengua Inglesa". No! They must also address both "a number of competences in "an effective way" within "**competence-based literature** together with the so-called "**attitudinal competences**" focused on linguistic, literary and cultural aspects, aimed at enabling the students "to make sound judgments from the aesthetic,

historial and literary standpoint".[214] Without a doubt essays -Stevenson's most specially- rather than novels prove ideal to work on these competences -which compel us to choose key passages that would facilitate the acquisition of the already mentioned competences-. Hence, in *Teaching Literature,* Showalter stresses the uppermost allegiance to the newest genre in detriment of all others, "as teachers of literature in the twenty-first century, we are most likely to be teaching the novel[215]". And yet, unlike novels, essays can be used in their original extension, for their length conforms with the necessary space and time constraits, thereby projecting **a sense of an harmonious whole, of unity not easily granted by the novel.** Thus, the aforementioned *The Amateur Emigrant*, a report of immigrant experience from within, deals with the different varieties of English -Irish, Scottish, American...-; a trait already present in *Travels with a Donkey*, in which we find the incursion of *patois*. Yet also in other essays not falling in the category of travel writing; like those of "On Falling in Love", or "An Apology for Idlers" which very much prove the importance of literacy and language education. Furthermore, Showalter emphasizes "the parallels between the trajectories of fiction and the trajectories of an individual life"[216] as a method of enormous utility to develop the "attitudinal competence" pointed out above. And we, Stevensonians, wonder if there is any other author who dwells on both trajectories so widely. For, just as in his blood-curdling shocker, the shadow and the "respectable" man are one and the same man, the man contained in the beloved initials R.L.S. is the very same man of his fictionalized versions. As Prof. Sánchez Canales, rightly states, such parallels "engages individuals in lifelong reading, a major goal set by the already cited *Teaching Reading in Europe: contexts, Policies and Practices*" [217].

Autobiographical writing in the second language class may prove inoperant in some purposes, yet not in that *telos* of engaging our students more effectively. A book like *Edinburgh Picturesque Notes* (1878), crammed with obscure legends about the dark, gruesome two-facedness of characters in Louis's native town, yet also with his

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[214] As stated in n.190 above, I owe these quotes and ideas to Prof. Sánchez Canales in his forthcoming article.

[215] Showalter, Elaine. *Teaching Literature*. Malden, Oxford, Victoria and Berlin: Blackwell Publishing, 2003, pg. 88. Quoted in Sánchez Canales' (see n. above).

[216] Ibid., pg. 89.

[217] Ibid., see notes 190 & 209 above.

anxieties to escape to "brighter skies", together with other valuable reflections from its young writer, may well move our students to read them in such a constructive way that they will take them to heart and to wish to explore those major themes in their own hometown. For, instance, the reflection on incipient globalisation, of the unease about the insecurity and fragmentation of modern urban life in Stevenson's time might be used in contrast to their current reality. Also, autobiographism -like that in most of the essays already mentioned- provides a transparent frame for intertextuality, as a device destined to facilitate the specified competences described in the syllabus.

Stevenson's essays explore the themes of freedom, the defense of the human being, of individualism, of the creative impulse. They offer an in-depth reflection on literary traditions very much open to that approach from an intertextual standpoint. Stevenson makes important claims in his essays. He denounces the philistenism, the scientific determinism and the hypocritical behaviour of the respectable bourgeois. These are but a few examples of how integrating Stevenson's essays into a general course on literature in English in the Spanish curriculum is not only possible but also of great consequence, for, at least, two reasons.

The first being, that this kind of anthropological approach fosters a study of the themes, backgrounds**,** etc., tending to achieve crafty descriptions, **what Elaine Showalter calls "the complex interactions of region, race, gender, class, and narrative technique."** [218] This allows for "a learning space" based on "student-centered" classes, characterized by "openness, boundaries, and an air of hospitality", that transforms teaching into a kind of "spiritual journey"[219], thereby counterposing it to the usual lecturing, now understood as "an active form of thinking *for the teacher*, but a passive form for the listener"[220] (Emphasis in the original).

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[218] Showalter, Ibid., pg. 88. These and the subsequent references are quoted in Sánchez Canales' (see n. 209 above).

[219] Ibid. Pp. 34-35.

[220] Ibid. p. 49.

The second reason is related to **what Chaim Potok calls the "core-to-core culture confrontation**"[221]. In his travel books, Stevenson deals extensively on the Scottish diaspora, same as on Scottish "cultural" and emerging political nationalism. His writings provide an excellent famework to address the issue of *Other*. As we have seen, in his South Seas books he develops a notion of *change* based on anthropological observation which modern anthropology has proved accurate. This "**transversal competence**", defined as "the ability to make well-grounded assessments of cultures and literatures written in English" appears as a foundamental goal in the course "Introducción a los Textos Literarios en Lengua Inglesa", yet also in most other literary classes taught through our Grado. So, why exclude the essay from this new pedagogical -at last- well-informed perspective? Why skip a whole tradition that emcompases all those virtues in a nutshell, as it were, to embrace them in the novel at a stretch? Why obliterate the paused reading proposed by the essay? Why?

Empowered by the critical perspectives already mentioned, and -above all- by my own teaching experiences -in the light of Stevenson's own views- through many years of practice, I felt that I was entitled to touch on the great utility of Steveson's essays in that *transcurricular* aim taking us from literature into language, from reading into writing, in a holistic perspective. I can attest to the substantial improvement in both competences on the part of our undergraduates and I feel that, pedagogues have consistently either erred or overlooked my point, made hopefully strong in the previous passages.

I wish to conclude the present section to this chapter quoting the following luminous passage from Martha C. Nussbaum's elucidating study *Cultivating Humanity.*

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[221] Chaim Potok, in *The Chosen* -New York: Ballantine Books, 1982 (1967) explains this confrontation as happening when someone locates himself at the heart of his own culture , constructs the world through inherited notions and values pertaining to that culture and then confronts core elements from another culture (e.g. Stevenson and Scotland as described in his South Seas tales and essays). The word "core" in that clash alludes to the essence, the substantial alien ideas colliding with those of the mainstream culture. Those outside values which "the fanatic, who is a zelous guardian of faith, fails to assimilate ... into his own tradition" (Potok, *The Chosen*, p. 147).

A Classical Defence of Reform in Liberal Education[222] in that disgraceful enormous framework we call "the attack on the humanities".

> This peril to democracy is compounded by the assault on curricular diversity that has been repetedly launched by defenders of the gentleman's model of liberal education. In principle, the gentleman's model and the world-citizen model agree on the importance of shared humanistic education for the culture of life. Against the challenge of vocationalism, they ought to be allies rather than opponents. But this has not always been the case. By portraying today's humanities departments as faddish, insubstantial, and controlled by a radical elite, cultural conservatives -while calling for a return to a more traditional arts curriculum- in practice feed the popular disdain for the humanities that has led to curtailment of departments and programs and to the rise of narrow pre-professional studies. When critics such as Allan Bloom, Roger Kinball and George Will caricature the activities of today's humanities departments by focusing only on what can be made to look extreme and absurd, they do not promote their goal of increasing university support for traditional humanistic education.

Underlying this thought is the proposition by Lopate that the essay should "certainly be celebrated, because it is one of the most approachable and diverting types of literature we possess" (1994, xxiii); and that other, already in Hazlitt's, that our social identity is superficial and provincial, so that as travel, the essay humanises us by making us "lose our importunate, tormenting, everlasting personal identity in the elements of nature, and become the creature of the moment, clear of all ties to hold to the universe only by a dish of sweet-breads, and to owe nothing but the score of the evening- and no loger seeking for applause and meeting with contempt, to be known by no other title than *the Gentleman in the parlour!*"[223].

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[222] Harvard University Press, 1997, p. 298.

[223] William Hazlitt, "On Going a Journey", F. H. Pritchard, 1932. p. 222

3.7 The spite of spoiling strategies: The Modernists' offence.

The philological interest which causes us to check the etymology of words such as "chicanery" and feel disappointed about its derivation having nothing to do with Mexico can be as constructive as deliberate ambiguities in the literary text. In its zest, scholarly work has often proved a form of critical deception through labelling. Hence the constant revisionism and reinterpretation.

It is all based on the false assumption that knowledge is basically academic. Which would be equivalent, in the other direction, to declaring every form of ignorance idiocy. I will try this other way. Why be obdurate in praising and condemning when a voice inside us says, "This shall be so till I learn more about the matter?" Reasoning like this may sound off-beat, but it is consequential with what I mean in this brief section. Why not take textual evidence for what there *is* rather than for what we *take to be* there?

Literary criticism has long looked very much like it was forged on the anvil of our sympathy or aversion for the author, rather than on the canvas of the work of art. In such a way that what was left finished on the easel, on the smithy, was given shape and frame through biographical introductions hammered rather than by textual evidence exposed like brushstrokes. How far did the New Critics go in balancing out that tendency? No doubt there was much of use, yet also more than a little abuse. And no abuse more seeking to obscure the truth than that of the Modernists. This elite appropriated their own favourites, bestowing a gravity to them calculated to irritate traditionalists.

A step further took these literati **to render those authors they disfavoured anathema**. Critic Joseph Pearce writes rightly about Bloomsbury, the "implicitly anti-Christian literary set who exerted a fashionably iconoclastic and culturally subversive influence in the years between the two world wars", pointing to "certain

things" being "accepted in a lump by all the Moderns"[224]. Much like the flapper, who flouting conventional standards of behaviour looked at her dark heavily-dressed Victorian matron with revulsion, these *nonpareil* delivered their verdict with their contempt. It was their crooked perspective that "regarded Stevenson's writing as a prime example of the spirit of the Victorian period: passé and unworthy of inclusion in the canon". This bears comparison to a lesser extent with what F.R. Leavis would later do in his *The Great Tradition* (1948), a kind of pantheon of all time greats that included Jane Austen, Joseph Conrad, George Eliot and Henry James, but excluded and dwarfed Laurence Sterne, Thomas Hardy, Charles Dickens, and Stevenson himself[225]. Many are the Stevensonians who resent that exclusion, not me. Why? Because having embraced tradition, our author was soon getting a lot of mileage from that tradition both by reason of his perpetual travelling and his constant experimentation.

Chalking up an author to a movement on the classroom board is not nailing him to the wall. Still, that is the effect on our students when we tell them Emily Dickinson was, "not exactly a Trascendentalist, at least not in the same way Emerson was a Trascendentalist". When we introduce her as a precursor of Modernism, we don't mean her a Modernist in the same sense Virginia Woolf was a Modernist. Similarly, we don't call Crane's *Maggie a Girl of the Streets* a naturalistic novella in the same way, not by any proximity of style or purpose, that we call *Heart of Darkness* a naturalistic novel. It is this "apparent resistance to be categorized" quality that speaks of real singularity. It is this property of defying while being elusive that speaks of greatness.

Stevenson was hailed as a poseur, much loved and discussed, censored, then taken to be finally irrelevant[226]. We have his words cried out upon the sudden realization of his fame, "There must be something wrong in me, or I would not be popular" (L5: 171).

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[224] Joseph Pearce's *Unafraid of Virginia Woolf, The Friends and Enemies of Roy Campbell*. Intercollegiate Studies Institute. Wilmington, Delaware. 2004. Quoting Chesterton in the last line, Pearce dwells on the many virtues of the great poet who was fully obliterated for being on the "wrong side" of the political spectrum. Yet his literary stand and stature were proven in *The Flaming Terrapin* and *Adamastor* -amongst other books- same as by more than a tremendous trifle: his unsurpassed translation of Saint John of the Cross, whose manuscripts he happened to save from sure destruction.

[225] To be precise, Leavis includes Stevenson in a footnote: "Out of Scott a bad tradition came. ...with Stevenson it took on 'literary' sophistication and fine writing'. Leavis had already omitted RLS from the "canon" of great writers in his *The Common Pursuit* (1952).

[226] In "the Fall of Stevenson" Leonard Woolf "registered with satisfaction and complacency" that "a false style tells most fatally against a writer when, as with Stevenson, he has nothing original to say". *Nation and Athenaeum* 34 (5 January, 1924), p. 517.

The irony is that by being called *a romancer* he was so ahead of his time that he soon created, if I may say so, "a Modernist **lookalike**" within himself, from which the truth would shine out, carried by his fascination with duplicities. I dwell on this idea in chapter V while discussing both his ethics and his aesthetics.

A discussion at some length would take us to the complexities of defining Modernism in order to defy the Modernist elite; to the work of Harry Levin, Michael Levenson, Ricardo Quiñones, Richard Ellmann, Charles Fiedelson, Malcom Bradbury, James Macfarlane and Harold Bloom among other critics, and to the perennial matter of assigining a date to it. A gargantuan task beyond the scope of this dissertation. No, other bits of information will suffice. Amongst which, the fact that Dylan Thomas sided with Whyndham Lewis against the Bloomsburys[227]. And yet more significantly, that in an early piece -"The Defects of Kipling"[228] (1909)- T. S. Eliot praised *The Ebb-Tide* as "a triumph" which combines "truth and strangeness". And later -in a review of Chesterton's (1927)- he is disappointed that no one has produced "a critical essay showing that Stevenson is a writer of permanent importance, and why" (Maixner 1981:42-43). It will be argued that it was all a matter of choice, but it is still meaningful that such comments came out of what was considered the most prestigious voice of the literati of the day. Eliot's estimation of Stevenson can also be traced in his quoting "Requiem" in "The Wasteland".

An assertion like this, from one of the most illustrious representatives of Modernism, takes us to Alan Sandison, who has been among the scholars who called Stevenson **a Modernist**, and to his discussion of those aspects of Stevenson's work satisfying the contentions made by the Modernists. His contribution[229] was not notable for being one of the first to do so. In 1885, William Archer[230] had already discussed Stevenson as "a modern of the moderns" in what Paul Maixner (1981:160) called "the first important general assessment of Stevenson's work".

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[227] In a letter to a friend Dylan Thomas wrote, "Neuter men and lady tenors rub shoulders with "the shams and shaman, the amateur hobo and homo of Bloomsbury W.C. I." (Paul Ferris, Ed.) *The Collected Letters of Dylan Thomas*, London: J.M. Dent, 1985, p. 56.

[228] Reprinted in *Essays in Criticism* 51i (2001).

[229] See Sandison (1996). *Robert Louis Stevenson and the Appearance of Modernism. A Future Feeling*.

[230] The introducer of Isben to the English speaking world, Archer, was a prestigious critic who was already challenging traditional literary values. Praising the Scot as being "in the front rank of our new school of stylist", Archer talked about Stevenson's putative Modernism.

Embracing Archer's perceptions and elaborating on then, Sandison (1996) ably documented how RLS was "**thoroughly committed** (emphasis mine) to the virtues we associate with modern literary artistry". His study offers a noteworthy, **albeit debatable**, analysis of those principles in Tusitala satisfying the Modernist dictums: self-consciousness, textuality and authority. Be that as it may, his reasoning -together with no few insconsistences-, provokes an uneasy state by which one is ready to both agree and disagree; as I would agree with Steven Pinker's[231] scorn with Virginia Woolf's famous statememt that "in or about December, 1910, human character changed"; and disagree with Maurice Beebe's[232] celebration of Modernism as "the greatest of all literary periods".

Let us take a concise look at those principles -so that we don't meander into a composite one- from Sandison's assertion that "RLS's work has "a future feeling"(Getrude Stein's phrase), highly compatible with what I construe to be Modernist sentiments" (Sandison 1999:3)[233].

On self-consciousness Sandison declares, "If anything distinguishes Stevenson's writing it is his intense artistic self-consciousness. It manifests itself in a number of ways, but principally, perhaps, in an abiding concern with matters of form and metafictional structures" (Ibid, 4). I am, nonetheless, prone to believe with Chesterton that "the critics are (too) fond of suggesting that he (RLS) was nothing if not self-conscious; (and) that the one really great and important work which he did for the world was done quite unconsciously" (Chesterton, 1927:31).

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[231] Pinker clarifies: "She (Woolf) was referring to the new philosophy of modernism that would dominate the elite arts and criticism for much of the twentieth century, **and whose denial of human nature** was carried over with a vengeance to postmodernism... The elite arts, criticism, and scholarship are in trouble because the statement is wrong. Human nature did not change in 1910, or in any year thereafter." Quoted in Lee Oser's *The Ethics of Modernism: Moral Ideas in Yeats, Eliot, Joyce, Woolf, and Beckett.* Cambridge University Press. 2007.p.1. Following Woolf, Roland Barthes looked further back in time to assert: "Around 1850 **classical writing therefore disintegrated,** and the whole of literature, from Flaubert to the present day, became the problematics of language". Quoted in Sandison 1999:2.

[232] See Maurice Beebe's introduction in "What Modernism Was". *Journal of Modern Literature.* Vol. 3, No. 5, From Modernism to Postmodernism (Jul., 1974), pp. 1065-1084.

[233] Sandison seeks to further justify his assertion adding "it helps to know that writers like Nabokov and Borges have also recognised in Stevenson that same future feeling" (Idid, 3). On my part, in this and in the next section, I seek to be more precise about what that "future feeling" entails regarding the appreciation of RLS by these two geniuses.

About textuality, I agree with Sandison's perception that Stevenson "delights in the poliphonic coexistence -even within one text- of a number of forms, articulating themselves in a number of "voices" (Ibid, 6).

On authority, I am more than happy to concur with Sandison's estimation that, for Stevenson, "the task of art is to redeem, essentially or existentially, the formless universe of contingency... The act of fictionality thus becomes the crucial act of imagining" [234]. (Ibid, 8-9).

But, as Beebe and other theorists have pointed out, these qualities are in no way, "the unique property of the Age of Modernism" [235]. If it is a proven truth that Modernist authors are self-centered -which is why Modernism is associated with detachment and non-commitment-, it is not less truth that, particularly in RLS, there is *otherness*, more than an abiding interest, an affinity with the people he encountered and wrote about. Such was his empathy with the indigenous cultures and his conviction in their moral integrity to govern their own destinies -regardless of any power- shown in *A Footnote to History,* in his South Seas fiction and in his early work. Besides, there is no more self-conscious writer, none more fixated on inagurating a new form than Montaigne - to offer one conspicuous example-; and yet literary criticism has never called Montaigne a Modernist.

Likewise, the polyphonic coexistence of form and voices was vastly present in the Romantic poets, whose experimentation was even more conspicuous in their seeking to immerse the I in nature.

Finally, my vehement observation that if there is any force in Modernism this will be far from redeeming or edifying. Stevenson was "an aggressive optimist" [236] (Harman 2005:73), he accepted the world as very well worth living. It was pessimistic critics and Modernist writers -above all the Bloomsbury Group- who, incapable of exercising

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[234] This is concomitant with my comments on Walter Benjamin, apropos RLS, that I make in the next section.

[235] See n. 225 above.

[236] As I contend, RLS's optimism was always curious, always inquisitive, always despising routine and yearning for the thrill of the unexpected. Even in *The Amateur Emigrant*, often thought to be his only bleak book, even in its grimmest chapter, the one entitled "Despised Races", Stevenson finally yields to something reassuring as he strikes his final note insisting on the prospect of a new dawn.

RLS's "gallant and cheery stoicism"[237], turned a blind eye to him. For a man of a feeble nature it is courageous and arduous to play the role of a happy warrior against the rigours of life. It calls for that certain ease and playful elegance -very coming to Stevenson's vitality- called *spigliatezza*. The very self-confidence pessimists and decadents lacked in such a way that to play their part, and play it successfully, they had but to whimper. Stevenson's concern about authority and originality here referred shares nothing with the hostility of the Modernists towards traditional authority.

Trying to elucidate how much of a Modernist Stevenson was, I rather side with critics like Nicholas Daly, who seems to suggest that Stevenson's main contribution to literary modernism consists on his **reviving the *romance* from an earlier narrative** form "and a hankering after some lost literary world", into "a distinctively modern phenomenon." [238]Matthew Wickman also asserts quite rightly that "Stevenson's fate was most powerful if **uncoupled from high modernism** (emphasis mine) and linked instead to the forgotten class of the storyteller, a figure whose critical significance depended on his partial disappearance from view". [239] I also uphold Stephen Arata's view that RLS "presents a more complex case, and in many ways a more interesting one". That "the commitment to stylistic perfection is in his case **wholly in the service of pleasure, of literature as play, of reading as idleness** (emphasis mine)"[240]. And, finally, I thoroughly, sympathize with Kenneth Simpson's opinion that **it is RLS's "kinetic method" which "identifies him as a harbinger of Modernism"** (emphasis mine); that "Stevenson's writing throughout is characterised by the interplay of values of motion and stasis"; and that it is his "sophisticated techniques such as fragmentary form and the

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[237] Andrew Lang' 'Mr Stevenson's Works' In *Essays in Little*. New York. Charles Scribner's Sons. 1897. p. 41.

[238] Nicholas Daly, *Modernism, Romance and the Fin De Siécle: Popular Fiction and British Culture, 1880-1914*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999:9)

[239] Matthew Wickman, "Stevenson, Benjamin, and the Decay of Experience" in I*nternational Journal of Scottish Literature* at www.ijsl.stir.ac.uk (last consulted 2014) ISSN 1751-2808 Issue Two, Spring/Summer 2007).

[240] Stephen Arata, "Stevenson, Morris, and the Value of Idleness" in Ambrosini and Dury (2006:10-11).

free indirect narration (that) require the reader's alertness on the journey through the text"[241].

I shall conclude this section clarifying that by "The Modernist' Offense" I imply a blistering attack that was, veritably, twofold: In their egomania, the Bloomsburys -together with other cynical Modernists- were attuned to a fashion that was transitory, fugitive and contingent rather than eternal and immutable[242]. In their bland reductionism they suppressed their origins and "revised" their history to harbour their "up-to-dateness" inclinations, **blindly ascribing our author** -surely one of the most anti-Victorian ones in a wider sense- **to the immature and unsophisticated.**

In their revolt against all authority, many Modernists and scholars of Modernism -Sandison included- **talked about Stevenson as a Modernist in the same way they talked about modernity**. For RLS the idea of modernity was an assumption, a rebuilding of the tradition in an edifying way. His experimentation was a perfect blending of the received with the unconventional; a realization that there was more innovation in the *romance* and other traditions than there was wisdom in the adumbrated. A better knowledge of Stevenson's important work would have freed these Modernists from what C.S.Lewis called "chronological snobbery"; namely the prejudice that the present -and, above all, the future- was, of necessity, superior to the past. A closer understanding of his work would have granted them the realization that he had achieved the unity of the ancient and the modern into something greater than both. For Stevenson was also an optimist about that advanced stage of social development and organization, that collective inherintance we call the history of civilization. And though he adored the sea, in his worshipping of change and kinesis, he did not fall in the absurdity of worshipping a changeable god.

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[241] Kenneth Simpson's "The great affair is to move: Stevenson's Journeys", contained in (SCROLL: *Scottish Cultural Review of Language & Literature*) Volume 18. [Paperback] Amsterdam & new York, 2012. Publisher: Editions Rodopi B.V. (3 Sep 2012), p. 231.

[242] Fairly -perhaps oddly- enough, I paraphrase here William Archer's later elucidation -still 1885- of the modern artist and of his tendencies. Paul Maixner (1981:160-161).

3.8 That "thing" some literary giants passed over

It is ironic -albeit coherent- that, while the Modernist elite dismissed Stevenson, those creative writers who really admired him came -almost invariably- from outside academy to be ranked amongst the most highly respected authors. I am not referring here to his strict contemporaries at home, puzzled and ready to admit with Oscar Wilde's "dabbling in French decadence"[243] that, "In Gower Street Stevenson could have written a new *Trois Mousquetaires*. In Samoa he wrote letters to The Times about Germans"[244]. No, though, there were certainly -amongst these- those who lauded him and sensed -with Henry James-, the open modesty of the following words:

> You don't know what news is, nor what politics, nor what the life of man, till you see it on so small a scale and with your own liberty on the board for stake. I would not have missed if for much. And anxious friends beg me to stay at home and study human nature in Brompton drawing-rooms! And anyway you know that such is not my talent... I am an Epick Writer with a k to it, but without the necessary genius.
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> (Stevenson to James, L 7:449).

No, I here refer to less contemporary lovers of Stevenson like Kipling, Chesterton, Hopkins, Eliot, Proust, Benjamin, Nabokov and Calvino; with a detection on Borges as one of his most dedicated defenders.

Kipling's affinity with Tusitala has been widely documented by biographers who tell us of his twice thwarted plans to visit Samoa[245]; and, most importantly, by the fact

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[243] Joseph Pearce's in *The Unmasking of Oscar Wilde.* Ignatius: San Francisco. 2004, p.51

[244] Quoted in Caroline McCracken-Flesher's "Travel Writing", chp 6 of *The Edinburgh Companion to Robert Louis Stevenson*. 2010. p. 367.

[245] In his autobiography, *Something of Myself* (1937), Kipling, then in Auckland, declared that "the captain of the fruit-boat, which might or might not go to Samoa at some time or another, was so devoltedly drunk that he abandoned the idea and went to India. (Quoted in L7: n4, 162-163). Years later, RLS writes from Vailima: "We are menaced with an invasion of Kiplings; very glad we shall be to see them". (L 7:254) Which never happened, since, expected to appear in the mail steamer, they had gone to Japan.

that they actually corresponded[246]. We know that "Kipling was a devoted reader of Stevenson by 1888". "There is a reference to him in "Black Jack", a short story included in the volume *Soldiers Three* whose opening paragraph was later deleted. [247] We also know of the "many references to Stevenson's works in Kipling's writings". Thus, *The Wrong Box "*is referred to in the story "The Vortex"[248] by the latter.

G.K.Chesterton has been much touched upon on these pages, due to his splendid rejection of Frank Swinnerton's accusations with which he sought to demolish Stevenson's work, and Stevenson the man. Maixner contends that "Chesterton's epigrammatic brilliance, undermined his defense"[249]. Any reader equipped with good Chestertonian luggage would send whoever made such an assertion homewards to think again. Since, it was Chesterton who first reinstated our author. And, furthermore, as I pointed out earlier, he was the true lover of Stevenson who defended him against the gawky Stevensonism of his cult.

The extraordinary poet of beguiling lines and sophisticated rhyme patterns that was Gerard Manley Hopkins read *Kidnapped* and *Jekyll and Hyde* shortly after their publication. His friend and correspondent Robert Bridges had suggested that he should study the classics instead of wasting his time with modern fiction. Hopkins wrote back complaining, "This sour severity blinds you to his great genius", and wondering "how can you be so blind as not to see" that in *The Strange Case* 'the superficial touches of character are admirable' and 'worthy of Shakespeare'? Hopkins calls "The Pavilion on

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[246] Besides the joke letters they exchanged (see L7:91 for an instance), Stevenson's missives to his associates contain numerous references to Kipling. Thus, in 1890, in a letter to James he writes: "Well, we begin to be the old folgies now; and it was high time *something* rose to take our places. Certainly Kipling has the gifts; the fairy godmothers were all tipsy at his christening"... (L7:6). And again, later, to James: "I was betrayed in a friend's house -and I was pained to hear that other friends delighted in the barmecide feast. I cannot read a page of Hardy for many a long day, my confidence is gone. So that you and Barrie and Kipling are now my Muses three. And with Kipling, you know, there are reservations to be made" (L7:450).

[247] The said paragraph read: 'There is a writer called Mr Robert Louis Stevenson, who makes most delicate inlay work in black and white, and files out the fraction of a hair. He has written a story about a Suicide Club, wherein men gamble for Death because other amusements did not bite sufficiently. My friend private Mulvaney knows nothing about Mr Stevenson, but he once assisted informally at almost such a Club as that gentleman has described, and his words are true". Norman Page, *A Kipling Companion.* Literary Companions, London: Springer,1984. p. 33

[248] Ibid.

[249] Frank Swinnerton on *Stevenson as a Writer of the Second Class,*' n Maixner (1981: 507-10).

the Links" "genius from beginning to end" and praises its author as a "master of a consummate style, and each phrase is finished as in poetry. It will not be at all, your treatment of him...' [250].

I have already mentioned Eliot's high esteem for *The Ebb-Tide,* same as his quoting Stevenson's *Requiem* in the flagship of his poems. We know too that he praised "the happy rhythm of his verse"; a meaningful circumstance, given that RLS has rarely been celebrated as a poet himself and that Modernism worked through poetry first before leaving its imprint on fiction.

We are also familiar with that passage in Marcel Proust's *Les Temps retrouvé* (1927) in which, "claimed to be taken from a Goncourt Journal, Swann hears someone describe Stevenson as a children's writer- and this slighting comment, "met dans la bouche de Swann cette affirmation péremptoire: 'Mais c'est tout à fait un grand écrivain, Stevenson, je vous assure, monsieur de Goncourt, un très grand, l'égal des plus grands'"[251]

Walter Benjamin's "affinity" with our author -made plain in his essay 'Der Erzähler' [The Storyteller] (1936)[252]- is sort of serendipitous, given that it comes from the very period in which RLS 's reputation was dwindling, and from a critical school with which the Scot would have shared next to nothing. However, Vanessa Smith (1998:23) explains this peculiar admiration in that, in a way, Benjamin "links the production of narrative with a context of licensed workmanship'. While, David Farrier argues that Louis anticipated that "conjunction of building (edifying) and writing", "the construction of a narrative, or of a dwelling structure", that is "ordered, controlled, and fitted to a particular design (purpose), by a single figure" [253] . On his part, Wickman avers that "On the Program of the Coming Philosophy" -an early essay unpublished in his lifetime-, "Benjamin noted how the new empirical philosophy reduced experience

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[250] Quoted in Catherine Phillips (ed.) *Gerard Manley Hopkins. The Major Works.* Including all the poems and selected prose. Oxford: O.U.P. 2002, pp. 265-266. The letter is dated 28 October 1886.

[251] In Ambrosini and Dury (2006: xvii).

[252] Walter Benjamin, 'The Storyteller', in Illuminations trans. Harry Zohn (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970) pp.83-109.

[253] David Farrier, " Unwritable Dwellings/Unsettled Texts: Robert Louis Stevenson's In the South Seas and the Vailima House", *International journal of scottish literature.* www.ijsl.stir.ac.uk (last visited 2014) ISSN 1751-2808. Issue one, Autumn 2006.p.7.

'to a nadir, to a minimum, of significance'.; and explains that it was Stevenson's "winnowing of experience to a series of impressionable moments" that caused Benjamin to regard him "as something of a prophet on the subject of the decay of experience, one of the most enigmatic but extensive problems the modern West had inherited from the Enlightenment"[254]. Even though one is not, particularly, liable to welcome Benjamin's theorising, I must avow that I find his comment that Stevenson "**provides an experience richer than that typically supplied by modernity** -especially in 'dialectal images'[255] (emphasis mine)- utterly suggestive.

Vladimir Nabokov's extensive correspondence with Edmund Wilson, before their friendship subsided, bespeaks of the former's admiration for Tusitala. Preparing material for a class, the Russian-born author invited Wilson's suggestions on a series of classics. In his returned appreciation he accused his friend of approaching Stevenson from the wrong angle. He should praise not *Treasure Island,* but *Jekyll and Hyde* for high art[256].

From a French, a German and a Russian-American we move to an equally respected and widely read Italian master of imaginative narratives. Praising his "marvellous lightness", Italo Calvino avowed, 'I love Stevenson because he gives the impression he is flying'[257] and declared himself a 'Stevenson worshipper'[258]. The author of *The Nonexistent Knight* also wrote about his indebtness to Cesare Pavese and Aldo Camerino, for introducing the genius of Tusitala in Italy. Later in life, he would show his steadfast admiration for our author stating:

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[254] Matthew Wickman. 'Stevenson, Benjamin and the Decay of Experience'. *International Journal of Scottish Literature 2*. 2007, pp. 7-9.

[255] Ibid. Benjamin upheld, Wickman says, that it was the replacement of oral storytelling by the novel which brought forth the decay of experience. And that "it is in the context of storytelling that Benjamin elicits Stevenson, converting him into an image of a quality of experience richer than that typically afforded by modernity, but immanent to those cultural critics who know how to perceive it".

[256] "Please completely forget, disremember, obliterate, unlearn, consign to oblivion any notion you may have that "Jekyll and Hyde" is some kind of mystery story, a detective story, or a movie" (Navokov, Vladimir 1980. "The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde" (1885) In *Lectures in Literature*. Ed. Fredson Bowers, 179-205. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

[257] Italo Calvino (1959). "Risposte a 9 domande sul romanzo". In Barenghi . Ibid 1995: 1528-9.

[258] Italo Calvino (1955). "L'isola del tesoro ha i suoi segreti". In Mario Barenghi ed. (1995). "Italo Calvino, Saggi 1945-1985", vol. I. Milano: Mondadori. 1995: 968-9.

> Sul valore autentico di Robert Louis Stevenson non tutti i giudizi sono d'accordo. C'è chi lo considera un minore e chi un grande in assoluto. Questo secondo è pure il mio avviso: per la nettezza limpida e leggera dello stile ma anche per il nocciolo morale d'ogni sua narrazione[259]

It is worthwhile to point out here that, besides speaking highly of RLS's style[260], Calvino pinpoints "the moral nucleous of all his narratives". -A blessing if face to face with the amoral approach of the Modernists-. The fact that this admiration had been shown even from his early novels -such as *Il sentiero dei nidi di ragno* (*The Path to the Spider's Nests)* and, above all, *Il visconte dimezzato* (*The Cloven Viscount)* adds consistency to his sincere appreciation of Stevenson.

Among these and many other literary luminaries[261], Borges -whose prolific work is full of references to his literary forefather [262] - surfaces as the author who has most extensively and **"openly"** acknowledged his indebtness to Stevenson. Thus, in his prologue to *The New Arabian Nights* he reminisces:

> Noches pasadas, me detuvo un desconocido en la calle Maipú - Borges, quiero agradecerle una cosa – me dijo. Le pregunté qué era y me contestó- Usted me ha hecho conocer a Stevenson. Me sentí justificado y feliz. Estoy seguro que el lector de este volumen compartirá esa gratitud. Como el de Montaigne o el de Sir Thomas Browne, el descubrimiento de Stevenson es una de las perdurables felicidades que puede deparar la literatura[263].

And in his prologue for a translation of Stevenson's *Fables,* which he collaborated with Roberto Alifano, the Argentinian states:

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[259] Italo Calvino, (1983). 'Il dottor Jekyll tradotto da Fruttero & Lucentini'. In Barenghi 1995: 982-8.

[260] In a late interview, Italo declared, "Certain writers I read as a boy, like Stevenson, have remained models of style for me, of lightness, narrative impetus, and energy." Interviewed by William Weaver, Damien Pettigrew, "Italo Calvino, The Art of Fiction No. 130", in *the Paris Review, Issue 124, Fall 1992*

[261] For an exhaustive record see Richard Dury's "The Robert Louis Stevenson Archive" at www.robert-louis-stevenson.org/richard-dury-archive (last visited September 2nd 2016).

[262] In 'Borges y yo', (1960), the Argentian author states: "Me gustan los relojes de arena, los mapas, la tipografía del siglo XVIII, las etimologías, el sabor del café y la prosa de Stevenson". We also have his grandiloquent, " From childhood onwards, Stevenson has been for me one of the forms of happiness" in his introduction to "The Isle of Voices", he so fervently admired. See also Apendix A for a retelling of that indebtness.

[263] *Las Nuevas noches árabes*. Markheim' (1986), reprinted in *Biblioteca personal. Prólogos* (1988).

> En la vasta obra de Stevenson este libro es un libro lateral, una breve y secreta obra maestra. Aquí también están su imaginación, su coraje y su gracia.[264]

However, Borges's candid homage to his literary master and friend in *Introducción a la literatura inglesa* is, presumably, the passage most widely quoted on that said indebtness:

> (Stevenson) ha dejado una obra importante que no contiene una sola página descuidada y sí muchas espléndidas... En 1886 publicó *El extraño caso del doctor Jekyll y del señor Hyde*... La escena de la transformación le fue dada a Stevenson por un sueño. La teoría y la práctica del estilo lo preocuparon siempre; escribió que el verso consiste en satisfacer una expectativa en forma directa y la prosa en resolverla de un modo inesperado y grato[265].

It is this fragment by the fantasy Spanish writer on the Scottish luminary that many savvy enthusiasts of both authors call to mind:

> A los espejos, laberintos y espadas que ya prevé mi resignado lector se han agregado dos temas nuevos. La vejez y la ética. Ésta, según se sabe, nunca dejó de preocupar a cierto amigo muy querido que la literatura me ha dado, a Robert Louis Stevenson[266]

The reader of these pages may intuit there won't be the tiniest mote of disagreement -on my part- with Borges' fervent recognition, this is not so. For his sincere avowal pointed to a denial; at least to **a covert adulation**. One that I make extensible to all the literary giants so far mentioned with regard to their estimation of RLS. Since, extolling the virtues of our hero's imaginative fiction -as a glimpse to his titles they celebrated will show- **they forsook, or at least, failed to commend his other prose writings, namely... his essays!**

The Stevenson enthusiast may -at a distance- deem this last comment more than a bit persnickity; but yet when one ponders on it he finds it is not that scrupulous after all. It will dawn on him that these masters here referred saw in our author a consummate stylist full of vitality and imaginative force. Yet, while singing the praises of this last

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[264] Robert Louis Stevenson, *Fábulas*, Buenos Aires, Legasa, 1983, p.11.

[265] Jorge Luis Borges, *Obras completas en colaboración.* Buenos Aires, Emecé, 1979.

[266] Jorge Luis Borges, *Elogio de la sombra* (1969), in *Poesía Completa.* Penguin Random House. Editorial España, 2011.

virtue **they neglected to consider, at best passed over, the fact, the sheer fact, that there was depth and breadth in his non-fictional prose.** Did they fail to read on? Did they not go beyond RLS's *romance of adventure*? I wondered while taking pleasure in such idolizing passages as that of Alfonso Reyes in his *Vision de Anáhuac* ("Una imaginación como la de Stevenson, capaz de soñar *La isla del tesoro* ante una cartografía infantil, hubiera tramado, sobre las estampas del Ramusio, mil y un regocijos para nuestros días nublados").

For sure these masters were brilliant essayists themselves. So, why not acknowledge RLS's prolific work other than just his yarns and tall tales and other pure narratives? Is there any evidence that these grandees ever read his essays? Did they, by some chance, fear that they might be chided by an elite? I also pondered while reading the equally exquisite much appropriated, and thus covertly admired, prose of the *gran polígrafo mexicano,* as Reyes was fittingly nicknamed. And the same about the said grandees. Were they all not **to blame for forcing a vision of the Scottish author bent only on the strength of his imaginative tales and novels**?

For sure there was mention of some of the essays by such grandees and other like these. Thusly, William James -Henry James's brother -considered that "The Lantern-Bearers" deserved "to become immortal, both for the truth of its matter and the excellence of its form".[267] Jack London asserted that Stevenson had almost no equal. He declared he admired his essays particularly for their highly personal style and careful choice of words, but also for their subject matter[268]. Walter Benjamin, in a letter to Theodor and Greta Adorno, speaks highly of 'A Plea for Gas Lamps' albeit drawing unconvincing parallels with Poe's 'The Man in the Crowd'. Wickman (2007) has asserted there are similarities between Benjamin's *Arcades Projec*t and Stevenson's essays at a large scale; given that, what Steiner called Benjamin's "crowning achievement" did not, in a similar way to Stevenson's essayistic work, cohere into a doctrine. This is debatable; and yet here we lack the space and the willingness to debate this issue.

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[267] William James, (1917) a reprint of New York; H. Holt and Company, 1900. p. 10.

[268] See Jack London, *The Letters of Jack London*, vol. 1. 1896-1905. Standford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1988).

On his part, Italo Calvino praises Stevenson's 'On Style in Literature: Its Technical Elements' [269], as an essay which 'anticipates the phonetic and phonological analyses of Roman Jakobson', and that is "more innovative because it makes little use of rhetorical or linguistic terminology, trying instead to examine the interaction of form and meaning". **Curtailment is, once more, disguised as tribute.** At least, a subconscious one. As I argue in the summary to the fourth chapter and in the liminary words to the fifth, there is no analytical school, no critical approach that would, systematically, embrace the whole span of Louis' thought. None that would serve to explain or to accommodate it. For, even at face value, Stevenson's theorising encompasses, at least, an intricate combination of those, both by convergence and divergence.

Which brings us back to Borges and to his essay "The False Problem of Ugolino"[270], where, discussing Dante and the confusion of life and reality, he mentions Stevenson's "Some Gentlemen in Fiction". Quoting his observation "that a book's characters are only strings of words", Borges elaborates on that anthropological vision by the master he revered proferring his conviction that only words are needed to conjure up "The powerful men who ruled the earth" such as Alexander or Attila.

In *Introducción a la literatura inglesa*, quoted above, Borges mentions "Pulvis et Umbra" in passing, while referring to Stevenson as "una de las figuras más queribles y más heróicas de la literatura inglesa"[271].

As a fervent reader of Borges -from my teens till my late twenties- I thought along with Ronald Christ that the Stevenson that appealed to Borges was, very probably, the Stevenson of *Treasure Island*, *The Wrecker* and "The Isle of Voices", rather than the essayist and the theorist[272]. Regardless of the fact that he hailed his master and literary alter ego as lovable and heroic, an ethic man, and a styler both in prose and verse, I had

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[269] Published in *The Contemporary Review* in April 1885, was described by Stevenson in letters as 'path-breaking and epoch making' and as 'a sort of start upon my Treatise on the Art of Literature', a work several times announced but never written.

[270] Jorge Luis Borges, "The False Problem of Ugolino", in Selected Non-Fiction, ed. Eliot Weinberger (New York: Viking, 1999), pp.277-79.

[271] Jorge Luis Borges, *Obras completas en colaboración*. Buenos Aires, Emecé, 1979.

[272] See Ronald Christ, *The Narrow Act: Borges' Art of Illusion,* New York: N.Y. University Press, 1969. p. 58.

the sneaking suspicion that Borges' unquenchable interest for fantasy, detective stories and reinterpretation had led him to brush aside the non-fictional prose of his predecessor. Later on, having abandoned the admirer[273] and focused widely on the admired, I came to the realisation that in *Historia universal de la infamia,* Borges had taken into practice those salient theories wonderfully expressed in Stevenson's *Familar Studies of Men and Books*[274]. My inkling was amply corroborated by re-reading *El libro de arena, Otras inquisiciones, El hacedor, El aleph,* etc. In the flaring light of the essays and my extensive knowledge of them, I concluded that the Argentinian was not merely acquainted with them, no doubt, but was fully cognizant of RLS's non-fictional prose which he must have read earlier on, and re-read in great detail through his writing career.

Furthermore, it occured to me that, like in Borges, as **in all of these literary giants and many others[275], there was the delusive and not quite fully unconscious practice of unacknowledged quotations and unacknowledged borrowed ideas**. It was also obvious that so ample a mention of *The Ebb-Tide* and *New Arabian Nights* was *non sequitor* with the apparent omission of his other prose writings equally fabulous. Finally, I noted that, in their celebrations of RLS' merits and virtues these giants had, in a way, created their own iconic image of our writer and passed their **partial visions and interpretations** of him to generations of their countless readers.

For example, in an interview with Borges, conducted in 1966, the writer declared: "I remember that Stevenson wrote that in a well-written page all the words should look the same way. If you write an uncouth word or an astonishing or an archaic word, then the rule is broken; and what is far more important, the attention of the reader is distracted by the word. One should be able to read smoothly in it even if you're writing metaphysics or philosophy or whatever"[276]. Acknowledging the inginious theory of reading for pleasure, Borges fails to mention -out of forgetfulness(?)- it came from

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[273] I found Borges increasingly unpalatable right after reading his declaration that the first rendering of *El Quijote* into English surpassed the original.

[274] Note, for instance, the parallels between Stevenson's Yoshida Torajiro and Borges's Kuranosuké which are apparent.

[275] See Bloom: *The Anxiety of Influence.*

[276] Jorge Luis Borges interviewed by Ronald Christ, "The Art of Fiction No. 39" *the Paris Review,* Issue 40, Winter-Spring 1967.

Chesterton's (1927) stressing that passage in Stevenson's "A Humble Remonstrance". Reading "La postulación de la realidad", a noted essay published in 1931 on which I landed long after reading his fantasy stories, I recalled those ideas Stevenson had fervently defended in the very same essay! Where, debating with James about the notions of life and reality he protested that literature did not have to compete with life. For life, being multifarious, is too complex to be imitated. So, it is the responsibility of the author, in his capacity, to select the most salient events and details. A browse at the following passages makes their similitude too obvious.

> El autor nos propone un juego de símbolos, **organizados rigurosamente** sin duda pero **cuya animación eventual queda a cargo nuestro**. No es realmente expresivo: **se limita a registrar una realidad, no a representarla.** Los ricos hechos a cuya póstuma alusión nos convida, importaron cargadas experiencias, percepciones, reacciones; éstas pueden inferirse de su relato, pero no están en él. Dicho con mejor precisión; no escribe los primeros contactos de la realidad, sino **su elaboración final en concepto**.[277] (Emphasis added).
>
> The whole secret is that no art does "compete with life." Man's one method, whether he reasons or creates, is to half-shut his eyes against the dazzle and confusion of reality. The arts, like arithmetic and geometry, turn away their eyes from the gross, coloured and mobile nature at our feet, and **regard instead a certain figmentary abstraction**... "Life is monstrous, infinite, illogical, abrupt and poignant; a work of art, in comparison, **is neat, finite, self-contained, rational, flowing and emasculate**. Life imposes by brute energy, like inarticulate thunder; art catches the ear, among the far louder noises of experience, like an air artificially made by a discreet musician... The novel, which is a work of art, exists, not by its resemblances to life, which are forced and material, as a shoe must still consist of leather, **but by its immeasurable difference from life, which is designed and significant**, and is both the method and the meaning of the work.
>
> ("A Humble Remonstrance", T29: 135-137. Emphasis mine)

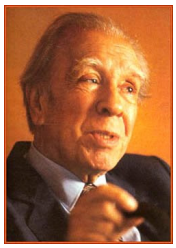
Like Stevenson, Borges places himself among the classics rather than the realists. As the Scottish, the Argentinian "no desconfía del lenguaje, cree en la suficiente virtud de cada uno de sus signos."[278] Like Stevenson, Borges believes that the author should not seek

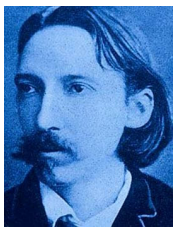
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[277]"La postulación de la realidad", in *Jorge Luis Borges. Obras Completas*, 1923-1972. Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores. 1974. pp. 217- 221

[278] Ibid, p. 217.

to represent reality in all its complexity, but should regard it as "a certain figmentary abstraction" instead.





For Borges, as for Stevenson, there is the opposition between the muddled reality of life and the organized well-conceived train of incidents -"significativos momentos"[279]- of the work of art. It is the incidental, in its **nea**tness, in its **finite**ness, in its **emasculat**ion, in its "**organiza**ción **rigurosa"**, that grants the novel its suggestive power to excite the reader's imagination ("cuya animación eventual queda a cargo nuestro"). For it was the novel and its future that Stevenson was discussing with James; although, ironically, Borges never wrote a novel.

As mentioned before, this technique is vastly appreciated in Borges' most popular writings, among them in the stories included in *El aleph.* In which the "invención circunstancial" -as he defined this overfilling of the narrative with "significativos momentos" ("the chief ganglion of the tale[280]")- neatly corresponds with RLS's quest for the reality of fiction, rather than for the fiction of reality. Why then that omission given Borges's proclivity for the overt quote and reference while citing Stevenson's imaginative fiction lavishly?

Having developed a fondness for Borges' poetry myself -besides the evident allusion in his "Blind Pew" -"A ti también, en otras playas de oro,/Te aguarda incorruptible tu tesoro:/La vasta y vaga y necesaria muerte"- [281] , it did not escape me that in his prologue to "Fervor de Buenos Aires" -his first book of poetry-, in poems like "Las calles", (1923)[282] Borges was, particularly doing the very same Stevenson had done in his essay "On the Enjoyment of Unpleasant Places". Both, the poem and the essay, were written by a young author. Both deal with the same theme in pretty much

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[279] Ibid, p. 221.

[280] In "A Gossip on Romance", (T29:124) Louis refers to the unsurpassed scene in which Rawdon Crawley delivers his blow in Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* with this phrase.

[281] Jorge Luis Borges, *Obras Completas*, Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1974. p.826.

[282] Borges pays homage to RLS referring to his own duplicity ("aquel muchacho que en 1923 lo escribió ya era esencialmente... el señor que ahora se resigna o corrige. Somos el mismo; los dos descreemos del fracaso y del éxito, de las escuelas literarias y de sus dogmas; los dos somos devotos de Shakespeare, de Stevenson y de Whitman"). *Jorge Luis Borges, Obras Completas,* Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1974. p.13

the same way; to wit, the aptness and congruity of unplesant places provided they are true to the imagination, not to the eye. The suitability of such an uninspiring place as the soulless Scottish town of Wick, or "las calles desganadas" "enternecidas de penumbra y de ocaso"[283] en Buenos Aires, for yielding action rather than presenting character. Their avility to delight in the ordinary is concomitant with the ideas Stevenson put forward in a later essay "Popular Authors", in which he remarks the great pleasure he derived during his childhood and later, rereading the authors and stories he found in the magazine *Cassell's Illustrated Family Paper.* It also makes one mindful of Stevenson's maxim in a letter to James from Vailima in December 1893 much quoted by Borges.

> 'Tis true, and unless I make the greater effort -and am, as a step to that, convinced of its necessity -it will be more true I fear in the future. I *hear* people talking, and I *feel* them acting, and that seems to me to be fiction. My two aims may be described as-
>
> 1st War to the adjective
> 2nd **Death to the optic nerve.**
>
> Admitted we live in an age of the optic nerve in literature. (L8:193)

Such convergence of parallelisms and similarities, after Borges' open declared propinquity with our author manifest themselves in so many occassions, side by side with his deliberate omission of Stevenson' essays as a source plentiful of ideas, brought in me a feeling of incongruity. This feeling was later confirmed and taken further when critics began to acknowledge Borges' covert indebtness to Stevenson, most especially, after reading Daniel Barlderston's dissertation entitled, *El precursor* ***velado****. Robert Louis Stevenson en la obra de Borges,* in which the author garners a copious harvest of those unacknowledged borrowings and quotations.

For example, Balderston states that in his prologue to *La invención de Morel*, by Bioy Casares, alluding to the relative importance of plot and character in the novel, Borges "insiste como Stevenson en que, sin peripecias o aventuras, el relato no es relato" but that, in doing so, Borges "cita a Stevenson de manera bastante equívoca":

> Stevenson, hacia 1882, anotó que los lectores británicos desdeñaban un poco las peripecias y opinaban que era muy hábil redactar una novela sin argumento, o de argumento infinitesimal, atrofiado. José Ortega y Gasset -*La deshumanización del arte,*

[283] Ibid, p. 17.

> 1925- trata de razonar el desdén anotado por Stevenson. Aboga por la novela "psicológica" y opina que el placer de las aventuras es inexistente o pueril. Tal es, sin duda, el común parecer de 1882, de 1925 y aun de 1940. Algunos escritores (entre los que me place contar a Adolfo Bioy Casares) creen razonable disentir.[284]

Further on, in the same prologue mentioned, Borges declares:

> Por otra parte, la novela "psicológica" quiere ser también novela "realista": prefiere que olvidemos su carácter de artificio verbal y hace de toda vana precisión (o de toda lánguida vaguedad) un nuevo toque verosímil... La novela de aventuras, en cambio, no se propone como una transcripción de la realidad: es un objeto artificial que no sufre ninguna parte injustificada[285].

As many of us readers of both writers had first conjectured, then concluded, Balderston is fully right, both in the befitting choice of **"velado"** in his title and in his accurate, well-documented judgment. Since, once more, **Borges obviates any mention to his source;** in this case, none other than "A Gossip on Romance", one of Stevenson's greatest essays which, as Balderston fittingly states contains:

> Una de las principales contribuciones de Stevenson a la narrativa británica de su época"... "su insistencia en que los relatos fueran relatos, que comunicaran alguna anécdota, un incidente que actuara de manera directa sobre la imaginación, y sobreviviera más claramente en la memoria, que "el tintineo de las cucharas de té y el énfasis del cura (XIII, 333) de la novela social. [286]

According to this same critic, Borges is not precisely to be commended for the fact that he appropiates such splendid phraseology as "avidez de otras vidas", "el codicioso de almas", "La fruición literaria[287]" or still, "indagador de vidas ajenas"; which are not his own creations but which he derived by adapting those he had found

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[284] *La invención de Morel,* Buenos Aires, Emecé, 1972; 1ªedición, 140, pág. 11. Quoted in the online digital version http://www.borges.pitt.edu/bsol/dbi.php) (Accessed Spring 2013) of Daniel Balderston's *El precursor velado: R. L. Stevenson en la obra de Borges*. Introducción. Borges Studies Online. J. L. Borges Center for Studies & Documentation.

[285] Ibid. As quoted in Balderston's 1985. Where he accurately states "Sin embargo la argumentación y la terminología de Borges provienen de Stevenson".

[286] Ibid.

[287] This is the title of an important early essay by Borges in which he borrows RLS's idea that, "... cierta clase de detalles -leimotivs, emblemas y detalles anómalos -puede ser utilizada para inducir al lector a que participe activamente en el proceso creador, apropiándose del relato. La imaginación, de albún modo es imredecible para ellos, pero puede ser persuadida o provocada. La lectura imaginativa es para ambos sumamente placentera" (Balderston, 1985).

in... yes!... another great essay by his not always overly recognized predecessor; this time the autobiographical "Random Memories: "Rosa quo Locorum"[288], from which he also borrowed such ideas as the importance of sonorous words and sparkling images that would feed the child's imagination setting it in restless motion. Again that disparity between **Borges' pernickity acknowledging his master's imaginative fiction, side by side with his drawing a veil over his friend's non-fictional prose**[289].

One more proof amongst many, as gathered by Balderston, will illustrate this point: the fascination Borges shows with and for the duplicities in Stevenson's narratives. Hence the figure of the *alter ego* lagging behind not unlike the doppelgänger of the psychological genre in stories as "Los teólogos", "Historia del guerrero y la cautiva" and, above all, in "El jardín de los senderos que se bifurcan". These, Balderston argues, "tienen una dinámica similar a "The Merry Men", aunque se rigen por diferentes teologías."[290]

After all this evidence -and such other the attentive reader of both authors can himself muster- we are willing to agree with those critics who state that "Borges's readerly attention re-invents Stevenson, just as his writerly attention created those vast unwritten books that Borges chose not to write, but just to imagine and comment on."*[291]*

Like with the Stevenson devotees of his deleterious cult, these findings lead to the conclusion that, in their covert -even in their overt praise- these literary masters brought the opposite effect to that they intended. Hereto I have offered but a glimpse of but

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[288] Included in *Further Memories* (T:30, pp. 1-8) RLS remembers in this late essay - "probably began during his stay in Sydney, March 1893, then left (it) aside when he returned to Samoa in April, yet never finished" (Swearingen 1980:189)- the inspiring books he relished as a child, such as *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and *The Swiss Family Robinson* (1812). He also calls to mind his fascination with the stories of the Covenanters and other pieces of lore his nurse so effectively read to him. He was still pondering on how the reader should be fully absorbed by the text he has chosen. See also (L4:209n).

[289] Balderston rightly says that Borges "nunca cita la frase textualmente, pero está implícita en frases como "el codicioso de almas" y "un curioso de vidas". About the presence of the first he notes *Obra poética,* Buenos Aires, Emecé, 1964, pág. 17, as used in the above mentioned "Las calles". On the second phrase Balderston notes *El tamaño de mi esperanza*, Buenos Aires, Editorial Proa, 1926, pág. 35.

[290] Balderston, 1985. p. 12. Ironically, the author incurs, just here, in the very fault he denounces for he does not clarify, unlike I will do in chapter v, what these "theologies" are, nor what doctrine they embrace.

[291] See Rivka Galchen's "Borges on Pleasure Island" in *The New York Times.* Sunday June 25, 2010.

some literary luminaries who -unwillingly yet not fully unconciously- showing their vast admiration and expressing their preference for RLS's fantasy stories, had paradoxically an adverse effect on the full appreciation of our author; picking the isolated instance of his novels rather than the whole lot of his genius they had unconsciously neglected to praise his essays.

3.9. An overview of the estimation of his essays

As announced in my methodology, I won't proceed here thematically, nor diachronically, as biographers, critics and scholars have done while referring to the reception of Stevenson's work[292]. I am fully aware that would not do "for a systematised approach and a clear exposition". I am also aware of the fact that none of the critical approaches addressed in 4c would do either to write conclusively on, or to wholy embrace Stevenson's prolific and polyphonic essayistic work. For clarity and concision, **I shall, directly, refer not to the low tide of his reception,** -copiously accounted for, one hopes, in the previous pages registering the ill-fated destiny and deliberate defacement Stevenson was clumsily subject to[293]-, **but to the main landmarks in the estimation of his essays**. Avoiding that overlapping[294], and being consistent with Stevenson's unquenchable optimism, I shall better focus on **the high accolades of his reappraisal.** I will simply note them down **in a synchronic way** for the reader to draw his own conclusions and to confront them with those here offered. For I wish to present

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[292] It is worthwhile to remark here -as pointed in the heading- that my aim in this section is far from retelling the complete history of the evaluation of Stevenson's work. That I am not aiming to register here the ups and downs of his general literary reputation as so many have done in "an attitude of kindly and agreeable patronage"(Fausset, Hugh l'Anson, "Stevenson Today". *Times Literary Supplement 933.* 4 December 1919: 701-2). No, **I wish to flee from any boastful consideration to focus on his trajectory and his standing as an essayist.** For, though interdependent, it developed in a slightly singular way. The fact that RLS's reputation as an essay writer specifically is so closely entwined with his overall literary reputation is congruent, I trust, with what I explore and state in this section.

[293] What Ambrosini and Dury call Stevenson's "critical misfortune" which "had been already settled" through "the glorification of "a Seraph in Chocolate", at the turn of the century, and long before WWI, and "culminated" in 1914 with the "backlash" ignited by Frank Swinnerton whose arguments, already commented upon here, "would recurr throughtout the century". (Ambrosini and Dury, eds. 2006:xvi).

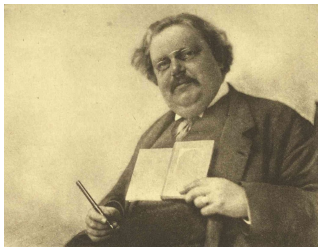
[294] I.e.omitting to recount, once again, the misfortunes of his reception, together with those of the essay as a literary genre.

the reader with an earnest invitation to ponder on whether or not the efforts here made to unbury the treasure of his other prose writings are based on satisfactory evidence and sound reasoning. Doing it that way will, hopefully, encourage future scholars to fan the flames of their appreciations and to substantiate them adding their fresh views to those which follow.

Thus, I shall deal briefly with those articles and monographs fulfilling my double wish: One, **to procure a much wider attention on the extraordinary value of Stevenson's essays,** above all, on the undergraduate reader seeking to soak himself up with sound thinking, so finely, so precisely and elegantly expressed that the essays may encourage him to write his own creations with brio and savyy; then on the professor willing to make a meaningful pedagogical use of such exceptional prose writings. Two, **to help revitalize the critical estimation of Stevenson's essays bringing them to their own dazzling light.** To do so, I will make my way through those judged appraisals, not diachronically, but coming down from their highest praise to those of lower calibre.

