

Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Young Chevalier*: Unimagined Space

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I

'The Young Chevalier' is the fragment of a novel written in 1892 and first published posthumously in Volume 26 of the Edinburgh Edition of the works of Robert Louis Stevenson in 1897.

¹ This chapter examines Stevenson's plans to redeploy Jacobite history in a less oblique manner than in his previous and much more familiar novels, *Kidnapped* and *The Master of Ballantrae*, both of which draw on Jacobite history and considers the possible reasons for the novel's unfinished state.

The published fragment consists of only two elements: a prologue and part of the first chapter. Stevenson's friend and editor, Sidney Colvin, prepared the prologue for publication from an untraced fair copy, and the beginning of the first chapter from a manuscript now held by the Silverado Museum.² Under the heading 'The Wine-Seller's Wife', the prologue describes the scene in a wine-seller's shop in Avignon frequented by two gentleman: members of the entourage of Charles Edward Stuart. The episode is constructed around a series of contrasts, the first being that opposing the brutish wine-seller Paradou and his wife Marie-Madeleine, a woman 'of exquisite delicacy'.³ On the tenth of November 1749 as the prologue opens Paradou is not in the shop but the two foreign gentlemen are on the premises, one dark and swarthy the other fair with grey eyes. The dark man is in fact Ballantrae while 'he of the dreamy eyes' is Lord Gladmuir, sometimes called Balmile. The mistral blows through the city and sweeps through the wine-shop evoking the contrast between the men's present situation and their past, their inner-lives and their outer-appearance as it lifts their drab cloaks to reveal bright finery below.

Marie-Madeleine is greatly attracted to the gentle Balmile whom she has observed on other occasions. Stevenson describes her mounting curiosity and fascination: ‘She considered him, the unknown, the speaker of an unknown tongue, the hero ... of an unknown romance, the dweller upon unknown memories.’⁴ He concurrently works through his own curiosity and uncertainties about the mysterious Jacobite character that he is creating so that Marie-Madeleine appears to shadow the author’s endeavour as ‘she forged for him a past.’ Paradou loves Marie-Madeleine ‘like a glutton and a brute; his love hung about her like an atmosphere’⁵ so when, on returning to the wine-shop and perceiving the look of disdain on his wife’s face as she contemplates the contrast between himself and Balmile, he explodes in anger. Before he can strike his wife, however, Balmile jumps up to defend her: ‘Neither spoke; there was no blow nor threat of one; it was war reduced to its last element, the spiritual.’

As a prologue, this episode works well. The reader’s interest is engaged and sustained by the setting of the scene in Avignon, the passing appearance of a mysterious French Jacobite sympathiser, the heightening sexual and physical tension, the gradual introduction of the secrecy and dissimulation attendant on Jacobite activities as well as the irreconcilable contrasts between characters – Balmile and Ballantrae as the good Jacobite and the bad Jacobite; the chivalrous Scotsman and the womanizing Scotsman; Paradou and Marie-Madeleine as the ill-matched couple; and Balmile and Paradou the potential rivals. This tension is compounded for any reader familiar with *The Master of Ballantrae* by the knowledge that Ballantrae was a spy in the Jacobite camp hired by the government in London. An impression of unrest is fanned by the mistral blowing and swirling through almost every paragraph.

A further unpublished page of dialogue between Ballantrae and Balmile which knits the situation into the plot of *The Master of Ballantrae* exists in manuscript form and is held by the Beinecke Library at Yale. It is reproduced below:

"Kelly⁶ is my abhorrence," said Balmile. "The prince I am sorry for, but I do not live for him. Live? Why do I live? I think because I know no honest means of dying. To kill myself were too much ado."

"And yet here comes a *dulce lenimen*⁷, and you reject it, as a man rejects an apple!" cried his companion.

"It seems inhuman," said Balmile "and what is more I look back on it with shame: what can I say but that I did not want her?"

"Which you did," put in Ballantrae. "Don't lie about it."

"It is not good to use these expressions; no good comes of it," returned Balmile. "But I should tell you something more. We are all here in a very wretched situation; life is at an end with us before we are thirty. It is a down going path, I see not anything that remains to us, but exile and the bottle; and and I think it the more needful to guard honour. It is not a thing I care to speak of, because like all else in our collapse, it is no more than a memory, – and the memory of a man already dead. But I was pledged before the affair to my cousin."

"My dear fellow, so was I!" cried Ballantrae. "And now she is married to my brother, and has a bairn forby !"

