

Robert Louis Stevenson and Scottish Calvinism

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis researches Stevenson's Protestant inheritance and the ways in which the Calvinist doctrine of predestination is incorporated in his major Scottish historical novels.

Chapter 1 draws on biographical accounts of Stevenson and the writer's commentary on Scottish Calvinism to discuss his critical views of religious doctrine and literary writing. I argue that Stevenson's essay on John Knox sensitizes us to the writer's attitudes towards the tension between moral narration and folklore. The tension is then examined in Chapter 2, where I analyze the Calvinist professionals portrayed in *Kidnapped* and *Catriona* who are committed to encouraging the Scots to narrate and adapt their identities and traditions in alignment with Scotland's quest for cultural autonomy. I argue that this novel endorses predestination within a legalistic context. In particular, *Catriona* idealizes a complex of judicial functions by associating self-censorship and professionalism with the possibility of attaining agency and individuality. Chapter 3 explains that Stevenson's writing in *The Master of Ballantrae* questions a professional system of predestination as embodied in the memoirs of a Calvinist land steward. I argue that Stevenson's writing inhabits the steward's deterministic perspective to poignantly archive remnants of Scotland's local traditions.

Stevenson's Scottish novels represent an aspiration to bridge professional narration and vernacular traditions that involves associating Presbyterianism with pastoral imagery. In Chapter 4, I argue that this dream co-exists with the writer's recognition that only remnants of the past can be preserved.

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Preface

An experiment gone wrong, the city at night, hypocritical respectability, the struggle between good and evil – we may associate these ideas and images with *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, and use them perhaps to describe its author as well.

Yet it is only recently that scholarship on Robert Louis Stevenson has demonstrated a willingness to look at his other works, which cover so wide and varied a terrain – Gothic fiction and nursery rhymes, historical romances and travel writing, literary essays and plays – that common ground among them may seem implausible. Nevertheless, if literary study involves using a range of primary and secondary materials to hold together the writer's achievements, this is what I have attempted to do for this thesis. In particular, my framework includes both the personal and the cultural in Stevenson's works as I emphasize his uncertainties about severing ties with an austere father, Thomas Stevenson, and his deeply religious nurse, Alison Cunningham, as well as a burden of history that he carried with him as he wrote in and away from Presbyterian Scotland in the late nineteenth-century.

My methodology is consistent with what Stevenson's critics have done – to place his writing into the world in which he lived. As others have shown, this world is familiar with Darwinism, and the evolution of language, culture, and religion is being explored by anthropological scientists such as Herbert Spenser and E.B. Taylor. This world is also professional, bourgeois, and thus prosperous. However, to focus my discussion of Stevenson, particularly his views of religion, I will emphasize the Scottish Presbyterian context in his work.

With the exception of Glenda Norquay's book, *Robert Louis Stevenson and Theories of Feeling*, the impact of Calvinist Presbyterianism on Stevenson's writing has not been mapped. Indirect as much of it was, it is profound. Calvinism's basic notion of predestination is at once rejected and incorporated in Stevenson's Scottish romances. Determinism manifests itself as the iron chains of history, politics, and legality in eighteenth-century Scotland, and hence, even as this thesis discusses Stevenson's critique of evolutionary science and the law in late-Victorian Edinburgh society, I have kept an eye on his sense of the forces that predated the contemporary. As the introductory chapter explains, his biographical essay, "John Knox and His Relations to Women," offers a valuable entry point for our consideration of the complexities of the Scottish Calvinism that Stevenson had inherited.

When criticisms remark upon the ways in which Stevenson's writing is inspired by his Calvinist heritage as well as his rejection of conventional Christianity, insufficient attention is paid to the nuances and ambivalences that characterize Stevenson's engagement with his own faith. Biographers have drawn attention to Stevenson's rebellion against Thomas Stevenson's rigorous Calvinism,¹ and critics have often capitalized on this aspect of the writer's life to emphasize that *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* encapsulates his resentment of patriarchy.² Yet I attempt to illustrate

¹ David Daiches tells us that Thomas Stevenson was "a nervous and intense man, deeply committed to Christian theology as he understood it," and when Thomas Stevenson "lost his faith in that theology the confrontation between father and son was hard and bitter" (8). Likewise, Jenny Calder mentions that he grew up in a "strictly Calvinist family," and that he was "agonised by his disagreements with" his parents, whom he loved and respected (8).

² Veeder insists that there is an oedipal conflict between Stevenson and his father which is acted out in "homicidal" terms in Stevenson's *Jekyll and Hyde*, which displaces the

that Stevenson's writing does not suggest a decisive oedipal triumph, and this has something to do with his unwillingness to sever ties with a more equivocal Calvinism that Cunningham embodied for him, one that affirms Scotland's folk tradition, and can mediate between his father's austerity and his own nostalgic return to the landed gentry (the Balfours) of his mother's line.

My preoccupations in this thesis lie with a Calvinist narrative voice that is idealized in Stevenson's Scottish novels, and I will suggest that the voice closely resembles Cunningham's maternal, storytelling registers. Here, certain limitations of my methodology should be acknowledged. I am aware that by accentuating the presence of a Cunningham-like surrogate authority, to the extent of claiming that Stevenson had aspired to cultivate such a feminine voice in his Scottish fiction, I may have placed undue biographical emphasis on his dependence on the nurse who tended to his weakness, particularly when he was an invalid child. Furthermore, Stevenson's portrayal of outlaws complicates the notion that the writer was bound by a need to write responsibly within a specifically Scottish context, in a manner that was accountable to Presbyterian nurses or servants in general. As critics have already noted, there are subversive undercurrents not just in his Scottish writing, but his works in general. There are outlaws who liberate

"lethal" antagonism into his portrayal of Edward Hyde's murder of the "paradigm patriarch," Sir Danvers Carew (109). Luisa Villa draws attention to "the famous quarrel" between father and son "over questions of religious belief" to underscore the reading that Stevenson exploited Thomas Stevenson's depression and mental decline to "[open] up a space for self-affirmation, which the son tried *guiltily* to profit from" (112). However, her analysis is not limited to *Jekyll and Hyde* as she observes that the "recurring image" of sea storms in Stevenson's fiction (*The Black Arrow*, *Kidnapped*, *The Master of Ballantrae*) embodies the "fear of the awesome power of the sea" that is "traceable to a Calvinist upbringing, which tended to see gigantic forces of nature and the agents of supernatural intervention" (113). To add to Villa's portrait, the sea possibly evoked nostalgia for the writer, who came from a family that designed lighthouses.

themselves from the strictures of tradition, to pursue bravely a freedom and human agency beyond Scotland.

However, although the thesis does attend to the radical freedom that iconoclasts could find, so compelling is that Scots, Cunningham-like voice that is so complexly conservative and maternal that I have consciously avoided an extensive study of iconoclasm. Furthermore, by invoking a range of fiction and non-fiction writings as evidence of Stevenson's nuanced engagement with Cunningham's humanity, I have tried to avoid committing myself to a particular methodology that Roland Barthes would have described as ahistorical. In Barthes's critique of a Parisian exhibition called *The Great Family of Man*, he argues that the photographs in this exhibition "amply moralized and sentimentalized" the human condition by "postulating a human essence" that "suppress[es] the determining weight of History" (12). He also suggests that literary "criticism" can use language to represent what photography alone may not demonstrate, like a child's birth that causes suffering to his mother that is obscured by romanticized and moralistic images of humanity. Although Cunningham is not Stevenson's biological mother, I believe that her surrogate authority embodies an ambivalent agency that not only enabled Stevenson to become a writer, but also – to borrow Barthes's words – to cope with the chains of historical determinism within a poignant language that "postulat[es] that one can transform them" (12). The thesis emphasizes that there is no escaping from history in Stevenson's Scottish writing, though this should not discredit the writer's efforts to narrate a nurse's voice to preserve remnants of his Presbyterian tradition.

Introduction

The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde confirmed Stevenson's status as a literary celebrity during his time. His critics have since then focused on his fascination with the double life at the expense of his other works. But there is only so much one can say about a writer by way of studying one novella, and Stevenson's life and other fiction were neglected by critics until recently, when anthologies such as *Robert Louis Stevenson: Writer of Boundaries* demonstrate a willingness to look around and beyond the influential story of duality.

However, one of the issues that will be brought over from *Jekyll and Hyde* to my examination of, in particular, Stevenson's Scottish romances, is the writer's interest in storytelling and his huge familiarity with the Scottish oral storytelling tradition. This folk culture may not be self-evident in *Jekyll and Hyde*, but a closer look at the legal and medical professionals portrayed in this work reveals that they are all storytellers in the sense that they are, discretely amongst themselves, gossipmongers. As portrayed in the first chapter, Utterson indirectly tests Enfield's familiarity with the codes of professional and gentlemanly behavior by allowing him to dwell descriptively on the "strong feeling of deformity" that Hyde evokes for him (*Jekyll and Hyde* 12). Upon realizing that Utterson knows Hyde, Enfield apologetically declares that he is "ashamed" of his "long tongue" (12). As critics such as Robbie Goh have noted, these professionals band together with their shared sense of the acceptable speech-acts that also make up a narrative of exclusion. One's viability within this social circle is dependent on one's ability to master a "professional code of discretion" (Goh 172).

Elsewhere, in Stevenson's literary essays and indeed his Scottish romances, the writer mingles his critique of the folk tradition with respect and a nostalgic regard for a lost world of Scotland's past. Writing the Scottish romances gave Stevenson the chance to confront and escape from the deterministic power of tradition; yet much of this thesis attends to his unwillingness to abandon a way of life that his Calvinist nurse, Alison Cunningham, had fostered in him. Stories and gossip are told not simply to preserve a social group against illegitimate outsiders. In Stevenson's invalid childhood, Cunningham's read-aloud stories provided relief from the "long nights when [he] was kept awake by coughing" (as quoted in Daiches, 10). These included newspaper articles on the crimes that occurred in Edinburgh and London, John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, as well as Scottish folklore and Covenanting histories.³ As biographers, including Daiches, have noted, Cunningham was a deeply convinced Calvinist Presbyterian, and she represented for Stevenson "a peculiarly Scottish blend of strong imagination" with her "great love of rhetoric and dramatic speech, and a strict adherence to the narrow Covenanting version of Scottish Presbyterianism" (Daiches 11). Stevenson's Calvinist inheritance is thus as much determined by his dependence on her caretaking as by her role as a mentor who bridges religious doctrine and the art of storytelling.

That the principle characters in Stevenson's Scottish historical romances, including Ephraim Mackellar in *The Master of Ballantrae* and Kirstie Elliott in *Weir of Hermiston*, are family servants is suggestive of Cunningham's enduring role in mediating to the

³ His father, Thomas Stevenson, also played a part by taking "him into the world of pirates and highwaymen that he always loved" by "feign[ing] conversations with guards or coachmen or innkeepers" (as quoted in Norquay 18). However, Cunningham's care was unremitting.

writer his experience of the Church and his understanding of fundamental doctrines of election and predestination. As enumerated in Calvin's *First Catechism*,

the seed of God's Word takes root and bears fruit only in those whom the Lord has by his eternal election predestined as his children and heirs of the kingdom of heaven; for all the rest, who were condemned by this same plan of God before the foundation of the world, the utterly clear preaching of truth can be nothing but the stench of death unto death. (Hesselink 17)

However, at the expense of Stevenson's nuanced negotiations with the religious tradition that Cunningham embodies, critics have generally overstated an aspect of his writing that challenges a monolithic "Presbyterian heritage with its idea of predestination and sense of sharply overdefined opposition between good and evil" that he had inherited from his father, Thomas Stevenson (Alliata 300). There is furthermore a critical tendency to simplify Stevenson's theological disputes with Thomas Stevenson by focusing on *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, not least by reiterating the claim that Dr Jekyll's scientific project may be read "as an analogue for the narrative itself" (Goh 158).

Typically, Jekyll's metamorphosis is read as reflecting Stevenson's "transgression of the contemporary naturalist taboo of textual integrity" within the constraints of the literary tradition of nineteenth-century realism (Jaëck 48). This notion of aesthetic rebellion is then seen as part of Stevenson's attempt to undermine patriarchy, which in turn is read as part of a conflict with Thomas Stevenson exorcized in narratives that indulge in the "desire/rage of oedipal emotions and in the guilt consequent on them"⁴ (Veeder 122).

⁴ An extension to this notion of rebellion as ascribed to Stevenson's writing is the view of it as anticipating twentieth-century modernism, even postmodernism. Hence, Alan Sandison claims that Stevenson's work is comparable to Joseph Conrad's in the way it

In shifting the critical focus away from Stevenson's attempt to undermine patriarchy to a more complex view of the deterministic influences of Calvinism that the servant characters embody in his Scottish novels, my thesis thus pays greater attention to his lowland protagonists who depend on and respect their Presbyterian servants in order to come to terms with their patriarchal responsibilities. Such a portrayal of functionaries reflects a vestigial belief in a humane model of Scottish Calvinism, which is inspired no less by memories of Cunningham's ability to mediate between his own oedipal tendencies and Thomas Stevenson's rigorous Calvinism, as she situates herself interstitially between the roles of insider and outsider, both brooding Calvinist and lover of stories, servant and surrogate mother. More significantly, however, Stevenson's writing is not merely an ahistorical product of psychosocial tensions that manifests themselves as theological quarrels with his father or his rebellion against his duty to honor familial expectations for him to become an engineer or lawyer. His reaction to his father's rigorous Calvinism is more complexly multifaceted than, say, Piet Mondrian's attempt to strike out beyond his Calvinist father's professionalism by parodying engineering and geometry in his paintings, and by extension, a secular religiosity that must have "everything in its place, nothing superfluous by way of ornament" (Gay 136). Stevenson's fiction, on the other hand, shades the traits of lowland Presbyterian personality, which include a scrupulosity and an extreme earnestness in one's commitment to "an ideal of personal duty," across a range of major and minor characters (Eigner 88). These include Henry Jekyll, whose medical profession requires him to "wear

demonstrates a high modernist irony and disenchantment: "Stevenson . . . is, in one respect, even more 'modern' than Conrad for his instinct to ironise or, where they might seem to posit too firm a moral grounding, to burlesque *everything*" (Sandison 138).

a more than commonly grave countenance before the public” (*Jekyll and Hyde*), as well as the “true-blue Protestant,” Captain Hoseason in *Kidnapped*, who can be counted on to deliver kidnapped Scots to slave markets, and to commemorate his mother’s death whenever the *Covenant* sails by Dysart (59). Indeed, as a critic discerns, “[w]e are never too far away from the Scottish Catechism in Stevenson, with its awe-inspiring first question: ‘What is the whole duty of man?’” (Robson 97).

My thesis thus attends to the ways Stevenson’s Scottish novels critique the lowlander’s often dogged sense of duty towards performing social roles, which is nonetheless kept in check by servants and paternalistic lawyers who resemble Cunningham as they mediate to their wards a patriarchal Calvinism by invoking the oral folk storytelling tradition. I argue that it is a recurring feature in the troubled political climate of Stevenson’s Scottish novels that lowlanders who fail to distance themselves from their socially ordained patriarchal responsibilities tend to become self-destructive, and hence within this social context it is critical that a Presbyterian surrogate parent intervenes.

