

**Discourses of Race and Disease in British and American Travel
Writing about the South Seas 1870-1915**

by

Jeffrey Scott Clayton

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Approved by

Chris Keirstead, Chair, Associate Professor of English
James Ryan, Associate Professor of English
Patrick Morrow, Professor of English, Emeritus

Abstract

The nineteenth century saw the islands of the South Pacific colonized by the Western powers, including the United States. Because of this relatively late date compared to other colonized regions of the world, the imperializing process was more widely witnessed and reported. Among the wider range of witnesses were literary travelers, including Anthony Trollope, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Jack London. These writers came to the Pacific in the wakes of earlier, influential figures such as the explorer James Cook, the naturalist Charles Darwin, and the novelist Herman Melville, all of whom contributed to the appeal of the Pacific islands. These literary travelers would see a region decimated by disease, epidemics that spread because of the isolated nature of the Pacific, a situation that resulted in a lack of immunity to many Eurasian diseases, including smallpox, tuberculosis, syphilis, and leprosy. Trollope visited Australia, where he viewed the dislocation and depopulation of the Aborigines dispassionately. Stevenson came in 1888, seeking relief from his chronic tuberculosis. He was appalled by the degradation of the islanders and settled in Samoa. London, who visited in 1907 and again afterwards, initially viewed the struggle between white and native through the lens of his racist philosophies, derived from Friedrich Nietzsche and Herbert Spencer. Later, as his own health weakened, he began to write more sympathetically of native peoples. Postcolonial studies have grown over the past three decades, led by writers such as Edward Said and Homi Bhabha, but the South Pacific has received relatively little attention compared to the Caribbean, the Middle East,

Africa, and India. However, Mary Louise Pratt's theories of the "seeing-man" traveler and the contact zone, important redefinitions of imperialist behavior and the frontier, respectively, address New World colonialism in a way that acknowledges the differences between Old and New World colonizations. Because of the similarities in the colonial experience, Pratt's theories of New World imperialism have been adapted to the adjacent world of the Pacific. One major critique of Pratt is that she ignores the literary traveler in favor of explorers and naturalists. This study demonstrates that in an analysis of South Pacific imperialism, literary authors as often complicate her theories as vindicate them.

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Introduction

This study of professional writers of a certain era, roughly the 1870s, when Anthony Trollope made his first tour of the Antipodes, to the 1910s, when Jack London penned his last pieces of fiction drawing on his Pacific experiences, is intended to make clearer the ways in which popular authors at the height of Western colonialism presented the farthest reaches of the imperial project—both lands and people—to their readers back home, using both readings of these authors' works as well as the analytical tools provided by the rise of postcolonial theory, especially that of Mary Louise Pratt. Pratt and her work with the concept of the gaze—the way vision is often equated with ownership and control—and that of the contact zone—a give-and-take area more expansive in terms of physical space and reciprocal influence than the frontier—are both theories which she roots in the unique New World experiences with imperialism. In this study, I will adapt and modify her theories in order to apply them to the unique context of the Pacific, especially in the way her concept of the “seeing-man” is complicated by the writers who will be examined here.

The relevance of this dissertation lies mainly in two aspects of South Pacific imperialism. First, the lands of the Pacific were among the very last to be colonized, in most cases not until the nineteenth century, affording us a more diverse look at the process, as improved efficiency in transportation and communication allowed not only a few officials, explorers, and soldiers to witness it, but missionaries, adventurers, emigrants, and, most importantly for us, writers. The three primary authors examined in this study, Anthony Trollope, Robert Louis Stevenson, and

Jack London, were mostly fiction writers, but all three generated extra income for their trips by agreeing to supply non-fiction impressions of what they saw, usually in the form of letters to various newspapers but also with book-length travelogues, published after the journey's end. This combination of skill and opportunity provides us with an unparalleled portrait of the long, continuing process of colonization. While Anglo-Indian writers like Rudyard Kipling chronicled a long-term occupation *in medias res*, as did Joseph Conrad with Africa and Malaysia, among other locations, Trollope, Stevenson, and London, as well as two important antecedents I will also examine, Herman Melville and Charles Darwin, were in on the ground floor, watching as settlers pushed out natives, epidemics decimated populations, and Western nations jockeyed for positions of influence in the few archipelagos left with some semblance of independence, thus gazing at something different than those in other regions of empire.

Secondly, less work has been done on colonization in the South Pacific and its long term effects than on regions such as India, the Middle East, or the West Indies, even in this era of blossoming postcolonial studies. To be sure, we have witnessed an upsurge of postcolonial criticism concerning the South Pacific in the last couple of decades, but much remains to be done, especially when compared to the sheer amount of attention directed at other areas of the postcolonial world sparked by the works of Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, Homi Bhabha, and others. The contemporary era of South Pacific criticism can be traced back to A. Grove Day's *Mad About Islands* (1987), which focused attention on a number of novelists who had traveled the South Seas; if a criticism can be made of Day's work, it is that it is light on analysis, instead taking a "literary biography" approach, content to trace the writers' itineraries without an in-depth study of the context and legacy of the works produced out of these voyages. Nevertheless,

it retains its importance for inaugurating this era of robust critical attention paid to the South Seas and the literary production associated with it.

Eight years later, Neil Rennie published *Far-Fetched Facts*, a thorough survey of works set in the South Pacific, although he is concerned more with how the concept of the region affected writers more than with how actual contact with the South Pacific was manifested in the texts of certain writers. After Day and Rennie, critical works have begun appearing more frequently, some focused on themes and motifs, such as Michael Sturma's study of the South Seas maiden trope, many more on individual writers—Stevenson and Herman Melville are particular beneficiaries in this regard, as several studies have been published on both in the last decade.

Nevertheless, if we date postcolonialism's ascendancy back to the 1978 publication of Said's *Orientalism*, or trace it as an interpretive framework back to the 1950s and early 1960s with the works of Frantz Fanon and Aimé Césaire, we see that South Pacific postcolonial criticism has only recently begun to come into its own, even more so when it is noted that many of the seminal works of the genre concern the Muslim world, Asia, and the West Indies, thus a comprehensive, theoretically informed, multi-author study of South Seas literature remains to be undertaken. This gap between the establishments of postcolonial frameworks for use in reading Old World texts and for use in the Pacific cannot be ignored.

The reasons for this neglect are understandable, if lamentable. Some of the same reasons that led to a tardy colonization by the West also explain this persistent lack of attention. The South Pacific is a vast area, scattered mainly with small island chains, many no more than coral rings surrounding a lagoon, and are thinly populated, if they are inhabited at all. Economically speaking, the lands of the South Seas held little allure; the cost of possessing and manning

foreign service offices and garrisons were almost invariably higher than any return on the investment. The major exceptions, Cook's discoveries of Australia, New Zealand, and Hawaii, could not cover the fact that the tourism industry was far in the future, and only pearling, guano, copra (coconut oil), and limited amounts of sugar cane would ever be successfully exploited, and even these, due to the vast distances and tiny amounts of land, were limited in scope.

Today, these same vast distances, miniscule islands, and small populations tend to keep the South Pacific off the world's radar, except as exotic backdrops for vacations or photo shoots. While leaders such as Simon Bolivar, Mohandas Gandhi, Ho Chi Minh, and Nelson Mandela brought the world's attention to the struggles of colonized and oppressed peoples in Latin America, India, Southeast Asia, and South Africa, respectively, no figure can be commonly identified with a resistance movement in the South Seas. Again, the distances and populations have been massive impediments to the growth of indigenous resistance, and what few movements there are, such as the National Liberation Front in New Caledonia and Tavini Huiiraatira (Polynesian Liberation Front) in French Polynesia, are rarely heard about in the West unless one searches out the subject. Many of the former colonies have received their independence, but even for these few, independence arrived long after the post-WWII move by the Western powers to divest themselves of their empires, that left few colonies in other areas of the world by the mid-sixties.

Even today, much of the South Pacific remains controlled from abroad. While Hawaii achieved American statehood in 1959, Guam, American Samoa, and the Northern Marianas, along with other scattered islands and atolls, have no such status in the United States. France still owns the Society Islands, which includes Tahiti, and the Marquesas—both under the banner of “French Polynesia”—as well as New Caledonia; while the French government allows these

regions deputies in their parliament, can there be any doubt that a colonizer-colony relationship still exists between France and their possessions in the South Seas? One deputy among hundreds from France itself is hard-pressed to make the needs and wishes of a few far-flung islanders on the other side of the world a serious topic among his or her fellow deputies. Even more disturbing were accounts that the French encouraged emigration of French citizens to New Caledonia in order to tip the balance in promised future referendums on independence, a practice finally renounced by the French government under pressure.

When the South Pacific has entered the world's consciousness as something other than a tropical paradise, it has been as a canvas for others to act upon. During World War II, the "Pacific Theater" was the site of a series of bloody and devastating battles between the United States and Japan, the only world power up to that point to compete with the West. But we must not make the mistake of viewing Japan as a champion of colonized people in Asia and the Pacific: clearly, Japan's ambition, as demonstrated in Manchuria, Southeast Asia, the Philippines, and the South Pacific, was to match the colonial empires of the Western powers. As Pacific Islanders saw their lands ravaged, the Americans and the Japanese fought fiercely for four years, and names like Pearl Harbor, Guadalcanal, and the Solomons became widely known

In the decades after World War II, the South Pacific unwillingly became the nuclear testing ground for the West. The United States shifted their testing from the American Southwest to the Marshall Islands, detonating their largest-ever warhead over Bikini Atoll in 1954, while the French, who tested their first atomic bomb in Algeria even as it was relinquishing control of its North African possessions, soon settled on the South Pacific as well, a move few objected to until relatively recently. While the U. S. ceased on-the-ground testing in the 1960s, the French drew protests by conducting a test in French Polynesia as recently as 1996. The British deserve

mention here as well, utilizing the sparsely populated southern regions of their former colony of Australia for their nuclear tests, as well as Christmas Island in the Pacific.

If the islands and archipelagos of the South Pacific have not had a Gandhi or a Mandela to rally indigenes and to pressure the West, neither have they had writers who have captured a wider audience to witness the struggles that continue even in the aftermath of independence or protectorate status. While writers like V. S. Naipaul, Chinua Achebe, and Maghib Mahfouz are names almost synonymous with postcolonial literature, documenting the lives of people in the West Indies, Africa, and the Middle East after the departure of the Western powers, no one of comparable stature has yet emerged in the South Pacific. Postcolonial criticism, which arises from the same fertile ground as the fiction, has traditionally drawn its greatest strength from these same areas. The peoples of the South Pacific have had a difficult time achieving the same critical mass.

Because of the enduring indifference of the West towards the Pacific and its continuing struggles with foreign influence and preservation of native cultures, the Western writers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries continue to be some of the clearest and most powerful voices—albeit unwittingly—in witness to the ravages of imperialism. While it is never ideal for Westerners to speak for those they have colonized, nevertheless the often-sympathetic portraits of Pacific Islanders offered by the likes of Herman Melville and Stevenson give us glimpses of the brutal processes of colonization and its effects. Even those Westerners who were not overly sympathetic towards native peoples, including Trollope and London, are as essential to an accurate portrayal of the South Pacific as are Melville and Stevenson, for they may not have concerned themselves with the rights and voices of non-whites, but they nevertheless documented what they saw and communicated typically callous and judgmental Western

attitudes regarding the effects of imperialism. At the same time, critics who take their cue from Edward Said would warn that any depiction of the non-Western world communicated through Western writers is a construct, and perhaps bears no relation to the reality of the colonized areas of the globe (Young 160); keeping this caveat in mind, I believe that, while we should always be aware of possible biases on the part of the writers in this study, they give us such a wide range of interpretations of the situation in the South Pacific, from pro-imperialism to anti-imperialism, that we can see that there could be no monolithic view on the part of “Westerners” as some sweeping category.

In devising an interpretive framework for this study, I found myself grappling with the origins and focuses of much of the prevailing postcolonial theory because of regional biases and the complexity of the Western gaze in the South Seas. As mentioned above, many of the seminal writers, as well as many of those still dominant, come out of regions that contained the oldest, most populous, and most profitable of the European colonies—South Asia, the Middle East, and the West Indies—and because of this orientation, their concerns and ideologies stem out of the situations found in these same colonies.

Undoubtedly, there are similarities in Western imperialism that cut across regional boundaries and chronological eras, whether they be initial intervention, motivations, consolidation of power, or suppression of indigenous cultures. However, significant differences also stand out between the operations and ramifications of empire in various parts of the globe. Unlike in many of the Old World colonies, including those in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, the colonies of the New World, a term which will include Oceania in my discussion, were affected by the catastrophic epidemics introduced by Europeans coming into contact with the inhabitants of these areas for the first time. Even with these similarities, the situation in Oceania

concerning disease and depopulation differs significantly from that in the Americas; Patrick Brantlinger observes that, unlike in the Americas, violence had relatively less to do with the decimation of South Pacific cultures than disease (*Dark* 142), an observation borne out in the various texts of the travelers covered in this study. The writers examined here may have leveled their gazes with varying degrees of impassivity and empathy, but all communicate this overwhelming impact of disease.

Apart from the role of violence, in terms of disease and the momentous effect epidemics had on native peoples, the Americas and the South Pacific clearly have similarities. As we will see in the discussion of Jared Diamond and Alfred Crosby in the next chapter, the link lies in the relatively recent migration to and settlement of these areas. Since the people, fauna, flora, and diseases of these regions had significantly less time to evolve, they often had less complexity than the older species of the Old World. In Eurasia and Africa, more virulent bacteria had developed through mutation and left societies with only those who either built up immunities or already possessed the genetic ability to stave off the disease, while fauna and flora, struggling against larger numbers of species, had developed traits that allowed them to survive and flourish. The result was cataclysmic. Westerners, and in the case of leprosy, probably East Asians, who appeared perfectly healthy, often carried bacteria that burned through indigenous populations never exposed to diseases that had mutated to greater and greater levels of virulence in the constant struggle against Eurasian immune systems. Fauna and flora, from pigs, rats, and rabbits to sugar cane and apple trees, found no natural checks or predators and ran rampant, overwhelming endemic species.

In many cases, this process led to different interpretations and justifications by the West than those sparked by the creation and often brutal consolidation of Old World colonies. Before

the scientific worldview began to gain dominance in mid-nineteenth century England, travelers and officials usually explained the continuing depopulation of the New World in terms of divine judgment, while during the period of scientific ascendancy, the divine argument was retained, but more often was combined with or superseded by variations of Darwinism, usually racist, that asserted that in a struggle between races—implicitly viewed as separate “species”—the white races would inevitably win. Violence was not employed as often in parts of the New World, not out of a progressive enlightenment, but because it was unnecessary: disease had carried the fight successfully for the West.

As noted above, Pratt’s theories provide an essential framework for several reasons, including the distinctions between imperialism’s operation in the Old World versus that in the New World. Pratt, in her postcolonial criticism, is particularly focused on the New World, especially in *Imperial Eyes*, the work I have drawn heavily upon in my study. She addresses the depopulations of the Americas while also developing theories of the gaze, such as her idea of the “seeing-man,” and the concept of the “contact zones,” a more complex and nuanced space that replaces the common theme of the frontier. The “seeing-man” concept draws its particular power as a recognition of the pattern of the usually male Westerner impassively yet approvingly watching the apparently spontaneous decimation of a native population due to disease. The true seeing-man would not dream of interfering with the working out of natural selection. The contact zone also takes on a different potency when disease and invasive species are among the main aspects of the unequal exchanges between the colonizers and the colonized.

With these explanations for my use of Pratt and her theories comes a caveat: despite compelling and significant similarities, I will argue that the imperial era in the South Pacific as often challenges and complicates her ideological framework as much as it is illuminated by it, an

argument that follows other critics, such as James Buzard, in a continuing reassessment of Pratt's work. Despite the similarities in the role of disease and its effects on the peoples of the New World, the Americas were colonized at the beginning of the era of Western imperialism, while the South Pacific in many cases was colonized in the last century or so before the European empires began falling apart. The Spaniards who initially came to the Americas were conquistadors, priests, and officials, mostly men for whom the theory of the gaze articulates the attitude of possession and superiority embodied in them. In *Imperial Eyes*, Pratt moves from the Spanish conquest and occupation of the Americas to her main focus, the later naturalists and explorers who, despite professing different motivations than those of the Spaniards, often embodied the gaze just as surely as did their predecessors. These later travelers, men like the German Alexander von Humboldt, observed and recorded, and their objective gazes took in everything.

As we will see in the following chapter, Captain Cook, whose voyages to the Pacific helped to create and to popularize the enduring myths of the South Seas, was in many ways a comrade-in-the-gaze to explorers like von Humboldt, recording objectively and christening everything from islands to bays during his years in the Pacific. Important differences can also be seen, however, dissimilarities that should be noted, for the legacy they would leave for later travelers to the region, such as the writers discussed in this study. Especially on his first voyage, Cook is careful to note the islanders' name for their home island, Tahiti, and despite a mixed record in his dealings with the natives, can be seen in both his and his naturalist's journals as trying to negotiate fairly with them. Cook failed at times, especially in his frustrations with the thefts by the Tahitians, but nevertheless, his attempts to interact with them set a precedent that will later be seen in Melville and Stevenson, especially.

Cook may have been roughly contemporaneous with von Humboldt, but while the latter was following three hundred years of Western penetrations of the Americas, Cook was truly in the vanguard of intensive Pacific exploration. Partly due to Cook's relationships with the Tahitians, but also due to the later date of initial Pacific colonization, this examination of South Seas writers complicates Pratt's "seeing-man" theory. Following Cook, Melville rarely presents uncomplicated examples of the gaze in his fiction, as his character Tommo, the protagonist of both *Typee* and *Omoo*, lives among and visits native peoples continuously, spending only limited amounts of time among his fellow Westerners, usually on board ship. Stevenson, however, is the figure who most defies the concept of the gaze. From his earliest travelogues, set among the peasants of the Cevennes in France and among Irish and Chinese immigrants in a trip to and across America, Stevenson avoided fellow intellectuals and those of his own background and class in favor of the marginalized; the pattern continues in his South Pacific experiences, as he steers clear of cities like Honolulu and Apia, and spends his time among the islanders he encounters.

Others in this study can be better understood in light of Pratt. London, to be sure, is a strong example of the "seeing-man," especially early in his travels through the South Pacific, as when he visits the Molokai leper colony and writes that he observed happy, lazy natives content to while their lives away on their tropical beach, free from work, although later he moves away from these earlier, simplistically paternal view. Finally we come to Trollope, undoubtedly the figure who best embodies the gaze as Pratt delineates it. As far as can be ascertained from his writings, during his time in Australia he never so much as engaged in conversation with an Aborigine, observing them from the deck of a ship and later in a courtroom as one was being tried for petty theft. Interestingly though, the exception of Trollope to the South Pacific

complication of the “seeing-man” theory is an example of location matching writer perfectly.

Both Trollope *and* Australia are exceptions: the one a perfect example of the objective imperialist, the unquestioning subscriber to the pseudo-scientific racial discourses of his time, the other a major area of Western settlement, a region which saw violence play a comparatively larger role during colonialism than is generally seen in Oceania.

Along with the gaze, the other aspect of Pratt’s reading of imperialism’s spread that influences my analysis is that of the contact zone. Again, the concept of the contact zone, as that of the gaze, is complicated by the unique nature of colonization in the South Pacific. The key here is the relatively late era in which systematic colonization began, much later than in other parts of the Western empires, as well as the friendly intentions of Cook in his dealings with the native peoples he encountered. In places like the Americas, South Asia, Africa, and the West Indies, lines between whites and their non-white subjects hardened fairly quickly. Whites may have taken native wives, but in many cases, these lines could not be crossed; slave revolts and native uprisings and “mutinies” led to a constant threat of violence.

Because this study concentrates to a large extent on the fiction of those who observed and experienced firsthand the regions of empire in the South Seas, perhaps a couple of examples from fiction from other colonized regions will illustrate this point via contrast. During the same period examined in my dissertation, 1870-1910, Rudyard Kipling wrote fiction about India and Joseph Conrad wrote fiction about almost every corner of the world, but most memorably Africa and the islands of Southeast Asia. What we find in Kipling’s fiction is an India where the English had clearly drawn lines, and the newly arrived Westerner knew what attitudes to assume and what opinions to hold, especially in the aftermath of the 1857 Mutiny; Kipling’s *Kim* depicts a child in a unique position—white, so unquestionably loyal to the English, but who can pass for

Indian—that allows him to act as a one-way conduit, funneling secret knowledge and plans to the English.

In Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* Marlow travels hundreds of miles downriver, into the interior of Africa, but he rarely converses with any native Africans, and never once does he name any. They are background, the savage context that explains Kurtz's insanity. In an earlier novel, *Almayer's Folly*, the marriage between trader Almayer and his Malay bride is arranged for solely economic reasons, and the hardened lines between white and non-white are even here unbroached, as the union breaks down into Almayer living in his house and his wife, unnamed in a foreshadowing of *Heart of Darkness*, preferring a hut by the riverside. No emotional exchanges seem possible in this contact zone, just as no dual loyalties are possible in the world of *Kim*. Even as late as George Orwell's *Burmese Days*, the protagonist is driven to suicide when his native mistress becomes public knowledge among the English ladies; an absolute wall has been breached.

By contrast, the contact zone as depicted in the writings of Melville, Stevenson, and London is more free-wheeling, less settled. As we find in *Typee*, based on Melville's real-life experiences after jumping ship in the Marquesas, "going native" is not the horrible fate we encounter in Africa with Kurtz, for instance. Tommo's three months among the Typee do not compromise his identity as a Westerner—only the further, permanent step of facial tattooing would have called his identity into question, and he vigorously resists this step. Stevenson's travelogues make it clear that he and his wife lived among islander groups, sometimes for weeks at a time, by choice. The British later became angry at his defense of the Samoans against imperial annexation, but officials never questioned his identity as a white, only his politics. London even further complicates the contact zone, avoiding too much contact during most of his

voyage, but he does note that, on his visit to Molokai, the ravages of leprosy encompassed all races and ethnicities, and he writes of the whites and blacks—admittedly fewer—who joined the native Hawaiians in their permanent quarantine.

Since Pratt wrote *Imperial Eyes*, other critics have built on her ideas, and one of the more fascinating additions to the concept of the contact zone comes in Robert J. C. Young's *Colonial Desire*, in which he emphasizes the sexual component of the give-and-take found in colonized areas, especially regarding the desire of whites for natives. Young notes that Westerners often had an obsession with the bodies of native peoples and included heavily sensual images in their writings, images in which writers speculated “obsessively about the uncertain crossing and invasion of identities” such encounters and relationships brought (Young 2). I would note that the South Seas literary works examined in this study again complicate any across-the-board reading of sexuality in colonial regions. While Melville's depiction of Fayaway in *Typee* and London's portrait of Jack's relationship with Lucy Mokunui are both strong examples of Young's theories, Trollope is at the other extreme—his steadfast determination to maintain what Pratt would later label the “seeing-man” stance keeps him from being anything other than repulsed by non-whites. Young even acknowledges as much when, referring to Trollope's analysis of the effects of a tropical climate on whites in the West Indies, he notes that Trollope may have wished from a hybrid race to work the islands, but that he intended this race to be “created magically, it seems, from white and black men alone” (Young 142).

Another point must be made concerning Pratt and my use of her critical theories in this study, especially as I argue that the situation in the South Pacific complicates her readings. With the exception of her last chapter, which concerns contemporary travel writers and their continuing use of the gaze, *Imperial Eyes* does not address the professional, established writer

who visits colonized regions. Pratt examines mainly explorers and naturalists from the West, but my study is focused on fiction writers, those who many readers would expect to challenge established discourses on race, domination, depopulation, and colonization—in short, a literary discourse, one which is more self-aware and self-critical in its potential. This distinction between those whose business it was to conquer, document, or systematize in the furthest reaches of empire, and those who travel by choice, travel to experience, travel to provide material for fiction, cannot be ignored. I believe that the differences between the two types of travelers, and the writing they respectively produce, contribute to the complicating of the theories of the gaze and the contact zone that we find in the South Pacific, but this distinction does not tell the whole story. As I argue above, just as essential to an application of any postcolonial theory to the region are Cook's approach to Pacific islanders and the later initial date of widespread Western contact and subsequent imperialism as compared to most areas of the globe which fell under imperialism's reach.

As for the structure of this dissertation, I will set up the travels and writings of the later writers by examining the first journey of Captain James Cook, who discovered the Hawaiian Islands and New Zealand, and while he was not the first to visit either Australia or Tahiti, did much to bring these lands to the attention of the West. The journals of both Cook and his naturalist, Joseph Banks, give us a fascinating glimpse of the Tahitians during the time of initial contact and of the relations between the Europeans and the natives, which even here is already settled into, from the British view, a dichotomy of Western paternalism and native mischievousness, a pattern that would recur throughout the colonial period. In the journals of Cook and Banks, we will also see the release of Old World animals and the spread of Old World disease, a process that will bear out tragic results by the times of the later writers.

In the second chapter, I will examine the South Pacific works of both Melville and Charles Darwin, two writers coming from distinctly different outlooks who nevertheless combined to influence heavily most of the professional writers who would follow in their wakes. Darwin, who as a naturalist owed much to the sober tones of Cook and Banks in their journals decades earlier, did much to further cement the objective tone of the Western man of learning, observing and analyzing constantly as he traveled about the empire; clearly, later writers—including Trollope, Stevenson, and London—had learned this lesson well. As writers, however, these men had also assimilated the lessons of Melville, whose observations were nevertheless salted with a healthy dose of skepticism over the motives and effects of Western intervention and influence in the South Pacific. While Stevenson and London wondered about the benefits to natives, Trollope actually went to the other extreme, believing Western benevolence was wasted on natives. In both cases, these writers ended up echoing Melville in questioning what effects the West was having and if the missionaries, naturalists, and anthropologists of Europe and America were deluding themselves.

The three chapters which comprise the main body of this dissertation are devoted to the three writers I have been discussing here as followers in spirit as well as in time of Cook, Darwin, and Melville: Trollope, Stevenson, and London. For Trollope, I will focus on his trip to Australia in the early 1870s to visit his son, an immigrant to Australia, and the subsequent views he expresses in his travelogue on the Aborigines and the future of the Australian continent. Stevenson, sailing to the Pacific in 1888 in search of relief from the tuberculosis that would eventually contribute to his early death, would feel intense sympathy for the Pacific Islanders and would write an array of works supporting them, from travelogues to novellas, from colonial history to angry polemics. Finally, London, in 1906, would swagger into the South Seas full of

his racist theories of white supremacy and the arrogance of his own self-image, but I will trace how his struggle with painful and debilitating illness on his journey would disrupt his self-assured gaze and lead to an at-least partial repudiation of his racism and to the writing of some remarkable short stories supporting the Polynesians, beleaguered as they were by leprosy and other epidemics.

As can be deduced from this short outline of this dissertation, much of the focus regarding the effects of colonization as seen by these three revolves around disease, depopulation, and ecological changes. While political changes did occur, they are often most noticeable as a result of one of these other factors, as when the Western authorities in Hawaii, in the name of public health, began a policy of forcible deportation and lifelong quarantine at the Molokai leper colony in response to the leprosy epidemic that burned through the indigenous population of the islands. Apart from the political response, Trollope witnessed the waning of the Aboriginal population and the establishment of introduced species, especially sheep and sugarcane, into Australia. Stevenson would compare the decimated and dispirited people of the Marquesas with the fierce, robust natives who inhabited Melville's *Typee*, only forty years earlier. London vividly recounted the native Hawaiian resistance to the Molokai transports, earning the enmity of the white community in Honolulu in the process.

I would also like to make a couple of points about the scope and terminology of this study before continuing on to the body of the work itself. The regions discussed by the writers examined here range from Hawaii in the north to Australia in the south; Australia is included because its major city, Sydney, was considered the southern terminus of the shipping and communications axis that ran through the South Pacific to Honolulu before continuing on to San Francisco. Even more importantly, Cook mapped much of the eastern coast of Australia, naming

and observing as he went, on the same first voyage that led to his stay in Tahiti and his discovery of New Zealand. Queensland, the area focused on in my study of Trollope, shared similarities with Hawaii and other Pacific islands in the increasing economic reliance on sugarcane introduced from the West Indies. Finally, the Aborigines were experiencing catastrophic change during the same time period that the Polynesians and Melanesians were experiencing disease and depopulation to the north and east. For these reasons, I believe that Australia fits both geographically and thematically with areas, such as Tahiti, Samoa, and Hawaii, more traditionally thought of as the “South Pacific.”

Regarding terminology, I use the terms “South Pacific” and “South Seas” interchangeably throughout this study. Although South Pacific is a more precise geographic term, South Seas is a traditional one, and it was used extensively throughout the era addressed in this study. In an 1859 lecture on the topic of the Pacific, Herman Melville defended the use of “South Seas,” explaining that it suggested so many themes, so many associations, so many “pleasant and venerable books of voyages, full of well-remembered engravings,” that perhaps it captures the region as effectively as any less romantic term used today (“South Seas” 576-7). Our “books of voyages” may not always be quite so pleasant as they were for Melville, but his point is taken, and I have chosen to use the term alongside “South Pacific.”

As far as the inhabitants of the South Pacific are concerned, I prefer the term “Pacific Islander” because although the lands examined here are mainly peopled by Polynesians, Trollope and, to a lesser extent, London also deal with Melanesians. The terms “native” and “indigene” are also used frequently; although “native” has accrued some negative connotations—savages dancing around fires in a frenzy, for instance—for the most part it is still a neutral term, and since the works discussed in this study depict contact between whites and non-whites on the

Pacific Islanders home islands, “native” is a term that unambiguously defines who was already on Tahiti, Samoa, or Hawaii when Westerners first began arriving.

Finally, in writing a study of the South Pacific and the struggles of its inhabitants, one cannot avoid dealing with the topic of leprosy, which burned most notably through the Hawaiian Islands, but also affected other areas in the region to a lesser degree. It has been suggested that use of the terms “leprosy,” “leper,” and “leper colony” be discontinued, as they are forever tainted by the behavior of those who often callously “treated” those afflicted as well as by the hysterical public reaction towards those with the disease. Those with the disease were considered immoral, either contracting the disease as judgment from God or through sexual licentiousness. Although today, the disease is known by its medically correct name, “Hansen’s Disease,” the term “leprosy” has not disappeared, and in fact, is still used by medical professionals and historians. Since “leprosy” is by far the most recognizable term for the disease, I have made the decision to use it and its related terms.

Chapter 1: Captain Cook and the Allure of Tahiti: Looking Backward
To the Dawn of Pacific Imperialism

Captain James Cook was certainly not the first Western explorer to sail the Pacific Ocean, nor was he even the first to touch on such romanticized islands as Tahiti, but arguably he is the most celebrated explorer of the region and inarguably he became a touchstone for generations of Westerners who followed in his wake. Incidents such as his initial encounter with the warmly welcoming, sensual Tahitians, generous with their sexual favors and abundantly fertile fruit trees, and his death, fighting against savage natives on a far-flung beach in the Hawaiian Islands, practically became archetypes, lending imagery to the imaginations of novelists and travelers intent on experiencing the South Seas for themselves. Rare, if not nonexistent, would be the traveler in the Pacific who had not read of Cook and had his voyages in his mind as the Edenic islands came into view. Cook's allure was so strong that it is even possible that Samuel Coleridge, in writing one of the most famous poems in our language, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," may have been influenced by him (Moorehead 73).

That Cook visited Tahiti, Hawaii, Australia, New Zealand, and other South Pacific destinations in the midst of debates over the role of civilization's either ennobling or corrupting influences probably added to the excited reception in Europe of his reports and the books written by numerous officers, naturalists, and others who had traveled with him. Alternately, though, an examination of Cook's own impressions and conclusions reveals a man not very interested in questions of "noble savages" versus "headhunting cannibals." More importantly for many of the

later writers who journeyed to the Pacific, Cook was rather more interested in close observation, objective reporting, and sober conclusions.

Despite not being a scientist himself, Cook had been sent, not explicitly on a voyage of colonization, but on one of furthering knowledge. For the first of his three Pacific expeditions, Cook's instructions were to set up an observation on Tahiti of an astronomical phenomenon, a transit of Venus, the results of which could later be compared to other observations to ascertain the size of the earth. His careful observations of geography, natives and their customs, and diseases show him to be an early amateur naturalist and anthropologist (Moorehead 11). Some of the lands he touched on were not claimed for the crown, and many others were not colonized for decades. All of these observations can be marshaled to make a case for Cook as a disinterested observer, a collector of facts and impressions, an important contributor to the exploding body of knowledge the West was gathering about the rest of the world.

Starting with Alan Moorehead's 1966 account of Cook's first voyage, *The Fatal Impact*, biographers and researchers have taken a more critical look at Cook. Moorehead portrays Cook as an aloof yet compassionate man, concerned with treating natives fairly, but prone to fits of temper when they continue to frustrate him. Moorehead is more concerned with the unintended negative consequences of that first voyage of the *Endeavour*, focusing on the diseases introduced among the Tahitians and Australian Aborigines, for example. A quarter-century later, Gananath Obeyesekere's *The Apotheosis of Captain Cook* brought the criticisms forward, implicating Cook more forcefully and directly than Moorehead had done, positing that the South Pacific became a lawless place for Cook and his men, "spaces for acting out sex and violence" far from the restraining gaze of Western law (14). The unintentional negative ramifications of Moorehead's Cook become deliberate brutality for Obeyesekere. Although Obeyesekere dismisses *The Fatal*

Impact as a “journalistic work” that few scholars would bother with (261), another critic notes that most later works critical of Cook’s intentions and the consequences of his expeditions are the “logical consequence” of Moorehead’s work (Currie 16-7), and even Obeyesekere admits of Moorehead that he is “[o]ne of the few modern writers who was critical of both Cook and the Pacific voyages of exploration” (261).

Moving beyond Cook into broader context, more recent criticism would also call into question exactly how disinterested and objective the accumulation of knowledge from the non-Western world could truly be. Mary Louise Pratt, in her *Imperial Eyes*, argues that when expeditions from Europe began shifting their aims from conquest to the pursuit of knowledge—what she terms the “anti-conquest”—the scores of naturalists and anthropologists scouring little-known corners of the world were in fact colonizing knowledge, dismissing native names for flora and fauna in favor of Latinate names that fit into the European classification system of Linnaeus, for instance. Cook, after all, was in the employ of the British navy, and while neither Tahiti nor Hawaii ended up in Britain’s hands, New Zealand and Australia did, both of which are dotted to this day with Western geographical names he bestowed. As he portrayed himself in his journals, Cook was a compassionate man who was angered by the sexual exploitation of Tahitian girls by his crew and who often treated native leaders with respect; Pratt and her followers, however, would point to the way Cook sailed the coasts of Australia, christening bays and points as he went, as though the land were either uninhabited—an act which places him firmly in the tradition of Christopher Columbus in the Caribbean—or peopled by unquestioned savages, evidenced by names like “Cannibal Cove, Murderers Bay, [and] Kidnappers Cape” (Obeyesekere 12).

It should be noted, however, that certain critics would argue for a more moderate approach to critiquing the “anti-conquest,” and thus, by extension, Cook. James Buzard, for

instance, in his study of ethnography, *Disorienting Fiction*, directly references Pratt and her system of absolute oppositions. Buzard objects to a dichotomy that treats the Western quest for knowledge as *a priori* oppressive, while self-representations by natives are unquestionably authentic; he critiques her “tidy opposition” as a “meta-anthropological critique that virtually identifies an ‘ethnographic perspective’ with the brutal ‘othering’ powers and aims of colonization” (13-4). With Pratt’s focus on the hidden effects of voyages of exploration rather than conquest, now nuanced by Buzard’s critiques, we can examine not only Cook, but his influence—if the new age of knowledge and curiosity he inspired had its catastrophic ramifications, how do those writers most directly following him contribute to the process of colonization, depopulation, dislocation, and despair?

Even with a moderated view, clearly the respect Cook showed to native rulers broke down at certain critical moments, as when he held the Tahitian chief hostage until stolen goods were returned. In terms of sheer practicality, such actions might have made sense, and indeed resulted in the return of important pieces of equipment, but they also betrayed a certain cavalier attitude towards the natives; instead of reasoning and negotiation, Cook and his officers felt no qualms at humiliating and belittling their hosts. Scenes such as this one could not even be imagined taking place between the English and the French, or even between the English and the Indian monarchs they encountered in South Asia, who ruled from cities and possessed formidable armies—in short, who came closer to the Western ideal of civilization.

As we will see, Cook’s measured opinions as recorded in his journals did not always correspond felicitously with behavior towards the natives in the moment, although Cook did not necessarily approve of the sometimes bullying approach taken. On two early tense occasions, Cook followed his own rule laid down as soon as the crew of the *Endeavour* disembarked, “to

treat them with all imaginable humanity” (Cook 25). When a native was shot trying to make off with a musket grabbed from a sailor, he was shot dead, an incident Cook merely records without comment, although Banks has more to say, recording that they were “not well pleased with the day’s expeditions,” guilty over the “death of a man whom the most severe laws of equity would not have condemned to so severe a punishment” (Banks 78). Several weeks later, when the quadrant was stolen—an essential piece of equipment for the measurements of the transit—Cook rejects the strategy of holding Tootaha, one of the native rulers, as a hostage until the device was returned, instead choosing to persuade Tootaha to work with them for the quadrant’s recovery, an approach that worked.

In another incident that illustrates Cook’s attempts to treat the Tahitians fairly, Banks brings to Cook’s attention to the abuse of a native woman by one of the *Endeavour*’s butchers; the man wanted a stone hatchet, but when the woman refused to trade it, he “threatened to cut her throat if she attempted to hinder him” (Banks 83-4). Cook brought both the butcher and the natives on board the ship, where he “immediately ordered the offender...stripped and fastened to the rigging” for a flogging. Interestingly, the natives, confronted with English naval discipline, “interfered with many tears, begging that the punishment might cease, a request which the captain would not comply with” (85).

One critic notes that, by the end of the first voyage, a full quarter of the *Endeavour*’s sailors would receive the “Maximum of twenty-four lashes” (Salmond 84), so perhaps the butcher’s flogging can be seen as the moment when Cook became sterner towards both crew and natives. When the two crew members deserted with their native “wives” just before the *Endeavour*’s departure, Cook authorized the detainment of Tootaha and Obarea, one of the ranking women, but three other respected natives. This reversal nearly led to all-out war, as a

group of incensed Tahitians seized several crew members in retaliation, and the group hotly feuded among themselves whether to release the men or not; fortunately, the two men from the *Endeavour* were produced, allowing Cook to avoid an ugly situation that could have spiraled out of control very quickly. Banks, in his journal, goes so far as to criticize Cook when he seizes a group of native canoes in an attempt to force the Tahitians to return any stolen items; Banks foresees, and is later vindicated, that the canoes did not belong to all the natives, so many of the thieves would have no compelling reason to return anything (Banks 99).

Viewed through this lens, perhaps Cook should be seen as one of the most important precursors to the scramble for Pacific colonies which would take up much of the nineteenth century, a competition which would see France send warships to Tahiti, England drive out the Aborigines in Australia, Germany land marines in Samoa, and the United States annex the Hawaiian Islands at the natives' "request." Writers such as Herman Melville, Anthony Trollope, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Jack London would witness these events directly or observe their immediate after effects, incorporating them into their fiction.

This is not to say that Cook would have felt any satisfaction if he could have seen the state of the Pacific a hundred years after his initial landing in Tahiti in 1769, but the supposedly purer motivations that often undergirded voyages after the initial rush to colonize the most obviously moneymaking areas of the globe, such as India, the Caribbean, the East Indies, and the African and Chinese coasts, had just as destructive long term consequences, leading to the final stages of imperial expansion in the nineteenth century, when less lucrative and more inaccessible areas were competed for—the interior of Africa, the celebrated "Great Game" of Central Asia, and the Pacific. While Central Asia was often explored by British traders and military officers, the expeditions into the African interior and to the South Pacific have stronger similarities, as

celebrated explorers whose quest for knowledge helped them transcend imperialism and gain adoring fans and readerships; Cook found his African corollaries in men like Henry Livingstone and Richard Burton. The public thrilled to the adventures these noble explorers experienced, but behind the romance trailed the diplomats, the traders and plantation owners, and the Union Jack, raised in ownership.

However, unlike Africa and Central Asia, both classic cases of what Pratt sees as the progressive movement from coastal explorations to interior expeditions as new sources of economic exploitation became more remote, the South Seas, because of their geography, for the most part remained a region of coastal contacts. Apart from Australia and New Zealand's North and South Islands, most islands in the South Pacific are almost nothing *but* coasts. Cook's influence, therefore, becomes magnified from previous coastal explorers, those like Hudson and Vespucci, Magellan and Tasman; once again, Cook's parallels to Columbus in the Caribbean are undeniable, as no inland expeditions succeeded him in order to consolidate control. Columbus certainly had economic considerations foremost in his mind as he sailed the Atlantic—he had no reason to justify himself any other way—but if Pratt is correct in implicating scientific expeditions as another type of imperial trailblazing, then Cook must be identified with this later phase of colonization as surely as Columbus is with the first phase, the undisguised, nakedly competitive landgrabs of the fifteenth through eighteenth centuries.

However, keeping these criticisms in mind, how did Cook approach the act of observing the peoples and lands that he visited, and what exactly did he perceive and find noteworthy? Further, how did he influence later generations of Pacific wanderers, especially the professional writers who were able to access and tour a region in the throes of incipient colonization in a way

that those without a direct financial or military interest in an area had rarely been able to do before?

Many of the subjects Cook detailed in his journals are the same ones addressed throughout the next century: customs like tattooing and cannibalism, religious beliefs, morality and character, and, intimately bound up with these last, sexuality. Alan Moorehead's assertion, in his still-popular account of the Cook voyages, *The Fatal Impact*, that Cook viewed natives without prejudice (11) must not be accepted without qualification, especially in light of some of his actions towards islanders, but Cook's tone in his journals is certainly sober and distanced, strongly avoiding any of the hysteria or rhapsodizing often found swirling around discussions of South Seas inhabitants.

The subject most often associated with Tahitians, their considerably less rigid sexual mores, gets a fair amount of attention from Cook. He mentions that Tahitian women were receptive sexual partners, often initiating sexual contact with the crew of the *Endeavour*, but he questions whether it is fair to label them licentious, simply remarking that "Chastity indeed is but little Valued" (Cook 38) and offering several illustrations for this observation. Early in their stay on Tahiti, Cook watched a curious ritual in which two young women disrobed and presented themselves to Joseph Banks; Cook comments that the ceremony was performed "with as much Innocency as one could possibly conceive" (31). Perhaps more disturbing to a contemporary reader is Cook's reaction to witnessing an apparent public deflowering of "a little girl about 10 or 12 years of age" by a grown man; noting that several ranking women were directing the girl, Cook concludes dispassionately that it was an "odd Scene," and "done more from Custom than Lewdness" (31).

Cook held himself aloof from the women who approached him, but he clearly does not reveal himself a moralist. When two men jumped ship shortly before the *Endeavour* was to set sail from Tahiti, he spared no effort in retrieving them, seizing several hostages as guarantee of the natives' efforts to bring them back, as mentioned above, but Cook passed no judgment on the men's motivations—"that they had got each of them a Wife" (33).

Only once does Cook raise an objection to the mores of the Tahitians, concerning the practice of infanticide. He hazards in his journal that perhaps those back in England will not believe him when he reports the practice because it is a "Custom so inhuman and contrary to the first principals of human nature." Nevertheless, he continues, the consequence of "injoying free liberty in love" is that the "[c]hildren who are so unfortunate as to be thus begot are smother'd at the moment of their birth"; further, Cook objects, infanticide is not seen as a shameful or hidden act, but one the natives are "far from concealing" (38).

Of even more concern to Cook was the syphilis that had, even by that point, begun burning through the islanders, and which, in turn, spread infection through the *Endeavour's* crew. Cook knew that Wallis' *Dolphin* had touched at Tahiti previously, and there was some suspicion, later proven correct, that a French ship had arrived soon after the *Dolphin*, so it did not come as a shock to him to find syphilis among the natives. He was of course concerned about the health of his crew, as the disease spread at an alarming rate: within weeks, one-third of the men had it, and by the time they left Tahiti, fully half of Cook's men were syphilitic (Moorehead 35, 40). Cook's apprehensions were furthered by the fact that the building and guarding of Ft. Venus meant that he could not keep his men on board ship; he laments that "Women were so very liberal with their favours, or else Nails, Shirts, etc were temptations they could not withstand,"

that he felt virtually powerless to stop the sexual contact between his men and the native women (Cook 32).

Consistent with his tone throughout his journals, however, Cook does not blame the Tahitians nor their open sexuality for his crew's predicament, rather lamenting that such a vile disease had been introduced among what he considered an innocent people. The idea that the *Endeavour's* men might be contributing to the spread of syphilis among the natives caused him "no small uneasiness," but regardless of the Western source—English or French, *Endeavour* or *Dolphin*—Cook uncannily foresaw one of the enduring themes of the South Pacific's history: sweeping and devastating epidemics. Cook sadly predicts that syphilis "may in time spread it self over all the Islands in the South Seas, to the eternal reproach of those who first brought it among them" (Cook 32-3).