"I am more fortunate or more unfortunate, I know not which," replied Balmile. "The poor soul is true to me.["]⁸

This unpublished page appears to show that Stevenson intended the novel to return to and develop certain of his characteristic concerns – questions of honour and morality and their contraries and that both were to be associated with the Jacobite endeavour. The prologue is followed by the first chapter entitled "The Prince" which has only one character who, although he is never named, is quite obviously Prince Charles Edward Stuart. This scene is set on the same night as the happenings in the wine shop, that is on the tenth of November 1749 (although Stevenson is mistaken, Charles Edward Stuart was in fact only resident in Avignon from December 27th 1748 until February 25th 1749). The prince is described as ‘a young man in distress of mind’ and Stevenson clearly intends the reader to make his acquaintance towards the onset of his downwards trajectory. He is declared to have ‘a beautiful bright, open face; a little feminine, a little hard, a little weak; still full of the light of youth, but already beginning to be vulgarized; a sordid bloom come upon it, the lines coarsened with a touch of puffiness’.⁹ Thus the dismal scene is set in this modest room¹⁰ in Avignon for the tormented prince to pace up and down, to remember past victories, a northern city and enthusiastic followers. He lights a fire and pours himself a drink. His mood changes; ‘behind the depicted triumph loomed up the actual failure: defeat, the long distress of the flight, exile, despair, broken followers, mourning faces, empty pockets, friends estranged’¹¹. A mood of resentfulness towards his father rises up in his mind – he ‘calls me Carluccio’ he complains – quickly followed by a hatred of ‘the lewd effeminate traitor’¹² Louis XV of France, and filling his glass to the brim he drinks to a king’s damnation. ‘He persevered in this debilitating cycle of emotions, still fed the fire of his excitement with dribbles of Rhine wine: a boy at odds with life, a boy with a spark of the heroic, which he was now burning out and drowning down in futile reverie and solitary excess’.¹³

The chapter breaks off after barely three pages, leaving the reader hanging on the word 'But'. Despite its fragmentary and clearly unfinished nature (the prince has blue eyes in one sentence and brown in another), the beginning of something interesting is evident in the nuanced psychological description of Charles Edward, the representation of the cyclical nature of his moods, the portrayal of his deteriorating appearance, his resentment, his rage and his nostalgia.

II

By suggesting that 'a story might be made from the tales of Prince Charles Edward Stuart's "secret adventures" in France and elsewhere after his official expulsion from France in December 1748',¹⁴ his friend Andrew Lang had provided him with the idea for the novel. Lang, a journalist and prolific author in many fields, was rapidly becoming a respected specialist in the Jacobite period of Scottish history and after Stevenson's death was to go on to publish several works of his own on Jacobite history that drew on a certain number of hitherto unexploited sources – first in *Pickle the Spy* (1897)¹⁵ then in *The Companions of Pickle* (1898) and finally in a biography of Prince Charles Edward Stuart also entitled *The Young Chevalier* (1903).¹⁶

Two sources help us to retrace the genesis of the idea for 'The Young Chevalier': Lang's letters to Stevenson and a short piece written by him to be included in Sidney Colvin's editorial note which accompanied the fragment in the Edinburgh Edition. In this piece Lang confirms that the novel was based on his suggestion but protests that Stevenson clearly intended something very different to his 'crude idea.'¹⁷ That idea had, by Lang's own account, been planted in his mind by reading of Prince Charles's mysterious incognito in the *Tales of the Century: or Sketches of the romance of history between the years 1746 and 1846*¹⁸ (1847) by the brothers John Sobieski

Stolberg Stuart and Charles Edward Stuart. This work of historical fiction lays out the claim of the authors – John Carter Allen and Charles Manning Allen by their real names – to royal blood. Lang describes the book as ‘curious’, although in a letter to Stevenson in November 1891, he suggests that there is some truth in the Allens’ story – ‘they were not, as I supposed, the inventors of their own romance.’¹⁹

His curiosity piqued, Lang based his reconstruction of Charles Edward Stuart's activities during this period on what he describes as ‘The Jacobite account of his secret adventures [...] given in a little romance, purporting to be a "Letter from Henry Goring," his equerry, brother of Sir Charles Goring.’²⁰ Published in 1750, the work in question is entitled *A Letter from H_____ G_____, Esq.; One of the Gentlemen of the Bedchamber to the Young Chevalier*.²¹ Although Lang in the editorial note – written almost twenty years after his promotion of the idea to Robert Louis Stevenson – describes this pamphlet, which was in fact the work of the prolific novelist Eliza Haywood, as being ‘perfectly untrustworthy’,²² he had thought it interesting enough in the early 1890s to have a transcript made and to send this copy to Stevenson who was by then living in Samoa.

Earla A. Wilputte in her study of parody in the pamphlet, claims that it was taken to be true by unsophisticated readers at the time. It is clear from exchanges between Lang and Stevenson that a specialist nineteenth-century readership was no more aware of the Elizabeth Haywood's identity or indeed her use of parody than her contemporaries and this despite her having been arrested in December 1749 for ‘seditious libel’ resulting from her involvement with the pamphlet which was ‘construed by a nervous government as too favourable to the Young Pretender.’²³ Indeed Lang was still unaware of the true authorship and nature of the pamphlet when, in 1897, he wrote *Pickle the Spy; or, The Incognito of Prince Charles* declaring

that 'The piece, in truth, is a Jacobite tract, meant to keep up the spirits of the faithful, and it is probable that the author really had some information, though he is often either mistaken, or fables by way of a "blind"'.²⁴

