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Robert Louis Stevenson
Treasure Island

IN THIS CHAPTER I shall examine Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1881-82 in serial form; 1883 in book form) in the context of the Victorian sea story, suggesting that it is a touchstone of its genre. *Treasure Island* is a *Bildungsroman*, a *rite de passage* from illusioned childhood to disillusioned adulthood, possessing a universality that allows it to grip firmly the intellect and imagination of readers of all ages.[1] I shall argue, however, that it is somewhat more complex than this suggests, for *Treasure Island* is also a practised collation of the conventions of quest romance.[2] These intertextual elements are also informed, as we will see, by Stevenson's reading of Anglo-American literature and his first-hand experience of what should perhaps be described as White America.

The American scholar, Barry Menikoff, suggests that Stevenson's extensive reading of American literature, in addition to his sojourn in the United States from August 1879 till August 1880, inspired a more ambitious approach to writing:

> the question is not how many American writers he knew. He read voraciously, omnivorously, and there is little of which he was unaware. That Hawthorne was his intellectual model is as undeniable as that Walt Whitman was his emotional inspiration. Stevenson found in the outspoken poet a zest for freedom that was the antithesis of the crimped and dour Scots mentality. In Whitman, as in Thoreau, he found an idea, perhaps even an ideal, that was associated with America…Whitman

[1] David H. Jackson, '*Treasure Island* as a Late-Victorian Adults' Novel', *The Victorian Newsletter*, 72 (1987), pp. 28-32.
[2] A quest involving conflict assumes two main characters, a protagonist or hero, and an antagonist or enemy. See Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (New York: Atheneum, 1966), pp. 187-196. See also Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: The University Press of Chicago, 1983), p. 287.

> and Thoreau represented the elevation, indeed the exaltation, of the individual, and the idea of freedom that was so strong an element in Stevenson's personality.[3]

The correspondence between the Self and the Anglosphere holds a singular resonance in Stevenson's literary imagination. He found in Anglo-American literature, and indeed in Anglo-American society, a sense of social liberty that he had failed to find in his earlier life. I shall show that this cross-fertilisation of literary influences is fundamental to an understanding of the gestation of *Treasure Island*.[4] The influence that Anglo-American literature had on Stevenson's writing cannot be gainsaid, but its significance has hitherto been underestimated, and perhaps as a consequence undervalued. Previous critics have examined many pieces of the Stevensonian puzzle that is *Treasure Island*, but the Anglo-American input is very much the missing piece, and one that I intend to supply in this chapter. Stevenson does acknowledge a small number of Anglo-American sources related to the plot and characters of *Treasure Island.* However, we will see that the Anglo-American contribution to Stevenson's novel is much greater than he was prepared to admit. In fact, Jenni Calder suggests that Anglo-American society influenced Stevenson in a number of ways:

> His relationship with America was crucial. He had a vigorous admiration for certain American writers, for Whitman and Hawthorne, for instance. America responded with enthusiasm for his own work which Britain did not match, and was prepared to back him with hard cash. His marriage to an American was no accident. Fanny Osbourne had qualities that Stevenson admired in American life and literature: independence, toughness, and unconventionality.[5]

Calder is certainly incisive in her broad view of Anglo-American influence upon Stevenson, but she neglects to provide detailed evidence in support of it. A number of tributaries flow into

[3] Barry Menikoff, 'Biographical Note', in *The Complete Stories of Robert Louis Stevenson* (New York: Modern Library, 2003), pp. *v-vii*, (p. *vi*).
[4] Susan Manning posited the distinctiveness, and distinction, of an Anglospheric literature independent of English literature and culture. See *The Puritan-Provincial Vision: Scottish and American Literature in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), *passim*.
[5] Jenni Calder, 'Introduction: Stevenson in Perspective', in *Stevenson and Victorian Scotland*, ed. by Jenni Calder (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981), pp. 1-10 (p. 1).

the confluence that comprises the narrative of *Treasure Island*, but the ones that spring forth from Anglo-America are perhaps those most worthy of being navigated and explored. Stevenson charts the serpentine waterways of good and evil with detachment. Anglo-American influences have hitherto received comparatively scant attention in the study of *Treasure Island*, but I shall show that they are fundamental to an understanding of its creation. A close study of *Treasure Island* makes evident that it is a significant literary expression of Stevenson's ideas on the nature of creative writing. It employs a style of storytelling in which components taken from Anglo-American and British experience, for the most part literary, but also personal and vicarious, coalesce.

Previous Criticism

John Jay Chapman is one of many critics who have drawn attention to the derivative element of Stevenson's literary output:

> Writing to him was an art, and almost everything that he has written has a little air of being a *tour de force*. Stevenson's books and essays were generally brilliant imitations of established things, done somewhat in the spirit of an expert in billiards. In short, Stevenson is the most extraordinary mimic that has ever appeared in literature…When Stevenson, writing from Samoa in the agony of his 'South Seas' (a book he could not write because he had no paradigm and original to copy from), says that he longs for a 'moment of style', he means that he wishes there would come floating through his head a memory of some other man's way of writing to which he could modulate his sentences.[6]

Chapman suggests that Stevenson needed a template, a literary point of reference, around which to write a story. Andrew Noble, even though enamoured of Stevenson's writing abilities, does not consider that his work stands comparison with those who so obviously influenced him:

> We have consequently sought to perceive Stevenson, as he saw himself, in a comparative context. It is a context in which he almost always fares badly.

[6] John Jay Chapman, 'John Jay Chapman on Stevenson's Sham Art' (1898), in *Robert Louis Stevenson: The Critical Heritage*, ed. by Paul Maixner (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), pp. 488-494 (p. 489-490).

> Consciously modelling himself on Poe, Hawthorne, Dostoevsky ('Markheim' and *Crime and Punishment*), Twain (*Huckleberry Finn* and *Kidnapped*), Scott, Charlotte Brontë and, in his Pacific stories, Herman Melville, he usually emerges from such encounters discredited.[7]

Yet, it should be noted that this view is by no means universal. Edwin M. Eigner argues that Stevenson elevated and modernised his sources of literary inspiration:

> Stevenson's official biographer, his cousin Graham Balfour, wrote that while the author took the best wherever he found it, 'he rendered it to the world again with interest'. Such a statement may appear immodest, especially if we consider that the best from which Stevenson took included such masterpieces as *Wuthering Heights*, *The Marble Faun*, *Huckleberry Finn*, and *Crime and Punishment*. The partiality is understandable, though, for in 1901, when Balfour's book was published, Stevenson was almost as over-rated as he is neglected today. And while it is perhaps improper to regard Stevenson as having improved on these books, it is just as wrong to dismiss him as a mere copier of the ideas he took from the great masters of his tradition. Always, as we shall see, he modified their themes with his own insights and concerns, and he made their ideas fitter to be transmitted into our own century.[8]

Stevenson can thus be seen, somewhat in the manner of Twain, as a literary mimic *par excellence*. He patently found narration far easier than invention, and he gleaned intimations for his writings from almost every work he read. Owen Knowles sees Stevenson as a literary chameleon, and it is the protean nature of his writing, perhaps to some degree born of a comparatively high level of derivativeness, that makes his work difficult to criticise as a whole:

> As a literary man-of-all-trades who had several collaborators during his career, he could sometimes cheerfully speak of himself as a mere tradesman and manipulator of formulae, a supplier of costume-drama which he called 'Tushery'; at other times as a writer who had no respect for 'that fatuous rabble of burgesses called "the public"', and on still other occasions as a helpless victim of a popularity he has neither courted nor wanted. These conflicting attitudes constitute a critical problem insofar as their implied presence can often be felt in Stevenson's fiction and make his work curiously difficult to judge. In his novels generally (and even in any *one* work) he presents himself as a writer who can cheerfully modulate from box-office 'Tushery' to high

[7] 'Introduction', in *Robert Louis Stevenson*, edited by Andrew Noble, Critical Studies Series (London: Vision Press, 1983), pp. 1-22 (p. 12).
[8] Edwin M. Eigner, 'Preface', in *Robert Louis Stevenson and the Romantic Tradition* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966), pp. vii-ix (p. viii).

> originality and back again or who simultaneously tries to engage both adolescent and 'grown up' readers.[9]

This suggests that Stevenson lacked a sense of identity as a writer. It is indeed small wonder that his ever-shifting sense of Self was made visible in his writings, for the sober Cameronian mentality of a substantial section of Scottish society nurtured a distinctive literary vision. The essence of Stevenson's art takes the form of an idiosyncratic invocation of literary tradition. There may not be a Stevensonian style, but there is certainly a Stevensonian method, which is the rewriting and collation of other authors' works. Yet, his writing is not merely what oft was thought but ne'er so well expressed. Indeed, his desire to model himself on the many and varied writers he admired, perhaps to some degree born of an inordinate desire to please his readership, makes his literary output somewhat difficult to categorise. However, if Stevenson's prose bears any hallmark at all it is one of readability. His commonplace style of writing presents no great difficulty to a naïve readership. Nevertheless, readability should not be equated with simplicity, for reading Stevenson at a deep level requires an awareness of the extent to which he employed intertextuality. In *Memories and Portraits* (1887), Stevenson reiterates his belief that writers are made to a great extent by perceptive reading, though every reader of a tale brings a set of experiences, literary and otherwise, to the interpretation of it: 'The fortune of a tale lies not alone in the skill of him that writes, but as much, perhaps, in the inherited experience of him who reads.'[10] One cannot understand what Stevenson wrote without some knowledge and understanding of what he read; his reading is reflected throughout his writing. He was a voracious reader from childhood, and he was palpably possessed of a

[9] *The Penguin History of Literature: The Victorians*, ed. by Arthur Pollard (London: Penguin Books, 1991), p. 346. See also Diana Loxley, 'Slaves to Adventure: The Pure Story of *Treasure Island*', in *Problematic Shores: The Literature of Islands* (London: Macmillan, 1990), pp. 129-169 (p. 136).
[10] Robert Louis Stevenson, 'Pastoral', in *Memories and Portraits* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1917), pp. 56-65 (p.62).

highly retentive memory, which goes some way to explaining the plethora of references and allusions throughout his published works. As Stephen Arata points out:

> Anyone can read a lot, but not everyone can summon up from memory so many apt quotations — often just tossed out in passing — as Stevenson does in his letters. Here is a list of some of the authors he quotes from in the letters (I exclude quotations from the Bible and Shakespeare): Virgil, Browning, Coleridge, Byron, Burns, Horace, Luther. Lady Grizel Baillie, Montaigne, Hugo, Milton, Ovid, Longfellow, Browne, Goethe, Poe, Whitman, Villon, Watts, Scott, Marvell, Heine, Molière, Henley, Dickens, Cicero, Pliny, Addison, Smollett, Disraeli, Pope, Wordsworth, Herrick, Cowper, Bret Harte, W. S. Gilbert, Thoreau, Marlowe, Tacitus, Butler, Twain, George Eliot, Marryat, Tennyson, Dryden, de Musset, Lamb, Goldsmith, Galt, Racine, Persius, "Sir Patrick Spens", Carlyle, Hood, Shelley, Barnfield, Bunyan, Spenser, Gay. You have to read intensely to be able to carry so much literature in your head.[11]

Surprisingly, Arata mentions scarce half-a-dozen of the Anglo-American writers who influenced Stevenson. Indeed, it is an omission all the more surprising given that Arata is an American academic. Stevenson touched upon the importance of reading widely in a concise essay, 'Books Which Have Influenced Me' (1887),[12] and I shall attend to such books as influenced Stevenson in what follows.

Stevenson's confessional preface

Arata's list notwithstanding, Stevenson was equally well versed in the literature of the United States as of the United Kingdom. In the prefatory verse to *Treasure Island* the seminal cross-fertilisation between Anglo-American and British literature is made plain, but I would wish to suggest that this wryly self-deprecating verse could be viewed as a sort of literary smokescreen, for Stevenson simply omits to mention the writers to whom he is most indebted:

[11] Stephen Arata, 'Living in a Book: RLS as an Engaged Reader", in *Robert Louis Stevenson, Writer of Boundaries*, ed. by Richard Ambrosini and Richard Dury (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), pp. 1-24 (p. 14).
[12] Stevenson, 'Books Which Have Influenced Me', in *R. L. Stevenson on Fiction: An Anthology of Literary and Critical Essays*, ed. by Glenda Norquay (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), pp. 110-116.

TO
THE HESITATING PURCHASER

If sailor tales to sailor tunes,
Storm and adventure, heat and cold,
If schooners, islands, and maroons
And Buccaneers and buried Gold,
And all the old romance, retold
Exactly in the ancient way,
Can please, as me they pleased of old,
The wiser youngsters of to-day:
—So be it, and fall on! If not,
If studious youth no longer crave,
His ancient appetites forgot,
Kingston, or Ballantyne the brave,
Or Cooper of the wood and wave:
So be it, also! And may I
And all the pirates share the grave
Where these and their creations lie![13]

Stevenson here suggests that his novel requires the reader to have an appetite that also relishes the prose fiction of W. H. G. Kingston, R. M. Ballantyne, and James Fenimore Cooper, which consists of genre texts that share clusters of codes and literary conventions. I therefore wish to begin by examining Stevenson's borrowings from these three authors. This introductory rhyme implies that the text is simply, 'all the old romance, retold/ Exactly in the ancient way', but this is demonstrably untrue. *Treasure Island* can be seen to deviate in a number of ways from 'the old romance'. Nevertheless, as Joseph Bristow observes, *Treasure Island* is indeed 'a self-conscious romance fiction, with a reflexive interest in storytelling'.[14]

Kingston, an English writer who specialised in nautical adventure stories written for boys, has long since fallen into obscurity, and is now read in the main by scholars of children's literature.[15] *Peter the Whaler* (1861) was perhaps his most popular work. Ballantyne's *The Coral Island: A Tale of the Pacific Ocean* (1857) has some lingering resonance, for it has been

[13] Stevenson, 'To the Hesitating Purchaser', in *Treasure Island* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), no pagination.
[14] Joseph Bristow, *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man's World* (London: Routledge, 1991), p.111.
[15] M. R. Kingsford, *The Life, Work, and Influence of W. H. G. Kingston* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1947), p. 3.

continuously in print since its initial publication; it led on directly to *Treasure Island*, and indirectly to J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*[16] (1904 as a play; 1911 as a novel), and was adeptly satirised in William Golding's anti-Robinsonade, *Lord of the Flies* (1954), which is an adult novel that has gained a wide adolescent readership.[17] Ballantyne's novel could be regarded as a morality tale espousing the mores of the Victorian Age, but this would be a naïve reading, for on closer inspection there are a number of factors — relating to colonialism, Christianity, and the concept of childhood innocence — that are alluded to in an ironic fashion. By having Jim Hawkins narrate *Treasure Island* as an adult's retrospective account of a boy's point of view Stevenson would appear to emulate Ballantyne's narrative method in *The Coral Island*, in which the narratorial voice is that of the adult Ralph Rover musing over his boyhood adventures:

> I was a boy when I went through the wonderful adventures herein set down. With the memory of my boyish feelings strong upon me, I present my book specially to boys, in the earnest hope that they may derive valuable information, much pleasure, great profit, and unbounded amusement from its pages.[18]

Ralph Rover possesses many of the character traits later displayed by Stevenson's Hawkins, albeit in a theatrically exaggerated form. Rover is captured by pirates when he sets out to explore the island in the mistaken belief that they have departed its shores. This is rather similar to Hawkins being captured by the pirates in the stockade when he wrongly believes that it is his associates who occupy it. The pirate captain spares the life of Rover, just as Silver spares the life of Hawkins. There is a recently recruited crew member on Ballantyne's pirate ship called Dick who is in constant need of instruction; this calls to mind Dick Johnson of the

[16] Kathleen Blake, 'The Sea-Dream: *Peter Pan* and *Treasure Island*', *Children's Literature*, 6 (1977), pp. 165-181.
[17] Minnie Singh, 'The Government of Boys: Golding's *Lord of the Flies* and Ballantyne's *Coral Island*', in *Children's Literature: Cross-Writing Child and Adult* (New Haven, Connecticut, Yale University Press, 1997), pp. 205-213.
[18] R. M. Ballantyne, *The Coral Island* (Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 1993), no pagination.

