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Editorial: *IJSL* at the MLA

> *Given its intellectual pre-eminence, Philadelphia could not be other than the major transatlantic recipient of the exciting configuration of ideas that constituted the eighteenth-century Enlightenment in Europe. In so far as Scotland in the eighteenth century participated in, and in no minor way contributed to, that European Enlightenment, it would not be unreasonable to suggest that Philadelphia was influenced by the Scottish Enlightenment. I am convinced it was.*[1]

Andrew Hook asserts this transatlantic linkage with conviction, persistence, and a degree of scholarly caution. The same qualities were called for on *IJSL*'s maiden attempt to break America — or at least dent Philadelphia. And so to the 2006 convention of the Modern Language Association, and a city-centre teeming with academic job-seekers, publishers, and vast crowds of bow-tied professors. Take fifty men of genius by the hand? You could meet three-score enlightened Americans in the Dunkin' Donuts coffee queue.

IJSL's charm offensive is only the most recent effort to strengthen North American interest in Scottish literary studies, amid a wider project of 'internationalisation'. Since its inception in 2003, the International Committee of the Association for Scottish Literary Studies, out of which this journal emerges, has been much concerned with forging academic links with individuals and institutions in North America. It is therefore fitting that the *International Journal of Scottish Literature* was officially launched at the MLA in Philadelphia. Both co-editors delivered papers at a special session on ‘Internationalizing Scottish Literature’, at which they were joined by advisory board members Professor Stephen Bernstein (University of Flint, Michigan) and Professor John Corbett (University of Glasgow), who also chaired the event

The MLA Discussion Group on Scottish literature was established in 1999, the result of a petition led by Professors Ian Duncan, Cairns Craig and Charles Snodgrass. Their aim was to provide a forum for Scottish literature that would challenge what they felt was ‘a parochial and obsolete model of “English literature”’ that had for too long been taken for granted and which failed to take into account Scottish literary, cultural and historical specificities. In each year since, the discussion group has organised a variety of panels on Scottish literature, covering a range of topics, including Enlightenment thought, anthropology, diversity of language, postcolonialism and postmodernity. In the last few years Professors Ian Duncan and Caroline McCracken-Flesher have also been working on Scottish titles for the MLA ‘Approaches to Teaching World Literature’ series, texts widely used in North American universities and sure to strengthen academics' interest in teaching Scottish literature at college level.

scottish writing exhibition
scottish writing

The ASLS itself is by now an established fixture at MLA conventions, acting as a source of information and contacts, and as a showcase for Scottish literature, publishing and scholarship. The recent founding of the Scottish Writing Exhibition, and sponsored Scottish writing events at the MLA, are ambitious recent initiatives already generating interest. At the 2006 MLA the Poet Laureate of Glasgow, Liz Lochhead, was joined by highly-acclaimed children’s novelist Teresa Breslin at a special event in Philadelphia; in 2007 Louise Welsh will join Gaelic writer Iain Finlay MacLeod at the convention in Chicago.

The Scottish presence at the MLA has been steadily growing in recent years, with a notable six panels in 2006 and the same number planned for 2007. Reflecting this strength of interest and commitment, the Scottish Discussion Group petitioned the MLA to elevate its status to that of a Division earlier this year, thereby ensuring greater prominence for the discipline in the future. Despite receiving over two hundred signatures, however, the MLA were reluctant to instigate this change of status at this time, partly due to internal restructuring of the organisation, but also because too few MLA members currently choose ‘Scottish Literature’ as one of their main research interests in their annual membership renewal. While interest in Scottish literature is growing among North American scholars, its formal recognition is less certain; like the influence of Scottish ideas on colonial Philadelphia, its reality is more a matter of strong convictions than demonstrable facts.

All the articles in this edition of *IJSL* were delivered as conference papers at the 2006 MLA Convention in Philadelphia. They represent a cross-section of the very impressive and exciting work being done in North America in the field of Scottish literary studies, but it should be noted that this issue of *IJSL* is essentially a select conference proceedings, and not comprised of full-length journal articles of the usual kind. The papers given by Nancy Gish, Antony Hasler, Caroline McCracken-Flesher and Matthew F. Wickman comprised a panel entitled ‘Press Ganged? Revisiting Robert Louis Stevenson’. These papers are complemented by an article by John Corbett, who chaired the session, discussing the implications of the recent campaign by the Edinburgh City of Literature Project (ECOL) to distribute 25,000 copies of *Kidnapped* to the general public throughout Scotland in February 2007. This issue also includes an outstanding paper delivered by Janet Sorenson at a panel entitled ‘Orality, Literacy, Print: Technologies of the Spoken and Written Word in Scotland’.

It is a pleasure to report that a much larger number of MLA papers were offered on Scottish literary subjects than this number of *IJSL* could possibly accommodate — including, it seems fitting, one by Professor Hook, the pioneer of Scottish-American studies.

NOTES

[1] Andrew Hook, *From Goosecreek to Gandercleugh: Studies in Scottish-American Literary and Cultural History* (East Linton, East Lothian: Tuckwell Press, 1999), pp. 26-27.

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Orality's Silence: The Other Ballad Revival

Janet Sorensen

Eighteenth-century technologies of the spoken and written word have come in for a good deal of attention in recent years, as writers have theorized the period's complex models of mediations between orality, literacy, and print.[1] In elaborating the dense conceptualizations of the media systems through which songs and ballads then circulated, such studies have continued to interrogate the notion of a simple, immediate orality appropriated and transformed by the technologies of literacy and print—a notion whose origins are often associated with the eighteenth century, and particularly its ballad revival. Yet British writers of the eighteenth century themselves offered a wide range of quite different conceptualizations of the technologies of the spoken and written word and, what is more, imagined those technologies operating in distinct ways in different regional and national contexts, the key division often seen as being that between England and Scotland.

In this paper I shall examine the models evident in the writings of English antiquary Joseph Ritson, editor of two weighty collections of English and then Scottish songs and author of accompanying prefatory material detailing distinct understandings of the technologies of orality, literacy, and print in those respective spaces. His 1783 *A Select Collection of English Songs* in three volumes and his 1794 *Scotish Songs* [sic] in two volumes collect, codify, and contextualize national songs—implicitly oral artifacts, even when written first—offering key sites for looking at late eighteenth-century attempts to theorize the relationships between oral and literate media.[2] Ritson, in some ways the antiquaries' antiquary, with his exacting, rigorous antiquarian methodologies and his voluminous treatises on the histories of national song—the reader must wade through near one hundred pages of his historical essay before getting to the English songs, for instance—brings to bear the full weight of antiquarian and polite literary print discourse on the spoken—and sung words—of Britain. His antiquarian rigor is evidenced in the fact that, although one of the first to be presented with fifteen ballad transcriptions of songs sung by Mrs. Brown of

Falkland, Ritson rejected them, saying they are 'genuine but by no means ancient.'[3] He also confined himself to print sources, saying that among the many manuscripts he viewed, none had 'sufficient merit to mingle with the elegancies of the present collection' of English songs.[4]

And yet, as he brings the technologies of several print discourses to bear on song, Ritson draws a distinction between England and Scotland. It is my contention that in his print collections of Scots music, as well as those of Scots song collector David Herd, to whom I shall refer briefly, we find distinct imaginings of the technologies of the Scots spoken and written word—and more significantly their limits. Let me explain what I mean by distinct imaginings, first in Ritson’s presentation of English and Scots songs, respectively.

Figure 1 (see end of document for all figures) is a reproduction of the opening pages of the songs printed in Volume I of Ritson’s *Select Collection of English Songs*. The first two volumes of this collection printed the words alone of these songs, just as we see in this image. The only reminder that these might have been sung appears in the occasional prefatory remark 'song to the tune of ___,' where the blank is filled in with any number of well known popular tunes. Ritson prints what he calls the 'airs,' the musical notation to the songs, but only in a separate third volume, a represenative page of which appears in **figure 2**. Yet even in the pages of this separate volume of airs to English songs, quite a few songs receive the notice appearing near the top of figure 2, 'No air to the first of these songs has been met with, and the other is not supposed to have been set, or to have any tune.' An odd 'song' indeed, as Ritson had defined song as 'the expression of a sentiment, sensation or image, the description of an action, or the narrative of an event, by words differently measured, and attached to certain sounds, which we call melody or tune.'[5]

Similarly, at the bottom of **figure 3**, Ritson casually notes, 'This and such like expressions generally mean no more than that the tune has not come to the editor’s knowledge. In some places they imply certainty. [That is, certainty that there is no tune.] The different instances are not worth pointing out.' So whether we know for certain that there is music—an air—or not to a 'song' is not very important. These are 'songs' in which the significance of a connection to an actual tune—and singing or hearing body—is negligible.

In his *Scotish Song*, the case—and the presentation—is quite different. Here, in his opening paragraph, Ritson insists, 'the words and melody of a Scotish song should ever be inseparable' (i). And from the first song of the collection, located in the first volume, **(figure 4)**, words and musical notation, 'melody' as he calls it, appear together, not in separate places, certainly not in separate volumes. Ritson explains the necessity of printing words and air together in terms of the period’s conventional associations of Scots music with sentiment and passion. Pastoral haven to a corrupted, commercial south, Scotland produces songs which, according to Ritson, 'when sung in the genuine natural manner, must affect the heart of every person of feeling, whose taste is not vitiated and seduced by fashion and novelty' (1). Scottish song, unlike English song, affects the heart, the body, in hearing. Their production is equally tied to feeling bodies. Ritson believes that the genuine and peculiar natural song of Scotland, is to be sought **'?**. . .in the productions of obscure or anonymous authors, of shepherds and milk maids, who actually felt the sensations they describe**'?** (lxxix). The essence of Scots song—simple, pastoral—unlike English song—artful, fashionable—is its connection to the body, available only through its singing and hearing. Scotland is, in these characterizations, essentially an oral space of voice, of sound—a space fulfilling a logocentrist's vision of a community of embodied 'natural' presence, a vision Penny Fielding has discussed.[6]

We all know this version of Scotland and the north—vestigial space of a once-unified and wide-spread oral culture, its unusually impassioned and sentiment-eliciting song stands as the placemarker of that embodied oral world in a developing official print literary history. In these narratives of British literary history, Scots song is the location of the memory of an affective, if now ghostly, orality. Eighteenth-century English writers suspicious of these characterizations, most notoriously Samuel Johnson, had argued that those parts of Scotland bereft of written record, of literacy, such as the Highlands, far from marking some ethereal tie to a remote past were without a knowable history and therefore lacking in any connection to its past. That unknowable past was, in Johnson's term, 'a vacuity,' and as Ian Duncan reminds us, Johnson was markedly hostile to those attempting to fill that vacuity, particularly those packing that empty space with 'Ossian'—accounts of third-century Scottish heroes and heroines for which James Macpherson falsely claimed to have discovered the manuscripts.[7] Johnson, alternatively, resolutely refused to fill the 'vacuity.'

Although Ritson indulges in the vision of Scots song's proximity to the body and to an uncorrupted rural and oral world, his skepticism regarding the possibility of recovery of Scotland's older songs resembles Johnson's skepticism regarding the attempts to fill in its oral culture's lost history. In some ways this is not at all surprising. Engaged in endless dispute with the Scot John Pinkerton, who had himself infamously forged sections of the ballad 'Hardyknute,' Ritson, in a rather Johnsonian quip, took to translating 'Timeo Daneaos'—loosely, 'I fear the Greeks, even when they bring gifts' as, instead, 'I dread a Scotchman bringing ancient verses.'[8] What might we make of Ritson's skepticism, however, alongside his investment in the idea of the distinctively embodied nature of Scots songs, a belief shored up in his publication of *Scotish Songs* and his insistence on the printing of—only there and not in the English collection—words and melody together? This different form of presentation for Scots songs, as opposed to English songs, suggests a distinct sense of Scotland as, still, an inherently oral space, as historical remnant of embodied community. And yet at the same time, Ritson marks its unknowability. Oddly, in his volumes of *Scotish Songs*, Ritson prints a good number of songs that look like that represented in **figure 5**. When he could not find the 'proper air' for a song, he printed blank ledger-lines.[9]

On these strange pages, melody—even in its absence—and words remain inseparable. Ritson does not in the Scots songs, as he had in the collection of English songs, off-handedly remark that these might or might not have been set to music. His inclusion of blank ledger lines for every single Scots song for which he does not know the melody insists they were all at some point certainly set to music, the blank ledgers a visible reminder. In a sense Ritson here stages the vacuity of the oral. Not written down, unlike the words and sometimes melodies he has found in various print forms, the music to the Scots songs cannot be known authoritatively; they remain cyphers. And yet this absence must be marked in a way that it is not for the English songs.

Bertrand Bronson, in his critical biography *Joseph Ritson, Scholar at Arms*, notes that Ritson 'printed blank ledger lines for the owner of the volumes to fill in' (194), and Ritson himself writes, 'blank lines are left for its [a tune's] after insertion with the pen' (vi). But questions remain: Why are readers presented with blank ledger lines for the Scots songs and not the English? Why are readers given these print place markers for an insisted-upon melody, orality, body—absent yet starkly present in their marked absence—but only for Scottish songs? Why might readers be invited to fill in the blanks of Scots melodies but not of English ones? Why, to press it further, might readers be given the leeway to fill in the blanks of the ledger of Scots songs with their own personal knowledge when Ritson is otherwise at such pains to control the protocols of authenticity, antiquity, and politeness of the songs he prints?

I want to suggest that Ritson, in his collection of *Scotish Songs*, is influenced by a particularly Scots conceptualization of the relationship of the technologies of print and orality, particularly as they are seen to consolidate the social and the national. This conceptualization, or distinct imagining, as I called it above, undoes those characterizations of Scotland as either the space of a former—and ongoing reminder of—oral plenitude or of a place whose connection to the past is absolutely unknowable. And it does so via an appeal to the subjective in terms familiar from David Hume's discussions of associationism. I want to try to demonstrate that by making a connection between Ritson's work and that of David Herd, a Scots collector of Scots songs whom Ritson admired.

Like Ritson and many others, in his first 1769 edition *Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs* and in his later, two-volume 1776 edition Herd features a pastoral engraving on the title page, linking present-day Scotland to that past Golden age of song.[10] Yet in his preface Herd quickly moves away from claims of popular songs' status as evidence, however ineluctably evanescent, of a far-off past, highlighting not preservation but disintegration. The printed word itself becomes a sign of that disintegration. Herd regrets that 'the poetry'—the printed words on the page—of the songs in his collection 'may appear much below mediocrity.'[11] He connects their 'below mediocrity' status to the fact that 'these were the only words existing to the tunes in question, the original words which gave rise to these tunes being irrecoverably lost' (ix). The original words are absent. What readers do have, in the form of words on the printed page of Herd's collection, are proxies for those other, older, and superior vanished words. Operating within a signifying logic not entirely unlike Ritson's blank ledgers, what the reader has in print is a reminder of what is missing and yet what is essential, even originary. It is those absent words, Herd insists, that 'gave rise to [the] tunes, which for Herd, like Ritson, are all important in Scots song (ix).

Herd's songs appear, as in **figure 6**, as words alone. Herd does not include the tunes of the songs, not even giving such hints as 'sung to the tune of ...' Yet just as in some of Ritson's *Scotish Songs* readers might fill in the blanks, Herd's print presentation of songs assumes readers will bring to the words their own subjective memory of the 'airs.' He even writes, 'Of many of the songs in these volumes the chief merit will be found to consist in the musical air' (ix)—airs, which do not actually appear on the page but which are called up in the readers' minds by 'the only words existing . . . the original words which gave rise to these tunes being irrecoverably lost' (ix). In both Ritson's and Herd's printing of Scottish songs, then, there is an unusual turn (at least for antiquarian discourse) to the subjective, to readers' individual memories, and, related, as we shall see in a moment, to association to underwrite these mediations of oral and print technologies.

Consider, for instance, Herd's description of the processes of association by which the sound of music in the individual reader's present sets in motion terms of national affiliation more usually thought of as historically or even, in recent theorizations, print-driven. Invoking notions of association and habit explored by fellow Scot David Hume Herd writes:

> That predilection so natural for every production of one's own country, together with the force of habit, a certain enthusiasm attendant on music, and perhaps sometimes the principle of association, whereby other agreeable ideas are mingled and always called up to the mind together with the musical air, has ever induced people to prefer their own national music to that of all others (1776 vi).

In Herd's language of associationism, contiguity of time and place of a national 'musical air' and of 'agreeable ideas' generates in the subjective mind a powerful sense of national connection and identification. Herd focuses on the moment of audition, on the instant a national subject hears a song, and the series of effortless mental connections that he believes quickly follow. In Herd's description it is not the word but the 'air'—in a complex relation of oral media and aural reception—which set off the chain of associations that lead to national feeling. The tune or air, then, despite deriving from and occurring after the words, is the forceful catalyst of national feeling and remains intact, negotiating experience and continuity, even as the tune does not appear on the pages of Herd’s volumes.

I want to pause here for a moment to consider the complex operations of oral and print technologies called up by Herd’s and Ritson’s texts. Herd collects 'Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs' but admittedly prints in that collection words that are distant from and sad reminders of the missing original words. Those now-absent original words, he argues, were what gave rise to specific Scots tunes. Hearing any one of these tunes sets off a chain of subjective associations that nonetheless ultimately elicits feelings of national affiliation in all national subjects. Seeing words on the page presumably participates in that chain of associations, even initiating that chain of associations. Both Ritson’s blank ledgers and Herd’s words on the page point to what is absent, inviting subjective 'filling-in' of memory and association, an openness to subjective memory not countenanced in much antiquarianism of the late eighteenth century and not, seemingly, deployed in antiquarian projects in their presentations of English songs.

Both Ritson and Herd make gestures in the direction of a distinctly affective, embodied Scots song experience. Yet their printed works foreground the elusive and utterly mediated, yet also subjective qualities of that orality. In this they resemble no thinker so much as, again, Hume. Even in his most optimistic account of the possibility of retrieving the full presence of an historical event, when Hume argues that we might trace back representations of an historical event to 'an original impression', he introduces the intercession of signs. Commencing the entire chain of connections leading back to 'an impression of the memory or senses' are **?'**characters and letters,' 'signs of certain ideas'—'delivery' both oral and written. What is more, these signs themselves operate on the principal of association. Hume writes,

> because such a particular idea is commonly annexed to such a particular word, nothing is required but the hearing of that word to produce the correspondent idea ... it is not absolutely necessary, that upon hearing such a particular sound, we should reflect on any past experience .... The imagination of itself supplies the place of this reflection, and is so accustomed to pass from the word to the idea, that it interposes not a moment’s delay ....[12]

Hume’s implicit model of retrieval here is a post-Lockean linguistics of arbitrary customary association. While crediting the social with stable, reliable meaning-making, such a linguistic model also introduces the possibility of instability and multiplicity into knowledge, particularly historical knowledge. Indeed, few were better equipped to see the fault lines of a supposedly singular customary language in eighteenth-century Britain than educated Scots, who knew well that a single word might have a variety of meanings based on the distinct customs of different locations.

In Herd's Hume-influenced volume, the presentation of un-annotated songs is especially conducive to their functioning as free-floating signs. Herd stands in stark contrast to an increasingly professionalized body of ballad collectors invested in authenticating those connections historically. Unlike most antiquarians, for instance, Herd offered little by way of authenticating commentary, even after Thomas Percy had pleaded with him to include such material. Instead, in refusing to specify an historical context for the songs of his collection, Herd makes them available as signs that one might associate with 'agreeable ideas' and the nation—but on one's own subjective terms of memory. Although Ritson, in contrast, goes to great lengths to provide extensive general historical context for both English and Scots songs in the armature of his extensive prefaces on the history of song, Ritson's blank ledgers are, alternatively, open to subjective memory, suggesting in the reception of Scots song a process of association parallel to that described by Herd. Herd and Ritson, despite their immediately recognizable differences, both bring a complex understanding of the interplay of oral and print technologies to their collections of Scots music. Their printed texts represent distinct imaginings of those technologies in relation to Scotland and Scots music. Their 'silence' in regard to the actual tunes of some Scots music allowed for projections of the reader's subjective imagination into the 'vacuity' as Johnson called it; projections with which Johnson might well not have been comfortable. Ritson's blank ledgers both invite such projections but also announce and foreground an absence when it comes to a knowable, continuous oral production. Those blank spaces highlight that vacuity, noting that it stands in the very place that the presence and plenitude of oral communication was meant to occupy.

NOTES

[1] See for instance recent writing by Ian Duncan, Celeste Langlan, Susan Manning, and Maureen McLane.

[2] *A Select Collection of English Songs* 3 Vols. (London, 1783) and *Scotish Songs*, 2 Vols. (London, 1794).

[3] Letter cited in Bertrand Bronson, *Joseph Ritson, Scholar-At-Arms* 2 Vols., v. 1 (Berkeley: California UP, 1938), 192.

[4] Cited in Branson, v. 1, p. 82.

