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The Island in Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Ebb-Tide* and Joseph Conrad's *Victory*, or the adventure of an enclave.

Julie Gay

Geography is obviously the domain to which the concept of the enclave primarily belongs, yet this spatial element is much more than just a setting and proves to be a very interesting tool for literary analysis. Indeed, although one could argue that islands are not technically enclaves, as they are surrounded not by foreign land but by water, they do share most of the latter's characteristics, and the concept of enclave will help analyse the insular adventure novel at the turn of the 19th century, through the detailed study of two specific works: *The Ebb-Tide* by R.L. Stevenson, which was published in 1894, and Joseph Conrad's *Victory, an Island Tale*, published in 1915.

My first aim will be to show how the islands in these two novels can be considered as enclaves, by drawing on Michel Foucault's definition of heterotopias, which I will argue is a way to theorize the enclave. Indeed, he defines this concept in the following words,

> Il y a également [...] des lieux réels, des lieux effectifs, [...] et qui sont des sortes de contre-emplacements, sortes d'utopies effectivement réalisées dans lesquelles les emplacements réels, tous les autres emplacements réels que l'on peut trouver à l'intérieur de la culture sont à la fois représentés, contestés et inversés, des sortes de lieux qui sont hors de tous les lieux, bien que pourtant ils soient effectivement localisables. (Foucault 749)

The terms of this definition are strikingly close to those of both the enclave and the island, as these spaces are characterised by their utter otherness, being separated from the rest of the world, while they are often observed to offer a distorted reflection of the latter. Foucault moreover highlights the fundamental duality also inherent to the enclave and the island when he writes: "Les hétérotopies supposent toujours un système d'ouverture et de fermeture qui, à la fois, les isole et les rend pénétrables" (Foucault 752). While also stressing the fact that they are often the dwelling place of individuals in crisis, and can superimpose several spaces and temporalities. And indeed, in both novels the occupants of the island think of themselves as hermits living in a haven remote from civilisation and society; yet both spaces progressively become contaminated by the outside world with the arrival of intruders that disrupt the fragile equilibrium of their utopic or at least edenic worlds, and the plots are fuelled by the conflicts between these two forces, thus illustrating the fundamental duality of the enclave as equally enclosed and porous. I shall argue that this duality and progressive contamination in turns affects the space, the characters' identities, and even the form: the motifs of isolation and enclosure hence give way to circulation and mutual contamination, as the spatial structure of

the enclave becomes a way to represent the tension between two very conflicting worlds and their values, and we will have to compare how the two novels finally dissolve this tension.

This brings about the question of the role of the enclave, and its literary use, which one cannot but link to the genre of the Adventure, as it very often resorts to remote, mysterious and liminal spaces. Yet at the turn of the 19th century there seemed to be fewer and fewer "blank spaces" available (*Heart* 11-12), as Marlowe notes at the beginning of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, and the enclave, this "absolutely other space" (Foucault 753), might be the last bastion of adventure, if only due to its element of mystery and its fictional plasticity. Thus, as both Realism and Romance were then reaching their limits, adventure novel authors such as Stevenson and Conrad settled at their margins, and drew on both genres and on many others. The ambivalence of the enclave is then also a generic one, and both texts represent the enclave as a form of literary museum where various temporalities and genres are superimposed, in a nostalgic attempt to preserve the romance motifs, while simultaneously highlighting their out-datedness.

Finally the spatio-temporal structure of the enclave, this ebb and flow movement, the very alternation between apparent enclosure and intrusions from the outside, between real time and frozen time, will serve as a frame to analyse the structure and the poetics of the adventure novel at the turn of the century, through the study of its dramatic potential.

The Island as a Heterotopic Enclave

I began by stating that islands are not technically enclaves, as indeed it is more common for them to be another territory's exclave, being separated from it by water, yet if one considers the definition of the enclave as a piece of land surrounded by foreign territories, one might postulate that maritime territories are territories nonetheless, and as such, can enclave an island, as they do separate it from the rest of the world. This makes it very difficult to access, which is another key characteristic of both the enclave and Foucault's heterotopia,[1] and it is particularly obvious in both novels, that differentiate between the desert (or enclaved) island where part of the novel is set, and other, more accessible islands.