The importance of Cook's foresight when surveying the carnage already wrought by venereal disease lies in the fact that he understood clearly the changes already occurring in the Pacific, even just a year after first contact, as in Tahiti, and he comprehended that even more monumental changes were to come. Unlike Banks, whose tendency was to be seduced by the romance of the South Seas, Cook established a parallel tradition, followed by some of the notable later travelers and writers to the region, of not letting the already coalescing myths of the South Pacific shape and overwhelm his perceptions of conditions directly observed. Understandings of everything from the spread of disease to the subtleties of the taboo were imperfect as the nineteenth century advanced, but when writers from Melville to London grappled with what they were seeing and experiencing, they are solidly in the path that Cook helped blaze.

We can see Cook's resistance to the lens of myth in regards to several topics. He may dwell upon the syphilis brought by Europeans, but he does not subscribe to an utopian vision of natives living in perfect health, far from civilization; he notes endemic afflictions as well, mentioning that some Tahitians suffered from "a sort of Leprosie or scab all over their bodies...to that degree as not to be able to walk" (Cook 37). Just as contrary to the assertions of philosophers back in Europe that "noble savages" lived in perfectly egalitarian societies, Cook clearly perceived and delineated three classes among the Tahitians, describing how the "Toutous," or lowest class, were the most numerous, and how the "Eares," or chiefs—translated as "baron" by Banks (Banks 176)—determined how land would be parceled out, practices that at least echo property ownership, one of the characteristic evils of European civilization.

After listing a number of fruits and vegetables grown on Tahiti, Cook observes that "[a]ll these articles the Earth almost spontaneously produces," leading him to conclude that "these people may almost be said to be exempt from the curse...that they earn their bread with the sweet of their brow" (Cook 35), an idea later echoed by Melville. The fruitful abundance of the South Seas was often an essential aspect of the myth of the new Eden, but again Cook skirts this line of interpretation, instead moving on to further catalogues of food sources for the natives.

Cook's early perception that massive changes would sweep the Pacific can be traced throughout the following century and more, as writers and travelers attempted to understand the exact nature and causes of these changes in light of scientific advances in the realms of biology and epidemiology. Robert Louis Stevenson, dealing with his own chronic tuberculosis, would write perceptively of the link between ill-health and defeatist mindsets, while Jack London cast the changes as part of the larger Darwinian struggle which he saw as the meta-narrative of earth's history. Today, we are still coming to a fuller knowledge of the processes by which

populations and ecosystems were profoundly transformed by contact with the West, and we are also able to put the region and its changes into a more complete context—connecting the South Pacific with the Americas, for instance, in terms of isolation, immunology, and invasive species.

Two groundbreaking works, Alfred Crosby's *Ecological Imperialism* and Jared Diamond's *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, have shaped our current understanding of why disease and invasive species decimated populations of people, flora, and fauna in regions such as the Americas and the South Pacific, instead of diseases and species originating in these areas dominating their European counterparts. The explanations of thinkers like Crosby and Diamond help explain why the epidemics of leprosy, smallpox, and tuberculosis flashed through the South Seas, leaving devastation that the later writers we will examine observed and incorporated into their works. The books of Crosby and Diamond also prove to be perfect examples of the modern tendency towards interdisciplinary studies; as Diamond writes of *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, the “subject matter is history, but the approach is that of science” (26), and if we add in that the subject of this study is literature, but the approach is that of history *and* science, it becomes clearer the importance of not only Crosby and Diamond, but Cook and Darwin also, to a fuller analysis of Trollope, Stevenson, and London. Postcolonial studies have traditionally stressed the importance of an interdisciplinary outlook, especially historical context, in the understanding of works. In a region like the South Pacific, however, scientific context is just as crucial—the settings, origins, and impacts of the literature coming out of the area cannot be truly comprehended without both.

Broadly speaking, the concerns of both Crosby and Diamond are to demonstrate how a deeper understanding of ecology and epidemiology allows us to draw significant conclusions about the fates of cultures, especially as the Renaissance impulse for exploration, trade, and

colonization led to contacts among cultures more and more widely separated. In contrast to earlier histories of colonization, which often depicted the time as one of superior Western cultures defeating and dominating weaker, “backwards” cultures—this superiority could be ascribed to anything from God guiding and blessing the Christian nations of the West to a belief that the European races had evolved into a more advanced state, leading to their powerful technology and strategies. Crosby and Diamond were not the first to refute these lines of thought, of course; they built on the theories and discoveries of many others, but their importance lies in their abilities to synthesize disparate ideas and provide a comprehensive and non-racially based explanation of how and why the West—its people as well as its flora and fauna—came to dominate such massive swaths of the globe.

Crosby’s *Ecological Imperialism*, published in 1986, focuses on the concept of what Crosby calls the “Neo-Europes,” the areas of the world that offered roughly similar climates and agricultural conditions to Europe, and thus, became the major centers of migration and resettlement for Europeans crowded out by overpopulation and poverty. These Neo-Europes can be found in the temperate bands of both the Northern and Southern Hemispheres, and they contain the nations dominated by European descendants to this day: the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and Argentina and, to a lesser extent, other South American countries. Most of these countries are often associated with their ability to produce wheat, cattle, or sheep, attributes which made them conducive to transplanted European culture. Crosby explains how diseases and introduced species often outstripped the march of colonization, leading to those advancing beyond the frontiers finding the land beyond already “Europeanized” (94), depopulated of natives and full of familiar flora and fauna.

Diamond's *Guns, Germs, and Steel* overlaps to an extent with Crosby's work, but he also goes back further in time to examine the biological and genetic reasons why Europeans carried such a stock of infectious diseases with them, as well as why their immune systems seemed to be so much resilient than those of many of the natives they encountered in the "New World," including the Pacific. He traces the effects of widespread agriculture, the domestication of animals, and the development of cities in the rise of disease and the dearly bought immunity to them once they began ravaging the West. Building on his analysis of disease and immunity, Diamond then examines the confluence of factors that led to the rapid rise of technology among the same Westerners who were simultaneously developing strengthened immunities. In the case of technology, whether of war, transportation, or medicine, the rise of cities again plays a major role, as well as specialization of labor and access to large reserves of various metals and minerals.

In the cases of Crosby and Diamond, Diamond's observation that the subject might be history, but the approach is science, holds true (26). For this dissertation, the line of thinking may also be modified: the subject might be literature, but the approach is science. Of course, two views of science must be examined and understood: the emerging understanding of disease and ecology that writers like Trollope, Stevenson, and London struggle to apply to what they see, and the advanced science, aided by decades of research and technological achievements, presented in the works of Crosby, Diamond, and others. The work of contemporary scientists and historians give us a revealing look at the overall impact of contact and colonization, but the scientific beliefs of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries cannot be discounted—the observations, or gaze, made "on the ground" and the theories devised to account for them contributed mightily to the continually sharpening image of a world in tumult. Crosby dismisses criticism of earlier

scientific thought by writing that the Victorians did nothing more contemptible than draw conclusions from the evidence at hand (xvi). Conversely, however, he also notes that Westerners were seldom master of the biological changes they triggered in other parts of the world (192), a fact that someone like Stevenson lamented, even though Trollope celebrated this process as confirmation of British claims to the depopulated land.

However, we can now examine the speculations and assertions of these writers in the light shed on them by decades of new discoveries. What those of the nineteenth century did not always seem to comprehend was the interconnectedness of all the destructive, transformative processes they were witnesses to: the people, the animals, the plants, all the way down to the bacteria—not one was an island of change, but each was intimately bound up with the others. As stated before, these changes up and down the spectrum of life were most cataclysmic in the so-called “new world,” an area I would expand to encompass Oceania—Australia, New Zealand, and the rest of the South Pacific islands. Further complicating the effects of Western encroachment in the region is the fact that certain areas of the Pacific—specifically Australia, New Zealand, and to a lesser extent, Hawaii—fall into what Crosby categorizes as the “Neo-Europes.” We find that in the Neo-Europes, the changes were often more deliberate, especially as settlers and their domesticated animals and agriculture moved in to dominate the land, but in many of the South Pacific islands, which Westerners never had much interest in settling, we see instead a lingering, a decimated and often shattered remnant of the native populations retaining their lands, but with degraded culture and diminished way of life.

Crosby’s and Diamond’s work, for my purposes, can be divided into two basic questions, each answered with the larger overview and understanding we possess from our vantage point of over a hundred years later. Crosby details the “what,” the actual changes that swept the “new

world,” connecting widely divergent lands and populations in a web of introduced species, epidemics, and displacements. The key to the West’s ability to easily dominate and conquer, Crosby argues, lay not in who they were, but in what they brought along with them, most importantly in this case, microbes (32). Smallpox was by far the most destructive of these microbes; Crosby labels the disease a “most spectacular pathogen,” and recounts as an example the scores of dead aborigines found by European settlers as they pushed inland from the Australian coast (199, 205).

Veneral diseases also decimated Pacific natives; from Cook forward, diseases like syphilis spread through island populations, causing sterility and lowered birth rates (208). There is some ambiguity as to whether syphilis is a disease originating in the new world or the old, but regardless, the Europeans were certainly responsible for its rapid spread as their ships visited island after island.

What the whites could not understand was that they were “seldom master of the biological changes triggered” (192) in the new world, even if they believed they were finding success through racial superiority or divine blessing. The “crowd diseases,” such as smallpox or measles, which regularly swept through the crowded European nations, lay dormant with them as they crossed the ocean and found fresh “fuel” to consume in the unexposed populations of the South Pacific (30). As the germs of the Europeans “[s]wept aside” Pacific natives, the Europeans themselves, who of course could not be expected to comprehend the process of virulent germs on unexposed peoples, saw a greater hand in the mysterious and devastating epidemics that often left the land depopulated and open for them. Perhaps, as some Westerners ventured, the diseases were divine punishment for native outrages such as regular infanticide (92).

Similarly to pathogens, flora and fauna exchanges were usually grossly one-sided as well, as Crosby points out. In places like Australia, newcomers found the native flora and fauna “exasperatingly bizarre” (6), and when they set about to “Europeanize” the new lands, disease had often blazed a path among the people, and familiar plants and animals completed the process. Inadvertantly, Westerners had long ago learned how well their flora and fauna could do, when in the 1420s, a few rabbits let loose in the Madeira Islands exploded in population due to a lack of natural checks (75). This ecological disaster foreshadowed what would happen time and again in the new world, sometimes planned, in the cases of introduced crops like sugar cane and animals such as goats and chickens, but other times accidentally, as the worldwide plague of rats, many of which rode aboard sailing vessels, attests to. Whether introduction was deliberate or not, in many cases Westerners could not control the spread of plants and animals once they had gained a foothold.

If Crosby concerned himself with the “what,” Diamond concentrates on the “how.” Much of Diamond’s analysis of how and why European cultures ended up colonizing much of the world focuses on factors such as urbanization, diversification of agriculture, domestication of animals, and the age of a culture. He goes on to demonstrate how a series of fortunate factors led to a slow rise in both the immunity and the technology of Europe. A variety of edible plants and animals amenable to domestication led to vastly more efficient agriculture, which in turn allowed larger densities and the growth of cities, since new farming techniques could feed more people in a smaller area.

Once the process of greater densities began, two events occurred. First, the proximity of a variety of animals to humans led to new pathogens sweeping human populations; as Diamond observes, most major killers evolved from animals—smallpox from cows, influenza from swine,

diphtheria (whooping cough) from dogs (196). A large number of the large animals eventually domesticated in the world originated in the Eurasian supercontinent, such as cattle, oxen, horses, and pigs, giving those who lived in the region greater exposure to pathogens of all kinds; of course, many died in successive epidemics, but they also began to earn an increasing and hard-won genetic resistance to many of these virulent diseases (202-3).

The other aspect of greater population densities and subsequent urbanization was the specialization of labor. Once some people were freed from the day-to-day concerns of providing food, they were able to fill such specialized roles as priests, merchants, and warriors. As effort was put into various roles, innovation occurred; from either Europe or Asia, over the centuries came catapults, longbows, gunpowder, ocean-going ships, and several generations of firearms. By the time Europeans encountered native peoples in the Americas or the Pacific, they were equipped with those things named in Diamond's book's title: guns, germs, and steel, a lethal and overwhelming combination.

Pacific Islanders had no chance. Most scholars believe the natives of the Pacific, in most cases, had reached their present habitats much later than those in Eurasia and Africa, and therefore did not have the long centuries those in Europe had to develop their civilizations. Other factors further hamstrung Pacific natives. They did not have the variety of animals to domesticate, limiting their exposure to pathogens that might make the leap from animal to human. The small sizes of most of the islands kept populations relatively low, as even efficient agriculture would not have been able to sustain greater densities. Finally, the small populations did not encourage the evolution and innovation that led to the weaponry and transportation breakthroughs achieved by their Western visitors. Diamond points out that on some few of the islands, such as Easter Island, or Rapa Nui, and Tahiti, "immense stone structures" which echoed

those of Egypt and Mesoamerica were found by the Europeans, suggesting that slowly, the Pacific cultures were advancing towards more complex civilizations, as does the fact that empires were slowly emerging in Tonga and Hawaii. But the arrival of Europeans came at an unfortunate time, and the results can be traced in the works of Melville, Darwin, Trollope, Stevenson, and London, as well as in the analysis of Crosby and Diamond.

Of course, there is more to the works of the literary writers traveling the Pacific in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries than simply nascent understandings of the ecological and epidemiological changes transforming the region; these writers were not free of ideological trappings as they encountered and examined the changing world of the South Seas. Pratt's criticism, as well as the criticism of those expanding on and critiquing her, needs to stand alongside that of Crosby and Diamond to get a fuller, more nuanced idea of how many early writers challenged or confirmed their contemporary assumptions. For example, Pratt's trope of the seeing-man, alongside scientific explanations of how epidemics and invasive species work in the New World, sheds light on Trollope, an observant man who nevertheless had little desire to challenge the worldview and understandings of his age—he embodies the seeing-man particularly in his conception of ecological imperialism. By contrast, Stevenson and London were not content with the accepted beliefs of the times, and their works testify to their gropings towards the more complex understanding of our time.

The following chapters of this dissertation will chronologically examine several important writers who journeyed to the South Pacific over the course of several decades, detailing both non-fiction travelogues and fiction based on their experiences. The earliest writers, Melville and Darwin, exerted a significant influence on those following them, and they are combined because they complement and challenge each other in the way their different

approaches guided their literary descendants. Anthony Trollope swung through the two most significant British possessions in the South Seas, Australia and New Zealand, and reported on the progress British settlers were making in these promising “Neo-Europes.” Robert Louis Stevenson was driven to the Pacific in his attempts to stave off the chronic tuberculosis that would eventually take his life, but would find renewed vigor and inspiration in his new surroundings. Jack London came in search for adventure, piloting his newly commissioned yacht and holding firm to his comfortable, racial views until an increasingly difficult journey led to a partial rethinking of his philosophies.

Melville and Darwin are crucial in shaping enduring views of the South Seas and its inhabitants because they were two of the most prominent travelers conscious of the shadow of Cook. Melville came to the Pacific under the most humble of circumstances—a sailor who jumped ship—but he came from an educated background, and when he came to base his first two novels, *Typee* and *Omoo*, on his experiences as a fugitive, island hopper, and companion of cannibals, he deftly drew on and twisted the body of myths, tropes, and images that had flourished since Cook had so thrust the enchanting, exotic world of the Pacific into the British consciousness. Melville did not come to the Pacific as a professional writer, but his career as one was born there, and his highly analytical approach would come to be imprinted on the following generations of writers who followed him.

Darwin, near contemporary of Melville, was of course, a naturalist rather than a professional writer, but his *Voyage of the Beagle* solidified the scientific, objective approach which characterized Cook’s sober journals, and wielded its powerful influence in the way later writers, even those from non-scientific backgrounds, attempted to interpret what they saw among native peoples and in native ecologies through the lens of Victorian science. Ideology seems to

be absent, but even in the most “objective” of narrative voices ideology is never absent. Perhaps Darwin has little to say explicitly about the colonial process, but his absolute confidence in his methods and approaches suggests much about the similar confidence all aspects of Western intervention, from science to diplomacy, from the military to missionary endeavors, possessed about itself. For Darwin, documentation takes precedence over preservation, and his classifications and naming processes take no account of existing native names and conceptions, although we must keep in mind that in this, Darwin was no different than any other naturalist of his day.

Anthony Trollope, who visited in the 1850s, had a personal stake in Western success in the South Pacific: his son had migrated to Australia and was struggling to establish his sheep farm in Queensland. Trollope’s views of the clash between aboriginal and British cultures paint him as the high Victorian *per excellence*, a man who does not question the myth of Western progress and its subsequent right to establish itself the world over. His dismissive contempt of aborigines and their claim to the land is striking, even shocking, when contrasted to other writers who both preceded and followed him. As we will see, his language regarding aborigines echoes the ugliest aspects of contemporary descriptions of African Americans and American Indians, dwelling on their supposed laziness, lack of intelligence, degradation, and propensity for theft. Trollope concludes in his travelogue *Australia and New Zealand* that the aborigines are fated to die out, and he wishes them godspeed in this destiny. When he returns to the Queensland setting of his son’s station for his novella *Harry Heathcote of Gangoil*, Trollope pens a book devoid of any aboriginal characters at all, even in a region still populated by natives, a gaping absence that symbolizes the place they—and by extension their culture, flora, and fauna—held in the mind of Trollope and many of his fellow Victorians.

Three decades after Trollope, Robert Louis Stevenson arrived in the South Seas, also with a personal stake, but in this case it was his fragile health, his constitution nearly broken by his long battle with tuberculosis. When doctors told him he must find a warmer climate or accept he would not survive another winter, he and his family toured the Pacific, finally settling in Samoa for the last four years of his life. Stevenson's precarious health lent him a natural empathy for the misery and disease he witnessed among the natives of the South Pacific, but so did his identity as a Scot, a marginalized people themselves within the United Kingdom. Sprinkled throughout both his travelogues and his Pacific-set fiction are references to Scotland and its turbulent history with regards to England—Stevenson was reminded of his homeland whenever he saw the dispirited state of the Pacific Islanders, the suppression of their cultures, their languages, their religions, all processes he knew intimately had afflicted the Scots after their crushing defeat during the Jacobite Rebellion. Stevenson's ill health and strong Scottish identity combine to make him by far the most sympathetic to the plight of the Pacific natives of any of the writers examined in this dissertation.

In an excellent illustration that the march of ideas does not necessarily lead to progressive thought, Jack London toured many of the same places as Stevenson did fifteen years earlier, but with a fraction of his predecessor's sympathy towards natives and criticism of imperialism. London, self-taught and self-assured, reveled in the extreme implications of the philosophies of both Friedrich Nietzsche and Herbert Spencer, viewing the white race as one of "übermensches," triumphing over the lower races in a Darwinian struggle for mastery. Initially, London's social Darwinism tinted everything he witnessed in the Pacific, even allowing him to be a mouthpiece for the American aristocracy in Hawaii when he wrote that the widely criticized leper colony at Molokai was a pleasure spot of sorts for leprous natives—since the native races of the Pacific

were, in his view, lazy and simple, they quickly took to a tropical beach where food and shelter were provided, and all the natives had to do was sleep and play. In an echo of Stevenson, disease would lead to a more sympathetic view, as the last leg of London's trip saw him struggling with a litany of health problems, a situation that eventually landed him in a Sydney hospital for months. While London never fully discarded his Social-Darwinian views, his subsequent fiction demonstrates a notably more balanced picture of natives and their struggles against disease, depopulation, and the other scourges of colonialism.

As demonstrated in the case of London, the use of a chronological structure in this dissertation does not imply an arc of continual progress or of an inevitable march toward more enlightened views of natives and the destructive path of imperialism. Instead, we see writers—Westerners all—struggling to differing degrees to comprehend and evaluate what they saw, what they experienced, what their backgrounds and identities had taught them to perceive. Some, like Melville and Stevenson, seemed at the vanguard of those questioning the moral foundation of colonization, while others, like Trollope and London, resisted challenging the myth of Western progress and superiority. These writers together, however, offer an illuminating and fascinating window into the inner conflicts that existed during this long period of aggressive, and quite successful, imperial expansion, conflicts that could be found on both sides of the Atlantic: in Britain, the most wide-flung empire in history, and in America, proudly and publically anti-imperial but nevertheless taking its first steps toward securing colonies of its own.

Chapter 2: The Naturalist and the Whaler: Charles Darwin, Herman Melville,
and Two Approaches to the Exotic

Two monumental figures who traveled the Pacific over a span of several years in the 1830s influenced later writers who came to the Pacific and who attempted to transform their experiences in the South Seas into literature: Herman Melville and Charles Darwin. Melville and Darwin, one a novelist and the other a naturalist, sit uneasily next to each other in terms of approach and objectives, but authors like Robert Louis Stevenson and Jack London assimilated these two disparate influences into their own works more smoothly, although the various genres Stevenson or London worked in betray the stronger imprint of one or the other. Generally, later writers used Darwin's scientific detachment and commitment to observation as the basis for their nonfiction, while Melville's approach to building upon objectivity with a markedly human element, dwelling upon individuals and their unique experiences and emotions, would be a major element of the nonfiction and the foundation of the fiction.

Melville, like later writers Joseph Conrad and Rudyard Kipling, lived out his works, shipping on an American whaler to the South Seas before jumping ship in the Marquesas and living for several weeks among a supposedly cannibalistic tribe, the Typee, or Taipi in modern spelling. Melville later knocked around Tahiti and nearby islands before taking a position on a U.S. naval frigate and traveling back to New York. Melville never published any non-fiction works on his adventures—although the impressionistic, episodic work *The Encantadas* skirts

non-fiction—but he transformed his experiences into a series of autobiographical novels: *Typee*, *Omoo*, *White-Jacket*, and *Moby Dick*.

Charles Roberts Anderson's *Melville in the South Seas*, published in 1939, is still the most authoritative source, cited by Melville scholars to this day, tracing exactly *how* autobiographical these novels are, using letters, contemporary accounts, ship logs and manifests, and Melville's influences to unravel how the young sailor incorporated his experiences, as well as his reading, into his fiction. Anderson goes a long way towards establishing the autobiographical foundations of novels like *Typee* and *Omoo*, although he also warns that in many cases, such as in his analysis of cannibalism among the *Typee*, the evidence is "meager, unreliable, and conflicting" (106).

One thing that is clear is that travelers, including Stevenson, took works like *Typee* as practically non-fiction, recording honestly and intricately Melville's impressions of the South Seas. Before landing at the Marquesas, Stevenson even refers to *Typee*, obviously thrilled to be following in the footsteps of his admired predecessor.

But why did Melville have such an enormous influence on later writers? Already mentioned is the fact that he had experienced adventure in the Pacific before writing about it. Melville also treated the romanticized South Seas in a more sober, realistic manner—undoubtedly influenced by his first-hand experiences—while simultaneously incorporating some of the more enduring images and themes, allusions to Eden and depictions of exotic beauties for instance, of previous Pacific accounts. Just as importantly, Melville also criticized much of the Western influence in the Pacific, and *Typee* and *Omoo* in particular are full of both anger and dismay at the changes taking place in the Marquesas and Society Islands. French colonization gets singled out, as does missionary activity with its simultaneous goals of conversion and

civilization. Stevenson and London, sixty years or more later, saw the devastating results of the changes Melville noticed in their infancy, and both followed Melville in their angry criticism.

This influence, not only reflected in later writers' mentions but in the impressive sales Melville's early novels achieved, levels he would never attain again, has not gone unnoticed by critics. Anderson's work may still be a touchstone in Melville scholarship, but quite a bit of criticism has been written on the earliest novels, especially *Typee*, in the last few years, part of an overall trend that has seen more critical attention paid to Pacific literature from a range of authors. Melville critics tend to focus on these same issues, particularly the exotic native woman and the unbalanced give and take between the West and the native peoples, that would prove to be so fascinating for the later novelists who followed in Melville's literary wake.

In *Typee*, Melville opens with pointed criticism of the West, arguing that true native character can be hard to find in the Pacific because the natives have already been corrupted by Europeans (11)—at best we get a world “romantically suspended between an idyllic state of purity and one of impending corruption” (Fanning 163). In a swipe at the “civilizing mission” of the French, Melville recounts a humorous story of a Tahitian queen brought on board a whaling ship by her French patrons in order to show off her newfound culture; to their horror, she rapturously greeted an old sailor covered in tattoos, spinning around, bending over, and lifting her French dress to display proudly her rear, itself blanketed by tattoos. One critic sees a cultural resiliency in this anecdote, a signal that customs and values were “untouched by visitors' depredations” (Ellis 164). Melville wryly ends this anecdote by noting that the queen's French benefactors, horrified by this breach of propriety, turned and left immediately. Perhaps there is strength in native cultures to resist various strains of colonization, but also implied is Melville's conviction that those who are not willing to accept and respect Islander cultures as they are have

no business there; Melville condemns all transformative missions, whether religious, economic, governmental, or cultural.

All of these different aspects of the West's involvement in the Pacific come under attack in *Typee*, including the military process of colonization, missionary activity, and even scientific fact gathering. At the time Melville was in the Marquesas, the French were in the process of confirming their control of the island chain. An even earlier military assault on the Typees by an American is also noted (26).

Missionaries fare no better with Melville. His sardonic wit exhibits itself once again in his tale of a missionary wife scandalized and the quest for conversion abandoned. The natives received the missionary couple warmly; they were especially in awe of the missionary's "young and beautiful wife, the first white woman who had ever visited their shores" (6). The admiration of the Marquesans soon turned to suspicion, however, and upon realizing that the woman's voluminous gowns concealed nothing more than a normal female body, "she was stripped of her garments, and given to understand that she could no longer carry on her deceits with impunity" (6-7). Melville's wry wit shines through in his conclusion to the scandal, informing us that the "gentle dame was not sufficiently evangelised to endure this," so the couple left for Tahiti, leaving the Marquesans to their heathenism (7).

Those who come to the Pacific for the disinterested cause of science are not spared by Melville either. He refers to naturalists and anthropologists as "learned tourists" and chalks their "unintentional humbuggery" (170) up to their naiveté and eagerness to believe the wildest tales of sensational taboos, "unaccountable superstitions and practices" (171), that they hear from wily old sailors and beachcombers who know exactly what their audiences want to hear; Melville explains that for the typical "retired old South-Sea rover," the "avidity with which his anecdotes

are noted down tickles his vanity, and his powers of invention increase with the credulity of his auditors” (170). If the military is cruel, and the missionaries uptight and self-righteous, then for Melville scientists are simply fools.

For Melville in *Typee*, the continuing isolation and ferocious reputation of the Typee worked to their advantage. Only five decades after Cook’s enthralling voyages of discovery, Melville could look around and see declining populations and dying cultures, tragedies that “flouted the progressive direction of history” (Herbert, Jr. 147) and which he laid at the feet of the West. In the valley of the Typee, he found a society still strong and vibrant, and his sense of the fragility of the Typees’ position can be felt in his wish that the tribe continue in its warlike ways “if a hostile attitude will secure his lovely domain from the remorseless inflictions of South Sea civilization” (189); interesting that sixty years later Robert Louis Stevenson would echo Melville’s emphasis on ferocity when he decided to settle among the Samoans partly because of their fierce and unrelenting resistance to the Germans and Americans encroaching on their islands.

Melville’s reasoning draws on the traditions of Montaigne and Rousseau, neither of whom visited colonized lands, but who helped lay the foundations of thought about “savage” peoples for much of the colonial period to follow. Rousseau, in his *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, argued that “man in the state of nature” (25) was ignorant of power and competition, instead being satisfied with basic human needs such as food, drink, shelter, and sex, all of which were easily obtained in a world sparsely populated. Only later, Rousseau continued, did the concept of property come into being, a concept that led to prosperity for some and poverty for others. Notably, Rousseau never uses the term often associated with him, the “noble savage,” and in fact, he never considered any of the world’s peoples to fulfill the characteristics of “the first

state of nature”; he believed that all nations or tribes, no matter how seemingly primitive, had gone at least some way in their journey toward civilization, often just far enough to learn cruelty, “the degree attained by most of the savage nations with whom we are acquainted” (32).

Despite Rousseau’s qualifications, his conjectures were easily distorted and simplified, and for many who visited the South Seas, the beauty of the natives, the lush greenery and fertile fruit trees, and the freer sexual mores, all contributed to an impression of primitive happiness and cooperation, a type of island socialism. Anderson observes that, for all of his complexity in viewing the natives, Melville nevertheless “consistently adopts a romantic attitude in his account of the Noble Savages that he found in Typee Valley” (121). Despite the later cruelty and duplicity he experiences, for Tommo in *Typee*, the valley remained a paradise apart.

To Melville’s way of thinking, only a lack of European contact could preserve the ideal of the Pacific Islander’s way of life and natural beauty; he asserts that the Typees were a physically perfect race, unmarred by any deformities, and that this enduring beauty was directly due to the lack of interaction with Westerners (180-1). He was right, as Stevenson, years later, would sadly note the degradation of the Typees, their depopulation, their chronic illnesses, and their despair, lamenting what had happened to the proud, strong people of Melville’s novel.

Besides influencing later writers in terms of attitudes towards natives and those from the West who sought to influence or manipulate them, Melville also vividly worked with several notable tropes beloved by many who wrote about the South Seas. In many cases, Melville managed to complicate the more simplistic depictions traditionally offered of tropical Edens and headhunting cannibals, showing the way for Stevenson and London, among others.

The trope of the South Sea maiden is one of the most enduring in the literature of the region, with images of the Tahitian girls swimming out to meet Cook’s ship always lurking in

the background. Critic Michael Sturma notes that the “creation of the Marquesan dream girl Fayaway” (103) did a large part in assuring the success of *Typee*, while also observing that she was one of a long line of native girls appearing in South Seas literature, a tradition in which “writer after writer repeated treasured myths and romantic images” (104). In some ways, Fayaway seems to be simply another of these “simple and uneducated island girl[s]” found “everywhere in the fiction of the South Seas” (108). When we first get a glimpse of her, Fayaway is the Western fantasy, pure and beautiful but undeniably eroticized: her “complexion was a rich and mantling olive,” complemented by “full lips,” “hair of the deepest brown,” and “strange blue eyes,” but her long hair only sometimes “hid from view her lovely bosom.” In a particularly sexually charged description, Fayaway’s open mouth is compared to a native fruit which, when “cleft in twain,” reveals its “red and juicy pulp,” language which could unmistakably refer to another orifice as well (*Typee* 85-6). Later, Tommo tells of his time on a small boat with Fayaway; to propel the ship, she disrobes and “spreading [her wrap] out like a sail, stood erect with upraised arms in the head of the canoe” (134). It is a striking image that Sturma refers to as a “combination of nautical motif and sexual bravado” (103). In these glimpses of her, Fayaway is unambiguously part of the South Sea maiden tradition, presented as an erotic fantasy for the mostly male consumers of exotic literature back in the West.

Melville, however, did not simply traffic in these timeworn images, but he also sought to complicate them. As Sturma observes, as realism in South Seas fiction increased, less fantasy appeared; one sign of this growing maturity was that, in Pacific-set fiction, “male European protagonists not only have sexual relations with island maidens, but develop deep emotional bonds as well” (117). Tommo’s sexual relationship with Fayaway is only implied, but Melville also stresses his emotional reliance on her. During his first flush of melancholy on realizing the

difficulty of his position in the Typee valley, Tommo finds himself turning increasingly to Fayaway; he acknowledges her empathy and its comfort to him when he laments that “she alone seemed to appreciate the effect...of the circumstances in which we were placed” (*Typee* 108). Although he has Tommo eventually leave the valley rather than taking Fayaway as his wife, Melville anticipates the realism of later South Pacific writers by several decades in demonstrating the emotional involvement Tommo experiences with this South Sea maiden. It should be pointed out, however, that although the Western male’s role in these types of relationships has been complicated, the image of the maiden has not been advanced nearly to the same extent. One critic’s view that Fayaway helps Tommo “to see the beauty in her culture but does not change his character” (Greenberg 29) may be true, but Tommo’s character from the beginning may be open to emotional involvement, making him an advance on the stand-ins for male fantasy often encountered in South Seas fiction.

Another trope we find in *Typee* is that of the South Pacific island as a paradise on earth, a rediscovered Eden that echoes Genesis (Ellis 171). While still struggling through the rugged uplands of the island’s interior, parched, feverish, and in pain, Tommo “chanced to push aside a branch,” a simple act that reveals the lush beauty of the Typee valley far below; he gushes, “[h]ad a glimpse of the gardens of Paradise been revealed to me I could scarcely have been more ravished with the sight” (49). The first inhabitants of the valley that Tommo and Toby meet, a young boy and girl, seem in their beauty and innocence a tropical Adam and Eve:

slender and graceful, and completely naked, with the exception of a slight girdle of bark, from which depended at opposite points two of the russet leaves of the bread-fruit tree. An arm of the boy, half screened from sight by her wild tresses,

was thrown about the neck of the girl, while with the other he held one of her hands in his. (68)

Fayaway, too, seems sprung from that most alluring of places, Eden, when Tommo terms her a “child of nature” and ascribes her happiness to “breathing from infancy an atmosphere of perpetual summer”; her reality was “a perfect freedom from care and anxiety” in the enchanting valley (86), and, like the Eve she so strongly echoes, she “for the most part clung to the primitive and summer garb of Eden” (87).

However, as with his descriptions of Fayaway as the typical South Sea maiden, Melville uses the Eden trope as a starting place, then begins to complicate matters. Significantly, many of the most alluring passages on Fayaway and the echoes of Eden occur in the first half of the novel. Tommo’s emotional attachment to Fayaway deepens as the novel moves through his deepening despair and towards his ultimate rescue; similarly, as Tommo becomes more familiar with life in the Typee valley, he sheds his facile view of the valley as Edenic and begins to see it in its complicated reality, including occasional cruelty and abrupt, brutal warfare.

An important aspect of Tommo’s mature view of the Typee is that of cannibalism. In keeping with his innocent and romantic approach to the lives of the Typee, he early on makes light of the entire topic. When he and Toby first meet the young boy and girl during their descent into the valley, he describes Toby’s grotesque pantomimed attempts to communicate as so frightening that, “I verily believe the poor creatures took us for a couple of white cannibals who were about to make a meal of them” (69), reversing the reader’s expectations and briefly placing the two whites in the roles of savages. In another, more comical scene, Toby becomes more and more obsessed with the idea that their hosts are indeed cannibals; when the Typee begin preparations for a feast, he is convinced that he and Tommo are intended as meat. When Mehevi,

one of the older men, arrives with “a large trencher of wood, containing some kind of steaming meat,” Toby can no longer contain himself and cries out, “A baked baby, by the soul of Captain Cook!” (94-5). A torch soon illuminates the meat, which turns out to be pork, but Toby never comes to intelligently explore the Typee’s culture and customs the way Tommo does.

As with Fayaway and the valley itself, Melville soon complicates the standard, facile view of South Pacific cannibalism. Tommo, feeling secure from being a victim of cannibalism himself, answers the charge from Westerners that “these shocking unprincipled wretches are cannibals.” Perhaps they are, he concedes, but not out of a debauched, uncontrolled taste for human flesh, but as part of a complex ritual, “only when they seek to gratify the passion of revenge upon their enemies.” In a rhetorical strategy later used by Stevenson, Melville includes examples of the “barbarity” of Westerners in *Typee*, most notably a brief description of methods of execution such as beheading, disemboweling, and drawing and quartering (125). Likewise, Tommo mocks the fantasy of “crews of vessels, shipwrecked on some barbarous coast...eaten alive like so many dainty joints by the uncivil inhabitants” of a South Seas island; he assures the reader that the practice of cannibalism is “not half so horrible as it is usually described,” repeating his claim that this ritual is only practiced “upon the bodies of slain enemies” (205). In a final swipe at the character of Westerners who might judge the Typee for ritual cannibalism, Tommo exclaims of the natives, “[t]hey deal more kindly with each other, and are more humane, than many who study essays on virtue and benevolence” (203).

If Melville allows Tommo some moments of transcendent magnanimity and righteous anger, he also depicts a Tommo who does not discuss cannibalism with such a detached and enlightened tone when he comes face to face with the practice. The Typee sensed from the beginning that, even if Tommo was more open about native practices and culture, he would still

bring a Westerners shock and recoil to cannibalism; they go to some lengths to convince Tommo and Toby that they are entirely innocent of all “participation in so horrid a custom.” The Typee further seek to convince the two whites that their implacable enemies, the Happar, who inhabited the next valley over, are the true monsters; one Typee attempts to convince them of the Happar’s guilt by gesturing wildly in the direction of the Happar valley and then “continuing his illustrations by seizing the fleshy part of my arm in his teeth”—an amazing bit of performance that combines cunning misdirection and a superficially comical pandering to the exaggerated expectations of his audience (102-3).

While the native’s over-the-top pantomime may appear hysterical and unnecessary in the moment, Toby’s paranoia and Tommo’s eventual visceral reaction show that the Typee were very perceptive in their anticipation of their visitors’ response to cannibalism, although the Typee undoubtedly had various motives for their subterfuge. In another of Melville’s complications of a favorite trope of South Sea writers, Tommo stumbles upon one of the hidden secrets of the native family he has been lodged with when he walks in one day to find the family bent over the contents of three packages that had always been suspended high over their heads; he “caught a glimpse of three human heads,” one of which had a “dry, hard, and mummy-like appearance.” For all of his dispassionate observations regarding the practice of cannibalism, Tommo’s detachment crumbles when one of the heads, “to my horror, was that of a white man.” The natives understand the implications of the white head among their collection and seek to convince him that he was mistaken in his impressions, that what he had seen “were the heads of three Happar warriors,” an attempt that fails (232-3).

Tommo may have been correct in his observation that cannibalism was a strictly controlled, ritualistic custom as practiced by groups such as the Typee, but he could conjecture

easily on it only as long as he was on the outside, in the position of the anthropologists he criticizes so sharply earlier in the novel. His attitude changes quickly to horror, however, when he realizes he has never actually been on the outside, gazing at an exotic practice from a place of safety, but has always been potentially part of it. Now that he has the knowledge that whites too can be counted among those “enemies” whose bodies can be consumed as part of the Typee belief system, we see yet another shift in Tommo’s outlook, from simple fantasies to enlightened analysis to, finally, a more complex and humbling realization that neither condemnation nor rational explanations can adequately account for a face-to-face encounter with something so foreign, so immediate.

Once Tommo realizes he is no longer simply an observer but possibly an unwilling participant, the practice of cannibalism takes on a new urgency for him. Shortly after he observes the preserved heads in the household, a skirmish is fought between the Typee and their neighbors, the Happar, leaving three dead Happar to be borne into the middle of the Typee valley (235). Tommo is banished back to his family’s hut while the celebration takes place, but he is determined to discover the truth—after making his way into the ceremonial hall, he lifts the lid of a large vessel, and “my eyes fell upon the disordered members of a human skeleton, the bones still fresh with moisture, and with particles of flesh still clinging to them here and there!” (238). The Typee continue their denials of the practice, and, when they “witness the expression of horror” on Tommo’s face, attempt to convince him he has seen the bodies of pigs.

Why the Typee continue to deny what seems to be obvious is explained when the taboo wanderer Marnoo makes his final visit to the valley. Marnoo, because of his taboo status, has a more protected position than Tommo, allowing him to explain to Tommo exactly what the tribe is doing and what their intentions are regarding him. According to Marnoo, it is precisely

Tommo's determination to maintain an outsider status that has the chiefs considering his death; Marnoo, in pidgin English, asks Tommo, "Why you no like to stay? Plenty moee-moee (sleep)—plenty ki-ki (eat)—plenty whihenee (young girls)—Oh, very good place Typee! Suppose you no like this bay, why you come?" (241). Interestingly, Marnoo describes the Typee valley in terms of the familiar fantasy cherished by many Westerners—Tommo's new life contains no end to sensual delights like food, sleep, and sex—but he acknowledges that the surface perception conceals a darker reality, embedded in the expectations and codes of the Typee, for those who would seek to be a part of the deceptively idyllic life.

Tommo's efforts to escape, his resistance to tattooing, perhaps even his revulsion when faced with evidence of cannibalism, all of these contribute to the Typee chiefs, once disposed to like Tommo and to make him an official part of the tribe, seeing him as an outsider and therefore as an enemy, subject to the same treatment that the slain Happar warriors received. Tommo's mistake was in assuming that he would be permanently tolerated in his determination to remain "white"; earlier in *Typee*, he asserts that the tribe's distrust towards anyone, white or native, who was not Typee was precisely what had preserved them even as surrounding tribes saw their cultures degraded and their people die off in epidemics, but Tommo is shocked when he discovers that this same ferocity is on the brink of exploding against him. Marnoo's final farewell to Tommo contains a pointed warning: "you get well, he kill you, eat you, hang you head up there, like Happar Kannaka...some night Kannaka all moee-moee (sleep)—you run away...you no run away ship no more" (241). Tommo's South Sea interlude, once such a Edenic respite placed next to the conditions aboard his whaler, ends with his confirmation as a Westerner.

Despite the threats Tommo finds himself menaced by and must escape from, the Typee never become the simplified portrait of the villainous tribe we might expect from fiction set in the South Pacific. Even when Melville complicates the tropes such as the tropical Eden and the South Sea maiden, he does not do so to condemn the people and locales of the South Pacific; similarly, even the ultimate horror Tommo feels when confronted with cannibalism does not cancel the earlier, rational explanations of the ritualistic nature of the practice. Tommo may have to escape the Typee, but as readers, we are left with a deep admiration for the tribe and wish that they will maintain their vigorous culture and their defiance of outside influences. Their valley may not be a perfect paradise and their women may not be unquestioning sexual playthings, but because they have resisted the corruptions of Western civilization, Melville seems to suggest, they have managed to construct something closer to paradise than we in the West ever have and we would do well to leave them to it.

If *Typee* can be construed as a positive portrayal of one Pacific people, then *Omoo*, the quasi-sequel to *Typee*, can be seen as a negative tour through a Pacific either already ruined or on the very precipice of disaster. *Omoo* is not nearly as tightly focused as *Typee*, following Tommo—again an autobiographical figure for Melville—as he has further adventures throughout the South Seas, sailing a whaler, arrested for vagrancy, escaping to remote islands. This lack of focus tends to dilute the observations, especially when compared to *Typee*, but it also allows Melville to send Tommo on a picaresque voyage through the Pacific, commenting all the way until the novel becomes almost a “State of the Pacific” address, a snapshot of the early 1830s. The darkness and tragedy Tommo encounters also make *Omoo* an important forerunner and pattern for later colonial narratives such as London’s non-fiction journey south from Hawaii to the Melanesian archipelagos and Joseph Conrad’s archetypal *Heart of Darkness*, all Dantean

journeys through the ugly underworld of colonial exploitation, the world those enjoying amazing prosperity back home in the colonial powers never saw.

Typee and *Omoo* may be significantly different in structure, but the two novels are concerned with many of the same topics, including the voracious imperialism consuming the Pacific, the exploitation that follows upon imperialist control, and the negative effects on the customs, attitudes, places, and bodies of the newly colonized natives. Before Melville gives us glimpses into more island peoples, however, he shows us, almost as a cautionary tale, one possible outcome of throwing Pacific Islanders into the brutal world of the rough-and-tumble Westerners who found themselves on the other side of the world from their homes in an attempt, if not always to subdue it, then more often to profit from it.

We learn at the beginning of *Omoo* that Tommo was rescued by crewmembers of the *Julia*, a whaler short of men and thus willing to give a chance to a deserter, even one living amidst the feared Typee; among the crew of the *Julia* whom Tommo met was a “wild New Zealander, or ‘Mowree’” (12), a man named Bembo. Bembo turns out to be representative of another common trope found in South Pacific literature, the irredeemable savage. Tommo is wary of him early on, confessing that, although Bembo seemed harmless, “remarkably quiet” and occasionally “dancing some cannibal fandango,” nevertheless “something in his eye showed he was far from being harmless” (16). The crew at large distrusted Bembo, whispering tales about his “propensity to kill men and eat them” and determining that the only thing they knew about him was that “he came from a race of cannibals.” Tommo, while also wondering about Bembo’s character, feels a wary respect for him, commenting on his strength, his intensity, even his “swart, tattooed skin,” concluding that “he was none of your effeminate barbarians” (77).

Ultimately, the crew and Tommo's suspicions are borne out when Bembo viciously attacks a fellow crewmember and must be bound until the next port—Tommo's final judgment is that Bembo possessed a "heart irreclaimably savage" (101-2). Bembo may be the victim, the aggressor, or both, but what is not in doubt is that the uneasy coexistence of two radically different worldviews contributed to the tragedy; as is usually the case, the Westerners are in the position of strength when they meet and mingle with indigenous peoples, leaving a man like Bembo isolated and resentful, making events such as his attack on a fellow sailor inevitable. Although most of Bembo's literary descendents, such as Oofy-Oofy in London's *The Sea Wolf*, Taveeta and others in Stevenson's *Ebb-Tide*, and Queequeg in Melville's own *Moby Dick*, suffer varying degrees of displacement and prejudice, all experience the same difficulties in experiencing the role of the outsider even as they sail their native ocean.