As indicated by the previous sections of this chapter, the first evidence that strikes the student of the reception of Stevenson's essays is the contrast between the suddenness of their fall and the gradual process of their revaluation. Having dealt on the first we must now address the second.

To my mind more fully fed with non-fictional prose, and rather lean by fiction, no writer -though he never called himself other than "a journalist"-has ever understood more deeply, nor appreciated more judiciously Stevenson than the chubby "apostle of common sense" who seems to burst the seams of his initials, GKCh! This genius without "sides", but with countless sidings[295], penned an unassuming and unprecedented defense of the, unlike himself, languid yet lively and equally energetic man that never filled out the beloved three in RLS! In his 1927 study, Chesterton called Stevenson "a highly honorable, responsible and



[295] I here allude to a well-known anecdote in which trying to get in a London Taxi, this enormous man in every possible sense, was instructed by its cabi with a, "Try sideways", to which our mountain of a man made the cutting rejoinder, "I have no sides!". Also to his alertness for he never misssed a chance of taking active part in a controversy.

chivalrous Pagan, in a world of Pagans who were most of them considerably less conspicuous for chivalry and honour"[296]. Yet one who was conscious that beyond fantasy lies a "real spiritual mystery". Incidentally, in "Laughter and Humility", an article he contributed much earlier, Chesterton wrote:

> **Stevenson's enormous capacity for joy flowed directly out of his profoundly religious temperament.** He conceived himself as an unimportant guest at one eternal and uproarious banquet, and instead of grumbling at the soup, he accepted it with careless gratitude that marks the baby and the real man of the world... **His gaiety was neither the gaiety of the pagan, nor the gaiety of the *bon vivant*. It was the greater gaiety of the mystic.** He could enjoy trifles because there was to him no such thing as a trifle. He was a child who respected his dolls because they were the images of the image of God, portraits at only two removes. [297] (Emphasis mine).

Gilbert Keith **Chesterton** also **declared that there was a morality in Louis's reaction to adventure, and** mantained that, "like Odysseus, for all his adventurousness, he [Stevenson] was always trying to get home". [298] Chesterton **praised Tusitala's miraculous ability to conjure up "le mot juste"**, the exact word as "by dwelling at length on the word "interjected": in the passage which describes a man stopping a clock with interjected finger"[299]. **He pointed out that though these** and other findings such as having a young man described "with cordial agitated manners" may seem fortuituous they singularly **added to the facile, enormous musical quality of Stevenson's style.**

Unlike ordinary admirers, **Chesterton can rightly be called Stevenson's literary sucesso**r. In "A Defence of Penny Dreadfuls" (1901) his apology for blood-curdling fiction, the Englishman comes quite close thematically to the Scotsman in "A Penny Plain and Two Pence Coloured" (1883, T29). In his *Robert Browning* (1903) , *Charles Dickens* (1922) and *William Blake* (1910) **Chesterton, implicitly, insists that the soundest type of critical appreciation ever was not scholarly cricitism -not that by a highbrow bespectacled outsider with just "an appreciation"- but that other made by a member of the clan, by an insider with a real admiration for the man**.

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[296] See Chesterton, 1927, p. 76.

[297] *Daily News*, October 18, 1901.

[298] Chesterton, 1927, p. 135.

[299] Ibid, p. 143.

This reasoning is consistent with Stevenson's treatment of Charles of Orleans, Villon, Thoreau, Whitman, Burns, and Poe, in *Familiar Studies of Men and Books* (T27) decades earlier. Like these reviews by Stevenson, Chesterton's appreciations were made in that very spirit of the independent man of letters with a special "gusto" for the man and his work and with an extraordinary talent for communicating it.

The virtues and noble ideals in Chesterton's delightful and jocose "On Running after One's Hat" (1908) **come very close to those expounded by Stevenson** in "An Apology for Idlers" (1877). **That excess, that childish appetite for life, that eternal capacity to exult in monotonies**.

> Did you ever hear a small boy complain of having to hang about a railway station and wait for a train? No; for to him to be inside a railway station is to be inside a cavern of wonder and a palace of poetical pleasures. Because to him the red light and the green light on the signal are like a new sun and a new moon. Because to him when the wooden arm falls down is as if a great king had thrown down his staff as a signal and started a shrieking tournament of trains. I myself am of little boys' habit in this matter... Many of the most purple hours of my life have been passed at Clapham Junction... in the case of all such annoyances, as I have said, everything depends upon the emotional point of view. You can safely apply the test to almost every one of the things that are currently talked of as the typical nuisance of daily life. ("On Running After One's Hat") [300].

So true! Unlike the boundless hem of Gilbert, we are bound to be hemmed in by surprises in our daily routines. **There is joy to be had in the smallest things in nature.** Life is such a constant source of thrilling sensations that we should be put on the culprit box for grumbling about its hardships. **Rather than slogging and slagging our way, we should walk diligently impatient with curiosity.**

> If they [that sort of "dead-alive, hackneyed people about who are scarcely conscious of living except in the exercise of some conventional occupation Stevenson] have to wait an hour or so for a train, they fall into a stupid trance with their eyes open. To see them, you would suppose there was nothing to look at and no one to speak with; you would imagine they were paralysed or alienated; and yet very possibly they are hard workers in their own way, and have good eyesight for a flaw in a deed or a turn of the market. They have been

[300] GKChesterton, London: Methuen & Co. 1908, pp. 3

> to school and college, but all the time they had their eye on the medal; they have gone about in the world and mixed with clever people, but all the time they were thinking of their own affairs. As if a man's soul were not too small to begin with, they have dwarfed and narrowed theirs by a life of all work and no play; until here they are at forty, with a listless attention, a mind vacant of all material of amusement, and not one thought to rub against another, while they wait for the train. ("An Apology for Idlers", T25: 56)

This connects naturally with the narrative emphasis in both essays in which fiction makes its incursion so that reasoning and arguing -"essaying"- is tantamount to telling the story[301]. It is also connected with the old utilitarian dictum of "success", which is replaced in both thinkers by **our only real obligation: to shed light on less vivacious spirits making them happy with our presence, encouragement and reasurance.**

> There is no duty we so much underrate as the duty of being happy. By being happy we sow anonymous benefits upon the world, which remain unknown even to ourselves, or when they are disclosed, surprise nobody so much as the benefactor. The other day, a ragged, barefoot boy ran down the street after a marble, with so jolly an air that he set everyone he passed into a good humour; one of these persons, who had been delivered from more than usually black thoughts, stopped the little fellow and gave him some money with this remark: "You see what sometimes comes of looking pleased." If he had looked pleased before, he had now to look both pleased and mystified. (Ibid, T25: 58)

> When last I saw an old gentleman running after his hat in Hyde Park, I told him that a heart so benevolent as his ought to be filled with peace and thanks at the thought of how much unaffected pleasure his every gesture and bodily attitude were at that moment giving to the crowd. ("On Running After One's Hat" 1908, p. 34).

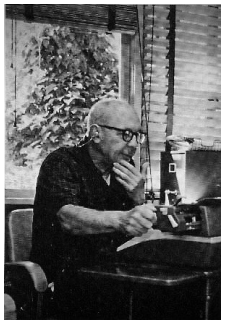
In his monograph, **Chesterton gives us the very essence of Stevenson's craft, philosophy and moral.** Although he takes up so much space himself -he once rejoiced that he had given up his seat in the tram "to two ladies"- Chesterton is able to do it in barely a hundred pages! Those ingenious, unpretentious pages, I firmly believe with no sententious rhetorics, are worth more than the thousands by those unimaginative, arrogant "outsiders" that came before and after him.

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[301] See for instance Chesterton's "A Piece of Chalk", "What I Found in My Pocket" and "The Perfect Game", which make us mindful of Stevenson's "An Old Scotch Gardener", "Beggars", or "Forest Notes".

However, this was not the first time Chesterton had felt the need for a reassesment of RLS's work that would be strong enough to distance itself from both "the Victorian whitewashers and the Post-Victorian mudslingers" (GKCh 1927:75). More than two decades before the publication of his monograph, as early as in 1902, he had published 'The Characteristics of Robert Louis Stevenson'[302]. Still a year ealier, he had objected that Moore[303] probably resented Louis's being "possessed and indeed the incarnation of that tangible spiritual lightness, that sixth sense of literature, which is sometimes called humour and sometimes humility."[304] Nor will it be the last time that I will call on GKCh to touch on their brotherhood while discussing Stevenson. The following quote will do for the time being.

> Glad did I live and gladly die[305], has a lilt that no repetition can make quite unreal, light as the lifted spires of Spyglass Hill and translucent as the dancing waves; types of tenuous but tenacious levity and the legend that has made his graveyard a mountain-peak and his epitaph a song.[306] (GKCh., *Robert Louis Stevenson,* 1927:182).



From the mountain-peak and clearing of such illuminating criticism, I start my descent into the still phenomenal recognition by Stevenson's foremost and authoritative biographer. We shall, however, omit to descend into the maelstrom -to any of the depths already dealt with in the previous pages-. As stated profusely, **J.C. Furnas**' *Voyage to Windward, The Life of Robert Louis Stevenson* (1952) is **of paramount importance for being the first critical**

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302 Chesterton, G.K. & William Robertson Nicholl] (1902a). "Robert Louis Stevenson". London : Hodder & Stoughton (The Bookman Booklets, No. 2). Also published in New York: James Pott, 1906. Chesterton, G.K (1902b).

303 In his review of Yeats's *The Secret Rose,* George Moore had attacked Stevenson making "some strange statements "as, "Stevenson imagined no human soul, and he invented no story that anyone will remember...." (quoted in Furnas 1952:380), or that other pure nonsensical declaration that "great literature cannot be composed from narratives of perilous adventures" (George Moore, London, *Daily Chronical*, 24th April, 1897).

304 GKCh, Pall Mall Magazine, September 1901. In "Twelve Types",London: London: Arthur L. Humphreys, 1901, Chesterton also defended Stevenson. In *The Victorian Age in Literature* (1913, London: Home University Library, p. 110) he warned that 'when we look back up the false perspective of time, Stevenson does seem in a sense to have prepared that imperial and downward path', even though 'he would not have liked it if he had lived to understand it'.

305 Stevenson's "Requiem", as engraved in his tomb at Mount Vaea, Samoa.

306 Chesterton, *Robert Louis Stevenson*, 1927, p. 224.

biography[307] **which dedicated unparalleled attention to the essays** -as a browse through the entries of works listed will immediately reveal-. A truth also proven by the critical aparatus consisting of detailed notes, and works consulted. [308] Like Chesterton, Furnas will pop up in our discussion in Chapter V. Meanwhile, they will help us to steer clear of unwelcome overlappings and mishaps. Notwithstanding, it is a matter of both intellectual rigor and academic honesty to praise Furnas for "scourging" those uninvolved insincere critics like Moore, Benson and Swinnerton and their "waspish" averse views[309].

The chaff of his reputation winnowed in all previous sections in this chapter, we continue downhill to gauge the tangy grain in the reception of Stevenson's essays. Their excellence, as a whole, would not have been possibly asserted had it not been for **Professor Roger G. Swearingen's superb research,** ***The Prose Writings of Robert Louis Stevenson: A Guide*** (1980) [310] in which he compiled a complete chronological bibliography of the prose writings, suppling -for each entry- precise indications on the location of all manuscripts, the place and date of their first publication, notes on the sources, the process of composition and much else. His guide constitutes an indispensable reference for every Stevenson scholar.



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[307] The first biography was the canonical 1901 by G. Balfour, Stevenson's cousin perjured and misrepresented by the family vision and subjective portrayal. Andrew Noble (1983:7) acurately celebrates the extaordinary merits of Furnas' *Voyage to Windward* as a "truly great biography" "a true labour of love and masterpiece. It and Stevenson's letters, righly praised by Henry James, do truly illuminate the art".

[308] See J. C. Furnas 1952: pp. 475-478; pp. 421-460, and pp. 405-416 respectively.

[309] George Moore accused Stevenson of mere trickery: composing by a technique of substituting banal expressions with more striking replacements: "literary marquetery". (Quoted in Furnas 1952:380. Also mentioned in Lesley Graham's "The Reception of Stevenson's Essays", JSS October 2012, p. 321). On his part, Benson claimed that Stevenson's forced style "compelled him, as under the lash to sacrifice simplicity to the desire to be striking and sonorous, and to arrest attention to himself by outlandish habiliments" (Furnas 1952: 381).

[310] Besides this essential publication offering the intricate publishing history of each individual essay and of his other prose writings, Swearingen has contributed **valuable editions of Stevenson's texts hitherto unplublished** pieces such as *An Old Song...and...Edifying Letters of the Rutherford Family.* (1982). Amongst his most recent publications see Stevenson's *The Hair Trunk or The Ideal Commonwealth. An Extravanza* (2014). In our correspondence, he announced the forthcoming publication of his biographical and critical work on Stevenson. Every RLS enthusiast must be thankful to this scholar for his munificence.

Kiely's *Robert Louis Stevenson and the Fiction of Adventure* (1964) though a sound reading of just the fiction offers extremely useful passages in which he asserts that Stevenson was constantly on the move, consistently attempting to establish "a philosophy, a morality, and a way of writing undergoing change" (Kiely 1964:33). **"Both his non-fiction and fiction bear witness to an abiding interest in a theoretial engagement with adventure"** (Ibid, 38; emphasis added). He makes, notwithstanding, reference to essays and travel books like *An Inland Voyage*, where Kiely states that the vocabulary of adventure is reserved for the severe mental state of blankness while paddling. Or to *Travels with A Donkey* where, Kiely asserts, adventure for Stevenson is "a kind of sacred purity which ought not to be tainted with moral or psychological convention". (Ibid.) In tracing what he understands are the two main epochs in Stevenson's writing, he refers to the late 1880s as the period in which his finest essays, like "Pulvis et Umbra" were published; one characterized by "metaphor inversion, hyperbole, balanced phrases and interior rhyme"; one in which "Stevenson appears to squint at the XIX cent like a suspicious child" (Ibid, 135).

It is a real paradox, one urging the honest critic to rise to the bait, that the mud-slinging devil's advocate should be the one remembered while the honest defense counsel -having argued and reasoned- is enshrouded in silence by the forum. That was, exactly, what happened to **Janet Adam Smith.** As Furnas tells us, Janet deplored "the fashion in which Stevenson as person -whether truly conceived or not- has obscured the literary artist of high integrity" (Furnas, 1952:376). In her ***Henry James & Robert Louis Stevenson: A Record of Friendship & Criticism*** (1948), compiling the letters addressed to each other, Miss Adam Smith speaks highly of that, vertitably, unique debate based on mutual understanding and appreciation. She dwells on that singular literary friendship founded not so much on charm and "pouncing sympathies" as "on shared respect for and grasp of the art to which both were dedicated". (Ibid, 377). The relevance of that engaging volume was overshadowed by those bumptious "neo-Jamesians" who would not approve of the serious European-American classic being regarded as identical with the Scottish author writing nursery rhymes and adventure stories for boys. In so doing, they failed to take heed of James's recognition of Stevenson as "the sole and single Anglo-Saxon capable of perceiving" how well the latest James novel was written (Janet Adam Smith 1948:188).

In her preface to Coburn's edition of R.L.S.: *Edinburgh Picturesque Notes* (1954), Smith draws attention on the "polished essays and articles" consolidated in 1878 in book form, in which facts and appearance give way to the picturesque, the story and the atmosphere. She states that Stevenson "builds up his pictures by accummulation of carefully selected detail". By "precise, selective vision". A very acute observation that would have opened early perspectives in the appreciation of the essays had it been widely disseminated.

Parallel to that disregard for the assumedly "irrelevant" were early critical appreciations such as those by sympathetic defenders like **Richard Le Galliene, James Barret, Scott-James** and **Janetta Newton-Robinson**. Galliene declared "Mr Stevenson's final fame will be that of an essayist, nearest and dearest fame of the prose-writer" and called him "one of the most original philosophers of his time"[311]. It can be gleaned from several sources that it was his sad associations with Oscar Wilde that buried Le Galliene as a poet and essayist, together with his subtle appreciations. The same can be surmised about James Barret's intriguing critiques. Barret was of the opinion that in "Beggars", Stevenson "touches the real depths of the question, and illumines the subject with many a brilliant flash of truth and insight"[312]. On his part, Scott James enthused, "How many memorable phrases there are in these essays, how much just exploding of prejudices, recalling of simpler and elemental ideals, of probing down to important and fundamental truths". [313] Janetta Newton-Robinson claimed, in 1893 "that Stevenson's essays "are the most fascinating that have appeared in England since the time of Lamb", and that it is "as an essayist that his intimated know and love him"[314]. And though Maixner (1981) made a great effort so that this early positive revaluation would not be wiped out by the new tide, the closing to his intro to the Critical Heritage in 1981 makes clear it did not click.

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[311] Richard Le Galliene in a 1900 serious and considered view of Stevenson's essays "The Dethroning of Stevenson" a chapter of his *Sleeping Beauty and Other Prose Fancies,* (London, /New York: John Lane, The Bodley Head) . See also the letter he exchanged with RLS on 28 Dec 1893, L 4: 247-8.

[312] James Barret, "The Essays of Robert Louis Stevenson", New Century Review 7 (1900).

[313] R.A. Scott-James in a review of the Pentland Edition in 1906 (The Daily News, Oct. 26, 1906)

[314] Quoted in L. Graham's "The Reception of Stevenson's essays". JSS, October 2012, p.324

Another paradox -this did click but in the unwanted direction- takes us to negotiate the wide downwards staircase of Stevenson's critical reception from those tall landings to a dizzy low landing, that of **David Daiches's *Robert Louis Stevenson: A Revaluation*** (1947) which opens with the sentence: "The works of Robert Louis Stevenson are not widely read today"; and goes on to aver "it has long been the fashion to esteem him as an essayist and dismiss the novels", so that part of the aim of the study is 'to redirect attention to the novels as the most impressive expression of Stevenson's genius' (Daiches, 1947:148). In my conversations with the acclaimed emeritus professor, while being the dean of the SUISS (Scottish Universities International Summer School) in the late 1990s, Daiches seemed to cherish the essays in a way contradictory to his appreciations of *An Inland Voyage* and *Travels with a Donkey* as examples of 'a show piece, a sort of prize essay' (Ibid, 154); and to his similar consideration of *The Amateur Emigrant* and *The Silverado Squatters* as 'more important as sources for Stevenson's biography than as literary works in their own right' (Ibid,167). For Daiches sees them as "self-conscious" (Ibid, 148), and "affected" (Ibid, 150). Overlooking the essays on literary theory, he gives a quotation from "The Lantern Bearers" followed by the comment "The modern reader looks askance at this pretentious and perhaps at the same time commonplace philosophising" (Ibid, 167). Daiches' aim was to stress Stevenson's importance as a novelist and a as a Scottish novelist, not as a consummate essayist. Which meant a critical regression to a more auspicious treatment like that of ***The Cambridge History of English and American Literature*** (1907-21), which in The Victorian Age, Part Two, Vol XIV described our author, **in the main entry for Stevenson, as "the foremost essayist since Lamb"**. As Lesley Graham rightly asserts, "In his desire to rehabilitate Stevenson's fictional work Daiches correspondingly downplayed the merits of the essays"[315]. Still Daiches's work was amply included among the period most critics call "the reinstatement". Hence the paradox. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to mention Daiches here if only to recognize his authoritative efforts in bringing Stevenson to the fore at a complex moment in the story of his assessment.

Within that same purpose, there were **other critical works**, however not that influential, still dealing with ample aspects of our author's life and work. Such was the

[315] Lesley Graham's "The Reception of Stevenson's essays". JSS, October 2012, pp. 325.

case of John F. Genung *Stevenson's Attitude to Life* (1901) Alexander Japp's *Robert Louis Stevenson, A Record, An Estimate, A Memorial* (1905) and George Hellman's *The True Stevenson: A Study in Clarification* (Boston:Little, Brown, and Co, 1925). Though they cannot be considered early monographs -they grew out of a sort of symposia of RLS's attitudes towards God, sex, religion, and beyond death- they are **weighty for culling from the essays**, letters, reminiscences and other. Which points to an increased attention on the essays while examining RLS's attitude toward religion.

All considerations are ancillary to the loftiest, overridding issue here, that of how can any reappraisal be obtained when more than a few of the essays remain still unpublished[316]. How precipitous is that ridge between those critical articles and monographs and the work by that legion of biographers and adulators? Those who -unlike Baildon (1901)- had no praise for the essays, lauded neither their unmistakable style, nor "the sense of personal frankness and intimacy" that his non-fiction evoked in the reader. Were did their rigour lie?

3.10 Fresh steerings

Still within the synchronic perspective in the previous section, we shall proceed in this one to note the main efforts that have -more recently- been instrumental in bringing about renewed interest and a better estimation of Stevenson's essays, omitting any mention of those which deal solely with his fiction.

Just as the "demise of the essay" played an important role in the "fall of Stevenson" -as referred above- **the publication of two general anthologies of the essay** -those by Phillip Lopate (1994) and by Lydia Fakundiny (1991)- contributed, together with *The Encyclopedia of the Essay* (1997), to revitalise the interest in the genre. The fact that all three include an entry for Stevenson -not entirely positive

[316] For a comprehensive catalogue of Stevenson's unpublished essays (unfinished, untracked retrievable, etc) see the correspondent section in the bibliography.

though[317]- speaks of the long-lived appeal of his essays and of their permanent ethic and aesthetic value.

The highest peak in the more current efforts towards a reinstatement is, of course, the eight volumes of ***The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, [318]. A colossal scholarly work by Ernest Mehew,** "the world's pre-eminent authority on RLS...with no patience at all with prejudice, errors, or academic ingenuity"[319]. Mehew read everything by Tusitala, and practically, everything that had been written about him. He was also mentor to new generations of Stevenson scholars whose monographs I will mention in the next pages in passing. If anyone has ever given negligent commentators their *cue* for a sincere discernment of Stevenson's achievement that was, vertitably, Mr Mehew.



That tenacious effort is at the back of **recent compilations** as those brought together by Treglown (1988), Norquay (1999), Letley (1992) and Skinner Sawyers (2002). And, still more so, of ***The New Edinburgh Edition of the Collected Works of Robert Louis Stevenson;*** where we find that same editorial principles governing the publication of the letters, "rigour and consistency, but also flexibility", thus making "available, often for the first time, authoritative texts that scholars and critics can use in their work and that all readers can rely on" [320]. The main drawback of this definitive

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[317] Lopate's *The Art of the Personal Essay* (1995: 212-235) includes "The Lantern-Bearers", "An Apology for Idlers", and "On Marriage". These essays, he says, speak "with **a gentler, milder voice, more charitable and consciously Christian, in the Victorian manner;** they identify with an attempt to win over or at least placate the reader, rather than staring him down, as Hazlitt's do" (212, emphasis added). And that "throughout his essays, Stevenson charms us with conversational smoothness, intricate prose rhythms, and developed metaphores, **and an humane, good-humoured flexible narrative voice**"(213, emphasis mine). On her part, Fakundiny's *The Art of the Essay* (1991:181-189) anthologizes "An Apology or Idlers" offering an introductory explanation in which she states that Stevenson uses "apology" not in the familiar sense of the word, because he is far from regretting being an "idler"; in the ancient Greek sense he means a defense of oneself. Finally, in his entry of Stevenson in *The Encyclopedia of the Essay* (1997:1727) the contributor, Peter Hinchcliffe offers an ambivalent assesment of Stevenson's essay prose, calling it "highly wrought" and "marked by a precise, even precious vocabulary and carefully controlled cadences" (Quoted in Lesley Graham, JSS Oct 2012, p328).

[318] In *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, (1994-95) Mehew worked tirelessly to remedy the very many expurgations in the first edition by Sidney Colvin to reveal that restlessly enquiring spirit surfacing in the correspondence.

[319] See Ernest Mehews's obituary, *The Telegraph*. Issue, 20 Dec 2011.

[320] *The New Edinburgh Edition of the Collected Works of Robert Louis Stevenson* "to be complete in thrity-nine volumes." General Editors Stephen Arata, Richard Dury, Penny Fielding and Anthony Mandal. Four volumes have been published so far, amongst which *The Amateur Emigrant.* Edited by Julia Reid. Edinburgh Universtity Press, 2018.

authoritative edition -with explanatory notes, details on the composition, suppression, partial publication, early reception and other literary and historical contexts- is that it is taking very long to see it in print and that it is sold at exhorbitant prices.

Mehew also sowed the seeds of what, in time, would become t**he biennial international Stevenson conferences**, of which the first "Travels, Tales and Tempests: The Contexts of Robert Louis Stevenson" was hosted at Guelp University in the year of the first centenary (1994), and the latest, "Robert Louis Stevenson: New Perspectives" in Edinburgh in July 2017[321]. This impressive array of scholars in Victorian and Stevenson studies resulted in the publication of **a number of monographs** of which Jones' (ed.) *Robert Louis Stevenson Reconsidered* (2003); Ambrosini and Dury's (eds.) *Writer of Boundaries* (2006), then *European Stevenson* (2009); and Richard J. Hill's *Robert Louis Stevenson and the Great Affair, Movement, Memory, and Modernity* (2017) deserve mention as referred both on the preceding and the forthcoming pages. These single-volume studies "reinstate Stevenson at the center of critical debate and demonstrate the sophistication of his writings and the present relevance of his kaleidoscopic achievements". In their varied critical approaches all contibutors unite to confer "scholarly legitimacy" on this enormously influential writer who was "very effectively excluded from the canon by his twentieth-century successors."



Renewed interest in Stevenson was also reflected in the creation of ***The Journal of Stevenson Studies*** under the auspices of the University of Stirling[322], which was acknowledged as a significant development for Stevenson's reputation as a writer; and more recently, by the issuing of ***The Edinburgh Companion to Robert Louis Stevenson*** (2010) which contributed to set our author "in his literary, scientific and political

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321 The staggering list of these conferences with their hosts and dates goes as follows: Guelp and Yale 1994; Stirling July 2000; Normandy and Arkansas September & November 2000; Gargnano, Lake Garda 2002; Edinburgh 2004; Saranac Lake, NY July 2006; Bergamo July 2008; Honolulú, Hawai, October 2010; Sydney 2013; and Edinburgh July 2017.

322 Edited by Eric Massie, Linda Dryden and Roderick Watson, the first issue of the annual *Journal of Stevenson Studies* was launched at *RLS 2004: Stevenson and Conrad, Writers of Land and Sea* in Edinburgh that summer as "an international refereed publication seeking to consolidate a reputation for excellence and rigour in the field of Stevenson studies".

contexts".[323] These efforts, together with those in the monographs, offer fresh new and original insights into RLS's work, and into the moral, psychological and cultural ambiguities that he explored. Together they put a thriving community of international Stevenson scholars of which, the following contributors must be singled out since their work pertains to my research on the essays. Once more, they will be listed according to their prominence and relevancy in advancing the reputation of RLS as an essayist excluding any mention to those dwelling on his fiction.

Gordon Hirsch [324] **made a comparative study** of *An Inland Voyage* (1878) and *Travels with a Donkey* (1879) as an expression **of Stevenson's wanderlust taking hold at an early age,** when his character was still in the process of being formed. He sees the former as RLS's own choice to "identify himself with the discontented and bohemian". While the latter, rather than adopting various *personae*, is "suffused with a sense that relationships involve obstinacy, struggles for mastery, suspicion, contestation" and "strife". Hirsch later analysed Stevenson's literary essays in *Familiar Studies* as an attempt to see the virtues of his subjects, together with their shortcomings, rather than as a rejection of their "manifold contraditions" .

On his part, **Lawrence Davies**[325] **offered a clarifying study of Stevenson's two early travel books** just mentioned, stating that they are more about identity and self-definition than about travelling.

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[323] Edited by Penny Fielding (2010), "Stevenson emerges as a complex writer", and "show him to be one of the key writers for understanding the growing sense of globalisation and cultural heterogeneity in the late nineteenth century". (Words from the publisher's presentation).

[324] Professor and associate chair of the English Department at the University of Minnesota, Mr Hirsch has already appeared on these pages while discussing the unskillful pedagogical adaptation of the essays. Hirsch is also co-editor of *Jekyll & Hyde After A Hundred Years* (1988) and has written extensively on the essays of other XIX century authors, including Austen, Dickens and Tennyson. See his "The Travels of RLS as a Young Man" (2001) and his 'The rejection of dichotomous thinking in Stevenson's literary essays'. *Journal of Stevenson Studies* 6 (2009): 81-96, here mentioned respectively.

[325] See "The Time of His Life": *Travels with a Donkey* and *An Inland Voyage'* , in Ambrosini and Dury (2009). Laurence Davies is Professor and Senior Research Fellow in English Literature at the University of Glasgow. He is the editor of *The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad.* Davies is a world authority on the Scottish writer, traveller, and political campaigner Robert Bontine Cunninghame Graham whose critical biography he wrote with Cedric Watts. In a more recent volume, Davies discusses Stevenson and Conrad in the context of the social double.

Stephen Arata[326], already alluded to in these pages while responding to the offence by the Modernists, **drew a parallel between our author and William Morris contending that, though less consciously, RLS "charges idleness and escapism with revolutionary energy"**. Arata found connections between those passages in *An Inland Voyage,* in which Stevenson describes his state of mind as "calm, golden, and incurious", and those in "Walking Tours", in which he surrenders "himself to that fine intoxication that comes of much motion in the open air". Arata also finds that both texts cohere with "An Apology for Idlers", and declares that "RLS reverses the valuations of those familiar Victorian keywords: industry and idleness", taking the first to mean "mental torpor and physical lassitude", so that to be industrious is, in Stevenson's phrase, to be "paralysed or alienated"; while idleness is a form of vigorous activity, a vehicle of self-development.

Richard Ambrosini[327] **showed the continuity between Stevenson's essays and letters and his fiction which speaks of a solid literary theory** framed in "A Gossip on Romance" and 'A Humble Remonstrance'[328]. Ambrosini also showed how Stevenson's aesthetics focus on an early interest in pleasure in general -as found in essays like "Roads", "Notes on the Movement of Young Children", and "On the Enjoyment of Unpleasant Places"-, from which Louis would develop a theory of specifically literary pleasure as contained in "Victor Hugo's Romances" [329]. In his dissertation, Ambrosini pays detailed attention to meaningful aspects that have still not been adequately discussed, for instance the significant change of approach in the early essays. In his lengthy study, accompanied by a profusive bibliography, Ambrosini states that in the essay 'On Style in Literature: Its Technical Elements' Stevenson 'anticipates the

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[326] Stephen Arata is associate professor of English at the University of Virginia. He has done extensive research on Victorian literature and is the editor of William Morris's *News From Nowhere* for the Broadview Literary Texts. See "Stevenson, Morris, and the Value of Idlenesss" in Ambrosini and Dury (Eds.) 2006. pp. 3-12 here referred to.

[327] Professor of English, at the Università di Roma Tre, Richard Ambrosini is also a specialist on Conrad. His dissertation *R.L. Stevenson: la poetica del romanzo,* Bulzoni, 2001 opened new perspectives in the critical appreciation of our author. See also his editorial work with Richard Dury *Robert Louis Stevenson, Writer of Boundaries* (2006) and *European Stevenson* (2009).

[328] See, Ambrosini, Richard (2010). 'Da saggista a romanziere: continuità ed evoluzione nelle poetiche di Robert Louis Stevenson' [From essayist to to novelist: continuity and evolution in the poetics of RLS]. Quaderni del Premio Letterario Giuseppe Acerbi 11 ('Letteratura Scozzese'): 78-81.

[329] 'The Art of Writing and the Pleasure of Reading: R. L. Stevenson as Theorist and Popular Author'. In Jones (ed.) (2003): 21-36.

analytic methods of New Criticism. There is nothing similar to this in any nineteenth-century criticism" [330].

Richard Dury[331] writes on RLS as a disruptive voice in the 1870, as a sceptic essayist fleeing from the emphatic styles of mid-Victorian sages by changing constantly his viewpoint, varying his persona, inserting brief narratives and imaginary dialogues, and by his "asides" to the reader. Dury **examines the irregular mutable style of Stevenson's essays** in an axis formed by what he deems are its six main characteristics : lightness, enthusiasm, variousness, playfulness, strangeness and "charm". These transform the essays into a veritable reading experience[332].

Liz Far[333] **explores the ways in which Stevenson reformulated the picturesque discourse of the late-eighteenth-century in his travel writings and essays.** Far contends that, even though indebted to a certain extent to Ruskin -who had sought to educate the middle-class traveller aesthetically, accounting for the suffering together with the picturesque- by adopting different *personae*, Stevenson made his readers turn their gaze back upon themselves. Siding with the needy, Stevenson "promoted a form of late-nineteenth century aestheticism and a bohemian rebellion against the constraints of modern life"[334]. Analysing *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*, Far illustrates how Stevenson spurned the ever-present scientific and moral

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330 (2001). R. L. Stevenson: la poetica del romanzo]. [R.L. Stevenson: Poetics of the novel]. Roma: Bulzoni.

331 Richard Dury founded the RLS website in 1996 and co-hosted the biennal RLS conferences in Gargnano and Bergamo. He is Honourary Professional Fellow of Edinburgh University after recelty retiring from the University of Bergamo in Italy. He coedited *European Stevenson,* and of *RLS: Writer of Boundaries* with Richard Ambrosini. He has published various articles on Stevenson as well as *The Annotated Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1993, 2005) and a scholarly edition of the same work with Edinburgh University Press (2004). He is currently (as of Spring 2017) preparing the annotated critical edition of Stevenson's essays, volume IV of *The New Edinburgh Edition of the Collected Works of Robert Louis Stevenson* of which he is one of the general editors.

332 Dury, Richard (2012). 'Stevenson's essays: language and style'. Journal of Stevenson Studies 9: 43-91.

333 Liz Farr, a senior lecturer in English at the University of Plymouth, completed a thesis, "Robert Louis Stevenson's Essays: Aesthetics, Masculinity and the Literary Marketplace", at Birkbeck College, University of London. She published a detailed article on Stevenson's essays of travel and youth which appeared in a special issue of Nineteenth-Century Prose (Autumn 2002), devoted to the nineteenth-century picturesque.

334 See Farr, Liz (2002). 'Stevenson's Picturesque Excursions: The Art of Youthful Vagrancy'. Nineteenth-Century Prose (special number: 'The Picturesque in the Nineteenth Century') 29ii: 197-225.

approach in late Victorian biographical writing, to opt for a subjective, provisional, amoral celebration through impressions related. Rather than passing judgement of his biographees, he would cultivate their friendship in an intimate tone.

Lesley Graham[335] **dwells on the reception of Stevenson's essays and on his reputation as an essayist in a diachronic way.** She has examined "the vicisitudes of those intersecting reputations" -Stevenson's and that of the essay as a literary form- "so closely entwined that distinguishing them is not straightforward". She dwells on the early praise he garnered as an acclaimed essayist, both for "his exquisite style, as well as (for) his personal qualities". In addition she talks about the negative appraisal that "held sway for over fifty years" as well as "the disenchantment cited by critics" (Moore, Benson, L. Woolf, F. Swinnerton) with Stevenson's style and their "dismissal of his ideas". Moreover, she points out the mild renewal of interest in the 1960s and 1980s evinced also by the increasing number of translations of the essays, "especially those on the art of literature".

Caroline McCrachen-Flesher[336] has been wrestling with the whole phenomenon of RLS's travel writings for years, as she herself stated at the fifth biannual international conference in Bergamo. Tracking the topographical dashes and the stylistic spaces she **discovered that in the end, our voyage lies "not across the land, but across the shifting terrain of RLS's mind"** (emphasis added). For Stevenson himself "changes through his encounter with unknown places and people, and his involved sensibility reconfigures the literary landscape for travel writing". The traveller is, hence, for Stevenson, "one whose movement serves as a medium for bestowing meaning on the self and the social, natural, or metaphysical realities through which it moves". McCrachen-Flesher also "tracks Stevenson's maturation and that of his writing, as his travels brought him into contact with new places, and into collision with the established modes of writing about them". This critic also draws on the comments about his travels Stevenson made in his letters to gain a wider understanding of Stevenson's contribution

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335 Lesley Graham is Maître des conderénces of English Studies at the Department of Languages and Cultures at Université de Bordeaux, for which institution she presented a thesis on the Scottish travellers in France in the XIX century. She has contributed several articles on RLS, amongst which "I am not a novelist alone: The Reception of Stevenson's essays" (Journal of Stevenson Studies, v.9, pp.313-342), here mentioned.

336 Caroline McCracken-Flesher is professor of English literature at the Univeristy of Wyoming. She has published widely on Scottish culture and literature.

to that literary field. She maintains that our author represented himself as survivor revealing "travel with Stevenson to be an uncomfortably inward experience" (McCrachen-Flesher, 2010) in which he calls into question the terms essential to travel writing being himself affected by his choices.

Oliver Buckton[337] has already been mentioned above, and will be brought up, more widely, in our discussion in chapter V. His study (2007) was hailed as "the first book-length study about the influence of travel on RLS's writings, both fiction and nonfiction". Searching for a critical term that would link Stevenson's "leisurely mode of travel with the striking narrative motifs of disruption and fragmentation that characterize his writings", Buckton landed on the notion of "cruising". Through this he was able to determine the themes that link various literary styles and personae of Stevenson. Namely, "the preocupation with the pleasures and perils of travel and the pivotal influence of location on literary production". Stevenson, declares Buckton, **advises the traveler and writer "to resort to the traditions of his forebearers to be able to bear, grasp and deeply understand" a new reality.** (Emphasis mine).

Other **loose articles have also contributed to the advancement of the appreciation and the study of Robert Louis Stevenson's essays**[338]. These will also be mentioned in our last chapter while applying my teleological approach. For, though of importance, they fail to contribute to the said advancement in the same proportion to those registered above.

Conversely, it will be of use to refer here to a couple of long-length studies -uncovering unexplored routes- that help to understand Stevenson's experiences in the

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[337] 332 Oliver Buckton is an associate professor of English at Florida Atlantic Universty in Boca Raton, where he teaches Victorian Literature, critical theory, and film. He has published essays on Stevenson, Dickens, Wilde, and Schreiner. (Words from the publisher's presentation).

[338] See for instance, Abrahamson, Robert-Louis (2012). '"The essays must fall from me": an outline of Stevenson's career as an essayist'. Journal of Stevenson Studies 9: 9-41; Evans, Dewi (2012). 'Stevenson in Scribner's: ethics and romance in the literary marketplace'. Journal of Stevenson Studies 9: 149-170; Hayward, Jennifer (2012), '"The Foreigner at Home": The Travel Essays of Robert Louis Stevenson'. Journal of Stevenson Studies 9:233-270; Hayward, Jennifer (2012). '"The Foreigner at Home": The Travel Essays of Robert Louis Stevenson'. Journal of Stevenson Studies 9: 233-270; Hill, Richard (2012). 'Stevenson in the Magazine of Art'. Journal of Stevenson Studies 9: 93-118; or still Robson, Andrew (2012). 'Stevenson as sympathetic essayist'. Journal of Stevenson Studies 9: 271-290.

South Seas during the last six years of his life (1888-1894). **Ann C. Colley**[339] (2004) -alluded to in these pages- provided a new insight into Stevenson's political imagination in the Pacific. Bringing to light information from the archives of several societies and institutions, Colley **explored the missionary culture surrounding Stevenson.** Focusing on the said period, which she understand was crucial for "the self-transformation wrought in Stevenson's Pacific travel-writing and political texts", **Roslyn Jolly** [340] (2009) shows how "Stevenson's desire to understand unfamiliar Polynesian and Micronesian cultures, and to record and intervene in the politics of Samoa, gave him opportunities to use his legal education, pursue his interest in historiography, and experiment with anthropology and journalism". Jolly **gives us the vision of a Stevenson experimenting with styles and genres** rather than aggrandizing his stature as Tusitala the beloved. She brings to light the distrust of his readers -still loyal to the image of Stevenson the romancer- when he presented himself in the guises of a historian and anthropologist **while seeking "to escape the vocational straightjacket that confined him".** (Words from the publisher's presentation).

Finally, I shall mention a few biographical efforts that have appeared in print, fairly recently.

Rather than just another lineal biography, **William Gray's**[341] (2004) is a work of literary criticism structured and defined by the multiple geographical and cultural contexts the Scot traversed. Gray **relates each of Stevenson's writings to their setting, and to RLS's residence during the writing process**. He also mentions the essays with those other works Stevenson produced for the same magazine, for instance, "A Plea for Gas Lamps" and "El Dorado" are discussed together because they both appeared in *London,* the short-lived journal edited by Henley.

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[339] Ann C. Colley is Professor of English at the State University College of New York at Buffalo. She has published numerous articles in such journals as *The Kenyon Review* and *Victorian Literature and Culture.*

[340]Roslyn Jolly is a Senior Lecturer in the School of English at the University of New South Wales. She contributed an edition of Fanny Stevenson's account of her journey with her husband and her grown son through the Cook Islands, *The Cruise of the Janet Nichol.*

[341] William Gray has studied at the Universities of Oxford, Edinburgh and Princeton and is currently Senior Lecturer at University College Chichester, UK.

Joseph Farrell [342] (2017) **has written** a vivid evocation of Stevenson's domestic life in his Vailima[343] years (1891-1894). We see Louis at ease talking about scanty clothes and large tattoos, indulging in *kava* drink, while embarked on that energetic amalgam of history, biography and travel... his book on the South Seas. Farrell's lucid light prose draws **an admirable picture of the complicated politics of the islands. He makes clear what has remained murky in many biographies: why he believes, Tusitala,** frequently brooding on evil and on his duty to denounce hypocrisy, was not able to detach himself -even though threatened with deportation-. Unlike Gauguin musing allegorically-, Stevenson **was rightly and genuinely committed to the Samoan people who were struggling to mantain independence against** German, British and American **imperialist interference.** Shedding light on Stevenson's later work during this extremely productive period, Farrell thoughfully clarifies how Louis saw, in what was being done to the Samoans, a parallel with the Clearances -the depopulation and subsequent "pacification" of the Scottish Highlands after the debacle in Culloden- he was so vastly familiar with. The book is also to be commended because -unlike previous biographies- Farell gives as much attention to Samoa itself -which he has actually visited with his wife- as to its national hero to this day.

Jefferson A. Singer[344]'s (2017) "first full-length psychobiographical study of Stevenson... takes readers on a fascinating psychological journey from the writer's religious and constricted upbringing to a life of imagination and wonder culminating in the South Seas islands... **Drawing on Stevenson's own treasure trove of personal correspondence, memoirs, essays, novels, stories and poems,** as well as on historical documents, biographies and critical studies", same as on "contemporary theories of identity development", "**Singer utilizes his background as a clinical psychologist and researcher in personality science to provide new and informative insights into the great writer's psychological development**" (Words from the publisher's presentation).

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[342] Joseph Farrell is Emeritus Professor at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow. He has done research on cultural history, Dario Fo and Leonardo Sciasca- and is a reknown translator from the Italian.

[343] Stevenson's own chosen name for his house in Upolu, Samoa. It means "four streams" in the native tongue.

[344] J.A. Singer is Professor of Psychology at Connecticut College. He has authored five books and multiple articles in the field of personallity, memory and clinical psychology. He has received numerous awards for research on autobiographical memory. Mr Singer is a distinguished member of the American Psychological Association.

Even after that prodigious recent outburst of Stevensonian studies here retold; after all that promising reawakening of interest in Stevenson, **there continues to be an imbalance between the high critical estimation of his fictional output and the low academic interest in his essays. That Stevenson's non-fictional prose should be lopsided is**, as we have seen, **due to the demise of the essay** as a genre, to its ambiguous place in the literary system, **and even more so, to its fall from the academic syllabi**. As widely stated above, the last occurance is the result of that tendency to treat Stevenson's essays as apprentice pieces, as clues that would help decode the intricacies of his fiction. It is, indeed, the direct consequence of academe being greatly enamoured of the novel and of its turning her back to the essay with rebuff. **Hence, the revitalization of the essay is the fundamental, pressing first step that would enable the study of Stevenson's essays "as whole carefully crafted pieces of text"** (Graham, 2012: 334). Failing to do so, we shall be showing contempt not just for that *sine qua non,* yet also for the incredible appropriateness, pliability and pertinency of Stevenson's essays. Failing to do so, his recent inclusion in the Norton Anthology[345], his dimension as a catalyst for a variety of critical approaches, as a writer who forces us to reflect and rethink on convential categories will have little or no value. Failing to do so, the fabulous efforts made by the community of Stevenson scholars that has been putting years of work into the study, interpretation and analysis of Stevenson's texts will be taken to be but a labour of ingenuity. After such collective pursuit, it is regretable that Stevenson should still figure, for most readers, only as an adventure novelist. After all our endevours, it is regretable not for what was venomously done, but for the good work that could and should have been done long ago. For the hurting fact that we still lack a critical reliable edition of his essays. For the regretable discernment that sensational collected essays like *Familiar Studies, Lay Morals,* or *A Footnote to History* continue to remain virtually unread, other than by us Stevenson researchers. As a recent critic puts it, "Stevenson continues to remain out of bounds ever for those who claim to be engaged in revising and opening up the canon". And yet paradoxically, being first celebrated as a prose stylist, he is now amply regarded as the author of the

345 The compilers of the Norton Anthology of English Literarute, in the seventh edition are still unable to find a place for Stevenson in their selection.

first colonial fiction in English[346] (”The Beach of Falesà”). It all speaks bemusedly- yet seemingly- of a flagrant reality: that Stevenson simply cannot be forced into old canons, new fashions and their ready-made categories. It all speaks of an irrefutable fact, that Stevenson’s importance -not just as an essayist- but as a writer, remains an issue.

[346] See Swearingen’s (1980:153) entry to “The Beach of Falesá”, and Menikoff, Barry (1984) *Robert Louis Stevenson and “The Beach of Falesá”. A Study in Victorian Publishing with the Original Text.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

CHAPTER 4

CHAPTER 4

TRAVEL LITERATURE: AN OVERVIEW

Preliminary words

In my general introduction to the essay, I dealt extensively on its protean capacities, -on its easiness to adopt different forms throughout subsequent times- so much as on its elusive and discursive nature, - that deliberate incompleteness which regards nothing as fixed. The case of Stevenson, who was such a prolific writer, calls for a further, multifarious definition of each single subtype of the genre. In this chapter I will address specifically the matter of travel literature and essays of travel and attempt to answer a simple question which has been very widely ignored till recently: What constitutes travel literature? What is at the essence of good travel writing? And so, its immediate corollary. What are the "reasons" for that apparent, flagrant unconcern evinced in most literary syllabi?

An overview of the development and evolution of travel narratives will endeavor to ascertain the purposes of travel and the cause of the extraordinary proliferation of its narratives [347]. This will be followed by an appraisal of the most relevant critical and theoretical approaches.

4. 1 Travel Literature and Essays of Travel

A glimpse at the terms that have long been taken to represent the genre -"journal", "travelogue", "reminiscences", "account", "journey", "travel essay", "log", "book of travels", "sketches", "tour", "voyage", "itinerary" etc.- and at its tropes -"walk", "ramble", "saunter", "stroll", "amble", "wander", "reverie"...- pointedly argue against an individual consideration of each possible subtype, in favour of different

[347] For reasons of space I will only deal with the foremost travel narratives and their critical approaches. For other related types consult Hulme, Peter and Youngs, Tim (Eds.) (2002), and Thompson, Carl (2011).

preconceptions of "travel literature", "the signicant *generic* descriptor" (Campbell 2002: 261). It also evinces the difficulties both to define and clarify a text which Louise Pratt calls "one of the most polyphonous of genres", (Pratt 1992: 141), and as such, one resistant to the "disciplined" mediation of cultural differences.

Further complexity steems from that hybrid nature in which reportage mingles with the imaginative; quest with romance; ordeal with tragedy; and epistolary travelogue reveals a utopian commodification, so that the boundaries between the factual and the fictional become very fluid. An example of this can be found in the early case of seventeenth century novels and travel journals in which the landscape aesthetics bear "the air of a real tour" (Gilroy 2000: 10).

To this must be added the literary valorization of the fictive by the Modernists and thus their disparagement of travel writing as a whole, which they regarded as "subliterary"[348].

These speak eloquently as to why the standards of structure, contents, or type were virtually nonexistent, as they still broadly remain, so that to this day, no comprehensive bibliography of nineteenth century travel literature is available other than *The Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature,* which contains approximately 200 titles; and Edward Cox's monumental *A Reference Guide to the Literature of Travel*[349]*,* which, unfortunatelly, does not really go beyond the year 1800.

In the twentieth century, Kirkpatrick suggested that in the literature of travel "the personality and literary power of the writer count for more than his theme", and that "one who writes about travel should have something of the born traveller in him", and write in the same vein, "so that the narrative shall itself reflect the spirit and passion of travel which possessed the writer" (Kirkpatrick in Bethke, 1977: xv.). Hugh Walker also feels inclined to urge that travel books deserving the title of literature "will bear a

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348 Did any of them actually express this? If so, who?

349. Edward Godfrey Cox, *A Reference Guide to the Literature of Travel. Including Voyages, Geographical Descriptions, Adventures, Shipwrecks and Expeditions,* 3 vols (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1935-1949).

stamp of individuality from the personality and style of the writer". (Walker, 1921: 1038). And Paul Kirby, commenting on this "extremely difficult art", states.

> The travel writer must be equal to all he meets. All history and all art should lie open to him. He must be as free-minded as a great Lord, as close to the earth as a farmer. He must know something of trade, be learned in the humanities, in geology, in botany, numismatics, hydraulics, engineering, sociology. He must be able to go beyond the limits of his own culture. He must have simple human understanding; because without sympathy he will learn nothing. The travel writer is expected to deal with everything -all information, all thought, all description, all people. (Kirby, 1952:186).

These and other considerations cause us to assert, invariably: one, that the genre is one of the most challenging forms that can ever daunt a writer; two, that "perhaps the only definition possible is the obvious statement that a travel book will contain a record of a journey, and be a varying mixture of reportage and autobiography" (Bethke, 1977: xi); three, that the variety of its purposes, modes or preconceptions revolves around "a harmonious point of balance between certain contrarieties, an unassertive, undogmatic and imaginative space neither true nor false, neither rational nor irrational" (Sandison, 2006: 322); four, that these experiences of mobility will entail, either some displacement and alienation, or the confirmation of identity.

In my study of Stevenson, considering, as I am, a significative corpus of his "non-fictional prose", I have adopted the convenience of referring to his travel literature as "travel essays", although I am conscious of the fact that their original appeared, individually, in the periodical publications of his day, while many others were collected in book form. In doing so I am very aware of the wide range and scope of his travel writings, same as of the varying important roles they played in relation to his other works and in the growth of his literary reputation.

4.2 The Development and Evolution of Travel Discourse

As Vanessa Smith rightly puts it, "travel writing always involves a wrestling with predecesors, a trope for debunking". For, she argues, "the traveller embarks with

preconceptions or questions formulated from the stories" (Smith 1998:105), whether he sets forth encumbered, -we may feel free to add- with burdensome chests of a whole tradition, or he skips nimbly down a more personal path, with a managable rucksack, bearing his own views and perspectives.

Before we set out to establish which of those questions, which of those preconceptions should be used regarding Stevenson and his extremely self-conscious art, we deem *ad rem* to cast our eyes over those marcescent elements of a formidable stem, a veritably rooted tradition.

The story of the singular development, evolution, and profusion of travel writing in Britain can best be told conceptually, through the overriding notion of "purpose", rather than diachronically, or geographically. The latter approaches would obliterate our findings with their mutiple intersections, and dismiss the freedom the genre affords to the traveller to be whatever he wishes to, a geographer charting new terrains, a botanist cassifying new specimens, an explorer opening further routes of commerce... In contrast, the former, the teleological -our *modus operandi* here-, will hopefully, further expose the singularities and disparities between the travel writings each one produced.

4. 2.1 Pilgrims, knights and missionaries, -the spiritual and chivalric quests-.

The first scene of all that starts this extraordinary story shows a pilgrim, a Christian-like figure immersed in a bleak landscape as he makes bickering hazardous progress towards the City of Light; be that luminesence heathen or heavenly.

In the first centuries after the advent of Christianity, we find echoes of the great travel epic, Homer's *Odyssey* (c.600 BCE) with its episodic structure and its presentation of its traveller-protagonist as a morally questionable individual. Yet most travel-related writings of the era, seldom conform to our modern notion of the "travel book", in the first person truth-telling narrator's voice. Horace is again the exception, his lively travelogue in verse, "A Journey to Brundisium", -in Book 1 of his *Satires*-, "offers a much more personal travel account in which the narrator recounts some of the

hardships and misfortunes which befell him along the way, and in this respect, it provided an important model for travel writers in later eras" (Thompson 2011: 36).

After the discovery in Jerusalem of the True Cross by St. Helena in the fourth century, the holy sights had to be seen and experienced. One of the earliest first-person, non-fictional Christian pilgrimages we know of in the Western tradition, the *Pilgrimage of Egeria* (c.381-84 CE) is an account, of such a journey, -in the form of a long letter to her compatriots-, by Egeria or Aetheria, -supposedly a nun, who travelled to Jerusalem from Spain or Western Gaul-. But "Egeria's narrative focuses on the spiritual significance of the landscapes she traverses, and on the devotional practices of the people she encounters, rather than on her personal feelings" (Thompson 2011: 36-7).

Early messengers of Faith were sent to the continent and to the regions of the Mediterranean. Legends of the ninth centuries -committed to writing in the eleventh century- have for foundation an actual sea-voyage of undetermined destination, the so called "Navigatio Brendani", the "Voyage or Wandering of St. Brendan". Brendan is said to have sailed from Ireland in search of a fabled Paradise on Earth with a company of some monks of no precise number. After a long voyage of seven years they reached the "Terra Repromissionis", or Paradise, a most beautiful land with luxuriant vegetation. But there is no historical evidence of such a journey which, if it ever happened, would have taken place in the sixth century.

Journeys to Rome were not uncommon in the time of Bede (673-735 CE), as Chaucer remarks -often incidentally-, the long pilgrimage to Jerusalem was thrice acomplished by the Wife of Bath, who had -unquestionably-, no lack of companions. Many had actually made that journey, same as devotees who completed the pilgrimage to Compostela in the ninth and tenth centuries.

The *Travels of Sir John Mandeville* (c.1356), originally written in Anglo-French and supposedly based on the author's own travels to the Holy Land, was meant to offer practical and devotional advice to pilgrims by one who had actually made the pilgrimage and claimed a first-hand experience of far off places known to medieval Europeans. Yet it is uncertain wether the account is "just a digest of other works", or if it was "seriously intended as an encyclopaedic summing-up of the geographical

knowledge of the age, with the traveller-persona of "Sir John Mandeville" being invented to provide a coherent narrative thread" (Thompson 2011: 38).

Nonetheless, it was the education of the soul that was the first concern of such texts in which the element of the travelogue is strictly subordinated to the practical and religious concern.

John Bunyan's ethos in his masterpiece, *Pilgrim's Progress* here alluded to in the opening sentences, -as being highly regarded by Stevenson-, falls squarely in that representation, -however allegorical that spiritual quest-, which looks back into the dark recesses of ancient times and is epitomized by a later occurance, that of the missionary.

The story of the missionary societies started in the last decade of the eighteenth century[350], in an impulse by north European Protestants to spread the Gospel. These were especially strong in Britain and linked to the slave trade abolition cause that freed the slave settlement of Sierra Leona, in 1787, bringing about the end of English slave trade in 1807.

Missionary societies, -founded by Congregationalists, Evangelical, Scottish Presbyterians and other aristocratic nonconformists -, published literature that supplemented the travel books for which there was a rapidly growing market during the eighteenth century. Some even furthered scientific travel writing, especially those outside the limits of polite society, like the British missionaries who arrived in Tahiti in 1797 and by the 1820s had established a virtual Protestant theocracy across the archipelago. Their development in the Pacific, and even more so, the tension between these and the Catholic missionaries, together with the little shift of religion in the nineteenth century, makes it specially relevant to our study of Stevenson's non-fictional writings in the South Seas.

Romances detailing the travails and exploits of a knight in his chivalric quest were another important motif in medieval travel and travel writing. King Arthur and Charlemagne, Chretien de Troyes, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight etc., so very popular in Europe, from the twelfth century onwards, though fictive renderings of the travel theme, in their tests of moral virtue and their call to courtly love, established

350. The non-denominational London Missionary Society, founded in 1795, soon began to have a powerful impact upon South African and islands in the Pacific.

personae and narrative conventions which influenced many real travellers who adopted them in their genuine, non-fictional travel accounts.

4.2.2 Thrill seekers, "Students" and "connoisseurs", - the thirst for experience, entertainment and self-fashioning-.

Following the route of the pilgrimage -in a broader sense, and almost "snapping" at the heels of the pagan and the Christian, bringing back relics that would later become art objects-, there came "an ideological exercise", whose "leading purpose was to round out the education of young men of the ruling classes, by exposing them to the treasured artifacts and ennobling society of the Continent". Usually occuring after completion of studies at Oxford or Cambridge University, the Grand Tour ran anywhere from one to five years in length and offered "a social ritual intended to prepare these young men to assume leadership positions preordained for them at home" (Buzard rpt. in Hulme and Youngs 2002: 38).

Begun as a French phrase, *le grand tour,* it was appropriated by Britons of the late seventeeth and early eighteenth centuries, whose wealthy nation had created a "substantial upper class with enough money and leisure to travel" (Withey 1997: 7). Richard Lassels appears to have introduced the term into English in his *An Italian Voyage* (1670) recommending that young gents undertake a "Grand Tour of France and the Giro of Italy"[351].

The itinerary included the habitat of the refined manners and gracious behaviour necessary to civilised men. To wit, the Loire Valley, where the purest French accent served to identify and ward off any form of *patois*; a lengthy stay in Paris; a visit to Geneva, -with perhaps a foray into philosophy with Voltaire at his villa-; then across the Alps, down to Florence, -via Turin, or Milan-, to La Serenissima, before reaching the Eternal City. The northward return included stays in Austria, the German university

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351. Richard Lassesls, *The Voyage Of Italy, Or A Complete Journey Through Italy: In Two Parts : With the Characters of the People, and the Description of the Chief Towns, Churches, Monasteries, Tombs, Libraries, Pallaces, Villa's, Gardens, Pictures, Statues, and Antiquities.* (Paris: Vincent du Moutier, 1670), p. 197

towns, Berlin and Amsterdam; and the Tour could be done *vice versa* as evinced by the Earl of Chesterfield.

> ... the young man was "rubbed at three of the considerable courts of Europe-Berlin, Dresden, and Vienna", before arriving in Italy "tolerably smooth and fit for the last polish.[352]

The vogue of the Grand Tour reached its peak in the eighteenth century and was described in 1749 by Thomas Nugent, an influential travel writer, as "a custom so visibly tending to enrich the mind with knowledge, to rectify the judgment, to remove the prejudices of education, to compose the outward manners, and in a word form the complete gentleman" (Buzard 1993: 98).[353] And most specially, when Samuel Jonhson declared that a "man who has not been to Italy", -who has not seen its Renaissance glories and classical splendors- "is always conscious of an inferiority, from his not having seen what it is expected a man should see"[354].

The Italians were obviously well ahead in the arts, and art was surely the main ingredient in Johnson's time, as revealed by the diaries of the day, filled to overflowing with matters of sculture and antiquities. But it certainly wasn't there in the late sixteenth and early seventeeth centuries, in which the Grand Tour "toddlered". The English were already behind their time as far as art was concerned. In 1604, James I signed the treaty of peace with Spain and there is a sense of urgency to catch up with art, also reflected upon by the afore-mentioned Earl of Chester.

