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Fanny Van de Grift Stevenson's Short Fiction:  
Gender and Genre in the Late Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination

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## Declaration

This is to certify that that the work contained within has been composed by me and is entirely my own work. No part of this thesis has been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Sections of chapter 2 appear as “Something Wicked Westward Goes: Fanny Van de Grift Stevenson’s Californian Uncanny” in a forthcoming *Humanities* special issue with the theme “Entangled Narratives: History, Gender and the Gothic.”

Signed: Robyn Pritzker

## Abstract

This thesis situates the short fiction of Fanny Van de Grift Stevenson in relation to the canon of late nineteenth century literature, tracing the ways that Stevenson's texts draw from multiple generic traditions and speak to the development of American women's supernatural literature. Using critical theories of the Gothic, the wonder tale, the adventure story, the animal fable, and the local colour story, I explore how the short fictions written by Stevenson between 1875 and 1900 interrogate discourses of anxiety, authority, and identity. Evaluating, in all, thirteen stories, the study distinguishes four central trends in Stevenson's writing and dedicates one chapter to each. Chapter one examines how Stevenson's writing engages with the transatlantic New Woman literary figure and the uncanny spectres of domesticity and public life which plague her. Chapter two focuses on Stevenson's Californian stories, and reads across the layered hauntings and traumas of that region and its inhabitants. Chapter three explores the ways that Stevenson's tales of U.S. imperialism extend the American colonial literary imagination overseas. Finally, chapter four investigates five of Stevenson's wonder tales, three of which I discovered during archival research for this thesis and which have never been published or officially acknowledged in any accounts of Stevenson's life or writing until now. The theoretical frameworks for this thesis include affect theory, approaches from psychoanalysis, postcolonial theory, and critical perspectives on the intersections of the Gothic and American identity. Overall, this study strives to bring attention to the ways in which nation, genre, and identificatory anxieties shape women's literature in this period, by locating Stevenson's writing in relation to other traditions of late nineteenth century women's fiction, rather than understanding her significance in terms of her husband Robert Louis Stevenson, the axis around which her place in history has usually been seen to rotate. Reading the multiple meanings of Stevenson's texts, each chapter brings distinct generic tendencies within turn of the century women's literature into a common narrative. By considering the crucial role this experimental genre work plays in understandings of late nineteenth century literature, this thesis demonstrates the utility of reintegrating work like Stevenson's into mainstream women's literary narratives, and argues for the inclusion of more diverse and lesser-known voices within literary history and criticism.

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## Introduction

### Polyvalence in Nineteenth Century American Women's Writing

Between the years of 1878 and 1899, Fanny Van de Grift Stevenson published nine short stories in magazines including *Belgravia*, *Lippincott's*, *McClure's*, and *Scribner's*. Stevenson wrote Gothic tales of ghosts, otherworldly realms, and the traumas of femininity, with psychological subtexts regarding identity, loss, and death. Stevenson's work was influenced in content by her experiences raising children in mining camps, and in context by her global travels and affiliations with various authors. She does not qualify as a "forgotten voice" of women's literary history, as virtually everything about her life is known through the fact of her marriage to her husband Louis—her writing has simply been left unevaluated. Yet, it is the burden of my argument that her work challenges norms in ways that suggest new potentialities for the American Gothic genre's renegotiation of otherwise rigid boundaries of selfhood.

This thesis focusses on Stevenson's published short fiction, as well as several previously unknown manuscript works which I discovered in the Robert Louis Stevenson Museum in St. Helena, California in October 2016. In this thesis, I recognise Stevenson for the first time within the still critically under-acknowledged tradition of supernatural short stories by women in the nineteenth century United States. Along with returning her textual remains to a resting place amongst the women writers of the late nineteenth century, this thesis argues that the multiple layers of meanings in her work exemplify the type of *difference* which so many feminist American scholars advocate as a basis for future readings of women's literature.

Stevenson's short stories bridge various transatlantic literary movements and styles common in the late nineteenth century, while giving voice to the anxieties of American women. Born in 1840 in Indiana, Stevenson spent her first three decades between the Midwest and the gold and silver mines of the western Frontier, later settling with her first husband, Samuel Osbourne, in post-Gold Rush San Francisco. Their marriage was fraught, and Osbourne was not a stable partner: he was a notorious philanderer who regularly disappeared for weeks at a time, and at one point was presumed dead for several months. Stevenson was often left to raise their three young children, Belle, Lloyd, and Hervey, on her own. She eventually separated from Osbourne, in the mid-1870s, and with her children she set off to study painting in Europe. While living in France, she met Robert Louis Stevenson, whom she married in 1880 after he followed her back to California. The couple moved regularly all across the world to find a climate suitable for his poor health, and eventually they settled in the Pacific Islands. Stevenson

moved back to California after her husband's death, and lived there until her death in 1914. Stevenson's short fictions, like their author, staunchly defy adherence to a single category: the tales will not allow themselves to settle within any one type of generic or narrative form. Though Stevenson published only nine short stories during her life, her extensive diaries, letters, travel journals, scrapbooks and other personal archives—including several further short story manuscripts—reveal her affinity for storytelling.

In this introduction, I first supply an overview of the literary-critical frameworks in which I am positioning Stevenson's stories, followed by some historical contextualisation of American women's place in late nineteenth century literature. The terms and theories of genre, form, and identity which I utilise throughout this thesis include the concepts of polyvalence, domesticity, the American Gothic and its subcategory which I will name the Californian Uncanny, the wonder tale, the anarchy of literary imperialism both within and beyond the borders of the United States, and the power which femininity derives from its own multiplicity. I then provide an overview of existing scholarship on Stevenson, before offering the structure and content of my four central chapters, each of which shows how Stevenson's stories perform ruptures of form, of boundary, of shape, of ideology, even of epistemology. In emphasising the wide array of critical perspectives through which I will read Stevenson's stories, I indicate the possibilities for these texts to transform disparate ideas into complementary narratives.

