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A Study of Robert Louis Stevenson's Theory of Setting and of His Use of Setting in His Fiction

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A STUDY OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON'S THEORY OF SETTING

AND OF HIS USE OF SETTING IN HIS FICTION

by

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CHAPTER I

THE SOURCES OF SETTING

For purposes of analysis of the author's use of setting in his novels and stories, or what have been called romances, the following definitions, inclusive of all of the above meanings, given by Lathrop and Perry, respectively, were utilized:

The setting includes all the circumstances, material and immaterial, which surround the action and determine the conditions under which it takes place. Such are, for example, time and place, as in the fourteenth century, in Lapland; the social group or groups to which the personages belong, as commercial travellers, or cowboys, or the smart set, or backwoodsmen; the current of ideas with which the narrative is conversant, as quietistic philosophy, or educational reform, or conservative politics; in brief all that makes up the medium in which the action is carried on.¹

...one strong element of interest which lies outside of the sphere of character or action...is provided by what we call, for lack of a more satisfactory word, the setting. Sometimes we shall use this word as synonymous with milieu, --the circumstances, namely, that surround and condition the appearance of the characters. Sometimes the setting of the novel corresponds precisely to the scenic effects of the stage, in that it gives a mere background for the vivid presentation of the characters. It will thus be seen that in the setting, that tertium quid which is neither characters nor action, we have something corresponding to what we should call "atmosphere" if we were to speak in the terms of art, or "environment" if we were to use the terminology of science.²


Of the three necessary elements of narrative, characters, plot, or setting, one may be the writer's main interest. Certain writers, said Lathrop, "care for the spirit of a peculiar setting; they make of their characters instruments which contribute their part, their special "tone colour" to the author's orchestra, and their plots are the things which express the spirit of a time and place." Under the heading of "Types of Story Ideas," Grabo cited the importance of the setting in the inception of the story; as, the attempt to "create a unity of impression and to subordinate everything to the background so that my reader will carry away, as his chief impression, a visual image of the place...." But even in stories where the setting was subordinated to plot and character it usually had some importance in the narrative, and had an interest and strength all its own. As Grabo said, "...there can be no doubt that place has more than a little to do with the germination of many a story to be classed primarily as one of character or action. A story theme may lie undeveloped in the mind for long and then of a sudden coalesce with some fitting scene, and in a moment a story is created. Here it would be unsafe to declare the scene a prime cause of the story, but that it was vital to the act of creation is none the less true. Nor can we say how often setting is present in the author's mind as he plans the action of his story. Often it may be indefinite and yet color the story and determine the choice and nature of the incidents."

The settings in the stories of Robert Louis Stevenson were no more picturesque nor exotic than the romance of his nomadic and colorful life.

3 Lathrop, op. cit., 67.
5 Ibid., 205-6.
Born in "grim grey" Edinburgh, the "metropolis of the winds," on November 13, 1850, he was like the proverbial Scottish wanderer, to traverse many distant lands before his death as a homesick exile in far-off, sunny Samoa on December 3, 1894.

Nor was his ancestry prosaic. His deep love for the sea and ships must have been inherited from the engineering Stevensons who, for over a century, had endeavoured to make the rocky dangerous coast of Scotland safe for mariners by the building of lighthouses, and, in particular, by the construction of the famous Bell Rock Lighthouse. Stevenson's ardent belief in the possibility of Highland descent in a direct line from the illustrious Rob Roy, and use of the name of Stevenson as an alias by the proscribed clan of Mac Gregor, was disproved; but Govenning and Border history, as well as French heritage were traceable on the maternal or Balfour side of the family. His cheerful view of life, as well as the chief cause of his wanderings, the constitutional weakness of chest and susceptibility to cold, were also probably inherited from his mother, Margaret, the youngest daughter of the Reverend Lewis Balfour of Colinton Manse. 6

"I steeped myself in open air and in past ages." 7 This statement by Stevenson revealed the chief treasure chest wherein the author found the settings for most of his novels and tales. His first experiences in the "open air" were gained by numerous walks about Edinburgh and its environs when


school tasks palled, by visits to various Scottish health resorts for his own or his mother's health, by inspection tours of lighthouses taken with his father, and later, by trips to various sites where works of the firm were in progress to gain practical experience for the study of engineering, a career which he abandoned in 1871. As to the "past," even in Samoa, he remembered Edinburgh as a city "...illustrious for her beauty, her tragic and picturesque associations, and for the credit of some of her brave sons." The type of "tragic and picturesque association" which he early imbibed, Stevenson described thus in differentiating between the Scottish and English schoolboy:

Nor must we omit the sense of the nature of his country and his country's history gradually growing in the child's mind from story and from observation. A Scottish child hears much of shipwreck, outlying iron skerries, pitiless breakers, and great sea-lights; much of heathery mountains, wild clans, and hunted Covenanters. Breaths come to him in song of the distant Cheviots and the ring of foraying hoofs. He glories in his hard-fisted forefathers, of the iron girdle and the handful of oatmeal, who rode so swiftly and lived so sparsely on their raids.... The heroes and kings of Scotland have been tragically fated; the most marking incidents in Scottish history--Flodden, Darien, or the Forty-five--were still either failures or defeats; and the fall of Wallace and the repeated reverses of the Bruce combine with the very smallness of the country to teach rather a moral than a material criterion for life.

This traditional lore was first imparted to little "Lou" during many a sleepless night by his devoted nurse, Alison Cunningham who did not omit from her dramatic recitals the weird and fearsome "bogey" stories which later figured

as sources for the storyteller's Scottish tales of superstition, "Thrawn Janet" and "Tod Lapraik's Tale," the latter a related incident in David Balfour. Oral sources were later supplemented by Stevenson's own intensive reading of Scottish history especially from the time of the Persecutions down to the present, undertaken for the project never materialized, a history of his beloved country. But this information was, fortunately, not lost; it was utilized by the novelist as a source for the details of the immaterial circumstances of the setting, or what may be designated as the spirit of the time, in the Scottish historical romances, namely: Kidnapped, its sequel, David Balfour, known in England as Catriona, the unfinished Weir of Hermiston, and in the Scottish scenes of The Master of Ballantrae and of St. Ives. Most of the details of the Appin Case, an historical incident treated in Kidnapped and in David Balfour, were found in a Jacobite pamphlet on the trial of James Stewart of Appin for the murder of Campbell of Glenure which took place in 1752. In 1881, Stevenson read the pamphlet to acquire information for a magazine article planned to give the electors of Edinburgh University a specimen of his qualifications for the Professorship in history, a position he desired as a steady source of income, and one which would not interfere greatly with the career of writing. Always concerned about the historical accuracy of the settings of these romances of past times, Stevenson, even in Samoa, requested friends at home for such books as Pitcairn's Criminal Trials and Cockburn's Memorials to verify details of the judicial aspect of the setting of Weir of Hermiston. In fact, it was the author's reading of the

11 Stevenson, Letters, IV, 250.

12 Ibid., 151.
"Annual Register" of 1814 in search of details for this same aspect of Weir of Hermiston which provided, in part, the inspiration for St. Ives, the story of the adventures of a French prisoner in England during the same period.\(^{13}\)

For help in describing fashions and manners of the above mentioned novels, Stevenson requested the "Edinburgh Courant" for 1811-14.\(^ {14}\) Another source for the accuracy of the legal aspects of the setting in these romances was the author's study in preparation for the examination given for admittance to the Scottish Bar, a task he undertook during the period from 1871-75, to conciliate parental displeasure at the abandonment of the family profession of engineering.\(^ {15}\)

But it was not alone in the Scottish romances of the past that such sources were utilized. Stevenson's reading of the Paston Letters inspired, in part, the story of fifteenth century England, The Black Arrow.\(^ {16}\) His French reading, undertaken for the magazine articles on Charles of Orleans and on François Villon, served as inspiration for the details of the spirit of the time in such stories as "A Lodging for the Night" and "The Sire de Malétroit's Door."\(^ {17}\)

Thus, the close relation in his stories between the "past" or what has been expressed as the spirit of the time, and the "open air" or the spirit of the place or scene, was, for Stevenson, organic. He loved the eighteenth

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13 Ibid., II, 66.

14 Ibid., IV, 171.

15 Steuart, op. cit., I, 159-97.

16 Balfour, op. cit., I, 246.

17 Steuart, I, 228-37.
century, and felt a strong personal sense of kinship with his ancestors; this is clearly evidenced by his belief that the spirit of Robert Fergusson, the Scottish laureate of low life, who died, according to his biographers, of debauchery at the age of twenty-three now lived on in Stevenson's spirit. Stevenson, too, chose the past as the setting for his stories because his imaginative sympathy with tales of Highland valor and loyalty, with his outlook on the dark and doubtful Victorian world whose Philistines "condemned, derided and deserted" him because: "He was solitary and eccentric with an ostentatious taste for the bizarre in appearance and behavior." 18

The details of the material aspect of the setting, most frequently with Stevenson, the "open air," were drawn from the actual experience of the widely travelled author. In this respect, Stevenson resembled Scott, and differed from his predecessors in the historical romance, those of the Gothic school who used imaginary places as the scenes of their tales. 19 As Swinnerton said, "Wherever he went, his journey or his place of residence provided him almost at once with a practicable background for literary work of some sort. His travel books, his stories--these all show immediately the stage of his life's journey to which they belong." 20 Clayton Hamilton believed that Stevenson made any place where he had lived famous in his stories because "...with his quick eye for localities, his keen enjoyment, and his vivid recollections of

18 Ibid., 80-86.


them, he may be said to have absorbed into himself the many places where he pitched his tent.\textsuperscript{21} The realistic and accurate descriptions of the natural and architectural aspects of the scene, contained in his stories and romances, were, no doubt, due to Stevenson's youthful practice of carrying a copybook with him whereever he went so that he might fit all that he observed with appropriate words, and note down the special features of the scene.\textsuperscript{22}

It was a singular fact that Stevenson's dislike of Edinburgh society, previously mentioned, and the harmful influence of the rigorous Scottish climate upon his health, did not, nevertheless, lessen his deep love for the picturesque country. This love became even more intense in his exile if the works written in Samoa, and set in Scotland may be considered as evidence of the country's presence in his thoughts. To signal out all the localities of Edinburgh and its environs which were mentioned in \textit{David Balfour} written in 1892, in the unfinished \textit{St. Ives}, started in 1891, partly set in Scotland, and \textit{Weir of Hermiston}, which he was working on the day of his death, would verify the constancy of his affection for "auld Reekie."

If one were to follow chapter by chapter the adventures related in \textit{Kidnapped}, written in 1885, one would have to circumnavigate the whole peninsula of Scotland.\textsuperscript{23} Colinton Manse, where the "golden" first ten years of the writer's life were spent, was celebrated in the eerie "Thrawn Janet."\textsuperscript{24}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{22} Stevenson, "A College Magazine" in \textit{Memories and Portraits}, 55-6.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Hamilton, \textit{op. cit.}, 3-44.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Jean Marie Carre, \textit{Robert Louis Stevenson: The Frail Warrior}. London: Noel Douglas, 1931, 145.
\end{itemize}
One of the author's few successful love scenes in his fiction, that between Flora and St. Ives in Chapter VII of the story of the prisoner's adventures, was laid in his beloved Swanston, a summer home in the Pentlands, rich with romantic associations of the historic past, bought by Thomas Stevenson in 1861. 25 Here, in the delightful Highland atmosphere surrounded with simple people of the soil, Stevenson spent some of the happiest years of his life, because, for most of the summer season, he was alone with his mother, a most sympathetic ally of his literary ambitions. 26 Glencorse Church, the scene of Chapter VI of Weir of Hermiston, was just a few miles southeast of Swanston in the Pentlands. 27 Sidney Colvin, 28 in an editorial note on this novel, said that the rest of the scenery was distilled from many different haunts of the author among the moorlands of southern Scotland, and was not, as Stevenson said in his Letters, set in the Lammermuirs. 29 "The Merry Men," a story of wrecks and sea madness was laid on the Isle of Earraid, fictitiously named "Aros" in the story. 30 This story was written in 1881 in the rainy gloom of Pitlochry. The setting of the short story, "The Pavilion on the Links," was suggested by the author's memories of Dirleton in East Lothian near North Berwick, a favorite haunt of the author's boyhood. 31 This story

25 Steuart, I, 106-12.
26 Ibid.
27 Hamilton, 33.
28 Weir of Hermiston, 178-9
29 Letters, IV, 139.
31 Balfour, I, 201.
was written in Monterey in 1879. The Master of Ballantrae, in process of composition during the period from 1887-1888 in various lands, was conceived, said Stevenson, "...on the moors between Pitlochry and Strathairdle in the Highland rain, in the blend of the smell of the heather and bog-plants, and with a mind full of the Athole correspondence and the memories of the dumli-cide justice." 32

But it was not Scottish scenery alone, which stimulated the writer's imagination. "The Treasure of Franchard," one of the most pleasant of Stevenson's short stories was suggested by the forest landscape of Fontain-bleau in France, visited by the author in 1875 for the first of many times, and used as a setting in 1882. Here, in the forest, and in the neighboring town of Grez, Stevenson experienced a physical well-being and a freedom of the spirit unknown to Edinburgh atmosphere. His memories of the time spent here were happy, not only because of the companionship of his favorite cousin, Bob Stevenson, the artist, but because it was at Grez that he met Fanny Osbourne, the woman later destined to become his wife. Barbizon, another artists' colony on the outskirts of the Forest, was featured by Stevenson in The Wrecker, a panoramic novel with various changes of setting, written in collaboration with his stepson, Lloyd Osbourne during the period from 1889-91. The natural aspect of the scene in the stories of Medieval France, "A Lodging for the Night," and "The Sire de Malétroit's Door" were taken from the Quartier Latin of Paris. 33

33 Hamilton, 75-99.
One of Stevenson's first published stories, "Will of the Mill," a moral tale written in 1871, utilized the author's memories of the combined scenery of the Brenner Pass and the Murgthal in Baden, localities visited in 1863 during a health excursion to the Riviera with his parents. For the scenery of the imaginary state of Grunewald in *Prince Otto*, written intermittently from 1880-1884, Stevenson used his observations noted during a walking tour in the Black Forest of Germany taken in the summer of 1872 with his friend, Sir Walter Simpson.34

The call of the road, as suggestive to Stevenson as the lure of the heather, and the hospitable charm of wayside taverns, were the only features of the English countryside celebrated in Stevenson's stories. The "Great North Road," for centuries the scene of travel from England to Edinburgh, had always intrigued his imagination, so he used it for the setting of several adventurous chapters of *St. Ives*. English taverns formed the background for several other parts of his romance, as well as of *The Black Arrow*, a tale of Tunstall forest in the period of the War of the Roses.35

Stevenson's impressions of English scenery were obtained during several visits to different parts of the country. Suffolk was the scene of his first meeting with Sidney Colvin who became the writer's best friend and critic, and was instrumental in introducing Stevenson to various publishers of his acquaintance. He achieved Stevenson's election to the Savile Club, in which place, the writer met many of the celebrities of the day.36 Burford Bridge was