As the *Julia* sails around the Pacific islands, touching at various ones, Tommo sees how quickly and perniciously the process of colonization was spreading; the last area of the globe to be discovered and colonized, the South Pacific imperial race was raging. Two days after leaving the Typee valley and still in the Marquesas, Tommo and the *Julia* stop at the island of St. Christina. The Typee had been concerned from the beginning of Tommo's stay about the movements and intentions of the French, and at St. Christina, Tommo receives confirmation of the French menace; a French corvette lies at anchor, facilitating trade between the natives and passing ships, asserting authority over the whole scene. To stress the predatory nature of the both the ship and its intention, Melville writes of the ship's "grim, black spars and waspish hull" (23). Further on, in Tahiti, the *Julia* arrives just in time for Tommo to see another French warship, similarly threatening: it "loomed up black and large; her two rows of teeth proclaiming a frigate." The warship was carrying out an important duty, "firing a salute, which afterward

turned out to be in honor of a treaty; or rather—as far as the natives were concerned—a forced cession of Tahiti to the French, that morning concluded” (74-5). Autobiographical as *Omoa* might be, Melville did not witness the actual conclusion of the Franco-Tahitian treaty, so his inclusion of the event demonstrates his interest in the gobbling up of the Pacific by the Western powers.

If any island plays a central role in *Omoa*, this transitory novel, it is Tahiti, where Melville was arrested for vagrancy and eventually escaped. When the *Julia*'s crew first sights “the Peaks of Tahiti,” everyone is thrilled. Tommo mentions that it is “the most famous island in the South Seas” (71), a distinction it arguably still holds today. The reasons for this fame were many: early accounts, lush greenery, dramatic volcanic peaks, graceful and sensual inhabitants—small wonder that Tahiti “retains so strong a hold on the sympathies of all readers of South Sea voyages” (72). Tahiti's iconic status caused Melville to be deeply interested in its political fate, so it is only appropriate he places Tommo's arrival against the backdrop of French colonization.

The French may have taken the initiative in signing “treaties” with the Tahitians, but they were by no means the only Western nation interested in the Society Islands, the archipelago of which Tahiti was a part. In Papeete, the most important anchorage and later capital under the French, Tommo looks around the fringes of the harbor and spots not only the French “tri-color,” but the British flag and “the stars and stripes” (111), a situation reminiscent of the one Stevenson would encounter almost sixty years later when he settled in a Samoa swarming with British, American, and German officials and warships.

In Tahiti, the British and Americans were not willing to risk all-out war over colonies that provided marginal profits compared to Africa, the West Indies, and South and Southeast Asia—“they were not going to cross sabres about Tahiti” (135)—but neither were they content to

simply let the French consolidate control. Tommo observes that “[o]wing to the proceedings of the French, every thing in Tahiti was in an uproar” (82), a situation in which the British were quick to take advantage. Captain Cook was still revered by the islanders, even if there was a hint of flattery in their enthusiasm (130), but the British indeed had a long tradition in Tahiti, and Tommo notes that a large part of the Tahitians’ willingness to resist the French came from the fact that they “confidently relied upon the speedy interposition of England—a nation bound to them by many ties, and which, more than once, had solemnly guaranteed their independence” (135). Of course, when the islanders sought to resist the French, they had little success, and the British refused to intercede; Melville has Tommo speak in hindsight about the historical Battle of Mahanar, which set in motion an ultimately futile guerilla war, and prophesy that resistance “must accelerate the final extinction of their race” (136).

The formal colonization of South Pacific chains such as the Marquesas and the Society Islands did not have much impact in relation to the sprawling empires already ruled by the West, but resources did exist in these islands, and the colonial powers took full advantage. When cruising a series of atolls to the east of Tahiti, Tommo explains that much of the economy of the area relied on two sources: pearling and coconut oil. Coconut oil, in particular, “forms no small part of the traffic carried on with trading vessels,” for its oil is “much cheaper than the sperm, and...better than the right-whale oil” (70). Despite the success of coconut oil, whalers such as the *Julia* still trawled the Pacific, stopping to reprovision and stripping the island of fresh fruit; while under arrest in Tahiti, Tommo comes to realize that, despite the paradise that surrounded him, the natives were “destitute,” a “distressing consequence of civilization,” as the “demands of the shipping exhaust the uncultivated resources of the island” (143-4).

People constituted another important resource of the South Pacific, and, while labor was an important element, so were the native women. In *Typee*, Melville gives us a fuller, more complex woman in Fayaway, but in *Omoo* we get glimpses of the sordid exploitation of women that had been continuing since the first European ships touched the islands in the eighteenth century. Tommo, recently departed from Fayaway, with whom he developed an emotional bond as well as a physical one, is also bedazzled by the Tahitians. He places his first encounter with them in the tradition that had continued for years, writing that “Tahitian beauty is quite as seducing as it proved to the crew of the *Bounty*.” He goes on with words that would complement any Westerner’s fantasy: “the young girls being just such creatures as a poet would picture in the tropics—soft, plump, and dreamy-eyed” (140). Later, Tommo discovers the reality of this objectification of native women, when he befriends two men who describe how an islander, wishing to form an alliance with Europeans, “frankly offered his two daughters for wives”; not surprisingly, the men decline—“though not averse to courting, [they were] unwilling to entangle themselves in a matrimonial alliance” (218). This is the destructive side of the titillating trope of the sensual, smiling, willing South Sea maiden.

Building on his indictment of the commodifying of native women, Melville’s sympathies emerge most strongly when addressing the plight of South Sea Islander, whether it be decimation by disease, habitat destruction, the dying out of customs, or the despair becoming endemic throughout the region. This aspect of Melville’s fiction—the concern with people—would be his central influence on later writers of Pacific fiction, especially Stevenson.

Reinforcing a theme he first visited in *Typee*, Melville in *Omoo* points out that those tribes and individuals most isolated from Westerners were invariably the healthiest; in a reminder of his tributes to the robust and vital beauty of the isolated *Typee*, he contrasts the

appearance of the inhabitants of an inland village favorably with those in Papeete, “a circumstance only to be imputed to their restricted intercourse with foreigners” (305). Besides lamenting the “effects of drunkenness, [and] the occasional inroads of the small-pox,” problems which arrived with whites, Melville returns to that favored motif of the Pacific, the sexually enthusiastic maiden, and blasts the venereal diseases sweeping the islands as sailors and others took advantage of a social code so radically different from those in Europe and America; he refers to this epidemic blight, this “virulent disease, which now taints the blood of at least two thirds of the common people” (206). He concludes that “[t]heir prospects are hopeless” (207).

Not as immediately noticeable as epidemics, but in the long run just as destructive, were the introduced flora and fauna that altered, if it did not destroy, native habitats, a process also noted by later writers from Trollope to London. Melville applauds some of the introduced species, especially oranges and limes, “unknown before Cook’s time, to whom the natives are indebted for so great a blessing” (132). Of course, many other species were not “so great a blessing.” Tommo takes strolls around Imeeo and observes that areas were “overgrown with a wild, scrub guava-bush, introduced by foreigners, and which spreads with such fatal rapidity, that the natives...anticipate its covering the entire island” (280).

More significant than wild fauna covering remote areas are the deliberately introduced crops, brought in as the foundation for a newly emerging plantation economy, one of the means by which Westerners determined to make the South Seas pay handsomely. Tommo does not necessarily foresee the ramifications of large-scale plantations, and he views cotton and sugarcane as possible sources of income for natives. He recounts that both cotton and weaving machinery were shipped into the Society Islands, but that, despite an initial flush of excitement on the part of the islanders, cotton’s future was in doubt. Sugarcane, on the other hand, was

booming. Not technically an introduced species, cane was nevertheless spread throughout the entire Pacific and plantations were formed; like their experiences with cotton fields, the Western owners of the plantations were disappointed, as all were now “owned and worked by whites” (205). Sugarcane was destined to have a brighter future in the South Seas than cotton, however; while in Imeeo, Tommo observes “an extensive sugar plantation—the best in the South Seas perhaps” (263). Ills from soil exhaustion to “blackbirding,” a type of coercive *de facto* slavery common in the Pacific, would result from the establishment of plantations in the region.

Tommo continues on with a line of reasoning common at the time, although seemingly inconsistent with Melville’s thought; he ventures that natives don’t want to work the plantations because agricultural labor would “require a kind of exertion altogether too steady and sustained, to agree with an indolent people like the Polynesians.” Indeed, they must be allowed to refrain from intensive labor, Tommo continues, for “they can not otherwise long exist” (205).

Plantation life may threaten the existence of the natives, but the intrusion of the West had already begun decimating their customs and culture. As in several other aspects, *Omoa* becomes the cautionary tale for the Typee, who at the end of *Typee* still jealously guarded their unique society and their isolation. Melville refers to earlier accounts of Tahitian canoe building that praised that art as one of the highest accomplishments of the South Pacific peoples; Melville cites Cook as observing “a royal fleet of seventeen hundred and twenty large war-canoes, handsomely carved, and otherwise adorned.” Unfortunately but also unsurprisingly, the increasing domination by the West had an effect on canoes, as “the art of building them, like all native accomplishments, has greatly deteriorated; and they are now the most inelegant, as well as the most insecure of any in the South Seas” (171).

Canoe building may have declined without a direct influence from whites, but other aspects of native societies were changed through laws and direct suppression. The “original national costume...graceful in the extreme, modest to all but the prudish, and peculiarly adapted to the climate...are, at the present day, prohibited by law, as indecorous” (196). Melville goes on to list a number of other adornments and activities, from “necklaces and garlands of flowers,” to “dancing...kite-flying, flute-playing, and singing traditional ballads; *now*, all punishable offenses,” although he goes on to lament that the laws are unnecessary, for “most of them have been so long in disuse that they are nearly forgotten.” Melville barely needs to mention that tattooing, that shocking practice, is banned by “a severe law.” Of course, it is not the officials who are so concerned with the clothing, tattooing, and dancing of the natives, but the missionaries, and Melville must be politic in his criticism of missionaries, but the sarcasm is unmistakable when he writes that “in thus denationalizing the Tahitians, as it were, the missionaries were prompted by a sincere desire for good,” but the effect is that the islanders have “sunk into a listlessness” (197). Melville’s criticism had little effect at the time, but his influence in this matter would be seen in later writers, as Stevenson quite possibly had these passages in mind when he observed the despair and “listlessness” of so many natives and compared the “denationalizing” of the islanders with what the English did to his own Highlander Scots in an attempt to subdue them.

If throughout *Typee* and *Omoo* Melville criticizes missionary activity in the South Seas, Darwin, his predecessor by six years, offers enthusiastic praise. Observing the same Tahitians that Melville did, Darwin comes to an unambiguous conclusion, in the midst of a meditation on the newfound temperance of the natives: “I think it will be acknowledged, that every well-wisher of Tahiti owes no common debt of gratitude to the missionaries” (*Voyage* 300).

However, any discussion of the different approaches the two writers had towards missionary activity, as well as towards any number of aspects of the South Pacific, its people, and its upheaval in the 1830s, must be prefaced with an understanding of the radically different positions occupied by Melville and Darwin when they visited Tahiti. Melville's situation, as an accused mutineer and detained prisoner, ultimately an escaped fugitive, suggests he would be more likely to sympathize with the beleaguered natives, while the young Darwin, chief naturalist on a prestigious scientific expedition, gaining knowledge as the government that deputized it gained authority, had virtually no reason to question the growing Western domination of the Pacific. His desire for knowledge may have been "intensely libidinous" (Beer 20), but it was channeled within carefully prescribed bounds.

While Melville landed on Tahitian soil a prisoner, a man in the midst of his own personal drama, with time to consider his context only later, Darwin makes clear in *The Voyage of the Beagle* that he had been reading about and pondering the "moral state" of the islanders. He wanted "to form, from my own observation," his own ideas about the culture and customs of the Tahitians, but he mentions by name three sources on the island that he had studied in the time leading up to the landing (301). Once again, as opposed to Melville's more immediate reactions—his reading would come much later—Darwin shows himself every bit the scientist, preparing himself mentally before he studies the evidence before him.

Darwin mentions the very same "prohibition of the flute and dancing" that Melville does, but does not detect the "listlessness" that Melville noted, instead disagreeing with two of the sources he had read that declared the "Tahitians... a gloomy race." "Instead of discontent being a common feeling," Darwin writes, "it would be difficult in Europe to pick out of a crowd half so many merry and happy faces" (301).

At root of these differing perceptions of the Tahitians lies their respective attitudes towards missionaries. We have already seen Melville's mockery of prudish missionaries, as well as his disgust at the effects of their attempts to change native societies wholesale. Darwin, on the other hand, attributes the happiness of the Tahitians to the dedication and vigilance of missionaries, going so far as to proclaim that "to forget these things is base ingratitude" (302). Darwin does humanize the missionaries, denying the humorless moral rigidity that some critics, including Melville at times, ascribed to them; he trivializes the effects of the laws against flutes and dancing, but he admits that some missionaries "inveighed against [the prohibitions] as wrong and foolish" (301), an acknowledgement that denies the monolithic image of missionaries in favor of one of more complexity and nuance. Darwin also mentions infanticide, a custom undoubtedly practiced throughout the Pacific, and significantly more difficult to justify in Western eyes than cannibalism, as an example of a vice "greatly reduced by the introduction of Christianity" (302).

The differences in outlook and approach—the very way utilize the gaze, as Mary Louise Pratt would term it—between Melville and Darwin are significant, but the two writers do not simply stand as two poles; they are not to be measured against each other in a litany of comparisons and contrasts. The fascination and importance reside in the way that later writers were able to assimilate two such dissimilar approaches in intersecting and overlapping lines of thought. Both writers demonstrate catholic tastes in their writing; Darwin may be a naturalist, but he also finds himself fascinated by people he encounters, as in the Patagonia section of *Voyage of the Beagle*, while Melville, celebrated for his symbolic and impressionistic fiction, writes detailed passages on the flora and fauna of the South Seas. The wide range of topics covered by

both authors anticipate London, Trollope, and Stevenson, especially when we keep in mind the range of genres produced by these later writers, from travelogue, to novels, to histories.

Aside from the variety of interests addressed by Melville and Darwin, the two also shared a certain approach. By the 1830s, a good fifty-plus years of myth and romance had built up around the South Pacific since Cook had made his series of visits. Melville and Darwin had little interest in seeing the region and its natives through the lens of cliché and received wisdom, and accordingly attempted to comprehend the exotic with new eyes. Melville, as we have seen, utilized cherished tropes such as the maiden and cannibalism, but he introduced them only to complicate them, while Darwin baldly renounces stereotypes, writing of the Tahitians that their intelligence “at once banishes the idea of a savage” (293). In their works, both authors acknowledge a complexity of life in the South Seas often overlooked by popular accounts of the region.

This congeniality of outlook explains why Melville and Darwin could be assimilated together by the later writers who followed them to the Pacific, but nevertheless, we can trace the differing amounts of influence each had on the likes of Trollope, London, and Stevenson. Darwin, as the standard-bearer of the progressive scientific worldview, found his tone of objective analysis laced with occasional emotion most championed by London, a writer enamored not only of Darwin but by Darwinian philosophies such as Herbert Spencer’s social Darwinism. Darwin’s legacy to London lies in the latter’s ability to perceive and depict widespread and sometimes catastrophic change, like those transforming the Pacific, as stripped of any divine purpose or order. Despite Darwin’s emphasis on natural explanations, he still admired missionary influence overall on the moral character of Pacific Islanders; Melville’s searing critiques of Missionary activity as yet another destructive aspect of imperialism instead

influences London and Stevenson. Melville always turned a jaundiced eye on Western “progress,” and London and Stevenson’s laments over the decayed state of so many societies in the South Seas reflect Melville’s legacy. Only Trollope bucks this trend, for, while not being overly religious, he does not question progress, nor does he treat missionaries negatively in his writing.

Certainly the destinations for those who traveled the Pacific in the early decades of the nineteenth century were limited, but we are aided in our analysis of the dual influences of Melville and Darwin by their shared visitations. Understandably, Tahiti is the most central of the shared locations because of that island’s dominant place in the imagination of the West concerning the South Seas, but it is not the only important one. Both Melville and Darwin visited and wrote about the Galapagos Islands, an archipelago on the fringes of what is often thought of as the South Pacific, but one that looms large for these two. Part of Darwin’s fame rests on his celebrated comparisons of the finches found on the various islands of the Galapagos, while one of Melville’s lesser known yet impressive works, *The Encantadas*, centers around his impressions of the chain as a young mariner.

Interestingly, the very fact that we can examine these two minds as they each viewed the Galapagos through the radically different lenses of their sensibilities is due not simply to a shared destination, but to Melville’s knowledge of the *Voyage of the Beagle*—we know that he was familiar with Darwin’s work (Sten 215). One critic speculates that Melville, who had challenged Western domination in the Pacific since *Typee*, made the choice to base one of his later works on his experiences in the Galapagos because he was inspired by “Darwin’s intent to challenge established ideas” (Liquete 214). Taking this line of thought even further, another critic observes that, for the last 150 years, “[v]isitors to the Galapagos view them through a

Darwinian lens” (Glendening 205). I would argue that Melville, looking back at his youthful sojourn in the islands, retroactively utilized this “Darwinian lens.”

What makes an examination of the writings of Melville and Darwin in conjunction so illustrative is due not only to Melville’s awareness of Darwin’s influence, but also to the striking character of the Galapagos, remarkable qualities that fired the imaginations of both. While islands in the Marquesas and Society chains were dramatic, with soaring peaks rising sheer from the sea, these same islands also had a lushness about them that bespoke vitality and luxury; the islands of the Galapagos, on the other hand, were dramatic in their unrelenting bleakness and hostility to life, with their “volcanic, primordial aspect” (Glendening 203), due mainly to a lack of the constant rain that drenched the chains farther west. As Darwin writes in *Voyage of the Beagle*, after commenting that the chain contains “at least 2,000 craters, . . . nothing could be less inviting than the first appearance” of the islands (268-9). Notably, in both accounts, the two writers use similar language of heat and fire in an attempt to accurately portray the Galapagos: Darwin, surveying massive slagheaps left by volcanic activity, was reminded of the “great iron-foundries” of England (270), while Melville in *The Encantadas* describes the barren, rocky land before him as a world “after a penal conflagration” (69).

Both writers also resort to Biblical language, as if what they were observing was so powerful that only the rhetoric of the Old Testament was epic enough to communicate their impressions of a place “suggesting evil, death, eternal punishment” (Sten 216). Melville invokes the name of the desolated city Sodom (73) before suggesting that “the clinkered Encantadas” might be the type of place “tormented Job” would languish (83). Both Melville and Darwin were especially struck by the magnificent and otherworldly Galapagos tortoises; Darwin grasps at images of the Biblical flood when he marvels, “[t]hese huge reptiles . . . appeared to my fancy like

some antediluvian animals” (271), while Melville draws from the same well, wondering at “three huge antediluvian-looking tortoises [that]...seemed hardly of the seed of earth” (76).

Darwin, as a naturalist and not a fiction writer, reins in his imagination and gets to the work of documenting the geology, flora, and fauna he observed. In the midst of his comments on volcanic rock, tortoises, birds and palm-trees, his interest in people is limited to the skull of a murdered ship captain which he sees lying at the fringes of a beautiful salt lake; this gruesome memento mori is little more than incidental to his primary interest, the lake (273-4).

While the islands and their natural life intrigued him as well, Melville was more fascinated by those whose lives brought them to the Galapagos. Interestingly, his initial impressions of the islands are formed by his detached gaze upon them, from the vantage point of a solitary rock towering up out of the sea, a gaze he compares to a “balloonist” and to the “outlooking man in the moon, tak[ing] a broader view of space,” although even here, he reaches for Biblical language, comparing his distanced view to “Pisgah,” the mountain from which Moses was allowed to glimpse the Promised Land before his death (86). Even Melville’s observations of wildlife are tinged by his imagination, as nesting cliff birds become nightmarish with their “demoniac din,” and penguins are “outlandish beings...grotesquely misshapen...Nature keeps this ungainly child hidden away at the ends of the earth” (82).

Soon, however, Melville’s gaze shifts from islands and birds to histories he has heard and read of the human inhabitants, as surely “outlandish beings” as any penguins. In *The Encantadas*, he is clearly taken by what effects extreme circumstances in such an extreme location have on people, particularly “representative figures who tell a larger human story defined by race and gender, class and nation” (Sten 223). One chapter details the interlude on Charles’s Isle of a “Creole” who sets himself up as dictator over his motley subjects, comprised

of beachcombers and deserters, supported in his rule by a “disciplined cavalry company of large, grim dogs” (101). Predictably, this “*Riotocracy*” (104) disintegrates into chaos, ending in a pitched battle between the “canine regiment,” loyal to its master, and the subjects; Melville describes the scene of the battle afterward as strewn with the bodies of men and dogs (103).

In a more redemptive vein, Melville also recounts the tale of Hunilla, an Indian woman who traveled from Peru with her brother and husband to Norfolk Island in order to collect tortoise oil. After her companions drown, she remains marooned on Norfolk for three years until finally discovered, and she tells her story (108-9). Several other examples of the fascinating anecdotes Melville picked up from the Galapagos appear in *The Encantadas*, but these two illustrations are sufficient to demonstrate how Melville’s work looks ahead to the rich, often-anecdotal travelogues of later travelers to the South Pacific. The criticism can certainly be raised, along the lines of Mary Louise Pratt’s observation that natives are seldom allowed to tell their own stories, but instead must have their words filtered through Western authors (21), but it is also true that in Melville we find a more sympathetic interest in natives and creoles than often encountered.

It is important to keep in mind, however, that *The Encantadas* is not a travelogue, nor a strict work of fiction or non-fiction—indeed it straddles the line between the two modes—a position made clear near the end of the work. In a chapter set on Hood’s Island, Melville tells of “Oberlus,” a white hermit who lived on the island for years before stealing a boat and making for other islands. When the rightful owners of the boat come looking for it, they find Oberlus gone and a note in his miserable hut, a note of the “most tristful eloquence” (130), as Melville terms it. And the note is indeed well-written and emotional, as Oberlus laments being “exiled from my country by the cruel hand of tyranny,” and further touches on his unproductive attempts to live a

“virtuous though unhappy old age” (130-1). So the cruel, wretched Oberlus ends with our sympathy, wrung from us by his surprising faculty with language, until at the end of the chapter, Melville amends a short note alerting his readers that Oberlus’s original letter “was full of the strangest satiric effrontery,” so, naturally, he “altered it to suit the general character of its author” (132).

Melville’s “tristful eloquence” in a supposedly true account is all his own, an important point to note in examining later travelers’ works on the South Seas; whereas writers such as Trollope, Stevenson, and London all kept a stricter division between their non-fiction travelogues and their later fiction, all three also used their trove of experiences as raw material, transforming tales, people, events, and locations into short stories and novels which would “suit the general character” of their impressions and intentions.

Trollope, Stevenson, and London were literary products of the new scientific age, an age and atmosphere advanced by many scientists and thinkers, from Darwin’s grandfather, Erasmus Darwin, to the geologist Charles Lyell, to Charles Darwin’s contemporaries, but it was Darwin himself who symbolized the new approach, and who is so important for those who came to the South Pacific because so many of his ideas were sparked in these very same South Seas. Professional writers who viewed a region of the globe being swept by changes, not only political but ecological and physical, understandably grounded both their non-fiction and their fiction in Darwinian fact, reflected in a sober, objective tone that depicted disease, displacement, degradation, and invasive species without flinching.

However, if Darwin was the foundation, then Melville was the framework, soaring beyond the new objectivity to find a metaphysical meaning above the physical. To differing degrees, the later writers who traveled the Pacific took their cues from their fellow novelist and

sought to discover through their fiction what the significance was of this roiling sea of change beyond the materialist world. At times, Trollope's Australian fiction barely aspired to anything other than the literal changes he saw coming in the environment and population of that continent, but Stevenson would find new strength for his own failing health in the Samoans' vigorous opposition to imperialism, a discovery that in all likelihood had an impact on his depictions of both the resiliency of native islanders in "The Beach of Falesá," and the shocking horrors of unfettered European ambition in *The Ebb Tide*. London, fascinatingly, moves from his mechanistic, unsympathetic view of native decimation as seen through the prism of thinkers such as Herbert Spencer and his credo of "survival of the fittest," but his later short stories "Koolau the Leper" and "Good-bye Jack" illustrated his conversion, as they detailed the proud dignity of doomed natives and the vulnerability of arrogant whites, suggesting that the situation would not always be one of white dominance and native oppression.

Chapter 3: Anthony Trollope: The Eminent Victorian and the Case of the Disappearing Aborigine

Anthony Trollope is known for being one of the quintessential Victorian novelists—less famous than Dickens or Eliot, perhaps, but outstripping them both with his prodigious output. He published over forty novels during his life, many of them mildly satiric portraits of provincial English life; his best known books, the six-novel set *Chronicles of Barsetshire*, are populated with clerics, lesser aristocrats, and the rising professional class in the fictional town of Barchester. In his time, however, Trollope was also known as a world traveler and writer of travelogues based on his journeys. Over a twenty-year period, he toured at various times Egypt and the Levant, the West Indies, the United States, Australia and New Zealand, South Africa, and Iceland; consistent with his almost mechanical rate of production, he several times, as is the case with his trip to Australia and New Zealand, determined before he left to write a book. “Of course,” as Trollope himself puts it in *An Autobiography*, “before [leaving] I made a contract with a publisher for a book about the colonies” (341). That “[o]f course” says much about his pragmatic, business-like approach to writing, and as we shall see, business—specifically, what is good for England and the colonists sent out from her—is one of the lenses, along with science, through which Trollope examines much of what he chooses to write about in his travelogues.

In some ways, Trollope presents a fairly typical case of high-Victorian racism, but my goal in this chapter is not simply to reveal his racism, which is easy enough to observe, but more importantly, to understand the complex ways in which his thinking on race evolves over the

course of his career as a travel writer. From his mother's bitterness at her financial setbacks in America, to his son's attempts to secure his future in Australia, travel would always be linked with money in Trollope's consideration. As we shall see, even his own trips to various parts of the world were undertaken with potential profits from travelogues in mind, and this ever-lurking concern with business and finance would clearly color his perceptions of natives, especially the Aborigines he would observe in Queensland. The contrast for Trollope between his son, working to clear productive land, and the Aborigines, with little interest in agriculture, doomed the natives to inferior status in his mind, and would lead to his easy dismissal of them as deserving of consideration, or even existence.

Another aspect of Trollope's high-Victorian racism is its distance from those he dismissed. I shall explore Mary Louise Pratt's concept of the "seeing man" in more detail later in the chapter, but the contrast between Trollope's relations with natives, and the relations cultivated by a later British author like Robert Louis Stevenson is jarring. Where Stevenson would befriend and, at times, even live with South Pacific natives, Trollope leaves behind no evidence that he even so much as engaged an Aborigine in conversation. In the chapter devoted to Aborigines in *Australia and New Zealand*, Trollope describes natives as seen from the deck of his steamer and later from his presence at the trial of an Aborigine, but he is always removed, examining and analyzing, but with no attempt at personal contact before he presents the reader with his findings.

The misfortune of Trollope's approach to the natives of the Australia, both his business outlook and his careful distance from his subjects, is that he profoundly misreads one of the great ecological tumults of recorded history. Like other Victorians, he persisted in reading the rapid disappearance of not only Aborigines, but native Australian flora and fauna, as either a just

action ordained by God, or as unmistakable evidence that the white races, and in particular the British, were superior racially and were destined to use the land that the Aborigines had so perversely wasted and neglected for centuries. Despite the nascent scientific understandings of how biological change, people like Trollope assimilated science into their already entrenched prejudices—different approaches, same conclusion.

With these understandings of Trollope as foundation, in this chapter I will examine his career as a travel writer—first producing travelogues as he journeyed, then later transforming some of his experiences and impressions into fiction. Two of Trollope’s journey’s, and the travelogues written after them, need to be examined to demonstrate that Trollope’s views on the Aborigines did not arise in a vacuum. In the late 1850s, he traveled the West Indies, seeing natives and former slaves building their own nations, a movement of which he approved, but significantly, only because he did not see the tropics as suitable for widespread white settlement, a belief he elucidated in *The West Indies and the Spanish Main*. Several years later, he toured the United States during the Civil War, producing the travelogue *North America*. Trollope held the correct, enlightened view of an Englishman that slavery was a savage practice, but he was clearly more concerned with the degrading effect of slave-owning on whites than with any effect on the slaves themselves. Again significantly for our later analysis of Trollope’s Australian trip, he views and considers the slaves, but he never engages in any contact with them; clearly, he considers their direct input inconsequential and prefers to maintain his “seeing-man” distance.

A decade later, when he visited Australia, Trollope’s primary concern for white settlers and their prospects in the colonized world come to the fore in his travelogue *Australia and New Zealand*. When he writes on Queensland, site of his son’s new home, Trollope devotes an entire chapter to the Aborigines, concluding that they are degraded, doomed, and, most importantly, a

block to full exploitation of the land by British emigrants. Trollope would set one full novel, *Harry Heathcote of Gangoil*, in this region, and part of another, *John Caldigate* in another section of Australia. Amazingly, neither work would contain any Aboriginal characters whatsoever, an act of what we might call wishful thinking on Trollope's part. Since he could see no future nor use for natives, they simply do not exist in the world of his fiction, peopled as it is with sheep farmers, cane growers, and gold miners, all financial exploiters of this vast new continent.

As Trollope's travels provide a rich vein of analysis for the scholar, producing as they did travelogues and fiction, and shedding light on his views of the place and destiny of the British people, it is surprising that so little critical work has been done on these aspects of his life and career. Among the travelogues, only *North America* has stayed in print in a scholarly edition, probably because of its connection to his mother's popular *Domestic Manners of the Americans*. As far as the fiction is concerned, one hinderance is that neither *Harry Heathcote of Gangoil* nor *John Caldigate* are considered among Trollope's most notable novels, and this persistent view of them as "minor works" has also kept them from closer criticism. When *John Caldigate* has received attention, it is invariably considered as another of Trollope's domestic fictions. If anything, Australia is seen as type of "frontier crucible" for whites, a place where violence and sexuality flourish, and the character of the Englishman is tested and proven either steadfast or wanting. The Aborigines are rarely considered, so the criticism acts as a mirror for the fiction: the non-whites are invisible in the novels, so they are invisible in the criticism that comes after. I also use the term "frontier" advisedly, as, with the absolute absence of the Aborigines and their culture, Trollope has dispensed with any hint of Pratt's "contact zone," at least as far as the fiction is concerned. In Trollope's fiction, Australia is presented as a blank slate, a land devoid of

prior inhabitants or culture, ready to receive the English and be shaped by their characters, whether for good or for bad.

The utter lack of criticism on Trollope and Australia is in strong contrast to Robert Louis Stevenson, whose South Pacific works, both fiction and non-fiction, have received an explosion of attention in the last ten years. A reexamination of Trollope's South Pacific work is overdue, partly because an analysis reveals him as an exemplar of Victorian attitudes and concerns about the state of the still-young settler colony of Australia.

What is interesting in terms of background for a study of Trollope's travels and views regarding the far-flung colonies of Britain is the fact that this most domestic and "English" of Victorian novelists could be complex in his thinking towards at least one colonized group, the Irish. In a novel such as *Phineas Finn*, for example, he treats the title character sympathetically as he traces his Irish émigré's troubling job at the colonial office and subsequent resignation. This visible and nuanced treatment of a colonized group has received more critical attention than Trollope's expressed views on other people held under imperial sway. One critic argues that, while many of the English considered Ireland a land that "does not exist outside of the empire," Trollope goes against the grain of contemporary thought in his depiction of Finn, a portrait that "speaks of the tensions between national identities" (Wolfreys 155-6). In all probability, this exception in attitudes lies in Ireland's proximity as well as the obvious, the status of the Irish as "white."

In general, though, Trollope had a more personal interest in the situations English colonists and emigrants found as they spread out through various parts of the globe, rather than in colonized peoples. In 1827, while he was still in school, Trollope's parents, who struggled financially, immigrated to the United States and eventually opened a store in Cincinnati. They

never found success, unfortunately, and came back in 1831 in worse straits than ever. The only positive to come out of the Trollopes' experience was a book by Anthony's mother, Frances, *The Domestic Manners of the Americans*, published in 1832 to wide acclaim. Trollope had mixed feelings about the harsh tone of his mother's book, appreciating its wit and the money it brought the family, but disapproving of its bitterness. He summed up his mother's attitude years later: "[t]he Americans were to her rough, uncouth, and vulgar,—and she told them so" (*Autobiography* 24). His mother's book stayed with him though; because he "had entertained for many years an ambition to follow her footsteps, and to write a book" (162), he made his own trip to America in the 1860s. *North America*, published in 1862, was the result.

In 1865, Trollope's son Frederic decided to immigrate to Australia to try to make his fortune as a sheep farmer. He eventually bought a 27,000 acre sheep station in New South Wales; the venture ultimately failed, but Frederic lived in Australia the rest of his life (Hall 333, 406). Trollope, as would be expected of any father, was concerned about his son's struggles on the other side of the world, and his desire to see Frederic led him to make his trip there over the course of eighteen months in 1871-72. Unlike his trip to America, when Trollope had fewer opportunities to see non-whites—he viewed slave housing in Kentucky but did not encounter native Americans—in Australia and New Zealand he observed Aborigines and Maoris, respectively, and he wrote extensively on both in *Australia and New Zealand*. While he respected the Maoris, as he did most Pacific Islanders, to a large extent, Trollope saw the Aborigines as standing in the way of hard-working immigrants like his son actually making something of the land, of producing wealth from it, and this view colored his opinions to the point that he "viewed the displacement of blacks by whites as inevitable" (Hall 374).

Trollope was not unusual in his views, of course; when it came to race, he was stolidly Victorian, more influenced by scientific ideas of the hierarchy of races than by the older, religiously-grounded notion that it was the sin and degradation of heathen peoples that allowed Europeans to so easily push them aside. In one revealing passage in *Australia and New Zealand*, he describes what he believes to be the artificially regal bearing of the Aborigine, concluding disapprovingly that his “so-called dignity has to me been the most odious part of his altogether low physiognomy” (70), physiognomy being the now discredited pseudoscientific belief that character can be determined by facial or other bodily features (Williams 268). This “altogether low physiognomy” Trollope ascribes to Aborigines contributes to his conclusion that they are “savages of the lowest kind” and “infinitely lower in [their] gifts than the African negro” (*Australia* 65, 69). Trollope’s interest in physiognomy is not limited to the travelogue; he references the discipline in both of his novels with Australian settings. In *Harry Heathcote of Gangoil*, he discusses a surly laborer’s face in terms of physiognomy (*Heathcote* 38), and in *John Caldigate*, he remarks that the title character’s features would lead a physiognomist to discern a “vacillation in conduct” that will indeed be borne out in the novel (*Caldigate* 16).

Besides physiognomy, Trollope also subscribed, like many of his fellow Victorians, to the belief that language distinguishes the higher races from the lower; Trollope flatly states that “the language spoken indicates the superiority of the race which speaks it” (*Australia* 19). In his first travelogue, the 1859 *The West Indies and the Spanish Main*, he delineates his lifelong belief that, in “endeavouring to separate the races...the speech, I think, and the intelligence would afford the sources of information on which most reliance could be placed” (77-78). The detached, objective analysis he assumes with the help of contemporary scientific assumptions makes him an example of what Mary Louise Pratt refers to as the “seeing-man,” the European

traveler “whose imperial eyes passively look out and possess” (Pratt 7). Nothing about the Aborigines, whether character, mentality, potential, or ultimate fate, is hidden from Trollope’s discerning eye as he dissects their very nature. Trollope carefully maintains his role as the seeing-man throughout all of his travel books; if he deduces unpleasant truths from the observations he makes, then he must express them, especially considering that the future of Australia, including the Aborigines, involves “the happiness of millions to come of English-speaking men and women” (*Australia* 1). His biographer N. John Hall sums up the extreme objective nature of Trollope’s bleak and brutal conclusions about the fate of the Aborigines thusly: he “simply did not register the horror of this analysis” (Hall 375). Trollope’s conclusion may not differ from many other Victorians, but rarely do we see the logical ramifications of this type of “bottom-line” thought expressed so clearly.

Trollope may have believed that emotion played no role in his observations of the various lands he visited as expressed in his travelogues, but to more clearly bring to light the underlying bias and personal stake he had in English colonization, we may turn to his fiction. As already mentioned, Trollope’s son Frederic had immigrated to Australia several years before Trollope himself visited; as can be imagined, he was anxious for his son’s success. In *An Autobiography*, Trollope tells his readers that his son has never prospered, but “I rejoice to say that this has been in no way due to any fault of his. I never knew a man work with more persistent honesty at his trade than he has done” (348); work, as is common in Trollope’s writing, is the emphasized element. In the introduction to *Australia* he reassures us that he is free from prejudice regarding the Australian colonies because he has a “son who has made his home there” (21). After he had been back in England for several months, Trollope contracted to write a Christmas novella for the *Graphic*, and he decided to set the story in Australia. This decision served two purposes;

first, it created a novel twist for the traditional Christmas tale—Christmas in mid-summer—and it allowed him to base a work on his son. He expresses in *An Autobiography* a wish to “describe the troubles to which my own son had been subjected, by the mingled accidents of heat and bad neighbors, on his station in the bush. So I wrote *Harry Heathcote of Gangoil*” (357). In a letter, Trollope is more explicit, writing, “Harry Heathcote is my boy Frederic,—or very much the same” (qtd in Hall 364). *Heathcote* is Trollope’s “only novel set entirely in the New World” (Edwards vii), and much of the description, both scenery and the central squatter/free-selector tension, is lifted from *Australia and New Zealand*.

In order to illustrate how *Heathcote* underlines the assumptions present in *Australia and New Zealand*, I would first like to go back twelve years and take a closer look at Trollope’s two earlier travel works since they contain attitudes and perceptions that would later be incorporated into the later travelogue—in other words, *Australia and New Zealand* and *Heathcote* did not spring from Trollope’s pen as new thought, but both were a culmination of the racial views found in the earlier works. *The West Indies and the Spanish Main* came out of a postal mission Trollope was sent on in 1858-59. He believed Jamaica was an important predictor for how non-whites in other present and former colonies would fare if granted equality since, by 1858, Jamaica’s blacks had enjoyed twenty-five years of freedom. Trollope had mixed impressions of the state of the former slaves, seeing potential for a type of prosperity but dismayed by what he observed in the present. “These people are a servile race, fitted by nature for the hardest physical work,” he states, before pessimistically concluding, “and apparently at present fitted for little else” (63). The problem resided in the mindset of the “West Indian negro”; despite a capacity for work, “he is idle, unambitious as to worldly position, sensual, and content with little” (56). In

this conclusion, Trollope was following in a tradition of using Jamaica as an example of why “free labour was not viable for African workers” (Young 120).

Promise for the future, then, lay in the mulattos, those of mixed European and African descent. As Trollope speculates, “Providence has sent white men and black men to these regions in order that from them may spring a race fitted by intellect for civilisation; and fitted also by physical organisation for tropical labour” (74). Notably, as Robert J. C. Young points out, the inter-racial sexuality implied by the springing forth of this mulatto race is ignored by Trollope, as though it were “created magically...from white and black men only” (142).

The groundwork for Trollope’s later rhetoric about race and the deficiencies of non-whites is laid in *The West Indies*, but in important ways, Trollope is more generous in dealing with black and mulatto Jamaicans than he is with either American blacks or Australian Aborigines. This generosity stems from his conclusion that the Caribbean should be left to the non-whites anyway because the tropical climate is not optimal for English immigrants; Trollope asks “why we should doom our children to swelter and grow pale within the tropics” (82). Few whites were migrating, he notes, and the white population was dwarfed by that of non-whites. Unconsciously looking ahead to the subjects of his next two travelogues, Trollope wonders why the English should be concerned with Jamaica at all when “so large a part of North America and Australia remain savage—waiting the white man’s foot—waiting, in fact, for the foot of the Englishman.” Almost jauntily, Trollope urges his countrymen to “take off our hats and bid farewell to the West Indies” (82). Jaunty or not, Trollope’s attitude must not be confused with benevolence; later, when he would visit the regions he specified as more suitable for British settlement, the views expressed here would become considerably less generous.

Further relevance, then, for a discussion of Trollope's later attitudes towards Australia and its native inhabitants can be found in *North America*. *North America* was the result of the first tour he took for the express purpose of writing a travelogue, and the United States was an area of the world in which he felt the English should take great pride; in *Australia and New Zealand*, he would even argue that America should be viewed as a colony, and the greatest of all England's colonies at that. A careful examination of the impressions he had during his tour of the United States at the height of the Civil War allows us to carefully trace the influence *North America* had on his later statements about Aborigines, Australia, and the fate of both. Australia may have been the region in which "he had most reason to feel a close and continuing interest" (Edwards ix) because of Frederic's presence there, but America also held a fascination for Trollope because of the disastrous four years his parents and siblings had spent in Cincinnati.

The shadow of his mother's book followed him, and his belief that her book was "somewhat unjust...about our cousins over the water" (*Autobiography* 161) demonstrates his commitment to an objective viewpoint early on. In fact, he partly ascribes the biased nature of *The Domestic Manners of the Americans* to her gender, speculating that it was "essentially a woman's book," imbued with "a woman's keen eye, and described with a woman's light but graphic pen." A book centering on social conditions and politics was "a work...fitter for a man than for a woman" (*North America* 20). In the introduction to *North America*, he cautions that, although he has made his visit to the United States in the middle of a war, he would have come anyway, and thus it is not his intention to write a history or analysis of the raging conflict. Despite this disclaimer, he does touch on the war and its causes several times, and he draws conclusions about the future of the black slaves from his present observations of their character, nature, and situation.

Trollope was against slavery, but not necessarily out of concern for the welfare of the slaves themselves. N. John Hall observes that, when it came to slavery, Trollope “seemed to oppose it chiefly for the dehumanizing effect it had on slaveholders, for whom it was a ‘deadly curse’” (240). Trollope’s emphasis on how slavery might compromise the moral standing of whites is consistent with his later statements in the introduction to *Australia and New Zealand* that the importance of certain colonies lies in “the direct welfare of our own race” (2). Whites in the American South were deficient simply because “servile” labor is “dishonourable,” and labor should always be, first and foremost, honorable (*North America* 23). He had further already concluded that “the Negro is the white man’s inferior through laws of nature” (181), and that emancipation was desirable, but only after slaves have been taught the “necessity of working without coercion” (179), presumably a difficult task as there are “advantages of which abolition would deprive him” (190). The task must be accomplished, however, for the sake of whites, for where slaves are, “prosperity cannot make any true advance,” and as such, “are signs of decay” (205). For Trollope, slavery was an issue with much at stake for whites, little for blacks.

Trollope for the most part stayed in the North during his tour of the United States, but he did make a brief trip to Virginia, where he observed soldiers being drilled, and also to Missouri and Kentucky, two slave states that did not secede with the rest of the Confederacy in 1861. While in Kentucky, he visited a stud farm near Lexington, where he got a first-hand look at a set of slave quarters, concluding that they were “superior in size, furniture, and comfort to those of agricultural workers back home” (Hall 236). Despite never journeying deeper into the South, Trollope also informs the reader that the “slave as a rule is well treated—he gets all he wants and almost all he desires” (*North America* 182), and now, encountering slavery first hand at that stud farm, he goes even further, in an extraordinarily naïve passage:

The Kentucky slave never wants for clothing fitted to the weather. He eats meat twice a day, and has three good meals; he knows no limit but his own appetite; his work is light; he has many varieties of amusement; he has instant medical attention at all periods of necessity for himself, his wife, and his children. Of course he pays no rent, fears no banker, and knows no hunger... If a Negro slave wants new shoes, he asks for them, and receives them, with the undoubted simplicity of a child. Such a state of things has its picturesquely patriarchal side; but what would be the state of such a man if he were emancipated tomorrow?
(190)

The objective tone persists, but how can its foundations but be in doubt? Throughout both *North America* and *Australia and New Zealand*, the impression lingers that Trollope's opinions were formed long before he left England and little that he sees in person will have any appreciable effect on them. Remember that, as demonstrated in his travelogues, Trollope had little or no personal contact with natives or African slaves in any of the areas he visited; perhaps the detached gaze of the high Victorian was profitable when examining Galapagos finches, but what of human societies and their futures? Demonstrating the selective eye critics have employed when they read Trollope's travel writing, one critic even caps an analysis of *North America* by celebrating the "warm humor, so often directed at himself, [that] pervades the pages of all his travel books" (Heineman 189). The "warm humor" is present, certainly, but is noticeably absent when he discusses non-whites.

Trollope ends his time in Kentucky by visiting Louisville, and he catches what he believes is a glimpse of what the future held for the soon-to-be emancipated slaves. He finds that the servants in his hotel are black, in contrast to the white servants he found in Cincinnati and St.

Louis, and he finds the difference illuminating. Where the whites were “noisy, dirty, forgetful, indifferent, and impudent,” the blacks were quite the opposite: slow, perhaps, but nevertheless “good servants.” He dismisses all other thoughts on race with a paternalistic, “[t]his is the work for which they seem to have been intended” (205). Trollope did not forget the effects of slavery, but even in a novel as late as the 1881 *Dr. Wortle’s School* he is concerned exclusively with the bankrupt moral character found among the whites who engaged in the degrading act of slave-owning and who defended it by arms in the Civil War.

Ten years after his tour of the United States, Trollope found himself in Australia, writing another travelogue and discovering that the subject of race was once again in the air, that it was a topic he needed to address. If the West Indies had been given over to non-whites, and the United States was painfully determining how whites and non-whites would live side-by-side, then Australia was where the lessons of the older colonial lands would be applied. In *Australia and New Zealand*, he begins his chapter entitled “Aboriginals” with the disclaimer that he will “say here what has to be said on this very disagreeable subject” (59), echoing the reluctance with which he addressed the Civil War and its causes in *North America*. The issue is “[d]isagreeable” in the sense that race was a tiring subject, one that Trollope reluctantly broaches when the state of Australian farms and the prospects for English emigrants seemed more important and relevant, but one that he must address and dispense with as efficiently as possible. Trollope devotes one chapter to the Aborigines, sandwiched between chapters on the relative merits of the emerging cities of Queensland and on the realities of gold-mining.