[5] *A Select Collection of English Songs*. vol. I p. i.

[6] “Writing at the North: Rhetoric and Dialect in Eighteenth-Century Scotland,” *The Eighteenth-Century: Theory and Interpretation*, 1998 (39), 25-43.

[7] “The Pathos of Abstraction: Adam Smith, Ossian, and Samuel Johnson” in *Scotland and the Borders of Romanticism*, eds. Leith Davis, Ian Duncan, and Janet Sorensen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 38-56 (39).

[8] Cited in Bronson (190).

[9] Bronson, vol. 1,194.

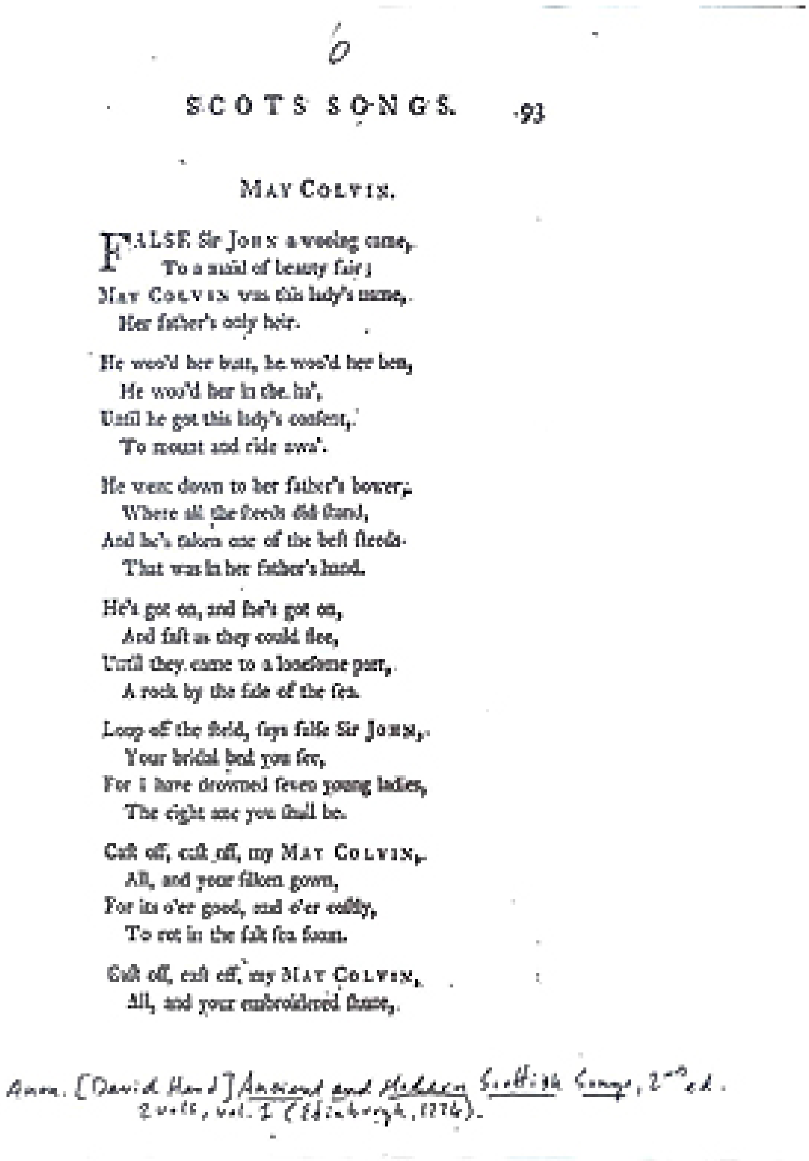
[10] David Herd, *The Ancient and Modern Scots Songs* (Edinburgh, 1769) and *Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs* in Two Volumes (Edinburgh, 1776)

[11] *Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs* in Two Volumes (Edinburgh, 1776), v. I, ix.

[12] David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, 2nd ed. P.H. Nidditch (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 93.

FIGURES

Figure 1



6

SCOTS SONGS. 93

MAY COLVIN.

FALSE Sir JOHN a wooing came,
To a maid of beauty fair;
MAY COLVIN was this lady's name,
Her father's only heir.

He woo'd her butt, he woo'd her ben,
He woo'd her in the ha',
Until he got this lady's conſent,
To mount and ride awa'.

He went down to her father's bower,
Where all the ſteeds did ſtand,
And he's taken one of the beſt ſteeds
That was in her father's hand.

He's got on, and ſhe's got on,
And faſt as they could flee,
Until they came to a loneſome part,
A rock by the ſide of the ſea.

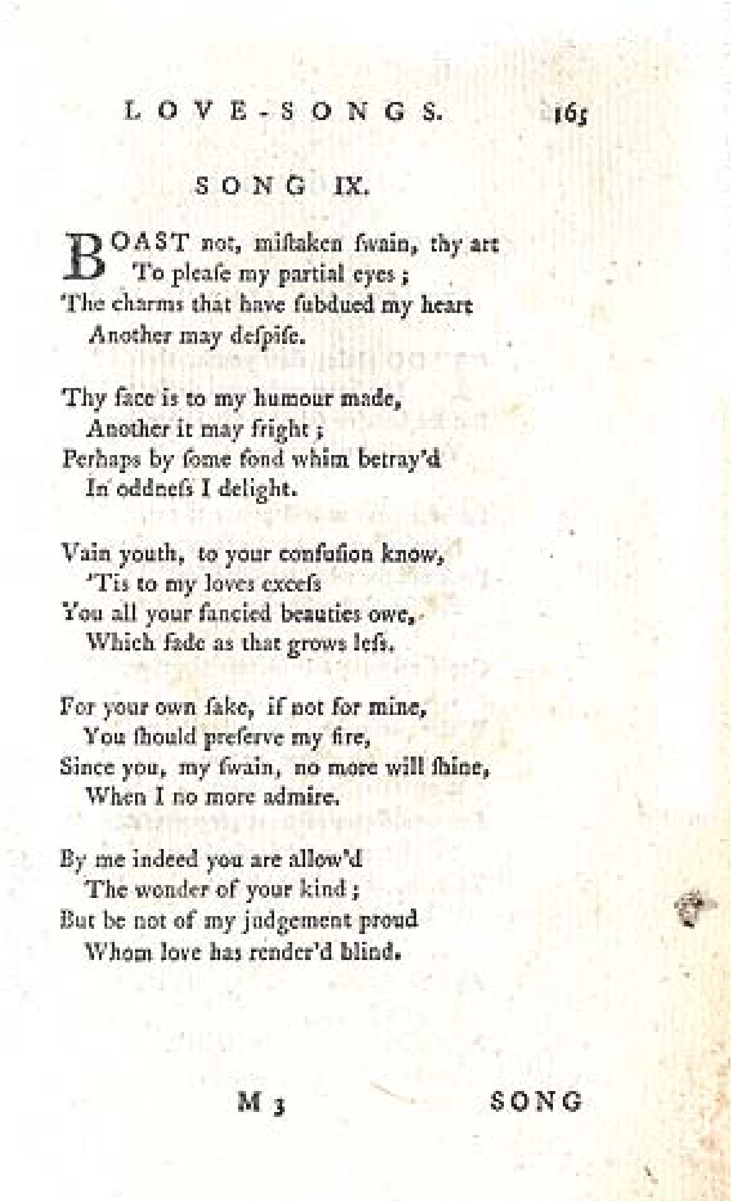
Loup off the ſteed, ſays falſe Sir JOHN,
Your bridal bed you ſee,
For I have drowned ſeven young ladies,
The eight one you ſhall be.

Caſt off, caſt off, my MAY COLVIN,
All, and your ſilken gown,
For its o'er good, and o'er coſtly,
To rot in the ſalt ſea foam.

Caſt off, caſt off, my MAY COLVIN,
All, and your embroidered ſhoon,

Anon. [David Herd] Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs, 2nd ed.
2 vols, vol. I (Edinburgh, 1776).

Figure 2



L O V E - S O N G S. 165

S O N G IX.

BOAST not, miſtaken ſwain, thy art
To pleaſe my partial eyes;
The charms that have ſubdued my heart
Another may deſpiſe.

Thy face is to my humour made,
Another it may fright;
Perhaps by ſome fond whim betray'd
In oddneſs I delight.

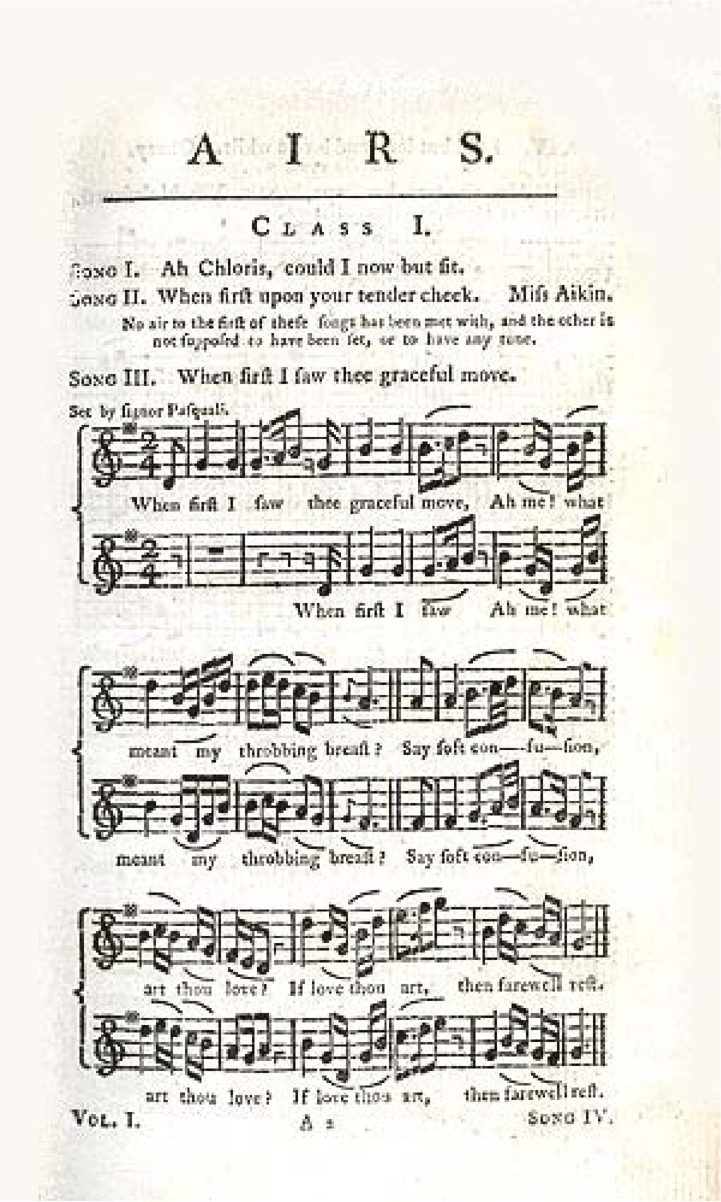
Vain youth, to your confuſion know,
'Tis to my loves exceſs
You all your fancied beauties owe,
Which fade as that grows leſs.

For your own ſake, if not for mine,
You ſhould preſerve my fire,
Since you, my ſwain, no more will ſhine,
When I no more admire.

By me indeed you are allow'd
The wonder of your kind;
But be not of my judgement proud
Whom love has render'd blind.

M 3 SONG

Figure 3



A I R S.

Class I.

Song I. Ah Chloris, could I now but ſit.

Song II. When firſt upon your tender cheek. Miſs Aikin.

No air to the firſt of theſe ſongs has been met with, and the other is not ſuppoſed to have been ſet, or to have any tune.

Song III. When firſt I ſaw thee graceful move.

Set by ſignor Paſquali.

When firſt I ſaw thee graceful move, Ah me! what
When firſt I ſaw Ah me! what
meant my throbbing breaſt? Say ſoft con—fu—ſion,
meant my throbbing breaſt? Say ſoft con—fu—ſion,
art thou love? If love thou art, then farewell reſt.
art thou love? If love thou art, then farewell reſt.

Vol. I. A 2 Song IV.

Figure 3 (detail)

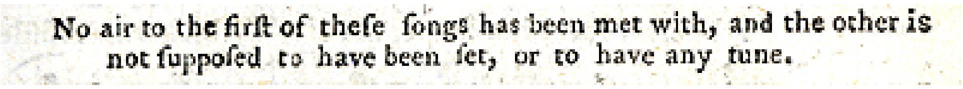


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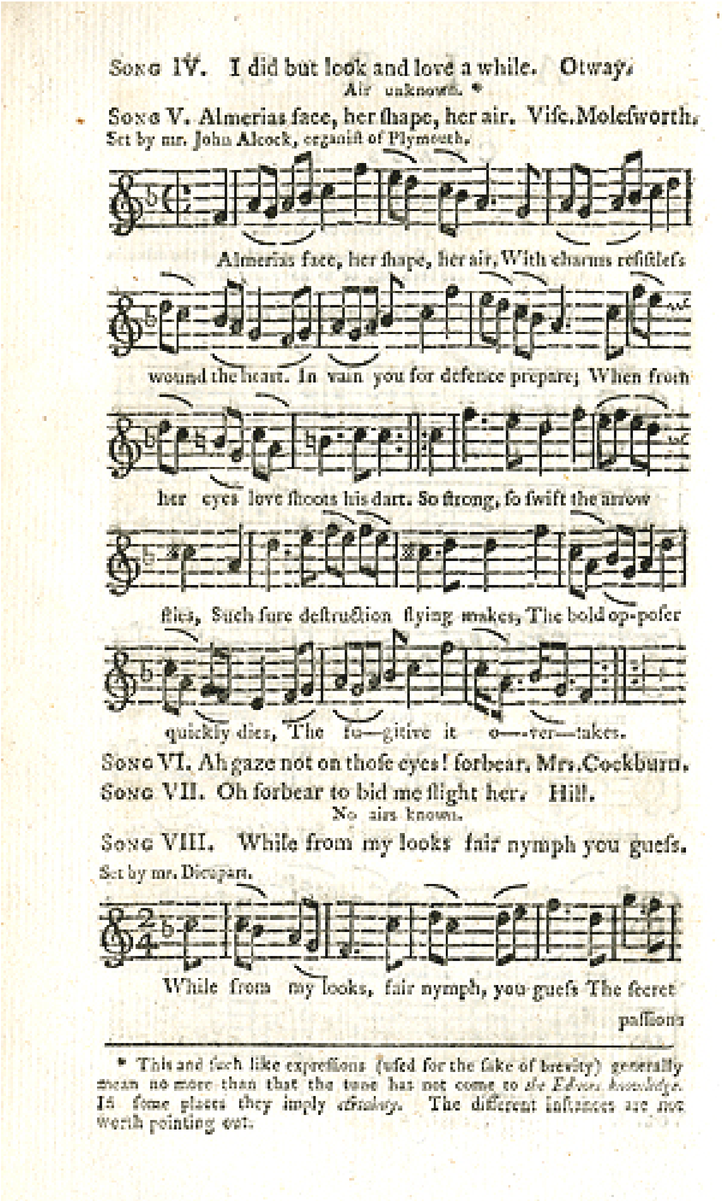
Figure 4



Song IV. I did but look and love a while. Otway.

Air unknown. *

Song V. Almerias face, her ſhape, her air. Viſc. Moleſworth.

Set by mr. John Alcock, organiſt of Plymouth.

Almerias face, her ſhape, her air, With charms reſiſtleſs
wound the heart. In vain you for defence prepare; When from
her eyes love ſhoots his dart. So ſtrong, ſo ſwift the arrow
flies, Such ſure deſtruction flying makes, The bold op-poſer
quickly dies, The fu—gitive it o—-ver—takes.

Song VI. Ah gaze not on thoſe eyes! forbear. Mrs. Cockburn.

Song VII. Oh forbear to bid me ſlight her. Hill.

No airs known.

Song VIII. While from my looks fair nymph you gueſs.

Set by mr. Dieupart.

While from my looks, fair nymph, you gueſs The ſecret
paſſions

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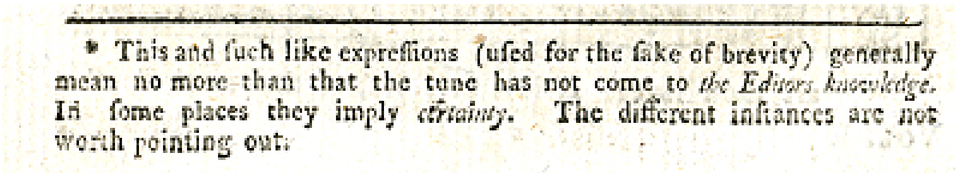
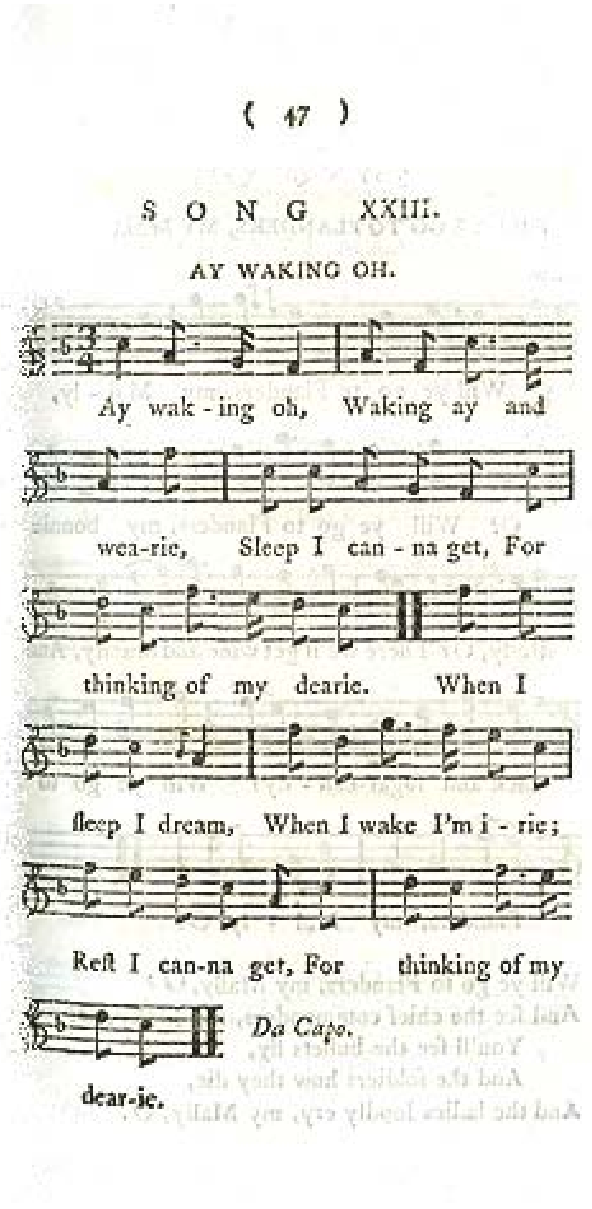
* This and ſuch like expreſſions (uſed for the ſake of brevity) generally mean no more than that the tune has not come to *the Editors knowledge*. In ſome places they imply *certainty*. The different inſtances are not worth pointing out.

Figure 4 (detail)



* This and ſuch like expreſſions (uſed for the ſake of brevity) generally mean no more than that the tune has not come to *the Editors knowledge*. In ſome places they imply *certainty*. The different inſtances are not worth pointing out.

Figure 5


(47)

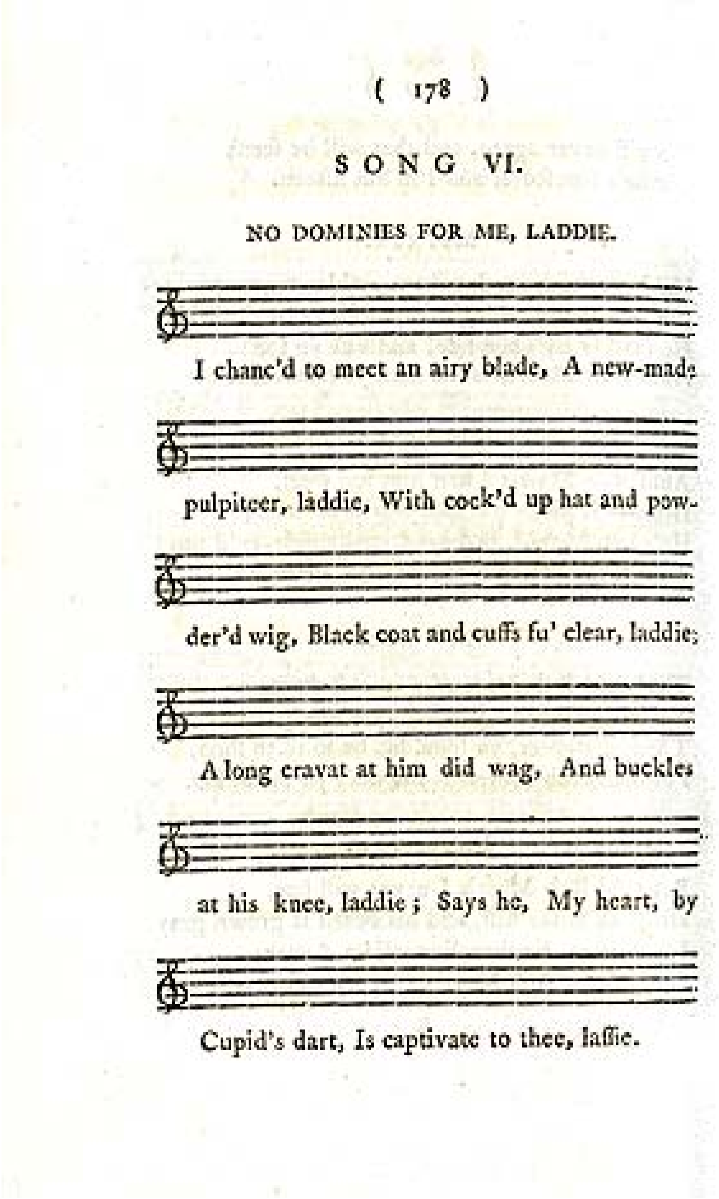
SONG XXIII.

