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COLONIES OF MEMORY

By Ann C. Colley

. . . so sadly, the changes come.
— *In the South Seas*, R. L. Stevenson

NINETEENTH-CENTURY WESTERN OBSERVERS of the South Seas often worried that the islanders were losing touch with their past and were forgetting the traditions of their ancestors. In writing about their concerns these commentators frequently identified the missionaries as being responsible for this loss. To a certain degree, their perspective was correct, for one does not have to search far to find examples of the missionaries' culpability. If one looks more closely, however, one learns that the missionaries (especially those representing the London Missionary Society) also preserved part of what they had destroyed by studying and gathering artifacts from the island cultures they had invaded. As time passed, these missionary collections became important to anthropologists, for they were visual reminders of an older, almost extinct Polynesian culture. They became a means through which to recall the past.

This circumstance is worth dwelling on, for the association of these artifacts with memory suggests ways of thinking about the psychology of memory. In particular, the parallels between what happens to these objects once they are removed from their indigenous surroundings and what befalls the contents of individual remembrances through time recall the alienation and the ultimate mutability of memory – two characteristics that undermine our hope that this faculty may hold the past in some kind of uncontaminated state. These characteristics also remind us that our personal memories (especially the memories of those who, like myself, are exiled from their own culture), like the Pacific islanders and their possessions, are all too readily held in the custody of others' desires and perceptions. With these reflections in mind, one cannot help but evetually turn to the South Seas writing of Robert Louis Stevenson where he recognizes these realities and where they inform his prose.

A Crisis of Memory

WHEN STEVENSON SAILED among the islands and atolls of the South Seas, he traveled in realms where, according to Western observers, a new order of things was believed to be subverting, if not replacing, older ways. These commentators feared that because of foreign pressures the indigenous peoples were relinquishing a devotion to primitive traditions and losing their cultural memories.[1] They worried that forgetfulness was slipping into the seat of memory. As early as 1829, William Ellis, an LMS missionary who had lived in Tahiti, was

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concerned that a new generation of Polynesians was "growing up in total ignorance of all that distinguished their ancestors from themselves" (vi–vii). And later in the nineteenth century, one anxious friend of Stevenson's suggested that the minds of the inhabitants had already become a "perfect blank" (Moss 149). The threat of human as well as cultural extinction was a widespread preoccupation. Individuals with interests as disparate as those of John LaFarge, the romantic painter (*Reminiscences of the South Seas*), as well as the methodical collector J. Edge Partington (*Ethnographic Album of the Pacific*) and the naturalist/traveler Charles Hedley fretted over the "slow extinction" of these islanders' past (46). They issued warnings about the growing scarcity of traditional objects, and their concern found a certain confirmation through a parallel preoccupation with a decrease in the population on a number of islands. An April, 1893 article in *The Chronicle of the London Missionary Society* addressing the "sad" decline in Rarotonga from 7,000 inhabitants in John Williams' time (1820s) to 1,900 in 1892 is typical (88–90), and so, in fact, is Stevenson's chapter (five) on depopulation in *In the South Seas*, where he talks of the Marquesans, the indigenous Hawaiians, and the Maoris as "perishing like flies" (31).

The London Missionary Society (LMS) Missionaries

AMONG THE PEOPLE MOST frequently held responsible for this rubbing out of indigenous culture were, of course, the missionaries (a view that persists, perhaps even more strongly, today). In spite of the fact that there were discourses on the merits of these individuals (Darwin's approval of the LMS missionaries on the islands of Tahiti and New Zealand in the *Voyage of the Beagle* is one), a number of nineteenth-century texts on the South Seas did not hesitate to pose the scathingly critical and obvious question whether it would not have been better for the Fijians "to be left alone in their old savagedom" and remain "in their old heathen faith" (St. Johnston 326). Nor did they fail to rebuke the missionary "who merely indulges in evangelical dreams and devotes himself only to the destruction of practices and beliefs which he classifies as 'pagan"' (Hickson 178). Yet the fact is that a significant number of South Seas missionaries were keenly sensitive to the crisis of memory – to the disappearance of traditions – and eventually functioned not only as the destroyers but also as the preservers and protectors of a compromised culture.

Because of the missionaries' early history in the South Seas, this sensitivity seems paradoxical, for one cannot forget the dogged determination of the first London Missionary Society representatives, sent out in 1797 to Tahiti, to wipe out everything that did not conform to its doctrines and to eradicate the dark ages of paganism. One cannot ignore their official reports, as well as those written by a second generation of missionaries on other islands, applauding the destruction of idols and documenting their successes in creating a void which they then filled with their own structures and institutions – an activity that became literally true when the missionaries in Rurutu took away the inhabitants' ceremonial spears and converted them into staves to support the balustrades of the pulpit staircase in one of the churches, and when the missionaries in Samoa confiscated the clubs and spears from the armory of the gods to build a railing for the courthouse.[2] The early missionary literature is replete with passages relishing the conflagration of *maraes* (idol temples), the driving of large herds of pigs into sacred enclosures, the hanging of gods disrobed of their apparel, the public burning of idols, the drowning of ritual mats, the throwing of the gods made of coral into the sea, and the forced eating of food thought to contain the spirit of a god.

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Figure 1. "Massacre of the Lamented Missionary the Reverend John Williams, at Erromanga." Pen and Watercolor. Rex Nan Kivell Collection NK 150 (T2930). By permission of National Library of Australia.

These acts and accounts have a horrifying resilience and reflect awful truths, but they do not represent the whole experience or impact of the missionary presence in the South Seas. If one reads more closely and widely in the missionaries' diaries, reports, letters, notes, and books, one discovers a more complex and provocative reality. In particular, one becomes aware of a contrary impulse on the part of these individuals to study and save what they and others were demolishing. Even in the beginning, when the LMS martyr, John Williams, was ostentatiously encouraging the breaking up of sacred places and objects in Tahiti, he was salvaging them for posterity [in 1839 he was clubbed to death in Erromanga (Figure 1)]. For instance, on the Vavau Islands, Williams saw five goddesses hanging by the neck (an "execution" that was part of his campaign) and decided to ask the chief to give him one. Proudly Williams recorded: "I have brought it to England, with the very string around its neck by which it was hung" (319–20). Later Williams placed this and other relics he obtained in collections back in London. Around the same time, Ellis – who was motivated by his religious convictions and could be heard speaking of "malignant deities" and "the deafening roar of idol worship" (viii, 62) – was also methodically gathering traditional objects and noting, in detail, the ways and beliefs of the people he was converting. He was eager to leave an authentic record of the peoples' customs and rituals before they became "obsolete" (vii).