Just as the 'imaginary space' (to use his own phrase²⁵) created by Charles Edward Stuart's incognito travels provided possibilities for textual adventure for Haywood in 1749 providing 'a new plot and renewed hope for the Jacobites, ... an imaginative space on which she could inscribe any number of adventures amorous and political',²⁶ so it might also have provided a rich imaginative space for Stevenson's fiction as his initial enthusiasm for Lang's idea shows. An idea which was by Lang's own account in the introductory note to 'The Young Chivalier' quite simply to 'make the narrator a young Scottish Jacobite at Avignon. He was to be sent by Charles to seek an actual hidden treasure — the fatal gold of the hoard buried at Loch Arkaig a few days after Culloden. He was to be a lover of Miss Clementina Walkinshaw²⁷. In fact, Lang had set out a much more precise idea of what the narrative might involve. He wrote to Stevenson in November 1891 impatiently inquiring if Stevenson intended to write the novel or not and then exposing his own skeleton plot: 'Date 1749. Place Avignon. Your narrator might be a lad who fancied Miss Walkinshaw and didn't know she fancied C. E. He has joined Charles at Avignon ... ' The outline continues suggesting various secondary characters and temporary places of residence for the Prince including Strasbourg where the Prince rescues a pretty girl from a fire, passes through Wurtzberg, Berlin, and Sweden. The narrator meanwhile arrives in Scotland with Allan Breck 'to dig up the 16,000 Louis, buried in the burn'. But 'as they are on the point of howking out gold, a spate washes it all away.' Lang ends the letter on a sentimental note: 'I think I see a Jacobite dawdling on the Pont d'Avignon. The sun has tint the bonny blink it had in his ain countrie.'²⁸ This last line is a reference to the

song by Alan Cunningham which Lang appears to be particularly attached to since he reminds Stevenson of it in a later letter: 'Don't forget "he has tint the bonny blink he had in my ain countrie"' Lang's detailed instructions leave the impression, then, not so much of a suggestion as a commission for a ghost writer, an impression reinforced by Stevenson's later referral to the projected novel in a letter to Colvin as the 'Lang story'.²⁹

III

By Lang's own account 'Stevenson liked something in the notion' of the story he was proposing:

'He told me that Alan Breck and the Master of Ballantrae were to appear in the tale. I sent him such books about Avignon as I could collect, and he also made inquiries about Mandrin, the famous French brigand. Shortly before his death I sent him transcripts of the unpublished letters of his old friend, James More Macgregor, and of Pickle the Spy, from the Pelham mss. in the British Museum. But these, I think, arrived too late for his perusal. In Pickle he would have found some one not very unlike his Ballantrae. The fragment, as it stands, looks as if the Scottish assassin and the other mysterious stranger were not to appear, or not so early as one had supposed. The beautiful woman of the inn and her surly husband (Mandrin?) were inventions of his own. Other projects superseded his interest in this tale, and deprived us of a fresh view of Alan Breck.'³⁰

And indeed Stevenson wrote to Colvin telling him that he had had 'the most gallant suggestion from Lang, with an offer of MS authorities, which turns my brain. It's all

about the throne of Poland and buried treasure in the Mackay country, and Alan Breck can figure there in all his glory.’³¹

Stevenson had already acquired an extensive knowledge of the history of Scotland through many years of voracious and varied reading. This appetite for reading about Scottish history was fuelled at one point in the early 1880s by a projected but never written history of the Highlands as well as his very real desire to be elected to the Chair of History and Constitutional Law at the University of Edinburgh. It has been argued³² that this wasn’t the foolhardy enterprise by an under-qualified upstart it might seem; after all, several of Stevenson's best-known fictional works were set against historical Scottish backgrounds, and he had in a very sophisticated way woven elements from his reading into the fabric of these novels.³³

Stevenson added considerably to his library in preparation for writing ‘The Young Chevalier’. Lang promised in a letter³⁴ to get hold of Ewald’s *Charles Edward*³⁵ and send it to him. He also sent his own copy of J. Browne’s *History of the Highlands*³⁶ and Chambers’s *History of the Rebellion in Scotland in 1745*³⁷, as well as his manuscript copy of ‘Goring’s Letter of 1750’. He also offered to do some research into Avignon notably by reading Dumas’s *Olympe de Clèves* but regrets that Lord Stanhope’s ‘Roxburghe Club book’³⁸ is *introuvable*. In a later letter, he adds that he’s inquiring about Mandrin, the French Brigand that RLS evidently intended to tie in to the story. Although he does not mention it in his introductory note or in a letter, Lang must also have sent his copy of John Burton's *A Genuine and True Journal of the most miraculous Escape of the Young Chevalier: from the Battle of Culloden to his landing in France*³⁹ as it was sold on the breaking up of Stevenson's library at Vailima. It appears in the Anderson Auction Company catalogue⁴⁰ and includes a 6-line pencil note by Lang who is again uncertain about the trustworthiness of these

sources: 'I don't think this very trustworthy but bits from the men who skulked with Charles are genuine. [This scored through] This is all right. I expect the "Englishman" is Forbes, quoted so much by Chambers.' Another book sent by Lang that appears in the Anderson catalogue⁴¹ but is unmentioned in surviving correspondence is Andrew Henderson's *A Full and Authentic History of the Rebellion, 1745 and 1746*,⁴² which Lang declares in an initialled note to be 'Not a book to trust to.'