Hispaniola. Rover is befriended by one of the pirates, Bloody Bill, and they have a relationship somewhat similar to that between Hawkins and Silver in the early chapters of *Treasure Island*.

The incident in *The Coral Island* that is most redolent of Hawkins' narrative is the one concerning Rover's escape from the pirates when the cannibals, or 'black gentry in their natural condition',[19] attack the pirates and succeed in killing the majority of them.[20] Bloody Bill, though grievously wounded, survives the *mêlée* and makes good his escape. Rover, having been left to watch over the ship's boat, is able to lend assistance to Bloody Bill by taking to the boat, and they subsequently manage to board the schooner. A member of the aforementioned 'black gentry' does succeed in boarding the schooner, but the plucky white youth, Ralph Rover, deals with him handily and jettisons the body overboard without ceremony. In the context of a boy's own story this is very much a *joie de mort*, for conspicuous valour in the face of the enemy is a key component thereof, all the more so when that enemy is an exotic indigene of ferocious disposition. Bloody Bill fires a ship's cannon with a flash from his pistol, and this proves sufficient to deter any further bellicosity. This episode of the wounded pirate and the boy aboard a drifting ship anticipates the story of Jim Hawkins and Israel Hands on the *Hispaniola*. There are similarities between the way that Ralph Rover ministers to the wounded Bloody Bill and the assistance Jim Hawkins renders to the wounded Israel Hands. In a state of exhaustion Rover falls asleep, but is woken suddenly when Bill loudly complains:

> 'I've got an ugly wound, I fear, and I've been waiting for you to waken, to ask you to get me a drop of brandy, and for a mouthful of bread from the cabin locker…I don't feel up to much just now.'

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 172.

[20] It was received opinion in nineteenth-century Western society that persons indigenous to tropical climes were inherently dangerous. Brian V. Street has explored this theme to good effect in his *The Savage in Literature: Representations of Primitive Society in English Fiction, 1858-1920* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), *passim*. Steven A. LeBlanc and Katherine E. Register have shown that Western opinion in this matter was not entirely unfounded. See *Constant Battles: The Myth of the Peaceful, Noble Savage* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2013), *passim*. See also Lawrence H. Keeley, *War Before Civilization: The Myth of the Peaceful Savage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), *passim*, and Terence Ellingson, *The Myth of the Noble Savage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), *passim*.

> I did not wait until he had done talking, but ran below immediately, and returned in a few seconds with a bottle of brandy and some broken biscuit. He seemed much refreshed after eating a few morsels mingled with a little of the spirits.[21]

Similarly, Hawkins fetches brandy and biscuit for the wounded pirate, Hands. In each case a boy administers alcohol to a pirate as a form of medication — brandy was a key ingredient in many patent medicines of the age:

> 'Come aboard, Mr Hands,' I said ironically.
>
> He rolled his eyes round heavily; but he was too far gone to express surprise. All he could do was utter the one word, 'Brandy'.
>
> It occurred to me that there was no time to lose…I slipped aft, and down the companion-stairs into the cabin.
>
> …I found a bottle with some brandy left, for Hands…and I routed out some biscuits…and then gave Hands the brandy.
>
> 'Aye,' said he, 'by thunder, but I wanted some o' that!'[22]

This is a clear example of an imitative allusion. Stevenson replicates, though not completely, a preceding text, thereby creating a thematic link to it. Two different texts elicit a similar image in the mind of the reader, even though they are the products of different authors. Stevenson appears to have absorbed much from his reading of *The Coral Island*.[23] A youthful Stevenson informed Ballantyne, when they briefly encountered one another in Leith in 1865, that *The Coral Island* numbered among his favourite novels, adding that he had read it twice, and intended to read it twice more.[24] It is perhaps unsurprising that their texts contain similarities, the conventions of the genre notwithstanding.[25] The protagonists of *The Coral Island* and *Treasure Island* are boys possessed of the ability to 'lead and command'.[26] *Treasure Island*

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[21] *Ibid.*, p. 257
[22] Stevenson, *Treasure Island, op. cit.*, p. 130.
[23] Stevenson turned once again to *The Coral Island* for inspiration later in his career when he rewrote Ballantyne's novel in a narrative of misadventure and existential threat, though on this occasion aimed at an adult readership. *The Ebb-Tide* (1894), which was written in collaboration with his stepson, Lloyd Osbourne, contains striking similarities in plot structure and character development to *The Coral Island*. See Roslyn Jolly, '*The Ebb-Tide* and *The Coral Island*', in *Scottish Studies Review*, 7 (2006), pp. 79-91.
[24] Eric Quayle, *Ballantyne the Brave* (London: Hart-Davis, 1967), p. 217.
[25] J. S. Bratton, *The Impact of Victorian Children's Fiction* (London: Croom Helm, 1981), p. 142.
[26] Bristow, *op. cit.*, p 95.

distils themes emanating from the earlier text. Moreover, one may infer from this that Stevenson wishes not only to comment self-referentially on his own story, *Treasure Island*, but perhaps also to comment obliquely upon *The Coral Island*. The root of Stevenson's extended allusion may stem from a wish to guide his readers toward a comprehension of the genre that may be obtained through their own recognition and recollection.

There is, however, an unexpected transatlantic element to this Scottish line of influence. *The Island Home: or, The Young Cast-aways* (1852), a Robinsonade written by Californian journalist, James F. Bowman, under the pseudonym of Christopher Romaunt, is a major source for *The Coral Island*, and thereby also a vicarious source for *Treasure Island*. There are enough similarities between *The Island Home* and *The Coral Island* to make it difficult to ascribe all of them to mere coincidence. There is certainly no plagiarism or paraphrasing, but a number of dramatic, or perhaps melodramatic, situations that appear in *The Island Home* seem to have been rewritten by Ballantyne and sewn seamlessly into his own story. *Treasure Island* also reworks some of these scenarios, either directly from *The Island Home* or *via The Coral Island*.

The *Urtext* of all these novels is, of course, Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), for they all share features of the 'Robinsonade'. Bowman makes full use of the Crusoe tradition in his story of the combined efforts of six marooned youths, one Scottish and five American, to fend for themselves in an alien and hostile environment set in an isolated and exotic location. Bowman includes episodes that would later influence both Ballantyne and Stevenson. There is an episode in *The Island Home* in which a crew member of the *Washington* seeks a place of safety from mutineers at the ship's foretop, but the fugitive is later compelled to descend to the deck after being threatened with a firearm.[27] A somewhat similar situation plays out in *Treasure Island*. Hawkins seeks to escape from Hands by climbing the mast, but it is Hawkins who has the firearm, and it is he who despatches the mutineer. This is a significant point in the novel,

[27] James F. Bowman, *The Island Home* (London: Kessinger, 2010), pp. 29-30.

for it is Hawkins' securing of the schooner that enables the expedition to return home safely. Similarly, Ralph Rover sails a schooner alone after the demise of the mortally wounded Bloody Bill, thereby bringing about the rescue of his shipwrecked companions.

Bowman, Ballantyne, and Stevenson do not evince a need to construct complex plots. Indeed, given the nature of their intended readerships such a stratagem would perhaps be self-defeating. However, there are a sufficient number of similarities between the three novels to make it difficult to ascribe all of them to the conventions of the genre. In addition, all three authors are clearly indebted to Defoe, Johann David Wyss, and Frederick Marryat.[28]

Fenimore Cooper's *The Pilot: A Tale of the Sea* (1824) could have influenced Stevenson when he named Long John Silver.[29] Cooper's harpooner, Long Tom Coffin, sails from the whaling port of Nantucket, Massachusetts. He is a heart-of-oak character, albeit one with a vicious streak, who is perhaps a harbinger of Stevenson's Silver. Interestingly, the naval gun on board the *Arrow* in R. M. Ballantyne's *The Coral Island* is named 'Long Tom', as is the nine-pounder gun mounted on the deck of the *Hispaniola*.

Despite the similarities with *The Coral Island* and *The Pilot*, however, I wish to argue that the introductory chapters of *Treasure Island* are much closer to Fenimore Cooper's *The Sea Lions* (1849) than any other literary source. Stevenson seems to have based his storyline of the ailing, pugnacious, rum-soaked old seadog, Billy Bones, whose personal effects include a curious sea-chest and a map indicating buried treasure, on a similar character in *The Sea Lions*. Cooper describes a rough-and-ready old seafarer who arrives out of the blue at a wayside inn; his only piece of luggage is a shabby sea-chest, which he jealously guards:

> Daggett was poor, as he admitted, as well as friendless and unknown. He had with him, nevertheless, a substantial sea-chest, one of those that sailors of that period

[28] Indeed, all of Bowman's literary references and allusions are to British authors, though with the notable exception of the Swiss author, Wyss.

[29] 'Long John' was also a popular brand of blended whisky, which was named after Long John MacDonald, and was established at the Long John Distillery in Glasgow in 1825. Stevenson, however, had a fondness for single malt whiskies. Scott Allen Nollen, *Robert Louis Stevenson: Life, Literature, and the Silver Screen* (Jefferson, North Carolina: MacFarland, 1994), p. 87.

> uniformly used in merchant vessels, a man-of-war compelling them to carry their clothes in bags for the convenience of compact storage. The chest of Daggett, however, was a regular inmate of the forecastle, and from its appearance had made almost as many voyages as its owner. The last, indeed, was heard to say that he had succeeded in saving it from no less than three shipwrecks. It was a reasonably heavy chest, though its contents when opened did not seem to be of any great value.[30]

Subsequently, the curmudgeonly Daggett, who is aware that his end is near, reveals the contents of his sea chest, which contains a map of an island on which there is to be found buried treasure: 'The chart is in my chest, and not only the islands but the key is so plainly laid down that any mariner could find them. With that chest, however, I cannot part so long as I live.'[31] Daggett explains that he is the sole survivor of the seven characters who were told the story of a hoard of loot by a condemned pirate before he suffered judicial execution. These elements of Cooper's novel anticipate several aspects of Billy Bones' story in *Treasure Island*. Bones had secured a chart from the dying Flint, who had murdered six men of his crew in order to secure secrecy:

> it's my old sea-chest they're after…all old Flint's crew, man and boy, all on 'em that's left. I was first mate, I was, old Flint's first mate, and I'm the on'y one as knows the place. He gave it me at Savannah, where he lay a-dying, like as if I was to now, you see.[32]

This would appear to be more allusion than imitative intertextuality insofar as there is no attempt to replicate the antecedent text. However, the distinction between imitation and allusion is open to debate. What Stevenson takes and uses becomes his own be it imitation or allusion.

Cooper's retired pirate, Daggett, displays much the same general contempt for members of the medical profession that Bones expresses for Dr Livesey.[33] Daggett is defiant to his last

[30] James Fenimore Cooper, *The Sea Lions* (Milton Keynes: Dodo Press, 2009), p. 14.
[31] *Ibid.*, p. 27.
[32] Stevenson, *Treasure Island*, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-25.
[33] Livesey may be based on a well-known temperance advocate possessed of the same surname, Joseph Livesey (1794-1884). In the novel, Livesey warns Bones that rum will be the death of him. Thomas L. Reed, *The*

breath: 'I'm not afeared of the doctor, so let him come as soon as he pleases. Medicine can't hurt a body if he don't take it.'[34] Bones is similarly strident:

> 'Doctors is all swabs,' he said; 'and that doctor there, why, what do he know about seafaring men? I been in places hot as pitch, and mates dropping round with Yellow Jack, and the blessed land a-heaving like the sea with earthquakes — what do the doctor know of lands like that? — and I lived on rum. I tell you…and that doctor swab:' and he ran on again with curses.[35]

Cooper's Dr Sage is described as being 'shrewd, observant, intelligent'.[36] (The non-ironic use of aptronym in the character's surname, Sage, leaves the reader in no doubt as to the quality of his medical advice.) Dr Livesey has something of the admirable Dr Sage about him. Both medical practitioners are prominent members of society: Sage is a former Member of Congress, whereas Livesey is a Justice of the Peace, and their respective comments on the dying pirates in the two novels are quite similar:

> 'This poor man is in the last stages of a decline,' said the physician coolly, 'and medicine can do him no good. He may live a month; though it would not surprise me to hear of his death in an hour.' (*The Sea Lions*, p. 33)

> 'This is nothing…I have drawn blood enough to keep him quite a while; he should lie for a week where he is — that is the best thing for him and you; but another stroke would settle him.' (*Treasure Island*, p.12)

This is not simply allusion, but would appear to be an imitative form of intertextuality. Stevenson establishes a metonymic filiation, importing some of the incidents found in the antecedent model into his own story. In this context, the term intertextuality can also refer to the way that Stevenson reads and critiques precursor Anglospheric texts in an act of rhetorical self-definition. He may be putting his readers on notice to expect certain devices or subplots, though recognition of these is by no means vital to comprehension. Another parallel is that

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Transforming Draught: Jekyll and Hyde, Robert Louis Stevenson, and the Victorian Alcohol Debate (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 2006), pp. 71-72.

[34] Cooper, *The Sea Lions*, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

[35] Stevenson, *Treasure Island*, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

[36] Cooper, *The Sea Lions*, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

Deacon Pratt feels, as does Jim Hawkins, that an outstanding bill for board and lodging grants him the moral right to open the deceased's sea-chest.

We have seen that the three writers who Stevenson names in the prefatory verse to *Treasure Island* did indeed influence the novel in various ways and to various degrees. Although only one of these writers, Cooper, was Anglo-American, we have seen that Stevenson's Scottish forerunner, Ballantyne, was himself influenced by an Anglo-American writer, Bowman, thus establishing an indirect Anglo-American influence on Stevenson also. The English writer, Kingston, was the least influential of the named trio. Yet, although the prefatory verse does identify *some* of Stevenson's influences, it also serves to obscure much more significant ones. However, before I proceed to substantiate this claim, I would like to develop a similar analysis of another text in which Stevenson appears to admit to the influences on *Treasure Island*.