As those familiar with it know, Ellis's subsequent study of the South Seas, *Polynesian Researches* (1829), served as a major reference text for ethnographers and, in addition, set a precedent for subsequent LMS missionaries in the nineteenth century who wished to "preserve and elevate" Polynesian culture (Gill, *Life in the Southern Isles* vi). It motivated those like

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the Reverend G. Pratt, who had been in Samoa since 1839 and had studied Old Samoan, to gather the results of his own researches. With the Reverend T. Powell, he salvaged and published vestiges of old Samoan traditions and songs. In their introduction to *Some Folk-Songs and Myths from Samoa*, they emphasized that their materials were collected many years before Europeans had become numerous on the islands and altered the way of life, and that they wanted to give readers a valuable insight into "the manner of life of the Samoans long ago" (196). Ellis also influenced missionaries, like Stevenson's acquaintances the Reverend Hiram Bingham and the Reverend S. J. Whitmee, who carefully studied the dying dialects of various Polynesian languages. They either created lists of words (after Bingham had collected two thousand words on his own, he paid a young convert a dollar for each additional one hundred words) or composed comparative grammars and dictionaries (Whitmee also collected ethnographic data and made ethnological maps of the Pacific islands).[3]

Following Ellis's lead, other missionaries took profuse notes and published books about the islands and their inhabitants. Among the papers of the Reverend J. E. Newell (Newell officiated at Stevenson's funeral in Samoa) are numerous manuscript pages written in an earnest hand detailing the burial and marriage customs, the religious beliefs, the legends, and the dialects of the Samoans, the Gilbert Islanders, the Kingsmill and Ellice Islanders, and the people of Katadi, New Guinea. Knowing these would be "of special value and interest to students of ethnology" (LMS Archives), Newell addressed his "Notes: chiefly ethnological" to the Secretary of the Polynesian Society. Another of Stevenson's friends, the Reverend William Wyatt Gill, was one of the most prolific writers. In his *From Darkness to Light in Polynesia*, he wrote, "I have been the more anxious to put these things on permanent record, as the correct knowledge of the past is rapidly fading away, and will probably soon become extinct" (9). Another writer and acquaintance of Stevenson's was the Reverend J. Chalmers, in whose descriptions one senses an extraordinary eagerness to find out as much as he can about his surroundings. At times Chalmers manifests an uncontrollable curiosity. On one occasion he entered a darkened temple alone and, after his eyes had grown accustomed to the lack of light, thrust his hand into the open frog-like mouth of a seven by nine foot wicker god to discover what was inside. Later he recalled how he was "somewhat startled when out flew dozens of small bats, which disturbed those in the other images" (79), and collectively they soon packed the interior. The next day Chalmers returned to take another look.

When the LMS missionaries were avidly collecting or purchasing pieces of the culture they were intruding upon, they did not necessarily confine themselves to salvaging objects related to traditional beliefs or to displaying the folly and sin of idolatry. They were also gathering items from a larger context: samples of hair (the Reverend George Turner counted nearly seven hundred bunches of hair on the head of one young man and compared his appearance to that of an Assyrian sculpture), canoes, clubs, cooking utensils, baskets, and clothing – in a word, what is now called "material culture." Even Williams did not confine himself to relics of idolatry. Following the pattern of explorers and seamen he also collected natural history specimens. Williams once complained that because his ship had leaked, he had lost his snakes which he was conveying home. Some forty years later the tradition among missionaries of amassing curiosities continued, for Reverend Gill secured a specimen, weighing sixty pounds, of the fruit from a gigantic palm tree, and the Reverend William Y. Turner with Reverend Lawes collected lepidoptera and other insects. Just before leaving Port Moresby (New Guinea), someone brought them an animal of whose existence they were ignorant. Turner recalls: "The specimen was a young one: the animal has a duckbill, small

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eyes, burrowing feet, and bristles over the body. Mr. Lawes preserved it in spirits and sent it to Professor Rolleston of Oxford" (27).

The shipping of this platypus was no exception; other LMS collections survived the long voyage home, not only to raise money through their sale, but also for experts to dissect, stuff, measure, assemble, and classify. Most of Reverend Turner's delicate butterflies arrived safely and added to the cluttered cases of the British Museum, and so did Reverend Chalmers's crates crammed with nose rings, girdles, tongs for turning wood in the fire, fiber belts, implements for opening coconuts, and a wooden step for the mast of a canoe. These joined the specimens of Samoan sea-worms that the Reverend John Stair had donated to the British Museum in 1847. All these curios sent to England were part of an active interchange these missionaries enjoyed with members of the scientific communities and learned societies. In the South Seas, for instance, they escorted British expeditions investigating the growth of coral formations – a subject that had earlier been of interest to Williams and Ellis and was currently fascinating Reverend Newell. And in England, on furloughs from their duties in the South Seas, the missionaries not only spoke about their adventures to the converted at "missionary soirées" or "missionary conversazione" held in chapel halls and Sunday school rooms, or displayed their exotic objects to Christian societies; they also served as respondents at scholarly functions and addressed members of the Zoological Society of London, the Royal Geographical Society, the Royal Anthropological Institute, the Philosophical Society, and the Philological Society of London.[4] Their papers, published later in these societies' proceedings and journals, resonate with their commitment to ethnographic and linguistic studies. Even in pieces about widow-strangling (a custom on some islands that the missionaries sensationalized), these missionaries silenced the cliches about the dark night of heathenism, muted alarming phrases deploring disgusting, barbaric, provocative practices and gestures, and refused to reassure the LMS officials that this research was not done at the expense of their duties as missionaries – a topos one often discovers in their books. Their sentences reveal a careful and measured hand that admits uncertainties and banishes the authoritative, judgmental tone of the LMS reports. Reverend Newell, for instance, frames his notes with apologies for their brevity, discursiveness, and partiality.[5]

Because of their long residences in the South Seas and widespread contacts with local populations, the LMS missionaries had extraordinary opportunities not readily available to the voyagers, naturalists, and tradesmen whose ships remained in port for relatively short periods. They were "intelligent witnesses" (Buzacott and Sunderland vii) who had an expertise upon which others depended. Anthropologists and explorers, consequently, spoke of their indebtedness to Reverend Whitmee's linguistic and ethnological work and paid tribute to the Reverend J. Atkin's "most curious specimens of hair" (Davis 101) or spoke generally of the missionaries' contributions to "the advancement of science" (Tylor 292–93). They praised the missionaries for their "mass of facts"(Hickson 238) and their journeys into the unfamiliar that charted ways into the recesses of an island's past unavailable to the outsider and almost lost to the indigenous peoples caught in the changing circumstances of time and necessity.

The London Missionary Society Museum

ONE MISSIONARY ESTABLISHMENT that became important for preserving the cultural memories of the South Sea Islands and for the work of the scientific community was the

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Figure 2. "The Museum of the London Missionary Society." Illustration from *Illustrated London News* (25 June 1859).