AY WAKING OH.

Ay wak - ing oh, Waking ay and
wea-rie, Sleep I can - na get, For
thinking of my dearie. When I
ſleep I dream, When I wake I'm i - rie;
Reſt I can-na get, For thinking of my
dear-ie.

Da Capo.

Figure 6



(178)

SONG VI.

NO DOMINIES FOR ME, LADDIE.

I chanc'd to meet an airy blade, A new-mad
pulpiteer, laddie, With cock'd up hat and powder'd wig, Black coat and cuffs fu' clear, laddie;
A long cravat at him did wag, And buckles
at his knee, laddie; Says he, My heart, by
Cupid's dart, Is captivate to thee, laſſie.

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Stevenson, Benjamin, and the Decay of Experience

Matthew Wickman

Nineteenth-century contemporaries like Henry James, Gerard Manley Hopkins, William Morris, and George Moore shared the conviction that Robert Louis Stevenson was a masterful writer. That Paul Maixner should have had to work so hard a century later to remind us of this fact may surprise readers who imagine Stevenson fitting squarely within the constellation of canonical authors. [1] The emergence of numerous books on Stevenson over the past fifteen years or so only strengthens our present-day impression of Stevenson as luminary. [2] Working successfully within multiple genres—novels, short stories, poems, essays, correspondence, and others—Stevenson was and is widely admired for the vivid pictures he painted with words, the sweep of his narratives, and his poignant observations on modern life.

However, as Maixner recognized in the early 1980s, it was not always so. Beginning perhaps with Frank Swinnerton's 1914 dismissal of Stevenson as a 'poseur' and 'a writer of the second class', Stevenson's reputation deteriorated in the early part of the twentieth century until he was seen as little more than a consumptive scribbler coughing up mere boys' books. [3] A similar thing had happened to Walter Scott in the nineteenth century, much as numerous female writers from that same period had been and were continuing to be dismissed as peddlers of vacuous romances. [4] Of course, tidal shifts swing in both directions, and given the massive recovery project devoted to a host of writers in this, our era of the so-called 'return to history' (synonymous for some critics with new historicism or, more ominously, the Information Age [5]), we should not be surprised that a spate of books and essays devoted to Stevenson's life and work have appeared over the past decade or two.

No, this resurgence of Stevenson studies is not surprising. But it may give us pause to recall one of Stevenson's true fans during the 1930s—that is, during the period of Stevenson's dimming reputation—and to reflect for a moment on the reason for this admirer's enthusiasm. I refer here to Walter Benjamin, who regarded Stevenson as something of a prophet on the subject of the decay of experience, one of the most enigmatic but extensive problems the modern West had inherited from the Enlightenment. As Benjamin saw it—indeed, as a multitude of philosophers and cultural critics saw it, had seen it, and eventually would come to see it (ranging from Dilthey and Nietzsche and Heidegger and Adorno to Foucault and Derrida and Lyotard and Jameson, to say nothing of Stevenson's contemporaries, nor Walter Scott's, nor for that matter James Macpherson's)—experience had lost much of its luster in modernity; the quality of experience and, with it, of life itself, was in decline. My initial aim in this essay is to provide an overview of the reason why this was so, though less as an end in itself than as a backdrop for the ultimate purpose of explaining Benjamin's peculiar affinity for Stevenson.

Of course, I should acknowledge at the outset that a rigorous recounting of the story about the legacy of experience in the modern West requires considerably more space than I can allot to it here. As I discuss elsewhere, it is a story as much about the resurgence as the decay of experience, and it is a tale in which Scotland figures in provocative ways. [6] Nevertheless, if we restrict our scope for the time being to Benjamin, we may discern at least the general outlines of this complex issue. In an essay entitled 'On the Program of the Coming Philosophy', written early in his career (e.g., 1918) and unpublished in his lifetime, Benjamin commented on the transformation of experience during the Enlightenment. More specifically, he noted how the new empirical philosophy reduced experience 'to a nadir, to a minimum, of significance'. [7] The 'quintessence' of experience during this period of modern secularization, he argued, 'was Newtonian physics', meaning that experience became associated with discrete moments of sensation rather than with life considered holistically or with values held in common across communities (101). David Hume famously appealed to experience in precisely this 'Newtonian' way, proclaiming that 'we cannot go beyond experience' in matters of human understanding, and that experience itself was reducible to 'a bundle or collection of different perceptions which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity.' [8] Though unique in the conclusions he drew from this concept of experience, Hume was hardly alone in invoking the category in this way. As Peter Dear explains, this reduction of experience to a series of impressions and perceptions was a modern, enlightened development: 'An "experience" in the Aristotelian sense was a statement of *how things happen* in nature, rather than a statement of *how something had happened* on a particular occasion'. This is why Aristotle argues that poetry is philosophically superior to history: poetry deals in universals, or in experience at a general level, rather than with particular details and, hence, with aberrations from perfect form. 'But', Dear continues, 'the experimental performance, the kind of experience upheld as the norm in modern scientific practice, is unlike its Aristotelian counterpart; it is usually sanctioned by reports of historically specific events'. [9] It becomes, in essence, the empty repository of events rooted in sensation.

Benjamin was deeply suspicious of this winnowing of experience to a series of impressionable moments. Such moments are, as Dear observes, the product of modern science, though over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries they began to appear outside the laboratory in such fields as law (in the division of witnesses from jurors), religion (especially in modern evangelical religions which place emphasis on divine revelation as heightened moments of truth), and art (e.g., with the onset of romantic notions of art as a crystallization of intense moments of lived experience set against the 'fading coal' of everyday life). [10] Marxist critics perceived the logical propinquity of this divisive, sensationist dynamic to the dominant features of modern socioeconomic reality, primarily the division of labor and, by extension, the commoditized sensationalism of, say, advertising. For them, any formation inherently separating experience from the texture of everyday life was thus inherently dubious, a mere by-product of a deeper, material cause, and hence reducible to ideology. [11] As I will discuss below, Benjamin championed a contrary, collective notion of experience as a phenomenon uniting together both atomistic impressions and alienated individuals. But he held to this standard amidst a deeper conviction that experience had fallen into decay, or that it was fragmenting into a motley array of consciousness-bombarding instants—in Marshall McLuhan's vernacular, 'hot' media. [12] But it would not be sufficient, he believed, simply to take these instants of experience at face value and denounce them for their divisive logic; indeed, such instants were themselves subsumed into larger, systemic processes of industry and knowledge. This was perhaps most evident in the scientific 'method' for marshalling random facts into patterns of knowledge. What science shared here with capital was the tendency to divide sensation from reflection and sunder direct contact with objects from objective understanding of the same. To this extent, they each contributed to a social and epistemological dynamic of alienation.

Benjamin gave most eloquent expression to this dynamic in his 1936 essay 'The Storyteller'. 'Experience has fallen in value,' he lamented.

> And it looks as if it may fall into bottomlessness.. Wasn't it noticeable at the end of the [First World W]ar that men who returned from the battlefield had grown silent—not richer but poorer in communicable experience?. And there was nothing remarkable about that. For never has experience been more thoroughly belied than strategic experience was belied by tactical warfare, economic experience by inflation, bodily experience by mechanical warfare, moral experience by those in power. A generation that had gone to school on horse-drawn streetcars now stood under the open sky in a landscape where nothing remained unchanged but the clouds and, beneath those clouds, in a field of force of destructive torrents and explosions, the tiny, fragile human body. [13]

As readers familiar with Benjamin's work might expect, the status of experience in this passage is shifting and complex. It designates both a phenomenological immersion in the world—the experience of the 'fragile body' beneath 'destructive torrents'—and also an epistemological mastery of that world—a transcendence of bodily experience which provides a knowledgeable perspective onto the causes of the chaos. [14] The passage thus embeds within itself two important and competing concepts of experience corresponding to the German differentiation of experience into the terms *Erfahrung* and *Erlebnis*. *Erfahrung*, from the root *fahren*, meaning to pass through or sail over, is called 'long' experience because it implies something which occurs over time or which we inherit from tradition. *Erlebnis*, by contrast, is a nineteenth-century coinage signifying 'inner, lived experience', especially of 'short', transcendent moments (e.g., in Romantic notions of art). [15] As Benjamin (and numerous others) saw it, *Erfahrung* was under siege in a modern world implicated epistemologically in science (and, hence, in particular 'experiences' derived through observation) and economically in intensified divisions of labor; the romantic aura accruing to short bursts of aesthetic and religious experience thus emerged as compensation for the loss of tradition and meaning. [16]*Erlebnisse*, or intensely lived moments, did not heal the breach of experience; instead, they compounded it.

Despite the arresting image in Benjamin's essay of 'the tiny, fragile human body' standing beneath an infernal sky, Benjamin's argument there is less about warfare than narrative. Taking as his vehicle the purported decay of oral narrative tradition, Benjamin characterizes modern experiential anomie as 'a concomitant of the secular productive forces of history' which divide laborers from capitalists, specialists in one field from those in another, and 'narrative from the realm of living speech' (p. 146). This is why, he argues, the novel emerges in its modern form in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: its subject matter, mass production, profitability to authors, and consumption by solitary readers all reflect the divisive, fragment-producing forces of industrial society and the latter's relations of private property. However, he observes, the situation is not entirely bleak: the disappearance of traditional storytelling and, with it, a conception of collective experience is 'making it possible to find a new beauty in what is vanishing' (p. 146). The collective consciousness of decay (an important paradox: our collective awareness of the virtual impossibility of such collectivity) generates the type of communal sentiment reputedly under siege. As a sign of this redemptive possibility, Benjamin points to the vestiges of storytelling (and hence of solidarity) in modernity 'in Leskov [and] in Hauff, in Poe [and] in Stevenson' (p. 162). He concludes his essay on this note of hope.

Though he was a fine storyteller, Stevenson's is the one name that seems out of place in this context. After all, Benjamin's essay directly addresses the work of Nikolai Leskov, and Wilhelm Hauff was well known for his early nineteenth-century fairy stories. Poe's inclusion seems logical if only because of his powerful influence on Charles Baudelaire, who, in Benjamin's mind, was the quintessential figure of burgeoning modernism during the nineteenth century. But Stevenson? True, Stevenson stories like 'Thrawn Janet' possess a strong, demotic flavor reminiscent of Leskov or Hauff, but Benjamin never speaks of these stories, here or elsewhere. He seems to have appreciated Stevenson more for his other work, notably the essay 'A Plea for Gas Lamps', which addresses nineteenth-century Paris, and *The Master of Ballantrae*, Stevenson's most complex novel.

Still, it is in the context of storytelling that Benjamin elicits Stevenson, converting him into an image of a quality of experience richer than that typically afforded by modernity, but immanent to those cultural critics who know how to perceive it. I say that Stevenson acquires the status of an 'image' in Benjamin's essay; Benjamin's more exact term would be a 'dialectical image': 'Where thinking comes to a standstill in a constellation saturated with tensions—there the dialectical image appears. It is the caesura in the movement of thought'. [17] Such momentary pauses represent for Benjamin the reflexive antithesis of experiential instants; through these disruptions we arrest the ideological flow of 'nature' as 'progress' and thus arrive at genuine historical (in Marxian terms: materialist; in the religious terminology sometimes employed by Benjamin: messianic; in modern speak: critical) consciousness. [18] On these grounds, Stevenson becomes doubly exemplary: he is part of a larger group of storytellers whose work supersedes or otherwise forestalls the decay of experience, and he is also set apart from that group by virtue of his 'dialectical' difference from it. Therefore, Stevenson's elliptical inclusion functions as something of a metonymic figure in Benjamin's essay: if we can discern why Stevenson belongs with Leskov, Hauff, and Poe, then perhaps we may perceive the 'new beauty' in what Benjamin claims is 'vanishing', and thereby come to understand how the drama of experience in modernity plays out in the particular case (for Benjamin, the virtually Leibnizian monad) of storytelling.

In a significantly longer version of this paper, I discuss Stevenson's—and more particularly his narrator's—role as storyteller in *Kidnapped* and *Catriona*. These novels, I claim, negotiate the complex dynamics of experience which Stevenson inherits partly from Walter Scott, but more especially from the legacy of late eighteenth-century Scottish Highland romance. More specifically, I interpret this legacy by way of an extended analysis of the 1752 Appin Murder and subsequent Trial of James Stewart, arguing that this trial delineates the contours of modernity's paradox of experience—the paradox, that is, of the allure accruing to experience for Benjamin and others as a function of its perceived decay. Stevenson's novels *Kidnapped* and *Catriona* take up the Appin Murder, the Stewart Trial, and this history of experience in acute and compelling ways which Benjamin reiterates not only in 'The Storyteller', but also across the breadth of his work. [19]

I do not have space here to address Stevenson's novels relative to the Stewart Trial, eighteenth-century Highland romance, Scott, or Benjamin. However, as a glimpse into the reasons for Benjamin's interest in Stevenson, we might briefly consider one of Stevenson's more provocative but often overlooked essays, 'A Plea for Gas Lamps,' first published in April 1878. Stevenson writes here in urbane but also mythical terms about the progress made in the lighting of large cities, specifically Paris. He idealizes the ante-modern (though not exactly primitive) device of the gas lamp: 'When gas first spread along a city. a new age had begun for sociality and corporate pleasure-seeking'. These lights brought people together outside the confines of the workplace: 'The city folk [now] had stars of their own; biddable, domesticated stars'. At the time at which he is writing, however, these lamps have regrettably been replaced by electricity, which causes Stevenson to pine for the lamplighter: 'not much longer shall we watch him speeding up the street and, at measured intervals, knocking another luminous hole into the dusk. The Greeks would have made a noble myth out of such an one; how he distributed starlight' in the manner of Prometheus. Now, however, 'like all heroic tasks, his labors draw toward apotheosis, and in the light of victory himself shall disappear. For another advance has been effected. Our tame stars are to come out in future, not one by one, but all in a body and at once. *Fiat Lux*, says the sedate electrician. Starrise by electricity, the most romantic flight of civilization; the compensatory benefit for an innumerable array of factories and bankers' clerks'. The new lighting befits a new age—one which is bureaucratic, technocratic, and instrumentalizing. 'In Paris' especially, Stevenson argues, 'a new sort of urban star [i.e., an electric lamp] now shines out nightly, horrible, unearthly, obnoxious to the human eye; a lamp for a nightmare. To look at it only once is to fall in love with gas, which gives a warm domestic radiance fit to eat by'. [20]

Stevenson's tone in this essay is clearly ironic, but this seems more posturing than disdainful; if anything, the young Stevenson affects here the urbane detachment of a figure like Baudelaire. And indeed, Stevenson felt entranced by Paris, where he lived periodically in the 1870s. His stepson, Lloyd Osbourne, observed that ' France had a profound influence on Stevenson; mentally he was half a Frenchman; in taste, habits and prepossessions he was almost totally French. [He] was more really at home in France than anywhere else'. [21] It may be overstating the case to label Stevenson 'almost totally French', but Stevenson certainly admired writers like Flaubert and Balzac, and his exposure to the artistic environment in Paris convinced him to take up the life of a bohemian. [22] Elsewhere, moreover, especially in *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, Stevenson evinces a kind of fascination with the urban lighting his essay associates with Paris. His later, famous tale variously describes streets 'all lighted up as if for a procession', 'the great field of lamps of a nocturnal city', the 'wider labyrinths of lamplighted city', 'lamps, unshaken by any wind', 'lamps, which had never been extinguished', 'lamps glimmer[ing] like carbuncles', and 'lamplit streets'. [23] Phosphorescence here is the basis of shape, color, and mood, and it plays a central role in creating the novella's morbid atmosphere. It even informs the psychology of its characters, as when Utterson articulates his obsession with Hyde as 'a scroll of lighted pictures' in his mind (13)—a vivid prefiguration of cinema as a medium constructed around the notion of our modern obsession with illuminated images, frame by frame.

Benjamin shared Stevenson's interests, albeit a generation later. He mentions Stevenson's 'A Plea for Gas Lamps' two years after the publication of 'The Storyteller', in a glowing 1938 letter written to Theodor and Greta Adorno. [24] That same year, 1938, Benjamin referred to the Stevenson piece in his own essay 'The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire', where he likened Stevenson's reflections to Poe's 1840 short story 'The Man of the Crowd'. Poe's narrator in that story is an observer of London 'throng[s]'—'tribe[s] of clerks', 'the race of swell pick-pockets', 'gamblers', 'Jew pedlars', 'sturdy professional street beggars', 'feeble and ghastly invalids', and so forth. Crucially, this narrator is as sensitive to the atmosphere of his observations as he is to their objects; he pointedly notes how 'the rays of the gas-lamps. threw over every thing a fitful and garish lustre. All was dark yet splendid'. [25] Benjamin loved this tale, alluding to it several times in his *Arcades Project*. [26] In his later book on Baudelaire, Benjamin remarks that Poe's narrator 'lets it grow dark. He lingers over the city by gaslight' in a manner evocative of Baudelaire's idyllic *flâneur*. [27]

The significance of Stevenson's essay becomes apparent as we follow Benjamin's train of associations: Stevenson's 'A Plea for Gas Lamps' evokes Poe, who in turn elicits Baudelaire's *flâneur*. This in turn takes us back to Benjamin's reflections on storytelling and the alleged decay of experience, for Benjamin cast the *flâneur*, the peripatetic urban onlooker, as a figure akin to the modern-day storyteller. Although obviously distinct in superficial ways—the *flâneur* is an idle gazer rather than a *raconteur* —Benjamin situates each figure 'on the threshold' separating premodern, communal sensibilities from modern, alienated ones. [28] This is the same place where, in 'The Storyteller', we behold an eroding *sensus communis* even as we 'find a new beauty in what is vanishing'. For Benjamin, ours is a 'dialectical', 'messianic' position which stakes out a vantage point between two broadly historical moments: the *flâneur* 's casual gaze conjures images of small townships traversable on foot and digestible to everyday experience even as his locale, by contrast, is the present-day city, which is increasingly sprawling and opaque.

In a way—compellingly, in fact—Stevenson created a *flâneur* -type figure in David Balfour, the callow narrator-protagonist of *Kidnapped* and *Catriona*. The 'city' in these particular novels is less Edinburgh or Inveraray than Scotland itself, a significant portion of which David absorbs peripatetically even as he describes and symptomatically exhibits multiple ways in which the complexities and corruptions of modernizing Scotland bewilder and escape him. Douglas Gifford comments on the symptomatic quality of these Balfour novels, remarking that Stevenson self-consciously utilizes David's naïveté to criticise 'the corrupt legal system [and] the ubiquitous expediency and social hypocrisy [of] a debased modern Scotland '. [29] Stevenson's vivid (but, to David, opaque) characters in these texts—from the miserly Ebenezer, the dour Hoseason, and the fastidious Rankeillor to the calculating Prestongrange and the odious James More—resemble the motley crew of Poe's gas-illuminated city-dwellers. What is more, and as Berthold Schoene argues, the very figure of the *flâneur* itself has legs in Scottish fiction: Alan Warner provocatively resets this bewildered, ironic, peripatetic motif in his 2002 novel *The Man Who Walks*. [30] Warner refers liberally to Stevenson's *Kidnapped* ; the novel's protagonist even stumbles across a Hollywood production of the story.

Ultimately, it may be the radical difference of Warner's vision from Stevenson's—a vision now become apocalyptically postmodern, violently hip, and frantically dystopian—which actually confirms Benjamin's and, as he imagines it, Stevenson's point about experience. For Benjamin, especially, the decay of experience, that is, the hypertrophied distillation of our engagement of life into discrete units of overloaded sensation, is not a feature of either 'modernist' or 'postmodernist' culture, nor of nineteenth-century industrialization, nor even of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century secularization in the shift toward modern science. The decay of experience paradoxically—because holistically—encompasses all of these historical moments; the decline 'in value' and the perception of 'beauty in what is vanishing' are part of the same dialectical process. Modernity, Benjamin implies (by way of storytellers, *flâneurs*, gas lighting, and hence Stevenson), is the era of a long farewell, an indefinitely extended moment of our heightened experience of the decay of our experience.