34 Ibid., 103-23.
35 Hamilton, 47-68.
36 Steuart, I, 163-68.
visited by the author in 1878, and again in 1882 for the purpose of seeing George Meredith, a writer he greatly admired. Although Stevenson's three year residence at Bournemouth from 1884-87 in the home, Skerryvore, bought by Thomas Stevenson in tribute to his son's wife, was spent, for the most part, in the sick-bed, it was one of the periods of most profuse literary activity in the author's career. This has been taken as evidence by many that the nature of Stevenson's pulmonary illness helped, rather than hindered the author in devoting his attention to his art, because, in the first place, it made his mind more active, and in the second place, his seclusion resulted in freedom from outside interruptions. 37

Three ventures in fiction, the whole of the short story, "Ollala," written in 1885, 38 the larger part of Treasure Island written in 1881, 39 and several part of The Wrecker, composed during the years, 1890-91, utilized the author's memories of Californian scenery absorbed during his first visit to the United States. This visit was projected for the twofold purpose of joining his future wife, who had returned to America from France to seek a divorce from her first husband, and for the purpose of testing his ability to become self-supporting in the career of writing. Previously, he had been aided by his Father's generosity. His painful experience during this stay in the poorest quarter of San Francisco when he was near death from starvation, provided the

38 Ibid., 109.
39 Letters, II, 224.
40 Hamilton, op. cit., 129-34.
local color for several scenes of the Wrecker.\(^41\)

The setting for the dénouement of The Master of Ballantrae, classified by the author as, "...a tale of many years, and countries, of the sea and the land, savagery, and civilization..."\(^42\) was suggested by the scenery of the Lake Saranac region of the Adirondack Mountains, a region in which Stevenson spent the year 1887-88, on the occasion of his second journey to America. This visit, a sharp contrast to the first because of its occurrence after the author's status as a celebrity had been recognized, was undertaken upon his physician's advice that further abode in the climate of Scotland was not to be considered.\(^43\)

The last stage of the author's somewhat varied life journey began as a health and pleasure excursion of a few month's duration in the Pacific on the yacht "Casco," and ended with his death as a voluntary exile established as the chief of a feudal-like entourage on his estate of Vailima in Samoa in 1894.\(^44\) It provided the writer with the background for one of his most successful short stories, "The Beach of Falesa," composed during the year 1890-91, as well as for parts of The Wrecker, finished in 1891, and for most of the atmosphere of The Ebb-Tide, written in the period from 1889-93, in collaboration with his step-son, Lloyd Osbourne.\(^45\)

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41 Steuart, I, 227, 323.
42 Stevenson, "The Genesis of The Master of Ballantrae," Essays of Travel and in the Art of Writing, 327.
43 Steuart, I, 117-29.
44 Colvin, editor, Letters, III, 72-5
45 Steuart, I, 146-299.
The type of inspiration provided by the islands for the storyteller was described by Stevenson in the following manner: "...our visits to the islands have been more like dreams than realities: the people, the life, the beachcombers, the old stories and songs...the climate, the scenery..."46 Again he said: "...nobody has had such stuff; such wild stories, such beautiful scenes, such singular intimacies, such manners and traditions, so incredible a mixture of the beautiful and horrible, the savage and civilized."47 "The Pacific," he said, "is a strange place, the nineteenth century only exists there in spots: all round, it is a no man's land of the ages, a stir-about of epochs and races, barbarisms and civilizations, virtues and crimes."48

"The Beach of Falesa," first entitled suggestively, "The High Woods of Ulufanua," said Stevenson, "...shot through me like a bullet in one of my moments of awe, alone in the tragic jungle."47 Balfour said that this story was not a picture of any certain island, but was applicable to nearly any place in Samoa, especially the Gilberts, the most primitive group of islands in the West Pacific, which was visited by the author in the trading schooner, the "Equator."50 Many of the details of the setting, the ghastly glow of the phosphorescent wood, the "aitu," or devil of the jungle, and the dealing of the white population with the natives, were taken from the actual experiences

46 Letters, III, 117.
47 Ibid., 164.
48 Ibid., 154.
49 Ibid., 238.
of the author, related in his letters to friends at home. 51

Stevenson believed that the novel, The Ebb-Tide, formerly entitled The Pearl Fisher and The Schooner Farallone was "...a black, ugly, trampling, violent story full of strange scenes and striking characters," 52 and that The Wrecker set forth strange ways of life. 53 For hints on illustration of Attwater's home in The Ebb-Tide, Stevenson referred the artist to photographs taken during a three weeks' stay in Fakarava, an island visited by the author in the yacht "Casco" in 1888. He emphasized especially the figure-head and the height of the pier. 54 The picture of the arrival of the Schooner, Farallone, at the new island in the second part of the novel, the part written wholly by Stevenson, gave a view, Balfour said of the charm of the South Sea Cruises. 55

The inspiration provided for Stevenson's art by his reading was held by many critics to be solely imitative, largely because of an autobiographical essay in which the author admitted playing the "sedulous ape" in the apprentice years of the writing craft to such varied writers as: Hazlitt, Lamb, Wordsworth, Sir Thomas Browne, Defoe, Hawthorne, Baudelaire, Obermann, and Dumas, etc. 56 But, as Sidney Colvin said, although Stevenson was an avid

51 Letters, III, 257-69.
52 Ibid., 208.
43 Ibid., 162.
54 Ibid., IV, 190.
55 Balfour, II, 171.
reader of poetry, fiction, and essays in both French and English, and a student of history in general, and although the form and mode of literature in which he chose to express himself might have recalled to the reader strains of literary association from such writers as Sterne, Poe, Kingston, Scott, Ballantyne and Burns, the "...vision, the temperament, the mode of conceiving and handling are in every case, personal to himself." Writing in the same vein, in the Athenaeum, Joseph Jacobs remarked that if Stevenson was not able to equal Poe's grasp of the eerie and fantastic, Dumas's grouping and wide canvas, and Scott's humor and geniality and varied life, he could "clothe what he took from each in drapery more closely fitting," and that although Meredith and Stevenson had a common style in their search for the unexpected adjective, and in their use of metaphor, the younger surpassed his master in clearness and grace, and ease of style. In Stevenson's Prince Otto, Swinerton saw a resemblance, in the German scenes, to Meredith's Harry Richmond, as did Conan Doyle. Cross stated that Defoe, Bunyan, and Swift, were the sources to which romance returned constantly for inspiration from Scott to Stevenson, and that the late eighteenth century, in which Stevenson was well read, was the "seedtime" of the nineteenth century novel with the popular

57 S. Colvin, Editor, Letters, op. cit., I, xxii.


59 Swinerton, 163.

60 A. Conan Doyle, "Mr. Stevenson's Methods in Fiction," Living Age, 184: 419, February 15, 1890.
romance of Smollett culminating in the romantic tales of Scott and Cooper. Smollett was praised by Stevenson for his realistic descriptions of the sea and ships in Roderick Random; Scott was his "king of the romantics," and Cooper was acknowledged as a source of inspiration for Treasure Island in a Prefatory poem contained in that novel. Weygandt stated that Stevenson came under the influence of writers as different as Sterne and Meredith, taking from each what he needed, and developed a spirit of romantic atmosphere as pervasive as that of Hawthorne's, a writer whom Stevenson commended for his unity of design. John Jay Chapman believed that Kidnapped read like a Waverley novel, and that the story of "The Treasure of Franchard" resembled a French farce or light comedy of bourgeois life, a genre in which Stevenson was well read.

Stevenson's more recent predecessors in the historical vogue in England were such noted writers as Bulwer Lytton, Dickens, Thackeray, Kingsley, Reade, and Eliot, each of whom had attempted at least one such type of novel as the result of Scott's influence. A minor writer, Blackmore, carried on

Scott's tendency also in *Lorna Doone*. Lesser English writers who carried on Scott's tendencies, and whom Stevenson often referred to, were his beloved G. F.R. James, author of *Richelieu*, and Harrison Ainsworth whose valiant Dick Turpin, Stevenson could conjure up to embellish a country lane with the attraction of romance.

Steuart stated that Stevenson's real start as a writer of romantic fiction dated from the summer of 1876 spent at Grez by the author reading and studying such French writers as Molière, Voltaire, Rochefoucauld, Michelet, Baudelaire, De Musset, Saint-Beuve, Flaubert, Daudet, Bourget, Anatole France, and even Zola whom he later derided. French influences were at that time, "...moulding his middle style, the style which lies midway between that of the early essays, when he was almost wholly imitative, and that of the later romances when he was passing beyond imitation." Victor Hugo and Dumas, Scott's French followers, were greatly admired by Stevenson,


68 Stevenson, "On the Enjoyment of Unpleasant Places," *Essays of Travel and in the Art of Writing*, 110.

69 Steuart, I, 225-32.

70 Ibid., 228.


the former for his use of setting as a determining force in the narrative, and the latter for his portrayal of a crowded and sunny field of life. Balzac whose use of setting was said by Lubbock to be of the very essence of the story, was referred to by Stevenson many times in his letters and essays. Barbey D'Aurevilly, a lesser French writer who dealt with the Norman period, was acclaimed a favorite by Stevenson because he reeked of the soil and the past.

The use of local color in the Island fiction has a predecessor in Herman Melville whose South Sea stories were introduced to Stevenson by Charles Warren Stoddard in San Francisco, and whose work the author read with pleasure.

Specific sources to which Stevenson acknowledged his indebtedness for inspiration, and for details of the setting were: The Phantom Ship by Frederic Marryat used in The Master of Ballantrae, a few reminiscences of of Poe, Defoe, and Washington Irving; a copy of Johnson's Buccaneers, the name of the Dead Man's Chest from Kingsley's At Last, used in Treasure Island, Marryat's Pirate used for the same novel; the serial style of

74 Letters, IV, 205.
75 Balfour, I, 204.
76 Letters, III, 65.
77 Stevenson, "Genesis," Essays of Travel, 323.
78 Treasure Island, xxxi.
79 Letters, II, 64.
Alfred Phillips, a writer for *Young Folks*, employed in the writing of *The Black Arrow*, and details from several of Dickens's historical novels used in *St. Ives*.

Of the influence of Thoreau, Stevenson remarked as follows: "Upon me this pure, narrow, sunnily-ascetic Thoreau had exercised a great charm. I have scarce written ten sentences since I was introduced to him, but his influence might be somewhere detected by a close observer." Whitman, he praised thus: "We fall upon Whitman, after the works of so many men who write better, with a sense of relief from strain, with a sense of touching nature, as when one passes out of the flaring, noisy thoroughfares of a great city into...the huge and thoughtful night." It was Whitman, he said who cured Stevenson of the "malady of being seventeen years old."

But the chief source of Stevenson's utilization of the various aspects of the setting, material and immaterial, was to be found in his own nature. As Sidney Colvin said, "The root of all originality was in him, in the shape of an extreme natural vividness of perception, imagination, and feeling." On another occasion the same critic remarked: "...he expressed vividly and extremely personal way of seeing and being, a sense of nature and of romance,

81 *Letters*, IV, 362.
83 Stevenson, "Walt Whitman," Ibid., 92.
84 *Loc. cit.*
of the aspects of human existence and problems of human conduct which was essentially his own.86 "Though prose was his chosen medium of expression, he was by temperament a born poet, to whom the world was full of enchantment and of latent romance, only waiting to take shape and substance in the forms of art... He had not only the poet's mind but the poet's senses...87 "He could not help being an extremely intelligent spectator of his own doings and feelings,"88 and in his own words, remembered things with "complete sensations, concrete, poignant and essential to the genius of the place."89 It was these exact sensations and feelings evoked in Stevenson, so sensitive to the suggestive influences of the environment in all its aspects, that he attempted to faithfully convey. He believed that:

A common sentiment is one of those goods that make life palatable and ever new. The knowledge that another has felt as we have felt, and seen things, even if they are little things, not much otherwise than we have seen them will continue to the end to be one of life's choicest pleasures.90

Thus, a few illustrations will demonstrate that Stevenson's choice and use of setting was as organic and natural as that of Scott's of whom he said:

To a man like Scott, the different appearances of nature seemed each to contain its own legend ready made, which it was his to call forth: in such or such a place, only such or such events ought with propriety to happen; and in this spirit he made the "Lady of the Lake" for Ben Venue, the "Heart of Midlothian" for Edinburgh,

86 Ibid., xxv.
87 S. Golvin, editor, Letters, xxxii.
88 Ibid.
89 Stevenson, Quoted in Balfour, I, 61.
90 Stevenson, "Roads," Essays of Travel, 100.
and the "Pirate,"...for the desolate islands and roaring
tideways of the North. 91

Stevenson, like Scott, believed that, "The Character of a place is most often
perfectly expressed in its associations. An event strikes root and grows in-
to a legend, when it has happened amongst congenial surroundings." 92

Stevenon's associations of place were largely derived from the past, as
was formerly noted; so he naturally peopled familiar scenes with characters
and incidents of by-gone days. It was no mere literary affectation or fashion
for him to write of the open air, because, as he said, all his chief pleasures
were active and adventurous, and ran in the open air. 93 His philosophy of
nature was: "One who has grown a long while in the sweat of laborious moons,
and under the stars at night, a frequenter of hills, and forest, ...has, in
the end, a sense of communion with the powers of the universe, and amicable
relations towards his God." 94 He dwelt so often on the past because he has
an unusually strong sense of kinship with his ancestors, perhaps an outgrowth
of the rise of evolutionary theories. He believed that "Our conscious years
are but a moment in the history of the elements that build us," 95 and that an
"homunculus or part-man" of his was present, partaking of the adventurous ex-
plts of his predecessors. 96

92 Ibid., 27-8.
93 Letters, II, 326.
94 Stevenson, "The Camisards," Travels With A Donkey In the Cevennes. New
York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926, 171.
96 Ibid., 108.
Thus, in *Prince Otto*, Seraphina's spirit was refreshed and freed from court intrigue in the forest because Stevenson felt that the forest changed and renewed man's weary spirit. For the same reason, Dr. Desprez was similarly affected in the story, "The Treasure of Franchard." "Will of the Mill" was consoled by contemplating the heavens because the author believed that the stars had a "serene and gladsome influence on the mind." He wrote so often and so realistically of the sea and ships, and seashores, and most often in such a disastrous vein because: "Though the sea is a deathful place, I like to be...there," and: "The sight of the sea, even from a city, will bring thoughts of storm and sea-disaster." Again, speaking of the sea, he said: "There is nowhere such a background for heroism as the noble, terrifying, and picturesque conditions of some of our sea-fights." Too, "...ships, and seas, and perilous headlands, and the shining pharos..." were the only parts of the engineering life with which he could sympathize. In *David Balfour* intrigue was perpetrated in the Courts of Edinburgh because Stevenson felt that Parliament Close with its crimes and heartbreaks gave one a vision of the mouth of Hell. The Great North Road in St. Ives was the

99 Letters, II, 128.
103 *Essays of Travel*, op. cit., 24.
scene of such lively and unexpected adventure because: "It is to this wander-
ing and uneasy spirit of anticipation that roads minister." In The Ebb-
Tide the Schooner "Farallone" met with such an exotic fate at Fakarava be-
cause to Stevenson the place was fit only for wizardry and shipwreck. 105
Church-going scenes were cheerless because: "...there are not many uproars in
this world more dismal than that of the Sabbath bells in Edinburgh...the out-
cry of incongruous orthodoxies..." 106 A map formed the plot of Treasure
Island, not because, as Steuart claimed the author had discovered a clever
way of revealing the practices of his art in the essay "My First Book" pub-
lished in 1894, long after the judgment of the critics and readers had been
received, 107 but because as Stevenson revealed, as early as 1871:

I have always been fond of maps, and can voyage
in an atlas with the greatest enjoyment. The names of
places are singularly inviting; the contour of coasts
and rivers is enthralling to the eye; and to hit in a
map upon some place you haven't heard of before makes
history a new possession. 108

Similarly, the atmosphere in Stevenson's stories was, for the most part, clear
and bright, even in death scenes, an atmosphere in sharp contrast to the murky
essence of decay in the stories of Poe, because it was Stevenson's philosophy
to give happiness to others, not only in living, but in literature, as well. 109
A unique influence upon Stevenson's use of setting was his youthful admiration for the Juvenile drama of Skelt with its "pages of...bosky forests, palaces, warships, frowning fortresses, and prison vaults..." Of this Stevenson said:

What am I, what are life, art, letters, the world, but what my Skelt has made them? ... The world was plain before I knew him, a poor penny world; but soon it was all coloured with romance. If I go to the theatre to see a good old melodrama, 'its but Skelt a little faded. If I visit a bold scene in nature, Skelt would have been bolder; there had been certainly a castle on that mountain, and the hollow tree--that set piece--I seem to miss it in the foreground. Indeed out of this out-and-dry, dull, swaggering, obtrusive, and infantile art, I seem to have learned the very spirit of my life's enjoyment; met there the shadows of the characters I was to read about and love in a late future; got the romance of "Der Freischutz" long ere I was to hear of Weber or the mighty Formes; acquired a gallery of scenes and characters with which, in the silent theatre of the brain, I might enact all novels and romances.

