THE SOUTH SEAS FICTION OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

ROBERT IRWIN HILLIER
University of New Hampshire, Durham

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholars.unh.edu/dissertation

Recommended Citation
https://scholars.unh.edu/dissertation/1467

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Scholarship at University of New Hampshire Scholars' Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctoral Dissertations by an authorized administrator of University of New Hampshire Scholars' Repository. For more information, please contact nicole.hentz@unh.edu.
INFORMATION TO USERS

This reproduction was made from a copy of a manuscript sent to us for publication and microfilming. While the most advanced technology has been used to photograph and reproduce this manuscript, the quality of the reproduction is heavily dependent upon the quality of the material submitted. Pages in any manuscript may have indistinct print. In all cases the best available copy has been filmed.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help clarify notations which may appear on this reproduction.

1. Manuscripts may not always be complete. When it is not possible to obtain missing pages, a note appears to indicate this.

2. When copyrighted materials are removed from the manuscript, a note appears to indicate this.

3. Oversize materials (maps, drawings, and charts) are photographed by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each oversize page is also filmed as one exposure and is available, for an additional charge, as a standard 35mm slide or in black and white paper format.*

4. Most photographs reproduce acceptably on positive microfilm or microfiche but lack clarity on xerographic copies made from the microfilm. For an additional charge, all photographs are available in black and white standard 35mm slide format.*

*For more information about black and white slides or enlarged paper reproductions, please contact the Dissertations Customer Services Department.
Hillier, Robert Irwin

THE SOUTH SEAS FICTION OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

University of New Hampshire

Copyright 1985 by
Hillier, Robert Irwin
All Rights Reserved
PLEASE NOTE:

In all cases this material has been filmed in the best possible way from the available copy. Problems encountered with this document have been identified here with a check mark √.

1. Glossy photographs or pages ______
2. Colored illustrations, paper or print ______
3. Photographs with dark background _____
4. Illustrations are poor copy ______
5. Pages with black marks, not original copy ______
6. Print shows through as there is text on both sides of page ______
7. Indistinct, broken or small print on several pages ______
8. Print exceeds margin requirements ______
9. Tightly bound copy with print lost in spine ______
10. Computer printout pages with indistinct print ______
11. Page(s) ____________ lacking when material received, and not available from school or author.
12. Page(s) ____________ seem to be missing in numbering only as text follows.
13. Two pages numbered ______. Text follows.
14. Curling and wrinkled pages ✓
15. Dissertation contains pages with print at a slant, filmed as received ✓
16. Other

University
Microfilms
International
THE SOUTH SEAS FICTION OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

BY

ROBERT IRWIN HILLIER

B.A. Haverford College, 1966
M.A. University of Vermont, 1977

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire
in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy
in
English

December, 1985
This dissertation has been examined and approved.

Dissertation Director, Carl Dawson
Professor of English

Jean E. Kennard, Professor of English

Edmund G. Miller, Professor of English

F. William Forbes, Associate Professor of Spanish and Classics

Frank D. McCann Jr., Professor of History

November 25, 1985
Date
For Cherlyn
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the people who have encouraged, supported, and guided me through the completion of this dissertation.

Warmest thanks go to my advisor Professor Carl Dawson. His confidence in me, his patience, and his ability to help me find patterns in my material have helped bring my writing to completion. Warm thanks also go to Professor Edmund G. Miller for working in close partnership with Professor Dawson helping me focus on pertinent details to support my main ideas. Both men have continually encouraged me to strive for excellence rather than adequacy. Thanks also go to the other members of my dissertation committee: Professor Jean Kennedy, Professor F. William Forbes, and Professor Frank D. McCann Jr.

Professor Emeritus Frank Nelson originally encouraged me to pursue graduate study. Nathaniel Allyn helped me find employment to cover the expenses of my travel and research. Professor Richard L. Hillier, Professor Peter Johnson, Helen Kobayashi, and John and Nancy Hoover have helped me at different stages of the writing. The personnel of the University of Hawaii Asian and Pacific Collection, the Yale University Beinecke Library, the Harvard Houghton Library, the Huntington Library, and the Library of Congress have all helped me get maximum benefits from my brief visits. My
principal Dr. Alan Garson has helped me balance the demands of teaching with those of research and writing. The Hoovers, the Johnsons, and Karen Dunn and Professor and Mrs. Gerald Dunn, and Kathleen and Russell Northrup have all provided hospitality and encouragement. Members of the staff of the University of New Hampshire English Department have helped me clerical and technical matters. And finally my wife and daughter have retained their confidence in me throughout my graduate study. Thanks goes to all of these people.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

| DEDICATION                                | iv  |
| ACKNOWLEDGMENTS                           | v   |
| ABSTRACT                                  | vii |
| CHAPTER PAGE                              |     |
| I. INTRODUCTION                           | 1   |
| Stevenson's South Seas Literary Heritage  | 6   |
| Stevenson's Life in the South Seas        | 13  |
| II. IN THE SOUTH SEAS                     | 28  |
| III. POLYNESIAN CUSTOMS AND ORAL TRADITION| 51  |
| "The Feast of Famine"                     | 52  |
| "The Song of Rahéro"                      | 56  |
| "The Isle of Voices"                      | 62  |
| "The Bottle Imp"                          | 70  |
| IV. THE WRECKER: THE NOVEL AS SEA YARN    | 79  |
| V. THE EBB TIDE: THE SOUTH SEAS AS SOURCE OF ALLEGORY | 113 |
| VI THE BEACH OF FALESA                    | 148 |
| VII CONCLUSION                            | 183 |
| WORKS CONSULTED                           | 189 |
| Holographic Sources                       | 189 |
| Secondary and Other Primary Sources       | 196 |
ABSTRACT

THE SOUTH SEAS FICTION OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

by

Robert Irwin Hillier
University of New Hampshire, December, 1985

As the title suggests, this dissertation investigates Stevenson's works which are set in the South Pacific, works emerging from his study, experience, and observation during his travels through and residence in islands of the South Pacific. The works discussed include a travel book, In the South Seas; two narrative poems which approximate Polynesian folklore, "The Feast of Famine" and "The Song of Rahéro;" two short stories in a fairy tale mode, "The Isle of Voices" and "The Bottle Imp;" two full-length novels written in collaboration with Lloyd Osbourne, The Wrecker and The Ebb Tide; and one novella, The Beach of Falesa.

The introductory chapter is largely biographical. While this study is not an example of archetypal criticism, it initially defines the sense westerners have of Pacific islands as the South Seas archetype. This chapter reveals Stevenson's early receptivity to the region, traces his travels, and begins to suggest the modifications Stevenson makes of the South Seas archetype in his writing. Chapter II focuses on Stevenson's travel writing. It contrasts the epic aspirations Stevenson had for In the South Seas with
the reality that his travel writing was more useful as a source book for his fiction. The first two chapters provide a background for the subsequent chapters in which Stevenson's fiction is actually discussed.

The dissertation shows the extent to which Stevenson draws on his imagination, his observations and experiences, Polynesian oral tradition, and the tradition of the sea yarn for each work of fiction. Chapter III focuses on the works which make most extensive use of Polynesian folklore—the poems and stories. Chapter IV reveals Stevenson's extensive use of sea yarns as source material for The Wrecker, an adventure novel which also explores human violence. Chapter V discusses Stevenson's use of allegorical land and seascape to intensify the grim realism of The Ebb Tide. Chapter VI suggests that The Beach of Falesã, which encompasses most of what Stevenson learned about the Pacific, remains his most successful work.

Finally, this dissertation shows two ways in which the South Seas fiction is significant. These works reveal Stevenson's artistic growth, showing his change from a master of the romance and adventure novel to a realist. In vividly depicting the South Seas, these works have offered an alternative to the South Seas archetype which subsequent writers have adopted.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Although this study is in no significant way based on Archetypal Criticism, the concept of the archetype can help distinguish Robert Louis Stevenson's South Seas works from his other writing, reveal how Stevenson's writings on the South Seas were different from those of his literary predecessors, and possibly account for the lack of popularity of these works in comparison to his other writing and to other literature dealing with the region.

The concept of the South Seas is more than a geographical region; it is an archetype which pervades western thought. We know the archetypal South Seas as a vast undefined area of ocean and islands. Because the islands offer the element of life before Adam's fall from grace, the region remains exempt from the curse to toil for food: in the South Seas "the ease of the golden age is still in use" (Bougainville 218). All one needs grows wild, free for the picking, just as a shady Parao tree or a rude grass hut provides sufficient shelter.

This legendary area of ocean and islands functions as an archetype, because it represents not only a region exempt from the ravages of nature but also a psychological region apparently exempt from the mores of civilization. It lies so far outside the realm of Judeo-Christian moral law that
people who dine on each other's flesh dwell there. Royalty live in incest, as siblings marry and rule. From early childhood islanders fear no sexual prohibitions. Idleness is a liberating virtue, not a sin, as even the concepts of sin and guilt are foreign to the archetypal South Seas.

Accounts of the wanderers who visited the actual region support our sense of the archetypal South Seas. We know that Captain Cook discovered, explored, and charted the South Seas, that his visit introduced Western disease and corruption to the unspoiled regions, and that South Seas natives--Hawaiians in this case--killed him and took his body and--we feel quite certain--devoured it. From Typee, we know that Herman Melville dwelt briefly and idyllically in the Marquesas, but that he realized he had lived in Paradise only after he had forever left the region. As part of our more mature dreams of islands we willingly would face savagery and cannibalism in exchange for the initiations into pleasure Fayaway could offer.

Being outside the moral realm makes the archetypal South Seas adventurously dangerous. One must contend with pirates as well as savages, Americans, Europeans, Asians, and various half-castes loose in this amoral realm. Spanish gold lies buried at sea or beneath the sand on some uninhabited island. Since we have read R. M. Ballantyne's The Coral Island and Robert Louis Stevenson's Treasure Island during childhood, this dream of pirate adventure perhaps holds the more lasting appeal.
Other people have disappeared into the South Pacific. Most of the *Bounty* crew mutinied rather than leave Tahiti; and with the miraculous possible exception of Fletcher Christian, who legend says wandered England and Europe in disguise (Wilkinson), none of the mutineers willingly returned to the civilized world. Gauguin abandoned his brokerage office in Paris, found a child bride or two in Tahiti, and painted what he lived. Pierre Loti (Louis Marie Julien Viaud) with lyrically melancholic prose savors his brief informal marriage to voluptuous and tubercular Rarahu in *The Marriage of Loti*. Nor is love solely heterosexual. Charles Warren Stoddard writes idylls as flowery as those of Melville or Loti to Tahitian and Hawaiian "brown boys" lolling wantonly beneath palm trees and along white sand beaches. Experience in the South Seas can even drive a person mad. The tale of the Ancient Mariner somehow overlaps with a tale Fletcher Christian could have told.

While we grow up longing for the South Seas, what we envision is really a mirage which fades as we approach. Nathaniel West's *Miss Lonelihearts* surprisingly includes a brief description of the archetypal South Seas. Editor Shrike visits ailing Miss Lonelihearts and mockingly offers him a series of escapes, of which one is the dream of the South Seas.

You live in a thatch hut with the daughter of the king, a slim young maiden in whose eyes is an ancient wisdom. Her breasts are golden speckled pears, her belly a melon, and her odor is like nothing so much as a jungle fern. In the evening, on the blue lagoon, under the silvery moon, to your love you croon in the soft
sylabelew and vocabelew of her langorour tonbgorour. Your body is golden brown like hers, and tourists have needs of the indignant finger of the missionary to point you out. They envy you your breech clout and carefree laugh and little brown bride and fingers instead of forks. But you don't return their envy, and when a beautiful society girl comes to your hut in the night, seeking to learn the secret of your happiness, you send her back to her yacht that hangs on the horizon like a nervous racehorse. And so you dream away the days, fishing, hunting, dancing, swimming, kissing, and picking flowers to twine in your hair. (West 107-08)

Experience in the actual South Seas reveals the frailty of the dream of islands and the illusion of much of the archetype. Once settled on Pitcairn Island the Bounty mutineers drunkenly made war on their Tahitian companions and then on each other. Those who survived did so mainly because they restored European discipline, order, and religion. Herman Melville's autobiographical persona Tommo lives in hypochondriacal terror of his Typee hosts, fearing both that he may eat someone as well as be eaten, falling into deepest despair when invited to become one with the Typees by submitting himself to tattooing. The real Herman Melville fared better in the semi-civilized ports of Papeete, Lahaina, and Honolulu. The real Paul Gauguin lived in Tahiti and died in the Marquesas. He wrote home to friends in France that he was living harmoniously off the land with his Polynesian hosts, when more often he was surviving on tinned sardines from Chinese stores, paid for with occasional commissions, squandered inheritance money, and briefly from wages earned as a draftsman with the French Colonial Department of Public Works. He overcame near-
suicidal depression with alcohol, morphine, pederastic attempts at the easy virtue of 13-year-old Tahitian girls, and brilliant and frantic spurts of painting during which he created pictures of the real Tahiti tinted and tainted with the Tahiti he could see in his mind. His book of Tahitian scripture, Noa Noa, is the product of his imagination with few roots in Tahitian legend (Daws, Dream; Menard). D. H. Lawrence suggests that among Western humanity only the total renegade can tolerate South Seas life. All others either seek to implant Western civilization, destroying Polynesian civilization in the process, or else go mad (Lawrence).

Robert Louis Stevenson came to the South Seas in 1888 and found neither ecstasy nor madness, but instead health and a setting which significantly changed his writing. He observed a combination of primitive innocence and eager, and even literary, intelligence among the native populations losing ground to the aggressive mercantilism of Caucasian traders and plantation owners and the narrow-minded benevolence of the missionaries. He also observed simultaneously savage and sentimentally tender behavior among Europeans and Americans loose in a region minimally ruled by Christian prohibitions and western law.

As a writer, Stevenson translated what he read, observed, and experienced into several types of literature. His South Seas works include travel writing with In the South Seas, newspaper "Letters" on Hawaii, and A Footnote to History; ballads entitled "The Feast of Famine" and "The
Song of Rahèro;" stories called "The Isle of Voices" and "The Bottle Imp;" and three novels, The Wrecker, The Ebb Tide, and The Beach of Falesa. This discussion of Stevenson's South Seas fiction initially focuses on the travel and historical writing for which he initially had epic aspirations and then shows how these historical travelogues became a source book for his more important writing, the fiction he produced from his experiences in the Pacific. It asserts the literary excellence of Stevenson's Pacific fiction and tries to explain why this body of writing has never been as popular as his other works.

Stevenson's South Seas Literary Heritage

A student of the South Seas writing of Herman Melville or of Henry Adams becomes aware of how extensively each writer has studied the previous literature of the South Seas before adding to it; both verify their observations by citing the writing of explorers, missionaries, and traders. Robert Louis Stevenson also read about the South Seas before and during his travels, but the extent of his study is less certain.

From his childhood he gained a sense of the South Seas. In addition to the poor health that thrust young Stevenson into reading and story-telling and adventures of the mind instead of more active outdoor pursuits, and in addition to his early and joyous contact with the sea where his health seemed best, Stevenson had access to his father's library,
which included such books as Captain Woodes Rogers' collected voyage accounts, The Reflections of Robinson Crusoe, The Female Bluebeard, probably the voyage logs of Captain Cook, and possibly many other books about adventure and exploration. When health and weather permitted, Stevenson enjoyed playing camping games which he called "Carusoing." When illness prevented sleep, his parents and his nurse took turns reading to him and telling him stories. Stevenson in turn put his hand to writing at an early age, and among his planned stories at age thirteen were "The Wreckers" and "Creek Island or Adventures in the South Seas." The second book was to be about "two midshipmen, wrecked, captured by savages, and about to be burned alive" (Aldington 28; Mackay 39), and obviously was an imitation of Ballantyne's Coral Island, which ostensibly is set in Fiji, and the author of which Stevenson had met.

At the age of twenty-four Stevenson met a customs inspector named J. Seed whom the government of New Zealand had sent to Britain to report on the Navigator (Samoan) Islands. While visiting the Stevensons Seed recommended Samoa as an ideal place for people suffering from respiratory ailments. Stevenson's enthusiasm was such that he began a satiric utopian novel entitled "The Hair Trunk or The Ideal Commonwealth." The gist of the fragment which survives is dialogue among characters who correspond to Stevenson and his circle of friends, condemning contemporary civilization and aspiring to establish a colony which will
combine "the extraordinary productive powers of civilisation and the freedom and purity of barbarism." After rejecting Australia as a place where "Nobody [is] about but the Aborigines," the friends select the Navigator Islands as a paradise with "ideal climate, ideal inhabitants, and ideal products." Before trailing off into the proposed adventures by which the group can steal sufficient funds to travel, Stevenson reveals one piece of trivia about Polynesia. When one character objects that living in Samoa might subject the group to contagion from leprosy, another accurately replies, "Not in the Navigators" but rather "in the Sandwich Islands" ("The Hair Trunk" 38, 13, 19, 20).

Other passages in Stevenson's early writing reveal his receptiveness to the exotic, especially the appeal of the South Seas. In 1875, Stevenson wrote to Fanny Sitwell of "beautiful places, green forever, perfect shapes of men and women, with red flowers in their hair, and nothing to do but study oratory and etiquette, sit in the sun, and pick up the fruits as they fall" (Works 20: 319-20; Furnas, "Exile 135). In his 1876 essay "Charles of Orleans" Stevenson uses an analogy to the "noble savages" of Polynesia to describe the ascension of King Louis XI: "When missionaries land in South Sea islands and lay strange embargo on the simplest things in life, the islanders will not be much more puzzled and irritated than Charles of Orleans at the policy of the Eleventh Louis" (Works, 4: 285). In other works the smuggler, Huddleston, in "The Pavillion on the Links" and
the kidnappers of David Balfour both recognize the South Seas as a region beyond all law.

When Stevenson followed Fanny Vandergrift Osbourne to San Francisco, he came five thousand miles closer to the South Seas. In _The Wrecker_ he recaptures the impact the Embarcadero had on his imagination.

From sailors and other old South Sea hands he heard enticingly about islands with 'precipitous shores, spired mountain tops, the deep shade of hanging forests, the unresting surf upon the reef, and the unending peace of the lagoon; sun, moon and stars of an imperial brightness; man moving in these scenes scarce fallen, and woman lovelier than Eve; the primal curse abrogated, the boat urged, and the long night beguiled with poetry and choral song.' (Furnas, "Exile" 135; _Wrecker_ 131)

Here one senses more fully the Lotos Land than in Tennyson's poem.

The Bay Area also expanded Stevenson's literary sense of the South Seas, for among Fanny's friends was Charles Warren Stoddard whose _South Sea Idylls_ Stevenson read with interest and appreciation. Stoddard's _Lepers of Molokai_ prompted Stevenson's own pilgrimage and colored his observations during his week at Kalaupapa. In addition to becoming a lifelong family friend, Stoddard gave Stevenson copies of _Typee_ and _Omoo_ which he read repeatedly. Almost a decade later as he retraced Melville's route through the Marquesas, Tahiti, and Hawaii, Stevenson annotated the copy of _Omoo_, noting points of agreement and disagreement with Melville and correcting Melville's Polynesian vocabulary, for Melville heard and spelled with a New England ear.

Soon after Stevenson married Fanny Osbourne, her
daughter Isobel, by eloping to Hawaii with an artist named Joe Strong, put the Stevensons in regular communication with Polynesia, albeit the most westernized part. A supporter of Hawaiian royalty, Isobel Strong suggested that Fanny and Louis call on Queen Kapiolani and Princess Lilioukalani when they visited London for the Silver Jubilee, although it doesn't appear that the Stevensons did so. Joe Strong as court artist and photographer accompanied King David Kalakaua's unsuccessful pan-Polynesian expedition—a trip to solicit confederation between Samoa and Hawaii which was planned without considering the power of colonial interests in Samoa and further marred by outrageous drunkenness on the part of the ambassadors and the crew.

*Treasure Island* was a product of Stevenson's map-drawing games with his stepson Lloyd Osbourne, his reading of adventure literature, father Thomas Stevenson's knowledge of the ocean, and of course his own imagination; yet it also is vaguely set on an imaginary island in the South Seas. The popularity of *Treasure Island* brought Stevenson "a small armoury of buccaneering weapons" sent by his new admirers "in the pretense that they had belonged to David Pew or Long John Silver," which undoubtedly served as invitations to adventure (Stevenson to Burlingame, February 1890; *Works*, 3, 225).

Additional sources of Stevenson's literary knowledge of the South Seas came from *The Marriage of Loti* and from Findlay's nautical *Directory* to the South Pacific, a huge
book which supplements information on tides, winds, seasonal variations, and geography with anthropological information on all charted islands, and which may have provided as fascinating reading as the most exciting South Seas fiction.

When Stevenson met Samuel Clemens in New York in 1888, they may have discussed Clemens' trip to Hawaii made fourteen years earlier. Stevenson so enjoyed Roughing It, chapters 74-78 of which deal with Clemens' real and exaggerated experiences in Hawaii, that he later requested from his agent copies of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn (Letter to Charles Baxter, 18 June 1894, Ferguson and Waingrow 360).

What began as pleasure reading became essential research for his proposed masterpiece, In the South Seas. In this book Stevenson cites Darwin's Voyage of the Beagle and Otto von Kotzebue's account of Adam Johann von Krusenstern's South Seas voyage. Passages from In the South Seas allude to the writing of other South Seas scholars, missionaries, and travellers, whose obscure books and pamphlets Stevenson studied for linguistic, anthropological, biological, and other scientific information. Among these people are the travel writer Isabella Lucy Bird Bishop; a Dr. Codrington; a Dr. Campbell who wrote a book called Poenaamo; the Dr. Turner whom Adams also cites as an expert on Samoan culture; a Monsieur Cuzart, possibly a botanist; a missionary, Mr. Wilmot; a Dr. F. Otto Sierich; and an unnamed visitor to the Gilbert Islands one or two decades
prior to Stevenson's stay. Although mission journals seem to have been Stevenson's least favorite South Seas reading, he avidly read *Pioneering New Guinea* written by his friend and hero James Chalmers; and Stevenson's reference to the martyred John Williams may indicate familiarity with his *Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South Sea Islands*. Finally, in setting out to sea Stevenson contrasts himself to Tennyson's persona in "Locksley Hall," who abandons his dream of escape to the South Seas.

Because Stevenson met and corresponded with Sir George Grey of New Zealand, with whom he shared a belief in islanders' capacity for self rule, Stevenson most likely read Grey's studies of Polynesian mythology. And once settled in Vailima, Stevenson regularly requested from his agents, Charles Baxter and E. L. Burlingame, books for his library, some of which dealt with the South Seas. Such books include Captain N. J. L. Wharton's *Literal Transcription of the Original Manuscript of Captain Cook's Journal* during his first Pacific voyage, William Wawn's *The South Sea Islanders*, and a boy's book by E. S. Elbes entitled *Lost in Samoa*. The Robert Louis Stevenson Museum in St. Helena, California has a copy of William Churchward's book *Blackbirding in the Pacific* which belonged to Stevenson.

The distance of Stevenson's travels and the remoteness of the places he settled made his South Seas reading more eclectic than systematic; but his scholarship is probably
more extensive than can be ascertained from citations in his letters or investigation of estate auction programs or library provenance files. Concerning Stevenson's library, Arthur Mahaffy, a visitor to Vailima in the 1890's, reported in a letter to The Spectator these observations: "Next come books of travel on almost every country in the world, the bulk of them however, dealing with the Pacific. From Captain Cook down, it would be hard to name a Pacific travel book that has not found itself on the shelves at Vailima" (Hammerton 113).

**Stevenson's Life in the South Seas**

Writers whose adventures equal or exceed those of their own characters often become more famous than the art they create. Such is the case with Robert Louis Stevenson, about whom over thirty full biographies of varying length, focus, and quality have been written, to the near exclusion of critical studies on his immensely varied writing. Despite the plethora of biographical material a brief summary of Stevenson's life in the South Seas must here precede detailed discussion of what he wrote. Details come mainly from biographies by his cousin and official biographer Graham Balfour, *Life of Robert Louis Stevenson*, and by J. C. Furnas, *Voyage to Windward*, but can also be found in most of the many other treatments of his life.

Stevenson ventured into the South Seas more in search of life than of new subjects for his writing. Ill health
plagued him most of his short life. By 1888, he had sought out nearly every European area recommended for people with respiratory problems, but to little avail. Similarly, his stay during the winter of 1887-88 at Dr. Edward L. Trudeau's tuberculosis resort in Saranac Lake, New York, brought little relief. The one place Stevenson seemed to thrive was at sea; so to try to elude death, he resolved to go to sea.

Facilitating this move, American publisher S. S. McClure offered him about ten thousand dollars to do a series of articles on travels he might make, giving him a choice of the Caribbean or the Pacific. Coincidentally, Fanny Stevenson wired from San Francisco that she had found a yacht, the Casco, suitable for sailing the South Seas, the charter cost of which would be about ten thousand dollars. After the June 28, 1888, departure from San Francisco Bay, the increasingly tropical sea air changed Stevenson from the sickly man Casco Captain A. H. Otis feared would be buried at sea to one of the most able and active sailors aboard the yacht.

On July 27, when the Casco approached Nukuhiwa, Marquesas, Stevenson was transfixed by what he saw. While reports that the Marquesans had recently been cannibals fascinated rather than repulsed him, he found himself most attracted to island royalty, Queen Vaekehu and her educated son Prince Stanislas Moanatini. Similarly, as his travels progressed Stevenson's closest friends would include Tahitian Chief Ori-a-Ori, Hawaiian King Kalakaua, Gilbertese
tyrant Tembinok', and deposed Samoan King Mataafa. Especially disturbing was the disintegration and death of the Marquesan people, caused, in his view, not only by white transmitted disease but also by malaise due to missionary prohibitions on recreational and cultural activities. Stevenson's month-long stay in the Marquesas provided him material for "The Feast of Famine," one of the two Polynesian ballads he wrote.

The next segment of the cruise was more dangerous than Stevenson probably realized. Recognizing that in the Marquesas he had not only excellent material for his "Letters" for McClure, but the beginnings of a monumental book about the Pacific, Stevenson had Captain Otis steer through the uncharted Tuamotu atolls, anchoring in the lagoon of Fakarava. The Marquesas, Society, Hawaiian, and Samoan Archipelagoes are volcanic islands dominated by huge steep mountains and lush valleys. The Tuamotus are coral atolls, crescent shaped, almost circular islands, each with its own lagoon, and most of such low elevation that in severe weather the islands may almost be submerged in the high surf. Tropical and pleasant though they were, atolls such as Fakarava, and later Butaritari and Apemama in the Gilberts, were not the Edens that the Marquesas seemed to be. Inhabitants had to support themselves by fishing and pearl-diving, and the meat and juice of coconuts made up a large portion of the diet. Yet Stevenson observed that the minimal contact with western missionaries, traders, and
adventurers and the greater need to toil resulted in heartier people raising larger families. In Fakarava Stevenson swapped folklore--Scotch for Polynesian--with his part-French hosts, giving him a base for his ghost story "The Isle of Voices."

Tahiti showed Stevenson that he was not immune to lung hemorrhages even in the tropics. Arriving in Papeete in late September with a cold, he grew more ill in the semi-civilized capital, sought a better climate in the rural Taravao district, and finally found a place to stay in remote Tautira after an agonizing fourteen-hour ride in a horse-drawn wagon. In Tautira, Stevenson, unable to eat or sleep, sank near to death before Princess Moe helped to revive him with raw fish marinated in lemon sauce.

With the Casco in Papeete to replace its dry-rotted mast, the Stevenson family became the guests of Moe and Prince Ori-a-Ori, lesser members of the ruling Tevas clan. In addition to writing a portion of The Master of Ballantrae, Stevenson wrote narrative poetry, completing "Ticonderoga" and composing after nightly exchanges of stories and legends with Ori, "The Song of Rahero." Graham Balfour reports that in Tautira Stevenson discontinued the daily entries in his diary, but began to plan what he hoped would become a monumental work on the South Seas for which he began collecting, and even attempting to translate, Tahitian songs, poems, and stories.

In Tautira, Stevenson and Ori ceremonially exchanged
names—Henry Adams later did likewise with Tati Salmon, proving that this was not as momentous or unusual an event as the Stevensons made it out to be—Stevenson taking Ori's longer name Teriitera, and Ori becoming Rui, the Tahitian pronunciation of Louis. Fanny Stevenson exchanged names with Princess Moe. In the early 1900's, Ori told an interviewer, "I have people from all over the earth come here to Tautira and ask very foolish questions concerning him. There was nothing the matter with him. He was a fine man and my friend" (Maryland Allen 599).

The final stretch of the voyage in the Casco, from Tahiti to Hawaii, was uneventful except that unfavorable winds caused a week's delay, the Casco arriving on January 24, 1889. In Honolulu Stevenson dismissed the Casco and settled into a complex of cottages in Waikiki to complete The Master of Ballantrae, revise his Polynesian ballads, and organize material for his "Letters."

Two days after his arrival in Honolulu Stevenson was formally presented to King David Kalakaua at Iolani Palace. Stevenson admired King Kalakaua, who had read both Treasure Island and Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, for his extensive knowledge of the history, anthropology, and oral literary traditions of the Hawaiian people. Stevenson described the king as "a very fine intelligent fellow," adding, "but ... what a crop for the drink" (To Charles Baxter, 8 February 1889, Ferguson and Waingrow, 240). At the King's urging Stevenson took Hawaiian lessons and he may have studied
Kalakaua's compilations of folklore, but otherwise he felt "oppressed with civilization."

Weary of Honolulu Stevenson, on April 26, 1889, took the steamer W. G. Hall to Hookena on the Kona coast of the Island of Hawaii, near the site of Captain Cook's death. Hosted by a Hawaiian storekeeper and a Hawaiian school teacher, he recharged himself on what he described as "that warm light vin du pays of human affection, . . . that simple dignity" of Polynesians (To Will Low, 20 May 1889, Works 22: 174). Among the sites Stevenson visited was Hale o Keawe, the House of Keawe. Before 1819, when King Liholiho ended the kapu system—a complex set of royal prohibitions which regulated all behavior—a fugitive who could reach Hale o Keawe would be allowed sanctuary and after a series of rites be cleansed of any crimes and free to reenter society.

Stevenson noted a huge house overlooking the ocean. Both sites figure in Stevenson's story "The Bottle Imp," which Sister Mary McGaw in her book Robert Louis Stevenson in Hawaii suggests Stevenson drafted while in Hookena (76-79).

On April 15, Belgian priest Father Damien succumbed to leprosy in the Kalaupapa leper colony on Molokai. Simultaneously moved by and curious about the Belgian martyr, Stevenson, on May 21, boarded the Kilauea Hou and spent a week in a guest cottage in the leper colony collecting material he unexpectedly would put to use to defend Damien's reputation against the libelous attacks of Stevenson's former host, the Reverend Charles McEwen Hyde.
He also prepared material for ten "Letters" about Hawaii, five about Kona and five about Molokai.