> ...it must be owned that the Graces do not seem to be natives of Great Britain... Since barbarism drove them out of Greece and Rome, they seem to have taken refuge in France.[355]

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352. Earl of Chesterfield, *The Letters of Philip Dormer Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield with the Characters.* ed. John Bradshaw (London: Geroge Allen & Unwin, 1926), vol. 1p. 197.

353. For a more detailed, -even though, much later- commentary and account of the Grand Tour, of its routes, cost, dangers, and annoyances, see Williams Edward Mead's *The Grand Tour in the Eighteen Century*, (Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1914).

354 James Boswell's *Life of Johnson* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 742,

355. Ibid vol. 1, p. 171.

Thus, Inigo Jones felt it was his role to singlehandedly absorb two hundred years of Italian Renaissance architecture in one career. A nice symbolic, perhaps exaggerated example, yet it was he who introduced the Palladian style to Britain.

Still, the 1640s meant the highest hiatus for travellers. With the Civil War, the royalists were attracted to the splendour of Italy[356]. Still, going to Italy for religious purposes had already been sneered at by Erasmus, among others, and it became sort of forbidden by the effect of the second Protestant Reformation. Nonetheless, the instinct to travel was too great to be put down by a mere shift of religion. Commercialisation and consumerism came together building the connoiseurship development: publications, art auctions, people coming fashionable, cataloging of the objects of art, art "pundits" letting themselves be easily cheated ... All these stimulated travelling.

With the rise of Louis XIV, France opted the wrong way. Going to Italy was almost subversive. Holland became the only option to the Grand Tourers. Religious tension was felt strongly at the time, -and even earlier, when Henry IV, Louis' grandfather, signed the Edict of Nantes in 1598, granting tolerance to the Huguenots,-. There was a sense of cultural betrayal by the elite, these very wealthy young people going abroad, picking up vices raging from siphilis to a preference for Catholicism, and cultural preferences as well. This idea of the betrayal of the national interests was already noticeable in the sixteenth and seventeeth centuries when Protestants were curious about Catholics. -What were Catholics really like?-. At the time, books offered explicit intructions and directions about how to approach foreign places, and how it was necessary to extract both pleasure and benefit from travelling experiences, "improvement", as it was later referred to.

A tension between xenophobia and cosmopolitanism runs ripe through into the eighteenth century. Going to Rome is tantamount to going to the ideological centre of Catholicism; not simply seen as a religion, but as the centre of political, social and cultural pressures that people find unwelcome. Constant propaganda advises against it in sermons, in caricature... Going to Rome was a source of suspicion and dissension.

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[356] See Edward Chaney's (1998) *The Evolution of the Grand Tour.*

Together with Jacobitism, "Anti-Catholicism was the prime ideological stance in eighteenth century Britain" (Black 1985: 89), families were often scared to send their children to Continental Europe. Catholicism was the great physical enemy, even though many aristocrats hid in Britain after the French Revolution. To be loyal was to stay at home.

Notwithstanding, it is the Grand Tourist who, in the eighteenth century, defines the ideas of art and establishes the rules of taste. The wonders of Italian architecture and culture certainly become fashionable. In that greed the British elite almost lose touch with their own country. As they get more understanding of France and Italy, they are able to discover the Lake District, the Home Counties and their many wonders. The artistic taste gets thus disseminated, and there is a growing pressure to have the right response to art as part of their education. Therefore, it is not surprising to find out that "tourists were expected to bring home sketch-books from their tour as well as diaries" (Hibbert 1987:169).

So, travel for knowledge and instruction was a new formulation. Yet, was it genuine culture curiosity that designed this travel, or simply the fashion? Did other ideals and purposes become ingrained in the "pristine" mind? Can we take the Grand Tour as a norm? Jeremy Black makes a telling statement about it.

> ... plenty of published books recount the experiences of travelling in Europe, yet much of the relevant literature, especially on the Grand Tour, exists in private manuscript correspondence, or in the form of arguments about the value of travelling, rather than that of travelogue" (Black 1992: xi-xiii).

Thomas Hoby[357] went for a very broad range of reasons, to study the institutions, the fortifications, the languages, above all, and in his particular case, to train to be a diplomat. As a result of his travel experiences, -long around-, he adquired Italian, and translated Castiglione's book of manners *Il Cortigiano* into English. But in his travel diaries there is very little mention of art, aside from a mention of Michalangelo by chance, and even not really realizing who he was!

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357. See, *The Travels and Life of Sir Thomas*. Edited for the Royal Historical Society by Edgar Powell. (London: Offices of the Society, 1902).

It is in the social history of the Grand Tour the fact that many of these young aristocrats never went to university; and many, of those who did, never completed their three years. Many indulged in excesses of drinking; many spent their time gambling, even on art objects; many came back with veneral disease[358], which was as much a legacy of the Grand Tour for many individual families as were the shapely scupltures they put in their garden. For all those, very many natural beauties and culture treasures were commensurate with sexual permissiveness and gratification. To others travel was in itself an adventure; a potentially dangerous and destabilizing one. And drunkeness provided a metaphor for the dangers of travel in a rapturous drinking song. The underside of British culture moved abroad.

This new notion of travelling for gathering and ordering experience of the world, the phenomenological purpose central to travel, changed at some point in the early eighteenth century when the authority of the traveller writing is a certain pre-scholar refering to notes, to the classics, to verbal sources, so the previous notion of simply having gone to a place is displaced, in addition, by having responded to the objects of commentary, to the objects of observation.

While confronting the extraordinary, "the sublime", - as expressed in Burke's theories[359]- there is a wide range of options, of rhetorical gains and dangers lying open to the traveller-observer, from whom a hyperbolic aesthetic and emotional responsivenes is demanded. Writers offering their accounts were now well aware of the risks the language of responsiveness entailed; the main one being affectation. If you go around Italy appreciating everything, you risk being taken as being too easily impressed; and even more risky, as showing emotions that you don't, in fact, feel.

Furthermore, emotional responsiveness is seen, at the time, as a feminine quality compatible with a man's quality of sincerity and simplicity; but if you don't achive the impression of sincerity and simplicity you are in danger of lapsing into effeminate affectation. If Italians saw a conceited Englishman in ruptures over a Titian, they

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358 See Chloe Chard's (1999), *Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour.* Machester: M.U.P.

359. In *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757) Edmund Burke explains how sensation, imagination, and judgment determine the experience of pleasure and pain, and how pleasure and pain are represented by the aesthetic concepts of beauty and sublimity.

wouldn't understand why he was doing it, why he was putting on this appearance of pleasure. Homosexuality was called "the Italian vice", some patrons felt they had to go away because they had got caught.

Travel could also jeopardize the travellers's perception of themselves. Their developed sensibilities could impinge on their self-consciousness. "How did Britain think of itself as an educated nation and what was it bringing back?" one wondered, as he went beyond his own bounderies to rediscover his own country. Yet these inducted quibbles, these instilled solecisms the vast majority couldn't appreciate, for that privilege was only granted to the elite of the Grand Tourists.

A few productive ideas came out of the Grand Tour -still a round trip-, we shall conclude. One: the discovery, through the Renaissance art, of the classical Greek, and a way of becoming civilised through contact with Italy. Two: the Grand Tour made Britain great humanistically. Three: it made it more sufficient to art. Four: it gave Britons, perhaps a certain prejudice, perhaps a pedagogical awareness that one is not required to learn while being abroad. Five*:* London became the world's city, a veritably exciting, almost "exotic", experience.

4.2.3 Empire builders, explorers and scientists
-discovery and the adquisition and dissemination of knowledge-.

In the opening paragraphs to this chapter, we commented on the very little bibliographical efforts made in the field of travel writing. It is pertinent to note here the paralleled paucity of anthologies serving to illustrate the evolution and the quality of the texts within the different periods. Works like Paul Fussell's[360] shed light on and help document that imbalance.

Fussell contends that the persuasive appeal of travel "owed something to the high degree of acceptance which philosophical empiricism had gained in Britain by the end

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360. Paul Fussel, *The Norton Anthology of Travel.* (New York, Norton, 1987)

of the seventeenth century". The kind of articulated systematic empiricism that turned John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) into "a sort of bible for those who espoused a "blank slate" conception of human consciousness and held that all knowledge is produced from impressions drawn in through our five senses" (Buzard in Hulme and Youngs 2002:37). The kind of knowledge rooted in experience and nowhere else, by which travel instantly gains in importance and desirability. The kind of heuristic approach that made the great Renaissance age of colonial exploration and expansion. So that, from then on, travelling about to contemplate the new and different became "something like an obligation for the person conscientious about developing the mind and accumulating knowledge" (Fussell 1987:130).

Yet that pattern, that emphasis was, already, in the four voyages of Cristopher Columbus, which constitute a key point of transition from medieval to early modern attitudes. Eye-witnessing and the insistance on an inductive method, had made possible the shaping of new protocols of "epistemological decorum"[361] that took over the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in turn, influencing the activities and accounts of many explorers, such as Francis Drake (*Voyage to the Istmus of Darien)*; Sir Walter Raleigh (*First Voyage to Guianna)*; and William Dampier -in his hugely influential record of his thirteen years as a privateer in the Caribbean (*New Voyage Round the World*)-.

The popularity of travel writing in lending libraries, which sprung up during the later part of the seventeenth century, attests to this widening interest, also confirmed by the presence of multi-volume collections of travels from a variety of sources, periods or regions. Compilations -rather costly- were designed for gentlemen's libraries in the Hakluyt tradition[362]. But John Knox's *A NewCollection of Voyages, Discoveries and Travels*[363](1767) was already issued in seven deliberately inexpensive volumes.

Those up to the 1750s were predominantly tales of catastrophes, of forberance, of adversity and suffering bravely borne, owing still much to "the Robinson Crusoe

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361. A term created by the historian of science Steven Shapin to make reference to the contemporary audience expectations and their conformity to the given canon.

362. A society named after Richard Hakluyt (1552-1616), collector and editor of narratives of voyages and travels and other documents relating to English interests overseas, his *The Principall Navigations, Voiages and Discoveries of the English Nation*, (1589) is considered a foundational text of the genre. See also next section, n44.

363. Bearing, the wordy subtitle, "Containing whatever is worthy of Notice, in Europe, Asia, Africa and America."

effect". The traveller's discourse was not carefully structured, yet, there was that intimation of new horizons ambitioned, new "techniques" of observation encompassed.

As the century proceeded there was a growing army of authentic travellers who strove to write with precision about the wider world, with some concern for perceived British interest. Some even moved along the new landscapes with a vast droll retinue. Preocupations in travel writing were becoming more and more secular.

In 1767, Samuel Wallis, reaches Tahiti, -a year ahead of the Frenchman Louis de Bugainville, and two years before Cook-, and starts writing his accounts. Through their descriptions Tahiti became the gold standard against which other Pacific cultures were measured. The predictable contrast between Europe and the Pacific, between self and alien. Yet the idea of "prelapsarian worlds, free of the guilty burdens and prohibitions of Judeo-Christian cultures" (Edmond rpt. in Hulme and Youngs 2002:139), had been a glint in the eye of Europe for centuries before the arrival of Wallis at Tahiti. An illusion as utopian as paradise on Earth.

Forster's *Observations Made During a Voyage Round the World* (1778)[364], were based on extensive reading but limited first-hand acquaintance. Although his account of Tahitian life is of great ethnographic value, it is also a prime example of how travel writing can tell as much about Europe as about others. Like Forster, many travellers still were in two places at once; neither here, nor there. And this constitutes a real warning[365]. As in Forster's, in Cook's there are descriptions of scenes of cannibalism, public displays of brutalities. Still, Tahiti soon emerged from barbarism, without yet being seriously threatened by the undermining effects of luxury, to be the most developed of all Pacific societies. Exploration had become an excuse for civilization.

Credit was, notwithstanding, given to the accuracy of travellers's information. Adam Smith included Chinese and Indian examples in his *Wealth of Nations* (1776). Pretty soon, there were reports about "stagnant despotisms", cruelty and barbarism.

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364. Johann Reinhold Forster, (1729-1798) travelled with Cook on his second voyage.

365 The anthropologist Victor Turner coined the term "liminality" to describe that state of existence of expatriates, and especially, of those who experience the new, at a time when the roles with the locals have not yet been established. See also Neill, Anna *British Discovery Literature and the Rise of Global Commerce*. (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave), pp. 3, 14, where she states this liminality is the crux of the matter, for identities are also confused, so that the traveller is neither one nor the other.

Non-Europeans at best were “innocent primitives”, the idea of the “noble savage” was a construct to which few practical travellers gave much credence, though.

By 1800 a typical pattern had emerged. Proceeding from a base in civilisation to an unknown region, the traveller must then describe experiences and observations day to day on the basis of a log or journal. This format left some scope for the depiction of the picturesque or the exotic, which would later constitute motifs by themselves-, yet placing the emphasis on science and precision. It was James Cook, in the 1770s, who allegedly set the pattern of “scientific” observation. His second voyage on the Resolution was called “arguably the greatest and most perfect of seaborne voyages of exploration”. In his voyages, he also set another pattern, that of the government demanding scientific investigation as part of a search for precise, accurate information whether or not this pointed to economic opportunities. Scientific exploration had become part of a process of “territorial surveillance, appropriation of resources and administrative control” (Bridges rpt. in Hulme and Youngs 2002: 57-8).

Yet, none of this took place forthwith; the seed had been sown more than a century earlier, with the foundation of the oldest and most prestigious scientific society in Britain. Set up in 1660 to foster Baconian principles in science and knowledge, the Royal Society “issued numerous directives to travellers, seeking in this way to regulate and systematise not only the sort of information they gathered, but just as crucially, the observational methods they used to gather and record data” (Thompson 2011:74). Thus, observations were registered whilst the scenes and phenomena being described were still in front of the traveller, rather than being hazily remembered at a different location or later point in time. Travel writers were soon required to demonstrate that they had adopted such a disciplined approach, and that their published narrative was largely derived from these originals. The Royal Society instructed a plain style, against the use of any rhetorical ornamentation, to limit the potential for misinterpretation. “Abstract or metaphysical speculations were to be kept to a minimum, as were subjective impressions and personal thoughts and feelings” (Thompson 2011:76).

An air of artlessness, and the apparent abscence of any retrospective narrational or editorial emendation, thus becomes a key marker of authenticity and reliability in travel writing.

The Royal Society reputedly had, in the gentleman-scientist and patron of exploration, Joseph Banks, its most illustrious president. Banks was founder of the "Asociation for Promoting the Discovery of the Inland Parts of Africa". As director of The Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew he sent plant collectors to all parts of the world. He also travelled on Cook's first voyage. In his journal, he describes going ashore at Tahiti for the first time.

By the 1770s travellers and explorers were expected to contribute papers, as Cook himself did, to the Royal Society's Philosohical Transactions. Soon other institutions followed; like the Admiralty, the Royal Geographical Society or the Anthropological Society. These institutions figured as "centres of calculation" that accumulated the different forms of data from the field; oversaw "the development of new theories and models in the light of this data; and directed further missons to test, extend or put to practical use the new knowledge that had thus been formed" (Thompson 2011: 85).

In 1815, the British governement organised landward and maritime exploration in western Africa. A decade later, science had made possible an "intellectual conquest" of most of the rest of the world so that an "imperialism of improvement" could be brought about. But governments were usually reluctant to take "administrative control" of large areas.

The turn of the century also meant the arrival of books in which travellers described their own exploits. This was a most important innovation since, so far, scientific findings had only been published in the form of articles in the respective societies. Once again, Cook's explorations proved a landmark here, there were volumes written by himself and by his numerous associates.

Still, most of these texts should not be considered literature, they served more pragmatic ends, athough this did not prevent them from being read for pleasure. Travel

writing in this regard played a major role in the emergence of Western science in its modern forms.

A further step towards that fulfillment, -indeed a crucial one-, was the creation of periodicals aimed at a wider readership, thereby abridging the gap between expert and general reader in their didactic purpose. Among these, *The Gentleman Magazine* was an early example promptly imitated by the Tory *Quaterly Review*, and the Whig *Edinburgh Review*. And still, aiming at a more popular market than these, there was *Blackwood's Magazine,* to which we referred in a previous chapter[366].

But the true story of scientific writing was told, in the Victorian Age, by the overwhelming proliferation of travel writings. Such massive vogue and development can only be measured by the extremely abundant testimony. F.A. Kirkpatrick in *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, mantains, "books of travel were more read in Great Britain than any other books except novels". (Kirkpatrick qtd. in Bethke 1977: ix), John Dodds in *The Age of Paradox*[367] goes as far as to claim that there were even more travel books than novels. A firm, Richard Bentley & Son account for some 367 traveloges put out in all Victorian period.

> The type of texts produced varied greaty encompasing memoirs, literary travelogues, news paper reports, campaigning tracts and a mass of purely functional documents intended for highly specialist audiences such as scientists, economists and policy-makers. All this material arguably constitutes a form of travel writing" (Thompson 2011: 52).

In came the likes of Darwin's *Voyage of the Beagle* (1839); A.W. Kinglake's *Eothen* (1844) with its many sensualities from the Middle East; Edward Lane's translation of *The Thousand and One Nights* (1838-1840)-; Sir Richard Francis Burton's *A Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Medinah and Meccah* (1855); Speke's *The Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile* (1863); Edward Henry Palmer's

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[366] See, for instance "The Scottish Pundits" section in chapter 2, on pp. 71 and 73 of these thesis.

[367] John Dodds, *The Age of Paradox. A Biography of England. 1841-1851*. (NewYork: Rhinehard & Co., 1952).

scholarly papers and popular manuals; Charles Montagu's great prose classic *Travels in Arabia Deserta* (1888), etc.

This was the age of David Livingston's and Henry Morton Stanley's descriptions of the African interior; of Mary Kingsley's interpretations and sympathetic understanding of other races and of the African peoples; of Amundsen and Scott's polar explorations. Yet also of Marryat, Kipling, and Haggard. Of scientific accounts; of poignant narratives of a startling literary merit, full of point and wit.

A first reason for such a cornucopia of wonderful geographical, natural, historical, ethnographic linguistic information about well-nigh every region of the globe, speaks for the fact that, during the Victorian era, travel narratives appealed more to general readers than to the literati. How? Because travel involves confrontation with foreign peoples and landscapes, it is valuable to approach the travel text in terms of the author's self-image as it emerges from that confrontation. A close reading of the travel narrative within the context of the authors' personal history reveals how the author's sense of identity influences the thematic structure of the work, arousing the obvious curiosity on the reader.

For Victorians "abroad", was a romantic, natural place full of mystical and voluptuos associations. An invaluable defense, a call of the imagination against the grey rigours of industrialisation and the pessimism of the rough, tough day. Just as for the Renaissance man, travelling to Europe represented reason, progress, science and empiricism, and the search for new aesthetics.

The question of whether to "go native" or go home, might have had a more or less intense impact in previous ages, but it was crucial to the sense of identity of the Victorians.

Hellen Carr argues that "much travel writing shows the complicity with imperialism", which goes side by side with the idea that the period also witnessed "the invention of distinct national identities, the establishement of firm ratial hierarchies and white supremacy" (Carr rpt. in Hulme and Youngs 2002: 73)

Conversely, it can also be maintained that travel writing provided a significant forum for disension, for challenging the conventions in search of a more open

interpretation of the data. Just as travel, essays were a forum for challenging the narrative conventions, formal architecture of plot and closural strategies on which the novel depended.

In any event, the expansion of the genre is intimately related to the territorial expansion of a new empire engulfing all the continents, yet based on the opening of new commercial routes, easily accesible harbours, and an extremily profitable mining industry.

Another decesive factor was that brought forth by the triumph of the middle class. The growth of wealth and the stunning technological advances -steamships, paved highways, railroads, etc.- made travelling in the continent a mark of culture. The very energy of the age spurred Victorians to journey abroad, and especially to venture farther to remote and inaccessible areas. An opportunity previously limited to the affluent upper classes now the well-to do bourgeois possessed the means to do so.

4.2.4 Traders and merchants,
-influence and political control-.

This discourse is intimately connected with the previous, that of writers intent on bringing the non-European world into a position where it could be influenced, exploited and directly controlled. This was significantly the case of Britain where several kinds of relationships -diplomacy, missionary endevour, scientific exploration...-, prevent direct administration. Of these, none was as trenchant as the mercantile and colonialist, none more directly connected with travel writing, in a process that soon became a self feeding circle. The proliferation of individual accounts inspired the opening of new commercial routes through exploratory expeditions, which in turn inspired the writing and publishing of further travel texts. Founders required and expected their “voyagers” to write their accounts. Readers demanded more books and this demand was answered by the proliferation of collections like Richard Hakluyt’s, -aformentioned-, *Principal*

Navigations of the English Nation[368] and Samuel Purchas's *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas his Pilgrimes.* These proved landmarks that provided defining examples of travel writing during the Tudor period.

Hakluyt's included mostly texts written at his request, yet also documents collected from other sources, translations of foreign books and some correspondence. Purchas's texts were usually epistolary. And here lies a categorical difference, for while the former dealt with private and business correspondence among merchants and other travellers, those of the latter were written with an intent to publication, thereby, creating expectation in their audience. Yet both Hakluyt's and Purchas's were, veritably, inexhaustible sources of information on far-off places, of inspiration for future voyages by the merchant companies like the East India Company and other such organizations.

Both publications indicate that correspondence was the primary tool of the trade. Masters expected their venturing merchants to send constant updates about the state of the market abroad, so much as of the progress of their joint enterprise. Manuals exhorted letter-writers to write tersely without rambling and unnecessary repetition, readers were admonished to observe the plain and brief form of "inditing".

In both, there is also the concern that this precious possession, this privileged information, could fall into the wrong hands. Eventually companies would deny "outsiders" access to their archives.

Finding "suitable conveyance" was indeed a problem, for reliable letter-carriers were scarce. Thus, the East India Company sent copies to different ships doing the route, if these were not lost in a shipwreck, it took them months to reach their destination.

It can thus be argued that the utilitarian aims of seafarers, traders and merchants -who wrote letters and kept logs out of duty or obligation, rather than out of a sincere desire to record their experiences-, produced texts which, usually, lacked detail and

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368. See also note 31 above. Hakluyt's collection was mainly of English travels, Purchas's aim was overambitious in that it aimed at a history of the world that would contain the whole body of the literature of travel. Hence its subtitle, *Contayning a History of the World in Sea Voyages and Lande Travells, by Englishmen and others.*

were limited in their scope even though they fled from affectation and rhetorics. These, and such as these, are not likely to contain elaborate interpretations of the alien, they rather provide snapshots of the early European attitudes to otherness.

Later on, technological superiority led to the presumed superiority of intellect. Europeans could now claim to understand and interpret the terrain they entered, as well as its inhabitants.

All this was brought forth by the developments in the eighteenth century discussed above. Spain's and Portugal's dominance was now eclipsed by the Netherlands, France and Britain. The three competed for, what was assumed, a limited supply of wealth, according to the mercantilist theory. And Britain proved ahead of the other two, most probably because of the overlapping of the interests of the landowning elite, who dominated politics, and those of the mercantile bourgeois to a much greater extent than elsewhere.

Victories in wars; the territories gained in 1744-8; the global struggle with France, from which Britain emerged with large gains in India; the fact that British North America (Canada) remained in the British sphere of trade and influence after the loss of the American colonies; the Trafalgar "apotheosis" of 1805... all point to Britain as a truly global power with vast areas in Canada and Australia under direct rule. The same was true in India, which was under control of a handful of East India Company officials. Britain now opperated in former Spanish and Portuguese territories, gained access to five hundred million possible consumers in China, found a valuable market in West Africa and soon began to decide for Africans who they should trade with and whether or not they could sell slaves.

Travelling discourses show Britain's closer engagement with the wider world. Larger numbers of travellers and explorers made journeys to report upon it.

4.2.5 Leisure travellers and bohemians,
- fleeing from the bourgeoisie, the aesthetic revolt-

The unconventional, informal, eccentric, idiosincratic ways and social habits of those of a creative artistic mind or talent are best definied by the term "Bohemian". Theirs was an experiment in living; a cry of freedom from social concern; an inordinate appetite for loving the youngest and prettiest, drinking the oldest and best.

As a word, "Bohemianism" comes from a tribe, in some measure Czech, that was taken over by them and amalgamated into that Slavic kingdom that became part of western Czechoslovakia. Soon emmigrants from that part of the world were called "Bohemians".

Meanwhile, the gypsies coming from central into western and northern Europe, by the 17th century, were also called "Bohemia" in France. Either because they were thought to come originally from the kingdom of Bohemia, or just because they were travelling through that kingdom. These gypses were nomadic, travelled in painted caravans, dressed colourfully and loosely, and were often identified with thieves, pickpockers, or pedlars, bearing even other sorts of criminal associations.

From the1830s onwards, the word started to be used in France to apply to young people who were living the kind of alternative lifestyle of the artistic bohemians. These exhibited not only their work, yet also the gaudy dress as symptomatic of their revolutionary spirit. For inside, the bohemians thought themselves as revolutionaries. And, still more, in their innermost views and convictions there burnt a fiery zeal for anti-authoritarianism, a proud animosity to power, -at times raging, as stated in Victor Hugo's romances and plays-, one destined to overturn any form of convention.

The concept keeps changing and building, yet always within that recoil from authorities as shown in the Oxford Thesaurus, where we find, "nonconformist", "unconventional", "avant-garde", "hippie", "freak", "irregular", "offbeat", "alternative"; "artistic", etc.

In Britain, "Bohemianism" was first popularized by George Borrow's *The Bible in Spain* (1843) and by William Makepeace Thackeray in *Vanity Fair* (1848). And even

more so, in the conceited record, by the former, -always blowing his own trumpet- of his “autobiographical”, roving experiences in *Lavengro* (1851), which epitomizes that improved fact for artistic purposes, offering a highly colored account of gypsy life in England; an insistance on the romantic and eccentric, henceforth identified with wandering Romani people, the out-and-out Bohemians, revelling in the company of gypsies and bruisers. These were the outsiders of the age, untroubled by the disapproval of conventional society. The term carries a pejorative connotation of carelessness about personal appearence, hygiene and marital fidelity.

Henri Murger's *Scènes de la Vie de Bohème*, a collection of stories published in 1845, had such an impact that in time it became a very romantic reference, an unforgettable view of Paris in the 1840s. Murger came from very humble origins, and associated with philospophers, musicians, painters etc., who lived in unberable poverty, and would go for days without food and live out their “poetic” existance. Yet Murger soon moved to the right bank, much to the discontent of his acolytes, when the book became a massive best-seller.

Victor Hugo is partly responsible for sweetening the image of the Bohemian as a real threat against authority. His was the era in which Bohemians aquired a political characteristic, for these young renegades were the ones who spurred the revolution, unlike the romantic vision we get of them in Balzac or that of the Bohemians as nomads in Baudelaire. Yet Baudelaire hated the bohemian life, he didn’t want to become one. He said dirty clothes don’t have to do with genius. Talk and wit have to do with bohemianism, which cannot be based just on being an artist, unhopefully poor, but with an exchange of wittism, sarcasm and tomfoolery.

In Flaubert, there is that feeling that European life is sterile, barren. That want to become the other, to temporary renounce the old identity.

> I delighted in ecstasy eight days ago upon seeing a Bohemian camp at Rouen. It was the third time that I've seen them, and every time that I do, it is with new pleasure. The incredible thing is that even though they are as inoffensive as lambs, they so stir the hatred of the Bourgeoisie. In giving them some money, I made myself very unpopular amongst the crowd. I heard such kind words "à la Prudhomme".

> This hate stems from something very profound and complex. You can find it in every well-to-do person. It's the hate that brings itself to the Bedouins, the Heretics, to the Philosophers, to solitary men and the poets. And in it, hides fear. I, who am a champion of minorities, am exasperated by it. The day I am no longer indignant is the day I will fall to the ground like a marionette whose strings have been cut.[369]

Perhaps Rimbaud was the archetypal Bohemian. He didn't really care about making profit as an artist, or about literary fame, he was intensely a practical person. In the 1870s he returned to Paris, which, he thought was going to be capital of Bohemia, but those "artists" didn't look so to him, they seemed too polite. He didn't come to represent anything in his lifetime, but the freedom of his writting was particularly astonishing for the French, and his style too daring. The French were still following classic modes. Rimbaud made lots of money, stopped writing at 20 and spent the rest of his time wandering.

With Bohemianism, low life becomes high art, as glossed in Pucini's early version of *La Boheme,* which is all about life in a gentle romanticism. A kind of glamourous easy life so squalid and yet so picturesque. Going to Paris was a rite of passage, quite an allure for a young man to resist.

In 1853, Wilde followed that route before writing *Salome*. Paris was the centre of Bohemia on the left bank. Wilde was soon giving Bohemianism a turn, he chose both sides of it, he saw the late Paris and France as an escape route; but he was very well connected, had letters of introduction to all sorts of French writers, so that today, his plays and poetry are even more highly appreciated in France than they are in Britain.

The English bohemians who went to Paris mixed but little with the French, they filled the model of "the misfit", the artist who is eternally misunderstood. Exilers that were left together in the left bank. Going to Paris was a way to shock. Paris represented all sorts of threatening things for normal decent sorts of English people: the terror of philosophical infection and sexual infection. The French capital also provided a counter argument against Catholicism, the kind of affectation of the poseur, the type of

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369. Gustave Flaubert, "Lettre à George Sand, Croisset, Wednesday evening, June 12th, 1867". In *Gustave Flaubert Correspondance,* Pléide, Volume 5, pp. 653-4.

exhibitionism which has to do with how you dress. You got -not just to reject European clothes-, but to show off to become a bohemian. A neccesary step if you wanted to count as an artist. You also must have left home and the country, be married, live on your own resources, debunk romantic love through hedonism, reject a regular job, and commit yourself to "*L'art pour l'art*".

For a time, Bohemianism comingled with or was associated with a late form of Romanticism. Yet the notion was so constantly altered that even when you cannot say today what bohemian life was you know what disqualifies it.

Sodomy was prosecuted in Britan and because Paris was the closest European capital and the cost of living was cheaper, it soon became the prototype of the liberating, tolerant city, where free life and free love were possible.

Once again "utopianism" is the key word which links it back to Hugo. Embodied was the idea of creating a better life in the teeth of what already existed of imperialism, of Victoriamism, of the oppresssive patriarch of the family structure. A community of like-minded artists that would make the world a better place. Where coeducation would be possible among all sorts of communities and dancing, and talking merrily was preferred to doing maths.

Bohemianism seemed to have a much more friendly and human movement in England, although it presumably was becoming more sexual too. In France it was more political, that social aspect of bohemiansim came along at the same time as a painter or a writer could start to live on his own art, or at least it seemed to. Bohemianism lived up to a romantic impulse, underlying it there was that constant search for new aesthetics, the figure of the artist reflecting on his craft beyond the standards.

4.2.6 Travelling heroes enmeshed in journey-plots[370], -admixing fact and fiction.-

4.2.6.1 Veracity: Relating fact

Upon returning from Africa in 1774, the eighteenth-century Scottish traveller James Bruce cannoned into a staggering, unwelcoming circumstance. He was not bestowed the high praise and admiring reception others sooner had. Why not? The "over-blown, self-aggrandising account he gave of his exploits amongst the Abyssinians" (Thompson 2011: 66) was regarded as preposterous and implausible, people assumed he had invented the stories. And yet, he had faithfully related his experiences of modern-day Ethiopia, at a time when the country was little known to Europeans. He had told the veritable, genuine stories and practices of this ancient, complex culture, however colourful, however bizarre they came to be. No matter how much he protested their veracity, he was still lampooned. In time, later travellers to Abyssinia corroborated many of his observations.

Although evidence of information acquired empirically has been more highly esteemed in some periods than in others, Bruce's failure to obtain credit with his audience illustrates the tendency, by the end of the eighteenth century, that to guarantee literary success, -perhaps literary merit- the writer must include presumed "scientific", utilitarian information garnered. Even so, there are ambiguities attendant on this protean and slippery genre that makes use of the first person narrative claiming to be a true record of the author's own experiences. In a similar way there are complexities concomitant with the outward statement that the travel book is a non-fictional form.

About the former, -the ambiguities-, there is the unquestionable truth that travel writings are, by definition, textual artifacts put together by their writers and publishers. That the crafting of travel experience into travel text must inevitably add a "fictive" dimension, not necessarily deceitful still, in a way, "economical" with the truth. For even in the form of a diary or travel journal, with its "apparent" immediacy, a writer

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[370] A phrase quoted from Paul Fussel's *The Norton Book of Travel,* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1987) as apposite to our discussion of that mingling of the real with the imaginative.

neccesarily selects the salient recent events and organizes them, together with his reflections, into some sort of narrative, however brief. And this careful, at times, painstaking "tailoring of the travel account clearly pushes the text in the direction of fiction, even if the writer does not perpetrate any outright inventions of falsehoods" (Thompson 2011: 67). -An "unpardonable" sin joyously accomplished by more than a few-.

Parallel elements of fabrication, while telling the travel tale, are those of the "subtle" necessary omissions and adjustments the writer has to negotiate in his potentially conflictive role of reporter and story-teller seeking to transfix his readers with the new and the enjoyable.

Even when a writer opts for a narrative mode of "showing", rather than "telling"; when he sets out to record his experiences faithfully; when he adscribes to that reality presented nothing other than honestly rendered observation, he is still reconstructing, editing, and distorting those experiences; he is offering a somewhat fictionalised version of them in a more vivid and novelistic fashion.

The matter is further complicated when we consider that historically writers have often shown a pronounced propensity for odd tales and amusing or intriguing anecdotes. Thus, travel writing has in a way been the focus and the projection of epistemological anxieties. Stepping out manfully, both author and reader have to watch their footing and confront the insufferable difficulty of seeing the boundary between fact and fiction blurred. Yet it is, precisely, that interweaving of story-telling and reportage resulting that, arguably, makes the genre so attractive.

4.2.6.1.1 The sublime

About the complexities derived from the travel book being non-fiction, there is the perennial hindrance of *the sublime,* that defiance to our will, that baffling of our senses illustrated by Edmund Burke in the following analogy about oxen and bulls:

> An ox is a creatute of vast strength; but he is an innocent creature, extremely serviceable, and not at all dangerous; for which reason the idea of an ox is by no means grand. A bull is strong too. But his strength is of another kind; often very

> destructive.... the idea of the bull is therefore great, and it has frequently a place in sublime descriptions, and elevating comparisons.[371]

In his *Essay on the Pleasures of the Imagination,* Joseph Addison strives to portay the "prized feeling", the "delightful stillness and amazement" that had overcome him while contemplating "an open champian country, a vast uncultivated desert, huge heaps of mountains, high rocks and precipices and a wide range of waters" (de Botton 2002: 165). Quite an impressive combination; certainly more uncanny than the unseasonal sighting of a flock of geese.

Yet the search for those emotions that would benefit our souls, was already adumbrated by the Greek author Longinus, around 200 CE, in his treatise *On the Sublime.* Writers were already grouping "into a single category a variety of hitherto unconnected landscapes by virtue of their size, emptiness or danger, and arguing that such places provoked an identifiable feeling that was both pleasurable and morally good", so that their value was no longer judged on "formal aesthetic criteria, or on economic or practical concerns, but according to their power to arouse the mind to sublimity"(de Botton 2002: 165).

4.2.6.1.2 Wonder and the grotesque

But, while seeking to relate fact, European travellers were bewildered, discombobulated by other alienated experiences closely associated with that linguistic inadequacy, that inability to render those intense, vivid emotions. Having to confront the truly new, the radically different, the unknown, they are confounded by what they have witnessed; deeply estranged, adrift from the harbouring standards and categories inherited.

The first of these experiences is best expressed by *wonder,* that paradoxical, "curious, unsettling amalgam of awe, fascination and fear", which critics have observed constitutes a recurrent theme in travel writing, and "may be defined as an emotional and intellectual response" (Thompson 2011: 67). It cannot be more aptly represented than in *The Wonders of the East*, -Brittish manuscripts in Old English, and Latin, - written

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[371] *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful,* by Edmund Burke, qtd. in Alain de Botton's *The Art of Travel*, (London: Penguin Books, 2002). pp. 166-7.

around AD 1000, which the scholar Mary Campbell describes as "a miniature encyclopedia in form" -divided into roughly paragraph-length chapters- where "plants, minerals, men, animals and birds are jumbled together like ingredients for a casserole"; giving us "a microsummary of the minerology, botany, zoology, and etnology of the East. These four sciences occupy themselves with four different kinds of physical existence: in one manner or another all cultures separate them" (Campbell 1988: 64).

The uniqueness of *The Wonders* is that those seemingly disconnected, sketchy descriptions differ, in several ways, with other medieval representations usually in the manner of the *Bestiarium vocabulum*, -that compendium of natural history and fantastic illustration of each beasts-; or the *volucrary*, -collections of symbolic birds-, both particularly popular in Britain and France around the twelveth century[372]. In these there is that constant refining of the moral lesson, in detriment of the not much detailed fanciful account of the beasts.

But there is no such moral intent, nor any reference to the Scriptures in *The Wonders,* where we fail to find "the medieval tendency to regard all data as figurative" and as such, "susceptible of allegorical understanding". *The Wonders, "*confounds the modern urge to categorize written works into literary and nonliterary, imaginative and factual". Its paradox, Campbell asserts, is that *The Wonders* is not designed to evoke laughter or fear. "It is so strictly declarative, indicative, and imformational in mood and tone", and thus "it is bound together with serious scientific works, computational tales, maps, and geological lists. The text does not seem intended to produce what we call an aesthetic experience. It functions to inform. But its information is grotesque in some sense that no definition can encompass" (Campbell 1988: 62).

"Grotesque" was already used by Montaigne as a literary genre often linked with the incongruous, fantastic or upleasant, with weird shapes and distorted forms. In the arts, "grotesque" invokes a feeling of uncomfortable curiousness, of utmost inapropriacy as in the form of those chimeras which in Gothic art we call "gargoyles". Yet in *The Wonders,* the grotesque differs from these and other notions alike to these in two main elements or tropes, "that of its hybridizing" its "assimilations of the unclean,

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[372] For the visual impact they provide, see the *Aberdeen* and the *Rochester Bestiary*, and the *Aviarium* or *Book of Birds.* Put together by an Augustan monk of St Nicholas-de-Regny, near Amiens, the latter deals with twenty seven birds, combining their description with long discursive moral teachings.

the monstruous, and the anomalous to the general category of "the holy" and as a rhetorical descriptive device to conceptualize alterity[373] and change.

The Wonders of the East belongs, "after all, to the corpus of factual literature about distant places, and it is time we placed it there, in the context to which it makes its most important and long-lived conribution" (Campbell 1988: 57).

Passing on monstruous projections European travellers not only documented with their writing, they also made possible the conquest of the people they described and showed how travel literature contributed to the genetics of the modern novel and the modern life scientists.

Thus, travel writing is interrelated with ethnograhy, and this relation is replicated with most other academic disciplines -such as natural history, geography, or anthropology-straddling many generic boundaries, as we shall see.

4.2.6.2 Authority: Appearance of reality
-back fraudsters[374].-

Reversing the issue previously discussed, the interpretation of reality as fictive, we come to Defoe's masterpiece *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) based on the paltry account by the Scottish sailor Alexander Selkirk, of his shipwreck and subsequent stranding on one of the uninhabited Juan Fernandez Islands. Defoe used the plain style pioneered by Dampier to create the illusion of truthfulness. A mighty effect of realism, he veritably proved that a journal format in the published text did not automatically guarantee that the events recounted in the narrative actually took place.

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[373] A philosophical term much used in academic discourse to denote "otherness", the entity in contrast to which a personal or cultural identity is constructed, thereby implying the ability to distinguish between self and alien or strange, as established by Emmanuel Lévinas.

[374] I have chosen the term to mean the reverse to the writers in the previous section. The paradox lies in that those facts retold were taken to be fictional, while these fictions narrated were interpreted as fact.

More's *Utopia* (1516) and Swift's *Gulliver Travels* (1729) are also playful literary experiments always meant to be recognised as fictions mimicking travel accounts. The same is true of early parodies of the discovery narrative like Joseph Hall's *Another World, Yet the Same* (1605), a throughgoing scornful attack on the travel vogue, yet fully deploying the conventions of contemporary travel literature.

But, more worringly, outright fraudsters could exploit the same narrative conventions to create deliberate deception. Long histories of hoax travelogues and fake accounts such as George Psalmanazar's *Historical and Geograpical Description of Formosa* (1704) had his European readers enthralled, "for several years, with its accounts of polygamy, cannibalism and other bizarre practices. Only when the Formosan craze begun to abate, however, did the author admit to compiling his narrative out of earlier sources, and making up the more lurid details" (Thompson 2011: 79).

Adherrence to the formal and stylistic conventions outlined earlier became, in this period, a rhetorical neccessity for travel writers who wished to be believed, especially while dealing with the exotic. Notwithstanding, there are admixtures of fact and fiction in Marco Polo same as in James Morrison's account of his experiences onboard the Bounty. In both there is the insistance that the observer is also a participant, a reinforcement of the allure of the real places portrayed.

But this was also the case with narratives of an overt, unashamed fictional intention, such as Defoe's *Captain Singleton*, -which was regarded as unacceptable as travel literature by the 1780s-; with those of a designedly satirical purpose like Johnson's *Rasselas,* or Voltaire's *Candide* -both printed in 1759-; with the cosmological vision in Villaroel's *Viaje Fantástico*; even with the spiritual journey of Dante's *Divine Comedy*; or still, with essayistic performances cast in the form of imaginary travelogues, like Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World* (1762).

Much linked with the latter, Xavier de Maistre's *Voyage autour de ma chambre* (1794), a parody set in the tradition of the grand travel narrative, is an autobiographical account of how a young official frames a captivating fantasy out of his forced reclusion in his room for six weeks. How he looks at the furniture, engravings, etc., as if they were scenes from a voyage in a strange land.

Much praised by the armchair traveller because it does not cost a farthing, the voyage is, therefore, strongly recommended to the poor, the infirm, and the lazy. He writes, "When I travel through my room," -wearing his “travel outfit”, i.e. in his favourite pink and blue pajamas- , "I rarely follow a straight line: I go from the table towards a picture hanging in a corner; from there, I set out obliquely towards the door; but even though, when I begin, it really is my intention to go there, if I happen to meet my armchair en route, I don’t think twice about it, and settle down in it without further ado" (de Maistre 2004:7). Remarkable for its play with the reader's imagination, and with an acknowledged debt to Shandean sentimentalism, this fresh take on travel literature would inspire Victor Hugo and Marcel Proust, and have several successors in the art of “travelling around your room”.

4.2.7 Literati and utopian poseurs, -constructing identity and revealing the self through new travel experiences like “the picturesque”-.

So far we have carefully applied “travel writing” to any travel text within, or “bordering”, the wide confines of the factual, the province of the “real”. There can be small wonder that this type of writing has historically been unseparable from fiction, -as illustrated in the previous section,- so that the limits still remain ambiguous and we still speak of “yarns”, or “travellers’ tales”. Yet, in this subdivision we shall deal more closely with the more constricted spaces of “travel literature”, i.e. that produced with publication in mind, rather than spurred by a regular utilitarian motivation.

The first obstacle we face in our approach is derived from the widespred modern objection that travel literature is, paradoxically, either too literary or, again, too factual. This can be levelled by stating that, of course, the genre has always included many accounts that were garishly sensational, if not pure artifice. Yet that schism between the imaginative and the factual, that anxiety about assigning the label “literature” to travel narratives, was perceived neither by the authors nor by their readers in the past, for they both held the genre in such high esteem that it was almost ever-present.

The second hurdle springs, more ironically, from its very popularity that seems to downgrade the genre depriving it of its full literary status, causing the critics to view it rather dismissively. Assertions like, "Experience sought for the sake of writing about it may produce reporting, or travel books, but it is not likely to produce literature", by novelist Wallace Stegner, (Qtd. in Kowaleswki 1992: 2), albeit germane to our matter here, can be deftly refutated by a mere peek through the British literature of the eighteenth century, where almost every author of consequence produced one or several overt travel books, worldwide literary masterpieces as influential as those by Fielding, Defoe, Sterne, Johnson or Wollstonecraft[375]. And the same could be argued about the American tradition, to which Stegner belongs, as initiated by the likes of Irving and Cooper[376].

The figure of the literati having authority to be eye-witnesses was already present in the seventeenth century, as a later development of the Grand Tour idea, which, we saw, brought about unsavoury accounts marked by but a smattering of the "literary", and by more than a modicum of the scholarly at the beginning of the eighteenth century. These are now superseded by that of the great author, the literary giant, the enlightened rambler, moving across the landscape.

And these, the literati, come as a theme not only germane, but also German, to our issue under discussion, for Goethe is given credit for being the chief architect of that edifying, illuminating practice exemplified by his *Italienische Reise*[377]. These evocations, recollected twenty five years later, gather together the arts and the sciences into a *Lebensphilosophie,* a harmony of experiences by the late humanist and early romantic. In his exceptional study of the genius of Weimar, Alfonso Reyes refers to Goethe's headlong flight from the rigidities and strict disciplines of his homeland, his

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[375] See Henry Fielding's *Journey of a Voyage to Lisbon,* (1755), Daniel Defoe's *A Tour thro the Whole Island of Great Britain, Divided into Circuits or Journies*, (1761), Laurence Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey*, (1768), Samuel Johnson's *A Journal to the Western Islands of Scotland,* (1775), and Mary Wollstonecraft's *Letters Written in Sweden, Norway and Denmark* (1796).

[376] Washington Irving pubished the collection of essays *Tales of a Traveller* in 1824. James Fennimore Cooper created a series of travelling essays in the 1830s under the heading *Gleanings in Europe.*

[377] An account of his trip to Italy, in 1786, in the form of field notes and letters. These reflecting his realtionship with Carlota, grumbling about his abscence, yet increasingly packed with his impressions and with his enormous zeal for independence.

escape into the light of Italy as bearing all the charms of a secret rite of passage, "Fausto se acerca, temblando al trípode sagrado" (Reyes 1993: 288).[378]

Germanic northern European philosophy was also entering Britain through Coleridge and Carlyle mostly, and the Romantic impulse owed much to the activities of travel and its metaphor, which, though more affordable during the period, was by its prerequisites of means, leisure and education still limited to an elite. Germany's spas, their prescriptive regiments, favouring an interaction with the scenery, forged the aesthetic of **the health-seeker, the traveller as patient**, of which Goethe himself partook most eagerly.

Treading lightly in the steps of Goethe, the vogue for "**the walking tour**", the Wordsworthian "ramble", "journey" or "excursion", informs the narrative poetry of the so called "Cumbrian school", same as that of the late Romantics.

The former included Coleridge and Wordsworth mostly, yet also Robert Southey and the influential essayist and critic William Hazlitt. The latter, the younger generation, was represented by Byron, Shelley and Keats, for whom the discovery of the ancient philosopy, the Mediterranean Greece and the warm weather was vital -as in Keats' forceful, "Oh for a beacon full of the warm south" in "Ode to the Nightingale"-. It also feels very fitting that all three died in the Mediterranean.

In the first, there is that increasing attention to the particularities of actual place and the commonplace features of domestic interior. Though much bent on creating *the traveller persona*, culminating in moments of personal revelation, they are more eloquent of that new sensibility which promotes the grandiosity of the domestic. They loop back home to Britain[379]. As Amanda Gilroy states, the Grand Tour, with its...

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[378] And further, on the following pages, Reyes contends, "Italia representó en su vida aquella interrupción oportuna, como la del cruzado que se iba a Jerusalén con el principal objeto de hallarse otra vez a sí propio y atajar el proceso de digestión del individuo por el medio...Italia fue el viaje de expiación de Goethe. Al volver de Italia es ya otro siendo todavía él mismo, o si se prefiere, es más él mismo".

[379] See, for instance, Wordsworth's *Prelude* (1805), *Excursion* (1814) and poems like "I wandered lonely as a cloud", or "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey"; Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (1798), or Hazlitt's essays "Walking Tours" and "On Going a Journey".

> sites of enthrallment in France and Italy" had forced the traveller to confront the boundaries between reason and passion, revolution and patriotism, pleasure and guilt and reconstruct British national identity in revolutionary Europe. (Gilroy 2000:7).

The second, the younger generation, would be more intent on writing *the self*, collaborating an anti-imperialist discourse at the height of the Napoleonic Wars. These wanted a fresh way forward, away from the patriotic vein. They wanted to come into their own by being out of Britain. Rather than fashion a gentleman of virtue, they created an unproven knight as in Keats' "La Belle Dame sans Merci"; or a Satanic hero as in Shelley's play *Prometheus Unbound* (1820), or Byron's *Child Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812-18).

Byron's poem is a very hybrid mixed up; it is indeed a tremendous travelogue describing the places he traverses throughout Europe, -in the hard to master Spencerian stanza-; yet also a satire on the political events through digressive asides and commentaries -the fall of Napoleon, the cruelty of war, including an attack on Lord Elgin- and a very personal account of his experiences with veiled references to his publicly scandalous life in its prose notes. It is these last that really bring ego into the poem creating a mysterious being capable of making the ordinary in a travelogue seem extraodinary. This third Byronic hero establishes such an intimate relationship with the reader that hero and author get intricately intertwined. It was this more than Byron's use of all kinds of traditional forms in a completely new way, that turned Byron into a phenomenon unlike any other.

Amanda Gilroy states that the poem did something more appurtenant to our purpose here, for it (2000:10) "destablished two genres the romance and the travelogue" not just interrogating "the early nineteenth century rhetoric of British imperialism", yet also offering "a radical critique of contemporary travel literature" by which geography was but a colonial construction, where the otherness of other cultures was not preserved.

But the Grand Tour had done something more; leaving few places in Europe to be described, it had cut a widening swath amongst the British and had given way to a new

paradigm for travelling that completely absorbed, altered and displaced it: tourism[380]. To repudiate the tourist's mentality, to flee from his bland perspective, the traveller was required to display an intellectual cultivation, a finesse, and demonstrate his moral superiority. Travellers were thus anxious to show that they were not just idlers traversing the landscape, but that their sensibilities were as heightened as that of a poet.

A response to this predicament occured well before that of the Romantics seen above. Contraposing "the figure in landscape" with a highly subjective impression of the viewer, **the "Sentimental traveller**", seeking emotional adventures that would serve to substantiate his own sensibility and magnanimity, pioneered innovative techniques to reveal inner thoughts and feelings. Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy* (1768), is, of course, a key influence of this inward turn, described by its author as "...as odd a Tour thro' france (sic), as ever was projected or executed by traveller or travel Writer, since the world began -tis a laughing good tempered Satyr against Traveling (as puppies travel)".- [381]. This classic owes, probably, more to the mischievious gratification Sterne must have felt upon reading Smollett's *Travels Through France and Italy* (1766), than to the inspiration he found in his trip from Calais to Paris and through the Alps. Sterne makes rollicking fun of Baedekers of the period, that particular sort of traveller who, just like "The learned Smelfungus.. set out with the spleen and jaundice, and every object he passed by was discoloured or distorted- He wrote an account of them, but 'twas nothing but an account of his miserable feelings"[382]. In truth, Smollet's book is not as enduring as his *Humphry Clinker*, partly because Smollet appears as "the most embittered and cantankerous Englishman (sic) that ever travelled abroad" (Cox 1935-1949: I, 137), and because he deflects a certain unease which blights a confident approach to the foreign, an enormous inability to say something that makes sense of it. Yet the perpetually discontented Smelfungus helped Sterne to define a *persona* for himself. As a traveller, his

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[380] The distinction between "tourist and "traveller" is still current in travel literature. The former quickly acquired its derogatory connotations in the eighteenth century, when the term was coined. For a definition of their differences see Fussell's 1987, where he states "Tourism soothes you by comfort and familiarity and shields you from the shocks of novelty and oddity. It confirms your pior view of the world instead of shaking it up" (Qtd. in Speake 2003: xii).

[381] Qtd. in Jack 1984: xi

[382] Ibid, xiii.

observations would be “altogether of a different sort from any of my forerunners”; defining what the whole business of travel is about, they would provide a wholly satisfactory blend of literary pleasure and useful knowledge. He would affect disdain for the common artistic pursuits of the Grand Tourist. He would be the product of “a pensive Moode”. He would forbear to offer any thought on the decline and fall of classical Rome, laying his interest in the present. He would be Parson Yorick, whining over a dead ass, yet also “the Yorick whose vaunted benevolence so often derives elsewhere from motives in which altruistic sensibility and the selfish desire for sexual gratification remain uneasily entwined” (Campbell Ross: 2002, 167).

In the swift and subtle shifts of mood which characterize *A Sentimental Journey*, we readers are constantly invited to chuckle and chort, weep and wail... to learn compassion for others. In a letter to a friend, Sterne tells him “...my design in it was to teach us to love the world and our fellow creatures better than we do -so it runs most upon those gentler passions and affections, which aid so much to it” (Qtd., in Jack 1984:xv). Thus we are also persistently provoked to ponder who is actually doing the teaching, for poor Yorick seems to have a good deal in common with his creator. And so it all poses the ineluctable question of whether the self that feels instinctively the misfortunes of a fellow-creature, can be identical with the self reflecting the instinctive response. Two episodes point to the realisation that incidents seldom correspond to actual events: Yorick’s jocular encounter with the Franciscan friar, and that of the celebrated meeting between Yorick and Smelfungus.

We then conclude that Sterne’s masterpiece does not spin a yarn but embroiders a tapestry in which fiction criss-crosses with travel writing, while unresolved lines struggle to divide fiction and fact. We may thus wonder whether the picaresque Sandyan influence is stronger and more perdurable than the philanthropic sentimentalism of Yorick.

In spite of being a fictional travelogue, Yorick’s digressive wanders inspired a host of real-life imitators and introduced techniques for the representation of the self. As Campbell Ross argues, “the cult of sensibility Sterne’s writings did so much to encourage was remarkably tenacious, in prose and verse... So Mary Wollstonecraft, whose early work extols the power of sentiment, and literary sentiment in particular,

eventually turned decisively away from it in favour of the power of reason..." (Campbell Ross 2002: 418-419).

Still ahead of the now plaintive, now gleeful distinguished roamer, yet within the same anti-touristic impulse, there came an important aesthetic known as "**the picturesque**", of which we get a glimmering in the 1780s but which soon developed into a new vocabulary for travel experience that deeply transformed the way travelling got done and written about [383]. Writers of this mode did not dismiss the Pantheon as "a pallet devoured by vermin", -in Smollett's phrase-, nor did they affect nonchalance or find a constant object of derison and mockery. Instead, they contemplated nature unhampered by specialised knowledge or fastidious detail. Rather than offer insights into their idiosyncratic personalities, they favoured a complex interaction with the scenery through which they travelled. Rather than provide a factual, comprehensive account of a place or culture, they captured its spirit impresionistically. Rather than foreground their personality, "they surveyed the natural with pure unmediated vision... devoid of ethical, political, or sentimental meaning" (Gilroy 2000:5).

Thus, style and aesthetic effect were increasingly prioritised by authors, and appreciated by critics and readers, in lieu of any factual information or subjective rendering. "From now on, travel writing would become, more and more, the province of professional writers for whom the travel experience was bound with a sense of literary vocation" (Corwin 1987:82).

Likewise, travel writers would be more literary and self-conscious of their status as artists. In this regard it is significant that the Victorian era saw many authors with established reputations in other literary genres, take up the travelogue form. For example Dickens in *American Notes* (1842) and *Pictures from Italy* (1846); and Mark Twain in *The Innocents Abroad* (1869) and *Roughing It* (1872). In both we find what

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[383] This new framing of the travelling experience appears to emerge not just as a rejection of mawkish emotionalism, yet also as a reaction against such prejudiced, conceited accounts as Samuel Johnson's *A Journal to the Western Islands of Scotland*, (1775), mentioned above; where we find a grumbling Dr Johnson throwing in that kind of cynical attitude, and many assaults on capital dogmas which would have provoked a violent altercation had it not been for the ancient politesse of the lairds. The Tory and Church of England man measuring himself against the sanguine Whig and Presbyterian.

Gilroy terms "the discourse of disinterested disembodiment that anchored mainstream aesthetic theory" (Gilroy 2000:5)[384].

Efforts to adjust the self to the romantic travel narrative; to forge identities and create impersonations that would be favoured in the Victorian context, failed. Such was the case of George Borrow's *The Bible in Spain* (1842) and of R. Burton's *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to El-Medinah and Meccah* (1855-56); for while the former cannot actually become gypsy, the latter cannot become an Arab. They just exploit their brilliant style to create the illusion of self-transformation.

Others, like Alexander Kinglake in *Eothen* (1844), or Isabella Bird in *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains* (1879) opted for a cautious, empirical world view they thought less self-elusive.

Late Victorian travel narratives, as R.B.Cunningham Graham's *Mogreb-el-Acksa* (1898), and W.H. Hudson's *Idle Days in Patagonia* (1893) abandoned traditional *travel personas* to create a passive narrator. Anticipating trends in twentieth century travel literature, they also transfomed travel into an interior journey while attempting to preserve their identities and the landscapes that defined them[385].

4.3 Main Critical and Theoretical Approaches to Travel Writing

In the opening pages to this chapter, we dealt on the inherent difficulties to define a genre characterised by its hybridity, so that the descriptor "travel literature" proved inadequate, blurring the ever-intriguing borderline between travel texts -such as explorers's accounts, merchants's letters, captains's log-books...- and travel fiction. We also showed how utilitarian interests were carefully and punctually superseded with the advent of new "types of traveller" (the elitistic youngman of the Grand Tour with a thirst for experience; the bohemian fleeing from the bourgeoise -while pursuing an aesthetic revolt-; -the health seeker as patient revitalized by the scenery; the literati

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[384] Although in Dickens there is considerable less detachement than in Twain, who gives us "the persona of a rough, honest no-nonsense yankee... unimpressed by everything he sees. Twain was, very probably, the first in denouncing tourism, what we go to see is spoiled by the swarms".

[385] For an analysis of this important aesthetic see Malcom Andrew's 1989, *The Search for the Picturesque*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.

taking an inward turn to write the self or construct communal identity and preserve them from the ravages of time; the Wordsworthian solitary walker journeying to "loop back" home; the poseur desiring to forge romantic identitites -"the traveller persona" as an all-action heroic figure-; the sentimental traveller revealing the self by mocking those who got it wrong; the artist of the picturesque mode carried, almost everywhere, by his imagination and his active relation with the landscape...).

The following pages are concerned with the interdisciplinary status gained by this "genre of genres", which has seen its boundaries expand from its original confined spacesto its pluralistic character, as a result of much academic attention in the last few decades.

"Travel literature" has emerged as a legitimate and innovative object of scholarly study only recently in the mid 1990s. The impetus is often explained by the need to clarify certain recent notions such as "boundary", "margin", "mobility", "displacement", "identity", "gender" or "globalisation". These have rendered "the western, imperialistic, and androcentric worldviews prevalent in European travel writing... increasingly out of kilter..." with their corresponding realities[386].

And this is where travel, with its variety of theoretical approaches, interrelated fields and methodological outlooks, provides an invaluable focus.

Scholars have found the genre relevant not just to the social and cultural debate, but also to the political and historical. Postcolonial studies have sought to take a stand against the many inequalities caused by the imperial projects of nineteenth and early twentieth century Europe. Post-structuralism gave way to historical revision and reinterpretation of travel texts. Linguists have analysed the function of language in travel writing. Literary criticism has explored the many quests and reformulations the hybrid genre provokes, such as the function of metaphor and other tropes, intercultural translation, or identification in reading[387].

This rise of status is also revealed by the unabated popularity and resilience of travel writing in recent decades -as a quick look at the travel section in a library, or decent bookshop will attest to-; and by the proliferation of societies, interdisciplinary

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[386] See. Paul Smethurst's introduction to (2009) *Travel Writing, Form, and Empire*.New York: Taylor and Francis, p.4.