\* \* \*

Establishing a literary history of the United States which appropriately acknowledges writing by and about white women and people of colour has proven a difficult task, as Toni Morrison, Nina Baym, Annette Kolodny, Audre Lorde, Elizabeth Ammons, Elaine Showalter, Jeffrey Weinstock, and many others have shown through their scholarship. In particular, situating women's writing within previously-established conventions of genre and form shaped through scholarship largely by and about white men is a troublesome project.<sup>1</sup> As Kolodny

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<sup>1</sup> Toni Morrison's *Playing in the Dark* (1993) argues that Gothically-repressed phantoms of Black American identity haunt American fiction, while Nina Baym, across her several works *Feminism and Literary History: New Essays* (1992), *American Women Writers and the Work of History 1790-1860* (1995), *Women Writers of the American West, 1833-1927* (2012) and *Woman's Fiction: A Guide to Novels by and about Women in America, 1820-70* (1993), indicates the depth and breadth of American women's writing, which has often been critically misunderstood or underrepresented. Annette Kolodny's *The Land Before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontiers 1630-1860* (1984) explores the historical construction of a women's American Frontier mythology at odds with the dominant masculinist counterpart. Audre Lorde's collection of essays and speeches, *Sister Outsider* (1984), theorises the multiplicitous nature of identity and the importance of embracing difference as a catalyst for social change, and Elizabeth Ammons, in *Conflicting Stories: American Women Writers at the*

observes, attempting to resituate writing which has been historically left out of literary criticism within the structures which already exist will result “not in integration but in fundamental distortion” (“Integrity” 296). This thesis attempts to avoid such distortion in its analysis of Fanny Van de Grift Stevenson’s short fiction by reworking the frameworks of history, genre, national identity, form, and others in which those works have previously been situated, and building on earlier scholars’ efforts to rebuild and redirect the canon.

Stevenson’s stories have proven difficult to categorise given their fluid movement between genres, and critically studying them necessitates reading across, to name only a few examples, broader theories of American literature, nineteenth century Anglo-American literature, gender theory, theories of the Gothic, and then of the distinct American Gothic, as well as traditions of short stories, especially in the nineteenth century, as written by women. There is an absence of existing material focussing on the specific intersection of these many categories, at which point Stevenson’s stories are located. That is, critical study of Gothic short stories by late nineteenth century American women, as a single category, is still minimal, and is largely focused on the process of recovering that writing from periodicals and collecting new anthologies rather than on theorising it.

Stevenson’s place in history is not accessible through dominant patterns of critical scholarship, such as those studies of nineteenth century American fiction which dedicate most of their time to men, and which almost exclusively feature the white feminine experience as the only authentic one. For example, *A Companion to the American Short Story* (2010) features fourteen chapters on individual men, and six on individual women—the only woman of colour among them being Denise Chávez, whose works were published in the 1970s. This imbalance gives an impression that American women have only occasionally written short fiction, and that American women writers of colour have been virtually nonexistent until recently. Kolodny identifies the implications of such accounts of American literature by imagining the internal monologues of the volumes’ editors: “Since we only have 200 pages for the entire nineteenth century, and since we have to cover the American Renaissance, and since Hawthorne and Melville between them published so many important works that we can’t omit, that doesn’t leave much room for all the rest” (“Integrity” 295). Rather than placing Stevenson within this

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*Turn into the Twentieth Century* (1992) draws on Lorde to argue that American women’s writing—by both women of colour and white women—in that era was characterised by turmoil, contradiction, and a thematic focus on dissonant subjects. Elaine Showalter has assembled comprehensive literary histories of American women’s writing in both *Scribbling Women: Short Stories by 19th Century American Women* (1997) and the groundbreaking *A Jury of Her Peers: American Women Writers from Anne Bradstreet to Annie Proulx* (2009), while Jeffrey Weinstock’s *Scare Tactics: Supernatural Fiction by American Women* (2008) is one of the first sustained analyses of American women’s short fiction with a specifically supernatural focus.

context, the same context which has prevented her work, and the work of women like her, from receiving the recognition it deserves, I position my analysis as part of divergent literary-critical tradition articulated by Lorde, and supported by Sara Ahmed, as well as Baym, Morrison, Ammons, and Kolodny herself.

What all of these feminist scholars hold in common across their critiques is the invocation of difference and polyvalence as productive and even necessary. Polyvalence, as I invoke the term throughout this thesis, indicates multiple purposes, facets, meanings, or functions, which may engage with, coexist neutrally with, or resist each other, but which are always different. In literature, texts which are polyvalent—which have many divergent and sometimes contradictory meanings—may be seen to have no readily accessible thematic or semantic coherence. An interpretive mode which contravenes this perspective, and instead positions polyvalence as valuable and as a way of understanding complex constructs such as identity, is a more productive way of approaching Stevenson’s short fiction. Lorde, in “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House,” argues for a renegotiation of scholarly methodology, and for innovations in perspective through which differences in identity will “be not merely tolerated but seen as a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark like a dialectic” (111). Kolodny and Baym, in a series of essays written from the 1970s to the early 1990s, similarly champion a new type of American literary tradition which might assert “as its central critical category not commonality but *difference*” (Kolodny, “Integrity” 293, emphasis included). This methodology, which Lorde, Baym, and Kolodny together propose, is the one which I have used in reading Stevenson’s tales.

Morrison, in *Playing in the Dark* (1993), also speaks of multiplicity as a necessary consideration for scholars rereading American fiction, and touches on uncanny notions which I incorporate into my understanding of the American Gothic. The “willed scholarly indifference” of those who elide racial distinctions of identity from American literary history, Morrison affirms, parallels the “centuries-long, hysterical blindness to feminist discourse and the way in which women and women’s issues were read (or unread)” (14). In other words, Morrison identifies a connection between scholars’ intentional omission of racial analyses of American literature and the ways in which gender has for hundreds of years been “hysterically” disregarded throughout literary criticism. For American women writers of colour, these two forms of marginalisation become even more profound.

Such contrasts of race and gender issues, as Kimberlé Crenshaw affirms in “Demarginalizing the Intersections of Race and Sex” (1989), results in women of colour—black women specifically—being doubly burdened, facing a “complexit[y] of

compoundedness” (166). This has been a contributing factor to the exclusion of black and indigenous women’s voices in critical readings of American literature, especially in the nineteenth century: the either-or ethos of identity which Crenshaw argues permeates society has been dominant within criticism as well. Though critical perspectives have slowly shifted to include more understandings of these palimpsests of identity since 1989, less work has been done to revisit earlier scholarship, and earlier writing, such as texts by women like Stevenson, who, although she was not a woman of colour, navigated marginal social spaces in a complex way.

In establishing my own critical perspective, I draw on Ahmed’s concept of “desire lines,” which alludes to theories from Lorde and others, and is figured in her study on the personal-made-theoretical, *Living a Feminist Life* (2017). In writing this thesis I have consciously reevaluated my own theoretical practices as Ahmed does. Describing her choice to avoid citing overrepresented theorists such as Freud, Derrida, Lacan, Foucault, Deleuze, and Guattari, Ahmed suggests an alternative framework, through which feminist scholars can create paths by “not following,” by diverging, by differentiating. Ahmed, instead, cites “work that lays out other paths, paths we can call desire lines” (15-16). These other paths offer the means by which to centre voices which are often cast aside or tokenised. I use the concept of the desire line throughout this thesis as a way of hypothesising a reimagined literary criticism of American women’s writing, which includes Stevenson, and which also leaves room for other unacknowledged writers. The desire line is “feminist memory,” and it is a tool through which “we acknowledge our debt to those who came before” (Ahmed 16). Throughout this thesis, I draw my own theoretical desire lines straight through Stevenson’s short fiction, in order to heed these aforementioned calls to future scholars to represent the realities of lived historical experiences.