As his aspirations for his research rose, he realized that he needed to visit more islands to get a fuller sense of the South Seas. He also felt he would have to read books on languages, anthropology, history, and geology unavailable in any Pacific region except Australia and New Zealand. Through his stay in Hawaii Stevenson had retraced the paths of his literary predecessors Melville, Loti, Stoddard, and Twain. In his subsequent travels he ventured into areas previously unexplored by literary figures.

Relieved at being refused passage aboard the missionary vessel The Morning Star, Stevenson found a trading schooner, the Equator which took his party, now consisting of himself, his wife, Lloyd Osbourne, Joe Strong, and a Chinese servant they had hired in the Marquesas, to some truly remote areas. Stevenson had already revised Osbourne's comic novel The Wrong Box, which was published under both their names. Inspired by the sea yarns they heard in every port and aboard the Equator, Stevenson and Osbourne decided to collaborate on The Wrecker, an adventure novel about wrecked ships and nautical crime. They also daydreamed about owning their own trading schooner, a plan the dishonesty of South Seas trade quickly discouraged.

In Butaritari on Great Makin Island in the Gilberts the Stevensons dwelled in danger from armed natives gone wild because the king had lifted the taboo on alcohol. In
contrast, King Tembinok' who ruled Apemama with absolute power gave the Stevensons full protection. Tembinok' grew fond of his guests, and Stevenson was not immune from the appeal of the cult of the hero. He admired Tembinok's rule rather than being appalled at the whimsical cruelty which accompanied it. The delayed return of the _Equator_ kept the Stevensons on Apemama for at least four months.

In Hawaii, relying on information related to him by Joe Strong, Stevenson had written a letter to the London _Times_ about the political situation in Samoa, islands over which England, Germany, and the United States claimed jurisdiction. On December 7, 1889, the _Equator_ docked at Apia, where in their disheveled condition the Stevensons were at first taken for a troop of actors or entertainers.

Stevenson planned to stay in Samoa for a few weeks and then begin his return home, possibly visiting Tonga and Fiji en route. Initially unimpressed with Samoa, he gradually became aware of some of the advantages Samoa offered over other islands. The Marquesas, Fanny's favorite islands, had neither postal service nor medical care. Tahiti was pleasant but also remote. A cooler climate and "excessive civilization" eliminated Hawaii as a possible place to settle. In contrast, Samoa was still thoroughly Polynesian—despite the Caucasian population of about 300—yet on shipping lines with San Francisco, Honolulu, and Auckland. When an estate of almost four hundred acres three miles from Apia went on sale, Stevenson purchased it. Since he wanted
to return to England at least for a visit and since the family could not occupy the land until existing shacks were refurbished and construction on a master house begun, the Stevensons sailed for Australia just after the New Year.

Sydney in February is far more temperate than Edinburgh any time of year, but the stay in Australia showed Stevenson that he could not live comfortably in any but a tropical climate. The illness which had made him a semi-invalid most of his life returned, preventing him from using the Sydney libraries to do research for his South Seas "Letters" and book. However, before succumbing to the sickbed, he noticed in a mission newspaper a letter from Reverend Hyde of Honolulu to a Reverend H. E. Gage, claiming that Father Damien of Molokai was a filthy, lecherous fraud, ill deserving of praise. In righteous fury Stevenson wrote defending the Catholic martyr. He showed what he had written to his family and with their support risked a libel suit by publishing the "Open Letter on Father Damien."

As Stevenson's health declined, Fanny, with much the same determination and energy with which she had been able to charter the Casco in San Francisco and persuade a reluctant Chinese storekeeper to rent a horse and wagon in Tahiti, got herself and her husband passage aboard the ship Janet Nicoll. A dock strike had stopped nearly all waterfront activity in Sydney, but the Stevensons were able to sail out because the entire crew of the ship were nonunion South Sea Islanders. As the Janet Nicoll plied
its business through scattered Micronesian islands Stevenson almost immediately recovered his health and aboard ship partially revised his "Letters" into the form in which they would appear in McClure's newspapers.

Once back in Samoa, except for second visits to Australia and to Hawaii, Stevenson never left. He organized the extensive writing he had done during his nearly two years of travel and vigorously turned out new material. The book of ballads featuring "Ticonderoga," "The Feast of Famine," and "The Song of Rahêro" came out in 1890. Small editions of "The Bottle Imp" and "Isle of Voices" came out both singly and together in 1891, with The Beach of Falesa first printed in 1892, although combination of the three stories into the single Islands Nights' Entertainments did not occur until 1893. The intended "Letters" on Samoa never appeared in McClure's publications but in 1892 achieved book form before the other "Letters" in A Footnote to History. The Wrecker, drafted mainly on Apemama, received Stevenson's thorough editing, revision, and rewriting in Samoa in 1890, appeared in serial form in Scribner's Magazine from August 1891 through July, 1892, and almost immediately afterward came out in book form (Ellison, Tusitala 187). The Ebb Tide, which Stevenson and Osbourne first planned almost as a sequel to The Wrecker and over which Stevenson agonized for three years, appeared as a serial in McClure's in the United States and To-day in England at the end of 1893 and came out as a book in the spring of 1894 (Swearingen 186). However,
the South Seas book which Stevenson had once hoped would be his masterpiece turned out to be the unrevised "Letters" written for McClure published in book form, minus the Hawaii "Letters," two years after his death. He also wrote David Balfour and the fragments St. Ives and Weir of Hermiston while in Samoa.

As the cruises over two years provided Stevenson with more material than he was ever able to put into print, Samoa provided a home from which he could work. The value Samoans placed on etiquette and oratory, and the loyalty of his families of household servants raised Stevenson's view of the Samoans. In order to participate more fully in community affairs Stevenson studied the Samoan language and at his most ambitious tried to write in Samoan a story of Saxon times in Britain called Eatuina or Edwina (Balfour, Life 2: 155). More practically, he developed sufficient fluency in Samoan to converse with his Samoan servants, and with help from Osbourne, missionary friends, and Samoan friends to deliver orations in correct polite Samoan. While the Stevensons tried to develop their estate, Vailima, into a working plantation, instead they established the largest dwelling in Samoa, which became the site for numerous dinners, dances, and Samoan style feasts to which the Stevensons invited the American, English, mixed, and Samoan communities. Sundays—and nightly while his mother lived at Vailima—Stevenson, who was more agnostic than orthodox, would preside over prayers which the entire household
attended. Some of these were published after his death into a sort of memory book entitled *Vailima Prayers*. Half jokingly Stevenson dubbed Vailima "Subpriorsford" in reference to Sir Walter Scott's bankrupting estate, Abbotsford.

Admission into the different societies of Samoa had perils as well as benefits, for Stevenson spent an aggravating amount of time enmeshed in local politics. Two items from the same newspaper reveal how his status changed among colonial officials during his four years in Samoa. An 1890 issue of the Samoan *Times* welcomed Stevenson in the following words: "We feel proud that after examining many places in the South Seas, Mr. Stevenson... selected as his future abode Samoa." By 1894, the same newspaper asserted: "Mr. Stevenson is... no friend to Samoa, although he poses as the champion of the oppressed and long-suffering inhabitants" (Ellison, *Tusitala* 130, 213).

In Hawaii while siding with the royalist cause, Stevenson avoided speaking out or writing on behalf of the monarchy. In Samoa, however, the greed of American and European plantation and trade interests—especially the German plantations farmed by semi-slave labor lured from Micronesia by "blackbirders," as dealers in human flesh were called—provoked his protests. For example, he wrote to his cousin Robert Alan Mobray Stevenson, "It is impossible to live here and not feel very sorely the consequences of horrid white management" (*Works* 23: 387).
Stevenson's most idealistic strategy was to write *A Footnote to History* chronicling the events of the previous decade in Samoa in hope that more enlightened and responsible politicians in the United States and England would try to resolve the troubles before the Samoans waged civil war. Instead the book elicited no response from either country, enraged the local powers, and even brought on a lawsuit. When appeals to the European chief Justice of Samoa proved useless Stevenson began openly meeting with rival claimants to the Samoan throne. In addition, he sent three letters about the Samoan situation to the London *Times* and to the British Parliament, in one of which he compared one claimant, Mataafa, to Toussaint L'Overture (Ellison, *Tusitala* 247). In so acting Stevenson risked deportation.

When actual fighting broke out Stevenson offered his house as a sanctuary for any Samoans seeking safety and used his influence to convert the British Consulate into a temporary hospital where he and Fanny helped nurse the wounded of both sides. British Consul Sir Berry Cusack-Smith recalls that when Mataafa surrendered, Stevenson intervened to guarantee that he would not be executed (Masson 329). In addition to urging release of Mataafa's followers, Stevenson ostentatiously brought food and clothing to the prisoners and then gave a job at Vailima to the fired jailer with whom he collaborated.

It is difficult to sort out Samoan politics of ninety years ago or to judge accurately Stevenson's influence in
Samoa. However, "Mackintosh," a story by W. Somerset Maugham, offers a comparison. In this story a young Samoan, out of dislike for the work, murders a patriarchal white official who has cajoled his Polynesian subjects into building roads. In contrast, the chiefs under Mataafa, on their own volition and with no support from Stevenson except the loan of tools, built the three-mile "Road of the Loving Hearts" along what had been a horse trail connecting Apia and Vailima. In one of his final letters Stevenson exults: "Think of it! It is road-making—the most fruitful cause (after taxes) of all rebellions in Samoa, a thing to which they could not be wiled with money nor driven by punishment. It does give me a sense of having done something in Samoa after all" (To Sidney Colvin, September 1894, Works 23: 430.) At the feast at which Stevenson expressed his gratitude to the chiefs, he also implored them that in activities such as road-building lay the key to their retention of their land and to their survival. There was a sense of patronizing superiority in Stevenson's role as "Lord" of Vailima, yet accompanying this was a sense of courtesy, kindness, respect, and fairness that won him possibly greater admiration in the Samoan community than any papolagi, or white man, before or since.

Near the end of 1894, Stevenson seemed to be enjoying his best health—although the last photograph taken of him alive does not reveal a well man. His lung problems appeared to be in remission. Intellectually he was in top
form, dictating pages of *Weir of Hermiston* each morning to his amanuensis Isobel Strong and working intermittently on three other works. With an irony that the creator of characters such as John Silver, Loudon Dodd, Alan Breck Stewart, and Robert Herrick would have appreciated, a stroke on the evening on December 3, 1894 cut Stevenson off in mid-sentence. The chiefs who had recently completed one road for "Tusitala" worked all night to cut a trail to the top of Mount Vaea seven hundred feet above Vailima, where the next day Stevenson was buried.
CHAPTER II

IN THE SOUTH SEAS

This chapter focuses on Robert Louis Stevenson's non-fictional South Seas writing and contrasts his hopes for In the South Seas with the reality of its posthumous publication. It chronicles the emotions he felt at different stages in the writing and the conflicts he had with his editor and his wife about the content and purposes of the book and then discusses flaws and strengths of the book and reasons for its relative unpopularity both in serial and book form. Since Stevenson originally planned for his South Seas book to include his observations of life in Hawaii and his study of Samoan history, treatment of In the South Seas incorporates the "Hawaii Letters" and A Footnote to History.¹

Stevenson began his literary career as a travel writer with accounts of a canoeing trip on the Sambre Canal and

¹In the discussion of Stevenson's South Seas travel writing ISS refers to the book In the South Seas, first published in 1896; the "Hawaii Letters" refers to ten chapters written about Hawaii but not included in In the South Seas, reprinted as "The Eight Islands" in Stevenson, Travels in Hawaii, ed. A. Grove Day; and the term "Letters" refers to the travel letters which S. S. McClure syndicated in 1891 and which with the omission of the "Hawaii Letters" became with minimal revision In the South Seas. With the same word being used to describe different pieces of writing, as much as possible Stevenson's personal letters are referred to as correspondence.
Oise River in Belgium and France in *An Inland Voyage* and a hike from Velay to St. Jean du Gard, France over the Cevennes Mountains in *Travels with a Donkey*. Charm is the main quality of these books, as Stevenson becomes the slightly absurd comic hero of each account, humorously explaining such things as that the Oise River was hardly one which either commercial navigators or recreational boatmen travelled, or telling about his ineptness in packing his gear or trying to command a donkey. Stevenson tells more about how he feels than what he sees. The books remind a reader of Laurence Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* minus the implied sexuality, because sentiment, geniality, kind feelings toward one's fellow creatures dominate these stylistically fluid but somewhat empty works.

Stevenson is also the comic hero of *The Silverado Squatters*, telling how he, his wife, and his stepson homesteaded in a deserted California mining camp after the marriage. Stevenson creates slightly absurd portraits of himself doing such things as rising early to observe the sunrise or the fog and making porridge or hiking the mile down to the tollhouse on guard for rattlesnakes. Because style eclipses content, one recalls enjoying these three travel works but does not remember much that occurs.

The two parts of another travel book, *The Amateur Immigrant* have a more serious purpose and a much harsher tone. Stevenson writes in disgust at the shiftless lack of purpose of the immigrants to America with whom he crosses
the Atlantic and traverses the American continent and at the anonymity with which he and his fellow travelers are regarded. In describing the voyage and the train trip, he shifts his focus from petty events in his own life to the things he observes and their significance. The seediness of his surroundings augmented by his own declining health produce almost surreal descriptions.

His contemporaries did not get to read *The Amateur Immigrant*, except those portions printed in magazines, because Thomas Stevenson prevailed on his son not to publish it. The popularity of *An Inland Voyage* and *Travels with a Donkey*, which rivaled his lesser fiction in sales, and unfamiliarity with his one venture into realistic and serious travel writing led S. S. McClure to underwrite the expenses for the cruise. McClure reasoned that if somewhat commonplace regions of Europe could elicit minor masterpieces from Stevenson, the South Seas might inspire sensational writing.

By 1888, Stevenson had mastered most forms of literature. The popularity of *Treasure Island*, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and *Kidnapped*, plus royalties from dramas based on *Jekyll and Hyde*, had brought fame and financial independence. Yet he hoped that this literary success was only a prelude to some greater work. He saw in his first glimpse of the Marquesas an initiation into beauty beyond anything previously imaginable, as he wrote, "The first experience can never be repeated. The first love, the first
sunrise, the first South Sea island are memories apart, and
touch... a virginity of sense" (ISS 2). He felt that the
complex savagery and grandeur he was experiencing could
inspire an epic masterpiece, which he would call In the
South Seas and which would encompass history, ethnology,
geology, and folklore, rather than the mere collection of
observations and anecdotes on exotica McClure had hired him
to write.

Stevenson's correspondence reveals the progression and
regression of his aspirations for In the South Seas. As
early as 6 September 1888, he promised Charles Baxter that
he would be able "to tell... more of the South Seas after
... [a] few months than any other writer has done--except
Herman Melville perhaps" (Ferguson and Waingrow 236).
Fifteen months later along with the chapter outline for the
book, he boasted to Colvin, "Not many people have seen more
of [the South Seas] than I, perhaps no one--certainly no one
capable of using the material" (Works 22: 204).

Yet with Stevenson's growing awareness of the
complexity of Pacific cultures came misgivings. In December
1889, he boasted, "My book is now practically modelled: if
I can execute what is designed, then there are few better
books now extant on this globe, bar the epics, and the big
tragedies, and histories, and the choice lyric poetics, and
a novel or so--none" (To Sidney Colvin, Works 22: 204). Yet
about the same time he confessed to Charles Baxter, "It is
very difficult to see what is the right thing. All I am
sure of is that I must stay" (Ferguson and Waingrow 252).
By February 1890, Stevenson saw that the Letters he was
writing for McClure were "simply patches" for the travel
volume, with the history of recent politics in Samoa likely
to become an additional book (To E. L. Burlingame, Works 22:
225). By the end of the year Stevenson could report to
Colvin only the completion of eight "Letters," and these
accompanied with the warning not to judge them as finished
products and an exclamation of agony--"The job is immense; I
stagger under the material" (6 November 1890, Widener
Collection 225, Vailima Letter 1, Houghton Library)--which
Colvin omitted from the published correspondence.

Frustration and despair dominate most of the rest of
Stevenson's comments on his South Seas writing. To Henry
James he confided,

Gracious what a strain is a long book! The time it took
me to design this volume before I could dream of putting
pen to paper, was excessive; and think of writing books
of travel on the spot, when I am continually extending
my information, revising my opinions, and seeing the
most finely finished portions of my work come part-by-
part to pieces. Very soon I shall have no opinions
left. And without an opinion how to string artistically
vast accumulations of fact. (19 December 1890, Works,
22, 347)

To Colvin he raged, "All the good I can express is just
this; some day when style revisits me, they will be
excellent matter to rewrite... . I haven't the least
anxiety about this book; unless I die I shall find time to
make it good" (19 March 1891, Widener Collection 225,
Vailima Letter 6).
Part of Stevenson's retreat from optimism to despair came from the realization that his subject matter exceeded his capacity to control it. Yet part came from the criticism he faced from those whose advice he most valued, his wife Fanny and his editor Sidney Colvin. Two long quotations from letters to Colvin convey this frustration.

One thing embarrasses me. No one ever seems to understand my attitude about that book; the stuff sent was never meant for other than a first state; I never meant it to appear as a book. Know well that I have never had one hour of inspiration since it was begun, and have only beaten out my metal by brute force and patient repetition, I had hoped some day to get a 'spate of style' and burnish it—fine mixed metaphor. I am now so sick that I intend, when the letters are done and some more written that will be wanted, simply to make a book of it by the pruning knife. I cannot fight longer; I am sensible of having done worse than I hoped, worse than I feared; all I can do now is to do the best I can for the future, and clear the book like a piece of bush, with axe and cutlass. Even to produce the MS of this will occupy me at the most favorable opinion till the middle of next year; really five years were wanting, when I could have made a book; but I have a family, and perhaps I could not make the book after all. (18 April 1891, Widenor Collection 225, Vailima Letter 7)

One word more about the South Seas in answer to a question I observe I have forgotten to answer. The Tahiti part has never turned up, because it has never been written.... As for telling you where I went or when, or anything about Honolulu, I would rather die; that is fair and plain. How can anybody care when or how I left Honolulu? A man upwards of forty cannot waste his time in communicating matter of that indifference. The letters, it appears, are tedious; they would be more tedious still if I wasted my time upon such infantile and sucking bottle details. If ever I put in any such detail, it is because it leads into something, or serves as a transition. To tell it for its own sake; never! the mistake is that all through I have told too much, I have not had sufficient confidence in the reader and have overfed him. (7 September 1891, Works, 22, 403)

Although Stevenson announced after completing thirty-
seven Letters that he would write no more, privately he asserted the merits of what he had written. In some of his final words to Colvin he wrote:

I am strong for making a volume out of selections from the South Seas letters; I read over again the King of Apemama, and it is good in spite of your teeth, and a real curiosity, a thing that can never be seen again, and the group is annexed and Tembinoka dead. I wonder, couldn't you send out to me the first five Butaritari letters and the Low Archipelago [Tuamotu] ones (both of which I lost or mislaid) and I can chop out a perfectly fair volume of what I wish to be preserved. It can keep for the last of the series [of collected works]. (7 August 1894, Works, 4, 417)

Stevenson's frustration with his audience parallels that of Herman Melville, who while writing works of profound philosophical and moral depth could not rise above his literary reputation as "the man who had lived among cannibals." Stevenson did not mind gaining increased notoriety for dwelling among "cannibals," but he also wanted to teach his audience that the Pacific was a fascinating and complex region, "a no man's land of the ages, a stir-about of epochs and races, barbarisms and civilizations, virtues and crimes" (To Colvin, June 1889, Works, 22: 186).

A sampling of editorial comments from Sydney Colvin and passages from the correspondence of Mrs. Stevenson show the extent of their influence on the South Seas book. The region that entranced Stevenson bored Colvin from his distant perspective at the British Museum. Colvin's introduction to In the South Seas discourages the reader from proceeding into the book. "Before serial production had gone very far, ... [Stevenson] realized that the
personal and the impersonal elements were not very successfully combined nor in proportions that contented his readers" (Works, 16: 4). In a biographical sketch of Stevenson Colvin asserts that "from living permanently in that outlandish world and far from cultural society both he and his writing must deteriorate" (Colvin, Memories 145). In a prefacing note to Stevenson's Pacific correspondence, Colvin again condemns Stevenson's "South Seas Letters:" "Unfortunately, he persisted in the endeavour to make his work impersonal and full of information, or what he called 'serious interest' exactly in the manner which his wife had foreseen before they left Honolulu, and from which she had wisely tried to dissuade him" (Works, 22: 100).

While Colvin expressed his disappointment with Stevenson's "South Seas Letters" from a distance of over ten thousand miles, Fanny sustained a barrage against the way her husband was going about organizing and writing the Letters and the time involved in this research. She was a powerful and able woman who guarded her husband's health and who endured a great deal for him, including over twenty-five thousand miles of ocean cruises on which she was often sick; but she was also strong-willed, single-minded, and almost unopposable, especially in her criticism of her husband's writing. David Daiches notes that, "in spite of her unconventional upbringing, she tried to act as Victorian censor of Louis' writing and must share part of the responsibility for his timidity in his handling of women in
his novels" ("Which ... Stevenson" 63). Part of Stevenson's reaction to pressure from his editor and his wife was to produce travel writing which pleased neither them nor himself and finally to put aside his great South Seas book.

Some incidents during their marriage help explain some of Fanny's behavior in the Pacific. Although a writer of only moderate talent, she had literary aspirations. Early in their marriage she collaborated with her husband on The Dynamiter and on an almost unreadable play entitled The Hanging Judge. When Stevenson's cousin Katherine da Mattos showed Fanny a story she had written but had been unable to publish, Fanny suggested that she might be able "to do something with it." Altering the story slightly, Fanny published it as "The Nixie" in Scribner's Magazine under her name. When W. E. Henley read the story and wrote to Stevenson in Saranac Lake accusing Fanny of plagiarism, Stevenson furiously defended his wife and ended what had been one of his closest friendships. She enjoyed her visits to the Marquesas and Tahiti, and she withstood the hardships of living in the Tuamotus and the Gilbergs, but when she realized that for her husband's health and even his pleasure they might settle in Samoa, the glory of the Pacific lost some of its radiance. To Colvin she admitted her misgivings, "I'm assured that I shall like the [Samoan] natives very much when I really know them; perhaps I may, but I have my doubts" (Lucas 225).
Furthermore, the nature of their marriage changed. Except for several months during the early part of the courtship at Gretz and Paris, Fanny had been as much a nurse and a mother to Louis as a lover and wife. When she proceeded with her hurried divorce from Samuel Osbourne and marriage to Stevenson, she knew she might as quickly become a widow. When after eight years of frequent convalescence under Fanny's care Stevenson suddenly enjoyed, albeit with relapses, the best health of his life, he no longer needed the nurse.

Investigation of the manuscripts of Stevenson's correspondence reveals that in 1893 Fanny suffered a mental breakdown, all mention of which Colvin deleted from the Vailima Letters as "beneath scorn" (McKay 3: 960). In a letter to his mother Stevenson describes Fanny's condition as influenza, but an insert in Isobel's handwriting interjects, "Fanny is not recovering. She lies in bed, doesn't smoke, doesn't want to eat or speak.... I would like to see her take an interest in something" (To Margaret Stevenson, 17 Ap. 1893, Beinecke Collection 3431). Among the many comments from Stevenson on the situation, two stand out. "She passes from death-bed scenes to states of stupor. The last was a hell of a scene which lasted all night--I will never tell anyone what about, it could not be believed and was so unlike herself or any of us--in which Belle and I held her for about two hours; she wanted to run away."

"Today's fit (which was the most insane she has yet had) was
still gentle and melancholy. I am broken on the wheel" (To Colvin, Ap. 1893, Beinecke 3114).

Concerning In the South Seas Fanny at first agreed that the South Seas book could become a masterpiece, but she countered her husband on what the book should include. Like Colvin and McClure she wanted her husband to write in the same modes as his earlier travel works and to remain faithful to the archetypal depictions of the South Seas, as her complaint to Colvin in a May 1889 letter reveals.

Louis has the most enchanting material that anyone ever had in the whole world for his book, and I am afraid he is going to spoil it all. He has taken into his Scotch Stevenson head, that a stern duty lies before him, and that his book must be a sort of scientific and historical impersonal thing, comparing the different languages (of which he knows nothing really) and the different people, the object being to settle the question as to whether they are of common Malay or not. Also to compare the Protestant and Catholic missions, etc., and the whole thing to be impersonal, leaving out all he knows of the people themselves. . . Think of a small treatise on the Polynesian races being offered to people who are dying to hear about Ori a Ori, the making of brothers with cannibals, the strange stories they told, and the extraordinary adventures that befell us;—suppose Herman Melville had given us theories as to the Polynesian language and the probable good and evil results of the missionary influences instead of Omoo or Typee. (Works, 3, 176-77)

The comments on Melville show the extent to which she absorbed Melville's fictional inventions designed to pander to the romantic stereotypes his readers had of the South Pacific and the extent to which she ignored Melville's carefully researched factual information about Polynesia and his chronicling of abuses of islanders by trader and missionary alike (Anderson 179-95).
In subsequent letters Fanny confides in Colvin that she discouraged including in the book such topics as the formation of coral reefs, the origin of South Sea peoples, possible language patterns; and that she tried to get her husband to eschew the South Seas works of any other writers. She felt that the book should contain "only what Louis' own experiences were," adding that the more serious topics "would have ruined the book... but for [her] brutality" (Colvin, "More Letters" 416, 417).

In fairness to Mrs. Stevenson, it must be admitted that her husband's pursuit of information could become absurd. On one occasion in Apemana he exhausted himself trying to chip off a chunk of coral which Fanny notes he could have picked up off the beach in Hawaii. In addition to being no journalist, Stevenson severely underestimated the magnitude of his subject. Its remoteness from western law and morality has sometimes made the entire Pacific seem even to the modern reader like a single community in which the creations of Stevenson, Maugham, Melville, Conrad, and Becke intersect, but it is a vast region with three separate cultural groups and over two hundred different languages in the Oceanic islands and with infinite variation within each tribe of people. Even one hundred years later scholars debate many of the same issues which fascinated Stevenson. However, the conclusion to the same letter from Fanny to Colvin--"always please fall upon me when his work goes wrong. He will stubbornly hold to his own position, but is
apt to give way if he thinks I am getting the blame" (417) reveals the extent to which she would manipulate her husband's writing.

Fanny, however, could also side with her husband. Whereas Colvin disparaged Stevenson's involvement in Samoan politics and stated that he would rather Stevenson write ten family histories than another letter to the London Times, Fanny was Louis' partner in their political participation. She supported the the writing and publication of A Footnote to History in hopes that it would help Mataafa, their friend and claimant to the Samoan throne.

It is possible that Colvin and Mrs. Stevenson were correct, that a volume of light chatter on the famous author's experiences in Polynesia would have delighted his readership and made a successful book, and that Stevenson was intellectually and artistically unsuited to comprehend the cultural history of Pacific Islanders. If In the South Seas is indeed a wasted effort, two reasons can explain its failure. If Colvin and Fanny were correct, then Stevenson stubbornly went ahead with doomed material in spite of their good council. Yet the flaws of the book may be the result of Stevenson's accepting their advice and trying to insert personal anecdotes into scholarly writing. A third possibility exists: that despite the difficulty he had writing his "Letters" and the conflicting advice he was assailed with, Stevenson still managed to write a flawed but comprehensive book, a draft of what could have become a
monumental study.

While Harry J. Moors, a friend of Stevenson in Apia, denigrates *In the South Seas* and claims to have secured Stevenson's release from having to write further "Letters" for McClure, several other writers knowledgeable about the region, including one who opposed Stevenson's advocacy of Polynesian self-determination, testify to the depth and accuracy of Stevenson's research and writing. Henry Adams admits in his letters to imitating Stevenson, but after having visited him berates the manner in which he lived while extolling his knowledge of the region. Adams writes "Stevenson has bought . . . four hundred acres of land at ten dollars an acre . . . . As his land is largely mountain, and wholly impenetrable forest, I think that two hundred acres would have been enough, and the balance might have been profitably invested in soap." On Stevenson's departure for Australia, "Stevenson so loves dirty vessels that he has gone to Sydney to get more seadirt on, the land-dirt having become monotonous" (*Henry Adams and His Friends* 202, 238). Despite this disparagement, Adams recognizes Stevenson's knowledge of the South Seas:

[Stevenson] has seen more of the islands than any literary or scientific man ever did before, and knows all that he has seen. He had much to say about his experiences, and about atolls, French gens d'armes, beachcombers, natives, and Chinamen . . . . He will tell his experiences in the form of travels, and I was rather surprised to find that his range of study included pretty much everything: geology, sociology, laws, politics, and ethnology. (*Adams, Letters* I: 426, 440)

Adams' fascination with the South Seas was such that when he
returned to the United States, he privately printed Tahiti: Memoires of Arii Taimai Oo Marama of Eimeo, his interpretation of the oral history shared with him by his hosts in Tahiti.

Arthur Johnstone, publisher of the Honolulu Pacific Commercial Advertiser and author of Recollections of Robert Louis Stevenson in the Pacific, accuses Stevenson of naivete in undercutting "the innate capacity of Anglo-Saxons to rule" with his support of Polynesian leaders, but praises the methods by which Stevenson gathered information.

He was not satisfied with the mere gathering of material for stories, as his predecessors had been, but he went deeply into the habits of savage life and tribal customs of the different groups. In the Marquesas Islands and Low Archipelago, besides the native side of the question, he made a careful study of French laws in force, and examined as closely as his time would permit into their effect on Polynesian customs and nationality. Folklore, with the customs concerning death, marriage, and adoptions, he examined quite fully, and took great store of facts with him for future use. He was extremely interested in the revolting and somewhat obscene habit of cannibalism which lingers in a few of the southern islands of the Pacific. And to him no sacrifice was too great where there was knowledge or a fact to be gained; he would traverse an island or cross a sea to secure such in his notebook. (49-50)

In the Vailima Letters Colvin mentions that his own letter which announced "the disappointment felt by Stevenson's friends at home at the impersonal and even tedious character of some portions of the South Seas Letters" provoked Stevenson's despairing letter of 29 April 1891. Having sabotaged Stevenson's hope for his South Seas book and diminished his confidence in Polynesia as a useful setting for his fiction and poetry, Colvin, in this
commentary written in 1901, adds, "As a corrective of this opinion, I may perhaps mention that there is a certain many voyaged master-mariner as well as master writer--no less a person than Mr. Joseph Conrad--who does not at all share it, and prefers In the South Seas to Treasure Island" (Works, 22, 367).