In *The Ebb-Tide*, the motif of the desert island is especially well delineated, as it can be opposed to the first island where the characters dwell, Tahiti, which is already occupied by civilisation and appears as the negative version of the island of romance: it is indeed described from the start in terms of lack, and the discrepancy between the mythical island and the harsh reality of this colonial world is underlined through a very telling antithesis, "there are still others […]

[1] Foucault remarks: "On n'accède pas à un emplacement hétérotopique comme dans un moulin" (Foucault 752).

who continue, even in these isles of **plenty**, to **lack** bread" (Stevenson 123, emphasis mine). It is even described as "bitter cold for the South Seas" (Stevenson 124), thus lacking one of the major characteristic of the exotic settings, that is, heat. It is part of the "island world" (Stevenson 123), just like the main character of *Victory*, Heyst, first roams "the islands" or "the Archipelago" (*Victory* 64) before settling on his island, and these insular worlds are like microcosms where "scattered men of many European races and from almost every grade of society carry activities and disseminate diseases" (Stevenson 122). This liminal description associates from the very first page the European presence with archipelagic circulation and the negative element of illness and contamination, thus completely deromanticizing it. There is absolutely no action or adventure there: the three main characters, Davis, Herrick and Huish, indeed spend their days in idleness and are already described as "outcast[s]" (Stevenson 127) as they are "*on the beach*" (Stevenson 124), a spatial expression that metonymically refers to the fact that they are destitute and just lie about on the beach [they are also called "beachcombers" (Stevenson 137)].

It looks as if this island of disease and complete stasis is only described in order to magnify by contrast the Edenic and romantic aspect of the enclaved island which the characters discover when they manage to leave Tahiti, as one of them is providentially made captain of a schooner, the crew of which was decimated by smallpox. As opposed to the well-known and civilised Tahiti, the outcasts happen upon a mysterious island which is not even on the chart, and first appears to them almost like a mirage, being very difficult to make out: "a green, **filmy iridescence** could be discerned **floating like smoke** on the pale heavens" (Stevenson 184, emphasis mine). The lagoon here operates like a "mirror" (Stevenson 184) reflecting the island and creates an optical illusion on the sky, while the entire passage is reminiscent of the floating island myth, the island being described in terms that stress its ethereal nature. All these elements make it very difficult to find except by chance. The characters then discover that it is mentioned in Findlay's *Pacific Directory*, which is an Atlas but according to Stevenson "may almost count as fiction" (Stevenson 284); and although it relies on two accounts mentioning the island, the coordinates they provide are not exactly the same, and it adds: "This **must** be the same, **if** such an island exists, which is **very doubtful** and **totally disbelieved in** by South Seas traders" (Stevenson 185, emphasis mine). The epistemic modal and the conditional structure, added to the double expression of doubt reinforce the potentially fictitious nature of the island, which is then described as an "elusive glimmer" (Stevenson 185) in a quite pleonastic manner. Its only trace on the horizon finally disappears "as the stain of breath vanishes from a window pane" (Stevenson 185), with a very visual comparison that again highlights its elusiveness and the quickness of its disappearance. The first perception the characters eventually get of the island is through sound, as it is night, and the almost personified "voice of breakers" (Stevenson 185) seems to operate like a mermaid's song on the

protagonists who cannot resist its attraction, and "spr[i]ng to [their] feet and stare […] and listen […]" (Stevenson 187): the cyclical ternary rhythm of this paratactic sentence mirrors the tension and anticipation of the characters. A very long and impressionistic description then delays the appearance of daylight, and finally "The isle—the undiscovered, the scarce-believed in—now lay before them and close aboard" (Stevenson 187): it looks as if it had appeared out of nowhere in a magical fashion, with the privative prefixes underlining its lack of reality, and one might even go as far as arguing that the two adjectives between dashes somehow enclave the opening substantive, "The isle," by separating it from the rest of the sentence, thus mirroring its actual spatial position. It is moreover described in hyperbolically positive terms that are reminiscent of the myth of the edenic exotic island,[2] as it is compared to a "dream […]" (Stevenson 187). The difference between the enclaved island and other islands would then lie in the fact that it is sufficiently unknown, mysterious and remote to leave some room for fiction and adventure, as its reality is not completely stabilised.