To the extent that the subject of the Aborigines had to be broached, it was only once again in terms of how it affected whites, this time settlers in Australia. Skirmishes on the frontiers of white expansion were a continuing difficulty, but more important was the problem of

the defeated, dispossessed Aborigines who lived scattered amongst the whites in areas firmly settled. These natives were reminders of the past when the business and duty of the white Australians was to look forward, ahead to its own prosperity and the prosperity it would contribute to England. Trollope draws on his conclusions and rhetoric from *North America*, preferring even to call the Australian natives “black men”; he seems almost bemused when he explains that “[i]t will be as well to call the race by the name officially given to it. The government styles them ‘aboriginals’” (60). The tone he uses in discussing race in *Australia and New Zealand* differs greatly from this later work and the earlier *North America*; the exasperation he communicates in deigning to use the word “aboriginals” signals a shift from the more generous, if condescending, tone he utilized ten years earlier. In fact, his use of “aboriginal” and “Aborigine” is inconsistent, as he switches back and forth between the name “officially given” to the natives, and the term “blacks.” Where his rhetoric can be termed naïve in *North America*, it is often harsh in *Australia and New Zealand*, despite the veneer of objectivity he maintains.

N. John Hall acknowledges the mean tone of *Australia and New Zealand*, commenting that the book “makes disturbing reading today when Trollope touches on native peoples,” but also observing that there are times when he is “sympathetic to the plight of the aborigines” (373). To be fair, he does deal even-handedly with issues such as the reaction of the Aborigines to the taking of their land; violence, writes Trollope, “was so natural when everything that the black men had was taken away from him” (*Australia* 62). He further recognizes that reprisals by whites for violence by Aborigines create a cycle that will end in too many deaths on both sides. Trollope recognizes that the natives do not want civilization but “fish, kangaroos, and liberty” (65), a clear if condescending moment of understanding, but nothing but a moment, for he will return again and again to their disinterest in the benefits of civilization. It may be that Trollope’s commitment

to his objectivity demands he be fair, but a couple of mildly generous statements regarding the Aborigines are simply obliterated by the tidal wave of invective, insults, and disgust that fill the pages of Trollope's travelogue.

Interestingly, though, Trollope's fairness also extends to his treatment of that most sensational of themes, cannibalism. He lists cannibalism among the traits that make the Aborigines "savages of the lowest kind," but his devotion to the objective viewpoint will not allow him to go on without qualifying their cannibalism. No one has "accused them of eating white people," Trollope points out; they "have laws which they obey...most rigidly." Disgust registers during his telling of the story of their "bunya-bunya" feast, but he outlines the exact rules that govern the engagement in cannibalism. When Aborigines from all over the region come to the territory of one group in order to share the ripened bunya-bunya fruit, they gorge themselves solely on the fruit for several days, until "they experience an irresistible longing for flesh." Since they are guests in the territory of another group, the wild game of the area is off-limits; instead, they "sacrifice one of their own number to provide the longed-for feast of flesh." Trollope is careful to assure the reader that the tale has been "corroborated by various persons in Queensland," but it is still one of those anecdotes so rich in its mixture of fascination and horror that Europeans loved to hear (66-67). While he ostensibly explains how the Aborigines follow a complex set of rules, he in fact undercuts his points with sensationalism.

Nevertheless, the amount of material Hall would characterize as "disturbing reading" dwarfs that where Trollope attempts to deal fairly with the Aborigines. Trollope frames his discussion in terms of "the white man's duty in respect to these blacks" (68), and he dismisses immediately any notion of equality by referring back to previous examples of the disastrous consequences of political and social equality between whites and non-whites—examples of the

“experiment,” as he terms it. Because he had been in the United States during the first two years of the Civil War, he had not directly experienced the aftermath of that conflict and its consequences for the emancipated slaves; writing in 1862, in *North America* Trollope speculates that equality would fail, that social tolerance of the freed blacks would be in short supply, even among the former abolitionists, but he had not foreseen the role many of the former slaves would play in the Reconstruction governments of the South. Looking back on that period from his vantage point of the early 1870s, in *Australia and New Zealand* he dubiously insists that his earlier speculation had been confirmed, and so the insights he drew from the situation in America should be heeded in any discussion on the future political state of the Aborigines. Limited protection of the Aborigines’ rights is one thing, argues Trollope, but it had long “appeared to me that the idea of training negroes to be magistrates, members of parliament, statesmen, or even merchants, was one destined to failure.” Referring back to the situation in the United States, Trollope observes that American blacks had been “put in possession of all the privileges belonging to white men,” before going on to offer his analysis of the results of the enfranchisement of the freed slaves:

[t]he more I see of the experiment the more convinced I am that the negro cannot live on equal terms with the white man, and that any land, state, or district in which the negro is empowered for awhile to have ascendancy over the white man by number of suffrages or other causes, will have but a woful [sic] destiny till such a condition of things be made to cease. (69)

As he is always careful to do, Trollope avoids rhetoric that he believes would indicate bias; his conclusions are built on meticulous observation and thoughtful analysis. His belief in a scientific racial hierarchy undergirds his warnings against the enfranchisement of the Aborigines: political

and social equality is an idea “destined to failure by the very nature of the man” (68), an assertion rooted in detached language of the new science.

And what exactly is this “very nature” Trollope believes condemns the Aborigines to failure? Their resistance to progress is an essential characteristic; the Aborigines not only “did not want civilisation,” but in Trollope’s mind they are incapable of receiving it. As he outlines the state of the Aborigines at the time of contact, “[t]hese people were in total ignorance of the use of metals, they went naked, they ill-used their women, they had no houses, they produced nothing from the soil.” For a man whose son was at that moment attempting to eke out a living from sheep farming on this very continent, Trollope must have found the Aborigines’ failure to produce from the land particularly galling. The shortcomings of the Aborigines extend to their moral character; besides the cannibalism discussed earlier, they “practised infanticide.” Trollope, in the guise of the “seeing-man,” dispassionately but devastatingly summarizes the situation: “for years, probably for many centuries, they have made no progress, and the coming of the white man among them has had no tendency to civilise,—only a tendency to exterminate them” (65, 67).

The Aborigines may be lower on the scale of races than African-descended blacks in Trollope’s estimation, but just as the political experiences of the former slaves in America provide warning for any well-meaning agitators who would argue for Aboriginal enfranchisement, Trollope also believes that the regressive social behavior of blacks in the United States matches that of the Aborigines, proving that the relevance of the American experience for the Australian one is indisputable. Trollope recycles rhetoric and imagery he first used in *North America* in *Australia and New Zealand* to prove the similarities between the two groups. In the midst of a discussion of abolition, Trollope in *North America* remarks that

“[c]harming pictures are drawn for you of the Negro in a state of Utopian bliss, owning his own hoe and eating his own hog; in a paradise, where everything is bought and sold.” Unfortunately, these “pictures” are fantasy; the “enfranchised Negro,” Trollope informs us, “has always thrown away his hoe and eaten any man’s hog but his own—and has too often sold his daughter for a dollar when any such market has been open to him” (181). Three years earlier, in *The West Indies*, Trollope first introduced the image of the crudely capitalistic non-white, remarking that the Jamaicans “will sell their daughter’s virtue for a dollar” (*West Indies* 59). Trollope revisits this perversion of the free-market system a decade later in *Australia and New Zealand*, as he belabors the futility of civilizing Aborigines: “it is said of them, that they sell their women to white men” (71). The Aborigine not only sells his women in common with the Jamaican and the freed American slave, but he also prefers to consume “any man’s hog but his own,” just as Trollope informed us the enfranchised American black does. The Aborigines live on “whatever can be filched from or may be given to them” by whites. Always reinforcing his belief that it is in the “very nature” of the non-white to behave in uncivilized or immoral ways, Trollope qualifies the cattle stealing of the Aborigines by marveling that it “has been so natural,—we may almost say, so innocent” (59, 63).

If there is a fundamental difference between the former slaves of the United States and the Aborigines in Trollope’s mind, it is their varying capacities for work. Simply put, the ability of American blacks to be taught how to work for their own benefit by whites is what elevates them on the Victorian scale of races. The task of teaching blacks of African descent to work may not be easy, but in *North America*, Trollope believes it can be done. Learning the “necessity of working without coercion” is always a prerequisite for emancipation, he writes, but he was confident the slaves would acquire that mindset, always keeping in mind that the ultimate goal

was freedom, not equality (178). Even this limited tone of optimism is absent ten years later when Trollope discusses the Aborigines. He may have been thinking back to his earlier statements regarding the emancipated slaves when he writes in *Australia and New Zealand* that where Africans have “come within the compass of the white man’s power, he has been taught to work for his bread” (70). Sadly, Trollope continues, when he observes the “begging, slouching life” of the Aborigines, he sees no hope that the same lesson can be taught to them. The fact that they “had never been called upon for an hour’s work in their lives” (60) was a perhaps fatal flaw in their moral character, for now, Trollope realizes, they would rather “beg, or steal, or eat opossum,” as long as they are “free from toil.” Trollope further discerns that the Aborigine “does in his heart despise the white working man,” an unfortunate state that leads to no other conclusion for Trollope but that, in regards to work and the Aborigine, he is “justified in saying that he cannot be so taught” (70).

Trollope’s belief in the differing capacities and inclinations to work may also lay behind the metaphorical terms he tends to use for blacks of African descent and those he uses for Aborigines. The former slaves in America are usually described as children. The slave expects “instruction as to every simple act of life, as do children,” a mindset that also extends to attitudes towards money; American blacks might understand vaguely the concept of money, but they view it the same way a child might: “he will play with it—will amuse himself with it” (*North America* 180). In Trollope’s view, the slave works and receives “with the undoubted simplicity of a child” (190).

By the time of *Australia and New Zealand*, Trollope had moved beyond the metaphor of the child to that of the animal. If the language used of American slaves is condescending, that used of the Aborigines is startling in its loathing and contempt. The objective tone in which

Trollope prides himself is abandoned here almost completely, as disgust for the Australian natives pervades his analysis. His first encounter with the Aborigines comes as he takes a steamer up the Mary River, and the natives swim out from an island they live on; Trollope remarks that “they seem to be almost amphibious,” before concluding that “in the water, they are very picturesque,—an effect which is lost altogether on terra firma” (59-60). Trollope’s initial impression of the Aborigines devolves from amphibians to primates just a few lines later when he speaks of the “dignity” he has heard some ascribe to them: “[t]o my eyes the deportment of the dignified aboriginal is that of a sapient monkey imitating the gait and manners of a do-nothing white dandy” (60). This mid-Victorian image vividly anticipates Marlow’s reaction in *Heart of Darkness* thirty years later when confronted with the “improved specimen,” the native fireman on his steamer who dressed in Western clothing: “to look at him was as edifying as seeing a dog in a parody of breeches and a feather-hat, walking on his hind-legs” (Conrad 140). More degrading yet is Trollope’s recounting of an incident in which a white hunter hands his flask of wine to his Aboriginal “gamekeeper” to hold while they tramp through the bush. When the hunter asks for his flask, the native grins and informs his “massa” that he drank all of the wine in it; Trollope observes that it was just that no punishment was meted out for the transgression, for “you would as soon think of punishing a dog for eating a mutton chop you had put in his mouth” (*Australia* 72).

Even the characteristics Trollope deems praiseworthy in the Aborigines reinforce their kinship with the animal world. He singles out their “festival dances” as “wonderful,” before moving on to their ability in “the tracking of men or cattle” (67). Implicit here is the assumption that a race closer to the animals would have the ability to think like animals, picking up spoors and following them with a facility that is almost uncanny.

If the Aborigines are to be compared to monkeys and dogs, then it is illuminating to discover the animal Trollope chooses earlier in the book to describe the English emigrants who were settling lands all over the world. In Canada, South Africa, and Australia, “the working Englishman seeks a new home, in order that he may earn higher wages, get better education for his children, and enjoy what he regards as fuller freedom than he can do at home.” In searching for a metaphor to do justice to this stream of hard-working people, Trollope turns here, too, to the animal world, but instead of evoking brute, impulsive primates or canines, he instead embraces one of the most cherished symbols of industry in the Western world: the honey bee. “Our people are going out from us, as bees do,” he writes, before expanding, “not that the old hive is deserted, but that new hives are wanted for new swarms” (15). The myth of the honey bee is one of order, discipline, acceptance of roles, and efficient production, both for themselves and for humanity. Monkeys and dogs may caper around and gratify every urge, but bees place the greater good of the whole above themselves. The fact that bees were considered the kings of the insect world in the Medieval European hierarchies, just as man was king of the world overall, is no coincidence.

Trollope’s belief in the differing natures of the various races extends to their inclination towards either virtue or vice. He brings up the complaint by certain “friends at home with the philanthropic mantle” that whites have “taught the black man nothing but his vices”; Trollope parries this charge by stating that a man will only be “taught what he will learn.” Yes, he acknowledges, the “aboriginals have become drunkards and thieves,” and certainly there are “white drunkards and white thieves in Australia,” but vice among the white settlers is no more prevalent than the ample virtues possessed by the colonists. White men are “energetic, independent, and good to their wives,” while their women are “kindly unexact, and careful”;

faced with the solid moral character of the settlers, Trollope wonders how the critics back home would explain the failure of the Aborigines to learn the virtues of the whites the way they have so readily embraced the few vices. The settlers have modeled for them the “finer characteristics of manhood,” but, Trollope asks rhetorically, “how can you teach any good lesson to a man who will only hold his head erect as he grins and asks you for sixpence, or a glass of grog, or a bit of tobacco, or a pair of old trousers” (71)?

The only extended anecdote Trollope provides of an Aborigine demonstrates for him, and presumably for the reader, the “very nature” of the natives, the objective proof that they are “savages of the lowest kind” (65). Still thinking of the well-meaning “friends back home,” Trollope warns that it is “difficult to make intelligible to those who know nothing of Australia the strange condition of these people” (72). His recounting of the tale of “Aboriginal Boney” describes his first-hand experience with “these people.” He arrived at Gladstone, in Queensland, a small harbor town with grandiose visions of its future; while there, Trollope discovers that an Aborigine is to be tried for theft, so he goes to the courthouse to watch.

The native on trial, known simply as “Aboriginal Boney,” was accused of making a hole in the wall of a store “in the hope of getting a bit of tobacco.” One witness had seen a man fleeing but had not been able to identify him; however, Boney confesses anyway, hoping to regain possession of a small pouch he had left behind that contained several coins and a lock of hair. Trollope demonstrates the novelist’s interest in details when he speculates about Boney’s desire for his pouch, wondering “how much of his regret was sordid as attaching to the money, and how much tender as attaching to the lock of hair.” Trollope acknowledges the man’s humanity through such conjecture, but then resumes viewing natives through a biased lens, observing that Boney was “sentenced to six months’ imprisonment, and seemed to be perfectly

satisfied.” Trollope continues, “I saw him afterwards in the prison at Rockhampton, and he seemed to be enjoying life in that retreat” (45-46). To the Englishman, it was perfectly logical that the Aborigine would prefer life in prison, where he could be fed and housed for free, to life outside where he might have to work for his living. Trollope’s interpretation of the events is consistent with his belief that Aborigines abhor physical labor, but at the same time contradicts his separate conclusion that Aborigines do not want civilization but rather “fish, kangaroos, and liberty” (65).

Regardless of the seeming contradictions in Trollope’s various impulses concerning the Aborigines, for him they lead to the same inescapable conclusion. In *North America*, we find Trollope’s prediction of the long-term effects of enfranchising the American blacks; if all black children born after a certain date were considered free, “the Negro population would probably die out slowly” because their natural lethargy and degradation would hamstring their ability to provide for themselves and their children (182). In short, slavery artificially supported the population of Africans in the United States. Keeping in mind both his statements in *North America* and his sentiment that white settlement did not bring civilization to the Aborigines, “only a tendency to exterminate” (*Australia* 67), Trollope’s assertions regarding the ultimate fate of the Australian natives come as no surprise. After all the discussion of their place among the races, their claim to the land wanted by white settlers, their character, including their aversion to work and their thievery, their lack of civilization and absence of ability to adapt to civilization, and their animal nature, Trollope summarizes: “[o]f the Australian black man, we may certainly say that he has to go.” Only one caveat qualifies his assertion; the English must not forget that they are the civilized ones, and that this advantage brings along with it certain obligations. Trollope insists that the “aim of all who are concerned in the manner,” settlers in Australia and

administrators in England alike, be that the Aborigines “should perish without unnecessary suffering” (76).

The effect of widespread colonization on the Aborigines may have spawned a significant amount of discussion and debate, but Trollope also recognized that an entire ecosystem, not just the humans who had long dwelt in it, was at stake. In the introduction to *Australia and New Zealand*, he defines “colony” as a word meant “to signify countries outside our own, which by our energies we have made fit for the occupation of our multiplying race” (2). These “energies,” in the form of “advancing science,” had done a remarkable job in creating a new Australia, one ready not only to be self-sustaining, but to be a contributing member of England’s colonial empire. When the first fleet arrived in 1788, Australia was “nearly...destitute,” but less than a hundred years later, its inhabitants were “relieving the wants of those at home who are too destitute to improve their fortunes by migrating” (3).

Was “advancing science” really behind the flourishing of the English settlers and all they imported? Alfred W. Crosby, in *Ecological Imperialism*, labels Australia, along with New Zealand, the United States, Canada, and Argentina, a “Neo-Europe,” one of the lands particularly suited for the transplanting of the European way of life. Crosby points out that the Neo-Europes “are scattered, but they are in similar latitudes. They are all completely or at least two-thirds in the temperate zones, north and south, which is to say that they have roughly similar climates” (Crosby 6); in other words, the Neo-Europes mirror Europe in latitude and climate, so “European flora and fauna, including human beings, can thrive in these regions” (7). Thrive they did, to the extent that, when all of the Neo-Europes were taken together, over 50 million Europeans migrated to them between 1820 and 1930 (5). What Trollope was observing was something different than a combination of “advancing science” and the natural savagery of the Aborigines

ensuring that the English settlers would remake the continent of Australia in their own image. He was describing a natural process, one in which the species of the Eurasian landmass—where all life was older and thus evolved to greater complexity—battled and decimated the younger and relatively simpler ones of the new world. In other words, what Trollope was seeing as an elegant arc of progress on the part of Europeans and their associated flora and fauna was in actuality part of a much greater, more nuanced process that had nothing to do with strength of character or “natural” superiority. Instead, he was witnessing the advantages that many things Eurasian had wrung from eons of fierce competition for survival; the plants, animals, and immune systems of the New World, having been settled and migrated to much later, had not reached the same point biologically.

What Trollope saw convinced him completely that Australia was destined to be a new paradise for the settlers pouring in from England, including his son. He even applauded the more unsavory first wave of immigrants, explaining that “gangs of convicts...had turned wildernesses into Edens” (*Australia* 28). He saw flourishing in Australia “beasts, birds, and fishes, fruit and vegetables, rich grasses and European trees, with a rapidity and profusion of which our grandfathers never dreamed, and which even our fathers hardly ventured to anticipate” (3). When James Morris describes the Governor’s mansion in 1840s Sydney, he mentions the luxurious gardens surrounding it, “stocked with the figs, sugar-canes, and bamboos of Empire as well as the quinces and apples of home,” while the quiet streets of the city were “hedged with geraniums” (Morris 136); note that the flora designated “of Empire” also consists of introduced species. Over a century before our time, when Australian wines are popular enough to be found in stores halfway around the world, Trollope mentions the vineyards sprouting around the country and says, “I have drank fairly good wine made in Australia” (30).

Not all of the environmental changes were as seemingly innocuous as geraniums and grapes. Sprawling sheep farms, such as the one Trollope's son Frederic owned, blanketed the landscape. In his history of Australian colonialism, *The Fatal Shore*, Robert Hughes addresses the wool industry and "its insatiable appetite for land" (Hughes 275). The effects of this landrush were devastating, for "[s]heep and cattle drove out kangaroos and other game...The forests were cut back. Familiar plants died out" (277). Even the dead sheep became a lucrative commodity for enterprising Australians; the settlers were producing "European meats" (*Australia* 3), and Trollope visited a facility dedicated to the boiling and tinning of mutton. He saw a real future in this industry, as profits for the Australians seemed promising because "one thing England wants and cannot get...is cheap animal food for her working classes" (55). Whether for wool or meat, the sheep was becoming for Australia what the steer was for Texas. "Pasturage altered the environment," Hughes states soberly, "and began to obliterate the old material bases of aboriginal life" (Hughes 277).

As we have seen, the obliteration of the bases of aboriginal life, which would necessarily lead to the extinction of the Aborigines themselves, was considered by some an unfortunate reality, but by others, disturbingly, a desirable occurrence. Hughes sums up most settlers' sentiments when he observes, "the Aborigine was seen as a mere native pest, like a dingo or kangaroo" (277). Trollope's belief that the Aborigines were fated to die out was, to be fair, not nearly this harsh, but nevertheless, the effect was the same—a useless and wasteful species would perish, leaving the land to those who intended to transform it into the "Edens" of Trollope's imagining.

But the whites were not, as Trollope saw it, the true displacers of the Aborigines; he argued that the actual introduced "species" in this case would be the Polynesians—"Canakers"

he called them—and the Chinese coolies. The workers imported mainly from the South Seas were not brought in to work the sheep stations but a new crop just then rising in prominence: sugar cane. In Queensland in particular, Trollope observes that “next to wool, sugar has lately become the most important article.” The small farmers investing in work-intensive sugar needed labor, and since the Aborigines were altogether unfit in many minds for any type of work, “Queensland at present is supplying itself with labour from the South Sea islands” (132). Trollope saw the importation of labor as a good idea, citing the success in the West Indies of the sugar cane industry when coolies were brought in. Unlike the indigenes of Australia and the African slaves of the Caribbean, Trollope believed that the Polynesians had greater potential. He asserts,

Civilisation is within their reach,—in spite of their island homes, their dusky colour, their various languages, and old cannibal propensities,—because they will work, and are anxious to gather to themselves and to keep the fruits of their labour. They are unlike the Australian aborigine,—or even the African negro, who is indifferent to the fruits of work as long as he can enjoy the present moment; but they are like the Chinese and the Indian coolies, who know the comforts conferred and the power given by accumulated possessions,—and who are therefore capable of receiving the blessings of civilisation. 146-47

In a refrain he repeats continuously, from *North America* up through *Australia and New Zealand*, the “blessings of civilisation” are always explicitly linked to the capacity and aptitude for physical labor.

For the philanthropists who were concerned about the treatment and possible exploitation of this new source of labor, Trollope has nothing but disdain. We have already seen how

Trollope excoriated those “friends at home with the philanthropic mantle” (70) who would meddle in the affairs of the settlers with regard to the Aborigines—he insists that “those who know nothing of Australia” (72) should confess their ignorance and be silent—and he takes the same tack when dealing with those concerned about the infusion of Polynesian labor. He belittles the critics of imported labor, “working as they always do with the best intentions, working as they so often do in much ignorance,” before assuring the reader that coolie workers in the West Indies, including Jamaica, “were treated with uniform kindness and care” (133); why would the situation be any different in Australia, another English colony? “Protect the poor ignorant dusky foreigner from the possible rapacity of the sugar planter,” Trollope begins sarcastically, before sternly warning that “an ill-conducted enthusiasm may not only debar Queensland from the labour which she requires, but debar also these poor savages from their best and nearest civilization” (134). In a final blow to the well-intentioned but seriously misguided, Trollope restates his constant theme one final time, roping in even those who would profess religious reasons for their concerns: “[w]ork with fair wages has done infinitely more to civilize, and even to christianise, the so-called savage races than has the energy of missionaries” (147). In writing off even missionary endeavors, Trollope once again reaffirms his commitment to an objective, scientific worldview. For Trollope, who persistently avoided personal contact with non-whites through all of his travels, the very idea of missionary work must have seemed abhorrent, requiring as it did living and working among the natives, not to mention that the act of conversion had no tangible financial benefit, ever important to the fiscally-minded Trollope.

Despite Trollope’s confidence in his own objectivity, his working methods perhaps undermine it. As befitted his contract to deliver a travelogue upon his return to England, Trollope wrote as he traveled, committing to paper his immediate impressions and impulses about the

situations and people he encountered. Trollope felt this method relevant enough to his book's content that he commented upon it in the introduction to *Australia and New Zealand*, acknowledging that he needed to "take the reader into my full confidence, and let him know that my book has been written as I went on"; however, he continues, "I do not know that I could have done my task otherwise," for whatever he observed and felt about a certain region would be "dispatched and cleared out of my mind" before he reached the next (22). Several years later, writing in *An Autobiography* on the composition of the travelogue, Trollope states, "I wrote my book as I was traveling, and brought it back with me to England all but completed" (348). The importance of his writing method for *Australia and New Zealand* is that it not only raises questions about his objectivity, analyzing as he does serious issues in the moment, but it also gives us another reason to examine his Australian fiction, written months after Trollope had returned to England and had time to ponder what he had seen. If the immediacy of his writing of his travelogue made it difficult to challenge the prejudices he already harbored, especially regarding issues of race, a subject he had already voiced strong opinions about years earlier in *The West Indies* and *North America*, then perhaps a work like *Harry Heathcote of Gangoil* would give him a chance to either reevaluate or reaffirm his initial conclusions from a distance.

As already mentioned, Trollope contracted to write *Harry Heathcote* during the middle months of 1873, for the Christmas issue of the *Graphic*. He had arrived back in England in December 1872, and this space of several months in fact did have a significant impact on the way he chose to depict Australia, most notably on the subjects of the conflict between the so-called "squatters" and "free-selectors," and of race. The squatter/free-selector controversy is comparable to the roughly contemporary rancher/homesteader conflicts of the American West. The squatters were the sheep farmers, whose stations often sprawled across tens of thousands of

acres in the bush; to encourage immigration, however, the law stipulated that anyone could claim, or “select,” a smaller amount of land to buy. Because the sheep farmers had “squatted,” or simply taken up residence, on the land of their choice, they had no rights when it came to settlers and farmers of various kinds selecting the land they had come to view as their own (*Australia* 34-35). Trollope’s son Frederic had a smaller sheep station, at a little over 25,000 acres, but he too was beginning to feel the effects of the free-selectors squeezing him when his father came to visit (304). In his chapter on life at a sheep station, written about Frederic’s outfit, Trollope carefully omits any explicit reference to his son; Frederic’s station was located at Mortray, 250 miles west of Sydney in New South Wales, but in *Australia and New Zealand*, the name is concealed as “M-----,” and although its approximate location is given, Trollope declines to pin it down any more precisely, simply stating that it was “decidedly in the bush” (299).

For *Harry Heathcote*, Trollope wanted the plot to revolve around Frederic and the tensions between squatters and free-selectors, but he did not want to cause any unnecessary problems for his son. Trollope shifted the setting from New South Wales to the Mary River valley of Queensland, “where he knew no squatters, free-selectors, or disgruntled farm labourers at all” (Edwards xi). Even with this change in setting, Trollope knew that there was an “obvious danger” that the villains of *Harry Heathcote* “might be mistaken for neighbours of his son’s,” so “the harsh realities of the situation...are significantly softened” in the novel (x). Harry, the character based on Frederic, is menaced by arsonists attempting to destroy his station, but the culprits turn out to be a drunken family of failed squatters, not the free-selector Giles Medicot. Medicot overcomes the mutual hostility he shares with Harry to help save his station from a raging fire, and he ends up celebrating Christmas dinner with the Heathcotes and becoming engaged to Harry’s sister-in-law. The plot is slight, but it fulfills the expectations of the

Christmas story, and the cooperation between the squatter Harry and the free-selector Giles indicates that Trollope believed the future of Australia depended on the shared concerns of both groups.

If that cooperation could be achieved, the future for the white settlers would be prosperous; however, the future for the Aborigines is nonexistent in *Harry Heathcote*. One critic notes that, in relocating the action of the novel, Trollope set it in an area “which he hardly saw at all when he visited it in 1871, having travelled through it after dark...apparently without visiting any farms” (Edwards x). Perhaps Trollope was not familiar with the farms of the Mary River valley, but he does mention the area in *Australia and New Zealand*; in fact, he begins his chapter devoted to the Aborigines with his steamship trip up the Mary River to Maryborough, a city several miles inland. “There is an island—Frazer’s Island—at the mouth of the Mary River,” Trollope begins, where the Aborigines “are allowed to live without molestation” (*Australia* 59). Here is where Trollope has his first significant encounter with the indigenes, from the vantage of a steamship deck, and where he describes them as “almost amphibious” because “[a]s the steamers run up the river they swim off, thirty or forty of them coming together.” A couple of them are taken on board, and Trollope and the Aborigines complete the trip to Maryborough together, Trollope to observe and write, the Aborigines to “loaf about, begging for money and tobacco” (59).

When Trollope describes Harry Heathcote as “a young squatter, well known west of the Mary river in Queensland,” and writes of his station, “[h]is house was near the river Mary...around him on his side of the river he could ride for ten miles in each direction without getting off his own pastures” (4-5), the setting for the novel seems more than random. Trollope wanted to relocate the action away from his son’s actual home in New South Wales, but he

chooses an area with which he was, in fact, familiar. The shift to the Mary River valley allows him to incorporate what he saw as a crucial crop for Australia's future, sugar-cane; as we have already seen, Trollope interestedly addresses the rising importance of sugar-cane for Queensland in *Australia and New Zealand*, and he chooses to have Giles, the free-selector of *Harry Heathcote*, be a sugar-cane farmer. The clash between sheep and sugar-cane embodied in the tension between Harry and Giles could only have happened in Queensland, for colonies like New South Wales were too temperate for the tropical plant to flourish.

Significantly though, there is a gaping absence in the Mary River valley setting of *Harry Heathcote*. Trollope takes advantage of his novel's setting to introduce the promising new sugar-cane industry, but the Aborigines, whose situation is explicitly addressed by Trollope when he was confronted by their presence in the same Mary River valley, are entirely absent from the novel. Considering his prior experience with the Aborigines in the area, it is unlikely that Trollope's omission of the natives is accidental. We have already seen that Trollope reluctantly dealt with the "disagreeable subject" of the Aborigines in *Australia and New Zealand*, arriving ultimately at the conclusion that it was their fate to die out before the widespread advance and settlement of whites. *Harry Heathcote* should be read as nothing less than Trollope fulfilling his own prophecy regarding the Aborigines. The conflicts between the Aborigines and the whites are of little consequence long-term because of the imminent demise of the natives, so Trollope centers his plot around the tension that has a much greater relevance for Australia, squatter versus free-selector.

Reading *Harry Heathcote* as Trollope's assured vision of Australia's future is supported by an examination of the other environmental and societal changes that have taken hold in the Queensland of his novel, changes explored earlier in *Australia and New Zealand*. Historians

have noted the sweeping changes sheep brought to the Australian landscape, including the manmade alterations designed to aid the grazing and locating of the sheep. The process known as “ringbarking” involved chopping a gap in the bark of the numerous box trees that hoarded the precious moisture the grass needed to flourish; the gash blocked the movement of moisture past that point, causing the tree to die without the backbreaking work of chopping it down. Robert Hughes vividly describes the effect of ringbarking, writing that it created “spectral landscapes of gesticulating, claw-white dead trees” (Hughes 318). In *Australia and New Zealand*, Trollope dispassionately explains this same process, commenting that ringbarking is necessary so trees “cease to suck up the strength of the earth for [their] nutrition” (312). In *Harry Heathcote* however, Trollope anticipates the ghastly imagery of Hughes, betraying an ambivalence towards ringbarking; on Harry’s station, “the trees had been destroyed, the run of the sap having been stopped by ‘ringing’ the bark; but they stood like troops of skeletons” (*Heathcote* 10).

Trollope had also noted with approval the rise of imported Polynesian labor from neighboring South Seas islands, and he had predicted that the prosperity of the colony’s new sugar-cane industry was dependent on their arrival. He lashed out at philanthropists, arguing that, though they believed they were working in the best interests of the imported islanders, both the productivity of the colony and the civilizing of the Polynesians hinged on their availability to work the cane fields. In *Harry Heathcote* the specter of the philanthropist is never raised, and Giles Medlicot finds his cane fields to be a rousing success, in large part because of the Polynesian labor helping him. Interestingly, despite the fact that all classes and types of white Australians are allowed to speak, from the educated Harry to the former convict Old Brownbie, the islander laborers are never distinguished one from another, and never given the opportunity to speak. The first glimpse we get of them is when Harry rides over to see Medlicot about a

disgruntled former employee of Harry's, Nokes; Harry finds that Nokes has been hired by Medicot, as an "overseer, having a gang of Polynesian labourers under him, sleek, swarthy fellows, from the South Sea Islands...who crept silently among the vats and machinery, shifting the sugar as it was made" (37). Presumably, this passage illustrates Trollope's conviction, expounded upon in *Australia and New Zealand*, that the Polynesians "will work, and...are therefore capable of receiving the blessings of civilisation" (147).

The Polynesians are not the only people imported to do the work the Aborigines were judged incapable of doing. While visiting Frederic at Mortray, Trollope mentions that the residents of the station had "their own cook, who on this occasion was a Chinaman...He was generally to be seen outside the door of the hut chopping up onions" (*Australia* 301). Similarly, Harry Heathcote might never encounter Aborigines, but he has a "Chinese man cook, Sing Sing" (*Heathcote* 11). Unlike the Polynesians, depicted as silent, servile, and hard-working, Sing Sing is not trusted by the white settlers; he "was more than ordinarily alert; but...not much trusted" (82). This lack of trust was confirmed when he deserts the Heathcotes on the eve of the final and most destructive act of arson, choosing to leave like a "rat" and join up with the Heathcotes' enemies, the Brownbies. After the Brownbies have been foiled, Sing Sing "was forced to turn over in his heathenish mind the ill-effects of joining the losing side" (110); unlike the Polynesians, who do not question the superiority of European ways and are influenced for the good, Sing Sing is too entrenched in his "heathenish" worldview to take anything morally beneficial from his time in Australia. The main thrust of *Heathcote* is the importance of a prosperous future for whites in Australia; the sheep herders and the cane growers rejoice in their cooperation, while the lazy, resistant whites and their perversely unenlightened Chinese ally are marginalized—the triumphant destiny of business is affirmed.

Harry Heathcote of Gangoil is the only one of Trollope's novels set entirely in Australia, and Harry is his only "major character avowedly...modeled on a living person" (Edwards vii), but it is not his only novel to touch on Australia. Two years after the publication of *Harry Heathcote*, Trollope made a return trip to Australia to see his son again, and then in 1879, he published *John Caldigate*, the story of a young gentleman ruined by debt who decides to try his luck in the Australian gold fields. Only four of the sixty-four chapters in the novel take place in Australia, for young Caldigate makes his fortune very quickly by striking gold; when he returns to England, his father approvingly notes that he "regarded the colonies generally from a politico-economical point of view" (*Caldigate* 126), an outlook Trollope shared and would have approved of in his son, still toiling away in Australia.

Although only a small percentage of the novel takes place in Australia, the specter of that "rough lawless wilderness" (*Caldigate* 353) haunts Caldigate when a woman he lived with during his gold mining days claims they were married, which would make him guilty of bigamy. One critic notes the link between the free-wheeling gold fields and the lax morality of the frontier, observing that in the novel we find a "verbal assimilation of gold and women" (Bury 175), suggesting that if the colonies are to be viewed economically, as Caldigate's father proposes, then women as well as precious metals become commodities, and both commodities to be obtained and retained in manners viewed askance back in the rigidly moral metropole.

The bigamy case turns partly on the locating of Dick Shand, a friend of Caldigate's from Cambridge, who went out to Australia with him but squandered away his share of the gold claim through drink and had not been heard from since. Shand's family learns that he had been working "in the wilderness of a sheep-run in Queensland" (*Caldigate* 127), but only months later do they discover he had moved on "to a sugar-plantation, and had superintended the work of a

gang of South Sea Islanders.” Shand participated in the three most important economic forces in Australia at the time—gold mining, sheep farming, and sugar growing—but again no mention is made of Aborigines, despite his time spent in Queensland, the colony of both Trollope’s initial encounter with the natives and of Harry Heathcote’s sheep station.

Similar to *Harry Heathcote* however, Polynesians make an appearance, even if they are again only given a collective identity. What information we do get in *John Caldigate* reaffirms Trollope’s belief that they were able and willing workers, capable of receiving the “blessings of civilisation” (*Australia* 147). In *John Caldigate* we are informed that the “Canakers” are “men who are brought into the colony from the islands of the Pacific”; when they return to their homes after their term of employment ends, it is “much to the regret of their employers.” Shand finds the Islanders so agreeable to work with that, before returning to England, he works as an agent on some of the islands, “with the view of persuading the men to emigrate and re-emigrate” (475). After Caldigate’s bigamy conviction is overturned with the help of Shand’s new testimony, Shand decides to return to Australia; he acknowledged that “he had done some good among the South Sea Islanders. He knew their ways and could manage them” (612). So, with a loan from Caldigate, Shand sets out to resume his work of conferring civilization on the Polynesian laborers through his very own sugar plantation—again, we find Trollope’s fiction fulfills the very future he prophesies in *Australia and New Zealand*. The Aborigines are nowhere on their native continent, but the English settlers prosper, and their docile Polynesian laborers are guided along the path to civilization and all it implies.

Only one possible reference to an Aborigine occurs in *John Caldigate*, and this mention should be examined. Upon arriving at the frontier gold-mining town of Nobble, Caldigate and Shand fall in with an experienced miner who asks their names. When Caldigate gives his name

as John, the miner reverts it to the nickname “Jack.” Caldigate tells him he prefers John to Jack, and the miner says it is just as well because “[w]e have such a lot of Jacks. There’s Dirty Jack, and Jack the nigger, and Jack Misery...and a lot more” (97). This “Jack the nigger” is in all likelihood an Aborigine, but nothing else is known about him—he is a name in a list. The presence of an Aborigine in a mining town does not contradict Trollope’s beliefs about the fate of the indigenes; in fact, of the three major professions mentioned in *John Caldigate*, gold mining is by far the most disreputable. Even with these fleeting mentions of Polynesians and a possible allusion to an Aborigine, the few critics who have discussed the novel have read it in terms of conflicts and challenges for white settlers, as if the Australian setting is only important in that it is outside the Western, “civilized” world. For example, one critic writes that Caldigate must admit that he fell into “the prevailing Australian standards of sexual conduct” (Nardin 82), “Australian standards,” even by this early date being synonymous with “white standards.” Any Aboriginal influence on standards or mores is conspicuously absent. Another critic sees the Australian setting of the novel as a place for Caldigate to have “done with his wild oats” before emerging from the colonial world to become a responsible husband and parent back in Britain (Markwick 138).

In *Australia and New Zealand*, Trollope visits the Queensland gold town of Gympie, and he does not come away impressed. Despite his observation that the miners were “a rough, civil, sober, hardworking lot” (*Australia* 85), the backwards, filthy conditions of the mining town and the speculative nature of prospecting lead him to detest the whole enterprise. After describing the coarsening effect the life of a miner produces, Trollope states that “I should be sorry to see a man I loved working in a gold-mine, sorry to see him successful in a gold-mine” (86). The fact that Caldigate, a Cambridge-educated gentleman, should commit the indiscretion of cohabitating with

a woman in the first place can be attributed to the lax, degrading atmosphere of the gold-mining environment. It is no coincidence that as Caldigate and Shand mature, they leave the gold fields behind to begin lives as a country gentleman and as an overseer of Polynesian laborers, respectively. “Jack the nigger,” though, in Trollope’s mind, would be right at home in the world of gold mining, where he might not even be a miner, but a beggar and thief.

Trollope is nothing if not consistent. Over a period of several decades, from *The West Indies* to *John Caldigate*, he unwaveringly holds to his belief in not only the hierarchy of races, but in its practical implications in the colonial world, where the “contact zones” between colonizers and natives were in the process of radically transforming native environments, leading to displacement and declining populations among indigenous peoples. True to his mid-Victorian scientific principles, Trollope believed that while non-whites deserved a measure of sympathy for their plight, nature was taking its course—the superior driving out the inferior—and from an objective standpoint, misguided philanthropic ventures and crusades only blocked these natural processes. He saw that “the happiness of millions to come of English-speaking men and women” (*Australia* 1) was at stake, and just as wheat, sugar, and sheep drove everything native from its ever widening path in Australia, the new settlers must have free rein to do the same. Of course, despite his rage against do-gooders, Trollope never doubted the special promise of the English people or their spread throughout the world. He could simply contrast the histories of non-whites such as the Aborigines with that of the English; he asserts of his people that, “let the faults have been what they may, the race has been more successful than other races” (2). As in the past, so the future. One race decreases, so the other may increase: it was the simple arithmetic of colonization, and Trollope figures it plainly in *Australia and New Zealand*.

When traced chronologically, Trollope's consistency of opinion becomes startlingly clear, but mainly in terms of content. Tone, however, changes, as we experience Trollope's escalating loathing for the objects of this "seeing-man's" gaze. Beginning as far back as *The West Indies*, up through *North America*, and culminating in *Australia and New Zealand*, certain strongly held ideas are stated in increasingly adamant terms. In *North America*, the "laws of nature" dictating white superiority (*North America* 181) and the "necessity of working" (178) for non-whites to be civilized become in *Australia and New Zealand* the "nature of the man"—the Aborigine—to perish (*Australia* 68) and his resultant hatred of "the working white man" (70). Intellectually, Trollope's views seem likely to have been formed before he ever left England; his views were reaffirmed by every tour he took over the next several decades. So what is behind the increasingly bitter tenor of his observations, why does the writer so proud of his detached and objective analysis betray his disgust with natives more strongly with each book? Trollope may have had a personal interest in seeing America because of the experiences his mother and family had in Cincinnati during his boyhood, but his interest was an intellectual curiosity—even a Civil War raging around him as he toured the States failed to invest his travelogue with much feeling. Ten years later, however, things had changed in the New World; his son Frederic had staked his future prosperity on wringing success out of the Australian bush, and Trollope had reason for emotional investment in what he saw. He was jealous for his son's success, and when he saw potential barriers to Frederic's future, such as what he perceived as the lazy, insolent, and at-times violent Aborigines, his anger was aroused. The amazing thing is that Trollope manages for the most part to keep his objective tone throughout *Australia and New Zealand*; only occasionally, as when he contemptuously dismisses the Aborigine as "a sapient monkey

imitating the gait and manners of a do-nothing white dandy” (60), does his revulsion for the native threaten to overwhelm his writing.

Trollope’s mounting disgust for the Aborigines takes on a new guise in his two pieces of fiction set at least partially in Australia, *Harry Heathcote of Gangoil* and *John Caldigate*; instead of risking the outright antipathy that showed through in *Australia and New Zealand*, he fulfills his own prophecy of the ultimate extinction of the Aborigines by deliberately excluding them from the narratives. This omission is glaring; within the context of his thoughts on Queensland, squatters, sheep stations, and imported Polynesian labor—all aspects of the novels—are his impressions and assertions regarding the Aborigines. Such a conspicuous absence would surely be noticed by anyone who had read both the earlier travelogue and the fiction that grew out of it, especially when so many vivid details were lifted from *Australia and New Zealand* for the plots and situations of the two novels. That *Australia and New Zealand* would not have sold as well as Trollope’s fiction is undoubtedly true, but in *An Autobiography*, Trollope remarks that, when the travelogue was published, he “was surprised to find they had an extensive sale.” Both the initial “expensive edition” and the subsequent smaller volumes “had a considerable circulation” (349). His surprise at the interest the British reading public showed for information on the Australian colonies may have influenced the decision for Trollope, that meticulous chronicler of English life, to set fiction in the Antipodes, and so the novels became extensions of his purpose in *Australia and New Zealand* to write “with the simple intention of giving trustworthy information on the state of the Colonies” (*Autobiography* 349). His “simple intention” in the novels is to invite the English to share in the inexorable fading from relevance and existence of the Australian natives.

Chapter 4: A Thorn in the Side of Imperialism: Robert Louis Stevenson, Outsider
Identity, and the Repression of Culture
in the South Pacific

The popular conception of the South Seas as a paradise on earth resonated in a particular way for Robert Louis Stevenson years before he ever sailed the Pacific; by the age of fifteen, he had twice read R. M. Ballantyne's *The Coral Island*, a castaway tale about three adventurous young boys (Rennie 210). In 1875, he was first told about the breathtaking loveliness and "wonderful climate" of the tropical islands dotting the Pacific and "how beneficial it was to sufferers from respiratory diseases" (Harman 357). Then, in 1879, newly arrived in San Francisco to marry American Fanny Osbourne, he was introduced to the early novels of Herman Melville, *Typee* and *Omoo*, and the fascination he already felt for the region solidified into adoration (Harman 358). Years passed as the Stevensons, joined by Fanny's son, Lloyd, traveled Europe and America, attempting to find a place where Stevenson's ever-worsening tuberculosis could be kept at bay. By the winter of 1887-88, realizing that he had to spend some time in the tropics for his health, Stevenson and Lloyd spent many evenings with maps and guides spread out over the floor, charting and dreaming over the South Seas voyage they would take by the spring. Melville's books maintained their influence over Stevenson, as the planned itinerary followed the older author's original course through the Pacific, touching Nukuhiva in the Marquesas first, then continuing on to Tahiti before turning to the Hawaiian Islands (Harman 358).