Colvin's belated qualification reveals several things. Appreciation of Stevenson's Polynesian works seems to require some personal interest in, and possibly experience with, the South Seas. Adams disdained Stevenson's style of living yet admired his ability as a writer and his knowledge of the South Seas. In contrast, Stevenson's friends and readership in England and America were unreceptive to information about Polynesia and hence the "South Seas Letters." Significantly, nowhere in his editorial or biographical commentary does Colvin criticize Stevenson's other minor works such a Memoire of Fleeming Jenkin, A Family of Engineers, or Edinburgh, Picturesque Notes, but only berates him for writing about "Blacks and Chocolates," involving himself in their politics, and believing that such people could be the proper subjects for serious literature.

Colvin's praise for Joseph Conrad, whom he served in much the same capacity as he did with Stevenson, reveals another barrier which Stevenson could not get past. Because Conrad was first a seaman and adventurer and later a man of letters, no one questioned his use of exotic settings, situations, or characters for his works of fiction. One
senses in Conrad such a confidence in the experiential backgrounds of his works, that had an editor suggested that Malay river villages or the skirmishing among Bugi tribesmen, native Malays, Arab carpetbaggers, and renegade whites were not proper material for literature, Conrad probably would have replied that this was the material he had. While critical and commercial success pleased Conrad and exceeded his expectations when he first wrote Almayer's Folly, he would have gone on writing with or without the sanction of the English literary establishment or reading public.

In contrast, Stevenson first embarked on a literary career at age sixteen, went through a literary apprenticeship during which he turned out articles, essays, stories, and romantic fantasies, and first met critical recognition as a stylist, and popular success as a creator of adventure novels. That he became an adventurer was almost an accident caused by his poor health. With his literary roots and his intellectual nurturing, he was keenly sensitive both to the advice of his literary friends such as Colvin, Edmund Gosse, Andrew Lang, Henry James, and Arthur Symonds and to the popularity of what he wrote. Paul Maixner summarizes the conflict Stevenson faced in writing his South Seas works. Among the barriers he faced were "having to live up to [others'] ideas of what he should accomplish, . . . [being] obliged to expend too much of his limited energy trying to placate supporters by doing work
they would approve of or trying to justify work he knew
would not" (Maixner 2).

Among more recent criticism, only that of J. C. 
Furnas--whose own book about the region is called Anatomy of
Paradise--praises In the South Seas. Furnas states that
Stevenson lacked the reporter's essential skill of ordering
details to build to a conclusion, but he so admires the
quantity and accuracy of information, that he rates In the
South Seas as "still one of the dozen things that a
beginning student [of the South Pacific] must know" (Furnas,
"Exile" 136).

The thirty-five chapters of In the South Seas are the
thirty-seven "Letters"--minus the "Hawaii Letters"--only
slightly revised from the form they took when McClure ran
them in the New York Sun and Black and White between
February and December 1891 (Swearingen, 136-39). The book
takes readers through three groups of islands, with a fourth
explored in the unpublished "Letters" from Hawaii, and a
fifth covered in A Footnote to History.

The first fifteen chapters deal with the Marquesas and
go into the greatest detail because these islands were
Stevenson's initiation into tropical life. The next six
chapters contrast the vitality of Polynesians in the Tuamotu
atolls with degeneration in the Marquesas and reveal
Stevenson's fascination with the ghost stories that are
central to Tuamotuan oral tradition. Stevenson does not
write about The Society Islands--Tahiti--except for points
of comparison and contrast in other sections of the book. He also writes little about Honolulu, but instead devotes five of his Hawaii Letters to his visit to the Kona coast of the Island of Hawaii and five to his visit to the Leper Colony of Kalaupapa on a tiny promontory on Molokai. The Kona "Letters" are the most folksy and personal, the most in line with what Fanny wanted and least in line with what Stevenson hoped to accomplish. The Molokai "Letters" focus on the scourge of leprosy, material basic to the "Open Letter on Father Damien," so that publication would have repeated information already provided in the widely read polemic. The final Molokai letter tells how a Hawaiian leper escaped from Kalaupapa around 1883, either miraculously sailed his own boat or stowed away in a trading schooner, and landed in Jaluit of the Marshall Islands, where he spread his contamination.

The most frequently excerpted sections of In the South Seas come from the seven chapters dealing with Butaritari and the seven chapters on Apemama, both part of the Gilbert Islands and both populated by Micronesian people. These sections come alive largely because of depictions of the contrasting weak and strong monarchs Tebureimoa and Tembinok'. The daily doings of the Stevensons play a larger part, but not to the author's discomfort, as the family routine in Butaritari and Apemama illuminates the nature of two similar societies under two very different rulers.

A Footnote to History consists of eleven chapters
depicting Samoan struggles against German, British, and American imperialism during the decade before Stevenson arrived. One memorable chapter depicts the pride of naval captains from each nation remaining in Apia harbor as a hurricane approached and the courage of Samoans trying to save the lives of the sailors as ships went down.

This totals almost eight hundred pages. The writing is filled with information: sketches of interesting characters, appealing anecdotes and yarns, descriptions of scenic beauty, attempts to explain contradictions and complexities in South Seas culture. But two things impede the reader. First, numerous associations and sub-topics make the book hard to follow. Each scene leads Stevenson to describe each interesting character associated with the scene. Each episode recalls parallel situations.

For example, when discussing the missionary prohibitions as a contribution to the obliteration of Marquesan culture, Stevenson also discusses missionary influence on other archipelagoes, and then interjects that despite several items of criticism he is writing to praise the missions, not to bury them. The ostensible subject of the fifth chapter is "Depopulation," yet this subject leads Stevenson into the barely related topics of patterns of Polynesian settlement, famine, cannibalism, degrees of agricultural development, infanticide, child rearing practices, adoption, and prostitution, all within three pages. The setting is the Marquesas, yet Stevenson first
propels the reader through Hawaii, the Tuamotus, the
Ellices, and Tahiti. Most of Stevenson's information is
accurate, and the opening subject, the possible extinction
of a people, is worth writing about; but the details are too
varied for easy absorption and the style of writing more
suited to scholars than newspaper readers.

Secondly, while the archetype of the South Seas lured
Stevenson into the region, he found the reality far more
fascinating. His readership most likely wanted sequels to
the depictions of the love lives of Fletcher Christian,
Pierre Loti, Tommo, and Charles Warren Stoddard. A
Victorian novelist whose fiction was nearly devoid of female
characters was more likely to offer them a treatise on such
topics as depopulation and cannibalism. And while Stevenson
could make up stories of buried treasure, barratry, and
plank-walking, the seedier real-life adventures he witnessed
among Polynesians and beachcombers more fully excited his
imagination. Compounding the problem of disunity which
afflicts the book is Stevenson's shifting focus. Rather
than observing the South Seas from above, Stevenson's
vantage is from the yacht and the trading schooners on which
he traveled. This gives him a continually changing
perspective which acts on his imagination as the wind,
currents, calms and storms act on sailing vessels.

*In the South Seas* can be best appreciated when regarded
as an informative fragment. The book is the posthumous
publication of mostly unrevised "Letters," certain of which
have been omitted, one major island group unmentioned, and observations on another area in a separate volume. The reader must overlook the obvious and numerous flaws and relish the wealth of information and the intelligent sympathy of the author for the people and situations he encounters. More significantly, *In the South Seas* is Stevenson's writer's notebook which provided him settings, plot ideas, and characters for his South Seas fiction. In one of his enraged letters to Colvin he wrote, "Can I find no form of words which will at last convey to your intelligence the fact that these letters were never meant, and are not now meant, to be other than a quarry of material from which the book may be drawn?" (Works, 22, 370-71). He did not live long enough to mine this quarry for *In the South Seas*, but through his years in Polynesia Stevenson used information from his travel writing to enrich his fiction. Stevenson began planning *In the South Seas* from the time he first landed in the Marquesas in 1888, and he completed his last "Letters" by the spring of 1891. Plans for his fiction did not begin until 1890 and much of the actual writing of the *Islands Nights' Entertainments*, *The Wrecker*, and *The Ebb Tide* did not occur until he was settled in Samoa in 1891. Because the subjects Stevenson features in his non-fictional South Seas writing include Polynesian oral tradition and legend, nautical oral tradition and the sea yarn, western influence on Polynesia, and the effects of Polynesia on white visitors and settlers, discussion of most
of the actual details from *In the South Seas* follows in subsequent chapters.
CHAPTER III

POLYNESIAN CUSTOMS AND ORAL TRADITION:

The rich oral tradition of history, stories, and legends in the Marquesas, Tuamotus, Tahiti, and Hawaii so impressed Stevenson that during the first year or two of his travels he hoped to write two books which would recapture Polynesian folklore. One volume would consist of ballads "The Feast of Famine," "The Song of Rahèro," a Hawaiian poem called "The Priest's Drought" which he never wrote, and the Highland legend "Ticonderoga." The other would feature fairy tales or Märchen, such as "Isle of Voices" and "The Bottle Imp." Stevenson acquiesced to his editor's decision to include with these two tales the realistic novelette The Beach of Falesà to make the book Islands Nights' Entertainments, but for this Polynesian equivalent of The Arabian Nights he would have preferred a different arrangement. After the book's publication he wrote,

What annoyed me about the use of The Bottle Imp was that I had always meant it for the centre-piece of a volume of Märchen which I was slowly to elaborate. You always had an idea that I depreciated The Bottle Imp; I can't think wherefore; I always particularly liked it—one of my best works, and ill to equal; and that was why I longed to keep it in portfolio till I had time to grow up to some other fruit of the same venue. (To Colvin, Jan. 1893, Works, 23, 206)

Stevenson's main sources for this lore were his friends and hosts Prince Stanislas Moanatini in the Marquesas, French Vice-Regent Donat-Rimerau in Fakarava, Tuamotus,
Princes Ori-a-Ori and Tati Salmon in Tahiti, Hawaiian King David Kalakaua, and King Tembinok' of Apemama, all of whom delighted in exchanging tales with their visitor, learning from him sagas of the Scottish Highlands. Stevenson explains:

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 equal trait of barbarism: Michael Scott, Lord Derwenwater's head, the second-sight, the Water Kelpie--each of these I found to be a killing bait; the black bull's head of Stirling procured me the legend of Rahero; and what I knew of the Cluny Macphersons, or the Appin Stewarts, enabled me to learn... about the Tevas of Tahiti. The native was no longer ashamed, his sense of kinship grew warmer, and his lips were opened. (ISS, 13)

Arthur Johnstone recreates what he remembers were Stevenson's ideas on narrative verse and Polynesian legend.
"The success... lies in the fact that there is something in the ballad form which hides the literary defect of the subject that would be quite conspicuous in more comprehensive prose. This was my reason for using verse--I wished to reproduce the legend as nearly as possible as I found it" (103).

"The Feast of Famine"

In the South Seas presents numerous anecdotes which are potential ballads or stories. The tales about the Marquesas focus on cannibalism. In one example an overseer of a cotton plantation whom Stevenson calls Robert Stewart dreads settling in a particular region of Hiva-oa because in his first encounter with the island he finds the remains of two
partly eaten natives and is greeted by a party of several young warriors one of whom is gnawing on a human foot. Later at Stewart's trading post during a supposed day of truce, a family from an outlying tribe arrives to get an axe sharpened. When Stewart declines to sharpen the axe, cadets of the island chief offer to do the job, but then test the quality of their work on the neck of the axe's owner and likewise behead an older daughter, while the Marquesan wife finds sanctuary in Stewart's house and the younger daughter flees into the cotton fields. The natives next wreck Stewart's station, while Stewart and his Chinese servant take refuge in the house of a missionary.

Stevenson concludes this portion of the grisly story with images of savages drawn to the shallow graves of their victims by the smell of decay, unearthing the corpses, and dragging them back to their camp for a feast on well-aged meat. In places, stale imagery—"Timau and his young men dancing the war dance on the hill-top till past twelve at night;" "the drums—perhaps twenty strong, and some of them twelve feet high—continuously throbbed in time... , the sense of time, in all these ocean races... [being] extremely perfect" (ISS, 111, 100)—counts the sense of danger and excitement he tries to achieve. He ends his string of archetypal cannibal stories with the irony that while the plantations on Nukuhiva and Hiva-oa survive these and other cannibal attacks, a tidal wave devastates both and leaves the Marquesas without any major commercial
The subject of cannibalism reveals the fullest differences possible between archetype and reality. No one questions that in the presence of starvation instances of cannibalism have occurred, or that a few mentally deranged individuals have killed and eaten parts of their victims. But while anthropologists generally concur that certain primitive societies practiced cannibalism, scientific views vary on the extent to which such practices were ritualistic and to what extent nutritional. Furthermore, one maverick anthropologist William Arens, having been unable to find a single reliable eye-witness account of cannibalism, suggests in *The Myth of Man-Eating* that in reality cannibalism is a myth like the myths of vampires or werewolves, except that the scientific community has accepted it.

"The Feast of Famine" reads like an additional cannibal story. A passage from *In the South Seas* outlines the setting and situation.

Occasionally, perhaps in famine, the Marquesan tribal priest would shut himself in his house, where he lay for a stated period like a person dead. When he came forth it was to run for three days through the territory of the clan, naked and starving, and to sleep at night alone in the high place. It was now the turn of the others to keep the house, for to encounter the priest upon his rounds was death. On the eve of the fourth day the time of the running was over; the priest returned to his roof, the laymen came forth, and in the morning the number of the victims was announced. I have this tale of the priest on one [unnamed] author--I think a good one,--but I set it down with diffidence. The particulars are so striking that, had they been true, I almost think I must have heard them oftener referred to. Upon one point there seems to be no question: that the feast was sometimes furnished from within the clan. In
times of scarcity, all who were not protected by their family connections—in the Highland expression, all the commons of the clan—had cause to tremble. It was vain to resist, it was useless to flee. They were begirt upon all hands by cannibals; and the oven was ready to smoke for them abroad in the country of their foes, or at home in the valley of their fathers. (ISS 98)

Stevenson wants the poem to take the form of the Polynesian stories he heard, but rather than an accurate retelling of Marquesan folklore, it may represent information received from priests, gens d'armes, and beachcombers. Stevenson's own notes to the poem admit to its being an imaginative recreation of what a Marquesan folktale might be.

In this ballad I have strung together some of the more striking particularities of the Marquesas. It rests upon no authority; it is in no sense... a native story; but a patchwork of details of manners and the impressions of a traveller. (Ballads 53)

The ballad brings together three character types Stevenson can imagine inhabiting the Marquesas before the arrival of whites began the cycle of depopulation: the divinely frenzied priest whose job it is to choose the victims to be slaughtered and eaten; Taheia, the priest's lovely daughter; and Rua, her low-born but courageous lover. Naturally, one of the nine victims the priest selects is Rua, but Taheia gives him the courage to hide in a part of the jungle that the tribe considers to be haunted. While Rua hides, the tribe feasts on the other victims. From his sanctuary Rua spots the approach of warriors from an enemy tribe. Yet when he rushes into the assembly to warn his people, they have energy enough to complete their prescribed sacrifice of Rua, but cannot withstand the ambush from the
rival tribe. They will become the feast for their assailants.

Certain details from Stevenson's observation of Marquesan life, supported by Melville's observations in *Typee*, give the ballad a degree of verisimilitude. Stevenson met Marquesans for whom braided beards or hair represented wealth. The priest in "The Feast of Famine" counts among his possessions "the silver beards of the old and the hair of the women slain" (l. 46). During the time of the priest's prophecy, to look on him results in death. While this may or may not have been a Marquesan taboo, it is consistent with other Polynesian taboos concerning royalty. The sense of Marquesan architecture, with the expertly constructed stone platforms and pavilion serving as a community gathering place, parallels the observations of every early visitor to the Marquesas. Tattooing was a badge of tribal membership and wealth, so it is logical for Stevenson to depict Teheia as ornately but extensively tattooed. He notes, "The art of the Marquesan tattooer is extreme; and she [Teheia] would appear to be clothed in a web of lace, inimitably delicate, exquisite in pattern, and of a bluish hue that at once contrasts and harmonises with the warm pigment of the native skin" (*Ballads* 55). Even Stevenson's best educated Marquesan acquaintances retained superstitious fear of night and of secluded places, which gives credence to a haunted place in the jungle offering sanctuary to Rua if he has courage equal to that of Taheia.
Finally, sacrifice victims throughout Polynesia would be commoners who might be clubbed from behind by militia of the chiefs or priests. Concerning the public slaughter of the sacrifice victim, Stevenson acknowledges that in reality "victims were disposed of privately and some time before" (Ballads 55).

"The Feast of Famine" has remained among Stevenson's least read works. The story is melodramatic and the poetry generally monotonous and occasionally ludicrous, as in Taheia's admonition to her lover, "Lie secret there, my Rua, in the arms of awful gods, / Sleep in the shade of the trees on the couch of the kindly sods" (ll. 130-31). Edmund Gosse's observation that Stevenson lacked confidence in his poetry, "always divided between hoping that his poetry was good enough for the public; and being easily daunted with the fear that it was only fit for his private entertainment" (Gosse 86) applies aptly to "The Feast of Famine."

"The Song of Rahéro"

Stevenson asserts full authenticity for "The Song of Rahéro." He writes,

This tale, of which I have not consciously changed a single feature, I received from tradition. It is highly popular through all the country of the eight Tevas, the clan to which Rahéro belonged; and particularly in Tàiarapu, the windward peninsula of Tahiti, where he lived. I have heard from end to end two versions; and as many as five different persons have helped me with details. There seems no reason why the tale should not be true. (Ballads 31)

However, lacking a section on Tahiti,—although Stevenson
included in his original outline six chapters on Tahiti, two of which would focus on "a Journey in Quest of Legends" and "Legends and Songs"—(To Colvin, 2 December 1889, Works, 22, 205)—In *The South Seas* provides little information about its oral tradition. In his letters, Stevenson praises the history and legends learned from Ori. Yale University's Beinecke Collection has manuscript versions of seven Tahitian songs and tales which Stevenson transcribed or translated. Two versions of short Tahitian legends entitled "Of the Making of Pai's Spear" and "Honoura and the Weird Woman" appeared in *Longman's Magazine* in 1892 (Finney 92-96).

Tahitian oral history seems to consist mainly of tales of outrage, revenge, and possibly restored equilibrium. The oral history of the Tevas clan relayed by Henry Adams in his *Memories of Arii Taimai* features one story after another in which a chief out of pride, anger, or avarice wantonly kills his enemy or the offspring of his enemy. The survivors then journey to the districts of the other chiefs to request a boon in the form of revenge or warfare against the offending chief. At times a pattern of revenge and counter-revenge develops, but more often brief warfare seems to establish a new equilibrium. The warfare can be bloody but hardly seems devastating, as before arrival of white disease the population of the Society Islands was so huge that infanticide was a common form of birth control.

Adams emphasizes the right of wronged survivors to
appeal to other chiefs for revenge and the propriety of their taking up such causes. One of the many stories he relates tells how the lie of two court-jester types provokes a chief to murder his brother-in-law. His wife petitions rival chiefs to punish her husband with death, but in this episode the husband finds exile in a different island. Adams adds that wealth in a sub-tribe or clan can become a temptation to other clans. Stevenson's almost obtrusive use of simile in both his Polynesian ballads follows the narrative style of Tahitian folklore. Adams' persona, Arii Taimai, speaks continually in metaphor, and Adams comments that in Tahitian, metaphor is necessary for intelligent expression (Adams, Tahiti 81-82).

"Song of Rahero" is not among the stories in Adams' Polynesian book, but it easily could be. And it seems to be as intriguing a revenge story as any Adams relates. Tàmatèa, who resembles a Wordsworthian simpleton, travels to bring the finest of his fishing catch to the cruel chief who rules the district of Tàràrapu. Lazy and proud Rahèro waylays the youth by inviting him to eat and then serving himself and his company the fish intended for the chief, replacing inside of the leaf-wrapped offering with an unspecified substance which draws flies. Oblivious to the ruse Tàmatèa delivers the parcel, and turns homeward, to the relief of Rahèro, who wishes to demean the chief but not to harm the simpleton. The chief, however, figures out who has delivered the shameful offering and has his soldier execute
Tamatèa.

Ahupu, the mother, seeks boons from each rival chief on the island, until the one from the distant district of Paea suggests a scheme which will lure the chief and his tribe into their power. All valuable goods are tabooed until a surplus accumulates and word of the surplus reaches Taièrapu. The entire tribe of 800, including the chief and Rahèro, visit Paea in peace, in effect demanding a hospitable feast from this district where food is so plentiful that "the victual rots on the ground" (l. 321). From the surplus of food and kava the guests fall into exhausted sleep, at which point the pavilion is secured and torched. Only Rahèro manages to awaken, climb through the flames, and escape. His final act is to murder a fisherman of Paea and escape with the fisherman's wife—who succumbs to Rahèro's presence much as Lady Anne succumbs to the power of Richard III in the Shakespeare play—and who at the tale's end will begin to bear a new tribe of warriors who may in some future age avenge the slaughter.

To the western reader, this pattern of violation, revenge, equilibrium in all the Tahitian revenge stories seems strange, although the intriguing and illogical strangeness of "Song of Rahèro," may remind one of some of the earlier adventures in Mort d'Arthur. While giving the story local color Stevenson's use of Tahitian words combines with the foreignness of the plot to make the story at first confusing and inconsistent. Rahèro seems to be three different
characters: first the lazy trickster intent on dishonoring his chief, then one of the chief's aitos or retainers, and finally a courageous warrior, who can escape ambush and dream of rebuilding the clan. The criticism of "Song of Rahéré" notes similar inconsistencies.

Teuira Henry's version of the same story, "The Revenge of Maraa" in his account of Tahitian legends Ancient Tahiti (241-46) shows where Stevenson possibly deviated from his sources. Tama-tea is the deity to whom an offering is demanded. The fisherman is a deaf man instead of a fool, who catches his fish in a neighboring district rather than at the one where he dwells and who voluntarily shares of the first catch that should be reserved for Tama-tea. A priest at the marae or shrine, feeling the lightness of the parcel, extracts a substitute tribute by killing the fisherman and his son. The kinsmen of the fisherman avenge his sacrifice themselves rather than seeking help from another district, although otherwise the scheme is the same as in Stevenson's ballad: the clan of the district where the fisherman has been killed is lured into a feast and then burned to death. Rahero's sole importance is as the only person to escape from the flames. In Henry's version, he does not commit an act of counter revenge or forcibly take a wife. Stevenson's changes mainly shift the focus of the story from tribal revenge to heroic action.

As with In the South Seas familiarity with things Polynesian increases appreciation. Adams praises the poem.
His Legend of Rahéro is extremely well done, and has only the fault of being done with more care than the importance of the legend deserves. In reading it, one is constantly worried by wondering that he should have worked so hard on so slight a subject. The legends and poetry of the island can be made interesting only by stringing them on a narrative, and Stevenson could have done it better than anyone else, for he has a light hand, when he likes, and can write verse as well as prose. (Letters of Henry Adams 1: 487)

Stevenson expressed his disappointment that his Polynesian ballads elicited little appreciation in the western world; yet a list of the people to whom Stevenson sent complimentary copies of his Ballads indicates that fidelity to Polynesian oral tradition rather than to western tastes or patterns of thinking was his highest goal in "Song of Rahéro." The recipients included "Ori a Ori, Sous chef de Tautira, Tahiti; Tati Salmon, Chef de Papara, Tahiti, Madame la Princesse Moe, Papeete, Tahiti; and H. M. the King of the Hawaiian Islands in Honolulu" (Ferguson and Waingrow, 272). Adams visited Prince Ori and explained Stevenson's rendition of the legend to him.

"The Isle of Voices"

The Tuamotu segment of In the South Seas provides notes and background for the Polynesian ghost story, "The Isle of Voices." Stevenson tells about spirits of the dead feeding on the living, material that remained untapped in his fiction. On the theme of cannibalism he chronicles the Tuamotuans' former ferocity. For example, in the story of the schooner Sarah Ann the ship disappears and with it a captain's wife taking her two sons to a civilized port for
school. A year later when marines from another ship land, they notice the ludicrous and colorful western dress of the islanders of Tematangi, spoils from the Sarah Ann. Empowered by their firearms, the crew occupy the island, search it without success, and are ready to leave when the sudden silence among their captives makes them look around and notice a severed human hand at the edge of a crack in the ground. After excavating the fissure, the crew discovers a cave filled with human bones, the dismembered body and the blond scalp of the captain's wife, and perched upon a stick the sun-dried body of one of the boys, artifacts, Stevenson surmises, of a cult peculiar to that island. He adds,

A few years ago, and the people of the archipelago were crafty savages. Their isles might be called sirens' isles, not merely from the attraction they exerted on the passing mariner, but from the perils that awaited him on shore. Even to this day, in certain outlying islands, danger lingers; and the civilised Paumotuan dreads to land and hesitates to accost his backward brother. (169-70)

Details from In the South Seas in addition to the ghost and cannibal stories fit into "The Isle of Voices." In contrasting coral atolls and volcanic islands Stevenson writes, "No distinction is so continually dwelt upon in South Sea talk as that between the 'low' and the 'high' island, and there is none more broadly marked in nature. The Himalayas are not more different from the Sahara" (141). He stresses the surreal nature of the Tuamotus and emphasizes the contrasting deserted ocean beach and
inhabited lagoon beach of each populated atoll. "Islands we beheld in plenty, but they were of 'such stuff as dreams are made on' and vanished at a wink, only to reappear in other places." "After the moon went down, the heaven was a thing to wonder at for stars." "The beach of the ocean is a place accursed and deserted, the fit scene only for wizardry and shipwreck, and in the native belief a haunting ground of murderous spectres" (141, 145, 149).

Details from In the South Seas figure in the plot as well as the setting. Concerning marine life, Stevenson writes.

Fish, too, abound; the lagoon is a closed fish-pond, such as might rejoice the fancy of an abbot; sharks swarm there, and chiefly round the passages, to feast upon this plenty, and you would suppose that man had only to prepare his angle. Alas! it is not so. Of these painted fish that came in hordes about the entering Casco, some bore poisonous spines, and others were poisonous if eaten. The stranger must refrain, or take his chance of painful and dangerous sickness. The native, on his own isle, is a safe guide; transplant him to the next and he is helpless as yourself. For it is a question both of time and place. A fish caught in a lagoon may be deadly; the same fish caught the same day at sea, and only a few hundred yards without the passage, will be wholesome eating: in a neighbouring isle perhaps the case will be reversed; and perhaps a fortnight later you shall be able to eat of them indifferently from within and from without. (158)

Concerning the nomadic nature of the tribe, Stevenson draws on his own experience of finding Fakarava, the capital of the Tuamotus, almost deserted, the residents having gone to other islands to settle property and boundary claims.

"Now, the folk of the archipelago are half nomadic; a man can scarce be said to belong to a particular atoll; he belongs to several, perhaps holds a stake and counts
cousinship in half a score" (159-60). In his discussion of Tuamotuan funerals, Stevenson stresses the value the people place on their woven mats which they seem to take with them everywhere. From his stay in Apemama, he describes the rites of a native "sorcerer" who burns certain leaves and mutters incantations over the flame and smoke, but does not succeed in curing Stevenson's cold. Alluding to the Arabian Nights motif which pervades Islands Night's Entertainments, Stevenson concludes, "Here was the suffumigation; here was the muttering wizard; here was the desert place to which Aladdin was decoyed by the false uncle. But they manage these things better in fiction" (328-29). And finally, in "The Eight Islands" Stevenson mentions aspects of Hawaiian legend and superstition, including a brief depiction of Kana, a deity that can elongate himself to walk along the ocean bottom (72).

Stevenson had access to King Kalakaua's notes on Hawaiian antiquity, but "The Isle of Voices" probably is not a retelling of a Polynesian legend; rather, the story draws extensively on the lore and customs of Hawaii, the Tuamotus, and the Gilberts filtered through Stevenson's experience and imagination. The story features the supernatural adventures of Keola, the son-in-law of Kalamake, a much-feared wizard on the Hawaiian island of Molokai. Lazy and useless, Keola accompanies Kalamake on one of his journeys--on a magical mat rather than a Persian carpet--to the ocean beach on the Isle of Voices where
Kalamake retrieves seashells which from the burning of certain leaves magically change into silver dollars. When Kalamake's incantations transport them to the Isle, Keola cannot figure out what part of Molokai they have gone to. The heat and brightness, the different foliage, the absence of mountains, the quantity of shells, the different language of the people to whom during his magical visit he seems to be an invisible devil all defy his previous experience.

Having assisted in Kalamake's wizardry, Keola asks for a share in the wealth. At this point, under the guise of teaching Keola his lore, Kalamake takes him out into the ocean, and, after assuming monstrous size, Kalamake abandons him to drown.

A trading schooner rescues Keola, and hires him as a sailor, but to escape the cruelty of one of the crew Keola jumps ship onto a habitable atoll, which turns out to be the Isle of Voices. Keola endures horrible isolation until a tribe of Tuamotuans arrives. The reason the tribe periodically leave their home island for the Isle of Voices is that at a certain time of year the fish that is the mainstay of their diet becomes poisoned. Thus, the tribe can report the death due to poisoned fish of the sailor whose cruelty has provoked Keola to desert. They seem to adopt Keola and even give him a wife. From the wife, however, he learns that he is being fattened up for a feast. Keola retreats to the ocean side of the atoll where Lehua, his Hawaiian wife—Kalamake's companion on another
expedition to retrieve dollars—recognizes him and rescues him by performing the rites which return them to Molokai. Without the mat on which he travels through space Kalamake is left stranded on the island; and while he has power of becoming a giant who can walk on mountains and along the ocean floor, an atlas convinces Keola and Lehua that the distance between the Tuamotus and Hawaii is beyond Kalamake's powers.

The story ends humorously, as once back in Molokai Keola and Lehua seek counsel from a white missionary. The missionary cannot understand the tale he hears, but he berates Keola for having taken a second wife while in the Tuamotus. Concerning the mysterious silver coins the Hawaiians possess, the missionary suggests that a way of cleansing them would be to donate a large portion "to the lepers and . . . to the missionary fund," yet afterwards he warns the Honolulu police that Keola may be guilty of coining false money (INE, 276-77).

Most of the characters are an interesting and realistic mixture of the traditional and the modern, probably typical of many of the Polynesians Stevenson met. Kalamake, while practicing what Stevenson represents to be ancient sorcery, watches for the arrival of the steamer from Honolulu to feed his taste for tinned salmon and gin. He furnishes his house in the manner of a "man of substance" with a rocking chair, a table, a writing desk, and a sofa "in the European style," plus a shelf of books and a family Bible, as Stevenson
describes almost item by item the house of David Nahinu where he stayed in Hookena (INE, 227, 228; "The Eight Islands, 10). Keola spends the five dollars Kalamake gives him on fine clothes, then provokes his father-in-law to revenge by begging him for a concertina. On their night boat ride Kalamake and Keola smoke cigars. During his month on the "haole" ship Keola grows fat on the diet of biscuits and salt beef and "pea-soup and puddings made of flour and suet" (INE, 250). Yet once a castaway on the Isle of Voices Keola knows enough of the old ways to make a fire drill and a shell hook and provide for himself like a Hawaiian Robinson Crusoe. Keola's cannibal bride tells him about the white trader in Fakarava who lives in a fine house with a verandah. She recalls the time a French warship visited and "gave everybody wine and biscuit." She describes Fakarava as "the finest place in the seas except Papeete," of which she has heard if not visited (INE 263).