Stevenson's 'A Plea for Gas Lamps' takes precisely this sort of extended view, albeit in miniature. Its readers vicariously gaze, *flâneur* -like, on a public space at once effulgent and eroding: the space, that is, of nineteenth-century Paris. As it turns out, Benjamin's *magnum opus*, *The Arcades Project*, essentially reproduced Stevenson's essay on a grander scale. In doing so, Benjamin cobbled together thousands of historical, aesthetic, and archaeological excerpts pertaining to nineteenth-century Paris. Benjamin refers in several instances to gas lighting (see, for instance, convolutes Q 1,4; R 2,2; S 2a,2; and all through convolute T). From these fragments, Benjamin crafts a mosaic of voices and perspectives from which he hopes to instill in his readers an appreciation of the ruinous nature of experience in modernity. At the same time, however, Benjamin wishes to impart an understanding of the modern forces responsible for this ruin, and to inspire an epiphany regarding the experience of fragmentation which alienated human subjects increasingly share. [31] He took his cue here from Marx and Engels, who, in *The German Ideology*, insisted that the dynamics of alienation inspired rather than suppressed the likelihood of revolution. More specifically, Marx and Engels argued that industrialization etiolates social bonds, fragmenting collective units into composites of discrete individuals. However, Marx and Engels claim, 'only by this fact' of alienation are these modern subjects 'put into a position to enter into relation with one another *as individuals* '. [32] The effect is one of dialectical reversal: once alienation becomes 'universalized', collectivity again prevails. But this time, predicated on the mutual experience of alienation, it attends the heightened self-consciousness of its subjects. This consciousness—this 'enlightenment'—putatively separates solidarity in an advanced egalitarian society from mere self-sameness in a primitive one. Only in this 'late' stage of self-awareness, presumably, is revolution—or, for Benjamin, the fullest experience—possible.

It was this sort of enlightened consciousness which Benjamin hoped to instill in his readers, for whom understanding the mass of fragments in *The Arcades Project* would require a Herculean interpretive effort. The difficulty of such a feat presumably rivals that of assembling all the loose and ludic threads of Joyce's *Ulysses* or *Finnegans Wake*. One key difference between Joyce and Benjamin, however, is that Benjamin did not imagine that only the grandest, most complex artifacts of high modernist culture required such perspicuity, his own *Arcades Project* included; indeed, even a ritual as folksy and (purportedly) endangered as storytelling required similar interpretive acumen. In our modern era, Benjamin believed, we must have an eye for the (displaced) *form* of storytelling even as we rediscover an ear for the tales themselves; such criticism alone merits the title of dialectical (or, later, for Stuart Hall and Raymond Williams, cultural) materialism. This sort of heightened and multi-mediated sensibility—this acuteness of vision and hearing—would presumably restore a measure of fullness to the quality of our experience. In Benjamin's mind, Stevenson was one of a select group of storytellers most capable of inspiring this experience in us.

This does not mean that Stevenson perceived either the problem or the redemption of experience in quite the same way as his later admirer. Indeed, their visions of experience delineate similar rather than strictly identical perspectives. One conviction they definitely shared concerned the lamentable reduction of experience to sensation. Benjamin, as we have discussed, believed that the constriction of experience to sensation followed from the logic of science. Stevenson, for his part, speaks to this issue in his dialogue with Henry James on the nature of literature. James defined the novel as 'a direct impression of life' in a way which conjures Hume's sensationist model of cognition: 'Experience is never limited, and it is never complete; it is an immense sensibility, a kind of huge spiderweb of the finest silken threads suspended in the chamber of consciousness, and catching every airborne particle in its tissue'. [33] While Stevenson greatly respected James, he held to a different aesthetic principle: rather than fixating on 'the welter of impressions', writers of fiction should pursue 'an independent and creative' trajectory akin to geometry. [34] Literature should be something other than life in its rawest, mimetic form. However, it was precisely this ideal which separated Stevenson from Benjamin. As I discuss in the longer piece from which this essay is taken, Stevenson held faster than Benjamin (or at least with less inner conflict) to a notion of literary transcendence, of literature in 'its immeasurable difference from life', and hence (in Benjamin's view), to 'inner' experience, or *Erlebnis*. [35]

And yet, despite these apparent differences, Benjamin discerned a more encompassing, holistic, or storytelling impulse at work in Stevenson's writing—something more akin to *Erfahrung*. True, Stevenson's belief in literary transcendence (a notion shared with other modern critics of experience, like Wilhelm Dilthey [36]) may strike us as naïve beside Benjamin's more sweeping and penetrating reflections on the problem. Still, we might recall Adorno's affectionate remarks concerning Benjamin's similarly romantic tendencies: 'instead of rejecting the promises of fairy tales and children's books. [Benjamin] took them so literally that real fulfillment was now within sight of knowledge'. [37] Stevenson and Benjamin thus shared a profound intellectual kinship in their inherent optimism, a oneness of spirit rendered all the more compelling given their differences of nationality, era, and literary background. And, in this spirit, Benjamin probably would have preferred Frank Swinnerton's Stevenson—the Stevenson of the so-called 'second class' of writers, the disregarded or overlooked Stevenson—to the cagey, urbane, and now, in our era, newly-fashionable man of letters. This is because Benjamin's Stevenson provided an alternative to the hegemonies and fashions of modern thought, including the changing tastes from which Swinnerton's dismissal of Stevenson was born. As Benjamin would have it, Stevenson's fate was most powerful if uncoupled from high modernism and linked instead to the forgotten class of the storyteller, a figure whose critical significance depended on his partial disappearance from view.

NOTES

I express my gratitude to the University of Pennsylvania Press for its permission to republish short excerpts of my book. Equal thanks are due to John Corbett for organizing the MLA session which generated the various essays in this cluster.

[1] For an overview of Stevenson's reputation among his contemporaries, see Paul Maixner, ed., *Robert Louis Stevenson: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge, 1981).
[2] Consider, for instance, a short list of books which have appeared in the past five years: Julia Reid, *Robert Louis Stevenson, Science, and the Fin de Siècle* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), Richard Ambrosini and Richard Dury, eds. *Robert Louis Stevenson: A Writer of Boundaries* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), Barry Menikoff, *Narrating Scotland: The Imagination of Robert Louis Stevenson* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2005), Ann C. Colley, *Robert Louis Stevenson and the Colonial Imagination* (Aldershot,

Hampshire: Ashgate, 2004), William Gray, *Robert Louis Stevenson: A Literary Life* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), and William B. Jones, ed. *Robert Louis Stevenson Reconsidered: New Critical Perspectives* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 2003).

[3] See 'Frank Swinnerton on Stevenson as a Writer of the Second Class' in Maixner, *Robert Louis Stevenson*, 507-10.

[4] A short list of such Scottish writers would include Elizabeth Hamilton, Jane Porter, Mary Brunton, and Susan Ferrier, as well as authors who are now slightly better known, like Anne Grant and Margaret Oliphant. The grand scholarly corrective of this historical oversight is, of course, *A History of Scottish Women's Writing*, ed. Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997). See especially chapters 11 and 12: 'The Other Great Unknowns: Women Fiction Writers of the Early Nineteenth Century', by Carol Anderson and Aileen M. Riddell, and 'Rediscovering Scottish Women's Fiction in the Nineteenth Century', by Moira Burgess.

[5] Alan Liu perceives an insidious thread not only connecting but also reducing 'history' to 'information' in the present age. See *The Laws of Cool: Knowledge Work and the Culture of Information* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), esp. pp. 14-72.

[6] See *The Ruins of Experience: Scotland's "Romantick" Highlands and the Birth of the Modern Witness* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007). For a study of experience that provides less of a narrative than a wide-ranging catalogue, see Martin Jay, *Songs of Experience: Modern American and European Variations on a Universal Theme* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005).

[7] 'On the Program of the Coming Philosophy', trans. Mark Ritter, *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, ed. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings, 4 vols. 1: 101 (100-110). Subsequent references will be cited in the text.

[8] Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. Ernest C. Mossner (London: Penguin, 1984), 44. 300.

[9] Dear, *Discipline and Experience: The Mathematical Way in the Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 4.

[10] In *The Ruins of Experience*, I focus most directly on the division in modern jurisprudence between witnesses and jurors as those, respectively, who 'experience' events and those who 'know' these events based on probabilistic inferences derived from witness testimony. The attendant oppositions in the fields of science, art, religion, and others are in some ways most legible from that evidential vantage-point if for no other reason than 'evidence' is how our modern world processes the question of 'truth'. See especially ch. 1.

[11] On the complications of reducing experience to ideology, see the rejoinder made by Raymond Williams to the theory of Louis Althusser in Williams, *Politics and Letters: Interviews with the New Left Review* (London: NLB, 1979), 168-72. See also my discussion of this debate in *The Ruins of Experience*, 10-11.

[12] On the rhetoric of 'hot' and 'cool' media, see especially McLuhan, *Understanding Media: the Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964).

[13] 'The Storyteller', trans. Harry Zohn, *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, 3: 143-44. Subsequent references will be cited in the text.

[14] Benjamin elicits this type of transcendental, epistemological experience in 'On the Program of the Coming Philosophy'. He called this 'metaphysical' experience, arguing that '[t]o say that knowledge is metaphysical means in the strict sense: it is related via the original concept of knowledge to the concrete totality of experience—that is, to *existence* ' taken as a whole (110, Benjamin's emphasis).

[15] For more on the difference between *Erfahrung* and *Erlebnis*, see Jay, *Songs of Experience*, chs. 2, 3. and 6.

[16] For an extended and rigorous critique of aesthetic experience as *Erlebnis*, see Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. revised by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Continuum, 1998), esp. pp. 1-169.

[17] Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1999), 475. Subsequent references will be cited in the text.

[18] On the dynamics of dialectical images in Benjamin, see Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1989). On the specifically religious quality of these images—specifically, their implication in Benjamin's understanding of the Kaballah—see Vincent P. Pecora, *Secularization and Cultural Criticism: Religion, Nation, and Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), ch. 2.

[19] I am referring here to *The Ruins of Experience*, chapters 1 and 2.

[20] 'A Plea for Gas Lamps', *"Virginibus Puerisque" and Other Papers: Memories and Portraits* (New York: Standard Book Company, 1930), 150-52.

[21] Quoted in Frank McLynn, *Robert Louis Stevenson: A Biography* (New York: Random House, 1993), 96.

[22] See McLynn, *Robert Louis Stevenson*, 97-98. See also Philip Callow's lyrical and *flâneur* -like description of Stevenson's love for Paris: 'On the verge of falling in love with Paris at first sight, seeing the brilliant posters pasted on round pillars, hearing the shouts of glaziers and grocers as he walked the streets, wandering through the village that was rural Montmartre with its trees, vineyards, windmills, and panoramic views, [Stevenson] was overwhelmed by the color on all sides-swarms of soldiers everywhere in red trousers-and by the sheer pace of it all; masons at work on their huge lumps of stone and buildings rising on all sides'. Etc. *Louis: A Life of Robert Louis Stevenson* (London: Constable, 2001), 61. Of special interest is a biography of Stevenson which preceded Benjamin's stated interest in him, Rosaline Masson's 1923 *The Life of Robert Louis Stevenson* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes), which quotes from Stevenson letters and other

sources on Stevenson's love for Paris. See especially Ch. 4: 'R. L. S.: "New Artist of First Promise"'.

[23] Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, and Other Tales of Terror*, ed. Robert Mighall (London: Penguin, 2002), 7, 13, 14, 23, 28, 64. Subsequent references will be cited in the text.

[24] See Benjamin's letter of August 28, 1938, trans. Nicholas Walker, *Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin: The Complete Correspondence, 1928-1940*, ed. Henri Lonitz (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 273-74.

[25] 'The Man of the Crowd' in *Edgar Allan Poe: Tales and Sketches*, 2 vols., ed. Thomas Ollive Mabbott (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1978), 1: 505-17 (508-09).

[26] See especially Convolute M, 'The Flâneur', specifically M 12a,2; M 12a,3; M 14,1; M 15a,2; passim.

[27] Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire : A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*, trans. Harry Zohn (London and New York: Verso, 1997), 50.

[28] Benjamin, ' Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth Century', trans. Howard Eiland. In *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, 3: 39.

[29] Gifford, 'Stevenson and Scottish Fiction: The Importance of *The Master of Ballantrae* ', in Jenni Calder, ed. *Stevenson and Victorian Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981 [62-87]), 67.

[30] 'The Walking Cure: *Heimat*, Masculinity and Mobile Narration in Alan Warner's *The Man Who Walks* ', *Scottish Studies Review* 7:1, 2006.

[31] Adorno remarks that Benjamin 'never wavered in his fundamental conviction that the smallest cell of observed reality offsets the rest of the world. To interpret phenomena materialistically meant for him not so much to elucidate them as products of the social whole but rather to relate them directly, in their isolated singularity, to material tendencies and social struggles'. 'A Portrait of Walter Benjamin', *Prisms*, trans. by Samuel and Shierry Weber (Cambridge: MIT, 1981), 236.

[32]*The German Ideology*, trans. unnamed, ed. C. J. Arthur (New York: International Publishers, 1970), 92, authors' emphasis.

[33] James, 'The Art of Fiction', in *The Art of Criticism: Henry James on the Theory and the Practice of Fiction*, ed. William Veeder and Susan M. Griffin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 170, 172.

[34] Stevenson, 'A Humble Remonstrance', in *R. L. Stevenson on Fiction: An Anthology of Literary and Critical Essays*, ed. Glenda Norquay (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 85.

[35] 'A Humble Remonstrance', 85. I am grateful to Scott Hames for reminding me of the pertinence of Stevenson's dialogue with James to the issue of experience.

[36] See, for instance, Dilthey's extended celebrations of literature's difference from and transcendence of quotidian reality in *Poetry and Experience*.

[37] Adorno, 'A Portrait of Walter Benjamin', 230.

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Press-ganging Scottish Literature?
Kidnapped and the City Of Literature's One Book, One Edinburgh project [1]

John Corbett

In 2004, following a campaign orchestrated by activists from the literary and arts industries in Scotland,[2] UNESCO recognised Edinburgh as its first designated 'City of Literature'. This acknowledgement pioneered UNESCO's establishment of a category of 'Creative Cities' (Cities of Cinema, Music, Folk Art, Design, Media Arts and Gastronomy are planned; see the 'Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity' homepage at http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en). In the wake of UNESCO's recognition, which takes the form of an institutional endorsement rather than a financial dowry, a charitable trust was established to promote Edinburgh as 'UNESCO City of Literature' (http://www.cityofliterature.com/). The trust comprises of two full-time employees and a steering group that sets policy. The trust has had several managers in its brief history, and the steering group consists of academics, arts administrators, booksellers, librarians and even a professional writer, Ian Rankin. In its early days, this trust has had to find a niche for itself and compete for public and private funding amongst the other national and regional bodies promoting the arts, and literature in particular, in Scotland. Rival bodies include the Association for Scottish Literary Studies, the Scottish Poetry Library, the Edinburgh Writers' Museum – all core or part-funded by the Scottish Arts Council, a quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisation that distributes public funding for the arts. The Edinburgh City of Literature (ECOL) project has come into being at a time when the status of the Scottish Arts Council is also in question: a report commissioned by the Scottish Executive recommended that it be transformed into a new body.[3] Although the process of transformation is not quite what the review ordered, the Scottish Arts Council is shortly to become 'Creative Scotland', and while this metamorphosis promises increased funding for literary activity, it is unclear how this promised largesse will be prioritised or distributed. Even so, in its first years the nascent ECOL project brought the prestigious International Man Booker literary prize ceremony to Edinburgh, and in February 2007 it launched its first major participatory event: a city-wide reading campaign based on Robert Louis Stevenson's *Kidnapped.*

Mass reading campaigns are not new. The promotional literature for the *Kidnapped* event points to the success of Chicago's reading campaign around *To Kill a Mockingbird* in 2001, and Bristol's campaign around another Stevenson novel, *Treasure Island* in 2003. These have become annual events, despite initial reservations about the focus of the reading campaign in Bristol, given the tenuous link between Stevenson and that city, which he never visited. [4] 'Creative Bristol' followed Stevenson's tale of 'treachery, pirates and rum' with 3-month reading campaigns based on *The Day of the Triffids* in 2004, Helen Dunmore's *The Siege* in 2005, and Jules Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days* in 2006. In 2007, Bristol joined Glasgow, Liverpool and Hull, three other cities with historic involvement in the slave trade, and from 11 January to 31 March ran a project centred on Andrea Levy's *Small Island*. The four-centre project resulted in 'the largest mass-reading project to have taken place in Britain', and 13 000 copies of the novel were distributed to Glasgow libraries, alongside readers' guides and supplementary texts (http://www.smallislandread.com/downloads/small_island_evaluation.pdf).

Edinburgh City of Literature's *One Book, One Edinburgh* campaign followed the pattern of its models by distributing free copies of several versions of the chosen text:

- 10 000 copies of Barry Menikoff's edition of the text, with a new foreword by author Louise Welsh, published in paperback by Canongate
- 7500 copies of a 'simplified retold edition' for younger readers, published in conjunction with the Russell Trust
- 7500 copies of a graphic novel based on Stevenson's text, written by Alan Grant and illustrated by Cam Kennedy, both of whom have worked on the *Judge Dredd, Batman* and *Star Wars* comics. Available separately for purchase was a Scots language version of the graphic novel – *Kidnappit* – adapted by Matthew Fitt.

The expressed hope of the City of Literature campaign was that the free distribution of these texts will act as a catalyst to 'get as many Edinburgh citizens as possible reading the same book […] on their own initiative, or through libraries, schools, reading groups and adult literacy classes' (ECOL promotional literature). If successful, the intention is that the campaign will serve as a precedent for further projects involving other Scottish locations; it may be that ECOL is sensitive to the charge that it is too Edinburgh-oriented, given that its proposal to UNESCO stresses outreach activities:

> [The principal gesture that Edinburgh wishes to make] centres on a wish to offer other cities and other nations the hand of friendship in a particular way. We offer a simple

> model for nurturing the human achievement that derives from literature and the life around books.[5]

The notion of *cities* of literature and the promise of *nations* of literature invite the alignment of literary and tourism studies. The 'City of Literature' criteria listed on the UNESCO website include, after all, 'an urban panorama in which literature, drama and/or poetry play an integral role'. The ECOL campaign, like its predecessors, attempts to marshal the reading practices of a citizenry and urges each literate citizen to identify with a specific text – at least for a set period, in this case a month. Edinburgh's so far unique configuration of text, city and national literature raises obvious questions of canonicity and identity, but it also prompts us to revisit the issue of what reading a novel involves and how the process of reading might be studied. A framework for the latter questions can be imported from recent developments in tourism studies. John Urry discusses the way in which tourism turns land, a potential site of agricultural exploitation or perilous navigation, into land*scape* through a process of visual consumption.[6] Urry further distinguishes different kinds of tourist gaze that may be directed towards the landscape of choice.[7] Those most relevant to literary tourism are:

- the 'most powerful' *romantic* gaze, which assumes individual or intimate engagement, and results in a 'semi-spiritual relationship with the object'
- the *collective* gaze, which involves large-scale consumption of the object, and may give a sense of occasion, even carnival
- the *spectatorial* gaze, which involves fleeting glances, 'such as from a tourist bus window'[8]
- the *reverential* gaze that involves intense, spiritual consumption of an object with sacred significance
- the *anthropological* gaze, in which the activity of looking is embedded into 'a historical array of meanings and symbols', sometimes with the support of a tourist guide.
- the *mediatised* gaze, which is another collective activity, in which tourists direct their attention to sites made famous by media events, such as the locations for Hollywood films. In his discussion of the mediatised gaze, John Urry cites a visitor exclaiming at the prospect of Victoria Falls: 'Wow, that is *so* postcard.'[9]

There is always a danger in setting up a taxonomy such as Urry's; boundaries between categories can be fuzzy. The anthropological and mediatised gaze can overlap considerably, for example, particularly in the case of literary tourism. Education packs, public lectures, and historical commentary can help situate the tourist gaze within a fact-based 'array of meanings and symbols'. But a very similar activity can also be mediatised, or based on fictions rather than fact, as when tourists in Paris navigate its sites and construct meanings and symbols not with the help of a Baedeker but with a copy of Dan Brown's novel *The Da Vinci Code.* Despite the overlaps between categories, however, Urry's framework remains usefully provocative for several reasons. First of all, and most obviously, it helps us to analyse the discourse of the ECOL project as marketing discourse that promotes certain kinds of consumption of place (in this case, Scotland, and, in particular, Edinburgh). Secondly, if we map Urry's categories of gaze onto different ways of reading, we can account more comprehensively for the kinds of literary activity that were shaped by the *Kidnapped* campaign. Finally, the focus on gaze and the sentiments it may inspire (romantic identification, reverence, concern for survival) leads us back to the novel itself – and to the kinds of engagements its characters have with the landscape of Scotland.