We also know that whilst ill in January Stevenson had re-read five of the Waverley novels immersing himself in Scott's version of the past. However, it was his habit to be working on several works at one time: in his own words there 'was never any man with so many irons in the fire,'⁴³ and he was unable to give the Lang project any sustained attention at this point. In early 1892 he was concurrently working on his history of Samoa, *A Footnote to History*, and on *Catriona* which by the beginning of March was, in his own words, 'skelping along'.⁴⁴

IV

It was not until mid-May 1892 that Stevenson took a brief break from *A Footnote to History* and finally found time to get down to writing 'The Young Chevalier'. He announced to Colvin on 20 May 1892 that 'the first prologuial episode'⁴⁵ was done. An earlier letter to Colvin had outlined the projected story in detail, declaring 'it is to a great extent a tale of Prince Charlie *after* the '45, and a love story forbye'.⁴⁶ This correspondence reveals much about the doubts, false starts and uncertainties of the creative process and at the same time gives us an impression of the raw energy of Stevenson's much described animated stream of conversation, as he flits from one plot possibility to the next; changes his mind; devises titles then rejects them; and imagines the response of his readership. He announces that the narrative will not after

all centre on the retrieval of the Loch Arkaig treasure but will provide an opportunity to revive The Master of Ballantrae, then announces that the Master will likely kill the hero in a duel but immediately changes his mind: ‘No – the Master doesn't kill him, they fight, he is wounded, and the Master plays *deus ex machina*.’⁴⁷

In the same letter Stevenson lays bare his thought process on choosing possible titles for the novel: ‘I *think* just now of calling it *The Tail of the Race*’. This initial choice of title is intriguing: was Stevenson thinking in terms of Charles Edward Stuart being the last of the Stuarts? Partly perhaps, but not only that since within the space of a sentence he had changed his mind on this as well: ‘no - heavens! I never saw till this moment - but of course nobody but myself would ever understand Mill-Race, they would think of a quarter-mile. So - I am nameless again.’ It appears then that Stevenson was thinking of flow of water out of a mill: a return to the normal flow after the turbulence of the waterwheel.⁴⁸ In any case, he resolves in the following sentence to name the book after his ‘melancholy’ young hero: ‘Yes, I'll name the book from him: *Dyce of Ythan* – pronounce Eethan’ and proceeds to mock up the title page. The uncertainty continues however into May when Stevenson asks Colvin for his help in choosing a title. He abhors titles that include adjectives but can he take the Young out of *The Young Chevalier* when his ‘story never touches on The Chevalier de Saint Georges *ipse*, but only the Young One?’⁴⁹ In late May or early June, Stevenson writes to his ‘trusty purveyor’ of books, Lang, thanking him for the admirable books he had sent and reveals that he continues to ponder the title and the name of the hero ‘whether to call the story *Blair of Balmyle*, or whether to call it *The Young Chevalier*, I have not yet decided.’⁵⁰ This tergiversation is also reflected in the existence of two manuscript lists of very different chapter titles and character names for the projected novel.⁵¹

Letters to Colvin also show the extent to which Stevenson laboured over the nuts and bolts of '[t]his queer tale' which he confesses 'has taken a great hold upon' him.⁵²

The projected plot called for a change in Stevenson's style. It is 'a story of sentiment and passion' he announces to Colvin 'which I mean to write a little differently from what I have been doing – if I can hit the key; rather more of a sentimental tremolo to it.'⁵³ Later in the same letter, however, he appears satisfied 'the style seems to be found. It is a little charged and violent; sins on the side of violence; but I think will carry the tale.'⁵⁴

Satisfied at having set Balmile up in the prologue, and more or less pleased with the style, he nevertheless announces that although he thinks they are successful as characters, he is now ready to discard Marie-Madeleine and Paradou. She was an episodic woman, he declares, but wonders how to continue: 'Where the devil shall I go next?' This is simply the tale of a *coup de tête* of a young man and a young woman; with a nearly, perhaps a wholly, tragic sequel, which I desire to make thinkable right through, and sensible; to make the reader, as far as I shall be able, eat and drink and breathe it. One begins to doubt Stevenson's commitment to the project as conceived by Lang. The story now is much less about Jacobite intrigue, Charles Edward Stuart and his 'imaginary space' and more about an imaginary woman and an imaginary love affair. The heroine's name is to be Marie-Salome des Saintes-Maries:

... she has got to *be* yet: *sursum corda!* So has the young Chevalier, whom I have not yet touched, and who comes next in order. Characters: Balmile, or Lord Gladsmuir, *comme vous voulez*; Prince Charlie; Earl Marischal; Master of Ballantrae; and a spy, and Dr. Archie Campbell, and a few nondescripts; then, of women, Marie-Salome and Flora Blair; seven at the outside; really four full lengths, and I suppose a half-dozen episodic profiles.

How I must bore you with these ineptitudes! Have patience. I am going to bed; it is (of all hours) eleven. I have been forced in (since I began to write to you) to blatter to Fanny on the subject of my heroine, there being two *cruces* as to her life and history.

Stevenson is very unsure of how to proceed with this woman character, or rather of how to explain the background to her current situation:

‘Yet I know there are many reasons why a *fille de famine*, romantic, adventurous, ambitious, innocent of the world, might run from her home in these days; might she not have been threatened with a convent? might there not be some Huguenot business mixed in? Here am I, far from books; if you can help me with a suggestion, I shall say God bless you. She has to be new run away from a strict family, well-justified in her own wild but honest eyes, and meeting these three men, Charles Edward, Marischal, and Balmile, through the accident of a fire at an inn...’