London Missionary Society Museum in the Old Jewry, Austin Friars, and then at 8 Bloomfield Street, Finsbury. The Museum was initially a repository for the trophies of Christianity. Even though "benevolent" travelers contributed objects (1845 *Catalogue*), the primary donors were the missionaries (from China, India, Africa, and the South Seas) who for over a hundred years filled the rooms with the plunder of their conversions and the evidence and purchases of their researches. (In New Guinea, Reverend Gill, for instance, obtained a jade axe in exchange for some red cloth.) Glass-covered cases lined the walls and displayed the weird, the wonderful, the grotesque, and the commonplace (Figure 2). Although there was nothing comparable to the inch-long flea chains of silver and gold with three hundred links, the mummified fingers, and the stuffed freaks to be seen in the *Kunstkammern* of private collectors, there were such curios as the club that struck the killing blow to the martyr Williams, a pair of shoes worn by Ellis in Hawaii, and a hat made by a sailor shipwrecked near the Marquesan Islands so that "if any vessel passed in sight, he might be noted as a civilized person, and not a savage" (1826 *Catalogue*). There were also the spoils of curiosity collected by the South Seas missionaries: grass skirts, necklaces, a head-dress of feathers, bark cloth, breadfruit pounders, files made of shark skin, decoys for catching fish, warriors' belts, hair, earrings, combs, tattooing instruments, mosquito brushes, fishing nets, kava bowls, fish hooks, a red sash used at the inauguration of "the greatest kings" (Williams 143), "boisterous" and "wild" drums (Ellis 281), mats, wooden pillows, and instruments of war. There was also a case of insects (wild bees, black scorpions, and centipedes), corals, and sponges from the reefs in the South Seas. On top of the cases and cupboards with countless drawers perched model

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canoes, mounted mole rats, lions (of course, not from the South Seas), weasels, ant-eaters, and a dried snout of the Saw Fish; beneath the cabinets hid large baskets, some filled with stones collected by the indigenous people to indicate how many battles the Samoans had won, and on the walls spread fanned arrangements of spears barbed with sharks' teeth, paddles, and clubs.

In a museum initially devoted to displaying the spoils of conversion, there were a plethora of "grim-looking gods," the "*horrible* IDOLS" calculated "to excite in the pious mind, feelings of deep commiseration for the hundreds of millions of the human race, still the vassals of ignorance and superstition" (1826 *Catalogue*). On the floor under the north skylight rose a forbidding twelve-foot high idol, covered with bark cloth and ornamented "with black zigzag lines," brought by Williams from Rarotonga. By 1845 these idols, torn from their surroundings, stood naked before guests from home and abroad who came to view these exotica three days a week (on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays). They stared at these trapped "barbaric" objects and, from a safe distance, contemplated the plight and zeal of the missionaries in the face of such foreignness, ugliness, and superstition. It is as if by placing these savage pieces in the Museum, the missionaries had tamed them – even Reverend Gill could not resist the thought that the rival New Guinea gods Motore and Tanē now "repose quietly" in the Museum (*Historical Sketches* 43).

This idiosyncratic jumble of specimens in the LMS Museum would seem to have had little use except for the Society's fund-raising efforts and to have been of negligible interest to those outside missionary circles who could view ethnographic exhibits elsewhere in Britain. But such a restricted picture of its appeal is not quite accurate, for in the second half of the century, the LMS Museum was in its own right attracting those wishing to study what was becoming unobtainable. Like the other collections, it too was catching the attention of those whose fascination with the South Seas was being encouraged by British economic and military interests. In a sense, the Museum was being transformed from a repository of Christian trophies to a collection of Polynesian memories. Anthropologists, especially, used its contents to reach into areas closed to them. They dipped into its cupboards to find examples of gods long gone (Figure 3), to illustrate and study details of a daily life long compromised, and to assemble ethnographic albums of the Pacific Islands (Partington's *Ethnographic Album of the Pacific Islands*, 1891). They were grateful to the missionaries for placing in their museum "records of many tribes of which we have now only a traditional or written knowledge" (Altick 297) and paid tribute to "the great historical importance of the London Missionary Society's Collection" (Read 139–40). Such was the significance of the collection to ethnographers that in 1890 concerned anthropologists suggested the Museum's contents be moved to the British Museum where the collection would receive better care. Apparently there was a fear that some of the objects were being neglected and, thus, were deteriorating. Charles H. Read in his article on the origin and sacred character of South Eastern Pacific ornaments (1891) discusses the decision:

> The Directors of the London Missionary Society, after due consideration, last year decided to accept the suggestion that had been made to them, to transfer to the custody of the Trustees of the British Museum the most important and valuable section of the interesting museum that they had gradually accumulated during the last hundred years at their well-known house in Bloomfield Street. . . . It is scarcely possible to exaggerate the ethnological importance of these specimens, an importance due in the first place to their intrinsic merits, and in the second to the fact that at the time they were obtained

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Figure 3. "Tahitian Idols, Carved in Wood – one-tenth real size (London Missionary Society's Collection)." Illustration from Friedrich Ratzel, *The History of Mankind* (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1896), vol. 1, 312.

> the religions and habits of the natives had been but little disturbed by European influence. . . . [T]he museum was by no means unknown, and for its scientific value was frequently visited by foreigners. An ethnographical museum, however, requires constant care for its proper preservation, and this it is only likely to obtain where the custody of the specimens is a principal object of the institution. (139–40)

In becoming the property of the scientific community and moving into the rooms of the British Museum, these objects now more readily displayed the impulse of their collectors who had wanted to gather these materials in order to salvage and study the vestiges of the native cultures.

The Colony of Memory

WHEN THE MISSIONARY ARTIFACTS moved to the British Museum, they migrated as inhabitants of a colony of memory. By this I mean they constituted a "colony" in a biological rather than in a political sense – not as a society that has been established by the metropole and remains subject to it, but as a clump of cells or spores that has detached itself from the parent

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organism and continues to exist in a foreign environment. These objects represented what had been an integral part of the traditional life. After nearly a century the weight of time had compressed and, as it were, converted into fossils the multifarious layers of disparate objects that had been lying on the LMS museum's shelves. As a substantial collection now residing in the British Museum, they were resettled in corridors and rooms exclusively dedicated to their study and preservation. In this museum, yet another repository of memory, these artifacts served as visual reminders of an older, partially extinct Polynesian culture.

This circumstance is compelling, for they take the mind away for a while from missionary history and anthropology and lead one's thoughts to the psychology or experience of recollection. In particular, as bearers and denizens of a social memory, the missionary artifacts suggest ways of thinking about what happens, through time, to the elements of an individual memory. The evolution of these artifacts once they leave their indigenous landscape has a striking resemblance to what becomes of memories once they have left their original experience far behind. My choice of the artifacts in the LMS Museum as a lens through which to view certain aspects of memory may seem arbitrary, but the analogy, although not always a perfect fit, is instructive. It elucidates the fate or progress of those pieces of remembrance that are purposely recalled in order to capture the past: the ones, which according to the Augustinian model, one knowingly retrieves from the storehouse of memory.[6] The parallels between the two illuminate the disturbing possibilities for alienation and the ultimate mutability of conscious recollection. They remind one that memory is constantly changing, that it is not always a fixed, passive trace of another time.