February is an auspicious month for literary carnival; the *Kidnapped* campaign mapped onto carnival proper, with Shrove Tuesday falling on 20th February, and it duly reached its climax on 1st March, 'World Book Day', thus completing a narrative arc of individual - book group - city - nation - planet. The type of gaze that the ECOL project is clearly keenest to provoke is the *collective* gaze; the free distribution of 25 000 free texts, supplemented by the commercial availability of others in attractive formats, is obviously intended to cross markets: adult, teenager, child; from middle-brow book group to graphic novel collectors. The chosen text has to bear the weight of the normative expectations of each group, and, as ECOL's promotional material states, *Kidnapped* ticks the required boxes: 'a tale of low skulduggery and high adventure, [it] is a great read that appeals to both children and adults alike, and with the free and special versions prepared for this event it will also be one that is impossible to miss'. The ECOL promotional pamphlets listed the kind of events that are intended expressly to invite the consumption of Edinburgh as a literary landscape:

- *The Kidnapped Walking Trail* in conjunction with Edinburgh World Heritage Trust
- *Stevenson Holdings* citywide participation by museums and galleries displaying their Stevenson holdings
- *VisitScotland* collaboration to promote Scotland and our literary culture through our citywide reading campaign.

Each of these events involves physical presence (which may of course be facilitated by the tourist agency, VisitScotland) and the act of looking. The inclusion of a walking trail is noteworthy; David Balfour and Alan Breck Stewart, after all, spend little time in Edinburgh itself. The House of Shaws is in Cramond; the brig *The Covenant* is moored in Queensferry, home of the lawyer, Mr Rankeillor. There are few episodes in the novel that call for a descriptive evocation of the picturesque Old Town, or any that allow city centre tourists to walk in the footsteps of David and Alan – save for a final scene in which David heads for the British Linen Bank via the Grassmarket.

The Edinburgh World Heritage Trust therefore devised a walking trail – printed as part of a *One Book, One Edinburgh* promotional pamphlet – of ten locations associated with Stevenson: from his childhood home in Heriot Row to St Giles Cathedral, where tourists can gaze on ‘a plaque in Stevenson’s memory’. The descriptions of all the ten stops on the walking trail are in three parts: a statement of the link with Stevenson’s biography, a quote from the man himself, and a general observation of greater or indeed lesser relevance to Stevenson’s life and work. Typical is the entry for Advocate’s Close:

> Stevenson founded a secret society, with meetings held in a pub in Advocate’s Close. The motto? ‘Disregard everything our parents ever taught us’.
>
> ‘…You look down an alley and see ships tacking for the Baltic.’ – RLS
>
> *The Old Town of Edinburgh, with its tall tenements or lands was the first place in the world where people lived in buildings up to 14 floors high.*
>
> (Walking Trail, devised by Edinburgh World Heritage, 2007)

At a glance such a text – with its abrupt jump in topics from secret society, to ships heading for the Baltic, to the architecture of Old Town Edinburgh – seems scarcely coherent. However, its coherence is guaranteed by the consistency of its function of fostering, via a romantic gaze, a ‘semi-spiritual’ identification between tourist, location, author and text: the walker gazes at a pub where our rebellious author formed a secret society; the vista down the alley puts the walker in Stevenson’s very footsteps and merges the gaze of tourist and author; as the gaze is directed upwards, the height of the buildings recalls the descriptive lines in the conclusion of *Kidnapped:* ‘The huge height of the buildings, running up to ten and fifteen storeys, the narrow arched entries that continually vomited passengers…’

Further visual pleasures available during the month-long reading campaign included exhibitions of some of the many illustrations of Stevenson’s work, offered up to the collective gaze in galleries and museums. Such displays invite a collective version of the kind of romantic gaze that the individual walker might indulge in at Advocate’s Close, or even that which a solitary and appreciative reader of one of the graphic novels might enjoy. Associated with the visual arts is also the participation by cinemas which offered ‘screenings of versions of Kidnapped and other Stevenson films’, thus allowing for another opportunity for the collective gazing at cultural products, and also a *mediatised* gaze, as one might take a trip across the Forth to the National Trust cottages in Culross where at least one version of *Kidnapped* was filmed. For another recent television version, of course, the literary tourist would have to visit New Zealand.

The gazes described above may intertwine and transform, one into the other: the walking trail, for example, might involve an individual, romantic gaze or a carnivalesque, collective gaze. If done in a hurry, it might allow for only fleeting, spectatorial glances at sites whose significance is discursively constructed by the trail guide, which thus facilitates an anthropological gaze. After such exertion, we may return to a solitary engagement with the text.

Of course the text itself can be subject to a plurality of gazes. *Kidnapped* is a shrewd, even obvious, choice for a Scottish literary campaign, despite the relatively few scenes set in the capital city itself. The theme of Lowland/Highland partnership across the barriers of history, politics, ethnicity and language has a strong appeal to tourist ideologies that are conventionally driven to present nation-states as unified organisms.[10] Moreover, landscape is crucial to *Kidnapped* – Stevenson himself, after all, lamented that the first American edition lacked the map that he deemed essential to all his novels, and Menikoff's edition comes equipped with a useful gazetteer.[11] In turn, Stevenson is stamped on the landscape of Edinburgh and its environs. The two-volume presentation made by the City of Literature project team to UNESCO describes the author as 'Edinburgh's Robert Louis Stevenson' before going on to state that:

> Stevenson's family background in Edinburgh gave him an acute sense of Scotland's heritage, while his genius was matured by the foreign travel necessary for his health.
>
> In his youth, he knew his native city and its sharp social contrasts intimately, savouring the differences between the Old and New towns, the richer and poorer areas, the urban centre and the rural environs, all recorded in *Edinburgh, Picturesque Notes.* […]
>
> Stevenson is commemorated in Edinburgh by public memorials in Princes Street Gardens and the High Kirk of St Giles. Stevenson's Edinburgh homes are marked with plaques and there is a permanent collection and display on Stevenson at the Writers' Museum. The names of seventeen residential streets have been taken from Stevenson's novel *Kidnapped* in an area associated with the novel. In addition, sites in **France, USA** and **Samoa** where Stevenson lived and visited now host museums and memorials to this writer who has captured the imaginations of millions of people.[12]

In this pitch to UNESCO, Stevenson is constructed as a man for all communities – rich, poor; urban, rural; old, new; adult, child; domestic, foreign. He is a man whom his city honours and whose literary work has now even given names to the urban landscape from which it drew some of its inspiration. The all-inclusiveness of Stevenson positions him as an author whose work can act as a locus for a plurality of literary and tourist gazes, all of which are again encouraged by the *One Book, One Edinburgh* reading campaign.

Ultimately, of course, the individual is expected to sit down and engage in an individual communion with the text: the *romantic* gaze is the holy grail of the reading campaign. Free copies of the text distributed through schools and libraries remove the possible barriers of finance and accessibility that might hinder this intense, subjective gaze. Literacy projects for reluctant readers, libraries' commitment to providing braille and audio versions of the story and those reading activities 'focussed on social inclusion' all aim to broaden the range of social groups who can and will sit down and read *Kidnapped.* There is an idealism at work here: the promotional material shows two casually-dressed, pretty young women sitting on grassy parkland, books in hand, reading and smiling. One of the books is the hardback edition of James Meek's *The People's Act of Love;* while the two women may be talking to each other about their respective novels, the literary experience is at heart a solitary, subjective one. The implication is that Edinburgh, drug capital of Europe, will be weaned off crack cocaine and heroin, and instead be characterised by thousands of individual literary subjectivities that can then become the currency of everyday talk amongst its population and of course its visitors. Read *Kidnapped* in the Princes Street Gardens and you become *de facto* an honorary citizen of the republic of letters.

Other ECOL events targeted the *anthropological* gaze, putting individual readings of *Kidnapped* into interpretive contexts by commissioning literary critical material targeted at different educational levels and groups:

- Education packs for primary and high school curriculum use
- Public lectures in conjunction with the National Library of Scotland
- Reading group guides
- The formation of 'Stevenson groups', in collaboration with scholarly journals and special interest groups like the Stevenson Society
- A 'book crossing' campaign, whereby a number of labelled copies were left in public spaces, to be picked up, read, and passed on

Such events inevitably impact on the individual's reading experience: those who come to the novel via the cinema versions or even the graphic novel must find their gaze *mediatised;* those who glance through a labelled copy left lying in a public space as a result of the 'book crossing' element of the campaign might experience a *spectatorial* literary gaze by skimming for gist before deciding whether or not to continue reading.

Edinburgh's promotion of a carnival of gazing may seem ironic given that Henry James comment that Stevenson's style in *Catriona* 'subjects my visual sense, my *seeing* imagination, to an almost painful under-feeding'.[13] Stevenson played down his descriptive intentions in both novels with the rejoinder 'Death to the optic nerve', and he claimed to have deliberately avoided descriptive prose in favour of the 'portrayal of [the characters'] emotions roused by […] external conditions'.[14] Even so, Menikoff and McCracken-Flesher, in their editions of *Kidnapped* and *Catriona* respectively, argue that Stevenson makes extensive use of visual, descriptive passages in both novels, but that his use of descriptive passages is essentially modern in that they serve not only to evoke landscape but also to indicate the developing emotional state of the protagonist.

In *Kidnapped,* we see the Scottish landscape through David's initially unappreciative eyes. Indeed, David Balfour's character, and, through identification, the character of the reader, are shaped by his sentimental education as a reluctant tourist. David's father's death occasions his two-day walking tour to Cramond and the House of Shaws, stopping only briefly to take in the panoramic vista of the City of Literature:

> On the forenoon of the second day, coming to the top of a hill, I saw all the country fall away before me, down to the sea; and in the midst of this descent, on a long ridge, the city of Edinburgh smoking like a kiln. There was a flag upon the castle, and ships moving or lying anchored in the firth; both of which, as far away as they were, I could distinguish clearly, and both brought my country heart into my mouth. (p. 17)

The semi-spiritual response of the country boy to his first view of the capital city qualifies this as an example of Urry's 'romantic gaze'; however, it is shortly countered by the sobering and perhaps even more affecting prospect of the House of Shaws, a sight whose meaning is contextualised by the encounter with Jennet Clouston. Like a parody of a tourist guide, she embeds what David sees in a historical set of circumstances whose significance to him is as yet opaque:

> The woman's face lit up with malignant anger. "That is the house of Shaws!" she cried. "Blood built it; blood stopped the building of it; blood shall bring it down." (p.19)

At the House of Shaws, David then experiences what might be termed the worst of Scottish hospitality. The building is an unfinished, gloomy, Gothic pile, David's room turns out to be damp, mouldy and spider-ridden, and the host serves him a parsimonious and unrelenting diet of porridge and small beer before attempting to murder him. He is next press-ganged into service aboard the *Covenant* under Captain Hoseason (coincidentally, Hoseasons is now one of the UK's major self-catering holiday operators, offering 'boating holidays on the beautiful waterways of Britain and France': www.hoseasons.co.uk). After being washed overboard, David experiences the Highlands directly, first on the small island of Earraid, where he is sickened by the seafood, and then, on the flight across the heather from Mull, via Appin, back to Queensferry and finally Edinburgh. As Christopher MacLachlan notes in his recent study guide for younger readers:

> Despite the ordeal of their journey, Alan and David do have moments of enjoyment among the moors and the mountains. They camp out, fish for trout, cook for

> themselves, tramp through the heather, spot deer and eagles, and generally do most of the things that modern hill-walkers do nowadays. It is easy to believe that what Stevenson is describing are his own experiences when travelling through the Highlands, and by his time that of course was something for tourists and holidaymakers. For the reader, if not exactly for the characters, the flight in the heather is like an adventure holiday, a strenuous and energetic hike across country in which you get close to nature and pit your wits, and your muscles, against her. For the reader in a comfortable armchair the hardships of the characters' journey across Scotland has the romantic appeal which has become the normal way of thinking of the Highlands since Queen Victoria and Prince Albert made Highland holidays fashionable.[15]

The tourist gaze of reader and main character diverge, as MacLachlan shrewdly points out, and one of the narrative arcs of the tale shows how David's 'country heart' and lowland eye are matured by his experiences into an appreciation of the Scottish highlands, a landscape he initially views as a depopulated wasteland:

> The mountains on either side were high, rough and barren, very black and gloomy in the shadow of the clouds, but all silver-laced with little water-courses where the sun shone upon them. It seemed a hard country, this of Appin, for people to care as much about as Alan did. (p. 145)

And again:

> The mist rose and died away, and showed us the country lying as waste as the sea; only the moorfowl and the peewees crying upon it, and far over to the east, a herd of deer moving like dots. Much of it was under heather; much of the rest broken up with hags and bogs and peaty pools; some had been burned black in a heath fire; and in another place, there was quite a forest of dead firs, standing like skeletons. A wearier looking desert, man never saw; but at least it was clear of troops, which was our point. (p. 193)

The latter description in particular recalls in some respects the kind of Scottish Tourist Board poster that McCrone, Morris and Keily discuss in their analysis of promotional images – scenic but barren mountains from which any signs of human life and past industry have been airbrushed out. The Scottish tourist industry is careful to present landscape as an unpopulated wilderness; this is certainly the way David sees it, but there is a clear tonal difference. While the tourist board images present the wilderness as a locus for a romantic gaze, David sees it as a site of desolation. It is his subsequent flight across the heather – or reluctant tour of the Highlands – that will afford him a set of experiences that will transform the way he gazes at the landscape.

To begin with, the hospitality that David receives from the Highlanders is in stark contrast to that offered by his kinsman, Ebenezer. A cottar family on Mull illustrates the point:

> The good woman set oat-bread before me and a cold grouse, patting my shoulder and smiling to me all the time, for she had no English; and the old gentleman (not to be behind) brewed me strong punch out of their country spirit. All the while I was eating, and after that when I was drinking the punch, I could scarce believe in my good fortune; and the house, though it was thick with the peat-smoke and as full of holes as a colander, seemed like a palace. (p. 127)

A more obvious factor in the transformation of David's perception of his environment is the central friendship that is struck up between David and Alan Breck Stewart, a friendship that endures through differences in background, politics and outlook, through quarrels and separation, and through David's reliance on his companion to see him through his illness. When, in the end, Alan delivers David to his lowland home, to take up his rightful place in society, the hero finds himself at last in the heart of the capital city, on his way to the British Linen Bank:

> It was coming near noon when I passed in by the West Kirk and the Grassmarket into the streets of the capital. The huge height of the buildings, running up to ten and fifteen storeys, the narrow arched entries that continually vomited passengers, the wares of the merchants in their windows, the hubbub and endless stir; the foul smells and the fine clothes, and a hundred other particulars too small to mention, struck me into a kind of stupor of surprise, so that I let the crowd carry me to and fro; and yet all the time what I was thinking of was Alan at Rest-and-be-Thankful [a steep point on Corstorphine Hill to the east of Edinburgh]; and all the time (although you would think I would not choose but be delighted with these braws and novelties) there was a cold gnawing in my inside like a remorse for something wrong. (pp. 276-277)

David is a traveller who consistently resists the romantic, consuming tourist gaze. When he looks upon the grandeur of Highland scenery, he sees desolation and poverty; his travels are a hard experience leavened by hospitality and a developing respect for and friendship with the Highland Other that can only be poignantly heightened by being set in contrast with family betrayal. Consequently when he comes at last to look upon the delights of the capital city, he feels dissatisfied with the evident liveliness and conspicuous wealth that so contrast with Highland poverty. David has learned to look beyond mere landscape and cityscape; he has become entwined into the mesh of human relationships that tie the individual to a place.

The analogy between different categories of tourist and literary gaze attempted in this article serves to bring different discourses into focus. Events like the *One Book, One Edinburgh* campaign prompts us to ask what it means to read a text individually and collectively, for private pleasure or for broader education, and how versions of a text interconnect with each other and with other cultural media, such as oral storytelling, visual art and film. We are prompted to ask what we talk about when we talk about literature – in book groups, in the classroom, on a park bench – and why. And we are prompted to ask how the tourist experience is embedded into the text chosen to represent the city. If *Kidnapped* represents David Balfour's forced induction into tourism and the positive potential of hospitality, then one can only hope that below the 'hubbub and endless stir' of Edinburgh's first UNESCO-sanctioned literary carnival, the participating readers – the passing tourists, longer-term sojourners, their hosts, and vicarious onlookers (whether engaged in solitary or collective activities) – found similarly enduring values to celebrate.

NOTES

[1] I am grateful to Ali Bowden of the City of Literature project for her time and cooperation during the research for this article, and to Caroline McCracken-Flesher and Alison Phipps for their constructive comments on an early draft.

[2] Namely, James Boyle, then Chairman of the Scottish Arts Council; Jenny Brown, a literary agent and at the time the Manager of the City of Literature project; Lorraine Fannin, Director of the Scottish Publishers' Association; and Catherine Lockerbie, Director of the Edinburgh International Book Festival, and Martyn Wade, National Librarian of the National Library of Scotland.

[3] See *Review of Culture in Scotland – Final Report of the Cultural Commission, June 2005* http://www.scotland.gov.uk/publications/2005/09/0191729/17302] Section 4.5.

[4] Kelly, Melanie *Small Island Read 2007* Evaluation Report. (Bristol Cultural Development Partnership, 2007) http://www.smallislandread.com/downloads/small_island_evaluation.pdf.

[5] Boyle, James, Jenny Brown, Lorraine Fannin and Catherine Lockerbie *We Cultivate Literature on a Little Oatmeal… An Introduction to Edinburgh as World City of Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh World City of Literature Trust, 2004), p.70.

[6] See his book *Consuming Places* (London: Routledge, 1995) and article 'The "Consuming" of Place' in *Discourse, Communication and Tourism* ed. Adam Jarowski and Annette Pritchard (Cleveden: Channel View, 2005), pp.19-27.

[7] Urry, 'The "Consuming" of Place', pp.21-22.

[8] Urry, *Consuming Places*, p.191.

[9] Urry, ‘The “Consuming” of Place’, p19, quoting P. Osborne (2000) *Travelling Light: Photography, Travel and Visual Culture* Manchester: Manchester University Press, p. 79.

[10] Prieto Arranz, J.I. ‘Two Markets, Two Scotlands? Gender and Race in STB’s “Othered” Scottishness’ *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 2:1, pp.1-23.

[11] Menikoff, ed. pp 325-334. On p. 325 Menikoff quotes Stevenson’s letter to Charles Scribner: ‘I must have my map when you next issue it: a book of mine without a map, Ye Gods!’

[12] Boyle, Brown, Fannin and Lockerbie, *We Cultivate Literature on Little Oatmeal…* pp.23-24 [bold as in original text].

[13] Booth, Bradford A. and Ernest Mehew, eds *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), Vol 7, p.284.

[14] Booth and Mehew, Vol 8, p.45. See also Barry Menikoff, ed. *Kidnapped, or the lad with the silver button* by Robert Louis Stevenson (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1999), p.xxii.

[15] Christopher MacLachlan, *Robert Louis Stevenson’s Treasure Island, Kidnapped and Catriona* Scotnotes No. 21 (Glasgow: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 2006), p.22.

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Cross-Channel Stevenson: David Balfour and the Problem of Scottish Return

Caroline McCracken-Flesher

From Bournemouth, Robert Louis Stevenson dedicated *Kidnapped* to his Edinburgh friend, Charles Baxter. '[The] past must echo in your memory!' he wrote, 'Let it not echo often without some kind thoughts of your friend, R. L. S'.[1] From even further-flung Samoa, he dedicated *Catriona*, too, to Baxter. He mused, 'You are still ... in the venerable city which I must always think of as my home. And I have come so far; and the sights and thoughts of my youth pursue me' (p.211). Thanking Samuel Rutherford Crockett for dedicating a book to him, Stevenson made the issue clear: 'Blows the wind today, and the sun and the rain are flying .... / Where about the graves of the martyrs the whaups are crying, / My heart remembers how!'[2] His heart, we understand, remembered—from however far away. It was even *dedicated* to remembering Scotland, and to being remembered by his native land.

Stevenson's claim to place through memory has contributed to a scholarship that rightly situates the author as Scottish. It has enabled *Kidnapped* to be recognised as the first 'book of the city' for Edinburgh as UNESCO 'City of Literature'.[3] But is such scholarly and popular recognition itself mis-placed? Certainly, David Balfour's wanderings across Scotland's history and geography, and his commitment to reaching Edinburgh from the islands, the highlands, and eventually from the lowlands of Holland, echo the primary mode of Scottish literature and politics. David is emplotted within the discourse of 'return'. As Lady Nairn encoded this dynamic for generations, Scots need to 'come back again'.[4] But the more David turns toward home, the more Stevenson suggests that Scots will always be lost, especially at home. And perhaps it is better that way.