Chesterton believed that Skelt had a direct influence upon Stevenson's art.

To the advance in science and sociology, Stevenson was, in part, indebted, not only for his preoccupation with the past and heredity, but also for his accurate observations and vivid portrayal of natural phenomena, as well as for his philosophical conception of the relation between these phenomena and the wants of human beings.

The various effects of ancestry, tradition, environment, travel, reading,


111 Stevenson, Ibid., 209-10.

112 Chesterton, 25-42.
friends, health, education, and temperament upon Robert Louis Stevenson's thought and art, were, herein noted because in Stevenson it was impossible to separate the man from the writer. As he put it so expressively: "... an art has its seat at the centre of the artist's doings and sufferings, deals directly with his experiences, teaches him the lessons of his own fortunes and mis-haps, and becomes a part of his biography." 113

113 Stevenson, "Thoreau," Familiar Studies, 126.
CHAPTER II

STEVENSON’S THEORIES ON THE ROLE OF SETTING

Almost from the start of his writing career, Robert Louis Stevenson had clearly in mind the principles of certain forms of stories he wished to write. Leslie Stephen said that Stevenson, the essayist, was the unconscious critic of the story teller. But it was not only in his essays that the author revealed the practice of his art; in his correspondence, as well, he left various enlightening passages relating to his conceptions of the use of setting in the narrative.

Stevenson realized the importance of the element of setting as the "initial element in narrative"—as the factor which could be used to determine plot, character, or both. He said, in a conversation with Dr. Graham Balfour, his biographer, regarding the genesis of the "Merry Men:"

"There are, so far as I know, three ways and three ways only, of writing a story. You may take a plot and fit characters to it, or you may take a character and choose incidents and situations to develop it, or...you may take a certain atmosphere and get action and persons to express and realize it. I'll give you an example—"The Merry Men." There I began with the feeling of one of those islands on the west coast of Scotland, and I gradually developed the story to express the sentiment with which that coast affected me."

1 Leslie Stephen, National Review, 736.
3 Stevenson, Quoted in Balfour, II, 168-9.
This was an explanation of some of his best work, the South Seas, as well as his own country, giving material for such impressionistic pictures as one critic has said.\(^4\) Canby believed that in this principle of the single effect underlying the above theory, Stevenson was more influential among his own contemporaries than Poe.\(^5\) In a similar vein, and with reference to the same place, the Isle of Earraid, Stevenson remarked in the essay, "Memoirs of an Islet:"

There is another isle in my collection, the memory of which besieges me. I put a whole family there in one of my tales; ["The Merry Men"] and later on, threw upon its shores, and condemned to several days of rain and shellfish on its tumbled boulders, the hero of another.\(^6\)

This last reference was to David Balfour's experience after the wreck of the "Covenant" on the shores of the isle, an incident in the novel \textit{Kidnapped}.\(^7\)

Again, in the same essay, Stevenson re-stated the same principle underlying the utilization of setting as the determining force:

Those who try to be artists use, time after time, the matter of their recollections, setting and resetting little coloured memories of men and scenes, rigging up (it may be) some especial friend in the attire of buccaneer, and decreeing armies to manoeuvre, or murder to be done, on the playground of their youth...

One or two of these pleasant spectres I think I have laid. I used one but the other day: a little eyot of dense, fresh-water sand, where I once waded deep


\(^6\) \textit{Memories and Portraits}, 114-15.

\(^7\) \textit{Kidnapped}, Chapter XIV, 122-133.
in butterburrs, delighting to hear the song of the river on both sides, and to tell myself that I was indeed and at last upon an island. Two of my puppets lay there a summer's day, hearkening to the shearsers at work in river-side fields and to the drums of the grey old garrison upon the neighboring hill. And this was, I think, done rightly: the place was rightly peopled—and now belongs not to me but to my puppets...and I shall once more...be pricked again, in season and out of season, by the desire to weave it into art.8

The "puppets" mentioned in the foregoing quotation, were David and Allan near the end of their flight through the heather in Kidnapped.9

Weygandt believed that in the following quotation from Stevenson's essay, "A Gossip on Romance," the author revealed that the basis of a large part of his writing was place, the spirit of place, the aura of romance there was about a haunting place:

Drama is the poetry of conduct, romance the poetry of circumstance.... Now we are pleased by our conduct, anon merely pleased by our surroundings. It would be hard to say which of these modes of satisfaction is the more effective, but the latter is surely the more constant....

One thing in life calls for another; there is a fitness in events and places. The sight of a pleasant arbour puts it in our mind to sit there. One place suggests work, another idleness, a third early rising and long rambles in the dew. The effect of night, of any flowing water, of the open ocean, calls up in the mind an army of anonymous desires and pleasures. Something we feel, should happen; we know not what, yet we proceed in quest of it. And many of the happiest hours of life fleet by us in this vain attendance on the genius of the place and moment. It is thus that tracts of young fir, and low rocks that reach into deep soundings, particularly torture and delight me. Something must have happened in such places, and perhaps ages back, to members of my race; and when I was a child I tried in

8 Memories and Portraits, op. cit., 113-14.
9 Kidnapped, 252.
vain to invent appropriate games for them, as I still try, just as vainly, to fit them with the proper story. Some places speak distinctly. Certain dank gardens cry aloud for a murder; certain old houses demand to be haunted; certain coasts are set apart for shipwreck. Other spots again, seem to abide their destiny, suggestive and impenetrable, "miching mallecho." The inn at Burford Bridge, with its arbours and green garden and silent, eddying river—and still seems to wait the coming of the appropriate legend. Within these ivied walls, behind those old green shutters, some further business smoulders, waiting for its hour. The Old Hawes Inn at the Queen's Ferry makes a similar call upon my fancy. There it stands, apart from the town, beside the pier, in a climate of its own, half inland, half marine—in front, the ferry bubbling with the tide and the guardship swinging to her anchor; behind, the old garden with the trees...there is some story...which must express the meaning of that inn more fully.... I have lived both at the Hawes and Burford in a perpetual flutter, on the heels, as it seemed, of some adventure that should justify the place; ...some day, I think, a boat shall put off from the Queen's Ferry, fraught with a dear cargo, and some frosty night a horseman, on a tragic errand, rattle with his whip upon the green shutters of the inn at Burford.

Now, this is one of the natural appetites with which any lively literature has to count. The desire for knowledge, I had almost added the desire for meat, is not more deeply seated than this demand for fit and striking incident.... The right kind of thing should fall out in the right kind of place; the right kind of thing should follow; and not only the characters talk aptly and think naturally, but all the circumstances in a tale answer one to another like notes in music.... It is one thing to write about the inn at Burford, or to describe scenery with the word-painters; it is quite another to seize on the heart of the suggestion and make a country famous with a legend...

Walter Scott is out and away the king of the king of the romantics. "The Lady of the Lake" had no indisputable claim to be a poem beyond the inherent fitness and desirability of the tale. It is just such a story as a man would make up for himself, walking, in the best health and temper, through just such scenes as it is laid in.10

10 Memories and Portraits, 232-49.
Clayton Hamilton cited the foregoing passage in illustration of setting employed as the motive toward, or suggestion of action.\textsuperscript{11} Chesterton defended the same passage from the charge of externality of thought thus:

It...means that there was from the first, in any such work of art, the unity of mood that there always ought to be. It means that he had decided what sort of novel he would write, before he had decided what novel he would write; and this is right and inevitable.... This does not prove that they were not deep feelings which thus rose up at the sight of the strange landscape and groped to find their appropriate images of doom. It only proves that the origin of the story was of the same sort as the origin of a poem.\textsuperscript{12}

Lathrop explained this passage thus:

He believes that in some sense every man's spirit thrills to the vibrations of natural things; that the connection between man and nature is obscure and inexplicable but very real, that it is active in the working of deeply seated instincts, and is manifested by the power of natural scenes over the imagination.\textsuperscript{13}

Lovett and Hughes said of the same passage: "He fully realized the importance of scene in giving atmosphere to capture the mood of the reader, and to fix, as it were, the rhyme-scheme of the story's action. Indeed, places were an invitation to his imagination, as to Scott's.\textsuperscript{14} A similar passage demonstrating the fitness of action to place was quoted in Chapter \textsuperscript{15} of this study.

The same practice of fitting the scene with the appropriate incidents

\textsuperscript{11} Clayton Hamilton, \textit{A Manual of the Art of Fiction}, 108.
\textsuperscript{12} Chesterton, 175.
\textsuperscript{13} Henry B. Lathrop, \textit{The Art of the Novelist}. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1919, 207.
\textsuperscript{14} Lovett and Hughes, \textit{The History of the Novel in England}, 353.
\textsuperscript{15} Supra, Chapter I, 21-22.
was expressed in the following excerpt taken from the essay, "An Autumn Effect."

Night had fallen before I ventured forth again. It was pitch-dark in the village street, and the darkness seemed only the greater for a light here and there in an uncurtained window or from an open door. Into one such window I was rude enough to peep, and saw within a charming "genre" picture. In a room, all white wainscot and crimson wall-paper, a perfect gem of colour after the black, empty darkness in which I had been groping, a pretty girl was telling a story, as well as I could make out, to an attentive child upon her knee, while an old woman sat placidly dozing over the fire.... I was not behindhand with a story for myself--a good old story after the manner of G. P.R. James and the village melodramas, with a wicked squire, and poachers, and an attorney, and a virtuous young man with a genius for mechanics, who should love, and protect and ultimately marry the girl in the crimson room. Baudelaire has a few dainty sentences on the fancies that we are inspired with when we look through a window into other people's lives; and I think Dickens has somewhere enlarged on the same text. The subject, at least, is one that I am seldom weary of entertaining. I remember, night after night, at Brussels, watching a good family sup together, make merry, and retire to rest.... Night after night, I found the scene rivet my attention and keep me awake in bed with all manner of quaint imaginations.16

Another instance of the element of place, or the map of a place forming the genesis for a story and determining the nature of the incidents which were to take place was set forth by Stevenson in the essay, "My First Book," wherein the described how Treasure Island had been inspired. He said:

...I made the map of an island; it was elaborately and (I thought) beautifully coloured; the shape of it took my fancy beyond expression; it contained harbors that pleased me like sonnets; and with the unconsciousness of the predestined, I ticketed my performance "Treasure Island." I am told there are people who do not care for maps, and find it hard to believe. The names, the shapes, of the woodlands, the courses of the roads and rivers, the

16 Stevenson, Essays of Travel, 131-2
prehistoric footsteps of man still distinctly traceable up hill and down dale, the mills and the ruins, the ponds and the ferries, perhaps the "Standing Stone" or the "Druidic Circle" on the heath; here is an inexhaustible fund of interest for any man with eyes to see, or twopence worth of imagination to understand with. No child but must remember laying his head in the grass, staring into the infinitesimal forest, and seeing it grow populous with fairy armies.

Somewhat in this way, as I pored upon my map of "Treasure Island," the future characters of the book began to appear there visibly among imaginary woods; and their brown faces and bright weapons peeped out upon me from unexpected quarters, as they passed to and fro, fighting, and hunting treasure, on these few square inches of a flat projection. The next thing I knew, I had some paper before me and was writing out a list of chapters....

I had written it up to the map. The map was the chief part of my plot. For instance, I had called an islet "Skeleton Island," not knowing what I meant, seeing only for the immediate picturesque; and it was to justify this name that I broke into the gallery of Mr. Poe and stole Flint's pointer. And in the same way, it was because I had made two harbours that the Hispaniola was sent on her wanderings with Israel Hands....

I have said it was the most of the plot. I might say it was the whole. A few reminiscences of Poe, Defoe, and Washington Irving, a copy of Johnson's "Buccaneers," the name of the Dead Man's Chest from Kingsley's "At Last," some recollections of canoeing on the high seas, a cruise in a fifteen-ton schooner yacht, and the map itself with its infinite, eloquent suggestion, made up the whole of my materials. It is perhaps not often that a map figures so largely in a tale; yet it is always important. The author must know his countryside, whether real or imaginary, like his hand; the distances, the points of the compass, the place of the sun's rising, the behaviour of the moon, should be beyond cavil. And how troublesome the moon is! I have come to grief over the moon in "Prince Otto;" and so soon as that was pointed out to me, adopted a precaution which I recommend to other men—I never write now without an almanac, and the map of the country and the plan of every house, whether actually plotted on paper or clearly and immediately apprehended in the mind, a man may hope to
avoid some of the grossest possible blunders. With the map before him, he will scarce allow the sun to set in the east as it does in the "Antiquary." With the almanac at hand, he will scarce allow two horsemen, journeying on the most urgent affair, to employ six days, from three of the Monday morning till late in the Saturday night, upon a journey of, say, ninety or a hundred miles; and before the week is out, and still on the same nags, to cover fifty in one day, as he may read at length in the inimitable novel of "Rob Roy." But it is my contention...that he who is faithful to his map, and consults it, and draws from its his inspiration, daily, and hourly, gains positive support, and not mere negative immunity from accident. The tale has a root there; it grows in that soil; it has a spine of it own behind the words. Better if the count be real, and he has walked every foot of it and knows every milestone. But, even, with imaginary places, he will do well in the beginning to provide a map. As he studies it, relations will appear that he had not thought upon. He will discover obvious though unsuspected short cuts and footpaths for his messengers; and even when a map is not all the plot, as it was in "Treasure Island," it will be found to be a mine of suggestion.17

Stevenson's conception of the role of the material aspect of the setting, both the phenomena of nature, excluding the handiwork of man, and also that part, the result of man's labors, as the motive towards, or determination of character, actions, or both, was expressed in many passages.