'My First Book: Treasure Island'

Stevenson later discussed the literary antecedents of his sea story in a carefully constructed admission of supposedly inadvertent plagiarism titled 'My First Book, *Treasure Island'* (1894). This essay does indeed shed some light on the gestation of the novel, but in a similar spirit to the prefatory verses, at least insofar as it is essentially an exercise in deception by omission. It cannot be gainsaid that any mode of comparison that lists and underscores similarities, while suppressing or minimising omissions, is by design misleading. Stevenson dissembles as follows:

> I am now upon a painful chapter. No doubt the parrot once belonged to *Robinson Crusoe*. No doubt the skeleton is conveyed from Poe. I think little of these, they are trifles and details; and no man can hope to have a monopoly of skeletons or make a corner in talking birds. The stockade, I am told, is from *Masterman Ready*. It may be, I care not a jot. These useful writers had fulfilled the poet's saying: departing they had left behind them Footprints on the sands of time, Footprints which perhaps another —

> and I was the other! It is my debt to Washington Irving that exercises my conscience, and justly so, for I believe plagiarism was rarely carried farther.[37]

Stevenson alludes here to Longfellow's poem 'A Psalm of Life' (1838) which contains a wholly apposite reference to sailing and shipwreck, and which itself alludes to *Robinson Crusoe* (1719):

> Lives of great men all remind us
> We can make our lives sublime,
> And, departing, leave behind us
> Footprints on the sands of time;
>
> Footprints, that perhaps another,
> Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
> A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
> Seeing, shall take heart again.[38]

In the above passage, Stevenson accepts that he may have borrowed minor details from *Robinson Crusoe*, Poe, and Marryat's *Masterman Ready* (1841), and confesses to significant plagiarism from Washington Irving. Yet, as I have suggested, Stevenson's essay on the literary antecedents of *Treasure Island* could be construed as a calculated obfuscation. He does tell the truth, but it is by no means the whole truth. The confluence of plots and characters from other texts that help form *Treasure Island* is much greater than Stevenson would admit. Stevenson's own view that a writer should seek to go beyond the bounds of convention is explained in an essay he published in the same year that *Treasure Island* appeared in book form. 'A Note on Realism' (1883) gives his views on how stock elements in adventure stories could be recast:

> The old stock incidents and accessories, tricks of workmanship and schemes of composition (all being admirably good, or they would long have been forgotten) haunt and tempt our fancy, offer us ready-made but not perfectly appropriate solutions for any problem that arises, and wean us from the study of nature and the uncompromising practice of art.[39]

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[37] Robert Louis Stevenson, 'My First Book, *Treasure Island', op. cit.,* (p. 120-121).
[38] Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *The Poems of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow* (London: J. M. Dent, 1909), p. 5. Originally published in *Knickerbocker Magazine*, October 1838.
[39] Stevenson, 'A Note on Realism', in *R. L. Stevenson on Fiction: An Anthology of Literary and Critical Essays*, ed. by Glenda Norquay, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-71 (p. 70). Originally published in *The Magazine of Art*, November, 1883, pp. 24-28.

Indeed, Stevenson follows precept with practice An untitled prefatory verse in *Penny Whistles* (1885), a collection of Stevenson's poems written for children, may betray a lack of confidence in his ability as a writer:

> Of all my verse, like not a single line;
> But like my title, for it is not mine.
> That title from a better man I stole:
> Ah, how much better, had I stol'n the whole![40]

Stevenson was still giving voice to a bleak self-appraisal of his abilities as a writer near to the end of his life. The lack of self-confidence he betrays regarding his literary abilities could perhaps explain his propensity to borrow so extensively from the works of other writers.

In 'My First Book, Treasure Island', Stevenson admits that it was his debt to Washington Irving that exercised his conscience because 'I believe that plagiarism was rarely carried further.' He goes on to say that

> I chanced to pick up… [Irving's] *Tales of a Traveller* some years ago with a view to an anthology of prose narrative, and the book flew up and struck me: Billy Bones, his chest, the company in the parlour, the whole inner spirit, and a good deal of the material detail of my first chapters — all were there, all were property of Washington Irving.[41]

Irving was an American man of letters who is remembered in the main for his short stories 'The Legend of Sleepy Hollow' and 'Rip van Winkle' contained in *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* (1820), and written while he was living in England. Irving is yet another writer who is embedded within a two-way transatlantic intertextual network. He visited the home of Sir Walter Scott in 1817, and this visit initiated a lifelong personal and professional friendship. Irving's father, William, had emigrated from the Orcadian island of Shapinsay to Manhattan, New York, and Irving was brought up listening to folk tales from his Scottish father and English mother. Irving made plain the significance of English letters in the United States

[40] Stevenson, *The Collected Poems of Robert Louis Stevenson* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), p. 69.
[41] Stevenson, 'My First Book: '*Treasure Island*'', in *Treasure Island*, *op. cit.*, pp. 185-191 (p. 188).

in a statement that projects an idealised version of literary relations in the nineteenth-century Anglosphere:

> There is nothing published in England on the subject of our country that does not circulate through every part of [America]…Possessing, then, as England does, the fountain-head whence the literature of the language flows, how completely it is in her power, and how truly is it in her duty, to make it the medium of amiable and magnanimous feeling — a stream where the two nations might meet together, and drink in peace and kindness.[42]

There is indeed a confluence of vision, style, and source in the meeting of Irving's and Stevenson's works. As Stevenson admits, the work of Irving that influenced him most was *Tales of a Traveller* (1824). This work uses the following lines from Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* as an epigraph:

> Now I remember those old women's words
> Who in my youth would tell me winter's tales;
> And speak of spirits and ghosts that glide by night
> About the place where treasure hath been hid.[43]

This epigraph announces one of the themes of *Tales of a Traveller* and knowingly indicates that the hunt for hidden treasure is a stock plot device. It also announces that Irving's writing draws on the literary treasures that he has found in his reading. Basically, like Stevenson, Irving writes what he reads, which is to say that the storytelling process is inherently intertextual.[44]

As Stevenson confesses, Irving's description of an old seadog in 'Wolfert Webber' (1824) in Part IV of *Tales of a Traveller* helped to shape his creation of Billy Bones. In *Treasure Island*, Stevenson's old seadog is described as 'a tall, strong, heavy, nut-brown man; his tarry pigtail falling over the shoulders of his soiled blue coat; his hands ragged and scarred, with black, broken nails, and the sabre cut across one cheek, a dirty, livid white.'[45] In addition,

[42] Washington Irving, *The Sketch-Book* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 54.
[43] Christopher Marlowe, *The Jew of Malta* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), II.1. p. 99.
[44] Robert D. Richardson, *First We Read, Then We Write: Emerson on the Creative Process* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2009), *passim.*
[45] Stevenson, *Treasure Island, op. cit.*, p. 1.

Bones has an authoritative mien: 'He had none of the appearance of a man who sailed before the mast; but seemed like a mate or skipper, accustomed to be obeyed or strike.'[46] In comparison, here is Irving's old seadog, Peechy Prauw,

> who seemed…completely at home in the chair and the tavern. He was rather under size, but deep-chested, square, and muscular. His broad shoulders, double joints, and bow knees, gave tokens of prodigious strength. His face was dark and weather-beaten; a deep scar, as if from the slash of a cutlass, had almost divided his nose, and made a gash in his upper lip, through which his teeth shone like a bull-dog's. A mop of iron-gray hair gave a grisly finish to this hard-favored visage. His dress was of an amphibious character. He wore an old hat edged with tarnished lace, and cocked in martial style, on one side of his head; a rusty blue military coat with brass buttons, and a wide pair of short petticoat trousers, or rather breeches, for they were gathered up at the knees. He ordered everybody about him with an authoritative air; talked in a brattling voice that sounded like the crackling of thorns under a pot; damned the landlord and servants with perfect impunity.[47]

Stevenson varies Irving's description by attributing his old seadog's facial scarring to a sabre cut, while Irving's seadog has a scar caused by a cutlass slash. Irving's version, which is rather more detailed, would seem to possess a greater degree of verisimilitude. Once again, then, Stevenson can be seen to adopt an episode from a precursor text and employ it in his own text. However, although Stevenson does borrow heavily from Irving, I want to show in what follows that his revelation, like that in the novel's prefatory verse, also conceals how heavily he has borrowed from other works.

Stevenson made further confessions in a letter to Sidney Colvin in late May 1884, suggesting that '*Treasure Island* came out of Kingsley's *At Last: A Christmas in the West Indies*; where I got the 'Dead Man's Chest' — that was the seed.'[48] The 'Dead Man's Chest' appears quite early in *At Last* when Kingsley refers to

> Virgin Gorda; the first of those numberless isles which Columbus, so goes the tale, discovered…Unfortunately, English buccaneers have since given to most of them less

[46] *Ibid.*, p. 2.
[47] Washington Irving, *Tales of a Traveller* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1987), pp. 247-248.
[48] *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. by Bradford A. Booth and Ernest Mehew, 8 vols (New Haven and London; Yale University Press, 1995), IV, p. 300.

> poetic names. The Dutchman's Cap, Broken Jerusalem, The Dead Man's Chest, Rum Island, and so forth…[49]

Kingsley, then, does refer briefly to The Dead Man's Chest as the name given by buccaneers to one of the islets in the Virgin Islands, though the correct cartographic nomenclature is Dead Chest Island (there is Deadman's Bay on the nearby Peter Island).[50] If this were 'the seed' of *Treasure Island*, however, it seems that this was all he took from *At Last*. Stevenson once more appears to dissemble.

Stevenson's unacknowledged borrowings

In 'To the Hesitating Purchaser' and 'My First Book', as we have seen, Stevenson admits to borrowing a great deal from other authors in composing *Treasure Island*. In the latter he goes on to say that

> the map was the most of the plot. I might almost say it was the whole. A few reminiscences of Poe, Defoe, and Washington Irving, a copy of Johnson's *Buccaneers*, the name of the Dead Man's Chest from Kingsley's *At Last*, some recollections of canoeing on the high seas, and the map itself, with its infinite, eloquent suggestion, made up the whole of my materials.[51]

Yet, Stevenson is still dissembling, for the admissions in the poem and essay omit the materials he gathered from other writers. Stevenson seems to have written the verse and 'My First Book, *Treasure Island*' to confuse the issue, for the influences that he does not list are of far greater significance than those he does. Robert Norquay describes Stevenson's disingenuous confession thus: 'In 'My First Book, *Treasure Island*' [Stevenson] claimed his own critical distance and expertise as a writer, gently chiding an earlier, naively influenced, reading self for plagiarism used by his writing self, then critiqued himself in the manner of a literary critic

[49] Charles Kingsley, *At Last: A Christmas in the West Indies* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1871), p. 13.
[50] Ian Bell, *Dreams of Exile: Robert Louis Stevenson: A Biography* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 1992), p. 166.
[51] Stevenson, *Treasure Island, op. cit.,* p. 190.

tracking down influences.'[52] Stevenson's *mea culpa* makes a virtue of necessity. He felt compelled to defend publicly the extent of his literary borrowing. However, in this and the following sections I want to trace some of the sources that are omitted from 'My First Book' and the prefatory verse. In an essay published in 1887 Stevenson confessed that:

> Whenever a book or a passage particularly pleased me, in which a thing was said or an effect rendered with propriety, in which there was either some conspicuous force or some happy distinction in the style, I must sit down at once and set myself to ape that quality. I was unsuccessful, and I knew it; and tried again, and was unsuccessful, and always unsuccessful. But at least in these vain bouts I got some practice in rhythm, in harmony, in construction, and in the co-ordination of parts. I have thus played the sedulous ape to Hazlitt, to Lamb, to Wordsworth, to Sir Thomas Browne, to Defoe, to Hawthorne, to Montaigne, to Baudelaire, and to Obermann.[53]

Stevenson goes on to conclude that this process, 'like it or not, is the way to learn to write; whether I have profited or not, that is the way.'[54] Perhaps tellingly, he does not admit to playing 'the sedulous ape' to any of the Anglo-American writers from whom he borrowed when writing *Treasure Island*.

In *Treasure Island*, Stevenson ingratiates himself with his juvenile readership by suggesting that an English boy can be much more courageous and resourceful than a grown man, and this is a device he has doubtless learned from his forerunners in the genre.[55] In Johann David Wyss' *Swiss Family Robinson* (1812), whose title flags up its own intertextual forebear, one of the four Robinson brothers recalls a useful Hottentot skill he read about in a book, which prompts his father to declare, 'Well done…I am glad to see that you remember what you have read.'[56] This is by no means an isolated incident. Earlier in the story another son makes a serendipitous discovery, which prompts his father to enunciate with unbridled enthusiasm,

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[52] Robert Norquay, *Robert Louis Stevenson and Theories of Reading* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), p. 6.
[53] Stevenson, 'A College Magazine', in *Memories and Portraits, op. cit.*, pp. 36-47 (p. 37).
[54] *Ibid.*, p. 39.
[55] Fiona McCulloch, 'Playing Double — Performing Childhood in *Treasure Island*', in *The Fictional Role of Childhood in Victorian and Early Twentieth-Century Children's Literature* (Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2004), pp. 52-77 (p. 54).
[56] Johann David Wyss, *Swiss Family Robinson* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 291.

'Well done, Franz!…these fish hooks, which you the youngest have found, may contribute more than anything else…to save our lives.'[57] This dependence upon a boy hero can also be found in Captain Marryat's *Masterman Ready,* whose influence Stevenson admits, but dismisses as slight. The eponymous protagonist of the tale is an experienced seafarer who finds himself shipwrecked on a desert island with the Seagrave family. Masterman Ready, hardy individual though he is, becomes increasingly dependent upon the resourcefulness of William, the Seagraves' son. In contrast, his parents are of no assistance whatsoever. 'I will not at present say anything to Mr and Mrs Seagrave,' Masterman Ready thinks to himself in the course of an existential crisis, 'And yet I cannot do without help — I must trust Master William — he is a noble boy that, and clever beyond his years.'[58] Stevenson also borrowed the oath 'shiver my timbers' from Marryat.[59]

The Anglo-American literary critic, Harold Francis Watson, in his seminal *Coasts of Treasure Island,* discusses American stories and novels of a maritime theme, and their possible influence on *Treasure Island,* but much is highly speculative. More convincing is his suggestion that the London journalist Bernard Blackmantle's novel, *The English Spy* (1826), may have influenced Stevenson to some degree.[60] Stevenson's dark-skinned Billy Bones is 'a tall, strong, heavy, nut-brown man',[61] while Blackmantle's seaman is:

> an old man-of-war's man, whose visage, something of the colour and hardness of dried salmon, sufficiently indicated that the possessor had weathered many a trying gale, and was familiar with all the vicissitudes of the mighty deep.[62]

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[57] *Ibid*., pp. 6-7.
[58] Frederick Marryat, *Masterman Ready, or, The Wreck of the Pacific* (Boston: Aldine, 1912), p. 209. Marryat played a decisive role in establishing the adventure story as a dominant form in nineteenth-century children's books.
[59] Stevenson, *Treasure Island, op. cit.,* p. 49. This slightly bizarre exclamation, which perhaps means shake my planks to pieces, was never, according to those knowledgeable in maritime lore, in common use among seamen. However, it is now universally associated with them, and has since become a humorous catchphrase. *The Oxford English Dictionary* states that the first use of the term is to be found in a nautical novel, Frederick Marryat's *Jacob Faithful,* 3 vols (London: Saunders and Otley, 1834), I, p. 72.
[60] Harold Francis Watson, *Coasts of Treasure Island: A Study of the Background and Sources for Robert Louis Stevenson's Romance of the Sea* (San Antonio, Texas: The Naylor Company, 1969), p. 25.
[61] Stevenson, *Treasure Island, op. cit*., p. 1.
[62] Bernard Blackmantle, *The English Spy*, 2 vols (London: Sherwood, Gilbert, and Piper, 1826), II, p. 181.