Because a significant portion of this thesis examines the different ways in which Stevenson’s Scottish novels incorporate a Cunningham-like Presbyterian narrator to humanize patriarchy, Chapter 1 anticipates my discussion of the tension between literary narration (as an aesthetic discourse with humane, compassionate registers) and *logos* (as the ‘Word’ that symbolizes the moral law) by discussing Stevenson’s non-fiction accounts of the Calvinist, Presbyterian, as well as oral folk storytelling traditions in Scotland. I examine Stevenson’s biographical account of John Knox to evaluate a logocentric discourse that Stevenson associates with a Genevan theology as envisioned

by John Calvin, who distrusted the arts. I explain that Stevenson is interested in distinguishing Knox's Presbyterianism from Calvin's theology, and that he does this without suggesting that Knox's religious practices had departed radically from the Word. I argue that Stevenson's discussion of Knox's religious career and his personal life points towards the writer's need to feminize and humanize unequivocal representations of the Word and the moral law. (To illustrate a more personalized account of Stevenson's engagement with the Word, I will suggest that this feminizing register in his writing resonates as Cunningham's Covenanting storytelling.)

Chapter 2 examines Stevenson's critical handling of a hard-line, legalistic Calvinism in his Balfour novels (*Kidnapped* and *Catriona*), and I draw attention to the ways *Catriona* endorses a model of cultural autonomy that is historically maintained by Scotland's legal and professional institutions during the eighteenth-century. I argue that, in *Catriona*, the quest for individuality entails compromising familial traditions and adapting socially to understand unequivocally judicial articulations of the moral law. In this regard, the novel endorses a secularized Calvinism.

In Chapter 3, I focus on *The Master of Ballantrae* to illustrate the possible self-destructive consequences of not attempting to reconcile traditions with socially determined notions of individuality and the moral law. The novel represents a remedy by portraying the land steward, Ephraim Mackellar, as a surrogate-father who mediates values of social adaptation to socially-maladjusted Scots, through a professional voice that possesses equivocal, storytelling registers. The chapter explains that even though Stevenson's writing apparently employs Mackellar's surrogate-authority to delineate a humane, Cunningham-like narrative voice, this employment also invites the reader to

question the steward's reliability as a surrogate-father, as well as accept the possibility that social change is not possible when the self is overdetermined by family tradition. In spite of the writer's pessimism, however, I will suggest that the novel does not present a fatalistic view of humanity; rather, it endorses a secularized Calvinism within the cautionary tale that Mackellar provides, which ironically preserves remnants of tradition.

In Chapter 4, I will discuss Stevenson's Scottish novels in general to argue that his writing consistently feminizes a Calvinist professional agency to critique, but ultimately to idealize, a Presbyterian narrative voice that resonates with idyllic folk elements. In particular, the novels portray Scots professionals who are able to preserve censured traditions within a narrative performance that vacillates indeterminately between the registers of storytelling and social judgment.

Chapter 1

John Knox and His Influence on Stevenson's Views of *Logos*, Art, and Language

As mentioned earlier, critics have tended to comment on Stevenson's rebellion against his Calvinist father, Thomas Stevenson, in ways that accentuate the socially deviant strains in his writing. In this chapter, I discuss a different view by referring to Stevenson's biographical investigation of John Knox's disagreements with John Calvin. The biographical essay traces the development and rise of Scottish Presbyterianism back to periods of political instability in Scotland's past, and hence it presents a clue to the nature of Stevenson's own ambivalent and nuanced views of Calvinist theology. This chapter attends to four main aspects of Stevenson's essay about Knox. The first is that Scotland's Calvinism should be distinguished from the original theology as established in Geneva because, for Stevenson, there is a greater room in Scotland for Scots to interact with their religious leaders to effect political and social change. Second, Stevenson considers this interaction by discussing the passionate registers in Knox's letters and written spiritual advice to his friends. Stevenson's critical writing suggests that such registers are more aesthetically pleasing, more moral even, than logocentric conceptions of morality. Third, Knox's Calvinism paradoxically inspired Scotland's Covenanting storytelling tradition despite the Presbyterian mistrust of the arts. Finally, I use Stevenson's literary essay on Robert Burns to exemplify the fruitful tension between doctrine and passionate narrations that is discernible in "John Knox." I will suggest that the essay's portrayal of Burns's rebellious youth reflects Stevenson's belief that iconoclasts who seek unconventional – in particular, theatrical – conceptions of art and autonomy cannot escape from Presbyterian conceptions of morality.

Stevenson's Presbyterianism and Its Origins

Historically, Calvin's teachings were built into the theological and ecclesiastical foundations of the Church of Scotland when it was reformed in 1560, under the direction of notable personalities, including Knox. In that year, the *First Scottish Confession* was established, and it affirms Calvinism from its very first line in the preface: "Long have we thirsted to have notified to the world the sum of that doctrine which we profess, and for which we have sustained infamy and danger" (as quoted in McNeill 299). However, as Stevenson discerns, this was not simple transposition because even though Calvinism was declared the principle religion, Scotland had to remain on diplomatic terms with Roman Catholic France and Episcopalian England. In "John Knox," Stevenson contrasts Knox's awareness of nationalist sentiments in Scotland against reformers who adhered strictly to the Genevan model, and whom Stevenson describes as "political weathercocks" with "no serious ideas upon politics" ("John Knox" 300). According to Stevenson, Calvin had repudiated Knox's brazenly indiscreet political tract, *The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*, which attacked the government of Mary of Guise and Mary Tudor. Stevenson is critical of Calvin's toleration of the Catholic Queen Mary's persecution of Protestants, describing his recoiling from "political affairs as from something unclean" as "a spirit necessarily fatal in the long run to the existence of any sect that may profess it; a suicidal doctrine that survives among us [Scots] in narrow views of personal duty" (307). By juxtaposing Calvin's "passive obedience" and Knox's aspirations to denounce Queen Mary's divine right to rule in Scotland (307), Stevenson has done more than account for the misogyny in Knox's view that the "government of women was a deviation from the original plan

and proper order of nature, to be ranked, no less than slavery, among the punishments consequent upon the fall of man” (as quoted in “John Knox” 306). In particular, by accentuating the sense of intimacy in Knox’s friendship with Elizabeth Bowes and Anne Locke, as well as his marriage to Marjorie Bowes, the biography emphasizes the discursive exchanges that occurred between Knox’s creation of the *First Blast* and the *First Scottish Confession* and the “circle of admiring women, eager to hear the new paragraph” (328). Stevenson therefore identifies the dynamic interactions between the Church and secular society as one of the strengths of Scottish Presbyterianism (328). Such a claim concurs with historical studies of Calvinism, including John T. McNeill’s, which notes that the Scottish Reformation was unique as it was “deeply rooted in the life of the people” (307).

Furthermore, for Stevenson, the theology of Geneva should be distinguished from the theology of Presbyterian Scotland, where the historical and political development and establishment of Calvinism legitimized and nourished the vernacular literature and storytelling tradition in spite of the Presbyterian mistrust of the arts. It can be said, perhaps, that Stevenson believed that the storytelling tradition had brought religion closer to the hearts and minds of the Scots, whereas in Geneva, the Church and the demotic realm were not necessarily bridged through the arts. Leslie P. Spelman has quoted the following passages from *The Institutes of Christian Religion* and *The Tracts* to reveal Calvin’s condemnation of the use of the visual arts in the church:

Do not men pay to images and statues the very same reverence which they pay to God? It is an error to suppose that there is any difference between this madness

and that of the heathen. For God forbids us not only to worship images, but to regard them as residence of his divinity. (*Tracts*, as quoted in Spelman 247)

I know that it is a very common observation, that images are the books of the illiterate. Gregory said so; but very different is the decision of the Spirit of God, in whose school had Gregory been taught, he would never have made such an assertion. For, since Jeremiah pronounces that “the stock is a doctrine of vanities,” (Jer. X. 8) since Habakkuk represents “a molten images” as “a teacher of lies,” (Hab. II. 18) . . . certainly the general doctrine to be gathered from the passages is, that whatever men learn respecting God from images is equally frivolous and false. (*Institutes of Christian Religion* Bk 1, Chapter 11: 5)

By mentioning that Knox had acquired the reputation of having “browbeat[en] Queen Mary” and broken “beautiful carved work in abbeys and cathedrals,” Stevenson’s biographical essay thus acknowledges that Knox’s Calvinism shared Calvin’s suspicious attitude towards the ecclesiastical employment of the visual arts (“John Knox” 316).

According to Spelman, the anti-artistic impulse in Calvinism stems from the veneration of the Bible as the basis of the Christian religion in the Protestant Reformation, which historically disassociates itself from the Roman Catholic heritage of liturgic art and music. He adds that, unlike Martin Luther who kept much of the arts (architecture, hymns, and organ and choral music) in the service of the church, Calvin “went as far as to allow nothing which was not expressly approved by the Bible” (1951: Spelman 166). Spelman’s emphasis on Calvin’s “legalistic” humanism exemplifies the common tendency (in popular understanding) to associate Calvinism with “religious tyranny,” “logic and cold reason” (246). Likewise, Stevenson’s portrayal of Knox’s

disagreements with Calvin (concerning the interpretation of the Bible) is written in a way that is not prejudiced in Calvin's favor. However, a closer look at Calvinism, in Calvin's own terms, suggests that the reformer's appreciation of the arts, in particularly of language and literature, is downplayed in Stevenson's appraisal of the origins of Scottish Calvinism. A fairer assessment of Calvin's view of language can be found in William J. Bouwsma's evaluation of Calvin in relation to sixteenth-century humanism. Bouwsma concedes that Calvin was disturbed by the ambiguities that can be found, for example, in the parallel between "the sudden intervention that had transformed the despair of Abraham into joy and the *deus ex machina* of various pagan myths" (Bouwsma 115). Calvin subsequently 'attributed the similarity to Satan, who, "by figments of this kind, has endeavored to obscure the wondering and amazing interventions of God"' (as quoted in Bouwsma 115). However, Calvin's humanism went deeper than a dogmatic distrust of the "figurative language" of myths and stories, because he believed that "[r]hetoric" had a "mysterious affinity with divinity" (117). He was not troubled by the view that authors of the Gospel" were "artists" even as they were "annalists," recognizing that a level of interpretive distortion was unavoidable because "the Evangelists" had "transfer[red] units of Christ's teaching here and there to different places as the occasion demand[ed]" (121). For Calvin, the "Bible is throughout a rhetorical document and a work of interpretation" (121). Following Bouwsma's analysis, such a view of the Word was also held by Renaissance humanists who looked to "orators, poets, and historians" for inspiration, and "rejected Scholastic education, which depended primarily on logic, the art of organizing truth into rationally intelligible systems of thought" (113-114). Calvin's *Institutes*, in fact, relied on pagan literature, and cited "Cicero and Quintilian, Homer and Virgil, Plutarch

and Seneca, Horace, Juvenal, and Ovid, the authors most cherished by humanists,” because the writer wrote for readers who “loved these authors,” but also “because he loved them himself” (115). The reformer clearly welcomed the powers of suggestive communication (“digression, repetition, embellishment, amplification, and passages of great emotional intensity”) as long as the impact of his messages was increased (126).

Even though Stevenson sidesteps Calvin’s humanism in his eagerness to represent Knox’s theology as humanely grounded in the demotic realm in Scotland, his historical attitudes towards Scottish Presbyterianism in fact concur with Calvin’s acknowledgement of the dynamic relationships between figurative language and religious doctrine. In particular, Stevenson discerns that, ironically, the Presbyterian distrust of interpretive ambiguities in art appreciation produced a tradition of oral narrative. When Stevenson emphatically states that Knox’s revolutionary Protestantism parallels the Puritanism that led to the execution of Charles I, there is the suggestion that the political fervor of Knox’s Calvinism was infused into Scotland’s folk storytelling tradition (“John Knox” 307). During the seventeenth century, such an uncompromising Calvinism was indeed exercised by Presbyterian ministers who amassed popular support for the National Covenant, which pledged to maintain the true religion of Scotland against English influences. This led to the formation of the Solemn League and Covenant in 1643.⁵ However, when Charles II attempted to reestablish episcopacy in Scotland, the Covenanted ministers left their manses and churches in rebellion, believing firmly, as a

⁵ Even though the Covenant failed to fulfill the larger purpose of establishing a uniformity of worship in the United Kingdom, the *Westminster Confession of Faith* was compiled and approved based on Calvin’s *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. This *Confession* was to become the “principle article of Calvinist theology in Scotland in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries” (Thorpe 7).

historian notes, that they were “good Calvinists” “predestined to grace and so were the more eager to die for their faith” (Maclean 136). In their heroic but failed attempt to rebel against English proscription, the Calvinist Covenanters left behind an undying legacy, not the less for Stevenson who was an “heir of the Covenanters” gripped “all his life” by that patriotic moment in Scotland’s past (Daiches 28, Calder 10). As much of this thesis explains, part of Stevenson’s argument in his Scottish historical romances is that the English Hanoverians were responsible for subduing the spirit of Scotland’s folk tradition to the extent of leading to its destruction, and the writer’s vestigial commitment to his native Calvinism paradoxically preserves tradition despite the local Presbyterian mistrust of the arts. Such an argument complicates the straightforward view that Stevenson’s writing subverts his Calvinist father’s tendency to regard his literary aspirations as rebellious.

There is, however, a more significant way in which Stevenson understood the contradictory impulses in the need to revive the awe-inspiring spirit of the Calvinist Covenanters through the ‘artifice’ of storytelling, despite his awareness of their austerity and mistrust of art and pleasure. From the Covenanting tradition as incited no less by Knox’s repudiation of episcopacy and eagerness to displace Roman Catholicism from Scotland, Stevenson had also inherited an awareness of the troubling tensions between language – and by extension, literature – and the centrality of ‘the Word’ in a system that emphasizes one’s individual relationship with God as well as one’s duty to the local Church. Once again, this privileging of ‘the Word’ in Presbyterian Scotland is traceable to the contrasting attitudes of the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches towards the employment of the arts in worship. Stevenson’s biographical account of Knox

exemplifies this key doctrinal difference by mentioning that Knox had emphasized “the first transgression and certain strong texts in Genesis and Paul’s Epistles” to invalidate Queen Mary’s accession (“John Knox” 304). Calvin had frustrated Knox by rejecting his reading of the Bible’s conception of Eve and her daughters and Queen Mary’s divine right to rule; and yet, as Stevenson suggests, Calvin’s own emphasis on ‘the Word’ and the authority of the local church paradoxically enabled Knox to legitimize his theological and political convictions, at least within Edinburgh. As stated in *Calvin’s Institutes*,

Wherever we see the Word of God *purely preached and heard*, and the sacraments administered according to Christ’s institution, there, it is not to be doubted, a church of God exists [cf. Eph. 2:20]. For his promise cannot fail: “Wherever two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them” [Matt. 18:20].

But we may clearly grasp the sum of this matter, we must proceed by the following steps: the church universal is a multitude gathered from all nations; it is divided and dispersed in separate places, but agrees on the one truth of divine doctrine, and is bound by the bond of the same religion. Under it are thus included individual churches, disposed in towns and villages *according to human need, so that each rightly has the name and authority of the church*. Individual men who, by their profession of religion, are reckoned within such churches, even though they may actually be strangers to the church, still in a sense belong to it until they have been rejected by public judgment. (my emphasis, IV.i.9)

Therefore, Calvin respects the autonomy of the individual ‘human need’ that is legitimized by the local church, which is sanctioned to represent *logos*. In other words,

Calvin's emphasis on the congregational participation in the service of worship and the reading of the Bible allows local variations. There is certainly the risk that the local may regard itself as the standard, and Stevenson is aware of this, because according to him, Knox felt completely justified in using the Bible to condemn Queen Mary in spite of Calvin's theological reservations and disagreements. However, without glossing over the fallibility in Knox's claim to represent *logos*, Stevenson's critical writing portrays a largely sympathetic, and also nuanced, account of Knox's political and theological convictions. We are told that the reformer understood "the world and his own heart, not so much under any very steady, equable light, as by extreme flashes of passion, true for the moment, but not true in the long run" ("John Knox" 316). At the same time, we are told that Knox found loyal friends, two of them being his own wife and mother-in-law, to whom he wrote sensitive and passionate letters, and the biographer goes as far as to argue that Knox's theology transcends ideology or false consciousness; that is, as he approached his female friends "in a certain halo of his own, as the minister of truth" "in a glory of art" (318). Part of Stevenson's claim, here, is that there was enough intersubjective agreement for the reformer to establish his own model of Geneva, the "Presbyterian paradise," in Scotland (327).