[387] See Campbell 2002:263.

journals, fruitful papers, conferences and symposia, on topics related to travel and travel writing[388] .

Such, seemingly unwieldy theorising demands selective reference and judicious quotation.

4.3.1 The etnographic impulse

Interest in the genre was already resurgent during and after the Second World War, when the moving of troops and of frontiers called for a new mapping of Europe and the necessary reimagining of the world. And even much earlier as Douglas Bush points out, since the "great mass of travel literature was a by-product of trade, exploration, and colonizing" (Bush 1962: 181-182).

Although descriptions of peoples, their customs, beliefs or forms of organisation are ancillary, or totally absent in early accounts such as those of the hardships of life in the colonies, as Dell Hymes contends, "the history of travel writing is essentially inseparable from etnography"[389]. Observing the foreign and the exotic, travellers after the Renaissance and even more so of the Enlightment, were already interpreting and articulating "the Other". Thus, "the European etnographic impulse was the result of a unique combination of colonial expansion and intellectual transformation" (Rubiés 2002: 243).

Building upon the history of anthropology, Hymes (1996: 7), distinguishes three progressive stages or types of etnography in its development. A first type that he refers to as "comprehensive etnography", corresponds to primary forms of travel writing attempting to offer an overview of a foreign people by gathering information. A second stage, "topic-oriented etnography" presents these people from a single viewpoint, -social organisation, religious beliefs...-. The third type is that of "hypothesis-oriented etnography", which uses the information and acquired evidence to povide rigurous conclusions.

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[388] See, for instance, *The International Society for Travel Writing.* http:istw-travel.org -last accessed 29/09/2013-; and "Studies in Travel Writing", by Nottingham Trent University.

[389] See Dell Hymes's (1996), *Etnography, Linguistics, Narrative Inequality: Toward an Understanding of Voice*. London: Taylor & Francis, p. 26).

To these stages would correspond different forms or subgenres, as pointed out by Rubíes. "Passages describing the lands and peoples encountered" increasingly "abandoned its narrow commercial focus and grew to become an entire treatise on a country and its inhabitants". "Relations... a synthetic descriptive account which could be narrative or analytical" as used by ambassadors, colonial administrators and missionaries, gave way to "the more elaborate production by cosmographers and historians" (Rubiés 2002: 246).

"More erudite travellers" adopted subgenres like the letter or the dialogue, "which allowed for a reasoned consideration of debatable issues", while systematic traveller-etnographers "published "researches" about a contentious issue"(Rubiés 2002:248).

Nevertheless, it was not until the nineteenth century with the emergence of ethnology, -understood as the analysis, comparison and classification of various peoples, their cultures and their relationships- that etnography began to acquire its academic status. Writers forgo the anecdotal and subjective of sensational narratives, -so strongly associated with travel writing-, to present their theories in a more rigorous fashion, aiming at the specialist rather than the general reader.

Even in the twentieth century, the structuralist, Claude Leví-Strauss, veritably one of the most influential anthropologists, declares in his memoirs *Tristes Tropiques* (1955) his loathing for travelling writers and explorers and his wish that explanatory work be undertaken by professional scientists.

New terms such as "transculturation", "liminality" and ""contact zone" were coined, and have been extensively used by etnographers, to help us discern the ways in which complicated ideologies and discourse shape exotic and domestic sites. The first describes the process by which materials are transmitted from a dominant culture to a marginal group that selects and invents them.[390] "Liminality" refers to that threshold in which expatriates find themselves when identities are confused[391]. "Contact zone"

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[390] See Fernando Ortiz's 1947, *Contrapunto Cubano.* (Reprinted in 1978, Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho). The term was later incorporated into literary studies, by Uruguayan critic Ángel Rama.

[391] For a definition of "liminality", see fn. 58 here and Victor and Edith Turner's (1978), *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture; Anthropological Perspectives* (New York: Columbia University Press).

[392]denotes the space or region in which two cultures, historically or geographically separated, encounter each other establishing ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of inequality and coercion.

Although writers opt for different viewpoints, -which will be more or less ethnocentric-, these approaches, and others such as through"topoi", [393] intimate that travel books are still a valid source of authoritative ethnographic information. [394]

4.3.2 The rhetorical analysis

In this approach rather than concern themselves with external biographical or social considerations, theorists increasingly focused on the intrinsic value of the text to offer illuminating interpretations of works that had not received the regard due or had been fully ignored. They derived their methods mostly from models that surged in France, Britain and America.

Thusly, by focusing attention on a work of art to employ the technique of close analytic reading, New Criticism started in Britain with such seminal works as T.S.Eliot's critical essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1917), I. A. Richards's *Practical Criticism* (1929), and W. Empson's *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930). This new linguistic approach to literature soon travelled to America, where it was given a name (John Crowe Ransom's "The New Criticism", 1941), and where its aesthetics were organised through the work of critics like Cleanth Brooks, Robert Penn Warren and W.K. Wimsatt. New Criticism owed much to the analytic methods and linguistic theories of Ferdinand de Saussure, and to French structuralists like Lévi-Strauss, and it

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[392] Coined by Mary Louise Pratt in her 1992, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (Reprinted in 2008, London & New York: Routledge) which has been hailed both as an influential study of Victorian travel writing and as a disemination of a colonial mindset.

[393] A literary commonplace, motif or theme, as used to base etnographical typologies. For istance, John Larner's *Marco Polo and the Discovery of the World* (1999) uses topoi to form a typology of the marvel, and argue that Polo's travels actually contain very few monsters and other unnatural things.

[394] For other stirrings, see the notion of "alterity" or "otherness" in Mary Campbell (1988) and in J. Fabian's (1983) Of *Time and the* Other*;* James Clifford and George E. Marcus' (1986) (eds). *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Etnography,* and Graham Huggan's (1991) "Maps, Dreams, and the Presentation of Etnographic Narrative: Hugh Brody's *Maps and Dreams,* and Bruce Chatwin's *The Songlines".* See also Caren Kaplan (1996) *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement.*

aimed at giving literary studies a status similar to that of anthropology and other sciences.

Unlike the New Critics, Roland Barthes did not think his structuralist and semiotic theories constituted a strict scientific endevour. Yet, his examination of the ways in which a society speaks through both writers and readers challenged the views of renowned figures of literature and academics and opened up new interpretative horizons for the active reader. In Writing *Degree Zero* (1953) Barthes states that creativity is but a continuous process of change and reaction, since bourgeois conventions inform both language and style. In "The Death of the Author" (1967) he developed the figure of "the scriptor" who can only combine previous texts in new ways, since modern thought has rendered our traditional notion of "the author" totally impractical. In "S/Z" (1970) he interrogated ways of reading, making the key distinction between the "readerly" and "the writerly text".

These efforts gave vigour to the rhetorical analysis of the 1950s and 1960s, and generated the Foucauldian practice of "discourse analysis"[395]. Foucault uses the term "counter-discourse" to make reference to those texts that censure the many abuses of the dominant ideologies, as is the case with the genre of travel writing in the West. Travellers had been granted mobility, as imperial subjects, to explore and extend, survey and maintain order "between the empirical and the imperial" . Yet in *The Other Things*, (1994, American edition), Foucault declares the "half-empirical, half-philosophical" had declined and been replaced by "the "anti-form" of post-structuralism; "a form of disorder, presenting itself as the new, superficial, order of things"[396].

Although more bent on historiography, *Hayden White's Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (1984) marked a watershed in the analysis of "discourse".

In *Orientalism* (1978), perhaps the book which has burgeoned the academic study of travel writing, Said contends that Western culture has consistently worked to

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[395] As espoused by Foucault, Hayden White and Edward Said, "discourse analysis" provides a suitable methodology for evaluating the corpus of European travel writing, and other bodies of text".

[396] See Steve Clark's (ed.)(1999) *Travel Writing and Empire* (London: Zed Books, p. 9)-.

construct a simplistic, negative "othering" of Asia, and the Middle East, to justify its colonial ambitions in these regions[397].

These, in turn, produced the postcolonial theory out of the "semiotic, deconstructive, and even psychoanalytical forms of attention" (Campbell 2002:262) in the 1970s[398]

4.3.3 Gender in travel writing

To organise the critical reading of a genre so specific in terms of culture as travel literature, theorists sought to deliniate other parameters, of which gender is a major one. As Amanda Gilroy asserts, "travel functions as one of the "technologies of gender", and is "a crucial discourse in the social construction of masculinities as well as femininities" (Gilroy's, 2000:6). Critics and historians thus found a most important source of information in travel texts, many of which were rediscovered, reinterpreted, and/or reprinted. Evidence garnered showed the prevalence of the patriarchal ideology of separate spheres in colonial discourse, and, consequently, the very problematic relation of women's travel writing within the colonial context.

This condemned women to immobility and domesticity imposing numerous limitations and constraints. They traversed the seas as migrants or missionaries, accompanied men to war as wives or nurses, were part of diplomatic retinues; and yet they could only travel unchaperoned as pilgrims. They were "wedded to the empire, and complacent with its ideologies and models"[399]. Which is why so very few accounts of female travel writing from the ancient or medieval eras, -such as that by Egeria-

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[397] -See Edward Said (1983), The World, The Text, the Critic (Cambridge: Harvard University Press)-

[398] In *Writing and Difference* (1967), Jacques Derrida coined the term *différance* to explain how linguistic meaning is created by being "deferred" infinitely in the interplay between words. He challenged the conventional hierarchies inherent in Western thought, displacing, "deconstructing" them.
In his many writings, the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, explored how language and unconscious desire have a bearing on the individual.

[399] See Paul Smethurst's introduction to (2009) *Travel Writing, Form, and Empire.* p. 8.

survive. As critic Sarah Mills, avers in her pioneering study, "gender cannot simply be added to colonial discourse theories"[400].

Imperialist ideology was established and transmitted in masculine terms ever since the early days of colonialism. Male travellers derived images from chivalric romances, and other conventions to fashion themselves as the questing knight, the conqueror, the explorer, the Crusader... heroic figures demonstrating the guile, courage, physical strength, resilience, and virtue commonly associated with manliness. Their lexis was translated into the literature of the day. New territories were metaphorised as virgin lands ready to be penetrated. John Donne's sensual poems such as "Elegy: Going to Bed" painted an anthropomorphic map, in the ludic conceit of opening unexplored territory while undressing the lover. The narratives of explores and men of science brim with dangerous temptresses, bewitching native maidens and other untold eroticized fantasy figures. Scientific discourse was especially marked as a masculine domain. Later on, the Grand Tour was constructed as a rite of passage from boyhood to adult masculinity. Sentimental travellers of the late eighteenth century, promoting the vogue of the picturesque aesthetics rather than the scientific light, were branded as effeminate, caricatured as emasculated figures by more contemporary critics.

The apparent freedom in nineteenth century imperial Britain available to young men in India, Africa or the Middle East, -as depicted by the likes of Rudyard Kipling, Rider Haggard, Stanley and Richard Francis Burton-, was replicated in the America of the "Wild West" by tales of "the frontier", the place were "manliness, simplicity and self-dependence" were learnt and enacted -as quoted from Washington Iriving's *Tour of the Praires* (1835) and encouraged in Mark Twain's *Roughing It* (1872); although, said in passing, Twain made it to the West to escape the American Civil War-.

It was against these expectations and deep-seated stereotypical assumptions that women travel writers had to define themselves.

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[400] Sarah Mills (1991) *Discourse of Difference.* New York: Routledge Inc. p. 19-.

Female travel writers were thus, not only considered disorderly, -they were locating themselves out of their "proper" domestic sphere-, but a real threat to imperial authority, -they were publishing their travel accounts-[401].

Feminist scholars, since the 1970s, have contributed widely to "the gendering of travel" and to the stimuli and growth of travel writing studies. Recovering and revaluating the travel writing women produced historically, they have countered the stereotypical masculine assumptions and sought to deconstruct their skewed interpretations. Their work in that decade concentrated on eighteenth century and Victorian female travel writers. In an attempt to rewrite women's history, they found that though associated with men, women reached far-flung places and were prolific producers of travelogues. Their critical observations pointed out that it was from the ranks of the upper-middle-class women that female travel writing sprung. This revival turned the work of imperial women travel writers into case studies at the time in which gender studies was coming to the foreground. Attention was also given to the figure of working-class women such as Sarah Kemble Knight, who in 1704 undertook a very arduous and corageous journey from Boston to New York on horseback. Published posthumously as *The Journal of Madam Knight* (1825), it offers a valuable description of life in villages in New England and New York in the early eighteen century interspersed with graceful, humorous rhymes.

Still, it was the work of aristocratic travellers like Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope that was, particularly, brought to light. The former visited Constantinople in 1716 upon her husband being nominated ambassador of Turkey. On her return to Britain, Montagu wrote a series of lively letters that inspired a host of female travel writers. Lady Stanhope sailed to Egypt in 1810 with her retinue, and from there to the Roman ruins of Palmira with a long single file of camels and a troop of armed Bedouins to protect her. In both these female-authored travellogues we find the inquiring mind and sincere voice of an extraordinary woman concerned with the everyday living conditions of the cultures she visits. Coupled to this, there is that persuasive rebuttal of the myth of the Middle East as a highly eroticized place full of

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[401] -One of the earliest female written records of travel that found its way into print is Mary Rowlandson's *The Sovereignity and Goodness of God* (1682). Yet, this tells the story of her captivity in a kind of spiritual autobiography which did not defy male authority, as proven by the fact that there was no peremptory reply, no chorus of dismissive voices. Besides, this type of narrative sits at the very limits of our genre.

veiled damsels in harems and bath-houses, where men can give free rein to their fantasies.

The records of other remarkable women, -like those by Mary Henrietta Kingsley and Mary French Sheldon in Africa; or Lady Elizabeth Eastlake in the Baltic - were also placed under scrutiny by feminists in order to explore how female subjectivities were articulated in comparison with those of male travellers travellinh through, or staying in, the same region.

Feminists theorists also indicated that the approach of these exceptional women deflected attention away from the fundamentally male act of mapping, defining and cinscumscribing. Unlike their male counterparts, they placed emphasis on the personal giving clarity to their female voices and reinserting a physical dimension into the travel discourse.

However, Susan Bassnett, [402] discussing the main issues that preocupy feminist scholars, deals with the "fictionalising process" by which these women wrote "themselves as characters into the account of their travels". This was, specially, the case of Isabella Bird, she argues, who "stresses the harships she endures during her travels, as though to reinforce the difference between Isabella the semi-invalid at home, and Miss Bird, the intrepid explorer", and still claims "to be writing in a spirit of authenticity". Her *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains* (1879), and *Journeys in Persia and Kurdistan* (1891) mark a transition from "amateur to professional writer status". Unlike her precursors, who intended their accounts for private comsumption, and, in spite of averring that publication was not her aim, Isabella "had a definite reading public in mind". The fact that she became the first woman to be elected a fellow of the Royal Geographic Society also speaks of her initial resolve to gain a reputation as a serious travel author.

Later studies have proved women's travel writing to be much more complex and have formulated the need to recognise diversity [403]. For not all women were privileged,

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[402] See, Susan Bassnett's "Travel Writing and Gender" in Peter Hulme and William Youngs (2002: 225-41).

[403] See for example more recent efforts in anthologies like Jane Robinson's (1990), *Wayward Women: A Guide to Women Travellers*; Elizabeth Bohls's (1995) Dea Birkett and Sara Wheeler's (eds.)(1998), *Amazonian: The Penguin Book of New Women's Travel Writing*; and Shirley Foster and Sara Mills (eds.) (2002), *An Anthology of Women's Travel Writing.* See, also, Sarah Mills's (1991) and Susan Bassnett's (2002) work mentioned above, - cf. ftns. 86 & 90, respectively-, and referred here.

nor did they all share the same ideological standpoint. Some were largely supportive of the colonial enterprise, some colluded with it, consciously or unconsciously. Besides, basing their views on the exploits of exceptional Victorian women, feminists had neglected writers of earlier periods, thereby "marginalising women's achievements" (Bassnett 2002:228).

In their rewriting process they had expunged from their publications the fact that Victorian female writers commonly opened their journals, diaries, letters and sketches with an apologetic preface. And that it was in these "low-status genres" that they were ecouraged to write so that their work would be "judged in a different way"; they would be "discouraged from writing" and fear to "enter into the realm of this public, high language"; or they would refuse to "put their names to their literary writing" using pseudonyms. (Mills 1991:43-44).

This in turn prompted what remains an unsolved question, whether or not "women's travel accounts differ from those written by men, in any fundamental way" (Bassnett 2002: 227). The travel critic Mary Morris and the anthologist Jane Robinson claim that there are distinctively feminine characteristics shared by all female travel writers [404]. Yet Mills objects that "these critics insist on treating these women's texts as expressions of personal endeavour and individualism rather than as part of a larger enterprise" (Mills 1991:34). Even when men and women produce more or less identical forms of travel writing, their travelogues will often be received very differently by the reading public on account of the authors's gender (Mills 1991:30). Together with Foster, Mills suggests that gender is but one variable, amongst many, that constantly interacts with other factors such as "race, age, class and financial position, educational political ideals and historical period" (Foster and Mills, 2002:1).

These issues and other such as these have been made still more complex by postcolonial perspectives and, as we have seen, continue to preocupy scholars[405].

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[404] See Mary Morris (ed.) (2007), *The Illustrated Virago Book of Women Travellers.* Robinson edited another anthology, *Unsuitable for Ladies: an Anthology of Women Travellers* (1994), in which she holds that, in the absence of a patron, women could be more discursive, impressionable and ordinary.

[405] For further stirrings see Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter (eds.) *Feminist Epistemologies*; Vita Fortunati, Rita Monticelli, and Maurizio Ascari, (eds). (2001) *Travel Writing and the Female Imaginary*; Kristi Siegel (ed.) (2004) *Gender, Genre, and Identity in Women's Travel Writing*.

4.3.4 Historical and cultural revisionism in travel writing.

As illustrated above, gender proves inadequate to calibrate the complexities and the significance of travel writing and of its aesthetics. Interdisciplinary studies have revealed that this and other factors like "tradition", "race", and "identity", were shaped by political concerns throughout the ages. Like other theoretically informed writing effectively deployed as tools for empire such as anthropology or geography, ethonography shifted focus from the imperial eras, which created the notion of Western identity and the idea of its "supremacy" over the rest, to a more involved and "sympathetic" dealing with "the Other" under a new postcolonial perspective.

New realities and social conditions emerging after WWII, such as globalisation, -also understood as the progressive extinction of tribes in their pristine "savage" state-, diaspora, and hence nomadism, evinced that there was much to be done "in the realm of engaged criticism and theory". Ethnohistorians and historical anthropologists questioned the formation of ideas during the pre-imperial era. Literary critics engaged themselves with formal issues such as the function of the stereotype, the unravelling of hidden etymologies, or the use of metaphor and other figures of speech, while facing issues of power. As Paul Smethurst asserts, "Historical and cultural revisionism is undoublty a productive and expanded area of travel writing studies". (Smethurst, 2009:4).

In this new light, social historians showed how **"tradition"** as the accumulated knowledge or representational corpus of a culture, proves essential while involved in the more intense work of deconstructing it. Literary critics mantained that every text is a product of "intertextuality" in the modernist dictum, and thus co-referential to what went before.

Historicism rebuked the Western scientific community and, consistently criticized their patronising tone and sentimental fashioning of the Other, laying bare the utterly spurious nature of their so-called "science of **race"**; that overlapping of social Darwinism and imperial adventure stories, which had posited intellectual and moral

superiority of the white peoples, side by side, with the decline and denigration of the Other. Historical revisionism exposed the underlying racist postulations of such theories originating in the classificatory agendas of the Englightment and the assumption that different intellectual and moral capabilities were the corollary of anatomical difference. It was under the guise of raising the "primitive" peoples morally, spiritually, and intellectually that their barbaric practises and superstitions were suppressed, and their territories and natural resources appropriated.

Yet race was not the only kind of epistemologically problematic and morally questionable "Othering". Critics and theorists of travel writing felt an increasing ethical concern, while looking at the usual fastidious presentation of the narrational self in travelogues. For, endevouring to persuade audiences of his distinctive sensibility, his reliability as an eyewitness, his open-mindness, spiritual and cultural enlightment, and other "heroic" attributes, the "refined" traveller denied others the power to represent themselves. To wheedle himself into recognising the moral integrity of his own **identity,** the traveller discriminated everything foreign, everything "other", as different from, as opposed to, "the self". To exercise this self-advancement he came to deprecate "the other". To displace his guilt for interfering with, or for damaging, the cultures through which he travels; to avoid signalling his mastery over the people and places described; or to eschew any introspection, he often adopted the strategy of presenting the self through a series of poses and personae. This diffidence, this unassertiveness, -rather than the usual condescending, haughty voice-, bespeaks unrest, confusion, and discontinuity on the part of the self describing the new people and narrating the events. It is also indicative of the many tensions, pressures and constraints imposed on the writer by the culture he supposedly represents, as a member, or into which he has been received.

To conform with the stock standards and conventions positively identifying national characteristics, in contradistinction to those of other nations, was, however, not the only avenue open to the travel writer.

Instead of deprecating and ironizing "the other", he could deprecate and ironize himself, belittling his efforts as feeble, juvenile attempts, when set side by side with the accounts of more audacious, plucky and accomplished travellers. As shown in earlier sections of this thesis, there was a long tradition of self-mockery in the literary travel book.

In a blatant rejection of the rhetoric of authenticity, carried away by a wish to flout or/and undermine the traditional conventions and discourses associated with his culture, the travel writer could exhibit a particular *gusto* for that playful attitude and use of parody commonly ascribed to postmodern sensibilities.

This revisionism began to take shape in the 1980s with an unprecedented proliferation of influential studies that added density to travel writing turning it into more than a literary phemomenon. Paul Fussell's examination of escapism in the British travel texts produced between the wars proved instrumental in attracting much critical attention on a genre hitherto dismissed as negligible [406]. Johannes Fabian showed how the so-called "ethnographic present", used in many scientifically inclined traveloges had, fallaciously, attributed stasis to indigenous cultures, just because they failed to conform to the expectations of modernity on the part of Western travellers[407]. Stephen Greenblatt's New Historicism, much concerned with the elusive nature of the Other and with the insurmountable problem of its representation, owed much to the rhetorical criticsm of classicist François Hartog [408].

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406 See Paul Fussell (1980), *Abroad: British Literary Travelling Between the Wars*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. As made explicit in the title, Fussell considers travel writing an implicitly literary text, rather than a historical or anthropological one.

407 See the notion of "denial of coevalness", in Johannes Fabian's (1983) *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object,* New York: Columbia University Press, where he stresses that both, the traveller and the aboriginal were, in fact, living in the same historical period.

408 See Stepen Greenblatt's (1991) *Marvellous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, and Francois Hartog's (1988), *The Mirror of Herodotus: The Representation of the Other in the Writing of History*, trans. Janet Lloyd, Berkeley: University of Claifornia Press. Another notable approach, during the period, is Francis Baker, Peter Hulme, Margaret Iversen and Diana Loxley's (1985), *Europe and its Others*, Colchester: University of Essex Press., 2vols.

Further interdisciplinary studies in the 1990s led to a perhaps more pungent criticism and stressed preocupation with cultural diversity and its derived issues such as nomadism [409].

More recent commentators have continued in that far from laudatory vein[410] while others have sought to defend the gender[411].

We have thus provided ample evidence of the full literary status of travel writing, same as of its authority as a scientific text.

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[409] See, for example Simon Gikandi's (1996), *Maps of Englishness: Writing Identity in the Culture of Colonialism,* New York: Columbia University Press, or Robert Young's (1995) censure of race as "one of the major organising axioms of knowledge in general" in *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*, London: Routledge; pg. 93.

[410] See, for instance, Julia Kuehn and Paul Smethurst's (2008) (eds.) *Travel Writing, Form and Empire; the Poetics and Politics of Mobility*, London: Routledge, and Gregorz Moroz and Jolanta Sztachelska's (2010) *Metamorphoses of Travel Writing: Across Theories, Genres, Centuries and Literary Traditions*, Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press.

[411] In *Loneliness and Time: British Travel Writing in the Twentieth Century,* London: Secker and Warburg, pg. 260, Mark Cocker asserts, "the travel book is a medium through which humans celebrate (their) freedom". And Dennis Porter, in (1991) *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, pg. 3, affirms our genre constitued an exemplary attempt "to overcome cultural distance through a protracted act of understanding".



VOLUME TWO

CHAPTER 5

“You must understand (I want to say this in a letter) that I shall be a nomad, more or less until my days be done. You don’t know how much I used to long for it in old days; how I used to go and look at the trains leaving, and wish to go with them. And now, you know, that I have a little more that is solid under my feet, you must take my nomadic habits as part of me... I must be a bit of a vagabond; it’s your own fault after all, isn’t it? You shouldn’t have had a tramp for a son!”

(Stevenson to his mother, 16th October 1874. L2:60-61.)



RLS
His last photograph

CHAPTER 5

THE TELEOLOGIES OF TRAVEL: AN APPROACH TO R.L. STEVENSON'S ESSAYS

Preliminary words

It is essential to point out here, as a retelling of what went on the previous chapter, that **Stevenson was all of those travellers in the pages above.** He was **an enfeebled pilgrim** in a chilvaric quest beyond the restoration of his health, **a thrill seeke**r of endless adventures, **a scientist** collecting exotic specimens and theorising on remote languages -also **a would-be naturalist and etnographer**-. He was **a trader of common sense** and meaning with a moral, a spiritual, rather than just political, material purpose, **a bohemian** taking refuge in his own aesthetics to rebute the hypocritical grimace of the bourgeois, **an engaged travelling hero**, surely the ultimate one by reason of his perspicacity and ingenuity for seeing the enormous in the smallest and the seemingly "trifle". He was **a singular travelling author** more than a literary pundit who, notwithstanding, played his part allowing for modesty and self-deprecation, **a *poseur,*** understood as his great capacity to mould himself into new shapes sliding through picturesque scenery. All of these coallesce into that fascinating personality of the writer under study contained in the three beloved initials RLS! All but one, for Louis was always repelled by those

> Chartered tourists, they make free with historic localities, and rear their young among the most picturesque sites with a grand human indifference. To see them thronging by, in their neat clothes and conscious moral rectitude, and with a little air of possession that verges on the absurd, is not the least striking feature of the place. (*Picturesque Notes on Edinburgh*. T26: 139)

Here, he points us to the split between "the traveller", actively engaged with the landscape, and the tourist, moving across that landscape like a packet in transit. Here, he resists the limitations of "home" implying that his real location lies elsewhere. Here he expresses his anger in his long relationship with Edinburgh, his native town, to forge an emotional bond with us, his readers.

Stevenson was thus a purposeful traveller, he fulfils all the purposes mentioned in the previous chapter; for **it was the aesthetics of wandering he was after, not the transient fleeting joy of the inane holidaymaker.** It dawned on me that an easy way to approach the essays would take them purpose by purpose, taking each type of traveller he was, individually, following some kind of chronological pattern to crush the myth of "the Seraph in Chocolate".

Stevenson sought out the little-travelled pathways. He was "a traveller hacking a trail through hostile geographical and literary landscapes, and occasionally disappearing off the map" (McCracken-Flesher 2010: 86). So, a second idea struck me that my method could map his topography with snippets of each of the places he got to see in Scotland, France, America and the South Seas. Yet, both these approaches, besides having their drawbacks would lose the perspective.

It is also crucial in these pages to put our finger on the fact that **none of the theoretical approaches to travel writing** dealt with in the previous section, **none of** them, whether taken individually or globally, is valid with Stevenson. For he crossed so many boundaries that **those critical approaches** would prove fully insufficient. Stevenson's essays are much wider, they are a phenomenon too complex to be described in terms of its simple constituents. Thus, it would be a futile undertaking to analyse the essays -solely- as part of the critical study of colonial discourse, as some scholars have attempted to. It would be equally pointless to use the discourses in etnography and anthorpology -exclusively- for the study of, say, *Across the Plains, The Silverado Squatters* or *The Amateur Emigrant.* For, as Hayworth states, these Californian writings also reflect Stevenson's "need to expand the boundaries of the traditional essay and travel writing forms to accommodate historical as well as self-reflective meditations on individual and national identity" (Hayward 2012: 233). And the same could be argued about "discourse analysis" and other rhetorical methods which are theoretically problematic as they don't form a system. Once more, none of these critical approaches produce a consistent pattern, some kind of theoretical framework or workable model that would serve to explain the essays of Stevenson as a phenomenon. For he raises racial, class, moral, cultural, gender and language issues -amongst others- through parallels and comparisons. Veritably a "mild" search for the literary researcher!

Consequently, it is paramount to remind my readers here of **the teleological approach,** for which I opted, as pointed out in my aims and methodology section in which I already announced some inevitable overlappings. Teleology understood, once again in the Aristotelian-Epicurean sense as...

> ...Pleasure and pain moreover supply(ing) the motives of desire and of avoidance, and the springs of conduct generally. This being so, it clearly follows that actions are right and praiseworthy only as being a means to the attainment of a life of pleasure. But **that which is not itself a means to anything else, but to which all else is a means, is what the Greeks term the *telos*, the highest, ultimate or final Good.**
> (Epicurus. Emphasis added).

Teleology even in the Kantian perception of a science belonging...

> **to no Doctrine, but only to Criticsm and to the criticism of a special cognitive faculty, viz. Judgement.** But so far as it contains principles a priori, it can and must furnish the method by which **nature must be judged according to the principle of final causes**.
> (Immanuel Kant, *Kant's Critique of Judgement*. Emphasis mine).

Still more, in the utterly amusing and yet expressive words of Chesterton.

> The chicken does not exist only in order to produce another egg. He may also exist to amuse himself, to praise God, and even to suggest ideas to a French dramatist.
> (GKC, *What's Wrong with the World*)

Thus basing my approach, I realized with Professor Swearingen that "**all books are books of travel: they are about somewhere other than here and someplace other than now".** All books are, "in a remote sense the same book -and what a fine book could be written explaining, exploring and wondering why this should be so. **Is it the fact that they are all "travel books" that make" Stevenson's essays "to endure? or what?"** I also was of one mind with Mr Swearingen that "the same *kinetic* element is elsewhere too: overtly, of course, in books like *Treasure Island, Kidnapped, The Master of Ballantrae, The Wrecker,* and *The Ebb-Tide;* as an absent but defining feature in *The Sire de Maletroit's Door*, *Will of the Mill, The Merry Men, Dr Jekyll and Mr*

Hyde, The Beach of Falesá, and *Weir of Hermiston;* and of course there are stories with both, such as *The New Arabian Nights* tales, *David Balfour* and *Catriona."* [412] Yet also in his poems and fables.

Studying the essays I was made widely aware -by Stevenson himself- that my three categories -i.e. travel as knowledge, the ethics and the aesthetics of travel- were not only arguable but, veritably, antithetical to his sensitivity. For instance, in "An Apology for Idlers", while addressing the rulers of old conventions he states:

> A fact is not called a fact, but a piece of gossip, if it does not fall into one of y**our scholastic categories**
>
> ("An Apology for Idlers"; Tusitala 25: 51-60. Emphasis added).

And in another essay, very much one of his greatest, he states that perhaps all categories are false:

> Science writes of the world as if with the cold finger of a starfish; it is all true; but what is it when compared to the reality of which it discourses? where hearts beat high in April, and death strikes, and hills totter in the earthquake, and there is a glamour over all the objects of sight, and a thrill in all noises for the ear, and Romance herself has made her dwelling among men?
>
> ("Pan's Pipes"; Tusitala 25:125-129)

Swearingen argues that Louis never put or seems to have put forward any category, because he probably never had them in his mind. "One cannot help wondering what he would think of them". Would he find them "too abstract", "simplistic" or "not to the essence of any of these essays?." As stated in my aims and methodology, **Stevenson's essays defy categorization**, for they broach way too many subjects and even cut across various genres (they make forays into his fiction). Daiches already (1981) advised us against the risks of importing into Scottish literary history the **categories** of the English literary historiographer. And McCracken-Flesher (2010:86) affirms that in *The Silverado Squatters*, RLS had "at last achieved an insight that broke all **categories** of place, person and literary convention" (emphasis added). Yet whatever

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[412] I here reproduce bits of Mr Swearingen's letter to me as from 18 January 2016.

our criteria, whichever our theory, we will be "imposing on Stevenson a scheme or sorting that he would reject. But the result may be good [413]".

For a while, I was much tempted to adopt the following axis for the division of the essays, -as "established" by Dury and Abrahamson- making them fall in two groups: the early essays, and the late ones. With the rationalized opposition between the former and the latter which might be best summarised "systematically" in my table:

Early Essays	**vs**	**Late Essays**
(The traveller who writes)		**(The writer that travels)**
(Travels elsewhere)		**(Scotland and the self)**
Phenomenological and descriptive		Subjective, confessional, political, social
Outward going (out of my country)		Inner world of experience (out of myself)
Bent on pleasure (to enjoy)		Bent on profit (to write)
Figures in landscape (*personae)*		Etnography and anthropology
Romance as the subversion of reality		Realism as the outer world of experience

However, I soon abandoned what had a tint of difficence, when I realized that, however useful in more than a few ways, as we shall see, such division would prove misleading; for there are qualities of one commingled with the other in more than several essays. Same as there are essays which being early, or late, do not particularly embrace their expected "requirements". For instance, *Travels with a Donkey* Stevenson's second book, as rewritten from his journal, is taken by Buckton to belong with those essays bent on profit rather than on pleasure, be it by reason of the evidence garnered in his letters[414], be it because we have proof of the royalties Stevenson was to receive[415]. Again, this taxonomy raises questions. If we can contend that his late essays were more bent on profit, how come Colvin's and other associates' plea that he should go back to his fictional writing went unheeded by Stevenson who went on writing *In the South Seas*? He could easily have continued publishing such hugely popular South Seas tales as "The Bottle Imp", "The Isle of Vocies" or "The Beach of Falesá". He simply

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[413] Ibid., as from my correspondance with Prof. Swerarингen.

[414] See (L2: 268), where Stevenson writes to Baxter, "I shall soon go off on a voyage for which I think I shall buy a donkey, and out of which, if I do not make a book, may my right hand forget its cunning"

[415] See Swearingen (1980:35).

didn't. It was his quest for authenticity that took him away from the solely venal into new aesthetic terrain.

Everything considered, as stated in the opening pages to this thesis, I am more than confident of the benefits of my approach as being far from unwieldy and unnecessarily complex. At least, not in the same degree than many of those based on conjecture and *topos* with little facts and with still less knowledge.

5.1 Robert Louis Stevenson: a unique traveller

In a letter addressed to a friend in May 1892 from Vailima, his final home and destination in Samoa, Robert Louis Stevenson offered, probably, his most forthright recognition of the predominance of his rambling nature over his aesthetic and ethical ambitions describing himself as "4 parts adventurer + 3 parts artist + 2 parts sensualist + 1 part Scottish clergyman" (L7:294).

The quote is but one occurance among the countless suggestive of that witty, jocular, winsome voice in his letters. Yet, as was frequently the case with our author, out of those scoffing declarations about himself, a true forceful assertion emerges: Stevenson is undoubtedly one of the greatest travellers of literary history. Nothing seemed to matter more to him than travel. Even in Hyères, France, in the spring of 1884, after his major hemorrhage, when the feebleness of his condition had him bedridden and void of physical and mental energy; when his poor state was exarcerbated by the spitting of blood, ophthalmia and writer's cramp, Stevenson was still yearning for the thrill of the unexpected; he was still dreaming of that elsewhere of his imagination. Witness the following poem "From a Railway Carriage", included in *A Child Garden of Verses,* he wrote in Hyères, in which he perfectly mimics and captures the sound, pace and rhythm of a train traversing the landsape.

> Faster than fairies, faster than witches,
> Bridges and houses, hedges and ditches;
> And charging along like troops in a battle,
> All through the meadows the horses and cattle:

All of the sights of the hill and the plain
Fly as thick as driving rain;
And ever again, in the wink of an eye,
Painted stations whistle by.

Here is a child who clambers and scrambles,
All by himself and gathering brambles;
Here is a tramp who stands and gazes;
And there is the green for stringing the daises!
Here is a cart run away in the road
Lumping along with man and load;
And here is a mill and there is a river:
Each a glimpse and gone for ever!

(Tus. 23:19)

Stevenson was perpetually on the move. If we had to pick up a word that best described both his life and his work, that word would be ***mobility.*** He will always be remembered as the supreme romancer who peopled his stories with swashbuckling pirates, plucky youngsters, unscrupulous beachcombers, doctrinarie missionaries and unwavering traders**.** Scholars have rightly pointed to the filmic nature of his fiction. Just like his novels, his stories and poems are vibrant with vivid portraits that spring off the page. ***Kinesis*** is everywhere in Stevenson, *stasis* almost nowhere. It is surely present in *Treasure Island* (1883)*, Kidnapped* (1886)*,* and *The Master of Ballantrae* (1889) -notable examples characterized by sailing, return and exile-. Yet, it is also very eloquent in *Songs of Travel* and in most of his other poems. It radiates from his fables and from his unique correspondence.

Still, it is my contention here as I shall attempt to demonstrate in the coming pages, that it is in his essays and more precisely, in his travel writings, that Stevenson placed that decisive and prevalent element on the anvil of his art and worked on it unflaggingly until it became the engine, the governing principle, the foundation stone on which he based both his knowledge, his aesthetic and his ethical views. Or, to put it otherwise, his aesthetic views just like his ethical views and his knowledge, derived from **the idea of mobility he persuasively and craftly developed in his essays and travel books**. Mindful of that keystone on which the whole edifice of his thought and

of his art rests, the Stevenson scholar, just like the Stevenson enthusiast must approach his work, and particularly his travel writings, with the *caveat* that these were not the field of his apprenticeship, but that they obtained and have their own intrinsic value.

In *Picturesque Notes on Edinburgh* (1878), a series of essays in which he penned an impressionistic and nostalgic description of his hometown as a city of dualities, of noble idealized beauty, yet also of dark often sinister recesses and trenchant duplicities, Stevenson draws a sympathetic picture of himself as one of the "delicate", "a survivor, among bleak winds and plumping rain" that "aspire angrily after that Somewhere-else of the imagination, where all troubles are supposed to end". And then he recounts one of the countless times in which he would...

> lean over the great bridge which joins the New Town with the Old- that windiest spot, or high altar, in this northern temple of the winds -and watch the trains smoking out from under them and vanishing into the tunnel on a voyage to brighter skies. Happy the passengers **who shake off the dust of Edinburgh**, and have heard for the last time the cry of the east wind among her chimney-tops! (Tus. 26:136. Emphasis mine).

Just like his apparently rootless wanderlusting spirit beautifully represented here, Edinburgh and Scotland would remain constant in his life and work. Images of his homeland would recur as his most intense yearning while cruising in the South Seas, that vast last scenario of his late fiction, essays, letters and poems.

> Be it granted me to behold you again in dying,
> Hills of home! and to hear again the call;
> Hear about the graves of the martyrs the peewees crying,
> And to hear no more at all.
> (*Songs of Travel*, XLV, Tus. 22:168)

As Ann Colley has remarked, "the Scottish parallel" would serve "as a point of reference that would help him understand" the multiple complexities and social and "political dilemmas" of his constantly changing surroundings. In his late travel book, *In the South Seas* (1890), "Stevenson often relied on his Scottish past to better understand the structure of island society (through its clan system)"(Colley 2004: 4)

> These points of similarity between a South Sea people and some of my own folk at home ran much in my head in the islands; and not only inclined me to view my fresh

> acquaintances with favour, **but continually modified my judgment**. A polite Englishman comes to-day to the Marquesans and is amazed to find the men tattooed; polite Italians came not long ago to England and found our fathers stained with woad... When I desired any detail of savage custom, or of superstitious belief, **I cast back in the story of my fathers, and fished for what I wanted with some trait of equal barbarism.**
>
> (*In the South Seas,* Tus. 20: 13, emphasis added)

Why this digression on Stevenson's Scottishness? Because, in that compulsive quest that was his life, there ran **a perpetual tension between self-exploration and external observation;** a call to step out of the familiar to grapple with the new and to render it as honestly and fully as possible. This pull, this difficulty of appropriating the strangeness of another culture while searching for the self, adds **flux and graceful mobility** to his style.

In a letter to James Payn, a fellow contributor to *The Cornhill Magazine,* on his cruising through the South Seas Stevenson wrote:

> This climate; these voyagings; these landfalls at dawn; new islands peaking from the morning bank; new forested harbours; new passing alarms of squalls and surf; new interest of gentle natives, - the whole tale of my life is better to me than any poem. (L6: 317)

And later on in September 1893, in a letter addressed to his life-long friend, the essayist, critic, and later, curator at the British Museum, Sidney Colvin:

> Singular that I should fulfil the Scots Destiny throughout, and live **a voluntary exile**, and have my head filled with the blessed, beastly place all the time!
>
> (L8: 159, emphasis added).

As Jenni Calder and other acute biographers have observed, Stevenson found himself in a liminal position, for being a Scot, he had been subjected to "an alien authority". Helped out by his fellow Scots (Lowlanders), the English had enforced their policies in the Highlands and Islands to disarm the clans, depose their chiefs, introduce new customs...

> ... and chiefly the fashion of regarding money as the means and object of existence.
>
> (*In the South Seas,* Tus. 20: 12)

With all his emphatic antagonism to colonial intervention and his attack on imperialist doctrines, he still thought of himself as an "intrusive colonial". "That circumstance placed Stevenson in "an odd position", in one of the dualities he was so much fond of. "Such an ambiguous situation is probably responsible for many of the tensions and incongruities one runs across when considering his reaction to his new surroundings" (Colley 2004: 5). And this new tension between Stevenson the victim and Stevenson the intrusive, adds, once again, **fluidity** to his elegant prose.

In an article, first published in the *North American Review,* in January 1900, and reprinted in Janet Adam Smith's 1948[416], Henry James quotes Stevenson's comment on his -Stevenson's- projected *Sophia Scarlet*, as being directly opposed to the manner of the author of *La Comédie humaine*

> exactly a Balzac one, and I wish I had his fist - **for I have already a better method -the kinetic**- whereas he continually allowed himself to be led into the static.
> (Janet Adam Smith 1948: 267)

We shall later refer to that singular and productive friendship, that swapping of theories and ideas in the intense correspondence Henry James and R.L.Stevenson mantained. Theirs was a most extraordinary testimony of mutual respect and interest in each other's art, paired with the affectionate and profound debate between the realist and the romancer, the expatriate and the perpetual exiler. Suffice it here to say that James noted Stevenson's agile style early on.

> ... that beautiful, golden thread, **the swinging of which in the wind, as he -R.L.S.- spins it** in alternate doubt and elation, we watch with much of the suspense and pity with which we sit at the serious drama. (Janet Adam Smith 1948: 269).

This "emphasis on motion and flux" (See Kenneth Simpson, 2012: 232) on which the Scot based his "practice of fiction", is consistent with another of his forthright declarations, much quoted, from his early *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevènnes:*

> For my part, I travel not to go anywhere, but to go. I travel for travel's sake. **The great affair is to move**; to feel the needs and hitches of our life more nearly; to come down off

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[416] "The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson", by Henry James. This was a review of *Letters to His Family and Friends*, by R.L.S., as edited by Sidney Colvin in 1899.

> **this feather-bed of civilisation**, and find the globe granite underfoot and strewn with cutting flints. (*Travels with a Donkey,* Tus. 17: 178. Emphasis mine)

And even, earlier on, in the chapter entitled "A Camp in the Dark", where he stresses.

> **I have been after an adventure all my life, a pure dispassionate adventure**, such as befell early and heroic voyagers; and thus to be found by morning in a random woodside nook in Gévaudan -not knowing north from south, as strange to my surroundings as the first man upon the earth, an inland castaway -was to find a fraction of my daydreams realised. (*Travels with a Donkey,* Tus. 17: 174. Emphasis added).

As Kenneth Simpson asserts, "For Stevenson the appeal of travel is that it breeds incident and offers the potential of adventure" (Simpson 2012:233). This takes us back to Kiely's interpretations of **Stevenson's own notion of adventure** -as discussed in chapter 3- and to its correlation with *romance* and the romance tradition. It also takes us to other valuable critical views on that relationship and on the issue of how to contextualize the concept of adventure within the narrative romance. Thus, for instance, Green argues that, from the time of Defoe onwards, "the adventure tale was a form of romance" [417]. On his part, Frye states that "the essential element of plot in romance is **adventure**"[418]; while Munson declares that "the genuine adventure story is inevitably **a romance**"[419]. These conjectures invite a close look at the etymology of the word in old French, which certainly points to an open interpretation -*romant, roman*- as descriptive of "courtly romance in verse", but is widely associated with a "popular book", in prose, spurring a peculiar vagrancy of imagination. Here is where Stevenson's manifest chant of life in the open comes to our ears, determined, resonant, carefree; echoing the poetics of Whitman and those of Wordsworth and Coleridge.

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[417] Martin Green's *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1979), p.22.

[418] Frye, Northrop *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973:186). Emphasis added.

[419] Gorham Munson, "Adventure Writing in our Time", College English, 16.3 (1954), 153-159, (p 154).Emphasis added.

"THE VAGABOND" (To an air of Schubert)

Give to me the life I love,
Let the lave go by me,
Give the jolly heaven above
And the byway nigh me.
Bed in the bush with stars to see,
Bread I dip in the river —
There's the life for a man like me,
There's the life for ever -

Let the blow fall soon or late,
Let what will be o'er me;
Give the face of earth around
And the road before me.
Wealth I seek not, hope nor love,
Nor a friend to know me;
All I seek, the heaven above
And the road below me.

(From "Songs of Travel", Smith (ed.) 1950: 245-46)

Speaking highly of this "famous ballad in praise of the Open Road" for which he had a predilection, Robert Graves, however, reminds us that "it is written by an invalid with an overpowering desire for freedom and a hatred of the dietary delicacies that his condition demands"[420]. Therefore, **this principle of mobility, this kinetic stability is not free from the tension generated by *stasis*** in early essays as "Ordered South"[421], "Crabbed Aged and Youth"[422] and in the -apparently unlike Stevenson- non-ontological story "Will of the Mill", "hovering between realism and allegory" [423].

To better understand Stevenson's unswerving push forward through constant mobility; to perceive the multiple dimensions of the fight of his courageous spirit

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[420] "What is bad in Poetry", a lecture delivered in 1922, reprinted in Poetic Unreason, 1925 and quoted in Janet Adam Smith's 1950, p. 502.

[421] Published in *Macmillan's Magazine,* 30 (May 1874), 68-73, yet written in late November 1873-5, and laterly collected in *Virginibus Puerisque* (1881), Tusitala 25.

[422] *Cornhill Magazine,* 37 (March 1878), 351-59, then in book form in *Virginibus Puerisque* (1881), Tusitala 25.

[423] Ibid, 37 (January 1878), 4-60, later collected in *The Merry Men and Other Tales and Fables* (1887). Tusitala 8. (See Swearingen 1980:28).

against that recurring bronchial condition from which he suffered as an unrestrained hero through his lifetime, we must touch fleetingly on these two essays and on the story. For -even though they are not dealt with at any length in this study, due to space constraints- they still fall very squarely on what I mean by Stevenson's *teloi.* Viz, **his resolute willingness not to lose purpose, be it ontological, phenomenological, deontological or aesthetic,** as reflected in the coming pages.

"Ordered South" is, indeed, an astounding essay propitiated by a doctor's order to a twenty-three years old Louis that made him abandon his plans to take the English Bar exam in Edinburgh, and flee to the salutary climate of Menton. Known as "the jewel of the Mediterranean", this lovely town -skirting the Alps- was -from the late eighteenth century- the place to which the comsumptive flocked out of bleak northern lattitudes, exiled, in pursuit of health and of a more congenial atmosphere. Some critics have righly pointed that the essay harks back to Fielding's *Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon* (1775), or Tobias Smollet's *Travels through France and Italy* (1766) which -together with innumerable other classics- may well constitute a gender in their search for cure or respite in congenial climates surrounded by nature. It also looks ahead to such essays as "Forest Notes"(1876, T30), "Health and Mountains", "Davos in Winter", "Alpine Diversions", "The Stimulation of the Alps" (all written in 1881, T30) and "The Misgivings of Convalescence"[424] which are partly responsible of the worship brought about by Louis' brave, indomitable fight against his illness. Stevenson's stay in Menton was pivotal, yet not to his health. It was there that he commited himself to professional writing. It was also in Menton that he first tried opium and met Andrew Lang, who would later hold that Louis's "younger soul rose against the tyranny of the body; and gallant and cheery stoicism were already with him... his style was so perfect, if a trifle overstudied, that one already foresaw a new and charming essayist" [425]. Lang declares his delight in the essays as a clear manifestation of the melancholic pleasure such places can still infuse in a wearied body and **a mind standing its ground against the pall of so early a malady**. A quote will do for irrefutable proof.

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[424] This last essay remains "unpublished since its original appearance in facsimile in the Beinecke Collection catalogue, *A Stevenson Library*... facing p.485 in Tusitala 30, which reprints only the first four of these essays". (Swearingen, 1980:58)

[425] 'Mr Stevenson's Works'. In *Essays in Little.* New York. Charles Scribner's Sons. 1897p.23

> Herein, I think, lies the chief attraction of railway travel. The speed is so easy, and the train disturbs so little the scenes through which it takes us, that our heart becomes full of **the placidity and stillness of the country**; and while the body is borne forward in the flying chain of carriages, **the thoughts alight,** as the humour moves them, at unfrequented stations; **they make haste** up the poplar alley that "leads towards the town; they are left behind with the signalman as, shading his eyes with his hand, he watches the long train sweep away into the golden distance.
>
> Moreover, there is **still before the invalid the shock of wonder and delight** with which he will learn that he has passed the indefinable line that separates South from North. And this is an uncertain moment; for sometimes **the consciousness is forced upon him** early, on the occasion of some slight association, a colour, a flower, or a scent...
> ("Ordered South", Tus. 25: 68; emphasis added)

The whole significance of this passage is in that tug of war between *kinesis* and *stasis*, between desire and reality, between his wanderlust and his being fettered by his illness. The whole significance is that it was resolved by an imaginative activity that would not have been possible without the hectic onward rush of the train; i.e. without kinesis itself. This bubbling of his imagination harmonizes paradoxically with our author's comment that the places to which invalids are normally sent are extremely beautiful. So, rather than the splendid scenery, what is truly admirable is "the mind's eye" within us, which makes one mindful of Henry James, Stevenson's most faithful and astute friend, once declaring Louis, "a shameless Bohemian haunted with duty, and a victim at once of the personal hunger and instinct for adventure and of the critical, constructive, sedentary view of it[426]".

The same tension breathes in the essay "Crabbed Age and Youth" -also included in *Virginibus Puerisque* (1881) where it takes its place with "Ordered South", "Aes Triplex" and "El Dorado", together with other writings, calling young men to heed their call for heroism in the ordinary, as opposed to the sedate complacency and respectability of the bourgeois.

> It is extraordinary," says Lord Beaconsfield, one of the brightest and best preserved of youths up to the date of his last novel, "it is extraordinary how hourly and how violently

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[426] Henry James, "The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson's (review, 1900), in Janet Adam Smith 1948, p 257. Emphasis added.

change the feelings of an inexperienced young man." **And this mobility is a special talent entrusted to his care**; **a sort of indestructible virginity; a magic armour, with which he can pass unhurt through great dangers and come unbedaubed out of the miriest passages.**

("Crabbed Age and Youth", Tus. 25: 44; emphasis added)"

However, it is in the short allegorical tale "Will o'the Mill" (1878) where, I believe, contrary to the ambivalence pointed by critics, that Stevenson more blatanly opposes any passive withdrawal from life[427]. In this highly original suspenseful story, the owner of a mountainside inn -ironically called "Will"- rather than travelling down into the valley below to partake of the cities, and engage with their people, -as was his desire as a young boy- nails himself to his perch letting life pass him by. Providence gives Will a chance when he meets the love of his life. Still he believes that it is not worthwhile to get married. Death comes, in the end, to collect him with his carriage, taking him on his first and last journey; thus, disolving the dialogical tension in the story. Deeming its ending a real blunder to the romance, critics like Alexander Japp (1905) failed to see the moral in the story. They failed to see the essays were making inroads into the fiction. Unrelenting on the despairing note and pessimism of these early writings, some sloppy biographers failed to see that travel abroad was, for Stevenson, not something "simply endured", but "first a physical necessity and then an abiding pleasure" (Royle,1991:xix). This links -in a far from contradictory way- with Stevenson's sense of homeland, never tied -as with Will- to an inmutable continuunm, but to a changeable one absorbing many spiritual, cultural and religious traditions. Stevenson's will is -unlike Will's, that of his fictive counterpart- not to become *démodé* but to remain relevant through renewal and innovation. Thus, the word "home" is, in his "Requiem" -his epitaph engraved on his gravestone on top of Vaea Mountain, in Upolu, Samoa- expressive of action rather than innaction by means of the phrases "from sea", and "from the hill", postmodifying "sailor" and "hunter" respectively[428].

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[427] Other equally passive characters are Dick Naseby in "The Story of a Lie", or Prinze Florizel in "New Arabian Nights".

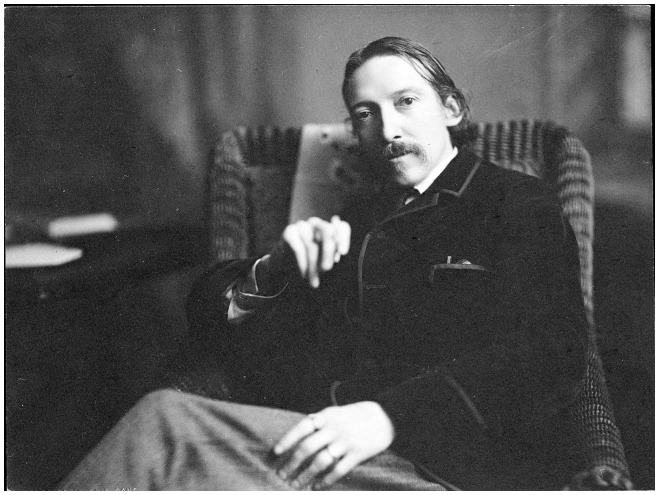
[428] RLS's "Requiem" reads, "Under the wide and starry sky,/ Dig the grave and let me lie./Glad did I live and gladly die,/And I laid me down with a will./This be the verse you grave for me:/*Here he lies where he longed to be;/Home is the sailor, home from sea, /And the hunter home from the hill.*

None of these early works, paradoxically, prophesized of Tusitala, the great story teller. A circumstance far from coincidental with Richard Ambrosini's bolstering that the essays are not a workshop for the fiction, but that they speak loudly of their intrinsical value, of their mastery, of their virtuosity.

Stevenson's ideas on writing, on travelling, were far from convoluted. They were more than a rite of passage. They were a real active. They were a real nomadic quest for identity, duty and style. Which is why I shall break my analysis into the three coming sections widely embracing the three *teloi* announced. **Mobility as a vehicle of cognition**; as granting knowledge both in the *ontological* sense (the matter of *being)* and on the *phenomenological* one (that of direct experience). **Mobility as a means to achieve the** *deontological* (meet our duties and obligations). Lastly, **mobility as instrumental to create some** *aesthetics* that would grant a personal recognizable style same as an enjoyable and fruitful reading experience.

On dealing with each individual essay/ book of essays in the next pages, I won't obviate a mention to the type of traveller RLS shows himself to be therein. Nor will I neglect alluding to the type of essay within the tradition he is, now adopting, now leaving behind. I shall, therefore, attempt to bring the essence of those more theoretical chapters into this more analytical one.

Having held on to these ideas as innovative and clarifying, for long, I earnestly hope to render them conspicuously through the vast evidence provided by Stevenson himself in his essays and in his correspondence, so that I feel an intoxicating wish to get started with the coming sections.



5.2 Travel as Knowledge

> Travel is of two kinds; and this voyage of mine across the ocean combined both. **'Out of my country and myself I go,'** sings the old poet: and **I was not only travelling out of my country** in latitude and longitude, **but out of myself** in diet, associates, and consideration. Part of the interest and a great deal of the amusement flowed, at "least to me, from this novel situation in the world.
> (*The Amateur Emigrant*. T 18:55. Emphasis Added)

Thus reads a singular passage in Stevenson's vivid account of his ten-day sail, across the Atlantic, from Greenock to New York in August 1879, in a desperate attempt to pursue his lover, Fanny Osborne, an American lady, mother of three children who was ten years senior to Louis, and who had been called back to the States, by her husband, after a sojourn in Europe. We have to remember that Stevenson was the only child of a highly respectable upper-class family well situated in Edinburgh's New Town. He came from a long line of civil engineers who lit the dangerous Scottish coast with lighthouses. He was of a staunch Presbyterian extraction made milder by his, however strict father, Thomas Stevenson. His mother, Margaret Isabella Balfour, was the daughter of a Presbyterian minister. Young Louis was travelling incognito *in extremis*, with little money, and most importantly, in poor health. His parents were fully unaware of his escapade and, given that his literary reputation was but growing, he was still financially dependent. The lines quoted would recur to my mind. As I reflected on his travels it occurred to me that they perfectly described the veritably long way Stevenson had

threaded, **not just across boundaries and continents, but even more trascendently, in his imagination**. Here is where an authoritative text would prove useful to the general reader, for the young Stevenson was alluding to William Hazlitt's phenomenal essay "On Going a Journey" (1822). Which, in one of its most captivating and telling paragraphs, reads:

> There is undoubtedly a sensation in travelling into foreign parts that is to be had nowhere else; but it is more pleasing at the time than lasting. It is too remote from our habitual associations to be a common topic of discourse or reference, and, like a dream or another state of existence, does not piece into our daily modes of life. It is an animated but momentary hallucination. **It demands an effort to exchange our actual for our ideal identity;** and to feel the pulse of our old transports revive very keenly, we must "jump" all our present comforts and connexions. **Our romantic and itinerant character is not to be domesticated.** Dr Johnson remarked how little foreign travel added to the facilities of conversation in those who had been abroad. In fact, the time we have spent there is both delightful and in one sense instructive; but it appears to be cut out of our substantial, downright existence, and never to join kindly on to it. **We are not the same, but another, and perhaps more enviable individual,** all the time we are out of our own country. We are lost to ourselves, as well as our friends. So the poet somewhat quaintly sings,
>
> **Out of my country** and **myself I go**.
>
> (Pritchard, F.H. Ed. 1932: 225. Emphasis mine)

Through such beautiful transparent writing I could plainly see a young Stevenson awake in a jolt, his imagination spurred by all those *alter egos* he would feed onto his prolific pages. I could neatly perceive an inquisitive young genius widening his wanderings; increasing his independence; sharpening his ethical and his aesthetical perceptions. Further evidence of Louis's early fascination with Hazlitt, as traced in "Walking Tours"[429], another early essay, justified my building a double axis, as we may call it. One going outwardly -"out of my country" (a figure sauntering without). One going inwardly -"out of myself"- (a mind probbing within). These would serve as the backbone of this section, provide me with a critical framework, and allow the breaking of *identity* into ***self*** and ***otherness*.** The former understood *ontologically,* as related to

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[429] January-February 1876. It appeared in *Cornhill Magazine*, 33 (June 1876), 685-90 and was later collected as a volume in *Virginibus Puerisque* (1881). Tusitala 25.

the matter of *being*; the latter *phenomenologically,* associated with direct experience. These can be paraphrased giving voice to Stevenson wondering, ***Who am I?*** and ***What to make of this?*** The most imperative objects of cognition attending their corresponding principles, *know thyself, know the other.* Cutting through these will bring considerable overlapping, as foreseen. But it will also serve to both classify and to explain **Stevenson's quest for identity**.