There is also an amputee in the novel, Tom Tackle, who has been maimed in a naval action:

> His mutilated frame spoke volumes in behalf of the gallantry he had displayed in the service of his country. One eye was entirely lost; one coat-sleeve hung armless by his side; and one vanished leg had its place superseded by a wooden substitute.[63]

An Admiral Benbow Inn, perhaps a popular name for inns in the eighteenth century, features in *The English Spy*, though this establishment is not set on a lonely coastal road but on a busy thoroughfare of Portsmouth. *The English Spy* was never a widely read work, but the stereotypical casting of weather-beaten, hard-bitten seadogs, and beggarly amputees acting before the backdrop of an Admiral Benbow Inn, seems to have struck a chord with Stevenson.

In 'My First Book' Stevenson makes light of his debt to *Robinson Crusoe*, but it is universally acknowledged that Daniel Defoe is the *paterfamilias* of the desert island romance, as witnessed by the generic term 'Robinsonade'. *Robinson Crusoe* occupies a unique place in the ancestry of the boy's own story. Indeed, just as the Presbyterian ban on fiction for the young made an exception of John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, so *Robinson Crusoe* was the one piece of fiction that those of a rationalist bent assigned to their charges, and on the authority of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Émile*, too.[64]

One of Stevenson's contemporaries was of the opinion that Stevenson was possessed of the ability to think and write like Defoe, and was able to 'so blend Defoe and Dickens with a something of himself…that he can present you with a blind old Pew or a John Silver'.[65] The Americas appear as an evocative setting in rather more than half of Defoe's novels, including *Robinson Crusoe*.[66] The political theory of possessive individualism, material advancement by the exercise of personal initiative, if not indeed daring, forms an undertow in *Robinson Crusoe*, and the resultant eddies can be seen in *Treasure Island*. Indeed, in some noteworthy aspects,

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[63] *Ibid*., pp. 183-184.
[64] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile, ou De l'éducation* (1762), trans. by Allan Bloom (New York: Basic, 1979), p. 148.
[65] J. E. H. Gordon, in *The Bookman*, (January 1895), p. 11.
[66] Dennis Todd, *Defoe's America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), *passim.*

these two stories are strikingly parallel. Hence, it would be productive to discuss *Robinson Crusoe* as it manifests itself in *Treasure Island*, for that contrast would serve to clarify the lineaments of Stevenson's literary imagination. Stevenson's indebtedness to Defoe was enduring and many-sided.[67] Indeed, Defoe's influence can be found in *Treasure Island* even when Stevenson is apparently unaware of it.[68]

While Stevenson's use of the phrase 'Footprints on the sand' in 'My First Book' is an allusion to Longfellow, Longfellow is himself alluding to one of the most memorable episodes in *Robinson Crusoe*, when the protagonist discovers a footprint upon the seashore and begins a new chapter in his quest for survival on his desert island. The following well-known passage from *Robinson Crusoe* left its imprint on *Treasure Island*:

> It happen'd one day about noon going toward my boat, I was exceedingly surprised with the print of a man's naked foot on the shore, which was very plain to be seen in the sand: I stood like one thunderstruck…I went up to a rising ground to look farther, I went up the shore and down the shore, but it was all one, I could see no other impression but that one, I went to it again to see if there were any more, and to observe if it might not be my fancy; but there was no room for that, for there was exactly the very print of a foot, toes, heel, and every part of a foot; how it came thither, I knew not, nor could in the least imagine.[69]

This passage presages the abrupt, albeit disconnected, interaction with the Other that is to be found in *Treasure Island*.[70] There is a noticeable correspondence between Crusoe's sudden

[67] Stevenson's first published work, *The Pentland Rising: A Page of History, 1666* (1866), which was a bicentennial tribute to Presbyterian martyrs, is based on Defoe's *Memoirs of the Church of Scotland* (1717).
[68] Sidney Colvin informed Stevenson by letter that Edward Burne-Jones, a celebrated artist and designer, found a marked similarity between Defoe's *Captain Singleton* (1720) and *Treasure Island*. This view seems to have caused Stevenson some annoyance: 'Here is a quaint thing. I have read *Robinson, Colonel Jack, Moll Flanders, Memoirs of a Cavalier, History of the Plague, History of the Great Storm, Scotch Church and Union.* And there my knowledge of Defoe ends — except a book, the name of which I forget, about Peterborough in Spain, which Defoe obviously did not write, and could not have written if he wanted. To which of these does B. J. refer? I guess it must be the history of the Scottish Church. I jest; for, of course, I *know* it must be a book I have never read, and which this makes me keen to read — I mean *Captain Singleton*. Can it be got and sent to me? If *Treasure Island* is at all like it, it will be delightful. I was just the other day wondering at my folly in not remembering it, when I was writing *T. I.*, as a mine for pirate tips.' Stevenson, *Letters*, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 300.
[69] Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), p. 122.
[70] Stephen Bertmann lists a plethora of sources from which Defoe may have taken the episode of a discovery of a footprint in the sand. See 'Defoe and 'the Footprints of Man', *Digital Defoe: Studies in Defoe and his Contemporaries*, 5 (2013), pp. 130-143.

awareness of the possible presence of another man on his island and Hawkins' encounter with the 'lurking nondescript', the Crusoesque Ben Gunn:

> From the side of the hill…a spout of gravel was dislodged…my eyes turned instinctively in that direction and I saw a figure leap with great rapidity behind the trunk of a pine. What it was, whether bear or man or monkey, I could in no wise tell…the terror of this apparition brought me to a stand…I began to prefer the dangers that I knew to those I knew not…I turned on my heel, and looking sharply behind me over my shoulder, began to retrace my steps…[71]

Stevenson admits in 'My First Book' that he borrowed from *Robinson Crusoe*, though it should be noted that Crusoe was shipwrecked, not marooned.

> Crusoe periodically refers to 'Providence' throughout the course of his story:
>
> I gave humble and hearty thanks that God had been pleas'd to discover to me, even that it was possible I might be more happy in this solitary condition, than I should have been in a liberty of society…he could fully make up to me, the deficiencies of my solitary state, and the want of human society by his presence, and the communications of his grace to my soul supporting, comforting, and encouraging me to depend upon his Providence.[72]

Crusoe, castaway-*cum*-eremite, comes to knowledge of God through an enforced solitude with nothing but a *King James Bible* to read, finding the Good Book a comfort to his condition. Ben Gunn experiences a similar epiphany: 'But it were Providence that put me here. I've thought it all out in this here lonely island, and I'm back on piety.'[73]

Gunn, who is a demented maroon *and* 'a white man',[74] is a former member of Flint's crew, and one of *Treasure Island's* most perplexing characters. Gunn receives but little attention in the narrative, yet his role in the story is pivotal. His life as a castaway has equipped him with local knowledge and practical skills that prove invaluable to Jim and his associates,

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[71] Stevenson, *Treasure Island*, *op. cit.*, p. 81.
[72] Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, *op. cit.*, p. 90.
[73] Stevenson, *Treasure Island*, op. cit., p. 83. In nineteenth-century Scotland many shared John Knox's conviction that 'Faith hath both her beginning and continuance by the Word of God.' See *The Works of John Knox*, ed. by David Laing, 6 vols (Edinburgh, Thomas George Stevenson, 1855), IV, p. 133. See also Alexander Cheyne, 'The Bible and Change in the Nineteenth Century', in *The Bible in Scottish Life and Literature*, ed. by David F. Wright (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1988), pp. 192-207.
[74] Stevenson, *Treasure Island*, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

and he is somewhat of an unsung hero. It may be significant that only inhabitant of Treasure Island is a maroon who bears a surname that is most commonly found in the North of Scotland. The marooned character could easily have been employed to signify the Other, for according to the Oxford English Dictionary maroons were originally black slaves who had escaped captivity and settled in the mountains and forests of the West Indies. Negroes and mulattoes served aboard ships of the Royal Navy and the British Merchant Marine during that period. Privateers also had multiracial crews.[75] Stevenson's cast of characters evince a fantastical, and perhaps atypical, whiteness. The presence of the Other is erased, and the effect of this absence, regardless of conscious intent, is to validate the normativity of whiteness.

Stevenson wrote that man can be stirred and emboldened by facing danger and hardship, a process which 'is as old as *Robinson Crusoe*; as old as man.'[76] Stevenson's text gains from being an unacknowledged repetition. The reader is rewarded by recognition of the *Urtext*.

Toni Morrison has declared that 'No early American writer is more important to the concept of American Africanism than Poe.'[77] This is a sweeping statement, and perhaps not one that bears examination. Killis Campbell has observed that:

> Poe…mentions the negro only once in his letters; and he is silent about the negro in his poems…he refers to the negro…precisely sixteen times: once in his letters, six times in his critical articles, and nine times in his tales. In some of these…he speaks very briefly about the negro.[78]

[75] Bolster, W. Jeffrey, *Black Jacks: African-American Seamen in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997), *passim*.
[76] Stevenson, 'Child's Play' (1878), in *R. L. Stevenson on Fiction: An Anthology of Literary and Critical Essays*, ed. by Glenda Norquay, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-39 (p. 34).
[77] Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the American Literary Imagination* (New York: Knopf, 1992), p. 32.
[78] Killis Campbell, 'Poe's Treatment of the Negro and of the Negro Dialect', *University of Texas Studies in English*, 16 (1936), pp. 106-114 (p. 106).

Edgar Allan Poe, whose stepfather was a slave dealer, was an unabashed supporter of 'the peculiar institution'.[79] Perhaps correlatively, Poe's *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* (1838) is an encomium on the rightness of whiteness.[80] On the other hand, blackness is a *Leitmotiv* threaded through *Treasure Island*. Pugh, being blind, sees only blackness as he presses the black spot into the palm of Bones. The pirate who discovers Bones' whereabouts is called Black Dog. The Admiral Benbow Inn is situated at Black Hill Cove. The pirate, Blackbeard, is mentioned. The pirate flag is a black background upon which a skull and bones are imposed. Silver tells a shipmate that 'if he hadn't taken to you like pitch…',[81] and pitch is black, of course. He later says to the same man, 'It's a black conscience that can make you feared of me'.[82] Jim's unwitting entry into the stockade after it has been occupied by pirates occurs 'in the blackness of the night'.[83] Silver's spouse is a black woman. However, it is perhaps no accident that silver is a *white* metal.

Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket relates the tale of a youth who stows away on a whaling ship, faces a mutinous crew, and interacts with putative pirates. In a similar manner to *Treasure Island* it purports to be an autobiographical account, albeit an incomplete one. However, while Hawkins is *implicitly* white, and any interaction with the Other is presumably deemed superfluous, Pym's whiteness is *explicit*, even though he seems to have little experience of dealing with the aforementioned Other. Similar to *Treasure Island*, the foremost malefactor is a cook. He is not an amputee, however, but a black man, who is 'a perfect

[79] For a discussion of Poe's views on African-Americans, and their interactions with Anglo-Americans, see Bernard Rosenthal, 'Poe, Slavery, and the *Southern Literary Messenger*: A Re-examination', *Poe Studies*, 7 (1974), pp. 29-38. Views similar to those espoused by Poe remain pervasive in Western society. See Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *White on Black: Images of Africa and Blacks in Western Popular Culture* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1995), *passim*.
[80] Dana D. Nelson, 'Ethnocentrism Decentered: Colonialist Motives in *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*', in *The Word in Black and White: Reading "Race" in American Literature, 1638-1867* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 90-108.
[81] Stevenson, *Treasure Island*, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
[82] *Ibid.*, p. 75.
[83] *Ibid.*, p. 145.

demon'.[84] To continue in a similar vein, in Poe's short story, 'The Gold-Bug' (1843), 'an old negro'[85] slave called Jupiter turns on his master and physically assaults him. Similarly, Pym, and the entire crew of a British ship, the *Jane Guy*, are blind to the implications of a taboo against whiteness, and are massacred by the dark-skinned indigenes of Tsalal, with whom they had previously imagined themselves to be on good terms. Poe, being himself a forthright tribalist, demonstrates that a lack of racial awareness can have fatal consequences. *Arthur Gordon Pym* is full of what Morrison has described as 'images of impenetrable whiteness',[86] though one can only speculate as to why she should find such examples of whiteness so impenetrable.[87] Indeed, Poe appears to employ whiteness as a metaphor throughout this work.[88]

Pym, his companion, Peters, and their native guide, Nu-Nu, float on a milk-white sea, and a fine white powder, resembling ashes, falls over themselves and the surface of the water. The black man dies, but the boat rushes on through a white curtain of light, and before them is 'a shrouded giant, whose skin is 'of the perfect whiteness of snow'.[89] This is perhaps a biblical allusion, and one of an apocalyptic nature.[90] The penultimate paragraph presents a repetitively italicised '*white*', perhaps as a symbol of hegemonic whiteness:

> Tekeli! was the cry of the affrighted natives of Tsalal upon discovering the carcass of the *white* animal picked up at sea. This also was the shuddering exclamation of the shuddering exclamation of the captive Tsalalian upon encountering the *white* materials in possession of Mr. Pym. This also was the shriek of the swift-flying, *white*, and gigantic birds which issued from the vapoury *white* curtain of the South. Nothing *white* was to be found at Tsalal.[91]

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[84] Edgar Allan Poe, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket and Related Tales* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 38. Mat Johnson's *Pym* (2011) tells Poe's story from a black perspective. A manuscript titled *The True Interesting Narrative of Dirk Peters. Colored Man. As Written by Himself*, is supposedly discovered, and the narrator of *Pym*, an African-American academic, examines the intellectual sources of 'racial whiteness' while retracing the voyage of Pym and Peters.
[85] Poe, 'The Gold-Bug', in *Selected Tales* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 199.
[86] Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the American Literary Imagination*, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
[87] A great many critics have found *Arthur Gordon Pym* difficult to comprehend. See Ronald C. Harvey, *The Critical History of Edgar Allan Poe's* The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket: *"A Dialogue with Unreason"* (New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 13-14.
[88] Jeffrey Meyers, *Edgar Allan Poe: His Life and Legacy* (New York: Cooper Square Press, 1992), p. 100.
[89] Poe, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket and Related Tales, op. cit.*, p. 175.
[90] 'His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire'. *The Bible: Authorized King James Version with Apocrypha. The Book of Revelation* 1:14. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).
[91] Poe, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket and Related Tales, op. cit.*, p. 220.

Poe's Romantic perception of such *whiteness* could be viewed as a nineteenth-century form of virtue signalling, for it would appear to embrace an unabashedly ethnocentric *Weltanschauung*. *Arthur Gordon Pym* is without doubt a celebration of whiteness, as indeed is *Treasure Island*, albeit in a very different way.