Yet there is a more problematic claim about language and morality that Stevenson's biographical account ventures, particularly when he notes a distinction between Knox's status as an artist and as a 'minister of truth,' and by extension, between representation and *logos*, artifice and reality. For Stevenson, Knox was more disingenuous than he would have liked to admit when he wrote letters that satisfied his female friends' need for moral instruction and "tenderness" (317). There was the recognition that *logos* may not

be objectively and unequivocally preached because representation is human and therefore fallible; however, a level of irony and equivocation may compensate for the failure of language to represent ‘truth.’ Hence, Stevenson’s biographical account asserts a parallel between “the religious friendship in the sixteenth century” and “a literary friendship in the eighteenth” to suggest that moral instruction, when wrought to pitch of art, is paradoxically liberated to represent the truths that matter (316). However, this is far from implying that conservative intentions or ideologies are preserved covertly by hypocrisy, to create a project mounted in some bad faith. As Stevenson notes, the Presbyterian minister only becomes a literary artist when he goes “straight before him on a journey, neither tempted by wayside flowers nor very scrupulous of small lives underfoot” (317). In the main body of this thesis, I emphasize that Stevenson derives a method for his own fictional writing in his Scottish historical romances, between the straight and narrow way of a Calvinist absolutist *logos* that predetermines realities and a rhetorical evasiveness. In particular, this oscillation between judgment and equivocation characterizes the narrative performances of Presbyterian stewards and servants, as well as lawyers like Lord Prestongrange in *Catriona* and Lord Glenalmond in *Weir of Hermiston*.

Covenanting Narrators and Scotland’s Oral Folk Storytelling Tradition

Exercising the speech habits of lowland Presbyterian authority figures also allows Stevenson to write elements of his own relationship with Cunningham into the drama of political conflict in his historical romances. In *Memoirs of Himself*, Stevenson reveals that Cunningham had unwittingly intoned her edifying stories in a way that drew attention to a seductive artifice as they fell distractedly “into a loose irregular measure with a tendency toward the ten-syllable heroic line” (as quoted in Norquay 13). For

Stevenson, Cunningham's storytelling implied that art and doctrine are not necessarily incompatible in spite of her mistrust of art and her "vivid awareness of the flicker of Hell-fire and of eternal damnation" (Norquay 34). Furthermore, her "Calvinist and Covenanting convictions" nourished in him the habit of reading the works of Covenanting historians, including "Robert Wodrow's *History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland* and *Analecta, or Materials for a History of Remarkable Providences* and James Kirkton's *Secret and True History of the Church of Scotland*" (Daiches 18). Writing to J.M. Barrie from Samoa in 1883, Stevenson mentions that his "style is from the Covenanting writers" (as quoted in Daiches 18). For Stevenson, these moral historians did not simply document the past, but more importantly, they left an opening for him to imagine enduring ethical and aesthetic models in spite of his sense of being personally entangled with competing ideologies. This moral goal is implicitly exemplified in Stevenson's discussion of Knox's politically-charged Calvinism that paved the way for the True Church of Scotland when the nation could have faded indistinctly into Great Britain by the Treaty of Union of 1707. However, as a novelist, Stevenson displaces the tension between *logos* and artifice that he discerns in Knox's theology into the politically tumultuous worlds that form the setting of his Scottish novels, where competing Hanoverian and Jacobite claims loom over the lowlanders' existence during the eighteenth century. Characters in *Kidnapped*, *The Master of Ballantrae* and *Catriona* struggle to commit to and critique different political ideals and ideologies, and Cunningham-like lawyers, servants, and stewards are hired to maintain the vulnerable integrity of one's political autonomy. An emphasis on Stevenson's inheritance of the fundamental tension between *logos* and style within the Covenanting

writing tradition, in particular his sensitivity to the constructedness of represented realities that gestures towards independently developed moral convictions, poses one kind of answer to the problems of reading historical and social determinism in his Scottish 'historical' novels, one of the most problematic being the role of the narrator who at times suggests the role of a Covenanting historian who strives for a purely objective perspective, and at other times resembles the role of a storyteller who is not always able to suppress the urge to convey personal beliefs in a partial and intense manner.

An example can be found in *The Master of Ballantrae*. When the land steward, Mackellar arrives at the Durrisdeer household, he remarks that he cannot appreciate the "French fashion, or perhaps Italianate" design of the house, and that the money used for the embellishments could have been used to restore the family's estate and reputation (*Master* 19). Even though this attitude towards beauty and artifice is consistent with Calvin's anti-art bias, and thus aligns itself with Mr Thomson's view that the steward's memoir is "bald," a contradictory opinion is offered by the fictionalized editor who states that "there is nothing so interesting" as Mackellar's writing, and that he "would have all literature bald" (8). That the paternalistic functionary is, however incidentally, portrayed as an artist is a consistent attribute of Stevenson's Scottish romances. More than this, as this thesis suggests, the art of storytelling plays a vital role in enabling landed lowlanders to exercise a limited degree of self-reflection and free will, even as their submission to patriarchy is predetermined by history and society.

As Stevenson reimagines Knox's and Cunningham's Covenanting speech habits in his historical fiction, his writing imitates, as his essay "A Humble Remonstrance" states, "not

life but speech: not the facts of human destiny, but the emphasis and the suppressions with which the human actor tells of them” (217). This essay was written in response to Henry James’s “The Art of Fiction,” which asserts that literature’s duty is “compete with life” (196).⁶ For Stevenson, art does not imitate ‘reality’ but it represents the ‘telling’ of reality (217). This conception of literary writing, as subject to the determinism of ‘life,’ ‘politics’ and ‘history’ but is nonetheless autonomously story-told, is consistent with his writing method in his Scottish novels, which may be read as moral tales in spite and because of the digressions, suppressions, and equivocation in the Presbyterian narrator’s fervent telling.

Self-Invention and Its Containment within a Presbyterian Community

Whereas I argue that Stevenson’s lowland narrators pivot between *logos* and style in their quest to remain committed to the moral law, thereby presenting at least versions of Knox’s or Cunningham’s individual ability to harmonize art and moral instruction, historically the Church of Scotland did not always accommodate local variations, particularly when the local church was judged by public opinion as having deviated too far from *logos*. During the 1750s, the Rev. John Home, a minister with a parish at Athelstaneford, had successfully staged in Edinburgh and London his tragedy, *Douglas*,

⁶ James wrote the essay in response to the public lecture delivered in 1884, also entitled “The Art of Fiction,” by the popular novelist Walter Besant. The essay is a respectful correction of Besant’s lecture that had earnestly delivered advice to aspiring writers, including keeping a notebook, and not writing about garrison life if you were a young lady living in quiet country villages. Interestingly, at the end of “The Humble Remonstrance,” Stevenson himself gives a version of Besant’s prescriptive lecture: “Let him choose a motive, whether of character or passion; carefully construct his plot so that every incident is an illustration of the motive, and every property employed shall bear to it a near relation of congruity or contrast; avoid a sub-plot” and so on (221). Perhaps, the essay can be read as another example of Stevenson’s interest in imitating the telling, as he tries to “[marshal] James’s sophisticated amendment and Besant’s crude prescription “towards a common end” (217).

which tells the tale of Lady Randolph's rediscovery of her long-lost son Norval, the illegitimate offspring of her unsanctioned union with a scion of the Douglas clan. As Alice Edna Gibson tells it, Home, Adam Ferguson and Alexander Carlyle belonged to the moderate church party who did not believe that they were worse as clergymen for enjoying "innocent social diversions, and for admitting to their society lay members from whose company they might gain both pleasure and profit" (71). Nevertheless, proceedings that condemned the "dangerous Entertainments of the Stage" were instituted in the Edinburgh and Glasgow presbyteries against Home as well as the other ministers who had attended the performances (as quoted in Gibson 73). Home's career had thus become an affront to existing social relations as a whole. Even though Stevenson's critical writing does not critique Home's liberal Calvinism and his secularized outlook specifically, his essay, "Some Aspects of Robert Burns," briefly outlines a suspicion against the progressive values of eighteenth-century Enlightenment as held by "a clique of roaring lawyers and half-heretical divines" (156). His Scottish novels likewise portray lowlanders and highlanders who are too extravagant, too sophisticated perhaps, in their will to pursue unconventional realities through theatrical self-fashioning or self-styling, but cannot escape from Presbyterian caretakers who embody the moral law. This Protestant distrust of drama in Stevenson's writing can be traced to his secularized Calvinist inheritance as well as Calvin's worry that role-playing in theatre can be transferred to social practices, where

we play roles that may require hiding the true self to meet the expectations of others or to deceive them. Acting on the stage also involves the substitution of an

artificial for an authentic self; it does not express the natural vitality and freedom of human being but hides behind a mask, assumes a *persona*. (Bouwsma 178)

The ministers who condemned Home's play certainly demonstrated Calvin's "anti-theatrical prejudice," but stage performances were seen as having the power to incite, in enlightened Edinburgh, subversions and even hypocritical self-inventions (179). A reflection of this anxiety can be found in Stevenson's portrayal of the intelligent, glib Frank Innes in *Weir of Hermiston*, a bored "young advocate" who worms his way into the hearts of the country folk. As the third-person narrator discerns, "[h]e offered you an alliance against the some one else. He flattered you by slighting him; you were drawn into a small intrigue against him before you knew how" (*Weir* 172).

Stevenson's critical view of hypocritical behaviors and his preoccupation with defining a responsible, humanely equivocal version of Presbyterian doctrine fits well into the so-called Kailyard school; however, it has its precedent in Robert Burns's poetry from the eighteenth century, particularly his "Cotter's Saturday Night" which takes us into a scene of family prayer in the lowlands.⁷ Stevenson's literary essay, "Some Aspects of Robert Burns," draws attention to the tensions in Burn's life and poetic concerns that

⁷ Briefly, Kailyard fiction was written (by Samuel Rutherford Crockett, Ian Maclaren, and James Barrie) in reaction against a hard-line Calvinism, which was seen as a repetition of the traditional "superstitious adherence to Covenants that were held to permit" heresy trials (Power 153). According to William Power, Kailyarders were scrupulous about including "the kirk and the minister" in their writing. Also, the tragic mode (in Thomas Hardy's novels for example) is incorporated but always eventually rejected, and the treatment of the Scots way of life is "romantic, sentimental, moralistic" (161-162). Francis Russell Hart tells us that the "persistent theme is reconciliation, secret charity, the conversion of hard legalistic Calvinism into kindly helpfulness" (122). Such impulses can likewise be found the works of the first generation of Scottish novelists who belonged to the "Blackwood milieu" (Hart 31). An example would be John Galt's *Annals of the Parish*, which presents the narratives of the minister Balwhidder, who aims to set down a "faithful account" of his ministry "to the end that I may bear witness to the work of a beneficent Providence, even in the narrow sphere of my parish" (Galt 6).

reflect his own Calvinist inheritance and views of iconoclasm, specifically when he exercises a Cunningham-like Presbyterianism by accentuating Burns's vacillation between his sense of duty to his family and parish and his reputation as a rebellious artist and a self-styling "Don Juan" ("Some Aspects" 155). By mediating between a sympathetic portrayal of the regrets of an older, embittered Burns on the one hand, and on the other, Principal Shairp's harsh critique that the poet of "Cotter's Saturday Night" should not have "stooped to write" "Holy Willie's Prayer" and "Jolly Beggars," Stevenson's critique revises Shairp's theological condemnation of Holy Willie's immorality. In particular, Stevenson's writing accentuates the poet's moral core that was ironically masked by his iconoclasm and the kind of bohemian "spirit" that "leads to the extravagant array of Latin Quarter students" (153). According to Stevenson, beneath Burns's "style" and apparent lack of moral "matter" lies the willed transgression that had motivated his unseemly connections with Jean Armour, but which is nevertheless consistent with the moral law to which Burns submitted by marrying the woman whom he did not truly love (174). For Stevenson, in this tension between aesthetic will and social anxiety, Burns's work acquires the power to affect "Wordsworth and the world" (174). This is rather overstated, but Stevenson's point is that the cosmopolitan poet can preserve his triumphant self only if he also remains accountable to his home church, where the clergymen are "kind and indulgent but orderly and orthodox," "anxious to be pleased, but too often hurt and disappointed by the behavior of his red-hot *protégé*" (151).

Stevenson's emphasis on the delicate balance between Burns's provinciality and cosmopolitanism, in particular the poet's ability to artistically represent the local speech

acts that “were easy, racy, graphic, and forcible” (“Some Aspects” 172), therefore exemplifies the “welter of impressions” described in “The Humble Remonstrance” (217). For Stevenson, the novelist’s impressions of reality are specifically derived from verbal representations or speech acts, and therefore art, as a “self-contained” work of love, should not be confused with “life” which is “monstrous, infinite, illogical, abrupt and poignant” (217). The belief that art is not and should not be concerned with providing a “sanctity of truth” can be appreciated if we compare Stevenson’s model to another Scots writer’s, James Hogg’s (216). In a letter to a critic and editor George Saintsbury, written on 17 May 1891, Stevenson mentions that Hogg’s *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*. “has always haunted and puzzled [him]” (as quoted in Massie 163). His admiration of Hogg suggests that he shares some of the writer’s yearning for “a simpler Scottish transition, that of rural community with oral tradition of ballad and story giving way to a Scotland sick either through religion or social snobbery” (Gifford 61). However, Hogg’s claim that Robert Wringham’s antinomianism is paradoxically a provision of fate aligns itself with Henry James’s model (of art competing with life) rather than Stevenson’s: in particular, Wringham’s fictionalized memoir embodies an organically revisioned reality that, to borrow Henry James’s word, ‘competes’ with an essay written in *Blackwood’s Magazine* by one James Hogg, which deals with an account of the discovery of grave of an unknown suicide, and which subsequently leads the fictional editor to search for Wringham’s memoir. Thus, a sense of moral confusion is evoked as the narratives elide the distinction between the representation and reality by juxtaposing Wringham’s confession against “supposedly objective, though limiting third-person account of events” (Thorpe 6). As signs are divorced from their signifieds and

voices are disembodied and dislocated, Hogg's tale creates a reinvented and purer vernacular identity out of the ruins of the flawed one that the text dismantles.

To reiterate the main concerns of this chapter – I have discussed Hogg and Home, as well as Stevenson's essay on Robert Burns, to highlight Stevenson's distrust of forms of dramatic self-styling that radically transgress conventional figurations of morality. The discussion of Stevenson's critique of John Knox's religious career forms a suggestive context for the writer's views of literature and Calvinist doctrine: in particular, Stevenson's non-fiction writing demonstrates the aesthetic possibilities within narratives that are moralistically and yet passionately conveyed. Such narratives also resonate as the speech habits of Stevenson's Covenanted nurse, Alison Cunningham.