The potential fictionality and absence of reliable cartography of the island, added to the role of chance in its discovery, can be linked to Deleuze and Guattari's definition of the "smooth space," which they oppose to the "striated space"[3] by highlighting the former's lack of clear mapping, and the potential randomness of the traveller's trajectory to reach it: "Dans l'espace strié on ferme une surface, on la 'répartit' suivant des intervalles déterminés, d'après des coupures assignées; dans le lisse on se 'distribue' sur un espace ouvert, d'après des fréquences et le long des parcours" (Deleuze and Guattari 600). The second, less rational kind of trajectory is precisely the one adopted by the outcasts, who navigate randomly, having lost all hope of salvation, when they finally happen upon the island: the enclaved island is hence characterised by its lack of spatial referentiality, as opposed to other, more familiar islands. Its occupant, Attwater, tries to preserve this absence of mapping by trying to keep his island secret, and notices: "If it gets upon the chart, the skippers will make nice work of it" (Stevenson 202), highlighting through this conditional structure the potentially disruptive effect of the passage from "smooth" to "striated".

Another key characteristic of this enclave is the difficulties the characters encounter when trying to penetrate it: they have to go all the way around it as it is surrounded by a "spur of coral sand" (Stevenson 188) and "barrier of trees" (Stevenson 187) which enclave it, and the sailors have to find a way into the lagoon if they want to avoid shipwreck—that is also a classical motif of insular novels—as can be observed in this crucial passage, "Twice a day the ocean crowded in that **narrow entrance** and was heaped between these **frail walls**" (Stevenson

[2] "Never in his dreams had he beheld anything more strange and delicate. The beach was excellently white, the barrier of trees inimitably green" (Stevenson 187).
[3] My translations for the French "espace lisse" and "espace strié".

188, emphasis mine). It concentrates the two essential elements which define both Foucault's heterotopia and the enclave, that are simultaneous openness and enclosure, with the parallel position of the antithetic terms "entrance" and "walls," added to the stress both on the difficulty of the passage with the adjective "narrow," and on the impossibility to keep all intrusion at bay with the adjective "frail." In addition, the lagoon inside can be considered as a form of maritime enclave within the enclave, being described as an "inland sea" (189), and as a "bosom" (189) while its shore is described as a "haven, snugly elbowed there" (189), thus doubly highlighting its protective and enclosed nature.

The same difficulty of access characterises Heyst's island in Conrad's *Victory*, which is doubly enclaved by the sea and by a "barricade of felled trees" (*Victory* 322) that divides it into two parts and separates him from the native community that built it as "a barrier against the march of civilisation" (*Victory* 322)–note again the semantic field of boundaries. After the coal company that employed him and placed him on the island of Samburan went bankrupt, Heyst decided to stay there, and one of the characters stresses his inaccessibility when saying that he "[went] off to live like a prince on that island, where nobody can get him" (*Victory* 58). The island, which used to be occupied by civilisation, is now desert, as nature, along with fiction, have reclaimed their rights over it in a form of reversed colonisation, "the jungle has choked the very sheds in black diamond bay. He's a hermit in the wilderness now" (*Victory* 29): both the island and its occupant are the object of distanciation through the prism of fiction with the terms "prince," "hermit" and "wilderness," while the "jungle" has replaced the "sheds" in a rather symbolic manner. The bay even lost its official name as it went back to its state of wilderness, thus seemingly disappearing from the chart just like Stevenson's island: "the slight indentation which for a time was known as Black Diamond Bay" (*Victory* 27). This is also very much in keeping with Foucault's definition of heterotopias of deviation, which can superimpose two conflicting and incompatible spaces, in this case civilisation and wilderness, "L'hétérotopie a le pouvoir de juxtaposer en un seul lieu réel plusieurs espaces, plusieurs emplacements qui sont en eux-mêmes incompatibles" (Foucault 751). Foucault moreover mentions the theatre and the garden as examples of this kind of heterotopia, and quite interestingly in *The Ebb-tide* the island is also compared to a form of derealised garden or theatre, wearing "an air of unreality, like a deserted theatre or a public garden at midnight" (Stevenson 220). Gardens and theatres are geometric, schematised representations of reality that point at their own artificiality. This potentially fictional, derealised aspect is thus present in the description of both islands, and highlights the proximity of the enclave to the concept of heterotopia, which provides an interesting critical outlook on it.