Therefore, I am confident that breaking this section into **out of myself** (searching for the "self") and **out of my country** (looking to embrace "others"), I shall be grounding my views about this first *telos,* this first purpose of travelling for RLS, both on sturdy textual evidence and clear-cut exposition. It is worth while an indication here that the essays/books under analysis in each separate section have been chosen as bespeaking that quality predominantly. Which naturally won't preclude a mention of those other writings by our author that harmonize with the said quality. That this or that idea put forth by a singular writer coexists in -or partly coincides with- his other works, be them a poem, a fable, or a novel needs no exegesis. On the contrary, the *oeuvre* of a master coheres through these correlations, it fits itself together easily, conveniently.

5.2.1 Out of myself

Identity in "An Apology for Idlers", "On the Choice of a Profession", "Walking Tours", *An Inland Voyage* and *Travels with a Donkey*.

What do we understand then by *identity?* What was *identity* for Stevenson? These are two questions attendant.

On the first, we must state that it poses very many psychological and philosophical problems not to be solved in very many pages. Hence, I would better eschew theorical explanations and opt for a simple, comprehensive way to hold that ***identity* is a homecoming.** It is about finding our place in the world. About "connecting" with and "belonging" to our reality both in a literally and in a figuratively way; thereby, making it opposite to "disconnection" and "dislocation". This is the path along which the psychologist and author Jefferson Singer (2017:18) -already in these pages- tells the story of Stevenson's quest for identity; as a veritable long journey that would take him from "confusion to clarity", "from dislocation to belonging".

About the second, any Stevensonian would declare that ***identity*** **for our writer was a veritable struggle to evolve breaking free from his Calvinistic extraction** and its many suffocating constraints. It was a flee from its paralyzing effect over his life; from the hypocritical grimace of its "respectability". The verb "to pose", above, is quite appropriate, for its derivate *poseur* has been used to refer to a young Louis poking fun about his identity. As a critic has pointed out, **much of Stevenson's greatest writing is a great effort to portray the fundamental tensions between imagination as relief and the oppressive constraints of reality**; between release through travelling and the anguish he born stoically during the many bouts of his illness. The mind is capricious, for drafting these lines, the following ones echo.

XXXVIII

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 strenous 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.

(From "Underwoods", Smith (ed.) 1950: 144)

That contrite tone evinces how Louis balked at the idea of joining his family of civil engineers, as was his fate. He would not define himself as a lighthouse-builder. He shuddered at the thought of becoming a barrister himself too. -Although he held degrees that would have granted him an easy comfortable life in either profession.- He could have figured himself amongst the highly respected. He could have been a Jekyll, a Lanyon, an Utterson[430]. He was privileged already. Still, **there was a sense of inequity** about it all, a winning force to shun the "bourgeois" in the New Town and to mix up and

[430] The three main characters in *The Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mr Hyde.*

confuse himself with the disadvantaged and disreputed in the Old Town, Leith Walk or Lothian Road[431]. These enchanting lines draw a parellel between his forefathers (”my sires”) building up lighthouses that would make the Scottish main less and less fearful, and **RLS himself battling to edify with his only true commitment: that of writing.** The parallel makes us mindful of Seamus Heany's “Digging”. The father uprooting the potatoes, the grandad unearthing “the good turf”, while the son holds “the squat pen” “between my finger and my thumb”, unwilling to “follow men like them”. Both writers celebrate their ancestors feeling widely proud (”well content”) of them. Both poets feel their writing justified. Edifying in order to enlighten, digging up words and meanings, they come to the very same their ancestors did. However, here is where Louis was put at a disadvantage, for the Victorian society of which he was part condemned a young man aspiring to become a writer. We can hear the sulky solemn voice of Thomas Stevenson bawling out his son, *A... writer?!* -in **such revealing, frequently anthologized essays as “An Apology for Idlers”**[432] and **“On the Choice of a Profession”**-. I bring them here for it is in these that a young Louis vented his **purposive** animosity towards the **philistinism** of the Nineteenth Century against which “state and deadly uniformity” he rebelled with all his might. Just as he would thrust his glee on the gloom of the decadents and counteract their deadening effect with the trenchant optimism of his cheerful style and spirit. Once again, outward and inward *kinesis* against stagnation and lassitude. *Joi de vivre,* gladness, against despondency and madness, -as in the poem by Wordsworth-.

“An Apology for Idlers”, alluded to in the pages above, figures amongst the most subversive essays of RLS, who, at twenty six, expostulates with the industrious type of Philistine -the self-satisfied “respectable” bourgeois- to fulminate him for his narrow-mindedness. It is here where he also lashes out at *academia*, at the rigours of conventional education. Like in other pieces included in *Virginibus Puerisque,* we find a young Stevenson flouting the ethos of the Victorian society to flaunt his indomitable

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[431] The reader unfamiliar with the Scottish capital will still know about it being “The Tale of Two Cities” separated by Princes Street as its main artery cutting the city in two, the Old Town where Edinburgh Castle sits on its extinct volcano, and the Royal Mile descends onto the Palace and Abbey of Holyrood, to the SE; the New Town with its wide streets, opened squares, terraced Georgian houses and private gardens to the NW.

[432] Originally published in *Cornhill Magazine*, 36 (July 1877), 80-86, signed R.L.S; it was later collected in *Virginibus Puerisque* (1881). Tusitala 25; pp. 51-60.

love of life and of its many joys, to wield his enthusiasm for that faithful diligence that can never be eroded by indifference, nor by that recognised industry called *busyness* (sic): his writing. We have his very words, his outbreak of mischievous impudence in one of his letters to Frances Sitwell[433] from Swanston[434], in which he declares

> If you were to ask a squirrell in a mechanical cage, for his autobiography, it would not be very gay. Every spin may be amusing in itself, but is mighty like the last. You see I compare myself to a light hearted animal; and indeed I have been in a very good humour... I've taken a deal of exercise, and done some work... **This is a floating way of life, not very serious, but diverting enough**. Morality, virtue, love, and these kind of things are very hard and very painful even, but they string your life together... A paper called "A Defence of Idlers"**(which is really a defence of R.L.S)** is in a good way. Also, I'm writing **scurrilities** about City men... (which are) all my fancy painted them... (and are) amusing to do. So you see **I am busy in a tumultuous, knotless sort of fashion;** and as I say, I take lots of exercise, and I'm as brown as a berry. (L2: 176-177. Emphasis mine).

Charming specially as self-revelation the quote accredits Hirsch's contention that the defence of "the wayward, the whimsical and the truant against the claims of industry" in "An Apology for Idlers" is part of a general "protest against offices and the mercantile spirit" in his essays and travel-writings of the 1870s[435].

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[433] A handful of maladroit biographers, making a mishmash of young Louis' cryptic references in his letters to "Claire"/"Consuelo"/"madonna" -"abetted" by the fact that her letters to him have not survived- added spice to the propagated rumour that Francis was a prostitute. Far from that. Sitwell was truly a remarkable woman of great insight, irradiating charm and divining intuition, who also had "wit and intelligence, great vitality, and a sympathetic understanding of other people's problems" (See Mehew's biographic notes on Francis L1:44-54 for the whole story of that relationship. Francis later married Colvin). A young Stevenson poured out his "miseries of illness and the oppressive intolerance of" his parents in his letters to her which diverted from "dangerous flames" and adoration, (See for instance, L1:84-85; 87; 92) "into calmer waters"... "of grateful and contented friendship", a kind of *fidus Achates* in the figure of a surrogate mother. (See Knight 1985:182-183 and L1:102, 107, 111, 112).

[434] Not precisely a "cottage" in that little charming town on the slopes of the Pentland Hills, near Edinburgh, but an imposing country residence which RLS's father took on a lease. A part-refuge, part-inspirational retreat for a young Louis who would later conjure up home through the convivial "Hills of sheep, and the howes of the silent vanished races" (Smith 1950:284) and recreate the place in "Pastoral" (1887. See T29).

[435] See "The Travels of RLS as a Young Man". Hirsch, Gordon, Victorian Newsletter, 90: 1-7, 2001. Also the protest against "business habits" in "Waking Tours" (1876).

Notwithstanding, here is where a couple of points need be clarified through citation. For, playing vagrant, Stevenson is not defending vagrancy. He is not adopting a superior tone towards the breadwinner, either.

> Idleness so called, which does not consist in doing nothing, but in doing a great deal not recognised in the dogmatic formularies of the ruling class, **has as good a right to state its position as industry itself.**.. ("An Apology for Idlers". T25:51. Empahsis added)

> Nay, and the idler has another and more important quality than these. I mean his wisdom. He who has much looked on at the childish satisfaction of other people in their hobbies, will regard his own with only a very ironical indulgence. **He will not be heard among the dogmatists. He will have a great and cool allowance for all sorts of people and opinions**. If he finds no out-of-the-way truths, he will identify himself with no very burning falsehood. (Ibid, T25:55)

To my mind, of all possible idlers, the *Idler* young Louis is here referring to is that of Johnson's. He is referring to the "diverting life" of *The Rambler*. To the idle gossiper of Addison and Steel's *Tatler*. The essay is there to fill an *idle* hour. **Stevenson is thus, identifying himself with *the essayist*** whom he defends for the essayist was not bestowed the garland of *a writer*, but was excluded from academia and branded as an idler for being inconclusive. He sets himself side by side with the essayist who, in Adorno's phrase, "shies away from the violence of dogma". The one who, in his curiosity, stimulates a catholic appetite for pleasure and a willingness to reflect. Only the idle person is *a seer*. Only he will be capable of perceiving the miracles of life based not precisely on the idea of profit. This "idler", cannot be conceived by the intolerant, unimaginative, "honorable" Thomas Gradgrind of Dickens' *Hard Times,* who is fully incapable of understanding the vigour and diligence of the writer [436].

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[436] In his *Life of Stevenson*, p. 122, Graham Balfour, Louis's cousin, says "Except before his own conscience, there was hardly any time when the author of the "Apology for Idlers" ever really neglected the tasks of his true vocation". Evidence of Stevenson's diligence is both in his prolific work and in his wide correspondence. See for instance letter 579 to his mother at the time (L2: 285-6), where he writes about his projects, " How's that for busy? It does me good. It was well I wrote my "Idlers" when I did; for I am now the busiest gent in Christendom." And still, in letter 570 to Henley, (L2: 279), "I have just finished the Arabians and *Edinburgh*; I go on a tour on my own two feet, goading a she ass before my face, pass most of the Cevennes, traverse a good distance, write about 24,000 words of Journal (*The Cevennes Journal*); and on my arrival, I find you complaining of my idleness! O thunder of the firmament!". Thus, **his playful self-identification with the idler was soon to come to an end, as he pressured himself to continue apace with his writing.**

In its form, "An Apology for Idlers", follows in the steps of Montaigne as the innovator patron saint of *the personal essay*, using *dianoia* (discursive reasoning) to handle the topic in all honesty, in a self-revealing, confidential, and humorous tone.[437] The title makes us mindful of "An Apology for Poetry" in which Sir Philip Sidney also elbows his way through earnest and intolerant opponents by means of his playful witty answers.

Now, to create an "Elia", a first person substitute, to compose an experimental and suggestive *essai,* one needs to expand the self in an implicit democratic bent. One needs to set considerable value on experience and have fascinating powers of perception. One needs to be industrious, energetic. "Energy" here taken in its Aristotelian acception as *enérgeia*, directly opposed to *érgon.* The latter alluding to Homer's use in the sense of "work", the former -I seek to emphasize- to "action", "activity", thereby linked to its corresponding adjective, *energés,* which means "active", "efficient", "ebullient". As glossed in a very refined way by Emilio Lledó, this *enérgeia* "que se consume en sí misma y se crea a sí misma, sin justificarse en otra posible obra (érgon) producida más alla de la propia actividad, supone una certera interpretación del proceso de la existencia. **El movimiento interior de la mente** queda instalado **en su propia** interioridad... La interioridad del hombre es, en el fondo, su misma **estructura ontológica**. Todo él es interioridad"[438]. (Emphasis mine).

This energetic mind, probbing within, in its innermost spiritual space, **in its fluidity** -even in its "scurrilities"- is **the intimate mind of the essayist**, the mind of the writer, **bent on the** *onthological* -on *being*- in order to interpret the external reality.

How then was a young Stevenson to define himself in that middle-class society of professionals, merchants and industrialists to which he belonged?

Those heedless critics who took "An Apology for Idlers" to be "contradictory" -an intrinsic part of the personal essay- would interpret **"On the Choice of a Profession"** as a rare instance of deflation and self-righteousness. Nothing could be farther from

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[437] In his marvellous introduction to the personal essay Lopate contends that in "their ironic modesty, personal essayists frequently represent themselves as loafers or retirees, inactive and tangential to the marketplace. The shiftless marginality of the essayist's persona is underscored by the titles of some of the most famous essay series". (Lopate 1994: xxiii- xxv).

[438] Emilio LLedó, *Imágenes y Palabras*. Madrid: Taurus, 2017. p. 192-193.

reality. It is in this essay where RLS makes -still more palpable- his protest that *inner purpose* is more important than "success" in its narrow utilitarian sense [439] and that it is the former that will lead to some happiness.

> ...there is nothing so hard to get people to understand as this: That they *pay for their money*; and nothing so difficult to make them remember as this: That money, when they have it, is for most of them, at least, only a cheque to purchase pleasure with. **How then if a man gets pleasure in following an art?** He might gain more cheques by following another; but then, although there is a difference in cheques, the amount of pleasure is the same. He gets some of his directly; unlike the bank clerk, he is having his fortnight's holiday, and doing what delights him, all the year. ("On the Choice of a Professsion", T28:18. Emphasis mine).

The **ironic apologetic stance** of "Idlers" gives way to a rougher treatment, a sardonic, hopeless tone here. The snide jokes about himself turn into an unfolding of his banner, an explicit and persistent declaration of war in "On the Choice of a Profession"[440].

> The world being more or less beset with Anxious Enquirers of the Socratic persuasion, it is the object of a Liberal Education to equip people with a proper number of these answers by way of passport; so they can pass swimmingly to and fro on their affairs without the trouble of thinking. ("On the Choice of a Professsion", T28:13).

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[439] The publication story of this essay is peculiar and very telling. Swearingen (1980:39) says that it was rejected by Leslie Stephen -editor of the *Cornhill-* first, then by *Scribner's Magazine* in 1888 in favour of "A Letter to a Young Man". The composition date is January 1879. Lloyd Osborne, RLS's step-son colaborator added an editorial note in which he let fall: "It had been adjudged too cynical, too sombre in tone, too out of keeping with the helpful philosophy always associated with RLS...We seem to be going against the wishes of the author, who had evidently been content to leave it in oblivion; yet on the other hand it appears wrong to keep so fine an effort, and one so brilliant and grimly humorous, from the many who would find pleasure in it". (T28:12). Still, as contended in Chapter 3.3. where I deal with RLS's myth, we shouldn't follow Lloyd's words to the letter. It is also hard to stomach that the stepson should dramatise himself as guardian of the essay, ignoring the previous draft mentioned by Swearingen (1980:39). Judging from its theme, "On the Choice of a Profession" was fated to enrich *Virginibus Puerisque* as the collection providing the young with sound advice on how to guide themselves through life: they should follow their own calling in order to engage with the world in a joyful way rather than accept blindly the stifling conventions of the "respectable" middle-class. Mehew (L2: 295, n.2) notes that a revised version was **posthumously published** in Scribner's Magazine 57 (Jan. 1915) 66-9. It seems more likely that this literary treasure was buried by his associates fearing that it would harm Stevenson's reputation as always upbeat, always optimistic in the face of life's hardships.

[440] In Stevenson's own words in his letters (L2:295)"No fancy, no humour, nothing taken largo; a peddling industriuous and pedestrian style". Still, contrary to the self-righteousness of some of his critics, we know that Stevenson often belittled himself.

As Brown states, in "An Apology", "Stevenson felt himself marked as *an idler* in more than one respect in the circles of his father's friends in Edinburgh" for "his systematic truancy from his engineering and legal studies"; and as "something of a dilettante" (...) "among the literary men in London whose friendship he had made in his early twenties". One "in revolt against the exaltation of humdrum industry and material success" (Brown,1919:7-8). However, having come to his own profession by industriously rejecting the two others, **Stevenson presents himself** in "On the Choice" **as the Bohemian lad** assailing the intolerant father-figure[441], who, on his part entreats his son:

> I beseech you," he goes on, rising in emotion, and appealing to his son by name, " I beseech you do not trifle with this till it actually comes upon you. Bethink yourself and bestir yourself as a man. This is the time. ("On the Choice of a Profession", T28:17)

Above all, Louis rages against the reckless conformism which takes the young to "go astray", to be "herded" into an undesired profession by the willingness of their staid parents -"robustious guardians"- rather than following, wisely, their own desires and inclinations.

> You have doubtless been present at the washing of sheep, which is a brisk, high-handed piece of manoeuvring, in its way; but what is it, as a subject of contemplation, to the case of the poor young animal, Man, turned loose into this roaring world, herded by robustious guardians, taken with the panic before he has wit enough to apprehend its cause, and soon flying with all his heels in the van of the general stampede? ("On the Choice of a Profession", T28:15).

In its form, "Choice of A Profession" is very close to the moral essay -as often pointed to in this dissertation Stevenson works defy categorization and reveal much overlapping-. Notwithstanding, it can be rightly said to belong to **the epistolary essay**,

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441 Pointing to the liberality of Sainte-Beuve as mentioned by Stevenson (T25:54) Furnas (1952:33), always the reliable biographer, notes, "But it was through his original father rather than any Frenchman that he first met such an attitude. Thomas cheerfully admited having been an "idle eager sentimental youth" a consistent truant from the old Hign School with utter scorn for teachers, process or learning, and subjects taught". Furnas also reveals that on his daily walks, Louis' father would stop "schoolboys to ask what they were learning out of the load of books, then smilingly advising them to drop the whole thing and learn only what seemed good for them -or, if that suited better, nothing". So we gather that failing to comply with the conventional notion of business through idleness, was, not too badly received, but diligently understood and shared by Louis's father himself!

a genre already practiced by Seneca in "Scipio's Villa" and by Plutarch in "Consolations to His Wife", but renewed as such by Steele in his "Love-Letters", Johnson in his Rambler essays, and **later enriched by our author** in "A Letter to a Young Gentleman Who Proposes to Embrace the Career of Art"[442]. Put side by side, "A Letter to a Young Gentleman" and "Choice of a Profession" reveal unexpected similaries as well as definite differences. In their epistolary style, -as in his letters of the period, our author always showed mastery on it- they both seek to guide their addressee. But, whereas in the former we have the intimate voice of RLS speaking in his own person, in the latter -like the authors here mentioned- **he plays with his identity to adopt a fictional elaborate persona**: that of a wise "elder" gentleman who has seen the world and is prepared to offer sound advice. It may be interpreted as a bout of arrogance that, at twenty-eight, the author was to offer such guidance to another young man, he ventures. However, the voice in the essay comes across reminding us that **we are not to interpret it in a self-righteous, sanctimonious way**. For, as he tells us in his introduction to *Lay Morals* and we learn from many of his writings, just as it is imposible for art to imitate life, it is imposible to answer the big questions of life.

> I am afraid the work will not be thought good enough to put into the hands of youth by any elder friend. (...) There are no guides in life, for a thousand reasons; but for this reason first, that we have all so fallen and so bemired ourselves and grown so bewildered in the paths of this rude labyrinth, that not a man among us knows clearly where he is or how he got there. ("Lay Morals", T26:1-2)

To my mind, such a passage, rather than undermine **the substantial Bohemian stance of both essays**, as some critics have contended, it enhances it. For, from the more idealistic and subdued tone in which he celebrates writing paying tribute to the true artist for his honesty and industry in "A Letter to a Young Gentleman", we come, in retrospect, to a more vigorous condemnation of social respectability formulated ten years earlier in "On the Choice". However, there are passages in the former pointing us back to the cynicism of the latter, as the following, where expressing the joy he takes in

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442 Swearingen (1980:124) tells us that this essay published in *Scribner's Magazine,* 4 (September 1888), signed RLS, was definitely finished by May of that same year, during his stay at Manasquan, N.J. and that it was, according to Lloyd Osborne, a redrafting of the suppressed "On the Choice of a Profession", which, as we noted, was first declined by Stephen, then by Scribner's "at least in its original form" ten years earlier. See also note 441 above.

his vocation he compares his profession with that of a streetwalker, inviting he who desists from art to follow...

> ... a more manly way of life, it is a point on which I must be frank. To live by a pleasure is not a high calling; it envolves patronage, however veiled; it numbers the artist, however ambitious, along with dancing-girls and billiard-markers. The French have a romantic evasion fort 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 (sic) his trade to please himself, gains his livelihood by pleasing others, and has parted with something of the sterner dignity of man. ("Letter to a Young Gentleman Who Porposes to Embrace the Career of Art", T28:8. Emphasis added).

Offering practical advice on how to succeed in an artistic career through hardwork, devotion to his craft and perpetual striving for improvement, a young Louis reminds us that the aim of art is not *money* but *to please* others, and that **the reward of the artist is not financial but a life gladly and fully lived**[443]. In his estrangement from the prosperous bourgeoisie of his parents, **he identifies himself with** "the Sons of Joy", the rebellious young scions who challenged the materialism of their forefathers chosing to embrace the life of **that particular bohemiam: the wandering artist.** There is a correlation between his essays and his fiction which brings cogency to everything our writer wrote. Witness, for instance the following passage from *The Wrecker*[444] (1892) in which Stevenson caricatures his own life to question his identity as an artist" [445] .

> ... **I told him I had no head for business,** and his kind face darkened. "You must not say that, Loudon," he replied; "I will never believe my son to be a coward".

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[443] As Claire Harman (2005: 145) and other biographers have rightly defended, Stevenson "wasn't yet preceived as a chronic invalid, which made him into something of a sentimental hero later: if anything in 1878 he might have seemed to the general reader to be some kind of exercise enthusiast".

[444] Swearingen (1980:131) tells us that this,' Louis' first novel set in the Pacific -written in "colaboration" with Lloyd Osbourne- "was conceived shortly after Stevenson and his party left for Honolulu, 24 June 1889, abroad the trading schooner Equator when Stevenson decided to make his home for ever in the islands". As pointed out in note 98 above, it is telling that Louis should dedicate the Epilogue to Low, with whom he shared at the colony of Bohemian artists in Barbizon.

[445] The protagonist, Loudon Dodd, follows RLS's route from Fountainebleu to Edinburgh, San Francisco and the Pacific. As his creator, Loudon initially epitomizes the type of the flâneur. The parallel rather than gathering strength weakens when failing in his attempt as a sculptor Loudon loses his determination and descends "from bohemianism to exploitation of himself a 'gentleman artist' in San Francisco before ending on an atoll lost in the Pacific", Ambrosini, 2007:160).

"But I don't like it," I pleaded- "**It hasn't got any interest for me, and art has.** I know I could do more in art," and I reminded him that a successful painter gains large sums; that a picture of Meissonier's would sell for many thousand dollars.

"And **do you think, Loudon,**" he replied, "**that a man who can paint a thousand dollar picture has no grit enough to keep his end up in the stock marke**t?" (*The Wrecker,* T12: 21-22. Emphasis mine).

Once again, there is the expediency of his correspondence to corroborate beyond dispute. Addressing Colvin in October 1891, Louis writes:

The Wrecker is finished... The part that is genuinely good is Nares, the American sailor; that is a genuine figure; had there been more Nares it would have been a better book; but of course it don't set up to be a book -only a long tough yarn with some pictures of the manners of today in the greater world- not the shoddy sham world of cities, clubs and colleges- **but the world where men still live a man's life.** (L7:180-181. Emphasis added).

Stevenson always opts for life -"glad did I live and I gladly die", reads his "Requiem"- rather than for art. A few years earlier he had written:

The interest taken in an author is fragile; his next book, or your next year of culture, might see the interest frosted or outgrown; and himself, in spite of all, you might probably find the most distasteful person upon earth. My case is different. I have bad health, am often condemned to silence for days together.... have outlived all my chief pleasures which were active and adventurous and ran in the open air; and **being a person who prefers life to art,** and who knows it is a far finer thing to be in love, or to risk a danger, than to paint the finiest picture or write the noblest book, I begin to regard what remains to me of my life as very shadowy. (L5:271-2).

As Roslyn Jolly states, "while not abandoning art, he (RLS) now sought diversity of enterprise, embracing all opportunities to be -in Loudon Dodd's words- "a man of a rounded experience"... There is that constant in his plea for "a catholic appetite" in human activities, rejecting the "poverty of nature" he associated with singlenesss of accupation" (Jolly, 2009:309). This might be the only motive by which some reviewers and editors have found -in these early essays, in the first two travel books and in his first Pacific novel- "uncanny resonances" to the beat generation and to the rhetorics and concerns of "millenial hipsters". For example, Trevor Royle sees in Stevenson "a precursor of Kerouac and Chatwin" just because of his "youthful relish and supreme disregard for discomfort", and his rating "life in the open as better by far than regular employment or even a dose of laudanum" (Royle 1993: back cover). At any rate,

besides a lot more familiarity with his reader, there is a lot of wisdom and still more honesty and elegance in the playful, conversational style of Stevenson.

It is, however, undeniable that ideologically speaking this youthful Tusitala sides with the practical person rather than with the wise. For **he shows himself in the guise of a practical philosopher against cliché;** against the ready made answers by which the youth is expected to judge and to act; **against cant.** To these he opposes his honesty and his glittering humour. As affirmed, these qualities are in the Cornhill essays as well as in Stevenson's first two travel books. **These early writings contribute to the formation of that complex, ever-fluid authorial voice.** But though the short pieces examined deal more with his conscious real struggle for identity, ***An Inland Voyage*** **and** ***Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes*** **exceed on and excel at the matter of playful role confusion to dwell on the upshots of an ill-defined social rank.** In other words, in these narratives of his adventures in France and Belgium, **we see a young Stevenson inventing himself while grappling with identity problems**. Once again, we are here confronted with the bothersome issue of overlapping, for religious strife being so apparent -and "defined by long-time disputes between Catholics and Protestants" (Di Frances 2011:30)- binds the two travel books together in their moral intent. Thus, besides **clearly ontological** the said books are also very phenomenological for, **showing Stevenson's concern with how we know**, they give us the historical climate and social culture of the places he traverses. Still, I include them in this section because, as we shall soon see, **these two adventures allowed him to explore his inner world of experience.**

The soft transition from, "An Apology", "On the Choice" and a few other similar early essays to *An Inland Voyage* and *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes* -which brought him to some public notice- is marked by the irruption of the sketch, the fable-like dramatic vignette which enters the two essays and permeates the two narratives under analysis in this wee section. Lending an ear to the following acrimonious exchange between Mr Wordly Wiseman[446] and the "fine fellow" he accosts, we attune to the ideals and values we later find in RLS's first two full books quoted

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[446] Soon after setting out for the City of Light, Christian -the protagonist of John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim Progress*, a book Stevenson delighted in and to which he alludes frequently in his essays- comes across this paternal figure to examplify the inevitable confrontation between the conventional mind of the father and the free thinking mind of his son. As we shall see, there is a series of such humorous passages and dramatic vignettes like this one, both in *An Inland Voyage* and in *Travels with a Donkey.*

above: the sense of adventure, the determining benefictions of having "one thought to rub against another", the pleasures of exercising one's faculties for one's own sake, the joys of the open air, the blessings of possessing a generous wide open spirit, of keeping an inquisitive eye and mind, of having "a catholic appetite and **a strong sense of personal identity.**" These values clash with the "deficient vitality" of those "hackneyed people" scarcely conscious of living, pining for their offices when in the country; those who "have no curiosity" and are never given to "random provocations"; those whose "nature is not generous enough" to be idle, but are furiously "moiling in the gold-mill" of their profit and the "success" of their own affairs; those who favour a life of all work and no amusement.

> "How now, young fellow, what dost thou here?"
> "Truly, sir, I take mine ease."
> "Is not this the hour of the class? and should'st thou not be plying thy Book with diligence, to the end thou mayest obtain knowledge?"
> "Nay, but thus also I follow after Learning, by your leave."
> "Learning, quotha! After what fashion, I pray thee? Is it mathematics?"
> "No, to be sure."
> "Is it metaphysics?"
> "Nor that."
> "Is it some language?"
> "Nay, it is no language."
> "Is it a trade?"
> "Nor a trade neither."
> "Why, then, what is't?"
> "Indeed, sir, as a time may soon come for me to go upon Pilgrimage, I am desirous to note what is commonly done by persons in my case, and where are the ugliest Sloughs and Thickets on the Road; as also, what manner of Staff is of the best service. Moreover, I lie here, by this water, to learn by root-of-heart a lesson which my master teaches me to call Peace, or Contentment."
>
> Hereupon Mr. Worldly Wiseman was much commoved with passion, and shaking his cane with a very threatful countenance, broke forth upon this wise: "Learning, quotha!" said he; "I would have all such rogues scourged by the Hangman!" ("An Apology for Idlers" [447], T25:53-4).

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[447] In fact, the essay opens with a dialogue between Boswell and Johnson, as from the biography of the latter by the former, justifying RLS's stance from their authority. "Boswell: We grow weary when idle. Johnson: That is, sir, because others being busy, we want company; but if we were idle, there would be no growing weary; we should all entertain one another". (T.25:51

This reversing of Victorian values correlates with *An Inland Voyage*[448] (1878) which recounts the canoe journey Stevenson made -in August/September 1876- with Walter Simpson[449], his friend from students days. Together they paddled on the Scheldt from Antwerp, thence through Belgium and France along canals and down the Oise to Pontoise[450]. As noted by Singer (2007:41) "the full flowering of his bohemian worldview emerges in this piece and in his other essays" [451], inagurating Louis' career as a travel writer.

> Reservery," said he, "seems a pretty mean way to spend one's autumn holiday".
> "A bout as mean", returned I, dejectedly, "as canoeing".
> "These gentlemen travel for their pleasure", asked the landlady, with unconscious irony.
> It was too much. The scales fell from our eyes. (*An Inland Voyage*,T17:83)

The same applies to the delightful -at times lugrubious- *Travels with a Donkey in the Cévennes* (December 1878-January 1879)[452], RLS's pioneering retelling of his twelve days/120 miles hike across the Cévennes Mountains in southern France accompanied by Modestine, a "diminutive" she-donkey which "passed into my (his) service for the consideration of sixty-five francs and a glass of brandy" (T17:147).

> A traveller of my sort was a thing hitherto unheard-of in that district. I was looked upon with contempt, like a man who should project a journey to the moon, but yet with a respectful interest, like one setting forth for the inclement Pole (*Travels with a Donkey*. T17:145)

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[448] London: Kegan Paul (1878). Tus 17. pp.1-124. The MS journal is at Yale (L2:230 n.2).

[449] The "Bart" of Stevenson's correspondence, Simpson was made a baron in 1870 upon the death of his father, Sir James Young Simpson, the obstretician who pioneered the use of chloroform as anaesthetic.

[450] Critics have pointed out what they deemed a possible influence, James Lynm Molloy's *Our Autumn Holiday on French Rivers*. London, Bradbury & Agnew, 1874. They ignored what our writer himself declares in a letter to Colvin in December 1877: "Molloy was not a canoeist; he went in a four oar gig. Moreover his book was not a book; it was only illustrated. Now my work is a true *Reisebild*; good or bad, well done or ill, **it is the history of a man's life during some weeks of travel**" (L2: 231-2. Emphasis added).

[451] Such as "Roads" (1873),"Cockermouth and Keswick" (1873), "Ordered South" (1873-5), "On the Enjoyment of Unpleasant Places" (1874), "An Autumn Effect" (1875), "Forest Notes" (1876), "Walking Tours" (1876), "A Winter's Walk in Carrick and Galloway" (1876) and "A Mountain Town in France" (1878). In these, Kiely asserts, (1964:50) RLS "attempts to integrate character, locale and incident".

[452] As Swearingen -attentive to every single wee bit and datum- tells us, it was "rewritten from the journal Stevenson kept the previous autumn during the walking tour itself, 22 September- 2 October 1878... "A Mountain Town in France" represents material originally intended as the begining of this work but eventually discarded". It appeared in book form in 1879, London:C. Kegan Paul and Company. (Swearingen1980:34).

Stevenson presents both unfavourable adventures as pointless from the outset. Yet he does it "out of myself". Rather than giving us his own view, he introduces a new possibility of perceiving ourselves through others. Thus, the bargees and bystanders -contemplating the whole enterprise as absurb- suggest that **the sense of absurdity does not steem from within the writer but extends without** -as it is mirrored- reducing human acts to bumptiousness and conceit. But what is significative is that -accepting his multiple varying *psyche*- **Stevenson holds out the hope of finding himself through some meaningful (re)action in the face of farcicality,** of inanity, **of inaction.** Hence the *ontological* dimension of these early writings.

In an act of willful ignorance, perhaps intent on the conventional voyage of discovery, biographers and critics have tended to either dismiss these [453] fabulous pieces of travel writing, or to silence their **relevance as personal exploration and self-testing**[454]**.** Focusing on their zigzag thinking and contradicting, and led by the truism that the journeys amounts to nothing save for an "unplesant and unexciting trip" (Kiely 1964:135) they seem not to realize that **these disruptive escapades** from "the Victorian shibboleth of respectability" (Buckton 2007:105) **through curiosity and whim, take on a serious *telos,*** a veritably accomplished purpose: **they paint a true and most valuable record of RLS' mind.** Basing their views on such uneventful ill-fated trips[455], they seem not to realize that shortness of incident is at the core of, for instance, absurb theatre which continues to be praised and discussed. This is to be

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[453] For instance, McLynn (1993:106-110, 134-137) shares David Daiches's view that, though delightful, frequently quoted, reprinted and anthologized both *An Inland Voyage* and *Travels with a Donkey* were justifiably silenced "because they are superficial and immature works" . Bell (1992:120) calls it "dull landscape sketches and dull character studies, as uninspiring as much of the weather the intrepid pair encountered" (see n. 23 p. in Hayward 2012:266). Even Furnas (1981:378) refers to the first a bit offhand as a "dulcet experiment" oppossing it to "the sturdier skill of *Silverado".* My views are closer to Clunas', Arata's and even Harman's interpretation of the introspective value of these early travelogues, as I defend in the next paragraphs.

[454] Again, such scholars ignore what RLS himself writes plain sailing in "Walking Tours": "He who is indeed of the brotherhood **does not voyage in quest of the picturesque**, but of certain jolly humours". (T 25:117) Emphasis mine.

[455] Amongst the many misadventures suffered, Stevenson and Simpson were steadily denied admision to inns -even thrown out- after being taken for pedlars; as a suspected German spy, Louis ended up in a calaboose. It was a brief detention by the local police. The incident "was not fully detailed until ten years after the book was originally published" (Swearingen, 1980:124). At one point, Louis, paddling down the river inadvertedly crashed against a branch and was left clinging to a tree while his canoe was swept away. Besides slacking her pace to a halt, dropping his luggage to the ground on numerous ocassions; Modestine, the reluctant wee donkey having the color of a mouse, would bray derisively and cause Louis to apply his goad unmercifully on her, thereby hurting "a female", which was much against his conscience.

ascribed, once again, to Stevenson's modesty and disingenious declarations[456]; yet also, to **the recurrent misleading judgment that these early travel books are relevant only as harbingers of his fiction**. As Trevor Royle, accurately, claims in the introduction to his Everyman edition of *Inland Voyage* and *Travels with a Donley*, the two volumes "stand in their own right as pieces of literature that have withstood the test of time and **which offer us a highly personal insight into the life of a man with complicated and contradictory swings of mood"** (Royle, 1993:xx. Emphasis added).

Conversely, induced by the popularity of that subgenre labelled "Songs of Vagabundia" -the romance of bohemia extant in XIX century Germany- and by its ethos in George Borrow-an author young Louis greatly admired[457]- scholars seem to have turned a blind eye to the fact that Stevenson sets forth his thoughts on such wide issues as religion, politics, and the responsibility of the artist in society. **They have avoided considering that the interest of our writer lies** not in the atmospheric description of the places and the events he encounters, but **in his own responses** to them; not in depicting characters, but **in building *a self* from new experiences**. They have overlooked the whole principle of Tusitala's philosophy: mobility.

> Out of my country and myself I go.' I wish to take a dive among new conditions for a while, as into another element. I have nothing to do with my friends or my affections for the time; when I came away, I left my heart at home in a desk, or sent it forward with my portmanteau to await me at my destination. (*An Inland Voyage*. T17:88)
>
> For my part I travel not to go anywhere, but to go. I travel for travel's sake. The great affair is to move; to feel the... and find granite underfoot and strewn with cutting flints (*Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes*. T17: 163)

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[456] See my comments on "My First" book on page 91 of this dissertation, for instance. **Still more relevant are the humorous comments our author himself makes in the Preface** to *An Inland Voyage*, where he writes: "I wonder, would a negative be found enticing? for, from the negative point of view, I flatter myself this volume has a certain stamp. Although it runs to considerably upwards of two hundred pages, **it contains not a single reference to the imbecility of God's universe,** nor so much as a single hint that I could have made a better one myself.. -I really do not know where my head can have been. I seemed to have forgotten all that makes it glorious to be man. **'Tis an omission that renders the book philosophically unimportant;** but I am in hopes the eccentricity may please in frivolous circles. ("Preface to the First Edition" of *An Inland Voyage.* T17: xv-xvi. Emphasis added).

[457] Hailed as one of the foremost writers of the picturesque in the period, besides *The Bible in Spain* (1843) -a forerunner of the vogue and *gusto* for our country as visited by more "exotic" better-prepared travellers as the Russian Vasili Petróvich Botkin- Borrow also penned *Lavengro,* in which he struts and frets his way through Wales carrying the life of a gypsy, tenaciously blowing his own trumpet about his unprecedented ability to speak Gaelic. Critics and enthusiasts have called "Jeorgito el inglés" "an out-and-out Bohemian revelling in the company of gypsies and bruisers" (See Buckton, 2007:59).

However, there have been some agreeable efforts made in the right direction. For example, Clunas is quite suggestive referring to both books as "evanescent forms of selfhood" (1996:54) and "autobiographical exercises" (1983: 10). He is right when he says that "a theme which constitutes the bedrock of Stevenson's way of seeing and which undergoes modification or transformation but is never completely overthrown is the theme of the self" (Ibid.:3). But when he argues that it is "in the uncertain and experimental composition of that self, the nonchalant spirit, that **the distinctively aimless character of the resultant essays lies**" (Ibid.:10. Emphasis mine), to my understanding, the whole edifice of his reasoning caves in with the second bit of his proposition. For **it is, again, precesily, that *self* which builds his edifying purpose.**

Thusly, Hirsch contends that these narratives were the result of Stevenson's early wanderlust and "desire to turn his journeys to use in his writing. At a time when the young Stevenson's character was still in the process of being formed **travel served as a mode of self-discovery** as well as providing material for his developing craft" (Hirsch, 2001:1. Emphasis added).

On her part, Harman (2005:143) holds that although Louis belittled his first two travel books, "he brought sophistication to a form that had few notable practitioners (except Heine and Sterne, both of whom he venerated). ***An Inland*** **turned out to be about a frame of mind**, and *Travels with a Donkey* a cautionary tale of how much effort and artifice were involved if the middle-class Victorian wished to get "back to nature" (Ibid.: 162. Emphasis mine).

Developing on the subgenre of **the familiar essay,** Thomson (2012:122) analyses *Memories and Portraits*, Stevenson's sequence of "familiar essays that explores autobiography, memorial and the consequences of pervasive inherited memory". Thomson fitly associates the familiar type "with scepticism and humanism emphasizing **the limitations of knowledge** in the flux of sense impressions"; "with **a self-conscious interest in style**; with **a reflection on subjectivity,** which makes the essay **an experiment on the self** (Ibid., 128 Empasis mine). He alludes to the popularity and poignancy of such reminiscences in Scotland -due to the dismantling of the Scottish culture after the debacle at Culloden-, to the "critical distance" from the subject that the essay creates through its "self-reflexive subjectivity", and to the "awareness of human experience as finite and ephemeral" (Ibid. 138. Emphasis added).

Arata (Hayward 2012: 238) identifies "modernist concerns in Stevenson's early travel writing", situating him "firmly in the aesthetic" [458].

Let us briefly consider the similarities between the two early travel books, which will hopefully make their disparities more piquant, more revealing, on these pages.

Reading these travel narratives, within the span of three decades, my pedagogical mind is now struck by the realization that **both adventures are charged with more than a tincture of Naturalism[459].** This inspiring dear friend on my shelves might well be said to have purposely inagurated a new vogue within the familiar essay. One anticipating the fictionalized experiences of Stephen Crane and Jack London, one involved in a mood rather than in a topic -as I state in chapter 2 (p.69) while discussing Lamb-. **We are introduced to the type of travel in which the traveller is dispirited by everything going egregiously wrong.** - One in which "nature" steadily mocks and teases hindering his progress -inclement weather, a roller-coaster of a river, a stubborn unsympathetic donkey... At the Bergamo Conference (2008) Laurence Davis -a worldwide authority on Joseph Conrad and Cunninghame Graham, two of the greatest literary wanderers- talked about the extraordinary proliferation of these travel essays after RLS, and very possibly influenced by him. All the same, we are to remember that unlike the American authors, the Scottish writer was an optimist, the true optimist; the ablest to enjoy discomfitures, to turn unpleasantries into riotous pleasure, public shipwreck into comedy that is worth doing. Hence **the comic effect articulates both books.** Like when these paddlers, these scions of British respectability are persistently taken for pedlars.

> These gentlemen are pedlars?' she asked sharply. And that was all the conversation forthcoming. We began to think we might be pedlars after all. I never knew a population with so narrow a range of conjecture as the innkeepers of Pont-sur-Sambre. But manners and bearing have not a wider currency than bank-notes. (*An Inland Voyage,* T27:28)
>
> Like the lackeys in Molière's farce, when the true nobleman broke in on their high life below stairs, we were destined to be confronted with a real pedlar. To make the lesson still

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[458] Explaining the essence of Katherine Mansfield's stories and style in class, I came to this same realization. I was smitten with that ever-shifting, ever-evolving *self* fleeing from *stasis* in its profound consciousness. I later reflected on the topographical convergence of the two great short-story writers while visiting Menton.

[459] Nonetheless, it would be inane -at least surprising- to affiliate Stevenson with the Naturalism of Zola, for he deplored his "rancidness" (Letter to Henry James, June 1893. L8:107).

more poignant for fallen gentlemen like us, he was a pedlar of infinitely more consideration than the sort of scurvy fellows we were taken for: like a lion among mice, or a ship of war bearing down upon two cock-boats. Indeed, he did not deserve the name of pedlar at all: he was a travelling merchant. (Ibid. T27:31).

Or when Modestine -a real nightmare of inertia- slackens her pace, comes "instantly to a halt" and begins to browse.

In the meantime there came up behind us a tall peasant, perhaps forty years of age, of an ironical snuffy countenance, and arrayed in the green tail-coat of the country. He overtook us hand over hand, and stopped to consider our pitiful advance.

'Your donkey,' says he, 'is very old?'
I told him, I believed not.
Then, he supposed, we had come far.
I told him, we had but newly left Monastier.
'Et vous marchez comme ça!' cried he; and, throwing back his head, he laughed long and heartily. I watched him, half prepared to feel offended, until he had satisfied his mirth; and then, 'You must have no pity on "these animals,' said he; and, plucking a switch out of a thicket, he began to lace Modestine about the stern-works, uttering a cry. The rogue pricked up her ears and broke into a good round pace, which she kept up without flagging, and without exhibiting the least symptom of distress, as long as the peasant kept beside us. Her former panting and shaking had been, I regret to say, a piece of comedy. (*Travels with a Donkey*. T17: 151).

A few years earlier, in" Walking Tours" (1876), Stevenson had laid aside "nature" declaring that "landscape on a walking tour is quite accessory. He who is indeed of the brotherhood does not voyage in quest of the picturesque, but of certain jolly humours" (T25:117 Emphasis added). "**Nature" is thus conceived** as a constraining force. As a circumstance. As an impediment to the ease and comfort of the respectable middle class. Yet also **as the space in which** the artist can indulge on meditations, in which **the self can wallow freely in epistemological experimentation.** For it is we who change, not the landscape. **Hence that playful attitude about his identity.** Hence the flux of his "being". Stevenson flees from the stasis of belonging. He recoils at the thought of the omnibus driver spending his entire life taking customers from the station to the hotel (in *An Inland Voyage),* same as at that of the monk confined in the pious cage of his monastery (in *Travels with a Donkey*). This is concomitant with the deftness with which he conceived and opened his narratives and the difficulties he experienced to close them as pointed out by many critics and biographers.

An interesting idea is that of **the innovative use of parody -which permeates both travel books**- "as a postmodern device or kind of sensibility, the self-ironising personae was already developed in RLS... A modest understatement, to heighthen the heroism attached to the traveller" (Thompson, 2011:128-129). Parody and irony happen when Louis... "is schocked that the people he meets respond to his clothes and physical appearance, rather than his more complicated, subjective sense of who he is"(Hirsch, 2001:5-6).

A further element in common is that **philosophy** we find **interjected in both adventures**[460] **to enliven and to clinch** as from their numerous misfortunes.

> You may paddle all day long; but it is when you come back at nightfall, and look in the familiar room, that you find Love or Death awaiting you beside the stove; and the most beautiful adventures are not those we go to seek" (*An Inland Voyage*. T17:111).

> To know what you prefer, instead of humbly saying Amen to what the world tells you you ought to prefer, is to have kept your soul alive. Such a man may be generous; he may be honest in something more than the commercial sense; he may love his friends with an elective, personal sympathy, and not accept them as an adjunct of the station to which he has been called. He may be a man, in short, acting on his own instincts, keeping in his own shape that God made him in; and not a mere crank in the social engine-house, welded on principles that he does not understand, and for purposes that he does not care for.(Ibid. T17: 14).

> I have been after an adventure all my life, a pure dispassionate adventure, such as befell early and heroic voyagers; and thus to be found by morning in a random woodside nook in Gévaudan — not knowing north from south, as strange to my surroundings as the first man upon the earth, an inland castaway — was to find a fraction of my day-dreams realised. (*Travels with a Donkey,* T17:175).

As it has been profusely stated and demonstarted, **the philosophy** these quotes represent is that **of mobility**[461]**.** Yet, **not just of physical activity**; **but** most importantly,

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[460] It is worthwhile to point out here that Stevenson, a staunch optimist, would thoroughly agree with Chesterton's view that "An adventure is only an inconvenience rightly considered. An inconvenience is only an adventure wrongly considered" (*All Things Considered.* "On Running after One's Hat").

[461]Clunas (1996:14) rightly contends, "Travels allows Stevenson a social anonimity, the privilege of being a stranger. Stevenson counted on his intermitent tramphood to preseve a freedom from social conventions which he hoped would stand him in good stead as a writer who was anxious to avoid provinciality".

of psychological action[462]. This, I defend, is the crucial element of both Tusitala's ethics and aesthetics as will be further explored in the coming sections of this thesis. We see it in that "self" constantly emerging, always shifting, always adjusting as it slips through the scenery.

Religious differences -and a plea for mutual understanding and respect- **is a recurrent topic to the core in both** *An Inland* and *Travels*. Yet it is in the former than we find a pensive meditation on their peculiarities by the irruption of dialogue which, in more than a way, masks that between a "cantankerous", self-opinionated young Louis and his -at the end of the day- tolerant Calvinistic father, whose whistling the son had killed by suddenly declaring himself an agnostic. Critics and biographers have been wide awake to trace any form of disrespect, of hell-bent irreverence in these early texts. They identify our author's readiness to join in the spiritual debate -with the characters he encounters- as an indication of the wee shifting and softening of religious pressures, in Scotland, right after the Franco-Prussian war. A browse of the following excerpts duly and dutifully spurs both contentions. The reader is here invited to judge by himself. Will he feel irritated, aggrieved, disheartened... perhaps cruelly mauled by them[463]?

> I could never fathom how a man dares to lift up his voice to preach in a cathedral. What is he to say that will not be an anti-climax? For though I have heard a considerable variety of sermons, I never yet heard one that was so expressive as a cathedral. (T17:80)
>
> I understood a great deal of the spirit of what went on. Indeed it would be difficult not to understand the Miserere, which I take to be the composition of an atheist. If it ever be a

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[462] Venting his opinion on his own ballad "The Song of Rahéro" Louis writes: "*The Spectator* said there was no psychology in it; that interested me much; my grandmother... cannot so much as observe the existence of savage psychology when it is place before it. I am at bottom a psychologist and ashamed of it; the tale seized me one third because of its picturesque features, two-thirds because of its astonishing psychology". (L7:187).

[463] Thomas Stevenson, RLS's father certainly did, for he admonished his son after having found "three or four irrevent uses of the name of God which offend me and must offend many others". (Thomas Stevenson from a letter to his son; 8 June 1879. Quoted in Maixner, 1981:64). Colvin, steered him away from such "light" subjects as the essay on Knox and his relationships with women. A lover of everything Stevenson from my earliest childhood, I found the episode in *An Inland* in which Stevenson's eye picks out and follows an old woman who was making her conscientious, peaceful way from altar to altar, pretty irksome: "She went from chair to chair, from altar to altar, circumnavigating the church. To each shrine she dedicated an equal number of beads and an equal length of time. Like a prudent capitalist with a somewhat cynical view of the commercial prospect, she desired to place her supplications in a great variety of heavenly securities... I could only think of it as a dull, transparent jugglery, based upon unconscious unbelief.... Perhaps she had known love: perhaps borne children, suckled them and given them pet names. But now that was all gone by, and had left her neither happier nor wiser; and the best she could do with her mornings was to come up here into the cold church and juggle for a slice of heaven". *An Inland Voyage.* T27:96

> good thing to take such despondency to heart, the Miserere is the right music, and a cathedral a fit scene. So far I am at one with the Catholics: — an odd name for them, after all? But why, in God's name, these holiday choristers? why these priests who steal wandering looks about the congregation while they feign to be at prayer? why this fat nun, who rudely arranges her procession and shakes delinquent virgins by the elbow? why this spitting, and snuffing, and forgetting of keys, and the thousand and one little misadventures that disturb a frame of mind laboriously edified with chaunts and organings? (T17:81)
>
> All Noyon is blotted out for me by these superior memories; and I do not care to say more about the place. It was but a stack of brown roofs at the best, where I believe people live very reputably in a quiet way; but the shadow of the church falls upon it when the sun is low, and the five bells are heard in all quarters, telling that the organ has begun. If ever I join the Church of Rome, I shall stipulate to be Bishop of Noyon on the Oise. (T17:82)

Biting, irksome, or frolicsome, these passages come to be mildish, extenuating when further on he declares:

> The true ignorance is when a man does not know that he has received a good gift, or begins to imagine that he has got it for himself. The self-made man is the funniest windbag after all! There is a marked difference between decreeing light in chaos, and lighting the gas in a metropolitan back-parlour with a box of patent matches; and do what we will, there is always something made to our hand, if it were only our fingers. (T17:98).
>
> I see it as plainly, I say, as a proposition in Euclid, that my Protestant mind has missed the point, and that there goes with these deformities some higher and more religious spirit than I dream. (T27:100).

Let us now look at the singularities and variations in *An Inland Voyage* and in *Travels with a Donkey*. Their titles reveal the former to be what we may call "internal", while the "relational" character of the latter is suggested by the preposition "with". Therefore, **the canoe trip** is not so much along the rivers and the canals, but it **is rooted inwardly in the mind of the elusive narrator**. In contrast, the trek in the mountains relates his wish for a companion.

> The central bureau of nerves, what in some moods we call Ourselves, enjoyed its holiday without disturbance, like a Government Office. The great wheels of intelligence turned idly in the head, like fly-wheels, grinding no grist. I have gone on for half an hour at a time, counting my strokes and forgetting the hundreds. I flatter myself the beasts that perish could not underbid that, as a low form of consciousness. And what a pleasure it was! What a hearty, tolerant temper did it bring about! There is nothing captious about a man who has

> attained to this, the one possible apotheosis in life, the Apotheosis of Stupidity; and he begins to feel dignified and longævous like a tree. (*An Inland Voyage*, T17:93)
>
> And yet even while I was exulting in my solitude I became aware of a strange lack. I wished a companion to lie near me in the starlight, silent and not moving, but even within touch... And to live out of doors with the woman a man loves is of all lives the most complete and free. (*Travels with a Donkey*, T17: 208).

None of the two do what a book of travels usually does. That they don't follow the conventions, still less the tenets of Victorian Britain, is made apparent in every page. Even though the journeys traverse historically signicant[464] and picturesque bits of France and Belgium they hing neither on the study of characters, nor on that of the picturesque. **They are centered on and vivified by the irruption of a particular "frame of mind" and by the intrusion of a captivating and memorable partner:** Modestine, his immoderate recalcitrant -still delightful- female donkey. Everything else -even Simpson, his bosom friend in the paddling adventure- is made ancilliary to foreground these two. Which explains that solitude à deux with his conscientious mind connoted by the first title and quote, and the emphasized relationship between these two fellow-travellers in those of the second. For that is **the main disctintion we shall draw between them; a *poseur* lacking any identity he could oppose to role confusions in *An Inland*** [465]**; a literary man on pins and needles to be recognized as such in *Travels.*** In other words, while the voice in the former remains protean, fluid, unrelated in its isolation,[466] as the writer struggles to define himself, that in the latter -we need not intuit it- is the very voice of Stevenson himself addressing us in his asides. Masking his

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[464] There is more than an intimation of otherness in the section entitled "The Country of the Camisards" (T17:211-251) in *Travels with a Donkey.* Those pages paint a vivid portrait of the Protestant French zealots who "held a station even on the Lozére" (T17:214) where RLS stood with Modestine. Louis draws a captivating parallel between these insurgents and the Covenanters, the Scottish Protestants adherent of the National Covenant (1638), upholding the organization of the Scottish Presbyterian Church. "The Protestants were one and all beside their right minds with zeal and sorrow. They were all prophets and prophetesses" (T17:219). For further clarification see note 200 of this thesis.

[465] The playful attitude and nature of a young Tusitala experimenting with impersonations is enhanced by the dedication to Simpsom, where he makes him answer to the soubriquet "The Cigarette", while he adopts that of "The Arethusa". Role confusion is further complicated given that the nicknames apply both to the canal barges and to their pilots.

[466] Stephen Arata (Ambrosini and Dury's, 2006: 3-4) says it extraordinary well. In *Inland Voyage* "Impressions from the landsclape impinge on the senses, but no answering consciousness rises to meet them, and so they drift unattended in some interior space Stevenson can give no name to. Likewise, "thoughts presented themselves unbidden", but they are not his own thoughts, bacause he is not there to think them".

ambivalent affair with Fanny[467] in his affection towards Modestine, the wilful unyielding donkey[468], we see Stevenson as himself expressing his frustration and anger.

I find the phrase "moments of psychological epiphany" (Di Frances, 2011:30) especially suitable to describe their enormous relevance in creating what Claire Harman (2005: 142) calls "an impromptu prospectus of the author's personality, philosophy and literary style" in *An Inland Voyage*. **Those random ruminations are suggestive of the "stream of consciousness" technique. Yet only in their epistemic raptures;** not in their neat elegant paragraphing. They evince Stevenson's ability to escape the narrative by impersonations,"misapprehensions" (See Kiely 1964:136), and above all, by absence of identity. This can be savoured in the next comic morsel.

> There was one odd piece of practical metaphysics which accompanied what I may call the depth, if I must not call it the intensity, of my abstraction. What philosophers call **me and not-me, ego and non ego,** preoccupied me whether I would or no. **There was less me and more not-me than I was accustomed to expect**. I looked on upon somebody else, who managed the paddling; I was aware of somebody else's feet against the stretcher my own body seemed to have no more intimate relation to me than the canoe, or the river, or the river banks. **Nor this alone: something inside my mind, a part of my brain, a province of my proper being, had thrown off allegiance and set up for itself,** or perhaps for the somebody else who did the paddling. **I had dwindled into quite a little thing in a corner of myself. I was isolated in my own skull. Thoughts presented themselves unbidden;** they were not my thoughts, they were plainly some one else's; and I considered them like a part of the landscape. I take it, in short, that I was about as near Nirvana as would be convenient in practical life; and if this be so, I make the Buddhists my sincere compliments; 'tis an agreeable state, not very consistent with mental brilliancy, not exactly profitable in a money point of view, but very calm, golden, and incurious, and one that sets a man superior to alarms. It may be best figured by supposing yourself to get dead drunk, and yet keep sober to enjoy it. (T17: 93-94).

That this limbo state correlates with what Louis had described in, again, "Walking Tours", reflects how Stevenson was on the lookout to

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[467] In his correspondence, Louis reveals "lots of it is mere protestations to Fanny" (L2:333). Fanny had left for the US to rejoin her husband. Stevenson felt dejected and depressed. Having no chance to follow his lover, he was left "a miserable widower" as he himself put. He could, however raise Fanny in this text.

[468] Much has been written on the embodiment of female qualities in Modestine. Still more as a surrogate for Fanny (as in Mackay 88, Holmes 38). For she remains a clear gender-marker throughout the text.

> surrender himself to that fine intoxication that comes of much motion in the open air, that begins in **a sort of dazzle and sluggishness of the brain**, and ends in **a peace that passes comprehension**" ("Walking Tours", T25:118. Emphasis added).

He was absorbed, riveted by that dazzling of the brain and by its possibilities in the creative impulse:

> once you have fallen into an equable stride, it requires no conscious thought from you to keep it up, and yet it prevents you from thinking earnestly of anything else. Like knitting, like the work of a copying clerk, **it gradually neutralises and sets to sleep the serious activity of the mind.** We can think of this or that, lightly and laughingly, as a child thinks, or as we think in a morning dose; we can make puns or puzzle out acrostics, and trifle in a thousand ways with words and rhymes; **but when it comes to honest work,** when we come to gather ourselves together for an effort, we may sound the trumpet as "loud and long as we please; **the great barons of the mind will not rally to the standard,** but sit, each one, at home, warming his hands over his own fire and brooding on his own private thought!" (Ibid. T25:120).

This stupor, this probbing into the self seeking to disencumber it, to "discard the encrustations of custom, to leave behind the familiar, and to discover, by wandering, a genuine voice" (Clunas, 1996:74) trying an assortment of impersonations characterizes *An Inland Voyage.* It's relevance lies in showing that **Stevenson had gained a mature self-understanding.** That **he had mastered a self-conscious identity** through continuous exploration[469]. That he was trully committed to his art.

In straight opposition to those scholars who deem Stevenson's two early travel books as picturesque descriptions of scenes, **I contend that they are about self-definition and identity.** Hence, I cannot account for my disagreeing-it ill be the only time that I do so- with the most perceptive of all Stevenson biographers, Mr. Furnas. Dealing on RLS's evident "rhetorical teasing of his audience", he considers them "two short books of egocentric travel". Implying that *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevvénnes* "is an exercise in sensibility rather than in brains" he dismisses the travelogue as "a youthful journey- man work", (Furnas 1952:381)[470].

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[469] It is worthwhile to remind my readers of what RLS himself tells us in *The Cevénnes Journal, "*a voyage is a piece of autobiography at best". For emphasizing the idea, we are to remember that Stevenson kept a journal of both travels he would fill in as he went.

[470] To my mind, it looked like even Furnas (!?) had faintly fallen under the spell of our author's uncalled for disparagement of his own work.