As the main body of my thesis suggests, the fervent Presbyterian narrator that embodies paradoxical aesthetic possibilities does not always emerge distinctly in Stevenson's Scottish novels. With the exception of the older Kirstie Elliott in *Weir of Hermiston* who, as I will explain, unabashedly possesses and provides a romanticized Presbyterian narrative voice, the surrogate-authorities portrayed in Stevenson's Scottish novels tend not to appreciate consciously the aesthetic merits that are discernible in Scotland's storytelling tradition. Before I attend to the Calvinist-Presbyterian agency that is poignantly and powerfully featured in *Weir of Hermiston*, I wish to discuss a patriarchal mode of narrative performance by illustrating Stevenson's representation of the Edinburgh judiciary in his Balfour novels. Even though I contend that Stevenson's Scottish writing ultimately endorses a pastoral Calvinist-Presbyterianism, I wish to delay my study of this endorsement by assessing the writer's sympathetic representations of patriarchs who embody a legalistic, Calvinistic *logos* (one that parallels Thomas

Stevenson's professionalism and religiosity). Such a delay would emphasize the patriarch's failure to articulate the human agency and freedom that Kirstie Elliott embodies, although for now I am more concerned with the mixed feelings that characterize Stevenson's representations of legalistic Calvinists.

Chapter 2

Social Adaptation and Calvin's Legacy in the Balfour Novels

Stevenson's unease with legalistic Calvinist practices manifests itself in different ways in his Scottish novels, such as David Balfour's gradual acceptance of Lord Prestongrange's surrogate fathering in *Catriona*, as the Durrisdeer brothers' employment of Mackellar's stewardship in *The Master of Ballantrae*, or as Archie Weir's rebellion against his father, the Lord Justice Clerk and 'hanging judge' in *Weir of Hermiston*. This chapter will focus on *Kidnapped* and *Catriona* to examine an aspect of Stevenson's writing that, arguably, idealizes a legalistic Calvinism that has the agency to maintain Scotland's religious identity in its unstable relationships with Hanoverian England and Roman Catholic France during the eighteenth century. The chapter has four main parts. First, I will discuss the criticisms that argue that Stevenson's Scottish writing questions the judicial application of law as organized by Scotland's professional society (which the writer generally associates with the city of Edinburgh). I suggest that such an argument is also relevant within an analytical context that is sensitive to Stevenson's struggles to come to terms with his father's austere Calvinism. Second, the chapter explores the possible interconnections between the legalistic practices represented in the Balfour novels and John Calvin's conceptions of social adaptation and civil society in his *Institutes*. As the previous chapter has mentioned, such an emphasis on Stevenson's vestigial commitment to his native Calvinism complicates the reductive view that his writing simply subverts Thomas Stevenson's patriarchy and professionalism. Next, having emphasized the presence of a legalistic Calvinism in Stevenson's writing, the third section explains that the Balfour novels ostensibly affirm the belief that individuality is attainable by way of

adapting to the social and censorial processes in Whig Scotland, even as the writing demonstrates the awareness that adaptation can severely compromise traditions that are associated with outlawry. The final section then asserts that *Catriona*, in particular, ultimately promotes a legalistic Calvinism.

Legality, Social Engineering, and Thomas Stevenson's Calvinism

Stevenson's Scottish novels consistently represent the determinism of law. In particular, they portray legal professionals whose speech acts are determined by a complex of social and political functions that is a product of Scotland's Enlightenment tradition. Within a site in which Stevenson plays out the dualities of a judicial culture, he works out ambivalent feelings towards the necessity of law (as a means to ensure social order in times of political turmoil) on the one hand, and the harsh imposition of law (contrasting with grace and forgiveness) on the other. Stevenson's critique of the hierarchies inscribed in Scottish Enlightenment historiography has been examined by Janet Sorensen, who explains that *Kidnapped* challenges the deterministic binary that divides iconic representations of value in the proscribed highlands, as exemplified by Alan Breck's belt of smuggled gold, from a judicially sanctioned economy in the lowlands, which has "advanced to more abstract representations of value" such as promissory notes and cheques (279). In a similar vein, Barry Menikoff critiques Stevenson's interest in the historical development and application of law, specifically by examining the ways in which the writer carefully researches eighteenth-century printed trials in order to represent the tensions between legal and illegal conceptions of morality and social order. As Menikoff examines the actual printed trials of two Jacobite renegades, James and Allan Breck Stewart, he emphasizes Stevenson's ability to

represent the years of the Jacobite Rebellion (mainly, in 1715 and 1745), in the novels *Kidnapped* and *Catriona*, with a historical “veracity” that attests to the ways social engineering and laws were utilized for the “preservation of power” in the lowlands (3). In particular, Stevenson throws a wrench into a deterministic history by portraying the interactions between the fictional lowlander, David Balfour, and historic outlaws. Issues of illegality and literary narration are raised, for instance, near the end of *Kidnapped*, where Rankeillor wryly comments that David’s report of his highland experiences is “a great epic, a great Odyssey” (207). Certain narratives constitute reality; others are condemned as falsifying, and Menikoff thus argues that Stevenson’s historical writing – which operates as ‘literature’ – subversively blurs such categorical distinctions.

From a psycho-biographical viewpoint, the meticulous historical research that informs Stevenson’s writing of the Balfour novels reflects his attempt to exorcise his tense feelings towards Thomas Stevenson. Beyond these personal pressures, there is also the sense that Stevenson’s narratives critique the abstract interpenetrations of the state’s judicial determinism and a hard-line Calvinism. Such a critique may not be found in Stevenson’s non-fiction writing, particularly his essay on Knox, which briefly refers to Calvin’s theological handling of the “body politic” and “affairs of the State” (“John Knox” 299). In focusing on Knox and his departure from the Genevan theology, Stevenson’s essay makes no direct mention of the “legalistic training” that enabled Calvin to authoritatively “rewrite the civil laws of the city and of Geneva,” as well as to found a “Protestant tradition” that “was deeply involved in political and social” affairs

(Spelman 246, Kerr 9).⁸ However, Stevenson's fictional representations of Edinburgh suggest a critical awareness of the workings of Scots criminal and civil laws as being historically adumbrated by a combination of Calvin's theology and his legalistic outlook. In the final section of *Calvin's Institutes*, under "The Holy Catholic Church," Calvin interweaves "biblical with doctrinal interpretation" to justify "the church's perennial responsibility" to embody *logos*, and further, even though he distinguishes between the secularism of "civil jurisdiction" and "Christ's spiritual Kingdom," he asserts that

civil government has as its appointed end, so long as we live among men, to cherish and protect the outward worship of God, to defend sound doctrine of piety and the positions of the church, and to adjust our life to the society of men, to form our social behavior to civil righteousness, to reconcile us with one another, and to promote general peace and tranquility. (IV.xx.2)

Although I do not intend to argue that Stevenson's conception of Scotland's judicial and civil arenas is closely modeled upon the functions of civil society as enumerated in *Calvin's Institutes*, I suggest that, within a context that displaces Calvinism into realistic settings, his handling of the doctrine of predestination in *Kidnapped* and *Catriona* provides judicial and political equivalents of salvation and grace.

As implied earlier in my summary of Sorensen's and Menikoff's criticisms, the opinion as held by critical consensus is that Stevenson's Scottish novels destabilize fixed divisions between socially-engineered and uncultivated political and economic spaces.

⁸ Also, in "John Knox," Stevenson's readiness to dismiss Calvin's theology as apolitical is perhaps symptomatic of his impatience and frustration with Thomas Stevenson's religiosity, even though his fiction suggests that his attitude towards a hard, legalistic Calvinism is far from simple, as my discussion of the 'hanging judge' in *Weir of Hermiston* will show.

This blurring of boundaries is then read as subverting the judiciary that regulates, even condemns, Scotland's ties to an older world in the highlands. Such an argument can be rephrased within a context that is sensitive to Stevenson's Calvinist inheritance, specifically the legalistic Calvinism that was embodied in his father. The Calvinist thinks and feels like a "criminal lawyer," to borrow Gilbert Ryle's description of the Calvinist mentality in his essay on Jane Austen. Within this deterministic universe where judgment always assumes the quality of fact, human beings are conceived as "Saved or Damned, Elect or Reject, children of Virtue or children of Vice, heading for Heaven or heading for Hell, White or Black, Innocent or Guilty" (as quoted in Robson 284-285). Stevenson resented and feared this unequivocal Calvinism, and it was this fear that drove him to write the following letter to Thomas Stevenson in 1883:

I have just finished reading a book which I counsel you above all things *not* to read; as it has made me very ill and would make you worse: Lockhart's *Scott*. It is worth reading, as all things are from time to time, that keep us nose to nose with fact, though I think such reading may be abused, and that a great deal of life is better spent in reading of a light and chivalrous strain. Thus no Waverley novel approaches in power, blackness, bitterness and moral elevation to the diary and Lockhart's narrative of the end; and yet the Waverley novels are better reading for every day than the life. ("Letters" 354)

Stevenson expected his father, the pioneering lighthouse engineer, to privilege the biography of Scott as written by John Gibson Lockhart over Scott's historical romances, because the biography can provide edifying facts in the way fiction, in its digressions and ironic evasiveness, may not. It was partly his fear of Thomas Stevenson's austere

literalism that inspired his “rebellious and bohemian” ways when he studied law at University of Edinburgh, and even in adult life, he could not shake off his father’s view that writing fiction was a hedonistic, “highly risky business” (Calder 11). As Calder suggests, Stevenson was haunted by the memories of having “deeply disappointed” his father, who had hoped that he would become a professional (11). Psycho-biographical criticisms are certainly on the right track when they suggest that Stevenson’s fiction undermines judicial conceptions of morality, because a fictional undermining could allow the writer to distance himself from his father’s highhanded Calvinism.

Calvin’s Legacy in *Catriona*

Not surprisingly, Stevenson’s closest friends tended to be people who could bridge facts and art. In the previous chapter, I have discussed Cunningham, who although a grim Calvinist, was yet a fervent storyteller. There was also Flemming Jenkin who, as a professor of engineering and “a lover of theatre and poetry,” gave Stevenson a chance to escape from his father and to seek approval from a surrogate father (Cookson 119). However, in Stevenson’s fiction, especially in *Catriona*, it is much less evident that Stevenson escapes naively or rebelliously from a legalistic Calvinism that professionals such as Prestongrange and Simon Fraser symbolize. On the surface, Stevenson’s portrayal of these professionals seems to point towards a straightforward indictment of patriarchy. Prestongrange exploits Catriona Macgregor’s filial piety to engineer her father’s escape from prison to facilitate the capturing of Alan Breck. He also bluntly tells David that “[p]atriotism is not always moral in the formal sense,” indirectly affirming the contingency of truth that is signaled by Lovat’s switching of political allegiances (39).

However, it is also fairly clear that Stevenson's writing is critical of David's inability to understand, from Prestongrange's perspective specifically, the judicial and social processes that do not give James Stewart a fair trial. The explanations that Prestongrange give him about the Campbell "barbarians on the right side" and Stewart "barbarians on the wrong" may well present a crude picture of arbitrarily-imposed distinctions (39). However, David's earnest defense of the "poor soul" of James "in the immediate and unjust danger of a shameful death" is evidently ahistorical (40). Furthermore, Prestongrange seems equally earnest as he reminds David that they are both bound by their duty as lowlanders to maintain the "Protestant religion and the whole frame of our civil institutions" (*Catriona* 38). Thus, even though the predetermined execution of an innocent Stewart is cruel, it is also true that David has initially failed to challenge Prestongrange's politics from a more constructive position within the judicial arena. In a sense, because we are already familiar – having read *Kidnapped* – with David's interactions with James, it should not be too surprising if the sequel invites the reader to appreciate the judicial determinism that Prestongrange tries to explain to David in historical terms. It is too simple to argue that the text endorses David's moral idealism and repudiates Prestongrange's political pragmatism.

Once again, it is possible to better appreciate Stevenson's handling of determinism by tracing it to Calvin. David's moral idealism is shown to jar against Prestongrange's *realpolitik*, and it would also jar against Calvin's conception of civil society. According to William J. Bouwsma, there is much in Calvinism that resembles Machiavellianism, insofar as Calvin was highly critical of "idealistic philosophical discourse about politics" that is unrealistic about fallen human nature (Bouwsma 205). For Calvin, human passions

are basically animalistic, and must be restrained by a paternalistic model of politics, specifically by a fatherhood that “was not a private and biological phenomenon” (211). This ‘fathering’ model to which Calvin was deeply attached “embodied an authority that was religious and political as well as familial” (211). The surrogate authority belonged to a

well-regulated commonwealth [where] various orders of judges and senators, soldiers, captains, artisans and doctors [i.e. ministers] aid each other by their mutual relationships and join together to promote the general welfare of the people. (as quoted in Bouwsma 210)

According to Bouwsma’s evaluation, such a model administers justice not simply to punish the wicked, but to protect “the weak and helpless (especially widows, orphans, and strangers)” (210).

David is, of course, a disheveled orphan when he arrives at the office of Rankeillor, who then gives him his son’s clothes. Prestongrange also fathers David by subtly cornering him into playing the role of a stubborn son under moral instruction:

‘Tut! Tut! young gentleman’, says he ‘ be not so pragmatical and suffer a man who might be your father (if I was nothing more) to employ his own imperfect language and express his own poor thoughts even when they have the misfortune not to coincide with Mr Balfour’s’. (*Catriona* 37)

The peculiarity of *Catriona*, then, is that even though the Whig government does indeed violate James Stewart’s innocence, social critique becomes very much secondary. The reader’s attention is directed to David’s adoption and social adaptation to Edinburgh’s judiciary. To borrow Stevenson’s words in his essay “A Humble Remonstrance,” the law

works like “[g]eometry,” which “tell[s] us of a circle, a thing never seen in nature; asked about a green circle or an iron circle, it [geometry] lays it hand upon its mouth. (“A Humble Remonstrance” (217). From Prestongrange’s professional perspective, David is asking for green and iron circles, and the most effective means to secure David’s silence is to have him kidnapped and sent to Bass Rock. Because the welfare of the people must be protected, little can be said or done to effect James’s acquittal (even though part of Stevenson’s critique, of course, is that James himself does little to assert his innocence to the Whig judiciary). Ironically, we can rely on the Calvinist Prestongrange to convey to us the power of literary narrations, because the patriarch recognizes that David’s ‘Odyssey’ (as narrated in *Kidnapped*) can very well stir the hearts and minds of the country to provoke civil unrest, regardless of David’s sincere and simple desire to defend James’s integrity.

The legalistic Calvinism that Prestongrange embodies is not geographically confined to the city of Edinburgh. In *Kidnapped*, Henderland, the catechist “sent out by the Edinburgh Society for Propagating Christian spirit” to “evangelize the more savage places of the Highlands” might be seen as embodying the interpenetrations of Calvinism and patriarchy during the eighteenth century (113). This paternalistic evangelist, whose political stance David describes as “moderate,” provides lessons on Whig *realpolitik* to David and becomes a version of his Whig mentor in Essendean, the “sweet singer of our covenanted Zion” (116). Such a Calvinist figure also points towards Stevenson’s inheritance of a politicized humanitarianism that flourished in Scotland during the eighteenth-century, when there was “an increase of poverty and misery” partly because of the Industrial Revolution, and writers such as Rev. Thomas Chalmers published studies in

political economy, urging parish agencies to give “the moral energy that would enable the poor to rise out of their poverty” (McNeill 422). Even though Henderland disappears from the landscape of the novel as soon as David tumbles into the highlands, David reenters the political economy at the end of *Kidnapped* and in *Catriona* with the help of other surrogate-fathers like Rankeillor and Prestongrange.

As for Stevenson’s handling of the legalistic Calvinism that Edinburgh symbolizes, I argue that Stevenson’s writing in *Catriona* humanizes the professionals who ‘father’ those who are orphaned and are willing to compromise their traditions to adapt to the legislated ways of life in Whig Scotland. The ‘fathering’ provides a crucial connection between past and present in times of political uncertainty and transition. In expressing this hope, Stevenson has also attempted to present a remedy to the problem of self-estrangement that he describes in the essay, “The Foreigner at Home”:

[About the time represented in *Kidnapped* and *Catriona*] the Highlander wore a different costume, spoke a different language, worshipped in another church, held different morals, and obeyed a different social constitution from his fellow-countrymen either of the south or north. Even the English, it is recorded, did not loath the Highlander and the Highland costume as they were loathed by the remainder of the Scots. (as quoted in Eigner 21)

In Stevenson’s Scottish fiction, the problem of cultural reconciliation is complexly figured because there is also the problem of being too entranced in romanticizing the outlawed highlander. David’s relationships with Alan Breck and *Catriona* represent a version of this dilemma, and hence I will discuss them in order to highlight the mediating and resolving functions of the Calvinist judiciary.