We have seen that Stevenson admits in 'My First Book' to borrowing from Poe: 'No doubt the skeleton is conveyed from Poe'.[92] He also says that 'The map was the chief part of my plot. For instance, I had called an islet "Skeleton Island," not knowing what I meant, seeking only for the immediate picturesque, and it was to justify this name that I broke the gallery of Mr Poe and stole Flint's pointer.'[93] Stevenson, however, does not give full credit to Poe in 'My First Book', since he borrowed a good deal more from Poe then he is willing to admit, and more from Poe than from Irvine. There are, for example, a number of scenes in *Treasure Island* that bear close resemblance to scenes in Poe's 'The Gold-Bug'. The expeditions in search of buried treasure in the two stories bear a close similarity, and some of the dialogue in *Treasure Island* also bears the stamp of Poe. The characters in 'The Gold- Bug' seek their treasure as follows:

> We crossed the creek at the head of the island by means of a skiff, and ascending the high grounds on the shore of the main land proceeded in a north-westerly direction, through a tract of country excessively wild and desolate, where no trace of human footstep was to be seen. Legrand led the way with decision; pausing only for an instant, here and there, to consult what appeared to be certain landmarks of his own contrivance on a former occasion.[94]

In *Treasure Island*, Jim Hawkins informs the reader that 'we set forth upon the bosom of the anchorage' and that, 'after quite a long passage, [we] landed at the mouth of the second river'.[95]

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[92] Stevenson, 'My First Book, Treasure Island', in *Treasure Island, op. cit.,* (p. 188). Stevenson drew on Poe's work once again when he transformed the theme of the destructive double in 'William Wilson' (1839) into *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886).
[93] *Ibid.,* pp. 190.
[94] Poe, 'The Gold-Bug', in *Selected Tales, op. cit.,* pp. 206-207.
[95] Stevenson, *Treasure Island, op. cit.,* p. 165

In a short time Silver's crew are also striking 'pretty near north-west' across the island. While William Legrand's destination is 'an enormously tall tulip tree, which stood with some eight or ten oaks',[96] Silver's destination is revealed to be the third of three tall pines which 'rose nearly two hundred feet in the air above a clump of underwood'.[97] Jupiter's misuse of Kidd's pointer in 'The Gold-Bug' (he confuses the right and left eye), and the consequent excavation in the wrong place, is similar to the bringing of the first two trees into Jim Hawkins' narrative, which are the wrong ones. Legrand's disenchantment in connection with the previously excavated site influences the writing of the scene in which Silver's mutinous seadogs discover the cache they seek has been already rifled. There is also a parallel of sorts in the febrile digging of Poe's dog and Stevenson's pirates. The Newfoundland dog, 'leaping into the hole, tore up the mould frantically with his claws'.[98] Similarly, the pirates, 'with oaths and cries, began to leap, one after another, into the pit, and to dig with their fingers'.[99]

The order of these events is not identical, but there would appear to be textual parallels. Kidd's two criminal associates, who according to Legrand's assertion were slain after assisting in the burial of the treasure, anticipate the six pirates murdered under a similar set of circumstances by Flint. Moreover, as Stevenson admits, there is a striking similarity regarding the use of a skeleton in both texts. Poe uses it as follows:

> In a few seconds [the dog] had uncovered a mass of human bones, forming two complete skeletons, intermingled with several buttons of metal, and what appeared to be the dust of decayed woollen. One or two strokes of the spade upturned the blade of a large Spanish knife, and as we dug further, three or four loose pieces of gold and silver coin came to light.[100]

This description bears comparison with Jim Hawkins' account in *Treasure Island*:

> a human skeleton lay, with a few shreds of clothing on the ground.

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[96] Poe, *'The Gold-Bug',* in *Selected Tales, op. cit.,* p. 207.
[97] Stevenson, *Treasure Island, op. cit.,* p. 178.
[98] Poe, *'The Gold-Bug',* in *Selected Tales, op. cit.,* p. 213.
[99] Stevenson, *Treasure Island, op. cit.,* p. 173.
[100] Poe, *'The Gold-Bug',* in *Selected Tales, op. cit.,* p. 213.

> ‘He was a good seaman,’ said George Merry. …‘Leastways, this is a good sea-cloth.’
> ‘Ay, ay,’ said Silver, ‘like enough; you wouldn’t look to find a bishop here, I reckon’[101]

Finally, after some deliberation, Stevenson’s pirates identify the remains of one individual:

> ‘You mind Allardyce, Tom Morgan?’
> ‘Ay, ay,’ returned Morgan, ‘I mind him; he owed me money, he did, and took my knife ashore with him.’
> ‘Speaking of knives,’ said another, ‘why don’t we find his’n lying round? Flint warn’t the man to pick a seaman’s pocket; and the birds, I guess, would leave it be.’
> ‘By the powers, and that’s true!’ cried Silver.
> ‘There ain’t a thing left here,’ said Merry, still feeling round among the bones, not a copper doit nor a baccy box. It don’t look nat’ral to me.’’[102]

Poe’s narrator concludes his tale by asking the question that any perceptive reader has in all likelihood already asked:

> What are we to make of the skeletons found in the hole?
> That is a question I am no more able to answer than yourself. There seems, however, only one plausible way of accounting for them — and yet it is dreadful to believe in such atrocity as my suggestion would imply. It is clear that Kidd — if Kidd indeed secreted this treasure, which I doubt not — it is clear that he must have had assistance in the labour. But this labour concluded, he may have thought it expedient to remove all participants in his secret. Perhaps a couple of blows with a mattock were sufficient, while his co-adjutors were busy in the pit; perhaps it required a dozen — who shall tell?[103]

Long John Silver is driven to similar dreadful speculations:

> ‘But, by thunder! If it don’t make me cold inside to think of Flint. This is one of *his* jokes, and no mistake. Him and these six was alone here; he killed them, every man; and this one he hauled over here and laid down by compass, shiver me timbers![104]

In the following paragraph Silver seems to be losing his nerve: ‘Great guns! Messmates, but if Flint was living this would be a hot spot for you and me. Six they were, and six are we; and

[101] Stevenson, *Treasure Island*, *op. cit.*, p. 173.
[102] *Ibid.*, pp. 173-174.
[103] Poe, *‘The Gold-Bug’,* in *Selected Tales, op. cit.*, p. 229.
[104] Stevenson, *Treasure Island*, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

bones is what they are now.'[105] Stevenson can be seen to imitate by sequential reproduction from a previous text, and such extended allusion draws the reader to its source.

Silver himself seems to be under the shadow of fear that was Poe's literary hallmark. Poe was heavily influenced by Scottish literature and events in Scottish history, and perhaps as a consequence his stories had a particular resonance with Stevenson and his contemporaries. The fact that Poe spent much of his childhood in South-West Scotland, and that it was a very unhappy time in his life, did much to make him the writer he became.

The Anglo-American Stamp on Silver

Tracing the Anglo-American sources — literary and extraliterary — of Long John Silver is perhaps a more rewarding endeavour than seeking precedents in English literature. It has been suggested that the forename and surname of Stevenson's pirate are anglicized forms of Juan Silverado, who was supposedly the landlord of a property Stevenson occupied during a sojourn in the Napa Valley, California.[106] However, Stevenson explains in *The Silverado Squatters* (1883) that 'Silverado, then under my immediate sway, belonged to one whom I will call a Mr Ronalds'.[107] Anne Roller Issler confirms the true name of the owner: 'Thomas Reynolds was…personally known to Stevenson, who in *The Silverado Squatters* called him "Ronalds," though he spelled the name correctly in his notes.'[108] In fact, Juan Silverado, as Stevenson recalls in *The Silverado Squatters*, was the name of the abandoned silver mine settlement where Stevenson and his wife set up home.[109]

[105] *Ibid*., p. 174.
[106] Eric J. Graham, *Seawolves: Pirates and the Scots* (Edinburgh: Birlinn Limited, 2007), p. 41
[107] Robert Louis Stevenson, *Travels with a Donkey, An Inland Voyage, The Silverado Squatters* (London: Everyman, 1994), p. 283.
[108] Anne Roller Issler, *Stevenson at Silverado* (Fairfield, California: James D. Stevenson, Publisher, 1996), p. 77.
[109] Stevenson, *Travels with a Donkey, An Inland Voyage, The Silverado Squatters*, *op. cit.*, p. 247.

Frank McLynn has argued that the influence of Melville is pervasive in the writings of Stevenson, particularly in *The Master of Ballantrae* (1889), though he neglects to offer any quotations in support of his case.[110] However, Melville's Captain Ahab in *Moby-Dick; or, The Whale* (1851) may indeed be an Anglo-American influence on the characterisation of Silver, especially as regards his infirmity. One of Ahab's legs has suffered traumatic amputation below the knee in an encounter with the white whale, Moby-Dick, and has been supplanted by a prosthesis fashioned from whalebone:

> So powerfully did the whole grim aspect of Ahab affect me…I hardly noted that not a little of this overbearing grimness was owing to the barbaric white leg upon which he partly stood. It had previously come to me that this ivory leg had at sea been fashioned from the polished bone of the sperm whale's jaw.[111]

Similarly, Silver arouses an uncanny terror in those around him that is to some degree predicated upon his physical disability, though much the same could be said of that 'terrible blind man', Pew.[112]

There is no record of Stevenson ever having actually read *Moby-Dick*, though it should not be inferred that such absence of evidence indicates he was unfamiliar with the work. However, he was introduced to Melville's *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life* (1846) and its sequel, *Omoo: A Narrative of Adventures in the South Seas* (1847) in 1879 by the Anglo-American author, Charles Warren Stoddard, who also loaned him a book authored by his own self, *South Sea Idylls* (1873). Stevenson confessed that he derived much profit from reading these works.[113] Melville, like Stevenson, borrowed extensively from a wide variety of sources, though *Typee* and *Omoo* were, in part at least, autobiographical.[114] However, Charles Roberts

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[110] Frank McLynn, *Robert Louis Stevenson: A Biography* (London: Hutchinson, 1993), p. 38.
[111] Melville, *Moby-Dick or The Whale* (London: Penguin Books, 2009), p. 135.
[112] Stevenson, *Treasure Island*, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
[113] Stevenson, *Letters*, VI, p. 207.
[114] Two years after the publication of *Typee*, Richard Tobias Greene, Melville's fellow deserter, verified some of the events described therein. See Laurie Robertson-Lorant, *Melville: A Biography* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), p. 106. See also Paul Witherington, 'The Art of Melville's *Typee*', *Arizona Quarterly*, 26 (1970), pp. 136-157.

Anderson has proved that these two novels are essentially practised collations of biographies, autobiographies, fictional works, and newspaper reports.[115] Perhaps Stevenson could instinctively identify with Melville's mode of literary composition.

Melville's *Redburn* (1849) would seem to be another candidate for influence on *Treasure Island*. A boy goes to sea in a *Bildungsroman* of sorts, and witnesses the worst side of human nature during the voyage, and there the similarity would appear to end. However, *Redburn* also establishes an analogy between slavery and shipboard authority. Redburn himself intones that there is more flogging on an American merchant vessel than on a Southern plantation, bewailing that he is 'commanded like a slave…vulgar and brutal men lording it over me, as if I were an African in Alabama.'[116] The harsh disciplinary code of the United States Merchant Marine is shown to replicate the cruellest aspects of slavery. Whiteness conferred no guarantee of equitable treatment.

The counterpoint of good and evil, similar to that of Hawkins and Silver, is explored in Melville's *Pierre: or, The Ambiguities* (1852), and by Stevenson himself in *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886). Stevenson also appears to have been familiar with Melville's short story, *Benito Cereno*[117] (1855 in serial form; 1856 in a slightly revised form in a collection of essays, *The Piazza Tales*), a story set in the equatorial waters of South America. As Andrew Loman suggests,

> *Treasure Island* itself strongly suggests that Stevenson not only knew *Benito Cereno*, but also perceived its indictment of slavery…*Benito Cereno* is a valuable intertext for *Treasure Island* in part because Silver closely resembles Melville's Babo, the leader of the mutineers on the *San Dominick.*[118]

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[115] Charles Roberts Anderson, *Melville in the South Seas* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1951), *passim*.
[116] Herman Melville, *Redburn* (London: Penguin, 1986), p. 202.
[117] Incidents reported in Chapter 18 of Amasa Delano's *A Narrative of Voyages and Travels, in the northern and southern hemispheres: comprising three voyages round the world, together with a voyage of survey and discovery in the Pacific Ocean and Oriental Islands* (1817) form the factual basis of Melville's fictional account. See R. Bruce Bickley, *The Method of Melville's Short Fiction* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1975), pp. 100-108.
[118] Andrew Loman, 'The Sea Cook's Wife: Evocations of Slavery in *Treasure Island*', *Children's Literature,* 38 (2010), pp. 1-26 (p. 10). The only information disclosed to the reader by Stevenson in respect of Silver's wife is her ethnicity. Early in the story we are told that she is a 'woman of colour', and at the *dénouement* that she is an 'old negress'. Silver's wife seems to serve as s symbolic trope that generates, and reflects, an ideology of

'Benito Cereno' is a story that is specifically about whiteness.[119] Delano lives in a society in which white dominance has been legitimised by making it appear to be customary and neutral, and his unwarranted assumptions regarding the nature of racial hierarchy blind him to the theatricality of Babo's subservient behaviour. The mutinous Babo assumes the role of loyal personal servant to Don Benito Cereno and ingratiates himself with the good-natured American captain, Amaso Delano, who visits the ship. Delano's point of view is recounted without correction, though this story is a classic example of unreliable narration, and describes Babo's servile demeanour in an ironic manner:

> Sometimes the Negro gave his master his arm, or took his handkerchief out of his pocket for him; performing these and similar offices with that affectionate zeal which transmutes into something filial, or fraternal acts in themselves but menial, and which had gained for the Negro the repute of making the most pleasing body servant in the world; one, too, whom a master need be on no stiffly superior terms with, but may treat with familiar trust — less a servant than a devoted companion.[120]

Hawkins describes Silver's mask of deference in a similar manner:

> There was Silver, sitting back almost out of the firelight but eating heartily, prompt to spring forward when anything was wanted, even joining quietly in our laughter — the same bland, polite, obsequious seaman of the voyage out.[121]

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difference. Interestingly, Charles Kingsley's poem, 'The Last Buccaneer' (1857), describes an English seaman who takes up with a 'negro lass'. See *Poems* (London: Macmillan, 1871), pp. 292-294. However, it should be noted that the concept of ethnic identity was somewhat more fluid in the eighteenth-century than it was at the time Stevenson was writing. See Roxanne Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), *passim.* Nevertheless, Stevenson's portrayal of Silver as a miscegenationist is surely of some significance. Anti-miscegenationist sentiments were widespread in the United States. See Peggy Pascoe, 'Miscegenation Law and Racial Classification, 1860-1948', in *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation, Law, and the Making of Race in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 77-162. Moreover, miscegenation was generally frowned upon throughout the wider Anglosphere. For example, see Douglas S. Mack, *Scottish Fiction and the British Empire* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), p. 183. In addition, Howard L. Malchow discusses the association of miscegenation, and the resultant racial hybridity, with moral turpitude in *Gothic Images of Race in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), p. 184. See also Edward Scobie, *Black Britannia: A History of Blacks in Britain* (Chicago: Johnson, 1972), p. 175. Stevenson, in revealing Silver's marital status so early in the narrative, may well have been hinting to the perceptive reader that the seemingly genial sea cook was not all he appeared to be.

[119] Josep M. Armengol, 'Of Gray Vapors and Creeping Clouds: White (Male) Privilege as Blinding in Herman Melville's "Benito Cereno"', in *Masculinities in Black and White: Manliness and Whiteness in (African) American Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 45-70.

[120] Herman Melville, 'Benito Cereno', in *Billy Budd, Sailor and Other Stories* (London: Penguin, 2016), pp. 55-137 (p. 62).