For example, in 1880 he had given his impression of the woods of Monterey, Treasure Island, as "...the kind of wood for murderers to crawl among..."18 In France he found scenery "Incomparable for romance and harmony,"19 and "the continual provocation of romantic scenes"20 to the sensitive imagination of the writer. Again he believed that the Forest of Fontain-

17 Stevenson, Treasure Island, xix-xxxiii
18 "Old Pacific Capital," Across the Plains, 80.
19 "Fontainbleau," Ibid., 111.
20 Ibid., 133.
bleau would be used "...for ever in their books and pictures." The "gaiety and inspiration of the woods" was the "spirit of the place." Speaking of Edinburgh, he said:

By all the canons of romance, the place demands to be half deserted and leaning towards decay; birds we might admit in profusion, the play of the sun and winds, and a few gipsies encamped in the chief thoroughfare; but these citizens, with their cabs and tramways, their trains and posters are altogether out of key.

In speaking of the New Town of Edinburgh on a temperate day he said, "It has the scenic quality that would best set off a life of unthinking, open-air diversion. It was meant by nature for the realization of the society of comic operas." Of the house on Swanston Farm, he said: "On dark days, when the mist runs low upon the hill, the house has a gloomy air as if suitable for private tragedy." In speaking of a pleasant old-fashioned room in an inn, he remarked:

The book I read was about Italy in the early Renaissance, the pageantries and the light loves of princes, the passion of men for learning, and poetry, and art; but it was written by good luck, after a solid, prosaic fashion, that suited the room infinitely more than the matter...

21 Ibid., 141.
22 Ibid., 142.
24 Ibid., 46
25 Ibid., 79
26 "An Autumn Effect," Ibid., 141.
Later of the same inn, he said:

I heard a party of children go up and down the dark street for awhile, singing together sweetly... One can rarely be in a pleasant place without meeting some pleasant accident. I have a conviction that these children would not have gone singing before the inn unless the inn-parlour had been the delightful place it was.27

In speaking of the ornate "oriel" window on the tower of the Castle in the town of Maybole in Carrick, connected with the heroine of the "sweet old ballad of 'Johnnie Faa,'" Stevenson remarked:

Some people say that the ballad has no basis in fact... But in the face of all that, the very look of that high oriel window convinces the imagination, and we enter into all the sorrows of the imprisoned dame. We conceive the burthen of the long, lack-lustre days, when she leaned her sick head against the mullions, and saw the burgurers loafing in Maybole High Street, and the children at play, and ruffling gallants riding by from hunt or foray.28

It was the setting, in part, which inspired certain of the situations in The Master of Ballantrae, for Stevenson said, in referring to the genesis of the story:

Here then, almost before I had begun my story, I had two countries, two ends of the earth involved; and thus, though the notion of the resuscitated man failed entirely on the score of general acceptation, or even (as I have since found, acceptability), it fitted at once with my design of a tale of many lands.29

On another occasion, referring to the same idea, he said: "... the devil and

27 Ibid., 143
29 "Genesis," Ibid., 328.
Saranac suggested this 'dénouement' ...”  

In an old inn in France he found "... the very model of what a kitchen ought to be; a melodrama kitchen, suitable for bandits or noblemen in disguise." Again he noted "... the fantastic and beautiful appearance of old warships and the romance that invests the sea and everything sea-going in the eyes of English lads on a half-holiday at the coast." In England many windmills "put a spirit of romance into the tamest landscape." Other English scenes: "The warm, habitable age of towns and hamlets, the green, settled ancient look of the country; the lush hedge-rows, stiles, and privy pathways in the fields; the sluggish, brimming rivers ... are all set to English airs in the child's story that he tells himself at nights." "... the weather," he said, "the dramatic element in scenery, ... is far more human both in import and suggestion than the stable features of the landscape.... it is often excitingly presented in literature. The novel, compared with the stage, had for Stevenson, the advantage of presenting: "... behind and around the personages that for the moment occupy the foreground of his story, the continual suggestion of the landscape; the turn of the weather that will turn with it men's lives and fortunes, dimly foreshadowed on the horizon...." Again, he mentioned his love of fitting a

31 Travels With A Donkey, 65.
33 "The Foreigner at Home," Memories and Portraits, 10.
34 Ibid., 10-11.
35 "Talks and Talkers," Memories and Portraits, 143.
scene with an appropriate story:

... even where there is no harmony ... we may still embellish a place with some attraction of romance. We may learn to go far afield for associations... Sometimes an old print comes to our aid; I have seen many a spot lit up at once with picturesque imaginations, by a reminiscence of Callot, of Sadeler, or Paul Brill. Dick Turpin (Harrison Ainsworth) has been my lay figure for many an English lane. And I suppose the Trossachs (Scott) would hardly be the Trossachs for most tourists if a man of admirable romantic instinct had not peopled it for them with harmonious figures...37

The woods of Fontainbleau "are still haunted for the imagination by royal hunts and progresses and peopled with the faces of memorable men of yore."38

Eighteenth century houses had for Stevenson the suggestions of:

loyalty, of urbanity... the spirit of a country orderly and prosperous, a flavour of the presence of magistrates and well-to-do merchants in bag-wigs, the clink of glasses at night in fire-lit parlours, something certain and civic and domestic, ... with no character but their exceeding shapeliness, and the comely external utterance that they make of their internal comfort.39

But newer houses were: "sly and grotesque; ... they were peopled for me with persons of the same fashion. Dwarfs and sinister people in cloaks are about them; and I seem to divine crypts, and ... trap doors..."40 In the same vein he said: "Scott's novels and poems could put one in the right humour for seeing an old place.41 The use of setting in a functional manner; in the

38 "Forest Notes," Ibid., 167.
40 Loc. cit.
evolution of the plot was revealed in the following passage:

I remember Bob once saying to me that the quadrangle of Edinburgh University was a good thing and our having a talk as to how it could be employed in different arts. I then stated that the different doors and staircases ought to be brought before a reader of a story, not by mere recapitulation, but by the use of them, by the descent of different people one after another by each of them. And that the grand feature of shadow and the light of the one lamp in the corner should also be introduced only as they enabled people in the story to see one another or prevented them. And finally that whatever could not be thus worked into the evolution of the action had no right to be commemorated at all. 42

Again, an old building stirred his imagination to create a tale: "Haggard's rooms are in a strange old building ... has the effect of the antique like some strange monastery; ... I think I'm going to use it in a tale." 43 Other aspects of the scene, "... identities of sensation, and the world of connotations implied; highland huts, and peat smoke, and brown, swirling rivers, and ... the romance of the past, and that indescribable bite of the whole thing at a man's heart ... lies at the bottom of--a story." 44 In speaking of the suggestion of the Islands for inspiration, he said: "The suggestion of the Island wood with the whole silent battle, murder, and slow death of the contending forest; weigh upon the imagination ... a new story ... just shot through me like a bullet in one of my moments of awe, alone in that tragic jungle." 45 Again he said he felt that "autumn and tragedies go hand in hand." 46

42 Stevenson, Letters, I, 131.
43 Letters, III, 386.
44 Ibid., 204
45 Ibid., 238
46 Ibid., I, 82
He revealed his opinion on the role of a setting concerning a building having the determining force in the narrative when he praised Victor Hugo for the successful development of the artistic conception underlying Notre Dame de Paris, the "reanimation of Gothic art" achieved by an "effect of mirage" whereby the story and characters attached themselves to the central building, the Cathedral. In comparing another work of Hugo's, Les Travailleurs de la Mer, wherein man was shown "hand to hand with the elements, the last form of external force brought against him," with Defoe's Robinson Crusoe, Stevenson said, that before art had learned to concern itself with what lies outside of human will, in the days of Defoe,

Crusoe was one sole centre of interest in the midst of a nature utterly dead and unrealized by the artist; but this is not how we feel with Gilliat; we feel that he is opposed by a "dark coalition of forces," that an "immense animosity" surroundshim; we are the witnesses of the terrible warfare that he wages with "the silent inclemency of phenomena going their own way; and the great general law, implacable and passive;" "a conspiracy of the indifference of things" is against him. There is not one interest on the reef but two.

The foregoing illustrations of Stevenson's theories of the role of setting in the narrative referred to the use of the suggestion of the material aspects of the scene.

But the immaterial aspect of the setting, what Stevenson termed the "spirit of the times," or what has been called the "milieu;" the civilization and culture of which the characters were a part, was not neglected by the author in his comments on fiction. Thus:

47 "Victor Hugo's Romances," Familiar Studies, 12-14
48 Ibid., 18-20.
He was sorry that "The historical novel is forgotten; yet truth to the conditions of man's nature and the conditions of man's life, the truth of literary art, is free of the ages."49 The difference between Fielding and Scott with relation to the use of setting, he characterized in the following manner:

This touches the difference between Fielding and Scott. In the work of the latter, true to his character of a modern and a romantic, we become suddenly conscious of the background. Fielding ... remained ignorant of certain capabilities which the novel possesses over the drama; or, at least, neglected and did not develop them. To the end he continued to see things as a playwright sees them. The world with which he dealt, the world he had realized for himself and sought to realize and set before his readers, was a world of exclusively human interest. As for landscape, he was content to underline stage directions, as it might be done in a play-book; Tom and Molly retire into a practicable wood. As for nationality and public sentiment, it is curious enough to think that Tom Jones is laid in the year forty-five, and that the only use he makes of the rebellion is to throw a troop of soldiers into his hero's way. It is most really important, however, to remark the change which has been introduced into the conception of character by the beginning of the romantic movement and the consequent introduction into fiction of a vast amount of new material. Fielding tells us as much as he thought necessary to account for the actions of his creatures; he thought that each of these actions could be decomposed on the spot into a few simple personal elements, as we decompose a force in a question of abstract dynamics. The larger motives are all unknown to him; he had not understood that the nature of the landscape or the spirit of the times could be for anything in a story; and so, naturally and rightly, he said nothing about them. But Scott's instinct, the instinct of the man of an age profoundly different, taught him otherwise; and, in his work, the individual characters begin to occupy a comparatively small proportion of that canvas on which armies manoeuvre, and great hills pile themselves upon each other's shoulders. Fielding's characters were always great to the full stature of a perfectly arbitrary will. Already in Scott we begin to have a sense of the subtle influences that moderate and qualify a man's personality;

49 "A Note on Realism," Essays of Travel, 280.
that personality is no longer thrown out in unnatural isolation, but is resumed into its place in the constitution of things.

It is this change in the manner of regarding men and their actions first exhibited in romance, that has since renewed and vivified history.50

The railway, "Across the Plains," stireed his creative imagaination because

... when I think how the railroad has been pushed through this unwatered wilderness and haunt of savage tribes, and now will bear an emigrant for some $12 from the Atlantic to the Golden Gates; how at each stage of the construction, roaring, impromptu cities, full of gold and lust and death, sprang up and then died away again, and are now but wayside stations in the desert; how in these uncouth places pig-tailed Chinese pirates worked side by side with border ruffians and broken men from Europe, taling together in a mixed dialect, mostly oaths, gambling, drinking, quarrelling and murdering like wolves; how the plumed hereditary lord of all America heard, in this last fastness, the scream of the "bad medicine waggon" charioting his foes; and then I go on to remember that all this epical turmoil was conducted by gentlemen in frock coats, and with a view to nothing more extraordinary than a fortune and a subsequent visit to Paris, it seems to me, I own, as if this railway were the one typical achievement of the age in which we live, as if it brought together into one plot all the ends of the world and all the degrees of social rank, and offered to some great writer the busiest, the most extended, and the most varied subject for an enduring literary work. If it be romance, if it be contrast, if it be heroism that we require, what was Troy town to this?51

His opinion of the value of a trade or occupation as a setting was given in the following manner:

A trade that touches nature, one that lies at the foundations of life, in which we have all had ancestors employed, so that on a hint of it ancestral memories re-


51 Across the Plains, 50-52.
vive, lends itself to literary use... The fortune of a tale lies not alone in the skill of him that writes, but as much, perhaps, in the inherited experience of him who reads; and when I hear with a particular thrill of things that I have never done or seen, it is one of that innumerable army of my ancestors rejoicing in past deeds. Thus novels begin to touch not the fine "dilettanti" but the gross of mankind, when they leave off to speak of parlours and shades of manner and still-born niceties of motive, and begin to deal with fighting, sailoring, adventure, death or child-birth; and thus ancient out-door crafts and occupations whether Mr. Hardy wields the shepherd's crook or Count Tolstoi swings the scythe, lift romance into a near neighborhood with epic. These aged things have on them the dew of man's morning; they lie near, ... to the trunk and aboriginal taproot of the race.52

The advance of Hugo over Scott and Fielding was attributed by Stevenson to his ability to use the setting in unaccustomed ways:

Those elements that only began to show themselves timidly, as adjuncts, in the novels of Walter Scott, have usurped ever more and more of the canvas; until we find the whole interest of one of Hugo's romances centring around matter that Fielding would have banished from his altogether, as being out of the field of action. So we have elemental forces occupying nearly as large a place, playing (so to speak) nearly as important a role, as theman, Gilliat, who opposes and overcomes them. So we find the fortunes of a nation put upon the stage with as much vividness as ever before the fortunes of a village maiden or a lost heir; ... So that, for Hugo, man is no longer an isolated spirit without antecedent or relation here below, but a being involved in the action and reaction of natural forces, himself a centre of such action and reaction; or an unit in a great multitude, chased hither and thither by epidemic terrors and aspirations, and, in all seriousness, blown about by every wind of doctrine. This is a long way that we have travelled: between such work and the work of Fielding is there not, indeed, a great gulf in thought and sentiment?

Art, thus conceived, realises for men a larger portion of life, and that portion one that it is more difficult for them to realise unaided; and, beside

52 "Pastoral," Memories and Portraits, 96.
helping them to feel more intensely those restricted personal interests which are patent to all, it awakes in them some consciousness of those more general relations that are so strangely invisible to the average man in ordinary moods. It helps to keep man in his place in nature, and, above all, it helps him to understand more intelligently the responsibilities of his place in society.53

Akin to the historical setting and the study of a trade or occupation is that quality of the setting which has been classified as local color and noted by Canby as existing where the setting is as important as the plot and where a strong factitious interest is let by the peculiarities of place, action, and the racial eccentricities of the characters.54 Perry said this quality was evident where the author has made "... an honest effort to realize in his story the impression made upon him by the landscape and the people of those quarters of the world."55 Stevenson realized the possibilities of using local color as the expression of the spirit of the place with its "strange ways of life,"56 and as the communication of the "smell and look of things," or the "essence of the South Seas."57 These were his descriptions of the matter contained in the novels, The Wrecker and The Ebb-Tide, and in the short story, "The Beach of Falesa." He stated that his utilization of local color in The Wrecker was for the purpose of "approaching and fortifying" the mystery of the sale of a wreck in the disguise of a novel of manners.58

54 H. S. Canby, The Short Story in English, 318-19.
56 Stevenson, Letters, III, 162.
57 Ibid., 342, 335.
The artistic principle underlying his application of the inspiration derived from the scene, he stated thus:

... I may say, I allow a considerable lapse of time to intervene between any of my little journeyings and the attempt to chronicle them. I cannot describe a thing that is before me at the moment, or that has been before me only a very little while before; I must allow my recollections to get thoroughly strained free from all chaff till nothing be except the pure gold; allow my memory to choose out what is truly memorable by a process of natural selection; ...59

59 "Cockermouth and Keswick," Essays of Travel, 84.
CHAPTER III

ILLUSTRATIONS OF STEVENSON'S USE OF SETTING
IN HIS NOVELS AND STORIES

From the various illustrations, in the foregoing chapters of Stevenson's conceptions of the role of setting in the narrative, there emerged such meanings of the term as: "scene," "atmosphere," "character of the place," "spirit of the place," "spirit of the times," "background," "environment," etc.