Social Determinism and Scotland's Autonomy

Stevenson's critique of judicial and professional fathering is instantiated in fairly self-evident ways in *Catriona*, where David is sequestered on Bass Rock, and consequently fails to arrive at the court-house in Inverary in time to present his eyewitness account of Alan Breck's and James Stewart's innocence. This determinism is more subtly figured in *Kidnapped*, which compels the reader's attention to the picturesque highlands, but in fact inscribes his journey to claim his birthright within a maze of paperwork that symbolizes his status as "David Balfour of Shaws." The estate that formerly grounds David's family tradition no longer forms the only basis of lowland identity. His father was free to flout the rule of primogeniture by sacrificing it to his brother Ebenezer in exchange for the hand of David's mother, but Rankeillor condemns this unsanctioned fraternal arrangement, labeling it an "unjust" "piece of Quixotry" that "brought forth a monstrous family of injustices" (*Kidnapped* 211). Stevenson's writing therefore critiques the judiciary that obscures and proscribes the authority of locally-determined agreements, and the critique also compels us to investigate the rather innocent quality of David's retrospective narration, which portrays his uncle as a stereotypical 'mean stepfather'. As the next chapter will show, Stevenson's writing more evidently weighs the claims of publicly and natively sanctioned primogeniture in *The Master of Ballantrae*. In the Balfour novels, however, Stevenson's depiction of David's privilege – and the ways in which the text critiques and protects the privilege – appears largely sympathetic.

David's increasing familiarity with legally-determined narratives is represented as he moves from his father's "letter" which the Whig minister of Essendean terms as his "inheritance" (4), to the deed that his Uncle Ebenezer signs when his arm is twisted by

the lawyer Rankeillor, and to the British Linen Company's bank, where henceforth, David becomes a participant within a system of "credit" and debt, and wealth is represented through markings in a bank book (*Catriona* 231). Significantly, David cannot legitimately secure his birthright unless the Edinburgh judiciary sanctions it. Thus, even as David is not physically coerced as was Ebenezer into submission into Edinburgh's judicial order, he submits to Rankeillor's advice that he should revise his perception of, and the ways he narrates, his fugitive experience in the highlands. Rankeillor instructs David to tell his story in "a sound Latinity" and to emphasize his tendency to get into "false positions" (*Kidnapped* 208). Thus, part of the process claiming his inheritance involves learning to appreciate the professional shibboleth that can present his highland experience as incidental to his apparently predestined path towards acquiring financial stability in the city. Rankeillor wants David to begin his story with the end in mind, and the memoirist has accordingly produced such an account when he depicts, for instance, his enjoyment of Robin Oig's bagpipe performance in the chapter, "In Balquhider," which ends abruptly with the sense of determinism that the student of law brings to the episode: "It was the last I saw of him, for I was in the Low Countries at the University of Leyden, when he stood trial, and was hanged . . . [I]t's in a manner history" (189). From a professional perspective that David eventually acquires, one's private past is not as important as the present social realities in Whig Scotland.

The sense of professional determinism that periodically intrudes upon David's memories of his highland experience, certainly anticipates his adaptation within a Whig state as he betters his "acquaintance with the bench, the bar, and the flower of Edinburgh company" (*Catriona* 188). *Catriona* – though more drastically – likewise 'adapts' by, in

fact, sacrificing her tradition, not least by deciding not to join her father, James More, in exile. The determinism here represents at least a version of Edward Said's "imprisoned nation" in his essay "Themes of Resistance Culture" (Said 215). The marriage between a Presbyterian lowlander and a highlander who renounces her Jacobitism and Roman Catholicism represents a "metropolitan" world of bourgeois domesticity and professionalism, where "assertions of ethnic particularity [are] not enough, just as solidarity with criticism [is] not enough" (219). A significant part of David's narration thus endorses the accommodation and compromise that are entailed in the process of being a Whig citizen, and the microcosmic world of his marriage with Catriona also reflects the larger nation that maintains its autonomy in face of its historically uneasy relations with England and France. In this regard, the Balfour novels secularize the "hand of Providence" that David mentions at the end of *Kidnapped*, specifically by associating colonialism with the hope for autonomy and self-fulfillment (228).

Here, the echoes of Scott's *Waverley* are more than incidental. Both David and Edward Waverley are given opportunities to understand their political destinies by way of journeying through circuitous routes as pioneered by their fathers: David's father has relinquished his birthright to his brother Ebenezer and the son must now legally reclaim it within Whig Edinburgh, and Waverley is given a commission in the Hanoverian army because of his Whig father's professional ties with the Hanoverian government in London. Like David, Waverley is drawn to highland Jacobites no less because of his mixed parentage, and it is possible that their hybrid English identities cause them to admire those whose lives seem to them clear and uncomplicated. Like David, Waverley turns his back on outlawry and retreats into the domestic space of conventional marriage

within a Whig paradise that is reconciled to the “well-ordered island of Great Britain” (*Waverley* 110). Terry Eagleton’s comments on Scott’s authorial mission are thus to some extent applicable to Stevenson:

His genius, from the viewpoint of modern British nationalism, is to recognize that local cultures must as far as possible be preserved within a greater whole. The nation is a harmony of differences, not an homogenous entity. The United Kingdom itself is a medley of nations peaceably co-existing. Like a work of art – indeed, like a novel, the nation is polyphonic, internally differentiated, a chorus of many voices orchestrated into one. (101)

In Stevenson’s Balfour novels, however, there is a greater sense that there is a price to pay for embarking on journeys with predetermined beginnings and ends plotted by Whig fathers or Whig patriarchs. Even though a part of Stevenson’s writing uses the professional voices (including David’s retroactive narration) of Whig Scotland to harmonize them, the orchestration does not distract the reader from being aware of the potentially forced manner in which Catriona’s highland lineage is co-opted onto David’s self-representation, not least to facilitate his acculturation in Edinburgh. Catriona is not as resolute as David to renounce her past, and she is not so willing to be fathered by a Whig parent or husband, at least not initially. One’s submission to the law entails a degree of self-effacement, and a rather glaring example of this can be found when David seems to lie to Catriona by declaring that his past until meeting her is a “plain tale” (208). In Catriona’s case, adaptation involves more than just effacement, but a degrading surrendering of the roots of her identity: her ancestral identity as “a daughter of Alpin,” her Jacobite dignity, and her French-sponsored Roman Catholicism (*Catriona* 298). That

David equivocates to win the trust of an infantilized “doll” further reflects Stevenson’s intention to act out the possible degradation involved in social engineering (211). In spite of David’s claim that he is “forgetting” Alan Breck, the willed amnesia does not conceal the possibility that, for him, Catriona represents a more adaptable version of the Jacobite renegade in *Kidnapped*, to be resolved into conventional marriage (208). In particular, this problematic implication that Catriona’s Jacobite outlawry is willed by David’s patriarchal self-representation surfaces not only when it becomes necessary that she possess two wardrobes, but also in their penniless journey from Rotterdam to Leyden which repeats his flight through the heather with Alan Breck. The telling in *Catriona* is also a diluted retelling of the exhilarating experience in the highlands (208). Critics including Leslie Fiedler and Edwin M. Eigner have remarked that the relationship between Alan Breck and David is “almost a full-fledged love affair, a presexual romance” (Eigner 97). More recently, Oliver S. Buckton draws attention to the homosocial aspect in *Kidnapped* that “carefully circumnavigates . . . love between men” by representing (138), for instance, a female innkeeper whose sustenance and help for David and his “most tender comrade” provide an occasion for them to address their need for each other (*Kidnapped* 195). Such a reading applies to Stevenson’s handling of marriage in the sequel. And hence, from a homosocial view, Catriona is politically acquiescent enough for David (as a world-wearied lawyer-to-be) to let himself “flow out to her in a happy weakness” within a realm of professionals who work dutifully “as soldiers on a march,” and yet free-spirited enough for him to exercise and purge a need to flirt with Jacobite outlawry within the domestic realm (*Catriona* 59). But surely, David’s equivocation cannot fully conceal the troubling implications of a social adaptation that

requires Catriona Macgregor to perform the role of a trophy wife within a Whig political theatre. Critics have to be careful when they read too closely the homoerotic implications in David's narratives without recognizing Stevenson's critique of professional performances that imprison femininity. As Caroline Mccracken-Flesher discerns,

Catriona fascinates until she becomes dependent on David, when she quickly resolves into a site of Victorian desires. But the change is not in her; it is in her relationships. Newly cast as brother and *in loco parentis*, David reduces her to "the frail sex and not so much beyond a child." Seen in this way, the character of Catriona is a delusion that David, and some of Stevenson's contemporary readers, wished upon her. (xiv)

Despite the problematic consequences of social adaptation that the text suggestively reveals, the novel reflects an authorial desire to critique the Whig judiciary from within and outside its empowering and disempowering structures. We are invited to balance the view of an 'imprisoning' Edinburgh with an appreciation of David's representation of a model society. This adroit balancing that David hopes to achieve in his patriarchal narration occurs in its subtle revealing of the debasing effects of adaptation, which are in turn ironically elided. For example, David acknowledges that Catriona's "free will" may have been severely compromised, specifically when he remembers confronting Catriona and revealing to her James More's attempt to force him to marry his daughter: "I will no more have a husband forced on that young lady than what I would have a wife forced upon myself" (273). The humiliations of coerced marriage, even rape, are also partially (and problematically) resolved and naturalized when David recalls Catriona's account of the forcible abduction of Jean Key and the trials of the Macgregor brothers. Instead of

restating the historical fact that Jean Key was abducted, Catriona argues that she was indecisive: “She would and she wouldn’t; she was for marrying Rob the one minute, and the next she would be for none of him” (207-208). For Catriona, all Jean Key had needed to do was to “tell her ay or no” (208). This is certainly a brash simplification, but nonetheless Stevenson (through David) modulates Catriona’s voice into a casual syntax and rhythm, thereby evoking a disarming simplicity that can dissemble her sophistication and intelligence. Such a narrative performance on David’s part seems to grant Catriona a certain degree of agency and autonomy, and in this regard, she is not merely a “delusion” that her husband “wished upon her” even as she seems imprisoned by her decision to become a Whig lowlander (Mccracken-Flesher xiv).

Another instance that points ironically towards the containment and assimilation of the outlaw can be found when Catriona, in disguise, breaks into Edinburgh Castle prison to take her father’s place in prison. This demonstration of high clanship loyalty is also willed by Prestongrange, who needs James More to escape in order to facilitate Alan Breck’s capture. Although there is certainly a sense that Catriona has become a pawn within a Machiavellian world and a potentially subversive force to be contained within the Whig state, her recklessness eventually endears the law-abiding public to her and secures her status as a prospective citizen: “all men were well enough pleased that her fault should be passed by in silence” (*Catriona* 185). The social freedom that Catriona attains is made to index a judicial equivalent of grace; and accordingly, she is fathered by Prestongrange, who depicts her “first intromission in politics” in a jovially paternalistic manner: “I drank Catriona’s health this night in public. Indeed the whole town admires her; and I think the beaux would wear bits of her garters in their button-holes if they

could only get them” (173). Here, Stevenson’s writing is particularly strained in its attempt to dissociate male homosocial representations of *Catriona* from a subtext that is demeaning to *Catriona*.⁹ This authorial unease co-exists, in ways that are not wholly resolved, with David’s commitment to defining a notion of Whig citizenry in his professional narration.

To some extent, Stevenson’s critique of the interpenetrations of social adaptability and judicial fathering in *Cariona* makes the novel a sequel to *The Master of Ballantrae* rather than *Kidnapped*. In *The Master of Ballantrae*, we are led into a wintry, barren landscape instead of the scene of domestic bliss and procreation as depicted at the end of *Catriona*, where it is revealed that David is telling his “long” life-story to Barbara and Alan Balfour, who are enraptured in listening to their father perhaps. *The Master of Ballantrae* demonstrates the disastrous consequences of rejecting, or of not being able to adapt to, the Whig standards that Edinburgh symbolizes. Therefore, it would be reductive to argue that *Catriona* reveals “the pitiful banality of the commonplace” without giving due attention to David’s attempt to manage his relationship with the dominant social order to provide new orientations to experience and history (Saposnik 116).

⁹ *Catriona*’s freedom to become a social exemplar in her marriage with David can be contrasted with Edward Hyde’s attempt to break into Henry Jekyll’s homosocial world to fall heir to the doctor’s inheritance. Hyde may prove himself to have mastered the codes of gentlemanly behavior by breakfasting with Enfield and drinking tea with Jekyll by the cozy fireside, but Utterson would domesticate and finally ‘rape’ and banish the outlaw by forcing open the red baize door of Jekyll’s surgical theatre that screeched “as of mere animal terror” (*Jekyll and Hyde* 48). One’s outlawed tradition is adaptable and therefore welcomed; the other’s pretense of adaptability is wisely disparaged and becomes a powerful cautionary tale within a professional arena.

I have argued that Stevenson's writing, in particular *Catriona*, depicts a sympathetic appraisal of a professional Calvinism that propounds moderating love and hatred, life and tradition, to fit the law. I have examined the price to pay when one is committed to this system, and the ways in which David's narrative in *Catriona* subtly reveals the potentially violent (and violating) consequences of renouncing the past insofar as censorship plays a critical role within a system of social adaptation and cultural reconciliation.

I would like now to return to the Cunningham-like Covenanting narrator discussed in Chapter 1, whose voice can embody remnants of the past even as the narrator is committed to meeting existing professional (i.e. Whig) expectations. My discussion of Mackellar in *The Master of Ballantrae* in the next chapter should illustrate such a voice that vacillates between storytelling and professional registers. On the one hand, the novel is consistent with the Balfour works insofar as the potential undesirable consequences of social adaptation are revealed. I have discussed the effectively regulated homosocial impulses in David's narrative, but we are also reminded of Henderland's excessive snuff consumption and Utterson's gin addiction ("to mortify a taste for vintages") (*Jekyll and Hyde* 7). On the other, the more dominant interest that I see in Stevenson's Scottish novels is the writer's strategy of preserving tradition by inhabiting the perspective of moralistic narrators who are unwitting storytellers. Unlike the legalistic Calvinist, Prestongrange, Mackellar can be viewed as a storyteller, even as he is unaware that his narratives can be read as good literature.

Chapter 3

The Covenanting Narrator of *The Master of Ballantrae*

If Stevenson critiques and finally idealizes the Edinburgh judiciary in *Catriona*, the relationship and tensions between acculturation and judicial determinism are pessimistically handled in *The Master of Ballantrae*. In this novel's portrayal of a landed family living on the Solway Firth, we are presented with the lowlanders, James and Henry Durrisdere, whose lives seem overdetermined by vestiges of clan tradition in Scotland. They are not as socially adaptable as David Balfour, who submits his birthright to the symbolic functions of legalistic Calvinism. They are also not as submissive or disempowered as *Catriona* Macgregor, who renounces her outlawed kinship with her own father, to be 'fathered' by David in Whig marriage. As I will explain, however, it could be that James and Henry may not wish to adapt, and that their ancestral ties to their family's estate give them a freedom to reject judicial interventions from the city. Nevertheless, Stevenson's writing critiques the functions of Whig determinism by portraying the land steward of Ballantrae, Mackellar, who acts as a surrogate-father to James and Henry in addition to managing their estate on their behalf.