Alienation and Memory

AS I HAVE POINTED OUT, WHEN the missionaries first assembled artifacts of Polynesian culture, they destroyed as well as preserved artifacts representing the islanders' rites and customs. Their contradictory actions are poignant reminders that, like the objects collected by the missionaries, memory often originates in a landscape of destruction, that memory tends to keep company with and be dependent upon annihilation. Its images – its idols – are what remain after the breaking up, the tearing apart, and the selecting of pieces from a continuum of experience. Like the curios taken away by the missionaries, these remnants leave behind a ravaged and silenced context. It is not that memory is responsible for this damage to the past, but memory does make forays into the past in order to steal from it: its collections are the plunder to be sequestered and used elsewhere. In this role memory requires alienation. It needs to be as foreign as the missionaries were to the islanders. Without this sense of a certain alienation, it is impossible to impose "schemata" (Bartlett 214), and thereby organize or exploit the past. The past really is another country; if it were not, it would be impossible to disentangle the objects that will inhabit memory from the intricately knotted clusters of the mind. Memory enters the culture of the present as a foreigner to it – as something that lives outside its time, its rites and customs – in order to support its reason for being. If the past were continuous and, therefore, not alien, memory would have no function. Although one cannot claim an actual parallel, it is helpful to be reminded that in a similar way the missionaries would not have felt it necessary to assemble what they did if they had not been acutely aware of their differences from the islands' inhabitants. It is significant that in their collections, the LMS missionaries rejected artifacts that showed signs of acculturation; they, like memory, were primarily interested in assembling objects that capture the otherness of experience.

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Figure 4. Henry Anelay, "The Reverend John Williams on Board Ship with Native Implements, in the South Sea Islands." Watercolor. Rex Nan Kivell Collection NK 187 (T2931). By permission National Library of Australia.

Although, for its short-term purposes, memory may hold on to anything and everything, one is reminded that recollection of what is long past tends to retain what is distinct. It rarely honors from a more distant time what merely blends into the present.

Once the pieces of memory are culled from the past, like the idols of Aitutaki that Williams attached to the yard-arms of his missionary ship to impress the inhabitants as he approached other islands, they come to shore to be displayed as trophies (Figure 4). Having left behind their vanquished companions, torn to pieces or drowned at sea, these gods will hang, illuminated by coconut lights, from the rafters of chapels. As trophies, they will later assemble to pose for photographs for others to see. And like Williams, carrying a spear and dressed in native costume, marching up and down his parlor before English friends, these spoils of the past will impose themselves upon the present. This sequence of acts launches these vestiges on their journey of alienation. Even when they attempt to hold on to the past and authenticate its experiences, these memories will lose touch with their original functional value and become, instead, curious pieces of exotic decoration even to the one who has carried

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them back. In such a way, by capitulating to the demands of the present, recollection alienates the object from its indigenous identity and, in turn, the individual from the real experience of a former time.

Memory and the Problem of Decontextualization

ANTHROPOLOGISTS PREOCCUPIED WITH the concept of decontextualization also offer ways of thinking about memory's instability and the process of alienation. Their sensitivity to the problems that ensue when a cultural object is removed from the original context and re-situated in collections has major implications for memory.

In her study of the Reverend H. A. Robertson's late nineteenth-century missionary collection, Barbara Lawson points out that early critics of museum anthropology were attentive to the difficulties created by isolating objects from their specific context. For years critics have acknowledged that once the material culture is moved, a new order of meaning imposes itself on it through various systems of classification for storing and displaying. The gap between the new environment and the indigenous landscape is clearly visible in the LMS Museum during the early nineteenth century when specimens sent back by the South Seas missionaries sat on shelves between tusks of Indian elephants and stuffed African lions. The subsequent loss of those objects' specific locale and the ensuing geographic confusion foreground the exotic nature of the items by shifting them into the mode of some unfamiliar otherness that distorts any possible understanding of them. I cannot argue for an actual parallel, for I understand that in human personal memory there is one single controlling intelligence that is not present in the case of artifacts:[7] still, one can see a similar trajectory when disengaged images from the past join others in memory to create a melange of pieces that obfuscates thoughts of their origins and obscures their indigenous relevance. Consider, for instance, what happens when one thinks back to a city one has visited. At the very moment one's mind returns to that place, images or sections of other cities, also of one's former acquaintance, silently and effortlessly start intruding upon and rearranging the memory. These discrepancies disrupt the perspective, upset the original order of things, and create a kind of generic jumble of foreignness or otherness. The recollection is no longer properly portraying what one has labeled or named. An illustration showing Ferrante Imperato's cabinet of curiosities (Naples, 1599) vividly replicates this dilemma (Figure 5). Specimens from various parts of the world fill the room: on the ceiling a grand, land-bound crocodile hangs upside down; surrounding it are arranged patterns of sea shells, lobsters, crabs, and starfish from a locale that has little to do with the crocodile. As in a universe that is reversed, these objects from the sea shine down like stars on the shelves below where there are small boxes containing minute artifacts from many other places. Through this strangely ordered chaos of specimens, this topsy-turvy, disparate world is homogenized into a dense space that overrides the history of the individual objects. Grouped among the remnants, the crocodile, now held in the custody of the awed viewers' curiosity, has lost all touch with its indigenous environment and is accordingly changed.

The anthropologist Nicholas Thomas is especially conscious of this problem of recontextualization in ethnology. His observations on the displacement and isolation of objects collected by the South Seas missionaries, in particular, invite further thoughts about the instability and mutability of memory. In his study of "entangled objects," Thomas remarks on the vacuity of meaning that surrounds a material culture once it becomes separated from

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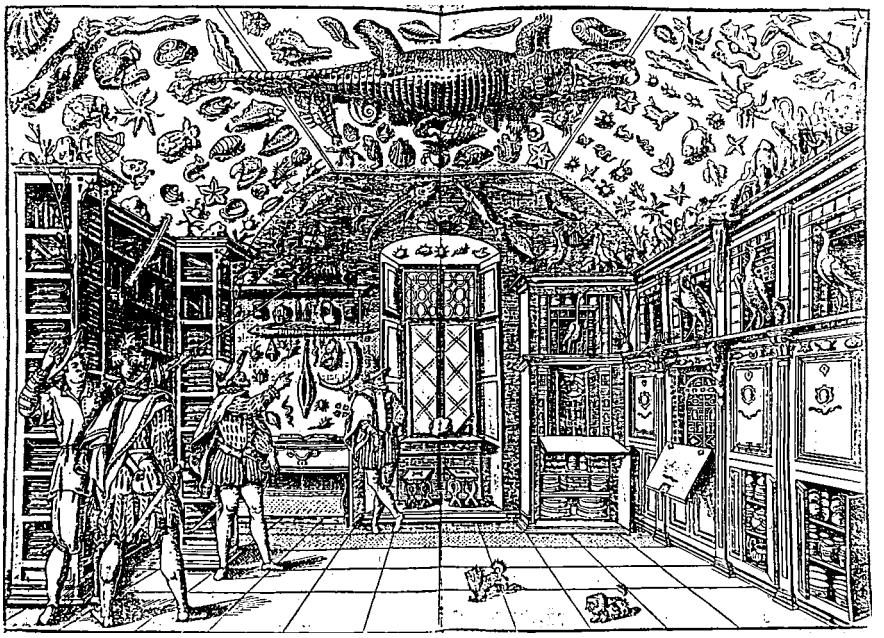


Figure 5. "Ferrante Imperato's Cabinet of Curiosities. Naples, 1599." Illustration from Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor, eds., *The Origin of Museums, the Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeeth-Century Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), plate 4. Courtesy of Clarendon Press.

its indigenous community. In his discussion he suggests that the vague labelling of specimens in missionary cabinets is one example of this emptiness that removes the specimens even further from their surroundings. To describe a Samoan spear as "a curious spear, whereon a curious face was carved in the grotesque manner" (131) leaves room for almost infinite ambiguity and creates spaces into which crowd the cultural, emotional, and political interests of those who now look upon them and hold them in their power. The lack of specificity makes room for others to step in and appropriate the contents for their own ends. Within this context, it becomes even easier to understand how the missionaries looked at the idols. In their official publication they transformed and refigured these sacred items and implements into commodities (when they sold their spoils to raise money for their missionary work), into structural pieces (when they used the spears to construct balustrades for staircases), into terrifying images to demonstrate the ugliness of heathenism, into trophies to show off their successes, and by mid-century into legitimate anthropological pieces as well as into meaningless, silly entities to illustrate how frivolous the former traditional worship had been.