"The Isle of Voices" combines the theme of greed for unlimited and satanically acquired wealth from "The Bottle Imp" with the theme of cannibalism from "The Feast of Famine." The source of infinite wealth, however, comes from an incantation and the burning of sacred leaves rather than from an imp or genii. Just as Keawe is successor to Prester John, Captain Cook, and Napoleon in owning the bottle, Kalamake is just one of many necromancers worldwide fetching wealth from the island, as the voices Keola hears are in many different languages. While nearly half of the action
occurs in Hawaii, the cannibal theme is Tuamotuan. The relationship between Keola and his Tuamotuan wife is almost identical to that of Rua and Taheia. She has the intelligence to suggest that the lover elude the oven by hiding in a haunted region. During the brief time of sanctuary in each tale the woman brings food to her lover. However, the craftier Keola survives, while Rua does not.

The extensive use of Polynesian setting and language forces careful and repeated reading—hardly what readers seek in a fairy tale—and two flaws mar the story. Kalamake is described as being so blind that "blind as Kalamake" has become a Hawaiian simile. This blindness seems to be the reason he needs assistance on his magical journeys to the Isle of Voices. Yet when he transforms himself into a giant and casts Keola into the ocean, he keeps the lantern and seems able to see his way back to Molokai. When Keola suggests to his Tuamotuan father-in-law that destruction of a certain tree, the leaves of which the warlocks burn in their shell-gathering ritual, might rid the island of the spirits which haunt the ocean side, the high chief rejects this scheme as dangerous. Yet later Keola is able to make his escape because of the battle between the assembled necromancers and the Tuamotuan cannibals who have begun to destroy the trees. A third implausibility which is necessary for the plot is that wizards visiting the island through their supernatural powers can see the tribesmen, but the tribesmen can only hear the voices of the wizards and see
their fires. This is why Lehua, who has accompanied Kalamake, is able to rescue her husband both from the appetite of the cannibals and the wrath of her father. While it is a story that grows in meaning with each reading, "The Isle of Voices" has attracted as little critical attention as the two ballads. Arthur Johnstone suggests that the story lacks a sufficient degree of "the civilized element" (103).

"The Bottle Imp"

For "The Bottle Imp" Stevenson arrived at a formula with which he could appeal to Englishman and Islander alike. In his "Hawaii Letters" Stevenson cites the avidness with which Hawaiians read their native-language papers and magazines, adding, "the first requisite of any native paper is a story from the English or the French," with renditions of Dumas romances or tales from The Arabian Nights being most popular. Motifs from such tales fused with the plot of a popular play by an O. Smith give Stevenson a story on which to attach the richness of his observations and experiences, a frame lacking for In the South Seas, the narrative poems, and "The Isle of Voices."

"The Bottle Imp" depicts the fortunes of a Hawaiian sailor named Keawe who is tricked into purchasing a satanic bottle with which he may possess everything he wishes, with the accompanying curse that should he still own the bottle when he dies, he will burn in Hell. Keawe decides to take
the good with the evil and requests on the Kona slopes of the Island of Hawaii a palace such as he has seen in San Francisco, and then sells the bottle to a friend who wishes to acquire his own trading schooner. After Keawe meets and wins Kokua, his ideal mate, he discovers that he has leprosy and repurchases the bottle to be clean again. However, the purchase price has decreased to a single cent, and the stipulation for the sale of the bottle is that it must always be sold at a price cheaper than what it was purchased for. Discovering the source of Keawe's despair, Kokua knows that the French coin money of lesser value than the penny, so that she and Keawe can try to unload the bottle in the French colony of Tahiti.

However, the missionaries in Tahiti have done their work so well that no Tahitian will come near anything demonic. Kokua tricks her husband into selling her the bottle, yet her despair once in its possession equals that which Keawe previously experienced. The story ends happily when a white beachcomber who knows he is doomed for Hell anyway buys the bottle so he can enjoy an unlimited supply of rum until his death and damnation.

In "The Bottle Imp" Stevenson duplicates the technique he uses in Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, juxtaposing a single aspect of the supernatural with otherwise intense realism of details. Moreover, the source of realism is largely autobiographical, as Stevenson retraces many of his experiences in San Francisco, Hawaii, and Tahiti. Keawe
looks in wonder at the fine mansions in San Francisco, perhaps much as Stevenson did in his poverty during his first visit. Where Keawe builds his mansion Stevenson visited a huge house, the outside of which was magnificent although the inside was totally unfurnished, so that host David Nahinu's name for the house—*ka hale nui* or the great house—is more ironic than serious ("The Eight Islands," 21). Keawe without facetiousness calls his estate *Ka-Hale Nui*. Details of Keawe's *hale*, however, sound more like the plans for Vailima than the house Stevenson saw above Hookena. With all lights burning, Keawe's house becomes a huge lantern along the Kona coast, just as Stevenson would expect Vailima to be fully lighted whenever he returned from travel or a naval ship arrived in Apia. Like Stevenson, Keawe sails to Australia while his house is being constructed.

The name Keawe is significant. Hookena, near where Keawe lives and where Stevenson spent a week, is about three miles from what is now *Pu'uhonua o Honaunau* National Park, the City of Refuge referred to in the first chapter of this dissertation, and the subject of the third "Hawaiian Letter." The founder of this sanctuary is a legendary king named Keawe, so that another name for the site is *Hale o Keawe*.

Other details duplicate Stevenson's experience and fully create a Hawaiian atmosphere. He describes scenery along the trail between Keawe's house and Hookena, located
above the burial caves where the bones of ancient Hawaiians lie, just as he describes the gathering at Hookena pier when the steamer Hall arrives. Aboard the ship Hawaiians festively gather and Haoles (Caucasians) play cards and drink whiskey "as their custom is" (INE, 184). In Honolulu Keawe listens to Berger's Royal Hawaiian Band, which plays Hawaiian songs popular at the time of Stevenson's visit. The boom in building in Honolulu Stevenson can fictionally attribute to the path of the bottle. The person from whom Keawe buys the bottle the second time lives on Beretania Street, the same street on which lived the Reverend Charles McEwen Hyde, whom Stevenson visited with his mother and later lambasted in his "Damien Letter." At Ka-Hale Nui, Keawe hires a "Chinaman" to keep house, as Nahinu hired one to tend his coffee lands. In Papeete, Keawe and Kokua stay near the residence of the British Consul where the Stevensons briefly stayed--and where Henry Adams and John La Farge were later to stay. Perhaps even Keawe's devotion to Kokua duplicates the romantic desperation with which Stevenson traveled from Edinburgh to San Francisco to court Fanny (McGaw 76-79).

The Hawaiian characters Keawe, Kokua, and Lopaka represent the type of people Stevenson met and admired, intelligent, literate, and generous. Under the reign of King Kalakaua Hawaii enjoyed one of the highest rates of literacy in the world, as public Hawaiian-language schools became ubiquitous in the islands. Stevenson's host David
Nahinu had attended and taught at Lahainaluna School, which still exists on Maui, had become a member of Legislature, and in his old age had settled in Hookena to head the school there (Kittelson 10-18). In the story Nahinu is Lopaka's host before he embarks on his adventures in island trade. Kokua is more elegantly educated at one of the mission schools for girls in Honolulu.

In their education and intelligence Keawe and Kokua depart from archetypal depictions of South Sea islanders. In addition to being intelligent and literate, Keawe is a "first-rate mariner" (TNE, 150) in the tradition of the sailors Richard Henry Dana so fondly depicts. While retaining native superstition, Keawe and Kokua otherwise are almost ideal products of missionary Christianity, so that Keawe, while viewing the bottle as a curiosity, is not especially tempted to purchase it, but rather is tricked into his purchase, in a pattern of trickery which parallels the way which Hawaiians were divested of their land. Once in possession of the bottle, Keawe systematically tests what the seller has told him about it, much as a scientist might test a phenomenon in an experiment.

Although part of the story deals with covetousness and greed, the kindness and generosity of the Hawaiian characters balances these sins. The scourge of leprosy was very much on Stevenson's mind, as at Hookena pier he noticed a leper sorrowfully awaiting her journey into exile, an exile he would voluntarily share during the last week of
May, 1889. Impressed not only with the legacy of Father Damien and the sacrifice of recently arrived Catholic sisters, Stevenson also noticed among the Hawaiians kokuaus, uninfected wives or husbands or other relatives who volunteered to accompany their leprous loved ones into Kalaupapa, of whom Stevenson observed, "These... are the working bees of the sad hive, the laborers, butchers, storekeepers, nurses, and gravediggers in that place of malady and folded hand" ("The Eight Islands," 67). The heroine's name of Kokua then signifies her willingness to be her husband's helpmate.

When Keawe realizes that the person from whom he makes his second purchase of the bottle has risked the fires of Hell to elude a jail sentence for embezzlement, like Adam in Paradise Lost, Keawe damns himself for love's sake. Similarly, perceiving the despair which Keawe endures Kokua tricks him into relinquishing the bottle into to her possession. When Keawe has first purchased the bottle and shares his terror with Lopaka, his friend advises him first to "take the good with the evil" and agrees to purchase the bottle from Keawe.

Published simultaneously in Samoan and English and also translated into Hawaiian, "The Bottle Imp" is as much a missionary parable, illustrating the meaning of a Biblical passage, as a fusion of European and Polynesian folklore. One of the final verses of the Sermon on the Mount says "Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow
shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient
to the day is the evil thereof" (Matt. 6:34). As Keawe
admires the "palaces" in San Francisco, he thinks, "how
happy must those people be who dwell in them and take no
care for the morrow!" (INE, 152). In his benign
covetousness, Keawe is ensnaring himself to the devil.
Almost immediately the owner of the finest house summons
Keawe and tricks him into buying the bottle.

What none of the characters can predict is the anguish
which accompanies possession of the bottle. Keawe believes
that his possessions will give him "perpetual joy" (INE,
173). But he shakes and sweats once he realizes that
everything he has learned about the bottle is true.
Similarly, the sight of the demon from the bottle turns
Keawe and Lopaka "to stone," and leads Keawe once Lopaka has
purchased the bottle, in a most un-Hawaiian fashion to deny
him further hospitality. In his own despair Lopaka accepts
this outrage and ventures into the night amid the spirits of
the dead (INE, 170).

When Keawe at the height of his happiness at having
courted and won Kokua, discovers the first decay of leprosy,
he laments, "What wrong have I done, what sin lies upon my
soul, that I should have encountered Kokua coming cool from
the sea-water in the evening." He has forgotten the warning
that the previous owner has given him "unless a man remain
content with what he has, ill will befall him," once he no
longer has the bottle (INE, 182, 157). And possession of
the bottle precludes obedience to the Biblical advice to worry only about the evil of the day, for it fixates the owner with images of the fires of Hell more vivid than in any missionary sermon. Both Keawe and Kokua sacrifice themselves to the bottle for the other, yet the aftermath of this sacrifice is alienating despair, rather than courageous resignation.

The reader assumes that by the end of the story when Keawe and Kokua have honorably disposed of the bottle to a man for whom the eternal damnation is a fair price for unlimited spirits while he lives, they will remain content with their fine house, each other, and their survival of the ordeal. They realize that in their own attitudes and not in desired possessions comes the capacity "take no care for the morrow."

A few details mar this otherwise superb story. The reader is comfortable with intelligent Polynesians, yet the reprimands "Fiddle-de-dee" and "Heighty-teighty" from the mouth of Keawe undercut the sense of everything Polynesian. Similarly, the scene where Kokua kisses Keawe's "knees with flowing tears" recalls Dickens at his sentimental worst. The sense of God, Satan, and predestination are confusing. When all details of the house plans which a Honolulu architect shows Keawe fit the house he has imagined for himself, Lopaka's advice to continue to follow satanic orders, seems almost righteous. When the old Tahitian who acts as middleman in Kokua's scheme to transfer the bottle's
ownership from Keawe to herself wonders if Kokua might be tricking him, she replies, "I could not be so treacherous--God would not suffer it." Finally, in the assumption that Keawe and Kokua, although having repented, will retain the fine house and the other benefits of their dealings with the devil, they are rather like Daniel DeFoe's heroes and heroines who conveniently lose none of their ill-gotten wealth when they repent.

Widely anthologized, "The Bottle Imp" has attained renown which has eluded the ballads and the companion fairy tale. Stevenson felt a huge appeal in Polynesian stories and folklore which he was able to transmit with reasonably high accuracy. However, few of his readers shared this fascination, especially since more often they hungered for stories in the archetypal South Seas mode. His audience seemed to require material with which they were comfortable and familiar. While Polynesian folklore was a rich source for his ballads and stories, in "The Bottle Imp" western popular literature and folklore, provided Stevenson with a formula to reach a larger audience.
CHAPTER IV

THE WRECKER: THE NOVEL AS SEA YARN

Stevenson wrote The Wrecker to make money, and he succeeded. Scribner's paid him fifteen thousand dollars for serial rights to the book. Sales during the final two years of his life exceeded those for all of his other books except Treasure Island, Kidnapped, and Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, and at the turn of the century profits for The Wrecker remained at two hundred pounds per year (Balfour, Life 2: 42).

An essential issue to raise before discussing either The Wrecker or The Ebb Tide is Lloyd Osbourne's role as Stevenson's writing partner. Loyalists state that only Stevenson's patronizing generosity allowed Osbourne's name to accompany his on the title pages of these works. Conversely, comments in Stevenson's correspondence indicate that he regarded his partner as a person of some talent. After publication of The Wrong Box in 1889, accomplished through his rewriting of Osbourne's manuscript, Stevenson observed that while not much of a "stylist," Osbourne had "a great knack at certain characters, some sound comedy, and an eye for the picturesque" (To Colvin, 2 April 1889, 224, Pacific Letters 7, Houghton Library, Cambridge). Osbourne told Graham Balfour that to break the ground he wrote a first draft of each book which was then written and rewritten by Stevenson and by Osbourne in turn, and that for
The Wrecker he contributed the storm, the fights, the murders on the Currency Lass, the picnics in San Francisco, the commercial details of Dodd's partnership, and the characters of Captain Nares and Jim Pinkerton, claims which David Daiches accepts as possible (Robert Louis Stevenson 142) and which J. C. Furnas finds improbable--"if [Osbourne] wrote like that in 1891, he must have experienced severe aesthetic mutation." Furnas concludes that on each piece of collaboration, "Louis did the final draft from stem to stern" (Furnas, Voyage 419).

Stevenson's correspondence confirms that Osbourne wrote much of the original copy of The Wrecker, but that Stevenson rewrote the entire book. Yet during the drafting, he would not proceed without Osbourne. In one letter he tells Burlingame that the book's progress has stopped for six months because of Osbourne's trip to England and Scotland (22 June 1891, Beinecke Collection 2938). In a letter to Robert Alan Mowbray Stevenson describes in greater detail the process of collaboration:

Of course that collaboration shows; as for the manner, it is superficially all mine, in the sense that the last copy is all in my hand... The great difficulty of collaboration is that you can't explain what you mean. I know what kind of an effect I mean a character to give--what kind of tache he is to make; but how am I to tell my collaborator in words? There are many impossibilities of collaboration. Its immediate advantage is to focus two minds together on the stuff, and to produce in consequence an extraordinarily greater richness of purview, consideration, and invention. The hardest chapter of all was 'Cross Questions and Crooked Answers.' You would not believe what it cost us before it assumed the last unity and colour. Lloyd wrote it at least thrice, and I at least five times--that is
from memory. And was that chapter worth the trouble it cost? (September 1894, Works 23, 436-38).

Within fifteen years after his stepfather's death Lloyd Osbourne had written two books of South Seas stories (The Queen Versus Billy and Other Stories and Love the Fiddler) and a memoir of his life with Stevenson (An Intimate Portrait of R. L. S.). These books enjoyed moderate success, and Pacific scholar A. Grove Day lists The Queen Versus Billy collection among the one hundred best South Seas books (Pacific Island Literature 120-21). Osbourne's stories show facility with setting and situation, but he is less able to develop or sustain his plots long enough to fulfill the requirements of a novel. His acute sense of both Caucasian and Polynesian characters who inhabit the South Seas and his sense of the ironies which occur when "civilization" meets "barbarism" reveal him as an apt partner for Stevenson's South Seas fiction. Stories such as "Frenchy's Last Job" and "The Best Day of His Life" have plots which Stevenson could have used and anticipate the ironic South Seas stories of Somerset Maugham. The fluency Osbourne developed in Samoan indicates the depth of his involvement with Polynesia. In The Wrecker and The Ebb Tide, Stevenson controlled the flow of words and much of the plot, but Osbourne contributed ideas, characters, and episodes to the books and did as much as half of the initial writing. Hence, while Stevenson's name dominates discussions of these works, Osbourne's contribution is
assumed.

John Jay Chapman accuses Stevenson of being "the most extraordinary mimic . . . in literature," citing as an example _In the South Seas_ as "a book he could not write because he . . . [had] no paradigm and original to copy from," unlike works such as _Kidnapped_, taken, according to Chapman, from Scott's Waverly novels and _Treasure Island_ imitating _Robinson Crusoe_ (221). Peter Gilmore and Andrew Noble to some extent agree with Chapman. Without affirming the assertion, or the examples, one must acknowledge the influence the stories Stevenson read or heard had on his writing. The analysis which follows distinguishes to what extent _The Wrecker_ is merely imitative, transforming into fiction sea yarns about several shipwrecks, to what extent _In the South Seas_ provides material for the novel, and to what extent the tradition of the yarn is merely the base from which Stevenson can investigate the nature of evil within otherwise benevolent characters. Making this assessment requires detailed discussion of diverse material: defining "yarn" as a literary term, recreating the actual yarns Stevenson may have heard, drawing parallels between these yarns and Stevenson's novel, and showing how Stevenson transferred personal anecdotes from the travel writing to the novel.

In his travel writing and his letters Stevenson repeatedly writes of "yarns" and "yarning" with the assumption that the reader knows what he means. For
example, he originally planned to open *In the South Seas* with a section called "Of schooners, islands, and maroons," which would include such aspects of nautical life as beachcombers, contraband, smuggling, barratry, and labor traffic, and would conclude with four beachcomber yarns (To Colvin, 2 Dec. 1889, *Works* 22: 204). While the yarn is as widespread and distinct a sub-genre in fiction as are the *bildungsroman* or the *roman à clef*, it is not a term included in handbooks to literature. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines "yarn" as a story, usually a long one, and usually of "marvelous or incredible kind." Not stated in any dictionary definition but implied in its usage is its most common reference to tales of the sea and its basis in oral tradition: a yarn is a story that is told; to yarn is to tell such stories. A likely place to hear yarns is aboard a ship or in port at a club or tavern where sailors congregate. And while the yarn usually includes amazing incidents, it almost always has some base in actual events. Tellers of yarns precede and follow Stevenson. The nautical novels of Marryat are rather artificial and elegantly narrated yarns. The most prolific spinner of South Seas yarns is the Australian adventurer and writer Louis Becke, most of whose two hundred published stories are blunt, brutal, yarns. Joseph Conrad remains the master at converting the yarn into complex literary art.

Noting the factual basis for *The Wrecker*, nearly every Stevenson critic who discusses the book mentions its genesis.
in the wreck of a ship called the *Wandering Minstrel*, but none have presented the details of the real event in the conflicting versions that confronted Stevenson, or shown how he converted the yarns he heard into his own written yarn. Because of this void, versions of what happened to the *Wandering Minstrel* are repeated here with almost excessive detail, because they approximate the yarns which influenced Stevenson to write *The Wrecker*.

The harbor and the two atolls—Sand Island and Eastern Island—of Midway which provide the setting for the key episodes in *The Wrecker* were between 1886 and 1889 the site of three nautical tragedies, information about which comes from the conflicting accounts by the survivors. Amid these versions is a body of information on which they agree. In 1869, the United States naval ship *Saginaw* arrived on Midway to dredge the lagoon entrance and bay and build a coaling station. The fifty thousand dollars appropriated for the job was sufficient only to build the quarters where the naval engineers lived and to leave loads of coal still on the barges or lighters on which the coal was floated to the shore (Shelmidine 183). Almost two decades later, the shelter, the coal, and the wood from the lighters helped castaways from two shipwrecks survive.

On 16 November 1886, a storm jarred the shark-fishing schooner *General Siegel* from its anchor in Midway's Welles Harbor and battered it onto coral reefs. The small crew of eight safely reached shore on Midway's Sand Island. Among
the crew were the captain—variously called Asberdine, Abserdine, Asberline, Jacobsen, and Jacobson—Adolph Jorgensen, Edvert Olsen, Peter Larkin, and a Mr. Brown, who shared the building constructed by the Saginaw dredging party. While life was difficult and the fare monotonous, fresh water, gooney bird eggs, fowl, and fish prevented starvation. Peter Larkin lost his hand fishing with dynamite and died soon afterwards either from complications from his injury or from poison. Later on, Brown and Jacobson died, one or both murder victims. Four of the remaining five survivors sailed a lifeboat 1,500 miles in 20 days to Jaluit in the Marshall Islands. Regarded as a murderer by the others, Jorgensen was left behind.

On 9 January 1888, the Wandering Minstrel, registered in Hong Kong and owned by the "Shark Fishing Company Limited," arrived at Midway, picked up Jorgensen and hired him as second mate, and remained in the region for several weeks, only to be wrecked by a storm which hit on 2 February. Everyone reached land safely. Captain Walker, his wife, and three sons occupied the dredging crew's hut; First mate John Cameron and Jorgensen lived in the veranda which Jorgensen had built during his exile; and the mostly Filipino crew built thatch huts on Midway's Eastern Island. The same monotonous diet which had kept earlier castaways alive again warded off starvation if not disease (Shelmidine 184-87). Two months later five of the crew escaped from Midway in one of the boats but were never seen again. Seven
months later Cameron and Jorgensen had better luck, sailing a 20-foot boat to the Marshall Islands (Shelmidine 187; Farrell, "Taming" 505). A few of those remaining on Midway died of scurvy.

On 16 March 1889, a third shark-fishing vessel, the Norma, commanded by Charles Johnson, arrived at Midway. The Norma left Midway on 26 March and brought Captain Walker, his family, and what was left of his crew to Honolulu around 6 April. Four days later a British naval or consular court of inquiry cleared Walker of any responsibility for the loss of his ship (Shelmidine 187; Farrell, "Taming" 505; Cameron's Odyssey 445-46n). By 25 June the Norma had returned to Midway. Two years later Captain Walker, in charge of the Kaalokai, chartered by the Rothschild Expedition for purposes of scientific observation of plant and animal life on the uninhabited islands west-northwest of Hawaii also revisited Midway (Shelmidine 186-87).

Versions of events related to the shipwrecks, whaleboat voyages, and rescues have been written by Olsen, Walker, and Cameron among the castaways and by George C. Munro who was with the Rothschild Expedition. In addition, Cameron relays Jorgensen's version of events after the first shipwreck, and Cameron's editor Andrew Farrell includes extensive notations on what he believes occurred. In his Epilogue to The Wrecker Stevenson alludes to the Wandering Minstrel and explains how yarns concerning this and other shipwrecks inspired Osbourne and him to write their novel. First-hand
information came from accounts in the Honolulu newspapers by Frederick Dunbar Walker, Stevenson's own meeting with Walker, and over a year later at Jaluit, his chance acquaintance with John Cameron. Concerning Walker, Stevenson informed Colvin, "I am going now to get the story of a shipwrecked family, who were fifteen months on an island with a murderer" (June 1889, Works 22: 185). Yet, with conflicting accounts from the victims, second-hand speculation narrated in the yarns he heard at sea and in remote ports during his Equator cruise influenced him as much what he may have learned from Walker or Cameron. What follows is a plot summary of The Wrecker which incorporates both details from In the South Seas and details from the yarns Stevenson heard.

Of the approximately one hundred twenty persons which In the South Seas depicts about a quarter are traders, sailors, or beachcombers, about whom Stevenson begins and sometimes completes yarns. The Prologue chapter to The Wrecker, "In the Marquesas," incorporates the most interesting of these yarns in order to introduce Loudon Dodd, a middle-aged world traveler, as the main character, create the South Seas ambience which is at the heart of the novel, and establish the sea yarn as the form the novel will take. Paralleling Marlow's account of much of Lord Jim to a group of fellow travelers, Dodd has put in writing the story he tells his host in Nukuhiva.

The "Prologue" prepares the reader for Dodd's long yarn
by briefly touching on some of the interesting anecdotes of Nukuhiva, mostly repeated from *In the South Seas*. In Nukuhiva the only people working are convicts who do so because they have no choice. The rest of the population, such as Queen Vaekehu, a Tahitian missionary, some white, Chinese, and half-cast merchants, or the Marquesan servants in the club, are all idle. Prince Stanislas Moanatini, with his concern for the destruction recent storms have caused on mountain trails, seems like a dedicated civil servant—except that he hurries as much to avoid the *sisu* or ghosts that come out after dark. The pier built up during the few years that the cotton plantation flourished now rots in disuse. Beneath its boards sleeps the white outcast who in tattooing his entire body has exiled himself forever from western civilization and also failed to win the Marquesan lady whom he had hoped his tattooed body would please. In the silence we briefly enter the thoughts of this man as he mixes memories of his boyhood in England with recollections of the Marquesas of a decade or two earlier when the drums still beat for cannibal festivals. The "Prologue" incorporates the atmosphere and several anecdotes from the Marquesas section of *In the South Seas*, and while little of this is organic to the plot, all of it is enticing and makes the reader wonder what connection this decaying island paradise has with the rest of the novel.

The arrival of a schooner awakens the tattooed man from his reverie and in turn revives the entire town, just as
Stevenson's arrival in the Casco animated the normally sleepy port. The population of twelve whites, "whom the tide of commerce or the chances of shipwreck or desertion had stranded on the beach of Tai-o-hae" (Wrecker 8), and several hundred Polynesians flock to the dock. The supercargo of the schooner is of such importance that the well-dressed Englishman Mr. Havens boards the ship and greets his guest, his old friend Loudon Dodd, who appears to be more of a gentleman than a trader. In Dodd's cabin stands a bust of his partner and owner of the schooner, Norris Carthew.

The white club in Nukuhiwa, which could as easily be in Papeete, Apia, or Lahaina, is the place for Dodd to begin his yarn. "Talk in the South Seas is all one pattern," stories of "smuggling, ship scuttling, barratry, piracy, the labour trade, and other kindred fields of human activity" (Wrecker 8). An additional way of making a fortune discussed at the club is the buying and selling of salvageable wrecks. Dodd silences an argument that is building by proclaiming that he has practiced all of these occupations, although none of them has made him rich. Later in the privacy of his mansion and over a feast of Polynesian delicacies, Havens reprimands Dodd for talking nonsense, to which Dodd responds that all he has claimed at the Cercle International is true and launches into his life story.

Set variously in Michigan, Scotland, Paris, and San
Francisco, three-quarters of the book deals with the passive acquiescence of Dodd to his surroundings and to people with more direction and drive such as his father and Jim Pinkerton, caricatures of American business types. As long as the yarn is land-locked, it stagnates, but once it moves into the Pacific the action begins. Before he can charge the novel with the South Seas adventure promised in the Prologue, Stevenson needs to establish Dodd as a person receptive to the archetype of the South Seas. When depicting Dodd alone in San Francisco, Stevenson draws on his own experiences during his 1879-80 residence in the Bay Area. San Francisco, Stevenson writes, "keeps the doors of the Pacific, and is the port of entry to another world and an earlier epoch in man's history" (Wrecker 124). Among the huge ships which connect the capitals of the world are docked the small trading schooners which link island trading stations and entrance Dodd. "The Island schooner circulates low in the water, with lofty spars and dainty lines, rigged and fashioned like a yacht, manned with brown-skinned, soft-spoken, sweet-eyed native sailors, and equipped with their great double-ender boats that tell a tale of boisterous sea beaches". (124). Similarly, Dodd meets an unnamed character, prototype of Charles Warren Stoddard, whose apartment is almost a museum of Polynesian artifacts: "evidences and examples of another earth, another climate, another culture" (126).

Dodd's quest for the exotic leads him to a
waterfront tavern, Black Tom's, where he can mingle with South Seas travelers of all ancestries, listening to their yarns and absorbing an archetypal sense of their region. Black Tom's not only moves Dodd toward his dream of paradise, it also becomes his link to the purchase of the *Flying Scud*. He observes sailors claiming to be survivors from the ship lost on Midway Islands, and as they tell their yarn, the artistic Dodd quietly sketches them. When Pinkerton proposes as a new venture bidding for salvage rights on the *Flying Scud*, Dodd not only assents but takes the lead. The "doors of the Pacific" have opened for him.

A major irony in *The Wrecker* is the artificial value placed on the wrecked ship. When the auction price jumps from the one hundred dollars Pinkerton has assumed would suffice to fifty thousand dollars, Dodd and Pinkerton surmise that they have purchased a smuggling ship which still has contraband aboard. Furthermore, since he is certain that he has leapt into the world of crime from Pinkerton's world of the merely shady—in the process freeing himself from dependence on Pinkerton—Dodd assumes that whoever has bid against him will have no respect for the sale and will race him to Midway, and that salvage rights will go to the survivor. Dodd is exhilarated by his willingness to kill or die for a possibly worthless ship. Among other ironies, the *Flying Scud* does contain opium amid its official cargo of rice, but the value of this contraband which Dodd sells in Honolulu is ten thousand dollars at the
most.

The minor focus on smuggling and contraband has probable parallels with the actual events. Honolulu and Hong Kong, ports of call for the Wandering Minstrel, have long been centers of smuggling. Certain events that Stevenson may or may not have heard about indicate that in the wreckage of the Wandering Minstrel or in the castaways' camp were goods worth salvaging. Captain Johnson's almost immediate return to Midway could have been due to eagerness to resume shark fishing in prime waters, but the thoroughness of his scavenging more likely reveals contraband in the sunken ship--provided he could get to it--or among the wreckage washed ashore and the ruins of Walker's camp. George C. Munro in his diary of the Rothschild Expedition suggests that Walker was more interested in returning to Midway than in assisting the scientists who hired him, as he refused their requests to land on Bird and Necker Islands where they wished to gather data. Once at Midway, Walker's fury that Johnson had ransacked the remains of his camp indicates that he had left items of value behind (Shelmidine 188). And while Cameron's narrative in John Cameron's Odyssey expresses no suspicions about drug smuggling, his editor Andrew Farrell contends in his commentary that both the Wandering Minstrel and the Norma were smuggling ships. This is how Farrell explains the ease with which Captain Johnson of the Norma could force Captain Walker to pay for being rescued from Midway, because
at a naval court of inquiry Walker could not demand 
restitution of funds gained from selling contraband.