In this chapter, I will show that Mackellar, like Prestongrange, is himself determined by a complex of social functions that make him a legalistic mediator and surrogate father. However, I add that Mackellar's parenting is more admirable insofar as he exceeds his duty in order to father Henry and James in spite of difficult circumstances. Again, as in *Kidnapped* and *Catriona*, *The Master of Ballantrae* shows the potential self-destructive consequences of over-committing to social adaptation. Mackellar's sea journey to New York demonstrates that his existence is too rigidly defined by his professionalism. In

spite of Mackellar's efforts to father Henry and James, both fall victim to outlawry. But even though the brothers finally abdicate their professional responsibility to manage their estate, and even though Mackellar fails to protect the brothers from the self-destructive determinism of clan tradition, the steward has unwittingly preserved remnants of tradition in his writing regardless of the historical circumstances that threaten to erase them.

Mackellar's Whig Professionalism and His Surrogate-Fathering

At the core of the novel is the intense fraternal hatred, tinged with love, that James and Henry Durrisdeer harbor against each other. Their relationship seems partly determined by the "broken remnants" of clanship traditions that, for instance, David Balfour witnesses in Balquhiddy, where "chiefless folks" have become victims of internecine warfare (*Kidnapped* 183). Mackellar hence faces tremendous difficulties in his task to restore some state of normality within the Durrisdeer household, particularly at a time of political turmoil and Jacobite unrest, when opposing political claims loom over the household and estate that he has been hired to manage on the behalf of failed lairds – the frail Lord Durrisdeer, and later, the anxiety-ridden Henry Durrisdeer, who lacks conviction in his status as a master of Ballantrae. Even though Mackellar fails to prevent the brothers from eventually ruining each other, he manages to preserve the family's honor within an equivocal, almost novelistic, language that fluctuates between the registers of storytelling and patriarchal judgment:

Was the man [James] moved by particular sentiment against Mr Henry? or by what he thought to be his interest? or by a mere delight in cruelty such as cats display and theologians tell us of the devil? or by what he would have called

love? My common opinion halts among the three first; perhaps there lay at the spring of his behavior an element of all. (*Master* 77)

Such a preoccupation with trying to reconcile understanding and judgment accounts for why the final text of the epitaph is situated at the end of the memoir, not earlier.

The narrator seems to predestine the lives of James, the “savage hunter,” and Henry, his “fraternal enemy” (*Master* 219) by using biblical archetypes – the “hairy” and “hunting” Esau and his brother, Jacob, who “supplanted” his elder brother and “took away [his] birthright” (Genesis 27:23, 36). This sense of highhanded judgment evoked in the final text has, of course, been anticipated throughout Mackellar’s narrative, “[s]o that the plot, by its own scope and progress, furthered and confirmed itself” (79). However, it is important to note that even though the Presbyterian steward does not see himself as a novelist, Stevenson’s writing compels us at some level to read the writing as a more affective version of moral instruction (even as the reader may have reservations about the cryptic evasions in Mackellar’s linguistic constructions). As I have suggested in Chapter 1, Mackellar’s narratives can be read in the light of Scotland’s Covenanting tradition: the moral historian distrusts art and simply documents existing realities, even though art can unexpectedly emerge when the narration quickens with a kind of passionate intensity.

Another way of appreciating Mackellar’s authority is by associating it with Stevenson’s nurse, Alison Cunningham, rather than with his grimly Calvinist father, Thomas Stevenson. As I have noted in Chapter 1, Cunningham’s social role occupies a unique position in Stevenson’s upbringing insofar she is both a mother and an outsider in the Stevenson household. Mackellar’s position is just as interstitial. On the one hand, his professionalism (like David Balfour’s) and education in Edinburgh College suggest that

he can comfortably represent the Whig standards that are legislated by the city's judiciary. And hence, he has the ability to "ride to Edinburgh, and there raise a new loan on very questionable terms to keep the old [loan] afloat" (64). On the other, there is a humane flexibility in the way he fathers, even mothers, the Durrisdeer family in Cunningham's manner. The sense of judicial determinism in his writing thus does not conceal his own struggles as a guardian to maintain Henry's status as the official heir, in particular by relentlessly making accommodations and personal sacrifices as he honored the contract that was established by the brothers' coin toss in the year 1745. Apart from offering James five hundred pounds from his own savings, Mackellar exceeds his duty to the Durrisdeer family by sailing across the stormy Atlantic Ocean and trekking through the wintry Adirondack wilderness. His willingness to incorporate an extract from Colonel Burke's memoirs into his memoir reflects his admiration of James's bravery in the way he single-handedly subdues a group of feckless pirates. As well, Mackellar commemorates James's death by accentuating the pathos in his shameful defeat as he strays away from the Jacobite cause, and is forced to "toil" among the "barbarous" wilderness en route to French Canada to seek amnesty (55). It almost seems as if Mackellar, as a writer, cannot but express his paternalistic sentiments, even as his basic moral duty is to document the facts within the memoranda that are "designed for edification" (32).

Of course, Stevenson's writing is also at pains to establish a narrative voice and perspective that belongs to the Durrisdeer family and as such distinct from Mackellar's biblical typologies and retrospectively determined narration. For instance, during the three weeks of Mackellar's absence when he leaves for Edinburgh to request a loan on

the family's behalf, Alison Graeme is given the chance to become a better wife and mother, and she does become "greatly wrapped up in Miss Katherine" (64). Alison's maternity is eventually determined, however, because Mackellar contrasts the change "in her demeanour" against Henry's incompetence and willed depression (64). And yet, in this retroactive analysis, Mackellar's writing is not prejudiced much in her favor. A similar critique surfaces to subvert Mackellar's narrative control when Henry takes Alexander to the shrubbery, where he and James once fought in a moonlit duel. Mackellar briefly recognizes that this is an idyllic moment of intimacy between father and son, as the language depicts: "It was at that time of year when the woods are all in their spring colours, and thorns all in flower, and the birds in the high season of their singing" (122). And yet, he proceeds to warn him that a "wise father" would not spoil his son (126). Similarly, Mackellar protests too much when James returns to his family, and dotes on his nephew, as he doted on his niece during his previous return. As Mackellar acknowledges, the uncle is "full of matter the most pleasing in the world" for Alexander's "youthful ear," such as "battles, sea-disasters, flights, the forests of the West, and (since his latest voyage) the ancient cities of the Indies" (143). This moment echoes, perhaps, the writer's memories of his father, who took young Stevenson "into the world of pirates and highwaymen that he always loved" by "feign[ing] conversations with guards or coachmen or innkeepers" (as quoted in Norquay 18). And yet, James's fathering (however unreliable and insignificant it really is) is almost lost in Mackellar's biblical abstractions: "there was the Eve in our perishable paradise; and the serpent was already hissing on the trail" (144). It is thus not surprising that the fictionalized editor once intrudes to disrupt the steward's moralistic logorrhea: "Five pages of Mr

Mackellar's MS. are here omitted. I have gathered from their perusal an impression that Mr Mackellar, in his old age, was rather an exacting servant" (125). The steward is an anti-hero of a fable with echoes of Polonius and Job, an amusing mixture of self-righteousness, political astuteness, and benevolent blindness that characterizes the other servant in Stevenson's Scottish work, Kirstie Elliott, who spends "her life in the same service, a helpmeet at first, then a tyrant, and at last a pensioner" (*Weir of Hermiston* 131).

Despite the editorial voice in Stevenson's writing that undermines Mackellar's narrative and parental control, I would still like to argue that the novel ultimately compels us to appreciate Mackellar's parental registers, precisely because the steward is not wholly conscious of his need to make provisions for the family at a more intimately-involved level.

Without reading too much sinister intention into Mackellar's narrative performance (as most critics tend to), however, we can see his social function as being overdetermined by the vestiges of the feudal, class, and religious systems as well as the threats of political rebellion in Scotland.¹⁰ Mackellar exists as a figure of continuity and stability, and we may thus excuse the restrictive cultural identity that history has bestowed on him.

Nonetheless, in terms of Stevenson's critique of social adaptation and judicial determinism, Mackellar's paternalism is not immune to Stevenson's critique of a

¹⁰ For example, Alan Sandison argues that Mackellar's "perception" of the brothers must be "suspect since, as a deeply committed Presbyterian, his particular theology will present him with a dualistic universe salvation will depend upon his recognizing the speciousness of surface appearances and penetrating to the truly significant moral substance which lies beneath" (278). My emphasis, however, is that Mackellar is all the more reliable as a surrogate-father and as a narrator because of his Covenanting Presbyterianism.

legalistic Calvinism. The previous chapter illustrated the ways David Balfour's, and especially Catriona Macgregor's, family traditions are compromised as they accept the terms of Whig social engineering. Mackellar's existence is perhaps even more codified, and Stevenson's writing draws attention to this determinism by portraying his moral crisis during his sea journey to New York. On the ship *Nonesuch* that is tossed about by the stormy sea, he describes James and his own psychological state in terms of indeterminable signs and blurred categories: "sometimes my gorge rose against him as though he was deformed – and sometimes I would draw away as though from something spectral. I had moments when I thought of him as of a man of pasteboard" (156). This Jekyll-like transformation that Mackellar's imagination imposes on James ironically brings about the collapse of the steward's patriarchal assurance as, one moment, the sea's horizon becomes the ceiling and the next, swings down under his feet. Within this "hurricane" (157) of moral confusion that moves Mackellar to a numb speechlessness (163), James is allowed to become the dominant narrator as he tells the story of a count who murders his enemy, a case in which no evidence can prove that there has been criminal intention (163). Mackellar has thus joined the outlaw to attain to an absolute freedom, though the freedom is immediately contained as soon as the ship arrives at New York, where the land steward's "former prejudices will revive" (169). Briefly, however, Mackellar confesses that he had become James's trusted companion. This is the same steward who has thus far relentlessly proscribed the air of adventure and romance that James, as a Jacobite renegade (and later, an English spy) breathes (36).

Mackellar's sea-journey provides one of the most memorable scenes in his memoir, since it humanizes the steward in James's eyes and shows that "the old wife has blood in

his body after all” (165). However, it is also an embarrassing moment, rather more disgraceful than an exposure of Utterson’s addiction to gin would be. The reader cannot but feel that the sober Calvinist has become a victim of textual irony as he falls flat on the ship’s deck with a “childish fixity,” precisely because he does not like us to second-guess him (163). Stevenson questions Mackellar’s high sense of duty in a way that differs from his portrayal of David’s highland journeying with Alan Breck in *Kidnapped*. Like Mackellar, David is kidnapped by a sense of pleasurable freedom in his associations with outlawry. However, even in moments of despair and severe physical exhaustion, as when he and Alan escape into the wood of Lettermore after Colin Campbell is murdered, David does not feel guilty, and he also recognizes that in spite of their friendship, he and Alan are simply different from each other – “your ways are not mine” (*Kidnapped* 124). To be fair to Mackellar, however, his moral crisis in the midst of the Atlantic Ocean is more severe than David’s in the highlands. Whereas the Whig David might be in a somewhat more favorable position to flirt with outlawry on a rugged terrain that is pervasively patrolled by the English army, the Atlantic tempest seems to occur in the blind spot of British colonial and mercantile expansion, the only place where Mackellar can fall victim to outlawry. Nonetheless, despite the lapse in moral judgment, there is perhaps something commendable in the way the seasick steward instantly recovers when he arrives in New York, and proceeds to his lord’s house at “top speed” (170).

Having discussed how Stevenson’s writing subverts Mackellar’s authority in an isolated incident, I would like to return to the reliability of the steward’s surrogate-parenting and professional narration. We should note that the other character who falls victim to outlawry in the novel is, of course, Henry Durrisddeer, and even though Alison

Graeme frequently castigates Mackellar for being meddlesome, it seems fairly clear that Henry is dependent on Mackellar's professionalism to function as the laird. It may even be said that of all the male lowlanders portrayed in Stevenson's Scottish novels, Henry most closely resembles Henry Jekyll, and it is hardly surprising that Stevenson has given them the same first names. Jekyll's 'brother,' Hyde, may not be one of the proscribed highlanders portrayed in *Kidnapped* who inhabit the braes of Balquhidder, although his outlawry is symptomatic of the internecine strife that is a salient feature of the clan tradition in Scotland, in part because he is born of "folklore" and "myth," as Douglas Thorpe discerns (18). Like Jekyll, Henry cannot and will not detach himself ironically from the pains of brotherly betrayal as he adheres rigidly to the rule of primogeniture, which the coin toss of 1745 formally invalidates. He may well agree to represent his family's loyalty to the Whigs, but he does not give himself a chance to dissemble his role as the rightful laird of Ballantrae. He either morbidly "prove[s] himself a man of dry nature, immersed in money-getting" (112), or abdicates responsibility by clinging, "with a passion of a child," to a nostalgia for the past that has never existed for the sake of a future (106). The gold coin that Alison flings into the family shield, shattering the stained glass box that houses it, suggests that Henry's literalism is determined by vestigial clanship traditions as well as by James's inability to exercise financial and moral restraint. Within seven years, he allows James to siphon more than eight thousand pounds from the Durrisdeer, at the expense of his own children, Alexander and Katherine. In this crisis, Mackellar's professional intervention and surrogate-fathering indeed become indispensable, to maintain the estate and the family's tradition and honor on the heir's behalf. Whereas Henry seems to assume that stability is almost impossible to achieve as

he descends into bouts of severe depression, Mackellar is a figure of stability and changelessness, although he recognizes that change is inevitable; and adaptation, difficult. The family does not allow Mackellar to mend the broken crest, but the steward has accomplished as much as he can in his documentary writing.

I am aware that, so far, I have emphasized Mackellar's reliability at the expense of Stevenson's treatment of outlawry in the potentially subversive character – the charismatic James Durrisdeer. Indeed, notions of patriarchy, duty and tradition sit uneasily, not just in *The Master of Ballantrae*, but Stevenson's other Scottish historical novels, and critics have been alert to the "metafictional structures" and "subversive, deconstructive undertow" in Stevenson's writing in general, which undermines the social and class distinctions as maintained by patriarchy (Sandison 5). Even though the scope of this thesis cannot accommodate an extensive study of subversive figurations of outlawry, it is still possible to briefly discuss Stevenson's politically radical suggestions, partly because this will lead to a consideration of Mackellar's handling of the metafictional realities that he may not understand or appreciate because of his moral and administrative responsibilities.

In Stevenson's Scottish writing, specifically, which is much informed by mainstream Calvinist theology, the deconstructive undercurrent tends to manifest itself as the freedom of the unredeemed. Douglas Thorpe has examined such a freedom in relation to *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (as well as James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*) by tracing Hyde's inheritance to "Calvinism" (49). I would like to apply his comments on the "connotative richness" of the Hydean 'other' to Stevenson's Scottish outlaws, including James and Alan Breck. The following

questions that Thorpe raises with regard to the psychology of the Calvinist may be considered:

1) how could a person, not changing in any other respect, suddenly shift from the lot of the damned to the lot of the saved; and (2) would his character change together with his spiritual fate? To the Romantic sensibility of Hogg, both questions could be answered by a doubling of identity. The one marked out for salvation may indeed be the worst of sinners, and paradoxically, the very assurance he feels of his heavenly destination only confirms him in his worldly character as a sinner. (8)

In *The Master of Ballantrae*, such a doubling of identity in the outlaw is articulated when James argues to Mackellar that he is just as justified as Henry to lay claim to the Ballantrae estate: "It is your pretension to be *un homme de parole*; 'tis mine not to accept defeat. Call it vanity, call it virtue, call it greatness of soul – what signifies the expression? But recognize in each of us a common strain: that we both live for an idea" (*Master* 168). Thus, as Douglas Gifford has mentioned, the partnership between Mackellar and Henry is doubled in the alliance between James and Secundra Dass: "One remembers that Mackellar is a 'devil of a steward'; he too dresses in black; and goes on board the *Nonesuch* 'as the devil would have it'" (72).