My perception is closer to that of later critics, like Clunas, who stress that though exposing "superficial cultural differences", both *An Inland Voyage* and *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevénnes "*make apparent one of RLS's greatest satisfactions in travelling: the casting off of assigned social roles which his foreigness and nondescript appearance entailed". (Clunas, 1999:11). Still close to psychological interpretations like that of Robert Holmes tagging the journey "a physical trial, a piece of deliberate "adventurism", a bet undertaken against himself" (Holmes 1985: 38). And totally in agreement with Kenneth Simpson's (2012: 233) estimation and praise of the following comment by John Wilson as "the most helpful":

> the mastery and flexibility of the first-person narrative, the skillful introduction of comment and supposition, the ways in which he achieves fluidity by varying the length of his sentences (...) He is the master of the active sentence. (Wilson 1983:80)

I shall close this bit of a chapter returning to Singer (2017:xv) in his reference to "Erik Erikson" as "the architect of identity theory" breaking "down identity into three different but overlapping parts. First there is the *personal* or psychological that encompasses our private thoughts, values, beliefs, etc. The second is the social -the relationships we hold with family, partners and friends". Having brilliantly achieved these two, Stevenson was now ready to conquer the third, "the societal, how we fit into social structures of community, religion, political, enthincity, class and nationality. Ideally identity knots these three together into an integrated whole that allows indviduals to feel a sense of unity and purpose in their lives". These shall shape the material in our next section.

5.2.2 Out of my country

Otherness in in "The Foreigner at Home", *The Amateur Emigrant,* and "The Old Pacific Capital".

In the previous pages to this chapter I have revealed how, attempting to track the topography and the style of RLS's early essays and travel books, **our voyage finally lies** not across the landscape -however absorving and picturesque-; not even in the characters he encounters -however gripping-, but **across that always shifting, mercurial terrain in its infinite curiosity: RLS's mind**. I have also provided textual evidence of how this probbing mind was able to open new literary perspectives by transforming the unpredictable adversities of constant movement into a new form of travel writing.

Having ascertained that **mobility is the fundamental principle** on which Stevenson's philosophy, ethics, and aesthetics are grounded. Also, that this premise is the only vehicle for grappling with his own mood and gauging his own "being". Having determined the epistemological value of the said vehicle and its capacity **to grant knowledge in its ontological sense, I set out to approach its phenomenological dimension in this section.** For, the matter of "being" dealt with, we must move on to that of "direct experience". For, that "self", that much engaged sensibility, is also susceptible to shifts, to alterations, to "alterity", by virtue of the new faces and the new places he comes across. For, it is through these that Tusitala is able to reconfigure his travel writing and his literature.

In this endevour, feeling my work here hampered by the necessary space and time constraints of a doctoral thesis, I have systematically elluded any repetition through overlapping. Hence, I have decided not to include, in this study, those writings which -however coming to my aims- are expressive in lengthy pages of what is expressed in more succint ones. The felt omission of *In the South Seas* should not be read as attuned to Oscar Wilde's bewildering assertion that "In Gower Street Stevenson could have written a new Trois Mousquetaires. In Samoa he wrote letters to The Times about Germans"[471]. Still less to those perceptions referring to it as a "travel farrago". Or to

[471] See note 244 above.

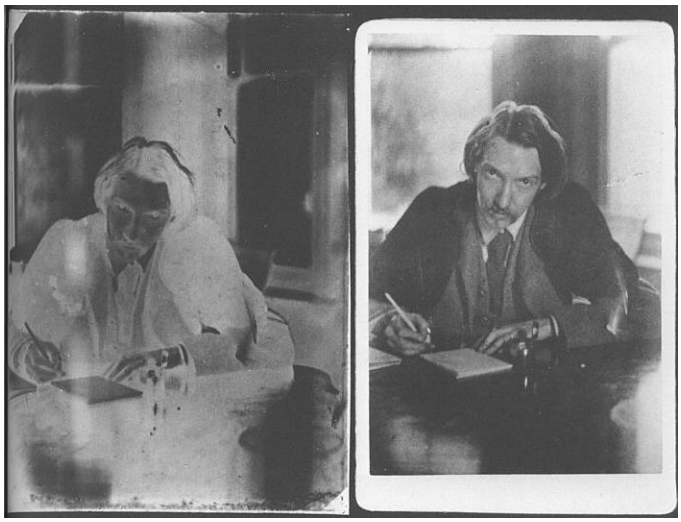
those belittling comments by Fanny Stevenson in her foreword[472]. Not even to the views of those Stevensonian critics who regard this savvy compendium of the Pacific and of its islands, either as an inauspicious or as a failed book[473]. My contention, added to the spatial reasons, is that there breaths *In the South Seas* a scientific impulse through anthropology and etnography, mingled with a nervy historical, and political concern that calls for a more minute, more scrupulous attention which would overflow the basin and the bases of this dissertation, cloak its focal point and purpose and threaten its clarity of exposition.

These omissions, these exclusions will albeit not preclude a mention of those fragments substancial and relevant to my *telos*. For instance ..... and ..... in *Across the Plains* and *The Silverado Squatters* won't, in any way, preclude a mention of those passages substancial and coming to my prupose (Smethhurst the Jew, etc.). itywith disarming honesty".

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[472] See Again that letter quoted in which Fanny Stevenson "for one" protested at the new scientific or pseudoscientific direction that Louis had taken, writing to Colvin .... "he has taken it into his Scotch Stevenson head... that his book must be a sort of scientific and historical impersonal thing" (quoted in McLynn 1993:334).

[473] See, for instance Vanessa Smith's 1998:108:" There was a fear that Stevenson was losing a context of appropriation rather than recuperating the novelty of the Pacific to the idiosyncrasies of his personal style, his energy is disipated upon a variety of new interests, that position him as a student of Pacific culture rather than master of literary production".



5.3 The Ethics of Travel

"Mama. I have drawed a man. Shall I draw his soul now?"[474]. These are the very words uttered by a three-year-old Smout[475] , as recorded in his mother's diary. I find this quote significant and I have brought it here for it perfectly reveals a rather early and strong concern for religious matters. It also betrays Alison Cunningham's[476] emotional and rhytmical readings to the easily impressed child, from The Bible, *The Shorter Catechism*, from metrical versions of *The Psalms,* and most of all, from Covenanting literature[477]. At the age of six he dictated a *History of Moses* to his mother, to whom he delighted by playing at being a minister, and acting out a church service[478]. Shortly after turning sixteen, he passed the manuscript of *The Pentland Rising* -a personal and yet acute interpretation of that historical event- to his father. All this evidence show

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[474] The Diary of Margaret Stevenson (R.L.S.'s mother), quoted in McLynn (1993:20)

[475] The parental nickname for R.L.S. as a child. A smout or a "smolt" is the Scots for a young salmon at tge stage when it migrates from fresh water to the sea. But it was widely applied to any infant in Scotland.

[476] Stevenon's nurse, a strict Calvinist who was laterly portrayed as the elder Kristie in the unfinished *Weir of Herminston,* and to whom *A Child Garden of Verses* was dedicated. Her fanatism took her to condemn dramatically the theatre and the novel as works of the devil. She spared the essay, though.

[477] Smout was found reading such books of religious exaltation as *A Cloud of Witnesses* or Walker's *Six Saints of the Covenant.* In later life he read those by Woodrow, Shields, and other grisly accounts of sinister deeds of the dark period. An ancestor of his on his mother's side, Balfour of Burleigh, was one of those fanaticals who drugged Archbishop Sharp from his carriage, and piously stabbed him to death, at Magnus Muir, in 1679.

[478] Retold in Calder (1980:32).

how sin, hell, evil and damnation weighed heavily on so young a mind, remaining a chief preocupation throughout his childhood; torturing him with terrifying nightmares; coloring his imagination with grey episodes of bloodshed.

> Do I know, how, mightly, on my bed
> The palpable close darkness shutting round me
> How my small heart went forth to evil things,
> How all the possibilities of sin
> That were yet present to my innocence
> Bound me too narrowly...
> ("Stormy Nights", Janet Adam Smith, 1950: 363)

It also highlights the oppressive atmosphere of religious strife so characteristically Scottish. Puritanism in Scotland was far more powerful and more prolonged than in England, where religion had taken a sentimental drift out of excessive dogmatism. It was also more intellectual, and more Calvinistic, as best described in the following paragraph.

> It mattered not what a man liked: the mere fact of his liking it made it sinful. Whatever was natural was wrong. The clergy deprived the people of their holidays, their amusements, their shows, their games, and their sports; they repressed every appearance of joy, they forbade all merriment, they stopped all festivities, they choked up every avenue by which pleasure could enter, and they spread over the country a universal gloom.... Men in their daily actions and their very looks, became troubled, melancholic, and ascetic.... Not only their general opinions, but their gait, their demeanour, their voice, their general aspect, were influenced by that deadly blight which nipped all that was genial and warm.
> (Quoted in Aldington, 1957: 9)

Of course, by the time of Stevenson's birth (1850) this repression had softened. But Knox's blasting of his trumpet still sang in Scottish ears. The walkout of four hundred ministers of the General Asembly of 1842, which gave way to the creation of the Free Church of Scotland, brought in a revival of Covenanting memories, awaking an

acute religious sensibility which had lain dormant for long years. Besides, Darwin had just shaken the Victorian mind with his theories causing a profound disturbance -not only religious- which still lingered in the air.

Stevenson was thus born out of a Puritanic tradition into a Presbyterian country, where the keeping of the Sabbath, and the reading of The Bible were the order of the day. And though his father -the last reresentative of generations of light-house engineers- was a liberal man, there was a clash between the two, which reached its high-water mark when the lad declared himself an agnostic on a cold January afternoon at the age of twenty-three[479]. The confrontation with his parents was inevitable, and yet this was part and parcel of almost any Scottish childhood at the time. The great revolt was still to come.

Stevenson had learnt his Bunyan by heart, he never understood why religious observance, why faith, should condemn a man to such a gloomy existence. He spent almost his whole childhood at home; but when he came to the outter world, he discovered something terrible. He saw that the strict moral code in which he had been reared did not match the moral laxity that accosted him now and again in the streets of Edinburgh. He soon realised that the story of "Auld Reekie" [480] was, veritably, the story of two cities: the respectable life of the New Town, and the, oftimes sinister, low-life of the Old Town cut off one from the other by the flagged windows of comercial Princess Street. But what repelled him more, to the point of abhorrance, was to discover that that respectability of the bourgeois which had begot him was... all lucrative sham! all venal fake! He found something indescribable, something repugnant, not only in the vices of that society, yet also in its virtues. That was the uncongenial atmosphere he breathed as he grew up, and that he found suffocating. He had to react, to move out of the "Unco

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[479] It was at this time he produced *The Edifying Letters of the Rutherford Family.* A fictional abrasive account, never reprinted, of what was going on at 17 Heriot Row, the parental house. Namely, his self-revelation as an agnostic, and the dispute with his father about the ill influence of his cousin Bob Stevenson the art critic.

[480] A well known Scottish phrase by which the vernacular poets -Robert Ferguson and Allan Ramsay in particular, referred to Edinburgh alluding to the unpleasant, filthy smoke it gave off as observed from the distance. Ramsay's *Auld Reekie*, still remains a well-known poem. Stevenson explains the origin of the name in *Picturesque Notes on Edinburgh.* (T26: 143): "Perhaps it was given her by people who had never crossed her doors: day after day, form their various rustic Pisghas they had seen the pile of building on the hill-top, and the long plume of smoke over the plain". See also his poem bearing that very nickname as a title, and the verse "Still are ye dear, and der to me,/Auld Reekie, still and on!" (T23:254).

guid"[481], of the highly hypocritical behaviour of the "respectable" middle class, of their pharisaism.

> Home no more home to me, wither must I wander?
> Hunger my driver, I go where I must.
> Cold blows the wind over hill and heather;
> Thick drives the rain, and my roof is in the dust.
> ("To the Tune of Wandering Willie", in *Songs of Travel*. Tus 22:142)

That "stuffy hypocrisy of the Edinburgh burgeoisie"[482] he soon associated with Scottish fatalism. He understood Hogg's message in his *Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, a work to which he was early drawn. The heresy by which morality is dissociated from religion and wickedness spurred as indifferent to goodness -determinism: no matter what we do we are already either doomed or saved-.

But this was not to be the only heresy to which he was exposed in his native Edinburgh. From this he could make easy exit by just crossing Princes Street, and entering the sensual world of the Old Town, where he joined his cronies in a certain howf[483]. At least there was nothing fake here, nothing unnatural even if it was filthy. He could also escape innerly and mentally devouring literature at the Advocates Library[484] -his father's stock was promptly consumed- or, developing, as he promply did, his own morality. To my thinking, here certainly lies one of the main principles of Stevenson's creed: that it is the individual who has to work out his own code of

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[481] Term coined by the Scottish Bard, Robert Burns, in his *Address to the Unco Guid,* in which he criticized the smugness of the higher classes.

[482] See Daiches's *A Companion to Scottish Culture* (1981:266).

[483] "Howf", is the Scots for "haunt", a public house and a tavern. His favourite one, the one he is known to have frequented in his errands after "attending" his law class at Ediburgh University, was known as "the Bash", in Lothian Road, and "the Rutherford's", in Drummond Street, where it still stands (Calder 1980:8). Biographers have instensively speculated about a presumable affair with a certain "Claire", which Furnas proved to be no other than Fanny Sitwell, later Lady Colvin -Sydney Colvin's wife- a respectable woman of Irish extraction who captured his heart and to whom he wrote one of the greatest declarations of incandescent love (Furnas 1971:393-404).

[484] The library of the College of Law at Edinburgh University, to which barristers and law students had ample access, which was later added to todays' National Library of Scotland.

behaviour, who needs to find his personal authenticity, by exercising his responsibility and owning up to his mistakes. That he must not accept blindly, but select nimbly.

He soon began to see his way out from those Puritanic constraints, when he discovered a still more venomous, a still more dangerous doctrine: pessimism. It was no use crossing Princes Street, that artery that divides the town, that threshold open to two different worlds to flee from it, no use heading South to his beloved France; Shopenhauer's shadow hovered over the whole of Europe.

His cousin Bob[485] introduced him to the Bohemian world, and he soon was known around Edinburgh as "velvet coat"[486] and considered an outsider, an unconventional youth. He and his intimates applied themselves the word "jink" (to make a turn, to elude), a meaningful term by which they rebelled against the respectability of the "unco-guid". They even constituted a club known quite solemnly as "The L. J. R.", which stood for Liberty, Justice and Reverence -though he laterly mocked it, he never really knew what the last meant-. They were observed playing their favourite trick of sending "carefully wrapped parcels of nothing to eminent citizens and invent fictious persons for whom they would anxiously enquire"[487] till they won a reputation in the city.

Contrary to what is commonly held by many malevolent critics willing to vulgarize him, Stevenson's rebellion, his agnosticism, his bohemianism, did not come from wanton dissolution or depravity, but was based upon sound reasoning. It was the result of a whimsical attitude, if not of a profound moral honesty. He was simply outraged at what passed for conventional piety; he objected to the Christianity he saw preached and practised around him in Victorian Edinburgh; he had no stomach for Calvinist nagativism. Still less a pleasant digestion of it . Above all, he bitterly resented any hypocritical behaviour. Against this he brandished his staunch sincerity, his resolute optimism, his belief in the doctrine of the superiority of the good heart, and his commitment to his art.

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[485] Robert A. Mowbray Stevenson, laterly an eminent critic of art and professor at Liverpool University, was brought up in England and Scotland. He would later, produce a critical appreciation of Velazquez's painting.

[486] Due to the extravagant way he dressed. He used a velved green jacket quite worn out.

[487] Retold by Calder (1980:19), yet rephrased to fit my purpose here.

This is certainly something more than the simplistic argument which explains his wanderings by considerations on climate.; by the conflict between the "raw and boisterous weather of Edinburgh" -*Picturesque Notes on Edinburgh* (Tus. 26:135) and his poor health, his consumptive nature.[488] There surely was a kind of wanderlust, what a biographer termed as a "compulsion of temperament", underlying this roaming existance. That life was no doubt a privilege for a writer. He could carry his manuscripts in a briefcase and work as he went. He was acquainted with new landscapes, with "new places and new faces", as Stevenson himself liked to put it, that provided a fresh canvas on which to exercise his genius. And his exile was highly formative. For there was, definitely, a cross-cultural stimuli operating in him wherever he strode.

Stevenson's attitude to Scotland and Edinburgh show a certain ambivalence. There was rejection, still also attraction; mockery, and yet deep respect; deprecation, but honest admiration; contempt, but sincere pride. He loved his country and its people intensively, and understood their singularities and complexities to the bottom. For he was not a Scottish writer, he was "the" Scottish writer. A Scot of the Scots. As Scottish as the prickly thistle. Still his patriotism never blinded him, for he was, primarily, a citizen of the world, a lover of life, a universal man.

Ever since he left his "pleasant land of counterpane"[489] the scenery of his childhood, he was overcome by nostalgia. Nostalgic memories of Edinbugh, of the Pentland Hills, of the Lothian Hills, of Erraid, of the Highlands, of all the dear places and beloved faces he knew, haunted his imagination in the Cevennes, at Fountainebleau, at Davos, at the Calistoga Mountans, in the South Seas... wherever he roamed.

"You cannot change ancestral feelings of right and wrong without what is practically soul-murder", he wrote some months before his death. And after writing that

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[488] Our author was treated by different medical authorities, in Edinburgh, in Davos, in the Aridondacks, and finally in Sydney. The diagnosses were dissimilar. Whether or not it was consumption what he suffered from, it still remains an unsolved mystery. What is certain is that he contracted a severe pulmunar condition, as a baby, he may well have inherterited from his mother.

[489] The title of one of his tender poems contained in *A Child Garden of Verses* symbolizing his childhood. The realm of the child, lying abed, his legs covered by the sheets bumping into hills; his leaden soldiers as marching citizens, the bedclothes surging as the sea over his wee toys. All stared at by "the giant great and still" (See T23:8). Stevenson uses a pun: "counterpane"/ counter pain.

line, he looked outside his window at Vailima[490], and he saw... the Pentlands! We may wonder if that change was effected, or what part of those feelings for home remained in him. The answer to the former will always be elusive. As for the latter, it is easily expounded in his work.

Stevenson retained a fascinated interest in the actual experience of men: a resolute desire to fill life's cup to the very brim; a deeply concious sense of morality; a determined waiving of any luxury; a fitting spirit; a stout heart against any form of tyranny; and a strict adherence to truth. All these virtues, and many defects, are inherent qualities of his Puritanic upbringing, of the Calvinistic tradition to which he was received, of the very doctrine propounded in *The Pilgrim Progress* or in the *Aeropagitica* he so much admired and reread. It is one, we Catholics, still misinterpret. For Puritanic divinity seemed to be, at the end of the day, more practical than theoretical, more casuistical than categorical; and that its message to its devotees was not that they should live in a Dickinsonian seclusion, but that it is, precisely, in engaging oneself fully in life, where the road to salvation lies. This is what many of his fellow countrymen did not force themselves to understand, or failed to do so. But Stevenson had too quick an intellect to be one with them. He knew where he has treading when, taking his knapsack he hit the road. Or, he learnt as he went.

Another heresy he steadily refused to accept, and this was one which spread like greased lighting in those days, was that of materialism. Stevenson was no Benthamine, still less a Milliam. He cared nothing for utilitarism, he thought there were far more important things neglected and he urged them on. He admired *Robinson Crusoe*, yet for aesthetic reasons. The old derogatory image of the Scotsman stuck to his penny like a mussel to its rock -so forcibly spread not by merely a few English misers - was never more fallacious than with our author. His bohemianism -just as his spontaneous generosity- spoke for itself against such an attitude. He wrote

> The true Bohemian, a creature lost to view under the imaginary Bohemians of literature... The Bohemian of the novel, who drinks more than is good for him, and

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[490] Scholars and enthusiast keep looking up the Atlas for that rare toponym, meaning -in the Samoan language- "house on five rivulets", and mixing up geographical references. Samoa is an archipielago, of which Western islands make Western Samoa, an independent State, of which , Upolu is the capital. Vailima is the name Stevenson gave to his house under Mount Vaea where he was buried.

> prefers anything to work, and wears strange clothes, is for the most part a respectable Bohemian, respectable in disrectectability, living for the outside, and an adventurer: But the man I mean lives wholly to himself, does what he wishes and not whay is thought proper, buys what he wants for himself and not what is thought proper, works at what he believes he can do well and not what will bring him money or favour.
>
> (*Lay Morals*, Tus. 26:46-47)

Stevenson always condemned venalities, mercantilism. Something he, probably, took from his father Thomas, an eminent civil engineer who never cared for a patent besides his many inventions. He denounced merchants as passionately as Addison had defended them. Still, unfortunately for him, "the survival of the fittest" made this and other no less hypocritical species -bankers, brokers, politicians, and other money-grubbers, strangely abundant in his native Edinburgh. As abundant as "the Bohemian of the novel", or the "canting dilettants" he clearly discerned in his strolls up and down Leith Walk. Against all these he cried out:

> Hail! Childish slaves of social rules
> You had yourselves a hand in making!
> How I could shake your faith, you fools.
> If I but thought it worth the shaking![491]
>
> (*New Poems*, Furnas 1978:67-68)

This foreshadows his attitude in later life towards the advance of imperialism in the South Seas; his irritated letters to *The Times*; and, as we shall see in due course in this thesis, his ranting defense of Father Damien[492].

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[491] The poem finishes, "Give me the publican and the harlot", an assertion which has been, again, misrepresented. Stevenson was not defending a life of disipation, he was just declaring that though degraded, there was a frankness, a courage and a dignity in those people which middle-class Edinburgh unfortunately lacked.

[492] Stevenson would have rejoiced at learning about Samoa's independence and Damian's canonization about the time he had foreseen these two felicitous events would actually take place. For a detailed account of Father Damian of Molokay, see the comprehensive introduction in the relevant appendix to these chapters.

Too much has been said about Stevenson's politics in those early years of voluntary exile. About his short-lived socialism; about his family Toryism. Yet, Stevenson could be called an apolitical man in the sense that he was not politically biased, nor did he adscribe himself to any political leaning[493]. It is true that he was a conservative in some ways, but his conservatism was based on sound intellectual reasons, as we shall see, and should be interpreted as a natural reaction against Gladstone's radical liberalism, which to his perceptive eyes, was just another form of hypocrisy[494].

That much about the social background determining the ethics of the day. Le us now take a look at the cultural backdrop.

Edinburgh was, veritably, no more the "Athens of the North" when Stevenson was born on that chilly morning on 13th November, 1850. He himself gives a compelling description of it: "O, Embro, you're a shrunken city" (Smith, 1950:106). As in his images, this perfectly depicts a metropolis "drenched with rain" (*Picturesque Notes on Edinburgh* T26) and with a diminished prominance. Gone were the days of the Scottish Enlightment and the brilliant splendour of the city. The Scottish grandees were all dead; -Carlyle still breathed but it was English air he inhaled-; Hume had long laid "within (his) circular idea"[495]. An appropriate attribute for the vicious scepticism his theories spread all through Europe. Scott had paid his terrible debts and left the scene never to return[496]. Soctland was thus overcome by an utmost feeling of nostalgia for its glorious past. To this, something positive was brought in those years: the Library Act which made possible the existence of the first public libraries in the following decades.

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493 Stevenson's politics are perhaps best defined by his independence. He was an activist when there was a worldwide cause, a high ideal to defend. This is intimately related to the complex notion of "change" he used, to explain how a civilization does not have the right to impose an improvement which, in the long run, will be pernicious. Thus he, logically, supported the Boers and attacked German imperialism in the Pacific, and mainly in Samoa.

494 We shall note here that *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyl & Mr Hyde*, which has passed as "a bogle yarn", a ghostly tale in the Gothic tradition, is by and large, a subvert attack and a perfect parable on the politics of the day. It has been suggested that Stevenson might well have had Gladstone's suppossed nocturnal existence as the "rescuer" of London prostitutes, in mind.

495 Thus reads Hume's unusual epitaph in Calton Hill, Edinburgh: "Within this circular idea/ Called vulgarly a tomb,/ The ideas and impressions lie/ That constituted Hume".

496 As described by Lochart's exquisite biography on Scott.

The literary activity in the half a century before our author made his entry was concentrated around a small number of periodicals. Of these, the most significant was *The Edinburgh Review*, which inagurated a new form of journalism under the editorship of Francis Jeffrey in 1802 with Scott and Carlyle as its main contributors. But this was just a trend, and one which did not count with much adherents, for the paper was liberal, and Scottish liberalism was still identified with religious sectarianism. Contrary to what would seem logical, it was the conservative *Blackwood Magazine*[497], better known as "Maga", and founded a decade later, the one that was to prove successful.

Whether or not Stevenson was a believer first, then what kind of a believer he was is of immaterial trascent, the real issue is that unless others, Stevenson knew, sense and felt what he was striving for. Unless others intent on easy victories, on the total fulfilment of desire, from success (like in the poem by Emily), from feeling completely gorged -that is suffering! That is spiritual deatg, a kind of unending moral indigestion... people don't know what they are striving for. They exhaust themselves in the senseless pursuit of material things and die without realizing their spiritual wealth".
Endevoured to make light of his labours by telling jokes (Chesterton, then RLS...)

od and benign even it is should not have been taken too serious. As for aethism our forefathers would have seen it as mean-spirited, the crypt of kill-joy creatures who refuse the brotherhood of man implicit in the spirit of Christmas

Say, Stevenson did never refuse the brotherhood of man... and then "Christmas at Sea", as evidence.

the Westerm world as being morally bankrupt
human rights? human obligations

[497] This was founded by William Blackwood, an Edinburgh bookseller, from an earlier one known as "The Edinbugh Monthly", and originated a whole saga of Blackwoods.

5.4 The Aesthetics of Travel

the counter-Decadent defiance of the dynamic ....(a phrase borrowed by Pea

the marriage of creative innovation and cultural tradition
A fascinating struggle not between genius and mediaocrity but with the problem of preventing the weight of the material from steamrolling you flat.

and even more aptly, Fraser asserts that Stevenson encountered in romance "a free field for debate and improvisation; he left it a recognizable and distinct mode of writing with its own range of spirited effects, its props, its desired and quickening mood [498]

This is attendant with Daly's opinion that

"the romance, the novel of incident' or novel of adventure,' **far from being the commercial pulp that it is labelled by modernist literary history,** actually possesses a theoretical backbone. Not just a reflex of the expanding publishing industry, the romance revival provided the narratives and the figures that enabled late Victorian middle-class culture to successfully accommodate certain historical changes, notably modernizing processes" [499]

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[498] See Robert Fraser, "Nineteenth-Century Adventure and Fantasy: James Morier, George Meredith, Lewis Carroll, and Robert Louis Stevenson,' in *A Companion to Romance: From Classical to Contemporary*, ed. by Corinne Saunders(Malden, MA; Oxford; Carlton, Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), pp. 389-405 (p. 413).

[499] Nicholas Daly, *Modernism, Romance and the Fin De Siécle: Popular Fiction and British Culture, 1880-1914.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999:24).

CONCLUSIONS

"For my olives have been gathered ,

and my grapes are in the tun"

(Roy Campbell)

This disssertation has attempted to put forth a resolute proposal and a plea for the inclusion of the essay in the *Grado en Estudios Ingleses* **syllabus**, as pertains to the study of literature in general, and of literature in English in particular. Carried by the certitude, through extensive teaching practice, that essays promote a more discerning reading and writing, I have worked out this major theme **with a view to restore the genre to its formidable value and relevance in the context of academic pedagogy.**

Defending the essay as thoughtful, witty, inviting and exciting in its intimate tone, **I seek to reinstate Robert Louis Stevenson's essays, showing their trascendence in evincing their author's polymorphic, multifaceted genius,** not just as the writer of the *romance,* of the fiction of adventure, he is widely associated with. Making apparent his thought, ethics and aesthetics I have presented Stevenson as a thankless prophet of a n unconcerned generation. **Basing the three** *teloi,* **his ontological-phenomenological, ethical and aesthetic values, on the principle of** *mobility,* **I seek to rescue his essay**s from their censorious evaluations, and to restore them **to their formidable relevance and singularity**. It is, paradoxically, becoming more difficult and, at times, daring to attempt to defend both the dismissed genre and the neglected master. So that it is, perhaps, presumptuous to say that Stevenson excels widely amongst his contemporaries and immidiate followers in the art of *assaying,* of crafting essays. **Bringing his essays into light from the background of his literary inheritance I show how he drew and departed from it contributing to the evolution of the genre;** opening it to new perspectives; detaching it from its conventions and sentimental comforts **to articulate a highly personal and innovative theory of art.** Contrary to what has been stated, Stevenson did not abandoned the essay for venal reasons[500]. As Singer(2017: 176. Emphasis added) rightly asserts, he "would not give up his personal struggle **to carve out a sense of purpose** -a kind of truth that felt authentic to him". Hence my opting for

[500] In March of 1894, the year he died, and in the immediate months before his death, Stevenson worked on unfinished essays ("Rosa Quo Locorum" and "Early Memories", respectively) that took him back to his earliest days in Edinburgh and his grandfather's manse in nearby Colinton.

a *teleological* method. First would be his philosophy and his spirituality, then his aesthetics.

My profund conviction is that the heroic dimension of that incredible life goes hand in hand with his moral reputation; with his brave outspoken criticism of complacencies; with his determined critique of the abuse of the empires and their lost of will in the face of international conflicts and responsibilities; with his determination to find his own personal, intuitive and innovative aesthetics. **I firmly believe that he vastly achieved all three** *teloi*. I firmly contend that he held down the front on all those sides.

I-Structure

As stated above, the foundamental purpose underlying the present dissertation is to offer a vindication of the essay as the literary genre that -been so widely appreciated- has laterly been obliterated from academic syllabi. Aided and abetted but my understanding of the British essay tradition -particularly by my extensive reading of RLS as a prolific practitioner of almost every type- **I set out to write a passionate defence of the elusive, inconclusive genre claiming its trascendental benefits and great usefulness within the context of academic pedagogy.** I was thoroughly encouraged to immerse myself in what might be called "an unheard of enterprise", by the resolute interest and enthusiasm with which my selection was regarded by our students of "Introducción a los textos literarios" throughout the academic years.

I have adopted **a microscopic structure** for the sake of clarity of exposition thereby facilitating an "at a glance" view of my contents. Hence, this dissertation has been organised into different sections dealing with a wide theme in order to narrow our scope into a detailed specificity in each subsequent chapter. Thus, from the enormous elusiveness of the essay, as described in chapter 1, which makes it imposible even to define the genre because of the multiple conceptions, aims, methods, and purposes on the part of its main practitioners, in chapter 2 I zoom in to represent what is, veritably, one of the most productive essay traditions by reason of its subgenres inagurated and the mastery and virtuosity of its essayists: that of the English essay, its slight variations and purposes.

Chapter 1, thus, looks at **the shifting elusive nature of the "essay"**, inquiring into its intimate style, the subtleness of its charm to present the different conceptions, paying special attention to **its development together with its Protean quality.**

Chapter 2 explores, more closely, **the evasive issue of the successive foremost tradition**s –mainly the English, the Scottish and the American- the genre incorporated in its evolution through the ages. It endevours to ascertain **how close Stevenson came to those traditions** and **how far did he go from them** in his constant new steerings.

Chapter 3 **Sheds light on the damage done to Stevenson's reputation as an essayist**, by his own disingenious declarations; by the overridding Stevenson myth; by the pernicious effect of the sugary illustrations of his works; by the attrocious fickleness of adaptations for the screen; by the deleterious academic adoption of his essays; by the fulminations of the Modernists; same as by the paradoxical effect of those literary luminaries who -praising his fiction very highly- (un)willingly passed over his essays. It provides insight and proposals as to how these can be put to rights, and into the latest scholarly efforts intending to reinstate RLS's essays.

Chapter 4 **discusses the travel genre,** its evolution and its critical and theoretical approaches, yet from a teleological standpoint.

Chapter 5 **focuses on Tusitala's engagement with the discourse of travel**. With his notion of *mobility,* with the *kinesis* that serves to identify him as one of the literary travellers of all time. It reveals how vital his change of scenery was in his quest for his identity; in his understanding of and sympathizing with the new faces and the new places he encountred. **It shows *mobility* as the principle articulating his epistemological, ethical and aesthetic values.** It evinces how vastly he achieved the three *teloi* he was after. Namely, an ontological notion of himself; a phenomenological appreciation of others; the building of some ethics detatched from any conformity of dogma. Finally, the defence of his extremely personal and innovative aesthetics based on the deliberate artifice of authorship as an art, of *romance* as fiction; of literature not seeking to ape life.

II- Summary

Chapter 1

In its striving for honesty; in its resolved impulse to generate an immediate conversational intimacy with its audience; in its Protean quality, intellectual substenance and shapeness, **the essay** has been **one of the most captivating approachable genres to study**. **However, it** continues to hold a reduced status and **has been much neglected in academic circles**. There are, seemingly, **numerous "reasons" accoun**ting **for the inadmissible exclusion of the essay from literary studies**. For instance, the fact that **any attempt to girdle the genre comes across** either as incomplete, or **as totally inoperable**. **The essay remains essentially elusive.** Attempting a definition of it is like trying to fetter a bronco. Its adverse identification with daunting technical writing, rather than with more reflective one -also with popular journalism-. The delusive conjecture that it feeds on facts and is starved of imagination, of creative force. These, together with **ill-advised educational pursuits and inveterate decisions have** misinterpreted the inconclusive openess of this fascinating genre which, Philip Lopate brilliantly says, "has historically sought to puncture the stiffness of formal discourse with language that is casual, everyday, demotic, direct". (Lopate, 1995:xxiv).

All of the above, together with contradictory definitions, have **blinded us to the enormous capacity of the essay to adjust itself to new times and to new ideas**. They have been determinant in its devaluation. And yet, those of us who indulge a passion for the form look forward to feeling ourselves awaken and provoked by its discursive force.

Chapter 2

In its multiplicity of forms and subgenres, in its subtle variations to engage us in its different purposes, **the English essay has, veritably, proved masterly by reason of its consistent tradition**. A first taste would give us the impression that such intimate disclosure would not possibly agree with the phlegmatic English temperament. It is not so. For the English masters saw, in the openess and liberty of the young genre, a powerful instrument enabling them to raze their innermost troubles to the ground, to contribute to the welfare of their fellow-countrymen through enterteainment and instruction. Whether or not we take Sieur de Montaigne as the father of the essay, the

truth remains uncontested that, side from the French, the English essay tradition is **as formidable as its masters are influential.**

Scottish essayists adhered to the tradition incorporating their peculiarities and singularities while exercising their imagination in the form of pungent satires, their great tradition of travel writing and their sentimental, marketable picture of rural Scotland. The Scots also **proved enormously influential in the philosophical essay** with giant practitioners like Thomas Reid and Dugald Stuart, whose "common sense" en passant, took root at Harvard and Princeton so that Emerson's self-reliance and Thoreau's civil disobedience might be considered the offsprings of the said Scottish doctrine.

The great **American essayists** brought a freshness of new perspectives and projections that revitalized the genre. Albeit less developed, as pertains to the tradition of an emerging nation, their contributions **brought an indefinable flavour** which makes us distinguish Twain from Irving, Emerson from Paine. Their trascendence is marked by the said peculiarities and perspectives **which shaped the ideas the modern nation upholds and revers**, such as individuality, democratic sensibility and optimism. The early historians and theologians of the colonial period support the idea that it was palpably, the triumph of American independence that brought an idiosyncratic mood to the American essay .

Chapter 3

In that tapestry of literary criticism -made vast by the steady incorporation of new schools and new theoretical approaches- there is no singular author whose work has not been subject to oscillations and reinterpretations. Those multi-coloured yarns speak of greatness in their various patched sections. However, this is not true with those authors who have been underestimated, and still more so, condemned to oblivion. These will -hopefully- be rediscovered, revalued and reprinted.

Robert Louis Stevenson's case is a singular one, considering his huge popularity as a writer of adventure, of the "romance", the genre to which he was consigned as its most reputed representative. **Stevenson was preternaturally downgraded by a series of unfortunate circumstances** same as manifest forms of

critical abuse and mishandling. His reputation continues to undergo too many vagaries, as those dealt with in this chapter. Like Hyde casting a shadow over Jekyll's hypocritical wickedness, **-in their inflated flame about Stevenson's fiction- critics sought to obscure the glowing virtues of Stevenson's polymorphic and heterogenous work.** Being symplistic in their appreciations, they were as thin and repetitive as most biographers. Whether in pensive silence or squealing deprecations, these impertinent jackanapes -misjudged Stevenson's recount of his "sedulous ape" method as that by an apprentice-, **harboured more than a few smacks of self-justification** in order to place our great author correspondingly low and bring their own favourites ludicrously high.

The first exasperating circumstance was that provided by the always regretable fall of **the essay and of its estimation as a literary form.** A very untimely demise, for it came right when it would play the part of a venomous spoke in the unfaltering wheel of our author's creative force. Untimely and capricious, because, even though academe decided to split with the most prominent genre and with its crucial tradition- to have eyes only for the novel and the poem- essays continued to be relished as being far from mendacious and beyond just an academic pursuit. The genre should, simply, never have been brought into disrepute. For is there any other form of literature inviting and inciting our students to think, to construct meaning, to reflect upon the world surrounding them in a more comprehensive and concise way?

Education aside, for a while, **the second vagary that hurt Stevenson's reputation came from** the most unexpected source, Stevenson himself. Our author proved to be widely disingenious in his **open declarations about his ar**t. These were distorted, vociferously misrepresented by utterly inaccurate, inasuspicious biographers and misguided Stevenson enthusiasts. Being such a conscious author, we are not to interpret these as impetuous behaviour, but as lively, jocose, deliberate manifestations of his humility in order to take his art steadily more seriously than himself. The bit about the "sedulous ape" and "My First Book, Treasure Island" must be read in parallel to those scoffing self-deprecations in his letters. Had the letters been known -at the time- in their unexpurgated, unmediated version -Mehew's rather than Colvin's- Stevenson's reputation would never have suffered from this malady.

The third ailment was, **still more harmful for** Stevenson than his pulmonar condition. One from which **his reputation** was already suffering when the tail of that meteor that was his life had still not vanished: **That muddled, misquoted, misrepresented, fake adulation by his associates**. Even by those of his acquaintances who came onboard his ship mulling over their own chances to come to the fore as artists themselves. The kind of unscrupulous manoeuvring as if bees should suddenly forget their instinct and seek the worst nectar for their honey. The word "warm" recurring in those endless pages of bland, toxic, eulogy by those who pretended to have met, befriended, or "conversed" with Tusitala, ward us -Stevenson lovers and researchers- off. Their mawkish sentimentality make us pack our materials and head for that somewhere else less polluted, more inviting.

A crucial feature of a visual, kinetic writer is that of how his work must be represented, illustrated. Hence the necessary corollary, which is the correspondence between such a representation and that in the reader's mind as forced by the very words of the author? On such visuality we should first allow both for the still image -however suggestive of action- and the moving images, the fleeting scenes of the countless cinema versions. **One needs** not to be crafty in the art of representation. A draughtsman, a sculptor, a musician does not need to be as keen as mustard, **but to read RLS with some intent, to be immediately repulsed by** such deplorable renderings. So much so that it is hard to determine whether the first, the **utterly disapppointing "namby-pamby" illustrations** were more damnable than the ominous second by the mighty Hollywood. Such disfavour about the former may come as new, by reason of these early illustrations being not widely available any more; yet this could not be defended about the latter which have been so widely distributed.

To my vocational mind loving the noble teaching profession, **no circumstance is more harmful for the reputation of RLS than** that brought about by **the irresponsible, injurious academic use of his essays** in American textbooks as evinced in these pages. I seek to counteract that pernicious effect by **offering my own pedagogical proposal for the resolved reincorporation of the essay in the literary syllabus,** same as for its essential, useful application in the academic pedagogy. **I fully feel that without the essay, academics are compelled to offer a somehow trite, somehow partial vision of our subject matter.** Even more so, now that we teach our

subjects in a term rather than in the whole academic year as we were used to; and that our undergraduates are either increasingly unwilling or unable to find the time to read "that baggy monster", the Victorian novel as it was phrased. Here is where the essay comes in hand, with its expressive, intimate, inviting tone. Here is the very place of which the essay should never have been deprived.

The academic world is well credited to have sung and be singing the praises of the Modernists, who undeniably brought much that was and is to be commended by reason of their merits, their new perspectives and techniques incorporated into the wealth of European literature. Modernists are acknowledged for giving way to more than a few aspects of creativity and interpretation that have, no doubt, fostered new critical methods and appreciations

Still, **in their acerbic attacks on tradition;** in their wish to break with what went before to adumbrate "the new", **Modernist are to be criticised**. They are to be criticised **for their assumption that everything that went before had to be undoubtfully a nonentity, and everything that came afterwards had to be, no doubt, a marvel**. They are to be criticised **for their fulminations against Christianity** which is at the very heart of Europe, and without which there would be no Giotto, Dante, or Shakespeare. They are to be criticised **for falling blindly in love with their favourite manifestos** while, in their arrogance, they applied their labels blatantly, unfairly, arbitrarily. In their appreciations, and above all, in their "deprecations", modernists became very irksome with the popular author. They would accuse him of "consciously modelling himself on Poe, Hawthorne, Dostoevsky and Twain... (Noble 1983:12)" as if these were not popular writers themselves, as if they did not figure among the greatest. John Jay Chapman was right when he declared, "He (Stevenson) is the mistletoe of English literature whose roots are not in the soil but in the tree". If we take it to mean that our author was not subject to decadence but to sportive innovation.

What came as a platitude on the part of the modernists resulted in a paradox on that of t**hose literary giants** who spoke of themselves as being in love with Stevenson's writings. The real conundrum was that **throwing their laudatory words on that aspect of Stevenson' work they veritably admired**, speaking highly of Stevenson as "a form of happiness", they **rubbed out any praise to his non-fictional work**. They illuminated his fiction and short fiction **to overshadow his essays**. They

read Stevenson's essays, at least some of them, **to appropriate his ideas and to misquote him**. In their assumed authority as literary giants they infused in their readers the spurious, however unintended, idea that there was nothing else of merit in Stevenson save from what they had kindly pointed out to their zealots.

Regardless of the long story of his reputation, and of the many ways it has so often been retold (biographically, geographically, diachronically, psychologically...), the truth remains that Stevenson struggled to find his own authentic singular voice in the many hardships of his age.

Recent efforts to reinstate Stevenson, both as one of the foremost geniuses of his age, and as a herald of what was to be innagurated in the wider scope of world literature, will prove fruitless **unless his essays are brought into the daylight**. As some critics have laterly asserted, the aesthetic values of post-Modernism still hold some degree of promise in that task. There is, however, the threat that breeding all those systems apace, academic literary criticism will affect our capacity to read imaginatively. We seem to be too intent on manufacturing both spurious celebrations and condemnations while aspiring to reveal inner meaning. Unlike Andrew Noble (1983:14) stated, I am fully convinced that, as the latest fresh steerings suggest, there will soon be "a radical revaluation" of Stevenson's reputation as one of the greatest.

Chapter 4

The extraordinary evolution of travel narratives and of their discourse; their overwhelming proliferation and development throughout the ages **speaks of that multiplicity of *telos,*** knitting every type of traveller tightly to his quest, to his venture. Whether we deal with pilgrims, knights and missionaries in their spiritual and chivalric crusade; with connoisseurs in their thirst for experience, entertainment and self-fashioning. Whether we engage ourselves in the daunting study of the explorers and scientists intent on building up the empire through their discoveries, their adquisition and dissemination of knowledge; with traders and merchants exercising their influence and political control. Whether we fall under the spell of leissure travellers and bohemians fleeing from the bourgeoise in their aesthetic revolt; of travelling heroes faithfully relating fact while being shaken to the core by the sublime, the wonderful and the grotesque. Regardless of the literati and utopian poseurs mouldering their fictions to give them an appearence of reality while constructing identity and revealing the self... these "journals", "travelogues", "reminiscences", "accounts", "journeys", "logs". **These**

"books of travel", "sketches", "tours", "voyages", "itineraries" and their tropes, **have provided both endless interest and delightful hours. And yet, literary syllabi evinces a flagrant disregard for travel literature.** Several reasons have been outlined for such trivializing. Amongst which the fact that the genre remains one of the most challenging and daunting for the writer of the essay. Then, the predictable issue of circumscribing, of setting its bounding line, of girdling it.

Notwithstanding, **we owe some consensus to the main critical and theoretical approaches to travel writing** in their etnographic impulse, rhetorical and gender analysis, historical and cultural revisionism which began to take shape in the 1980s with an equally unprecedented proliferation of influential studies. Also to the interdisciplinary studies steeming in the 1990s that led to a stressed preocupation with cultural diversity and its derived issues. **That concurrence** between the different preconceptions has reached a harmonious point: for these experiences of mobility entail, either some displacement and alienation, or the confirmation of identity. This **will, hopefully, induce academic authorities not to shy away from these concerns and stimuli, but to reflect their bearing on our societies and hence, their relevance in our philological studies**.

Chapter 5

All the travellers's ventures, all of their purposes meet in the singular travelling author that was Robert Louis Stevenson. An enfeebled pilgrim, a thrill seeker, a scientist, a would-be naturalist and etnographer, a trader of common sense, a bohemian, an engaged travelling hero, a *poseur*.. **Stevenson was after the aesthetics of wandering,** not after the transient fleeting joy of the inane holidaymaker.

None of the critical approaches to travel writing dealt with in the previous chapter, either individually or globally, produce a theoretical framework that would serve to explain the complexities of **Stevenson's essays** as a phenomenon. For they raise, moral, cultural, aesthetic, class, gender and language issues amongst others. They **defy categorization** through continuous overlapping and fluidity. Hence, I **base my approach on the** *teleological* in its Aristotelian-Epicurean sense, yet also in the Kantian perception.

Stevenson defined himself as "4 parts adventurer, 3 parts artist, 2 parts sensualist and 1 part Scottish clergyman". Such witty jocular quote underscores the fact that he, undoubtedly **remains one of the greatest travellers of literary history**. *Mobility* is the

word that defines his life. *Kinesis* **is everywhere in his writing**, *stasis* is almost nowhere. In his fiction, yet also in his travel books and essays, **Stevenson,** persuasively and **craftly, developed this** *flux*, **this idea of mobility.** His own life can be explained as a perpetual tension between self-exploration and external observation, between *identity* and *otherness.* His writing method, he himself termed *kinetic* in opposition to the static one of Balzac. His most popularized quotes refer to movement, "The great affair". Stevenson's own notion of adventure correlates with that of the narrative romance he also championed. Romance is adventure. However, this principle of mobility is not free from the tension generated by *stasis* in a few stories such as "Will of the Mill", and in early essays like "Ordered South" or "Crabbed Aged and Youth" which however emphasize the principle.

There is, in Stevenson, a resolute willingness not to lose purpose, be it ontological /phenomenological, deontological or aesthetic. These three extremely active *teloi,* represent his real quest for identity, duty and style. **Mobility,** the principle governing his work and his life, **is thus a vehicle of cognition; a means to meet his duties and obligations; an instrument to create his own aesthetics.**

The first *telos,* "travel as knowledge", breaks Stevenson's quest for *identity* into *self* and *otherness.* The former understood *ontologically*, the latter *phenomenologically.* For **Stevenson had threaded his way, more trascendently, in his imagination than across boundaries and continents.** Identity for our writer was a veritable struggle to break free from his Calvinistic extraction. Much of RLS's greatest writing is a great effort to portray the foundamental tensions between imagination as relief and the oppressive constraints of reality. **Stevenson battled to edify with his true commitment to his writing.** Early essays like "An Apology for Idlers", and "On the Choice of a Profession" vent his animosity towards the Victorian philistinism he abhorred. In them **Tusitala identifies himself with** *the essayist*. **The energetic mind we witness in these essays, is, in its fluidity, the intimate mind of the essayist.** In their ironic apologetic stance, Stevenson also presents himself as the Bohemian lad assailing the intolerant father-figure. He plays with his identity to adopt a fictional persona, a substantial Bohemian stance stating that the reward of the artist is not financial but a life gladly and fully lived. **This wandering artist shows himself also in the guise of a practical philosopher against cliché and cant**. These two early pieces contribute to the formation of that complex, ever-fluid authorial voice.

Stevenson's first two books, *An Inland Voyage* and *Travels with a Donkey* excel at the matter of playful role confusion to **dwell on the upshots of an ill-defined social rank.** In them we see a young Stevenson inventing himself while grappling with

identity problems. **These two, clearly ontological, adventures** allowed our hero to **explore his inner wold of experience and to crave for a strong sense of personal identity.** A young Louis holds out the hope, in these narratives, of finding himself through some meaningful reaction in the face of inaction. They are specially relevant as personal exploration and self-testing. They also take on a serious *telos*, they paint a true most valuable record of RLS's mind. Both adventures are charged with a tincture of Naturalism for they introduce us to the type of journey in which the traveller is dispirited by everything going wrong. The comic effect articulates both books. "**Nature" is that conceived in both as the space in which the self can wallow in epistemological experimentation. This, together with the innovative use of paradox in both books, and the enlivening philosophy interjected in both adventures bespeaks of a postmodern sensibility and point to a more developed conception of travel writing based not just on physical activity but on psychological action.** Those random ruminations permeating *An Inland Voyage* and *Travels with a Donkey* are suggestive of the "stream of consciousness" in their epistemic rapture. In their disimilarities -the former narrated by a poseur lacking any identity he could oppose to role confusions; the latter by a literary man anxious to be recognized as such-. One dealing with his innermost identity -*inland*- the other announcing "otherness" in its relational value -*with a Donkey*-.Either way, they show that Stevenson had mastered a self-conscious identity.

Still within the fundamental principle of mobilty as granter of knowledge, we go beyond RLS's mind, always shifting, always mercurial to approach its phenomenological dimension. We move on from the high-self conscious mode introducing him as a narrator, little engaged with the locations he traverses and with their types, to focus on his reactions to them. We find ourselves stepping on another stage in which **we encounter a mature author disdaining the power of conventional representations to shape his own experience of a particular place**. This subsection -within the first *telos*- is represented by his first boundary crossing from Scotland into England; and more so, by his American experience reflected both by his sailing from Greenock to New York in an emigrant ship as a steerage passanger, and by his stay in Monterey, California. **These experiences speak of a mind in a sweet unrest, wondering in its tolerance, seeking to understand first, to sympathize later.**

The second *telos* t**akes us to Stevenson's quest for his own ethical values.** It **immerses us in** his acute reflexions on **the moral responsibilities of he in the writing profession. On his brave denunciation of complacencies and dogmatism**. On the

abuse of political and economic powers, and their paralleled lack of commitment and willingness to solve conflicts exercising their responsibilities. It takes us to touch on the matter of his belief, on that of his supposed pagamism and on his acute, awake moral sensibility. On the proposed possibility that he was mildly approaching a Catholic perception, certainly more in its sense represented in lower case as "all-embracing" than in that of the Roman Catholic Church. Stevenson's morality is centered in his determination to "make others happier with his presence". That simple statement encapsulates the wholeness of his moral principle. These he widely presented also in "Pulvis Et Umbra" and "Truth of Intercourse", which condense it in their peculiarites of tone and content.

The third and last *telos* of his extensive movility through travelling **is that of his aesthetics. Stevenson blatantly opposes to the idea that literature must ape and compete with life.** He argues and he states his position with undebatable effectiveness. **His defence of romance is asserted with a force and pinpoint accuracy that should be hard and mendacious to ignore**. And yet, it has been ignored and falsified. Stevenson reveals himself in these extraordinary literary essays -"A Chapter on Dreams", "A Gossip on Romance", and "A Humble Remonstrance", as an honest and profound critic of exquisite literary taste, same as an innovator constantly experimenting in search of new forms, of new tastes that would enthrall and enthuse his readers.

III-Future research

Ample light and vast evidence been hopefully shed on the extraordinary and fully rewarding experience Stevenson's essays will always provide, three words remain o be said on that flawless delight.

This academic endevour completed, I am fearful that I will fail to encounter my friend as often and intimatelly as in all those years of extensive research. Yet I am also hopeful and eager to meet Stevenson at the crossroads for the still more dedicated delight of reading him for "simple" pleasure. I have, very willingly, left but one of his volumes unread on my shelves; for the idea of having consumed all of his writings is not to be borne.

After devoting the passed years to explore the pedagogical use of Stevenson's essays in my classes, ample evidence of their fruitful and constructive use in developing

both our students's reading and writing skills, **I wish to encourage my colleagues to explore their favourite essays and essayists in their sessions.**

And so *vade liber*! I would be happy if you engaged but one fellow researcher in that edifying, enthusing resolve. For **more than a few efforts still need be made** in that rewarding direction. **For instance, the interplay between Tusitala's romances and essays,** between Stevenson's fiction and non-fiction **needs to be further investigated.** Issues such as **the contrasted fact that many of his fictions steemed from his essays** rather than the reverse; **that his rejection of naturalism and realism** in literature **did not preclude his conscious assimilation of other literary theories** and pre-conceptions **need to be clearly discerned and presented. And the same about his** discernible drive towards a **more psychological dealing with reality in his narratives and their correlation with his non-fictional prose**. This last, paralleled with Henry James's hinting at a less real fiction embracing a detective story still close to the romance in, for instance, *The Aspern Papers*, discloses an osmosis working in the fabulous letters these two fabulous writers exchanged. Janet Adam Smith brought their correspondence together in one volume, still that mutual theorising, that respectful sharing of literary attitudes and ideas calls for a detailed study in the light of new findings.

Additional work underway will attempt to study the essays from other ingenious approaches, such as their publication in the original magazines and their distribution and reception, rather than in their collected book form. Also to study those essays which remain unpublished and to work out critical editions on them.

To you, prospective Stevenson scholar, a greeting of brotherhood and **my encouragements that you will take this study much farther,** vastly more so, **in this resolute proposal for the inclusion of** the essay in general -a truly fascinating genre- and of **Tusitala's essays** in particular -a veritably fabulous reading experience- **in the curricula**, as pertinent and crucial to the study of literature as it is to that of the art of writing.

Aye! Gae ye wee work!, with a wee bit more than the usual amount of confidence.

APPENDIX A-

APENDIX A-
A NOTE ON THE EARLY SPANISH TRANSLATIONS

The pupose of this appendix is to offer a comprehensive review of the earlier and most relevant Spanish renderings of Stevenson's essayistic production as compared to the rest of his oeuvre. In our country, Stevenson is recognized as the universal boy-charmer; the spinner of lovely yarns; Tusitala, the supreme story-teller. Fortunately, after the first centenary of his premature death, he began to be revalued as one of the most versatile and prolific writers in the English Language. Still, in Spain, many of his essays have been much neglected throughout the years, so that the Spanish reader is not well acquainted with that familiar and enormously personal voice. It is these texts that I wish to promote interest in.

A.1. Brief Story of a Reputation

Indeed, it would be quite an interesting object of study for the sociology of literature, to make a survey of some works by certain writers which have been translated into different languages. The result would surely shed light not only on the shifting quality of the appreciation of an author, but also on the peculiarities of his style, as well as of his readership. If we were to apply such a study to Stevenson, one of the writers most widely read in Europe and America, we would conclude that his is a case which is not comparable to that of most of his contemporaries. For, as is well known, Scotland did not pay due regard to this boy of its extraction, simply because his fellow countrymen thought Stevenson had slandered Robert Burns; while England, after so much praise, disparaged his reputation by branding his work as juvenile, charged him with imitation, and hailing him as a poseur. It was in The States, where many of his works were published by Scribner's at the same time as the British editions, where he began to receive the attention he so much deserved. On his second arrival in New York in 1887 a

crowd acclaimed him while reporters swarmed all over his ship demanding a few words from the Scottish genius.

But of all countries, France was surely the land of his adoption, and French, the language to which he was to be most widely translated. To the point that Michael Le Bris[501], one of the best known champions of Stevensonism, in a deliberate attempt at self-appropiation not wholly unjustified, considers the great Scot a French writer. Interest in Stevenson seems not to have dwindled in France since he made his first appearance at Menton when he was twenty four. It was there that the spark of his revival was lit, an assertion which has been recently proved by the large number of publications on Stevenson, which appeared in France in 1994, marking the first centenary of his death. After the serious criticism by Le Bris and Queffélec, and the detailed biographism of Alexandra Lapierre, whose *Fanny Stevenson* became a best-seller, there followed the translation of works which have not been reprinted in their original version, namely: *Les pleurs de Laupepa*[502] and *Fontainebleau*[503]; French editions of hitherto unpublished pieces: "Une Vieille Chanson"[504], or "L'esprit d' aventure"[505]; and a thoughtful translation of some of his correspondence -*Correspondance inedite*[506]-.

Britain and the United States immediately joined in this felicitous outburst of Stevensonism. The former with the announced publication, of an authoritative new edition of his works with full introductions, explanatory notes, and editorial commentary (six volumes have been published so far) by Edingurgh University Press, and the latter with an unabridged and unexpurgated edition of his letters in eight volumes by Yale University Press. There were followed by less fortunate biographies as Bell's (1992) and McLynn's (1993).

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501. Le Bris is the authot of a biography of Stevenson published in September 1994: he has also written admirable essays on the Scottish genius, and a record of one of the most fruitful literary friendships.

502 *A Footnote to History,* Stevenson's account of the war in Samoa, including letters and several unpublished documents.

503 His description of the artist colony with some letters from his friends.

504 *An Old Song,* an autobiographical short story in which he describes his household. And a book whih has still to be traced.

505 A few unpublished essays in French.

506 Stevenson's unpublished correspondance in two volumes.

In this renewed enthusiasm for Stevenson, mindful of that which took place after his reassessment started by Chesterton, and continued by Furnas, Smith, Daiches and Calder, we may wonder how Stevenson is received in our country. Have we Spaniards completely forgotten the beloved child of the North?, the peripatetic and conversational young philosopher? Have we neglected the inquisitive adventurer, once we have enjoyed his enliving force?. Or do we still follow him up and down Princes Street, leaning a while on George IV Bridge to watch trains leaving Waverley Station for brighter skies? Do we paddle with him down the Oise, and march by his side feeding Modestine[507] as we go? Or is he no more to us than a mere whispered name, an epitaph engraved on some vanishing spot in the inmensity of the ocean?

A.2.Translating Stevenson

After Babel, it is a lucky person, indeed, who has access to the meaning of foreign words, who not only savours them, but digests them with pleasure. For the rest it is a matter of attentive reading, pause and perusal, just as for others the deceptive dictionary, or that mischievious and still not bottled imp which goes by the name of "translation". If those who read the original are not sure to grasp what the author holds out to them, how can they who interpret an interpretation capture the intended meaning?

Again new difficulties are added to the dubious and toilsome efforts of the translator; for time imposes barriers which the modern reader has to overcome. Thus, in Spain, as in other countries, there are many who enjoy the courage and vitality of his fiction, who climb with Jim to the topmast, or fly with David through the heather, but who can't cope with the dragging pace of Modestine, just as they can't approve the prevalence of moral issues and the personal tone of the rest of his prose. It might be objected that this happens time and again with almost any author. But this is where Stevenson goes one step farther; for as we stated above, he was, in a rare sense, *a writer*. His striking ability to conjure up the exact word so effectively, the happy turn of phrase, the musicality of cadence, the jaunty tone of idiom... These are all

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[507] Modestine is, as any Stevensonian knows, the tender though stubborn mouse-colored donkey which passed into Stevenson's service for "the consideration of sixty-five francs and a glass of brandy", and the *hero* of his adventures in The Cévennes, Southern France.

untranslatable qualities which demonstrate the magnetism of an easily recognizable style.