Bereft of their native surroundings, many such objects in the museum fell prey to missionary propaganda and forfeited what was left of their ethnographic reality. In the case of Stevenson's mother, Margaret Stevenson, who was an avid supporter of the missionary cause, these curios seem to have lost their indigenous meaning and to exist primarily for the lessons they could teach about the valuable contributions of Christianity. In her 1890 diary, written upon her return to Edinburgh from Samoa, these artifacts have become nothing but "things": On January 29, 1890, she records: "St. Marks party. Etta & I showed some of the

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South Sea things" (Beinecke #7304). In other cases, these "things" were to become even more immersed in the missionary enterprise and its shifting requirements. Many years later, for instance, when some of the curios were exhibited at the "Isles of the Sea" exhibitions and pageants (held at the Queen Street Congregational Church in Wolverhampton, 1921 and at the New Town Hall, Lewisham, 1933), they were shown for their "glamour" (LMS Archives) and children in Sunday Schools were instructed on how to make plasticene models of the idols once thought to be untouchable. The earlier idea of horrid and disgusting idols has vanished under the protective clothing of a benign paternalism. In other people's hands, these idols went through more extreme metamorphoses. Stevenson's acquaintances Charles Warren Stoddard turned the idols into homo-erotic appendages for his "baby cannibal" (his young male lover in his story "My South-Sea Show" Figure 6), and H. J. Moors used them to decorate the South Seas exhibit (mainly an exotic display of dancing) at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair.

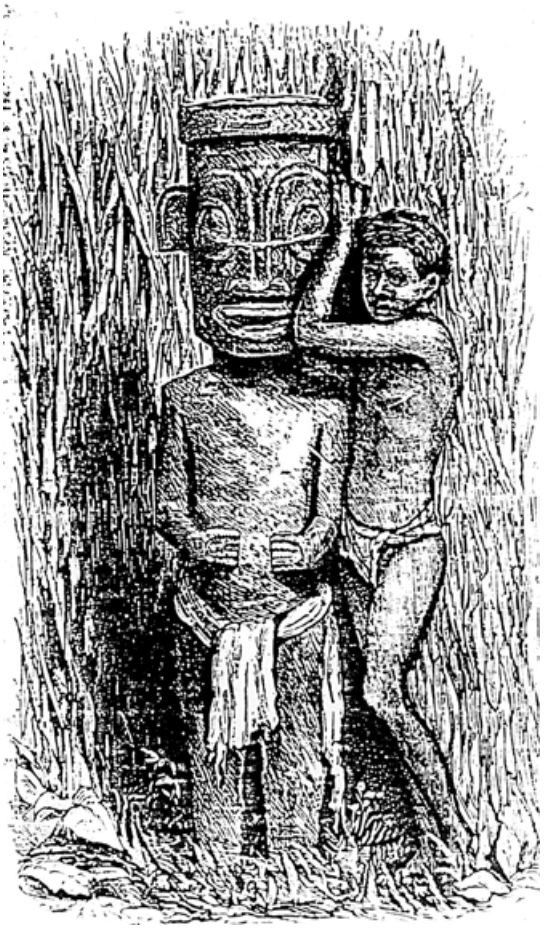


Figure 6. Wallis McKay, "Niga and His Creed." Illustration from Charles Warren Stoddard, *Summer Cruising in the South Seas* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1881), frontispiece.

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Through these examples one can readily understand why Thomas, thinking about this series of transformations, insists that objects are not solid entities, that objects change in defiance of their material stability. Although artifacts may remain the same in appearance, the plethora of shifting meanings attached to them continually alters their significance. The implications for memory are important. Through the example, one more fully appreciates the reality that conscious memory is not a stable entity either. It is, as Frederic C. Bartlett suggests, a living, developing, and "complex expression of the life of the moment" (214). Like the artifacts, it gets caught by a current of mutability; it too gets swept away into the whirlpools created by its alienation and, in turn, falls under the influence of the circulating present with its social and institutional needs that destroy or alter the structure of the original story. A recollection might superficially remain intact and give a false impression of longevity, but, as common sense instructs, it too is subject to retrospective constructions that deviate from the initial experience. Depending on the pressing demands of its new and various surroundings, what was marginal comes forward, what was singular converts to the plural, what was prominent seeks absence, what was elsewhere joins in, what was painful ripens into sweetness, what was facile grows still easier, what was simple turns more complex, and what was opaque becomes lucid. All depends upon who is subsidizing the recollection. In this sense, a conscious recollection is as much of a commodity as the curios collected by the missionaries; it is an item marketed by the circumstances of the present and the power of retrospect.

Memory and the Problem of Identity

THE WAY CURIOS AND RECOLLECTIONS are perceived influences how one discerns the identity or culture of a person. When the recollections mutate, so does an understanding of an individual's or a culture's nature. But no matter what the understanding, gatherings of recollections imperfectly define the individual or the society; selections of memories do not fully replicate a person's being. Just as the pilfered objects insufficiently represent South Seas societies, these transformed vestiges of the past will always be, in some way, inadequate and misleading.

Individuals conscious of the power of memory to create an identity are often aware of the way others, like the missionaries, plunder their culture – their past – and exploit it for their own purposes. As a result, in an effort to please or to win approval, individuals start manufacturing idols of memory for others to see or use. They fabricate, embellish, or restructure their recollections in order to pander to the pleasure, curiosity, and predilections of others. Coming from England to the United States, as I did, at the age of thirteen, I found myself conforming (because I wanted acceptance) to what those in my new surroundings thought about my land. They believed, I thought, that people from my country are supposed to be smart, polite, and reserved, so I found and still do find myself adopting that persona and recalling moments that subscribe to these prescribed qualities. Furthermore, I catch myself reinterpreting and transforming other memories so that they may display the features that others say they should. As a consequence, the actual photograph of myself as a seven-year-old child gripping the hand of a visiting refugee from Czechoslovakia, becomes, in my own present recollection, nothing but a discreet, mannered handshake. I alter and compromise, even subjectively, what was originally there.

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This kind of response brings to mind the inhabitants of New Guinea who, at the turn of this century, began making false shrunken heads for tourists and anthropologists intent on exhibiting them; the Samoans who started weaving mats and ornamenting clubs for the curious and acquisitive traveller to take home; and the residents of Fiji who produced "cannibal forks" for nineteenth-century collectors. (Thomas reminds his readers that Partington in the late 1880s warned that "special care" was needed to be exercised in buying forks, for when he was in Fiji "they were being made by white men for sale to travellers" [167].) These manufactured pieces of material culture do not possess the true dimensions of the original item; they are a forgery or a *trompe l'oeil*. Like aestheticized recollections narrated or exhibited before an audience, they take their cue from the expectations of the receiver. They portray a compromised history. In this way, the past finds itself trapped within an insidious cultural exchange and sacrificing what integrity it ever had.