From the quantity of Stevenson's theories regarding the role of setting in the narrative, and his intimate method of communicating the various impressions made upon him by the different aspects of the setting, it was clearly evident that he realized the important role this element of fiction could be made to play in the story or novel. As Chesterton said, "The germ of all his stories lies in the idea that every landscape or scrap of scenery has a soul: and that soul is a story."¹ Lathrop classified Stevenson's method of employing setting thus: "In James as in Stevenson, the novels seem to have taken their beginning from the setting. The authors seem to have said to themselves, 'Given these surroundings, such and such things would be likely to happen,' ..." With Stevenson, the setting is the spirit of place, the instinctive romantic response to a physical scene.²

² Lathrop, op. cit., 275.
In addition to the uses of setting noted in the preceding paragraphs, namely: for the genesis or inception of a story, as the determination or motive toward character and action, Stevenson employed setting in various ways. His realization of the fact that human beings translated their feelings into their surroundings, thereby justifying the use of landscape for symbolizing and representing the human emotions of the characters at some stage or crisis in the story was represented thus: "The traveller is ... aware of a sympathy of mood between himself and the road he travels." A conception such as this when applied to fiction was classified by Clayton Hamilton as "emotional similarity of setting." But the scenery or environment, he knew, could be used not only to reflect the moods of the characters and vice versa, but also for influencing the characters because he said:

Nor does the scenery any more affect the thoughts than the thoughts affect the scenery. We see a place through our humours as through differently coloured glasses. We are ourselves a term in the equation, a note of the chord...

Of course, the most elementary means of making the setting a vital part of the story, its employment as a utilitarian aid to action and character, and as mere vividness was not neglected by Stevenson. The following section illustrates Stevenson's technique of utilizing the setting in these various ways:

3 "Roads," Essays of Travel and In The Art of Writing, 105.
4 A Manual of the Art of Fiction, 106.
Setting Used as genesis. The various instances in which the setting, either time or place, featured as the inspiration for the story were noted in Chapters I and II of this study.

Setting Used as a motive toward or determination of action. In the discussion of Stevenson's theories on setting in the preceding chapter there were references to: His method of fitting characters and action to the desolate Isle of Earraid, the scene of "The Merry Men," described on two different occasions, his detailed explanation of fitting characters and action to the imaginary isle conceived on a map in the case of Treasure Island, his description of his technique of fitting the idea of a tale of many lands with appropriate situations for The Master of Ballantrae, and his admission of placing "puppets" in two different places in Kidnapped to fit the scenes with appropriate characters.

The interest of "The Merry Men," one of the best examples of Stevenson's use of setting as a determining forces, a tragic tale of sea madness, wrecks, treasures of the dead, and a gloomy "sea girt, solitary" island lay chiefly in the setting. "The great and fearful voices of the breakers ... the Merry Men" with their "dance of death" that "seemed ... to be a part of the world's evil and the tragic side of life," finally drove Gordon Darnaway to madness and murder. Gordon, a "rough cold gloomy man," the superstitious Rory, Gordon's serious daughter, Mary, together with the "rain falling like black crape on the mountain, the remains of the wreck of the "Christ-Anna," the pitiful sinking of the Spanish adventurers' ship in its hunt for the lost ship of the Armada, the horrid glee of the madman as he watched the ship go down, were all, characters, incidents, and details, appropriately attuned to
the melancholy sentiment evoked in the author by the perilous isle. From the outset of the story when Charles, the narrator, noticed the coble repaired with beautiful, foreign wood and the plain old kitchen "shamed by incongruous additions" from the previous wreck, through the discovery of the lonesome grave, to the coming of the black man out of the sea, as it seemed, and Darnaway's ensuing drowning in superstitious horror; not one detail lessened the dreary effect of the tale.

The bitter cold of Saranac, not only suggested the dénouement of the plot of The Master of Ballantrae, as Stevenson related, but determined the horrid character of the end. Speaking of the journey in the wilderness where Henry Durie hired accomplices to murder the Master, his brother, under pretext of helping him find his ill-got treasure, Mackellar, the steward of the estate of Durisdeer, and narrator of the story said: "I wonder ... if some of the horror of these events ... flowed not from the foul skies and savage winds to which we were exposed, and the agony of cold that we must suffer." Again, he said, "... the character of the country where they journeyed promised impunity to deeds of blood." In fact, it was the cold which lent a sort of unity to the entire, episodic tale, suggestively sub-titled, "A Winter's Tale." The bitter duel after which the Master's wanderings increased, took place on a night "... dark and still and starless and exceeding cold: a night the most unseasonable, fit for strange events." The night on

6 The Master of Ballantrae, 310.
7 Ibid., 311.
8 Ibid., 147.
which Mountain, the trader, staggered into camp to tell Henry Durie of his brother's death, was "murderously cold."

Treasure Island, as might be expected from the treacherous deeds and characters with which it was fitted by the author in his description of its construction, was a place "uniform and sad," covered with "gray, melancholy woods" and foliage of a "poisonous brightness." "The chill and the vapor told a poor tale of the island ... a damp feverish unhealthy spot."9

Another instance of the author's utilization of setting to determine characters and action, fit to a suggestive scene, was that of the story "The Pavilion on the Links." There was little doubt that the place was to determine the rest of the story because, at the outset, the narrator, Frank Cassilis, spoke of the links as "a bleak stretch of country," whose quicksands had "an infamous reputation." "... the place told of nothing but dead mariners and sea disasters."10 A wreck and a ship in peril near the coast "completed the innuendo of the scene." The "capabilities of the sand-hills for protracted ambush or stealthy advances and retreats" was noted. The Pavilion, the house on the links, "had an air of solitude ... the wind cried in the chimneys with a strange and wailing note."11 The fitting incidents for such a setting were murder, death in the quicksands, and arson committed by a band of mysterious "carborari" who were engaged in hunting down a defaulting banker hidden in the Pavilion. Northmour, the owner of the Pavilion was a "misanthrope" of ill temper. The desolate landscape, the dismal rain,

9 Treasure Island, 117, 118, 120, 178.
11 Ibid., 233
the doleful voice of the gale, and the roaring of the sea, were all orchestral accompaniments, expressive of a place that cried out to Stevenson for murderous deeds.

An instance wherein both the spirit of the time and the spirit of the place determined both incident and character was in the case of the historical novels, *Kidnapped* and its sequel, *David Balfour*. Long before Stevenson thought of writing about the Highlands after the last Jacobite insurrection of 1745, the days of the rivalry between the clans of Stewart and Campbell, in story, he had planned a history dealing with the same historical elements such as forfeited estates, religion, etc. In addition, his imagination had long inhabited the glorious past of his country, so that when he decided to write *Kidnapped*, after receiving further inspiration from the Jacobite pamphlet referred to in Chapter I of this study, he peopled it with characters expressive of his ideals of Highland loyalty, courage, and daring, and with incidents in harmony and expressive of the same spirit. He believed that the setting was a "picturesque period" which had not been handled by Scott.\(^\text{12}\)

The period, or the spirit of the time determined such incidents as the "trepanning" of David Balfour on the brig Covenant for the purpose of being sold into slavery in Carolina, Alan's risking his life as a forfeited rebel to collect and smuggle rents to his exiled and forfeited chief, David's witnessing of the murder of the Red Fox near the home of James of the Glens in Appin, on the occasion of the Red Fox's attempt to drive out the Stewart tenants, his clan rivals, the interview with James of the Glens, and the resulting "papering" of David as the killer to cast away suspicion from the true mur-

\(^{12}\) Letters, II, 319.
derer, the meeting with Cluny Mac Pherson, a leader of the Rebellion, in his "cage" on Ben Alder where David saw how patriarchal justice was exercised over wild Highland Jacobites by their clan chief, Jacobites who ignored the laws of King George, and kept their proscribed and forfeited chief's secret when betrayal meant a fortune, David's dangerous encounter with the Blind Catechist, his pleasant meeting with the good and humble Mr. Henderland, the evangelist of the Highlands, and the contest of the pipes between the son of Rob Roy and Alan Breck, sworn enemies, at Balquhidder. In the sequel, David Balfour, the incidents determined by the period, or the spirit of the time were largely involved in the workings of Scots politics of the time, or as it was called in irony, the "Campbell Justice." David's desire to see justice done to Alan Breck, a suspected accomplice in the murder of the Red Fox, and to James of Glens who was to be hanged in vengeance on the clan of Appin, involved in him the intrigue and duplicity of the courts. It was the maneuvers of the Appin "conspiracy" which determined such experiences of David's as sequestration on the Bass Rock, the duel with the Lieutenant in Hope Park, his embarrassing social debut in the company of the Lord Advocate's daughters, his weary vigil with Alan Breck while awaiting the rebel's ship to smuggle him into France, David's disillusioning experience with the Edinburgh lawyers who desired to perpetrate a revolution in the Courts by making use of his evidence which was to save James of the Glens, and the dangerous experience in France at the hands of the insidious Mac Gregor, James More who attempted to betray Alan to the English after his narrow escape from Scotland.

In these two novels the spirit of place had a major part in determining the incidents and character also. Grabo says that in Kidnapped, a unity was
imposed upon the events occurring in David's travels by sea from the east coast around the end of Scotland, his escape upon the Isle of Earraid, and his flight through the heather with Alan Breck to Edinburgh. The unity imposed upon these varied incidents was that of geography.\(^\text{13}\) Of the part played by place in one part of the novel, one authority said:

The determination of action by the setting is illustrated in his handling of the "leap for life" motive which Scott used in Old Mortality. David Balfour and Alan Breck in their flight through the Highlands are confronted by a cataract like that which Morton crosses to hold his interview with Burley, but Stevenson heightens the situation and the nervous tension of his heroes by having the stream divided by a rock to which they must jump and then attempt the longer leap to the farther side.\(^\text{14}\)

In a footnote to "A Gossip on Romance" Stevenson stated that he had attempted to fit the Hawes Inn at Queensferry with an appropriate incident by having David Balfour trepanned from there on the brig "Covenant."\(^\text{15}\) A similar instance concerning the same novel was noted in Chapter II of this study.\(^\text{16}\) David's narrow escape from death in his climb to the Tower in the same novel at the desolate House of Shaws must certainly have been planned by Stevenson as an incident fit to the place, because he led up to the view of the house with four pages of allusions disreputable to the character of the house. This incident, said Beach, determined David's resourcefulness, the strain on


\(^\text{14}\) Lovett and Hughes, 353.

\(^\text{15}\) "A Gossip on Romance," 236.

\(^\text{16}\) Chapter II, 28-29.
his wits. David's experiences on the brig "Covenant" were appropriate to his first impression of the ship when he looked at her "... with extreme abhorrence and pitied all poor souls that were condemned to sail in her."  

The importance of the topography in *David Balfour* was evidenced in Stevenson's request for a map of the environs of Edinburgh about 1750 because he said, "The topography is very much worked into the story." In the Dedication to the same novel, he said that he wished to give the familiar places of Edinburgh picturesque associations for its youth to enjoy. Too, at the outset of the story the character of the incidents to be expected in the city of Edinburgh, was thus described:

... Here I was in this old, black city, which was for all the world like a rabbit-warren, not only by the number of its indwellers, but the complication of its passages and holes. It was indeed a place where no stranger had a chance to find a friend, let be another stranger. Suppose him even to hit on the right close, people dwelt so thronged in these tall houses, he might very well seek a day before he chanced on the right door. The ordinary course was to hire a lad they called a caddie, who was like a guide or pilot, led you where you had occasion, and (your errands being done) brought you again where you were lodging. But these caddies, being always employed in the same sort of services, and having it for obligation to be well informed of every house and person in the city, had grown to form a brotherhood of spies; ... and ... they were like eyes and fingers to the police.


18 *Kidnapped*, 45.

19 *Letters*, IV, 43.

20 Dedication, vii.

21 *David Balfour*, 4-5.
The role of the setting as the medium of character and action was un-mistakable in "The Beach of Falesa," a story which the author thus described,

It is the first realistic South Sea story; I mean with real South Sea character and details of life. Everybody else who has tried, that I have seen, got carried away by the romance, and ended in a kind of sugar candy sham epic, and the whole effect was lost -- there was no etching, no human grin, consequently no confession. Now I have got the smell and look of the thing a good deal. You will know more about the South Seas after you have read my little tale than if you had read a library.... But there is always the exotic question, and everything, the life, the place, the dialects -- trader's talk, which is a strange conglomerate of literary expressions and English and American slang, and Beach de Mar, or native English, -- the very trades and hopes and fears of the characters, are all novel ...22

and again as "... sixteen pages of the South Seas, their essence, ... true to the manners."23

Only in the setting of "The Beach of Falesa" were the incidents and characters portrayed, possible. The way in which the "wood" aided Case in playing on the superstitious fears of the natives was expressed by Wiltshire, the trader thus:

But the queerness of the place it's more difficult to tell of, unless to one who has been alone in the high bush himself. The brightest kind of a day it is always dim down there. A man can see to the end of nothing; whichever way he looks the wood shuts up, one bough folding with another like the fingers of your hand; and whenever he listens he hears always something new -- men talking, children laughing, the strokes of an axe a far way ahead of him, and sometimes a sort of a quick, stealthy scurry near at hand that makes him jump and look to his weapons. It's

22 Letters, III, 342-43.
23 Ibid., 335, 309.
all very well for him to tell himself that he's alone, bar trees and birds; he can't make out to believe it; whichever way he turns the whole place seems to be alive and looking on. Don't think it was Uma's yarns that put me out; I don't value native talk a fourpenny piece; it's a thing that's natural in the bush, and that's the end of it.24

The characters as well as the incidents of Kidnapped and David Balfour were dependent upon the period and soil from which they grew. Alan Breck and Catriona Drummond were typical Scotch Highlanders with ideals of racial pride, loyalty, sacrifice, and courage. David was a typical Whig Lowlander with his strict moral sense, religious beliefs, and sense of duty. James More was the type of Highlander loyal to his clan in spite of overpowering defects of character. The Lord Advocate was the canny Edinburgh Scot with the legal mind. All were indigenous to Scotland, the moors, or the wynds, and the picturesque period of history.