For some in his state of mind, entranced by the exotic depictions found in much fiction set in the South Seas, disillusion would come swiftly when they witnessed the reality of dispirited and diseased natives contrasted with groups of ne'er-do-well whites drifting from island to island, and profit-minded officials complemented by missionaries bent on eradicating what they considered to be degrading and heathenish customs of the islanders. Stevenson, however, would react differently to what he witnessed, as his feelings evolved from a child's enthusiasm to a dying man's profound empathy. In the end, the islands of the South Pacific and the plight of the natives resonated deeply with Stevenson, prompting him to embrace the region as his home for the last six years of his life and inspiring some of his best work, works about both the Pacific, and interestingly enough, about his native Scotland as well.

The reasons behind this resonance the South Pacific inspired in Stevenson are twofold. He was proudly Scottish, and he felt the second-class status of Scotland within the United Kingdom keenly, and he immediately recognized that the South Seas Islanders were being pushed into the same sort of unequal relationship. When he writes of missionaries stamping out customs and newly-installed Western authorities outlawing tattooing and other traditions, Stevenson thought of the way Highlander Scots were forbidden to wear kilts or speak Gaelic in the eighteenth century as a way of both humiliating them and dampening their defiant spirits.

Furthermore, the very mover behind Stevenson's trip to the Pacific, his illness, also led him to feel a kinship with the natives; a significant factor in the decimation of South Pacific populations and culture was the spate of epidemics that were burning through the region. Cook's voyages may have contributed syphilis and tuberculosis, but in the decades since, smallpox, influenza, and leprosy had been introduced as well, and each island, with its isolated population, suffered the nightmare of epidemics as forcefully as any of the previous islands infected, with

overwhelming mortality and often broken wills the result. As a dying man, Stevenson immediately empathized in a way few other Westerners could or would, and his attempts to communicate the situation of the natives would bring attention to the conditions in the region, and it would even lead to his near-expulsion from Samoa by British officials, embarrassed by the unwelcome notice his writings attracted.

In this chapter I plan to trace these dual influences as Stevenson first experiences the people and islands of the South Pacific and then begins reacting to what he saw through a range of both fiction and non-fiction. I will begin by examining several earlier travelogues, *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes* and *The Amateur Emigrant*, which establish that Stevenson long had a sympathy for those on the margins, outsiders kept at arm's length by those in power because of religion, race, class, or disease. He may have always felt himself an outsider, but Stevenson was also aware of his popularity and never hesitated to use his strength, writing, to bring the stories of the marginalized to a wider audience.

Once Stevenson's interest in the plight of the outsider has been demonstrated, I will turn to the brace of non-fiction works he wrote during his time in the Pacific. *In the South Seas* was his planned *magnum opus*, a work of breathtaking scope as originally conceived, a text which was to transcend mere travel literature and gather in strands of history, anthropology, psychology, and biology. The work as finally published, though more limited than Stevenson's original plan for it, still eloquently documents his initial journey through the islands and his impressions of the people he encountered.

From here, I will move on to two works concerning his experiences in Hawaii, *The Eight Islands*, which includes a lengthy section describing his visit to the infamous leper colony of Molokai, a virtual prison reserved for mainly native lepers on the north shore of Molokai Island,

and “Open Letter to the Rev. Dr. Hyde of Honolulu,” a remarkable document eviscerating a prominent Presbyterian clergyman in Honolulu for his slanderous gossip about Father Damien, a priest who devoted his life to the Molokai lepers and who eventually died of that very disease. Doubtless, Damien’s insistence on helping those marginalized by both disease and race inspired Stevenson’s passionate defense—if Damien could offer his life, Stevenson implies, I can at least offer my pen.

Stevenson’s final piece of non-fiction that we will examine is *A Footnote to History*, one of our most important eyewitness accounts of the colonizing process. Stevenson settled in Samoa as Germany, the United States, and Britain were jockeying for influence in the chain, and the Samoans themselves were resisting—in some cases violently—the oncoming annexation by one of the Western powers. Stevenson carefully documents the events that had occurred in the two or three years previous to his arrival, up to his present time; the work was so scathing that the British briefly considered declaring him *persona non grata* in order to minimize the damage he might do to their expansionist hopes.

All during his traveling and his settlement at Vailima in Samoa, Stevenson kept writing, and he produced more than just non-fiction during this period. He wrote two important pieces of fiction set in the South Seas, “The Beach of Falesá” and *The Ebb-Tide*, both of which expand on and clarify the attitudes Stevenson already laid out in his travelogues and history. If in the non-fiction Stevenson focuses on the natives and their physical diseases and decay, then in his fiction he shifts his attention to the Westerners in the Pacific and emphasizes the ways in which they suffer from spiritual diseases, corruptions that lead them to degrade natives politically, sexually, and culturally to leave in their wakes nothing less than the decimations of once-vibrant societies. *The Ebb-Tide* in particular climaxes with a remarkably violent show-down between whites, all of

whom suffer various delusions and psychoses, and which closes with disturbing images of a megalomaniacal Christianity capable of uniting Westerners even as the exploitation of islanders continues.

Of the writers examined in this study, Stevenson and Melville are the two who most resist Pratt's characterization of the "seeing-man," the Westerner who observes and judges from a distance, whether that distance be racial, political, or moral. Of these two, however, Stevenson is the true outsider, the one whose sympathy for the South Pacific natives rings the most nearly honest—not to say Melville's depictions are insincere, but one also gets the sense reading novels like *Typee* and *Omoo* that his months among the islanders were the adventures of youth, certainly pondered over and thoughtfully recounted, but nevertheless a sojourn never to be repeated. Stevenson, older and living with the constant awareness of his looming mortality, stayed and lived among the natives for six years. The key to understanding this difference is to recognize that Pratt's seeing-man was an emanation of the metropole, a man who, being a creature of the seat of power, never questioned the right of his people, his society, his religion, to hold sway over indigenous peoples halfway around the world. While Melville might denounce Western influence in the Pacific, in his maturity he moved away from South Seas tales, especially after the commercial failure of *Moby Dick*, while Stevenson, ever the outsider—the Scot, the agnostic, the chronically ill—embraced the region and its people, and indeed, saw his work mature as he dealt with the issues arising the witnessing of brute force and colonization.

Stevenson's anger, his observations, his remarkable run of works written on the topic of the South Seas still lay in the future in 1888, when the original plan, as for Trollope previously and for London afterwards, was for a tour, but not for a permanent residence. A serious illness during the trip, as well as renewed health problems in Sydney, quickly convinced the Stevensons

that they must settle in the tropics and that, in all likelihood, Stevenson would never see his homeland of Scotland again. Perhaps if all Stevenson found were the romantic paradises he had been dreaming about for over a decade, the experience would have eventually disappointed him, but Stevenson instead found the reality of the South Seas more engrossing than any tale in the vein of *Treasure Island* (Harman 364); what he found instead was a complex world of economic, political, and environmental upheavals, one that simultaneously outraged him at the effects of European colonization but which also reminded him of the difficult history of his beloved Scotland, a “more familiar, vanishing culture” (Rennie 211). The Stevensons eventually decided to buy land and settle in Samoa, both because they admired the way the native Samoans more fiercely guarded their independence than many of their Pacific neighbors, and because the deepwater port of Apia, newly dredged by German interests in Samoa, would allow for easier communication with Sydney, and hence with Europe (Harman 391).

Interestingly, these last few years of Stevenson’s life, spent in Samoa, transformed the range and depth of his writing, both fiction and nonfiction. He may have been initially attracted to the islands of the Pacific by their romantic image, fitting for a writer whose reputation has rested largely on romances of his own such as *Treasure Island*, *Kidnapped*, and *The Master of Ballantrae*, but some of the first works of realism set in the South Seas came from the pen of Stevenson during this period, and even *Ballantrae*, arguably the best of his classic romances, was written in the Pacific. He resisted exoticizing the South Seas (Kucich 33), and few works debunk the myths of idyllic living in the Pacific more convincingly than the novellas *The Beach of Falesá* and *Ebb-Tide*, both of which offer searing indictments of the motives and character of whites in the region. Guy Davidson observes that Stevenson’s Pacific narratives were brutal enough at times to argue that he inserted the “perspective of naturalism into the adventure novel”

(124). The nonfiction Stevenson produced sometimes wandered from its roots as travelogue, as he set down history, explored political rivalry, and examined cultural differences; these wide-ranging aspects of the nonfiction at times compromise its clarity, but there are also passages of extraordinary power and focus. Indeed, Stevenson's account of the imperial maneuverings of Germany, Britain, and the U. S. in Samoa during the 1880s and 1890s, *A Footnote to History*, together with his "eccentric but influential crusade" (Kucich 32) on behalf of the Samoans, almost led to his deportation by the British. It is to Stevenson's credit that this simple writer of romances could couple his writing to his actions in such a way as to concern an empire. The native Samoans would come to call Stevenson "Tusitala," or "teller of tales" (Day 115), a deceptively simple name, for the natives understood the power his "tales" would come to have in shaping a more critical view of colonialism in the Pacific.

Perhaps because Stevenson's critical fortunes suffered during so much of the twentieth century, the criticism published for many years tended to focus on his most well-known, canonical works, such as *Kidnapped*, *Treasure Island*, and *The Master of Ballantrae*, while marginalizing his travelogues and the fiction set in the Pacific. In the 1980s, two notable works heralded a renewed emphasis on Stevenson's Pacific literature: A. Grove Day's *Mad About Islands*, which surveyed the works of several professional writers who traveled the South Seas, specifically Hawaii, and Robert Irwin Hillier's *The South Seas Fiction of Robert Louis Stevenson*. Hillier's book-length study of the Pacific works is important for demonstrating that this later fiction rewarded such in-depth analysis, and Hillier gives complex readings of both "The Beach of Falesá" and *The Ebb-Tide*.

Since the mid-1990s, criticism addressing Stevenson's Pacific writing has been issued at a steady clip, and if these works are still not as widely known by the general public, in academia

the South Seas works are clearly perceived as an essential part of Stevenson's canon. Neil Rennie's *Far-Fetched Facts*, like Day's *Mad About Islands*, casts a wider net than just Stevenson, but his discussion of his works is more sophisticated than Day's, which tended towards the uncritical and smilingly sympathetic. In *Literary Culture and the Pacific*, Vanessa Smith examines each mode of Stevenson's South Seas output, travelogue, fiction, and history, in turn, while John Kucich, in *Imperial Masochism*, focuses on suffering in Stevenson's Pacific works and documents his "evangelical anti-imperialism."

This "anti-imperialism" is certainly present, and two themes reflecting it would come to dominate the "tales" Stevenson wrote, the psychological devastation caused by widespread epidemics and mortality and the more spiritual "disease" that seemed to affect so many of the Westerners in the Pacific, corrupting their motives and actions; Stevenson tended to restrict each of the themes to a different mode, addressing the natives in his non-fiction and travelogues, while the fiction focuses on whites. The prevalence and effect of disease played a significant role in Stevenson's dismay of what he saw around him as he traveled from island to island through the Pacific. The tuberculosis he had lived with, and the specter of an early death that came with it, attuned him to the draining of emotional vitality that the constant presence of disease brought.

Images and scenes of serious illness recur in several of the works Stevenson wrote before he ever left for the Pacific, such as the near-death of David Balfour as he trekked across the wild heaths and became ill from exposure in *Kidnapped* and the lingering final illness of Jim Hawkins' father in *Treasure Island*, a situation that casts a pall over the young boy's life from the beginning of the work. When it became clear they must stay for health reasons, Stevenson and Fanny settled on Samoa as their home base partly because the Samoans vigorously resisted the Europeans not just politically but managed to avoid the malaise they glimpsed in places such

as the Marquesas (Harman 391), where disease and depopulation conspired to create an atmosphere of emotional surrender, as when Stevenson found himself appalled when a young Marquesan woman dispassionately prophesied the death of her infant (*South Seas* 22). Stevenson of course did not find fault in attitudes such as these, but he found himself attracted to the fact that the Samoans were one of the few groups that maintained their spirit and vigor in the face of the rapidly changing realities of life in the Pacific.

Stevenson himself refused to succumb to pessimism in regards to his own health issues, even at one point calmly issuing instructions to the captain of the *Casco* in the case of his death while at sea, an incident that earned the admiration of the captain; the “necessary items for a burial at sea” had also been stowed aboard in anticipation of the worst (Harman 355).

Stevenson’s feeling of kinship with the Samoans and their defiance in the face of the severe epidemics sweeping the Pacific led him to throw his literary and other talents behind them, but he did not give up on other groups throughout the Pacific by any means. His travelogue cum political analysis of the Marquesas, Gilberts, and Society Islands incisively documented those cultures in varying states of resistance and capitulation, while his series of essays, “The Eight Islands,” as well as his famous letter defending Father Damien, examined Hawaii and dissected the effects of the leprosy epidemic and the physical and spiritual conditions of the leper colony, Molokai.

Stevenson’s interest in the downtrodden and defeated in all likelihood originated not only in his day-to-day existence with mortality shadowing him, but his strong identity as a Scotsman, a member of a subjugated people whose most recent rebellion against the English, crushed in the mid-eighteenth century and whose aftermath Stevenson documented in *Kidnapped*, *The Master of Ballantrae*, and *Catriona*, left them subjugated, also led to his identifying with peoples

dominated yet defiant. We can see Stevenson's sympathy with the doomed as early as his travelogue *Travels with a Donkey*, written when he was twenty-eight and to help finance his trip to America to marry Fanny. The work documents his walking tour through the Cévennes region of France, an area bloodied by friction between the Catholic majority of France and the Protestant minority heavily concentrated there.

Stevenson, whose historical romances often concerned wars in which religion was bound up with other causes, found the early eighteenth-century struggle between the Camisard heretics and the Catholics seeking to crush them fascinating. The Camisards, while not an ethnic group like the Scottish, nevertheless were a proud, peculiar people who inhabited their rugged mountain region with the same tenacity they brought to their religious beliefs. This similarity to the Highlander Scots that Stevenson was so intimately familiar with must have appealed to him, as at one point, the agnostic Stevenson confesses that he felt more at home with the remaining Protestants of the Cévennes than with the Catholics who lived alongside them (*Travels* 80). As he wanders through the mountains with his comically contrary donkey, Modestine, he reads from a standard history on the conflict, *Pastors of the Desert*, and vividly imagines the many people and events of that time; he later comments that his knowledge of their history led him to be more readily accepted by the descendents of the Camisards, just as he later would be accepted by the Pacific Islanders who recognized a knowledgeable and sympathetic spirit in Stevenson (86). In the end, despite what he feels is his Protestant bias, the Camisards' identity as defiant underdogs and the fact that their descendents remained true to the beliefs and customs of their ancestors has more to do with Stevenson's deeply felt identification than the nature of their religious beliefs. Stevenson's self-analysis and sympathies for the outsider in *Travels with a Donkey* are important to note in any attempt to trace the evolution of his eventual "evangelistic anti-imperialism"

(Kucich 31), but critic John Kucich also rightly observes that the whimsical tone of the work distances it from its subjects; Kucich points out that *Travels with a Donkey* could be labeled “aestheticized travel, making it a vehicle for the elegant detachment of the observer” (79).

However, Stevenson’s next attempt at writing a travelogue, during his American travels, begins to break down this detachment, as his trip turns out to be dirty, difficult, and nearly debilitating. *The Amateur Emigrant*, the resulting travelogue, documents the simultaneous tedium and wonder that accompanies a long-distance journey such as the one Stevenson took in 1879 from Scotland to New York, and from New York on to San Francisco. Robert Irwin Hillier also notes the significant change from *Travels with a Donkey* to *The Amateur Emigrant*, asserting that the latter has “a more serious purpose and a much harsher tone” (Hillier 33). Again, Stevenson reinforces his sympathy for outsiders, but this time for the lower classes and racial minorities rather than for the religiously persecuted. On the first leg of the trip, the sea voyage across the Atlantic, he prefers to spend time with those traveling steerage even though his berth is “second cabin” (6-7). He explains that he has “always nourished an idea that one person was as good as another,” and finds himself disgusted when he notices three other “cabin” passengers, well dressed and haughty, taking a turn around the steerage area as though touring a slum (33). Stevenson, on the other hand, does not find himself grouped in with his fellow cabin passengers, instead being “readily and naturally taken for a peddler” (80); this perception delights him and leads him to conclude that he became one of the steerage passenger, “not only in manner but at heart, growing hostile to the officers and cabin passengers who looked down upon me” (84). His assertion that he became “at heart” one of the very outsiders he spent so much of his journey with is a key expression of Stevenson’s attitude towards so many of the peoples this self-conscious Scotchman found himself among.

The cross-county portion of his trip to meet Fanny in California occupies the second part of Stevenson's book. Though the subtitle of the section, "Across the Plains," accurately indicates that emphasis is laid on the leg from the Mississippi River to San Francisco, one key incident occurs when the train he is on stops in Pittsburgh. Stevenson goes to a restaurant to have dinner, and his black waiter was his "first introduction to a coloured gentleman" (121). Like many an enlightened European, Stevenson confides that he has come to America "prepared to pity the poor negro, to put him at his ease, to prove in a thousand condescensions that I was no sharer in the prejudice of race" (122); true to Stevenson's egalitarian nature however, he "put [his] patronage away," commenting that his waiter was "strikingly unlike the negroes of Mrs. Beecher Stowe, or the Christy Minstrels of my youth" (122). Instead, the waiter was "armed with manners so patronisingly familiar" that Stevenson could only compare him to the butlers he encountered in Britain, and he ultimately concludes that the waiter was like a "not very self-respecting master might behave to a good-looking chambermaid" (122). Condescension had given way to surprise, and Stevenson reacts characteristically, identifying the new with something familiar from his homeland.

When Stevenson finally crosses the Mississippi and endures the most uncomfortable and seemingly endless section of the trip, he fell seriously ill, just as he would several times during his voyages in the Pacific. He passed much of his time observing and getting to know various European immigrants as well as Chinese "coolies." Of the three passenger cars on the train full of immigrants on which he takes passage, one of the cars is reserved exclusively for the Chinese. Stevenson's fellow Europeans seemed to despise the Chinese to a man, branding them "hideous vermin" and "stupid, because they are imperfectly acquainted with English" (161-62). At one point, Stevenson laments how filthy the train cars had become during that interminable journey

but notes that “the car of the Chinese was noticeably the least offensive” (155), but this fact has no influence on popular opinion: “there was no calumny too idle for the Caucasians to repeat, and even to believe” (161).

Stevenson also notes that the distrust and dislike that existed between whites and Chinese extended also to Native Americans. For the most part, he rarely saw any Natives during the trip, but on occasion he would observe a family at some isolated stop. Stevenson reflects that “the pathetic degradation of their appearance, would have touched any thinking creature, but my fellow-passengers danced and jested round them with a truly Cockney baseness” (165). He further laments that they have had “their promised reservations torn from them one after another” and have been harried by “the extortion of Indian agents,” commentary that indicates that Stevenson had read extensively on the people of the areas he was traveling, just as he had on the *Camisards*. No doubt but that naiveté of the young, impassioned freethinker tinges his impressions and attitudes more as he encounters racial minorities in America than with the religious dissenters of France, giving them perhaps a touch of the very condescension he labors to avoid, but these experiences would prove to be formative and would be maturely built upon when he came to meet and live among the natives of the Pacific.

Indeed, years later, these impressions stayed with him as he lounged in a New England farmhouse over the winter of 1887-8 and planned out the fanciful, romantic trip to the South Seas with his stepson Lloyd (Rennie, “Introduction” viii). Whatever idyllic fantasies the forthcoming trip conjured up, Stevenson seemed to recognize from the beginning that he would also find grittiness and ugliness that would be impossible to reconcile with the romantic conceptions of the Pacific. Stevenson did not, however, understand how deeply the exploitations and transformations he would encounter would change him, but his natural sympathy and

previous experiences in France, on board an Atlantic steamer, and on a transcontinental train prepared him to deal mentally and emotionally with what he found, putting it down sensitively into print.

Finally, in June, 1888, the Stevensons, along with a small crew, departed San Francisco on the luxury yacht *Casco*—described as a “high-Victorian parlour” (Harman 354)—and set sail for the Marquesas, with eventual plans to visit the Society Islands, and then travel north to Hawaii. Initially, this was to be a voyage for Stevenson’s health, another temporary stop in the nomadic existence of Robert and his wife Fanny, but a combination of precarious health and an attractive climate kept them there for the next six years, until Stevenson’s death in 1894.

Stevenson’s collection of non-fiction works on the Pacific were not written and published following the chronological order of his journey; his initial idea was to publish an unified, epic work—a “magnum opus” (Day 112)—on the various islands groups, incorporating history, sociology, and statistical data, among other things. The scope of this South Seas work became so comprehensive that Fanny wrote to a friend that she was afraid her husband was leaving behind his strength as a writer, intimacy and character, for a colder, more objective, and less readable type of text (Rennie, “Introduction” xii-xiii). Her fears were not unfounded, for, even though the sheer ambition of the work caused it to fall apart before Stevenson could bring it into any kind of coherent form, the various works published separately that were intended to comprise the larger work are uneven, varying wildly in consistency both internally and from one work to another; one critic even dismisses the non-fiction as merely a “source book for his more important writing, the fiction he produced from his experiences in the Pacific” (Hillier 6). I would argue otherwise, and, as might be imagined, these works—*In the South Seas*, *A Footnote to History*, and *The Eight Islands*—are at their strongest when Stevenson focuses on his subjective

impressions of the islands he visits, describing landscapes, atmospheres, and people with warmth and imagination.

Only *A Footnote to History* was published in book form during Stevenson's life, while *In the South Seas*, compiled from published letters, was in preparation when Stevenson died, and *The Eight Islands* was compiled posthumously from the Hawaiian section of Stevenson's draft of his planned epic work. The fact that the works as eventually published are not arranged chronologically is a holdover from the original intention of a larger, comprehensive work that would have treated the various areas in an interconnected way (Rennie, *Far-Fetched* 214), partly in terms of reactions to the growing colonization of the Pacific; Stevenson noticed different dominating characteristics and social responses to European intrusion among the island groups, and he tended to write of each chain according to these observations, not in the order in which he visited. Early in *In the South Seas*, Stevenson notes that "in the Marquesas, in the Eight Islands of Hawaii, in Mangareva, in Easter Island, we find the same race perishing like flies" (*South Seas* 31). He points to, among other things, "the coming of the whites, the change of habits, and the introduction of new maladies and vices" as bearing a large part of the responsibility for the alarming decline of Polynesian populations, but he was also puzzled that the Tahitians, Paumotuans, and Samoans were either reversing declines or, in the case of the Samoans, remained stable in the face of Western contact. Stevenson concludes that the various peoples of the Pacific have shown a variety of emotional responses to the West, and that those who have maintained an attitude of defiance or strength fared well, often with the help of strong rulers and institutions. As mentioned earlier, this very defiance and resistance by the Samoans played a large role in the Stevensons' decision to settle at a farm near Apia, the major Samoan port.

Stevenson writes of the Marquesas in the first section of *In the South Seas*, and the island chain was both his first destination and perhaps the most dismaying of the archipelagos he visits. Heading first for the Marquesas was understandable; after all, the Marquesan island of Nukuhiva was the site of Herman Melville's desertion of his whaling ship and the setting for his influential novel *Typee* (Harman 358), and so became a fitting location for "Stevenson's initiation into tropical life" (Hillier 50). Just like Jack London almost twenty years later, Stevenson adored Melville and had formed so many of his fanciful ideas of the idyllic South Seas reading *Typee* during young adulthood. The romantic side of Stevenson's character comes to the fore when he rhapsodizes about his first journey to the South Pacific, confessing that although poor health may have spurred this trip, the Pacific promised "scenes that had attracted me in youth and health," before concluding that "[n]o part of the world exerts the same attractive power upon the visitor" (*South Seas* 5). He even expresses his first impressions in erotic terms, that the "first experience can never be repeated," and that it "touched a virginity of sense" (6).

What Stevenson actually found as he neared Nukuhiva may have "touched a virginity of sense" in some ways, but in other ways, what he found was sullied; he experienced what Dennis Porter refers to as the "sense of belatedness" in later travelers (12). The romantic in Stevenson was not fully prepared for the fact that the paradise he took in was not purely foreign, but mixed with the familiar: "the beach might have been in Europe; the mountain forms behind modelled in little from the Alps, and the forest which clustered on their ramparts a growth no more considerable than our Scottish heath." Nukuhiva was not similar to Europe in imagination only. Native birds sang out in dulcet tones, but they shared the air with the "bleating of young lambs." The air contained scents of a "hundred fruits or flowers," but as he smelled them Stevenson spied high-built houses and gardens, "conspicuous habitations... a mark of the passage of whites"; the

native villages could only be seen later because they blended with the landscape (7-8). Unlike Melville, Stevenson had missed the age of untouched native life in the Pacific, although even in the time of Melville, this period was fast approaching its end.

Not all of the signs of Western presence were as seemingly innocuous as sheep and houses. When Stevenson finally entered the main port of Nukuhiva, Tai-o-hae, he found a government schooner and the Residency, both flying the French flag (49). Stevenson noted the careless implementation of “improvements” by the French colonial administration, “the desecration of tombs, thoughtlessly ruffled in the laying down of the new roads,” a situation which constituted a “chief ingredient in the native hatred for the French” (25). Another “highly unpopular” law required that the children between the ages of six and fifteen be removed from their homes, relocated, and segregated by gender for instruction by priests and nuns; Stevenson disagreed with the law and its “harsh” separation of families, but he was even more dismayed by the education provided by the priests. The “dreary nature of the course” consisted of “[p]rayers, and reading and writing, prayers again and arithmetic, and more prayers to conclude”; Stevenson laments that the overriding purpose is “to make the natives pious, a design in which they all concede defeat,” while in the end, families are split: “a Marquesan brother and sister meet again, after their education is complete, a pair of strangers” (44-5). Despite the omnipresence of Christianity, opium had also made its presence felt among the islanders. Stevenson comments that the Marquesans are one of the groups “most infected with this vice” (32), and he finds that “agents of the opium monopoly,” mostly Chinese, live amongst the other nationalities of the administrative settlements (50).

As in so many other places in the Pacific, disease was taking a steep toll on the Marquesans. Stevenson could not help but be “staggered” at the precipitous decline in population

among the islanders. Around the time Melville visited the valley of Hapaa on Nukuhiva, the population was estimated at around four hundred; the combined devastation of smallpox and “tubercular consumption” reduced that number to only two in a span of eighteen months (23). Stevenson encounters cases of both phthisis and elephantiasis (52) while exploring. Estimates Stevenson consults indicate that the population of the Marquesas “declined in forty years from six thousand to less than four hundred” (24), astounding figures in both his day and ours. Ironically, “a dying Stevenson meets a dying Pacific” (Edmond 167).

What effect did the combined forces of Western changes and imported disease have on the Marquesans? Here, Stevenson’s interest in the psychological effects of debilitating and widespread illness comes to the fore. Sadly, Stevenson observes that the natives are not only physically afflicted but are also “subject to a disease...of the will.” He writes that the “Marquesan beholds with dismay the approaching extinction of his race” (25-6), and that many of the islanders have turned to suicide and despair; the “proneness to suicide” that Stevenson notes is carried out by methods ranging from hanging to “the old form of poisoning with the fruit of the *eva*,” a traditional type of lingering death that gives the dying time to say his goodbyes (26). This lack of spirit, this “despondency” (27), this “dead inertia and quiescence” (85) that Stevenson finds everywhere he looks on Nukuhiva had of course not escaped the notice of the French colonials; in an echo of Anthony Trollope’s conclusion regarding the Australian Aborigine, Stevenson quotes a M. Delaruelle as stating in pious resignation, “They are dying, poor devils!...the main thing is to let them die in peace” (52).

One fascinating aspect of Stevenson’s account of the Marquesas concerns a complex no-man’s-land between the despairing natives and their patronizing French masters. Stevenson notes several times the blurring of distinctions and sense of dislocation experienced in the brave new

world of the late-nineteenth century Pacific. Interracial relationships were common, if rarely successful. Stevenson met in Tai-o-hae an European who had fallen in love with a native woman; the woman “declared she could never marry a man who was untattooed,” and so the man “was tattooed from head to foot in the most approved methods of the art.” The man’s attempt at going native backfired as the woman determined she could not accept him anyway; Stevenson nevertheless applauds “[o]ur enamoured countryman” for his “greatness of soul” in rejecting his previous identity for love (50). On a walking trip into some of the valleys of the Marquesas, Stevenson found a complimentary tale. He met an old woman—“of aged countenance”—who tenderly presented him with two crimson flowers and told him her story; she had fallen in love with a whaler who taught her to speak English, but then he had left on his ship and never returned. Encounters such as these capture the imagination of Stevenson the novelist, and he wonders of the long-departed whaler, “in the rain and mire of what sea-ports he had tramped since then...in the ward of what infirmary dreamed his last of the Marquesas” (95).

Then there was the case of Charlie Coffin, a native Hawaiian who had shipped out with an American whaler in his youth, but his New Bedford captain eventually “carried him to Nukuhiva and marooned him there among the cannibals.” Charlie had lived out a full life once he survived the first harrowing days among the hostile tribe, marrying one of their women and now living as a widower, with a grandchild of his own. He had never left Nukuhiva since the day of his marooning, and Stevenson writes that “the thought of Oahu haunted him...he beheld it, looking back, as a place of ceaseless feasting, song, and dance.” Charlie had no realistic hopes of revisiting the island of his youth, and Stevenson muses that it was just as well: “I wonder what he would think if he could be carried there indeed...what he would think to see the brown faces grown so few and the white so many; and his father’s land sold for planting sugar...the last of

[his family] struck leprous” (20-1). One could argue that Charlie had led a fulfilling and adventuresome life, but what price had the dislocation he and many others had experienced cost them in loss of family, endless longing, and anguish?

As Stevenson writes of the Marquesas a curious but not unique mixture of attitudes becomes apparent. For all of his sympathy and sensitivity to the natives, feelings to be expected because of his previous experiences with religious, socioeconomic, and racial minorities and the strife they endured, Stevenson also cannot escape some of the condescending, belittling language and perceptions of imperialism at its worst. Particularly odious is Stevenson’s use of animal imagery and metaphors in describing natives; a tattoo of a native on one Marquesan becomes “something bestial...sucking an orange and spitting it out again to alternate sides with ape-like vivacity” (8). In frustration over his inability to speak any of the Polynesian dialects, he lashes out that the natives “were beyond the reach of articulate communication, like furred animals...or the dwellers of some alien planet” (9). Stevenson is also reminded of a later incident in New Caledonia, “a trial for infanticide against an ape-like native woman” who “spoke no language” (11). Even in his compliments, Stevenson utilizes animal imagery, describing the Polynesians as “greedy of the least affection, like amiable, fawning dogs” (10).

One Stevenson biographer ventures that he was “wary” of such language because he saw that the differences in cultures “made judgment of their manners impossible” (Harman 365). Perhaps. But it is true that if Stevenson uses objectionable language while grappling with certain aspects of Polynesia in general and the Marquesas in particular, he is also refreshingly nonjudgmental about some of the West’s usual bugaboos of native life like sexual mores and cannibalism. With sexuality, Stevenson pursues two themes: Western travelers and missionaries have exaggerated sexual license and promiscuity in the Pacific because it was titillating or

scandalous to them, and rampant sexuality has actually increased since the West began colonizing the region, both because of Westerners who expected it and of dispirited Islanders who have little satisfaction in their new lives. Stevenson cites older natives who tell him that life was radically different in their youths; life at that time was far from the continuing orgies implied by early accounts. Stevenson does not wish to argue that Polynesian mores matched Christian ones, simply that open sexuality would have been shocking enough to European explorers that they would have difficulty placing it in a proper context with the rest of a native society. Though he does not mention Melville, perhaps he also had in mind *Typee*, a novel that contained tender scenes between Tommo and Fayaway, but never depicts physical relationships of any sort as the consuming passion of the Typees. He states that, in reconstructing pre-contact societies, he would “prefer the statement of an intelligent native...to the report of the most honest traveler” (*South Seas* 34-5).

Cannibalism captured Stevenson’s imagination more forcefully. When the first natives scramble on board the *Casco* as it sailed into Anaho Bay at Nukahiva, he confesses, “I knew nothing of my guests beyond the fact that they were cannibals” (9). He is remarkably nonplussed by this (debatable) identity, however, venturing that our objections to the practice are relative; after all, no matter how strongly cannibalism “arouses our disgust...we ourselves make much the same appearance in the eyes of the Buddhist and the vegetarian.” Stevenson continues this line of argument, observing that we “consume the carcasses of creatures of like appetites, passions, and organs with ourselves; we feed on babes, though not our own; and the slaughter-house resounds daily with screams of pain and fear” (68). Acknowledging that it is a “bestial vice” that hopefully will die out, Stevenson nevertheless seconds Montaigne, concluding, “to eat a man’s flesh after he is dead is far less hateful than to oppress him whilst he lives” (70-1). Harsher language is

reserved for Christian morality. Stevenson points out that Polynesians do not expect Westerners to observe their *tapus* (taboos) because they worship a different god, but “[a]ll the world must respect our *tapus*, or we gnash our teeth” (42).

No doubt shocking to some of Stevenson’s readers were his sympathetic comparisons of his beloved “Scots folks of the Highlands” to the Marquesans, an association brought about partly by the natives’ now-outlawed custom of cannibalism. As he learned more about the Marquesans and their culture, Stevenson determined that the Islanders were enduring the same type of “convulsive and transitory state” that the Scots had a hundred years earlier, when the English exerted repressive control after a serious Scottish uprising; as John Kucich observes, “imperial abuses...resonated so strongly with his tragic view of Scottish history (33). Stevenson elaborates, “[i]n both cases an alien authority enforced, the clans disarmed, the chiefs deposed, new customs introduced” (*South Seas* 12). When giving specific points of comparison, he dares to bring up his newfound parallel of cannibalism, using the literal translation “long-pig,” in connection with the Scots:

In one the cherished practice of tattooing, in the other a cherished costume [kilts], proscribed. In each a main luxury cut off: beef, driven under cloud of night from Lowland pastures, denied to the meat-loving Highlander; long-pig, pirated from the next village, to the man-eating Kanaka. (12)

As Stevenson was aware, the defiant Highlanders were eventually broken by their conquerors, and he was witnessing the same process in the Marquesas.

Stevenson, perhaps taken with the spiritual connection he established in his mind, even lets himself become nostalgic over the olden days of cannibal feasts in the South Seas when he meets the elderly queen Vaekehu. The imagination of the novelist asserts itself once again when

he meets this “quiet, smooth, elaborate old lady, such as you might find at home...in a score of country houses.” To Stevenson’s mind, however, she will ever be a “queen of cannibals,” and he vividly describes a vision of her past: “being so great a lady, she had sat on the high place, and throned it there, alone of her sex, while the drums were going twenty strong and the priests carried up the bloodstained baskets of long-pig” (57-8).

If the disheartening scenes witnessed in the Marquesas could be leavened by glimpses of a romantic past, what Stevenson would see in Hawaii, with its notorious leper colony of Molokai, left him shakened and aware that the Marquesas were not an isolated case. After stopovers in the Paumotus and Tahiti, the *Casco* reached Honolulu in January of 1889. Honolulu, by this point, had become one of the most progressive, cosmopolitan, and Westernized cities in the Pacific—a “simulacrum society,” as Vanessa Smith terms it (119)—and Stevenson noted the “humming city” in *The Eight Islands*, the travelogue that emerged from his time in the Hawaiian Islands. He mentions in passing the modern wonders of the metropolis, the “shops and palaces and busy wharfs, plying cabs and tramcars, telephones in operation and a railway in building,” before quickly moving to his trip to a remote part of the Kona coast untouched by progress (6). Stevenson had never enjoyed cities, and he was not about to begin with Honolulu (Day 111).

Stevenson rejoiced to find himself at Ho’okena—“set down at last in a village uninhabited by any white” (*Eight* 6)—and he set about exploring wonders both natural, such as the lava caves, and historical, like the ancient “city of refuge,” Hale o Keawe, situated nearby. But even as he attempted to lose himself in this fascinating world, reminders of the Western presence and its ramifications intruded. One day, as he explored the caves honeycombing the cliffs of the area, he sighted a schooner riding off the coast; the boat was “presently due at Ho’okena to load lepers” (26). The leprosy epidemic raging at that time in Hawaii, as well as the

controversial Molokai, deemed the best course of action for public health by the Western interests in the islands, haunts these early passages of *The Eight Islands* and soon comes to dominate the work.

Late one morning, when the schooner he had sighted anchored at Ho'okena and sent a whaleboat to the beach to receive the lepers, Stevenson had already spent several emotional hours observing a farewell by the village for a nineteen-year old girl who was being transported to Molokai. She and her mother had spent two years living in the woods to avoid this fate, but lately they had become exhausted with this life of fear and had surrendered themselves. When Stevenson first comes upon them, the afternoon before the schooner arrived, a circle of mourners surrounds the girl, lamenting her exile with a "continuous and high-pitched drone of song"; for her part, the leperous girl was "swathed in a black shawl and motionless" (41). The next day, when Stevenson sees her face uncovered, he notes that, although she was not disfigured, the disease had already begun to affect her; her face had the "haunted look of an unfinished wood doll, at once expressionless and disproportioned" (43). The scene elicited an odd reaction from Stevenson; he confesses that he was moved deeply, but he also believed there to be something "weak and false" (41) about his feelings—perhaps because he only later considered whether the relocations to Molokai were sound policy or not? Or because the whole incident seemed calculated? Some critics have questioned how genuine Stevenson's self-analysis was during this parting scene; Vanessa Smith believes that his description "underscores the very theatricality it deplors" (124). Nevertheless, as he watched the girl be rowed out to the waiting schooner, he determined, "I had seen the departure of the lepers for the place of exile; I must see their arrival and the place itself" (45). And so he would, partly out of sympathy and partly to satisfy "a morbid curiosity to see the outcasts" (Harman 376).

Stevenson does not spare himself or us the intensely conflicted feelings he endured during his trip to the colony; moments from stepping onto the beach at Molokai, he admits that “when we drew near the landing stairs and saw them thronged with the dishonored images of God, horror and cowardice worked in the marrow of my bones” (*Eight* 64). Nothing moved him more than the plight of the children he found there, but interestingly, Stevenson only recounts the encouraging improvements made in living conditions for the orphaned and otherwise uncared for children by volunteers working at the colony. He avoids detailing the suffering in *The Eight Islands*, for, as he writes, “I was told things which I heard with tears, of which I sometimes think at night, and which I spare the reader” (69). Some of these same children later called for Stevenson to return when he passed their group home on his way to the launch that would take him from Molokai, but as touched as he was by their entreaties, he confesses that, “in truth, when the day came, my heart panted for deliverance” (71). Stevenson had played with the children, talked to them, learned their stories, but he was not ashamed to admit that the emotional toll of those few days were almost unbearable for him.

With distance from his visit, Stevenson was able to reflect more objectively on what he observed and experienced at Molokai, dwelling on the dispiriting atmosphere, so similar to what he had recently left behind in the Marquesas. He recounts the despair endemic in the colony; after all, these were people many times “caught like bandits, lurking armed in woods, resisting to the blood, hauled in with violence.” The abandon with which they avoided transportation seemed justified in light of their fate at Molokai: “stripped of their lands and families...sick unto death, already dead in law” (63). Once there, Stevenson insists they “swiftly decivilized” (55), a situation unavoidable in the prison they found themselves in. Stevenson further claims that the

lazy, defeated atmosphere of the place “emasculated” the inmates, discouraging further attempts at freedom as they became dependent on the free rations and lethargy that surrounded them (66).

Nor could the lepers forget that where they had been landed, beautiful as it might be, was nothing less than a prison. Stevenson spends several pages on the “uncompromising” (47) wall that vaults two to three thousand feet into the air, hemming in the shelf of land that comprises the colony. One path snakes down the cliff wall, but it is so precipitous that “rains continually destroy it; it must be renewed continually; to ride there is impossible...even the descent exhausts a powerful man” (47). Another reminder of the nature of Molokai was the visitor’s quarters; the visitor alone determines the extent of his interaction with the inmates, for “[n]o patient is suffered to approach his place of residence.” Only a “clean helper” may enter the place to tidy up (51).

Not all was negative to Stevenson’s mind, however. He believed that life had been bleaker and much less meaningful before the arrival of Father Damien in 1873, the famous priest who had died of leprosy several months before Stevenson’s visit, and who had helped institute a new sense of organization, especially in the care and housing of children. Stevenson also notes a sense of freedom among the lepers; self-consciousness slips away, as [t]he disease no longer awakens pity, nor do its deformities move shame in the patient.” Life resumes, and many of the inmates adapt themselves to their new home. Stevenson mentions the “strains of song and laughter” he heard, and he writes that, from what he had seen, even “the most disgraced of that unhappy crew may expect the consolations of love; love laughs at leprosy.” One afternoon, he encountered a small group of lepers returning from a walk, and he was surprised to see the young woman from Ho’okena among them. Among the laughing cluster, she alone “held down her head,” but Stevenson comforts himself with the sense of security the lepers he had seen came to

possess at Molokai: “she would soon walk with face erect among her fellows, and perhaps be attended as a beauty” (67).

Stevenson’s balanced view of Molokai and its lepers—subject to depression and despair but often adapting to their new lives—led him to sympathize with the continuing native resistance to forced segregation. The welcome fact that many lepers found a new sense of stability, forging relationships and pursuing various activities, did not delude Stevenson into believing that the lepers were perfectly content in the colony. The prevailing attitude among the whites of the islands was that the natives, naturally lazy and childlike, came to embrace Molokai because they were not required to work or to exercise discipline, only eat, sleep, and gambol about on the beach. Nearly twenty years later, Jack London would initially embrace this condescending theory after his carefully shepherded visit to Molokai before ultimately rejecting it, but Stevenson was always wary of such a simplistic conception of native emotions and psychology. Stevenson notes that family bonds were extraordinarily strong amongst Polynesians, and he deduces that much of the resistance to the leper colony is not due to an irrational challenge of public health measures, but to a profound grief at the permanent separation of families required by the containment laws. He writes that the native has “no fear of the Lazaretto,” for those who have gone before write back letters describing the new lives into which they eventually settle. Stevenson in all likelihood overstates the case when he insists that, because of the letters sent by the inmates, “could the family be taken in a body, they would go with glee” (40), but he does eloquently argue that the separation of families due to exile at Molokai was cruel and encourages lepers “to resist and their friends to aid and applaud them” (39). After all, Stevenson could hardly forget that as he traveled much of the world in an attempt to alleviate his tuberculosis, he was accompanied by his family, no small consolation for him.

Ultimately though, Stevenson concludes that, despite the sympathy he feels for the natives and the critiques he can make of the transportation system, emotions “must not betray us into injustice for the government whose laws” the lepers and their families resist (41). The problematic nature of the whole system is acknowledged, but in the end Stevenson still falls squarely on the side of the Western interests in the Islands; he insists that for all of its flaws, “it is not only good for the world but best for the lepers themselves to be thus set apart” (68).

Jack London would later recant his initial belief that the natives were completely happy in their exile at Molokai, even writing several short stories that brought the wrath of the white community upon him. Because Stevenson already acknowledged the serious defects of the colony and the policy behind it, including the lingering discontent from split families, he did not later have a change of heart about the place, but his experiences certainly stayed with him, and the emotions from his visit remained close to the surface, as when several months after his departure from Hawaii he read Rev. Hyde’s denunciation of Father Damien. Stevenson channeled his fury into his “vitriolic response” (Harman 399), one of the most famous letters in English literature, the “Open Letter to the Rev. Dr. Hyde of Honolulu,” first printed as a pamphlet in early 1890; it forms an illuminating, passionate sidebar to the more restrained *The Eight Islands*.

Several reasons likely lie at the heart of why Stevenson felt compelled to rebut Rev. Hyde’s letter, which, in short, contained accusations that Father Damien was coarse, unsanitary, and sexually involved with the female lepers at Molokai, this last being given by Hyde as the reason for his contraction of leprosy, the eventual cause of his death (“Open Letter” 150-1). For one thing, Hyde’s letter, in attacking Damien so virulently, completely ignores the suffering natives, as though they were of no consequence in the white heat of his vendetta.

Just as importantly, even though Stevenson missed meeting Damien by several months, he knew of and admired him long before visiting Molokai (148), and his respect for the Belgian priest only increased as he heard stories of the early days of Molokai, a time of widespread filth, despondency, and callousness that Damien willingly threw himself into, regardless of the consequences to himself; Stevenson refers to him, in a heartfelt manner, as “that noble brother of mine” (149). That his memories of Molokai continued to haunt him, there can be little doubt; in the letter, Stevenson writes that he can “never recall the days and nights I spent upon that island promontory...without heartfelt thankfulness that I am somewhere else” (157). The idea that Damien would commit to living the rest of his life at the colony was awe-inspiring for Stevenson when he could scarcely endure a week of that “grinding experience” (157).