In addition, the intruders in *Victory* arrive on Heyst's island in a similarly coincidental manner as in *The Ebb-Tide*, in a burlesque rewriting of the shipwreck motif where Mr Jones and his

two acolytes Ricardo and Pedro almost die of thirst on their boat, having "lost their bearings" (220), and then finally drift to the island, which is thus also in keeping with Deleuze's definition of the "espace lisse." They experience the same hesitation between mirage and reality as in Stevenson's novel, as Mr Jones says, "Really, when I saw a wharf on what might have been an uninhabited island, I **couldn't believe** my eyes. I **doubted** its existence. I thought it was a **delusion**, till the boat actually drove between the piles" (*Victory* 226, emphasis mine). Here too there is a threefold insistence on disbelief, and on the idea of having to cross a boundary before reaching the island, on which one arrives by chance. Ricardo then compares the appearance of the island to "a lovely dream" (*Victory* 226), in the same way as *The Ebb-Tide*'s narrator did.

Doomed Utopias

Moreover, in both novels, the occupants of the islands are completely taken aback by the arrival of strangers, as they thought their utopic islands were hermetic: Attwater, the man who dwells on the island of *The Ebb-Tide* and whose tranquillity the three adventurers disrupt, indeed tried to create an alternative society on the island, with its own rules, before most of its population died of smallpox: "I was making a new people here" (Stevenson 204). The disease brought by his own pearling ship and then the arrival of the three adventurers mark the symbolic death of his utopia, as Attwater realises that secrecy about his island "came wholly to an end with [their] arrival" (Stevenson 196): the sense of doom is very palpable here. Heyst too is called a "utopist" (*Victory* 8) at the very beginning of the novel, and he even compares himself to "Adam" (*Victory* 163), but then he too realises that the equilibrium of his Eden has been fundamentally disrupted with the intrusion of the strangers' boat, when he tells Lena, the girl who went on the island with him, "This seemed to be an **inexpugnable** refuge, where we could live **untroubled** and learn to know each other." (*Victory* 329, emphasis mine) The insistence on its hermetic nature with the redundant adjectives is checked by the preterit and the use of the derealising verb "seem," thus highlighting the illusion they lived in. And indeed, he describes the intruders as "the envoys of the outer world" (*Victory* 307), thus simultaneously underlining the separation of the enclave from the real world *and* the porosity that is key to its definition. He then uses the bungalow as another enclave within the enclave, in which he tries to hide Lena to protect her against the intruders, but which will in turn be colonised by the latter.

Just like the islands, the characters that inhabit them can be understood as enclaves, as they are both very enigmatic, almost godly beings, who live according to their own rules: Attwater is described as "inscrutable" (Stevenson 201) while Heyst is characterised as "unfathomable" (*Victory* 25), and other characters have difficulties grasping them both. However, they still

have ties to the outside world: Heyst's "detachment from the world was not complete. And incompleteness of any sort leads to trouble" (*Victory* 30). Thus, the impending presence of adventure ("trouble") seems to be essentially linked to the dual nature of the enclave, as being imperfectly severed from the world. Heyst is linked to the world by having some belongings to collect, which conflicts with his definition as a hermit or an outcast, and his passage from one world to another is made possible by a man that regularly sails past his island, thus allowing circulation. Similarly, Attwater describes himself as being "a man of the world still" (Stevenson 204), where the final adverb underlines this in-between state. He indeed collects pearls in order to return home one day with a fortune, while his commerce is made possible by the regular coming and going of his schooner.