[121] Stevenson, *Treasure Island*, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

Silver and Babo exhibit comparable psychopathic traits; their affability is of relatively short duration, and is glib and egocentric. In another story, 'The Bell-Tower' (1856), Melville elucidates in an epigraph, taken from a private manuscript, the perilously naïve attitude of Cereno, who seems to look upon the slavish Babo as something akin to a faithful dog: 'Like Negroes, these powers own man sullenly; mindful of their higher master; while serving, plot revenge.'[122] Babo's practised devotion to Cereno conveys to Delano the 'beauty of that relation' between black and white, 'spectacle of fidelity on the one hand and confidence on the other'.[123] The conceptual binary of black and white that governs Delano's perception shapes his interpretation of events, but it is his naivety, and not his whiteness, that blinds him to the true state of affairs aboard the *San Dominick*.[124]

In *Treasure Island*, Silver's affected *bonhomie* seems almost to be a form of compulsive behaviour. He seems unable, or perhaps simply unwilling, to desist from dissembling even when he can no longer hope to profit by it:

> Silver, I should say, was allowed his entire liberty, and, in spite of daily rebuffs, seemed to regard himself once more as quite a privileged and friendly dependant. Indeed, it was remarkable…with what unwearying politeness he kept on trying to ingratiate himself with all.[125]

The Janus-faced Silver's feigned fidelity, his obsequiousness, his jollity, bear some resemblance to the theatrically enthusiastic displays of affection evinced by Cereno's retainer. They are mutable beings both, each of whom is capable of circumventing and subverting, at least for a limited period of time, an ossified system of social control that is primarily built upon a foundation of religious observance. Their assumed servility conceals a latent hostility, a muffled antagonism, toward those who imagine themselves to be in authority over them, and

[122] Melville, 'The Bell-Tower', in *Billy Budd, Sailor and Other Stories, op. cit.,* p. 202.
[123] Melville, 'Benito Cereno', in *Billy Budd, Sailor and Other Stories*, *op. cit.,* p. 67.
[124] Dana D. Nelson, '"For the Gaze of the Whites": The Crisis of the Subject in "Benito Cereno"', in *The Word in Black and White: Reading "Race" in American Literature, 1638-1867*, *op. cit.*, pp. 109-130.
[125] Stevenson, *Treasure Island*, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

both seek to be taken at mask value.[126] Cereno and Smollett held positions of authority on their respective ships, but subsequent events prove that were never entirely in command of them.[127] Stevenson patently shared Melville's thematic concerns with authority.[128] Once again we see adult literature, as a form of esoteric writing, embedded in so-called children's literature.

The British Stamp on Silver

Long John Silver can be seen as a composite character made up of numerous intertextual components. These include British as well as American sources. The main textual source for knowledge of pirates in the period was Charles Johnson's *A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the Most Notorious Pirates* (1724).[129] At the time Stevenson commenced writing *Treasure Island* he possessed but a vague knowledge of pirates and piracy, but he swiftly improved his knowledge by consulting Johnson's book.[130] Bartholemew Roberts, who is vividly portrayed in Johnson's book, may also have inspired Stevenson's creation of Silver:

> Notwithstanding the successful Adventures of this Crew, yet it was with great difficulty that they could be kept together, under any kind of Regulation; for being almost always mad or drunk, their behaviour produced infinite Disorders, every Man being in his own Imagination a Captain, a Prince, or a King. When Roberts saw there was no managing of such a Company of wild ungovernable Brutes, by gentle Means, nor to keep them from drinking to Excess, the cause of all their Disturbances, he put on a rougher Deportment, and a more magisterial Carriage towards them, correcting whom he thought fit; and if any seemed to resent his Usage, he told them, they might go ashore, and take Satisfaction of him, if they thought fit, at Sword and Pistol, for he neither valued or feared any of them.[131]

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[126] Susan Manning, *The Puritan-Provincial Vision: Scottish and American Literature in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 131-133. See also Jean Fagan Yellin, 'Black Masks: Melville's *Benito Cereno*', *American Quarterly*, 22 (1970), pp. 678-689.
[127] Paul Giles, *Virtual Americas: Transnational Fictions and the Transatlantic Imaginary* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2002), p. 73.
[128] Alan Shima, 'The Authority of Babo in Herman Melville's 'Benito Cereno'', *Nordic Journal of English Studies*, 3 (2004), pp. 301-317.
[129] Charles Johnson, [misattributed to Daniel Defoe], ed. by David Cordingly, *Pirates: A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the Most Notorious Pirates* (1724) (London: Bloomsbury, 2014). A similar work, *The Pirates Own Book: Or Authentic Narratives of the Lives, Exploits, and Executions of the Most Celebrated Sea Robbers*, authored by Charles Ellms, was published in 1837, but there is no evidence that Stevenson ever read it.
[130] Watson, *Coasts of Treasure Island: A Study of the Background and Sources for Robert Louis Stevenson's Romance of the Sea*, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
[131] Charles Johnson, *Pirates: A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the Most Notorious Pirates*, *op. cit.*, pp. 161-259 (p. 194).

Similarly, Silver, who has been brutalised, and consequently armoured, by an adult life spent in the company of violent criminals, controls his associates by sheer force of personality:

> 'We're all foc's'le hands, you mean,' snapped Silver. 'We can steer a course, but who's to set one? That's what all you gentlemen split on, first and last. If I had my way, I'd have Cap'n Smollett work us back into the trades at least; then we'd have no blessed miscalculations and a spoonful of water a day. But I know the sort you are. I'll finish with 'em at the island, as soon's the blunt's on board, and a pity it is. But you're never happy till you're drunk. Split my sides, I've a sick heart to sail with the likes of you!…That's what I call business. We'll, what would you think? Put 'em ashore like maroons? That would have been England's way. Or cut 'em down like that much pork? That would have been Flint's, or Billy Bones's.'[132]

This episode contains echoes of Cain's similar response to his crew in Marryat's *The Pirate* (1836):

> 'I'll cleave to the shoulder the first man who attempts to break into the spirit-room. You know I never joke. Shame upon you! Do you call yourselves men, when, for the sake of a little liquor now, you would lose your only chance of getting drunk every day as soon as we get on shore again? There's a time for all things; and I've a notion this is a time to be sober.'[133]

Silver is a curdled blend of misanthropy and venality, but his rank cunning marks him out from the crew. He is among them, but he is never really one of them. The pirates are actually little more than small-time crooks, blunderers of a violent disposition, who are sometimes laughably at sea. They seek instant gratification, but Silver, being rather more intelligent than those around him, is aware that postponement of gratification can lead to greater reward. Silver is indeed the very avatar of roguery. His illustrious ancestry may be traced through English letters: the exceedingly personable, but fundamentally dishonest, character appears so often that he is pretty much a stock character. Silver is a parodic figure of an English gentleman. He is Darkest England incarnate, albeit wrapped in affected airs and graces.

Silver relates his life-changing encounter with a naval surgeon as follows:

[132] Stevenson, *Treasure Island*, pp. 70-71.
[133] Frederick Marryat, *The Pirate* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1897), pp. 26-27.

> The same broadside I lost my leg, old Pew lost his deadlights. It was a master surgeon, him that ampytated me — out of college and all — Latin by the bucket, and what not; but he was hanged like a dog, and sun-dried like the rest, at Corso Castle. That was Roberts' men.[134]

Stevenson seems to have taken this from Johnson's *Pirates.* The naval surgeon to whom Silver refers seems to be based on a member of Roberts' crew who went by the name of Peter Scudamore. He was executed for piracy at Corso Castle, which was a British naval base on the Gold Coast of West Africa. Johnson offers the following account of the episode:

> Mr. Child (acquitted) deposed, that in their passage from the island of St. Thomas, in the *Fortune* prize, this prisoner [Scudamore] was several times tempting him into measures of rising with the Negroes, and killing the *Swallow*'s People, showing him how easily the white men might be demolished, and a new Company raised at Angola, and that part of the coast. 'For,' says he, 'I understand how to navigate a ship, and can soon teach you to steer; and is it not better to do this, than to go back to Cape Coast, and be hanged and Sun dried?' To which the deponent replying, he was not afraid of being hanged, Scudamore bid him be still, and no harm should come to him; but before the next evening, which was the designed time of executing this project, the deponent discovered it to the officer, and assured him, Scudamore had been talking all the proceeding night to the Negroes, in the Angolan language.[135]

Johnson also gives a memorable account of an energetic amputee on board a pirate ship who appears to be of a similar stamp to Silver:

> a fellow with a terrible pair of whiskers, and a wooden leg, being stuck around confession with pistols, like the man in the Almanack with darts, comes swearing and vapouring upon the quarter-deck.[136]

However, another possible candidate for the source of Silver's physical infirmity would seem to be none other than Admiral John Benbow, whose name Stevenson adopted for the coastal inn in *Treasure Island*. Benbow lost his leg in the course of a running battle with a French naval squadron that commenced off Cape Santa Marta, which lies on the coast of Colombia, in 1702.[137] Stevenson's essay 'The English Admirals' (1881) was published in the same year that

[134] Stevenson, *Treasure Island, op. cit.,* p. 57.
[135] Johnson, *op. cit.,* pp. 161-259 (p. 243).
[136] *Ibid.*, p. 121.
[137] Sam Willis, *The Admiral Benbow: The Life and Times of a Naval Legend* (London: Quercus, 2010), p. 291.

Treasure Island began to be published in serial form. In this essay, Stevenson notes that 'Benbow could not lie still in his bunk after he had lost his leg; he must be on deck in a basket to direct and animate the fight.'[138] Similarly, Silver's fighting spirit is in no way diminished by his disability.

Benbow is indeed an obvious, if non-fictional, textual source for the Silver character, though one should not forget Silas Wegg, the one-legged, farcically smarmy, rascal in Dickens' *Our Mutual Friend* (1864-1865 in serial form; 1866 in book form):

> Wegg was a knotty man, and a close-grained, with a face carved out of a very hard material, that had just as much play of expression as a watchman's rattle. When he laughed certain jerks occurred in it, and the rattle sprung. Sooth to say he was so wooden a man that he seemed to have taken his wooden leg naturally, and rather suggested to the fanciful observer that he might be expected — if his development received no untimely check — to be completely set up with a pair of wooden legs in about six months.[139]

Wegg's similarity to Silver does not end with the nature of his physical handicap. The practised insincerity and lack of conscience that Silver exhibits can also be found in Wegg:

> Mr Wegg was an observant person, or, as he himself said, 'took a powerful sight of notice'. He saluted all his regular passers-by every day, as he sat on his stool backed up by the lamp-post; and on the adaptable character of these salutes he greatly plumed himself. Thus, to the rector, he addressed a bow, compounded of lay deference and a slight touch of the shady preliminary meditation at church; to the doctor, a confidential bow, as to a gentleman whose acquaintance with his inside he begged respectfully to acknowledge; before the quality he delighted to abase himself; and for Uncle Parker, who was in the army (at least so he had settled it), he put his open hand to the side of the hat, in a military manner which that angry-eyed buttoned-up inflammatory-faced old gentleman appeared but imperfectly to appreciate.[140]

Wegg and Silver are oleaginous confidence tricksters who know how and whom to flannel. Indeed, Wegg, like Silver, is all things to all men. There is a distinct Dickensian aura surrounding the thespian-like Silver. He is an eccentric, embroidered grotesque, an amalgam

[138] Robert Louis Stevenson, 'The English Admirals' in *Familiar Studies of Men and Books, Virginibus Puerisque, and Selected Poems* (London: Collins, 1956), pp. 296-305 (p. 300).
[139] Charles Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 45-46.
[140] *Ibid*., p. 46.

of the ludicrous and the monstrous, a vulgar stage-ruffian who would not be out of place in the convoluted, coincidental plot of a Dickens novel. Moreover, Hawkins' description of Silver when he first meets him is somewhat Dickensian:

> a man came out of a side room, and, at a glance, I was sure he must be Long John. His left leg was cut off close by the hip, and under the left shoulder he carried a crutch, which he managed with wonderful dexterity, hopping about upon it like a bird. He was very tall and strong, with a face as big as a ham — plain and pale, but intelligent and smiling. Indeed, he seemed in the most cheerful spirits, whistling as he moved about among the tables, with a merry word or a slap on the shoulder for the more favoured of his guests.[141]

Silver's entrance is appositely theatrical, with his physical disability and cheerful manner lending him an air of benign vulnerability. It is the smile on the face of the tiger. Silver functions as an archetypal anti-hero, albeit one who is writ large and emblazoned. However, the identification of a crossover between Dickens and Stevenson does not devalue the text. Indeed, perhaps the very opposite.

The Coral Island may also provide a possible back story for Silver, as for much else in the novel. The heroic adolescent castaways find evidence of anterior visitors to the island upon which they find themselves marooned:

> Jack began carefully to scrape away the moss and fungus from the stump, and soon laid bare three distinct traces of marks, as if some inscription or initials had been cut thereon. But although the traces were distinct, beyond all doubt, the exact form of the letters could not be made out. Jack thought they looked like J. S., but we could not be certain.[142]

These mysterious initials could be thought of as foreshadowing Long John Silver, given that, as we have seen, Ballantyne's novel clearly anticipates several aspects of *Treasure Island*.

John Robert Moore has suggested that Long John Silver's surname may have been inspired by Captain Thomas Silver, who held the honorific title of Master Gunner of Whitehall

[141] Stevenson, *Treasure Island, op. cit.,* p. 46.
[142] Ballantyne, *The Coral Island, op. cit.,* p. 50.

and Saint James Park from 1678 till 1710.[143] Silver may also be called Long John after Henry 'Long Ben' Avery, the pirate captain whose depredations made him the most successful pirate in terms of treasure seized.[144]

Silver, though a changeable reprobate, is a person of able mind whose innate mastery of social skills, at every level of society, enables him to navigate his way through interpersonal relationships with aplomb. Indeed, as Israel Hands observes, '"He's no common man, Barbecue," said the coxswain to me. "He had a good schooling in his young days, and he can speak like a book when so minded."'[145] It is interesting that Silver is known to the ship's motley crew as Barbecue. Silver is supposedly a buccaneer,[146] and this term derives from *bakan*, the Arawak word for what is known as a 'barbecue' or a spit used for smoking the flesh of manatees, which are also known as sea cows. In fact, Silver refers to himself as a 'sea-calf': 'Why, what a precious old sea-calf I am.'[147] Stevenson was patently aware of this etymological ambiguity.

Another possible source for Silver is Shakespeare's buffoonish reprobate, Falstaff, who has a talent for flattery, and a propensity to ingratiate himself with his social superiors. As Hardasty and Mann suggest,

> The morally ambiguous Silver contrasts sharply with the stock villains of Victorian boys' books and melodrama. His paradoxical conduct helps make the pirate chieftain a fully developed character. Stevenson has here created the Falstaff of children's literature; just as Shakespeare took the stock *miles gloriosus* and made him a living man, so Stevenson has developed the stock pirate into one of the most memorable personalities in children's literature.[148]

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[143] John Robert Moore, 'Defoe, Stevenson, and the Pirates', *English Literary Studies*, 10 (1943), pp. 35-60 (p. 51).
[144] David Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag: The Romance and Reality of Life among the Pirates* (London: Random House, 1995), p. 177.
[145] Stevenson, *Treasure Island*, *op. cit.*, p. 58.
[146] *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 20 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), I, p. 947.
[147] Stevenson, *Treasure Island*, *op. cit.*, p. 49.
[148] William H. Hardesty and David D. Mann, 'Stevenson's Method in *Treasure Island*: The Old Romance, Retold', in *Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism*, 9 (1998), pp. 180-195 (p. 185).