In the story of the adventures of a French prisoner in England, St. Ives, both the spirit of the time and place determined the nature of the incidents which were to take place. This was a good illustration of the statement by Bliss Perry:

... even in novels of adventure, the novelist is compelled by the very force of circumstances to keep close to mere adventure ... only those things may happen there which are pertinent to the road, the camp, or the court during the progress of a particular campaign.25

Stevenson said of this book: "It is a mere tissue of adventures ... a kind of show picture of the time... the style ... seems to suit the mail-coaches

25 Bliss Perry, 174.
and post-chaises with which it sounds all through."26 It was a story of exciting adventure, but adventure of a sort determined both by the period and the time. Stevenson's imagination was always stimulated by the Castle of Edinburgh and its picturesque associations. Too, in Glencorse Churchyard, he had seen headstones of French prisoners who had died in the Castle.27 The incidents determined by the Castle were both pleasant and unpleasant. It was the scene of St. Ives's meeting with his beloved Flora, the scene of St. Ives's murder of Gougelat, and thrilling night escape down its ramparts. The incidents determined by Swanston Cottage and the Pentlands were in keeping with Stevenson's nature in harmony with his delightful remembered associations of the place. These were Flora's aid to the escaped prisoner, avowal of love, and the homely, earthy scene of the Drovers, themselves almost a part of the scenery. The "Road," always an intriguing scene for Stevenson, was to St. Ives, a pleasurable place, the scene of varied adventures, an elopement, the dreary ride in Burchell Fenn's smuggling cart, and a suicide burial. English inns determined the lively scene with a revolutionist, the struggle to escape a patriotic Attorney Clerk and the near escape from being recognized by a familiar English sentry who was being feted in honor of Lord Wellington's success. The meeting with Burchell Fenn took place, characteristically, in a deserted house with a neglected garden, an "eligible theatre for deeds of darkness."

26 Letters, III, 316.

In The Black Arrow the sub-title, A Tale of the Two Roses, indicated, somewhat, the degree of dependence to which the incidents were indebted to the period, or the spirit of the time. In addition, the number of scenes throughout the story which were laid in Tunstall forest, indicated the importance of the material setting upon the action.

Setting used as emotional harmony. One of the best examples of complete harmony of scene with the emotions of the character and the scene of the story was that depicted in the tale, "Will of the Mill," concerned with the theme of deferred fruition. The landscape, winds, stars, fish in the pond, the curves of the river, all were in complete and gentle accord with Will's voluntary quiescence until he met Marjory. Stevenson depicted the scenery with the changing of Will's every humor. For instance, before Will met Marjory, his whole being was attuned to his beloved surroundings. After their meeting, by comparison with her beauty his cherished "... trees looked inanimate and senseless, the clouds hung in heaven like dead things, and even the mountain tops were disenchanted." 28 She colored all that he saw. "The sound of his own mill-wheel, or of the wind among the trees, confounded and charmed his heart." 29 When he renounced Marjory, in the fear that she would disturb his life of artificial calm, even the stars, the symbols of the Eternal to Will, failed to give consolation. Even death, welcomed long ago by Will, came gently to the man who had never lived.

In "The Treasure of Franchard," a similar harmony of setting with charac-

28 "Will of the Mill," in The Merry Men and Other Tales and Fables, 92.
29 Ibid., 96.
ters and theme was utilized. Doctor Desprez, his wife, Anastasie, and their adopted son, Jean-Marie, were in communion with nature at its source in their primitive rural surroundings until the lure of the city in the form of treasure threatened to disturb their elemental life of outdoor beauty and peace. Stevenson's utilization of landscape, weather, colors of the sky, sounds of the stream, in fact, all sensory appeals made a complete harmony with the theme of "back to nature."

The harmony existing between Jean-Marie and nature was thus expressed:

When he was by himself, his pleasures were almost vegetable. He would slip into the woods towards Acheres, and sit in the mouth of a cave among grey birches. His soul stared straight out of his eyes; he did not move or think; sunlight, thin shadows moving in the wind, the edge of firs against the sky, occupied and bound his faculties.30

Other examples of emotional harmony of scene with characters and incident were "Olalla" and "Thrawn Janet," wherein a harmony of gloom pervaded in "Olalla" the theme of hereditary degeneration, and in "Thrawn Janet" the idea of Scotch superstitious horror.

In "Olalla" after the narrator had met the lovely girl whom he had to leave behind, nature was in sympathy with his love:

In my own room, I opened the window and looked out, and could not think what change had come upon that austere field of mountains that it should thus sing and shine under the lofty heaven. I had seen her -- Olalla! And the stone crags answered, Olalla! and the dumb, unfathomable azure answered, Olalla!31

31 "Olalla," The Merry Men, 192.
Again, on another occasion, nature responded to his love:

... A bird sang near by; and in that season, birds were rare. It bade me be of good cheer. And once more the whole countenance of nature, from the ponderous and stable mountains down to the lightest leaf and the smallest darting fly in the shadow of the groves, began to stir before me and to put on the lineaments of life and wear a face of awful joy. The sunshine struck upon the hills, strong as a hammer on the anvil, and the hills shook; the earth, under that vigorous insolation, yielded up heady scents; the woods smouldered in the blaze. I felt a thrill of travail and delight run through the earth. Something elemental, something rude, violent, and savage, in the love that sang in my heart, was like a key to nature's secrets; and the very stones that rattled under my feet appeared alive and friendly. Olalla! Her touch had quickened, and renewed, and strung me up to the old pitch of concert with the rugged earth, to a swelling of the soul that men learn to forget in their polite assemblies... She seemed ... a thing brutal and divine, and akin at once to the innocence and to the unbridled forces of the earth.32

In the story "Thrawn Janet" the weather in which the devil came to Ba'weary was suitable for eerie happenings, and was thus described:

About the end o' July there cam' a spell o' weather, the like o't never was in that country-side; it was lown and het an' heartless; the herds couldnae win up the Black Hill, the bairns were ower weariet to play; an' yet it was gousty too, wi' claps o' het wund that rumbled in the glens, and bits of showers that slockened naething. We aye thocht it but to thun' er on the morn; but the morn came', and' the morn's morning, and it was aye the same uncanny weather, sair on folks and bestial...33

In the unfinished Weir of Hermiston which Stevenson described as "all moorland," the dreary setting of The Weaver's Stone in the grey moors harmonized with the story of an unhappy wife, a misunderstood son, an unloved

32 Ibid., 201-2.
33 "Thrawn Janet," The Merry Men, 149.
woman, and a betrayed girl.

In David Balfour when David's fears of being hanged because of his connection with James Stewart were mounting, the harmony between nature and his sentiments were expressed in the following manner:

It was a plain, fair morning, but the wind in the east. The little chill of it sang in my blood, and gave me a feeling of the autumn, and the dead leaves, and dead folks' bodies in their graves. It seemed the devil was in it, if I was to die in that tide of my fortunes and for other folks' affairs. On the top of the Calton Hill, though it was not the customary time of year for that diversion, some children were crying and running with their kites. These toys appeared very plain against the sky; I remarked a great one soar on the wind to a high altitude and then plump among the whins; and I though to myself at sight of it, "There goes Davie."[34]

The Deil's Hag where the Praying Weaver's stone of bloody history was situated, and which was reputed to have a "weird" on it, was a fitting background for Archie's and Christina's tragic romance:

In the falling greyness of the evening he watched her figure winding through the morass, saw it turn a last time and wave a hand, and then pass through the Slap; and it seemed to him as if something went along with her out of the deepest of his heart.... He had retained from childhood a picture, now half obliterated by the passage of time and the multitude of fresh impressions, of his mother telling him, with the fluttered earnestness of her voice, and often with dropping tears, the tale of the "Praying weaver," on the very scene of his brief tragedy and long repose. And now there was a companion piece; and he beheld, and he should behold forever, Christina perched on the same tomb, in the grey colours of evening, gracious, dainty, perfect as a flower, and she also singing --

Of old, unhappy far-off things,
And battles long ago,

34 David Balfour, 27.
-- Of their common ancestors now dead, of their rude
wars composed, their weapons buried with them, and of these
strange changelings, their descendants, who lingered a
little in their places, and would soon be gone also, and
perhaps sung of by others at the gloaming hour.35

In The Wrecker when Loudon Dodd had to leave Paris because of his
father's death, and Loudon's ensuing poverty, the surroundings were in har-
mony with his feelings:

On a certain bench on the outer boulevard, not
far from the tomb of Napoleon, a bench shaded at that
date by a shabby tree, and commanding a view of muddy
roadway and blank wall, I sat down to wrestle with my
misery. The weather was cheerless and dark; in three
days I had eaten but once; I had no tobacco; my shoes
were soaked, my trousers horrid with mire; my humour
and all the circumstances of the time and place
lugubriously attuned.36

Another example of emotional harmony between scene and the feelings of
the character was the following passage from the story, "Strange Case of Dr.
Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," which showed how Dr. Jekyll's waiting room changed
its aspect for Mr. Utterson, the lawyer, after his first strange meeting
with Mr. Hyde:

... a large, low-roofed, comfortable hall, paved
with flags, warmed (after the fashion of a country
house) by a bright, open fire, and furnished with
costly cabinets of oak.... Utterson himself was wont
to speak of ... as the pleasantest room in London.
But to-night there was a shudder in his blood; the face
of Hyde sat heavy on his memory; he felt (what was rare
with him) a nausea and distaste of life; and in the
gloom of his spirits, he seemed to read a menace in the
flickering of the firelight on the plished cabinets and
the uneasy starting of the shadow on the roof.37

35 Weir of Hermiston, 123.
36 The Wrecker, 93.
37 "Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," The Merry Men, 341.
Emotional contrast in setting. In "Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," the story of the dual nature of man, the two entrances into Jekyll's house, the dissecting room door used by Hyde, ravaged by negligence and peopled with tramps; and the other, noble and presenting an air of wealth and comfort symbolized the two parts of man's nature.

Hyde's entrance to Jekyll's house, contrasted sharply, not only with Hyde's house, but with its own surroundings:

It chanced on one of these rambles that their way led them down a by-street, in a busy quarter of London. The street was small and what is called quiet, but it drove a thriving trade on week-days. The inhabitants were all doing well, it seemed, and all emulously hoping to do better still, and laying out the surplus of their gains in coquetry; so that the shop fronts stood along that thoroughfare with an air of invitation, like rows of smiling saleswomen. Even on Sunday, when it veiled its more florid charms and lay comparatively empty of passage, the street shone out in contrast to its dingy neighborhood, like a fire in a forest; and with its freshly painted shutters, well-polished brasses, and general cleanliness and gaiety of note, instantly caught and pleased the eye of the passenger.

The doors from one corner, on the left hand going east, the line was broken by the entry of a court; and just at that point, a certain sinister block of building thrust forward its gable on the street. It was two storeys high; showed no window, nothing but a door on the lower storey and a blind forehead of discouloured wall on the upper; and bore in every feature the marks of prolonged and sordid negligence. The door, which was equipped with neither bell nor knocker, was blistered and distained. Tramps sloched into the recess and struck matches on the panels; children kept ship upon the steps; the schoolboy had tried his knife on the mouldings; and for close on a generation, no one had appeared to drive away these random visitors or to repair their ravages.38

38 Ibid., 340.
This, on the contrary, was Jekyll's entrance:

Round the corner from the by-street, there was a square of ancient, handsome houses, now now for the most part decayed from their high estate and let in flats and chambers to all sorts and conditions of men; map-engravers, architects, shady lawyers and the agents of obscure enterprises. One house, however, second from the corner, was still occupied entire; and at the door of this, which wore a great air of wealth and comfort, though it was now plunged in darkness except for the fanlight, Mr. Utterson stopped and knocked.39

In Weir of Hermiston, contrast was utilized in the drab setting of the Church at Glencorse to emphasize Christina's spring-like beauty and to draw her to Archie's attention.

In The Master of Ballantrae, the duel between the brothers, with its heat of passion contrasted sharply with the bitter cold weather and the frozen ground.

Loudon Dodd in The Wrecker stood out by contrast in San Francisco from the busy, money-making, bustling atmosphere, but blended well with the Parisian scene. Pinkerton was like a bull in a china shop in the artistic atmosphere of the Parisian colony, but was in harmony with the noisy, thriving American city.

In The Ebb-Tide, the setting of the "Schooner Farallone" emphasized the simplicity of the Kanakas and the greed and sloth of Huish and Captain Davis.

Setting used to influence character. In Prince Otto, the use of setting to influence character was demonstrated in Seraphina's flight from civilization into the forest where she found her spirit refreshed and cleansed from the intrigue of the court, and was reunited with Otto in the peace of the greenwood.

39 Ibid., 340
... The glory of the great night laid hold upon her; her eyes shone with stars; she dipped her sight into the coolness and brightness of the sky, as she might have dipped her wrist into a spring; her heart, at that ethereal shock, began to move more soberly. The sun that sails overhead, ploughing into gold the fields of daylight azure and uttering the signal to man's myriads, has no word apart for man the individual; and the moon, like a violin, only praises and laments our private destiny. The stars alone, cheerful whisperers, confer quietly with each of us like friends; they give ear to our sorrows smilingly, like wise old men, rich in tolerance; and by their double scale, so small to the eye, so vast to the imagination, they keep before the mind the double character of man's nature and fate.

There sat the Princess, beautifully looking upon beauty, in council with these glad advisers. Bright like pictures, clear like a voice in the porches of her ear, memory re-enacted the tumult of the evening: The Countess and the dancing fan, the big Baron on his knees, the blood on the polished floor, the knocking, the swing of the litter down the avenue of lamps, the messenger, the cries of the charging mob; and yet all were far away and phantasmal, and she was still healingly conscious of the peace and glory of the night.

... The early evening had fallen chill, but the night was now temperate; out of the recesses of the wood there came mild airs as from a deep and peaceful breathing; and the dew was heavy on the grass and the tight-shut daisies. This was the girl's first night under the naked heaven;... she was touched to the soul by its serene amenity and peace. Kindly the host of heaven blinked down upon the wandering Princess; and the honest brook had no words but to encourage her.

At last she began to be aware of a wonderful revolution, compared to which the fire of Mitt-walden Palace was but the crack and flash of a percussion cap. The countenance with which the pines regarded her began insensibly to change; the grass, too, short as it was, and the whole winding staircase of the brook's course, began to wear a solemn freshness of appearance. And this slow transfiguration reached her heart, and played upon it, and transpierced it with a serious thrill. She looked all about; the whole face of nature looked back, brimful of
meaning, finger on lip, leaking its glad secret... 40

In *The Ebb-Tide*, the effect of the wrecks on Attwater's island with its images of ghastly sailors upon Herrick's imagination resembled the way in which places suggested deeds to Stevenson himself. In the same book, the magic effect of the sight of the New Island on Herrick made him forget the past and the present danger and starvation.

The store-houses were nearest him upon his right. The first was locked; in the second he could dimly perceive, through a window, a certain accumulation of pearl shell piled in the far end; the third, which stood gaping open on the afternoon, seized on the mind of Herrick with multiplicity and disorder of romantic things. Therein were cables, windlasses, and blocks of every size and capacity; cabin windows and ladders; rusty tanks; a companion hatch; a binnacle with its brass mountings, and its compass idly pointing, in the confusion and dusk of that shed, to a forgotten pole; ... Two wrecks at least must have contributed to this random heap of lumber; and as Herrick looked upon it, it seemed to him as if the two ships' companies were there on guard, and he heard the tread of feet and whisperings, and saw with the tale of his eye the commonplace ghosts of sailormen. 41

There was little or no morning bank. A brightening came in the east; then a wash of some ineffable, faint, nameless hue between crimson and silver; and then coals of fire. These glimmered awhile on the sea-line, and seemed to brighten and darken and spread out; and still the night and the stars reigned undisturbed. It was as tough a spark should catch and glow and creep along the foot of some heavy and almost incombustible wall-hanging, and the room itself be scarce menaced. Yet a little after, and the whole east glowed with gold and scarlet, and the hollow of heaven was filled with the daylight.