Dodd's voyage to Honolulu and Midway aboard the Norah 
Creina recaptures Stevenson's experiences aboard the Casco, 
occasional details of which form part of In the South Seas. 
The entry into the tropics fits both the ailing Stevenson 
and phlegmatic Dodd: "I was aware of a spiritual change, 
or, perhaps, rather a molecular reconstitution. My bones 
were sweeter to me. I had come home to my own climate, and 
looked back with pity on those damp and wintry zones, 
miscalled the temperate" (Wrecker 190). The storm scene 
recreates the time Stevenson commissioned Captain Otis to 
try to outrun a weather front during the passage from Tahiti 
to Hawaii. Lashing through wind and wave Dodd, for the 
first time in his life, sees himself as a man. He resolves 
that whether the Norah Creina stays ahead of the storm or 
capsizes, he will bear himself decently. This resolution 
carries over to the salvaging of the Flying Scud when he 
confronts the truth that he has bankrupted himself and 
Pinkerton both morally and financially in order to acquire 
contraband worth no more than twenty percent of what he bid 
for the wreck. As Stevenson's skill as a sailor won him 
Captain Otis' respect, Dodd's energy and bravery win over 
Captain Nares.

In razing the ship Dodd also discovers clues indicating 
that the quartet of men claiming to be the survivors of the 
wreck are impostors and that the original crew has
disappeared. Having sketched the four men in Black Toms, Dodd can also identify a fifth impostor as Norris Carthew. Discovering what has occurred on the Flying Scud becomes Dodd's obsession, so that with the possibility of blackmail in mind, Dodd pursues Carthew to Europe with the same intensity with which he has bid for, raced to, and ransacked the wrecked ship. However, in Carthew, Dodd meets his double who willingly tells him his grisly story.

A wealthy heir, Carthew tells how, like Dodd, he lives a useless and passive life until the enticement of travel and trade in the South Seas awakens him. He tells how he and four others—Wicks the captain, Hadden the trader, Hemstead the deckhand, Amalu the Hawaiian cook, and later Mac, another deckhand—begin an idyllic voyage aboard their ship the Currency Lass. He explains how fine weather, pleasant companionship, and a hugely profitable sale of cargo are only preludes to tragedy.

Carthew and his companions react to challenges of increasing intensity. When heavy winds bring down masts on the Currency Lass, the sailors safely reach Midway Island in their whaleboat. When the Flying Scud arrives on Midway, Trent, its captain, at first offers safe passage without charge. When he discovers the fortune they have with them, for they cannot conceal the weight of their chest filled with over four thousand pounds in specie, he expresses his fear that to acquire so much wealth the men must be pirates. Wicks willingly tells him of the vastly profitable sale of
their cargo at Butaritari. The "pawn shop" banker rather than the able sea captain takes over in Trent, and seeing how Wicks and his crew have connived to make huge profits, Trent resolves to transfer these into his own coffers as the new fare to San Francisco. The crew of the Currency Lass fight rather than surrender their spoils. Mac slits Trent's throat, and in the resulting tension Carthew and his companions systematically slaughter the entire crew of the Flying Scud. Observing the arrival of a second ship, the Tempest, the crew of murderers take on the identities of five of their victims.

This key episode comes directly from yarns surrounding the rescue of the Wandering Minstrel crew. Fanny Stevenson in her introduction to The Wrecker explains what she believes happened.

While we were submerged in preparations for the voyage, Honolulu was thrilled by the landing of a number of castaways picked up on Midway Island by a passing vessel. This, in itself, was not so extraordinary, but the circumstances were unusual and mysterious. The story, which was far from convincing told by the captain of the wrecked ship, . . . was that he had fitted out his vessel in Hong Kong for the purpose of catching sharks. He meant, he said, to make spurious cod-liver oil from the livers of the sharks, and sell the dried fins to the Chinese. There were many discrepancies and evasions in his tale that I have forgotten; but it was plain that fishing for sharks was not the sole object of the Wandering Minstrel. The wages of the sailors, for one thing, were to be far beyond the usual rate of payment. . . .

The castaways were soon in desperate circumstances, and in no condition to make terms with a ship that answered their signals of distress. The captain of the rescuing vessel first ascertained exactly what amount of money had been saved from the wreck; it was just this sum, several thousand dollars--comprising all the sailors' wages as well as the entire means of the
captain—that the stranger demanded as his price for carrying the miserable creatures to the nearest civilised port, where they were dumped, penniless, on the wharf. (Works 17: 6-7)

Munro’s diary likewise indicates that Walker chartered this passage. Farrell cites the probable blackmail involved in the rescue of the survivors from the Wandering Minstrel. Walker’s report to the court of inquiry states the Norma under agreement conveyed the Midway survivors to Honolulu. In other words, Walker had to pay for his rescue.

For a rescuer of a group of castaways to extort payment is an outrage if not actually a crime. By virtue of their plight castaways do not pay their rescuers, except a voluntary reward after they reach safety. Rescuing the shipwrecked is a moral duty on the sea. For example, in Kipling’s Captains Courageous Disko Troop has no thought of reward when he fishes up Harvey Cheyne. Implying that in the Pacific the distinction between trader and pirate was not that great, Farrell reemphasizes his belief that Captain Johnson had sufficient leverage over Captain Walker to blackmail him.

Equally important as a source for the violent climax are such tales of murders among the General Siegel crew and possibly among several of the Wandering Minstrel crew. In a letter to Colvin, Stevenson refers to Jorgensen, the remaining castaway from the General Siegel, as a murderer, an indictment supported by another survivor Edvert Olsen in his article "The Midway Tragedy". Yet from Cameron a year
later Stevenson would have heard a sympathetic description of Jorgensen who accused the captain of committing the two murders and maintained his own innocence of any such wrongdoing. Having met Cameron—who in his Odyssey portrays himself as a hearty rogue equally content serving aboard a trading schooner or recruiting "blackbird" labor for German plantations throughout the Pacific—and heard about Jorgensen, Stevenson may have considered how these men would have responded to blackmail, especially if they were armed and had some chance of success. By partially modeling his characters after actual people, Stevenson mans both The Currency Lass and the Flying Scud with characters who elicit horror and sympathy.

In charge of the Currency Lass is Captain Wicks, an expert mariner and almost a sentimental "old salt" yet one who escapes from Sydney with an alias and in a disguise, because on his previous command he has killed a rebellious crewman. The character of Tommy Hadden is taken almost totally from Stevenson's friend from his Janet Nicoll cruise and later guest at Vailima "Tin Jack" Buckland. Hadden is a South Seas trader who wastes in a few weeks of revelry in Sydney, Apia, or Honolulu what he accumulates the rest of the year at his Gilbert Island trading station. Joseph Amalu—whose name links the first name of Stevenson's Hawaiian language teacher in Honolulu with the last name of one of his hosts during his visit to Hookena—Stevenson describes as the drudge of the crew; but because of his
habit of working under the worst of conditions, in preparing breakfast the morning after the murders and beginning to clean the bloody mess on deck, he reanimates his companions. The well-traveled Mac shares both compassionate and violent qualities and functions as a jinx. He has served as boatswain on the Leslie, which has sunk off Butaritari. After he boards the Currency Lass, the once lucky crew faces the misfortunes of the broken masts, the deserted island, and the Flying Scud massacre. Stevenson establishes Mac's experience and expertise as a sailor, yet also foreshadows the third disaster when Mac reveals his propensity to violence by destroying Hemstead's banjo in a brief fit of rage. Hemstead, the least developed of the characters, is another sentimental type, reducing his companions to tears when he sings "Home Sweet Home."

Just as Stevenson creates sympathetic characters, he gives them a reason for being armed more like pirates than sailors and gentlemen. Wicks addresses his small crew as he arms them: "Boys, . . . we're going aboard of a ship of which we don't know nothing; we've got a chest of specie, and seeing the weight, we can't turn to and deny it. Now suppose she was fishy; suppose it was some kind of a Bully Hayes business" (Wrecker 385). Soon after invoking the most famous South Seas pirate, Wicks and his crew themselves become pirates.

Stevenson sketches the Flying Scud crew with similar lines. Goddedaal is a friendly Swede who reveals his
kindness through his love of music, the canary he keeps, and the shock and shame which register on his face as he watches his captain blackmail the castaways. Yet Stevenson also depicts his fearlessness and hugeness, so the reader can imagine how he terrifies Carthew into action when he breaks Mac's arm and Hemstead's head with the bench on which he has been sitting. The parallel Scandanavian names may indicate that Jorgensen is the prototype for Goddedaal.

Stevenson assigns to one of the Flying Scud crew the name of one of the General Siegel company. Like his counterpart, who was killed for witnessing either the murder of Larkin or the murder of the captain, the Flying Scud's Brown is the most pathetic of the victims. Stevenson describes him as an "incomparably mild and harmless man," whose one vice of drinking has made him forever a rover (Wrecker 384). While he begs for mercy, Carthew resolves to "dispatch" him, but finds that he cannot pull the trigger to commit his third murder. Wicks unloads his pistol in the direction of the pleading voice. Earlier, a homey letter to Brown from his family in Scotland which Nares and Dodd find on the wrecked Flying Scud makes them aware that he belongs to a crew that has disappeared.

Stevenson could easily have portrayed Trent as a villain. Instead, by revealing how Trent vainly glorifies the time he was a "banker" in what was more like a slum pawnshop, and how he eschews his accomplishments as a mariner, Stevenson creates a character who, sensing a good
bargain, tries blackmail. In the process Stevenson also makes the reader realize that the huge profits that Carthew, Wicks, and Hadden have reaped have also involved a bit of a swindle.

With these brief portraits Stevenson reveals how closely the crews on the *Currency Lass* and the *Flying Scud* resemble each other. If they had been in the same crew they would have worked as harmoniously as they do on their separate ships. In the isolation of Midway, after Mac's first outburst of fury when he destroys the banjo and the original crew members briefly grow tense in their own fury before Mac apologizes for his rash act, Stevenson allows each sailor a glimpse at the depravity and viciousness inside his heart. *In the South Seas* contains a passage where the sight of two drunken native females clawing and grappling on the ground gives Stevenson a vision of all humanity's "beastliness, of his ferality," calling up "the image of our race upon its lowest terms as the partner of beasts, beastly itself, dwelling pell-mell and hugger-mugger, hairy man with hairy woman in the caves of old" (*ISS* 239). In *The Wrecker* he writes, "In that savage, houseless isle, the passions of man had sounded, if only for the moment, and all men trembled at the possibilities of horror" (377). Stevenson then places the men in a situation where these passions erupt into the murder of seven of their brother mariners in a manner that makes caveman violence seem rational.
When Carthew tells Dodd his story, both characters realize that their lives are almost interchangeable, except that Carthew has actually committed the crimes that Dodd has only realized that he has the potential to commit. The reader can assume the meeting of Dodd and Carthew results in their partnership, thus explaining Dodd's arrival in Nuku Hiva which opens the book.

Other items from Stevenson's fascination with yarns more randomly make their way into The Wrecker. The motif of sailors being adrift in the Pacific overlaps with actual Midway events. While the journey to Midway that the Currency Lass crew make in their whaleboat is only forty miles, not the one thousand five hundred miles which four survivors from the General Siegel and three from the Wandering Minstrel sailed, yet like the actual castaways, Wicks knows his location in the Pacific and considers trying to sail a whaleboat 1,200 miles to Hawaii. The yarns about castaways which the Currency Lass sailors share lead them to choose the immediate safety of nearby Midway, for the tales they tell involve madness and disaster. In having Mac tell about a man who after covering one thousand two hundred miles in a boat and safely reaching the Marquesas, never leaves his remote sanctuary, because he refuses ever again to set foot in a boat of any size or kind, Stevenson repeats one of his anecdotes from In the South Seas. Wicks tells of a crew of castaways who go so insane during their lifeboat voyage to Kauai that when their destination is in sight,
they lose all sense of danger and smash their boat onto a rocky shore, and all but one drown. The theme of the risk of madness during a long voyage may have roots in Cameron's belief that Jorgensen alternated between periods of sanity and periods of madness.

Belief that a coaling station exists on Midway sways the decision of the Currency Lass castaways. As they approach the deserted islands, Mac states that he previously passed near Midway aboard the China mail, information which sustains the crew's hope for rescue. The experiences of the marooned sailors from the General Siegel and the Wandering Minstrel, each waiting fourteen months before seeing another ship, belie the logic of this optimism, just as knowledge of the two-thirds success rate of lifeboat sailors from Midway might induce Wicks' party to try for Honolulu or Jaluit. For purposes of his plot, however, Stevenson must keep the men on Midway and have two ships arrive within a week.

Clearer parallels exist between Stevenson's contributing yarns and The Wrecker in regard to situation and setting. Two ships are lost in the novel as in actual events. In both a third ship arrives and rescues the marooned sailors. Likewise, as rapidly as possible, salvage ships—the Norma in 1889, the Kaalokai in 1891, and in the novel the Norah Creina—return to Midway. And events concerning the ships are parallel. If Cameron's belief is correct, Walker deliberately scuttled the Wandering Minstrel. Unfamiliarity with the operation of a square-
rigged ship compounded by the small size, minimal experience, and disability of the crew causes Wicks to hang up the stolen *Flying Scud*.

Loudon Dodd's salvaging of the *Flying Scud* does not at first seem to have parallels with actual salvage operations, mainly because both the *General Siegel* and the *Wandering Minstrel* sank in Welles Harbor, while in the novel the *Currency Lass* is abandoned at sea and the *Flying Scud* is beached, apparently undamaged. Yet the position of the *Flying Scud* gives Nares his first clue that the report submitted by the man claiming to be Captain Trent is bogus. The ways the fictional San Francisco court of inquiry and the real Honolulu court of inquiry clear the captains in their investigations are parallel.

Unsavoriness is a main feature in the yarns Stevenson heard and in the commercial exchanges he observed. His most detailed use of sources comes in his focus on the crimes of insurance fraud, smuggling, blackmail, and murder. *The Wrecker* alludes to insurance fraud more than actually depicting it. The pattern of wrecks of ships owned by Capsicum and Company mentioned at the Cercle International indicates the profitability of this crime (*Wrecker* 9).

After his involvement in shipwrecks and Dodd's purchase and salvage of the wreck, Carthew is able to tell Dodd, "And yet neither you nor I had the worst of the puzzle," and add that "the underwriters were . . . deeper in" on the bidding for the *Flying Scud* (330).
In addition to hearing yarns about insurance fraud in general, Stevenson probably heard of at least one case of ship scuttling. If the information that John Cameron gave Stevenson resembles his account of the Wandering Minstrel wreck in his Odyssey, then he shared with Stevenson his belief that Captain Walker deliberately lost the ship. In his book Cameron cites the following pieces of evidence: Walker's apathy in fishing for sharks, the excess of supplies on board the ship and their transfer to land when the ship first reached Midway, Walker's hint that Cameron might profit from the voyage, and his probable knowledge that Midway offered some shelter, fresh water, food, and the hope of rescue (John Cameron's Odyssey 270-71; 293-94).

Munro's experiences support Cameron's charges. He states in one entry: "It seems very plain to me that it was Captain Walker's intention to beach the Wandering Minstrel but fate did not favour his designs. He had every convenience to make them very comfortable if he had managed it as he evidently wished." Munro adds his belief that Walker is involved in an insurance scheme with the owners of the Kaaloka (Shelmidine 188-89).

Once a ship falters, hierarchies of authority topple. Just as Jacobson lost control of at least part of his crew, and Walker, as depicted by Cameron, had little control of his men; despair, exhaustion, and apathy cause Wicks' crew to resist his order to try to dislodge the beached Flying Scud. The men assume that high tide the next day will more
easily free the ship.

Stevenson takes his setting of Midway Islands from the yarns he heard. In his specific description of the islands, however, he probably relies more on information found in sailing directories and his own need to be able to manipulate plot than on descriptions of the area he may have gotten from any of the mariners he talked with during his travels. When Stevenson has the Currency Lass castaways read in a "Hoyt's Directory" that Midway has become a coaling station for the Pacific mail, he may be either relaying an actual piece of misinformation from a sailing directory or inventing this detail in order to waylay his characters onto Midway. He places his Midway along the route of the China mail to increase the likelihood of naval traffic. The descriptions of Midway most likely come from Findlay's Directory of the North Pacific, for they are accurate in general detail about the shape, size, and environment of the islands. However, they lack the precision of his descriptions of islands he actually visited. The absence in The Wrecker of any buildings, coal lighters, or loads of coal which helped make Midway endurable for the actual castaways indicates either that Stevenson did not learn about actual conditions on Midway or, more likely, that he deliberately depicts Midway as more stark and barren than it actually was.
In "A Humble Remonstrance," written soon after Treasure Island, Stevenson discusses what he feels to be the proper scope and subject matter for "the novel of adventure."

Danger is the matter with which this class of novel deals; fear, the passion with which it idly trifles; and the characters are portrayed only so far as they realise the sense of danger and provoke the sympathy of fear. To add more traits, to be too clever, to start the hare of moral or intellectual interest while we are running the fox of material interest, is not to enrich but to stultify your tale. The stupid reader will only be offended, and the clever reader lose the scent. (In Smith, James and Stevenson, 95)

Clearly the yarn as a form of literature fulfills Stevenson's requirements for the adventure novel. Yet it is questionable whether, in 1891, Stevenson would still agree with the limitations he sets on such novels, for in The Wrecker the yarn becomes the vehicle for perhaps his most effective investigation of evil.

The tradition of the yarn reduces the vast Pacific rim into a single, somewhat inbred community. For example, the Pacific sections of The Wrecker link the ports of San Francisco, Honolulu, Hong Kong, Nukuhiva, Sidney, and Butaritari. The hugeness of the Pacific and the remoteness of many of its lands account for the patterns in Pacific yarns which feature immunity from law, control, or inhibition from either western or eastern civilization. The Pacific is the region where scoundrels thrive, and from their actions yarns emanate.

Fascination with the nature of evil dominates Stevenson's fiction. Morality often seems static,
monotonous, and ineffectual, while formerly moral characters often find immorality invigorating. *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and *The Master of Ballantrae*, two of his best works, focus on evil. Yet the manifestations of evil in both works are devil or Satan figures for whom an evil nature is more of a defined attribute than something which emerges in the course of the plots. Hyde's evil—the stomping of a child and the murder of Sir Danvers Carew are mere incidents in Hyde's nighttime prowls—remains unspecified and unexplained, except as evidence of the folly of trying either to deny or isolate the evil within oneself.¹ James Durie is born daring and malicious, and in the course of *The Master of Ballantrae* becomes outright evil, but his nature is more of a given than a development of his personality. As the Hyde in Jekyll obliterates benevolence, James Durie's persecution of his brother Henry spreads the evil like some contagion, so that by the end of the novel mania for revenge has changed Henry into his brother's image. Even in *The Beach of Falesà*, Case's evil nature is a given attribute rather than one for which a motivation or cause emerges during the story.

In contrast, no one in *The Wrecker* is innately evil. Before the tragedy, the *Flying Scud* crew would vouch for the skill and decency of Captain Trent. Among Carthew's

¹Hyde's most vivid action is writing blasphemy in the margins of Jekyll's favorite books of theology.
companions Mac, whose furious temper is more an excess of choler than a manifestation of malice or evil, shares equally in their fellowship. Yet a premise in *The Wrecker* is that within each human being resides the potential for violence and evil. The environment in which characters live can stifle or encourage the expression of evil. Amid civilization Dodd and Pinkerton can profit from devious acts and even petty fraud, but hardly would fight or kill to increase their wealth. By contrast, in the Pacific, neither laws nor inhibitions exist to discourage greed or violence. Dodd does nothing more violent than tear the beached ship apart and nothing more criminal than sell in Honolulu the opium he finds. Yet he realizes that even if he had known that his ship is almost worthless, he still would fight and kill to retain his salvage rights, as Carthew does to protect his share of the profits of trade. Placed in opposition in Midway, he and Carthew could kill each other. At a restaurant in Barbizon they pledge their brotherhood.

Carthew abhors the acts he has committed, and Dodd shares in his horror; yet the revitalization which has accompanied each confrontation with evil has been partial compensation. Carthew's companions react to their crimes much as he does. After the massacre, the murderers shudder at what they have done. One man vomits, another faints; but the murders have been committed. The unified purpose of the *Currency Lass* survivors becomes to disguise their crimes before the arrival of the *Tempest*, lie their way through the
San Francisco inquiry, invest whatever fortunes they have to eliminate all evidence of the bloodbath, and try to carry on with their lives in areas of the world beyond the reach of anyone who may learn the truth.

Matching the experiences of his characters with his own much tamer adventures, Stevenson contrasts the banality of civilized and safe existence with the vitality that comes with traveling beyond civilization. In one letter to Colvin, he describes his book as "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" (24 Oct. 1891, Works 22: 423). In his final written comment on The Wrecker Stevenson makes the same point again:

Did you not fail to appreciate the attitude of Dodd? He was a fizzle and a stick, he knew it, he knew nothing else, and there is an undercurrent of bitterness in him. And then the problem that Pinkerton laid down: why the artist can do nothing else is one that continually exercises myself. He cannot: granted. But Scott could. And Montaigne. And Julius Caesar. And many more. And why can't R. L. S.?

He adds that he wishes he were an engineer or a magistrate as well as the author of David Balfour (15 Jan. 1894, Works 23: 356). To Charles Baxter, Stevenson proclaims that The Wrecker "is certainly nourished with facts; no realist can touch me there; for by this time I do begin to know something of life in the 19th century, which no novelist either in France or England seems to know much of" (Nov. 1891, Ferguson and Waingrow 289). Stevenson tries to make
his editor understand that to him *The Wrecker* is not only an
adventure novel set in some exotic region, but also a
realistic picture of an actual world and a statement in
rejection of the passive life of the artist, and an
affirmation of experience, action, and adventure even
if mixed with violence, crime, and evil.

The depravity and viciousness that Carthew not only
sees within himself but on which he acts to kill other men
may reside in all humanity. Human beings can insulate
themselves from the passions within themselves, yet to do so
is at best to exist, at worst to risk perverted explosions
of repressed desire. As if he has been sleepwalking for
thirty years Dodd awakens to life with his first sounding of
his own passion, when he bids for the *Flying Scud*. Yet he
cannot understand the vitality and potential viciousness
within himself until he hears Carthew's story. Had Dodd
sailed aboard the *Currency Lass*, Carthew's story could be
his own. Dodd and Carthew are related only in their love
for art and the way they for most of their lives have
acquiesced to their surroundings. Jekyll's act of splitting
himself into good and evil personae forces him to choose
between deaths by hanging or by suicide. In *The Master of
Ballantrae* desire for revenge leads the Durie brothers to
destroy each other. In contrast, self-awareness for both
Dodd and Carthew results from their confrontations with the
evil within themselves. Carthew faces his past, and Dodd
vicariously shares in Carthew's crimes. In the process, two
unrelated men move into psychic twinship. Jekyll confesses that his split of good from evil has been a life-long preoccupation. MacKeller tells how the enmity between James and Henry Durie builds for over two decades. In contrast, the evil within Dodd and Carthaw rises to the surface only on one unusual occasion, flares with momentary turbulence, and, the consequences of the murder’s successfully evaded, brings Dodd and Carthaw together. Their acknowledgment of their potential for evil prevents the evil from possessing them.

The sea yarn serves Stevenson well, and with focus on the shipwreck sequence, The Wrecker is a disturbing novel. Yet two things undercut its power. First is a limitation which accompanies most yarns, the sense that while hardly a “shaggy dog story,” a yarn by its rambling nature is often an entertaining tale designed in part to kill time.

Second is Stevenson’s sense of obligation to provide a felicitous ending, a fault not uncommon to eighteenth and nineteenth century fiction and demanded by many Victorian readers and critics (Graham, English Criticism 33, 53-54). Conrad’s yarns build to and retain an intensity and seriousness where they transcend mere story-telling and reveal insight into the episodes, the characters, and even all humanity. In contrast, Stevenson in The Wrecker, having transcended the mere sense of danger mandated in his definition of adventure by revealing how human beings may react in kind to a threat or an attack, retreats to the
lighthearted tone which opens the yarn.

Shakespeare's use in *Measure for Measure* of a comic resolution for scenes featuring greed, lust, hypocrisy, and corruption, perplexes the audience because the conclusion inadequately resolves the issues. Similarly, in *The Wrecker* the mixture of the form, a story told for entertainment, and the substance, an intense focus on violence and evil, produces an unresolved tension. Perhaps in vividly depicting how two characters with artistic sensibilities react to violence Stevenson becomes guilty of endowing them with unnecessary "traits," trying "to be too clever," and starting "the hare of moral or intellectual interest while running the fox of material." More likely he has gone beyond only creating a sense of danger and fear, and revealed something about human nature. However, in the "Epilogue" which tells how each murderer retired into moderately happy exile, Stevenson retreats to the terms of his own prescription for the adventure novel and in the process trivializes what he has achieved.
CHAPTER V

THE EBB TIDE: THE SOUTH SEAS AS SOURCE OF ALLEGORY

Stevenson's most complex South Seas novel, The Ebb Tide, would have remained a fragment if he had not decided in February 1893 that the five or six chapters he and Osbourne had written and abandoned in 1890 were worth completing. Finishing the book involved the slowest and most painful writing he ever did; however, the final product is a novel of such intensity and complexity that it can be most fully interpreted as an allegory, yet one which incorporates his most extensive use of the techniques of realism.

Investigation of such diverse topics as Stevenson's definition of and shifting attitude toward realism, his admiration for heroes and heroic action, his mixed agnosticism and reverence for religion, and his fascination with the behavior of western humanity in Oceania helps illuminate this novel and reveal patterns of possible meaning. Stevenson's travel writing provides some information for the novel, yet more of the novel comes from his unrecorded experiences and his imagination than from studied or collected lore.

The key literary term "realism" is difficult to define precisely. Margaret Drabble in the new edition of The Oxford Companion to English Literature calls realism "a
literary term so widely used as to be more or less meaningless except when used in contradistinction to some other movement" such as Naturalism, Expressionism, or Surrealism. She cites the definition given by her predecessor, Sir Paul Harvey, "a loosely used term meaning true to the observed facts of life (especially when they are gloomy)." She mentions that in nineteenth-century French literature "realism" implied treatment of everyday life, preferably lower-class life, with— from Zola's sense of Naturalism— scientific objectivity and the belief that human life is subject to natural laws which can be documented. Hence, part of realism involves the refusal to idealize experience (813, 688).


The air of reality . . . seems to me to be the supreme virtue of a novel—the merit on which all its other merits . . . helplessly and submissively depend. If it be not there, they are all as nothing, and if these be there, they owe their effect to the success with which the author has produced the illusion of life. The cultivation of this success, the study of this exquisite process, form, to my taste, the beginning and the end of the art of the novelist. . . . It is here, in very truth, that he competes with life. (James, "Art of Fiction" 67–68)

In "A Humble Remonstrance" Stevenson replies by questioning whether any art can "compete with life" any more than, for example, a human being can stare at the sun (91). Instead, the novel exists by its difference from life" (92).

Stating that a "novel is not a transcript of life to be
judged by its exactitude, ("Humble Remonstrance" 100), the rather young Stevenson concludes with advice to any young writer:

Let him choose a motive, whether of character or passion; carefully construct his plot so that every incident is an illustration of the motive and every property employed shall bear to it a near relation of congruity or contrast; avoid a sub-plot, . . . suffer not his style to flag below the level of the argument; pitch the key of conversation, not with any thought of how men talk in parlours, but with a single eye to the degree of passion he may be called on to express; and allow neither himself in the narrative nor any character in the course of the dialogue, to utter one sentence that is not part and parcel of the business of the story or the discussion of the problem involved. (99)

The ideas of both James and Stevenson change from writing to writing, for in the friendship which begins with "The Art of Fiction" and "A Humble Remonstrance" each concedes the validity of the other's views (Graham, "Stevenson and James" 24).

To both James and Stevenson, Realism as a literary movement, rather than an aspect or technique of fiction, signifies the ideas and writing of Emile Zola, the immensity of whose Les Rougon-Macquart series of novels amazes them as much as the grimness of character and plot and dogmatism of writing theory disturb them. In "The Art of Fiction" James compares Zola's method of writing to working in the dark. Similarly Stevenson opposes the starkness and lack of beauty in such writing, yet also recognizes that fiction based on strict adherence to real life is more than a passing fad.

In his "Note on Realism" Stevenson contrasts two elements in any piece of writing: the idealistic, the grand conception
of the piece; and the realistic, the details from life and nature. He suggests that the balance between the two is a matter for ongoing and unresolved debate, but sees the literature of his time as heavy on oppressive detail and light on that which is "philosophical, passionate, dignified, happy, mirthful or romantic" (Works 4: 423).

However, as he writes in 1884, Stevenson seems to believe that details from real life are useful tools for the writer and important aspects of fiction only as they contribute to a successful artificial product. He again discusses realism when he describes the process of writing The Ebb Tide in his letters.

"Allegory" is almost as illusive a term to define as realism. Emphasizing that allegory is a mode of narration more than a genre, Northrup Frye labels narrative as allegorical when it "obviously and continuously refers to another simultaneous structure of events and ideas" whether historical, moral, philosophical, or natural. Because of its "naive" didacticism, pure allegory in post-Renaissance writing, according to Frye, rarely achieves greatness. Such classics as Moby Dick, The Scarlet Letter, or To the Lighthouse show "allegorical tendencies" in that they "present a central symbol . . . [with] a great variety of suggestive implications, . . . [but lack] the continuity necessary for genuine allegory." Frye labels certain works and parts of other works such as Pilgrim's Progress as "naive" in that the author "is too interested in his
additional meaning to care whether his fiction is consistent or not as a fiction" (Preminger 12).

Frye does not mention the possible juxtaposition of allegory with realism. In traditional allegory the two seem contrary, yet in fiction of at least the past century the allegorical is difficult to accept seriously unless it is rendered with verisimilitude. The realistic and allegorical can be complementary. The tension between realistic details and sustained symbolic narrative if successful, as for example in Heart of Darkness, conveys power and intensity, believability and universality.

The Ebb Tide begins as realistic fiction. Yet in "The Quartet" section symbolism becomes so intense and so sustained that "allegory" more than "allegorical tendency" best describes the mode of narration. Whichever term one prefers, focus on allegory helps elicit meaning from the book. For example, Gay Clifford, in a passage applicable to The Ebb Tide lists subject matter common to allegory from medieval to modern times.