As this study focuses on a white woman, Stevenson’s case cannot be used to draw conclusions about the way women writers of colour negotiated these same historical literary spaces. As a white scholar, moreover, that privilege inevitably informs my readings, but I seek nonetheless to identify the structures named by Ahmed, Morrison, Lorde, Baym, Kolodny, and others as tools of ongoing scholarly repression and oppression. My desire lines work to recentre the marginalised by featuring theories which illuminate the writing of the marginalised, which may not be the theories which are conventional or expected. My task is still to situate Stevenson within her particular time and place, and to argue for the importance of understanding the specific literary-historical contexts into which her stories might be productively resettled. I therefore use the call to action from the aforementioned scholars as a point of departure, and a

touchstone to which I will eventually return. While this thesis is substantially constituted of close analysis, my research is grounded in the traditions of their feminist memories and the need to illustrate a possible desire line in which textual polyvalence is an essential component, and in which difference is understood to apply to literary identity, genre, and form, as well as to context.

Baym and Kolodny, in asserting why women writers have faced difficulty in achieving scholarly recognition, voice a theory which resonates with Stevenson's particular position as different. Baym argues that the woman writer "has entered literary history as the enemy," and therefore rewriting the narrative is the only solution to reinscribing her ("Melodramas" 130). The critic's task is therefore seeking "what was already in view" ("Scribbling" 4). I take this as a point at which to involve Baym and Kolodny's theory in Stevenson's stories: Stevenson has frequently been considered as a wife, but rarely considered as an author. Her recuperation involves her recovery, but not from obscurity, rather from misunderstanding, because her tales have not fitted into legible frameworks of success or recognition. Stevenson was not a prolific writer, and I do not suggest her to be influential in the same way women Louisa May Alcott or Harriet Beecher Stowe have been, but if part of the responsibility of feminist critics of American literature is to reread what has been available all along, Stevenson becomes an ideal candidate.

There are several concepts which are central to the task of reintegrating Stevenson into literary history: first, the matter of influence; second, the locus of historical criticism; and finally, the idea of "Americanness." On the first point, both Baym and Kolodny ask variations of the question, "how can the popular be anomalous?" (Kolodny, "Integrity" 297). Stevenson was not writing in obscure publications: the magazines in which she published, including *Lippincott's*, *St. Nicholas*, and *Scribner's*, were highly successful, publishing work by, and featuring the editorial labour of, women such as Alcott, Willa Cather, Emma Lazarus, Frances Hodgson Burnett, and many more. Yet, in American literary history, even such successful and well-known women are left out of dominant narratives: as Ammons argues, many twentieth century narratives of American literature begin with Irving and Poe, expand throughout the nineteenth century to include Hawthorne, Emerson, Whitman, Twain, James, sometimes including Dickinson, and then tend to leap over the end of the nineteenth century to World War I (3). The disconnect between names found in literary-critical histories, and those in popular periodicals, particularly in the late nineteenth century, is one tension which begins to answer Kolodny's and Baym's question.

The second point, on the locus of historical criticism, intersects with the first. Both Baym and Kolodny, as well as Teresa Goddu in *Gothic America: Narrative, History, and Nation* (1997), cite Leslie Fiedler's 1960 book *Love and Death in the American Novel* as an example of scholarship which leaves out women—as both writers and characters—through the very nature of its arguments. Baym argues against Fiedler's "warped" reading of women in literature and his assumption, as Baym phrases it, that "all readers are men, [and] that the novel is an act of communication among and about" men ("Melodramas" 134). Indeed, Fiedler asserts that American "classic literature is a literature of horror for boys" (29). The justification for such a claim, Baym postulates, leads to the third point, the construction of Americanness and American forms of interiority. The centrality of the wilderness, and landscape, to early American literature, not only resonates with the prominence of the Gothic mode, but also with the myth of masculinity, or as Baym aptly names it, the "melodrama of beset manhood" (130). Tales such as Stevenson's, as I will demonstrate, problematise the very core of this myth, and thereby threaten hegemonic narratives about American literature.

Positioning the wilderness as the essence of American literary identity is not the crux of such a false myth, but rather, as I will argue throughout this thesis, viewing masculinity as synonymous with the wilderness perpetuates this incomplete equivalency. Through stories such as Stevenson's in which women actively negotiate the boundaries between domesticity and exteriority, nature and civilisation, we can reread the feminine experience of American wilderness as an integral part of the national literary tradition, and reshape the frameworks to fit the desire lines which would, to borrow from Morrison, extend American literature to a "wider landscape" (3). This rereading is fitting because American identity is constructed upon the various repressions of difference which Morrison foregrounds, which I analyse throughout my readings of Stevenson's work.

I will refer back to Baym and Kolodny's ideas throughout this thesis in discussions of the ways that valuing difference and multiplicity—in the form of rewritings of literary traditions—can aid in the formation of new cultural memory and in the revision of literary histories. Kolodny advocates "the avoidance of familiar texts and authors" in order to aid in the "breaking-away from old habits of classification and interpretation" ("Integrity" 303), a call my study of Stevenson's work answers by including additional readings of women's literature in the late nineteenth century. Showalter takes up such an endeavour in several of her books, and I use *A Jury of Her Peers* as a contextualising tool for women's literary history, relying often on Showalter's historicisation to provide context. *A Jury of Her Peers* is the first comprehensive literary history of American women writers in the last 350 years, and stands in

opposition to earlier androcentric accounts such as Fiedler's. Replacing the literary histories which elide white women and people of colour, and charting their divergent experiences, Showalter's study forms the groundwork of new feminist memory, and creates new points of departure. Noting the significant anthologising of women's writing which has emerged in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries which "inevitably makes selections, distinctions, and judgments" (xv), Showalter takes up the cudgels of retheorising and rehistoricising American literary history.