The exchange is insidious because, once again, it compromises memory and, worse, because it causes memory to alienate the individual from him or herself (as I became separated from the boldness of my youth). One is left to cope with the disturbing probability that memory not only emerges from but also creates alienation. Those who might like to think that their memories are what designate the integrity of their being run the risk of being betrayed by the mutability of those recollections structuring their identity and by the fact that many of their remembrances are constructs determined by outsiders and conventions, rather than by themselves. This circumstance makes it difficult to entertain Hume's suggestion that identity of the self is a construct of one's own acts of retrospection that seem to show relations of cause and effect, and, in such a way, reveal a unity, for, according to what has been suggested, identity does not belong to the individual; it is largely in the possession of others, or at best fashioned in an exchange.[8] Consequently, like the curios in the missionary collections, people, whether the South Sea islanders or ourselves, find themselves held in custody and placed in museums curated by others' desires and perceptions. In this sense, memory works against the ideal of itself, for it does not always do either what it promises or what one thinks it should. Instead of holding the past in some kind of uninterrupted, uncontaminated state, it undoes the ideal by faltering under the influence of the present. Contrary to what people might wish, memory is not completely committed to preserving the past. As the analogy between the missionary collections and conscious recollection instructs, it partakes in a strange paradox. In the manner recalling the procedures of the LMS missionaries in the South Seas, remembrance not only preserves elements from the past but also simultaneously annihilates, through forgetfulness and alteration, what surrounds those images. As the example of these missionaries' efforts and the history of their collections illustrate, conscious recollections in the colony of memory move from place to place, mutate, and betray their origins and the people whose continuity they were once supposed to guarantee. St. Augustine's metaphor of the vast cloister of memory with cells into which fit particular pristine pieces of the past waiting for the individual's summons is not always appropriate. Memory cannot always be a sanctuary, for others force their way in and plunder its images. They violate the images' shapes and distort their meanings for their own pleasures. We are not the only ones who control our remembrances.

Robert Louis Stevenson and the Colony of Memory

WITH THESE REFLECTIONS IN MIND, it is interesting to turn to Stevenson's experience of memory. The context of his friendship with the LMS missionaries in Samoa offers an

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opportunity to consider how his thoughts about recollection conform to what I have suggested concerning the alienating character and mutability of remembrance. This comparison isolates the idiosyncracies of his understanding and reinforces one's awareness of memory's role as a shaping force of fiction.

Memory and Alienation

OBVIOUSLY MANY OF STEVENSON'S memories shared a berth with loss, for they depended upon his absence/his alienation from home and his sense of himself as an outsider among his new surroundings. Having first sailed away from Scotland in 1879, then again in the late 1880s, Stevenson, "exiled" in Samoa, found himself intermittently swamped by remembrances of his past. These poignant moments led him away from his barefooted life and out of the entangled tropical plants and trees approaching Vailima (his house in Samoa) and transported him back to the Highlands, to the sounds of old acquaintances' voices, to the familiar rooms of his childhood, and to the maze of intersecting streets in Edinburgh. In the South Seas, especially when writing about the history and the landscape of home, he consciously sought to resurrect these memories by writing to Charles Baxter to request books, maps, or pictures that would prompt his memory. And sometimes, sitting at his desk in Samoa, he re-entered a dialogue with his friend and editor Sidney Colvin by looking up at Colvin's portrait hanging on the wall and letting the image's frown reproach him and his work. But these consecrated memories of people and places belonging to his past also stood before him without any prompting. Recollections flashed spontaneously into his mind and for that moment overwhelmed him so that he was no longer in the South Seas but suddenly, without warning, standing on Princes Street in Edinburgh or once more listening to a brook winding its way and tumbling over stones.

These memories, however, whether conscious or spontaneous, did not dictate the nature of all his work, for during his six years on the islands, in addition to finishing up *The Master of Ballantrae*, starting *Weir of Hermiston* and *St. Ives*, and writing a history of both Scotland and his family, he was also actively thinking and writing about the culture, history, and traditions of the people he now lived and traveled among. When he was writing about the South Seas, Stevenson, like the anthropologists, frequently sought support from the LMS missionaries, who having lived longer than he in these surroundings, possessed an invaluable expertise. They gave him information, assisted him with various Polynesian languages, introduced him to people, and, as friends, offered him their perspective on his subject.

In the South Seas is one project that benefited from the missionaries' help. As those familiar with this book know, for many years Stevenson struggled trying to compose what began as a serious, "semi-anthropological" study of the region. He worked and re-worked its chapters, agonized over its structure, and dealt with (and seems finally to have given in to) the displeasure of his wife and his editor who were afraid that the book was not entertaining enough – not anecdotal enough, "a sort of scientific and historical impersonal thing" – and who thought it an inappropriate waste of his time (*Letters* 6: 303). Because Stevenson wanted the pages faithfully to represent the people he met, he feared propagating errors. Not wanting to be like the voyager who during the first week in a new place amasses falsehoods and then leaves "homeward bound and vomiting in a stateroom," Stevenson fretted that he had not enough time to study these islands properly and thought it "pitiful, to come here an ignorant elderly ass and glance at them for [a] quarter of an hour out of a ship" (213). He longed

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to address the very ethnographic and historical questions that preoccupied Whitmee, Gill, Chalmers, Newell, and Taylor about the origins of Polynesian peoples; like these missionaries he wished to learn the languages and dialects, understand the meanings of burial customs, and consider the pressing "questions of race and civilisation" (213). As if working in parallel with them, Stevenson spent hours, days, and months gathering legends, ballads, and traditional songs, many of which he attempted to translate. He also read scientific pamphlets, natural histories, and studies on the depopulation of the Marquesans. In the end, with the help of not only the missionaries but also native informants and white traders, he accumulated what he referred to as "a mass of stuff" and found himself, as a consequence, "staggering" under the weight of his research (8: 29).

Allowing for obvious discrepancies, Stevenson's massive assembling of information takes one back to these missionaries' enthusiastic, if not zealous, amassing of ethnographic data. There is, however, one significant distinction that reveals a difference in the composition of his and the missionaries' stocks of memory. In Stevenson's ethnologic materials there were no objects, no specimens from the islands' material culture. Unlike the missionaries who had and were still gathering a plethora of implements, clothing, hair, and models of canoes to send home, Stevenson was not interested in collecting such artifacts. Indeed he seems to have been annoyed with those who did. He especially disliked the missionary's habit of accumulating bits of the material culture, so much so that in one of his South Sea stories, he criticized a rather dull and insensitive missionary by referring to him as the "one that loved curios" ("Something in It" 255). Although he sent a few artifacts home as gifts to relatives – two mother-of-pearl shells to his cousin, Lady Kyllacky and Samoan fish hooks to others – and somewhat reluctantly, yet persistently, bargained for a sorcerer's basket which he sent to an eager Andrew Lang, Stevenson rarely felt compelled to acquire a curio from the islands he visited. His impatience with and his sense of the irrelevance of these South Seas trophies are bitingly clear in a July 1890 letter he wrote at sea between Ellice Island and New Caledonia.