To express change and process, allegorical action often takes the form of a journey, a quest, or a pursuit: this becomes the metaphor by which a process of learning for both protagonists and readers is expressed. In the course of their adventures the heroes of allegory discover what ideals are worth pursuing. (11)

While The Ebb Tide began as another collaboration, with Osbourne drafting the first four chapters in 1889 and 1890, Osbourne's name appears as co-author more as a concession to his ability to discuss possible plots and draft episodes
than as an indication of partnership throughout the novel. Stevenson rewrote the first section, leaving Osbourne's four chapters pretty well intact, set the book aside for almost three years, and wrote "The Quartet" section (Fowler 127n). Osbourne admits in An Intimate Portrait of R. L. S. that Stevenson only approved the first sixty pages he had written.

Try as I would I could not please RLS; I wrote and rewrote, and rewrote again, but always to have him shake his head. Finally at his suggestions and in utter hopelessness I laid the manuscript by, hoping to come back to it later but with greater success. But I never did. (98; Swearingen 184)

Stevenson and Osbourne originally planned for a longer work, with a variety of settings similar to The Wrecker, adding England to Tahiti and an unnamed equatorial atoll. Stevenson's titles indicate the different emphases he was trying to settle on. The Pearl Fisher makes Attwater the main character and probably was dropped when the English setting was abandoned. The Schooner Farallone may mainly have pleased Stevenson for its sound but also could indicate concentration on the act of barratry or the allegorical significance of the vessel as a kind of phantom ship. The Ebb Tide allows multiple focuses which include each character in "the quartet" and suggest the ebb and flow in these characters' lives (Fowler 121).

Stevenson's correspondence reveals the ebb and flow of writing the book, as he initially describes it as "the gaudiest yarn" and "a black, ugly, trampling, violent story,
full of strange scenes and striking characters" (To Baxter, Ferguson and Waingrow, 246; To Marcel Schwob 18 August 1890, Works 22: 254). Three years later the book is "grinding slowly" as Stevenson still affirms its merit:

The tale... seems to me to go off with a considerable bang; in fact to be an extra-ordinary work; but whether popular! Attwater is no end of a courageous attempt; ... how far successful is another affair. If my island ain't a thing of beauty, I'll be damned. Please observe Wiseman and Wishart for incidental grimness, they strike me as in it. Also, kindly observe the Captain and Adar [Davis' deceased daughter]; I think that knocks spots. In short, as you see, I'm a trifle vainglorious. But O, it has been such a grind! The devil himself would allow a man to brag a little after such a crucifixion! And indeed I'm only bragging for a change before I return to the damned thing lying waiting for me on page 88, where I last broke down. I break down every paragraph, I may observe; and lie here and sweat, till I can get one sentence wrung out after another. Strange doom; after having worked so easily for so long. (To Colvin, 12, 16 May 1893, Works 23: 233, 234-35)

Writing became more painful. Like Charles Dickens raising his blood-pressure to dangerous levels while acting out in his public readings Bill Sykes' murder of Nancy in Oliver Twist, Stevenson regarded the anomie of his villain as if Huish were a living person whom he had to face. He reports disgust instead of triumph at completing the book: "Have spent thirteen days about as nearly in Hell as a man could expect to live through. It's done, and of course it ain't worth while, and who cares? There it is, and about as grim a tale as was ever written, and as grimy and as hateful" (To Colvin, 5 June 1893, Works 23: 249). To Henry James Stevenson suggests that The Ebb Tide will serve as a touchstone by which they can judge the actual standards of
advocates of realism.

If the admirers of Zola admire him for his pertinent ugliness and pessimism, I think they should this; but if, as I have long suspected, they neither admire nor understand the man's art, and only wallow in his rancidness like a hound in offal, then they will certainly be disappointed in The Ebb Tide. Alas! poor little tale, it is not even rancid. (17 June 1893, Works 23: 261-62)

Negative reviews of the serialization and Colvin's criticism so depressed Stevenson that he considered withholding it from further publication or deleting Osbourne's name so as not to hamper his writing career. After having received an admission from Colvin that he had allowed his detestation for Huish and Davis to color his views of the novel, Stevenson, uncharacteristically, defends what he has written:

Hi! Stop! You say The Ebb Tide is the working out of an artistic problem of a kind! Well I should just bet it was! You don't like Attwater. But look at my three rogues; they're all there, I'll go to bail. Three types of bad man, the weak man, and the strong man with a weakness that are gone through and lived out. (29 Aug. 1893, Works 23: 316)

After rereading the book in 1894, Stevenson notes its surprising excellence.

Two sections, "The Trio" and "The Quartet" split the book. The first section depicts the lives of three of the most wretched beachcombers in Tahiti, three men typical of the human refuse which has wandered beyond the boundaries of Roman civilization and law (Fowler 115). The cockney clerk Huish, alias Hay and Tomkins, has been fired from nearly every business in Papeete. Captain Davis' negligence on his
last command has contributed to the deaths of five of his crew. Robert Herrick, also alias Hay, an intelligent, educated, sensitive, and incompetent drifter, is a Loudon Dodd or Norris Carthew, for whom the South Seas provides a deeper pit to sink into rather than an invigorating tonic. Like Huish, he has been unable to retain a job.

As the novel begins the three characters reside literally "on the beach," a phrase in South Seas lingo which also means unemployed, out of luck, or down and out. They have sunk so low that nights they shiver in the ruins of the calaboose, and days they roast in hungry idleness in the sun. Davis even performs songs and dances for a crew of Polynesian sailors in exchange for a breakfast of fried bananas and coffee, the trio having exhausted the charity of the white community.

A desperate scheme saves them from arrest. Davis learns of the Farallone, a schooner bound for Australia ostensibly with a cargo of California champagne. The officers on this ship have died on board of smallpox. Since no respectable sailor will board the boat, Davis receives a commission to complete the voyage, a decision which allows the colonial authorities to rid the bay of possible contagion and rid the beach of its worst human vermin. The command temporarily restores Davis. He organizes the loading of the ship, prevents desertion among the Polynesian crew of three, and sets a course for Peru or Ecuador illegally to sell the cargo and the ship. The trio dreams
of realizing sufficient profit from this act of barratry to keep themselves forever off the beach.

Once at sea, however, Huish and Davis settle into consuming the cargo, leaving the inexperienced Herrick and the Polynesian crew to keep the ship afloat. Only when the ship seems ready to sink does Davis sober up sufficiently to help avert shipwreck. Huish's discovery that only the top layer of the cases of cargo contains champagne indicates that the ship's owners have sent the Farallone to be lost at sea in order to collect on the insurance. This discovery provokes a new scheme of scuttling the ship near Samoa, getting extradited to San Francisco, and once there blackmailing the owners. However, since almost all the provisions have been consumed, slow starvation seems to be the more likely fate of all aboard the ship. At this moment, Taveeta, one of the Polynesian crew, spots an uncharted atoll in the distance. Davis interprets information in Findlay's Directory to mean that they are approaching a privately owned pearling island. While all the Farallone crew need are provisions to last them a week, the thought of plunder stirs Davis and Huish to schemes of piracy.

John Attwater, the pearl entrepreneur, soldier, adventurer, and missionary, who owns the now depopulated island, well aware of the threat he faces, boards the Farallone. He needs information about the Trinity Hall, his missing trading and supply ship. Once he
figures out that the invasion of the Farallone is accidental, Attwater crafts his own schemes to split the trio. He snubs Davis and Huish and favors Herrick. With courage and a sense of superiority he prevents immediate ambush by hinting that he might be willing to charter the Farallone.

Alone with Herrick, who is supposed to try to save him by convincing him of the ruthlessness of Davis and Huish, Attwater first turns on his charm and then as suddenly preaches redemption from sin. This missionary mask as quickly blends into that of the warrior, causing Herrick, who has pitied what he thought was Attwater's vulnerability, now to fear for the lives of his shipmates. Among other things Attwater emphasizes his ability as a marksman, and when Herrick asks him if he ever misses what he shoots at, he compares himself to King Tembinok'.

To miss nicely is the art. There was an old king one knew in the Western Islands, who used to empty a Winchester all round a man and stir his hair or nick a rag out of his clothes with every ball except the last; and that went plump between the eyes. It was a pretty practice. . . . Oh, I can do anything. (Ebb Tide 140)

At the feast which he hosts, Attwater plays with his guests much as his cat snatches at and plays with the food it devours during the meal. He wins Davis' admiration with his account of how he recruited and trained his native labor force. He plays with Huish's vanity by getting him drunk on sherry which costs 112 shillings a bottle. Herrick shudders in fear that anything he says may spark violence, and a yarn
about his execution of an disloyal servant warns the
visitors of Attwater's ruthlessness and reduces Herrick to
hysteria. Davis takes Herrick outside the house, leaving
Huish drunk and alone for Attwater to flatter and glean.

The trio retreat to their schooner, but Herrick jumps
into the lagoon hoping to drown. Instead he swims to shore
where Attwater greets him with dry clothes rather than a
bullet. Huish plots to attack Attwater with the contents of
a cannister of vitriol, and Davis reluctantly joins him.
Attwater, however, shoots Huish in the act of hurling the
acid, first hitting the container so that Huish writhes in
pain for a few moments before a second bullet ends his
agony. Attwater surrounds Davis with bullets, but the
sincerity of Davis' prayer for his wife and children saves
him. Attwater, Herrick, and Davis form a new trio.

Stevenson's experiences in the South Seas more than his
tavel writing provide material for The Ebb Tide. Bits of
his correspondence and comments by his contemporaries
indicate what parts of The Ebb Tide have factual bases. The
setting in Tahiti links Stevenson with Melville, for where
the trio take refuge is the now abandoned calaboose where
Melville was briefly jailed for possible mutiny. Also, the
comical actions of the trio while in Tahiti remind the
reader of the experiences of Melville's persona, Tommo, while
also "on the beach" (Fowler 110). Stevenson takes other
minor scenes from his travel experiences. During his voyage
on the Janet Nicoll in 1890, he stopped for a week on the
island of New Caledonia, which housed in Noumea a prison for convicts throughout island colonies of France. The greatest fear hovering over the trio is being sent there.

A variety of sources provides insight into how Stevenson has named his characters. Like many of the beachcombers he met, the trio in the novel take on aliases. Robert Herrick takes his possibly real name, if not the "seize the day" philosophy, from the English poet. In giving both Herrick and Huish the alias of Hay, Stevenson "immortalizes" a Mr. Hay in Samoa whom the Stevensons fired for dishonesty and refusal to repay money borrowed from them. Notes from other white residents in Samoa indicate that Hay rose from beachcomber to collector of customs, in which capacity he possibly overlooked liquor smuggling and helped spring a fugitive (Hammerton 116-17; John Cameron's Odyssey 373-75).

The name Huish comes from someone Stevenson knew in England. A sentence of a letter to Henley says, "I received a communication from you per Huish." A note identifies the man as Marcus Bourne Huish, the editor of the Art Journal from 1881-93, for whom Stevenson in some connection with Henley was to write an article on Auguste Rodin. Nothing in this letter reveals why an English art editor should lend his name to one of Stevenson's nastiest characters (Ferguson and Waingrow 199, 199n).

Davis is simply a common last name, but the character represents the type of the disgraced sea captain adrift in the South Seas, also used in The Wrecker for Wicks and an
unnamed white at the club in Nuhuhiva. The last the
Stevensons heard of their friend Dennis Reid, captain of the
Equator, he was in jail for barratry.

The letters of Henry Adams provide information on a
possible prototype for Atwater. Adams writes,

Two more personages of interest to us have come to
dinner. One is called Atwater; he was formerly our
consul at Tahiti; a Yankee who married into the chief
native family, and, through his wife got large interest
in cocoa-nut plantations and pearl islands. . . . Mr.
Atwater has perhaps been long enough in the South Seas
to reach the universal lava-foundation of commonplace.
. . . He wanders between San Francisco to Sydney, and
back again, as though the ocean were a French play.
(Letters 1: 453-54)

Adams confides that despite the magnificent environment he
shares Atwater's restlessness and ennui.

Stevenson's Atwater may take his name and his
plantation wealth from Adams' acquaintance, but his
personality more fully reflects Stevenson's belief in
heroism and his relationship with certain South Seas
missionaries. In a speech written for mission groups in
Samoa and Australia Stevenson praised the success of the
"new, less radical class of missionaries," who could build
on the "great amount of moral force reservoired in every
race" rather than solely combatting heathenish practices
(Balfour, Life 229-230). Adventurers Stevenson admired
included Charles Gordon and David Livingston; heroic South
Seas missionaries, George Brown, Shirley Baker, and James
Chalmers. Stevenson's admiration for a few missionary
heroes is important to emphasize, because for most readers
Attwater seems more despotic than heroic.

George Brown was deported from Samoa for opposing German interests. Baker, while in appearance nothing like the towering Attwater, held nearly absolute power in Tonga, yet used this power to help develop education, improve health facilities, increase copra production and trade, and preserve the only island monarchy successfully to resist colonialism. Able, overbearing and arrogant, Baker was also victim of malicious accusations including one that he was planning to use vitriol to destroy King George of Tonga (Rutherford). Stevenson met him in Samoa after his expulsion from Tonga.

The man Stevenson described as "the only hero I have ever met" was a missionary and explorer in New Guinea, the Reverend James Chalmers, with whom Stevenson traveled aboard the Lübeck from Sydney to Apia in 1890. "Tamate," as Chalmers was called from the time of his first assignment in Rarotonga, was a huge and fiery man who mixed exuberant love of life with missionary zeal, and whose power wherever he preached and taught was nearly absolute. To this charisma he added respect for island customs and heritage and a belief that Christianity should complement the best of this heritage. Stevenson informed Lloyd Osbourne about Chalmers:

He has rather fluttered the missionary doves in our Samoan dovecot; but they cannot struggle--this is Tamate; and they have to swallow his affectionate rowdyism, and produce drinks, and sit by (and even join him) when he smokes--some of them with a little shocked, sanctified air that is delicious to behold. (29 Sept. 1890, Beinecke Collection 3210)
Stevenson's uncertain health and his responsibilities at Vailima prevented him from accepting Chalmers' invitation to visit him in New Guinea, but effusive admiration fills the letters Stevenson wrote to him. In one he proclaims, "O, Tamate, if I had met you when I was a boy and a bachelor, how different my life would have been" (Dec. 1890, Beinecke Collection 2971).

Stevenson's sense of the missionary as hero in The Ebb Tide emanates from his friendship with Brown, Baker, and Chalmers, and Chalmers especially overlaps with Attwater. In size, complexion and presence Attwater parallels Chalmers, although in his precise tropical dress Attwater could be any of numerous Protestant missionaries. Biographer Richard Lovett describes Chalmers' determination: "At the basis of his personality, there was a strong will, an indomitable purpose, a plan in life that refused to be modified by opposition or suffering or external difficulties of any kind." Lovett also describes Chalmers as prejudiced, intensely humane, fearless, and devoted. A colleague of Chalmers wrote, "He stood alone, and was hardly amenable to the laws that govern other men" (Lovett 5, 47, 486).

Entering increasingly dangerous areas of New Guinea, Chalmers summarizes in his letters the risk in terms that also fit Attwater's attitude toward danger: "If we die, we die fighting." Defining the missionary as adventurer or hero, Chalmers declares, "Let them be men and women without any namby-pambyism," "men and women who think preaching and
living the Gospel to the heathen the grandest work on earth, and the greatest of Heaven's commissions. We want missionaries like the men Colonel Gordon defines" (Lovett, 190, 213). Chalmers describes himself in words like those Attwater might use to affirm Herrick's mixed attraction and revulsion toward him: "I am called the 'tyrant missionary' ... because the natives ever appeal to me, and wish to act as I say.... My tyranny is well-liked by the natives" (Lovett, 241). Attwater's language, in describing how his efforts differ with those of typical missions, parallels the words of Chalmers. Missions "go the wrong way to work; they are too parsonish, too much of the old wife, and even the old apple-wife. Clothes, clothes, are their idea; but clothes are not Christianity, any more than they are the sun in heaven or could take the place of it" (Ebb Tide, 131-32). Chalmers cites excessive clothing as a cause of native degeneration and death equal to the ravages caused by syphilis and strong drink. In admiring Chalmers without converting to his religious beliefs, Stevenson placed himself in a relationship somewhat like that of Herrick to Attwater at the end of the novel.

Parallels between Stevenson's real missionary hero and his fictional missionary tyrant can be taken too far. While Attwater has similar firmness, strength, and presence, in no way is he a humorous or jovial person. Whereas Chalmers married twice and the language of his letters to his second wife mixes flirtatiousness with holy fervor, Attwater regards
women with disdain and his sexual drive as a weakness. He decrees that the last native male and female marry each other, lest he succumb to temptation. Attwater's aristocratic haughtiness offends Davis and Huish. In contrast, Chalmers offended his brethren with his earthiness. Nor was the Chestnut Institute where Chalmers received his training much like Attwater's Trinity Hall, Cambridge. Still the similarities between Attwater and actual missionary figures are sufficient to demonstrate that Stevenson regarded Attwater as heroic and that he drew on actual missionaries to depict Attwater. Critics who make Attwater into a villain need to pore through some missionary literature.

Stevenson's travel writing contributes two items to The Ebb Tide. Details of Attwater's island repeat descriptions of the arrival of the Casco at Fakarava atoll. A sense of disease and depopulation pervades the Marquesas section of In the South Seas. In addition, Stevenson's final Hawaii "Letter," "Another Molokai" describes the devastation of the Penrhyn atoll caused by a Hawaiian leper escaped from Kalaupapa. Just as Huish shares in the wretched illness from which most of the Tahitian population suffer, pestilence has devastated Attwater's community.

In The Ebb Tide Stevenson ventures deeper into the realism he disdained a decade before. Yet it is simultaneously allegorical in that vivid depictions of the landscape and seascape take on sustained symbolic qualities
and three beachcombers taken from among the people Stevenson met become types much like the trio of ruffians in Chaucer's "Pardoner's Tale," even to the point of encountering a fourth character whose omnipotence brings out their worst qualities (Eigner 214). In addition to the symbolic plot and setting, images of disease and Biblical and religious language encourage an allegorical interpretation.

Disease has changed the entire South Seas to lost paradises. The opening sentence in The Ebb Tide states that with trade and progress whites bring plague. "Throughout the island world of the Pacific, scattered men of many European races and from almost every grade of society carry activity and disseminate disease" (9). Colonial activity proceeds in Tahiti, but the island is laid low with an epidemic of influenza brought by a Peruvian ship. The surviving Tahitians have become sufficiently inured to such epidemics that the sufferers no longer compound the sickness into pneumonia by trying to cool their fevers in the ocean, but "the sick natives with the islander's impatience of a touch of fever, had crawled from their houses to be cool, and squatting on the shore or on the beached canoes, painfully expected the new day" (16). The sounds that accompany the trio's sleepless night are those of coughing. Most ill of all in Tahiti is Huish, whose disease shakes him "to the vitals" with combinations of coughing, retching, and diarrhea startlingly described. And disease has reduced Attwater's once vibrant enterprise to a ghost island of four
inhabitants. He describes the epidemic: "There were five of the dead that morning, and thirteen of the dying, and no one able to go about except the sexton and myself. We held a council of war, took the--empty bottles [corpses] into the lagoon--buried them" (117). As an aftermath of the pestilence weeds sprout in Attwater's once immaculate gardens.

Spiritual disease matches physical disease. Herrick throughout the novel has suicide in mind as the "open door" to escape from his wretchedness. When Davis proposes stealing the Farallone, Herrick suggests a suicide pact instead. Herrick later urges escape from Zacynthos--Attwater's island--in the ship, preferring likely death by starvation to the justice Attwater will extract. When bloodshed seems inevitable, Herrick attempts suicide, yet he is such a failure that he cannot even kill himself.

Davis is hearty, able, and "a gentleman when sober," but succumbs easily to drink, and once drunk loses all courage and will. In contrast, the champagne diet restores Huish to health. Courageous malice is Huish's normal state of mind, but gratification of his appetites can temporarily subdue him. As he raids the cargo he feels no concern about whether the ship floats or sinks. Offered a surfeit of food, wine, cigars, and flattery, he forgets his vow to squash Attwater. Sober and hungry, however, Huish is wholly malevolent. Former employers avoid him as they would "a creditor." Herrick underrates this malice in calling him a
"little cad." Davis calls him "the bummer." Attwater recognizes him as a wolf.

The schooner Farallone has symbolic importance as a carrier of physical and spiritual disease. The story of the Farallone offers the irony of white imported disease reinfecting those from whom it originated much the way the contagion which emanates from Chancery in Dickens' Bleak House returns to infect its source. The previous captain and first mate, given the ironical names Wiseman and Wishart, try to consume the layer of champagne covering the false cargo. When the schooner happens to reach one of the inhabited Tuamotuan atolls, Wiseman and Wishart add lechery to drunken gluttony. Unaware that the keening they hear is cries of mourning, they rollick through the village, "embrace . . . the girls . . ., and join . . . (with drunken voices) the death wail" (Ebb Tide 79). They barge into the prayer services for a man dying of smallpox and only then realize why people in the village have lacked the energy to resist them. Infected, they return to the ship, set sail, retreat to their cabin, and unsuccessfully try to drown the contagion. Within a week both have died, leaving their infection and the stench from their corpses for health authorities in Papeete to disinfect when the ocean current carries the boat "tumbled end-on upon Tahiti" (45). Despite the warning of the yellow flag, "the emblem of Pestilence," which the schooner flies, the Farallone tempts Davis and
Stevenson objected to the ridiculous improbability of events in The Phantom Ship by Marryat. Depicting the Farallone with believability, Stevenson creates his own phantom ship which becomes a source of temptation for those who board it. The ship seems to possess its own sailing directions. It has taken Wiseman and Wishart to an island beset with smallpox. It drifts to Tahiti to tempt the trio with the hope of escape. Once at sea again, it tacks for Attwater's island, where unlimited wealth, like that which entices the rogues in the "Pardoner's Tale," draws out avarice and envy in at least two of the trio as intense as their sloth and gluttony. Davis senses that something is wrong with the Farallone, but he thinks in nautical terms, not moral ones.

The Polynesian crew seems immune to temptation on the ship, yet cursed to remain aboard. Very much like the "brown-skinned, soft spoken, sweet-eyed sailors" described in the Wrecker, they exist placidly amid the turmoil aboard ship, more like spirits than human beings (Furnas, "Exile" 135). While by no means developed characters such as Keawe, Kokua, Keola, or Uma, the crewman remain sympathetic figures. The piety of these "savages" contrasts ironically with the wretched degeneracy of their white "superiors." Herrick's determination to keep this ship afloat wins him their respect and friendship. Possibly Attwater's island is a sort of deliverance after their ordeal.

The title of the novel mixes the low state of life of
Herrick, Davis, Huish, and possibly Attwater with their vulnerability to the currents of their ocean environment. Alastair Fowler describes the four characters as "a quartet . . . of psychological forces contending for a single mind" (Fowler 124). Stevenson begins to create a doppelgänger in Herrick and Huish, but never develops this aspect of characterization except perhaps that Huish with his vital malice and Herrick with his innocuous virtue together form a single realized human being (Eigner 119n).

When Davis receives his commission, he allies himself with Herrick because he fears Huish. Once Huish opens the first bottle of champagne, he easily seduces Davis into hoggish dissipation while himself maintaining some balance between drunkenness and sobriety. During the storm Herrick shames Davis back into responsible behavior and wins his pledge of sobriety. But when Huish discovers the fake cargo, Davis the depletion of stores, and Taveeta the unknown island, Davis and Huish plan how they can exploit the island they are approaching. Herrick shuns Huish, while Davis's alternation between friendship with Herrick and shared degeneracy with Huish render the trio impotent. The four characters form a variety of opposing and fluctuating pairs. Herrick and Attwater are educated gentlemen; Davis and Huish uneducated, slovenly, and ignorant. Attwater and Davis are men of the sea used to commanding their own crews; the ocean has been foreign to Huish and Herrick, who also are both loners rather
than leaders. Attwater and Davis have faith in God; Huish and Herrick do not. Attwater and Huish have similar energy and capacity for violence as opposed to fawning, wavering uncertain Davis and Herrick. As a result, Attwater and Huish remain in opposition. "The Quartet" of characters insures explosive confrontation. Whereas in the trio any pair of the three characters can pretty much force its will on the third, with four characters, more evenly balanced pairs square off. More because of Herrick's weakness than his decency, wavering between attraction for Attwater and loyalty to his shipmates, the victory that Huish and Davis envision based on three persons against one never occurs. Relationships among the trio and the quartet move like ocean currents and leave the reader little sense of equilibrium.

In the novel allegorical landscape is more incidental. Tahiti in its colonial modernity eludes romantic description except in the letter Herrick writes to his sweetheart in which he lies about his well-being in the archetypal South Seas. Attwater's island, however, appears as a heavenly mirage, rousing Herrick to ecstasy.

Herrick thought that never in his dreams had he beheld anything more strange and delicate. The beach was excellently white, the continuous barrier of trees inimitably green; the land perhaps ten feet high, the trees thirty more. . . . The isle was like the rim of a great vessel sunken in the waters; it was like the embankment of an annular railway grown upon with wood. So slender it seemed amidst the outrageous breakers, so frail and pretty, he would scarce have wondered to see it sink and disappear without a sound, and the wave close smoothly over its descent. (Ebb Tide 107)

Once sailors come within sight of the island, nature
seems to control the movement and passage of ships, and Attwater seems to know the ebb and flow of the lagoon tide. A ship can enter only at a certain place and only at the time near highest tide when the waters flood the lagoon. Mariners could wish to enter but not knowing this secret fail in their attempts. Significantly, the Farallone arrives at "the hour of flood."

The sea turned (as with the instinct of the homing pigeon) for the vast receptacle, swept eddying through the gates, was transmuted, as it did so into a wonder of watery and silken hues, and brimmed into the island sea beyond. The schooner worked up, close-hauled, and was caught and carried away by the influx like a toy. (Ebb Tide 109)

As the tide controls the boat, the word "flood" suggests the Biblical Covenant of the Rainbow, especially with the glorious colors which briefly transport Herrick beyond his sense of past uselessness or his worry over future danger.

[The schooner] floated on the bosom of the lagoon; and below, in the transparent chamber of waters, a myriad of many colored fishes were sporting, a myriad pale flowers of coral diversified the floor. . . . A drove of fishes painted like a rainbow and billed like parrots, hovered in the shadow of the schooner, and passed clear of it, and glinted in the submarine sun. They were beautiful like birds, and their silent passage impressed him like a strain of song. (109-110)

The descriptions bathe the island in a divine glory. Attwater's island seems to have a magnetic enchantment which draws certain ships to it. Two derelict ships have drifted to Zacynthos with randomness similar to the Farallone's arrival. Attwater confesses that his discovery of the island was equally accidental.

Similarly, the ocean currents can control an
individual. When Herrick leaps into the ocean expecting to drown himself, his very limbs reject the suicide command his mind gives, the impact of his inability to kill himself hitting him "with the authority of a revelation" (Ebb Tide 170). After first testing his newly found will, the currents act on Herrick much as they have acted on the schooner.

A strong current set against him like a wind in his face; he contended with it heavily, wearily, without enthusiasm, but with substantial advantage. . . . About three in the morning, chance and the set of the current, and the bias of his own right handed body, so decided it between them that he came to shore upon the beach in front of Attwater's. (Ebb Tide 171)

Earlier Herrick has imagined in his horror at having to turn against either his Farallone companions or Attwater that, "He had complied with the ebb-tide in man's affairs, and the tide had carried him away; he heard already the roaring of the maelstrom that must hurry him under" (139). The swim which begins as suicide ends in baptism and restored will (Fowler 122). Herrick greets the dawn ready to submit to Attwater's punishment or mercy, firm in readiness to follow him as a leader, but equally firm in not converting to his religion.

Religious ideas and imagery permeate "The Quartet" section, as Attwater combines the qualities of "dead shot and Christian revivalist" (Baker 316). He mixes the conversational, the literary, and the Biblical to manipulate, divide, and ultimately punish or save his adversaries. When Herrick expresses admiration for
Attwater's kindness to his servant-disciples, Attwater denies any love:

I have had a business and a colony and a mission of my own. I was a man of the world before I was a Christian; I'm a man of the world still, and I made my mission pay. No good ever came of coddling. A man has to stand up in God's sight and work up to his weight avoirdupois; then I'll talk to him, but not before. I gave these beggars what they wanted,—a judge in Israel, the bearer of the sword and scourge. I was making a new people here, and behold! the angel of the Lord smote them and they were not! (Ebbtide 132).

The parallel passage in II Kings 19:35-36 describes the angel of the Lord smiting the Assyrians, enemies of the Israelites. Attwater's followers seem to be too innocent to have deserve similar retribution. Yet this and other statements indicate Attwater's belief in predestination, his confidence in his mission on earth, and his fatalistic acceptance of what occurs as he pursues his mission.

Herrick defines the term "fatalist" for Davis: "It's a fellow that believes a lot of things.... Believes that his bullets go true; believes that all falls out as God chooses, do as you like to prevent it; and all that" (161).

Attwater admits that in his rule of the island he has tried to reduce all values to the simplicity of parables, but that at least one real situation has proved to be more complex. He tells about how a sullen but industrious servant who seems to be continually committing minor infractions against Attwater's rules of conduct despite repeated reprimands and other punishment and how, after enforcing his rule prohibiting explanations, Attwater finds
the accused servant hanging from a tree. Later, he discovers the innocence of the sullen worker and that all the evidence against this victim has come from the false witness of an obsequiously devoted servant. Attwater tells how he orders the guilty man up into the same coconut tree where the bird-pecked corpse is hanging, tells him to make peace with God, and executes him.

Certain passages indicate only mannerisms in Attwater's speech. For example, when he suggests that one of the islanders who has died now rests "with kings and councillors" (Ebb Tide 133), he is closer to the mood of the grave-digger's scene in Hamlet than to the source of the quotation, Job's wish that he had died at birth (Job 3:13-14). The next clause, "the rest of his acts, are they not written in the book of Chronicles," makes little sense but sounds grand. When Attwater speaks of his wealth, he compares it to the ebb and flow around him; having grown, it may also diminish. "Today it groweth up and flourisheth; tomorrow it is cut down and cast into the over" (Ebb Tide 142). Attwater is using archaic verb endings to create a sense of the Biblical, yet is quoting from the Bible only in the last four words and this out of context. His burial words fit Zacynthos, "Coral to coral, pebbles to pebbles" (Ebb Tide 133).

When Davis asks Attwater at their first meeting how long he has stayed on the island, Attwater replies, "How long, O Lord!" (Ebb Tide 119). While these words parallel
Jesus' words to the father of a lunatic brought to him to
heal, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I
be with you, how long shall I suffer you" (Matthew 17:17)
and the pleas of the martyrs in Revelation (6:10) who wonder
how long before God will avenge their "blood on them that
dwell on the earth," what Attwater says mainly indicates his
contempt for Davis' question.