David spends his time trying to get home. His dead father has mapped his journey from the past into the present as a homecoming. 'That is the place I came from', he once said, 'and it's where it befits that my boy should return' (p.2). David is a lad of parts, and should have no trouble getting there. His father considered him ‘a steady lad . . . and a canny goer’ (p.2). Moreover, he carries the letters of introduction—first in *Kidnapped*, then in *Catriona*—that should allow him to be recognised and to complete the plots of his father’s generation, coming home once more.

But David’s first ‘return’ to Shaws doesn’t work out so well, and this points us to the problem at the heart of home. Freud explains that home is not that homely place we imagine it to be. Rather, it is the site of the uncanny. Because it is the place of our origins, home is the site of our earliest and deepest repressions. So home is what we need to leave, but cannot get away from. Moreover, while home clings to us, we are not who it thinks we are.[5] This is where therapy comes in: it encourages us to become deliberately strange to our confining past, to negotiate a strategic and saving distance that allows us to end up in a different time and place.[6]

Robert Louis Stevenson undertakes the cure for Scotland. He asks who would want to go to such an uncanny home? Who can? Perhaps a stranger. In *Kidnapped* and *Catriona*, Stevenson puts David Balfour through what we might call the *walking* cure to reveal the stranger in ourselves and produce a different Scotland.

It is worth noting that the Stevenson who seems dedicated to place through the returns of memory himself resisted the drive to return. He spent long years making himself other than home could recognise, whether through the modes of modernism, a life as bohemian author, the distances of countries and then oceans, or his many assertively non-Scottish books. It should not be surprising, then, that in these two Scottish books, David is trying to get home to a place he has never been, that recognises him only problematically, and that he never learns to recognise himself. David Balfour works to make himself as strange as Robert Louis Stevenson.[7]

Kidnapped begins as a standard tale of exile. Yet the idyllic Essendean David sets out from is not the place he will struggle to get back to: his journey takes a gothic detour to the House of Shaws. Still, this doesn’t cause him much difficulty, for at Cramond, the usual oedipal anxieties of return are defused through the need to usurp only a wicked uncle. However David’s success serves to set up the real voyage of the book. The moment when David imagines he has gained control over his situation, the moment when he ‘[knows] what [he] wanted now’ (p.23), is also the moment that suggests we can’t come home, don’t belong there, and shouldn’t want to: the House of Shaws turns itself inside out to vomit up the indigestible David, ejecting him off its stairway and into a night filled with uncanny things.

When David is ejected from a House of Shaws he labeled ‘strange’ before he even viewed it, it is he who shows to be the strangest one of all (p.6). David claims a difference between family and others. He declares: ‘I should be helped by my own blood, [not] strangers’ (p.17). The list of those he sees as different from himself mounts from Ransome, the pathetic cabin boy, through the crew to the Jacobite Alan until it peaks when he is castaway but ‘very different’ from those in ‘all the books I have read of’ (p.84). But strangeness is a two-sided term. If others are strange to David, he must be equally strange to them. Thus, at the moment when he is ejected from the House of Shaws, the shocked David announces the truth: ‘to set a stranger mounting [the unfinished stairway] in the darkness was to send him straight to his death’ (p.23). David himself is the stranger at home. And from this point, the episodes of the novel gather to make the case: David is strange to all who meet him; strange in the bill that advertises for his capture; especially strange in that ‘strange place’, Cluny’s Cage, with its ‘strange host’, where he has to acknowledge that because of his odditites, ‘if ever Cluny hated any man it was David Balfour’ (p.150; p.156).

Strangeness becomes a discourse in *Catriona* / *David Balfour*.[8] Here, though David has come home to place, position, and money, he recognises himself as the outsider in ‘a place where no stranger had a chance to find a friend’ (p.216). Sometimes, David’s strangeness is marked as ridiculous: he assures the Lord Advocate ‘I am not your lordship’s daughter’ (p.363). But more and more David asserts his strangeness, claiming kinship with Catriona though she belongs to the outcast MacGregors. He even cultivates it. Passing by a gibbet with two men hanged in chains, David ‘could scarce be done with examining it and drinking in discomfort’ (p.234). Ultimately, the obvious statement David makes of himself in Holland is a deep truth that applies to him wherever he goes: ‘[I] am a foreigner myself’ (p.427).

Numerous motifs and plot movements work across Stevenson’s two novels to sustain this point. David’s obsessive youthfulness separates him from adult plots.[9] His inability to hold onto money keeps him apart from conventional systems of valuation. And David himself is constantly getting lost. The young man who knew where he was going at the House of Shaws gets lost to sea, at sea, and across Scotland in *Kidnapped*. Then in *Catriona* he gets lost in and around Edinburgh, on the Bass rock, via Inverary, in Edinburgh again (after a detour to Glasgow), and in Holland—where he becomes lost in the plots of romance.

Indeed, no amount of help from others can dislodge David from his role as stranger in a strangely familiar land. Twelve surrogate fathers vie to parent him, but no one is adequate. And his real parents turn out to have been rather silly. So the many plots of parenthood—Jacobite and Whig, good and bad, romantic and real—in the end point not to the achievement of identity through patriarchy, but to the need to get yourself lost, and to stay that way. David’s many fathers each represent the plots of politics, of genre, of family, but no plot can command when there is a stranger in the house.

In fact, everyone is a stranger here, and together they show the strangeness within Scottish plots. David's potential fathers are a sorry bunch. Hoseason, the brutal captain who is one man ashore, another on board, and yet a good son, sets the pattern. James of the Glen is no Jacobite hero, invoking personal desires against those of politics to save himself as 'a man that has a family' (p.123). Cluny's romantic mountain dwelling is a metaphorical cage in which his high exploits have dwindled into card-sharping. Even Alan is not immune: his ostentatious dress advertises his incongruent presence in the landscape and, for all the romance of the way he tells it, he collaborates in the rack-renting of tenants. If Mr. Campbell with his lily water and Mr. Henderland with his snuff represent the comic side of the disconnection between Scots and their supposed historical and literary circumstances, it is much more disturbingly expressed through the despicable James More MacGregor. MacGregor insists on the community of Scots and thus undermines the very idea. When he claims 'All we forfeited folk hang a little together', David 'could scarce refrain from shooting my tongue out at him' (p.438). The Scotland of stereotypical personalities, predictable plots, and old alliances does not exist, and probably should not. The condition of Scotland is strangeness.

As for Scotland itself, it hardly exists. Stevenson's Scotland is a land of island, mountain, and glen, but to David it is a desert. Viewed from his perspective, the rain cuts down the view and seeps into the shoes; the rocks are glimpsed in frantic moments as David leaps across them, or suffered as he lies atop them divorced from the world below and fried by the sun above. The city is no better: in *Catriona* it is a succession of waiting rooms that force disturbing meetings. The national landscape of Scotland falls into fragments in this Scotsman's eye. It is only intermittently visible and consistently strange. Perhaps David wants no home to go to.

In *Kidnapped* and *Catriona*, then, Stevenson bids farewell to the standard plots of Scottishness. He foregrounds Jacobitism and romance only to expose the difference and disjunction that their plotting as history and novel strives to contain. Scots can't come home through either of them. Stevenson accomplishes this even in the recuperative plot of marriage between Jacobite and Whig. Although *Catriona* seems to settle into domesticity—when David admires his strapping lass's 'little shoes', for instance—Catriona has always talked about her manly ways (p.443). And even David notes that Catriona's compliance in marriage is a function of 'early days' (p.473). For the Stevenson who married Fanny VandeGrift/Osborne (1880), and published *Virginibus Puerisque* (1881), marriage is no ordinary state but, just like home, the site of much strangeness. Thus, Stevenson's books of return are really about ending up somewhere else. Their internal fractures, episodic plots, and strange characters reflect the modes of Scottishness outside romance. Yet the state of Scottishness is not necessarily lamentable.

This may be what Edinburgh recognises in claiming *Kidnapped* as the book of the city. If Stevenson's heart remembered Scotland, his feet didn't follow. Once in Samoa, he never did go home again. But whatever inadequacies Stevenson sees in Scotland, he understands their productivity. In both *Kidnapped* and *Catriona*, David feels new and uncomfortable everywhere he goes. And that is the point. Stevenson shows how to make Edinburgh new by *not* belonging to it; his Scotland is anxious, and alive. Through David, Edinburgh becomes a desert where Scots will always be too young. Whereas the modernist tradition Stevenson anticipates focuses on the difficulty of situating the self, Stevenson suggests that Scots should refuse to situate themselves. Memory can only operate to dissociate us: it cannot get us there from here, and our failure only shows us how far we do not fit into its conventions. From Bournemouth and Samoa, as from Earraid and Holland, there is no way home. Yet as Stevenson suggests in the end of his dedication to *Catriona*, failing to fit, we may be 'cast ... out in the end, as by a sudden freshet, on these ultimate islands' (p.211).

Perhaps, for an old country made new, Stevenson's strategy is best: remembering the past, yet refusing to fit it, Scotland may get to the somewhere else that is today.

NOTES

[1] Since the Edinburgh University Press series of Stevenson's works has not yet reached *Kidnapped* or *Catriona*, I cite the easily accessible combined volume, edited and introduced by Emma Letley: Robert Louis Stevenson, *Kidnapped and Catriona* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986). See p.xlii.

[2] Roger C. Lewis, *The Collected Poems of Robert Louis Stevenson* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), p.201.

[3] John Corbett details the UNESCO and ECOL (Edinburgh City of Literature) projects in 'Press-ganging Scottish Literature: *Kidnapped* and the City Of Literature's One Book, One Edinburgh project' in this issue of *IJSL*.

[4] The song's chorus, addressed to 'Bonnie Charlie', runs: 'Will ye no come back again? / Will ye no come back again? / Better lo'ed ye canna be, / Will ye no come back again'. Carolina Oliphant, Lady Nairne (1766-1845) published as 'Mrs. Bogan of Bogan'.

[5] Sigmund Freud 'The Uncanny', in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and trans. James Strachey et al., vol. 17 (London: Hogarth, 1955), pp.219-52.

[6] These ideas are helpfully elucidated in David Simpson *Situatedness, or, Why We Keep Saying Where We're Coming From* (Durham, N. Carolina: Duke University Press, 2002) and Julia Kristeva *Strangers to Ourselves*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991).

[7] I explore Stevenson's strangeness in '"One City" of Fragments: Robert Louis Stevenson's Second (Person) City Through David Daiches's Personal Eye' in William Baker, ed. *David Daiches: A Celebration of his Life and Work* (Sussex Academic Press, forthcoming 2007).

[8] The novel was published as *David Balfour* in serial and in its American book form. In Britain, the publisher preferred *Catriona*. For the book's complicated publishing history, see Roger Swearingen *The Prose Writings of Robert Louis Stevenson: A Guide* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1980) and Barry Menikoff 'Toward the Production of a Text: Time, Space, and David Balfour' in *Studies in the Novel* 27.3 (1995), pp. 351-63.

[9] Alan Sandison has noted David's obsession with his youth, and the 'inhibited maturation process' that implies: *Robert Louis Stevenson and the Appearance of Modernism: A Future Feeling* (Houndsmills: Macmillan Press, 1996), p.193.

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Frontier Creatures: The Imaginary Characters of *Weir of Hermiston* [1]

Antony Hasler

Stevenson's last novel *Weir of Hermiston*, left unfinished on the day of his death, begins with a gesture of suspended reference. A landscape is evoked - 'the wild end of a moorland parish,' where 'there stands a cairn among the heather, and a little by east of it … a monument with some verses half defaced.'[2] The stone marks an atrocity of the Killing Time ('here … Claverhouse shot with his own hand the Praying Weaver of Balweary') and its memorialization, both by the wandering engraver Robert Paterson ('the chisel of Old Mortality has clinked on that lonely gravestone') and, perhaps, his own recording angel, Scott's Peter Pattieson. But the place, according to our informant, is now called Francie's Cairn, in memory of the more recent – and largely fictional - events Stevenson's novel is about to describe. In *Weir*'s palimpsestic opening, the historical Old Mortality's time-worn and vanishing inscriptions, and Scott's meticulously engineered and highly ambivalent epistemological break with the past, cede to history under erasure – facts 'naked and imperfect' (5), raised to visibility by their very cancellation.

Weir is set, we should here recall, around the canonical date of the historical novel's inception. Duncan Jopp is hanged in 1813, the year before the publication of *Waverley*, and Stevenson's novel, with its many allusions to Scott and his contemporaries Hogg and Galt, offers a modernist retrospect over a national genre, estranging its topoi at the very outset. The Weaver's Stone is the terminus – both origin and end – of the Scottish historical novel in other ways too. Recent criticism of Scott has observed both a cultural masculinization of the genre he instituted,[3] and the conventionally 'feminine' hesitancies which attend Edward Waverley's passage into full-blown post-historical subjecthood.[4] As Stevenson folds that genre back into its beginnings, however, they become a cluster of synchronous dislocations. The Weaver's Stone 'quilts' several substitute Names-of-the-Father – Balweary, Weaver, Weir ('a worthy family of weavers somewhere,' Frank Innes guesses flippantly, [95]), Scott, Old Mortality, the judge-as-executioner Claverhouse.[5] Meanwhile, it is also a site of female oral storytelling, where Archie's dead mother and the living 'soother' young Kirstie are 'enshrined together in his memory' (87). *Weir* both disassembles a revered narrative typology and suggests that its associative and libidinal mobility may be impossible to bind. Where Scott's gendered emplotment signifies a rich and stable circulation of meaning between past and present, Stevenson's becomes unsettlingly volatile, not least where it catches up some of the Scottish novel's most familiar antagonisms – between writing and orality, English and Scots, fiction and history. The opening of *Weir* accordingly evokes origin not as the beginning of a stadial, post-Enlightenment narrative of historical progress, but as a moment both temporally and ontologically undecidable, entangled in multiple, simultaneous and contradictory meanings, and only intermittently accountable to difference of sex.[6]

My aim here is to look at the psychosexual paths the novel traces across its highly reflexive literary terrain. To be sure, psychoanalyzing *Weir* hardly of itself breaks new ground, given that the novel does the job so well without help; and analytic metaphors are themselves, one might say, richly Stevensonian. We may recall that in *The Ego and the Id*, Freud described the ego itself as a 'frontier-creature,' charged with the task of policing the borderlands of identity by means of the mechanisms of identification.[7] His topographies of consciousness have lately been read against the charting of other territories: Diana Fuss reminds us that the historical moments of psychoanalysis and colonialism are intimately linked, so that 'Freud's theory of self-other relations takes shape historically within a colonialist context.'[8] A superb recent account by Penny Fielding has linked the emergence of an unconscious with *Weir*'s unsettling exploration of the interplay among traditionary oral registers and nineteenth-century realism. For Fielding, Archie Weir is caught in an embattled struggle with novelistic discourse *per se*: 'the relationship between character and author' she writes 'comes to re-enact Archie's Oedipal experience with his father, as Archie is never given the opportunity to express himself, but is always written by the narrator.'[9]

The novel's marked Oedipal pattern does invite readings which assign the parental Weirs to two different orders: Adam Weir is the stern, unbending man of law constantly at his books, Jean Weir, seconded after her death by both Kirsties, is one of many Scottish literary mothers who serve to transmit national culture through oral tradition. I want to suggest here that Stevenson's text does not quite sustain this division: on the contrary, *Weir*'s peculiar reflexiveness, alert to its own belatedness, generates a symbolic order where such contrasts are less straightforward. The law, at the outset the novel's dominant figure, is codified text, sustaining an order at once paternal, institutional and literary. When Archie passes from Edinburgh to the Borders, we don't leave this order of writing but enter its extension, a colonized territory thick with the tropes of the historical novel post-Scott. At this genre's commencement it is evidently already written, and there is no exit. Within this dispensation, however – and as if under the pressure of its very violence – unexpected identifications spring up, as the borderlines between Stevenson's 'frontier creatures' shift, dissolve and blur. *Weir* also shows a fascination with the uncanny remainders that elude the symbolic, and that disturb even as they offer it support. In what follows I draw on the work of Jacques Lacan and Slavoj Zizek to consider the role such elements play. My point is that the very intensity of *Weir*'s national and familial allegorizations lends special force to the novel's overdetermined properties and objects, residues which fulfil their function in sustaining a symbolic of law and allusion, but which also come perilously close to exposing its artifice. And Stevenson's prose – exquisite, sinuous, answerable less to an 'unreliable narrator' than to unreliable occasion – aids and abets such revelations.

If Archie Weir is on the face of it caught between his 'tender' mother and the legalistic brutality of the Lord Justice-Clerk, both are marked by a surplus enjoyment that inheres in the very material grain of the voice as object. Adam Weir, in fact, could serve as the textbook instance of Zizek's imaginary 'obscene father' of enjoyment. The authorial discourse styles him a scrupulous observer of the law he upholds, barely tainted by vanity, his 'sterling industry' 'unobserved like the ticking of a clock' (20). 'I'm a man that gets through with my day's business,' he admonishes Archie (35); he proceeds 'with a mechanical movement, as of the unconscious, that was almost august' (19). The spectacle of Jopp's trial, however, reveals the grotesque support to the law's supposed formal neutrality. Weir's 'bloomless nobility' (37) does 'not affect the virtue of impartiality' (25); as he offends even the 'aesthetics . . . of the slaughter-house' (27) with 'the savage pleasure of the speaker in his task' (26), his Scots vernacular becomes the very measure of Zizekian obscenity ('I have been the means, under God, of haanging a great number, but never just such a disjaskit rascal as yourself,' 26).[10]

If Lord Hermiston's stern lawfulness conceals 'recondite pleasures' (20), the same might be said of Archie's mother. Fielding diagnoses a contrast between Weir the stereotypical Oedipal father, mainstay of the symbolic order, and Jean Weir, the mother who uses words with a pre-symbolic 'glamour.' We may note, however, that she rehearses, if with a difference, her spouse's incarnation of a law whose unsettling surplus resides in the voice. Her own lineage is made up of the insistent signifiers of transgenerational trauma;[11] it derives from the warlike Border ancestry of the male Rutherfords and the 'white-faced … succession of martyrs' (7) their wives, and in her tearful and 'tender' tales of Covenanting martyrs this descendant of the persecutors ('Her great-great-grandfather had drawn the sword against the Lord's anointed on the field of Rullion Green') identifies with the pathos of the victims. Her Biblical language is rooted in a symbolic more ancient than (if ultimately inseparable from) Adam Weir's, and we glimpse authentic enjoyment in the 'voice for that name of persecutor that thrilled in the child's marrow.' Archie's bids to locate his father (and of course himself) in relation to this speech through metaphoric extension of her words are doomed to strike against constant and arbitrary prohibition. Asking why the mob brands the elder Weir persecutor, he is met with her horrified ‘Ye must never ask me anything poleetical’ (12). In short, Jean Weir’s ‘tenderness,’ born of several contradictory historical identifications, is based in the terminological violence of a Calvinist rhetoric that does not counter the law so much as produce what Fuss calls its ‘hystericization.’[12]

Small wonder Archie denounces Jopp’s ‘God-defying murder’ (28) with the fervour of a 1670s Presbyterian watching a captive from the Pentland Rising strung up in the Grassmarket; small wonder, too, that he does so before ‘a cloud of witnesses’ (30) – the allusion, of course, not just to *Hebrews* 12.1, but also to one of the best-known collections of Presbyterian martyrology.[13] Here, we see Archie, the vacillating descendant of the Waverley-hero, clinging to the irreducible ‘thrill’ in the maternal voice, until Dr. Gregory’s portrait of a loving if gruff father creates in him ‘a new image of Lord Hermiston,’ ‘all iron without and all sensibility within’ and leaves this suggestible hero ‘impatient to throw himself on the mercy of this imaginary character’ (32). Ready to embrace the imaginary father of sensibility, he encounters instead the pillar (or letter – Stevenson’s pun is clear) of the law, and what ensues is his Border exile.