Nevertheless, Stevenson told his irascible friend, Henley, that it was he who had been his initial inspiration for the Silver character. Henley had contracted tuberculosis at the age of 12, which caused him to have a foot amputated, and he subsequently walked with the aid of a crutch:[149]

> I will now make a confession. It was the sight of your maimed strength and masterfulness that begot John Silver in Treasure Island. Of course, he is not in any other quality or feature the least like you; but the idea of the maimed man, ruling and dreaded by the sound, was entirely taken from you.[150]

Stevenson's 'confession' is, by his own admittance, not the whole truth. Indeed, as we have seen, Silver is a composite character, but it is possible that Henley provided the material for at least one incident in *Treasure Island*. Silver reacts with deadly force in response to the disaffection of a subordinate:

> With a cry, John seized a branch of a tree, whipped the crutch out of his armpit, and sent that uncouth missile hurtling through the air. It struck poor Tom, point foremost, and with stunning violence, right between the shoulders in the middle of his back…Silver, agile as a monkey, even without leg or crutch, was on top of him next moment, and had twice buried his knife up to the hilt in that defenceless body…[151]

J. M. Barrie supports the idea that Silver was based on Henley, and that the above passage was taken from a real-life incident in which Henley was involved:

> [Henley] was a splendidly ironic, bearded man, and John Silver was Stevenson's idea of Henley taken to piracy. It was Henley's crutch that Silver threw to clinch an argument, and thus also did Henley throw it, as I have seen. On this occasion the subject of discussion was merely literary, the scene was the steps of a London *café*, and the opponent was Oscar Wilde, a very courteous opponent too, but he was neatly pinned by that javelin.[152]

The similarity of this episode to Silver's employment of his crutch as a throwing weapon in *Treasure Island* reveals that Silver is indeed partly based on Henley, and this is an example of an extraliterary reference in a text that is essentially intertextual. The fictional episode,

[149] Bell, *op. cit.,* p. 103.
[150] Stevenson, *Letters, op. cit.,* IV, p. 129.
[151] Stevenson, *Treasure Island, op. cit.,* p. 78.
[152] J. M. Barrie, *The Greenwood Hat* (London: Peter Davies, 1937), p 195.

borrowed from hearsay, has been preserved in literary memory, while the original act upon which it was based has been almost forgotten.

Stevenson seems to allude to *The Tempest*: *or, The Enchanted Island* (*circa* 1610-1611) when Silver mocks the pirates as they search for buried treasure: '"Dig away, boys," said Silver, with the coolest insolence, "you'll find some pig-nuts and I shouldn't wonder."'[153] Caliban, in an effort to ingratiate himself with the marooned party on his own island, offers his services, '"I prithee, let me bring thee where crabs grow;/And I with my long nails will dig thee pig-nuts".'[154] *The Tempest* would seem to be an obvious point of reference for a novel set on an imaginary island.

The moral universe inhabited by Silver is a bleak one. He is a detestable felon, and yet in some unfathomable way endearing and memorable. Stevenson, by some peculiar sort of alchemy, makes the reader glad that there is a fictional world in which a Long John Silver can exist. It is such ambivalence that makes Silver a literary guilty pleasure. He is a character with symbolic and universal implications for every reader.[155] However, Silver is no mere Genet-like celebration of criminality, but rather more an anti-hero in the mould of Milton's Satan, albeit one who has been to some degree haloed by his creator. He is a villain's villain — 'Hell within him; for within him Hell/He brings'.[156] Silver is a cosmopolitan degenerate who succeeds in keeping condign punishment at arm's length. He is essentially alien to the class of boys at which the story is aimed, and it is this marriage of Englishness and exoticism that is perhaps the key to his popularity. The allusions surrounding Silver are English *and* Anglo-American, unlike those surrounding Hawkins, who is based wholly on English sources, and those are primarily oppositional.

[153] Stevenson, *Treasure Island*, *op. cit.*, p. 174.
[154] Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (London: The Arden Shakespeare, 2007), II.2, p. 174.
[155] Lisa Sainsbury, *Ethics in British Children's Literature: Unexamined Life* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), pp. 42-45.
[156] John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 73.

Jim Hawkins

Jim Hawkins, the well-meaning, wide-eyed rapporteur, being ostensibly the author of the confessional picaresque memoir that is *Treasure Island*, is an archetype of the type of character who is destined to prevail. Indeed, every reader would be aware of the probable outcome of the story, both because he is the hero *and* the retrospective storyteller, though that in no way diminishes the narrational suspense.[157] Boyhood heroism is raced white, for the representative boy hero of the nineteenth-century adventure story is a spectacle of phenotypical and chromatic whiteness. Hawkins joins the ranks of those who go down to the sea in ships, and do business in great waters. Hence, as Troy Boone notes, Stevenson's boy hero is a stereotypical figure in the children's literature of the age, which often aimed at preparing young minds to take up the 'The White Man's Burden':

> The narrative of *Treasure Island*…epitomizes the goal of the improving magazines, whereby 'poor born' English youths who take pleasure in narratives of sea voyages, islands, savages, wild beasts, and the rest of it will be prepared for avid participation in what is, in fact, the adult enterprise of imperialism: emptying foreign lands of their riches.[158]

Hawkins has considerably less background than Silver, though *The Coral Island* may have contributed something to the character since, as we have seen, Hawkins has a touch of Ralph Rover about him. Hawkins' name also provides historical and intertextual links. Silver, who lost his leg while aboard a pirate ship commanded by the notorious Flint, dishonestly claims to have 'lost it in his country's service, under the immortal Hawke'.[159] (Admiral Edward Hawke (1705-1781) was held to be an exemplar of British naval heroism.) The 'kins' component of Jim's surname usually signifies a diminutive form; it is attached to a name as a form of

[157] Thomas Carlyle held the heroic man of letters to be the most important person in the modern world. See 'The Hero as Man of Letters', in *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (1841) (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2013), pp. 132-161 (p. 133).
[158] Troy Boone, *Youth of Darkest England: Working-Class Children at the Heart of Victorian Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 73.
[159] Stevenson, *Treasure Island*, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

endearment. One of the boy castaways in *The Coral Island* is called Peterkin. In addition, the name Jim Hawkins also brings to mind Jack Dawkins, Dickens' 'Artful Dodger' in *Oliver Twist; or, The Parish Boy's Progress* (1837-1839 in serial form; 1838 in book form). Furthermore, Charles Kingsley's novel, *Westward Ho!* (1855), features the character of Amyas Leigh, a West Country youth whose father dies immediately prior to him setting out to seek treasure in the Caribbean.[160] This story is based on an Elizabethan travelogue authored by Admiral Sir Richard Hawkins, whose father was Admiral Sir John Hawkins. Both of these Elizabethan seadogs feature in Kingsley's novel:

> John Hawkins, Admiral of the port, is the Patriarch of Plymouth seamen…The short prim man…is Richard Hawkins, the Complete Seaman, Admiral John's hereafter famous and hapless son.[161]

There were doubtless a number of factors attendant upon Stevenson's choice of surname for his boy hero, and indeed for his other characters, but he was likely familiar with the sources listed, notwithstanding that intertextuality is not necessarily founded upon conscious awareness.

Jim Hawkins' painfully acquired knowledge of how insincere and inauthentic the fellowship of the sea really is shatters any illusion that the treasure hunt is a boy's game. These aspects of Hawkins' experience make themselves particularly apparent in his relationship with Silver. Hawkins had once regarded Silver as an avuncular figure, but events during the voyage disabuse him of any such notion. However, this disenchantment with literary visions of heroism is Hawkins', not Stevenson's, and the author, in employing the protagonist in this manner, makes plain the difference between reality and romance. Hawkins, in the course of his quest for treasure, comes to have a better understanding of the ways of men. He saves the day on a number of occasions, most notably when he overhears the planning of a mutiny and alerts the

[160] Charles Kingsley, *Westward Ho!* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2009), *passim*.
[161] *Ibid.*, pp. 606-607.

ship's captain: 'Every step, it's you that saves our lives,' Dr Livesey tells Hawkins. The boy here also looks askance at the 'childish laughter' of men old enough to be his father.[162] However, unlike his literary forebears, Stevenson alerts his young readers to adults who feign admiration for youthful prowess. Hawkins overhears Silver flattering a young member of the crew:

> 'You're young, you are, but you're as smart as paint. I see that when I set my eyes on you, and I'll talk to you like a man.'
> You may imagine how I felt when I heard this abominable old rogue addressing another in the very same words of flattery as he had used on myself. I think, if I had been able, that I would have killed him.[163]

Stevenson portrays such heightened awareness of base behavioural traits as an epistemic process. However, Stevenson also drew on his family's marine civil engineering exploits for his fictional works, which may be described as intratextuality. In *Treasure Island*, Jim Hawkins secretes himself in an apple-barrel, where he inadvertently overhears Silver inciting the crew to mutiny. It is a truth disclosed in a moment of falsity. In *Records of a Family of Engineers*, an unfinished work that was published posthumously in 1911, Stevenson tells the story of a duplicitous seaman named Soutar who his grandfather employed on the Bell Rock Lighthouse building project. Stevenson's father, Thomas, often accompanied his own father, also called Robert, on journeys around Scotland in pursuance of his profession. Stevenson's character portraits of Soutar and Silver do resemble one another:

> Soutar at first attracted notice as the mate of a praam (stonelighter) at the Bell Rock, and rose gradually to be captain of the *Regent*. He was active, admirably skilled in his trade, and a man incapable of fear…He usually dined on Sundays in the cabin…artfully combining the extreme of deference with a blunt and seamanlike demeanour. My father and uncles…were far from being deceived; and my father, indeed, was favoured with an object-lesson not to be mistaken. He had crept one rainy night into an apple-barrel on deck, and from this place of ambush overheard Soutar and a comrade conversing in their oilskins. The smooth sycophant of the cabin had wholly disappeared, and the boy listened with wonder to a vulgar and truculent ruffian. Of Soutar, I may say *tantum vidi*, having met him in the Leith docks now

[162] Stevenson, *Treasure Island, op. cit.,* p. 155.
[163] *Ibid.,* p. 61.

> more than thirty years ago, when he abounded in praises of my grandfather, encouraged me (in the most admirable manner) to pursue his footprints, and left impressed for ever on my memory the image of his own Bardolphian nose.[164]

This incident does bear some resemblance to the eavesdropping episode in *Treasure Island*, and shows Stevenson transmuting familial memory into fictive account:

> I got bodily into the apple barrel, and found there was scarce an apple left; but sitting down there in the dark, what with the sound of the waters and the rocking movement of the ship, I had either fallen asleep, or was on the point of doing so, when a heavy man sat down with rather a crash close by. The barrel shook as he leaned his shoulders against it, and I was just about to jump up when the man began to speak. It was Silver's voice, and, before I had heard a dozen words, I would not have shown myself for all the world, but lay there, trembling and listening, in the extreme of fear and curiosity; from these dozen words I understood that the lives of all the honest men aboard depended on me alone.[165]

As we have seen, there are similarities between Soutar and Silver, and the episode recounted no less so, though in the context of the novel as a whole the analogy cannot be pressed too far.[166] *Treasure Island* does, to some degree, preserve the homiletic form of the educational tract. Indeed, 'the curtains of boyhood'[167] rise before Hawkins, and he learns some hard lessons. Once again, *The Coral Island* can be seen to prefigure *Treasure Island*, for Ralph also feels compelled to examine and evaluate the simplistic view of right and wrong to which he adhered prior to his adventures when he overhears a conversation between the captain and the first mate, and discovers that the putative traders in sandalwood are simply pirates. They propose to plunder, not trade: 'We've got the cargo aboard. Why not cut your cable and take French leave o' them? What's the use o' tryin' to kill the blackguards?' Ralph is horrified by the planned murder of the native islanders by whom they had earlier been made welcome. He

[164] Stevenson, *Records of a Family of Engineers* (Gloucester: Dodo Press, 2007), pp. 50-51.
[165] Stevenson, *Treasure Island, op. cit.,* p. 56.
[166] It should be noted that Anne Gaylin neglects to comment upon this episode of eavesdropping in her otherwise comprehensive *Eavesdropping in the Novel from Austen to Proust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). Now, this omission would appear surprising given that it numbers among the most famous acts of eavesdropping in English literature, but it perhaps betrays the prevalent attitude of critics toward so-called children's literature.
[167] Stevenson, 'Weir of Hermiston', in *The Strange Case of Jekyll and Hyde* and *Weir of Hermiston* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 194.

reflects that 'Life is a strange compound…the more I consider it the more I am struck with the strange mixture of good and evil that exists…in our own natures.'[168] Jim and Ralph discover the nebulous nature of whiteness in the moral sphere.

The success or failure of *Treasure Island* is, in some measure at least, dependent upon the reader's acceptance of Hawkins' account as a form of autobiography. As we will later see, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (Tom Sawyer's Comrade)* (1884) walks a similar tightrope. Hawkins remains a credible character, despite his incredible exploits. He is deeply affected by the events that take place on Treasure Island, but he knows the behaviour that is expected of him, and his upper lip remains resolutely stiff. He is stoical to a fault, self-possessed, and never behaves in anything less than an honourable fashion. Indeed, his intertextual roots are entirely in English literature and history, and would seem to exemplify the Anglo-Saxon traits of pluck and absolute integrity that are to be found in abundance throughout the genre. He is perhaps intended to epitomise England, as indeed is Tom Brown in *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1857). In Chapter 4 we will meet with his all-American counterparts, Huckleberry Finn and Tom Sawyer, who may well epitomise Anglo-America.

Smollett and Trelawney

The name and character of Alexander Smollett, steadfast martinet, rough diamond, and irascible captain of the schooner *Hispaniola*, may be taken from Tobias Smollett, the Scottish author who is now in the main remembered for his nautical-picaresque satire *The Adventures of Roderick Random* (1748). Indeed, Captain Smollett employs the language of his namesake when he says, 'my name is Alexander Smollett, I've flown my sovereign's colours, and I'll see you all to Davy Jones.'[169] Stevenson's reference to Davy Jones can be traced to Smollett's *The*

[168] Ballantyne, *The Coral Sea, op. cit.*, pp. 187.
[169] Stevenson, *Treasure Island, op. cit.*, p. 107.

Adventures of Peregrine Pickle (1751): 'I'll be damned if it was not Davy Jones himself…This same Davy Jones, according to the mythology of sailors, is the fiend that presides over all the evil spirits of the deep.'[170] This nomenclature appears to have been current among eighteenth-century seamen.

Stevenson informed Henley by letter that Squire Trelawney's surname was inspired by Edward John Trelawney, who was a friend of Lord Byron and Percy Bysshe Shelley. Trelawney's *Adventures of a Younger Son* (1831) is a recording of his experiences on Royal Navy men-of-war, and also on board a privateer, which was a licensed raiding vessel. Trelawney is indeed a West Country surname, but the name came to Stevenson's mind when Trelawney died on 12 August 1881, just as *Treasure Island* was in a state of gestation.[171]

Smollett and Trelawney are staid English gentlemen who lack the raffish allure of Silver. They are upright and honourable, but they lack Silver's mesmeric appeal. Silver's attraction is to be found in his ambiguity; he manages to be simultaneously cosmopolitan *and* English. He has a transatlantic quality that gives his character greater depth. As we have seen, his character is much more densely intertextual than any other in the novel.