> The ship [*Janet Nicoll*] wallows deep with barbaric trumpery collected by Mrs Stevenson [Fanny], twopenny spears are triced up in the rigging; whenever the ship rolls, I look to have a shark's tooth scimitar discharged upon my dead head; and as I walk about the cabin dictating to Lloyd [his stepson], my path is impeded by a Manikiki drum, vainly sprinkled on the outside with buhac powder, but supposed internally to be one clotted bolus of cockroaches. (6: 396)

Stevenson was not to be a John Williams sailing triumphantly to shore in a boat that ostentatiously exhibited his spoils. This difference between the missionaries' impulse to collect the material culture and Stevenson's unwillingness to do so emerges in part from the placement of his memory in the South Seas. It reflects his own sense of the crisis of memory. Living thousands of miles away from home and residing where a letter took seven weeks to come from Edinburgh to Samoa via Sydney, Stevenson's colony of remembrances was, naturally, primarily inhabited with recollections of the people and places he had left behind and replete with images he would not have liked to see vanish from his internal sight. Keeping these vestiges alive and together was for him a more pressing need than assembling and preserving material artifacts representing the traditions of his current surroundings. The result is that rather than being interested in collecting curios from his travels in Polynesia, he went to extraordinary lengths to fill his house in Samoa with the material culture belonging to his life in Scotland and England. In 1891 he arranged for shipments of his massive library,

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his Piranesi etchings, his Hogarths (reputed), two or three of his cousin Robert's paintings, Sir George Reid's portrait of Thomas Stevenson, a plaster group by Rodin, and his pictures from Skerryvore (his house in England). With the aid of his stepson Lloyd, who was sent home to select items and find a shipping company, Stevenson also had the furniture, china, silver, cutlery, and glassware from Heriot Row (the family house in Edinburgh) and Skerryvore packed and sent to Samoa. He even went to the trouble of transporting the contents of the wine cellar at Heriot Row. A year later, still gathering these curios from his past, Stevenson wrote to his friend Adelaide Boodle to inquire if she knew the whereabouts of a lantern belonging to the lighthouse (evidently a miniature one) that had stood on the porch at Skerryvore. He complained, "For some inscrutable reason, Lloyd chose to leave it behind and we have the bare tower which is far from ornamental and the reverse of useful. If by any accident you can lay hands on it, do please communicate with [Charles] Baxter who will see it sent to Samoa." As if pleading, Stevenson concluded, "even if incomplete let us have the remains" (7: 355). He understood that "the remains" are all memory requires, particularly in the context of another country. Like the curios sent to the LMS Museum and like recollections in a foreign land, these assembled vestiges bumped into the incongruities of an alien setting. Yet, there was a difference, for they were protected by those who had known and lived among them in the past.

The Mutability of Memory

NOT ALL THE ITEMS, HOWEVER, arrived in one piece. The objects shipped to Samoa either suffered damage or were ripped apart and reassembled for other purposes. First, the china arrived, and "though, alas! a good deal had been broken," it still cheered their "hearts to see the 'home-things"' about them once more (*Letters from Samoa* 64–65). Stevenson was distressed over the condition of his library, especially his collection of fifteenth-century French history from which sheets and boards had been torn, like waste paper, to use as packaging material. Other older books had been stuffed in corners to steady chest of drawers within a shipping crate. As Stevenson wryly remarked, "My library is arriving piecemeal" (*Letters* 7: 121). Almost resembling the idols broken apart and sometimes reassembled by the missionaries, these damaged books had been appropriated by others and put to new uses. Even the volumes that had not been damaged during shipment were threatened, for they now faced the debilitating humidity of their new, tropical home. In an attempt to protect them – to prevent the memories embedded within them from being devoured by some alien presence – Stevenson's mother set about varnishing their covers. She hoped the coating would deter not only the damp but also the paper-eating, burrowing insects eager to consume these vestiges of the past and home. Their fate reminds one that like the Manikiki drums Fanny took on board the *Janet Nicoll*, any object from the past, no matter what the circumstances, once removed from its original context, carries within its core a mass of cockroaches – clots of deterioration – that endanger the permanence of the thing and, worse, threaten to destroy the center of its significance. The incongruous companions, destruction and preservation, cling to memory.

Stevenson's sense of the vulnerability of these remnants and his consciousness of the vagaries of remembrance do not surface, though, in his writing about Scotland, for those essays and novels, composed in the South Seas, emerge from a sanctified repository exempt from time and circumstance. Contrary to what I have suggested about the experience of

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recollection, Stevenson's memories of home are unusually stable: certainly more so than those of the rest of us. As a result, they transport him, as if on a magic carpet (see *The Ebb-Tide*), back to the shores, streets, lowlands, and highlands of home. They are the record of a retrospective eye that creates a present of the past by being blind to the spaces and alterations inherent in memory. These remembrances do seem to reside in St. Augustine's sanctuary, for Stevenson can reach in to gather what he needs and then put it back for another time. He might alter what he takes for his fiction, but all returns as it had been. The treasure house of his Scottish memories is a safe place; little vanishes because the pristine memories wait protected in their cells for Stevenson to beckon them. Of course, when his recollections appear in print, others might appropriate or adapt them. But none of that activity seems to intrude upon Stevenson's sense of his own past.

Paradoxically, the point at which one discovers Stevenson's appreciation of the mutability and vagaries of memory is when he sets aside his nostalgia and reflects on the present condition of life in the South Seas. In these moments his eager eye shoots forward, like a voyager's telescope, to catch a glimpse of what awaits him on the shores of the moment. There is no looking back; instead, there is an immersion in the infidelities and convulsions of the present that jumbles and confuses the past. As he had done in his youthful *An Inland Voyage* (1878), rather than looking at the door for the figure that is gone, Stevenson, enthralled by where he is, waits to see what will enter.

The present that fascinates Stevenson is an unstable one; therefore, in his fiction and prose about the South Seas, he concentrates on episodes of transition. He dwells on those occasions where one culture or group intrudes upon or intersects with another and disrupts memories and the seeming continuity of the past. Novels like *The Ebb-Tide* and *The Wrecker* (both written with his stepson), stories like "The Beach of Falesá" and "Something in It," his *In the South Seas*, and his study of the colonial and civil wars in Samoa (*A Footnote to History*) explore the diverse forms of encounter among traders, sailors, missionaries, beachcombers, colonial officials, Chinese servants, "black boys" (*In the South Seas* 5), German, British, and American officers, and the indigenous populations. From its very opening *The Ebb-Tide* immerses the reader in the midst of a group of dissolute Europeans living in Tahiti who manifest an awkward and clashing intertexture of cultures: they dress like natives, yet retain "some foreign element of gait or attitude"; sprawled on palm-leaf verandahs, they "entertain an island audience with memoirs of the music-hall" (123). Jumbling bits and pieces of their present and past, these beachcombers present a confusing, jarring picture.