Besides the emotional connection to Damien, Hyde’s letter also triggered a quick response from Stevenson because it touched on his distrust of organized religion and its effect when it gains too much power. When Stevenson toured the Cévennes, he vividly imagined the historical persecution of the Protestants of the region and thus understood something of the hatred for others even variations of the same faith could breed in their adherents. The Anglican English domination of his native Presbyterian Scots probably also added to his impatience with religious rivalries. Ironically, in *Travels with a Donkey*, Stevenson confessed to a bias against the Catholics he met during his time in the area, a feeling he attributed to his childhood Protestantism, but in opposing Hyde, he now found himself defending a Catholic priest against a clergyman of, as he puts it, “my sect, and that in which my ancestors labored” (151). Stevenson baldly characterizes Hyde’s true motives for his accusations: “[y]our Church and Damien’s were in Hawaii upon a rivalry to do well: to help, to edify, to set divine examples. You...failed, and Damien succeeded” (154).

Stevenson, rarely vindictive, nevertheless had two purposes in his “Open Letter,” to defend Damien and to defame Hyde. His defense of Damien is balanced, considering it did not come from the pen of an overtly religious man; Stevenson laments that “Damien has been too much depicted with a conventional halo,” and that he has no intention of writing yet another hagiography (155). Stevenson goes right at Hyde’s accusations of coarseness and dirtiness by agreeing with him, but asking what either of these charges has to do with Damien’s immediate and lasting influence. Stevenson suggests Hyde rages because “a plain, uncouth peasant steps into the battle...succors the afflicted, and consoles the dying, and is himself afflicted in his turn, and dies upon the field of honor” (153). Stevenson goes on to acknowledge that Damien could be rude and stubborn and was widely disliked by those who came into daily contact with him for his uncompromising nature, but none of those who knew him denied the good he accomplished at a godforsaken piece of land far from the sight and minds of those in Honolulu. Further, “the true lovers, patrons, and servants of mankind” do not expect their heroes to be flawless (161).

But what of Rev. Hyde? Stevenson makes it clear that he believes jealousy to be at the root of Hyde’s criticism, but Stevenson is not content to probe motives. He also exposes the reputation Hyde had earned among the native Hawaiians. For one thing, Hyde was so detached he never even bothered to visit Molokai, the site of so much controversy and misery; Stevenson writes, “I imagine you to be one of those persons who talk with cheerfulness of that place which oxen and wainropes could not drag you to behold.” The colorful detail was always a specialty of Stevenson’s, and he continues with a searing scenario: “[y]ou...probably denounce sensational descriptions, stretching your limbs the while in your pleasant parlor” (156). Stevenson also echoes the native disgust with the lifestyles of many of the religious leaders in the Islands—“too many...grew rich.” He recounts an incident when he was paying a social call to Hyde, and the

native “driver of my cab commented on the size, the taste, and the comfort of your home.”

Stevenson sarcastically ventures that it “may be news to you that the houses of missionaries are a cause of mocking on the streets of Honolulu” (152). With this observation, Stevenson gets to the essence of the problem Hyde and others had with Damien; the missionaries had long colluded with colonialists, and in many cases were one and the same, and Damien betrayed an unspoken code that placed the whites, regardless of whether business, religion, or some combination brought them to the Islands, clearly above the natives. This dirty, crude, peasant priest brought embarrassment upon his fellow Westerners by living among the lowest of the natives and silently pointing up the failures of the establishment.

Stevenson had read Hyde’s original denunciation of Damien when he arrived in Samoa in late 1889, and even as he fumed over petty politics in the islands he left behind, deep admiration was growing in him for Samoa and its people; indeed, he and his family may have expected they were on a temporary tour of the South Seas, but when it became clear that Stevenson’s health would not tolerate another long voyage, Samoa was the clear choice for permanent residency (Harman 391). Stevenson’s third major travelogue to emerge from his time in the Pacific came out of his time in Samoa as well. *A Footnote to History*, published in 1892, is a detailed account of recent colonial maneuverings by the Germans, British, and Americans as they competed for influence in the region; the “expanding white government class” (Harman 408) in Samoa caught Stevenson’s notice as soon as he arrived, with the subsequent result of his work, “fiercely critical of the arrogance, ignorance, and duplicity of all three powers” (Edmond 169).

As mentioned above, Fanny’s fear had been that her husband’s interest in incorporating the historical, political, and economic aspects of the Pacific Islanders into his non-fiction would compromise the effectiveness of his work, that history and statistics would overwhelm the

subjective, personal details he was so skilled at writing. Despite these reservations, in *A Footnote to History* Stevenson's vision of an all-encompassing non-fiction work on the Pacific resulted in a near-masterpiece. The book is a powerful, firsthand record of not only the jockeying between colonial powers, but also of the resistance by the natives to maintain sovereignty over their own territory; Vanessa Smith applauds Stevenson for "writing large that small print to which the history of peripheral societies is reduced in the grand historical narrative of empire" (Smith 212). The Samoans would eventually lose the struggle detailed in the work, finding their homeland carved up between Germany and the U. S., but for a brief while they more than held their own, inflicting one of the most significant military defeats of a Western power by natives upon Germany at Fangali'i in 1888, resulting in fifty-six German dead (*Footnote* 103). But that ultimate capitulation was still a decade hence, and I would argue that in Samoa, Stevenson was seeing his Highlander Scots all over again, only in this case, his writing might support the cause.

The Samoans had to a large degree avoided the crippling epidemics that had affected the Marquesas and Hawaii, but the theme of a South Seas afflicted by disease had not departed Stevenson's mind, only in the case of Samoa, he conceives of the Westerners in the islands as the diseased ones, an idea he would flesh out in his South Seas fiction. The trope of Westerner as diseased both physically and spiritually is developed throughout *A Footnote to History*; the sickness remains isolated among the whites for the most part, but continual attempts to infest the natives with the affliction of gross competition and sheer greed must be fended off by the Samoans.

The center of the German, British, and American administrations in Samoa was Apia, on the island of 'Upolu; Stevenson came to know the city well, for Vailima, the isolated station eventually established by them in the mountains, was "virtually inaccessible except for a stony

track that connected it to Apia, three miles away” (Harman 396). Stevenson considered Apia a necessary evil because he needed its deepwater port in order to have relatively efficient communications with Sydney and thence Britain, but he does not hide his feelings about the city, describing it as “the seat of the political sickness of Samoa” (*Footnote 10*). In *A Footnote to History*, the city becomes a pit of petty imperialistic ambition, unable to come to terms with its insignificance in the larger context of empire. Conspiracies, plots, jealousies, and intrigues filled the air in Apia, as members of the three Western groups in the city glanced suspiciously at each other; political gossip and rumor become the “country sickness” for whites in Samoa, and Stevenson marvels at “the way our sickness takes the predisposed” (13).

During one particularly low point in relations between the three would-be colonizers, a frenzy of flag-raising commenced to show just how much of squalid Apia each controlled; Stevenson observes, “[t]he disease spread, the flags were multiplied... though all men took a hand in these proceedings, all men in turn were struck with their absurdity” (95). Beyond the spiritual sickness of the Westerners, literal disease also played a role. Stevenson attributes German and British animosities partly to the illnesses of their respective consuls: “Knappe from time to time prostrated with that formidable complaint, New Guinea fever, and de Coetlogon throughout his whole stay in the islands continually ailing” (93). Debilitating disease led to short tempers, and escalation from tense negotiating to saber-rattling became inevitable.

The antagonism between the colonial powers often spilled over into action against the natives. Keeping in mind the “received stereotype” (Smith 205) of Germans as humorless and touchy, Stevenson nevertheless saw the Germans as the most aggressive in their campaign for annexation, and their contempt for non-whites went beyond the rhetoric of most of the British and Americans. For instance, the de Coetlogons, British consul and his wife, opened their house

for natives wounded in various skirmishes and battles during the later revolt, and doctors from both British and American ships that came into the harbor ministered to the hurt; Stevenson recounts an instance when a member of the German consulate came by and sneered, “Why don’t you let the dogs die?” (81-2). Their placing of a loyal native on the Samoan throne was protested immediately by the natives. The Germans responded by burning a native village—“in a very decent and orderly style,” as Stevenson drily notes (35). The Germans also crowded Apia’s harbor with five warships, and Stevenson mentions “villages shelled on very trifling grounds by Germans” (19), real-life foreshadowing of Conrad’s African bush shelled by French warships. Apia, the traditional seat of the Samoan kings, was carved up among the Western powers, with the Germans taking title to some of the most historic areas of the city (11).

As a result of actions such as these, Stevenson believed that the full-scale Samoan resistance to the Westerners in general, but the Germans in particular, was justified. The fierce Samoan opposition to the “disease” of imperialism spreading through the Pacific and now their own islands, was startlingly effective, if only in forestalling colonization but not preventing it altogether, and surprising to the whites; even after capable and bloody resistance movements from the North American plains, to India, to the Sudan, the colonial powers never seemed to lose their sense of surprise when faced with natives who did not immediately capitulate in the face of civilization. In *A Footnote to History*, Stevenson writes that when the Samoans “began to prepare secretly for rebellion,” few whites, other than merchants who handled the weapons being bought in increasing numbers by natives, suspected that a plot against the German puppet, Tamasese, was at hand (53-4). The planning of the rebellion, Stevenson continues, is history “unknown to whites”; he can only speculate about “the stealthy councils of Samoans” during that late summer of 1888.

The Germans began losing ground almost immediately, as by September the Samoan resistance, continually fortified by men streaming in from the islands surrounding ‘Upolu, “paraded the streets of Apia, taking possession” (66). As of yet, though, the Samoans had only fought fellow Samoans backed by the Germans and Tamasese, the puppet king. It was not until the Germans decided it was time to use their own forces and rout the rebels once and for all that the shock of Fangali’i occurred. A contingent of 140 German sailors was landed to repel a Samoan force that had occupied a German plantation several miles from Apia, but the “blue-jackets,” perhaps underestimating the natives once again, allowed themselves to be surrounded in the plantation house and endured sustained fire from the Samoans all night. Shelling from the *Eber*, the German warship off the coast, finally caused the Samoans to retreat, but they left behind fifty-six dead Germans—as Stevenson points out, a full forty percent of their strength (100-3).

Befitting his nature, Stevenson did not revel in the German casualties despite his anger towards them for their actions. He writes of the “poor sailor lads, always so pleasantly behaved in times of peace,” and laments that their lives should be “cast away upon an enterprise so hopeless” (103). When it came to the Samoans, Stevenson worried that their way of life “makes them hard to understand,” and thus sympathize with, for his readers, but for comparison, his mind returned to the lands he had left behind, comparing the Samoans’ fierce fight against an overwhelming, technologically advanced foe to the English savages of Roman times: “they are the contemporaries of our tattooed ancestors who drove their chariots on the wrong side of the Roman wall” (1). Samoan society also reminded him of the Highlander Scots, always a ready touchstone for him, especially the similar positions and qualifications of the chiefs of both tribe and clan—born into great families, “loved and respected and served and fed and died for

implicitly,” but both “liable to deposition” if they do not carry out their office well (2). Perhaps courting controversy, Stevenson even goes so far as to compare head-hunting to certain Biblical accounts, quoting a chief who innocently asked a missionary if it were not head-hunting also when “David killed Goliath, he cut off his head and carried it before the king” (5).

During 1890, while researching and writing *A Footnote to History* at Vailima, the station he bought above Apia, Stevenson also began writing “The Beach of Falesá,” one of the first works of realism set in the South Seas. The gritty setting and less-than-honorable characters of the work at first seem surprising, coming as they do from one of the leading writers of romances of his time, but his works had always been underpinned by historical realities, and the previous two years of experiences had consumed his imagination. Furthermore, the unmet expectations of *In the South Seas*, in the hands of a talented fiction writer, become “the more focused setting for the fiction” (Hillier 55). Stevenson also loved Melville, especially *Typee*, and he had made the Marquesas his first stop in the South Seas partly out of his love for the novel; Melville limited his critique of Westerners in *Typee*, but the criticism was present nonetheless, and more importantly, Melville treats the residents of the Hapar valley more realistically than Pacific natives had been depicted in fiction to that point. Traces of the exotic and seductive South Seas siren could be traced in a character like Fayaway, but she still walks through the pages of Melville’s novel as more than a two-dimensional figure, moving away from Michael Sturma’s charge that, in the world of South Seas fiction, “indigenous women serve mainly to facilitate male plots” (Sturma 108). Stevenson knew his Melville well, and “The Beach of Falesá” and Uma are certainly indebted to *Typee* and Fayaway, respectively; Uma, in particular, reflects Sturma’s further observation that as some Pacific fiction evolved towards realism, “male

European protagonists not only have sexual relations with island maidens, but develop deep emotional bonds as well” (117).

None of this is to say that “The Beach of Falesá” is in any way a derivative work; instead, this novella and its later companion in South Seas realism, *The Ebb-Tide*, take their places among Stevenson’s most mature work, inspiring Hillier to claim “Falesá” as the “one work [that] fulfills the aspirations which he originally had for all of his Pacific writing” (Hillier 157). Stevenson’s fascination with history had informed novels such as *Kidnapped* and *The Master of Ballantrae*, but instead of researched events, no matter how intensely visioned, with the material for his South Seas fiction, Stevenson was now experiencing things firsthand, especially in Samoa, “at an important moment in its history” (Harman 393). Patrick Brantlinger also astutely notes the shift from romances to realism: now Stevenson “produced accounts...of empire quite at odds with his romances of historic adventure” (*Rule* 39). As Stevenson himself enthuses in the opening of *A Footnote to History*, “The story I have to tell is still going on as I write; the characters are alive and active; it is a piece of contemporary history in the most exact sense” (*Footnote* 1). These lines could just as well apply to “The Beach of Falesá,” and Stevenson’s involvement in the very world he writes about infuses the work with immediacy.

The island, descriptions, and events in “The Beach of Falesá” are strongly Samoan, but Stevenson goes to some lengths to create the impression of an “every island,” so to speak. He never names the island chain in which the trader Wiltshire disembarks, and in an intriguing bit of misdirection, Stevenson has Case’s native wife be an outsider in the archipelago, for “[s]he was a Samoa woman” who, after her husband’s death, “went off home in the schooner *Manu’a*” (“Falesá” 5). In one direct reference, however, Case tells Wiltshire that the “impudence of the Kanakas” frustrates him enough that he wishes for “a man-of-war—a German, if we could—they

know how to manage Kanakas” (22); as recounted by Stevenson in *A Footnote to History*, Samoans were recently and dramatically familiar with German warships. Of course, since the Germans had proven spectacularly that they could not manage natives with either their warships or their contempt, Stevenson gives us an early clue about the character of Case and his outlook.

The novella centers on the figure of Wiltshire, a trader newly arrived on Falesá to take a recently vacated post. Wiltshire is a naïve man who eagerly views his new home as welcoming, commenting that the wind “smelt strong of wild lime and vanilla,” and feels that the promise of new experience had “renewed my blood” (3). Despite the fact that Wiltshire begins to be “overtaken by romance...he never shakes off his trader mentality” (Tulloch 79). He initially believes that trade is synonymous with progress; as he tells Case, “I’ve come here to do them good, and bring them civilization” (“Falesá” 23). One critic describes Wiltshire as a “brilliantly conceived creation,” a man “just decent enough for toleration, while wholly a part of the degenerate white trading community” (Harman 417).

Wiltshire finds himself in a murky world when it comes to racial matters. Whites were not the only non-natives in the islands, but the trader finds that every non-Islander was nevertheless considered white; Wiltshire marvels, “a negro is counted a white man, and so is a Chinese!” He muses that this is certainly a “strange idea, but common in the islands” (7). Interracial relationships were also common, just as Stevenson had observed throughout the Pacific. Besides Case and his Samoan wife, Wiltshire allows Case to steer him towards Uma, a young native woman enthused at the idea of a white husband—when it comes to native women, Case assures Wiltshire that “[y]ou can have your pick of the lot for a plug of tobacco” (7). What Uma does not know, however, is that Wiltshire may be naïve, but he is also agreeably amoral, and he agrees to Case’s sham marriage certificate that Uma “is illegally married to Mr. John

Wiltshire for one night, and Mr. John Wiltshire is at liberty to send her to hell next morning” (11). This detail, so shocking to Stevenson’s publishers that they required him to change the length of the “marriage” to one week in the original printings (Day 118), was lifted straight from a real practice noted by Stevenson in the Gilbert Islands. In one example, Stevenson writes in *In the South Seas* that the illiterate native wife of a Gilbert Islands’ trader proudly showed him her marriage certificate, but that it stated “she was ‘married for one night,’ and her partner was at liberty to ‘send her to hell’ the next morning.” Interestingly, Stevenson determines the native woman “was none the wiser or the worse for the dastardly trick” since the trader decided not to exercise this out-clause and instead continued on with the marriage (*South Seas* 200); this debatably happy ending would be recycled for Wiltshire and Uma’s union as well, with better results.

As he did previously in *A Footnote to History*, Stevenson generates an atmosphere of disease, again both physical and spiritual, that affects whites but which quickly spills over into the surrounding native population. Before he even leaves the ship that has brought him to Falesá, Wiltshire learns that one of his predecessors went insane with illness, but when he inquires if it were the island that made him sick, the captain replies, “I never could hear but what it was a healthy place” (“Falesá” 4). This truth is borne out when Wiltshire settles in and discovers that a pestilential atmosphere envelops the whites of the islands, and that they have only themselves to blame for their afflictions, which includes the insanity of Adams, the previous trader, who, as it turns out, was poisoned by Case. Another trader, Underhill, “was struck with a general palsy, all of him, dead but one eye, which he continually winked.” Initially, one of the local missionaries believed this to be the result of the island, explaining, “white men die very suddenly in Falesá,” but he soon learns from the natives that, while still living, “Case worked upon the natives’

fears...a grave was dug, and the living body buried at the far end of the village” (40). Captain Randall, an associate of Case’s, shocks Wiltshire at their first meeting for he is a filthy, drunken, seventy-year old man who lay all day sprawled upon the floor of his miserable hut. Case goads Randall into telling Wiltshire why he drinks so much, and the old man practically slurs, “[t]ake gin for my health’s sake, Mr. Wha’s-ever-your-name—‘s a precautionary measure” (8). Randall may distrust the island, but his degrading state is of his own making; he periodically dozes off and than awakes, “whimpering and shivering,” leaving Wiltshire appalled at the state of so many of the Westerners on Falesá (9).

The common link among the debased, sickly whites of Falesá is clearly not the island, but Case, a fact Wiltshire does not comprehend at first; Wiltshire, like many whites, devalues anything other than rudimentary communication with natives, and thus fails to realize that Case’s “success lies in his ability to negotiate between cultures” (Smith 173). Wiltshire’s doubts about Case begin when he asks him about Adams’ death; Case responds with a farcical tale about Adams’ request for a priest to administer last rites and the subsequent clash between the priest and Randall, a fervent anti-Catholic (19). Case obviously relishes the opportunity to recount these events, “like a man that enjoyed the fun,” but Wiltshire confesses, “it seems rather a sickening yarn” (20). Wiltshire quickly comes to realize that Case’s actions, as well as his yarns, are “sickening” when he discovers that Case was not only responsible for the deaths of both of Wiltshire’s predecessors, Adams and Underhill, but that he coerced Wiltshire into the marriage with Uma knowing full well she was tabooed. Once he marries a tabooed woman, Wiltshire himself is tabooed, meaning that the natives will not trade with him and Case again has eliminated his competition.

Case's spiritual sickness threatens the natives, in the pattern Stevenson had traced throughout the Pacific; Wiltshire learns that Case manipulated the natives into burying Underhill alive by playing upon their superstitions, but as Wiltshire discovers, Case's depravity goes further than that; he is nothing less than "Lucifer in Paradise" (Hillier 184). A native eventually tells Wiltshire that Case is "*Tiapolo*" ("Falesá" 45), or as Uma elaborates, "big chief devil...all-e-same Christian devil...all-e-same his son" (47); Case had convinced the natives that he was in league with the Satan talked about by the various priests and missionaries in Falesá, and this allowed him impressive control over their actions. "The Beach of Falesá" climaxes with Wiltshire discovering the means by which Case convinced the natives of his relationship with the devil: deep in the forest, aeolian harps produced eerie wailings and grotesque faces slathered with luminous paint glowed menacingly in the night (52-5).

Before he can do anything to undermine the control Case has gained over the natives, Wiltshire turns to Mr. Tarleton, one of the local missionaries, but here he is disappointed because he is afflicted as well. Kucich argues for Tarleton as an essential help for Wiltshire, part of a theme of "redemptive suffering and conversion" (59) that runs through Stevenson's South Seas fiction, but Vanessa Smith more perceptively notes that Tarleton's "authority as guide and interpreter...[is] undermined" (174). Wiltshire hopes to have Tarleton speak with the natives about lifting the taboo on him and Uma, but when the missionary steps out of the boat, Wiltshire loses confidence, commenting that "he looked mortal sick, for the truth was he had a fever on, and had just had a chill in the boat" (34). Tarleton's frailty of body matches a frailty of spirit; he can fill in details of Case's murderous time on Falesá, but in response to Wiltshire's predicament, he weakly offers, "I will just see what can be done" (43).

In an extended scene of violence “far more graphic and disturbing than anything from Stevenson’s early adventure novels” (Kucich 61), a shootout between Wiltshire and Case, as well as the explosive destruction of Case’s props, seems to bring the debilitating atmosphere on Falesá to an end, but the novella’s ending is not so clear-cut. Wiltshire is preferable to Case, but his attitudes towards the natives are not demonstrably more enlightened than his adversary’s—he is “the poor best of a very bad lot” (Harman 417). He is contemptuous of missionaries because they “suck up with natives instead of with other white men like themselves” (“Falesá” 34)—indeed, it is a sign of Wiltshire’s desperation that he even appeals to Tarleton at all. Later, he reluctantly agrees to Tarleton’s request that he “deal fairly with the natives” in return for his help after the shootout with Case; Wiltshire terms this extracted promise a “meanish kind of a revenge” and is relieved when his firm transfers him to a new island where he “was under no kind of a pledge and could look my balances in the face” (70). Perhaps the most blatant of the abuses ends with Case’s death and the shuttering of his operation, but Wiltshire is certainly not immune to the spiritual sickness that infests whites in this world.

Critics misread the complexity and ambiguity of “The Beach of Falesá”; Neil Rennie reads the work as a simple reiteration of the romance form, including Ballantyne’s *The Coral Island*, one of Stevenson’s boyhood favorites. He reads the formalization of the sham marriage between Wiltshire and Uma as the “victory of Christianity,” a triumph further solidified by the “burning of the false gods” (Rennie 216). Rennie acknowledges the “false gods” to be the creation of Case, but he still interprets their destruction as a vanquishing of superstition. One objection to this reading is the fact that it is the Islanders already converted to Christianity who are most easily manipulated by Case, as when he convinces them to bury Underhill alive, and the native pastor, Namu, “offered up a prayer at the hateful scene” (“Falesá” 40). Case also

persuades the natives that he is in league with the Christian devil, not that he communes with the indigenous spirits of Falesá (46-7). The issue of Wiltshire and Uma's marriage also resists Rennie's reading, as seen not only in Wiltshire's continued economic exploitation of natives, albeit on a different island than Falesá, but also in his loving yet unmistakably ambivalent feelings towards his family. Hillier also reads an unjustified simplicity into the novella's ending, seeing Wiltshire as content and his mixed-race family as "heirs to the South Seas," although he does admit that this view may be "too rosy a projection" (193). Christianity may have won a sort of victory in "Falesá," but Stevenson leaves open the question of whether this triumph is ultimately an uneasy one for both natives and whites, as well as for the mixed-race.

Wiltshire's conflicted feelings about his children with Uma contribute to the ambiguous note on which the work ends. He dismisses his dream of returning to England with his earnings to open a pub because he does not want to leave his children, and he realizes, "they're better here than what they would be in a white man's country." The sons, he believes, will make their own way, but "what bothers me is the girls"; Wiltshire assures the reader "there's nobody thinks less of half-castes than I do," but he cannot quite bring himself to despise them: "they're mine, and about all I've got." He still adheres to a rigid hierarchy of whites over non-whites, despite his own marriage to Uma, and this belief torments him over the subject of his daughters' own marriages. Wiltshire "can't reconcile my mind to their taking up with Kanakas, and I'd like to know where I'm to find the whites?" (71). Another facet of Neil Rennie's criticism of "Falesá," that Stevenson "pass[es] over the continuing...conflict between the indigenous cultures and civilization" (216), ignores the fact that conflict between natives and whites permeates the work, from fair trading to manipulation to Wiltshire's uncertainties about his "half-caste" children.

By 1893, Stevenson was still living at Vailima, and he only had one more year to live. During this time, he began writing his other major work of South Seas realism, the novel *The Ebb-Tide*. Many of the same elements from “The Beach of Falesá” reappear, but if anything, the tone had become bleaker—“his most grimly realistic book” (Harman 367). Whites again cultivate a dreadful, pestilential atmosphere everywhere they settle, and their inhumanity to each other, and to the natives, escalates. The opening scenes are set in Tahiti, where Stevenson introduces three beachcombers, homeless whites who beg and loaf while waiting for their big economic opportunities to come along; unfortunately, Tahiti is gripped by disease because “a ship from Peru had brought an influenza,” and like many others on the island, the three men are wracked by illness. One of the three, a clerk named Huish, was especially afflicted; each “paroxysm of coughing” shattered him and “shook him to the vitals.” The clerk’s two companions, Herrick and Davis, looked upon “so ugly a sickness...exploring [his face] for any mark of life” (*Ebb-Tide* 128). From where they lay, the men heard the “dismal sound of men coughing, and strangling as they coughed...accesses of coughing arose, and spread, and died in the distance, and sprang up again” (128).

While Tahiti is thus paralyzed, the people of the island awaken to a further horror: the schooner *Farallone* had entered the harbor in the middle of the night and now lay anchored, ghostly, while “the yellow flag, the emblem of pestilence, flew from her” (134). Later it is learned that both of the whites on board died of smallpox, while the four crew members left alive and still quarantined on the ship were Pacific Islanders. The consul of Tahiti tells Davis the ship picked up smallpox in the Paumotus, and the “Kanakas” managed to bring her in to the harbor; he offers the three beachcombers the chance to avoid being jailed for vagrancy if they will agree to sail the ship and her cargo of “California champagne” to her intended destination of Sydney

(146-7). Despite the paralysis caused by an influenza epidemic, and this new specter of an even more virulent epidemic of smallpox, trade is still a priority and the wisdom of piloting an infected ship through the length of the Pacific is not questioned in the face of economic concerns.

Once on the *Farallone*, “flaunting the plague-flag as she rolled” (152), the three men waited for the port’s doctor to clear the ship for sailing, a job done sloppily at best. Upon the doctor’s departure, they discovered “the bed-clothes still lay tumbled in the bunk, the blanket flung back as they had flung it back from the disfigured corpse before its burial” (153). The hasty dumping of the bedsheets in the harbor, the burning of sulphur in the main cabin, and the precaution of initially sleeping on deck rather than in the staterooms protected the men from physical infection, but the spiritual sickness so often observed by Stevenson rears its head almost immediately on the *Farallone*. Davis, humiliated by his months of drifting from one island to the next and being reduced to dancing and singing for scraps, finds in the natives people below even him in status, and he relishes the chance to lord his newfound authority over them; he threatens the native crew that if he is not obeyed in everything, he will “make [the ship] a living hell.” He also ignores one native’s attempt to tell him his name, dismissing him with “that’s not English... We’ll call you old Uncle Ned” (156), an excellent example of what Guy Davidson describes as the “colonialist power to name or to misname” (Davidson 132). Davis betrays his motives for treating his crew this way when he exults to Herrick: “yesterday I danced for my breakfast like a poodle dog” (*Ebb-Tide* 157).

The behavior of Davis and Huish further disintegrates as the ship gets under way. Early plans to steer the *Farallone* to South America and sell the cargo and schooner itself, splitting the proceeds, are discarded when the two fall upon the hold full of champagne. Quickly, absolute

drunkenness prevails, and the captain's "hours were passed in slavish self-indulgence or in hoggish slumber" (165). Only Herrick remains in control of himself, although he is isolated from the two others by his disgust: "[a] wave of nausea overcame Herrick at the wheel." He alone attempts to maintain his dignity, even in the compromised situation in which the three beachcombers had put themselves. As he struggles to run the ship by himself, with the help of the native crew, Herrick soon "sickened at the thought of his two comrades drinking away their reason upon stolen wine, quarrelling and hiccupping" (163). Stevenson writes that it was "a cutting reproof to compare the islanders and the whites aboard the *Farallone*" (168), for the contrast between them was stark.

Davidson suggests that Stevenson denies any real humanity to the natives, "relegating them to the status of background or metaphor" (Davidson 125), but the text simply does not support this reading. The islanders may be treated sympathetically, but they are certainly more than innocent, positive foils to the corrupt Westerners. As Herrick resists the spiritual malaise taking hold of the other whites on board, he finds himself befriending the natives and treating them with respect. He has long talks with Uncle Ned, "and the old man told him his simple and hard story of exile, suffering, and injustice among cruel whites" (*Ebb-Tide* 167). The natives reciprocate his kindness; Uncle Ned feels comfortable enough to stress that he was not pleased with the condescending title bestowed upon him by Davis, and in pidgin English insists, "No my name! My name Taveeta, all-e-same Taveeta King of Israel," "Taveeta" being a Pacific version of David. Herrick is allowed to observe their Christian religious services on Sundays, and he cannot help but continuously admire the moral code of "the child of cannibals" (168) in contrast to the representatives of "civilization." Davidson's charge that Stevenson "represses the humanity" (130) of the natives does not hold up; in fact, Stevenson is one of the first Western

writers to give Pacific islanders a voice. If Taveeta and the other natives are “less morally complex” (Davidson 130) than they could be, they certainly do not lack moral complexity overall.

Another benefit of the close relationship Herrick develops with the natives is that he hears from them exactly what happened on the *Farallone*, and how the ship came to be infected with smallpox. In a foreshadowing of the disgraceful behavior of Davis and Huish, Taveeta explains that as soon as the schooner left San Francisco, “the captain and mate had entered on a career of drunkenness”; with this parallel to their present situation, Stevenson seems to stress the repeated failures of moral strength among the Western colonizers of the Pacific. As usual, the natives had little or no control, even in their own region of the globe, and were forced into passive positions, watching the destruction “their insane conductors” seemed bent on delivering to all of them; small wonder “the natives had drunk deep of terror” (169).

Taveeta’s tale veers from the reckless to the genuinely terrifying when he recounts the sighting of an atoll after weeks of wandering through the Pacific without a single consultation of the map or plotting of the sun or stars. Taveeta and his fellow Islanders, familiar with the rituals of the South Seas, recognized “the sounds of island lamentation,” but the inebriated whites never consulted them; instead, they drunkenly rowed to shore and “embraced the girls who had scarce energy to repel them.” After a considerable period spent carousing, the two happened upon a man so obviously afflicted by smallpox that they sobered up immediately: “they came forth again with changed faces and silent tongues.” From his place in the boat, Taveeta glimpsed “the sick man raising from his mat a head already defeatured by disease” (169). In short order, both the captain and mate were dead and their bodies thrown into the sea, leaving Taveeta and his mates to sail the ship into Tahiti’s harbor.

Herrick's reaction to Taveeta's tale was visceral; "[s]ickness fell upon him" (170), and he determines to do right by his crew and deliver them safely to their destination. Of course, Herrick's resolution is problematic, for he decides to be the white who will live up to the moral code of which all Europeans should be capable; he will save the natives, as the previous captain and mate had almost destroyed them, but in both cases the Islanders are still passive participants in their own fates, being forced to put their hopes on another white who is in control. Stevenson understands the problems with entrusting Westerners with the greater good, no matter how resolved they are, for at this point in the narrative, the *Farallone* comes upon yet another atoll, and the emphasis shifts away from the interaction between Herrick and Taveeta to the internal struggles of Herrick to live up to the ideals he believes in, not just as a white, but as an educated, particularly "civilized" Englishman.

Stevenson's introduction of Attwater, a similarly educated Englishman whose essence is a puzzling mixture of brutal amorality and devout religiosity, forces Herrick to confront the ramifications of this moral code he has newly determined to embody. Initially, however, no difficulties seem present, as the island, not found on the charts, seems an Eden from afar. Davis speculates that it is a pearling island, a paradise in the midst of the Pacific, but significantly, as the *Farallone* heads for "that elusive glimmer," it began to "pale in lustre and diminish in size, as the stain of breath vanishes from a window pane" (185). What promises to be an enchanted refuge from the turmoil of the voyage, a sanctuary for their ailing spirits, becomes yet another complication as the island's reflection against the sky becomes solid ground before their bow.

Upon entering the lagoon, the men of the *Farallone* could be forgiven for still believing they had found another Eden; as they silently skimmed the "watery and silken hues" of the lagoon, they looked down in wonder, as "below, in that transparent chamber of waters, a myriad

of many-coloured fishes were sporting.” Herrick, in particular, is moved by this realm of beauty the men find themselves in, as even the exotic fishes “impressed him like a strain of song” (189). Stevenson carefully sets the scene here, for surely, we think, the corrupting touch of the West has not sullied a place such as this?

In an instant, this reverie is shattered, and as the schooner rounds the last spit of land within the lagoon, “the curtain was raised” (189). In *In the South Seas*, Stevenson had remarked that obvious signs of habitation, intruding upon the natural beauty of the Pacific islands, always marked the presence of whites (*South Seas* 8), and on this uncharted island, that truth is reaffirmed. The men “beheld, with an astonishment beyond words, the roofs of men... a long line of sheds and store-houses... a deep-veranda’ed dwelling house” (*Ebb-Tide* 189). The settlement seemed deserted, but a British flag crisply waved from a pole. A statue loomed up next to the pole, “a woman of exorbitant stature and as white as snow [who] was to be seen beckoning with uplifted arm.” Herrick’s initial impression of her welcoming pose turns suddenly sinister, as her whiteness becomes a symbol of contamination and sickness; for him, “its perpetual gesture and its leprous whiteness” (189) simultaneously mock and account for the forsaken aspect of the place.

It is at this point that Attwater makes his appearance; he was hoping for the arrival of a doctor but discovers that the *Farallone* simply blundered upon the atoll. He pointedly and perceptively inquires about the schooner, “have you had smallpox?” (193). Attwater’s follow-up to this question shocks them, as he explains to them that the private pearling operation he supervises had recently been ravaged by the disease— “[t]wenty-nine deaths and thirty-one cases, out of thirty-three souls upon the island” (194). Conditions had become so overwhelming that the few people left alive and strong enough had forsaken burial of the dead and sunk them to the

bottom of the Edenic, otherworldly lagoon, another image of contamination in a narrative choked with them.

Once again, epidemic is coupled with a diseased spirit, at least among whites. Attwater is proud of his background as a “University man” (193), and he maintains the strict and brutal authority over his natives that would be expected of any white in this world, especially in his case, where Attwater is the lone non-native on the island. Guy Davidson points out that the “presentation of Attwater and the regime he has installed on his island constitutes the text’s most explicit critique of imperialist racism” (Davidson 131); one incident in particular stands out. In a story reminiscent of Case’s “sickening yarn” (“Falesá” 20) about an island trader’s death, Attwater regales Herrick, Davis, and Huish with a tale of rigid, merciless justice; he labels the two native players in his nauseating drama “Obsequiousness” and “Sullens” (*Ebb-Tide* 217), clearly examples of two “colonial caricatures, the mimic and the silent slave” (Smith 164). Attwater drily explains how he had wrongly punished Sullens for an infraction by Obsequiousness. Shamed, Sullens had disappeared, and Attwater found him two days later, “hanging in a cocoa-palm...[h]is tongue was out, poor devil, and the birds had got at him.” No sympathy can be spared for the suicide, but Attwater metes out severe justice to the actual rule-breaker, Obsequiousness; Attwater orders him to climb the palm to cut down Sullens body, but when the native glances down, he finds Attwater’s rifle leveled at him. In a demeaning detail, Attwater casually mentions that the native “gave a whimper like a dog,” before he was shot (218-9).

What makes Attwater’s tale all the more sickening is his righteous posturing. Attwater believes his actions to have been honorable because, before he was shot out of the palm, Obsequiousness “recited his crime, recommended his soul to God” (218), having been graciously

given the chance to do so by Attwater. Earlier, Attwater tells his guests that, among other reasons, he came to the South Seas due to “an interest in missions” (203). He quickly follows this admission up by asserting that “religion is a savage thing, like the universe it illuminates; savage, cold, and bare” (204). He also proselytizes his guests, exhorting Herrick to “fall on your knees and cast your sins and sorrows on the Redeemer,” before breaking out into an amazingly egotistical pose, “spread[ing] out his arms like a crucifix” (206). Attwater’s grotesque mixture of egotism, moralism, and savagery disgusts Herrick; at the climax of the tale of Sullens and Obsequiousness, he cries out, “You monstrous being! Murderer and hypocrite—murderer and hypocrite—murderer and hypocrite” (219).

In an illuminating commentary on the state of things in the colonial world, however, Stevenson allows Attwater nevertheless to emerge triumphant from the murder plot by Davis and Huish, killing Huish and converting Davis to his austere, uncompromising version of Christianity, which leaves the captain an “emasculated figure” (Smith 166), praying and weeping on the beach. Left unclear is whether Taveeta and the other natives from the *Farallone* will stay on to replace the workers in the pearling operation or will depart with Herrick when the *Trinity Hall*, the ship that regularly supplies the atoll, arrives; either way, they remain subservient, and the most they can hope for is to be in the employ of a white who will treat them graciously. Herrick, like Wiltshire in “The Beach of Falesá,” remains ambivalent about his position in the brave new world of the colonial Pacific. He is a rarity in that he respects and likes the natives, but he still views himself as removed and superior to them, and the novella ends without resolution: will he continue to live in the South Seas, or now that he has acquired confidence in himself, will he return to England and leave behind a world that is in some ways nothing more than a purgatory, a proving ground for whites?

At least one critic has noted that the character of Attwater anticipates Kurtz, the compelling figure Marlow journeys to meet in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, and that this link should not be surprising, considering that Stevenson's writing is "so clear a precursor of Conrad's fiction" (Sandison 318). While Kurtz is more obviously mentally deranged, a strong argument can be made that Attwater, "maverick lone white man" (Harman 446) who develops a messiah complex as he lords it over the natives under his command, is similarly insane. John Kucich notes that Attwater "makes no mention of nationalism, military conquest, or social reform" (65); despite his fervent religiosity, he operates without the usual justifications for imperial expansion, an observation that can also be made of Kurtz. Importantly, though, Attwater also manages to continue functioning effectively for the company that employs him, and, as profits drive the Western presence in the colonial world, he is allowed to remain in his position of authority as *The Ebb-Tide* closes, whereas "The Company" in Conrad's work decides to send Marlow to remove Kurtz only when the trader's mental instability threatens the smooth operation of his outpost.

The comparison between Attwater and Kurtz, and thus Stevenson and Conrad, is certainly more than just an interesting footnote, however. Chinua Achebe, in his broadside against *Heart of Darkness*, "An Image of Africa," argues that Conrad's novel is a racist work—an "offensive and deplorable book" (Achebe 14)—whose bigotry outweighs its literary merits, and hence should not be taught. A major aspect of Achebe's criticism concerns the voice and identity of the natives; he correctly notes that not a single African native is named in *Heart of Darkness*, and rather than being given opportunities to explain their roles and attitudes towards colonialism, they are reduced to babbling and grunting bystanders (Achebe 8), with the frenzied

fireside dances of Kurtz's minions and the demonstrative grief of his native mistress being their most notable means of communication.

Is Stevenson open to the same criticism, that a disproportionate amount of attention is focused on the white characters, while the natives function as little more than exotic window dressing, stripped of any identity apart from being part of a savage horde that threatens that most precious and fragile of possessions, civilization? Previously, the differences in emphasis between Stevenson's fiction and non-fiction was noted; while his naturalistic fiction does tend to focus on Westerners in the Pacific, the non-fiction overwhelmingly consists of Stevenson's interactions with natives from across the Pacific: anecdotes, conversations, feasts, customs, all in a personal, involved manner. Stevenson in these writings does not write of the natives as objects he is observing and analyzing; he lived with them, and, if anything, usually reserved his more objective analysis for the strange collection of whites—from beachcombers to minor colonial officials—he came across during his voyage.

Robert Hillier believes that Stevenson and Conrad are linked in the way their fictions “reveal the vulnerability of any haven to which a character hopes to escape” (Hillier 197), but important distinctions must be made in the underlying causes of this fatal vulnerability. For Stevenson, it is the flaws inherent in the Western character that spoil and corrupt any potential haven discovered and inhabited. For instance, while it is true that Herrick and Attwater in particular dominate the foreground of *The Ebb-Tide*, Stevenson is clearly interested in the ramifications of white attitudes and actions on the situation of natives, whereas Conrad, in *Heart of Darkness*, seemed consumed with the exact opposite: the effect of savage surroundings on the integrity of the white psyche. For Stevenson, whites negatively impact natives; for Conrad, natives exert a malevolent influence on whites unlucky enough to live amongst them. Stevenson

understood that he could not change the unfortunate fact that, in the majority of the Pacific islands, whites were in control, whether formally or in actuality, usually through economic means; this status concerned him—again, the subservient position of Scotland to England and Scotland’s central position in Stevenson’s sense of identity are important to note—and he uses his fiction to work out what he saw as the results of this imbalance of power.

Stevenson never allows us to forget that every action by the whites affects—often drastically—natives. In *The Ebb-Tide*, the original crew of the *Farallone* contracts smallpox from an island already ravaged by it, as a result of previous Western contact, and the two whites expose themselves to the disease by drunkenly raping ill native women. The native crew of the schooner are at the mercy of their white superiors, and it is only when the captain and mate die that Taveeta and his fellows manage to steer the ship to safe harbor. The natives once again find themselves in a dangerous position when their new captain and mate, Davis and Huish, begin drinking heavily and allow the ship once again to go off course. By the end, if they stay with Attwater, they will be at the mercy of a severe and unsympathetic morality, a system capable, as already seen in the hands of Attwater, of leading to humiliating punishment or death. Herrick is the only character in the work who takes a genuine interest in the natives, learning their names and stories, but his distrust and dislike of most of the whites he comes across means he will most likely leave the Pacific; even if he stays, what positive impact would he have?

Unlike the probable course of action of Herrick, Stevenson stayed in the Pacific, but in his position as a widely famous author, he had the ability to effect some change. Despite the fact that the British authorities in Samoa tried to have him expelled from the islands, they failed (Harman 441), and he continued to agitate on behalf of the Samoans, who fiercely resisted colonization, although they would eventually fail and see their land divided between the

Germans and the Americans, with Britain's blessing. Unlike most authors who toured the Pacific, Stevenson impacted the natives in an important way. Anthony Trollope rarely lowered himself to even speak with natives and so left no impression at all among the Australian Aborigines, who he preferred to observe and analyze as though they were specimens, while Jack London would have more interaction, even visiting Molokai, but the majority of time he spent in Hawaii was among white society, where he was popular and social. Not to say that Stevenson's actions were ideal—after all, he was periodically guilty of demeaning language and condescension when describing the islanders—but overall, he was a rarity, a Westerner who not only sympathized with the natives but treated them as equals as he often lived side-by-side with them during his various stops, preferring their company to that of whites met along the way.

Stevenson would not live to see and protest the ultimate capitulation of Samoa though, dying in 1894 of a brain aneurysm at the age of forty-four. Perhaps one of the strongest arguments for Stevenson's respect for the Pacific natives lies in the honors accorded him in death and burial by local Samoans. The "generous white man beloved by grateful natives" is always a theme to be approached with suspicion, but Stevenson loved the Samoans for their stubborn independence and lack of fawning towards Westerners who came to Samoa, hardly traits that would cast doubt on Stevenson's true standing among the natives. He seemed to inspire a true depth of feeling among the Samoans, feelings that went beyond the respect accorded to many men of position and integrity to a sense of admiration and even affection. No doubt many Samoans, seeing their country slipping inexorably towards further interference and control by the West, lamented the changes that had occurred since discovery and interest by whites, but nevertheless they recognized in Stevenson a rare thing: a white ally who was not content to eulogize a people but to lend his strength and talent to resist right alongside them.

Chapter 5: Leprous Ideology: Jack London's Transformative Journey through Disease and the South Pacific

Jack London's experiences informed his fiction as intensely as any writer of the last two centuries, comparable to those other adventurers, Joseph Conrad and Herman Melville. His earliest and best-known fiction stemmed from his days on a seal-hunting ship and his early travels to the North, Alaska and the Yukon; out of his time as a gold-miner he produced the tales whose titles still evoke the frozen Arctic lands so vividly: *White Fang*, *The Call of the Wild*, "To Build a Fire." But later, after his almost overnight explosion into the public consciousness with the publication of *The Call of the Wild* in 1903, London determined to fulfill one of his long-deferred dreams: to travel the islands of the Pacific. His yearning for the vast tropical ocean with its scattered atolls and volcanic specks was nurtured by a childhood reading Melville and Robert Louis Stevenson, among others. Whereas the journey north was more easily made by the penniless laborer, the journey south had to wait for financial prosperity. The inspiration for the Pacific fiction was sparked by the near-disastrous commissioning and building of the *Snark*, the yacht London designed himself and persevered to build during the course of 1906-07, even when the 1906 San Francisco earthquake threatened to derail his plans before they could be put into motion. But his plans eventually succeeded, even though London and his wife, Charmian, would only tour the Pacific for two years before returning to their beloved California, rather than taking the planned seven years to complete a circumnavigation of the globe. The two years they did spend on the *Snark* would provide material for several novels and over a dozen short stories in

the following years, packed as they were with interactions with both natives and Europeans, and haunted as they were by the continual specter of illness and decay.