In the same tradition as Showalter, and speaking to the same narratives of valuing difference which act as the guiding parameters for the desire lines of this thesis, Ammons's *Conflicting Stories: American Women Writers at the Turn into the Twentieth Century* offers a more period-specific iteration of the affirmation that reading across, and through, divergent perspectives is the most productive method for reading late-century American women's fiction. I have found especially valuable the foundation Ammons builds for reincorporating previously overlooked literature into literary histories of a period characterised by "[v]ariety—turmoil even" (4). Stevenson's stories align well with the two concerns Ammons foregrounds, namely "radical experimentation with narrative form itself" and "recurrent, complicated themes which ... finally interlock in their shared focus on issues of power" (5). However, while Ammons identifies the latter as often including the breaking of silences around institutional violence, sexual exploitation, and racism—in particular that of white women towards women of colour—and instances of multiple discrimination (5), Stevenson's tales centre more explicitly around themes of authority and anxiety.

Stevenson's tales of wonder and terror also engage with the process of "dissolving polarity" that Ammons identifies as common in other late-century narratives (64). While Ammons does not specifically reference the Gothic genre, her arguments about difference and ambiguity reflect tensions that are also present within the American Gothic mode: "[d]ifference need not be hierarchical, opposites need not be in conflict, polarity need not be the basic principle" (65). Ammons is making a historical argument, but my readings of Stevenson's stories illustrate that Ammons' attestations are germane to the Gothic genre as well.

As this study proceeds, it will be necessary to refine the definitions of the uncanny and the Gothic throughout each chapter, as these concepts irrupt differently in different contexts, and I can therefore only gesture here towards provisional definitions, as an introductory measure. I do, however, offer several theories on which my use of the concepts surrounding the Gothic rests, and, just as I have established the necessity of re-historicising women's literary history, so too do I focus upon historicisation as a crucial component of generic study.

Several critics have written about uncanny historical phenomena impacting the United States, which, though not always centrally concerned with genre conventions of Gothic literature, are nonetheless driven by Gothic motivations. Amy Kaplan and Renée Bergland gesture towards the manifestations of the Gothic mode within literature through more historical and social phenomena, particularly the hauntings and repressions inherent to navigating the borders between interiority and exteriority. The principle they both focus around is the combination of trauma and contradiction inherent to the American imagination borne out of the historical oppressions and repressions of the nation's past, a concept which also lies at the root of more traditional readings of the Gothic. Kaplan's *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture* (2002) and Bergland's *The National Uncanny: Indian Ghosts and American Subjects* (2000) elaborate on the cultural spectres which haunt the imagined identity of the United States from the inside, attempting to break out, and from the outside, seeking to continually press in.

Kaplan and Bergland both investigate the "ghostifying" of American identity which, I argue, is key to reading Stevenson's stories, as these spectralities operate both within the imagined United States, and in the U.S. imagination as it extends itself to external territories. Bergland analyses the internal spectres of American identity from the nation's establishment in the eighteenth century onwards. Detailing the "internalisation of national space," Bergland's study suggests that the traumas of the landscape metamorphose into spectres in the American imagination (4). This is, Bergland asserts, a result of the land being "haunted because it is stolen" (9). The theft, arrogation, and forceful resettlement of the North American continent, the political territory of the United States especially, has led to the virtually unresolvable possession of the (white) American psyche, which is thus always already ghostly.

Kaplan focuses on the turn of the twentieth century, and illustrates similar theories of the "disembodied shades" of expansionism which complicate the imagery of the nation as home. Territories of American empire which extended beyond political borders "blurred the boundaries between the domestic and the foreign," with, in this case, the term "domestic" applying both to the sphere of domesticity as typically governed by femininity, and to the physical space of the interior of the nation (26). Kaplan's significant contributions to the discursive desire line of difference in this thesis include the affirmation that in the (re)construction of a nation, "stereotypes do not simply impose hierarchies ... stereotypes themselves become unstable sites of ambivalence that distort and challenge the bedrock divisions on which they are founded" (14). Those stereotypes include racialised, gendered, classed, and otherwise differentiated identities, and throughout my readings of Stevenson's tales those hierarchies break down in the manner Kaplan suggests. Kaplan's theories, and

Bergland's, offer a way of historicising the rhetoric of American subjectivity in a manner which draws clear connections to the Gothic mode.

The hypotheses of both critics have at their heart an engagement with constructs of Self and Other which also underlie the uncanny. Freud's 1919 essay on the latter phenomena has been a core text of literary criticism on the Gothic for a full century, despite growing acknowledgment of the partiality of his psychoanalytic approach. The definition of the uncanny which this thesis employs is based on Itzhak Benyamini's updated, reformatted conception of the uncanny, inspired by Freud, Jentsch, and Lacan but adapted to more nuanced twenty-first century understandings of gender, psychology, and the importance of difference more generally. Benyamini succinctly explains that uncanniness emerges out of the "opposition of the *known* and the *strange*, to their juxtaposition; it is the uncertainty produced when we are faced with something both known and completely new" (72). Leading away from rigid theories of sexual difference, Benyamini alludes to Donna Haraway's cyborg theory in asserting that the concept of the uncanny "tries to break up the possibility of binary thought about the relation between masculine and feminine," often inspiring a type of anxiety (85). Helpfully, Benyamini also redefines anxiety as the "horrible affect of the insufferable encounter with the unrepresentable Real," an explanation which is strikingly Gothic (84). I draw from these descriptions throughout my analysis of Stevenson's stories as a means of renegotiating some of the taxonomic components of the Gothic, and in doing so I begin to reconstruct certain taxonomies of American literary identity which have traditionally excluded marginalised voices.

Part of my motivation for breaking from specific citation of Freud and Lacan in this thesis leads back to the project's desire lines: it is difficult to apply their theories to texts which diverge from normative discourse, because their ideas are understood to be central to formations *of* that discourse. Kaplan and Bergland both speak to the centrality of blurred boundaries, difference, and ambiguity in American identity and within the collective American psyche. As Bergland asserts, in an "unstable region where meanings shift as cultures encounter each other, the discourse of ghostliness becomes a useful tool for describing the mysterious encounters that take place within it" (67). My task in this thesis is to redraw those obscurities as productive and meaningful, and to indicate the benefits of attending to multiple meanings, rather than seeing them as destructive.

Between Kaplan and Bergland's imagery, a particularly phantasmic American landscape emerges, which Stevenson's texts begin to map out. Terry Castle, in *The Female Thermometer: Eighteenth Century Culture and the Invention of the Uncanny* (1995), refers to

this type of ghostly imagined landscape as a “spectropia” (174). The “anarchy” of the Stevensonian spectropia, as I define it using Kaplan and Bergland’s theories, is one of “internal contradictions, ambiguities, and frayed edges . . . where binary divisions collapse and fractured spaces open” (Kaplan 14). Amongst all of those liminal spaces, hybridised as they are, American subjects must come to terms with the trauma upon which they have constituted themselves.