More important however is the sexual question: ‘how far did she go with the Chevalier?’ he wonders in particular. ‘The Young Chevalier’ has received very little attention from commentators but that which it has attracted has tended to centre on its promising treatment of a woman character, an aspect of Stevenson's fiction that has been regularly criticized⁵⁵, and an area in which he considered himself rather weak.⁵⁶ Furnas, for example, believes that the prologue is ‘extremely notable for opening with a woman utterly remote from the virginities and inhibitions of Catriona, she startles the reader as if he had unexpectedly found her in bed.’⁵⁷ While Jenni Calder writes that through this female character Stevenson ‘conveys splendidly a mature, substantial sexuality.’⁵⁸ How paradoxical then that Stevenson should finally come up with a successful portrait of a woman in a text that was to centre on a prince with such a

problematic attitude to women. It is perhaps worth noting that in one of Stevenson's source texts, *A Letter from Henry Goring*, Charles' sexual incontinence is given covert attention by the fact that he actually manages *not* to ravish the young girl that he rescues from a fire despite her being 'naked to her Shift'.⁵⁹

V

Why did Stevenson never come back to 'The Young Chevalier' and resume work on the text? Misgivings 'about plot and proper key'⁶⁰ may have been one reason for his abandonment of the embryonic novel. He was particularly worried about striking the right tone and avoiding 'grossness' in his treatment of the love story and wrote to Colvin on this subject. 'I am afraid my touch is a little broad in a love story;' he writes, 'if my characters have to go to bed to each other – well, I want them to go. As for women, I am no more in any fear of them: I can do a sort all right, age makes me less afraid of a petticoat; but I am a little in fear of grossness.'⁶¹

It has also been argued that Stevenson quite simply had no deep-seated sympathy for the Jacobite cause. Lang states quite unequivocally in his introduction to the Swanston edition of Stevenson's collected works that he 'can remember no proof that he was fascinated by the greatness of Montrose.' And 'If that figure left Stevenson cold, no other figure associated with the Stuarts was likely to attract him' adds J.A. Lovat-Fraser, who concludes that despite having written three novels the plots of which rose out of the Jacobite episode, Stevenson expressed neither approval nor disapproval of the 'Jacobite creed'; that he had no personal sympathy for the Stuart cause or what Jacobitism stood for. Jacobitism, he claims, represented no more to Stevenson 'than a romantic tradition that could be used for literary ends.'⁶²

Jonathan Clark draws our attention to Frank McLynn's argument that Stevenson should not be interpreted as a 'Jacobite-inspired reactionary.' *Kidnapped* is concerned with reconciliation after the '45 within a Whig outcome and ultimately 'Jacobitism is not presented as a serious alternative to Whig prosperity, but as a generous misjudgement.'⁶³ It might be argued that Stevenson was intellectually won over by the Whigs but that morally his preference lay with the Jacobites. It has to be said, however, that this fragment sheds no further light on the exact distribution of Stevenson's moral and intellectual allegiance between the Whigs and the Jacobites. It is perhaps no coincidence that Stevenson turned to Jacobite history while he lived in Samoa where his involvement in a real-life struggle for kingship undoubtedly also contributed to the unfinished state of the barely begun novel. He has been described during this period as being obsessed with the twin themes of the Polynesian present and the Scottish past. 'It is a singular thing,' he famously wrote to J. M. Barrie, 'that I should live here in the South Seas under conditions so new and so striking, and yet my imagination so continually inhabits that cold old huddle of grey hills from which we come.'⁶⁴ This turning towards home was motivated neither by nostalgia nor by a turning of his back on Samoa. The exiled Stevenson undoubtedly felt a fondness for his Scotland but he had no irrepressible longing to return, no maudlin yearning for the hills of home. He never indulged in the 'The sun has tint the bonny blink it had in my ain countrie' sentiment that Lang projected for his Jacobite hero, rather he saw parallels between the social and political life he saw here and a Scottish past. In Samoa, Stevenson's most important work was carried out in acts rather than in texts. In describing his struggles with *Catriona* (or *David Balfour* as he was then calling it) to Lang, Stevenson segues into a reflection on his involvement in Samoan political affairs and how much of his time it is taking up: 'I am in a deuce of a flutter

with politics, which I hate, and in which I certainly do not shine; but a fellow cannot stand aside and look on at such an exhibition as our government. 'Tain't decent'.⁶⁵ Perhaps inevitably, this time-consuming preoccupation with local politics bled into Stevenson's writing and indeed Roselyn Jolly has demonstrated parallels between *Catriona* and Stevenson's political writing on Samoa, revealing a common concern with repair and transformation of a society in the aftermath of war and rebellion.⁶⁶ Oliver Buckton similarly argues against seeing the South Seas fiction as being informed by nostalgia and also aligns *Catriona* with *A Footnote to History*, as a critique of colonial conditions in the Highlands and Samoa⁶⁷. *A Footnote to History* (1892), tells the story of the political machinations behind German intervention in Samoan affairs, the involvement of Britain and America, and the conflicts over the kingship between rival chiefs. Following a conference in Berlin in 1889, Britain, the United States and Germany established tripartite control of the government of Samoa; they endorsed Malietoa Laupepa as king and denied the equally legitimate claim of Mataafa Iosefu. Stevenson campaigned for the cause of his friend Mataafa, for whom he developed a great affection and paid several visits to Mataafa's rebel camp, not far from Apia and his home at Vailima. In recounting a visit to Mataafa's house, one of the largest and finest she had ever seen in Polynesia, Fanny Stevenson revealed the imaginary connection between the Samoan King and the Scottish Prince, and the way in which Jacobite references had seeped into the Stevensons' mental representation of the island situation:

We have been in the habit of referring to the king as 'Charley over the water,' and toasting him by waving our glasses over the water bottle. Talolo [their incompetent interpreter] had some vague notion of what this meant and now thought it a good time to do the same. To our great amusement, he took his

glass, waved it in the air, and cried 'Charley in the water!' which we felt to be a rather ominous toast.⁶⁸

Perhaps Stevenson also came to the realisation that despite his voracious ingurgitation of history books, the character of Charles Edward Stuart, central to his novel, could never be anything more than an imaginary misrepresentation. As Wilputte concludes on the subject of the Haywood pamphlet, a *Letter from Henry Goring*, 'We do not learn anything new about Charles because, as the parody of repeated events demonstrates, there is nothing new, can be nothing new because he is a created character caught in a plot that is perpetually replayed but does not advance.' Like Haywood, all he could hope to do is take the most popular motifs of the Jacobite myth and 'exploit them to reveal their falseness', to show 'how each image had been exposed and exploded even by the man himself'⁶⁹ The battle over Charles's reputation had dissolved into 'a contest between sentiment and prejudice, the degenerate descendants of his mythos,'⁷⁰ a sterile debate that shadowed his own dismal descent into drink and indolence.

VI

The impossibility of going beyond the myth, of reconciling the historical figure Charles Edward Stuart and the myth of Charles Edward Stuart, the charm of the Jacobite prince and the ill-fated loyalty of his followers may account in part at least for the difficulty he had in continuing his own narrative. Also, at the beginning of November 1892, although he was at that point still planning to continue 'The Young Chevalier', he had just begun another Scottish story which was to become *Weir of Hermiston*. This novel, often regarded as his unfinished masterpiece, soon took up much of his attention and did so until his death two years later.

Whatever the main reason for Stevenson's reluctance or inability to complete 'The Young Chevalier', it was in the end no more than an interlude in his writing life and his life of political action in Samoa, and had to give way to work on *Catriona*. 'I have had my little holiday outing in my kick at *The Young Chevalier*;' he wrote to Colvin on 25th May 1892. The project had been an imaginary space in his career in much the same way as the time spent in Avignon had been an imaginary space for Charles Edward Stuart. They both started projects that they would be unable to finish. Lang concludes his note on the text of *The Young Chevalier* by regretting that since Stevenson's death he has often come across unknown Jacobite manuscripts and thought "He could have done something with this," or "This would have interested him." We can only join Lang in lamenting 'Eheu!'