But the story of London's fiction is not one of disconnect, a period of stories set against a backdrop of ice and blizzards followed by one with the scenery of the tropics, palm trees and headhunters. Instead, the influence of the thinkers London began reading at a young age—especially Herbert Spencer and Friedrich Nietzsche—shapes and informs his fiction, regardless of locale, regardless of situation.

London approached both of these philosophers with an already present racial viewpoint, inculcated from childhood by his mother, Flora Wellman, who gave birth to Jack out-of-wedlock in 1876. One of London's biographers observes that the “question of race had nagged Jack all his life because of the scandal of his birth,” a scandal that from early on gave London an obsession with triumphing over those around him who were also despised: “the unknown people beating carpets in the yard, the Chinese gamblers...the Greek poachers of the Bay, and the Italian scabs of the slums” (Sinclair 220). His mother also felt the shame acutely; during Jack's childhood, “she ranted about the racial purity of her ancestors” (Kershaw 11). In his memoir *John Barleycorn*, London remarks, “often I heard my mother pride herself that we were old American stock and not immigrant Irish and Italians like our neighbors” (12); later, he recounts one of his mother's “theories”: “she steadfastly maintained that brunettes and all the tribe of dark-eyed humans were deceitful” (14). As a result of his mother's tirades and his own insecurities, London would desperately hold to the belief “that the Anglo-Saxon is the superior breed” for most of his life; however, he later on periodically yet significantly wavered from this bedrock of racial ideology (Kershaw 11).

In this chapter, I will trace these waverings, the increasing complexity of London's thought when it came to race, even if he never fully relinquished his earlier racism, deep-seated as it was. Further, when compared to the consistent racism of Trollope, London's shift, incomplete as it was, must still be considered significant. Even before the torturous experiences of the *Snark* voyage that, I argue, would challenge his beliefs and lead him to explore more complex views on race, two earlier works need to be examined. The short story "The League of Old Men," though set in the Far North, is an early indicator that perhaps sympathy towards natives was always lurking somewhere in London's mind, while *The Sea Wolf* provides us with a first glimpse of a South Pacific islander in his fiction, the crewman Oofty-Oofty.

From these preliminary texts, we will examine the travelogue of London's tour of the South Seas, *The Cruise of the Snark*. This work documents London's initial glib racism as he visited the Molokai leper colony, but eventually moves into darker territory, as London transforms it into a chronicle of the myriad frightening and painful medical problems he experienced as he sailed ever nearer the equator. Some of the fiction produced either during the journey or directly afterwards, such as *Adventure* and "Mauki," seems a last, shockingly spiteful gasp of London's racial theorizing before he took a turn towards an often more balanced view on the topic of race. His later short stories "Good-by Jack" and "Koolau the Leper" are remarkable when read in light of the work which preceded them, as we shall find sharp condemnations of white attitudes towards natives and the epidemics afflicting them, but we will also find ennobling portraits of natives themselves, something almost inconceivable in the pre-*Snark* London. This later remarkable reversal of some of his views will also be explained by London's moving from Nietzsche and Spencer as his philosophic touchstones to Freud and Jung, finding comfort in their

assertions that, through myth, humans do endure, and in this small way at least, defy the cold mechanisms of the Darwinian universe.

While critics have long focused on the earlier influence of Spencer and Nietzsche on London's thought, their studies have also often been limited to the more famous works, those set in Alaska and the Yukon. While the works set in the South Seas have certainly not been completely neglected, neither have they received the attention they merit, especially considering the significant alterations in London's racial attitudes as expressed in this fiction. A. Grove Day's seminal *Mad About Islands*, from 1987, was one of the first sources to examine London's Pacific corpus, but as with Day's chapters on Melville and Stevenson, the emphasis is more on a short recounting of the experiences and works of the authors than on literary analysis. Since that time, a smattering of articles have been published on London's South Seas work, but nothing approaching the bloom of attention Robert Louis Stevenson's output has attracted.

In his youth, however, days sailing the South Seas were still far off, despite the fact he grew up practically with the Pacific at his doorstep. With few exceptions, London had little formal schooling, but he had a desire for knowledge, educating himself by reading the important books of his time; his discipline allowed him to "read voraciously on every conceivable topic" until he could be labeled "an autodidact of heroic proportions" (Sutherland x). This painstaking process enabled him to transform his racial dogma from an emotional, jumbled reaction to his childhood into one supposedly justified by the prevailing scientific and philosophical thought of the moment. London determined that "a clear philosophy of life" was "essential to success" (Kershaw 77), and the first significant addition to his philosophy was Herbert Spencer, the eminent sociologist. Spencer built on the ideas of natural selection first popularized by Charles Darwin, applying them to the world of human interactions. He coined the phrase "survival of the

fittest,” and advocated “unrestrained capitalism” as a method for letting the “fittest” triumph (Sinclair 32). In the 1890s, London came across Spencer’s most powerful elucidation of Social Darwinism, *Philosophy of Style*, and he “wolfed it down” (Kershaw 48), entranced by the idea that “the laws of the universe and of nature must work themselves out, whatever individuals might do” (Sinclair 32). London’s background as an autodidact steered his understanding of the implications of Spencer’s philosophies—he “grabbed what he found most attractive” (Kershaw 77)—and he forced the ideas of Social Darwinism into the mold of his racial beliefs. Admittedly, London was not the only one to co-opt Spencer’s theories for racist ideology; as Clarice Stasz phrases it, Social Darwinism “appealed to the privileged Anglo-Saxon elite because it reinforced ethnocentric and evolutionist attitudes toward so-called primitive peoples” (Stasz 130). Few, however, applied the ideas so vividly as London would in his fiction. Simply put, for London, the Anglo-Saxon “race” was “the fittest,” and it was proving its superiority by continuously conquering new regions and peoples until few were left untouched by its might.

London may have been “dangerously enamoured” by Spencer, but the determinism inherent in Social Darwinism left him without a personal “philosophical motivation for living” (Kershaw 77). It was left to Nietzsche’s rhapsodic praise of the *übermensch*, or “superman,” to inspire London with the archetype so many of his protagonists would embody in his fiction over the next twenty years. For Nietzsche, the *übermensch* was the magnificent physical and mental specimen who “would overcome all obstacles” in his quest for dominance, and this quest was justified by nothing more than the superman’s ability to achieve what he desired. London was electrified by the fact that Nietzsche’s argument would “validate egotism,” and in the way it dovetailed so perfectly with Spencer’s theories: the actions of the superman “would speed the selection of the fittest” (77). As he did with Spencer, London selectively took from Nietzsche,

creating a portmanteau worldview that justified not only his racism but his elevated view of himself; the Anglo-Saxons, the “only true supermen” and represented by London, waged a titanic struggle against both nature and “[l]esser breeds” (Kershaw 154). London believed himself to be nothing less than “an advertisement for the white race whose supremacy he trumpeted” (Sutherland xii).

This potent combination of Social Darwinism and supermen immediately shaped London’s perceptions of the non-whites he had encountered, predominantly in the cold regions of the North. One biographer asserts that his “belief in Anglo-Saxon superiority would be severely tested later in life,” but that it was “deep-seated” and unchallenged throughout his twenties (Kershaw 101-02). Another biographer, though, points out that at times, London’s “sense of justice and compassion for the outcasts of society mitigated” his tendency toward absolutist racial dogma (Sinclair 220). This tension between the hatred and the empathy he felt for those trampled under by the standard-bearers of Social Darwinism created contradictions in London’s fiction that were certainly less evident in the earlier works but which would become more pronounced later, especially when it came to the stories set in the Pacific after his travels on the *Snark*. I will argue that London’s experiences while sailing the *Snark*, visiting Hawaii, the Marquesas, Tahiti, and the Solomons, among other locales, widened the cracks in his youthful ideology, cracks that had been present for some time, and which occasionally showed through, but for the most part lay concealed until a combination of factors on his Pacific voyage conspired to discover them. A common link between these factors is disease—the ravages of leprosy, elephantiasis, and syphilis, among other ailments, on the once-beautiful and vigorous natives of the tropical islands, as well as the physical deterioration London himself suffered as the trip sputtered to a premature close.

Although over the past two to three decades London has been the subject of an increasing amount of critical attention, this line of analysis—examining the Pacific fiction and his preoccupation with disease and disfigurement—has been for the most part neglected. Understandably, the earlier works set in Alaska and the Yukon have received more attention because these are the stories and novels that catapulted London to fame and have consistently remained his most popular ever since, but the intellectual wrestling with his racial ideologies so present in the Pacific fiction makes them fertile ground for study, especially for a better understanding of his conflicted mindset during his last few years. One of London's most prominent critics, Clarice Stasz, writing specifically in the context of his Pacific work, mentions the apparent effect his ongoing health problems had on his fiction, and laments that “[a]lthough London's intermittent disabilities are well documented, their influence of his uneven inventiveness has yet to be detailed” (138), an issue that will be addressed here, but more in terms of racial ideology than of “uneven inventiveness.”

One major work that does address London's *Snark* voyage and its impact is A. Grove Day's thorough analysis of several writers who set work in the South Pacific, *Mad About Islands*, published in 1987. In his chapters on London, Day traces the path of the *Snark*, focusing mainly on Hawaii, and links the plots and themes of London's fiction to his experiences during the Pacific trip. Day correctly observed that London's “fiction with a Pacific setting is often overlooked” (161), a situation that still exists to a certain extent, but if there is a flaw to Day's work, it is that he sacrifices depth of analysis for breadth of coverage. He places almost all of London's Pacific fiction in its experiential context, but mentioning the literally dozens of short stories and narratives impedes his ability to focus on a handful of the most significant and representative works. And while Day discusses the litany of health problems that afflicted

London, he also neglects to address London's ideological changes both during the voyage and in the years afterwards, choosing instead to emphasize London's love for the Hawaiian Islands and his positive experiences there. Disease is a part of the *Snark* voyage in Day's book, but its lasting impact is overlooked.

In reality, the impressions the *Snark* voyage left on London caused him to seriously reevaluate his assumptions, including those regarding non-whites, but the roots of his change had already shown themselves fleetingly in his earlier fiction. The 1902 short story "The League of the Old Men," which predates the publication of *The Call of the Wild*, startlingly presages the more sympathetic tone London would assume in stories like "Koolau the Leper" and "Shin-Bones," both written years later. Although "The League of the Old Men" embodies the tension between sympathy and derision London so often struggled with, he wrote later that the story of Old Imber, the native protagonist of the work, "epitomises the whole vast tragedy of the contact of the Indian with the white man" (qtd in Labor 727). Of course it can be argued that London's sympathy is easy, that it in no way casts doubt on the inevitable triumph of the Anglo-Saxon race, and is in fact the condescending generosity of the victor. I would disagree, however, as London displays in this story an admiration for the methods of Imber and his people as they utilize sometimes brutal means in an attempt to ensure their survival. Imber eventually acknowledges he is fighting a losing battle, but London's depiction is anything but belittling.

As in the later "Koolau the Leper," London treats his native protagonists with more sympathy when they maintain a separate identity from the white society enveloping and otherwise pressuring them. Imber determines to reject the creeping, damaging influence of the whites, and to fight a decades-long guerilla campaign to preserve the purity of his race and culture. Importantly, London allows Imber to tell his own story as he sits in a Dawson courtroom

surrounded by his eager executioners; Imber recounts that his understanding of the crucial role purity plays in survival did not come all at once. His people, the Siwash, were bewildered by the first white who stumbled in among them, but they nursed him, along with his dog, as he seemed “weak, so weak, like a little child” (“League” 162). In retrospect, this was the Siwash’s mistake, as the recovered white man seduced away the chief’s daughter, and the white’s dog left behind a litter of puppies. In London’s conception, this introduction of foreign blood was as polluting for the Siwash natives as the foreign blood would be for the Anglo-Saxon race he so adamantly championed.

Only slowly did Imber and some of the older men of the tribe come to the realization that purification was the first step in an effective resistance. Imber remembers that when that initial litter of puppies was born, his father, Otsabok, was horrified by them: “never was there such a breed of dogs—big-headed, thick-jawed, and short-haired, and helpless.” Otsabok intuits the right course of action, one Imber does not assent to mentally until years later, and, angered by the “helplessness” of the puppies, Otsabok “took a stone, so and so, and there was no more helplessness” (163). The leap from dogs to humans took some time, but after more Siwash were seduced away—the women by traders, the men by liquor and gambling—Imber decides that what was done to preserve the purity of the tribe’s wolf-dogs must be done to preserve the purity of the tribe itself. The resistance must not be only to the men themselves, Imber determines, but to their technology as well; the first whites Imber kills are with his arrows and spears, not with a gun (166).

London reinforces the undesirability of compromise when it concerns purity in the character of Howkan, Imber’s nephew who had assimilated among the whites of Dawson and serves as translator during Imber’s trial. Howkan “had fallen among the mission folk and been

taught by them to read and write” (160), and his “fall” gives him an inflated air about himself; at one point, he “smirked with self-appreciation” when he realizes that Imber does not comprehend writing and reading. His assimilation may secure him an existence among the whites, but Howkan will never be one of them; for London, the figure of Howkan, with his “hair...parted in the middle” and “shrill voice,” was fooling both himself and the whites. At one point, as Imber’s begins reciting his story in the spellbinding cadences of the wizened native, a change comes over Howkan, exposing his suppressed identity: his “inherent barbarism gripped hold of him, and...[he] lost his mission culture and veneered civilization as he caught the savage ring and rhythm of old Imber’s tale” (162). This pattern of admiration for the pure native and contempt for the assimilated, “polluted” one, would be utilized again by London when he centers his fiction in the Pacific.

Also of note in “The League of the Old Men” are the hints of London’s interest in disease, a concern that will bloom after his *Snark* voyage. London implicitly approves of the brutal yet temporarily effective manner in which the Siwash attempt to ensure a future for themselves, but it is nevertheless a futile effort. The white man’s law is never successful in apprehending Imber on its own; he is only put on trial and executed when he makes the decision to travel to Dawson and surrender himself. Even before Imber and the other Siwash elders begin their resistance campaign, disease has been introduced and takes its toll: “the coughing sickness came upon us, and men and women coughed and sweated through the long nights, and the hunters on trail spat blood upon the snow” (164). Despite the attempt to regain strength and vigor through a violent culling of the contamination among them, the Siwash had become a “weak breed” and died away “as die the salmon in the still eddies when in the fall their eggs are spawned and there is no longer any need for them to live” (164-5). Imber wonders at the plagues

afflicting his people, and he looks in astonishment at the whites who suffer no similar hardships; as he expresses it, “theirs the many sicknesses, the smallpox and measles, the coughing and mouth-bleeding...[a]nd yet they grow fat on their many ills, and prosper” (165).

London understood the concept of immunity to disease, and so, despite casting doubt on the nobility of whites—“Anglo-Saxons”—in “The League of the Old Men,” his belief in the eventual triumph of his race never wavers. His racial variation on Social Darwinism infects the story and leaves no doubt that, even if the white man’s codified laws are sometimes weak and ineffectual in the face of a determined enemy, natural law will not be denied. Early in the story, London explains that it “had been the custom of the land-robbing and sea-robbing Anglo-Saxon to give the law to conquered peoples,” but in this case, their law had “seemed inadequate and weak” (155). When it comes time for the judge to hand down his ruling, he has a vision in which “his race rose up before him in a mighty phantasmagoria—his steel-shod, mail-clad race, the lawgiver and world-maker among the families of men,” but with a hint that the ultimate destiny of whites may not be eternal triumph, for after the noon of his race—a “blaze, bloody and red”—the judge sees it “dropping into night” (167-68). But if the failure of the white race’s legal system and the doom implied by the judge’s vision offer a pessimistic version of white strength, Imber counters with a contrasting image, one drawing on natural imagery to reinforce the biological determinism that led London’s beloved Anglo-Saxons from conquest to conquest; as he sits in the courtroom, encircled by a large number of whites, numerous despite his years of attempting to impede them, “there was an ominous note in the rumble and grumble of their low-pitched voices, which came to his ears like the growl of the sea from deep caverns” (159). As inexorable as the action of the sea, for Imber the white race was simply too powerful a natural force to be stopped.

Moving on from one of London's earliest complex treatments of native peoples, we find in another pre-*Snark* work, *The Sea Wolf*, an important early depiction of a South Sea Islander. London's biographers have noted that for *The Sea Wolf* he drew upon the experiences he had as a young man on the sealing ship *Sophia Sutherland*. Just as Herman Melville in all likelihood based the Maori harpooner Queequeg upon Polynesians he sailed with during his trips on whalers, London probably encountered South Sea Islanders while he sailed the North Pacific hunting seals. But unlike the more mature treatment of natives in "The League of the Old Men," an approach London would build upon after he had more extensive contact with Pacific natives during his voyage on the *Snark*, the depiction of the Polynesian Oofy-Oofy in *The Sea Wolf* seems embryonic in a way, an incomplete picture of a race that would be more fully and complexly inhabited by London's imagination in later works.

The Sea Wolf in the main is a vehicle for casting doubt on the Nietzschean "übermensch" idea at its furthest extreme, as Wolf Larsen, the captain of the *Ghost*, demonstrates the glory of the ideal of "will to power" in all its brutality. Larsen, an autodictator who discusses Darwin, Herbert, and Nietzsche with the narrator Humphrey Van Weyden, dominates the world of the novel, lording his authority and animal strength over his men, but Oofy-Oofy, one of the crew, seems unaffected by the savage physicality around him, although he has the potential for matching any display of violence. Ethereal, yet virile, he is the most idealized man in the book. Van Weyden first describes him when, down below in the forecabin, Larsen sneaks from man to man seeking who is only feigning sleep, for he had just been attacked on deck. When Larsen comes to Oofy-Oofy, the description is strangely effeminate: he "was asleep on his back and breathing as placidly as a woman... In the midst of it the Kanaka roused. He awoke as gently as he slept... The eyes, only, moved. They flashed wide open, big and black, and stared, unblinking,

into our faces” (*Sea Wolf* 93). The softness of Oofy-Oofy is complemented by his capacity for violence, however; when the crew ambushes Larsen, Oofy-Oofy takes part, eventually splitting his hand open in the brawl. As soon as the battle is over, his placid and feline nature returns. Van Weyden goes on to describe him as “a beautiful creature, almost feminine in the pleasing lines of his figure, and there was a softness and dreaminess in his large eyes which seemed to contradict his well-earned reputation for strife and action” (96).

Van Weyden’s fetishized descriptions of Oofy-Oofy continue, as at one point, he mentions that he sees the native’s “velvety and luminous eyes glistening in the light like a deer’s eyes, and yet I knew the barbaric devil that lurked in his breast and belied all the softness and tenderness, almost womanly, of his face and form” (168). When contrasted to his later Polynesian characters like Koolau and Prince Akuli, London’s depiction of Oofy-Oofy is startling; stylized and feminized, Oofy-Oofy draws as much from London’s childhood obsessions over Melville’s *Typee* as it does from any actual Pacific Islanders that he encountered on the *Sophia Sutherland*. Also of note, however, is that the idealized body of Oofy-Oofy is without blemish or spot; unlike the Siwash people of “The League of Old Men,” related to other Inuit peoples London would have had prolonged exposure to during his time in the Yukon, and who are thus more grittily depicted by him as suffering from debilitating epidemics and weakening as a tribe, South Sea Islanders would not be drawn with a comparable amount of comprehension until London spent two years intimately observing conditions throughout the South Pacific. The flawless, feminine body of Oofy-Oofy would not become the ravaged, masculine body of the leper Koolau until the *Snark* voyage provokes the transformation.

The *Snark* finally set sail on April 23, 1907, and for London and his wife Charmian, it was a triumphant occasion, especially after the long months of delays and cost overruns it took to

build their dream boat. In *The Cruise of the Snark*, London writes joyously of those early days, “adventure is not dead” (36), but his conception of “adventure” would change dramatically over the next two years. Initially though, Social Darwinist and materialist that he might have been, London nevertheless romanticizes the journey stretching out before them. His youthful reading colored his anticipations as he “sailed on toward the west in the wake of Melville and Mark Twain and Robert Louis Stevenson” (Sinclair 139). When they reached Hawaii, the first few weeks were as idyllic as London had hoped; reporters came down to discuss the Londons’ impressions, and he was taken by a newly-discovered sport for the West, surfing. He is so taken by it that his language “elevates the sport to a religious celebration of man’s domination of the elements” (Sutherland ix). Surfing, in fact, seemed to London to be the activity of Nietzsche’s übermensch; he describes the native surfer as “a member of the kingly species that has mastered matter and the brutes and lorded it over creation” (*Snark* 74, 78). As awed as he may have been by the Hawaiian surfers, at this point London is still romanticizing the native. The surfer in his estimation is Oofy-Oofy come again, having traded in his sealing tools for a surfboard.

When London finally went to Molokai, the infamous Hawaiian leper colony, he at first approached it with exaggerated expectations; before he even set foot on shore, he writes, he looked at the looming cliffs that penned in the lepers and referred to the location as the “pit of hell, the most cursed place on earth” (*Snark* 91). He was shocked by what he actually found, which was a place full of humans—diseased and disfigured yes, but humans still. The varied evaluations he made of Molokai and its inhabitants over the next few years document the difficulty he had in making the transition from the superficial characterizations he made in *The Sea Wolf* and in his writing about surfers, to the more complex, emotionally-invested natives found in the later work, fiction especially. His initial impressions, as recorded in *The Cruise of*

the Snark, are mostly positive; instead of gazing upon the “pit of hell” he had imagined, he found a “self-sufficient collective” (Kershaw 187) where lepers in various states of disfigurement—in fact, some showed no visible scarring at all—worked and lived together in a state of vigorous fulfillment. While there, London recounts seeing the lepers take part in horse and donkey races, musical ensembles, baseball games, and firing practice.

In *The Cruise of the Snark*, London seethes over the “lurid” stories propagated the world over by “sensationalists who have never laid eyes” on the colony (94). In his chapter centered on the colony, London flatly states, “the horrors of Molokai, as they have been painted in the past, do not exist” (94). He recounts meeting a Major Lee, one of the few American lepers confined to the colony, who implores London to “write us up straight. Put your foot down on this chamber-of-horrors rot . . . Just tell the world how we really are in here” (101). London goes on to assert that the lepers “resented bitterly the sensational and untruthful way in which they have been exploited in the past” (101).

The “lurid” and “sensational” untruths that London seeks to demolish are several. To the charge that removal to Molokai is a traumatic, sudden event, he writes that “the leper is not torn ruthlessly from his family.” Furthermore, the confirmed leper is “given ample time, weeks, and even months, sometimes, during which he . . . winds up or arranges all his business affairs” (*Snark* 97-8). In case any would shed tears over families torn apart by the removal policy, London assures us that “the leper may be visited by his relatives” at any time (98). He even quotes the president of the Board of Health, who says that Molokai is such a paradise on earth that, when it comes to the inmates, “you can’t drive them away with a shot gun” (102). One grotesque anecdote supposedly proves the president’s assertion; an “American negro” lived contentedly in the colony for several years, free from labor or care, when an improved test for the leprosy

bacillus confirmed him free from the disease. This man was so loath to leave that he married an elderly woman in the last stages of the disease, and petitioned to stay to care for his dying wife. The Board refused his request and shipped him back to Honolulu, where, according to London's source, he still mourned his idyllic life at Molokai (103-4).

London's first perceptions of his visit to Molokai as recorded in *The Cruise of the Snark* are "a sincere reflection" of his views at the time (Slagel 180), yet one factor which would trigger his more critical stance in the later fiction was his realization that he had been well and unwittingly prepared for his encounter with the Molokai inmates. He had spent his first days in Honolulu rubbing shoulders with the "expatriate rich, the colonial elite" (Kershaw 184), many of whom had instigated the 1893 *coup d'etat* that deposed the Hawaiian royals and prepared the islands for annexation by the United States, and this crowd had a specific view of the lepers and their colony, one they shared repeatedly with London. In fact, the character of Jack Kersdale, in London's later short story "Good-By, Jack," tells a visitor to Hawaii a version of the official leprosy policy that was probably straight from the mouth of one of London's hosts: "[t]he horrors of Molokai are all poppycock... You ought to see those living deaths racing horses on the Fourth of July... They have nothing to do but have a good time" (114). Of course, referring back to London's own words in *The Cruise of the Snark*, we can see that these words were those of his hosts, but became London's as well before he bitterly returns them to Kersdale, the colonial mouthpiece. London would angrily turn his own naïve defense of haole society's methods into a weapon. Upon reflection, even the musical band he was met with and the discussions he had with both the colony's official doctors and eloquent lepers like the American Major Lee seem suspiciously calculated, like an early form of public relations.

Besides feeling duped in retrospect, the remainder of London's *Snark* voyage and the aftermath of its ignoble end spent convalescing in an Australian hospital also changed his perceptions of what he had seen. Even as he defended and championed the colony in *The Cruise of the Snark*, disturbing and ghoulish images persisted, both in his account and in the details he never reported in his early writings about the place; as he looked back, these events and impressions were magnified, shifting the emphasis of his visit. The first night London stayed at Molokai, his wife Charmian would write later, they were awakened in the half-light of dawn. She continues on that when they stepped outside their hut to see what was happening, they were confronted with a disconcerting sight: "[i]n the eerie whispering dawn there gambolled a score or so 'horribles,' men and women already horrible enough...and but thinly disguised in all manner of extravagant costumings" (qtd in Kershaw 188). London makes no mention of this incident in *The Cruise of the Snark*, instead moving on to the later events of that day, the horse and donkey races he found so exciting. That the event lingered however, there can be little doubt—the dance of the lepers in the story "Koolau the Leper" seems drawn from this incident.

The specter of fugitive lepers who resisted deportation, taking refuge in the hills and forests of Hawaii's various islands is also present. London goes to great lengths in *The Cruise of the Snark* to assure his readers that those confined to Molokai were infinitely better off than those who choose a renegade freedom on the outside. London brands the fugitive a "lonely outcast, living in constant fear of discovery and slowly and surely rotting away" (*Snark* 106-7). "In a brief and horrible time," he continues, "that leper will die of gangrene or some other terrible complication" (107); the Molokai inmate, in contrast, receives cutting-edge Western medical treatment and may live out a relatively healthy and happy life. London's personal philosophies, however, must have made him sympathetic towards the fugitive lepers, those who

defied the lure of an easy but confined life for fierce resistance against a certain fate. London had heard stories of the historical Koolau from one of the *Snark*'s crew members, and Koolau's defiance would have appealed to him, probably even reminding him of old Imber, who also refused to fade away or assimilate, instead fighting fiercely against the encroaching whites despite the ultimate futility of his struggle. What could Koolau and Imber be but mangled examples of Nietzsche's *übermensch*, doomed racially but individually defiant and determined?

Once away from Hawaii, the *Snark* was put on course for the Marquesas, and the diseased spectacle he found there would throw what he saw bottled up at Molokai into a revealing context. Despite the lessons he should have learned during his stay in the colony, London initially reverted back to his previous romanticized view on the South Seas and its inhabitants as he neared the Marquesas. Not that this would be entirely unexpected; the "sweet vale of Typee" (*Snark* 156), located on the Marquesan island of Nuku-hiva, had filled London's imagination since his childhood, when he read Melville's novel *Typee*. London's description of Nuku-hiva is filled with enthusiastic references to one of his favorite books; he resists the contemporary spelling of "Taipi," insisting, "I prefer 'Typee,' and I shall always spell it 'Typee'" (154). He exclaims when he sees a small path snaking up and out of the secluded valley, "The path by which Toby escaped from Typee!," referring to one of the two whites dwelling amongst the cannibals in Melville's novel (157). He finds the spot on the beach where he determines Tommo, the character Melville based on himself, "gave Fayaway the parting embrace ere he dashed for the boat" (173)—Fayaway being, of course, the beautiful, innocent, and flawless maiden Tommo came to love during his time in the valley. The fondness London harbors for his childhood favorite permeates the account, reinforcing his claim that, when it came to *Typee*, "many long hours I dreamed over its pages" (154).

The raptures of the past were quickly tempered by the grim realities of the present, though. The natives were nothing like the vigorous, vital Typees glimpsed in the pages of Melville's novel, but were wretched and contaminated by disease. An immediate reminder of Molokai presented itself, as London discovered that, unlike the charming taboos against women riding in boats and men touching certain cloths that Melville described, now the taboo was against approaching native lepers, of which several dwelled in the valley. The man who told them of the new taboo "was afflicted horribly with elephantiasis" (*Snark* 168). London looked around with horror at this former paradise, where now "asthma, phthisis, and tuberculosis flourish as luxuriantly as the vegetation" (163). London had an informed layman's understanding of medical theory, and he quickly connected the Marquesans' plight to the lack of immunity they had when germs arrived with Western explorers and visitors; he correctly observes that "[t]heir air did not contain the bacilli and germs and microbes of disease that fill our own air. And when the white men imported in their ships these various microorganisms of disease, the Typeans crumpled up and went down before them" (170). While the science is sound, his Social Darwinist spin on it is mired in the late nineteenth century. He interprets what has happened to the once-proud Typees in terms of "[n]atural selection," elaborating specifically that "[w]e of the white race are the survivors" (170). This distancing analysis may have satisfied him superficially, but a profound sadness creeps into London's tone as he closes the chapter on Typee by recounting that as he and Charmian fell asleep their first night in the valley, they listened as "a woman panted and moaned in her sleep, and all about us the dying islanders coughed in the night" (177). London's personal ideology of Anglo-Saxon superiority fails to reassure him when brought to bear on a people in ruins, a people he had cherished and idealized in his imagination since boyhood.

When it came to the Typees, London also could not have failed to be disappointed by the deterioration of their racial purity alongside the deterioration of their bodies. As we saw with “The League of the Old Men,” London depicted Imber as proud and admirable because he took inspiration from the decision by his father to kill the monstrous mixed-breed puppies that resulted from the mating of the whites’ dogs with those of the Siwash people. In contrast, Howkan, Imber’s nephew, assimilates into white society in Dawson and is seen as an impotent hybrid—he may have taken on the trappings of white society, but his newfound culture is nothing more than “veneered civilization” that wears away when confronted with the “barbarism” of Imber. To London, the Typees had become a race of Howkans, an uneasy mixture of antithetical peoples, through their mixed bloodlines as well as their intermingled cultures. London describes the Typees as “half-breeds and strange conglomerations of dozens of different races,” before adjudging the result to be a “wreckage of races at best” (*Snark* 163). The irony is that the same racial impurity London decries is also, in his estimation, the one thing allowing the Typees to survive—as he puts it in *The Cruise of the Snark*, “the one thing that retards their destruction is the infusion of fresh blood” (163). Again taking his cue from Imber, London advocates ferocious resistance to any breach of the settled racial bloodlines; in evaluating the decayed state of the Typees and the subsequent bastardizing of their race, he concludes that “the results led one to wonder whether it was worth while” (175). Better extinction with integrity than lingering with compromise, he seems to say.

The compromises were serious indeed. The intermingling of bloodlines that disturbed London was accompanied by other signs that the Typees and their way of life were in jeopardy. Before even reaching shore, the first glimpse of the valley stretching down towards the beach was a moment of puzzlement for London. Expecting to gaze upon Melville’s garden paradise, he

instead saw “a wilderness.” This world was foreign from the exotic marvel Melville had led London to expect. “Where were the hundred groves of the breadfruit tree he saw?,” London asks, and “where was the hut that old Narheyo eternally builded” (*Snark* 167)? As if to emphasize that the natives were a waning people, the jungle itself was reclaiming the valley. Those Typees who remained catered to the Westerners who visited them, carrying out parodies of the rituals the whites had become enamored with while reading *Typee* and other South Pacific literature; at a feast, some of the natives brought in roasted pig, but wrapped “in imitation of old times when they carried in ‘long-pig.’” London explains that “long-pig” was “the Polynesian euphemism for human flesh” (159). This simulated cannibal feast titillated the Western tourists then crowding the island, but London found himself disgusted by the debasement of the Typees’ culture; once, “the Typeans were the human-flesh eaters par excellence,” he laments. Seventy years after Melville, London was witnessing the humiliating debasement of one of the South Pacific’s most celebrated cultures.

The trip on the *Snark* thus far had traced a definite progression from diseased and ravaged natives being rigidly contained in a part of Hawaii and limited to a small percentage of the population, to the situation in the Marquesas, where entire islands became types of Molokai, with whole native populations affected. Interestingly, both Molokai and Typee had become tourist destinations, locations where Westerners could bask in the myths of the Pacific, idyllic islands of sun and warmth, while simultaneously gazing at the decaying races that populated the islands. However, London’s next destination would take him to Melanesia, that region of the Pacific tourists typically shunned, for its larger, more impenetrable and primitive islands teemed with both hostile natives and virulent diseases, diseases that threatened whites as well as indigenes. London spent several weeks in and around the Solomon Islands, a Melanesian

archipelago that sprawled hundreds of miles eastward from the coast of New Guinea. Thickly covered by rain forest, with the possible exception of Fiji, these islands were never perceived as paradises in the Western imagination the way Tahiti, Hawaii, or the Marquesas had been, for “[t]ropical disease mocked the lush beauty of the blue lagoons” (Stasz 131). Rather, names like Guadalcanal and Bougainville were afterwards burned into the public consciousness by the series of horrific battles fought there between the Allies and the Japanese in World War II.

London writes in the context of the Solomons when he advises, “no one that stands in finicky dread of...diseases can afford to travel in the South Seas” (*Snark* 207). Elephantiasis, a disease caused by mosquito-borne roundworms that block lymphatic vessels and result in grotesquely swollen limbs, was particularly prevalent. London again shows himself epidemiologically informed when he informs the reader that one “theory attributes it to inoculation through mosquito bites.” He is not content to leave it at textbook explanations, though, illustrating the disfiguring disease with several anecdotes, demonstrating his ongoing interest in illness and disfigurement. One vivid example is another of London’s mangled, native supermen: “six-foot man, erect, mighty-muscled, bronzed, with the body of a god, yet with feet and calves so swollen that they ran together, forming legs, shapeless, monstrous, that were for all the world like elephant legs” (207).

The risk of infection was ever-present, even for whites. Contact with stricken natives was unavoidable, as London explains: “[i]n the public market...two known lepers run stalls, and heaven alone knows through what channels arrive at that market the daily supplies of fish, fruit, meat, and vegetables” (*Snark* 207). Later, London “watched a Raratongan woman, with swollen, distorted limbs, prepare our cocoanut cream” (208). The situation was thus all through the South Seas, but risks increased for whites the farther south towards Melanesia and the equator they

went. The very air around them seemed to swarm with bacteria and contagion; two Japanese crew members of the *Snark* were brought low by painful sores after being in the Solomons only a short time. London describes the sores as inevitable, as a “mosquito bite, a cut, or the slightest abrasion, serves for lodgment of the poison with which the air seems to be filled. Immediately the ulcer commences to eat” (263). “Eating” is the perfect metaphor, as London’s time in the Solomons was filled by consuming abscesses and lesions of various kinds. He confesses being frightened by a sore on the instep of his foot that would not heal, instead boring its way toward the bone; the sore “was daily eating up more skin...and was eating up the muscle itself” (315).

One visitor to the *Snark* swore that sores in the Solomons devoured the flesh until “they attacked the walls of the arteries, the arteries burst, and there was a funeral” (322); London and his crew were finally driven to dosing themselves with corrosive sublimate, a mercury-based treatment potentially devastating in its own right. The final few chapters of *The Cruise of the Snark* are overhung with a suffocating pall of disease; London even names the final chapter of his book “The Amateur M. D.,” after the desperate way he attempted to treat himself, Charmian, and the crew with whatever supplies and medications he could scrounge from the *Snark*’s medical kit and other sources. Critic A. Grove Day does not sensationalize when he labels the Melanesian portion of the *Snark* voyage London’s “Heart of Darkness” (162).

London’s decision to end the *Snark*’s voyage in Australia and to check himself into a hospital there to convalesce brought the whole experience to a dispiriting close. Several years later, in his memoir *John Barleycorn*, London would underplay his stay in Australia as a chance to “get tinkered up” (180), but as one biographer put it, “there was no escape from the defects of his body” (Sinclair 150); another critic states that the “doctors of Australia were their only hope” (Day 171). The yaws were only the beginning; eventually he would endure an operation in

Sydney to repair a double fistula in his rectum, and he would not leave the hospital there for five months. More influential for his reevaluation of the natives he had encountered was the painful and frightening skin disease from which he began to suffer towards the end of the trip. As London described his “mysterious malady,” “[o]n occasion my hands were twice their natural size, with seven dead and dying skins peeling off at the same time. There were times when my toe-nails, in twenty-four hours, grew as thick as they were long” (*Snark* 338).

He later was convinced that the intense tropical sunlight had damaged his fair skin to a traumatic degree, but at the time London feared leprosy, among other possibilities. In *The Cruise of the Snark*, he refers to it as “*Biblical Leprosy*” (italics his) in order to differentiate it from what he had seen at Molokai and Typee, among other locations, but even the prospect of contracting the “disease he had secretly feared since Hawaii” (Day 171) shook him. London had long considered himself an übermensch, but as he returned to California for more recuperation after selling the *Snark* only two years into its projected seven-year circumnavigation he was a broken man physically. At this point, in early 1909, he had only seven more years to live, but I argue that his fiction would undergo some remarkable changes during this time—his shattering experience with disease and pain in the South Seas shook him forced him to examine others, previously dismissed, with a different gaze. These changes, however, would not come at once, nor would they completely purge his fiction of his long-held racist theories.

Amazingly, London’s first fiction inspired by his Pacific experiences came as he waited in the Solomons for a ship to take him to Sydney for his treatment. His skin condition, as yet undiagnosed, made his hands so sensitive that even to clutch the railing of the *Snark* was agony (*Snark* 338), yet somehow he continued to write. *Adventure*, finally published in 1911, was the product of those fearful days of waiting. This novel was characterized harshly by one critic as

“his worst novel, written at the time of his greatest physical agony” (Sinclair 152), and by another as a work which “easily competes for the nadir of London’s longer tales” (Stasz 132). *Adventure* is certainly not his most accomplished work, aesthetically speaking, but nevertheless is a fascinating text, a “dark story of disease and sadism, a horror of the flesh and its torments” (Sinclair 152). If the last few chapters of *The Cruise of the Snark* are pervaded by the language of disease, then *Adventure* is the one true product of London’s misery in the Solomons. Not only does disease and the fears that follow influence the text, but so does the disgust and eventual hatred of everything associated with those lowest of moments of London’s life. *Adventure* is easily the least-sympathetic and brutal depiction of the South Seas he would produce; it would take time, recovery, and relocation to his beloved California to bring London the perspective necessary to write his later, more complex tales of Pacific natives.

Adventure recounts the story of David Sheldon, an Englishman who, with his partner Hughie Drummond, sets up and runs a copra, or coconut-oil, plantation in the Solomons, worked by recruited labor from neighboring Malaita Island, the “savage island, the abode of murder, and robbery, and man-eating” (10). Unlike Anthony Trollope’s conception of the mutually beneficial recruitment system as elaborated by him in *Australia and New Zealand*, London punctures illusions of conferred civilization and ethically generated profits left and right. His labor plantations are cesspools of disease, savagery, and competition: ground zero in the Darwinian struggle for survival and triumph. Building on his experiences in the Solomons, London depicts not only the whites as susceptible to a number of debilitating illnesses, but the natives as well. In the ugly, brutal battle for supremacy on the plantation, the winner would more than likely be determined by an epidemiological war of attrition—whoever lived the longest would win. After dosing his sick workers with quinine and hearing from a fellow white that some of the recruits

“die out of spite” (33), Sheldon confesses that “he had reached the stage where he lived by will alone” (36).

An important distinction on the part of London becomes clear several chapters into *Adventure*; the savagery of the South Sea islanders is restricted to the Melanesians, those of the Solomon Islands and other archipelagos strung out along the equator to the south and west of Polynesia. These groups, differentiated from the Polynesians of Hawaii and other Pacific chains further north and east, are unequivocally inferior in the mind of London. Whereas the golden-skinned Polynesians, and Hawaiians in particular, would be the subjects of London’s later, more sympathetic fiction, the darker, “woolly-headed” (1) Melanesians are almost always as they are found in *Adventure*: savages without equal. In the racial hierarchy of which London was so fond, the Melanesians would be demonstrably beneath the more “noble” Polynesian races; leprosy in Hawaiians would be a tragedy, but elephantiasis in Solomon Islanders is nothing more than an aspect of savagery. Critic James Slagel points out that, when dealing with the idea of the exotic, writers tended to utilize one of two opposing discourses: either “that the natives were peaceful, domestic sorts, noble inhabitants of a paradise; or that the natives...were depraved and were to be shot at the first threat of harm” (Slagel 174-5). Interestingly, London embraces both discourses in *Adventure*, simply applying the former to the Polynesians and the latter to the Melanesians.

Examples of Melanesian racial degradation abound in *Adventure*. The most obvious method London utilizes is animalistic imagery, a favored device by many a Western traveler to savage lands. As Sheldon glances over the sick natives he is tending, he notes that their “faces were asymmetrical, bestial; their bodies were ugly and ape-like” (3), while another native “made grimaces like a monkey” (17). Even ostensible compliments come sheathed in animal rhetoric:

Joan, the white American, observes that “she had never realized before how handsome Gogoomy was in his mutinous and obstinate wild-animal way.” Gogoomy, a recruited laborer, in fact, embodied a “primitive aristocraticness” (310). At one point, Sheldon has to scream “fiercely” in an attempt to “penetrat[e] the low intelligence” of one of his natives (7).

The brutal nature of the Melanesians matched the repulsive aspects of their physical bodies. Joan, raised in Hawaii and accustomed to the docile yet noble nature of Polynesians, naively “generalized that the Solomon Islanders, under kind treatment, would grow gentle” (91). Sheldon repeatedly protests that only force can communicate with Melanesians, and Joan comes to agree with him when they have to team up to fight off two “ferocious” natives just returned from the “Queensland plantations” in Australia (93). Fortunately for the small band of whites, Sheldon foresees the extinction of the Melanesian race, to be replaced by imported coolies; Joan asks if “the blacks will die off?” and he succinctly replies, “[t]he unfit must perish” (113-4). What other fate could be anticipated for a race that is, according to Sheldon, “a whole lot lower than the African niggers” (98)?

The hierarchical position of the Melanesian race relative to its Pacific neighbors, the Polynesians, is reinforced by London in *Adventure* by direct comparison. Joan first visits Sheldon in a whale-boat pulled by her loyal gang of Polynesian crewmembers collected from Tahiti and the Marquesas. In contrast to the “ape-like” Melanesians, Sheldon is immediately taken by her gang—“not black like the Solomon Islanders, but light brown...handsome” (46-7). Later he notes that one of the Tahitians has “black eyes, soft and deer-like” (213), language reminiscent of his feminized descriptions of Oofy-Oofy in *The Sea Wolf*. Any doubts he has about their separateness from the Melanesians are rebuffed when he absent-mindedly refers to them also as “niggers,” and Joan turns on him in fury: “My men are not niggers” (51). Unlike the

bloodthirsty Solomon Islanders, Joan had sailed across the Pacific with her crew of Polynesians and had been protected and cared for by them at every turn; their loyalty impresses Sheldon, as he thinks of her ship floundering but Joan herself never in danger, “protected by her gang of huge Polynesian sailors” (178). They defend her not only from sinking ships, but from dangerous sea life; Sheldon warns Joan against the sharks teeming around the island, but she is determined to swim, “her henchmen swimming a dozen feet on either side” (175). Although Sheldon doubts that the Polynesians could do anything in the case of a shark attack, “he did believe, implicitly, that their lives would go bravely before hers” (175) in their attempt to protect their white mistress. London, surrounded by Melanesians and afflicted by disease, reverts to romanticizing—one critic uses the word “valorizes” (Furer 158)—the Polynesians as he had done throughout the voyage.

Of course, the whites are not the only ones to keenly sense the fundamental difference between the Polynesians and the Melanesians; Joan’s Tahitians and Marquesans fully feel their supposed superiority. When a menacing mob of nearby savages advances on Sheldon’s house, the Polynesians do their part in stopping them. After the Melanesians have been terrified by several explosions, the Polynesians decide to teach the leader of the mob, the old chief Telepasse, a lesson. Holding the Solomon Islanders’ taboos in contempt, including the prohibition against bathing, they dunk Telepasse in a tub, taking pains to ensure the “sacred dirt [was] rubbed and soused from his body” (155). Later, a group of Melanesians and Polynesians, led by Sheldon and Joan, come across a severed and smoked head in the bush; while the Melanesians break into “wild hearty laughter” and take in the “spectacle with glittering eyes and glutinous expressions,” the “Tahitians, on the other hand, were shocked.” Joan sees one of her noble men “shaking his head slowly and grunting forth his disgust” (341-2).