This kind of American spectropia—or perhaps spectropolis, when the hauntings roam towards the cityscape—depends on an ambiguity between interior and exterior, subject and object, as well as history and the present. Goddu’s *Gothic America*, as I have previously mentioned, identifies such historical tensions within the Gothic mode. Goddu, however, goes a step further by also suggesting the spectrality of the nineteenth century American literary marketplace. Trapped Gothically within historical conventions of literature, struggling to regain agency, women writers in this print cultural spectropia began to participate in a metatextual boundary transgression which I read as relevant to Stevenson’s own experiences of writing the supernatural. Goddu’s arguments historicise the Gothic in order to—convincingly—counter the “national and critical myths that America and its literature *have* no history” (9).

Critiquing the tendency for readings of the Gothic to “imprison” it either within the female psyche or within the domestic sphere (94), Goddu instead situates the Gothic in the public market, dissolving those limitations and allowing the Gothic as written by American women to participate in a subversion of those binary realms: the texts do “expose female entrapment within and rebellion against a patriarchal culture,” but they also reflect “how the anxieties and dislocations of a new commodity culture were mediated through the female body” (94). Therefore, in situating the Gothic as a significant part of both nation-building, through its engagement with national traumas, and developments in print culture in the United States, Goddu subverts the idea that the Gothic is a tool of escapism which “registers [American] culture’s contradictions, presenting a distorted, not a disengaged, version of reality” (3). Reworking understandings of the way women invoked domesticity through Gothic texts, Goddu also argues that the real “horror of the story” is that domesticity is “neither heaven nor hell but a workplace where women are expected to give their labour for free” (121). Stevenson’s tales negotiate the boundaries of the domestic sphere in a similar way, and her characters move between the anxieties of domestic entrapment and the anxieties of historical trauma awaiting American subjects once they move out into the landscape, complicating the idea, and the location, of refuge.

Encounters with the American landscape throughout Stevenson's texts also carry various ecological ramifications, with Kevin Corstorphine's analysis of the "ecogothic" being particularly germane to Stevenson's texts. Building on Allan Lloyd-Smith and others, Corstorphine describes the central characteristic of American Gothic texts as all which renders readers "bewildered" (121). The wilderness thus becomes a "source of both idealism and anxiety" in the search for settlement (120). As I have mentioned, the search for refuge, denied as it is to women who are both oppressed by, and complicit in, the racist patriarchal structures which uphold American identity, is a key concern for Stevenson's characters. Her Californian tales in particular work towards a consideration of the balances and flows of power between those who function as the natural stewards of the land and the "rapacious and resource-hungry developed world" (122). Dawn Keetly and Matthew Wynn Sivils's volume *Ecogothic in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (2017) also speaks to the specific historical consequences of such discourse. Across all theories of the American Gothic, ecological or otherwise, however, almost every spectre is associated with the landscape.

Theories by Laurence Talairach-Vielmas, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Gina Wisker, Marilyn Sanders Mobley, Fred Botting, David Punter, Jarrold E. Hogle and Lucie Armitt are among those which also engage with and inform the desire lines of my conceptualisation of the Gothic throughout this thesis, and within each chapter I introduce specific key theories and terminology which apply specifically to each set of stories. However, there are several recurring constructs which I return to again and again—the revenant theories of my project—including Punter's claim that the "drama of names" or naming constitutes a central focus of the American Gothic ("Dream" 24), Armitt's theory that Gothic young women are constantly in the process of metamorphosing or becoming ("Girl Child" 61), and the emergence in Gothic writing by women of what Mobley terms "the mythic impulse": the use of, and allusion to, "classical myth, fairy tale, and the supernatural" (11). These ideas, to which I will have frequent recourse in my analyses, all indicate the ambiguities of the Gothic genre which, I argue, might only be resolved by a greater reliance on the discourse of polyvalence.

As outlined above, scholarship by Fiedler, as well as by Punter, Corstorphine, Gillian Brown, Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet, and others also foregrounds the tendency of American writing, through the mode of the Gothic, to show an androcentric bias. Given the cultural associations between masculinity and the outdoors through the lens of "exteriority", this characterisation of bias is understandable but incomplete. What I mean to argue throughout this thesis is that American Gothic literature only has an androcentric bias when the only American Gothic literature widely read and acknowledged is by, and about, men. Both

Weinstock, in *Scare Tactics: Supernatural Fiction by American Women* (2008), and Lynette Carpenter and Wendy K. Kolmar, in *Haunting the House of Fiction: Feminist Perspectives on Ghost Stories by American Women* (1991) offer an alternative narrative, one in which women are granted the opportunity to speak for themselves through their own writing. Carpenter and Kolmar focus on the ghost story specifically, rather than the disambiguated supernatural or Gothic, but their acknowledgment of the wider, “relatively unexplored body of women’s work in supernatural fiction” is notable (1). Rather than viewing these American ghost stories as women’s versions of masculine narratives, Carpenter and Kolmar cite Donald A. Ringe and Jessica Amanda Salmonson in situating women writers as part of a transatlantic Anglophone tradition leading back at least as far as Ann Radcliffe (Carpenter and Kolmar 5; Ringe 102; Salmonson x).<sup>2</sup> *Haunting the House of Fiction* also points to the centrality of multiple or blended genres in the production of women’s ghost stories, particularly with respect to local colour fiction, which I explore more thoroughly in chapter 2, as a significant tradition through which women writers explored the paranormal.

What Carpenter and Kolmar label “relatively unexplored” literature, Weinstock, in *Scare Tactics*, calls the “unacknowledged tradition” of women’s supernatural writing from 1850-1930 which “almost escaped notice entirely” (2). Weinstock’s study is the nearest point of comparison for this thesis, and I position Stevenson’s tales as being for the most part congruent with his perspective. However, Weinstock’s work is based around the recovery of a specific tradition, while my project occupies a more ambivalent space between recuperative work and canonically-oriented study: as a well-known, highly scrutinised woman, whose adjacency to the canon has left her stranded in a literary-critical limbo, Stevenson has never quite fitted comfortably into the category of “forgotten” women. Weinstock makes an incisive point that “the implications of acknowledging this tradition” include not only a reconsideration of the American Gothic genre but of American literature in general (2). One of his most salient points is that this kind of writing not only existed, but was prominent, popular, and influential (3). Weinstock’s project poses two overarching questions: first, why American women writers used supernatural techniques, and second, why no one seems to have noticed that they did.