Furthermore, both individuals seem to be experiencing some form of existential crisis, and settling on the island is a way to get away from a disappointing and disenchanted world, just like setting the plot in the enclave might be a way to compensate for the lack of romance in the outside world: Attwater explains that what brought him to the place was "youth, curiosity, romance, the love of the sea" (203), which perfectly sums up the essential elements of the insular adventure novel. The insular enclave moreover precisely corresponds to Alain-Michel Boyer's description of the typical space of adventure, "En effet l'outre-mer, ou l'outre-montagne, tout ce qui est lié au dehors, au voyage lointain, est indissociable de la recherche qu'effectue le héros—même s'il n'est lui-même impliqué dans aucune quête : l'action d'un roman d'aventures se déroule dans un lieu situé, en général, hors des courants de la civilisation occidentale" (Boyer and Couegnas 20). The desert island indeed satisfies this desire for a place outside civilisation, as it is distant and unknown, yet still somehow reachable, and its fictional potentialities are thus extremely rich.

Since the possibility of circulation that defines the enclave is what appears to bring about the adventure, the disruptive elements that manage to penetrate the island fuel the plot with tension and wreak havoc on the previously ordered island: in *The Ebb-Tide* it goes from "heavenly" (Stevenson 203) to "dreadful" (Stevenson 220) in the space of seventeen pages. Similarly, in *Victory*, the intruders are described as "the venom of the viper in [their] paradise" (*Victory* 273), which is as lethal as the contagion of smallpox in *The Ebb-Tide*, and progressively brings about the collapse of this formerly ideal world, in a process that seems to mirror the biblical Fall, and ends with the tragic death of its two inhabitants. This questions the generic status of the novel, as adventure novels usually end with the triumph of the hero over death. Thus, the structure of the enclave seems to spatialize the conflict between different worlds and genres, and this is well delineated by Janice Ho when she describes the characters that penetrate the enclaves in Conrad's novels as "symptomatic of the outside world of capital and modernization—a world that can no longer be kept at bay and that now permeates the

world of romance only to destroy it" (Ho 15). This points at the fact that the porosity of the enclave is precisely what allows for the confrontation between modernity and tradition, civilisation and wilderness, Romance and Realism, and it seems to be the ideal place to create a form of modern romance, the adventure novel, which distances itself from both Realism and the romance motifs whilst heavily relying on them, as this enclaved form "communique avec son propre dehors" (Deleuze 9), in Deleuze's words.

The Adventurous Poetics of the Enclave

Indeed, the vestiges of romance are omnipresent in both texts, and the island might be described as a form of museum superimposing several temporalities and genres, in line with what Foucault defines as heterochronias, when he deals with the temporal dimension of heterotopias. He writes: "L'idée de constituer une sorte d'archive générale, la volonté d'enfermer dans un lieu tous les temps, toutes les époques, toutes les formes, tous les goûts, l'idée de constituer un lieu de tous les temps qui soit lui-même hors du temps, et inaccessible à sa morsure [...], tout cela appartient à notre modernité" (Foucault 752). Interestingly enough, he places the beginning of this modernity and thirst for archives in the 19th century, which is precisely the time of the adventure novel's renewal, as it settles in the minor space of the enclaved island in order to question the major paradigm of Realism and reconcile the novel and Romance. In *The Ebb-Tide*, the first relic of Romance the characters encounter is the figurehead that lies in the sand of the lagoon, "**So long** she had been the blind conductress of a ship among the waves; **so long** she had stood here idle in the violent sun, that yet did not avail to blister her; and was even this the end of so many adventures? he wondered, or was there more behind?" (Stevenson 200, emphasis mine). The two parallel clauses seem to metatextually mirror the different temporal strata that the figure-head concentrates, and the emphasis on its resilience ("did not avail to blister her") is very much in keeping with Foucault's idea of a place mentioned above: "inaccessible à [la] morsure [du temps]". The two final questions then highlight the renewal potential of the romance form, as they leave the question of its "end" open and lean towards a potential future. Similarly, the store-house that Herrick then visits is the perfect example of the heterochronic museum as it contains all the traditional props of romance, a "disorder of romantic things," and "aroused imagination, but had something sensible to go upon" (Stevenson 201): this seems to be a metatextual comment on Stevenson's use of the enclaved island as a sort of archive of romance, a place out of time that allows him to revive its motifs by displacing them.