Indeed, it is possible to concede that James has the right to claim his birthright, not simply because he is a charismatic prodigal son, but because the rule of primogeniture still maintains a strong foothold on the Durrisdeer family. However, even if both James and Henry were to agree to invalidate the reversal of roles that was established by coin toss in 1745, it does not seem likely that they can invalidate Henry's marriage with

Alison, which is a partnership that entails an assumption of the role of the heir on Henry's part. There is thus another kind of determinism here, one that is not necessarily a product of a feudal political realm where internecine strife appears to be a significant force. The marriage of landed individuals entails the marriage of lands. It is within this context that James's expulsion seems necessary, because he can neither husband Alison nor her estate having returned to her after her marriage with Henry. However, it is also true that neither Henry nor Mackellar is willing to allow the marriage to co-exist with a possible reinstatement of the elder son's status as a master of Ballantrae.

For Gifford, who is generally sympathetic to James, Henry's authority needs to be questioned. The critic suggests that Henry deviously plays the role of a victimized and deceiving 'Jacob' to consolidate his status as the rightful master (Gifford 73). I do not agree with such a reading of Henry, however, mainly because I follow Mackellar's observation that Henry, along with his family and the tenants in his estate, are overdetermined by primogeniture. The guilt of brotherly betrayal that Henry feels is obviously overwhelming, and hence even if he does play the role of the devious brother, he does so to shut down his own consciousness, to mindlessly become the Jacob that his community expects him to be. Such an essentializing determinism makes exile necessary, and hence Mackellar supports the family's decision to migrate to New York, and encourages Henry to find himself in his wife's estate in the new world.

In spite of the new possibilities that exile can introduce, the brothers remain faithful to tradition in self-destructive ways. They reject Mackellar's paternalistic mediation at a critical juncture in their lives, where some degree of financial sacrifice and accommodation can allow them to pursue their individual destinies. They may well have

arrived in the Thirteen Colonies, but they remain essentially in the Scottish lowlands. By inhabiting Mackellar's documentation of the brothers' lives in the new and the old, Stevenson's writing also archives and revives the broken pieces of clan tradition that the steward buries underground as part of his professional duty to protect Alison's estate and the next generation of Durriseeders.

So far in this thesis, I have examined Stevenson's representation of the complex relationship between professional duty and the accommodation of local traditions in Calvinist-Presbyterian Scotland. I argued that *Catriona* affirms a legalistic Calvinism that is suspicious of stories that can disrupt the Whig national autonomy and stability, and that *The Master of Ballantrae* subtly figures a Presbyterian narrative voice that vacillates uncertainly between professional judgment and parental speech habits. Juxtaposing the two novels in this way, it may seem, at a surface reading, that the writer subversively demonstrates the failure of equivocal narrations in *The Master of Ballantrae*, and proceeds to create a model judiciary and Calvinist society in his third major Scottish novel, *Catriona*. Specifically, if we compare the achievements and surrogate paternity of Prestongrange and Mackellar, it would seem the former is more successful. Whereas David Balfour and *Catriona* Macgregor ultimately submit to the law, Henry and James Durriseeder generally remain recalcitrant.

However, I would like to suggest that Stevenson's portrayal of Mackellar's failure more poignantly evokes the resilience and constancy of his paternity, and even though the text does question his stability and narrative control, it also subjects his professionalism to a strenuous testing, not least by situating his character within a realm of chaotic

circumstances, including divisive loyalties, political contingencies, irrational fraternal impulses, and a turbulent sea journey.

The Master of Ballantrae can be said to be highly representative of Stevenson's Scottish writing, because it presents the writer's preoccupation with recovering fleeting impressions of Scotland's past by imitating a land administrator's Covenanted speech habits. However, as the next chapter will show, Stevenson's writing also imitates the voices of other surrogate authorities, whose narratives are less strained by historical circumstances, though not necessarily less compelling, than Mackellar's.

Chapter 4

Calvinism and Forms of Pastoral Presbyterianism in Stevenson's Scottish Novels

In the previous chapter, I examined Stevenson's interest in dramatizing an irreconcilable gap between tradition and professional parenting. In this chapter, I examine Stevenson's Scottish novels in general to evaluate the writer's different handlings of the complicated associations between tradition and professionalism. The first part examines *Kidnapped* in greater detail than in Chapter 2, where I discussed Stevenson's endorsement of a legalistic Calvinism in the Balfour novels. I argue that in *Kidnapped*, Stevenson's writing ironizes, but ultimately supports, David Balfour's aspiration to bridge outlawed traditions and law by infusing compassion into the judiciary, and by associating outlawry with pastoral imagery. Next, I explain that even though Stevenson's Whig patriarchs may not wholly accept the ease in which David retains aspects of Scotland's oral folk storytelling tradition by associating it with images of an idyllic landscape, this narrative association ironically naturalizes and reveals David's authority within the judicial realm. The last section explains that in *Weir of Hermiston*, Stevenson's writing provocatively dissociates the Covenanting tradition from judicial machinations to engender another model of pastoral Presbyterianism. I argue that, for Stevenson, such an uncomplicated model is unsustainable without a degree of legalistic regulation. I then conclude that because David Balfour embodies a tenable balance between tradition and professionalism, he may be read as a historic role model for Scotland.

In *Kidnapped*, we are presented with an affective gap between a moral determinism, as told from a native perspective, and a judicial determinism, as narrated from a perspective that is aligned with the public (Edinburgh) judicial sphere. The sense of

moral predestination is clearly evoked between David's departure from his hometown in Essendean to the loss of the brig *Covenant* in the Inner Hebrides. We are consistently presented with polarized worlds of good and evil. For instance, David's Whig mentor is clearly good; and his Uncle Ebenezer, bad. David's parish at Essendean is Edenic, as the "sun began to shine upon the summit of the hills," and as "blackbirds were whistling in the garden lilacs" (3). The ruined House of Shaws, on the other hand, is a nightmarish, gothic space of "bats in the top part of the tower" beating upon David's body as he scales the stairs that would lead him to the abyss, if not for the providential illumination of lightning.¹¹ Indeed, the dichotomies evoked in this Calvinist tale of predestined identities confirm the message in Rankeillor's legal counsel. David has the right to claim his birthright from the doomed Ebenezer, who must relinquish his inheritance to his nephew in compliance with the judicially enforced primogeniture. However, despite the obvious parallel between David's moral right and Rankeillor's official authentication of it, the reader cannot but feel that the two determinisms are not harmoniously integrated in David, whose entry into the city of "continually vomited passengers" feels anti-climactic in contrast to his journeying from the idyllic parish to the picturesque, rugged highlands (227).

In spite of an underlying dissonance, however, as a narrator David seems determined to harmonize his native and public selves in a narrative voice that vacillates ironically between pastoral and political registers. The narrative is retrospective in its determinism,

¹¹ The moral tale here should be distinguished from the plot structure in John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Unlike Christian who must conquer the trials and tribulations that obstruct his way to the Celestial City, where he can finally gain his honorable name, David is, to borrow Rankeillor remarks, "beyond a doubt" the heir to his estate as "David Balfour of Shaws" (*Kidnapped* 211).

not least in the way he retells his highland experiences to maintain his privileged status within the dominant social order. In particular, the maintenance involves exposing the privilege to a degree of adventure and danger in a harmless, almost playful manner. He concedes that socio-political distinctions are pervasively maintained in the highlands, and that there is no escaping from the official force of history even when the Roman Catholic Alan Breck befriends his (David's) younger self on the ship *Covenant*, a symbol of the autonomous and true Church of Presbyterian Scotland. Like the other lowlanders on the ship, David is always already a Whig, a Presbyterian, and on the side of King George and House of Hanover; conversely, Alan Breck is a "condemned rebel, and a deserter, and a man of the French King" (81). Alan Breck may well have hijacked a national symbol, and David may well have defended Alan Breck against his own fellow lowlanders, to the extent of gunning them down with pistols, but the bloodbath in the roundhouse does not entirely exorcise the existing political distinctions that proscribe the highlands. Thus, even though bullets are discharged, David remembers that his will was not wholly involved: "I gave a shriek and shot him in the midst of the body" (70). And yet, one of the provocative ways in which the narrator elides the historically determined distinctions is that he alludes to biblical archetypes to enrich his narrative voice with a sense of pre-history and originality. Alan Breck's silver button for David becomes an ironic reminder of God's Covenant, his promise to the Israelites that He would relinquish His freedom to act on them. It almost seems as if David was free, once upon a time, to be a French-sponsored Jacobite. Furthermore, there is a resonant reference to the flood and God's rainbow for Noah. Thus, David remembers being "judged by the wailing of a great number of gulls that went crying and fishing round the ship" in the Inner Hebrides (72).

The narrator hopes to establish a new beginning by returning to the absolute original, even as he is well aware of the forces that predate his existence.

The rich allusions to God's covenant seem to give the narrator the poetic license to portray the outlawed highlands as an unthreatening, even protective, space. The reader is invited to take a leap of faith as David leaps across 'the roaring of the falls' with brandy "singing in [his] ears" (*Kidnapped* 140). Instead of encountering highland savages, we read about the people in the countryside who take care of David as fathers, brothers, and mothers. In spite of reservations about respecting the way of life of proscribed highlanders, David's narrative consistently obscures the political line that divides lowlanders and highlanders. Mr. Campbell sets David on "the right guard against the dangers of the world" by giving him a little bible, a shilling piece, and a medical recipe (5). These gifts carry no inherent or specific moral meaning for David, and yet they are as familial and providential as Jennet Clouston's prophesy (when she calls down doom on Ebenezer), Cluny Macpherson's generous return of David's money, Robin Oig's enchanting bagpipe performance, and the bonny lass's offer of bread and cheese. Alan Breck, too, protects David. The two hide for days in a cave at Corrynakiegh, where they find pleasure in making fires, cooking porridge, and hunting and grilling trout. If the reader from time to time forgets, along with the younger David, that Alan Breck is a persecuted outlaw and a Roman Catholic, the forgetting seems providentially determined within a sanctuary. Here, as the dedication to Charles Baxter depicts, Alan Breck is a guardian who packs a child "to bed with some engaging images to mingle with his dreams" ('Dedication' in *Kidnapped*), by way of telling stories that are "neat, finite, self-contained" ("The Humble Remonstrance" 217).

Once again, it should be noted that, as a lowland professional, David is acutely aware that he is on the side of official history, regardless of how equivocal or personalizing his storytelling is. The episodic, almost casual way in which he narrates history also reveals the stability of his social position as a Whig citizen and landed professional. He is even free and powerful enough to infuse a sense of fictional aura into historical facts: the murder of a King's factor, the enforced separation of family members in the highlands, the tenants who pay two rents, the execution of Jacobite renegades. That Alan Breck is a seductive bundle of contradictions makes it less easy, perhaps, for David to fictionalize, because the social fact of the Jacobite's criminality cannot be equivocated as far as Whig lawyers and citizens are concerned. We are told that Alan Breck is exiled from England, from the Stuart clan, as well as from France, where he would tarry long enough before returning to "the heather and the deer" that he misses in the highlands (81). However, one of the remarkable ways in which David's narrative further demonstrates the security of his professional status is that he is able to portray Alan Breck as an unthreatening character. This is achieved as the narrator works closely with the Calvinist notion of mankind's inherent depravity. In Chapter 2, I have discussed Calvin's distrust of fallen human nature and his belief that human passions are animalistic and must be regulated by the Church and the State. In the following passage that describes David's flight through the heather with Alan Breck, for instance, narrator ironically concedes that the outlaw can become bestial:

[H]e began to run forward on his hands and knees with an incredible quickness, as though it were his natural way of going. All the time, too, he kept winding in and out of the lower parts of the moorland where we were best concealed . . . Nothing

but the fear of Alan lent me enough of a false kind of courage to continue. As for himself (and you are to bear in mind that he was cumbered with a great-coat) he had first turned crimson, but as time went on the redness began to be mingled with patches of white; his breath cried and whistled as it came; and his voice, when he whispered his observations in my ear during our halts, sounded like nothing human. (158-159)

Like a chameleon, Alan Breck's physiology fluctuates to adapt to the external environment, and he does not "[wind] in and out in the lower parts of the moorland" as much as the landscape moves and conceals him (158). He is subhuman as much as superhuman. And yet, it is also clear that he is not a dangerous or evil person, but a striking individual who is passionately-involved with the hostile terrain. The enthralled narrator seems momentarily distracted by 'a false kind of courage' to look at the proscribed highlands through Alan Breck's eyes, which have "a kind of dancing madness" in them (58). We are reminded of the brooding Calvinist, Alison Cunningham, whose nursing and moralizing could fall fleetingly into a seductive, undulating rhythm. However, it is also true that David has inherited a better class position, and it is a position that gives him the freedom to display a broader sympathy towards criminals.

Apart from reflecting and refracting the notion of inherent depravity, the narrator also twists Calvinist conceptions of chance and providence to show that he is comfortable with possessing potentially dangerously conflicting identities. As stated in *Calvin's Institutes*, providence must not be confused with chance:

Suppose a man falls among thieves, or wild beasts; is shipwrecked at sea by a sudden gale; is killed by a falling house or tree. Suppose another man wandering

through the desert finds help in the straits; having been tossed by the waves, reaches harbor; miraculously escapes death by a finger's breadth. Carnal reason ascribes all such happenings, whether prosperous or adverse, to fortune. (I.xvi.2)

Rather coincidentally, David has experienced almost all of the aforementioned accidents, and the reader may even be tempted to appropriate his highland wanderings and innumerable brushes with death in order to characterize Stevenson's subversion of Calvinist doctrine. It does seem as though David has been lucky, too lucky perhaps, all along. Chance apparently saves him at the top of the stairs in the House of Shaws, delivers him from Mull when he could have died of thirst or starvation, and catches hold of him on the slippery highland rocks. But the narrator is aware that chance could have damned his younger self too, leading him anywhere but to self-determination in Scotland. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, there are highlanders who are willing to take care of David, and the narrator has evoked their disparate voices to characterize the drifting hand of providence. Perhaps, chance and providence play complementary parts in determining David's existence. After all, David never strays too dangerously far away from Scotland, and he never chooses to become a Jacobite. The *Covenant* sinks in the Inner Hebrides even though it was meant to make a transatlantic journey. If chance is a pervasive force in *Kidnapped*, its power is confined to the coastal waters and countryside around Edinburgh, and hence the storyteller evokes a sense of wondrous particularity by which providence works. David seems to be arguing that it will not hurt too much to flirt with dicey experiences, although this narrative flirtation co-exists ironically with the claim that the narrator has outgrown the need for highland adventures.

Beyond Stevenson's representation of a Whig patriarch's ability to retroactively distance himself from his immature years, there is also a sense that the writer invites the reader to respect, even admire, David's eloquently ironic confessions. David is not as brave as James Durrisdeer, who tosses a coin to determine his next step in the American wilderness, and is eventually ravaged by chance. However, David's bravery is different. Unlike the legal Calvinists in Edinburgh who worry that Scotland can slip easily into civil war, David hopes to pull together politically opposing personalities to form a reasonably integrated whole. His status as "David Balfour of the Shaws" certainly requires authentication from the Whig state, but he does not allow this determinism to discredit his efforts to naturalize his birthright by evoking a sense of the familial and the pastoral in his depiction of his parish, the countryside, and the highlands. After all, a shaw is a thicket, or a strip of "underwood forming the border of a field" (*OED*). David allows himself to narrate his identity within the field, even as he "opts back into ruling order" by becoming a "lawyer and landed proprietor, where his adornment of his estate with 'plantations, parterres, and a terrace' signals his status as an improving landowner" (Reid 164). In a sense, David's dream is to be effectively bilingual as well as to be indifferent, to some extent, to the judicial apparatus that promotes a logocentric system of cultural reconciliation. The law does not necessarily supercede the vernacular tradition. David Balfour remains, or he hopes to remain, as Mr. Campbell's "Davie boy" in Essendean (*Kidnapped* 3).