I summarise here some of Weinstock’s most salient points because the patterns within women’s writing which he acknowledges are well embodied by Stevenson’s stories, and thus her stories function as further case studies of his concepts. Moreover, Weinstock presents the

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<sup>2</sup> Salmonson suggests in her introduction to *What Did Miss Darrington See?* (1989) that in British and American periodicals, “as much as seventy percent of the supernatural fiction was the work of women” (x).

most comprehensive picture of Stevenson's literary peers, women writing in the same genre, in the same historical period, within the same national marketplace, against which to hold up her texts. This network of women includes Harriet Prescott Spofford, Alice Cary, Mary Austin, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward, Gertrude Atherton, Mary Noailles Murfree, and more. Most studies of supernatural stories in the nineteenth century focus on the British context, Weinstock affirms, with only an "occasional nod" towards American men such as Poe or Hawthorne, let alone any American women (4). While he comprehensively accounts for scholarship on the Gothic as written by British women, Weinstock argues for new theoretical perspectives to address the reality that the United States "has its own tradition" and the way that American tales are often "profoundly double-voiced" (14). Responding to Weinstock's call, I therefore attempt throughout this thesis not to conflate the Gothic of British women's writing with American women's Gothic without careful distinction.

Weinstock identifies several tendencies within American women's supernatural short fiction which chime with Stevenson's texts. As a caveat, Weinstock does state clearly that the experiences of American women writers were not uniform and varied between Black women, white women, and other multiply burdened women. However, as a first critical generalisation, he sees themes of "confinement, loneliness, and varying forms of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse" as manifesting largely through the "uncanniness of domestic spaces" (21). Alongside these manifestations, women's tales deploy supernatural phenomena to critique the "expanding capitalist system that is shown to underlie gender oppression" (22). In so doing, Weinstock argues, women's writing fights back against the inadequacy of the androcentric Gothic for "representing female anxieties, including anxieties over authorship itself" (23). Identifying a "web of connections" between women writers from the late nineteenth century into the early twentieth, Weinstock points out that "the recurrence of particular feminist themes within their work is not simply coincidental" but rather indicates a commonality, a "shared repertoire of literary conventions" (24). As I move through each chapter, and through the distinct categories of genre and mode within Stevenson's short fiction, I will identify some of these recurrent themes and techniques and thereby argue for Stevenson's place amongst the kind of network Weinstock suggests.

The focus certain critics such as Weinstock and Goddu place on the literary marketplace also illuminates one of my own interventions: my introduction and analysis of several unpublished manuscripts of Stevenson's in this thesis. The inclusion of these unpublished stories allows me to question the distinction between work *written* by American women and

the work *published* by American women, and to affirm the necessity for scholars to return to the archives, and the margins of history, in order to reread what scholars might still be missing.

The periodicals which published Stevenson's stories are not, however, within such margins. *Belgravia*, *St. Nicholas*, *Scribner's*, *Lippincott's*, and *McClure's* were well-known, popular, and successful magazines published and edited by some of the most celebrated British and American authors of the era. *Belgravia* was extremely influential within British culture in particular, as a channel for sensation fiction.<sup>3</sup> The magazine was founded in 1866 by Mary Elizabeth Braddon, author of *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862) and other widely known texts, and her magazine published authors such as Mark Twain, Thomas Hardy, Wilkie Collins, and Arthur Conan Doyle. *Lippincott's* circulated stories by many of the same authors, publishing Conan Doyle's *The Sign of the Four* in February 1890, and Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* five months later. Regular *Scribner's* contributors varied from Stevenson's husband Louis to Rudyard Kipling, John Galsworthy, Edith Wharton, Ernest Hemingway, and F. Scott Fitzgerald. Wharton and Hemingway were even, for a time, employed as *Scribner's* staff writers. *McClure's*, known for its more overtly political focus, boasted Willa Cather as a writer and managing editor.<sup>4</sup> Stevenson's stories were published alongside these famous names and many more, a fact which emphasises the need to include her within critical studies of late nineteenth century writing.

The tales Stevenson published in children's magazines also shared space with distinguished writers. *St. Nicholas*, one such magazine for young people, featured writing by Twain, Kipling, Alcott, Frances Hodgson Burnett, and others. Several children's classics, such as *The Jungle Book* (1894) and *A Little Princess* (1905), began as serials in *St. Nicholas*. The magazine was exceptionally popular, and Susan R. Gannon has argued it was "the finest literary magazine for children ever produced" (153). One aspect of the magazine which has attracted critical attention from scholars of the periodical press was the "St. Nicholas League," a monthly competition for readers' submissions of writing or art whose prizes included cash. Edna St. Vincent Millay won seven poetry awards from *St. Nicholas*, although both F. Scott Fitzgerald and William Faulkner were only awarded honourable mentions. I argue that such details suggest the salience of children's magazines within literary history: *St. Nicholas* was inspiring, informing—and in this case funding—the next generation of storytellers.

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<sup>3</sup> Jennifer Phegley emphasises *Belgravia's* motivation to protect not only the sensation genre, but also women's intellectual independence more generally (149-151).

<sup>4</sup> Amy Ahearn interrogates Cather's role at *McClure's* in her dissertation "Engaging with the Political: Willa Cather, "*McClure's Magazine*", and the Production of National Rhetoric."

Thus, not only was Stevenson publishing in successful journals for adults, but the magazines for children within which she published were extraordinarily popular as well. Both Showalter and Michael Newton have argued for greater recognition of children's fiction and fantasy writing in the nineteenth century, not only because these genres impacted children themselves, but also because such texts were often—more surreptitiously than other modes—vehicles of subversive content for adult readers. In reading, as well as writing, fairy tales or tales of wonder, Newton affirms, “adults dramatize their own wants and dreams, and simultaneously dream themselves back into their own childhood.” Newton further attests to the literary value of fantasy writing, which often provides children with their “first discover[ies] of intertextuality”; the tales are “known, and loved, and mockable, and quickly understood as working in generic terms, according to accepted rules” (xvii). In the late nineteenth century United States, women such as Stevenson were manipulating these accepted rules for the purposes of social commentary, by writing dreams and fables which “acknowledged the bitter disappointments of personal life and literary ambition.” In this way, “hiding subversive material in the category of children's literature was one way to escape censure” (Showalter, *Jury* 237). As I argue throughout this thesis, Stevenson's stories often participate in a similar kind of subversive discourse. Her tales figure such resistance to social conventions through fantastic and uncanny phenomena such as talking dogs, ghosts, wood nymphs, and warlocks, but as in other women's writing, as noted by Showalter and Newton, these supernatural or childish fantasies stand in for very real concerns. Positioning Stevenson's stories in what Weinstock has termed a “web of connections” with other women writers, in this case those women also writing for the periodical press, I argue for the importance of incorporating book historical and print cultural readings of women's writing into literary histories in order to rediscover narratives which have been hiding in plain sight.