Both novels of course bear intertextual references to the major hypotext (to use Genette's terminology) of any insular novel, that is *Robinson Crusoe*, in the form of an ironic comparison in *The Ebb-tide*, when the protagonists realise that their cargo of champagne is actually water,

"each stared at the bottle in its glory of gold paper as Crusoe may have stared at the footprint" (Stevenson 176), in which Stevenson clearly acknowledges this filiation and intertextuality. In *Victory*, Heyst's servant Wang, who cultivates the land in order to produce food and finds himself a native companion, might also be an ironical reference to this text, while another major reference is rewritten when Ricardo tells the story of how gentlemen like his master "play at adventure" and put together "A treasure-hunting expedition" (*Victory* 120), highlighting the artificiality of wanting to reproduce the traditional romance motif of the treasure island at that time.

Moreover, the intruders in both novels can be described as modern versions of pirates. In *The Ebb-Tide* the former anti-heroes become "co-adventurers" (Stevenson 153) as soon as they set foot on the schooner, and start their career as pirates when they decide to steal it. When they get to the island they approach it "under-hand, like eavesdroppers or thieves" (Stevenson 188), and then plot to steal Attwater's pearl treasure, by working their way into his home and trying to gain his trust: yet he is not taken in and calls the captain a "pirate" (Stevenson 224) towards the end of the novel. A similarly stealthy attitude characterises the two desperadoes in *Victory*, who only decide to go to the island out of boredom and because they believe Heyst is hiding a treasure on it, which is actually not true, and thus the adventure is entirely devoid of real purpose from the start. This leads to a playful displacement of this typical romance motif: "the treasure, my dear, is not big enough to require a cavern" (*Victory* 239), while Lena, Heyst's companion, becomes the metaphorical treasure coveted by Ricardo. The two intruders appear as the knight and his "henchman" (*Victory* 250), yet Mr Jones describes himself as "an outlaw" (*Victory* 353), Ricardo takes on the role of a spy, and they are sometimes both characterised as "desperadoes" (*Victory* 102), or even "bandits" and then "swindler" (*Victory* 358): this linguistic instability reflects the complexity of their identities that are much more difficult to grasp than that of traditional pirates. Heyst himself expresses his nostalgia for a more traditional form of romance, with its typical characters, of which he would be the heroic knight—he does rescue a damsel in distress, and is described as a "romantic" (*Victory* 49)—when he exclaims: "I wish to goodness you were the commonest sort of ruffian!" (*Victory* 354), thus underlining the complexification of adventure. No treasure, pirates that do not attack but spy, and are sometimes not even scary, a hero that is completely unable to act and commits suicide: these are the new modalities of adventure.

Yet it seems that Conrad goes further than Stevenson in the questioning of romance, as in Stevenson's novel we are given a shootout, the occupant of the island manages to protect his pearl treasure and his island while two of the adventurers are spared and given a chance to leave the island, even though the return journey is not narrated and the outcome left somehow open. However, it is no comparison to the ending in Conrad's novel where the metaphorical

treasure that Lena represents is lost, the hero commits suicide, and we do not even know the circumstances of some characters' deaths, or even if they are really dead, and are thus left with mostly loose ends and question marks.