The isle -- the undiscovered, the scarce believed in -- now lay before them and close aboard; and Herrick thought

40 *Prince Otto*, 238-43.

41 *The Ebb-Tide*, 166-7.
that never in his dreams had he beheld anything more strange and delicate.... He tortured himself to find analogies. The isle was like the rime of a great vessel sunken in the waters; it was like the embankment of an annular railway grown upon with wood. So slender it seemed amidst the outrageous breakers, so frail and pretty, he would scarce have wondered to see it sink and disappear without a sound, and the waves close smoothly over its descent.

Herrick stock transported. In the gratified lust of his eye he forgot the past and the present; forgot that he was menaced by a prison on the one hand and starvation on the other; forgot that he was come to that island, desperately foraging, clutching at expedients. A drove of fishes, painted like the rainbow and billed like parrots, hovered up in the shadow of the schooner, and passed clear of it, and glinted in the submarine sun. They were beautiful like birds, and their silent passage impressed him like a strain of song.42

Use of scene to influence character in Weir of Hermiston was exemplified in the effect of the coming of spring on Archie's emotions. With the feeling of an essential beauty emanating from the old earth, "His heart beat in time to some vast indwelling of the universe."43

The character, Loudon Dodd, in The Wrecker expressed the effect that the isolation of Midway Island and the unremitting labor made upon him thus: "... the eternal life of man, spent under sun and rain and in rude physical effort, lies ... scarce changed since the beginning."44

42 Ibid., 137-42.
43 Weir of Hermiston, 95.
44 The Wrecker, 299.
The effect of the San Francisco setting upon his character, Loudon Dodd, himself, expressed thus:

It shows how much I had suffered morally during my sojourn in San Francisco, that even now, when our fortunes trembled in the balance, I should have consented to become a smuggler and (of all things) a smuggler of opium. Yet I did, and that in silence; without a protest, not without a twinge.45

The maddening influence of the "Merry Men" in the story of the same name, Stevenson related in the following manner:

The night, though we were so little past mid-summer, was dark as January. Intervals of a groping twilight alternated with spells of utter blackness; and it was impossible to trace the reason of these changes in the flying horror of the sky. The wind blew the breath out of a man's nostrils; all heaven seemed to thunder overhead like one huge sail; and when there fell a momentary lull on Aros, we could hear the gusts dismally sweeping in the distance. Over all the lowlands of the Ross, the wind must have blown as fierce as on the open sea; and God only knows the uproar that was raging around the head of Ben Kyaw. Sheets of mingled spray and rain were drive in our faces. All round the isle of Aros, the surf, with an incessant, hammering thunder, beat upon the reefs and beaches. Now louder in on place, now lower in another, like the combinations of orchestral music, the constant mass of sound was hardly varied for a moment. And loud above all this hurly-burly I could hear the changeful voices of the Roost and the intermittent roaring of the Merry Men. At that hour, there flashed into my mind the reason of the name that they were called. For the noise of them seemed almost mirthful, as it out-topped the other moises of the night; or if not mirthful, yet instinct with a portentous joviality. Nay, and it seemed even human. As when savage men have drunk away their reason, and, discarding speech, bawl together in their madness by the hour; so, to my ears, these deadly breakers, shouted by Aros in the night... Never before had I seen the Merry Men thus violent. The fury, height, and transiency of their spoutings was a thing to be seen and not recounted. High over our heads on the cliff rose their white columns in the darkness; and the same instant, like phantoms, they were gone. Sometime three at a time would thus aspire and

45 Ibid., 197-8
vanish; sometimes a gust took them, and the spray would fall about us, heavy as a wave. And yet the spectacle was rather maddening in its levity than impressive by its force. Thought was beaten down by the confounding uproar; a gleeful vacancy possessed the brains of men, a state akin to madness; and I found myself at times following the dance of the Merry Men as it were a tune upon a gigging instrument.46

After Markheim, in the story of the same name, had murdered the dealer in the shop, the effect of the setting upon his guilty conscience was related by Stevenson in the two passages below:

Time had some score of small voices in that shop, some stately and slow as was becoming to their great age; others garrulous and hurried. All these told out the seconds in an intricate chorus of tickings. Then the passage of a lad's feet, heavily running on the pavement, broke in upon these smatter voices and startled Markheim into the consciousness of his surroundings. He looked about him awfully. The candle stood on the counter, its flame solemnly wagging in a draught; and by that inconsiderable movement, the whole room was filled with noiseless bustle and kept heaving like a sea; the tall shadows nodding, the gross blots of darkness swelling and dwindling as with respiration, the faces of the portraits and the china gods changing and wavering like images in water. The inner door stood ajar, and peered into that leaguer of shadows with a long slit of daylight like a pointing finger.47

... first one and then another, with every variety of pace and voice -- one deep as the bell from a cathedral turret, another ringing on its treble notes the prelude of a waltz -- the clocks began to strike the hour of three in the afternoon.

The sudden outbreak of so many tongues in that dumb chamber staggered him. He began to bestir himself, going to and fro with the candle, beleaguered by moving shadows, and startled to the soul by chance reflections. In many rich mirrors, some of home designs, some from Venice or

46 "The Merry Men," The Merry Men, 53-55.
47 "Markheim," The Merry Men, 121.
Amsterdam, he saw his face repeated, as it were army of spies; his own eyes met and detected him; and the sound of his own steps, lightly as they fell, vexed the surrounding quiet.48

The manner in which the desert wind reacted upon the various characters in the story, "Olalla" occupied a lengthy passage in the story of the same name. The insane outburst of one of the characters in the story, caused by the distempering effect of the wind, stirred the narrator to action which brought about the solution of the mystery of the house more quickly.49

The terrifying influence of the Bass Rock upon David Balfour's Highland captors during his sequestration in the place was thus described:

Dwelling in that isolated place, in the old falling ruins of a prison, and among endless strange sounds of the sea and the sea-birds, I thought I perceived in them early the effects of superstitious fear. When there was nothing doing they would either lie and sleep, for which their appetite appeared insatiable, or Neil would entertain the others with stories which seemed always of a terrifying strain. If neither of these delights were within reach -- if perhaps two were sleeping and the third could find no means to follow their example -- I would see him sit and listen and look about him in a progression of uneasiness, starting, his face blenching, his hands clutched, a man strung like a bow. The nature of these fears I had never an occasion to find out, but the sight of them was catching, and the nature of the place that we were in favourable to alarms. I can find no word for it in the English, but Andie had an expression for it in the Scots from which he never varied.

"Ay," he would say "it's an unco place, the Bass."50

The contrasting influences of the city and the country upon the character

48 Ibid., 122.
49 "Olalla," The Merry Men, 179-84.
50 David Balfour, 156-7.
of Dr. Desprez, the doctor, himself, spoke of thus in the story, "The Treasure of Franchard:"

... Paris -- you know Paris -- Paris and Paradise are not convertible terms. This pleasant noise of the wind streaming among leaves changed into the grinding Babel of the street, the stupid glare of plaster substituted for this quiet pattern of greens and greys, the nerves shattered, the digestion falsified -- picture the fall! Already you perceive the consequences; the mind is himself no longer.... Should I return to Paris, I should ruin myself gambling; nay, I go further -- I should break the heart of my Anastasie with infidelities.51

Setting Used as an aid to action and character. In the story, "The Sire de Malétroit's Door," the situation of a forced marriage was brought about with the aid of an extremely dark night in which the hero lost his way. It was further aided by the time, the year 1429, one in which it was dangerous to be abroad at night lest one should encounter the roaming sentry who used his sword without compunction. Denis De Beaulieu, lost in the strange city and night, to escape from the sentry stumbled into the "Sire de Malétroit's Door."

In "A Lodging for the Night," a study of François Villon, set in the cold and snow, the poet was driven into the knight's house, were the discussion upon which the story rested, ensued. After the murder of Thevenin by Montigny, one of Villon's rascally colleagues, the effect of the cessation of the snowfall upon the action of the story, mentioned above, was described in the following manner:

The wind had triumphed and swept all the clouds from heaven. Only a few vapours, as thin as moonlight, fleeted

51 "The Treasure of Franchard," The Merry Men, 255.
rapidly across the stars. It was bitter cold; and by a common optical effect, things seemed almost more definite than in the broadest daylight. The sleeping city was absolutely still; a company of white hoods, a field full of little alps, below the twinkling stars. Villon cursed his fortune. Would it were still snowing! Now, wherever he went, he left an indelible trail behind him on the glittering streets; wherever he went, he was still tethered to the house by the cemetery of St. John; wherever he went he must weave, with his own plooding feet, the rope that bound him to the crime and would bind him to the gallows. The leer of the dead man came back to him with a new significance. He ... stepped boldly forward in the snow.

Two things preoccupied him as he went: the aspect of the gallows at Montfaucon in this bright, windy phase of the night’s existence, for one; and for another, the look of the dead man with bald head and garland of red curls... Sometimes he looked back over his shoulder with a sudden nervous jerk; but he was the only moving thing in the white streets, except when the wind swooped round a corner and threw up the snow, which was beginning to freeze, in spouts of glittering dust.52

In Kidnapped, the fog which caused the brig "Covenant" to ram an unseen ship, brought about Alan’s arrival on the ship, where he met David Balfour.53 It was also in Kidnapped that the lightning was useful. It was the means of saving David Balfour from the death planned by his crafty uncle on the decrepit staircase.54

A downfall of rain in David Balfour caused the hero to seek shelter in a door near Advocate’s Close, thereby bringing about by his delay the meeting with Catriona.55

53 Kidnapped, 72-3
54 Ibid., 30-2.
55 David Balfour, 6-7
In *The Master of Ballantrae*, the swamp aided the Chevalier Burke and the Master by disposing of two undesirable companions from the pirate ship. 56

In the same book the action throughout the story was aided by the setting of both time and place. The Durie's tragic devotion to the honor of the house and to patriotism was the chief cause of prolonging Henry's silent suffering in the face of his evil brother's squandering and ill-doing. Once the scene had changed to the Provinces, Henry was no longer obliged to keep up appearances. He then refused to support the Master, and thus, forced him to seek the loot hidden in the mountains. This change of scene also revealed a less favorable side of Henry's character. In addition, the situation of the Durie house near the Solway shore in Scotland was ideal for the comings and goings of the Master and his connection with the freetraders.

In the story, "The Treasure of Franchard," the storm which demolished the Desprez's house, leaving them in poverty, was also the means of recouping their fortune. The return of the lost treasure, the dénouement of the story, was brought about by the storm because Jean-Marie, seeing them reduced to poverty with the loss of their home, produced the treasure of Franchard which he had hidden for their good. 57

In the novel, *St. Ives* the hero's escape from the prison was aided, and the suspense heightened by the "blackness of the night and the fog." 58

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56 *The Master of Ballantrae*, 71-3.

57 Ibid., 295-7.

58 *St. Ives*, 71-2
with the aid of "a strong east wind" which blew her handkerchief in his
direction. 59
CHAPTER IV

STEVENSON'S INFLUENCE ON THE USE OF SETTING

The attempt to estimate Stevenson's influence on the use of setting was not an easy undertaking, not only because of his profuse literary achievements in such diverse genres as the novel, short story, travel essay, ethical treatise, drama, juvenile poem, ballad, prayer, critical essay, sermon, and even political tract, but also because of his great popularity as a picturesque figure of high romance, valor, and personal charm.

Those queer wanderings in the South Seas; those flights from death; those levities and eccentricities of behaviour and appearance; the penury, the hardship, the invincible determination, and then the sudden blaze of spendour as a Pacific island chief, so romantically reported -- all these in their varied and cumulative effect were well calculated to fascinate the public imagination. Moreover, his death was most singularly of a piece with his life.... As he had lived a life of contradiction, so it seemed meet that he should die tragically of an impossible disease, in the very moment of victory.1

Unique evidence of his widespread fame was the use of his career by three different novelists of his day as material for their narratives, namely: George Meredith2 in The Amazing Marriage; Henry James3 in The Author of Beltraffio, and Maurice Hewlett4 in the trilogy of novels featuring the

1 Steuart, II, 306.
2 Stevenson, Letters, IV, 298.
3 Lovett and Hughes, The History of the Novel in England, 341.
4 Weygandt, A Century of the English Novel, 397.
Further evidence of the measure of his success were the various collected editions of his works, such as the "Edinburgh," "Biographical," "Vailima," "Thistle," etc.

Some critics believed, however, that a part of Stevenson's success was due to the "booming" of his critic friends; a boom so powerful in the quantity of "Stevensonia" produced that it was, in part, responsible for leading to a reaction against the author in the generation following his own; a reaction which has persisted in some degree until the present. This reaction was, in part, caused by an article written by Henley at the time of the publication of the Balfour Biography, a picture of Stevenson, which Henley believed suppressed too many of the details of the author's Bohemian youth. In this article, Henley also questioned the sincerity of his former friend, especially in the matter of his religious writings, and emphasized his egotism as a major fault of character.

It was a reaction, but only of a totally different character which was responsible for Stevenson's important influence in literary history, a position recognized and acknowledged throughout the literary world.

In 1883, when "Treasure Island" appeared, the public was gasping for the oxygen that a story with outdoor movement and action could supply; there was enough ... of invertebrate subtleties, strained metaphysics, and coarse naturalistic studies.... "Treasure


"Island" came at the psychologic moment; the year before "The New Arabian Nights" had offered the same sort of pabulum, but had been practically overlooked. Readers were only too glad to turn from people with a past to people of the past...  

Almost prophetically Stevenson decried the "literature of woe" of his day, saying that he desired a story of romance or of adventure, neither of which his weary world would produce.  

Chesterton viewed the situation thus:

Treasure Island, if hardly a historical novel, was essentially a historical event. The rise or revolt of R. L. S. must be taken in relation to history, to the history of the whole European mind and mood. It was first and last, a reaction against pessimism. There was thrown across all that earth and sky the gigantic shadow of Schopenhauer... in that period we might almost say that pessimism was another name for culture. Cheerfulness was associated with the Philistine, like the broad grin with the bumpkin. Pessimism could be read between the lines of the lightest triolet or most elegant essay.... Mr. H. G. Wells, whose genius had just been discovered by Henley, ... was prophesying that the outline of history would end, not in communism, but in cannibalism. He was prophesying the end of the world: a crack of doom not even cheerful enough to be a day of judgement. Oscar Wilde, ... expressed his philosophy in that bitter parable in which Christ seeks to comfort a man weeping and is answered," Lord, I was dead and you raised me to life; what else can I do but weep?"  