Having begun with an overview of my central theoretical concerns, I turn now to a closer investigation of the specific geographic, historical, and generic concerns of this project. Each of the twelve tales I evaluate within this thesis engages with the preoccupations of differentiation and ambiguity, the importance of which to a reconceptualisation of Gothic women's writing is explained above. Ammons, Kaplan, Bergland, Showalter, Morrison, and Lorde, along with many other key theorists whose ideas have shaped my readings, identify difference and differentiation as concepts which have been, but emphatically should not be, as Rosi Braidotti puts it, “poisoned” (4). Both Braidotti and Marina Warner have written extensively on the concept of metamorphosis, although in very different contexts, and both

develop their theories in order to reshape difference as a productive rather than a destructive tool, and a framework that, to incorporate a phrase from Ammons, “need not be hierarchical” (65).<sup>5</sup> These critics represent metamorphosis as a state which conceptualizes difference on a continuum, and which incorporates composite parts within one larger commonality. As Braidotti imagines it, metamorphosis is “a map that draws the trajectory of changes, transformations and becomings” (*Metamorphoses* 10). Warner more prosaically pictures metamorphosis “as divine fantasy, as vital principle of nature, as punishment, as reprieve, as miracle, as cultural dynamic, as effect of historical meetings and clashes, as the difference that lures, as the lost idyll, as time out of time, as a producer of stories and meanings” (*Metamorphoses* 74). Seen in this way, metamorphosis becomes less of a happenstance and more of a system for understanding difference and ambiguity, which is how I apply it to readings of Stevenson’s tales. I argue throughout this thesis that metamorphosis is a central project of self-construction within Stevenson’s stories. Many of her characters must undergo, or resist, various types of metamorphosis in order to fulfil their narrative purposes. These transformations often require a change in, or development of, sympathy with other characters, to whom subjective understanding must be extended.

Braidotti’s definitions are also useful because they acknowledge both physical changes as well as changes in identity and subjectivity. The latter is the “effect of the constant flows or in-between interconnections” of identity (*Metamorphoses* 6-7). It is not stable or linear, but rather a “nonunitary and multilayered vision, as a dynamic and changing entity” (*Nomadic* 5). Understanding identity as having as much metamorphic potential as the physical form of any mythic changeling is essential for understanding the transitions, transformations, and purposeful rather than passive ambiguities around which Stevenson’s tales are focused.

I introduce Warner’s and Braidotti’s concepts of metamorphosis to the specific transformations of uncanny femininity in Gothic texts through Armit’s claim that the Gothic young woman is fixed at a point of “becoming” (61). Applying the idea of a metamorphic femininity to readings of Stevenson’s tales, I suggest that if masculinity is, often, presented in Western cultural texts as a signifier of stability—singular, linear, steadfast—then the kind of splitting, metamorphosis, dissociation and difference associated with the Gothic aligns such qualities with femininity. I see this tendency in Stevenson’s texts as a function of prototypical

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<sup>5</sup> Braidotti’s *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (1994) and *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming* (2002) explore such themes of transformation, while Warner’s *From the Beast to the Blonde: On Fairy Tales and Their Tellers* (1994) and *Fantastic Metamorphoses, Other Worlds* (2002) trace the role of metamorphosis in global fairy tale, myth, and fantasy traditions through history.

forms of nonbinary figuration. Rather than inverting gender, her narratives admix it, positioning masculinity and femininity as imbricating categories, perhaps, with overlaps through which various subjects, regardless of their gender identity, move at various points, usually in response to supernatural forces. My readings of Stevenson's tales demonstrate the way that these metamorphoses often provoke anxiety in feminine subjects because of the uncanny oscillations between what is usual and unusual. Such shifts in identity also implicate the unsteady boundaries between the realms of interiority and exteriority as signifiers of Self and Other.

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From a discussion of theoretical perspectives, I turn now to a consideration of historical ones. Fanny Van de Grift Stevenson has always occupied a metamorphic, ambiguous space in critical and literary historical memory. As Roslyn Jolly notes,

Biographers have presented wildly contrasting portraits of Fanny Stevenson. She was a skilled and devoted nurse who repeatedly saved her husband's life; she was a hypochondriac who selfishly competed with him for the attention given to invalids. She protected him from the social demands made by his London literary circle; she was jealous of the friends of his youth and bachelor days and deliberately set out to alienate him from them. She was a wonderful emotional and professional support; she was a terrible emotional and financial drain. (22)

Yet, in none of the various accounts, positive or negative, of Stevenson's life, is she considered a writer or artist, despite both of those occupations being among her lifelong interests. At most, critics and biographers, including Jolly, Heather Waldroup, and Stevenson's sister, Nellie Van de Grift Sanchez, consider her, at heart, a storyteller. As Waldroup explains in an article about Stevenson's sociological activities, "Stevenson certainly takes pleasure in describing, in the telling of a story ... her life experience gave her a knack for interpreting and explaining narratives around her" (13). My experience of reading Stevenson's letters in her archive bears this out, as her dry wit, and ability to capture captivating anecdotes is clear.

For example, Stevenson notes in a diary entry from 1894 that a guest at their home in Apia, Samoa, had been particularly irritating. Stevenson describes the problematic visitor, "the Frenchman," with her characteristic sarcasm. Though the man may have been "quite clever in many ways," he is reportedly "beyond measure wearisome with long complicated boastful stories about himself, most of them patently false." Though the man calls himself "a dreamer,"

Stevenson muses, “I think him a nightmare.” An entry from several days later recounts the Frenchman telling an improbable story of how he once shot a Jewish man in the back, because his very appearance rendered the Frenchman nervous: the visitor says it was a “very laughable” occurrence. Despite Louis asking Stevenson to promise that she would not show her dislike in front of the man, whom Louis had found “very interesting and amusing,” Stevenson cannot refrain from saying to the man, “I do not believe your story; if I did either you or I should leave this house” (1894). Her letters and diaries are full of such compelling reflections, but have seldom been critically acknowledged, especially those from before the voyage to Samoa.