This liminal destabilisation and absence of complete return is in keeping with Jankélévitch's definition of adventure: "Pour qu'il y ait aventure, il faut être la fois dedans et dehors" (Jankélévitch 831). This perfectly highlights how the enclave is indeed the ideal space for this new form of adventure, insofar as it belongs to the world but is also somehow outside of it, severed from it. The crucial link between space and form is moreover underlined by Boyer when he remarks: "comme si les lieux de la fiction contribuaient aussi à dessiner une forme et une thématique, des *topoi* narratifs, des types de personnages, voire une vision du monde pour une large part tributaire du cadre dans lequel se déroule l'action" (Boyer and Couegnas 23). Space is thus a key element in the construction of the narrative, and in the case of insular novels the motif of the intrusion which is associated to the figure of the new pirate might be key to defining the new poetics of adventure at the turn of the 19th century. In both novels the initial situation of the island is described in terms of complete calm and stillness, which could be compared to the moment of slack between the ebb and flow: in *Victory*, the waters surrounding Samburan are described in the first chapter as "passionless" (*Victory* 4), while "the silence" around it is "dazzling," in a form of synaesthesia that underlines the poetic nature of the island. A similarly poetic language is used to first describe New Island in *The Ebb-Tide*, yet the silence within the lagoon already bears an ominous undertone while it is contrasted to the sound of the sea outside: "the silence of death was only broken by the throbbing of the sea" (Stevenson 188). This "throbbing" mirrors the elation of the characters as "the excitement of the three adventurers glowed about their bones like a fever" (Stevenson 188), which climaxes when the flood comes and the boat is "carried away by the influx like a toy" (Stevenson 189), into the lagoon. The suspension that precedes the event, as the characters are waiting for the flood: "Ces instants où rien n'arrive encore" (Rivière 81). This is what Jacques Rivière (and also Jankélévitch) define as the essence of adventure.

The structure of the enclave is thus a way to dramatize the discovery of the island as the difficulty of the passage delays the moment of resolution and magnifies the tension building up to it, and the final revelation of the lagoon is described through a very telling theatrical metaphor: "And suddenly the curtain was raised" (Stevenson 189). Then, as soon as the event penetrates the previously frozen time of the utopia, the adventure begins; yet it does not consist—as it did in more traditional adventure novels—in a rapid succession of events leading up to one another, but rather in the tension that leads to one major event, that is the final confrontation between the two opposite sides. This climax is consistently delayed and replaced by a constant tension, a form of suspension, that is metaphorically represented by the

thunderstorm brooding over Samburan in *Victory*: the ominous cloud covering it is compared to "an enormous curtain hiding menacing preparations of violence," until "it begins" (*Victory* 350). Just as in *The Ebb-Tide*, the beginning of the action that will lead to the resolution is here dramatized through the use of theatrical vocabulary, while the natural elements provide a sort of objective correlative to the intense psychological tension that is felt.

The adventure indeed sometimes becomes a psychological one, as characters try to decipher each other and to penetrate the enclave that the "other" represents: no surprise then that Ricardo, the henchman, who is not used to this new kind of adventure, is affected by the "fatigue of a mental rather than physical contest" (*Victory* 275). This displacement from the physical to the psychological is another key element of the new poetics of adventure, especially in Conrad's work, as Jean-Yves Tadié remarks, highlighting the modernity of this device: "Pour la première fois dans l'histoire du roman d'aventures, le personnage est divisé et changeant, [et] les tensions auxquelles il est soumis sont internes autant qu'externes" (Tadié 158). However, Conrad may not actually have been the first adventure author to resort to this device, as Stevenson seems to have anticipated this typically Conradian feature in his novel, notably through the enigmatic character of Attwater and his attempt, by the end of the novel, to convert Herrick and Davis to his faith by exerting a form a psychological pressure on them. Another example of this psychological complexification can be found in Herrick's dilemma as he is torn between the worlds that Attwater and Davis embody and cannot pick sides, which leads him to almost drown himself in a rather tragic manner, in this liminal space which is the lagoon, being unable to choose between the island and the boat, which metonymically represent Attwater and Davis.

Finally, what stands out from this analysis is the key role of space in the construction of the narrative, the characters' identities and also the genre, as the choice of the insular enclave seems to shape the whole tale and allow for various kinds of experimentations. Its fictional plasticity is allowed by the basic characteristics of the enclave as being remote and difficult to map and access, while its status oscillates between reality and fiction, and between different temporalities and genres. Moreover, the tension between the occupants of the enclave and the representatives of the outside world, whom the former try to keep at bay, is also allowed by the ambivalent spatial structure of the enclave, and creates a more complex, less binary form of adventure, that can be understood in terms of contamination and progressive corruption: reality and fiction, utopia and heterotopia, Realism and Romance are thus intertwined in this liminal space, the dramatic potential of which both Conrad and Stevenson use as a laboratory for a new, adventurous form of fiction.

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