An overview of some Spanish versions promptly reveals these and other almost insurmountable difficulties. The switch from an analytic to a synthetic language with the necessary textual expansion, implies a blatant attack on Stevenson's economy of diction. His clear style invites literality, while verbosity, not only ignores the poetic virtue of his prose, but mars its spontaneous and elegant fluidity. And worst of all: that warm and friendly personality which permeates everything he wrote, is often lost thanks to the artifice of careless translators.

A.3. Main Early Spanish Editions

The first objection which needs be voiced here, is that there are too many Spanish editions of his classics, whereas the rest of his production, namely most of his essays and poems, are still not available in our country[508]. Thus, there are some twenty entries under *El extraño caso del doctor Jekyll y el señor Hyde*, in the general catalogue of the Biblioteca Nacional, some thirty under *La flecha negra*, and more than a hundred and fifty under *La isla del tesoro*. A browse through these references reveals most of them to be abridged editions for the young. Others, which claim to be translations of the complete texts, are full of additions and amputations. Finally, those which reproduce the original, are either too faithful or too liberal, and they rarely include introductions. The same should be argued against the almost total abscence of explanatory notes shown in novels such as *Kidnapped*, *The Master of Ballantrae*, or *Weir of Hermiston*, where reasonable ignorance of Scottish themes by most Spanish readers, blunts their comprehension; just like the inability of translators who find themselves at a loss when trying to elucidate the meaning of dialogues in Scots -something for which they are not entirely responsible, for most English editions don't include glossaries. And what is still more discouraging: after rummaging for years through library cards and library shelves,

[508]A new comprehensive quite thorough translation by Amelia Pérez de Villar has laterly appeared in three “instalments” entitled, *Escribir* (2013) *Viajar* (2014) and *Vivir* (2015) by Páginas de Espuma, a publisher specialized in the short story, though.

I couldn't find a single study on *Tusitala*[509] by a Spanish author; a thing which may sound rather strange, for the tide of interest in Stevenson has always flowed in our country, not without some natural ebbs.

It was at the beginning of the twentieth century, just when one of these recessions was at its lowest ebb, when, perhaps the most sensitive of all Stevensonians, the Mexican poet, essayist and critic Alfonso Reyes -himself a superb translator of Chesterton- began to publish articles on the great Scot[510]. The invaluable contribution by this grandee of Spanish letters to Stevenson studies and to the strengthening of his appreciation, was also present in what may well be, the best translation of one of his works: "Olalla"[511]. Reyes' criticism of Stevenson was followed by that of another of our American brothers: Jorge Luis Borges, whose prolific oeuvre is full of references to his literary forefather[512]. Indeed a lot of influences from Tusitala can be traced not only in the imaginative and experimental writings of the prestigious Argentinian, but also on the perceptive essays of the Mexican. And it is my belief that the imprint left by the author of *Treasure Island* on both writers came from their enthusiastic reading of Chesterton, an impassioned Stevensonian, and that it was through them that the great Scot found his place in the Literature of Spanish America. The matter truly deserves a thesis.

But little or nothing of this remains now in our country, for in spite of his resolution to relieve a number of authors of the burdens imposed on them -paradoxically it was he who revalued Chesterton and reintroduced him in Britain after the war- Borges has been put on a pedestal; while Reyes, who did so much for the expansion of English literature beyond its borders (see his splendid translation of *A Sentimental Journey*) is almost entirely neglected. For many years, Spanish Stevensonians had to content

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509 As we know, *Tusitala,* is the well-known name Samoans gave to R.L.S. as inscribed on his gravestone, it means, “The Teller of Tales”.

510 For an illustration of Reyes’ acute criticism, see “Las nuevas noches árabes de Stevenson”, contained in *Grata Compañía*. A reprint of his article which appeared in 1912, as published by Fondo de Cultura Económica.

511 "Olalla", in *El Extraño caso del Doctor Jekyll y Míster Hyde*. (The traslation of the latter is by J. Torroba). In his splendid version of this spine-chilling short story, set in Spain, Reyes is not only faithful to the original, but what is really singular: to Stevenson's voice.

512 As Reyes, Borges translated and introduced some of Stevenson's works. I am glad to mention here just a couple of them which are still available: *Fábulas* (*Fables*), and *La isla de las voces*, which contains two of the tales from the South Seas: "The Isle of Voices" and "The Bottled Imp".

themselves with a few articles scattered in magazines and newspapers, and with a handful of introductions to his life and work. It is not until 1976 that we find a serious, though very brief, essay on Tusitala, by the philosopher and writer Fernando Savater. In his retelling of the famous piratic odyssey, Savater examines Jim's ethics, the intricacies of that mutable characterization which turns the timorous and pious youth at the Admiral Benbow into a dashing ruthless buccaneer, and back to the apparent respectability and pragmatism of Captain Smollet, Squire Trelawney, Doctor Livesey and the rest. Savater praises *Treasure Island* as:

> La narración más pura que conozco, la que reúne con perfección más singular lo iniciático y lo épico, las sombras de la violencia y lo macabro con el fulgor incomparable de la audacia victoriosa, el perfume de la aventura marinera -que siempre es la aventura más perfecta, la aventura absoluta- con la sutil complejidad de la primera y decisiva elección moral, en una palabra, la historia más hermosa que jamás me han contado.[513]

This is all very well, but what the reader doesn't care about is Savater's echoing of psychoanalytic interpretations to explain the intriguing relationship between Jim Hawkins and Long John Silver. We are more interested in the vitality of the narrative, in Jim's reactions to events, than in philosophizing on the paternal nature of Silver with regard to Jim. The philosopher is back, years later, to give voice to Mister Hyde, who now usurps the place of his *respectable, canny* counterpart in a monologue in which he unburdens himself[514] -and to offer a discerning introduction to a new version of *Virginibus Puerisque*.

A comparative study between new and old Spanish editions serves as a refutation to the absurd commercial superstititon which assumes that recent translators are better than their unlearned predecessors. Let's consider the two published versions of the aforesaid book to illustrate our meaning. The collection first appeared in 1943, by Escelicer, and it is almost unknown owing to the scarcity of copies -just 2,500-. As if paying tribute to its creator, its publication is surrounded by mystery and adventure. It was entitled *Ensayos*,

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[513] "Un tesoro de ambigüedad" in *La infancia recuperada*, . p 39-4

[514] "Habla Míster Hyde" in *Criaturas del aire.*, p. 47-9.

thereby not making reference to the original book, and causing confusion. But what was really unusual is that the publisher ignored the essay "Some Portraits by Raeburn", included in the original, and replaced it by another one: "Yoshida Torajiro", which does not belong to that collection, but to *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*.

Later research by Professor Ana Pinto[515], solved the enigma. An interview with the translator -Eulalia Galvarriato- proved that she was unaware of the change. A close reading showed the interloper to be, in fact, a political manifesto for the Spain of that time.

The essay tells the story of a learned Japanese patriot who, distressed by the situation in which his country is immersed, devotes his life to fighting against the tyranny of the Shogun, and for the reopening of Japan by the restoration of its legitimate sovereign, the emperor, exiled in Kyoto. Further inquires revealed the translator was not the person whose name figured in the volume, but none other than Damaso Alonso, and that he used the name of his wife to mask himself and avoid persecution; and by this trickery, he managed to get through an ardent vindication of monarchy when Franco faced the first opposition to his dictatorship. The censor let it go with a "No tiene valor documental". The episode is not only of worth in demostrating the perennial value of Stevenson's work -how it adapts itself to new times and suits new situtations- but it also highlights the differences between mediocrity and mastery in the skillful art of translation; for the later version shows recurring lexical mistakes, anacoluthia, unintended ambiguities, literalities, disloyalties, distortions and other *pecadillos*; while the early one, in its fidelity to the original, the gentle flowing of its prose, the taste with which it is woven into a unifying pattern, demostrates that a translator can be both a faithful interpreter and a creator. Fortunately, this much neglected version has been rescued from oblivion in a corrected and annotated reprint of the 1943 edition, which is also acompanied by a penetrating introduction. Apart from a couple of inaccurancies in the data offered, and some misprints, the only objection we can make to this magnificent book is that it should have been published earlier.

Another -though uncomplete- translation of *Virginibus Puerisque*, this by Mintening & Cardin, repeats the errors of the last version just commented, but includes

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[515] See , ABC. Tribuna Abierta, viernes 3 Junio, 1994.

a sympathetic introduction by Marcel Schwob[516]-Stevenson's French translator and one of his correspondants- in which he ascertains the importance of *Treasure Island* as a realistic novel and Stevenson's special talent for creating thrill. Oddly enough, in the sure pace of his criticism, Schowb, we humbly believe, stumbles when he draws a comparison between Tusitala and Poe; for Poe's characters live in darkness and renunciation, while Stevenson's are luminous and vital. Besides that, the editor adds superfluous notes to the text. The reader is far more interested in the continuous references gathered by the Scot's erudition, and scattered in perfect harmony, than in knowing that porridge is a kind of "sopa o papilla de avena típica de Escocia", or a kilt, "una falda escocesa".

In our review of some of the Spanish translations of Stevenson's work, we come to a little volume with a suggestive steam locomotive in its front-cover, enveloped in smoke and steam, and everything surmounted by the title *Del Atlántico al Pacífico*. This is a complete and faithful version of the collection *Across the Plains with other Memories and Essays,* which was first published in 1892. Its main defect could also be attributed to all collections of essays so far translated, for they don't include references to where and when each single paper appeared for the first time. Being autobiographical, it also requires a brief introduction to the brilliant personality of its author. Notwithstanding, the book reads well, and it has some of the spontaneity of the original. It's a pity it has not been reprinted! As we said above, it was intended to be the sequel to the posthumously published *The Amateur Emigrant.* There is a Spanish version of this by Jordá dedicated to the young.

Similar criticism could be made of Angel Abad's version of *Travels with a Donkey in the Cévennes*; where a dismissive summary of what the reader will find on its pages is added to the back cover: "Viaje de doce días con una burra, es una aventura divertida, amena, muy bién escrita, que tiene la gran virtud de interesar en todo momento al lector".

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[516] Schowb also wrote an interesting record of his voyages to the South Seas.

Worthy of comment, also, is Lance's version of *In the South Seas*, introduced by Rossaline Masson, one of the multitude of Stevenson's biographers, who gives a valuable approach to the author and his background.

A different note is that struck by an issue of the Mexican magazine "Cultura", which includes four essays -some of them previously unavailable in Spanish- translated by José Castellanos, to whom we are introduced with the inspiring: "Joven cubano, que cultiva su espíritu con humildad; lee de contino los mejores libros; y mira la vida sin prejuicios; sin curiosidades frívolas y sólo con un alto sentimiento de contemplador desinteresado".[517]

The text is preceded by a sensitive forword in which the translator briefly acknowledges Stevenson's virtues. In him we can find- Castellanos maintains-: "lo bueno que no es anómalo, lo individual que no es ininteligible, lo distinto que no es extraño". And though his brilliant translation of “Pulvis et Umbra”, “A Christmas Sermon”, “Old Mortality” and “Letter to a Young Man” is somewhat naïve, as it is to be expected from a young man, he accompanies it with clarifying notes, so that the final effect we get is that this version, has been produced by a kindred spirit of Stevenson.

Recent efforts are those made by Hiperión, a publisher very much interested in Tusitala, which has edited some of his essays, novels and poems. Javier Marías broke the ice with a bilingual anthology of Stevenson's poetry, but his selection does not form a unified whole, and some verses are quite lacking in the lyricism of the original. In an attempt to compensate, José María Álvarez, prepared what he intended to be a comprehensive edition of the poems. Guided by his ambitious project, he gathered verses from the different editions (Edinburgh, Thistle, Pentland, Vailima and Tusitala), and grouped them under a heading of his own creation.

The result is a somewhat disparate arrangement of Stevenson's poems, in which juvenile verses alternate with masterpieces. Besides that, some lines are lost, there are serious misprints in the English text, and the Spanish one is more literal than poetical. Some of these defects could easily have been avoided if the translator had followed Janet Adam Smith's edition, where the errors of the previous ones have been corrected.

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[517] *Robert Louis Stevenson: Ensayos* . Versión española de F.J. Castellanos (1892-1920). Castellanos was closely associated to the Dominican writer P.E. Ureña, he is best known for his *Ensayos y diálogos* (1920).

Álvarez has a useful introduction to the life and work of R.L.S.R.L.S., in which he allows himself to disparage his colleages: "Son muchos los títulos que aún desconoce nuestro idioma, y la mayoría de los ya publicados constituye un alarde de ignorancia de Stevenson, de la lengua inglesa y de la castellana".[518]

Though there is some truth in his statement, he drives himself into a dead-end with those he critizes, through pontificating, he ignores some excellent translations (Reyes', Borges', and Damaso's among some others). So that we may say with Wilde, *"Don't shoot the translator he is doing his best*", or even, in case he has forgotten his Wilde, with the elegant Spanish proverb *"Procure ser en todo lo posible, el que ha de reprender, irreprensible"*. He also offers a bibliographical note in which hagiography goes hand-in-hand with serious biography. Nonetheless, we should argue in his defence, that he worked well, that some verses are quite accomplished, and that he rescued the New Poems from oblivion, a thing most English and American editions still haven't done.

Amongst the Spanish versions of Stevenson's essays published by Hiperion, we should mention the two volumes by Santiago Santerbás. The first one, is a fine translation of "The Ideal House", a brief paper we have comented on, which gives its title to the book and is accompanied by other pieces. The second, is an intelligent -and beautifully printed- rewriting of *Vailima Prayers* and "A Christmas Sermon", the two charming and pious works Stevenson dedicated to the Samoans on his last days. Worthy of notice is also the edition entitled *Ensayos Literarios*, which includes some esays still not available in English (apart from the general editions), others that belong to the collection *Lay Morals and Other Papers* which have been reprinted; and a few others taken from the volume *Across the Plains with other Memories and Essays*, all preceded by a brief but useful introduction and with an appropiate front cover.

The two most recent editions by Hiperión are a version of *The Ebb-Tide*, the novel written in collaboration with Lloyd Osbourne[519], and an illustrated translation of Stevenson's first biography, written by his cousin Graham Balfour. The former, lacks a

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[518] See, Álvarez, p. 31 above.

[519] Stevenson's step-son to whom *Treasure Island* is dedicated. A vain youth who spent his life in a perpetual "joie de vivre", and who "collaborated" with him in some of his writings.

detailed explanation of that collaboration (where can we find the disciple's pen, where the master's hand), the latter requires a forword in which memoirs and other hagiographic reminiscences are differentiated from sincere biography.

Another Spanish publishing house, Valdemar, responded to the summons by Hyperión, thereby contributing to that renewed gusto for Tusitala, and editing some books hitherto unknown in our country. This is the case of *Los colonos de Silverado,* an attractive interpretation of the account he wrote of his stay at a derelict mine in California, which is headed by the first Spanish traslation of *An Intimate Portrait of R.L.S.* by his stepson; and *Los traficantes de naufragios*, a less intelligent version of *The Wrecker.* Valdemar also offered a new edition of *In the South Seas*, which, in my modest opinion, does not improve the one by Lance already commented, nor even the American edition by Esclasans, which has been reprinted in Spain by Forum.

Among the countless traslations of Stevenson's fiction, or, as he liked to called them *romances*, we should mention the first and very early Spanish version of *Treasure Island*[520], a volume to which I didn't have access at the time I wrote this chapter for it was on show at the exhibition on ancient books and incunabula organized by the Biblioteca Nacional. Other remarkable editions of this, surely one of the greatest narratives in English, are that by Torroba[521] which is beautifully illustrated, though some of its chapters need urgent revision; the one signed Gaziel -Agustín Calvet's nom de plume- a very nice version which does not justify the pseudonym; that by the Stevensonian Scholz[522]; the more recent by Cuyás, Oliver, Fontanela, and Meyfrem, this last faithfully reproducing the illustration of the fisrt Spanish edition; and the new unsigned American version published by Zig-Zag.

The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde, is, after the piratic odyssey, the novel which has been most widely translated. The first Spanish version I could lay my hands on, is that by Pereira[523] an admirable edition which has never been reprinted. This is

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[520] *La isla del tesoro.* A. Laurie, *1889*

[521] Torroba also translated *Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde.*

[522] See, too, his excellent edition of *La flecha negra,* and his adroit David Balfour.

[523] Pereira produced a successful version of *Kidnapped* ,as well, entitled *Las tribulaciones de un joven indolente*, with a still happier introduction

followed by the one by Ávila, charminly illustrated, and those by Esclassans and Torroba already mentioned. The latest edition is by Cátedra, in the collection Letras Universales, just released[524], which includes a thorough review of the film versions. Indeed it would be interesting to study some of the cinematographic adaptations of Stevenson's novels and short fiction; anyway, it would support Borges' opinion that Hollywood has distorted the art of the Scottish genious (after terrible pangs, spasms and contractions, behold!, Spencer Tracy is transmogrified into a wigged, hairy, and spectral Spencer Tracy, who pursues and rapes a non-existent street-walker: Ingrid Bergman!).

Kidnapped, is with *Treasure Island* and *Jekyll & Hyde*, the Stevenson novel most extensively read by Spaniards. The Spanish editions are somewhat misleading in the manifold versions of the original title. It first appeared as *Aventuras de David Balfour*[525], which translated the original subtitle; later on as *Las tribulaciones de un joven indolente*;[526] then as *David Balfour*[527] alone; and finally as *Raptado*[528] (I can even remember -though vaguely, two other titles: *Secuestrado*, and *Herencia en Peligro*). There is also an interesting translation of its sequel, *Catriona*, by Bardón.

Stevenson's medieval story *The Black Arrow*, though less well known and read than Kidnapped, has also been widely translated. Besides Scholtz's edition mentioned above[529], there are others worthy of notice. The earliest one by Navarro, the most accomplished by Herrera, and the most recent by the Círculo de Amigos de la Historia.

Gerardo Escodín made a valuable version of *The Wrong Box*, entitled *Las Aventuras de un cadáver*. A further edition of T*he Master of Ballantrae* is that by Ochoa and Azcoyen. But, no doubt, the most successful contribution to Stevenson's

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525 There are three editions under this title: Miguel Medina's unpolished version, José Farrán y Mayoral's, which includes the first Spanish version of the unfinished *Weir of Hermiston*, and finally, the still better by Luis Trillas.

526 See n. 124, above

527 See n. 123, above.

528 This is the title given to an adaptation by Piero Zanotto, translated straight from the Italian by Adoración Pérez.

529 See n. 123 above.

appreciation in our country -together with Reyes', Borges' and Damaso's- and a real gift for Spanish Stevensonians, is Fraile's brilliant translation of *Weir of Hermiston*[530]. Fraile, Emeritus Professor of Spanish literature at Strathclyde University, Glasgow, and the first Spaniard to hold that chair, lived in Scotland since the 60's. Himself a writer of short fiction and essayist, who belongs with Aldecoa to the so called "generación de los 50" (see his *Cuentos Completos* in Alianza and his *Escritura y Verdad* in Páginas de Espuma), Fraile, is a master of the Spanish short-story, who published skillful articles. He was also an eminent contributor to *El Sol, ABC, Ya, La Estafeta Literaria, El País, Saber Leer* and countless other magazines and newspapers, and edited a penetrating anthology on Spanish Post-War tales for Cátedra. His careful prose suits this masterful story of love and conflict in the Lowlands. At the same time, his deep knowledge of Scottish themes, made him an invaluable translator of this complex story, in which autobiography is in perfect accord with topography, history and an extensive use of Lallans. Fraile is aware of all these peculiarities, thus, he accompanies his pages with clarifying notes which illuminate the text, and makes a brief but sound introduction to this fascinating, though unfinished, novel. Stevenson's short fiction has also been extensively read and translated in our country. His *New Arabian Nights* and *More Arabian Nights*, are dispersed in different volumes[531]; just as his *Island Nights' Entertainments*[532].

His *Fables* were translated with an introduction by Borges[533]. Too many of his essays and other uncollected pieces classified as "miscellaneous writings" in the editions of his complete works, remain still untranslated. The complete corpus of his massive and superbly elegant correspondence is also unavailable in our language.

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[530] *El weir de Herminston.* Traducción de Medardo y Janet Fraile. Alianza Editorial.

[531] The most recent edition of the first I could find, is that by Onván. See also the collection of tales by Aguilar (Colección Crisol) and *El club de los suicidas*. *El diamante del rajá*, etc in Alianza.

[532] The tales included in this collection, are usually grouped together with others as "Olalla", "Will O' the Mill, "The Merry Men", "The Pavillion on the Links", etc, under the title of *El diablo de la botella*. This is the case with the 1924 edition by García Mercadel; or even with *El diablo de la botella y otros cuentos*, trad. J.L. López Muñon. There are two more interesting versions, the first by an unknown translator, entitled La botella infernal; the second, Cuentos de los Mares del Sur, by J.L. Izquierdo Hernández.

[533] See n. 113, above.

APPENDIX B

APENDIX B
FATHER DAMIEN: A RENDERING

Introducción

A finales del siglo XX, las tensiones entre católicos y protestantes, en sus diversas órdenes, por hacerse con algo más que el control espiritual del Pacífico Sur, depararon a los lectores de diarios europeos y americanos una serie de espectáculos, más o menos vergonzosos, siempre lamentables, en los que los misioneros se lanzaban, ya, toda clase de acusaciones y reproches. Uno de los episodios más deplorables fue el protagonizado por cierto reverendo de Honolulú, quien se atrevió a publicar un libelo, en el que se difamaba, de la manera más despiadada e ignominiosa, la figura del Padre Damian de Veuster, el célebre "Damián de Molokai" (1840-1890), aquel valeroso misionero belga y mártir de la caridad que entregó su vida por el bien de los leprosos.

El escrito circuló por toda Oceanía sin que apareciera réplica alguna. Hasta que, meses más tarde, viniera a caer en las manos de alguien situado, aparentemente, al margen de toda rivalidad religiosa, de un observador y aventurero nato, de un enfermo en busca de climas propicios, de un consagrado y comprometido escritor que, en su juventud se había confesado agnóstico a sus padres: el novelista, ensayista y poeta escocés Robert Louis Stevenson. El cual, llevado tanto por aquella férrea convicción profundamente sajona: *"the pen is mightier than the sword"*, como por esa inquebrantable adhesión suya a la verdad, propia del puritanismo escocés, del que no podía dejar de ser heredero, saltó de su sillón como por resorte, y dio rienda suelta a su indignación, componiendo, en apenas unas horas, una de las cartas magistrales que ha dado la lengua inglesa. En un estilo harto personal, ora próximo a los ritmos bíblicos propios de los escritos calvinistas que alimentaron su infancia y adolescencia, ora al más fino y eficaz discurso forense, resultado de sus estudios de abogacía, Stevenson, arremete fulminantemente contra aquel innoble misionero, quien, paradójicamente, llevaba el nombre de Dr Hyde (Charles McEwen Hyde). Pocos años antes, el genial escocés, se había servido de aquel espectro, de aquella sombra, para reflejar en Jekyll lo

más despreciable de la moral burguesa tradicional que tanto odiaba. Ahora, ese espantajo le perseguía en la persona de un ministro protestante, envidioso, acostumbrado al buen vivir y al poco reflexionar.

Stevenson había leído el libro que, sobre Damián, compuso su amigo el escritor norteamericano Henry Stoddard. Más tarde, en su periplo por los mares del Sur, visitó la colonia de Molokai tan sólo un mes después de que muriera el santo, obteniendo un conocimiento de primera mano sobre el Padre Damián, a quien pronto identificó como un personaje bohemio de aquellos que él tanto amaba. En su diario, Stevenson, describe la experiencia como "the horror of the horrible"; reconoce las claras virtudes de Damián, y encuentra en sus defectos y faltas, sobrados motivos para reafirmar su condición de santo. Su admiración por Damián era ya incuestionable.

La carta se publicó en forma de panfleto en el *Scots Observer*, en Mayo de 1890. Y, más tarde, en la edición londinense de *The Times*, junto con otros escritos sobre la Polinesia; pero, curiosamente, se divulgó antes en una versión en lengua nativa que circuló por las islas Hawaii.

El documento, en el que nuestro autor, revela su aguda intuición, previendo, como ocurrió, que Damián tardaría un siglo en ser canonizado[534], además de una defensa apasionada del santo, constituye una verdadera diatriba, un ataque inmisericorde contra el Reverendo Hyde, asunto que pudo haber dañado seriamente la reputación de Stevenson y causarle graves perjuicios financieros.

En las páginas que siguen a su original, -tomado de la edición de *Lay Morals*, publicada en Nueva York, en 1911, a cargo de Charles Scribner's and Sons-, ofrezco mi versión en español. Empeño acometido en años lejanos y recogido ahora junto a esta breve contextualización de tan singular misiva[535].

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534 San Damián De Veuster fue canonizado por el Papa Benedicto XVI, el 11 de octubre de 2009, en la Ciudad del Vaticano.

535 En una de sus muy numerosas cartas -la vastísima correspondencia de Stevenson, inigualable Referencia a la carta 2176, junio de 1889 a Colvin (L6:310) would imply a bit of translation of on my part.

FATHER DAMIAN: ORIGINAL TEXT BY STEVENSON

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE REVEREND
DR. HYDE OF HONOLOLU

Sydney, February 25, 1890

SIR, -It may probably occur to you that we have met, and visited, and conversed; on my side, with interest. You may remember that you have done me several courtesies, for which I was prepared to be grateful. But there are duties which come before gratitude, and offences with justly divide friends, far more acquaintances. Your letter to the Reverend H.B. Gage is a document, which, in my sight, if you had sat up to nurse my father when he lay a-dying, would yet absolve me from the bonds of gratitude. You know enough, doubtless, of the process of canonisation to be aware that, a hundred years after the death of Damien, there will appear a man charged with the painful office of the *devil's advocate*, After that noble brother of mine, and of all frail crail, shall have lain a century at rest, one shall accuse, one defend him. The circumstance is unusual that the devil's advocate should be a volunteer, should be a member of a sect immediately rival, and should make haste to take upon himself his ugly office ere the bones are cold; unusual, and of a taste which I shall leave my readers free to qualify; unusual, and to me inspiring. If I have at all learned the trade of using words wo convey truth and to arouse emotion, you have at last furnished me with a subject. For it is in the interest of all mankind and the cause of public decency in every quarter of the world, not only that Damien should be righted, but that you and your letter should be displayed at length, in their true colors, to the public eye.

To do this properly, I must begin by quoting you at large: I shall then proceed to criticise your utterance from several points of view, divine and human, in the course of which I shall attempt to draw again and with more specification the character of the dead saint whom it has pleased you to vilify: so much being done, I shall say farewell to you for ever.

"Honolulu, August 2, 1889."

"REV. H. B: GAGE

"Dear Brother,- In answer to your inquiries about Father Damien, I can only reply that we who knew the man are surprised at the extravagant newspaper laudations, as if he was a coarse, dirty man, headstrong and bigoted. He was not sent to Molokai; but when there without ordeers; did not stay at the leper settlement (before he became one himself), but circulated freely over the whole island (less than half the island is devoted to the lepers), and came often to Honolulu. He had no hand in the reforms and improvements inagurated which were the work of our Board of Health, as occasion required and means were provided. He was not a pure man in his relations with women, and the leprosy of which he died should be attributed to his vices and cearelessness. Others have done much for the lepers, our own ministers, the government physicians, and so forth, but never with the Catholic idea of meriting eternal life.- Yours, etc.,

"C.M. Hyde."[536]

To deal fittly with a letter so extraordinary, I must draw at the outset on my private knowledge of the signatory and his sect. It may offend others; scarcely you, who have been so busy to collect, so bold to publish, gossip on your rivals. And this is perhaprs the moment when I may best explain to you the character of what you are to read: I conceive you as a man quite beyond and below the reticences of civility: with what measure you meet, with that shall it be measured you again; with you, at last, I rejoice to feel the button off the foil and to plunge home. And if in aught that I shall say I should offend others, your colleagues, whom I respect and remember with affection, I can but offer them my regret; I am not free, I am inspired by the consideration of interests far more large; and such pain as can be inflicted by anything from me must be indeed trifling when compared with the pain with which they read your letter. It is not the hangman, but the criminal, that brings dishonour on the house.

You belong sir, to a sect -I believe my sect, and that in which my ancestors laboured -which has enjoyed, and partly failed to utilise, an expceptional advantage in the islands of Hawaii. The first missionaries came; they found the land alread self-purged of its old and bloody faith; they were embraced almost on their arrival, with enthusiasm; what troubles they supported came far more from whites than Hawaiians;

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[536] From the Sydney *Presbyterian,* October 26, 1889.

and to these last they stood (in a rough figure) in the shoes of God. This is not the place to enter into the degree or causes of their failure, such as it is. One element alone is pertinent, and must here be plainly dealt with. In the course of their evangelical calling, they -or too many of them- grew rich. It may be news to you that the houses of missionaries are a cause of mocking on the streets of Honolulu. It will at least be news to you, that when I returned your civil visit, the driver of my cab commented on the size, the taste, and the comfort of your home. It would have been news certainly to myslef, had any one told me that afternoon that I should live to drag such matter into print. But you see, sir, how you degrade better men to your own level; and it is needful that those who are to judge betwixt you and me, betwixt Damien and the devil's advocate, should understand your letter to have been penned in a house which could raise, and that vey justly, the envy and the comments of the passers-by. I think (to employ a phrase of yours which I admire) it "should be attributed" to you that you have never visited the scene of Damien's life and death. If you had, and had recalled it, and looked about your pleasant rooms, even your pen perhaps would have been stayed.

Your sect (and remember, as far as any sect avows me, it is mine) has not done ill in a worrldy sense in the Hawaiian Kingdom. When calamity befell their innocent parishioners, when leprosy descended and took root in the English Islands, *a quid pro quo* was to be looked for. To that prospersous mission, and to you, as one of its adornments, God had sent at last an opportunity. I know I am touching here upon a nerve acutely sensitive. I know that others of your colleagues look back on the inertia of your Church, and the intrusive and decisive heroism of Damien, with something almost to be called remorse. I am sure it is so with yourself; I am persuaded your letter was inspired by a certain envy, not essentially ignoble, and the one human trait to be espied in that performance. You were thinking of the lost chance, the past day; of that which should have been conceived and was not; of the service due and not rendered. *Time was,* said the voice in your ear, in your pleasant room, as you sat raging and writing; and if the words written were base beyond parallel, the rage, I am happy to repeat- it is the only compliment I shall pay you -the rage was almost virtuous. But, sir, when we have failed, and another has succeeded; when we have stoody by, and another has stepped in; when we sit and grow bulky in our charming mansions, and a plain, uncouth peasant steps into the battle, under the eyes of God, and succors the afflicted, and consoles the

dying, and is himself afflicted in his turn and dies upon the field of honour -the battle cannot be retrieved as your unhappy irritation has suggested. It is a lost battle, and lost forever. One thing remained to you in your defeat -some rags of common honour; and these you have made haste to cast away.

Common honour; not the honour of having done anything right, but the honour of not having done aught conspicuously foul; the honour of the inert: that was what remained to you. We are not all expected to be Damiens, a man may conceive his duty more narrowly, he may love his comforts better; and none will cast a stone at him for that. But will a gentleman of your reverend profession allow me an example from the fields of gallantry? When two gentleman compete for the favour of a lady, and the one succeeds and the other is rejected, and (as will sometimes happen) matter damaging to the successful rival's credit reaches the ear of the defeated, it is held by plain men of no pretensions that his mouth is, in the circumstance, almost necessarily closed. Your Church and Damien's were in Hawaii upon a rivalry to do well: to help, to edify, to set divine examples. You having (in one huge istance) failed, and Damien succeeded, I marvel it should not have occured to you that you were doomed to silence; that when you had been outstripped in that high rivalry, and sat inglorious in the midst of your well-being, in your pleasant room -and Damien, crowned with glories and horrors, toiled and rotted in that pigsty of his under the cliffs of Kalawao- you, the elect who would not, were the last man on earth to collect and propagate gossip on the volunteer who would and did.

I think I see you -for I try to see you in the flesh as I write these sentences- I think I see you leap at the word pigstye, a hyperbolical expression at the best. "He had no hand in the reforms", he was "a coarse, dirty man", these were your own words; and you may think it possible that I am come to support you with fresh evidence. In a sense, it is even so. Damien has been too much depicted with a conventional halo and conventional features; so drawn by men who perhaps had not the eye to remark or the pen to express the individual; or who perhaps were only blinded and silenced by generous admiration, such as I partly envy for myself -such as you, if your soul were enlightened, would envy on your bended knees. It is the least defect of such a method of portraiture that it makes the path easy for the devil's advocate, and leaves for the misuse of the slanderer a considerable field of truth. For the truth that is suppressed by

friends is the readiest weapon of the enemy. The world, in your respite, may perhaps owe you something, if your letter be the means of substituting once for all a credible likeness for a wax abstraction. For, if that world at all remember you, on the day when Damien of Molokai shall be named Saint, it will be in virtue of one work: your letter to the Reverend H. B. Gage.

You may ask on what authority I speak. It was my inclement destiny to become acquainted, not with Damien, but with Dr. Hyde. When I visited the lezaretto Damien was already in his resting grave. But such information as I have, I gathered on the spot in conversation with those who knew him well and long: some indeed who revered his memory; but others who had sparred and wrangled with him, who beheld him with no halo, who perhaps regarded him with small respect, and through whose unprepared and scarcely partial communications the plain, human features of the man shone on me convingcingly. These gave me what knowledge I possess; and I learnt it in that scene where it could be most completely ans sensitively understood -Kalawao, which you have never visited, about which you have never so much as endevoured to inform yourself: for, brief as your letter is, you have found the means to stumble into that confesion. *"Less than one-half* of the island," you say, "is devoted to the lepers." Molokai -"*Molokai ahina",* the "grey", lofty, and most desolate island -along all its northern side plunges a front of precipice into a sea of unusual profundity. This range of cliff is, from east to west, the true end and frontier of the isalnd. Only in one spot there projects into the ocean a certain triangular and rugged down, grassy, stony, windy, and rising in the midst into a hill with a dead crater: the whole bearing to the cliff that overhangs it somewhcat the same relation as a bracket to a wall. With this hint you will now be able to pick out the leper station on a map; you will be able to judge how much Molokai is thus cut off between the surf and precipice, whether less than a half, or less than a quarter, or a fifth, or a tenth -or, say, a twentieth; and the next time you burst into print you will be in a position to share with us the issue of your calculations.

I imagine you to be one of those persons who talk with cheerfulness of that place which oxen and wainropes could not drag you to behold. You, who do not even know its situation on the map, probably denounce sensational descriptions, stretching your limbs the while in your pleasant parlour on Beretania Street. When I was pulled ashore there one early morning, there sat with me in the boat two sisters, bidding farewell (in humble

imitaiton of Damien) to the lights and joys of human life. One of thee wept silently; I could not withhold myself from joining her. Had you been there, it is my belief that nature would have triumphed even in you; and as the boat drew but a little nearer and you beheld the stairs crowded with abominable deformations of our common manhood, and saw yourself landing in the midts of such a population as only now and then surrounds us in the horror of a nightmare -what a haggard eye you would have rolled over your reluctant shoulder towards the house on Beretania Street! Had you gone on; had you found every fourth face a blot upom the landscape; had you visited the hospital and seen the butt-ends of human beings lying there almost unrecognisable, but still breathing, still thinking, still remembering; you would have understood that life in the lazaretto is an ordeal from which the nerves of a man's spirit shrink, even as his eye quails under the brightness of the sun; you would have felt it was (even to-day) a pitiful place to visit and a hell to dwell in. It is not the fear of possible infection. That seems a little thing when compared with the pain, the pity, and the disgust of the visitor's surroundings, and the atmosphere of affliction, diesease, and physical disgrace in which he breathes. I do not think I am a man more than usually timid; but I never recall the days and nights I spent upon that island promontory (eight days and seven nights), without heartfelt thankfulness that I am somewhere else. I find in my diary that I speak on my stay as a "grinding experience": I have once jotted in the margin, *"Harrowing* is the word"; and when the *Mokolii* bore me at last towards the outer world, I kept repeating to myself, with a new conception of their pregnancy, those simple words of the song-

"'Tis the most distressful country that ever yet was seen".

And observe: that which I saw and suffered from was a settlement purged, bettered, beautified; the new village built, the hospital and the Bishop-Home excellently arranged; the sisters, the doctor, and the missionaries; all indefatigable in their noble tasks. It was a different place when Damien came there, and made his great renunciation, and slept that first night under a tree amidst his rotting brethren: alone with pestilence; and looking forward (with what courage, with what pitiful sinkings of dread, God only knows) to a lifetime of dressing sores and stumps.

You will say, perhaps, I am too sensitive, that sights as painful abound in cancer hospitals and are confronted daily by doctors and nurses. I have long learned to admire and envy the doctors and the nurses. But there is no cancer hospital so large and populous as Kalawao and Kalaupapa; and in such a matter every fresh case, like every inch of length in the pipe of an organ, deepens the note of the impression; for what daunts the onlooker is that monstruous sum of human suffering by which he stands surrounded. Lastly, no doctor or nurse is called upon to enter once for all the doors of that gehenna; they do not say farewell, they need not abandon hope, on its sad threshold; they but go for a time to their high calling, and can look forward as they go to relief, to recreation, and to rest. But Damien shut to with his own hand the doors of his own sepulchre.

I shall now extract three passages from my diary at kalawao.

A. "Damien is dead and already somewhat ungratefully remembered in the field of his labours and sufferings. "He was a good man, but very officious", says one. Another tells me he had fallen (as other priests so easily do) into something of the ways and habits of thought of a Kanaka; but he had the wit to recognise that fact, and the good sense to laugh at" (over) "it. A plain man it seems he was; as I cannot find he was popular."

B. "After Ragsdale's death" (Ragsdale was a famous Luna, or overseer, of the unruly settlement) "there followed a brief term of office by Father Damien which served only topublish the weakness of that noble man. He was rough in his ways, and he nad no control. Authority was relaxed; Damien's life was threatened, and he was soon eager to resign".

C. "Of Damien I begin to have an idea. He seems to have been a man of the peasant class, certainly of the peasant type: shrewd; ignorant and bigoted, yet with an open mind, and capable of receiving and digesting a reproof if it were bluntly administered; superbly generous in the lease thing as well as in the greatest, and as ready to give his last shirt (although not without human grumbling) as he had been to sacrifice his life; essentially indiscreet and officious, which made him a troublesome colleague; domineering in all his ways, which made him incurably unpopular with the Kanakas, but yet destitute of real authority, so that his boys laughed at him and he must

carry out his wishes by the means of bribes. He learned to have a mania for doctoring; and set up the Kanakas against the remedies of his regular rivals: perhaps (if anyhting matter at all in the treatment of such a disease) the worst thing that he did, and certaintly the easisest. The best and worst of the man appear very plainly in his dealings with Mr. Chapman's money; he had originally laid it out" (intended to lay it out) "entirely for the benefit of Catholics, and even so not wisely, but after a long, plain talk, he admitted his error fully and revised the list. The sad state of the boy's home is in part the result of his lack of control; in part, of his own slovenly ways and false ideas of hygiene. Brother officials used to call it "Damien's Chinatown." "Well?, they would say, "your Chinatown keeps growing." And he would laugh with perfect good-nature, and adhere to his errors with perfect obstinacy. So much I have gathered of truth about this plain, noble human brother and father of ours; his imperfections are the traits of his face, by which we know him for our fellow; his martyrdom and his example nothing can lessen or annul; and only a person here on the spot can properly appreciate their greatness."

I have set down these private passages, as you perceive, without correction; thanks to you, the public has them in their bluntness. They are almost a list of the man's faults, for it is rather these that I was seeking: with his virtues, with the heroic profile of his life, I and the world were already sufficiently acquainted. I was besides a little suspicious of Catholic testimony; in no ill sense, but merely because Damien's admirers and disciples were the least likely to be critical. I know you will be more suspicious still; and the facts set down above were one and all collected from the lips of Protestants who had opposed the father in his life. Yet I am strangely deceived, or they build up the image of a man, with all his weaknesses, essentially heroic, and alive with rugged honesty, generosity, and mirth.

Take it for what it is, rough private jottings of the worst sides of Damien's character, collected from the lips of those who had laboured with and (in your won phrase) "knew the man"; - though I question whether Damien would have said tha the knew you. Take it, and observe with wonder how well you were served by your gossips, how ill by your intelligence and sympathy; in how many points of fact we are at one, and how widely our appreciations vary. There is something wrong here; either with you or me. It is possible, for instance, that you, who seem to have so many ears in Kalawao, had heard of the affair of Mr. Champman's money and were singly struck by

Damien's intended wrong-doing. I was struck with that also, and set it fairly down; but I was struck much more by the fact that he had the honesty of mind to be convinced. I may here tell you that it was a long business; that one of his colleagues sat with him late into the night, multipying arguments and accusations; that the father listened as ususal with "perfect good-nature and perfect obstinacy"; but at the last, when he was persuaded - "Yes", said he "I am very much obliged to you , you have dome me a service; it would have been a theft." There are many (not Catholic merely) who require their heroes and saints to be infallible; to these the story will be painful; not to the true lovers, patrons, and servants of mankind.

And I take it, this is a type of our division; that you are one of those who have an eye for faults and failures; that you take a pleasure to find and publish them; and that, having found them, you make haste to forget the overvailing virtues and the real success which had alone introduced them to your knowledge. It is a dangerous frame of mind. That you may understand how dangerous, and into what a situation is has already brought you, we will (if you please) go hand-in-hand through the different phrases of your letter, and candidly examine each from the point of view of its truth, its appositeness, and its charity.

Damien was *coarse*.

It is very possible. You make us sorry for the lepers who had only a coarse old peasant for their friend and father. But you, who were so refined, why were you not there, to cheer them with the lights of culture? Or may I remind you that we have some reason to doubt if John the Baptist were genteel; and in the case of Peter, on whose career you doubtless dwell approvingly in the pulpit, no doubt at all he was a "coarse, headstrong" fisherman! Yet even in our Protestant Biblies Peter is called Saint.

Damien was *dirty*.

He was. Think of the poor lepers annoyed with this dirty comrade! But the clean Dr. Hyde was at his food in a fine house.

Damien was *headstrong.*

I believe you are right again; and I thank God for his strong head and heart.

Damien was *bigoted.*

I am not fond of bigots myself, because they are not fond of me. But what is meant by bigotry, that we should regard it as a blemish in a priest? Damien believed his own religion with the simplicity of a peasant or a child; as I would I could suppose that you do. For this, I wonder at him some way off; and had that been his only character, should have avoided him in life. But the point of interest in Damien, which has caused him to be so much talked about and made him at last the subject of your pen and mine, was that, in him, his bigotry, his intense and narrow faith, wrought potently for good, and strengthened him to be one of the world's heroes and exemplars.

Damien *was not sent to Molokai, but went there without orders.*

Is this a misreading? or do you really mean the words for blame? I have heard Christ, in the pulpits of our Church, held up for imitation on the ground that His sacrifice was voluntary. Does Dr. Hyde think otherwise?

Damien *did not stay at the settlement, etc.*

It is true he was allowed many indulgences. Am I to understand that you blame the father for profiting by these, or the officers for granting them? In either case, it is a mighty Spartan standard to issue from the house on Beretania Street; and I am convinced you will find yourself with few supporters.

Damien *had no hand in the reforms, etc.*

I think even you will admit that I have already been frank in my description of the man I am defending but before I take you up upon this head, I will be franker still, and tell you that perhaps nowhere in the world can a man taste a more pleasurable sense of contrats than when he passes from Damien's "Chinatown" at Kalawao to the beautiful Bishop-Home at Kalaupapa. At this point, in my desire to take all fair for you, I will break my rule and adduce Catholic testimony. Here is a passage form my diary about my visit to the Chinatown, from which you will see how it is (even now) regarded by its own official: "We went round all the dormitories, refectories, etc. -dark and dingy enough, with a superficial cleanliness, which he (Mr. Dutton, the lay brother) "did not seek to defend. "It is almost decent", said he; "the sisters will make that all right when

we get them here." And yet I gathered it was already better since Damien was dead, and far better than when he was there alone and had his own (not always excellent) way. I have not come far enough to meet you on a common ground of fact; and I tell you that, to a mind not prejudiced by jealousy, all the reforms of the lazaretto, and even those which he most vigurously opposed, are properly the work of Damien. They are the evidence of his success; they are what his heroism provoked from the reluctant and the careless. Many were before him in the field; Mr Meyer, for instance, of whose faithful work we hear too little: there have been many since; and some had more wordly wisdom, though none had more devotion, than our saint. Before this day, even you will confess, they had effected little. It was his part, by one srriking act of martyrdom, to direct al men's eyes on that distressful country. At a blow, and with the price of his life, he made the place illustrious and public. And that, if you will consider largely, was the one reform needful; pregnant of all that should succeed. It brought money; it brought (best individual addition of them all) the sister; it brought supervision, for public opinion and public interest landed with the man at Kalawao. If ever any man brought reforms, and died to bring them, it was he. There is not a clean cup or towel in the Bishop-Home, but dirty Damien washed it.

Damien *was not a pure man in his relations with women, etc.*

How do you know that? Is this the nature of the conversation in that house on Beretania Steret which the cabman envied, driving past? -racy details of the misconduct of the poor peasant priest, toiling under the cliffs of Molokai?

Many have visited the station before me; they seem not to have heard the rumour. When I was there I heard many shocking tales, for my informants were men speaking with the plainness of the laity; and I heard plenty of complaints of Damien. Why was this never mentioned? and how came in to you in the retirement of your clerical parlour?

But I must not even seem to deceive you. This scandal, when I read it in your letter, was not new to me. I had heard it once before; and I must tell you how. There came to Samoa a man from Honolulu; he, in a public-house on the beach, volunteered the statement that Damien had "contracted the disease from having connection with the female lepers"; and I find joy in telling you how the report was welcomed in a

public-house. A man sparng to his feet; I am not at liberty to give his name, but from what I heard I doubt if you would care to have him to dinner in Beretania Street. "You miserable little -" (here is a word a dare not print, it would so shock your ears). "You misetable little -," he cried, "if the story were a thousand times true, can't you see you are a million times lower - for daring to repeat it?" I wish it could be told of you that when the report reached you in your house, perhaps after family worship, you had found in your soul enough holy anger to receive it with the same expressions: ay, even with that one which I dare not print; it would not need to have been blotted away, like Uncle Toby's oath, by the tears of the recording angel; it would have been counted to you for your brightest righteousness. But you have deliberately chosen the part of the man from Honolulu, and you have played it with improvements of your own. The man from Honolulu- miserable, leering creature -communicated the tale to a rude knot of beach-combing drinkers in a public-house, where (I will so far agree with your temperance opinions) man is not always at his noblest; and the man from Honolulu had himself been drinking -drinking, we may charitably fancy, to excess. It was your "Dear Brother, the Reverend H. B. Gage," that you chose to communicate the sickening story; and the blue ribbon which adorns your portly bosom forbids me to allow you the extenuating plea that you were drunk when it was done. Your "dear brother" - a brother indeed- made haste to deliver up your letter (as a means of grace, perhaps) to the religious papers; where, after many months, I found and read and wondered at it; and whence I have not reproduced it for the wonder of others. And you and your dear brother have, by this cycle of operations, built up a contrast very edifying to examine in detail. The man whom you would not care to have to dinner, one the one side; on the other, the Reverend Dr. Hyde and the Reverend H. B. Gage: the Apia bar-room, the Honolulu manse.

But I fear you scarce appreciate how you appear to your fellow-men; and to bring it home to you, I will suppose your story to be true. I will suppose - and God forgive me for supposing it - that Damien faltered and stumbled in his narrow path of duty; I will suppose that, in the horror of his isolation, perhaps in the fever of incipient disease, he, who was doing so much more than he had sworn, failed in the letter of his priestly oath -he, who was so much a better man than either you or me, who did what we have never dreamed of daring- he too tasted of our common frailty. "O, Iago, the pity of it!"

The least tender should ne moved to tears; the most incredulous to prayer. And all that you could do was to pen your letter to the Reverend H. B.. Gage!

It is growing at all clear to you what a picture you have drawn of your own heart? I will try yet once again to make it clearer. You had a father: suppose this tale were about him, and some informant brought it to you, proof in hand: I am not making too high an estimate of your emotional nature when I suppose you would regret the circumstance? that you would feel the tale of frailty the more keenly since it shamed the author of your days? and that the last thing you would do would be to publish it in the religious press? Well, the man who tried to do what Damien did, is my father, and the father of the man in the Apia bar, and the father of all who love goodness; and he was your father too, if God had given you grace to see it.

A RENDERING

PADRE DAMIÁN

CARTA ABIERTA AL REVERENDO

DR. HYDE DE HONOLULÚ

Sydney, 25 de febrero de 1890.

SEÑOR.- Probablemente llegue a percatarse de que nos conocimos, nos visitamos, y conversamos: con interés, al menos por mi parte. Quizá recuerde incluso que me hizo usted varios favores que estuve pronto a agradecerle. Pero hay obligaciones que, por necesidad, han de preceder a la gratitud, y ofensas que, si con justicia separan a los amigos, habrán de separar, todavía más, a quienes sólo se conocen. Su carta al Reverendo H. B. Gage, constituye un documento que, a mi parecer, si me hubiera usted colmado de panes cuando pasaba hambre, si hubiera usted velado para auxiliar a mi padre en su lecho de muerte, quedaría aún, libre de todo lazo de gratitud. Sin duda conoce de sobra un proceso de canonización para saber que, cien años después de la muerte de Damián, habrá quien desempeñe la lamentable función de “abogado del diablo”.

Después de que este noble hermano mío, y de todo aquel hecho con su mismo barro delicado, haya descansado un siglo, aún habrá quien le acuse y quien le defienda. Resulta, en verdad insólito, que venga a ser, precisamente, un miembro de una secta en inmediata rivalidad, quien se apresure a hacer suyo tan desagradable papel, aún antes de que se hayan enfriado los huesos del difunto. Insólito y de un gusto cuya calificación dejaré a mis lectores. Insólito y, a mi parecer, fuente de inspiración. Pues, si poseo por acaso el arte de emplear palabras para transmitir verdades y provocar emociones, usted me ha proporcionado, al fin, un motivo. Pues, es en interés de toda la Humanidad, y causa en pro de la decencia pública, en todo el mundo, no sólo hacer justicia a Damián; sino exponer a usted y a su carta en público, tal y como son, y por entero.

Y, para hacerlo como es debido, he de comenzar citándole en pormenor. Procederé luego a criticar sus afirmaciones desde distintas perspectivas, divinas y humanas; al tiempo que intentaré retratar de nuevo, y con mayor atención al detalle, el carácter de este santo desaparecido que se complace usted en difamar. Hecho esto me despediré de usted para siempre.

"Honolulú, 2 de agosto de 1889.

"REVDO. H. B. GAGE.

"Querido Hermano, -En respuesta a sus indagaciones sobre el Padre Damián, sólo puedo decirle que, a quienes le conocimos, nos sorprenden tan extravagantes elogios vertidos por la prensa, como si se tratase del más santo de los filántropos. La pura verdad es que Damián era un hombre rudo, sucio, testarudo e intolerante. No le enviaron a Molokai, sino que se presentó allí sin disposición alguna; no residió en la leprosería (antes de convertirse él mismo en leproso), sino que circulaba libremente por toda la isla (la cual está en menos de su mitad, destinada a los leprosos) y venía a menudo por Honolulú. No participó en las reformas ni en las mejoras introducidas allí por nuestro Comité de Higiene, conforme lo requerían las circunstancias y lo permitían los medios. No fue un hombre casto en sus relaciones con las mujeres. Y, la lepra de la que murió, ha de atribuirse a sus vicios y falta de cuidado. Mucho han hecho otros por los leprosos: nuestros propios ministros, los médicos del

gobierno, etc., pero nunca llevados por la idea Católica de alcanzar la vida eterna. - Suyo, etc.,

"C.M. Hyde" [537]

Para abordar, convenientemente, tan inconcebible misiva, he de empezar haciendo uso de mi conocimiento particular, tanto de su signatario, como de su secta. Puede que al hacerlo ofenda a otros; mas no a usted, que se dedica a reunir, con tanto afán, y propalar, con tanto valor, rumores sobre sus rivales. Quizá sea este el mejor momento para mostrarle la naturaleza de lo que aquí leerá. Creo ver en usted una incapacidad total para guardar silencio por cortesía. Con la misma medida que midiéreis seréis medido; en su caso, estoy encantado de arremeter por fin a fondo y sin contemplaciones. Y, si con algo de lo que diga ofendiera a otros, a sus colegas, a quienes respeto y recuerdo con afecto, no haré sino ofrecerles mis disculpas. No soy libre, me inspiran consideraciones de la más alta estima; el daño que pudieran ocasionar mis palabras sería insignificante comparado con el dolor con el que habrán de leer su carta. No es el verdugo, sino el delincuente, quien trae la deshonra a la familia.

Usted, señor, pertenece a una secta, que creo es también la mía y aquella por la que se afanaron mis antepasados, que, gozó, y en parte no supo aprovechar su posición privilegiada en las Islas Hawaii. Cuando llegaron los primeros misioneros, encontraron el territorio, limpio ya, y por sí solo, de aquella fe primitiva y sangrienta. Los nativos les abrazaban con entusiasmo casi a su llegada; las dificultades que tuvieron que afrontar provenían, sin duda, más de los blancos que de los hawaianos; y pudieron así mantener a estos últimos -para emplear una torpe imagen- tras los pasos de Dios. No es éste lugar para discutir ni la proporción ni las causas de tal fracaso, sean las que fueren. Conviene ahora señalar sólo un aspecto de aquellas misiones, y ello ha de hacerse con la mayor claridad posible. Y es que, en el transcurso de su llamada evangélica, ellos -al menos muchos de ellos- se enriquecieron. Quizá le sorprenda saber que las casas de los misioneros son motivo de burla en las calles de Honolulú. Al menos sí le sorprenderá saber que, cuando le devolví su cordial visita, el cochero con quien viajaba hizo

[537] Del diario de Sidney ""Presbyterian", 26 de octubre de 1889.

comentarios sobre el tamaño, el gusto y el confort de su vivienda. Ciertamente, si alguien me hubiera dicho aquella tarde que viviría para llevar asuntos así a la prensa, yo mismo me hubiera sorprendido. Pero vea, señor, cómo consigue usted rebajar a hombres mejores a su propio nivel. Es por tanto preciso que, quienes deban juzgar entre usted y yo, entre Damián y el abogado del diablo, sepan que redactó su carta en una casa que despertaba la envidia y provocaba comentarios entre los transeúntes. Creo que -para emplear una expresión suya que admiro- "debe atribuirse" a usted, el hecho de que no ha visitado nunca el verdadero escenario de la vida y de la muerte de Damián. Si lo hubiera visitado, si lo hubiera usted recordado, mientras recreaba la mirada en sus agradables salones, puede que, incluso su pluma, se hubiera detenido.

Su secta -recuerde que, en la medida en que una secta pueda reconocerme como suyo, también es la mía- en cierto sentido, no ha causado ningún daño al Reino de Hawaii. Cuando la epidemia azotó a sus inocentes feligreses, cuando sobrevino la lepra instalándose en las ocho islas, se hizo del todo punto necesaria alguna compensación. Dios quiso ofrecer, al fin, una oportunidad a aquella prospera misión, y a usted como uno de sus ornamentos. Sé que toco aquí un nervio en extremo sensible. Sé también que, otros colegas suyos contemplan ahora aquella inercia de su Iglesia, aquel heroísmo decisivo e importuno de Damián, con lo que podríamos llamar remordimiento. Estoy seguro de que es este su caso, y persuadido de que, lo que inspiró su carta, no fue sino cierta envidia, no del todo innoble, y en cualquier caso, el único rasgo humano que cabe observar en su comportamiento. Pensaba usted en la ocasión desaprovechada; en lo que debió hacerse y no se hizo; en la ayuda merecida más no prestada[538]. *Hubo tiempo!,* resonaba una voz en sus oídos, cuando, airado, se sentaba a escribir en su agradable habitación. Y si lo que escribía era incomparablemente abyecto, no me cansaré de repetir que su ira - y será este el único cumplido que le haga-, su ira era casi virtuosa. Pues señor, cuando fracasamos, mientras otro sale victorioso; cuando permanecemos al margen, mientras otro toma cartas en el asunto; cuando nos sentamos a echar barriga en nuestras confortables mansiones, mientras un sencillo y tosco campesino se adentra en la refriega, y a los ojos de Dios, socorre al afligido y consuela al moribundo, y él

[538] Optamos aquí por el sentido primigenio de "service", en lugar de su acepción religiosa que equivaldría en nuestra lengua a un "oficio", y convendría quizá más al texto, pero, al mismo tiempo, "ayuda" acentúa el desamparo al que estaban sometidos los feligreses.

mismo, a su vez, se aflige y muere noblemente en el campo de batalla -ésta no puede recobrarse, como sugiere su desafortunada irritación. Es batalla perdida, perdida para siempre. Sólo una cosa le quedaba en su derrota: unas migajas de honor común. Pero incluso éstas se ha apresurado usted a rechazar.

Honor común, no el honor de haber obrado bien, sino el honor de no haber obrado con ostensible vileza. El honor de lo inerte, eso es lo que le quedaba. No se espera de nosotros que seamos todos como Damián. Uno puede tener poco presentes sus obligaciones; puede preferir, con mucho, sus comodidades, nadie le reprenderá por ello. Y si, un caballero de su reverenda profesión, me permite un ejemplo propio del reino de la galantería, cuando dos caballeros compiten por los favores de una dama, y uno de ellos vence, y el otro es rechazado, y -como suele ocurrir-, llegan a oídos del derrotado habladurías que dañan la reputación de su rival victorioso, ¿no cree usted acaso que, hasta el hombre más sencillo y sin pretensiones, comprendería que, en tales circunstancias, su boca habría de permanecer necesariamente cerrada?

Su Iglesia y la de Damián desencadenaron en Hawaii una rivalidad para hacer el bien, para ayudar, para edificar, para proponer ejemplos divinos. Y puesto que usted fracasó -estrepitosamente-, y Damián triunfó, me maravillo de que no se le pasara por la cabeza que estaba usted condenado al silencio. Que, vencido en tan alta rivalidad, y sentado sin pena ni gloria en el bienestar de su agradable habitación -mientras Damián, coronado de gloria y de horrores, se afanaba y se consumía en aquella pocilga suya bajo los acantilados de Kalawao -; usted, el elegido remiso, era la última persona de la tierra a quien correspondía reunir y propalar rumores sobre el voluntario que quiso e hizo.

Creo verle, -pues trato de representarle en carne y hueso mientras escribo estas líneas-, creo verle, digo, dar un respingo ante la palabra “pocilga”, como mucho una expresión hiperbólica. “No participó en las reformas”. Era “un hombre rudo y sucio”; esas fueron sus palabras. Y es, incluso, posible que venga yo a sustentar su opinión aportando nuevos testimonios. Pues, en cierto modo, así fue. Y es que a Damián se le ha retratado, demasiadas veces, con un halo convencional y con rasgos convencionales. Así nos lo presentan, al menos, quienes no poseen suficiente vista para captar, o suficiente estilo para expresar, lo mas sobresaliente de su persona. O a quienes ciega y enmudece la mas generosa admiración. Semejante a la que, en parte, yo mismo envidio. Semejante a la que usted, hincado de rodillas, habría de envidiar si hubiera alguna luz

en su alma. Uno de los defectos menores de una manera de retrato así, es que allana el camino al abogado del diablo, dejando al abuso del difamador, un margen de verdad considerablemente amplio. Pues, las verdades que callan nuestros amigos se convierten en las más agudas de las armas en manos de nuestros enemigos. Y si su carta ha de ser el medio por el que, un retrato fidedigno sustituya, de una vez por todas, a una abstracción de cera, puede que, el mundo incluso deba algo a su malicia. Pues si, el día en que Damián de Molokai reciba el nombre de Santo, ese mundo se acuerda aún de usted será en virtud de una sola obra: su carta al Reverendo H. B. Gage.