From legal Edinburgh, then, Archie moves to a land itself overwritten, and the connection between law-writing, novelistic fiction and paternity is entirely explicit. In this border country imaginatively colonized – as, Ian Duncan reminds us, it once was for Hogg – by a *British* author,[14] Archie’s father has been ‘led by the influence of Mr. Sheriff Scott into a considerable design of planting.’ The prospect is everywhere fictive (‘the little feathery besoms gave a false scale and lent a strange air of a toy-shop to the moors,’ 48). Scott is present as local magnate and patron; Frank Innes, who so unprofitably condescends to the peasantry, ‘could have turned a neater compliment’ to Mr. Sheriff Scott, ‘because Mr. Scott would have been a friend worth making’ (94). Scott’s presence crucially frames the Four Black Brothers, who ironically link a world of unreconstructed Border violence with a ‘society gagged and swaddled with civilization.’ These figures themselves, of course, embody multiple aspects of the Scottish fiction of the nineteenth century’s early decades.[15] In Hob Elliott, we see the revenger of blood turned into a personification of Scott’s enterprise of transfiguring magic; after his act of ballad-vengeance against his father’s slayers, ‘The figure he had shown on that eventful night disappeared as if swallowed by a trap,’ and he becomes ‘a stiff and rather graceless model of the rustic proprieties’ (58), having transformed history’s violence into profit. Clem, the Glasgow merchant, condenses a number of features from John Galt’s authorial profile. Dand, a manifest combination of Burns and Hogg, brawls with the Ettrick Shepherd while supplying Scott with ‘the text of the “Raid of Wearie”’ (62) in the *Minstrelsy*. Now that ‘dreadful feuds’ have been displaced on to the ‘battle of the India shawls’ (66) between the elder Kirstie and Mrs. Elliott during Sunday churchgoing, even the Elliotts’ grand act of reprisal has already been caught within a novelistic fabric:

> Some century earlier the last of the minstrels might have fashioned the last of the ballads out of that Homeric fight and chase; but the spirit was dead, or had been reincarnated already in Mr. Sheriff Scott, and the degenerate moorsmen must be content to tell the tale in prose, and to make of the 'Four Black Brothers' a unit after the fashion of the 'Twelve Apostles' or the 'Three Musketeers.' (58)

So much textuality, however, cannot but call up its own disquieting remainder. A powerful instance comes as Archie and the younger Kirstie first catch sight of one another in church. Stevenson's sly pun – 'that deadly instrument, the maiden, was suddenly unmasked in profile' (71) – shadows this scene of 'a pair of children at the old game of falling in love' (73) with reminders of paternal Edinburgh and its penalties for transgressors. The episode accordingly oscillates between a fairly explicit fetishism – the lure for Archie's look – and something akin to Lacan's version of the gaze as *objet petit a*, an enigmatic, all-environing perspective that leaves a stable subject-position untenable, a field of vision in which the observer is observed. Thus, the foreseeable appeal of Kirstie's *décolletage* ('He saw the breasts heave, and the flowers shake with the heaving,' 72) alternates with that 'ambiguity of the jewel' in which, for Lacan, 'the point of the gaze always participates.'[16] The brooch 'that caught the daylight and returned it in a fiery flash, and the threads of bronze and gold [that] made her hair precious,' metonymically turn Kirstie into 'a bright thing.' Archie's look - 'a battery of cannon,' that 'uplift[s] her as on a pillory' and 'drink[s] her in with his eyes' (72) - plays over her with a bewildering metaphoric variety that itself suggests the object's brilliant opacity, the resistance to full disclosure that enacts the spectator's own lack. The fullest shock is reserved for the sequence's closing gesture of an uncanny enfolding. In the minister Torrance's sermon the narrative reposes on 'a deep layer of texts' (71), but the strangely impersonal intersection of two lines of sight ('two stealthy glances were sent out like antennae … and drew timidly nearer to the straight line between Archie and Christina') disrupts a text ('the leaf of her psalm-book was torn across,' 74). And the torn leaf is implicated in Stevenson's game of presence and absence; 'A Leaf from Christina's Psalm-Book' is the name of the chapter itself. The reader doubles Archie, caught in a textual gaze that goes far beyond the eye.

My final observations move from gaze back to voice. Here Stevenson's revisionary impulse is at its most scandalous. Romantic culture had cast the mother and nurse as the bearer, for good or ill, of oral tradition and historical continuity.[17] Its antiquarian practices had also instantiated a split between the ballad's form – associated with the child as innocent receptor of cultural transmission – and its often disturbing content. This is replicated in the distinction between the 'little formalist' (70) young Kirstie, whose mixture of song and Glasgow finery embodies the published ballad anthology's perceived artifice, and the elder Kirstie, cast as 'matter' – the surrogate mother whose quasi-incestuous inclinations toward Archie, it goes without saying, bear a particular transgressive charge.[18] In Stevenson's complex replaying of cultural crisis as erotic mythography, she at once opposes and furthers paternal interdiction. The obvious intimations are just that; Stevenson is unsparing in his depiction of her 'passion' and 'rich, physical pleasure' (51), and in her nightly trysts with Archie, encounters where oral tradition, domesticity and maternal eroticism meet. The tales of this 'brave narrator' (52) become Scheherazade-like provocation, at once deferring and arousing desire:

'Mercy, Mr. Archie!' she would say, 'whatten a time o' night is this of it! God forgive me for a daft wife!' So it befell, by good management, that she was not only the first to begin these nocturnal conversations, but invariably the first to break them off … (53)

In the midst of her own yearnings for Archie, however, she evokes the prohibitive 'Hanging Face' of his father ('the flinty countenance of Hermiston,' 109) in order to hinder access to her young namesake and rival. Her voice, 'the single outlet of the soul' (104), here takes us more than halfway to Zizek's association between voice and the incestuous maternal superego that blocks 'normal' sexual relationship.[19]

Such moments, where objects sustaining the text's symbolic also tease incessantly at its borders, are entirely characteristic of *Weir*, and return us finally to the recalcitrant presence of the Weaver's Stone. At first sight it appears possessed of geographical and symbolic fixity – the mortifying effect which links the Hanging Judge Hermiston with Kirstie's legendary Border genealogy from whose every ramification 'there dangled a halter' (53). In truth, though, this monument to renaming and difference marks a novel whose supple progress corrodes meaning even as it reinforces it, discomposing 'proper' relations – referential or sexual – or troubling opposites. The objects that bestow a dubious consistency on historical fantasy can only do so by worrying at it. Stevenson's acute responsiveness to desire posits an imagined beginning to the historical novel in which the creation of historical discourse proves inseparable from its fictional fading.

NOTES

[1] I am grateful to Elizabeth Human for her careful comments on earlier versions of this essay.

[2] All references to the novel are to Robert Louis Stevenson, *Weir of Hermiston*, ed. Catherine Kerrigan (Edinburgh, 1995).

[3] Ina Ferris, *The Achievement of Literary Authority: Gender, History and the Waverley Novels* (Ithaca and London, 1991), pp.79-104.

[4] See Judith Wilt, *Secret Leaves: The Novels of Walter Scott* (Chicago, 1985), p.117; Ferris, *Achievement*, pp.99-104; Ian Duncan, *Modern Romance and Transformations of the Novel: The Gothic, Scott, Dickens* (Cambridge, 1992), pp.65-73.

[5] For Lacan's fullest explication of the psychoanalytic role of the 'quilting point' (*point de capiton*, or upholstery button) see *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book III: The Psychoses*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller and trans. Russell Grigg (New York and London, 1993). The quilting point between signifier and signified is the 'point of convergence that enables everything that happens in … discourse to be situated retroactively and prospectively'; for Freud its 'most palpable experience' is 'the notion of father' (p.268). A limited number of such points ensures the unified discourse of the 'normal' subject, while their absence engenders psychosis. Zizek gives the term ideological reach: 'the multitude of 'floating signifiers,' or proto-ideological elements, is structured into a unified field through the intervention of a certain 'nodal point' (the Lacanian *point de capiton*) which 'quilts' them, stops their sliding and fixes their meaning.' See Slavoj Zizek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London and New York, 1989), p.87. The senior Weir occupies such a place, an 'adamantine Adam' (32) not only because of his petrifaction, but because he is a loadstone for the text's conditions of meaning.

[6] I am indebted here to Ned Lukacher's revision of Freud's notion of the 'primal scene.' 'Rather than signifying the child's observation of sexual intercourse,' Lukacher writes, 'the primal scene comes to signify an ontologically undecidable intertextual event that is situated in the differential space between historical memory and imaginative construction, between archival verification and interpretive free play.' See Lukacher's *Primal Scenes: Literature, Philosophy, Psychoanalysis* (Ithaca and London, 1986), p.24.

[7] Freud's own term is *Grenzwesen*: see Sigmund Freud, *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Anna Freud et al., 18 vols. (London, 1940-52 [vols. I-XVII] and Frankfurt-am-Main, 1968 [Vol. XVIII]), XIII, p.286. For the English translation see Freud, 'The Ego and the Id,' in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, translated from the German under the general editorship of James Strachey, 24 vols. (London, 1953-74), XIX, p.56.

[8] Diana Fuss, *Identification Papers* (New York and London, 1995), p.35.

[9] Penny Fielding, *Writing and Orality: Nationality, Culture and Nineteenth-Century Scottish Fiction* (Oxford, 1996), p.188.

[10] On the obscene father's '*knowledge of enjoyment*, i.e., the knowledge which is by definition excluded from the Law in its universal-neutral guise,' see Zizek, *Enjoy Your Symptom! Jacques Lacan in Hollywood and Out* (New York and London, 1992), p.159. The infraction of this 'neutral guise' interestingly mirrors Archie's reading of his father's cruelty as an aesthetic problem first and an ethical or juridical one second, in a retrospective comment on the Scottish Enlightenment's categories of abstraction and sympathy: see Ian Duncan, 'The Pathos of Abstraction: Adam Smith, Ossian and Samuel Johnson,' in *Scotland and the Borders of*

Romanticism, ed. Leith Davis, Ian Duncan and Janet Sorensen (Cambridge, 2004), pp.38-56 (pp.44-45). For an account of Hermiston's vernacular as the sublime vessel of 'grandeur, expansiveness and the natural,' see Emma Letley, *From Galt to Douglas Brown: Nineteenth-Century Fiction and Scots Language* (Edinburgh, 1988), p.209.

[11] See Nicolas Abraham, 'Notes on the Phantom: A Complement to Freud's Metapsychology,' in Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, *The Shell and the Kernel: Vol. I*, ed, and trans. Nicholas T. Rand (Chicago and London, 1994), pp.171-76. Jean Weir also responds to a tradition of sentimental representations of the Killing Time: see e.g. 'The Covenanter's Marriage Day' in John Wilson, *Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life: A Selection From the Papers of the Late Arthur Austin* (Edinburgh, 1822).

[12] Fuss, 129-33. I should note that my intention here is not to reiterate critical assertions that a hysterical mother is in some sense the novel's, and Archie Weir's, 'problem.' I am reminded rather of Fuss's telling reflection on analyses of hysteria: 'what might it mean to say that there is no law outside of hysteria? … To pose this question is to entertain the possibility that the Symbolic itself is ill' (p.131). Archie's predicament with regard to Jean Weir is, quite precisely, that of the Lacanian subject confronted with the lack in the Other: see Bruce Fink, *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jouissance* (Princeton, 1995), p.54.

[13] First published in 1714.

[14] Ian Duncan, 'Shadows of the Potentate: Scott in Hogg's Fiction,' *Studies in Hogg and His World* 4 (1993), 12-25.

[15] I am grateful to 'Can the Subaltern Speak?: Stevenson, Hogg and Samoa,' a paper given by Douglas Mack during 'Stevenson, Scotland and Samoa: An International Literary Conference,' University of Stirling, 10-14 July 2000, and to a conversation afterwards with Janette Currie, for encouraging my thinking here.

[16] Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller and trans. Alan Sheridan (London, 1977), p.96. Lacan observes that 'the gaze, *qua objet a*, may come to symbolize [the] central lack expressed in the phenomenon of castration' (p.77).

[17] Ann Wierda Rowland, '"The fauce nourice sang": Childhood, Child Murder and the Formalism of the Scottish Ballad Revival,' in *Scotland and the Borders of Romanticism*, pp.225-44.

[18] Stevenson's 1892 MS of *Weir*, as Kerrigan notes, courts outrage especially keenly, and does so in part because of its multiple identifications and positionalities:

> At times, by a <base> forlorn transmigration of memory, she could have believed he [Archie] was her son, born out of her body, suckled at her breasts; by another, she could almost have believed she was her own niece and saw Archie kneel <before> ^to^ her. (p.176)

[19] Slavoj Zizek, *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan Through Popular Culture* (Cambridge MA and London, 1991), p.99.

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Jekyll and Hyde: The Psychology of Dissociation

Nancy K. Gish

In Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Robert Louis Stevenson created not only a haunting representation of consciousness but a way to define what psychology and literature had both come to view as distinctly modern and deeply disturbing. Writing of Baudelaire's response to modernity, Peter Nicholls argues that 'The greatest fear is now provoked by the spectre of the Double, by the appearance of an other who somehow mirrors oneself',[1] and he quotes Baudelaire, 'Who amongst us is not a *homo duplex*? I speak of those whose mind since childhood has been *touched with pensiveness*; always double, action and intention, dream and reality; always one hindering the other, one usurping the place of the other.'[2] If for Baudelaire, Poe, and Dostoevsky, this doubleness was, in Nicholls's words, a 'tortured disunity ... the tragic condition of the modern poet',[3] for nineteenth- and early twentieth-century psychology it was one form of hysteria, a pathology of consciousness. Lecturing at Harvard in 1906, Pierre Janet, a leading theorist of dissociation at the turn of the century, reviewed major early researchers including Charcot, Breuer, Freud, and Prince, and claimed that 'what has been most characteristic in France for a score of years in the study of nervous diseases is the development of pathological psychology', and that to understand them, it is with 'Hysteria ... that one should begin'.[4] And for Janet, hysteria included 'total modifications of the personality divided into two successive or simultaneous persons, which is again the dissociation of consciousness in the hysteric'.[5] Janet's theory of dissociated consciousness, I believe, provides the most compelling conceptual framework for understanding Stevenson's representation of duality.

In 1886, the same year that Stevenson published *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Frederic W. H. Myers described a case of what he called 'multiplex personality', an example of the 'pitch to which the dissociation of memories, faculties, sensibilities may be carried, without resulting in mere insane chaos, mere demented oblivion'.[6] Louis V. alternated between a 'quiet, well-behaved, and obedient' child and one who 'became violent, greedy, and quarrelsome' after a traumatic experience. According to Myers, at any time, depending on whether his right or left brain is ascendant, Louis V. 'is only half himself', and he refers to his 'normal period of childhood, before his *Wesen* was thus cloven in twain'.[7] This image of a cloven *Wesen* [being], once joined, is similar to cases studied by Janet and clearly resembles Jekyll and Hyde though, unlike most, Stevenson's characters are co-conscious. Significantly, however, many cases reveal overt and consistent differences of personality as extreme as those of Jekyll and Hyde. Myers read *Jekyll and Hyde* and corresponded with Stevenson, who denied having heard of actual cases of double personality before he wrote the novel. He would, however, have known literary versions, and he had already depicted duality in *Deacon Brodie, or The Double Life* (1880) and 'Markheim' (1886). Moreover, as Karl Miller states, 'the modern double' goes back to the eighteenth century and, during the 1880s and 1890s, 'underwent a revival'.[8]

Why then, given the widespread interest in and study of duality in both psychology and literature, was Stevenson's novel immediately fascinating and morally shocking? And why has it remained so? For despite their frequency in late Victorian literature, duality and multiplicity can become deeply frightening when taken beyond the abstract to the bodily—associated in popular culture with addiction, sexual depravity and serial killers.[9] By embodying Hyde as a dissociated personality, giving him literally a different size, age, appearance and expression, Stevenson made him that 'monstrous' possibility—that we could all be someone quite 'other' and that we cannot rely on the control of the will. More significantly, by making the 'other' pure evil, he defined, for more than a century, an assumption that divisions in human consciousness are inevitably moral: the self and that spectre who evokes fear. Though Jekyll claims that moral division only as his own individual case, it has framed critical discussion of two key questions raised by the text: who or what is Hyde? And what is the nature of his 'pure evil'? If we accept the literally separate, 'other' personality of Hyde depicted by his bodily difference, his relation to Jekyll can be more clearly understood.

In a letter to John Paul Bocock, Stevenson said that Hyde was 'the beast' who 'is the essence of cruelty and malice, and selfishness and cowardice: and these are the diabolical in man'; the harm, he added, 'was in Jekyll, because he was a hypocrite—not because he was fond of women; he says so himself'.[10] The depth of Hyde's evil, as represented in the novel, is that he is not a mixture of good and evil but is an unmixed essence, unlike all other humanity in which varying degrees of good and evil join. Thus he is described repeatedly as not human, or as inhuman, and Jekyll disavows any responsibility for what Hyde does while acknowledging his awareness of, and release in, experiencing it. The insistence on absolute otherness thus has its base in this fundamental distinction of 'human' and 'inhuman', notwithstanding Hyde's undeniable participation, from youth, in Jekyll's pleasures and desires. And though frequently read as sexual, these desires are never defined in the text itself. Yet despite Stevenson's attribution of evil to Jekyll's hypocrisy and despite the lack of any evidence of infant sexual expression or fantasy in either, Hyde has predominantly been read through Freud.[11] Because the language of the text itself is filled with images of an ape-like figure, a devil, a habitué of Soho and vile pleasures, a monster, a double, all these readings can be used to account for him, and his evil nature has been read through Freud's theory of repressed desire, impossible for a Victorian gentleman to acknowledge or act out. Jekyll's claim that he was given, at an early age, to 'a certain impatient gaiety of disposition', and at night 'laid aside restraint and plunged into shame', has been read as demonstrating a sexual origin to his developed evil behavior, in part because of suggestive earlier versions. In the 'Notebook Draft' he used stronger and more violent language: 'From a very early age, however, I became. . . (/in secret) the slave of disgraceful pleasures'; in the 'Printer's Copy' this is altered to 'the slave of certain appetites'.[12] According to Robert Mighall, 'Earlier drafts of the text certainly reveal a more explicit sexual content.'[13] But although these drafts can be read as sexual, they are not definitively so; children can also be prone to selfishness and malice and cruelty and cowardice of other kinds, even brutality and killing. My point is that the suggestiveness of the text is indeterminate, not directed exclusively or primarily to sexuality in itself.

Popular films and the musical, in order to sustain the image of sexual repression, remove Utterson—a voice of reasoned balance (if a life of extreme self-denial)—and add fiancées, prostitutes, love relations and sexual sadism, while making Jekyll young and good-looking, that is, writing a different story in which sexual repression is apparent. While these readings and cultural representations are revealing, both 'Dr. Lanyon's Narrative' and 'Henry Jekyll's Full Statement of the Case' offer psychological accounts that more aptly explain both Jekyll/Hyde and Hyde's separate identity. Stevenson's well-known insistence that Hyde is 'no mere voluptuary' has been dismissed or overridden on many grounds, yet as Katherine Linehan and others have emphasised, there are no women in the text.[14] What the text depicts is violence, narcissism and the hypocritical denial/acceptance of them. If we read Hyde through the psychological lens of hysteria as defined by early psychologists other than Freud—including Pierre Janet, William James and Morton Prince—we can recognise the structure of personality and consciousness in Stevenson's text. When I use the terms 'hysteria', and 'dissociation', I refer to these terms as they were accepted and standard at that time. Yet Stevenson's language—in the voice of Jekyll—both parallels the dissociation theory of his time and anticipates recent neo-dissociation theory that assumes originary plurality rather than fragmented unity.

Pierre Janet published *L'automatisme psychologique* in 1889; Breuer's and Freud's *Studies in Hysteria* was published in 1895; Morton Prince's *The Dissociation of a Personality* in 1905; and Pierre Janet's *The Major Symptoms of Hysteria* in 1907. All drew on over two decades of studies, chiefly Charcot's observations of hysterical patients at the Salpêtrière; all recorded dual personalities and/or alternating consciousness with specific accounts of hysterical symptoms. In his lectures published in 1907, Janet described a wide range of behaviors in hysterics, all of which he defined as forms of dissociation. But by the 1920s, Freud had been credited with offering, in addition to description, a hypothesis of causation: his theory of repression and sexual trauma—actual or fantasised—as the origin. This was seen in Henderson and Gillespie's *A Textbook of Psychiatry* (1927), which went into seven editions by 1950, as supplying a deficiency in Janet, despite the recognition that a sexual ætiology of hysteria could not account for the massive 'hysteria' of soldiers in World War I.[15] That Freud's sexual hypothesis cannot explain many examples of 'hysteria' has not prevented the continuing reading of a text without direct representations of sex as repressed sexual desire. And, of course, it could be, for we are never told specifically what Hyde does in his nocturnal life beyond the incidents when he tramples a child, murders Sir Danvers Carew, and 'smites' a woman who speaks to him. Stevenson's denial of the 'mere voluptuary', after all, adds that 'the sexual field and the business field are perhaps the two best fitted for the display of cruelty and cowardice and selfishness'.[16] This, he says, people confuse with sexuality as an evil in itself. Sexuality, then, is evil when it is cruel, cowardly and selfish, but so are other such acts. What distinguishes Hyde absolutely from other humans is that he has no identity or motives other than evil, and in that sense he is a full personality, but wholly unlike the common human lot shared by Jekyll. Jekyll makes this clear in his account of his life-long awareness of Hyde within and delight in recognising Hyde as also himself, even though Hyde is utterly indifferent to good or to Jekyll. Perhaps more important, for recognising this form of duality, Hyde is neither unconscious nor repressed: Jekyll knows him, if not fully, 'from very early', and Jekyll does not create him; he releases him. 'Splitting' is intentional but neither a defense mechanism nor simply disintegration. 'He' is doubled, not halved, since Hyde has none of his character.