Other passages that Attwater quotes reveal his
fundamental belief in the scriptures and his identification
with Jesus Christ, the disciples, and the apostles. When
Herrick expresses his amazement that Attwater's act of
having the island woman marry removes her as an object of
temptation, Attwater replies, "I am a plain man, and very
literal. Who God hath joined together are the words" (141).
Similarly, although Attwater has told how he dispensed Old
Testament justice on the servant whose disobedience "would
have puzzled Solomon," he follows the words of the apostle
Paul (Romans 12:14) in declining to execute the trio for
their past crimes and present plots. He yells to Davis, "I
have nothing to do with the 'Sea Ranger' and the people you
drowned, or the 'Farallone' and the champagne that you
stole. That is your account with God" (164).

Attwater shifts his speech from that of the gentleman
or the tyrant to that of the proselytizer, in the process
regarding objects around him as material for parables about
God's omnipotence and omnipresence. Before Attwater has
detected Herrick's lies, he confides in him. Contemplating
the diving suits which protect him and his servants while they extract pearls from the ocean floor, Attwater asks Herrick if humanity has similar protection, "a dress to go down into the world in and come up scathless." When Herrick cynically suggest first "self-conceit" and then "self-respect," Attwater exhorts:

Why not God's grace? . . . Why not the grace of your Maker and Redeemer, he who died for you, he who upholds you, he whom you daily crucify afresh? There is . . . nothing but God's grace! We walk upon, we breathe it; we live and die by it; it makes the nails and axles of the universe; and a puppy in pyjamas prefers self-conceit. (130)

Although Herrick never comes to share Attwater's convictions, a life force frustrates his suicide attempt as effectively as Attwater's diving suits protect the pearl divers.

During the dinner Attwater switches from polite conversation to preaching about God's presence everywhere.

He rings a bell, the sound of which disappears into the night, emphasizing the solitude of the island. He then counters, "And yet god hears the bell!" When Davis questions Attwater's power to "ring up God," the missionary replies that his bell-ringing is only a parable, and that each beat of each human heart reverberates as fully into God's awareness as the sound of the bell has vibrated through the house.

Why ring a bell, when there flows out from one's self and everything about one a far more momentous silence? The least beat of my heart, and the least thought in my mind, echoing into eternity forever and forever and forever." (148-49).
Attwater is proselytizing, manipulating his guests to see how each one responds, and protecting himself against invaders who at any moment may kill him. Davis feels the power of Attwater's parable; Huish dismisses and later mocks it.

Davis and Huish quote the Bible for different purposes, as they attempt a final attack on Attwater. The diminutive Huish compares himself and the huge missionary to "Dyvid and Goliar." In addition to rousing his courage by parodying nursery rhymes (Briggs, 448-49), he mocks his childhood Bible lessons. He asks Davis about his beliefs concerning divine retribution:

Ow are you off now, for the notion of a future style? Do you cotton to the tea-fight view, or the old red-'ot Boguey business? . . . Bloomin' 'umbug. . . . Thou Gawd seest me . . . . I remember I had that written in my Bible. I remember the Bible too, all about Abinadab and parties. Well, Gawd! . . . you're goin' to see a rum start presently, I promise you that. (191-192)

In contrast, Davis reveals his ripeness for redemption. When Herrick proposes the suicide pact, Davis replies, "Get behind me Satan" (48). Heading into shore he orders Huish to desist from blasphemy and then begins to pray. The sudden appearance of Herrick and Attwater wearing strange head gear startles Davis into monstrous Biblical images: "His mythology appeared to have come alive, and Tophet [the site of human sacrifices to Moloch in the Old Testament] to be vomiting demons" (193). After killing Huish Attwater terrifies and then spares Davis. To Davis' question, "What must I do to be saved?" Attwater replies with Christ's words
to the woman caught in adultery, "Go and sin no more" (John 8:11), adding, "And remember that whatever you do to others, God shall visit it again a thousand fold upon your innocents" (200). While appearing too conceited and proud to learn or change, Attwater, in sparing Davis, reveals personal growth from Old Testament punishment to New Testament mercy and forgiveness.

Although agnostic, Herrick has a full knowledge of the Bible. He sees in Attwater total power and control in contrast to his own helplessness. During his hysteria Herrick laments to Davis, "He knows all; he sees through all. We only make him laugh with our pretenses--he looks at us and laughs like God!" (Ebb Tide 160). This image comes from Psalms 37, verses 12-15 of which apply to the threat the trio pose to Attwater.

The wicked plottest against the just and gnashest upon him with his teeth.
The Lord shall laugh at him: for he seeth that his day is coming.
The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, and to slay such as be of upright conversation.
Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken.

One can extract meaning from The Ebb Tide by using Clifford's ideas about how the adventures in an allegory reveal the ideals worth pursuing. Attwater learns to grant mercy wherever mercy is practicable; Herrick gains will; Davis finds restored faith and hope for salvation; and Huish receives the retribution reserved for those who will not learn from their experiences.
Stevenson's suggestion of two moral centers for the book may undercut this allegorical interpretation. Allegories often project dogma, but Stevenson relished diversity and ambiguity more than any credo. While Herrick is the main character and the consciousness through which the reader experiences most of the story, Attwater is as dominating in the novel as he is domineering on his island. Rather than directing the reader to a single conclusion or viewpoint, Stevenson leaves the reader with two perspectives.

Attwater and Davis combine to suggest the orthodoxy of the religious tract. In a letter Stevenson warns Baxter about the book: "there is a peculiarity about the tale in its new form: it ends with a conversion! We have been rather tempted to call it the Schooner Farallone: A Tract by R. L. S. and L. O. It would make a boss tract" (1 March 1893, Ferguson and Waingrow, 325). Possibly a god-like figure, Attwater rules absolutely. Human beings must fear God, accept Christ as a personal savior, and while alive busy themselves with the creation of the Kingdom of God on earth. Profit joins order, beauty, and cleanliness as a virtue. By the end of the novel Attwater can show mercy to sinners who truly repent, but he exterminates those who shun his rule. In his mind a person like Herrick who accepts his authority but not his doctrine will face a higher judge.

As Attwater demands that those on his island respect his rule, he accepts the forces which he cannot control.
The smallpox epidemic is the scourge of the angel of the Lord; and whether God's purpose has been to bring Attwater's converts into heaven, to punish the unrepentant, or to punish Attwater for his pride remains beyond human knowledge. Huish's death fits into this interpretation. The weapon he would use on the righteous places him in liquid fire. He is unredeemable and unredeemed.

Herrick eludes Attwater's doctrine and suggests a different moral. With him, as with Dodd and Carthew in The Wrecker and Wiltshire in The Beach of Falesa, will is more a key to salvation on earth than grace or belief. The trials Herrick endures send him into increasingly severe despair, but also steadily move him from incompetence to adequacy to expertise. The carving of the opening notes of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony on the walls of the Papeete jail shows Herrick affirming his existence. His decisions to sail the ship and, once he recognizes that he cannot take his own life, to swim against the current toward shore, Stevenson calls courageous. While Attwater duels with Huish, Herrick keeps Davis pinned to the figure head on the shore. With the arrival of the Trinity Hall, Herrick exorcises whatever evil may remain in the Farallone by setting it on fire and willfully enjoying the spectacle.

If Herrick does not convert to Attwater's religion, he does convert to his belief in will. As Attwater wills bullets from his Winchester to hit or miss the target, so too he wills each act he performs and each word he says. On
the beach of Zacynthus Herrick demands execution or mercy, and given the latter, he willingly becomes Attwater's ally if not his disciple. With the next cruise of the Trinity Hall Herrick will rejoin the world from which, under an alias, he tried to flee.

The setting, while concretely Polynesian, tells surprisingly little about Polynesia, but rather functions allegorically as Stevenson juxtaposes it with otherwise intense realism. Whereas the settings for the ballads, "The Isle of Voices," "The Bottle Imp," The Beach of Falesa, and even the few specifically Polynesian pages of The Wrecker are all set in recognizable locales, all the reader sees of Tahiti is bush and beach; and Attwater's island, while vividly described and clearly a South Seas atoll, is more a unique creation of Stevenson's imagination than incorporation of places he visited. Stevenson may or may not have read Melville's Mardi, but the relationship of moral and physical setting of The Ebb Tide to Stevenson's other South Seas works is roughly akin to the relationship of Mardi to Typee and Omoo, in that what is ostensibly a South Seas setting is really more a product of each author's imagination. However, unlike Mardi, The Ebb Tide remains a fascinating and readable book.
CHAPTER VI

THE BEACH OF FALESA

Although accurate in depicting South Seas character and setting, Stevenson's ballads and short stories remain limited in scope and importance. Similarly, while revealing growth in vision and artistic maturity, the two South Seas novels remain flawed and uncertain of purpose. Among Stevenson's South Seas fiction, one work fulfills the aspirations which he originally had for all of his Pacific writing. The Beach of Falesa contains all that Stevenson learned of life in the Pacific. Complexity of situation, realism of character, vivid physical and emotional detail, and ironic first-person narration so complement each other as to make it one of Stevenson's best works and place it among the best of all South Seas literature written by any author, and this despite extensive bowdlerization of the original manuscript.

A recent study by Barry Menikoff, Robert Louis Stevenson and 'The Beach of Falesa': A Study in Victorian Publishing, reveals the extent to which Stevenson deferred to the demands of his editors, agents, and publishers, resulting in the abridged version of the story appearing both in the serial publication and in Islands Nights' Entertainments. Yet in his correspondence Stevenson reveals a certainty about the merits of this tale absent
from his comments about his other South Seas writing. In one letter Stevenson boasts that he is writing "the first realistic South Sea story, ... with real South Sea Character and details of life." Previous works--stories, idyls, and sketches by Melville, Stoddard, Loti, and others preserving the South Seas archetype--he defines as "a kind of sugar candy sham epic," devoid of "etching," "human grin," and especially "conviction." In the same letter he concludes, "You will know more about the South Seas after you have read my little tale than if you had read a library" (To Colvin, 28 Sept 1891, *Works* 22: 407).

While in his travel writing Stevenson sketches most South Seas character types--missionaries, traders, beachcombers, sailors, "half-castes," natives, all of varying backgrounds and sophistication--they remain, amid the other matter, frozen and static, as if awaiting a story in which to take on life. These types from *In the South Seas* are described in the next few pages to show the extent to which they populate the community of Falesà. Likewise, modes of narration and uses of language are introduced in these early pages, although close focus on specific language devices comes nearer the end of the chapter.

A perusal of Stevenson's fiction reveals his extensive use of first person narration, his skill at rendering a wide variety of narrators convincingly, and his keen ear for dialect. Even his detractors recognize the unique perception with which he recaptures the emotions of
childhood in *A Child's Garden of Verses*. Some of his other personae include young Jim Hawkins in *Treasure Island*, the somewhat older David Balfour in *Kidnapped* and its sequel, an old time Covenanter at a country tavern who in Lallans dialect tells the ghost story "Thrawn Janet," and of course Loudon Dodd and John Wiltshire. In novels in which Stevenson narrates from a third-person point-of-view, dialogue and personal documents offer first-person perspectives. Most of the insight into the conflict between Henry and James Durie in *The Master of Ballantrae* comes from the journals of the family servant MacKeller, the soldier of fortune Burke, James himself, and the American fur-trapper Mountain. The intensity of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* builds as the conversations of Enfield, Utterson, and Poole and the documents of Hastie Lanyon and Henry Jekyll bring the reader closer to the outrage that has occurred.

The same sensitivity to speech which provoked him to mark *Omoo* with margin notes correcting Melville's spelling of Polynesian words allows Stevenson to move in and out of Lallans and Cockney, British and American English, South Seas trader talk and Pidgin English. To cite one example, the absolutely clear English of Mr. Soulis in "Thrawn Janet" startles the reader who has adjusted to the dialect of the narrator. The pinnacle of Stevenson's use of dialect occurs in Wiltshire's story, narration comparable in its accuracy and receptivity to irony to Huck Finn's account of his own adventures. Although Wiltshire is an Englishman, life in
the South Seas has exposed him to American and Australian English and South Seas patois and given him a unique idiom through which he reveals his character. Furthermore, within his narration are the astute observations of Uma phrased in her Pidgin English.

The character types from *In the South Seas* with which Stevenson animates *The Beach of Falesa* include white and native missionaries, traders and beachcombers, and island chiefs and commoners. He praises the missionaries as "the best and most useful whites in the Pacific," adding that the married Protestant "offers to the native... a higher picture of domestic life," but tends "to keep... in touch with Europe and out of touch with Polynesia," while the Catholic "falls readily into native ways of life," but retains as "an inheritance from medieval saints... slovenly habits and an unclean person." He salutes the kindness and generosity of native missionaries, but questions their narrow views, as they parrot with equal severity prohibitions on "sorcery, polygame, human sacrifice, ... tobacco smoking," and nudity which they have learned from their white mentors (*ISS*, 85-86). Maka of Butaritari typifies the Polynesian missionary in his sincerity and evangelical fervor mixed with his retention of Polynesian fear of ghosts. He burns a night light in his house, while the less superstitious Gilbertese whom he serves sleep in darkness.

In his correspondence and throughout *In the South Seas*
Stevenson describes the different types of traders and beachcombers he meets and observes how these whites adjust to island life. Most often empathy dominates his depictions, but repeatedly he has to remind his friends back home that in the South Seas a traveler must associate with types of people he would shun in the more civilized world.

The beachcomber is perhaps the most interesting character here... The whites are a strange lot, many of them good, kind pleasant fellows, others quite the lowest I have ever seen in the slums of cities. One... undoubted assassin quite gained my affection in his big home out of a wreck, with his New Hebrides wife in her savage turban of hair and yet a perfect lady, and his three adorable little girls in Rob Roy Macgregor dresses, dancing to the hand organ, performing circus on the floor with startling effect of modesty, and curling up together on a mat to sleep, three sizes, three attitudes, three Rob Roy dresses, and six little clenched fists: the murderer meanwhile brooding and gloatimg over his chicks, till your whole heart went out to him; and yet his crime on the face of it was dark, disemboweling, in his own house, an old man of seventy and him drunk. (To Sidney Colvin, 22 Aug. 1889, Works 22: 193)

Elsewhere he adds, "Where there are traders, there will be ammunition; aphorism by R.L.S." (To Colvin, 24 Oct. 1891, Works 22: 425).

The trader who marries an island woman and goes native may find himself with an extended family which drains any profit he makes.

Now, with such a man, falling and taking root among islanders, the processes described may be compared to a gardener's graft. He passes bodily into the native stock; ceases wholly to be alien; has entered the commune of his blood, shares the prosperity and consideration of his new family, and is expected to impart with the same generosity the fruits of his European skill and knowledge. (ISS 133)

The pretensions of traders, who prefer to be called "South
Sea Merchants," amuse Stevenson. Balfour comments that unlike most wealthier whites in Samoa, Stevenson included among his house and dinner guests traders from the beach with their island wives. Two traders, however, Stevenson recalls with repugnance.

The was one black sheep indeed, . . . and the man is typical of a class of ruffian that once disgraced the whole field of the South Seas, and still linger in the rarely visited isles of Micronesia. He had the name on the beach of a 'a perfect gentleman when sober,' but I never saw him otherwise than drunk. The few shocking and savage traits of the Micronesians he has singled out with the skill of a collector, and planted in the soil of his original baseness. He has been accused and acquitted of a treacherous murder; and has since boastfully owned it, which inclines me to suppose him innocent. . . . The best of his business is to make natives drink, and then advance the money for the fine upon a lucrative mortgage. 'Respect for whites' is the man's word: 'What is the matter with this island is the want of respect for whites.' (ISS 225-26)

Mr. Williams, the bartender at Butaritari's "The Land we Live in" tavern equally depresses Stevenson, who observes: "I never knew a man who had more words in his command or less truth to communicate" (ISS 210).

Stevenson transfers the appearance, malice, and language of the drunk trader to Case, and Williams, almost without alteration, becomes Black Jack of Falesà. Married traders sketched in the travel writing provide a partial basis for Wiltshire. From his experience in Butaritari where drunken islanders rampaged out of control and he became an ambassador between rival traders to halt liquor sales, Stevenson writes about alcohol as a major source of traders' profits and manipulation of natives.
Though too much of a Victorian to use this phrase, Stevenson also comments on the sex life of traders. He tells how over a dozen traders and beachcombers in the Gilbert Islands have been murdered because their mistaken equation of scanty garb of island women for promiscuity has provoked the revenge of angry fathers, brothers, and husbands. Unlike in Polynesia, traders in the Gilberts have had to marry the objects of their desires, although some have asserted final control by using bogus certificates and ceremonies. Stevenson describes one such marriage:

The certificate of one [bride], when she proudly showed it, proved to run thus, that she was 'married for one night,' and her gracious partner was at liberty to 'send her to hell' the next morning; but she was none the wiser or the worse for the dastardly trick. Another, I heard, was married on a work of mine in a pirated edition; it answered the purpose as well as a Hall Bible. (ISS 268; Menikoff 85; Daiches, "From Scotland" 128)

Other details from In the South Seas become part of The Beach of Falesà. After his months aboard the Equator amid nothing but ocean and atolls, on approaching Samoa Stevenson relishes the sight of mountains. "Since the sunset faded from the peaks of Oahu six months had intervened, and we had seen no spot of earth so high as an ordinary cottage" (ISS 204-05). Wiltshire feels much the same way about transferring from an atoll station to the one in Falesà. Stevenson notes how islanders incorporate western technology into their beliefs. When he and Osbourne show the residents of Butaritari pictures of Biblical stories on their "magic lantern," although some of the
representations are so absurd that everyone laughs, the showing nevertheless convinces the audience of the truth of the Bible. Case's props include mostly products of western manufacture. Finally, King Tembinok' offers the best system for classifying sea captains and traders: "He cheat a litt[le]—he cheat plenty—and I think he cheat too much" (IStS, 283).

Studies of specific colonial trade practices verify Stevenson's observations from In the South Seas and reveal how accurately he captures the lives of traders in The Beach of Falesa. The United States, France, England, and Germany all competed for South Seas trade, with religious leaders of the United States and England uniting their missionary enterprise against the French Catholics, and Germany generally eschewing the evangelical. Through combined force and negotiations France gained control over Tahiti, the Tuamotus, and the Marquesas, leaving the other countries to dispute the remaining Pacific islands, especially the Gilbert Islands and Samoa, where German traders first arrived in the 1850's and by 1875 controlled most of the Samoan trade (Ellison, "Partition" 259n). Traders sought copra, dried coconut meat used mainly for oil, especially with the decline of whaling.

Godeffroys of Germany, the largest trading firm, established the policy and behavior which traders of all nationalities and for all companies generally followed. According to J. C. Furnas company instructions to young
Traders included the following: "Learn the native language. Don't get into quarrels with local whites. Have no truck with missionaries, except as humanity requires. . . . Get a native woman of your own, but no nonsense about marrying her. . . . Get in that copra. . . . Keep your mouth shut" (Furnas, Anatomy 28). Traders working for Godeffroys received bonus pay for "blocking the expansion . . . of British trade, inciting native mischief whenever a British trader found[ed] a new station. . . , and injuring British interests in any way," although once ruined, rival traders could sometimes find work for the German firm (Fletcher 29-30). Labor for German plantations on Samoa and elsewhere came from Micronesian islands where "blackbirders" used gifts and magic tricks for chiefs as the recourses preferred to kidnapping in order to obtain workers (Furnas, Anatomy 363). Competition in the copra trade and contrary views on the sale of alcohol and weapons, on sexual morality, and on observation of the Sabbath created enmity between missionaries and traders, although the missions often cultivated desire among islanders for the material goods which traders sold (Furnas, Anatomy 264; Rutherford). In addition to incorporating the character types Stevenson met, The Beach of Falesà reflects Stevenson's observations of colonial practices among rival traders.

The plot of The Beach of Falesà is simple. An experienced trader, Case, greets a new rival trader, John Wiltshire, and prevents him from establishing his station by
tricking him into marrying Uma, a native whom the society considers cursed or taboo. Wiltshire investigates the environment of the island and discovers that Case has gained control of the natives by convincing them of his demonic powers which he has "proven" by performing conventional magic tricks with cards and coins and by taking small bands of disciples to a kind of haunted cave which he has created with aeolean harps, imitation skull idols, and luminous paint. Wiltshire almost succumbs to the eerie atmosphere of this supposedly haunted region but with Uma's help manages to blow up the "bogie cave," and in a vicious fight kill the false conjurer.

The title of the novelette holds a double meaning. Wiltshire lands on the actual beach of Falesà, his station overlooks it, and certain events, such as his brawl with Case, take place along that beach. However, a second meaning of the word emerges in Wiltshire's statement that he "kept posting . . . [Tarleton] up on Master Case and the beach of Falesà." With the word "beach" Wiltshire refers to the whites dwelling on the island. The beach, as the prosperity of Case, Randall, and Jack show, need not be "on the beach" in the sense of the trio in The Ebb Tide. By the end of the story Wiltshire has become sole representative of the beach. In telling how he has succeeded, Wiltshire obliterates much of the romance of the beachcombing life.

Many of the character types sketched in the travel literature inhabit Falesà. Among the missionaries Father
Galuchet, whom traders call Father "Galoshes," is "a good natured old soul" and "a kind old buffer," but "so dirty you could have written with him on a piece of paper" (Beach, 130, 158). In contrast, Mr. Tarleton, the Protestant missionary, elicits Wiltshire's admiration and envy.

The mission boat was shooting for the mouth of the river. She was a long whale boat painted white; a bit of an awning astern; a native pastor crouched on the wedge of poop, steering; some four and twenty paddles flashing and dipping, true to the boat-song; and the missionary under the awning in his white clothes, reading in a book, and set him up! It was pretty to see and hear; there's no smarter sight in the islands than a missionary boat with a good crew and a good pipe to them. . . .

When I saw the missionary step out of his boat in the regular uniform, white duck clothes, pith helmet, white shirt and tie, and yellow boots to his feet, I could have bunged stones at him. (147, 148)

Clothing is part of the basis by which Wiltshire compares himself with the missionaries. Galuchet is no threat to him but also of little help, as Wiltshire and Uma tolerate more than encourage his nightly visits to their trading station. With Tarleton, even in his best outfit of trader pajamas Wiltshire feels uncomfortable.

Wiltshire expresses the traders' views of missionaries. For example, he blames them for complicating traders' relations with island women. "If they had let the natives be, I had never needed this deception, but taken all the wives I wished, and left them when I pleased, with a clear conscience" (124). When he decides to marry Uma properly, Wiltshire realizes that in his decade as a trader he never has spoken with a missionary. He observes, "I didn't like
the lot, no trader does; they look down upon us and make no concealment; . . . [they] suck up with natives instead of with other white men like themselves" (148). Wiltshire's manner of greeting Tarleton, especially after Tarleton has witnessed Wiltshire brawling on the beach with Case, leads the missionary to assume that Wiltshire is drunk as well as violent. Wiltshire declares:

I want to tell you first that I don't hold with missions, and that I think you and likes of you do a sight of harm filling up the natives with old wives' tales and bumptiousness. . . . I'm no missionary nor missionary lover; I'm just a trader, I'm just a common, low, god-damned white man and British subject, the sort you would like to wipe your boots on. I hope that's plain. (149)

When Tarleton greets Uma with courtesy, Wiltshire says, "They can always find civility for a kanaka; it's us white men they lord it over" (150). Having expressed his resentment, Wiltshire can request Tarleton's help.

Namu, the native pastor preaches more effectively than his prototype, Maka of Butaritari, and to a larger congregation, but he also is more easily led into temptation. He falls into Case's debt, and by associating with him sanctions Case's authority. He even presides at the burial of Underhill. The prospect of losing his most effective convert to Case humanizes the regal Tarleton. He confides in Wiltshire, "I am perfectly serious in these old wives' tales with which you reproach me, and as anxious to do well for these islands as you can be to please and to protect your pretty wife. . . . With Namu's failure fresh
in my view, the work of my life appeared a mockery; hope was dead in me" (154, 155).

More importantly, the novelette depicts in detail the lives of four residents of the beach and describes bits of the lives of seven others. Their common vice of avarice sets them at odds with each other. The captain, commissioned by the owners of the empty station to find a replacement, helps Wiltshire get to shore and then abandons him. He covers his tracks by telling Wiltshire of the failures of the previous traders, but avoids scaring him off by attributing these yarns to malicious gossip. Similarly, Case plies Wiltshire with gin, introduces him to the other traders, arranges an island marriage for him, and, this accomplished, shuns him.

Wiltshire states his opinions of certain trader types, and shares the yarns he has heard about his predecessors on the island. He reserves his highest contempt for the type represented by Uma's late stepfather, a trader in search for "a soft job."

They talk about looking for gold at the end of a rainbow; but if a man wants an employment that'll last him till he dies, let him start out on the soft-job hunt. There's meat and drink in it too, and beer and skittles; for you never hear of them starving and rarely see them sober; and as for steady sport, cockfighting isn't in the same county with it. . . . This beachcomber carried the woman and her daughter all over the shop, but mostly to out of the way islands, where there were no police and he thought perhaps the soft-job hung out. (144)

Adams, one of Wiltshire's predecessors at the Falesà station, arrives believing that he has "dropped into a soft
thing." He dies from poisoned gin, ranting about the copra Case has had the natives water and begging for a priest to give him last rites.

Other whites have died or been driven away. "Whistling Jimmy," to whom the captain attributes Adams' troubles, has drowned while drunk nearby Case's boat. Tarleton describes old Underhill, a retired sailor whom Case tricks the community into disposing of. Vigours escapes before the islanders, riled for some inexplicable reason, can murder him. Young Buncombe seems to have left, leaving Papa Billy Randall, Black Jack, and Case as proprietors of the beach.

Akin to Captain Davis in The Ebb Tide Randall represents the trader or sailor abandoned to drink. Black Jack is a sham and a parasite who lives off Randall's profits and takes his orders from Case. Dressed "with a big paper collar," using a novel for scripture, and spouting obscenities, he officiates at the "wedding" and signs Uma's bogus certificate "John Blackamoor, Chaplain to the Hulks." Case is both a realistic and a symbolic figure. Despite the superficially kind welcome he gives the new arrival, he reveals his true nature in his story about organizing all the traders on an unnamed island in the Ellices to sell their copra at a loss in order to drive the main trader on the island into bankruptcy. Wiltshire concedes a grudging admiration for Case is the smartest and dodgiest trader in the islands, a man with the brains to run a parliament, and admits that he is kind to his wife. By this second comment,
he hardly implies any fidelity, only that Case does not beat his wife and in his will leaves her well provided for. Wiltshire contrasts more common treatment of wives by recalling a previous experience when a crowd of Polynesians clustered outside a trading station when "a trader was thrashing his wife inside, and she singing out" (128).

The attitudes and personalities of Case and Wiltshire overlap. Both claim innate superiority as white men. For example when Wiltshire reports that he is for some unknown reason tabooed, Case, the instigator of the taboo, replies:

I never would have believed it. I don't know where the impudence of these kanakas'll go next, they seem to have lost all idea of respect for whites. What we want is a man of war: a German, if we could--they know how to manage kanakas... I don't count this your quarrel, I count it all of our quarrel, I count it the White Man's Quarrel, and I'll stand to it through thick and thin, and there's my hand on it. (135-36)

At the meeting with the island chiefs and their retainers where Case cements the taboo, Wiltshire instructs Case to tell them in the native language the following:

I am a white man, and a British Subject, and no end of a big chief at home; and I've come here to do them good and bring them civilisation... And tell them plain, that I demand the reason of this treatment as a White Man and a British Subject. (137)

Privately he states the cliches of imperialism.

I know how to deal with kanakas; give them plain sens and fair dealing, and I'll do them that much justice, they knuckle under every time. They haven't any real government or any real law, that's what you've got to knock into their heads; and even if they had, it would be a good joke if it was to apply to a white man. It would be a strange thing if we came all this way and couldn't do what we pleased. (Beach 137; Eigner 217)

As in "The Isle of Voices" and "The Bottle Imp" the
Polynesian characters are intelligent human beings and not mere exotic types. Stevenson objected to the title of "Uma" given the *The Beach of Falesa* when it appeared as a serial in the *Illustrated London News* because the story's emphasis in on the beach. Yet Uma is possibly the most appealing character in the story. She has been fooled by Case's claim that Wiltshire is so in love with her that he does not care that she is a pariah in Falesa. Illiterate, she values the bogus marriage certificate which mocks her true status as the trader's woman. Yet she balances her coy observation to Wiltshire, "Me--your wifie," by recognizing her second class status as a native and a female when she wails, "I belong you all-e-same pig!" (125, 126).

She is honest about her love for Wiltshire. When she tells him about her life, she admits that she considered Ioane, the chief who courted her, "very pretty," and that not only would she have gladly married him, but that once married she in no way would have been swayed by Wiltshire's arrival. When Wiltshire expresses his jealous fear that Case has dallied with her, Uma exclaims, "I no common kanaka: good girl!" and more calmly explains,

"White man he come here, I marry him all-e-same kanaka; very well then, he marry me all-e-same white woman. Suppose he no marry, he go 'way, woman he stop. All-e-same thief; empty hand, Tonga-heart--no can love! Now you come marry me; you big heart--you no 'shamed island girl. That thing I love you for too much. I proud. (145)

Uma's sensuous beauty first arouses Wiltshire's casual lust--"Who's she? ... She'll do" (119) --but her loyalty,
elegance, and intelligence cause him to fall so in love with her that he indeed overlooks her tabooed status, temporarily-abandons any prospect of trade, and lowers himself to negotiate with a hated missionary to sanctify their marriage.

When Wiltshire tries to explain to Uma his reasons for taking certain actions, her counter arguments reveal her keener sense. When the spectre of Randall causes Wiltshire to pour out his case of gin, Uma questions him: "Why you bring him [it]? . . . Suppose you no want drink, you no bring him, I think" (126). During his appearance before the council of chiefs he demands immunity from the taboo based on his close relationship with Queen Victoria. And before he first ventures into the "haunted" part of the island, he asserts that this same special status renders him immune to aitus, the island ghosts or devils. Uma mocks him: "Victoreea he big chief, like you too much; no can help you here in Falesà; no can do, too far off" (162). Before his second trip into the demonic region Wiltshire claims that their huge Bible will protect him, as it supposedly protects people in England from aitus. Uma replies that if England lacks breadfruit trees, it is unlikely to have aitus. Ultimately Uma's love and loyalty are so intense that she follows her husband into this region, gets shot in the shoulder, witnesses the death of Case and what seems to be the death of her husband, and spends much of the night in terror by herself.
Minor Polynesian characters are similarly well-sketched. Namu falls into Case's power, but not through stupidity. Not only does he preach powerfully from his heart and mind rather than only in imitation of his missionary mentors, he uses missionary logic against Tarleton to reject his demand that he shun Case. Tarleton regards another character, the youngest chief, Maea, as "one of Case's jackals," yet Maea is the only chief in the council who forces Case to explain exactly how Wiltshire has come to marry an outcast. Once Case tries to intimidate the woman Maea loves, Maea, kinsman of Keola in his taste for food, cigars, and clothing, becomes the first islander to trade with Wiltshire. Tarleton disapproves of the heathenism of another chief, Faiaso, but respects him as "a teller of truth." Even the wildest of islanders, Uma's mother, Fa'avao, owns the coconut trees which become Wiltshire's livelihood as long as the taboo lasts. She works alongside her daughter and son-in-law processing the copra.