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- ¹ R. L. Stevenson, 'The Young Chevalier' in *The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson Vol. 26. Romances, Volume VII. Weir of Hermiston and other fragments*, ed. S. Colvin (Edinburgh: Constable, 1897), pp. 63-83.
- ² A longer version is held by Yale along with a different list of chapters. cf. R. G. Swearingen, *The Prose Writings of Robert Louis Stevenson: A Guide* (Hamden, Conn: Archon Books, 1980).
- ³ Stevenson, 'The Young Chevalier', p. 67.
- ⁴ Stevenson, 'The Young Chevalier', p. 71.
- ⁵ Stevenson, 'The Young Chevalier', p. 68.
- ⁶ George Kelly (1686-1750) was Prince Charles Edward Stuart's private secretary during his exile in France.
- ⁷ Sweet soother (Horace, Odes, 1.32.15).
- ⁸ Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University: GEN MSS 664 Box 40, Folder 873.
- ⁹ Stevenson, 'The Young Chevalier', p. 80.
- ¹⁰ Lang points out in his note to the fragment that 'His dates, as indicated in the fragment, are not exact; and there is no reason to believe that Charles's house at Avignon (that of the De Rochefort family) was dismantled and comfortless, as here represented.' Stevenson, 'The Young Chevalier', p. 86.
- ¹¹ Stevenson, 'The Young Chevalier', pp. 81-2.
- ¹² Stevenson, 'The Young Chevalier', p. 82.
- ¹³ Stevenson, 'The Young Chevalier', p. 82-3.
- ¹⁴ Swearingen, *The Prose Writings of Robert Louis Stevenson: A Guide*, p. 170.
- ¹⁵ i.e. Alestair Ruadh MacDonnell
- ¹⁶ A. Lang, *Pickle the Spy* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1897). *The Companions of Pickle* (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1898). *Prince Charles Edward Stuart: The Young Chevalier* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1903). As W. Donaldson observes in the entry for Lang in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Lang's 'cavalier temperament and distaste for the Whiggish and Presbyterian bias of much existing Scottish historiography moved him to produce a series of books a devoted to a single question: was it possible to defend the Stuarts?' (cited by J. C. D. Clark, 'The Many Restorations of King James: a Short History of Scholarship on Jacobitism, 1688-2006' in P. K. Monod, M. Pittock, and D Szechi. *Loyalty and Identity: Jacobites at Home and Abroad* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 9-56, on p. 31.
- ¹⁷ *The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson Vol. 26*, ed. Colvin, p. 84.
- ¹⁸ J. H. Allen, and C. S. H. Allen, *Tales of the Century: Or, Sketches of the Romance of History between the Years 1746 and 1846* (Edinburgh: J. Marshall, 1847).
- ¹⁹ R. L. Stevenson, and A. Lang, *Dear Stevenson: Letters from Andrew Lang to Robert Louis Stevenson with Five Letters from Stevenson to Lang*. ed. M. Demoor, (Leuven: Peeters, 1990), p. 126.
- ²⁰ *The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson Vol. 26*, ed. S. Colvin, p. 85.
- ²¹ [E. Haywood], *A Letter from H[enry] G[orin]g Esq: One of the Gentlemen of the Bedchamber to the Young Chevalier, Containing Many Occurrences Which Happened to the P[rince] During the Course of His Mysterious Progress* (London: s.n., 1750).
- ²² *The works of Robert Louis Stevenson Vol. 26*, ed. S. Colvin, p. 85.
- ²³ E. A. Wilputte, 'Parody in Eliza Haywood's A Letter from H— G—g, Esq.' in *Eighteenth Century Fiction*, Volume 17:2, 2005, pp. 207-30, on p. 208.
- ²⁴ Quoted by Wilputte, p. 213. By 1911 Lang had realised his error and writes in the 'Introduction to the Swanston Edition' that 'The Young Chevalier,' had a germ in 'The Letter of Henry Goring' (1749-1750), with which I brought him acquainted, not knowing then that it was merely a romance by the prolific Eliza Heywood.' *The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson, Swanston Edition, Volume 1*. (London: Chatto & Windus (in assoc. with Cassell, Heinemann & Longmans, Green), 1911).
- ²⁵ He used the term 'imaginary space' to describe the time that he spent incognito between 1749 and 1752. See F. J. McLynn, *Charles Edward Stuart: A Tragedy in Many Acts* (Oxford: OUP, 1991), p. 385.
- ²⁶ Wilputte, p. 215

- ²⁷ *The works of Robert Louis Stevenson Vol. 26*, ed. S. Colvin, p. 85-6. Lang continues: 'who later played the part of Beatrix Esmond to the Prince'. Beatrix Esmond was a character in *The History of Henry Esmond* by William Makepiece Thackeray.
- ²⁸ R. L. Stevenson, and A. Lang, *Dear Stevenson*, pp. 126-7.
- ²⁹ R. L. Stevenson, *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson. Vol. 7, September 1890 - December 1892*, eds B. A. Booth, and E. Mehew (New Haven: YUP, 1995) p. 251.
- ³⁰ R. L. Stevenson, 'The Young Chevalier', p. 67.
- ³¹ *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, eds. A. B. Bradford and E. Mehew, 8 vols (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994-95; hereafter *Letters*), Vol. 7, p. 220.
- ³² See B. Menikoff, *Narrating Scotland: The imagination of Robert Louis Stevenson*. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2005).
- ³³ In conceiving a story that would be a precursor to *The Master of Ballantrae*, for example, he remembers that he had 'a mind full of the *Atholl Correspondence* and the *Memoirs of the Chevalier de Johnstone* [aide-de-camp to the Young Pretender first pub in 1820]. ('Note to the Master of Ballantrae' in R. L. Stevenson, *The Master of Ballantrae: A Winter's Tale*, ed. A. Poole (London: Penguin Books, 1996. p. 223).
- ³⁴ R. L. Stevenson, and A. Lang, *Dear Stevenson*, p. 129.
- ³⁵ A. C. Ewald, *The life and times of Prince Charles Stuart: Count of Albany, commonly called the Young Pretender. From the state papers and other sources* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1883).
- ³⁶ J. Browne, (1838). *A History of the Highlands and of the Highland Clans*. 4 vols. (London; Edinburgh : A. Fullerton, 1848-52). Lang's copy, sent to Stevenson and now held in the Thomas B. Lockwood Collection, State University of New York at Buffalo, has the signature of Andrew Lang on the fly-leaf along with the note 'This is the hidden gold.'
- ³⁷ R. Chambers, *History of the Rebellion in Scotland in 1745, 1746* (Edinburgh: Constable and Co, 1827).
- ³⁸ P. H. S. Stanhope, *The Decline of the Last Stuarts. Extracts from the Despatches of British Envoys to the Secretary of State. Printed for the Roxburghe Club*. (London: W. Nicol, Shakespeare press, 1843).
- ³⁹ J. A. Burton, *Genuine and True Journal of the most miraculous Escape of the Young Chevalier: from the Battle of Culloden to his landing in France ... to which is added, a Short Account of what befel the Pr[ince]. in France, and the Manner of taking him Prisoner ... by an Englishman*. (London : W. Webb near St. Paul's, 1749).
- ⁴⁰ Lot 198. Anderson Auction Company, *Autograph Letters, Original Manuscripts, Books, Portraits, and Curios from the Library of the Late Robert Louis Stevenson Consigned by the Present Owner, Mrs. Isobel Strong, Part 1* (New York: Anderson Auction Co, 1914).
- ⁴¹ Lot 495, Anderson Auction Company, *Autograph Letters, Original Manuscripts, Books... Part 1*
- ⁴² A. Henderson, *A Full and Authentic History of the Rebellion Mdccxlv. and Mdcclxvi: Setting Forth All the Most Remarkable Transactions of Both Parties ; the Characters of the Principal Persons Concerned ; Their Manifestoes, Declarations, and Proclamations ; with Other Genuine and Curious Particulars, Not to Be Met with in Any Other Account of That Memorable Aera. to Which Is Added, a Copy of What Dr. Archibald Cameron Intended to Have Delivered to the Sheriff of Middlesex, at the Place of Execution, but Which He Left in the Hands of His Wise for Publication: with Proper Remarks Thereon. by an Impartial Hand*. (London: Printed for W. Reeve, at Shakespear's-Head, and W. Owen, at Homer's-Head, both in Fleet-Street, 1755).
- ⁴³ *Letters*, Vol. 7, p. 220.
- ⁴⁴ *Letters*, Vol. 7, p. 246.
- ⁴⁵ *Letters*, Vol. 7, p. 284.
- ⁴⁶ *Letters*, Vol. 7, p. 251.
- ⁴⁷ *Letters*, Vol. 7, p. 251.
- ⁴⁸ The choice, however, is especially curious given that the channel in question is most often called the lade in Scotland.