Jekyll's confusion of pronouns, his shift from 'I' to 'he', has been frequently noted as revealing ambiguity about his identification with Hyde. But in stating that he 'cannot say "I"', Jekyll demonstrates a phenomenon noted in other accounts of multiple personality. In *The Dissociation of a Personality*, for example, one personality consistently claims to be the same as the conscious version of 'Miss Beauchamp' and says 'I' for both; Sally, a distinctly different personality who, though neither evil nor hateful, appears and disappears much as does Hyde, insists that she is *not* 'Miss Beauchamp' and always refers to the latter as 'she'. Whatever Stevenson previously read or was familiar with, he represents personality formations found in psychiatric literature.[17] Regardless, then, of Hyde's specific evil behavior, his existence and character—whether or not through the catalyst of drugs—are definable through psychological theories developing in the 1880s and later, as a recognisable, if presumed rare, form of hysteria. I wish to demonstrate this by making three points: Hyde's behavior fits descriptions in Janet of hysterical dissociation; Stevenson uses the same terms in the text itself; and recent renewal of interest in dissociation theory rather than Freudian repression suggests comparable structures of personality. What Stevenson did, in an astonishingly modern portrayal of dissociation, was to provide an image for a distinctly different way to understand an ancient phenomenon in which—in the words of a recent psychiatric article—‘dissociation begins with the assumption that some multiplicity of mental process is typical and normal, in the sense of coexisting levels of control that are usually well-coordinated’ and, when ‘dissociation becomes evident’, lay ‘bare some of the underlying “multifarious” architecture of the mind’.[18]

In his 1906 lectures, Pierre Janet stated that the most important psychological studies of the previous twenty years had as their object ‘hysterical phenomena’, which he defined as forms of dissociation, whether in localised amnesia, fugue states, conversion disorders in which blindness or deafness or paralysis occurred without an organic base, or successive or alternating personalities which could have amnesia or be co-conscious. He devoted a chapter of *The Major Symptoms of Hysteria* to double personalities, categorising types such as alternating or co-existing, dual or multiple, and states that alternate, or dominating somnabulisms in which one state or the other dominates. A renowned example of the last, and one similar to Jekyll and Hyde, was that of Felida X. A ‘reserved, melancholy and timid’ person, she began to fall asleep and awake gay, active, and free of her otherwise frequent illnesses. At first these second states lasted only briefly, and, when she awoke in her presumed ‘natural’ state, it was without memory of the second. Gradually, however, the second state became dominant both in length of time and altered behavior. During one period of gaiety, she became pregnant, no doubt as horrifying for a nineteenth-century French lady of reserved temperament as Hyde’s secret pleasures for a ‘grave’, professional Victorian gentleman. As she learned of her condition, she feared to be thought mad, since she could not remember the first state.[19] A similar case was that of Mary Reynolds, who began with reciprocal states but in whom one became dominant. Towards the end of her life, the memories of each state seemed partially to blend. Like Jekyll and Hyde, Mary’s states had different handwriting,[20] contrasting moods, and distinct personalities. Since then, and especially in the 1980s and 1990s, many narratives of multiplicity have been published, usually by therapists claiming to cure them, but these characteristics are repeated. Moreover, although it may seem that Hyde’s embodiment in a smaller, younger, paler, and frightening self places it in a separate category as demonic or simply hallucinatory, many multiples experience their bodies in very different ways—in size, age, gender and physical ability. In Morton Prince’s narrative, for example, Sally experiences herself as younger and healthier than ‘Miss Beauchamp’. The supposedly objective body is itself subject to separate, subjective self-perception, a possible reason for Hyde’s fascination with his image in the mirror.

What Stevenson represents is thus well within the realm of psychological studies, then and now, and explicit, if considered unusual, observed behavior. One may only guess how frequent such experience might be since, like Hyde, it would remain hidden. My point is that Hyde's presence is not dependent on a theory of repressed desire but fits more overtly in a theory of a 'normal' multiplicity of the self that, in this case, takes the form of a good/evil split. If Janet, other theorists of dissociation in his time, and recent theorists of dissociation and neo-dissociation describe a broad range of duality and multiplicity, Stevenson not only represents what they observe but uses the language of dissociation theory himself in at least three ways: first, Lanyon labels Hyde a hysteric, and does so even more technically in the draft version; second, Jekyll initially describes Hyde as an always-present part of himself but later shifts to the third person pronoun as he realises how 'other' Hyde is; and third, in Henry Jekyll's 'Full Statement of the Case', Jekyll provides a self-revelatory concept of identity recently taken up by neo-dissociation theorists Woody and Bowers to define the meaning of dissociation not as a disintegration of prior unity, but as a prior multiplicity only revealing itself with the weakening of 'higher conscious functioning', i.e., Jekyll's control of those co-existing selves, the struggling 'polar twins', prior to his fatefully deliberate cutting apart of 'warring members'.

In 'Dr. Lanyon's Narrative', Lanyon describes Hyde's behavior immediately before and after he drinks the potion. As a doctor, Lanyon might be expected to recognise medical symptoms, but in any case, the terminology is medical. 'I could see', Lanyon reports, that 'he was wrestling with the approaches of hysteria'. In the draft version edited by William Veeder, Lanyon says 'the approaches of the "globus hystericus"'—the medical term for the ball of emotion assumed to rise as hysteria in the throat. In the printer's copy this becomes 'the hysteric ball', and in the printed text 'hysteria'. That the change did not mean simply a shift to a popular use of 'hysteria' is evident in Hyde's behavior: of nine symptoms Janet lists for a convulsive attack of hysteria, Hyde manifests eight: meaningless movements, eyes open and staring, distorted mouth, grinding teeth, piercing cries, injected eyes, congested face, and hysteric ball. Only the latter is rephrased to omit 'ball'.

This use of medical terminology is repeated in 'Henry Jekyll's Full Statement of the Case' when Jekyll ponders his duality as something 'natural', something he remembers as always present rather than created by repression. 'It was the curse of mankind that these incongruous faggots were thus bound together—that in the agonised womb of consciousness, these polar twins should be continuously struggling. How, then, were they dissociated?'[21] This query about 'dissociation' follows upon the 'truth' that has doomed him, and that, more fully than the first two examples of Stevenson's use of the language of psychology, both asserts the theories of his own time and accurately predicts later ones: that 'man is not truly one, but truly two', that this is only his own state of knowledge, and that more likely 'man will be ultimately known for a mere polity of multifarious, incongruous and independent denizens'.[22] In his own case, he claims the duality was on the moral side and in his own person. He makes no claims to generalise on the nature of these independent denizens.

Moreover, Jekyll's desire from early life is to separate the two selves that are distinct but equally present. His purpose is to allow each to go his own way and to let each exist without the inhibitions and guilt of the one or the limitations of the other. Jekyll learns how to free Hyde, but, as Hyde lives and acts, he becomes stronger while Jekyll loses the control he could maintain when he alone had agency. Exercise and nourishment empower Hyde until he cannot be stopped. This shift in ability to exercise control is, interestingly, a key event also in Prince's description of the lives of 'Miss Beauchamp' and Sally: the longer and more often Sally appears and speaks, the more she is able to continue doing so. Similarly, in Janet's account of Felida X., the second state—more lively and healthy than the first—initially lasted only an hour or two. But, Janet states, 'little by little, this state developed singularly; it lasted for hours and days, and as the subject was now much more active, it was filled with all kinds of serious incidents'.[23] Thus Jekyll's self-description parallels other narratives of duality in its development of agency as in its medical definitions.

It is for these reasons that Erik Z. Woody and Kenneth S. Bowers, in a 1994 article on neo-dissociation, use Jekyll and Hyde as the model for some 'multiplicity of mental processes' that is 'typical and normal'. Indeed, they assert that 'This is, properly, the Stevensonian view'.[24] Their concluding metaphor goes beyond the psychiatry of Stevenson's time and suggests a radical new way also to view Jekyll and Hyde: 'It is an intriguing fact that nothing can prevent the possibility of two operating systems coexisting on the same hardware—for example, Windows and OS/2, either of which could be "brought up" during a particular session.'[25] Like Windows and OS/2, Jekyll and Hyde are equally real, and they co-exist, though only one is embodied at any given time. Hyde is not, then, Jekyll's repressed desires and feelings since he is neither repressed nor unconscious, nor is it necessary to explain his existence more than Jekyll's: their status as personalities is not different, only their times of embodiment and agency. As Woody and Bowers define it:

> The action of the drug in the story is simply to bring to light divisions that were *already* within: the action tendencies elicited in Hyde, horrific as they are to Jekyll, always lay dormant within Jekyll. The drug, rather than creating a second personality, weakens the integrative mechanisms by which the gaping cracks in a personality are papered over and normally hidden from view.[26]

One need only explain the existence and nature of what is not assumed to be typical or normal, as psychiatry once explained homosexuality or Church fathers once explained women. What simply *is* needs no explanation, as heterosexuality and maleness were never explained. In ‘selves’ that are *already* plural, alternate or different personae or personalities may be as ‘normal’ as the presumed unitary self. If Robert J. Lifton, writing in 1993 in *The Protean Self*, correctly identifies the modern self as ‘fluid and many-sided’, and describes ‘tendencies toward multiplicity to the point of fragmentation’ as ‘rampant in both the modern and postmodern’,[27] Stevenson is perhaps more originary of modernism than Eliot or Conrad. Hyde is there because he is there. And his evil is one manifestation of the human condition, a condition not new but framed by profoundly altered ways of understanding the self.

NOTES

[1] Peter Nicholls, *Modernisms: A Literary Guide* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), p.15.

[2] Baudelaire, quoted in Nicholls, p.16.

[3] Nicholls, p.16.

[4] Pierre Janet, *The Major Symptoms of Hysteria,* 2nd ed. (1907; New York: Macmillan, 1920), pp.3-4.

[5] Janet, p.4.

[6] Frederic W. H. Myers, ‘Multiplex Personality’, in Katherine Linehan, ed., *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Norton Critical Edition (New York: Norton, 2003), p.134.

[7] Myers, p.135.

[8] Karl Miller, ‘The Modern Double’, in Linehan ed., *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, pp.124-5.

[9] A 2005 film, for example, represents the character of Jekyll/Hyde as a medical student with access to drugs, and depicts murders in graphic detail: *Jekyll + Hyde* DVD (Santa Monica, CA: Lionsgate, 2005), while newspapers in 1888 linked the story to both the Marquis de Sade and Jack the Ripper. For a discussion of the text as representing contemporary ideas of ‘moral insanity’, criminality, and sexual perversion, see Robert Mighall, ‘Diagnosing Jekyll: the Scientific Context to Dr Jekyll’s Experiment and Mr Hyde’s Embodiment’ in *Robert Louis Stevenson: The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and Other Tales of Terror* (London: Penguin, 2002).

[10] Robert Louis Stevenson to John Paul Bocock, Saranac Lake, [? Mid-November 1887], in Linehan, ed., *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, p.86.

[11] See, for example, William Veeder, ‘Children of the Night: Stevenson and Patriarchy’, in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde after One Hundred Years*, ed. William Veeder and Gordon Hirsch (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp.107-60; Jerold Hogle, ‘The Struggle for a Dichotomy:

Abjection in Jekyll and His Interpreters', in Veeder and Hirsch, pp.161-207; for a review of film versions treating the evil as repression, see Katherine Linehan, "'Closer Than a Wife": the Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll's Significant Other,' in *Robert Louis Stevenson Reconsidered: New Critical Perspectives*, ed. William B. Jones, Jr. (London: McFarland & Company, 2003). In an article on duality in Jekyll and Hyde, published as I was writing this paper, Anne Stiles discusses pre-Freudian psychology, including Pierre Janet, and also points to 'a larger body of Stevenson criticism in which Freud's later works overshadow any late-nineteenth-century scientific sources from which Stevenson might have drawn'. Stiles's broader focus parallels my own reading, but her specific discussion examines the then-current theory of the double brain. See Anne Stiles, 'Robert Louis Stevenson's *Jekyll and Hyde* and the Double Brain', *Studies in English Literature* 46, no. 4 (2006), pp.879-900.

[12] See Veeder, 'The Texts in Question', in Veeder and Hirsch, pp.3-56.

[13] Mighall, p.155.

[14] Julia Reid also reads the earlier drafts as more explicitly sexual but argues that the changes represent 'a toning down of the sexual content, indicating an attempt either to offer more respectable, family reading, or to increase the tale's imaginative reach by making Jekyll's sins less specific, or to bring thematic unity to the tale. The last explanation is most convincing: removing the emphasis on sexual misdemeanor allowed Stevenson to stress instead the dangers of denying primitive instincts.' 'The intriguing nature of Hyde's atavism', she notes, 'is that it resides in the eye of the beholder.' See Julia Reid, *Robert Louis Stevenson, Science, and the Fin de Siécle* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp.100-101.

[15] David Henderson and R. D. Gillespie, *A Text-book of Psychiatry*, 7th ed. (1927; London: Oxford University Press, 1950), pp.179-180.

[16] Stevenson to John Paul Bocock, in Linehan, ed., *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, p.87.

[17] See Morton Prince, *The Dissociation of a Personality: A Biographical Study in Abnormal Psychology*, 2nd ed. (1905; New York: Longmans, 1925). For a discussion of shifting pronouns see, for example, Peter K. Garrett, 'Cries and Voices: Reading *Jekyll and Hyde*' in Veeder and Hirsch, pp.59-72.

[18] Erik Z. Woody and Kenneth S. Bowers, 'A Frontal Assault on Dissociated Control' in *Dissociation: Clinical and Theoretical Perspectives* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1994), p.53.

[19] Ann Stiles notes that the case of Felida X. was 'widely ... discussed in the British press'. Stiles, p.6.

[20] Jekyll claims to have his 'own' handwriting, and they are recognisably similar; moreover, Jekyll says he created one for Hyde. They nonetheless retain these differences as indications of identity.

[21] Stevenson, in Linehan, ed. *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, p.49.

[22] Linehan, ed., *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, p.48.

[23] Janet, p.80.

[24] Woody and Bowers, p.53.

[25] Woody and Bowers, p.75.

[26] Woody and Bowers, p.53.

[27] Robert Jay Lifton, *The Protean Self: Human Resilience in an Age of Fragmentation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p.1, p.8.

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Occasional Paper: Bye Bye Bakhtin

Peter McCarey

Alastair Renfrew begins his article ‘Brief Encounters, Long Farewells’ (*IJSL* 1) by saying that

> The first textual engagement between Bakhtin and Scottish literature came in David Morris’s 1987 article “Burns and Heteroglossia”, published six years after Bakhtin’s vogue had been seriously enabled by the English translation of “Discourse in the Novel”.

In fact, that first textual engagement occurred a good six years earlier, in a piece on Dostoevsky, MacDiarmid and Bakhtin that was read and discussed at the time by Edwin Morgan, Alan Riach, Kenneth Buthlay and others, published in a PhD in 1984 and then in book form by the Scottish Academic Press in 1987.[1] The book was called *Hugh MacDiarmid and the Russians*, and the work on Bakhtin had been done at Leningrad University in 1980, when I was preparing the PhD. The publisher’s reader was Roderick Watson, and the book was reviewed by Robert Crawford (in the *LRB*) and Christopher Whyte (in the *SLJ*); all of them went on to publish on Bakhtin and Scottish literature. Crawford wrote to me “It may amuse you to know I’m trying to do a conference paper involving Bakhtin. I wish you’d had more on him in your book. Surely all his dialogic ideas are a godsend to Scottish lit?” That was on 23 June 1992: I remember because I used the quote in a cut-up poem shortly after that. I don’t claim responsibility or influence, just precedence: I am the man who signed Mikhail Bakhtin for Scotland, and in that capacity I would like to make the following comments.

The Bakhtin I brought back from Leningrad to Glasgow was not about “prestige and exposure” as Renfrew puts it. He was the critic who, for me and for many others following Professor Byaly’s seminar at Leningrad University, had lifted discussion of Dostoevsky out of the undecidable ambiguities of psychology, using analysis of form to get at other aspects of the novelist’s work.

The Bakhtin I brought away with me spoke of “polyphony” (the break-out from solipsism into acknowledgment that someone else exists), “carnival” (other social arrangements are thinkable) and Menippean satire. I simplify grossly; you would need to read the book.

I had not much use for the polyphony: I was working on MacDiarmid, who had little dramatic sense and never saw solipsism as a problem. The critics discussed by Renfrew tend to latch onto polyphony and heteroglossia as something particularly important in Scotland. I’m sure that’s true. But I’m struggling to think of a country for which it is not true.

The carnival business struck me as dubious, though I could not have told you why. Alastair Renfrew does, quite brilliantly, in his article, though he seems to miss the mark in one sense: although Bakhtin writes with relish of a mediaeval culture where the great cities were on holiday for three to four months in the year, I do not believe he idealised carnival; after all, some of the scenes he describes as carnivalesque in Dostoevsky’s novels are violent in every way.

Menippean satire – to summarise Bakhtin’s description of it – contains more comedy than the Socratic dialogue, more thematic and philosophical invention; fantastic episodes are introduced to test the philosophical ideas. Mystical and religious themes are prominent, but the action is often set in bars, brothels and highways. Academic philosophy is dropped and only the ultimate ethical questions remain. Abnormal moral and psychological states are depicted in dreams and madness that disrupt epic and tragic integrity. (By contrast, dreams in the epic are prophetic or minatory structural devices; they do not disintegrate the character.) The Menippean features scandal and disruption of accepted codes, and abrupt changes of tone and subject; it incorporates other genres and topical issues.

The Menippean satire as defined by Bakhtin seemed to me to be greatly contrived, but contrived with such candour and ingenuity that it won me over. Little or nothing remains of the eponymous Menippus; and no one claims that Dostoevsky had ever heard of him or of his satire. What this virtual genre did was to allow strong connections to be made among works which, on the face of it, had little to do with one another. What it can do for readers in Scotland (and this is where I want to endorse Renfrew’s third conclusion, on the subject of genre) is to locate subterranean connections, and to discard spurious links: *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle* is an example of the Menippean genre, and *Cain’s Book*, perhaps surprisingly, fits the bill. But *Trainspotting*, which has its points in common with *Cain’s Book*, owes more to Ealing comedy.

Another point to consider in this light is the remarkable migration from verse to prose in Scottish literature over the last generation. If, to shortcut the argument, the verse/prose distinction is in fact a superficial trait, then the generic shift might have more to do with the market than with anything else. If readers are looking for work that has the deep affinities we find between certain of these writers, they must learn to reach past Menippus to the presocratic philosophers who, as it happens, tended to write in verse; or to that blinding shock when Greek and Jewish cultures collided. Indeed, they can go back to the first recorded epic - for Gilgamesh is not an epic at all, but a Menippean satire before the fact. Scottish *writers* too could take a harder look at genre: there has been heavy concentration on diction, voice and attitude—to brilliant effect. But where is it going?

Recognition of the Menippean genre that Bakhtin adumbrates depends perhaps too much on the reader seeing a Rorschach test the same way he does. It might be worth taking a step back and viewing this genre less as something transmitted from one practitioner to another and gradually transformed, like the sestina and the sonnet, and more as the result of a set of circumstances which repeat themselves in various situations down the ages, in much the same way as creole languages (some of which are worlds apart from the others) tend to share certain linguistic features such as the double negative, subject-verb-object word order, doubling of nouns for plurals and doubling of adjectives or adverbs as intensifiers.

Creoles are clash languages — often a slaving language mixed with a local one to cope with the basic imperatives of communication; the redundancy built into every language is reinforced, the initial vocabulary is simplified. The Menippean is a clash genre where authors try to deal with the imperatives of survival as a human being or community. When authors are in full command of the media of their tribe, they use and adapt the classical genres. In crises where either those genres can no longer cope or the classes that mastered them have lost their place, something like the Menippean satire is likely to arise: a forceful, impatient and often profane attack on central questions of existence.

Is this where we plug into post-coloniality? I rather hope not. We are far beyond that now, in a world where university-educated domestics wire home enough of their paltry earnings to keep entire economies afloat: $19 billion cash last year, which is more than the total capital of the Gates Foundation. Also, there is a certain slyness in the way the Scots have told themselves their histories. MacDiarmid was very astute in his separatist take, which got us off Scot-free from the Empire. If academia is now selling Scotland as the archetypal colonised coloniser, then astute is not the word; it should simply not be done until we are sure that school history books are revised so as to include the Scottish Opium Wars along with the Union of Parliaments. If not, then we are having our cake, eating it, and selling tickets for the performance.

NOTES

[1] Peter McCarey, *Hugh MacDiarmid and the Russians: Dostoevsky, Solovyov and Blok, Mayakovsky and Shestov; with a preliminary chapter on Ossian, Scott and Byron in Russian Literature* (University of Glasgow, 1984)