One of London's more disturbing additions to a text already full of racist images and attitudes is Sheldon's dog, Satan. A huge, muscular animal, Satan has a natural aversion towards the Melanesians; in fact, "he had it in for the whole black race" (114). Sheldon refers to Satan as his "nigger-chaser" (115), but he is initially surprised when after furiously routing a gang of Melanesian laborers, Satan charges one of Joan's Polynesians, but instead of attacking, he "danced and frisked about him with laughing eyes and wagging tail." Joan rebukes Sheldon for his surprise and refers to Satan as a "proper dog," adding that he "didn't require any teaching to recognize the difference between a Tahitian and a black boy" (115). At one point, Satan does mistake Matauare, one of Joan's Polynesians, for a Melanesian when he changes into local dress, but the defiance of Matauare in the face of the snarling dog soon convinces Satan that the man is not one of the "blacks"; Satan instead contents himself with terrifying the cowardly Melanesian house-boys, chasing them around the yard until Joan finally quiets him (117). Despite this continual violence against the Melanesians, Satan impresses his white masters with his "inexhaustible energy and good spirits." Satan's actions are disturbing enough, but London's attempts to "explain" the dog's essence are chilling: because "everlasting hatred of the black had been woven into the fibres of consciousness," Satan's "teeth seemed perpetually to ache with desire" (118). Nothing excites the animal like "black legs," and the occasion for Sheldon to rescue a "mauled and frightened black" was likely not rare (137).

Satan's perception of the differences between races, and his seeming comprehension of the relative positions of these "breeds" in a racial hierarchy simply reinforces London's worldview of a fierce, Darwinian struggle waged by humanity's various peoples. London, racked as he was by pain and illness, persisted defiantly in his belief that whites had triumphed thus far everywhere they had gone, and were destined to continue to do so, but the disease-ridden

atmosphere of the Solomon Islands complicated the battle. In *Adventure*, the whites of the plantation while away afternoons by “propounding the theory of the strong arm by which the white man ordered life among the lesser breeds.” Sheldon thrills as he realizes that it is not simply theory for him but life—“he was living it, placing the strong hand of his race firmly on the shoulders of the lesser breeds that laboured” (200). But, mirroring London’s present situation, Sheldon himself had barely survived several bouts of tropical illness; in fact, the very first line of the novel underlines his precarious position in the Solomons, informing the reader that he “was a very sick white man.” At the beginning, as he carries out the necessary task of dosing the workers, laid low with dysentery, he is too sick to walk and relies upon a native to convey him, riding “pick-a-back on a woolly-headed, black-skinned savage, the lobes of whose ears had been pierced and stretched until one had torn out” (1)—a classic image of colonialism.

This grotesque image of the stricken but intelligent white plantation owner lugged about by the brutish, dull, yet physically powerful black laborer clearly illustrates the nature of the racial struggle carried on at the plantation. Both whites and blacks are susceptible to illness in the Solomon Islands, but the whites can hope to preserve their mastery over the savage natives through their intelligence and technology—if the Melanesians have been mired in a struggle against disease and environment since time out of mind, thus limiting their ability to become civilized, then the whites, with their imported quinine and other medicines, have confidence they can overcome these same limitations and, in the bargain, help the natives overcome them to the extent their physical labor becomes more reliable. Perhaps, as Sheldon tells Joan, the Melanesians are fated to die out and be replaced with imported labor from other parts of the colonized world, but until that scenario is realized, white ingenuity and innate superiority will build a foundation for present and future economic prosperity in locations like the Solomon

Islands. Disease may conspire to create a level playing field between the two competing races, but technology and medicine help the whites regain their advantage.

Certainly, London sees the intelligence and advancement of the white race as a decisive factor in the domination of the colonial world, but, apropos of his belief in the Nietzschean theory of the *übermensch*, he indicates in *Adventure* that intelligence without physicality is impotent. Sheldon may be a cultured Englishman, but his surroundings inspire him with a decisiveness that allows him to prosper; as London would write in *John Barleycorn*, whites “in the tropics...become savage, merciless. They commit monstrous acts of cruelty that they would never dream of committing in their original temperate climate” (177). Of course, in *Adventure*, this capacity for “monstrous...cruelty” is to be applauded.

Joan, in her initial tendency towards kindness as a method for winning over the native laborers, shows her intelligence—after all, the natives only use violence in their dealings with each other—but Sheldon insists to her that his experience has shown him that, for whites to succeed in this part of the globe, intellect must be backed up by force, brutal force if necessary, in order to be effective. To return to the opening scene of the novel, when Sheldon is piggybacked to the barracks so he can dose his workers, we find that the principle of intelligence bulwarked by the constant threat of violence is operating, and effective, from the beginning. Sheldon realizes his power over the recruited laborers is precarious, and as he moves down the line of bunks examining and treating the ill natives, he speaks to his helpers, those still strong enough to do physical labor, “in the sharp, preemptory manner of a man who would take no nonsense” (4). When one native moves to challenge Sheldon’s orders, the plantation owner erupts in violence, “landing a back-hand blow on the black’s mouth.” The native still does not back down—the “anger of a wild animal was in his eyes”—and Sheldon escalates his threats by

putting his hand on the pistol shoved into his belt. The native finally relents, implicitly acknowledging that Sheldon has a more powerful capacity for violence than he does, and follows orders. Sheldon's exertion "cost him a painful effort," but to allow a challenge to go unmet would mean the swift and merciless end of his ascendancy (5).

Sheldon holds his views on the complementary roles of intelligence and force from the beginning of the novel; Joan, on the other hand, evolves into her initial acceptance and eventual embrace of Sheldon's philosophy. Much is made in the novel of the two main characters' national origins. Sheldon, as an Englishman, rigidly feels the distance between whites and non-whites, while Joan, the American, who grew up in Hawaii, one of the last "frontiers" of America, experienced childhood as though she were a native, swimming and shooting, "like Indians," as she puts it (65). Her worldview is not invalidated by her experiences in the Solomons—after all, the Polynesians reward her friendlier approach—but in *Adventure* she must learn to adapt it in light of where a particular race fits in the hierarchy of races.

Soon after Joan urges Sheldon to treat the Melanesians with kindness, she is thrust into the dangerous confrontation with the recently returned Queensland recruits, and in order to save Sheldon's life, she is forced to shoot one of the natives in the shoulder (94-5). This action shakes her, and she still protests that surely the Solomon Islanders are "amenable to reason" (97), but nevertheless, the incident serves as the catalyst for her change in attitude. Sheldon admits that she is correct in "all that you say about the Hawaiians and Tahitians," but he explains that while Polynesians are not black, the Melanesians are—"look at their kinky hair," he urges (98). That Joan listens to Sheldon is apparent; she changes from stressing the Melanesians' human characteristics to viewing them as animals. Earlier, she helps feed her crew and the domestic workers on the plantation by dynamiting fish (88), a method of fishing London mentions in *The*

Cruise of the Snark, but after her confrontation she adapts her use of dynamite to a more dangerous type of animal—the bloodthirsty natives. When the mob of islanders led by the old chief Telepasse swarms the yard of the plantation house and demands tobacco and other goods, Joan alertly brings out several sticks of dynamite in order to defuse the situation. When a native fires his rifle through one of the house’s windows, Joan “flung the dynamite, the fuse hissing and spluttering, into the thick of the blacks” (150-1). The cowardly Melanesians scatter wildly, dropping their guns and spears in headlong flight, and Satan is released to mop up the remnants. This time, Joan is not shaken by her actions but instead is almost gleeful about the effects of the dynamite, or as London writes, “tragedy was averted, and the comedy began” (151).

Sheldon and Joan eventually marry and resolve to carry on the task of running the now-prosperous plantation together, an ending that reaffirms London’s own attitudes about racial hierarchy, views initially reinforced by his experiences on the *Snark*, even if they must have been wavering as he lay on his sickbed. If Sheldon is not a thinly-disguised version of London, then at the least, the two share both a worldview and an unwavering commitment to its ramifications. When faced with Telepasse’s mob, Sheldon affects a lack of concern and saunters to the edge of the veranda, where it “came to him curiously that it was his destiny ever to stand on this high place, looking down on unending hordes of black trouble that required control, bullying, and cajolery” (146). As London finished *Adventure* and prepared to be taken to Sydney in great pain for treatment and recuperation, the same sentiments could be applied to him, gazing down from the platform of his fiction onto the weaker races, the “lesser breeds” (200), and never doubting that he would be vindicated in his belief that whites, “by some strange alchemy of race, was pledged to mastery” (106).

However, *Adventure* was not the end of London's fictional treatments of the Pacific and its native inhabitants, nor was it the last word in his attitudes towards the same. During this period of suffering and convalescence, London also wrote many of the short stories that would be collected in 1911 as *South Sea Tales*, including "Mauki," a tale singled out by critics as an example, alongside *Adventure*, of London's unredeemable racism at the time. Certainly, this "blood-soaked tale" (Kershaw 203), characterized as the "most sadistic" of the *South Sea Tales* (Sinclair 153), takes up the savagery of *Adventure* and distills it into the intensity demanded by the short story form. Mauki, the title character, is one of the laborers recruited from among the Solomon Island headhunters, similar to the hordes of recruits that Sheldon and Joan despise, drive, and at times kill in *Adventure*. Mauki would no doubt have been viewed and treated the same way if he had appeared in the novel, for he is willful and treacherous. His aversion to labor leads him to escape the plantation he had signed up to work on for three years, despite the fact that his tribal chief had already received tobacco in exchange for his pledge; at one point, he smuggles several other laborers out of the plantation along with him, only to turn cannibal when hungry, slaying one of his fellow escapees, "saving his head and cooking and eating the rest of him" ("Mauki" 124). He is eventually judged "incorrigible" and sentenced to transportation to remote Lord Howe atoll, a "Polynesian gulag" (Horwitz xiii), in anticipation that he will be worked to death by the brutal overseer Max Bunster ("Mauki" 125-26).

London is doing something different with "Mauki" than he did with *Adventure*, however. The title of the story itself alerts us that the focus is on the recruit this time; the laborer is no longer simply exotic wallpaper in a story of white romance in the savage Solomons. Mauki does not want to work, it is true, but he was ordered by his master to pledge his three years of labor, and London goes so far as to describe Mauki as "a lamb led to the slaughter" (123). Despite

Mauki's cannibalism and headhunting nature, London clearly means for the reader to sympathize with the overwhelmed recruit. Perhaps there is little chance of Mauki holding out against the advance of the whites long-term, but like Imber in "The League of the Old Men," London cannot help but admire the defiance in the face of long odds by men such as Mauki; no one will help Mauki, for both his own people and the whites are ranged against him, yet he does not meekly surrender. This "lamb" determines not to sell his life cheaply.

London's preoccupation with disease informs "Mauki," yet his concurrent fascination with disfigurement complements this obsession, a pairing that is perhaps natural in light of the grotesque physical symptoms of his own illness, including the horrific peeling skin and painful, swollen hands. Tropical disease is not foregrounded in the story; it is an accepted and unremarkable aspect of life in the Solomons. One of Mauki's escape attempts derails when, before he can steal a canoe for his trip home, "the fever got him, and he was captured and brought back more dead than alive" (123). He simply waits out the fever and tries again. Max Bunster, the overseer stationed on remote Lord Howe, understands well the war of attrition between adversaries that disease necessitates in the tropics; as in *Adventure*, whoever falls ill first loses the struggle. Once, we are told, when faced with a formidable rival for a prize position, he simply bided his time until the giant of a man was "prostrated by a combined attack of dysentery and fever." Bunster takes advantage of the man's weakness, beating him mercilessly and making it clear to the Moongleam Soap Company that he was indispensable for their extensive plantation system.

When they find themselves face to face on Lord Howe, both Mauki and Bunster understand the nature of the face-off in which they find themselves. Furthermore, the Moongleam Soap Company, burdened with two undesirables, one white and one native, also

comprehends all too well what will happen on that speck of land isolated in the South Pacific; as Mr. Haveby, a company manager, puts it, “[i]t will be a case, imagine, of Mauki getting Bunster, or Bunster getting Mauki, and good riddance in either event” (126). Bunster, as the white overseer, of course has the upper hand initially, even emphasizing the epidemiological specter haunting their battle when he catches Mauki and burns him with “the live end of a cigar against his flesh.” This particular torture Bunster “called vaccination, and Mauki was vaccinated a number of times a week” (130). However, Mauki “continued his patient wait” (131) in this Darwinistic war of attrition, and eventually, the inevitable happens: Bunster falls ill. One morning, Mauki finds Bunster “shivering with ague, and half an hour later he was burning with fever” (131). Mauki knows the significance of Bunster’s illness—he has won the battle, and with his victory, perhaps cast doubt on “the idea of the white race being the fittest to survive” (Stasz 137).

The fever itself will not kill Bunster, and this is where London’s fascination with disfigurement makes its gruesome appearance. Bunster has a mitten fashioned from raspy “ray fish skin” (130), and he uses it occasionally to rip the skin from Mauki. Mauki thus learns the efficacy of this mitten firsthand, and Bunster’s disease brings him a chance to apply his knowledge. After an afternoon’s work on Bunster, laid low and “weak as a baby,” with Bunster’s own instrument of torture, Mauki loads a boat in preparation for his final, successful escape back to his native island; as he arranges the goods, we get our final glimpse of Mauki’s handiwork: “a hideous, skinless thing came out of the house and ran screaming down the beach till it fell in the sand and mowed and gibbered under the scorching sun.” A merciful beheading both ends Bunster’s sufferings and gives Mauki a trophy of his victory (132). Mauki’s calm demeanor as he methodically flays Bunster with the mitten easily, and perhaps justifiably, leads to the charges

of sadism in the story, but it is also important to note the way Bunster's disease leads directly to his grotesque disfigurement, almost as if it were a natural process, a connection reinforced by the agonies and temporary deformities London was experiencing at the time he was writing "Mauki."

This correlation between disease and disfigurement in London's mind looms heavily over his later fiction concerning leprosy, the ultimate disfiguring illness. In 1912, a year after the publication of *South Sea Tales*, London put out another collection of short stories, *The House of Pride and Other Tales of Hawaii*. The "racist pulp fiction" of the earlier collection is left behind; the stories contained in this volume are mature and provocative, easily among the best work London did. Of particular note for this study are two stories that concern leprosy and its impact on Hawaiian society, both white and native: "Good-by, Jack" and "Koolau the Leper."

"Good-by, Jack" recounts the impression Jack Kersdale makes on the unnamed narrator of the story. Interestingly, both Kersdale and the narrator can be read as thinly-disguised versions of London himself—the narrator as a visitor being told about Hawaii, including the leprosy epidemic and the colony at Molokai, and Kersdale, as mentioned earlier, as the mouthpiece of the white colonial elites, spouting arguments for leper deportation taken almost verbatim from London's discussion of Molokai in *The Cruise of the Snark*.

Kersdale is a fascinating figure; he represents the two American groups who proceeded to dominate the Hawaiian political and economic spheres from the mid-Nineteenth Century forward: the missionaries and the traders. Kersdale, the narrator tells us, "came of missionary stock," but one "grandfather was... a Yankee trader, who got his start for a million in the old days by selling cheap whiskey and square-face gin" ("Good-by" 111). As a member of the wealthy American society in Hawaii, Kersdale has a stake in justifying the heavy-handed methods by

which this same society defends its interests, including the existence and maintenance of the Molokai colony. Leprosy, in fact, is “one of his hobbies,” as the narrator puts it, and Kersdale is eager to explain to him why “the horrors of Molokai are all poppycock” (114). Kersdale’s discourse on the “joyous leper” focuses on the quality of life for the inmates of the colony, and he mentions many of the same pastimes London does in *The Cruise of the Snark*, horse racing and boating among them. Echoing London’s earlier sentiments, Kersdale favorably contrasts conditions at Molokai with those in any number of slums around the world and insists that those forced to live there are happy; Kersdale even contends that “I shouldn’t mind going down there myself for the rest of my days” (114), a statement whose absurdity would be proven in short order.

To further buttress his argument that the lepers embrace Molokai as a new paradise, Kersdale also tells a story that London relates in *Snark*; upon the development of a more accurate leprosy test, doctors discover that one inmate of the colony is not actually leprous and thus is required to leave. The man, desperate to stay in his newfound Eden, “marrie[s] a leper woman in the last stages” and petitions to stay, as “no one was as well able as he to take care of his poor old wife” (“Good-by” 115). Significantly, the story as recounted in *Snark* concerns an African-American man who had migrated to Hawaii years before, but in “Good-By, Jack,” the man’s ethnicity is omitted, leading the reader to assume he is one of the natives so attached to his new life out at Molokai.

A sense of distance characterizes all that Kersdale has to say to the narrator on the subjects of leprosy and Molokai. He is a man confident that, insulated as he is in the white society of Honolulu, leprosy need be nothing more than a curiosity to him—“one of his hobbies.” Deportation was a public health issue, true, but only in economic terms for Kersdale; if

leprosy were allowed to spread through the labor population that worked the sugar cane plantations of the islands, the impact on exports could be devastating. In this sense, leperous workers are no different than insect pests or drought. His assurance of his invulnerability extends so far that he tells the narrator “there wasn’t one chance in a million for him or any other white man to catch it” (114).

Kersdale coolly urges the narrator to accompany him to the next departure of the government ship to Molokai, where they could observe deportees saying their last goodbyes and boarding for the trip. The spectacle becomes a type of tourist attraction for newcomers to the islands, just as the disease-ravaged Typee valley and Molokai itself had become—as Kersdale callously phrases it, they will go see “the lepers wailing as they depart for Molokai” (116). His ability to turn “family tragedy into a spectator sport reveals the monster in Kersdale” (Slagel 187).

London’s fascination with the link between disease and disfigurement manifests itself in this scene, but what should alarm the white spectators is the capricious nature of the disease’s devastation. The narrator finds himself fascinated by the fact that the “faces of the majority were hideous—too horrible for me to describe,” but at the same time, the illness left other victims unscathed, “with no apparent signs of the fell disease upon them” (“Good-by” 116). That this scourge could thus lurk undetected even in the whites milling about at the dock is reinforced when the narrator notices that one of the deportees is “a little white girl, not more than twelve, with blue eyes and golden hair,” a child who sounds very much like one of London’s championed Anglo-Saxons. He remarks on her unfortunate situation as an “alien...among the brown-skinned afflicted ones,” but the Honolulu whites refuse to acknowledge the ramifications of an infected white amongst them; one of the doctors supervising the deportation dismisses the

little girl as one who would also be better off at Molokai because her “father is a brute.” By explaining that she is a child of whites who do not respect civilized values—a father who has degenerated into brutality—the girl is effectively othered, and her plight is therefore not a reason for concern.

This cavalier attitude on the part of the white establishment seems foolhardy in light of the hints London provides in the story that a capacity for uncleanness exists even within them, that they are not walled off from contact with, and contamination by, the natives. The lack of visible symptoms and the infection of the white girl underscore an earlier warning that Kersdale has made himself susceptible to leprosy. Coupled with his unshakeable self-confidence, Kersdale’s other dominant trait is his virility; his staggering sense of his own masculinity defines him. The narrator tells us that, apart from the wealth his family already possessed, Kersdale made his own fortunes, as “a sugar king, a coffee planter, a rubber pioneer, a cattle rancher.” And his success in the bruising world of frontier commerce is matched by his physicality; not only had he fought two duels when he “was no more than a raw youth,” he had also taken a “courageous part in the last revolution, when the native dynasty was overthrown” (“Good-by” 112). All of this—the money, the duels, the revolution—conspires to make him a figure of awe in the eyes of white Hawaiian society. He is another example of London’s cherished myth of the *übermensch*, but he is a superman with feet of clay.

Building on his success in other endeavors, Kersdale also revels in his status as a “bachelor . . . as handsome a man as was ever doted upon by mamas with marriageable daughters” (“Good-by” 112). One incident witnessed by the narrator firsthand demonstrates Kersdale’s assured masculinity. At a gathering one evening, a massive centipede—“seven inches” long (112)—fell from the rafters into one young woman’s hair. The “devil” appeared close to

dropping onto her “exposed shoulders,” or even to “fall inside her bodice,” but Kersdale decisively catches the centipede with one hand and crushes it on the ground, but not before the creature “writhed and twisted” itself into position to bite him twice. The poison injected by the bites causes a painful if temporary disfigurement, with Kersdale’s arm “as big as a barrel” by the next morning; the narrator tells us “it was three weeks before the swelling went down” (113). As if to punctuate the dangers native life poses to white society, regardless of how insulated it appears to be, London gives the young woman the delicate name of “Fairchild” (112), hinting that she is the everywoman—and by extension, everyman—of transplanted American society.

Two important observations need to be made about this incident. First, an undeniably sexual undertone shades the situation, from the phallic, predatory centipede to the lovely and vulnerable shoulders and bust of the young woman. This charged symbolism anticipates London’s embrace of Freud and Jung several years later. Second, it is Kersdale’s swaggering virility that endangers him; his masculinity requires him to forcefully interject himself into the situation, but his encounter with the “ugly venomous devil” leaves him infected despite his aura of cool invincibility.

London, with the centipede incident and the outwardly healthy lepers preparing to depart for Molokai, masterfully sets the scene for Kersdale’s downfall at the docks. As the crowd of whites continues its detached observation of the deportation, the narrator notices an apparently flawless and beautiful native woman boarding the ship; he immediately determines that she is “pure Polynesian,” and he remarks that her “lines and proportions were magnificent.” No trace of the dread leprosy appeared outwardly, and in fact, the doctor sadly but admiringly explains that she had voluntarily surrendered herself, even though “[n]o one suspected. But somehow she had contracted the disease” (“Good-by” 117). Significantly, the doctor continues with her story,

mentioning that her name was Lucy Mokonui, that she was a well-known singer in the Islands, and that a dozen whites had “lost their hearts to her at one time or another” (117). We can infer that as the entertainer known as the “Hawaiian nightingale,” she performed often for white audiences—the narrator even tells she had once traveled to the mainland to sing with the Boston Symphony—and we can further infer that, as captivating as she was, she would have commanded the attention of that most eligible of bachelors, Jack Kersdale.

The falsehood of an impregnable white community existing within the larger native population unravels with the introduction of Lucy. Kersdale had begun walking back to the carriage and so does not notice her; Lucy, however, spots Kersdale, and she “stretched forth her arms” in a “sensuous way,” calling out “Good-by, Jack! Good-by!” Considering that Lucy has performed on stage and is compared to the British actress Olga Nethersole by the narrator when she cries out to Jack, with her outstretched arms reminding him of the theatrical way “Nethersole has of embracing an audience,” London implies that Lucy knows full well the implications of her pitiful farewell to Kersdale. The narrator tells us that “his face went white to the roots of his hair,” and that he “threw up his hands and groaned” (119). That Kersdale’s virility has exposed him to the contagion of leprosy, something he contemptuously thought of as a native scourge, is obvious even to other bystanders. The doctor at the docks looks at him “curiously,” and clinically observes, “[y]ou, of all men, should have known” (120). Lucy’s calculatedly naïve acknowledgement of Kersdale at the scene of her deportation confirms publicly what was probably an open secret among the Hawaiian whites; that open secret has now become an all-too-public stigma.

Previously, as in the monstrous flaws of Wolf Larsen in *The Sea Wolf*, London had cast doubt on the invulnerability of the übermensch, but with Jack Kersdale, the myth is cracked wide

open; the importance of London's characterization is that it is Kersdale's own sense of his invulnerability, his deification of his own masculinity, that exposes him to what may be his downfall. In coupling his physical drives with a contempt for those he uses to gratify himself, he has dealt himself the ultimate blow. I asserted earlier that Kersdale was an autobiographical portrait of London, and Kersdale's fate reflects on London as well, as the author followed his stubborn, foolish urges to build his own yacht, to sail that yacht himself across the Pacific, and then to self-medicate both himself and his crew, until his confidence was shattered and his body was wrecked. For a man who believed himself to be the living embodiment of the ideal of the *übermensch*, the miserable ending and aftermath of the *Snark* adventure had a profound impact on him both psychologically and physically. Kersdale's sense of self sinks in the wake of Lucy's revelation, and we can sense London pouring into Kersdale his own doubts and misgivings.

If "Good-by, Jack" is a portrait of the artist as a sick man, then that story's companion piece, "Koolau the Leper" is a recasting of London's Darwinian beliefs from the viewpoint of the native; the science does not overwhelm the human element in the story, as he "shows genuine empathy" for the lepers (Slagel 173). He draws on previous attempts to write from the perspective of non-whites, and the resultant tone is closer to the regret of Imber in "The League of Old Men," than to the brutality of Mauki in the story of that name. Critic Andrew J. Furer goes so far as to label "Koolau the Leper" an "antiracist" work (Furer 159), which it certainly is, but caution must be used in extending that conclusion to London's overall outlook at this time. The sadistic elements of "Mauki" are toned down considerably, but it is important to note that rather than tracing a tidy transition in London's views towards natives from savagery to sympathy, the lepers in both "Good-by, Jack" and "Koolau the Leper" are Polynesians rather than Melanesians, and as we have seen, London treated Polynesians much more sympathetically

as far back as *Adventure*, drawing a distinct line between the two groups. Imber, as an Inuit, the hardy and honorable people of the far north, was also treated more sympathetically by the always race-conscious London, but unlike Imber, who tells his story in a courtroom and has his story translated to the whites sitting in judgment, Koolau has no desire nor intention of justifying himself to the white society that now dominates his ancestral lands. London indicates an ultimate futility perhaps, in the resistance of Koolau just as he did in that of Imber, but whereas Imber reconciles himself to defeat, Koolau never does. He fights a lonely war against the whites, and he dies just as he lived: defiantly.

This defiance stems from the sense of injustice Koolau feels at being afflicted with leprosy—a disease he holds white plantation owners responsible for—and then at being required to submit to deportation. Unlike Lucy Mokunui, who betrayed no outward symptoms of the disease, Koolau is disfigured, branded by the illness, and thus is given no choice when it comes to surrendering himself for the Molokai transport. Undercutting Kersdale’s belief that natives considered Molokai a paradise, Koolau and his fellow lepers who take to the mountains to escape the white authorities see the colony for the prison it truly was; Koolau laments that one leper had not seen his sister since she “was sent to Molokai seven years ago” (“Koolau” 135), an abrupt change from London’s assurance in *The Cruise of the Snark* that families came to visit the exiles regularly. Kersdale and Koolau share a magnetism and confidence that allow them to become centers of their respective communities, but Koolau does not have the luxury of distance from which to moralize, and this gives his character a depth Kersdale does not possess. Koolau feels the suffering he witnesses, unlike Kersdale, who dispassionately watches the wailing partings of families at the dock.

Koolau might not know an individual named Kersdale, but he implicates men like him when he tells his ragged, pitiful band of followers how Hawaii came to be in its present situation. Koolau speaks of the whites who initially came to the Islands: “[t]hey were of two kinds. The one kind asked our permission, our gracious permission, to preach to us the word of God. The other kind asked our permission, our gracious permission, to trade with us” (135). Remembering that Kersdale is the scion of a wealthy Yankee trader who married into a prominent missionary family, there is little doubt that Kersdale represents a common type that London, through Koolau, implicates in the misery of the Hawaiian natives. Kersdale saw the problem of native lepers as an economic one that threatened the plantation system, and this perspective allowed him to trivialize the human misery created by the policy of exile; for Kersdale, the solution was simply pragmatic.

Koolau also grasps the economic dimension of the epidemic, but he sees economics as inseparable from the moral issues raised by the Western presence in Hawaii. He tells his followers that, once the land was under the control of the whites, the natives were cut off from any economic benefits reaped from the sprawling plantations that now covered their land. When the natives refused to take part in such an unjust system, the whites, instead of addressing their grievances, “brought the Chinese slaves from across the sea. And with them came the Chinese sickness” (“Koolau” 137). Koolau’s friend Kapahei seconds him, explaining that the whites “brought the sickness with the coolie slaves who work the stolen lands” (138). The idea of leprosy being the “Chinese sickness” was commonplace; John Tayman, in his history of Molokai, *The Colony*, observes that “[n]o one knows precisely when leprosy entered” the islands, but he acknowledges that one theory “said the disease snuck ashore upon the backs of Chinese cooks and laborers” (Tayman 20), workers imported by white plantation owners eager

for productive labor. Gavan Daws, in *Shoal of Time*, a history of the Hawaiian Islands, echoes Tayman, writing that “natives called it mai pake, Chinese disease, though no one really knew who brought it to the islands” (Daws 209).

Apart from the ultimate source, the moral aspect of the leprosy epidemic is made more explicit when London remarks of the small band of renegade lepers that “upon them had been placed the mark of the beast.” This statement suggests a number of things, but it is primarily a Biblical allusion—in Revelation, those who choose to follow the “Beast,” traditionally interpreted by Western Christianity as synonymous with another Biblical figure, the Antichrist, received the mark of the beast. It is not strange that London would reach into the history of Christian thought and theology to brand these sufferers. Saul Brody, in his definitive work on leprosy and literature, *The Disease of the Soul*, traces the history of the stigmatizing of lepers throughout those most staunchly religious of times, the Medieval period, and explains, “[t]he association of leprosy with morality does not end with the waning of the Middle Ages; in fact it continues into the twentieth century” (189-90). The implication is clear; in a continuum from centuries before, the native lepers are outcasts, outsiders, those rejected by God, and thus, as London describes them, “men and women beyond the pale” (“Koolau” 135). Leprosy always “seemed like a judgment as much as a disease” (Daws 210)—as Tayman puts it, “victims of the disease were sinful, shameful, and unclean” (3)—and even if Kersdale blithely ignores any but the most pragmatic ramifications of the epidemic, Koolau grasps the deeper meanings of it.

Of course, on a more literal level, the “mark of the beast” also reinforces the physical plight of the lepers; as one critic observes, “the characters regress to their animal roots” (Slagel 185). They are the hunted, tracked through the wilds of Hawaii’s mountains by a determined band of whites, and reduced to living in caves and sleeping in the open. The bodily ravages

suffered by the natives also reduce them to the level of “beasts.” Their humanity is “smeared half away” (“Koolau” 136) by the physical wreckage they have become. London draws on some of the exiles he encountered at Molokai when he describes the disfigurement of the lepers; he speaks of a “space [that] yawned in a face where should have been a nose” (135) and of “one woman [who] wept scalding tears from twin pits of horror” (136). These people “once had been men and women” but were now “caricatures of everything human,” with some even reduced to “apelike travesties” (136-7).

In “Mauki,” London reveled in the descriptions of mutilation and defacement as if he were channeling his own pain and fear into the characters, but in “Koolau the Leper,” the explicit depictions of disfigurement are never debasing, never gratuitous. Perhaps time and recuperation account for this difference, but London manages to treat the lepers sympathetically and sadly, not as a parade of grotesqueries. Despite the “mark of the beast” with which the natives have been branded, London sensitively stresses their humanity. Perhaps the most remarkable and moving scene of the story recounts the activities of the group on their final night before the all-out assault by the authorities to capture them, a scene most likely inspired by the pre-dawn dance of the “horribles” the Londons witnessed their first night at Molokai. The lepers pass around calabashes and, “as the liquid fire coursed through them and mounted to their brains, they forgot that they had once been men and women, for they were men and women once more.” One woman “plucked the strings of an *ukulele*” and sang with a “cry, softly imperious and seductive.” The lepers dance and sing in the warm rush of the native liquor, “for in their disintegrating bodies life still loved and longed” (138-9). It is a heartbreaking moment, for we know it is only a momentary respite, and indeed, the flares of the advancing soldiers abruptly end their revels.

As the haunting festivities of the lepers suggest, “Koolau the Leper” may be a story of defiance, but it is also an elegy. “The League of Old Men” might lament the end of a proud but doomed people, overmatched in the struggle between the races by the crush of whites swarming their lands, but London’s tone encourages us to identify with Koolau in a way it does not with Imber. Presumably Imber was executed by the white authorities after his trial, but Koolau refuses to go out on the whites’ terms. He is reduced to living like an animal, as his pursuers “drove him like a rabbit,” and he “turned and doubled and eluded.” After two years of this existence, leprosy had ravaged him, and “[l]ike a wild animal he had crept into hiding to die” (“Koolau” 149). He would die afflicted by both the disease brought with imported labor and by the system that unblinkingly would sacrifice him for economic concerns. He does not die meekly, however; to the end, he clutches his beloved Mauser rifle, even if it is with a hand that “had no fingers left upon it with which to pull the trigger” (149). Just as importantly, Koolau may have been reduced to the life of an animal, but in contrast to the crude, racist descriptions of the Melanesian natives in *Adventure*, London makes it clear that Koolau is anything but an animal. A gruesome death seems an unlikely triumph, but Koolau makes it so, as he has too much strength and dignity to give in to despair or defeat.

As the next few years passed, London struggled to accept that he was no longer the *übermensch*; physically, he never fully recovered from the nightmarish end of the journey on the *Snark*. In fact, he was sadly headed for a young death, just past his fortieth year; his body simply could not keep up with the mythology he had embraced so early in his adulthood. Evidence exists from his reading and writing, though, that suggests London came to an uneasy sense of peace with the reality of disease and death, a peace that allowed him to finally shed his horrified identification of disfigurement with disease.

Hints of this new attitude surface in “Koolau the Leper” when London invests Koolau with a quiet dignity even as his wrecked body fails him. During his last couple of years, London began reading the works of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, and some of the last fiction he produced demonstrated a complexity and intriguing thoughtfulness beyond even the impressive works from *The House of Pride*; Jung, especially, “helped [London] to write some of his better short stories in the last months of his life” (Sinclair 229), as he became aware of the “role of dreams and the unconscious” (Day 159). These new thinkers mitigated the long-standing influence on London’s mind of Spencer and Nietzsche by influencing him to look inward; whereas Nietzsche once convinced London that he was an *übermensch*, a physical god, now Jung inspired him “to make a study of his own psychology.” An important aspect of this self-study was that it allowed London to “separate...the ancient myths that illuminated his best work from the racial prejudices that darkened his worst” (Sinclair 220-1). London’s fixation on disease was inextricably tied in with his racial ideology; the weak races were the ones prone to disease, and London’s experience with illness, temporary disfigurement, and pain during the voyage of the *Snark* shocked his absolute confidence in the supremacy of his “Anglo-Saxon” bloodlines.

A brief incident in one of these later stories, so profoundly influenced by Freud and Jung, “Shin-Bones,” illustrates London’s evolving views towards disease, both in himself and in the natives, previously doomed in his mind to fall before the white race’s dominance. The softening of London’s attitudes can be seen in the figure of Prince Akuli, who is the product of two native parents, a mother obsessed by the old traditions and a father enchanted by the modern world of business. Akuli gracefully reconciles the two, receiving his education at Oxford yet indulging his mother in her wish that he travel to the family’s ancient burial ground to fetch the bones of her family before she dies. Previously, in stories such as “The League of the Old Men” and “Koolau

the Leper,” London dignified those who held firmly to a pure racial and cultural identity, while denigrating those who weakened themselves through intermingling bloodlines and cultures; “Shin-Bones” represents a significant shift in London’s thinking. The influence of Freud and Jung is also apparent throughout, as Akuli and an elderly family retainer wind their way through clearly symbolic landscapes; it is a journey he will only make this once and it winds its way into the impenetrable mountains of the interior until he comes to the subterranean chamber where he faces the past and identity that natives like his father encourage him to reject. The difficulty of the mission mirrors the arduous process by which Akuli manages to unify the two separate paths his parents urge him towards; the young man taken by Jules Verne journeys to the center of his own family history and comes away with a new, mature identity.

The incident that so significantly comments on London’s attitudes at this late point in his life happens while Akuli and his guide make their way through the ghostly, unpeopled valleys and groves on their way to the chamber; in one valley they suddenly find “an old leper in hiding.” The old native learns who Akuli’s family is, and, in Akuli’s words, “he groveled at my feet, almost clasping them, and mumbled a *mele* of all my line out of a lipless mouth” (“Shin-Bones” 207). Then they continued on their way. London mentions the detail of the “lipless mouth,” but other than this, the emotion of the scene lies in the stricken man, representative of so many suffering natives, embracing Akuli and not being rejected, rather than in the grotesque deformity of his body. London chooses deliberately not to dwell on the physical aspect of the leper, but on the spiritual. Akuli’s refusal to distance himself from the shameful, painful past embodied in the ancient leper signifies that, even as he becomes a new, modern Hawaiian, there is no danger of his identity coming unmoored from his people’s shared history.

London's ability to depict disease in this new light—as a natural part of the landscape—suggests that he was reconciling himself to his declining health. The leper, disfigured as he might be, has found a home, has become an important part of Akuli's journey, and so the emotions of rage, disgust, or sensationalism no longer have a role to play. One biographer notes that London's reading of Freud and Jung led him “to recognize some of the unadmitted neuroses of his life,” including his “denial of his physical breakdown in the myths of himself as a superhero” (Sinclair 220). Disease no longer must be an enemy once this recognition is made; instead, its place in most lives can be recognized as natural, and so finally a man like London can attempt to come to terms with this reality once the delusion of Nietzschean superiority is dashed.

As I have continued to stress, London's journey from the hideous headhunters in *Adventure* to the moment of sympathetic acceptance between Akuli and the leper in “Shin-Bones” is by no means an uninterrupted trajectory from ignorance to enlightenment. His fiction and thought displayed a new maturity and clarity, partially due to his reading, partially due to his own realization that his body was slowly failing, but the deeply-ingrained ideology of his childhood and early self-education died hard. Andrew Sinclair mentions one incident that occurred in the last two years of London's life in which a young Greek challenged London's racism, and the older writer launched into a “gratuitously personal” rant, declaring that the Greeks were irrelevant in modern society because “they became mongrelized” (219). To further complicate London's mindset, he also went back to Hawaii to live for most of his last few months; he had a new respect and sympathy for the natives, but despite his indictment of the planter aristocracy in the Islands, he spent most of his time socializing with the rich plantation owners, playing cards and drinking. He came to believe that the “melting pot” of races and cultures in Hawaii “offered a possible solution to his dark prophecies of racial degeneration and

war” (Sinclair 214). The character of Prince Akuli, who embraces his native heritage and traditions but also values his university education, can be read as an example of this new direction, but this fantasy of racial harmony has been rightly criticized as “too sweet a picture of the many tensions on Hawaii” (219), especially from someone who had experienced many of the devastating consequences between Westerners and natives.

London’s escalating physical deterioration also gives us an understanding of why the thinkers he found himself attracted to changed from Nietzsche and Spencer to Freud and Jung. Generally speaking, the ideologies of Nietzsche and Spencer are unforgiving ones that make no allowances for weakness or compassion. They are the philosophies of the young: confident and assertive. The London in the midst of his experiences pirating for oysters, mining gold in the Yukon, or building his own yacht for a tour of the world would find much in common with the vigorous, virile assumptions inherent in a conception of the world like Social Darwinism, a system that asserted that only self-interest and strength would ensure brute survival and a passing on of genes, the only considerations worth having. Nietzsche’s rationale of the “will to power” further brushed aside moral or ethical concerns in its emphasis on the individual’s right to accomplish what he can. Of course, these summations gloss over the nuances of the complex ideas of Spencer and Nietzsche, but as we have already seen, London, as an autodidact, tended to embrace the broad strokes in favor of the details. He may have periodically questioned the ramifications of these youthful ideologies—as in Captain Wolf—but he remained enthralled by the twin forces of Spencer and Nietzsche until the aftermath of the *Snark* cruise definitively opened him to other ways of thinking.

In his prolonged convalescence after returning to California, a period that would last with few exceptions until his death, the slow realization that he would never possess the physical

vigor he once did must have been disheartening. The long-cherished ideologies of Nietzsche and Spencer would have been of no value, unless London was willing to admit that he was not an *übermensch*, not one of the fittest destined to survive. He needed new ideas, new philosophies that placed value even on a physical also-ran like London was fast becoming, and it seems that in Freud and Jung he found just what he needed. These pioneers of psychology appealed to London at precisely this moment because of their new discipline's emphasis on the *psyche*, or mind, over the body. The young, in the flush of their virility, may conquer and seize in the moment, Jung in particular said, but their deeds alone brought them no immortality. Instead the teller of tales, the one who could tap into the stories, images, and truths of ages immemorial, was the one who truly persevered through the long, unbroken strands of resonant wisdom accessed and recounted. This was a forgiving, merciful philosophy on many levels, for the follies of humanity, as surely as the triumphs, contributed to the store of wisdom the storyteller shared.

Perhaps this shift in philosophy can best be illustrated by examples from London's fiction itself. Where "the man" in one of London's celebrated short stories, "To Build a Fire," would die alone in the bitter cold, nameless, unremembered, an unpitied victim of a world operating according to the rules of Darwin as filtered through Nietzsche and Spencer, London gives the title character of "Koolau the Leper" a different fate. Koolau, too, dies alone, in this case in the thickly forested mountains of Hawaii and disfigured by leprosy, but even though nature itself has had no pity on him, he will not die without dignity or unremembered. Koolau defied his fate as an outcast, and as a result, London implies that he will be remembered by his people as one of its heroes. London, in his fiction as in outlook, had moved from the purely physical existence of the earlier story to the realm of endurance transformed into myth by the latter tale. By this period,

late in a life which would be cut short, death is still not a gentle force, but neither must it be a state of absolute oblivion.

Conclusion

The period covered in this study, especially the decades from the 1860s to the 1910s, witnessed a flowering of travel writing from professional novelists and fiction writers. This golden age left to us a wealth of works, both non-fiction travelogues and fictional novels and short stories, all due to the opening of the globe during these years; efficient and affordable travel, faster communications with the West, and relative safety for whites due to the establishment of colonies—formal or *de facto*—allowed those who had established themselves as authors the luxury of traveling to the distant parts of the earth.

Probably authors had always traveled in some fashion, but beginning in the early eighteenth century, we can trace a definite widening of accessible locales for professional writers interested in exploring the genre of travel writing. Daniel Defoe toured Britain for his *A Tour Thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain* (1726), while several decades later, in the 1770s, Samuel Johnson and James Boswell ventured to Scotland and the island chains beyond, both penning accounts of their travels. The Grand Tour was of course a requirement for many of the noble classes, but Henry Fielding, at the end of his life, veered south and wrote an account of his journey to Portugal in 1754. By the nineteenth century, it was common for established writers to cross back and forth across the Atlantic, as Washington Irving did from America, experiencing Britain and Spain, while in turn Charles Dickens would tour the United States, resulting in the 1842 travelogue *American Notes* and sections of his novel *Martin Chuzzlewit*.

It was only with the passing of the nineteenth century's midpoint, however, that we regularly see professional authors departing for farther destinations. As we have seen, Anthony Trollope took two different trips to the Antipodes, Robert Louis Stevenson went to the tropical climes of the Marquesas, Hawaii, and Samoa, among other places, in what he initially believed to be a temporary convalescence before going back to Britain, and Jack London built his own yacht, an indication that the South Seas to him seemed little more than a pleasure cruise. Add to these Mark Twain, who visited almost every region of the globe, including the Levant and the South Pacific, leading to his *The Innocents Abroad* (1869) and other travelogues, considered classics in the genre, and Herman Melville, who visited, years after the working voyages of his youth, the Near East, including Jerusalem, a journey which inspired his long poem *Clarel* (1876). The extensive travels by this list of luminary authors is certainly impressive, and taking place when they did, demonstrate just how accessible the world had become.

The result of this remarkable series of travels by established authors is a unique set of texts, many of which happen to focus on the South Pacific. What makes these texts so unique, other than the fact that that they were written by professional authors? Part of the key lies in this very fact, that we have impressions of the world outside of the metropolises of London and the American Northeast written by those whose very talents lay in their ability to capture settings, people, and events with their minds and to communicate their impressions via the written word. Of course, reports from Africa, Asia, the Americas, and Oceania had long rolled in as written by explorers, soldiers, missionaries, naturalists, and settlers, but never before had those who had honed their writing skills to such a degree tackled the world of empire, or the parts soon to be so. Without journalists on location in most cases, these writers often sent back the most readable reports of what the situation was like in remote regions.

The importance of dispatches of such quality is not limited to the time periods in which they wrote, either. Not to minimize the importance of prosaic accounts by those who were not, first and foremost, writers, for much of our understanding of colonial history depends on their reports, journals, and histories, but at the same time, the works of Trollope, Stevenson, and London add a different dimension to our picture of the imperial world. Their works are not simply documents, but eloquent witnesses, the best of which—Stevenson’s *The Ebb-Tide* or London’s “Koolau the Leper,” for example—still lives and breathes. The rediscovery of these works by the public at large could be very important in helping the populations of the West to understand more fully the legacy of the colonial world which seems to many to be so distant in the past, and also to grasp more vividly the issues raised by postcolonial writers and critics. For it is true that there are reasons why some writers endure, and those who may never pick up an academic history or a missionary’s journal might very well find themselves engrossed in the best work of some of the best writers of their times. These authors are not omniscient, nor do their conclusions reflect our updated understandings—indeed, at times they should be deeply criticized for their attitudes—but they bring alive, strikingly, a perspective of history, often more complex and nuanced than the less writerly accounts by those who did not make it their business to communicate anything more than facts, figures, strengths, economic potentials, religious conversions, estimates, and classifications.

These vivid and striking portrayals of history and its attendant mindsets can give us valuable insight when coming to terms with the changing world of the South Pacific as it was in the throes of the colonizing process, but just as darkly, we also find in the works of many of these writers the beginnings of processes and philosophies that would continue to spread their noxious tentacles for decades to come. The diseases already devastating natives in Melville’s

time would continue to sweep the South Pacific. The suppression of Aborigines witnessed and approved of by Trollope would persist well into the twentieth century until the Australian natives and their cultures were nearly extinct. Most disturbingly, London's twisting of both Darwin and Nietzsche's ideas to racist ends would be echoed over and over to justify many of the genocides which tragically litter the history of the last hundred years. If art can play its role in never letting us forget the tragedies and sins of our past—either by design, like Picasso's *Guernica*, or unintentionally, like Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*—then would not the works of Herman Melville, Anthony Trollope, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Jack London take their places as articulate reminders of the often overlooked legacy of Western interference and imperialism in the South Pacific?

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