- ⁴⁹ *Letters*, Vol. 7, p. 285. Colvin omitted this passage from his own editions of Stevenson's letters (1895) presumably because he ultimately decided to include the Young in 'Young Chevalier' despite Stevenson's declared opposition to adjectives in titles.
- ⁵⁰ *Letters*, Vol. 7, pp. 311-2. Stevenson also acknowledges that he got the name of his hero in one of the books received from Lang and indeed the name Blair of Balmile appears in Browne, J. (1838). *A History of the Highlands and of the Highland Clans*. (London; Edinburgh : A. Fullerton, 1848-52). in Vol. 4, p. 22.
- ⁵¹ Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University: GEN MSS 684 box 13 folder 232.
- ⁵² *Letters*, Vol. 7, p. 285.
- ⁵³ *Letters*, Vol. 7, p. 282.
- ⁵⁴ *Letters*, Vol. 7, p. 285
- ⁵⁵ See Linehan who writes, 'Critics have long tended to see Robert Louis Stevenson's fiction as lacking in its treatment of women and love, especially before his push towards franker treatment of sexual passion in the 1890s. They recurrently speak of the paucity and woodenness of female characterization in his work,' 'Revaluing Women and Marriage in Robert Louis Stevenson's Short Fiction', *English Literature in Transition*, 40:1 (1997), pp. 34-59 on p. 34.
- ⁵⁶ 'I am always afraid of my women, who are not admired in my home circle;' he was to write later (R. L. Stevenson, 'Note to *The Master of Ballantrae*', p. 226).
- ⁵⁷ She is 'a sort of tawny, warm she-genie instantly substantial as a thick braid of hair and as exigent as hunger. The single scene built round her builds like fire.' J. C. Furnas, *Voyage to Windward: the Life of Robert Louis Stevenson* (New York: W. Sloane, 1951). p. 364.
- ⁵⁸ J. Calder, *RLS: a life study* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1980) p. 323.
- ⁵⁹ See Wilputte, p. 219
- ⁶⁰ J. C. Furnas, *Voyage to Windward*, p. 364.
- ⁶¹ *Letters*, Vol. 7, p. 284. A few sentences later, we read 'I am a realist and a prosaist, and a most fanatical lover of plain physical sensations plainly and expressly rendered; hence my perils. To do love in the same spirit as I did (for instance) D. Balfour's fatigue in the heather; my dear sir, there were grossness ready made!'
- ⁶² J. A. Lovat-Fraser, 'Stevenson and the Jacobite tradition. A paper read before the Robert Louis Stevenson Club of London' (Inverness: R. Carruthers & Sons, 1900).
- ⁶³ J. C. D. Clark, p. 29.
- ⁶⁴ *Letters*, Vol. 7, p. 285.
- ⁶⁵ *Letters*, Vol. 7, p. 312.
- ⁶⁶ R. Jolly, *Robert Louis Stevenson in the Pacific: Travel, Empire, and the Author's Profession* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).
- ⁶⁷ O. S. Buckton, *Cruising with Robert Louis Stevenson: Travel, Narrative, and the Colonial Body* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007).
- ⁶⁸ *Letters*, Vol. 7, pp. 278-9, n.9.
- ⁶⁹ Wilputte, p. 215
- ⁷⁰ M. G. H. Pittock, 'Charles Edward Stuart' in *Études écossaises*, 10 | 2005, §6 URL: <http://etudeseccossaises.revues.org/index149.html>.