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denial, and despair. The scientific and philosophic doctrines of Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, and Spencer seemed to offer a threat to revealed religion, while the political theories of Karl Marx, together with the uprisings of 1848 and the Paris Commune of 1871 presented a threat of revolution. Science provided a philosophic foundation for history and social economy. "The movements of races and the development of nations, civilizations, and institutions were explained not in the spiritual terms of Carlyle, but as the inevitable results of material conditions."¹⁰

As romanticism in literature was closely allied with intellectual and political movements in the late eighteenth century, so realism in literature was in accord with the two important roads of progress in the nineteenth century, democracy and science. Realism, in its dependence upon the things perceived by the senses, was supported by science in its definition of the universe in terms of matter. In various nations, certain types of literary realism developed. From France came Balzac's La Comédie Humaine in 1842, followed in 1856 by Flaubert's Madame Bovary, and in 1871 by Zola's thesis of "Le Roman Experimental." The culmination of these was arrived at in the muddy excesses of the naturalists with their emphasis on behaviourism and their seeming choice of the unpleasant and sordid aspects of existence,¹¹ which Stevenson termed "a picture of life in so far as it consists of old iron, cheap desires and cheap fears...."¹² Chekov in Russia confirmed the

¹¹ Ibid., 330-7; and Burton, op. cit., 150-74.
emphasis of the naturalists on the importance of matter; and Hardy in England agreed with them in the philosophy of the indifference of the cosmos to man's hopes and fears. Howells in America portrayed actuality with more selective realism than his contemporaries.

Stevenson felt all this, without exactly defining it; ... and while he was entirely of that time and society, while he read all the realists, knew all the artists, doubted with the doubters and even denied with the deniers, he had that within him which could not but break out in a sort of passionate protest for more personal and poetical things. He flung out his arms with a wide and blind gesture, as one who would find wings at the moment when the world sank beneath him.13

Stevenson's method of protest against the tendencies of his age was aptly termed by Chesterton, the "reaction to romance" because his influence in bringing about the Romantic Revival was stronger than that of any other writer of his age. In the year of his death, 1894, Phelps said, the Revival was at its height; everybody was reading, not only Stevenson, but The Prisoner of Zenda by Anthony Hope Hawkins, A Gentleman of France and Under the Red Robe by Stanley J. Weyman.14 As eminent a critic as Saintsbury remarked of Stevenson's influence: "His style is of less importance than the fact that he applied it almost wholly to the carrying out of that rejuvenescence of romance... speedily taken up by writers mostly still living."15 Burton spoke of his

13 Chesterton, op. cit., 180-81.
... indisputable claim as a novelist... founded, first, on his art and power as a maker of romance, but also upon his historical service to English fiction, as the man most instrumental in purifying the muddy current of realism in the late nineteenth century by a wholesome infusion, -- the romantic view of life.16

In the Athenaeum for December 22, 1894, a critic stated that Stevenson was the leader of the Romantic Revival of the day, the founder or refounder of the 'plein air' school; that the moment was ripe when he came because the world was tired of analysis and introspection, of painful creations of "Society nothings," and that because of his influence young men were writing imitations of Dumas, scorning Howells and James.17 Cross said, "To Stevenson more than any one else we owe the recrudescence of historical romance..."18

Of Stevenson's influence Lovett and Hughes said on one occasion:

To Stevenson may be attributed the initiation of a new phase of romanticism. His attitude toward subject-matter was romantic; his method of treatment was realistic, thus reversing the procedure of the sensation novelists who claimed realism for their subject-matter, and indulged in the extravagance of romantic presentation inherited from Mrs. Radcliffe. In particular, Stevenson was the mentor of a group of Scottish writers who shared his views and enjoyed his friendship. They were regional artists, seeking local color in well-defined districts, and in the manners and speech characteristic of each. To them William Ernest Henley rather contemptuously gave the name, The Kailyard school, with reference to the motto of Ian Maclaren's "Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush."19

And again:

16 Burton, op. cit., 299.
17 Joseph Jacobs, Athenaeum, 863.
18 Cross, op. cit., 288.
19 Lovett and Hughes, op. cit., 355.
The formula established by Stevenson and Kipling of subject matter possessing the romantic appeal of the past, the distant, or the extraordinary, treated with realistic exactness of detail, engaged many writers whose rapid popularity, and often rapid decline, is characteristic of fiction in the present day. The opening of the remote parts of the world to travelers, and to the interest of the curious untraveled public, provided new sources of local color.  

Carl Van Doren expressed Stevenson's influence thus:

Historical romance flared up about the time of the war with Spain, and produced a score of immensely popular novels. The fashion for history was not exactly new in 1898. It went back a dozen years or more, when it had taken form and doctrin partly from Stevenson's eager preference for Scott and Dumas as against contemporary realists. Within two or three years after Stevenson's "Kidnapped" (1886) and Rider Haggard's "She" (1887), history in the American novel assumed an importance it had not had since Cooper and Hawthorne.

William Lyon Phelps described the influence of Stevenson's romances in the following manner:

These books worked a revolution in English fiction. One man appearing at just the moment when readers were either weary or disgusted with the reigning Sovereign, Realism, toppled him over with the sheer audacity of genius.... What a relief to turn from the close, foul mugginess of naturalism to the invigorating air of the ocean! For Stevenson's immense service to letters was really nothing more or less than opening the windows of heaven, and sweeping the chambers of art with air and sunshine. Before he died, he had converted the English speaking world, and he knew it....

Two years before his death the signs of the coming revival of romance was unmistakable, ... two English

20 Ibid., 361.
critics went on record at almost the same moment. Mr. Saintsbury and R. Gosse each independently predicted the coming flood, warning all novelists to get into the ark of safety. 22

Grant C. Knight in his study of the novel noted that:

Robert Louis Stevenson was not a great novelist... But he will always be important, not only that he was able to write in flowing style, but that with his own might he was able to resuscitate the romance and by his skill keep it alive until the present... 23

Swinnerton stated that Stanley Weyman's Gentleman of France, and other heroes of "costume romances" were inspired by the example of Stevenson. 24 Weygandt called Neil Munro the "Highland Stevenson" and believed that Arthur Machen was influenced by Stevenson in his realistic depicting of romantic subject-matter. 25 In 1894, Andrew Lang chose Kipling, Barrie, Weyman, Stevenson, Conan Doyle, S. R. Crockett, and Anthony Hope Hawkins as the chief romancers of the day, as the young novelists who were true to the "primitive and eternal the Fijian canons of fiction." 26

In short, this "reaction to romance" effected by Stevenson, which was at its height for about fifteen years after the author's death, was an enormously popular vogue of the novel wherein the chief source of interest in the tale

23 Grant C. Knight, The Novel in English, 233.
24 Swinnerton, op. cit., 158.
25 Weygandt, op. cit., 41, 331.
26 Quoted in: Ibid., 319.
centered around an historical, local, or exotic setting; the coupling of romantic subject matter with realistic treatment of detail. This fashion was a contrast to the then current emphasis in fiction upon analysis and introspection of character with realistic depicting of the scene chiefly as perceived by the senses alone; not the presentation as in romance of the spirit of the time or place. It was a flight from the parlors and salons and wars of the passions to adventure in the open air, to the vision of the primitive untouched earth, either of the past or the distant, showing the elemental relationship between man and the universe.

The following titles and authors, noted by most of the foregoing authorities, were only a few examples illustrative of the renewed emphasis upon, and the use of the historical setting with its remoteness in time, and the distant or local settings with their strangeness or peculiarity, as the motive force and the chief source of interest in the novel:

Among the most important writers of the "Kailyard School" were James M. Barrie whom Stevenson "loved for the intimacy of his Scottish local color pictured in A Window in Thrums (1890) and The Little Minister (1891), John Watson who, under the pseudonym of Ian Maclaren, published a series of very popular tales, entitled Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush (1894), and Samuel Rutherford Crockett, a romancer of the more conventional type who laid his tales of adventure in the Border country with historical interest centered around the Covenanters in such romances as Mad Sir Uchtred of the Hills (1894) and The Black Douglas (1899). Henry Maurice Hewlett typified the romancer of past ages who applied modern scholarship to his art in such novels as The Life and Death of Richard Yea-and-Nay (1900) and The Queen's Quair (1904), and
also used the romantic theme of escape from society into the simple world of nature in a triology which featured the hero, Senhouse; Robert Smythe Hichens used the Sahara as the scene of *The Garden of Allah* (1905); Arthur Machen utilized Stevenson's romantic principles in *The Hill of Dreams* (1907).

Mary Hartwell Catherwood probably thought of Stevenson, said Van Doren, when she wrote *The Romance of Dollard* (1889), a story of adventuring in the forests of the Middle West in Indian days. Charles Major's *When Knighthood Was in Flower*, a tale of the Tudor sixteenth century, although worse in "tushery" than Stevenson's *Black Arrow*, sold as many as 500,000 copies. S. Weir Mitchell's *Hugh Wynne* (1897) the story of a Free Quaker, the setting of which centered around Philadelphia in the days of the Continental Congress, came nearer than other novels written in the fashion to a lasting success. James Lane Allen, the author of *The Choir Invisible* (1897), an historical romance of eighteenth century Lexington, utilized both local color and history, not as ends in themselves, but as contributory elements to some general impression of beauty and meaning. Winston Churchill's *The Crossing* (1904) employed the scenery of the West during the Revolutionary and Federalist periods for a story of pioneering hardships.

This emphasis upon the element of setting in the novel, together with its use as the source of character and action, had advanced from beginnings in the history of fiction as vaguely localized as the "once upon a time" of the early folk tales. In a later period the decorative value of the setting was realized and utilized in such poetic works as the "Orlando Furioso" of Ariosto, and the "Faerie Queene" of Spenser, and in the prose work, the *Arcadia* of Sir Philip Sidney.
Defoe was the first English author to establish the utilitarian relationship between the setting and the action, one of the simplest methods of making the setting a functional part of the story. Yet, while in Robinson Crusoe the element of setting was useful to the action, it was not vitally related to character. The island was a part of Crusoe's actions, but not of Crusoe, himself. Stevenson noted Hugo's advance over Defoe in this respect.

Fielding and his contemporaries were the first English novelists to employ setting as an aid to characterization, but as yet, he, and most of the eighteenth century authors used setting for mere vividness, for the purpose of rendering action and characters more credible.

It was not until the rise of the Romantic movement and Rousseau's Nouvelle Heloise that the setting was used to symbolize the emotions evoked in the characters at significant places in the plot, and to show "... a sympathetic interchange of mood between the characters and the landscape. ..."). Such followers of Rousseau as Chateaubriand, Victor Hugo, George Sand, Balzac, Maupassant, and Pierre Loti recognized the power of natural scenery over the thoughts and feelings of their characters. Stevenson was well read in these French writers.

In England Rousseau's indirect influence became significant with the rise of the Romantic school at the end of the eighteenth century when natural scenery was regarded with such sentiment, and the feelings of hero and heroine

28 Chapter II, 40.
29 Hamilton, op. cit., 104.
in such novels as Anne Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho* were profoundly influenced by the landscape. In *Castle of Otranto* it was Walpole's sensitivity to the romantic suggestions of Gothic architecture, and not external nature which stirred his imagination. At a much later date, Dickens, too, was fond of this use of the setting to achieve strong emotional effects, so fond, almost as to suggest the excessive use condemned by Ruskin and entitled "The Pathetic Fallacy." 30

In the interesting field of historical romance, Scott's method of associating familiar surroundings with characters and deeds of the past was admired by Stevenson for its true romantic quality, a quality lacking in George Eliot's *Romola*, a tale of old Florence, based wholly on research in an unfamiliar period and place, and a characteristic present in Thackeray's *Henry Esmond*, a novel of the eighteenth century, a period in which Thackeray's imagination had long sympathetically dwelled. Scott's influence in this type of novel which emphasized the element of setting was referred to in Chapter I of this study. 31 Scott's advance over Fielding in the recognition of the importance of setting was also noted by Stevenson. 32

One method of dealing with an historical setting in which Stevenson differed from Scott, a difference, perhaps, reflecting both the ages in which they lived, and their different temperaments, was the younger writer's fidelity to fact in all details of the setting. This spirit of accurate observation

30 Hamilton, *op. cit.*, 104-5.
31 p. 17.
32 Chapter II, 40-41.
and research was followed by later writers of historical fiction. 33

The more modern uses of the element of setting were spoken of in the following manner by Clayton Hamilton:

... very recent writers have grown to use the element not only for the sake of illustrating character and action but also for the sake of determining them. The sociologists of the nineteenth century have come to regard circumstance as a prime motive for action, and environment as a prime influence on character; and recent writers have applied this philosophic thesis in their employment of the element of setting. 34

Hamilton cited the passage from Stevenson's essay, "A Gossip on Romance," quoted in Chapter II of this study in illustration of the above statement. 35

George Meredith, Thomas Hardy, and Zola were said to be exponents of this use of setting. 36

Lathrop's opinion of more recent developments in the use of setting was stated thus:

There can be no doubt that the setting plays a part in the recent novel far greater than that which it played in the novel of the past, even of the not very distant past. The novelist to today, ... labours and rejoices to present not only the character and his acts, but also the conditions out of which the character has grown, and the medium which has made his acts mean something definite. In the novel of today, the characters spread abroad and thrust tentacles and move and breathe, but would collapse into shapeless disorganization if they were lifted out of their proper element. The plot, too, is presented not as a thing in itself, but as something caused and conditional, as a

33 Bliss Perry, A Study of Prose Fiction, 157-8.
34 Clayton Hamilton, op. cit., 107-8.
35 pp. 29-31.
thing possible and characteristic only in its own milieu;-- in a middle-class dissenting household with a place at Richmond, or in the Irish set of lead miners up Sinsinawa Creek; -- as germinating in a special soil, begotten, grown, not made, and hence requiring an air which it can breathe and its proper food. As the setting has thus grown in importance and advanced in definiteness, the efforts of authors to create not the illusion -- but the impression of reality, ... have greatly increased; and their technical skill in this respect has of course advance enormously. A thin or inadequately studied setting is not acceptable in an author of the day. Elder authors insisted relatively less on this aspect of their novels and were often satisfied with "neutral" or broadly conventionalized settings. 37

In this vein Lathrop, on another occasion, said:

In earlier authors who elaborated their setting, in Dickens, for example, the setting is indeed a setting -- a work of art wrought so that in it the jewel character may be set forth to advantage. In Dickens's writing the setting is subordinate to the characters, adjusted to them, dependent upon them, almost made by them. Not before George Eliot is the interaction of character and surroundings, the setting as the source of medium of character, and the matter upon which the character must work in order to be manifest, at all definitely realized. Since her day, the setting has become not only a necessary datum, but a force, sometimes a fatal and overwhelming force, in the narrative. 38

Thus, Stevenson's relation to later uses of setting, both in his theory and practice of regarding setting as a source of character and of action, and as a motive force, might, in a sense, be classed as one of the forerunners of the more modern uses of this element of fiction. It would be difficult to imagine Stevenson's various characters or the adventurous action of his tales divorced from their peculiar settings, either of time, or of place.

37 Lathrop, The Art of the Novelist, 247-8.
38 Ibid., 250-51.
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(Periodicals)


The thesis submitted by Margaret Mary O'Toole has been read and approved by three members of Department of English.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

August 25, 1947

Date

Signature of Adviser