Se preguntará en qué me baso para hablarle así. Mi cruel destino me deparaba el conocer, no a Damián, sino al Dr Hyde. Cuando visité el lazareto, Damián descansaba ya en su tumba. Pero la información que poseo, esa la obtuve allí, *in situ*, conversando con quienes le conocieron bien y desde mucho. Con quienes, en verdad, veneraban su memoria; pero también con los que disputaron y discutieron con él. Con los que le contemplaban sin halo alguno. Con aquellos a los que inspiraba un leve respeto, y cuyos relatos espontáneos e imparciales me revelaron, convincentemente, los rasgos sencillos y humanos de aquel hombre. Ellos fueron quienes me contaron lo que sé. Lo aprendí en el lugar en que mejor y más sensiblemente puede aprenderse: en Kalawao, donde usted nunca ha estado, y sobre el que ni siquiera se ha molestado en informarse. Pues, aunque breve, se las arregló usted muy bien en su carta para dejar escapar esa confesión.

La isla, dice usted, "está, en menos de su mitad, destinada a los leprosos".

Molokai -"*Molokai-ahina"*, aquella "gris", escarpada y desolada isla -a lo largo de cuyo lado norte, desciende en picado una fachada de promontorios adentrándose en un mar de inusitada profundidad. Esta cadena de acantilados, que se extiende de este a oeste, constituye el verdadero extremo límite de la isla. Sólo en un lugar se interna en el océano cierto terreno triangular, escabroso, cubierto de hierba, pedregoso y al hostigo de los vientos, en medio del cual se alza una colina con un cráter extinguido; estableciendo, junto con el acantilado que proyecta su sombra sobre aquel terreno, una relación similar a la de una ménsula y su muro. Con estas pistas, podrá usted ahora reconocer la leprosería en un mapa; podrá juzgar hasta qué punto se encuentra Molokai delimitada por el oleaje y los acantilados, si en menos de la mitad, o en menos de una cuarta, quinta, décima, -o, digamos, una vigésima parte. Y, la próxima vez que irrumpa

usted en la prensa, estará en condiciones de compartir con nosotros el resultado de sus apreciaciones.

Tengo la impresión de que es usted una de esas personas que hablan alegremente de aquel lugar que no podríamos obligarle a contemplar ni arrastrándole hasta allí con maromas y bueyes. Usted, que ni siquiera puede localizarlo en el mapa, se habrá, probablemente, atrevido a censurar espléndidas descripciones, mientras se estiraba en su agradable recibidor de la calle Beretania. Cuando desembarqué allí una mañana temprano, sentadas junto a mí, abordo de aquel barco, iban dos monjas que se despedían -en humilde imitación de Damián-, de los gozos y de las luces de esta vida. Una de ellas lloraba en silencio; no pudiendo contenerme vine a unir mis lágrimas a las suyas. Estoy convencido de que, si hubiera estado allí, incluso en usted habría prevalecido el mismo humor. Y, cuando el bote se acercara, sólo un poco más, y contemplara aquellas escaleras abarrotadas de tan abominables deformaciones de nuestra común humanidad, y se viera desembarcando entre unas gentes como las que, de cuando en cuando nos rondan en el horror de una pesadilla-... ¡Qué melancólica mirada habría usted lanzado sobre su reacio hombro hacia aquella casa de la calle Beretania! Y, si hubiera proseguido, si hubiera encontrado en uno de cada cuatro rostros, una mancha sobre el paisaje; si hubiera visitado el hospital y contemplado los restos de seres humanos yaciendo allí, casi irreconocibles, pero aún respirando, aún pensando, aún recordando; habría comprendido que la vida en el lazareto es toda una ordalía ante la cual el ánimo de un hombre no puede sino encogerse como han de temblar sus ojos al exponerlos a la cegadora luz del sol. Habría sabido que aquel fue -e incluso sigue siendo- un lugar piadoso que visitar, un infierno en el que vivir. No tanto por el temor al posible contagio; lo que resulta una nadería si lo comparamos con el dolor, la compasión y repulsión que inspira el lugar en el visitante, y la atmósfera de aflicción, enfermedad y oprobio físico que se respira. No me tengo por excesivamente temeroso, pero no puedo recordar los días y las noches que pasé en el promontorio de aquella isla, -ocho días y siete noches-, sin sentir un profundo y sincero agradecimiento por encontrarme en otro sitio. Leo en mi diario, que me referí a mi estancia allí como, “una experiencia demoledora”. Y anoté en el margen: “Desgarradora” es la palabra”. Y cuando el *Mokolii* me devolvió al fin al mundo exterior, no hacía sino repetir, una y otra vez, aquellas palabras sencillas de la canción, impregnadas ahora de un nuevo sentir:

"Es el país más angustioso que verse pueda".

Fíjese en que, lo que vi y sufrí, fue una colonia limpia, reformada, embellecida; la aldea, recién construida; el hospital y el Obispado, espléndidamente dispuestos; las monjas, el médico, los misioneros, todos realizando sus nobles tareas con la mayor perseverancia. ¡Qué distinto de aquel lugar al que llegó Damián para llevar a cabo su indecible renuncia y pasar, aquella primera noche, bajo un árbol entre sus hermanos en descomposición. Solo entre la pestilencia, y aguardando, -¡sólo Dios sabe con cuánto valor, con qué piadoso e insondable temor!- toda una vida de muñones y úlceras por vendar.

Aducirá que soy harto sensible, que tan dolorosas escenas son frecuentes en los hospitales de enfermos de cáncer, y que, los médicos y las enfermeras han de enfrentarse a ellas día a día. Hace tiempo que aprendí a admirar y a envidiar tanto a los médicos como a las enfermeras. Pero no existe, en este mundo, un hospital de enfermos de cáncer tan grande ni tan poblado como Kalawao o como Kalaupapa. En sitios así, cada nuevo caso produce, como cada pulgada que añadimos al tubo de un órgano, una más honda impresión. Pues lo que desalienta al visitante es ese monstruoso cúmulo de sufrimiento humano que le rodea. Y, finalmente, a ningún médico o enfermera se le exige que atraviese, de una vez y para siempre, las puertas de un infierno como aquel.[539] Ellos no se despiden, no les abandona la esperanza al cruzar tan triste umbral; dedican sólo un tiempo a sus nobles profesiones, y al hacerlo, saben que les espera el sosiego, el esparcimiento, el descanso. Pero Damián cerró, con sus propias manos, las puertas de su propio sepulcro.

Extraigo, a continuación, tres párrafos de mi diario en Kalawao.

A. "Apenas ha muerto Damián, y ya se le recuerda en el escenario de sus padecimientos y sacrificios con cierta ingratitud. "Era un hombre bueno, pero bastante oficioso", afirma uno. Un segundo me cuenta que, -como suele ocurrirles, fácilmente, a otros sacerdotes-, Damián se había dejado llevar tanto por los usos como por el modo

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[539] Stevenson alude aquí, con "gehenna", al Hinnon, valle próximo a Jerusalén, en el que los israelitas inmolaban a sus hijos, en honor al dios Moloch. Con lo que traza un oportuno y sugerente paralelismo entre estos y los enfermos de Molokai. El D.R.A.E, anota, "gehena, infierno de los condenados".

de pensar de los canacas.[540] Pero él tuvo, al menos, la suficiente inteligencia para reconocerlo, la suficiente sensatez para reírse de (con) ello. Parece que fue un hombre sencillo; cuesta creer que fuera popular".

B. "A la muerte de Ragsdale[541], siguió un breve mandato del Padre Damián, que habría de servir sólo para hacer públicos los defectos de aquel hombre noble, de maneras toscas que no conseguía hacerse con el control de sus feligreses. Las autoridades se relajaban; la vida de Damián se vio amenazada, y pronto sintió vehementes deseos de renuncia".

C. "De Damián comienzo a formarme una idea. Parece que perteneció al mundo rural, ciertamente respondía al tipo del campesino: era despierto, inculto e intolerante. No obstante, poseía una mente abierta y era capaz de recibir y encajar cualquier crítica, siempre que se le formulara con franqueza. Se mostraba además extraordinariamente generoso, tanto en lo pequeño como en lo grande, y tan dispuesto a entregar su última camisa -aunque no sin un rezongo de humana resignación-, como a sacrificar su vida. Su esencial indiscreción y oficiosidad hacían de él un colega conflictivo. Era también de carácter dominante, con lo que se granjeaba, irremediablemente, la antipatía de los canacas; aunque carecía de verdadera autoridad, de manera que sus muchachos se burlaban de él y le obligaban a hacer uso de toda clase de sobornos para conseguir sus propósitos. Se convirtió en un entusiasta de la medicina; llegando incluso a prevenir a los canacas contra los remedios de sus rivales profesionales. Y fue este quizá, si no el peor de sus errores -lo cual apenas importaba tratándose de una enfermedad así-, sí al menos el más digno de indulgencia. Tanto lo mejor como lo peor de su personalidad quedó reflejado de forma patente en el uso que hizo del dinero el señor Chapman. Al principio lo gastó -tenía intención de gastarlo-, "no con demasiada prudencia, en beneficio exclusivo de los católicos". Pero, tras una larga y sincera conversación, reconoció abiertamente que estaba equivocado y revisó su lista. El lamentable estado en que se encuentra la vivienda de los muchachos se debe, en parte a su falta de control, en parte a su propia negligencia e ideas erróneas sobre la higiene. Los Hermanos de su orden llamaban a aquel lugar "El Chinatown de Damián". "¡Vaya!", decían, "¡tu

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[540] Nombre con el que se designa a los indígenas de Hawaii, aplicable a cualquier otro nativo del Pacífico Sur.

[541] Ragsdale fue un célebre "Luna" o supervisor de aquella colonia rebelde.

Chinatown sigue creciendo!". Y él se reía con perfecta afabilidad, aferrándose a sus errores con total obstinación. Hasta aquí las verdades que he podido reunir sobre este hermano y padre nuestro, sencillo, noble y humano, cuyas imperfecciones pueden leerse en sus rasgos faciales, y nos permiten reconocerle como a uno de los nuestros.

Nada puede contra su martirio ni contra su ejemplo. Sólo acudiendo a este lugar es posible apreciar su grandeza".

Como ve, transcribo estos párrafos personales sin corregirlos; gracias a usted, se presentan ante el público en toda su rudeza[542]. Forman casi una lista de los defectos de aquel hombre, pues eran más bien estos los que me interesaban, ya que, de sus virtudes, del perfil heroico de su vida, no sólo yo, sino todo el mundo, sabía ya de sobra. Andaba ademas un tanto escéptico con respecto a los testimonios que, sobre Damián, aportaban los católicos, no en un sentido malicioso, simplemente porque no cabía esperar que sus discípulos y admiradores tuvieran un talante crítico. Sé que se mostrará usted aún más escéptico; pero lo recogido arriba son, todas y cada una de ellas, declaraciones tomadas de labios de protestantes que se opusieron al padre en vida suya. No obstante, o me engaño de manera inexplicable, o juntas, componen, a pesar de las deficiencias de su personalidad, el retrato de un hombre heroico por naturaleza y rebosante de una honradez, de una generosidad, y de una alegría inquebrantables.

Téngalo por lo que es, no más que unas cuantas torpes y personales notas sobre lo peor del carácter de Damián, de labios de quienes trabajaron con él y -en sus propias palabras-, "le conocimos"; -aunque dudo que Damián hubiera dicho que le conocía a usted. Téngalo y repare, con asombro, en cuánto le aprovecharon sus rumores, en qué poco sus confidentes y amistades. Observe también, hasta qué punto estamos de acuerdo con los hechos y qué distantes quedan nuestras apreciaciones. Uno de los dos ha de estar equivocado: usted o yo. Es así posible que, usted, que al parecer tiene tantos espías en Kalawao, se enterara de lo del dinero del señor Chapman y le sorprendieran, sobre manera, las malas intenciones de Damián. También a mí me sorprendieron, tal y como hice constar a las claras en mi diario. Pero me sorprendió, mucho más, que tuviera

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542 Trato de conservar aquí, no con demasiada fortuna, el hábil juego de palabras que emplea el autor, aprovechando una acepción de "rudo", que según Doña María Moliner, es equiparable a "fuerte", como en "rudo golpe".

la honradez de reconocer que estaba equivocado. He de advertirle que, convencerle, llevó su tiempo. Que, uno de sus colegas, permaneció con él, hasta altas horas de la noche, multiplicando argumentos y acusaciones. Y que, el padre, le escuchaba, como siempre, con "perfecta afabilidad y obstinación"; hasta que, al fin persuadido de su error, declaró: "Ciertamente, habría sido un robo, me hace usted un favor por el que le quedo muy agradecido". Muchos son (y no sólo católicos) quienes requieren a sus santos y a sus héroes que sean infalibles; para ellos, la historia de Damián será dolorosa; mas no para los verdaderos amantes, patronos y siervos de la Humanidad.

Y es aquí, según creo, donde divergen nuestras opiniones; pues es usted una de esas personas que no ven mas que los defectos y los fracasos ajenos; que disfrutan buscándolos y haciéndolos públicos; y que, una vez los encuentran, se apresuran a olvidar las reveladoras virtudes y los auténticos éxitos que fueron los que le permitieron cobrarse ese conocimiento. Es la suya una actitud peligrosa. Y para que comprenda hasta qué punto, y a qué trance le ha conducido, recorreremos de la mano -si le parece-, los distintos enunciados de su carta, y examinaremos, con ecuanimidad, cada uno de ellos teniendo en cuenta su verdad, su pertinencia y su caridad.

Damián era *rudo*.

Es muy posible. ¡Qué triste que aquellos leprosos tuvieran sólo a un rudo y viejo campesino por padre y amigo! Pero usted, que es tan refinado, ¿por qué no estaba allí para alentarles con las luces de su cultura? ¿Debo acaso recordarle que tenemos razones para dudar que San Juan Bautista fuera un hombre delicado? Y San Pedro, cuya vida, sin duda, usted mismo ha predicado desde el púlpito con reconocimiento, ¿no fue acaso un "rudo y testarudo" pescador? Sin embargo, hasta en nuestras Biblias protestantes, Pedro, recibe el título de Santo.

Damián era *sucio*.

Lo era. ¡Pobrecitos leprosos, tener que aguantar a tan sucio compañero! Y mientras, el impecable Dr Hyde sentado a la mesa en una casa espléndida.

Damián era *testarudo*.

Creo que, de nuevo, le asiste usted la razón. Doy gracias a Dios por esa ruda testa, por ese rudo corazón de Damián.

Damián era *intolerante*.

Tampoco yo siento simpatía por los intolerantes, porque a ellos no les resulto simpático. Pero ¿qué hemos de entender por intolerancia para que, aplicada a un sacerdote la consideremos tacha? Damián creía en su fe con la ingenuidad de un niño o de un campesino. ¡Ya quisiera yo poder pensar lo mismo de usted! Es por ello por lo que, perplejo, observaba yo a Damián, a cierta distancia; y, si hubiera sido este el único rasgo de su carácter, le hubiera evitado siempre. Pero lo interesante en Damián, lo que hace de él un personaje célebre y le ha convertido en objeto de nuestras cartas, es que, en él, su intolerancia, su escrupulosa e intensa fe, obró vigorosamente por el bien y le dio fuerzas para llegar a ser uno de los ejemplos y héroes de este mundo.

A Damián no *le enviaron a Molokai, sino que se presentó allí sin disposición alguna._* ¿Se trata de un error, o en verdad pretende usted acusarle con estas palabras? He oído cómo, desde los púlpitos de nuestra Iglesia, se alaba el ejemplo de Cristo, precisamente porque su sacrificio fue voluntario. ¿Acaso el Dr Hyde piensa de otro modo?

Damián *no residió en la leprosería,* etc.

Cierto, se le concedieron muchas indulgencias. ¿Debo entender que reprocháis al padre el que se beneficiara de ellas, o a los oficiales el que se las otorgaran? En cualquier caso, ¡qué precedente tan severo pretende usted sentar desde aquella casa en la calle Beretania!. Estoy convencido de que serán pocos quienes le secunden.

Damián *no participó en las reformas, etc.*

Creo que, hasta usted, reconocería que he sido bastante sincero al describir al hombre a quien defiendo. Pero antes de ocuparnos de ello, permítame serle aún más sincero, y decirle que, quizá en ningún otro lugar del mundo sea posible experimentar un contraste más agradable que el que sentimos al salir del "Chinatown" de Damián, en Kalawao, y entrar en el bello Obispado de Kalaupapa. Dejaré ahora a un lado mi propio

principio, y en mi empeño por aclararle todo, aduciré un testimonio católico. He aquí un párrafo de mi diario, en el que me refiero a aquel Chinatown. En él podrá usted observar la opinión que el lugar merece -incluso hoy-, a los propios oficiantes: "Visitamos los dormitorios, los refectorios, etc., todos bastante oscuros y lóbregos, de una limpieza sólo superficial, que él -el señor Dutton, uno de los legos-, "no trataba de ocultar". "Están casi decentes", decía; "las hermanas los dejarán en condiciones cuando vengan". Y, no obstante, he llegado a la conclusión de que están ahora mejor que cuando murió Damián, y mucho mejor de lo que estaban cuando, allí solo, hacía las cosas todas -no siempre de forma admirable- a su manera. Ya le he dicho lo suficiente para encontrarnos en igualdad de condiciones; y le diré ahora que, para una mente libre de celos, todas las reformas que se emprendieron en el lazareto, incluso aquellas a las que él se opuso con todas sus fuerzas, son, en verdad, obra de Damián. Son la prueba de su éxito. Son las respuestas que provocó su heroísmo en el remiso y el indiferente. Muchos son los que le precedieron; el señor Meyer, por ejemplo, de cuya piadosa obra apenas se habla. Muchos también los que le sucedieron; y algunos con más experiencia, aunque ninguno con mayor devoción que la de nuestro santo. Hasta usted confesaría que, antes de la llegada de Damián, fue poco lo que se había conseguido. A él le estaba reservado dirigir todas las miradas a aquel angustioso país, mediante un martirio único e impresionante. De un sólo golpe, y pagando con su vida, hizo de aquel un lugar famoso y prominente. Y fue esta, si se detiene usted a considerarlo, la reforma más necesaria; preñada de todas las que llegarían después. Trajo dinero; trajo -sin duda el mejor logro individual-, a las monjas; trajo la supervisión. Pues, tanto el interés, como la opinión pública, llegaron a Kalawao con Damián. Si alguna vez hubo alguien que introdujera reformas y muriera por introducirlas, ese fue él. Pues no hay en el Obispado taza o toalla que el sucio Damián no limpiara.

Damián *no fue un hombre casto en sus relaciones con las mujeres, etc.*

¿Y usted cómo lo sabe?. ¿Es, por ventura, esto de lo que se habla en aquella casa de la calle Beretania que, al paso, tanto envidiaba mi cochero? -¿comentarios indecentes sobre el comportamiento indecoroso de aquel pobre sacerdote y campesino, que se afanaba bajo los acantilados de Molokai?

A mi visita a la colonia precedieron muchas otras, sin embargo, no parece que nadie haya escuchado ese rumor. Estando allí, llegaron a mis oídos ciertas historias sorprendentes, lo cual no es de extrañar, ya que quienes me las contaron se expresaban con la sencillez de los laicos. Pude así oír abundantes críticas sobre Damián. ¿Por qué nunca se mencionó esto? y ¿cómo llegó a usted, en el retiro de su antesala eclesiástica?

Pero no seré yo quien le engañe. Sepa que, ya antes de leer su carta, tuve noticias de este escándalo. Escuché ese comentario sólo una vez, y le diré cómo.

Cierto día, llegó a Samoa, un hombre de Honolulú, quien, en una taberna de la playa, hizo correr la especie de que Damián, "contrajo la enfermedad a través del trato carnal con las leprosas", y me congratulo al referirle cómo se recibió tal infundio en aquella taberna. Un hombre se puso de pie de un salto; no puedo revelarle su nombre, pero, atendiendo a lo que allí oí, dudo que usted accediera a cenar con él en su casa de la calle Beretania. "¡Miserable e insignificante!-" -a lo que sigue una palabra que no me atrevo a reproducir aquí, pues le dejaría atónito-. "¡Miserable e insignificante!" -gritó-, "¿no te das cuenta de que, si esta calumnia fuera mil veces verdad, serías un millón de veces más bajo por atreverte a repetirla?". Ójala pudiera decirse de usted que, cuando le llegó el infundio a su casa, quizá después de la oración familiar, encontró en su alma la suficiente y sagrada indignación como para recibirlo con las mismas expresiones. Sí, incluso con esa que no me atrevo a reproducir. Así no habría sido necesario que, como ocurrió con el juramento del Tío Tobías[543], la emborronaran las lágrimas de el ángel que todo lo registra. Habría figurado como la más resplandeciente de sus virtudes. Pero no, tuvo usted que escoger, deliberadamente, el papel de aquel hombre de Honolulú y representarlo con sus propios arreglos. Aquel hombre de Honolulú -criatura miserable de mirada aviesa- hizo circular el rumor entre una gavilla de ordinarios raqueros borrachos, en una taberna en donde -hasta aquí estoy de acuerdo con sus sobrias opiniones-, las maneras, no son precisamente las más refinadas, y donde aquel hombre de Honolulú había estado bebiendo -bebiendo, podríamos pensar para su descargo-, en exceso. Pero usted optó por hacer partícipe de tan abominable calumnia a su "Querido

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[543] Uncle Toby. Tío protagonista de la novela inglesa "Life and Opinions of Tristram Sandy", de Laurence Sterne (1713-1768). Personaje noble donde los haya, recto y honorable, de gran pureza de espíritu y natural modesto de quien se dice que "para cada dolor tiene una lágrima, para cada necesidad un chelín", y cuyo único temor era el poder, alguna vez, llegar a realizar alguna mala acción.

Hermano, el Reverendo H.B. Gage", y, la cinta azul que adorna su robusto pecho me impide concederle la circunstancia atenuante de que estaba usted ebrio cuando lo hizo. Su "estimado hermano" -un auténtico hermano ciertamente-, se apresuró a dar su misiva -quizá esperando obtener la gracia-, a la prensa religiosa, donde, tras largos meses, la hallé y la leí estupefacto; y de donde la reproduzco para el estupor de los lectores. Y, mediante estas artimañas, usted y su estimado hermano ofrecen un contraste, del todo edificante, que merece la pena examinar al detalle. Por un lado, el hombre con quien usted no accedería a cenar en su casa; por otro, el Reverendo Dr Hyde y el Reverendo H. B. Gage. La taberna de Apia, la rectoría de Honolulú.

Pero me temo que apenas comprenda la impresión que produce usted en los suyos; y, para alumbrarle, supondré que su calumnia es cierta. Supondré -que Dios me perdone por ello- que, en el angosto sendero de su deber, Damián flaqueó y tropezó. Supondré que, en el horror de su aislamiento, quizá febril por causa de su incipiente enfermedad, él, que llevaba a cabo mucho más de lo que había jurado hacer, faltó a la letra de su voto sacerdotal. Él, que fue un hombre mucho mejor de lo que usted o yo pudiéramos llegar a ser, que hizo lo que, ni usted ni yo, hemos soñado jamás con atrevernos a hacer -también él participó de nuestra común flaqueza. ¡Qué pena tan grande, Yago![544]. Hasta el menos sensible estallaría en sollozos, hasta el más impío elevaría plegarias. ¡Y todo lo que se le ocurre a usted hacer es redactar esa carta suya al Reverendo H. B. Gage!

¿Comienza a ver, con claridad, el retrato que ha pintado usted de su propio corazón? ¿No? Trataré, sólo una vez más, de mostrárselo con mayor luz. Usted tuvo un padre, suponga que este infundio se refiriese a él, y que alguien viniera a contárselo aportando pruebas. ¿Encarezco en algo su sensibilidad afectiva si supongo que deploraría el hecho? ¿Que lamentaría en lo más hondo de su ser el infundio por cubrir de ignominia al autor de sus días? ¿Y que lo último que haría sería darlo a la prensa religiosa?

Pues bien, Damián, que se esforzó por lo que tanto hizo, es mi Padre, y el Padre de aquel hombre en el bar de Apia, y el Padre de quienes aman la bondad. Y también habría sido su Padre si Dios le hubiera concedido a usted gracia para verlo.

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[544] Shakespeare, *Othelo,* IV. i.

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PRIMARY SOURCES

(Chronologically arranged but for the canonical edition quoted first). Note should be made here to the bibliographical efforts of Prideaux and then Swearingen.

1. Complete works.

As noted on the opening pages the edition of the collected works of Stevenson I have adopted for my study is the "canonical" one, known as *Tusitala.* This was opted for owing to the triple consideration of its being a uniform edition, the best complete one, and because it has some of Stevenson's family and associates as the editing team[545].

The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson. **Tusitala Edition**. 35 vols. London: William Heinemann, Ltd. In Association with Chatto & Windus: Cassell & Company, Ltd; and Longmans, Green & Company. 1923-4.
Earlier complete editions I have used for contrast and reliability are:

The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson. **Edinburgh Edition.** 20 vols. plus 8 suppl. vols. Edited by Charles Baxter & Sidney Colvin on behalf of Robert Louis Stevenson. London: Printed by Constable. Distributed by Chatto & Windus. 1894-8.

The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson. **Thistle Edition.** 24, later 27 vols. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1895-9, 1911-12.
(Headings in gold vary in title volumes. "The Travels and Essays of Robert Louis Stevenson", "The Novels and Tales of ...", etc.).

The Works of R.L. Stevenson. **Manhattan Edition**. 10 vols. Edited by Charles Curtis Bigelow & Temple Scott. London: Bigelow, Smith & Co/ Davos Press. 1905-6 (?) (The

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[545] These included his friends Sidney Colvin (in charge of Stevenson's letters collected in volumes xxxi-xxxv), W.E. Henley, and Quiller-Couch, besides his widow and his stepson.
However, some scholars and biographers like for example Richard Dury and Furnas, myself with them, find it a bit iffy, shaky given that Colvin was not named in the contract, Henley quarrelled with Stevenson, Mrs F. Stevenson wrote the prefaces in half the volumes and the whole thing was done with the approval of Lloyd who not only got the royalties but also dictated the contents and the order of the series. Others have picked some of the earlier editions just for the convenience that their spines were numbered, the color of their cover flashier, etc.

following two were of special interest in my research: vol 9 'A critical essay on Robert Louis Stevenson' by Leslie Stephen; and vol. 10 'Life of Robert Louis Stevenson' by Sidney Colvin).

The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson. **Pentland Edition**. 20 vols. Edited by Edmund Gosse. London: Cassell (in association with Chatto & Windus, W. Heinemann and Longmans, Green). 1906-7, & 1908. (The last vol with Gosse's biographical and bibliographical notes proved especially useful, same as Prideaux's *Bibliography* in the same binding).

Works by R.L. Stevenson. **Swanston Edition.** 25 vols. Edited by Andrew Lang. London: Chatto & Windus (in assoc. with Cassell, Heinemann & Longmans, Green); printed by Cassell. 1911-2. (Text follows the Edinburgh Edition. I found particularly enticing vol. 1 in which the Scottish scholar and friend discusses proposed collaborations with Stevenson together with other personal reminiscences and offers his literary evaluation not unlike those by him listed below here).

The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson. Second **Vailima Edition.** 26 vols. Edited by Will D. Howe & L. Osbourne. New York and London: Scribner's/ Heinemann(in association with Chatto & Windus, W. Heinemann and Longmans, Green); set up and printed by Doubleday, Page & Company, New York. 1921-3.

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Memories and Portraits by Robert Louis Stevenson, Eight Edition. London Chatto & Windus, 1898.

Virginibus Puerisque And Other Papers, by Robert Louis Stevenson. Twentieth Edition, London: Chatto & Windus, 1898.

In the South Seas. Being An Account of Experiences And Observations in The Marquesas, Paumotus & Gilbert Islands… London: Chatto & Windus. 1900.

Essays of Travel. By Robert Louis Stevenson. London: Chatto & Windus, 1905.

Travels with A Donkey in the Cevennes- Edited with Biographical Sketch and Notes. New York; Charles Scribner's Sons. 1910.

Virginibus Puerisque. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910.

An Inland Voyage and Travels with a Donkey. By Robert Louis Stevenson. Edited by Gilbert Sykes Blakely. New York: American Book Company. 1911.

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Lay Morals And Other Papers, by Robert Louis Stevenson. With a Preface by Mrs. Stevenson. New York. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911.

A Footnote To History. Eight Years Of Trouble in Samoa & Island Night's Entertainments. The Works Of Robert Louis Stevenson. Swanston Edition. Volume XVII. London: Chatto & Windus with Cassell & Company Ltd. 1912.

Across The Plains with Other Memories & Essays by Robert Louis Stevenson. London: Chato & Windus. 1923.

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Memories and Portraits. With an introduction by Jenni Calder. Glasgow : Richard Drew Publishing, 1990.

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Virginibus Puerisque & Familiar Studies Of Men & Books by Robert Louis Stevenson. Edited by Ernest Rhys. London & Toronto: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd for the Everyman's Library?

3. Essays individually

Stevenson's Periodicals: A Note to Where his Essays Originally Appeared

In his short life, Stevenson's output was prodigious. He contributed to over sixty magazines and newspapers from 1863 to 1894. A thorough record of each and every contribution in prose to those periodicals would smear these pages and overwhelm the reader[546]. Consequently, I offer here a list, alphabetically arranged, of those which merit individual entries. For it was these that brought his essays to light and helped frame his reputation.

Titles alluded to and analyzed in my text are indexed here **by original date of publication** together with relevant data about the periodical where they originally appeared -such as editorship, notable contributors, etc.- and a note about the time of composition, where posible. This is followed by a reference to the Tusitala volume (Tus) in which they were laterly collected.

For a complete chronological bibliography of the prose writings the essential authoritative source is Swearingen (1980). Where each entry supplies precise indications and the location of all manuscripts, the place and date of the first publication, notes on the sources, the process of composition and much else.

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[546] Amongst those very many other there are, *The Edinburgh University Magazine, The Academy*, *New Quaterly Magazine*, *The Monterey Californian*, *Atalanta, The Athenaeum*, *Daily Cronical,The New York Herald, The Idler, National Observer... etc.* Still not mentioning those in which his fiction appeared.

The British Weekly

-"Books Which Have Influenced Me", (May 1887). Reprinted in The Bookman. (1913).Tus 28.

The Century Magazine

-'The Siverado Squatters'., (Nov-Dec 1883). T:18; 151-268. London/Boston: Chatto & Windus/Roberts Brothers (1884).

The Contemporary Review

-'On Some Technical Elements of Style in Literature', 47 (Apr 1885). Tus 28.Not collected until the Edinburgh Edition (Miscellanies 3, 1895) and then in Essays in the Art of Writing (1905). Critical essay.

The Cornhill Magazine

Edited by Leslie Stephen. Stevenson was a constant contributor between 1874 and 1882.

-'Victor Hugo's Romances', (August 1874). Included in *Familiar Studies of men and Books*. (1882). Tus 27

-'An Apology for Idlers', 36 (July 1877). Included in V*irginibus Puerisque* (1881). Tus 25: 51-60.

-'Aes Triplex', 37 (Apr 1878). Included in V*irginibus Puerisqu*e (1881). Tus 25: 73-81

-'François Villon, student, poet, housebreaker', 36 (Aug 1877). Included in *Familiar Studies of Men and Books* (1882). Tus 27, 118-145.

- "Forest Notes"., 33 (May 1876)- Tus 30

-'Walking Tours', 33 (June 1876). Tus 25: 117-124. Included in *Virginibus Puerisque* (1881).

- "Virginibus Puerisque", 34 (August 1876). Included in *Virginibus Puerisque* (1881).

- "Some Aspects of Robert Burns", 490 (October 1879), Included in *Familiar Studies of Men and Books* (1882). Tus 27

- "Crabbed Age and Youth"., 37 (Mar 1878). Included in *Virginibus Puerisque* (1881).

- "Henry David Thoreau: His Character and Opinions"., 41(June 1880). Included in *Familiar Studies of Men and Books* (1882). Tus 27.

-‘The Foreigner at Home’, 45 (May 1882). Included in *Memories and Portraits* (1887). Tus 29; 1-11

The Fortnightly Review

-‘The Morality of the Profession of Letters’, 157 (Apr 1881). Tus 28:50-61

Fraser’s Magazine

-‘The Old Pacific Capital’, 131 (Nov 1880). Tus 18:vii-23. Included in *Across the Plains* (1892).

The Idler

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The Illustrated London News

-‘A Winter’s Walk in Carrick and Galloway’, (summer 1996) Tus 30.

London Magazine

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Longman’s Magazine

-‘Across the Plains: Leaves from the Notebook of an Emigrant Between New York and San Francisco’, 2 (July-Aug 1883). Tus 18:vii-23 Included in *Across the Plains* (1892).

-‘A Gossip on Romance’, 1 (Nov 1882). Tus 29:119-131 Included in *Memories and Portraits* (1887).

-“A Humble Remonstrance’.5 (Dec 1884). T 29:132-143.Included (with additional final paragraph) in *Memories and Portraits* (1887).

MacMillan’s Magazine

-‘Ordered South’. 30 (May 1874). Tus 25: 61-72 Included in *Virginibus Puerisque (*1881).

-“John Knox and his Relations to Women”. 32 (September 1875), 446-56, and ·32 (October 875), 520-31, Tus 27

The Magazine of Art

-"Byways of Book Illustration: The Pilgrim's Progress"., 5 ns pt 16 (February 1882). Tus 28.

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-'A Modern Cosmopolis'., 6 ns pt 31 (May 1883). Combined with 'The Old Pacific Capital' (1880) as

-'A Note on Realism'., 7 (Nov 1883). Tus 28: 69-75.

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-"A Penny Plain and Twopence Coloured"., 7 ns pt 42 (April 1884). Included in *Memories and Portraits* (1887). Tus 29

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The Pall Mall Gazette

-"Health and the Mountains"., (17 February, 1881). Tus 30.

-"Davos in Winter"., (21 February, 1881). Tus 30

-"Alpine Diversions"., (26 February, 1881). Tus 30

-"The Stimulation of the Alps"., (5 March 1881). Tus 30.

Portfolio

The significance of this publication is that it was the periodical to which Stevenson contributed his first article. Its editor was the well-known art critic Philip Gilbert Hamilton-

-'Roads'. The Portfolio 4 (Dec 1873). Tus 25: 183-189.

-'On the Enjoyment of Unpleasant Places'. The Portfolio 5 (Nov 1874). Tus 25: 175-182.

-"An Autumn Effect". 6 (apr 1875). Tus 30.

The Scots Observer

-'Father Damien: An Open Letter to the Reverend Dr Hyde of Honolulu'. (May 1890). Tus 21

Scribner's Magazine

-"Beggars", V iii. January-June 1888. p. 380-384.

-"A Chapter on Dreams", V iii. January-June 1888. p. 122-128. Tus 30; 41-53. Included in *Across the Plains* (1892).

-'Epilogue to An Inland Voyage'. IV (Aug 1888). Included in *Across the Plains* (1892). Tus 18

-"The Lantern Bearers", V iii. (January-June 1888). p. 251-256. Tus 30:29-40. Included in *Across the Plains* (1892).

-"Pulvis et Umbra"., 3 (April 1888). Included in *Across the Plains* (1892). Tus 26.

-'Some Gentlemen in Fiction', 3 (June 1888). Tus 26: 103-112 "Some Gentlemen in Fiction", *S*V iii. January-June 1888. p. 64-768.

-'Popular Authors', 4 (July 1888). Tus 28; 20-32. -'A Letter to a Young Gentleman who Proposes to Embrace the Career of Art', IV (Sep 1888). T 28: 3-11 Included in *Across the Plains* (1892).

-"A Letter to a Gentleman who Proposes to Embrace the Career of Art"., 4 (October 1888). Tus 30. Included in *Across the Plains* (1892).

-"A Christmas Sermon", 4 (Dec 1888). Included in *Across the Plains* (1892). Tus 26.

- "On the Choice of a Profession"., 57 (January 1915): 66-9.

The Studio

-"A Mountain Town in France", Winter 1896-7, pp. 3-17, including four of Stevenson's pencil sketches. This material is published as first chapter to "Travels with a Donkey" (1879) in Tus 17. "It is unkown whether Stevenson or someone else decided to drop this beginning from the published version", (Swearingen, 34).

The Sun

-'The South Seas: Life under the Equator: Letters from a Leisurely Traveller'. The Sun [New York]/ 'The South Seas: A Record of Three Cruises', Black and White [London] (Feb-Dec 1891). Tus 20. Published as a volume in 1896.

Loose

This section records those essays mentioned in this study which were published **posthumously in the successive complete editions** of his works rather then in individual newspapers and magazines as entered above.

-"An Appeal to the Clergy of the Church of Scotland with A Note for the Laity". William Blackwood & Sons. Edinburgh and London. 1875. In The Pentland Edition of the Works of R.L.S.. V. xx. . MCMVII.

-"Cockermouth and Keswick". Edin Ed 21 (1896). Tus 30

-'Lay Morals'. Edin Ed 21 (1896). Tus 26.

-"Prayers Written for Family Use at Vailima", Edinburgh Ed., 21 (1896), 379-88. But others published in 1921 and 1923, see Swearingen 150, Tus 21. Collected ed. Prayers Written At Vailima & A Christmas Sermon. London: Chatto & Windus. 1941. 43p.

IV. Stevenson's Work in Early Anthologies: A Note on a Few.

Not many are the early anthologies of the essay in which Stevenson appears, as an exploration reveals. And yet, part of his essayistic work was garnered in some important ones as these that follow chronologically.

BROADUS, E.K and GORDON, R.K (Eds.) (1918)

English Prose from Bacon to Hardy. London, Glasgow, Edinburgh and New York: Humphrey Milford. Oxford University Press.

(The biographical preface, p. 581 reads, ""His (Stevenson's) essays are as **adventurous in spirit** as his novels. He looked on life "as **a thing to be dashingly used** and cheerfully hazarded... His essays are full of this gallant courage a**nd an undulled zest in the ways of men** which recalls Hazlitt. And in the introduction, p. 2, "No similar selection -with the purpose of representing "fairly liberally to types of literature peculiarly characteristic of the period- has been given for the nineteenth century, because the compact literary society of the previous age had disappeared").

5. Early Translations into Spanish

I list here those efforts made and published up till the 1950s. More recent editions are gathered in the next section.

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Castellanos, F.J. (trans.) (1917). *Roberto Luis Stevenson: Ensayos*, México: revista Cultura. Tomo V. Num. 6.

Esclasans, A. (trans.)

(1943). *El extraño caso del Doctor Jekyll y míster Hyde.* Barcelona: Apolo, La Académica, 107p. Biblioteca Freya.

Galvarriato, E. (Trans.) (1943). *Robert Louis Stevenson: Ensayos*. Madrid: Escelicer, 200p. (Reprinted in Alianza, 1994).

García Mercadel. (trans.) (1924). *El diablo de la botella*. Soc. de Rivadeneyra.

"Gaziel" (Calvet, A.) (trans.) (1942) *La isla del tesoro.* Barcelona:. Seix Barral, (Reprinted in 1984.)

Gutiérrez, F & Navarro, D. (trans.) (1944). *La flecha negra*. Barcelona: Hispanoamericana de Ediciones.

Izquierdo Hernández, J.L. (trans.) (1959). *Cuentos de los Mares del Sur*. Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 175p. col. Austral. vol 627. (3ª ed.).

Laurie, A. (trans.) (1889). *La isla del tesoro*. Madrid: ?

López Lance, A. (trans.) (1946). *Hasta la isla de Honolulú.* Barcelona: Emporium.

Medina, M. (trans.) (1921). *David Balfour.* Soc. de Rivadeneyra.

Méndez Herrera, J. (trans.) (1956). *La flecha negra*. Madrid: Espasa Clape. (3ª ed. Reprinted in 1968, Colección Austral, nº 566).

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IX. Stevenson's Manuscripts

MS Yale - The Edwin J. Beinecke Collection at Yale University
MS Huntington- Henry E. Huntington Library in San Marino, California
MS NLS- National Library of Scotland
MS Wid- The Widener (Harry Elkins) Collection at Harvard University
MS Silverado- Silverado Museum, St. Elena, California

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1876

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1877

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1881

'The Misgivings of Convalescence'. Pall Mall Gazette (17 Mar 1881). Unpublished since then.

1896

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ABSTRACT

UNIVERSIDAD COMPLUTENSE DE MADRID

FACULTAD DE FILOLOGÍA

DPTO. DE INGLÉS II.
LITERATURA DE LOS PAÍSES EN LENGUA INGLESA

A THESIS PRESENTED FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILbOSOPHY

A TELEOLOGICAL APPROACH TO THE ESSAYS OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

POST-GRADUATE: JOSÉ LUIS MIRAS OROZCO
ADVISER: DRA-. MARGARITA ARDANAZ MORÁN

MADRID, 2018

A TELEOLOGICAL APPROACH TO THE ESSAYS OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Introduction

This disssertation has attempted to put forth a resolute proposal and a plea for the inclusion of the essay in the *Grado en Estudios Ingleses* syllabus, as pertains to the study of literature in general, and of literature in English in particular. Carried by the certitude, through extensive teaching practice, that essays promote a more discerning reading and writing, I have worked out this major theme with a view to restore the genre to its formidable value and relevance in the context of academic pedagogy.

Defending the essay as thoughtful, witty, inviting and exciting in its intimate tone, I seek to reinstate Robert Louis Stevenson's essays, showing their trascendence in evincing their author's polymorphic, multifaceted genius, not just as the writer of the romance, of the fiction of adventure, he is widely associated with. Making apparent his thought, ethics and aesthetics I have presented Stevenson as a thankless prophet of an unconcerned generation. Basing the three teloi, his ontological-phenomenological, ethical and aesthetic values, on the principle of mobility, I seek to rescue his essays from their censorious evaluations, and to restore them to their formidable relevance and singularity. Bringing his essays into light from the background of his literary inheritance I show how he drew and departed from it contributing to the evolution of the genre; opening it to new perspectives; detaching it from its conventions and sentimental comforts to articulate a highly personal and innovative theory of art.

In a more approachable objective, I demonstrate the relevance of the essay in the English literature classroom, more precisely, in our *Grado en estudios ingleses*, *Grado e n lenguas modernas y sus literaturas,* and *Grado en literatura comparada*. Most especially the essays of Robert Louis Stevenson, which have always been highly regarded by our students. I am amply persuaded that they help our students to develop and to enhance both their reading and writing skills.

1. HAVING, HOPEFULLY, SHED LIGHT ON THE ESSAY, ON ITS PROTEAN QUALITY AND INTIMATE STYLE, SAME AS ON ITS TRASCENDENCE AND GREAT IMPRINT IN ACADEMIC LITERARY STUDIES, WE CONCLUDE:

1.1. A resolute proposal for the inclusion of the essay in our *Grado en Estudios Ingleses* as pertinent and crucial to the study of literature needs to be put forth.

1.2. An awareness that "essaying" conveys more than "an attempt to" in its etymological sense, and that there is more to feed on than just the aesthetic of an essay, would put an end to its wonted dismissal in academic circles.

1.3. In a world made vague by confused identities, political nationalisms, relativism and globalisation the voice of the essayist has much to offer that will be vital and compelling for our students. Hence the enormous significance of the genre and its pedagogical possibilities.

2. SEEKING TO MAKE APPARENT THE SHAPE AND THE CONTOURS OF STEVENSON'S THOUGHT, OF HIS ETHICS AND OF HIS AESTHETICS -OUR SECOND GENERAL AIM- WE GATHER THAT...

2.1. Stevenson's essayistic work defies categorization by reason of its complexity.

2.2. The term that best -and most naturally- brings everything Stevenson together is *mobility*, the principle that binds his oeuvre in a more indubitable.

2.3. The *teleological approach* proves an invaluable mehod to study Stevenson's contribution to the essay and to its tradition.

2.4. Such methodology reveals three *teloi,* three purposes of travel that serve to explain his work more neatly and clearly than the biographical or topographical approaches so much usued by critics and biographers.

2.5. These *teloi*, these purpose on the part of an ever wandering Stevenson were aimed at: one- achieving an *ontological* - epistemological conscious understanding of himself and of his surrondings -*phenomenological;* two- finding his own morals, shying any dogmatism with a conscious always alert, always awake to his responsibilities; three- creating some asthetics free from the pessimmism of the decadents, centered on his innovation and on his defence of the romance as a deliberate artifice, thus never seeking to, nor being able to, compete with life by aping it.

3. AMONGST THE MORE ATTAINABLE OBJECTIVES, WE HAVE MANAGED TO..

3.1. Reveal a new, and thus, fully unkown Stevenson at variance with the oversimplified view of his work by the Modernists.

3.2. Rescue Robert Louis Stevenson's extraordinary essays from the censorious evaluation that condemned him to the nursery, lowering his prolofic work to the status of juvenile yarns and ghostly tales by the fireside.

3.3. Present the intricacies of Stevenson's essayistic polimorphous work, together with the complexities of his *oeuvre*.

4. ON OUR FOURTH GENERAL AIM- TO SHOW AMPLE LIGHT ON THE EXTRAORDINARY VIRTUE OF STEVENSON'S ESSAYS AS RECORDED ON THIS DISSERTATION- WE CONCLUDE

4.1. An analysis of Stevenson's most representative essays and travel books demonstrates how the great author used these narratives to detach himself from the sentimental clichés and comforts of his bourgeois Edinburgh.

4.2 A study of his moral essays evinces how Stevenson also used his *mobility* to finally being able to expound his versatile, never doctrinaire, ethical principles.

4.3. A close reading of his literary essays, sheds glowing light on the fact that Stevenson 's notion and practice of *kinessis* greatly contributed to integrate a highly personal, articulate and innovative theory of art.

5. COMING TO THE FIFTH AND LAST GENERAL OBJECTIVE OF THIS THESIS, HAVING ALREADY OFFERED AN APPRAISAL OF ..... AS SHOWN IN ..... WE CAN SURMISE:

5.1. Stevenson's essays promote a more penetrating and discerning reading in the *Grado en Estudios Ingleses* curricula.

5.2 Stevenson's essays also help our students of the said *Grado* to enhance their writing skills in English.

5.3. Stevenson's essays procure both insightful discussions and engrossing analysis of figures such as the crafty use of cadence, chiasmus... amongst our students.

Conclusions

After our appraisal, and considering the inferences drawn from each consecutive chapter, **we conclude:**

1. The essay remains one of the most captivating approachable genres to study due to its striving for honesty, its intimacy, its Protean quality and intellectual substance. However, the essay has been -inadmissibly- excluded from literary studies, partly because of its elusiveness, yet also due to ill-advised educational pursuits and inveterate misinterpretations.

2. The English essay has proved masterly by reason of its formidable tradition and its masterful practitioners. Scottish essayists were enormously influential in the philosophical essay. American essayists brought an indefinable flavour into it which shaped the ideas the modern nation upholds, such as individuality, democratic sensibility and optimism.

3. Stevenson's essays have been downgraded by a series of circumstances which have obscured the virtues of his polymorphic, heterogenous work. Amongst which the regretable demise of the essay; Stevenson's own disingenious declarations about his art; the muddled, misquoted, misrepresented fake adulation by his associates; the sugary illustrations and spiteful adaptations for the screen of his works; the irresponsible, injurious academic use of his essays; the acerbic attack of the Modernists; the laudatory words on RLS's fiction by those literary giants, appropriating and misquoting him to rub out any praise to his essays... Efforts to reinstate Stevenson will prove fruitless unless his essays are brought into the daylight.

4. The extraordinary evolution of travel narratives speaks of a multiplicity of *telos*, knitting every type of traveller tightly to his venture. Although it has provided endless interest and delightful hours, literary syllabi evince a flagrant disregard for travel literature. Notwithstanding, we owe some consensus to the main critical and theoretical approaches to travel writing who have recently induced academic authorities to reflect its bearing and its relevance in our societies and, hence, in our philological studies.

5. All traveller's ventures and *teloi* meet in the singular travelling author that was RLS. His were the aesthetics of wandering. He remains one of the greatest travellers in literary history. Stevenson's essays defy categorization. *kinessis* being everywhere in his writing, *mobility* proves the principle governing his work and his life. It is also a vehicle of cognition, a means to meet his duties and obligations; an instrument to create his own aesthetics. Stevenson threaded his way more trascendently in his imagination than across continents and boundaries. He battled to edify his true commitment to his writing.

Following these three *teloi,* this teleological method, the first one is revealed in his early writings, where he identifies himself with the energetic, fluid, intimate mind of *the essayist*. He also shows himself in the guise of a practical philosopher against cant. Stevenson's first two books, *An Inland Voyage* and *Travels with a Donkey* can be taken as ontological adventures showing his craving for a conscious sense of personal identity. In their employ of "nature" as the space in which the self can experiment epistemologically; in their innovative use of paradox and enlivening philosophy both volumes bespeak of a postmodern sensibility pointing to a more developed conception of travel writing based on psychological action.

The second *telos* of this same section takes us to Stevenson's quest for his own ethical values; to the moral responsibilities of his writing; to his brave denunciation of complacencies and dogmatism.

The third and last *telos* is that of his easthetics. Stevenson blatantly opposes to the idea that lliterature must ape and compete with life. His defence of romance is asserted with a force that would be hard and mendacious to ignore.

RESUMEN

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TESIS DOCTORAL

APROXIMACIÓN TELEOLÓGICA A LOS ENSAYOS DE ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

DOCTORANDO : JOSÉ LUIS MIRAS OROZCO
DIRECTOR: DRA-. MARGARITA ARDANAZ MORÁN

MADRID, 2018

Introducción

La tesis contenida en estas páginas propone una defensa de las Humanidades mediante la reivindicación apasionada del ensayo para la pedagogía académica. Resulta, en verdad, paradójico que venga a ser, precisamente, el género discursivo abierto el que se haya visto relegado de los planes de estudio correspondientes a nuestro *Grado en estudios ingleses*, así como al *Grado en lenguas modernas y sus literaturas* y el de *Literatura comparada*. Más aún, dada la relevancia del ensayo en la tradición británica, auspiciada por la norteamericana, así como por la irlandesa y escocesa. Que el ensayo ofrece más que un placer estético en la sabiduría que encierra y en el trato íntimo con su lector, se verifica, tanto en la obra de Montaigne, como en la de Séneca o Aristóteles. En un contexto social de globalización, relativismo, pérdidas identitarias y nacionalismos emergentes, la voz *en* el ensayo, la voz *del* ensayista, ha de resultar tan útil como vital y convincente a nuestros alumnos.

Robert Louis Stevenson respondió a ese desafío con una obra ensayística tan excelsa como innovadora. No obstante, sus ensayos y libros de viajes fueron objeto, tanto de crítica mordaz como de adulación desmedida. Ello provocó que su obra de ficción ensombreciera su prosa más reflexiva e íntima. Me propongo, pues, dar a conocer a un Stevenson distinto a esa visión simplista de él -a cargo de sus contemporáneos-, y rescatar a sus ensayos de aquel asedio que relegó a su autor al cuarto de niños, a los cuentos de piratas, a fantasmagorías junto al fuego. Para ello, parto del principio que más y mejor define su vida y su obra: *kinesis*. Dicha obra, por otra parte, no se ajusta ni se da a categorías en su individualismo y complejidad. De ello se sigue la aproximación *teleológica* a sus ensayos, ya que ese movimiento perseguía tres *teloi,* tres fines que nutrieran e impulsaran su avance: una vía de conocimiento *epistemológico* basado en lo *ontológico y fenomenológico*; el encuentro con una verdad íntima *deontológica*; y la creación de un ideal ascético tan propio como individualizado.

Llevado por la vocación docente y la práctica pedagógica que he tenido el honor de desarrollar en nuestro departamento, en estos últimos años, busco demostrar que el ensayo en inglés, y en especial, el de Stevenson, propicia una lectura más honda y aventajada en nuestros alumnos, a la vez que contribuye a mejorar sensiblemente su escritura en la lengua meta.

1.UNA VEZ DEMOSTRADA LA CAPACIDAD DEL ENSAYO PARA ADAPTARSE A LAS DISTINTAS ÉPOCAS, AMÉN DE SU GRAN TRASCENDENCIA Y RELEVANCIA EN LOS ESTUDIOS LITERARIOS, CONCLUIMOS:

1.1. Es, de todo punto, necesaria la inclusión del en sayo en nuestro *Grado en Estudios Ingleses* dada su pertinencia para el estudio de la literatura en lengua inglesa.

1.2. Es pertinente, también, poner al ensayo en todo su valor, desmintiendo su único significado etimológico de "intento". Siendo conscientes de todo lo que el género ofrece repararemos en sus valores más allá de lo estético, y conseguiremos que regrese a los círculos académicos que le pertenecen.

1.3. En un mundo exacerbado mediante problemas identitarios, nacionalismos políticos, globalización, relativismo... la voz del ensayista, la voz en el ensayo, ha de resultar siempre útil a nuestros estudiantes. De ahí la gran relevancia del género y sus muchas posibilidades pedagógicas.

2. SEÑALADOS Y PUESTOS EN RELEVANCIA EL PENSAMIENTO DE STEVENSON, SU ÉTICA Y SU IDEAL ESTÉTICO, INFERIMOS...

2.1. La obra ensayística de Stevenson no se presta a categorización alguna dada su complejidad.

2.2. *Movimiento,* es el término que mejor se avine para aludir a Stevenson, a su obra y al principio que la cohesiona.

2.3. La *aproximación teleológica* demuestra ser un método idóneo para el estudio de la obra ensayística de Stevenson y de su contribución a la tradición del mismo.

2.4. Tal metodología viene a dar en tres *teloi,* tres causas últimas que explican con mayor claridad que los métods biográficos o topográficos, las peculiaridades de la obra del genial escritor escocés

2.5. Dichos *teloi*, están orientados a: a) lograr un conocimiento*ontológico*-epistemológico, cobrarse una comprensión consciente de sí mismo y de sus contornos -*fenomenológico*-. b) dar con una moral propia, individual, fuera de todo dogmatismo, despierta y ráuda a toda responsabilidad. c) crear un ideal estético lejano al pesimismo de los decadentes, enfocado en la experimentación, en la defensa del "romance", de la narración pura, como deliberado artificio que no se presta a competir con la realidad.

3. DADOS A CONOCER LOS ENSAYOS DE STEVENSON Y SU RELEVANCIA, PODEMOS DECLARAR...

3.1. Dichos ensayos nos revelan a un Stevenson desconocido por el lector de su obra de ficción. Más todavía, del todo opuesto y encontrado con la visión simplona que de él reflejaron algunos modernistas.

3.2. Hemos hecho hincapié en la gran valía de los ensayos de Stevenson y los hemos rescatado de la crítica hinóspita, caprichosa e irresponsable que los mantuvo al margen.

3.3. Hemos dado a conocer el aspecto intrincado de una obra compleja, polimorfa y, sin embargo, apasionante.

4. A PROPÓSITO DE NUESTRO CUARTO OBJETIVO GENERAL Y ARROJADA LUZ SOBRE LA EXTRAORDINARIA VIRTUD DE LOS LIBROS DE VIAJE DE STEVENSON, TAL Y COMO QUEDA REGISTRADA EN ESTA TESIS... PODEMOS AFIRMAR QUE..

4.1. Nuestro escritor empleo dichas narraciones para desvincularse de los clichés sentimentales y del conformismo burgés de su Edinburgo natal.

4.2 Stevesnon se sirvió también de su principio de *kinesis* para, en ellos, exponer sus principios éticos, versátiles alejados de toda doctrina y basados ya en su interioridad, ya en el otro.

5. LLEGADO EL QUINTO Y ÚLTIMO OBJETIVO GENERAL ANUNCIADO EN NUESTRAS DE CABECERA, DEFENDEMOS QUE...

5.1. La obra ensayística de Stevenson propone una lectura reflexiva, gozosa y atenta de gran utilidad en nuestro *Grado en Estudios Ingleses.*

5.2 Los ensayos de este genial autor contribuyen también, considerablemente, a mejorar su escritura en inglés.

5.3. Los ensayos de Stevenson fomentan la discusión y el análisis decididos de figuras tales como el quiasmo, el paralelismo, o la cadencia.

Conclusiones

Finalizado nuestro estudio podemos concluir:

1. El ensayo es un género tan accesible como cautivador, por razón de su tono íntimo, su honestidad, su rigor intelectual y su capacidad de adaptarse a tiempos y mores. A pesar de ello, el ensayo ha quedado, inadmisiblemente, apartado de los estudios literarios, ora por su carácter esquivo, ora por políticas educativas erráticas.

2. La excelencia del ensayo británico queda probada tanto en la raigambre de su tradición como en la maestría de sus autores. Los escoceses dieron gran pujanza al ensayo filosófico. Los clásicos ensayistas norteamericanos añadieron un toque tan personal como distintivo a sus composiciones, que vino a conformar las ideas que la nación moderna defiende y respeta: su individualismo, su sensibilidad democrática y su optimismo.

3. Los ensayos de Stevenson se vieron seriamente perjudicados por una serie de circunstancias que vinieron a ensombrecer sus muy claras virtudes. De ellas, la pérdida de la relevancia del ensayo en círculos académicos; las propias declaraciones jocosas del autor -sobre su obra- en su correspondencia; el "hagiografismo estivensoniano" por parte de sus más cercanos; el uso académico irresponsable de sus ensayos; el azote de los Modernistas; la creación de un Stevenson propio, distinto al real, por parte de otros grandes genios literarios; etc.

4. La extraordinaria evolución del género de viajes nos revela sus muy variados *telos*, asociando a cada viajero con su aventura. A pesar de ser amenos e interesantes, no aparecen en los planes de estudios conducentes a la adquisición de nuestros títulos de grado. Lo que no ha sido óbice para que las diferentes tendencias críticas y teóricas lleguen a un acuerdo: la relevancia de dichos libros de viaje en nuestras sociedades y, por ende, en nuestros estudios de filología.

5. Todos los propósitos, todos los *teloi* referidos concurren en ese viajero y autor tan singular que lleva por nombre Robert Louis Stevenson. Su ideal estético queda representad por el término *kinsesis*. Presente en toda su obra como el principio que rige también su vida. Como forma de conocimiento, como medio para permanecer despierto a su rectitud y responsabilidad; como instrumento para alcanzar su ideal estético.

En la estela de esos tres *teloi,* tras del método teleológico, llegamos a la primera finalidad de nuestro autor: cobrarse un conocimiento *ontológico, y fenomenológico*, que le permita discernir su vocación y talante. Los dos primeros libros, *Viaje tierra adentro* y *Viajes con una burra*, no son sino aventuras de carácter ontológico que ponen en relieve la búsqueda de una consciencia y una identidad propia

Tras el segundo *teloi*, vemos a Stevenson consciente de las responsabilidades que entraña su labor de escritor; abierto a posibilidades éticas siempre que sean responsables; presto y valiente en el momento de denunciar abusos dogmáticos.

Por último, el tercer *teloi,* nos muestra un Tusitala del todo opuesto a la idea decadente de que la literatura, las artes, han de imitar a la realidad, a la vida. Su defensa del "romance" es tan resuelta y evocadora que no puede ignorarse.