In a similar manner, the first chapter of "The Beach of Falesá" places the reader at the scene of Mr. Wiltshire's arrival on an island where this white trader will clash with and alter the lives of other European traders, the natives, and himself. Throughout *In the South Seas* Stevenson takes his reader with him as he attends to sounds and images that represent this intermingling and that vividly illustrate the transitory state of these archipelagos. He listens to the natives speaking the pidgin language "Beach-la-Mar" and hears them communicating among themselves through a version of a French-English or a "scraped up" English (10) – Stevenson's eye glances at palaces built of "imported wood upon a European plan," a modern lamp and a sewing machine in a native dwelling in the Marquesas, a cricket game played on a Samoan beach, the confused dress of a converted high chief (he wears western women's garments, his own attire, and epaulets of a European officer), and the suffering of a native army parading in misfitting European shoes and carrying

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European arms. As part of his preoccupation with these confusing cultural exchanges, Stevenson was also drawn to the sight of King Tembinok's collections of foreign curiosities: "clocks, musical boxes, blue spectacles, umbrellas, knitted waistcoats, bolts of stuff, tools, rifles, fowling-pieces, medicines, European foods, sewing-machines, and, what is more extraordinary, stoves" (213) – an exquisite version and reversal of the European cabinets of curiosities.

Within this shifting context of incongruity, Stevenson was as conscious of change and loss as were his European contemporaries. And, as a consequence, he was as aware as they of a crisis in memory. When visiting the Gilbert Islands, he commented on the particulars of this dilemma: "In the last decade many changes have crept in; women no longer go unclothed till marriage; the widow no longer sleeps at night and goes abroad by day with the skull of her dead husband; and, fire-arms being introduced, the spear and the shark-tooth sword are sold for curiosities. Ten years ago all these things and practices were to be seen in use; yet ten years more, and the old society will have entirely vanished" (*In the South Seas* 156).

Details like these form the backdrop for his South Seas writing. His short story "The Beach of Falesá" is an especially vivid example of his fiction devoted to these changes. Its episodes record how the present is peopled by those who appropriate, contaminate, and qualify the old order of things; the story's events capture the gestures and actions of vanishing memories. The false "marriage" of Mr. Wiltshire, a white trader, and the tabooed Uma is one such moment. Their union is "blessed" by a fabricated and perfidious contract that has nothing to do with indigenous practices and has everything to do with both the missionaries' insistence upon such ceremonies and the traders' corruption of that requirement. The ceremony compromises the memory of both the indigenous and the Christian traditions. But far more provocative examples surface when Wiltshire's rival trader and nemesis, Case, appropriates what was traditional and part of the island's cultural heritage for his own advantage, therefore misrepresenting and compromising the integrity of the past. Case is a forger of memory. Caring only for what profits him, he cleverly manufactures island curios which he sells to those who pass by and leave. As fabricated remnants, these objects have nothing of what Malinowski calls an "ethnological reality"; no part of them touches what they are imitating. When they sail away from the island to distant lands, they disperse misunderstanding and create fictions about the past. But worse is Case's purposeful distortion of the inhabitants' traditional beliefs. Deep in the forest, using magic tricks and "supernatural" devices like an aeolian harp (banjo strings stretched over a wooden box that sound when the wind blows), suspending brightly clothed figures with carved and ugly faces that have teeth and eyes made of shells that could be tugged and made to move, and placing in a dark corner a large shining and smoking face splashed with luminous paint, the corrupt Case institutes what Stevenson calls a "museum" of curiosities (54) to scare and intimidate the natives. His barbarous idols are horrific caricatures of the real thing. Mimicking devils and indigenous spirits of the dead, they clank, radiate, swing, and moan among the leaves and branches so that Case may rule and always have the advantage. In a sense, Case's awful gathering of puppets and tricks is a parody of the LMS Museum during its early years when its collection of South Seas artifacts, with its emphasis on the savage and hideous idols, manipulated alarmed viewers so they would share and promote the official missionary agenda to bring the light of Christianity to those who worshiped these barbaric beings.

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Conclusion

PERHAPS STEVENSON'S character Case represents more the rule than the exception regarding the operation of memory. Not everyone has the alternative of Stevenson's sanctuary of memory – not all of us can dip in and out of memories that remain, untouched, within our minds. We do not have the recourse he enjoyed when thinking about home. Most of us find ourselves tripped up by the compromises and appropriations of the present, and we are left with recollections that are not as true as they once were; we live with memories that have become the fiction of others and that remove us from the very past we wish remembrance would brings us closer to. Therefore, if we cannot find sanctuary in our memory, perhaps we must fabricate it by playing tricks and manufacturing idols and curios to create an illusion of a past and an illusion of an identity and a sense of origin. We have to invent tradition by freely ornamenting our recollections to gain not only some sense of self but also the acceptance of others. Like the individual who recollects episodes to suit the demands of her audience, we embellish and distort what was natural and paint in what was not there. We must hang out those parodies of another time for others to see, or we must walk into the rooms of these collections in an attempt to experience something that resembles what once was. From time to time we find ourselves trapped in our own false colony of memory. The fate of the South Seas curios can be ours.

SUNY College at Buffalo

NOTES

1. Depending on their ideological or economic orientation, nineteenth-century Western commentators blamed this crisis of culture on the intrusive behavior and policies of Europeans traveling in the Pacific regions: whalers, white traders, beachcombers, colonial officials, British, German, and American sailors from the ships-of-war, slave traders, and missionaries, all of whom introduced diseases and many of whom encouraged corruption and intemperance (early on, even the missionaries were accused of driving the natives to drink). In one form or another the increasingly sustained contact with Europeans and the subsequent cultural exchange were culpable.
2. See John Williams's *Narrative of Missionary Enterprises in the South Sea Islands* (50). Also see George Turner's 1876 Diary about his visit to Tahiti, Ellice, and the Gilbert Islands.
3. Rev. Whitmee's map showing the ethnology of Polynesia can be seen in the map room of The Royal Geographical Society, London. The map was published in The Journal of the Anthropological Institute, February 13, 1879.
4. See, for instance, *Journal of the Anthropological Society*, volumes 6–8, 10, and 18 (1877–1899). Also see *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, volume 1 n.s. (1879).
5. In the LMS Archives among Newell's personal papers (Box 9, Folder 2) are the following statements written by Newell concerning the inadequacy of his notes:
   The writer's Samoan experience, and his lack of personal knowledge of Western Polynesia cannot fail to have coloured his observation of the Kingsmill Islanders . . . .
   The following notes are necessarily brief and discursive and partial. The time spent at each Island was largely occupied in Missionary work & would, apart from that fact [,] have been much too brief for detailed enquiry into the origin and history of the peoples occupying this section of the great tropical belt that encircles the earth.
6. In Book X of his *Confessions*, St. Augustine speaks of memory as a storehouse, a treasure-house, of countless images of all kinds. One picks what one chooses and then returns the selected memory to

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its place in storage – to the cloister of memory. Memories can be brought out and called back again. In this way, memory is held in a vast sanctuary, protected until needed again.

7. I am indebted to Professor Regina Groll for pointing out this distinction.
8. See section VI ("Identity") of David Hume's *Treatise on Human Nature* (251–63).

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