California in the Caribbean

In a letter to Sidney Colvin, dated July, 1884, Stevenson asserts that the scenery of *Treasure Island* is 'Californian in part, in part *chic*.'[172] Indeed, the scenery of *Treasure Island* bears a striking resemblance to that of the Napa Valley near San Francisco, which Stevenson described in one of his travel books, *The Silverado Squatters*.[173] Anne Roller Issler, a noted authority on

[170] Tobias Smollett, *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle* (London: Harrison, 1751), p. 41. The Oxford English Dictionary lists Smollett's use of the term 'Davy Jones' as the first traceable in print.
[171] Stevenson, *Letters*, II, *op. cit.*, p. 60.
[172] Stevenson, *Letters*, V, *op. cit.*, p. 3.
[173] William Blackburn has noted that the portrayal of the island fails to conform to the traditional formula. 'Mirror in the Sea: *Treasure Island* and the Internalization of Juvenile Romance', *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, 8 (1983), pp. 7-12.

Stevenson's California period, claims that his sojourn at Silverado was a watershed in his literary career:

> The winter in San Francisco, where he struggled with loneliness, defeat, starvation, illness, and the threat of death, changed him from boy to man, and the summer in rural California gave new impetus to his writing. He found a rich new fund of literary material. Out of this fund, then and later, he drew poems, essays, parts of short stories, settings for novels, and his wholly American book, *The Silverado Squatters*.[174]

The Silverado Squatters, which is the final volume of a trilogy, tells of Stevenson's honeymoon in the Napa Valley with his American wife. Issler has traced correlations between *The Silverado Squatters* and *Treasure Island* in their descriptions of flora and fauna. Indeed, according to Issler, '*Treasure Island* is especially rich in transferred Silverado scenes.'[175] For example, she notes that Cathedral Rock, which lies to the East of Mount Saint Helena, and which is employed by local people throughout the entire range of Napa County as a landmark, is similar to the following description of Spy-glass Hill in *Treasure Island*:

> the Spy-glass, which was by three or four hundred feet the tallest on the island, was likewise the strangest in configuration, running up sheer from almost every side, and then suddenly cut off at the top like a pedestal to put a statue on.[176]

Moreover, Issler explains that Stevenson repeatedly employed memories of his stay at the ghost town of Silverado as an adjunct to his literary imagination. The name is analogous to Eldorado, the land of gold, and the so-called 'treasure grotto' of Silverado, which lay within a stone's throw of Stevenson's ramshackle accommodation, became a treasure trove of inspiration:

> He went to that treasure house for help with later writing, drawing upon his memories of Silverado for description and incident. Nowhere is this more obvious than in *Treasure Island*, where not only the Monterey Peninsula but the Saint Helena country furnished setting after setting. *Treasure Island* is associated in many particulars with *The Silverado Squatters*, and even the wording of descriptions in the two books is sometimes the same.[177]

[174] Issler, *op. cit.*, p. 5.
[175] *Ibid.*, p. 67.
[176] Stevenson, *Treasure Island*, *op. cit.*, p. 68.
[177] Issler, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

Silverado is situated on the shoulder of Mount Saint Helena, and Issler suggests that the ecology of this local landmark is described in *Treasure Island*:

> The vegetation of *Treasure Island* was the vegetation of Mount Saint Helena — "contorted trees, not unlike the oak," "heavy-scented broom and many flowering shrubs," "thickets of green nutmeg trees," foliage of "poisonous brightness," the poison oak of Silverado, and the "broad shadow of the pines." The fresh spicy air, the sheer sunlight, the sliding gravel, the chirp of insects, even the rattlesnakes of Silverado are here! A comparison of the last chapter of *The Silverado Squatters* and the descriptive passages of *Treasure Island* would bring out many more similarities.[178]

Issler points out that Stevenson's two-month stay at Silverado produced material for a number of Stevenson's works. It is therefore clear that Silverado had a pivotal influence on Stevenson's writing and, while correlation should not be equated with causation, it is worth stating that Stevenson found extensive critical and commercial success only after his visit to America.

There are any number of sequels and prequels to *Treasure Island,* presumably authored by those who would seek to trade upon its iconic status. Arthur Ransome may be among their number, for he alluded to, and borrowed from, *Treasure Island* when he wrote *Swallows and Amazons* (1930) and *Peter Duck* (1932), though he also alluded to *Robinson Crusoe*, *The Coral Island*, *Masterman Ready*, Jules Verne's *The Mysterious Island* (1875), and Rafael Sabatini's *Captain Blood* (1922). However, *Treasure Island* is certainly a book with which Ransome expected his readers to be familiar.[179] In *Swallows and Amazons* he projects a piratical fantasy into a Lakeland setting, in which a 'Treasure Island', properly known as Cormorant Island, temporarily becomes an invented playground,[180] though Wild Cat Island is the children's piratical lair. Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn find a similar refuge on Jackson's Island, and find

[178] *Ibid.*, p. 103.
[179] Roger Wardale, *Arthur Ransome: Master Storyteller* (Ilkley: Great Northern Books, 2010), pp. 2-3.
[180] Enid Blyton also favoured the formulaic approach, in which an island is viewed as a metaphorical space, when she wrote *Five on a Treasure Island* (1942). See David Rudd, 'Islands and I-lands in Enid Blyton', in *Treasure Islands: Studies in Children's Literature*, ed. by Mary Shine Thompson and Celia Kennan (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), pp. 72-78. *Five on a Treasure Island* is a book for boys *and* tomboys. It is also an implicitly white novel. However, Blyton's advocacy of literary whiteness has been deplored in modern times. For example, see Owen Dudley Edwards, *British Children's Fiction in the Second World War* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p. 257.

themselves temporarily stranded when they lose their boat. A similar fate is experienced by the Blackett sisters. Ransome, though being doubtless aware of the significance of the island motif in imperial literature, perhaps chooses to employ it in a local setting as a provocative counterpoint. Yet, *Peter Duck*, a metafictional work, perhaps bears a greater similarity to *Treasure Island*, with a search for buried treasure on a Caribbean island, and the involvement of real pirates, though Ransome would appear to owe a good deal more to E. F. Knight's *The Cruise of the Alerte, the Narrative of a Search for Treasure on the Desert Island of Trindade* (1905), which is a true account, albeit an embellished one.[181]

The Blackett sisters' uncle, Jim Turner, is known to them as 'Captain Flint'. Uncle Jim owns a green parrot that has been trained to say 'pieces of eight';[182] Long John Silver also owned such a parrot.[183] Captain Flint is also given the black spot, though he bears no resemblance to Billy Bones. Ransome confessed that the character of Uncle Jim was actually based on himself.[184] Towards the end of *Swallows and Amazons*, Captain Flint's trunk is stolen and buried on Cormorant Island by thieves, but Able-seaman Titty Walker and her brother, Roger, subsequently unearth it. The children are dismayed to learn that the trunk does not contain any of the Spanish doubloons, pieces of eight, or gold ingots for which they had hoped, but simply the manuscript of Captain Flint's autobiography, his diaries, and a typewriter. Captain Flint offers the children this explanation:

> 'There's treasure and treasure…It takes all sorts to make a world. You know, Able-seaman, I can never say thank you enough to you. If I'd lost this…I'd have lost the diaries of my pirate past, and I've put all the best of my life into this book.'[185]

[181] Christina Hardyment, *Arthur Ransome and Captain Flint's Trunk* (London: Frances Lincoln, 2006), pp. 178-181. See also Peter Hunt, *Approaching Arthur Ransome* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1992), pp. 148-151.
[182] Arthur Ransome, *Swallows and Amazons* (London: Vintage, 2012), p. 459.
[183] Stevenson, *Treasure Island, op. cit.*, p. 41.
[184] Roland Chambers, *The Last Englishman: The Double Life of Arthur Ransome* (London: Faber and Faber, 2009), p. 344.
[185] Ransome, *Swallows and Amazons*, *op. cit.*, p. 446.

The children's expectation of treasure is one that they have gathered from the reading of boy's own adventure stories such as *Treasure Island*. Captain Flint's idea of treasure is his life distilled into a book, and his remarks about the treasure perhaps suggest a need for the children to assay received wisdom in the light of personal experience. Ransome much admired classic desert island stories,[186] but in *Swallows and Amazons* he relegated such adventures to the realm of fantasy, and instead substituted the acquisition of practical skills such as sailing, camping, and fishing, while emphasising self-reliance, acceptance of personal responsibility, and the import of remaining on good terms with one's peers. *Swallows and Amazons* marked the end of the desert island story as a staple of British children's adventure, and also brought to a close the celebration of imperial glory in the literary sphere. There is no place for the white warrior ethos in *Swallows and Amazon*; the agency of the children is illusory. Ransome transmutes the island adventure story into something provincial, almost folksy, thereby abjuring the hitherto obligatory exotic element.

Indeed, in *Swallows and Amazons* the exotic, and on occasion lethally dangerous, Other is conspicuous by its absence. However, the essential whiteness of *Swallows and Amazons* cannot be gainsaid. The children view the lake as 'a desolate ocean sailed for the first time by white seamen', and they 'keep a lookout for savages'.[187] Ransome could presume a demographic and cultural homogeneity among his readers that has now to some degree atrophied. As times change, so stories change with them.[188] However, it is surely the case that *Swallows and Amazons* should be classified as an implicitly white literary work.

[186] Daphne M. Kutzer, *Empire's Children: Empire and Imperialism in Classic British Children's Books* (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000), pp. 107-128.
[187] Ransome, *Swallows and Amazons*, *op. cit.*, p. 40.
[188] John Stephens and Robyn MacCallum, 'Contesting Ideologies: Reversions of Modern Fiction Classics', in *Retelling Stories, Framing Culture: Traditional Story and Metanarratives in Children's Literature* (London: Garland, 1998), pp. 267-284.

Conclusion

We have seen that intertextual borrowings, whether acknowledged or not, are a significant feature of *Treasure Island*, but they can be accepted as part and parcel of the genre, while appearing to transcend its inherent limitations. As Peter Hunt suggests, 'If *Treasure Island* did not lead anywhere specific, it enabled the popular to acknowledge the profound within itself.'[189]

As we have seen, the disreputable characters in *Treasure Island* are densely intertextual, whereas the reputable ones have nothing like the same literary background. Stevenson seems to have found respectability much less interesting than the depredations of the fictional criminal classes. Silver in particular is made memorable by the depth brought to him by the device of intertextuality. Stevenson's American-*cum*-British intertextual references would seem to reflect, and be a reflection upon, Silver's bifurcated psyche. Americana and Victoriana inextricably entwined, and yet somehow separate. However, as we have seen, whiteness is the unifying factor.

The mysterious stranger, the cipher, the map, the sea journey, the mutiny, the noble savage, the Caribbean, and the desert island are standard components of a significant number of piratical adventure stories. *Treasure Island* is demonstrably a pastiche, but one which is, as Henry James observed, 'all as perfect as a well-played boy's game'.[190] Yet, Stevenson also subverts the genre in a number of ways. *Treasure Island* is clearly an ironic critique of the values of the imperial boy's own stories that it echoes, for it does not laud the subjugation of native peoples.[191] Nevertheless, the implicit whiteness of *Treasure Island* could be seen as a

[189] Peter Hunt, *Children's Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2001), p. 236.
[190] *Henry James and Robert Louis Stevenson: A Record of Friendship and Criticism*, ed. by Janet Adam Smith (London: 1948), p.154.
[191] Marah Gubar, 'Collaborating with the Enemy: *Treasure Island* as Anti-Adventure Story', in *Artful Dodgers: Reconceiving the Golden Age of Children's Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp.69-92.

muted celebration of ingroup bias;[192] the Other is relegated to a vignette. Stevenson hides whiteness in plain sight. It is visible, and yet somehow invisible. Stevenson patently seeks to disencumber the boy's own adventure story from overt moral tutelage. He appears neither to teach nor to preach, but rather, as Conrad would seem to imply in his thought-provoking preface to *The Nigger of the Narcissus* (1897), to gift his more perceptive readers that glimpse of truth for which they have forgotten to ask.[193] Intertextuality in Anglospheric children's literature is so prevalent that the general reader may simply regard it as the natural order of things. The *naturalness* of whiteness is a given, though this should not be taken as indicative of animus. As we have seen, it is possible to read whiteness into a text that is not overtly about race.

Stevenson's account of Hawkins and his adventures has led some to label Stevenson as primarily a children's author, and *Treasure Island* does indeed evince folkloric attributes, but I suggest that my account of the depth and breadth of the novel's intertextual relations has opened a window to a radically different outlook. He has been shown to have employed the recursive device of embedding episodes and characters from other writers' stories into his own. (It should be emphasised that this is not plagiarism, but more a case of assimilation, and that these illustrations of derivativeness are patently representative of general authorial practise rather than atypical.)[194] Sub-plots are taken from earlier stories and collated and intertwined to form a new plot. Those from whom he borrowed employed a similar strategy when writing their own stories. Hence, these borrowed segments cannot be disavowed, as might emendations by a publishing house editor, for they clearly constitute the very fabric of the genre itself.

[192] Implicit coding communicates through multifaceted cultural references, thereby opening manifold and perhaps contradictory meanings. See Robin Bernstein, *Racial Innocence: Performing American Childhood from Slavery to Civil Rights* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), p. 84.
[193] Joseph Conrad, 'Author's Note', in *The Nigger of the Narcissus* (London: J. M. Dent, 1997), pp.128-131.
[194] The premier document on the transvaluation of originality and imitation in a literary context is Edward Young's *Conjectures on Original Composition* (1759). William Duff's *An Essay on Original Genius* (1767) was also influential. They both held that originality was the true test of authorial talent. See Logan Pearsall Smith, *Four Words: Romantic, Originality, Creative, Genius* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926), p. 2.

Treasure Island is indeed replete with *cliché*. It is, however, an observation *of*, and not a participation *in*, the application of *cliché*. Indeed, such practised ambiguity has done much to earn *Treasure Island* a paradigmatic status in the lore of the boy's own story. As one of Stevenson's biographers, J. C. Furnas, remarked with regard to the composition of *Treasure Island*:

> I know of no more striking example of an artist's taking a cheap, artificial set of commercialised values — which is fair enough to the Victorian 'boy's story' — and doing work of everlasting quality by changing nothing, transmuting everything, as if Jane Austen has ennobled soap opera.[195]

Treasure Island can be seen to be a component part of a literary matrix in which one story perforce generates another of a similar nature, and is by this means transformed into metaliterature: a set of references to its own genre. Stevenson was patently heir to a literary tradition of synthesis, and his novel is demonstrably a collation of plots, sub-plots, and characters borrowed from a welter of diverse sources. Stevenson's originality is constituted in his imaginative arrangement, and sedulous presentation, of such sources. *Treasure Island* is an intertextual cornucopia that gains much from the efforts of its predecessors, and it is this feature of pronounced intertextuality that does much to make it a quintessentially Victorian sea story of timeless validity, thereby elevating it to the status of a classic of the genre. Stevenson opens the doors of perception to a vast vista of boy's own stories, and tacitly beckons the reader to view each and every one of them through the prism of his own story.[196]

I have shown conclusively that *Treasure Island* is much more an expert distillation of a popular genre than any form of innovation or experimentation. I have demonstrated that the influence of Anglo-American literature on the writing of *Treasure Island* is incontestable, and indeed seminal. The hybrid vigour of Stevenson's *Treasure Island* is testimony to the fecund

[195] J. C. Furnas, *Voyage to Windward: The Life of Robert Louis Stevenson* (New York: William Sloan, 1911), p. 11.
[196] Arthur Ransome, *Arthur Ransome's Long-Lost Study of Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. by Kirsty Nichol Findlay (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2011), p. 202.

literary field of Anglospheric intertextuality. *Treasure Island* belongs not to Albion alone, but to the wider Anglosphere, for *Treasure Island* is an implicitly white novel.