Wiltshire's development as a character, even as he speaks, enriches the plot. In a single sitting, he tells his tale to a visitor or a fellow trader, yet in this narration the reader can trace the changes in his attitudes from the time he first arrived in Falesa to the time of the narration about fifteen years later. A blunt, coarse, plain-spoken trader, Wiltshire only partially understands the changes he has undergone. The key term with which he
berates the missionaries is "kanakaisation," yet his survival lies in the extent to which he assimilates himself to island life, which is a fair portion of what this story chronicles.

When Case first shows him some island women and suggests that he acquire a wife, Wiltshire regards them as a "Bashaw" would a harem and boasts that he does not like the word marriage. Yet the vulgarity of the mock wedding sickens him, and on the way to his station he catches himself walking hand in hand with Uma "as though she were some girl at home in the old country." And when he contrasts her appearance—her "fine tapa and fine scents, and her red flowers and seeds that were quite as bright as jewels, only larger"—with his own travel-worn trader outfit, he observes, "she was a kind of a countess really, dressed to hear great singers at a concert and no even mate for a poor trader like myself" (124, 125).

Love for Uma seems to get in the way of Wiltshire's very purpose in living at Falesà, to make money for his company and himself. His ignorance of the native language has placed him in Case's mercy to begin with. In marrying Uma, let alone acquiescing to the curse which accompanies her, Wiltshire further violates the traders' credo. "I forgot that I was to get no copra and so could make no livelihood; and I forgot my employers, and the strange kind of service I was doing them, when I preferred my fancy to their business" (143).
The process of becoming an islander perhaps begins with the fear of possible degeneration far beneath that of anything Polynesian. Viewing some of the "whites" on the island as they really are deflates Wiltshire's supremacist opinions, especially when he contemplates Randall.

In the back room was old Captain Randall, squatting on the floor native fashion, fat and pale, naked to the waist, gray as a badger and his eyes set with drink. His body was covered with gray hair and crawled over by flies; one was in the corner of his eye—he never heeded; and the mosquitoes hummed about the man like bees. Any clean-minded man would have had the creature out at once and buried him. (120-21)

And Wiltshire only sees Randall on reasonably good behavior, not when he is violent "and tearing... [the furniture] to laths" (122). Wiltshire contrasts the image Randall must have presented when commanding a ship, dressing well, and talking boldly wherever he went when on shore. Furthermore, from his own proclivity to drink Wiltshire sees in Randall what he realizes he could become. Randall, by his mere disgusting presence, sobers Wiltshire up and frightens him, to Uma's amazement, into taking the pledge. Possibly this abstention gives Wiltshire clear-headedness which Case does not anticipate and also allows him to stand up to Tarleton.

In providing hospitality to Father Galuchet and allying himself with Tarleton, Wiltshire violates a third item of the traders' code; and Wiltshire even finds values in common with the missionary. Both share a heroic ideal of rescuing damsels in distress, even if Uma is unaware of her distress. Faced with a common enemy both abandon their prejudices.
Tarleton advises Wiltshire also to seek the aid of his rival, Farther Galuchet. Wiltshire begins capitalizing the "C" in Christianity. On his exploratory visit to the haunted region of the island, Wiltshire reconsiders Tarleton's "old wives' tales" and sinks to his knees in prayer before pursuing the source of the sound which terrifies him. He has tried to convince Uma that God will protect him. Either luck or divine blessing seem the best explanations for Wiltshire's and Uma's somewhat improbable survival. Case, who has not missed a shot of any kind in his dealings with previous rivals, only manages to wound each of the two and then misses on what should be the coup de grace aimed at Wiltshire's still body.

Part of Wiltshire's assimilation involves respecting island beliefs, even superstitions. Having stated in the one paragraph that he does not "value native talk a fourpenny piece," when he recalls in the next paragraph the terror of first trespassing into Case's lair, Wiltshire contradicts himself:

We laugh at the natives and their superstitions; but see how many traders take them up, splendidly educated white men, that have been bookkeepers...and clerks in the old country! It's my belief a superstition grows up in a place like the different kinds of weeds. (166)

In brief comic relief before the climax, Wiltshire bellows in terror when he mistakes Uma in the night for one of the demon enchantresses from the legends she tells.

A probable fifth item expected of traders is avoiding tasks better suited to native labor. Black Jack taunts
Wiltshire as he husks coconuts, and Case mocks him for working with his own hands "like a negro slave" (170). Yet from having performed this work, Wiltshire learns what quality copra is and the extent to which he has previously been cheated by islanders selling him watered copra. At the end his trading practice is a balance between his promise to Tarleton to deal fairly with islanders and his knowledge of their trickery.

He is glad later to move to another station where he feels less compunction to keep his word to Tarleton, yet he never becomes rich. Early in the story he is "one of those most opposed to any nonsense about native women, having seen so many whites eaten up by their wives' relatives and made fools of in the bargain" (125). As he concludes his tale Wiltshire salutes Uma, now "a powerful big woman" as an "A one" wife, even "if... she would give away the roof off the station" as "seems... natural in kanakas" (185).

Furthermore, he has little wish to return to England:

My public house? Not a bit of it, nor ever likely; I'm stuck here, I fancy; I don't like to leave the kids, you see; and there's no use talking--they're better here than what they would be in a white man's country. Though Ben took the eldest up to Auckland, where he's being schooled with the best. But what bothers me is the girls. They're only half castes of course; I knew that as well as you do, and there's nobody thinks less of half castes than I do; but they're mine, and about all I've got; I can't reconcile my mind to their taking up with kanakas, and I'd like to know where I'm to find them whites. (186)

Earlier Wiltshire has had a clearer vision of where he is and where he has come from. What begins as a daydream of
making a fortune at Falesà and returning to England rich enough to set up a pub instantly changes into the realization that he resides amid "as handsome a piece of scenery as you could find, a splendid sun and a fine, fresh healthy trade that stirred up a man's blood like seabathing," as opposed to England, "which is after all a nasty, cold, muddy hole, with not enough light to see to read by" (130).

Imagery of the demonic pervades the novelette, as Case functions as a Satan figure as well as villain. Wiltshire's first description emphasizes Case's smoothness and cleverness and his lack of definite origin.

Case would have passed muster in a city. He was yellow and smallish; had a hawk's nose to his face, pale eyes, and his beard trimmed with scissors. No man knew his country, beyond he was of English speech; and it was clear he came of a good family and was splendidly educated. He was accomplished too; played the accordion first rate; and give him a piece of string or a cork or a pack of cards, and he could show you tricks equal to any professional. He could speak when he chose fit for a drawing room; and when he chose he could blaspheme worse than a Yankee boatswain and talk smut to sicken a kanaka. The way he thought would pay best at the moment, that was Case's way; and it always seemed to come natural and like as if he was born to it. He had the courage of a lion and the cunning of a rat. (117)

As Case has readily perceived the weaknesses of his previous adversaries, within a few hours of their first meeting he gets Wiltshire half drunk and "married."

Case's pleasures link him with such archetypal satanic figures as the Jew of Malta or Iago. He teaches his island followers among other superstitions, the European belief in the evil eye, and warns them whom to avoid. When Underhill
suffers a stroke that leaves every part of him paralysed except for one blinking eye, Case feigns terror and provokes the islanders into burying him alive with Namu officiating. Similarly, the islanders banish Vigours rather than face his stare. Case tells Wiltshire how when Adams was dying and begging for last rites, upon hearing the word priest from Case's lips, Randall, in his hostility to Roman Catholicism, barred the door, and later harassed Father Galuchet when he tried to pray over Adams' grave.

Next thing, word came to Randall the priest was praying upon Johnny's grave. Papa was pretty full, and got a club, and lit out straight for the place; and there was Galoshes on his knees, and a lot of natives looking on. You wouldn't think that papa cared that much about anything, unless it was liquor; but he and the priest stuck to it two hours, slanging each other in native; and every time Galoshes tried to kneel down, papa went for him with the club. There never were such larks in Falesà. (133)

A fourth "lark" for Case is wedding Wiltshire and Uma with a bogus certificate "illegally" marrying them "for one night," after which the groom is at liberty to send the bride "to hell" (124), and withholding from him Uma's status on the island.

Case's imported superstitions blend easily with the islanders' fusion of folk belief and Christianity. The Protestant congregation adopts the sign of the cross to guard themselves from the threats they perceive in Vigours, Underhill, Uma, and Fa'avao, a practice even Randall has adopted. Just as Wiltshire has immediately observed that Randall, Case and Black Jack deal mainly in contraband,
making the remote location of their station ideal, Case has certainly linked in the minds of the islanders the proximity of the station that Vigours, Adams, and Wiltshire occupy with the haunted jungle. Acts of creative malice seem to be Case's sole joy in life. Tarleton warns that Case in plotting against Wiltshire will try something new, adding, "There is no end to his readiness and invention" (156).

Case has things both ways. By openly identifying himself with the devil he leads the islanders to believe that he is more powerful than they, but that he can also protect them from enemies, such as Uma, Underhill, and Vigours, whom he claims are secretly possessed. Islanders one time tell Wiltshire that Case is Tiapolo, their name for the Christian devil, and another time explain "Ese [Case] belong Tiapolo; Tiapolo too much like; Ese all-e-same his son" (161). Islanders wishing to retain his protection shun those he tells them to, but do not shun him. He builds his "devil works" in the region of the island to which native superstitions attribute aitus, and where huge stone ruins unaccounted for in island lore stand amid jungle growth. A sort of anti-Christ, Case takes parties of followers into the bush at night to experience his devil work. Namu returns from an expedition "glorifying God for these wonders" (162).

The image of hell accompanies Case. Early in his yarn Wiltshire anticipates the outcome when he completes his description of Case by gloating, "If he's not in Hell today,
there's no such place" (117). When Uma realizes that Case has tricked Wiltshire into marrying her, she mutters, "Damn Ese," to which Wiltshire explains, "You might think it was funny to hear this kanaka girl come out with a big swear. No such thing. There was no swearing in her; no, nor anger; she was beyond anger, and meant the word simple and serious" (141). Tarleton rests Case's corpse in the cave which housed his "demons," and Wiltshire feels that the missionary should have decreed to the islanders that Case was damned rather than merely giving "a pretty sick view of the dear departed's prospects" (184).

Stevenson's rendering of Case as a Satan figure is subtle rather than blatant, and hence, contributive rather than essential to meaning in the story. Balancing the symbol of Case as Lucifer in Paradise, Stevenson otherwise depicts him with detailed realism. The extent to which Case and his associates represent certain trader types reveals Stevenson's indictment of certain excesses of imperialism.

Superstition and a sense of the supernatural begin to possess Wiltshire. Uma is Wiltshire's main source for lore concerning the haunted region, as she tells of enchantresses luring the finest native youths to their deaths and of her own encounter with a being which takes the form of a boar but which she believes is actually "a man with a man's thoughts" (165), possibly a hidden reference to Case who has lusted after her. While he mocks Uma's tales, Wiltshire senses hostility and danger when he ventures into the bush,
and thereafter alternates between panic and rationality. He observes bats—what he calls "the flying-fox" or "vampire"—flying in broad daylight and then in his mind has one "gnashing its teeth" (159). What should be beautiful and natural instead appears as sinister.

Just across, the bush begins outright; high bush at that: trees going up like the masts of ships, and ropes of liana hanging down like a ship's rigging, and nasty orchid growing in the forks like funguses. . . . Butterflies flopped up and down along the ground like dead leaves. . . .

A man can see to the end of nothing; whichever way he looks, the wood shuts up, one bough folding with another, like the fingers of your hand; and whenever he listens, he hears always something new—men talking, children laughing, the strokes of an axe a far way ahead of home, and sometimes a sort quick, stealthy scurry near at hand that makes him jump and look to his weapons. (165-66)

At night the area glimmers with dead wood, "the way the matchbox used to shine after you had struck a lucifer" (177). Once he has discovered Case's trickery, the ominous landscape returns to the natural as Wiltshire observes on his way out that the liana and most of the other jungle bush are "just big weeds and sappy to cut through like a carrot" (168). As Wiltshire and Uma nurse their wounds and await rescue, birdsong, not the strange humming of Case's banjo strings, heralds the morning, followed by the singing of Maea and his men.

Whereas Tarleton appears foolish when he confronts Case before the natives only to have Case seem to pluck a dollar bill from the missionaries head and project onto him his own greed, Wiltshire simplifies the nature of Case's malice in
order to combat it. Wiltshire states that to think like a "kanaka" all one need do is recall one's own thoughts at age ten or fifteen. He remembers a companion in school whom all the schoolboys followed because of his claim to knowing sorcery; but that once caught and flogged, the "sorcerer" lost his following. Wiltshire sets out to expose Case and even when facing almost certain death, remains steadfast. "Case had still ten shots in his Winchester, it looked a kind of hopeless business. But I never despaired nor thought upon despairing: that man had got to go" (182). By viewing Case as a human being with no supernatural powers, Wiltshire can outlast him. Or symbolically, Wiltshire's refusal to sink into despair sends his adversary back into hell.

Allied with his blessing or luck, and the help from Uma, Tarleton, and Maea, Wiltshire saves himself by ruthless violence equal to that of Case. During their first confrontation, Wiltshire fights only somewhat more fairly than Case would, deciding not to kick him in the head. Similarly, when presented the opportunity, he cannot bring himself to shoot Case in the back, but he does accompany his promise of safe passage with the threat, "I don't mean to shoot you today" (170). After the final battle, Wiltshire justifies stabbing the corpse a dozen times by observing, "I believe he was dead already; but it did him no harm and did me good," and relishes his victory: "Every time I looked over to Case, I could have sung and whistled. Talk about
meat and drink! to see that man lying there dead as a herring filled me full" (184). In his epilogue he gloats over the subsequent deaths of Randall and Jack.

Wiltshire is an ignorant man who loves language. The vitality and humor of his speech balances the coarseness of his attitudes and the brutality of some of his behavior. Malapropisms dot his conversation, as he speaks about "Tyrolean harps," agrees with the captain's speculation that papa Randall "might live to be old Kafoozleum--an allusion which links the biblical Methselah with "the harlot of Jerusalem" in a bawdy old song--and confesses that he cannot read the year of publication on the Bible "owing to it being in these X's" (175). Wiltshire occasionally mixes his metaphors, such as when he proclaims that he does not want a "hound" such as Case eavesdropping on his conversation with Tarleton.

More often his metaphors and similes are rich and salty, often tied to trade and nautical life. Startled by the crowd of islanders silently staring at him in his station, Wiltshire foolishly does his "five knots" to and from the river. He and Uma survive the night in the bush Case having them "all in a clove hitch" (179). While he awaita Case's finishing shot, Wiltshire feels like his heart will "come right out of its bearings" (182). Earlier, the sudden love and desire he feels for Uma shoots through him, "like the wind in the luff of a sail" (125). He assures his tabooed wife that he would rather have her "than all the
copra in the South Seas" (142). His rage at Case during their fight on the beach is so great that he "could have bit into a chisel" (148).

Wiltshire sometimes compares people he cares for to more pleasant animals and his enemies to vermin. With her "sly, strange, blindish look between a cat's and a baby's," Uma stands out among the other island women, but once Case approaches, she glances at Wiltshire "quick and timid like a child dodging a blow" (119-120). As much in terror of the night as pain from her wound or even fear of her husband's death, Uma sobs through the night in the bush "with no more noise than an insect" (184). Fa'avao in her gratitude for a husband for Uma catches Wiltshire's hand and croons over it "like a great cat" (122). In contrast, Case and Jack are "parasites" who crawl and feed upon Randall "like the flies" (121). Worried that he might "be . . . shot like a dog," Wiltshire tries to extinguish a burning stick, only let out a howl "like a bullock" during castration when Case plugs him in the leg (182). Once in Wiltshire's grip, Case throws up his hands, "more like a frightened woman" but then fixes his teeth in Wiltshire's forearm "like a weasel." When stabbed, Case's body kicks under the force "like a spring sofa," but his blood flows "hot as tea" (183).

Despite Wiltshire's agnosticism, images mixed from Sunday school, the Bible, and a sense of apocalypse punctuate his thought. Although their expressions are like those of the crowd at a public hanging, the islanders
gathered by his station stare at him "like graven images." When he moves toward them, briefly they gasp as a theatre audience does when the curtain goes up. The natives—"who would never let a joke slip even at a burial"—laugh at the naked children scampering away from Wiltshire, but catch themselves and stop "as short as a dog's bark." One woman gives "a kind of pious moan, the way you have heard dissenters in their chapels at the sermon." Basically they seem to await "fire coming down from heaven" to burn this outcast, or the earth opening to swallow him up (128–29)—both of which images recur when Wiltshire, with an explosion compared to the erruption of Vesuvius, blows up the devil works. The taboo on Uma strikes him as "a regular excommunication, like what you read of in the middle ages" (145). The realization that he shares in this excommunication when Namu and his congregation freeze at the sight of Wiltshire's face makes him feel "as if the bottom had dropped out of the world" (134).

Uma considers her wedding certificate "a pass to heaven." He cannot figure out where she hides it, but she produces it so quickly that "it seemed to jump in her hand like that Blavatsky business in the papers" (150). When the couple argue about Wiltshire's plan to revisit the bush it's "like a mechanics' debating society" (175). When groping through the bush in the night Wiltshire, in an apt smoker's simile, compares himself to a man looking for the matches in his bedroom" (176).
Once he reworked his plot so that he could avoid the supernatural, Stevenson worried that some of Wiltshire's speech, especially in passages describing the approach to Falesà, might contain unnatural "literaryisms." Instead the language gives Wiltshire an authentic voice and adds brisk humor, much in the same way narration makes *Huckleberry Finn* an American classic. In Stevenson's numerous letters concerning *In the South Seas* he emphasizes how a sense of style and a consistent viewpoint elude him. However, just as the friction between traders gives Stevenson a precise focus, John Wiltshire's coarse traders' English gives Stevenson the "spate of style" and consistent range of viewpoint lacking in his travel writing. Similarly the vaguely Samoan but otherwise unspecified location makes Falesà a typical outpost (Balfour, *Life* 2: 165).

Following the lead of Henry James, who upon reading the book wrote to Stevenson, "Primitive man doesn't interest me, I confess, as much as civilized--and yet he does, when you write about him" (Summer 1893, Smith, *James and Stevenson* 231; Menikoff 4), most Stevenson critics praise *The Beach of Falesà*. However, Peter Gilmore accuses Stevenson of racism and, with the tactic Wiltshire uses to fight Case, trivializing evil. While Wiltshire expresses numerous racist sentiments, the novel convincingly depicts his retreat from racism and his adoption of an island style of living. Most importantly, Wiltshire is the persona in the book and not its author. The threat from Case is terrifying
and insidious. Yet neither pious arrogance nor despair offers release. Reduction of Case into a mere bad boy sustains Wiltshire's courage and allows him to diminish the threat to a manageable level and then dismantle the props with which Case maintains his power. Previous opponents of Case have allowed him to control their responses. A reasonable person might escape from Falesà at the first opportunity, and would certainly quiver and cry out for mercy while lying wounded in the sights of a crack-shot aiming a loaded rifle. But with superior patience and craft and brutality and malice almost equal to that of Case, Wiltshire gains victory and revenge.

The defeat of an vicious trader on a South Seas island, and possibly a temporary victory over evil in a larger sense, provide a plot which creates and sustains a sense of danger in line with Stevenson's sense of the adventure novel. Yet equally important are the changes which Wiltshire himself undergoes. Almost everything he believes upon his arrival proves to be false. What seems to be a nice set-up is in reality the most dangerous of trading stations. The men who greet him as friends are his worst enemies. The clerics who his training has taught him to hate become his allies. Manual labor which he should shun teaches him how to grade the product in which he trades. Lust for an island woman turns to love. Human values become more important than trade. Supposedly inferior beings reveal their superiority. To survive in the South Seas, an
imperialist must assimilate. And through his narration Wiltshire's point of view slides between his attitudes upon arriving at Falesà and the not wholly different attitudes he holds as he tells his story. Part of the mastery in Stevenson's depiction is that Wiltshire, while having changed his attitudes in numerous and significant ways, still clings to his fair share of prejudices. In his persona Stevenson is able both to recount Wiltshire's adventures and show his development. The rich use of personal idiom and dialect make The Beach of Falesà the most "American" of his works of fiction and reveal growth in a writer whose sense of style in his early writing seems self-conscious.

Certain critics see Wiltshire's final statement lamenting about the unavailability of suitable husbands for his daughters as a new dilemma which he cannot face. More likely it represents another aspect of his ignorance and another opportunity for learning. In The Beach of Falesà Stevenson shows that while Polynesians cannot withstand the changes that the western world brings, yet in the process of assimilation they also manage to alter their colonizers. Wiltshire and Uma—their son being educated, successfully or not, in New Zealand, their daughters more likely to marry Polynesians than whites—still possess attributes of their heritages which include strength, intelligence, and courage. Although not fully aware of it, Wiltshire and his family are the heirs to the South Seas. Or if this seems too rosy a
projection, at the very least, in the blending of setting, character, and language Stevenson creates an absolutely vivid and accurate depiction of South Seas life.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Comparison of "The Feast of Famine" and "The Song of Rahero," "The Isle of Voices" and "The Bottle Imp, and The Wrecker, The Ebb Tide, and The Beach of Falesā with Stevenson's earlier fiction, with exotic literature which preceded his writing, and with subsequent writing set in the Pacific has mainly revealed the significance and importance of Stevenson's South Seas fiction. Yet the difficulties he faced as a writer and perhaps even his own reluctance to transcend the narrower scope of his more polished earlier writing helps explain his continued obscurity.

By describing actual life in Polynesia Stevenson's Pacific works offer an alternative to the romantic archetype of the South Seas. His attempt at an approximation of Marquesan folklore and his meticulous recreation of a Tahitian legend, while hardly successful in educating western readers about Polynesian culture, indicate the respect with which he regarded island people. The continued obscurity of "The Feast of Famine," "The Song of Rahéro," and "The Isle of Voices" reveals the contrast between popular fascination with the romantic archetype of the South Seas and the disinterest in the actual region. To interest a western audience Stevenson needed a western element in his works. He more successfully uses Polynesian folklore to
help create South Seas ambience in his stories or novels.

In them Stevenson's vivid and realistic depiction of Polynesians as actual human beings helps him transcend the romantic South Seas archetype. Intelligent, materialistic, or even greedy or treacherous Polynesian replace the merely exotic types in the works of previous writers. But Stevenson's primary interest becomes the ways in which whites react to living in the South Pacific.

The effect of Stevenson's serious treatment of South Seas folklore, setting, and character has been threefold. By no means have his works eliminated or even permanently redefined the South Seas archetype. Views of the South Seas as Eden, a paradise of free love, or the place where humanity existed or exists in a natural state still permeate pulp literature. Instead, Stevenson's realistic treatment of the South Seas has encouraged others to write of the Pacific and other distant regions with equally vivid accuracy. Similarly, his symbolic use of Pacific setting has helped make it possible for other writers to use exotic setting symbolically and even to do so with realistic detail.

Stevenson's South Seas works do propound the archetypal idea of the Pacific as a region exempt from the restrictions and prohibitions of western law, but then investigate the actual consequences of life in a moral frontier, whether it be invigoration based on a receptivity to evil or ennui and paralysis amid a plethora of warmth and beauty. In between
are those who assimilate, just as to survive, Polynesians abandon much of their culture and adopt aspects of white ways, colonizers who thrive must adopt island ways.

The extent to which Stevenson's Pacific fiction anticipates Joseph Conrad's use of exotic setting and situation further reveals the importance of these works. For example, the union of Loudon Dodd and Norris Carthew foreshadows Conrad's more intense pairing of a captain with his murderous counterpart in "The Secret Sharer." Both The Wrecker and Heart of Darkness probe human viciousness. While the light tone of Stevenson's book contrasts with the intensity and seriousness of Conrad's novella, Marlow's observations at the end that "the most you can hope from ... [life] is some knowledge of yourself ... that comes too late (Heart of Darkness 594), overlaps with the truths Dodd and Carthew discover.

Both Stevenson and Conrad reveal the vulnerability of any haven to which a character hopes to escape. The trio of The Ebb Tide compare favorably with the melodramatically malicious trio of villains in Victory and in their random malice share traits with Gentleman Brown and his band of renegades. Both Stevenson and Conrad depict the Pacific as a lawless frontier. Both emphasize the fragilness and possibly the falseness of any utopia such as Samburan, Patusan, Zacynthos, the Isle of Voices, or Falesa. Whereas Conrad suggests in Almayer's Folly that bitterness is the main fruit of imperialism and in Victory and Lord Jim that
most of what humanity may build succumbs to destruction, Stevenson implies in *The Ebb Tide* that reconciliation is possible and demonstrates in *The Beach of Falesā* that the heirs to the South Seas will blend the Polynesian and the western. While Conrad’s pessimism makes each of his books seem more serious than Stevenson’s ultimately optimistic novels, neither approach is intrinsically more valid.

Most of Stevenson’s South Seas writing is problematic. His work indicates artistic growth and maturity cut short by an early death; yet, with the exception of *The Beach of Falesā* they lack the precision and unity of his best earlier stories and novels. *Treasure Island* perfectly conforms to Stevenson’s criteria for the novel of adventure, containing only details which advance the plot and heighten the sense of danger. Yet implied in the term novel of adventure is the sense that the purpose of such literature is mainly entertainment and even that the audience for which such works are written consists mainly of teenage males.

In creating in his earlier works near-perfect models of a trivial form of fiction Stevenson appealed to the literary tastes of his time. The depiction of amoral adventure on the high seas, investigation of the dual impulses so divided in a single personality as to split that person into two separate beings, the search of a youth for his respectable inheritance through the help of less-than-respectable clansmen and adventurers all offered antidoes for what George Steiner calls "The Great Ennui" of late Victorian
Yet popular success can be restricting. The South Seas works represent Stevenson's responses to a new environment and to his need to grow as a writer. His perception of conflicts among the mixtures of human beings and their cultures remains astute and accurate. His sense of the range of possible uses of this new material—ranging from cataloging folklore to discovering new sources of symbolism with which to portray the conflict between good and evil—was immense. Set against such inspiration were the monetary demands of living at the most luxurious level islanders had ever seen, retaining literary popularity, and conforming to the demands of publishers, editors, and even his own wife.

Ambivalence of purpose mars the two otherwise powerful full-length novels. To anyone interested in South Seas lore and history the narrative poems, the travel book, and the colonial history of Samoa remain valuable documents, but for most readers limited appeal undercuts the value of these works. The fairy-tale quality of the two South Seas short stories leaves them more charming than significant. And the publication of the one indisputable great work, *The Beach of Falesa* into *Islands Night's Entertainments*, moreover with inaccurate text, can reduce the reader's perception of its importance to the level of the stories with which it appears.

Still the South Seas works of Robert Louis Stevenson remain important. They chronicle life in the South Seas
during its period of greatest change. They reveal the development of a master writer of romances and adventure novels—a man regarded by many of his own contemporaries as the greatest writer among them—into a realist. They show Stevenson's importance in transforming exotic setting and character from the archetypal and idealized to the actual. The irony that confounded Stevenson's contemporaries can perhaps now lead present day readers to reconsider Stevenson's significance. When the acknowledged master of romance and adventure traveled into the most romantic of regions, what he drew from the South Seas was vivid and often grim realism.
WORKS CONSULTED

Holographic Sources


---. "Continuation of Cruise of the Casco." Ms. 6224. Huntington Library.

---. The Hair Trunk or The Ideal Commonwealth: an Extravaganza. Ms. HM2411. Huntington Library.


--- Letter to Burlingame. 5 Nov. 1890. Beinecke Collection 2930.
--- Letter to Burlingame. 28 Nov. 1891. Beinecke Collection 2942.
---. Draft of letter to Conrad Cedercrantz. 29 March 1891. Beinecke Collection 2969.


---. Letter to Colvin. 6 Nov. 1890. Widener Collection 225, Vailima Letter 1.


---. Letter to Cusack-Smith. 22 May 1893. Beinecke Collection 3120.
---. Letter to Sister Maryanne. 22 May 1889. Beinecke 3189.

---. Letter to Margaret Stevenson. 5 Mar. 1890. Beinecke Collection 3426.


---. Letter to Margaret Stevenson. 18 June 1893. Beinecke Collection 3432.


---. "Plain John Wiltshire on the Situation." Ms. HM2409. Huntington Library.
Secondary and Other Primary Sources


---. *A Voyage toward the South Pole and round the World... in the Resolution and Adventure.* London, 1777.


---. "Youth." Zabel, Portable Conrad. 115-54.


---. This Life I've Loved. New York: Longmans, 1937.


Fraser, Marie. In Stevenson's Samoa. London, 1895.


Hawkesworth, John, comp. *An Account of the Voyages ... by Commodore Byron, Captain Wallis, Captain Carteret, and Captain Cook.* London, 1773.


---. *The Queen versus Billy and Other Stories.* New York: Scribner's, 1900.


----. The Beach of Falesa. Menikoff, Robert Louis Stevenson and 'The Beach of Falesa'. 113-86.


----. "Charles of Orleans." Colvin, Works. 4: 245-94.

----. David Balfour Vol. 10 of Colvin, Works.


---.  An Inland Voyage.  Colvin, Works.  1:  3-177.
---.  "A Note on Realism." Colvin, Works.  8:  414-23.
---.  "The Song of Rahero." Ballads.  1-33.  Also in Colvin Works.  8:  251-88.
---.  The South Seas:  A Record of Three Cruises.  London, 1890.
---.  The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.  Colvin, Works.  7:  335-454.
---.  Treasure Island.  Vol 5.  of Colvin, Works.


Stevenson, Robert Louis and Fanny.  The Dynamiter  Colvin, Works.  7:  1-333.
---. **The Hanging Judge.** Colvin, Works. 6: 313-414.

Stoddard, Charles Warren. **The Lepers of Molokai.** Notre Dame, 1885.

---. **South Sea Idylls.** Boston, 1873.

---. **Summer Cruising in the South Seas.** London, 1874.


Strong, Isobel and Lloyd Osbourne. **Memories of Vailima.** New York: Scribner's, 1902.


Suggs, Robert C. **The Island Civilizations of Polynesia.** New York: Mentor, n.d.