Even though the Whig professionals in *Catriona* are ill at ease with the comfortable hybridity that David's "epic" represents (*Kidnapped* 207), there is the recognition that such a vernacular bridging that can occur independently from the state may be powerful,

and may also even be co-opted to ensure law and order. *Catriona* exemplifies this socially determined bilingualism in a brief, but memorable, moment that suggests that folklore and temporary banishment can be employed to maintain the status quo. When David is abducted by Prestongrange's hired highlanders on the Gillane Sands and ferried to Bass Rock, he is awe-struck by the "one crag of rock" that is "great enough to carve a city from" (125). David is witness to a version of "Cluny's Cage" that he saw on proscribed Ben Alder, which "half hung, half stood in that steep, hillside thicket, like a wasp's nest in a green hawthorn" (164). At Bass, however, the landscape is less menacing, and it is in fact not an outlawed space, even though it is a prison for suspended lowlanders like David. However, the fact that David is suspended is soon forgotten, as Stevenson's writing leads us into a world of dungeons that had imprisoned Calvinist prisoners of conscience during the late seventeenth-century. The landscape and ruins that are "full of history" and therefore richly symbolize the Covenanting legacy in Scotland (127). And yet, it also becomes clear that the Presbyterian heritage is judicially determined. David's jailor, Andie Tale, may well be gifted "with a natural genius for narration, so that people seemed to speak and the things to be done before your face," but he has been hired not least to distract David from his private agenda to defend James Stewart (*Catriona* 128). The chapter on the rock ends poignantly with the following lines that move David with their simplicity and mature resignation: "But ye see in this world, the way God made it, we cannae just get a' thing that we want" (131). David soon becomes engrossed in listening to the tale of Tod Lapraik, which is delivered in broad Scots. It might be said that David is swept away from the craigs, along with the lass, by

the incantatory force of Peden's prophesying. In the mean time, James is effectively forgotten.

Perhaps, it was this awareness that David's bilingualism can be co-opted onto national ideology that motivated Stevenson to create a different narrative model in *Weir of Hermiston*, where the narrator disassociates the native from the public. At times, the third-person narrator in this final Scottish historical novel closely resembles the narrators in *Kidnapped* and *Catriona*, but it is a more consistently feminized voice that supports, yet subverts, patriarchy. It may be regarded as what Stevenson calls the "dramatic novel" in "The Humble Remonstrance," in which characters become "transfigured and raised out of themselves by passion" (220).

We are presented with an unequivocal, unbearably austere Calvinist patriarch, the hanging judge, whose presence looms over every other character in the book, including the family servant, Kirstie, who "saw, at the end of every passage, the flinty countenance of Hermiston" (*Weir* 188). Within this deterministic "maze of difficulties" that Adam Weir represents, Archie Weir, the son, struggles in vain to find an independent agency through rebellion (188). Nobody in the *Speculative Society* seems to argue in favor of Archie's revulsion against capital punishment, and it is very likely that the hanging judge will stop at nothing to maintain social justice, even if this involves sacrificing his son's life and his own. There are moments of relief, however, even before Archie's expulsion and arrival at his mother's Hermiston estate. Lord Glenalmond and Dr Gregory provide anecdotes to Archie to reveal the vulnerability beneath his father's "adamantine" professional persona (110). Glenalmond's androgynous registers thus imbue an almost bittersweet sense of world-weariness into its portrayal of Adam who "climbs the "bare

staircase of his duty” (101), and the reader is invited to excuse the after-dinner “sculduddery” that Archie finds unbearably coarse (120). Highhandedness and weakness are depicted as paradoxically two sides of a complexly integrated personality. At this point, we are still in the world of the Balfour novels, where the equivocal registers of storytelling ultimately complement official narratives.

However, Stevenson’s writing soon asserts the autonomy of folklore and local traditions. The standard-English narrative often melts into the family chronicle that the older Kirstie presents, in broad Scots, to Archie, as squire of his mother’s Hermiston estate (122). The language is thus unrestrained in its passionate assertions and highhanded generalizations:

For that is the mark of the Scot of all classes: that he stands in an attitude towards the past unthinkable to Englishmen, and remembers and cherishes the memory of his forebears, good or bad; and there burns alive in him a sense of identity with the dead even to the twentieth generation. No more characteristic instance could be found than in the family of Kirstie Elliott. They were all, and Kirstie the first of all, ready and eager to pour forth the particulars of their genealogy, embellished with every detail that memory had handed down or fancy fabricated. (*Weir* 131)

The narrative voice respectfully dramatizes Kirstie Elliott’s speech habits, compelling the reader to disassociate her from the proscription that Adam Weir and Edinburgh represent. She is not the sentimental, effete maid in *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, for example, who faints at the sight of murder for nearly three hours. The “clan spirit” “burns alive” in her as she tells the tale (131), “like one inspired” (134), of the Elliott brothers who had ruthlessly hunted down the “scum of Edinburgh” that murdered their father

(133). The narrator has called her “a moorland Helen,” and her rusticity remains robust even in Adam Weir’s patriarchal presence, where is “comely as a blood horse and healthy as the hill wind” (87). Lord Hermiston would butter her scones.

It is thus hardly surprising that the narrator, who greatly respects Kirstie’s autonomy, is not the proleptic land steward in *The Master of Ballantrae*, who ultimately inscribes the destinies of the Durrisdeer brothers within the reductive space of their tombstone. Both Kirstie Elliott and Mackellar are figures of changelessness, but in the *Weir of Hermiston*, the past, which concerns the Praying Weaver of Balweary and John Graham of Claverhouse, Viscount Dundee, is told and storied in a loose rhythm that undulates over an anonymous tombstone. Social distinctions are still present in the Hermiston estate, because after all Archie is banished to live and work here. However, the narrative voice is passionate, even crude, and almost heedless of the official force of history. Hence, the narrator presents a complex image of a natural world that is at once politicized and uncultivated. We find, at the end of the “road to Hermiston,” an open-ended road, where a landscape gardener would be tasked “to say where policy ended and unpolicied nature began” (126).

Thus, it seems that the narrator is free to willfully romanticize the “hard and cold and pure” landscape, which is as traditional as the “Auld, auld Elliotts, clay-auld Elliotts, dour, bauld Elliotts” of Cauldstaneslap (140). Nature and tradition do not necessarily co-exist as a biologically organic whole like “the inheritance of cells,” because if “I buy ancestors by the gross from the benevolence of Lyon King of Arms, my grandson will feel a quickening emulation of their deeds” (132). In other words, the dynastic tradition is more powerful than nature, and nature can also embody the power of tradition. Even

Archie, in spite of his urbanity, is a descendent of a clan: the “old ‘riding Rutherfords’” of his mother’s line (84). This landscape also has its own Calvinism that should be distinguished from the legalistic Calvinism that *Catriona* endorses. The brothers have all inherited a high sense of filial and fraternal piety from the “deeply pious” Gilbert Elliott, who is a “savage disciplinarian” (132). Even the bourgeois Glasgow businessman, Clement, is united to his three brothers “by a close bond” of a “mutual admiration – or rather mutual hero-worship – which is so strong among the members of secluded families who have much ability and little culture” (141). The narrator is thus willing to fiercely protect “a country gagged and swaddled with civilization,” just as Kirstie Elliott has taken care of the timid and victimized Jean Rutherford, forcing her to sit on Adam Weir’s “own chair by the cheek of the hearth” (94).

And yet, it will soon become clear that the narrator does not entirely accept the unproblematic Presbyterianism that Kirstie embodies. For one, the Elliott brothers are too grounded in an agrarian world, too isolated from Whig Scotland, and this can cause problems for the next generation, just as David Balfour’s father and uncle complicated theirs in their remoteness from the Edinburgh judiciary. For reasons that are not clearly mentioned, the older Kirstie Elliott has antagonized “the whole Cauldstaneslap contingent” who marches past her “with an indescribable air of being in the presence of the foe” (144). There was a quarrel between the older and younger Kirstie, and there are disturbing echoes of the destructive, self-consuming fraternal rivalry portrayed in *The Master of Ballantrae*. The narrator does not always side with the older Kirstie. For example, she (the narrator) also passionately asserts a sense of longevity in the younger Kirstie’s “pretty fashion in which our grandmothers did not hesitate to appear, and our

great-aunts went forth armed for the pursuit and capture of our great-uncles” (151). The language here is sensual, procreative, and wrought to the pitch of art, unlike the ‘Winter’s Tale’ that leads us into the barren Adirondack wilderness in *The Master of Ballantrae*.

In the end, it is not Edinburgh, but the older Kirstie whose storytelling and moral guidance possess the power to banish Archie and Kirstie junior from Eden. The housekeeper is shown to be too compulsive in her need to evoke and maintain the absolute autonomy of the local tradition. Tradition does seem to disappear from the moral landscape of the novel, ironically when Kirstie’s youthful voice singing of the ‘Auld, auld Elliotts’ blends with that of her aunt at the tomb of the ‘Praying Weaver.’ The pasts conflate in the song that has been “sung of by others at the same gloaming hour,” and the musical performance that mesmerizes Archie seems to exorcise the past entirely (166). However, the housekeeper’s native Presbyterianism is shown to be too powerful, even more so than Adam Weir’s patriarchy. The Mephistophelean Frank Innes is there in the novel partly for the reader to measure the degree of damage which the housekeeper has wrought in the relationship between Archie and Kirstie. Thus, a poignantly ironic thrust erupts as we proceed from the penultimate chapter to the last, where Archie is shown to be too entranced in the depth of his servant’s maternal concerns, and too involved with the duties of a squire, and he hurts his lover by speaking as a “grey-faced, harsh schoolmaster” (190).

The final scene in *Weir of Hermiston* shows that when law and folklore confront one another, the English subject cannot escape unscathed, although the figure of the surrogate-parent still hovers over the text to intervene and protect the children. As “the first sob broke from” the undignified Kirstie “like the paroxysm of some mortal

sickness,” the narrator seems to break down the patriarchy that inscribes rural Presbyterianism and broad Scots, in the official discourse, as a secondary language. The reader is drawn deeper into the fervent state that causes Kirstie to tear a page from the psalm-book (147). A freedom is unleashed as social and gender distinctions are elided, although in the midst of this moral confusion, Archie becomes Kirstie’s surrogate-father and mother: “Archie ran to her. He took the poor child in his arms, and she nestled to his breast as to a mother’s, and clasped him in hands that were strong like vices. He felt her whole body shaken by throes of distress, and had pity upon her beyond speech” (194). The final image of their tight embrace, which reverberates disturbingly and bewilderingly with homoerotic and incestuous implications, becomes a fascinating emblem that melds illegality and pre-history, as if what is always already nourishing and naturally occurring in the borderlands must be regulated by a squire because of an imprecise dread surrounding their “brute” union (194). The third-person narrator buries voices within a language that predestines their anachronism and inarticulacy, and Stevenson’s storytelling translates the alienating determinism into a wider mourning that augments the local loss.

Conclusion

According to Sidney Colvin's editorial note, the rest of *Weir of Hermiston* following the "wilful convulsion of brute nature" is to be bleak (*Weir* 194). We will be lead into the world of accidents and missed opportunities. The young Kirstie falls victim to Innes's seduction, Archie kills Frank, and is condemned to death by his own father. Adam Weir cannot reconcile his professional duty with his role as Archie's father, and dies of trauma. Archie and Kirstie will then escape to America, and this part of the novel reenacts the Durrisdeer brothers' migration to the Thirteen Colonies. To us, Colvin's note does not suggest if Archie and Kirstie will avoid the fate of the doomed brothers. However, the note ends suggestively with the words of Stevenson's loyal amanuensis, Mrs Strong, who said that even though she did not know "what becomes of old Kirstie," she felt sure that Stevenson "had some dramatic destiny" for this character, who "grew and strengthened so in the writing" (*Weir* 196). Will the old Kirstie join her niece and Archie in exile, sailing across the Atlantic Ocean like Mackellar? It would be hardly surprising to find her dramatic destiny unfold in this manner in Stevenson's writing.

Once again, then, the voice of Stevenson's nurse, Alison Cunningham, hovers near even as he wrote his last Scottish novel, his last work in fact, in Samoa. Throughout this thesis, I have attended to the nurturing, morally-grounded, but poignantly equivocal voice in Stevenson's Scottish writing. Such a personalized Calvinist voice can also be found in the Balfour novels, especially *Kidnapped*. I have argued that even professionals such as David Balfour desire to imitate and cultivate pastoral Presbyterian registers within their speech habits. David does not want to abandon his private subjectivity as his pastor's 'Davie boy,' just as Stevenson, as an accomplished writer, calls himself Cummy's

“laddie” in his letters to her (Vailima, 8 October, 1894). For Stevenson, writing acquires meaning at the site where the voices of tradition are archived in respectful and intimate ways, even as an older Scotland is fading away because of the encroachment of colonization and forms of secular modernity.

As the historian, John T. McNeill tells us, “[i]t is often charged or assumed that Calvinism produces an oppressively austere, dour, or dreary type of personality” (435). He concedes that the generalizing view that “Calvinists are gloomy folk” is often treated in fiction: “Nathaniel Hawthorne, Ian Maclaren, and George Macdonald are among the more familiar writers who treat the problems of somber personality in a Calvinist setting, mingling high respect with critical judgment” (435). However, McNeill also reminds us that there are many Calvinist writers who “possess a high capacity for social fun and cheerful wit. [For example,] C.S. Lewis has felt strongly the influence of George Macdonald, who shed his boyhood Calvinism; but Lewis describes Macdonald’s father, a Scottish Congregationalist minister, as ‘hard, tender and humorous all at once, in the old fashion of Scotch Christianity’” (435).

Robert Louis Stevenson may be added to McNeill’s list of witty, mature Calvinist writers. To be sure, Stevenson’s acrimonious relationship with his father, Thomas Stevenson, repeats a kind of pattern in the personal lives of lapsed Calvinist writers such as Macdonald and even Walter Scott, who struggled against their fathers’ religiosity. And yet, as this thesis has suggested, theological quarrels may have masked oedipal, inter-generational tensions between fathers and sons, and our reading of Stevenson can be enriched if we dissociate theological understanding from potentially petty psychosocial concerns. Stevenson’s Scottish writing, as I have shown, sympathizes with patriarchal

professional performances, and reflects and refracts them through the seductive storytelling registers of a Presbyterian surrogate parent.

The current critical tendency has been to explore the ways Stevenson's writing break free from native contexts and registers. There are perhaps powerful implications when scholars open Stevenson's works, in particular his South Sea writings, to important developments in the field of postcolonial studies. However, I wonder if Stevenson had succeeded in escaping from traditional conceptions of Presbyterian Scotland, or if there was the desire to let go of the past, even as he was cruising in the South Seas.

Stevenson's *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes*, which recounts his twelve-day hiking journey in south-central France, shows that the writer is capable of using foreign landscapes to re-imagine the heather-filled braes and barren rocks in the Scottish highlands. He also imposes his understanding of the tensions between Catholics and Protestants onto the native communities. During a visit to a Trappist monastery, Notre-Dame-des-Neiges, he reflects on the monks who have chosen a life which he finds intolerably restricted and inhuman, and yet he must develop his sense of conscience based on such a determinism; in this paradox the Scots writer "was free to wander, free to hope, and free to love" (65).

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