The extent to which Stevenson has been misrepresented is hinted at by Julia Sun-Joo Lee’s remark that critics “have not been kind to Fanny” (142). Stevenson has been the subject of numerous biographies, including multiple fictionalised accounts of her life, and public awareness of her marriage, travels, and personal life are relatively well-known, particularly to scholars of her husband Louis. Alanna Knight, Nancy Horan, Joseph Farrell, J.C. Furnas, Ian Bell, Claire Harman, Frank McLynn,<sup>6</sup> and Margaret Mackay, to name only a few, have all written biographical accounts of the Stevensons.<sup>7</sup> Mackay in *The Violent Friend* (1968) gives a dynamic picture of Stevenson herself. Memoirs written by both of Stevenson’s surviving children, *This Life I’ve Loved* (1937) and *An Intimate Portrait of RLS by His Stepson* (1924), offer additional perspectives on the Stevenson family at large, and Sanchez has written her sister’s enlightening biography *The Life of Mrs Robert Louis Stevenson* (1920). Collaborative stories written by Stevenson with her husband feature in several other studies such as Lee’s *The American Slave Narrative and the Victorian Novel* (2010), and Kelly Hurley’s *The Gothic Body: Sexuality, Materialism, and Degeneration at the Fin de Siècle* (1996), while Stevenson’s travel writing has been edited and analysed acutely by both Jolly and Waldroup.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Frank McLynn’s view of Stevenson is so highly misogynistic I have declined to include his study in my work other than here, in order to indicate the extent of his hostility. He claimed that Stevenson developed “delusions of grandeur” about her writing, and in marrying her husband, “ruined a young man of great promise” (356; 511). McLynn, meanwhile, asserts that Stevenson drove Louis to his fatal haemorrhage, and finds it “impossible to argue against the thesis that Robert Louis Stevenson was a martyr to the greedy, grasping Osbourne family” (513).

<sup>7</sup> Knight’s *The Passionate Kindness* (1980) and Horan’s *Under the Wide and Starry Sky* (2014) are more dramatised accounts of the marriage between Stevenson and her husband. Joseph Farrell’s *Robert Louis Stevenson in Samoa* focusses largely on Louis but includes a compelling discussion of the Stevenson marriage through the way “selective sympathy” tends to excuse the man “artist-hero” from fault but “deficiencies in his partner are subject to absolute censure” (50). Farrell further notes the way McLynn’s account seems to “plumb depths of dislike which seem to have a pathological basis” (54). J.C. Furnas’s *The Voyage to Windward* (1953), Ian Bell’s *Dreams of Exile* (1992), and Claire Harman’s *Myself and the Other Fellow* (2005), are all centrally concerned with Louis as well, but invite various perspectives on Stevenson which contribute to the polarised understandings of her life and character.

<sup>8</sup> Elsewhere, Anouk Lang and I have presented research on the issues of authorship surrounding not only the Stevensons’ coauthored stories such as *The Dynamiter* (Lang and Pritzker). Stevenson’s sole-authored short stories are also important to consider through the lens of authorship attribution, as the whole family, including

Each of these scholars and writers present wildly different conceptions of how Stevenson impacted those around her. Sanchez, more generously than others, affirms the potential Stevenson displayed in her literary accomplishments, considering that if her sister had not chosen to “devote her time and strength to ... the support and encouragement of others, there is no saying how far she might have gone, for she had an active, creative imagination, and a discriminating, critical judgment of style” (327). In one evocative description, Sanchez calls her a “sort of spiritual X-ray” capable of discerning someone’s character almost immediately (Sanchez 316). Accordingly, “her dislike of deceit and treachery was one of the most strongly marked traits in her character” (321). Sanchez figures Stevenson as containing “many strange contradictions,” and notes that even years into friendships she could reveal some “unexpected contrast” (323). Though old-fashioned, she was adaptable, and once she had the vote, “her family was amused to see her go to the polls and vote and carefully advise the men employed on her place concerning their ballots” (323). Yet all her life she was plagued by “harassing anxieties” (53). She was shy, and she did not like to talk about her own achievements, and would likely never have asserted her right to be considered an author.

This study opposes such biographical readings by being the first to consider Stevenson within the context of late nineteenth century American women writers. Stevenson’s archives comprise boxes on boxes of records held in the National Library of Scotland, the Yale University Library, and the California State Park Archives, as well as the aforementioned independent Robert Louis Stevenson Museum in St. Helena. These resources have been utilised by biographers, but largely untouched by other researchers save for the occasional scholar evaluating her travel writing. However, in her position as a woman who moved in the circles of well-known authors and artists, and lived in a number of different regions, Stevenson’s texts offer the opportunity to do two things: they furnish additional perspectives through which to understand established literary-critical conventions, and they also inform understandings of wider print culture. In the 1850s and 1860s, the two decades immediately preceding the point when Stevenson began to publish her work, the American literary marketplace had become “a battlefield between women and men” (Showalter, *Jury* 72). The domestic novel was the most popular form of American fiction in this period, and this genre’s stylish, highly-wrought writing which has been tied to the so-called cult of domestic womanhood by Dorri Beam in *Style, Gender, and Fantasy in Nineteenth-Century American Women's Writing* (2010) and

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Stevenson’s children Lloyd and Belle, edited and collaborated on writing, but these dynamics of authorship are not the focus of this thesis.

Gillian Brown in *Domestic Individualism: Imagining Self in Nineteenth-Century America* (1990). Evidence of this mode can be found throughout Stevenson's work in depictions of flora, landscape tableaux, and the more ornamental aspects of the natural environment. As women writers found success through such texts and began to further assert their literary influence, the postbellum era of change and political upheaval led to the new "heroine" of women's writing in the 1870s, "the coming woman" who was emancipated and forward thinking (165). Themes of both progressivism and domesticity thus resonate with Stevenson's stories' consistent renegotiation of social *and* subjective constructions of femininity.

In other ways, Stevenson's stories incorporate aspects of the local colour tale, an entanglement between regional fiction and the flourishing midcentury short story which also drew from early journalistic accounts of areas of the United States which were rapidly urbanising. Well-known local colour writers include Caroline Kirkland, Rose Terry Cooke, Sarah Orne Jewett, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, Helen Hunt Jackson, and others who interrogated the kinds of changes in understandings of domesticity through their understandings of specific regional attitudes. Showalter describes the way the local colour story gave women new opportunities to try out narrative fluidity, and by the 1880s American women "specialized in shorter genres," and "envisioned an American literature more inclusive of women's perspectives and more willing to grant legitimacy to women's narratives as part of the great American story" (*Jury* 209). Throughout this thesis, I demonstrate the many ways Stevenson's short fiction participates in the imagining of this inclusive future.

Stevenson's stories all incorporate aspects of the uncanny and the supernatural regardless of the genre to which they ostensibly belong, something which contributes to the imaginative, metamorphic, and ambiguous space they occupy in literary history. Stevenson's childhood reverence for ghost stories, both listening to them and inventing them, was noted by all of her family members (Mackay 22). To emphasise the centrality of the ghost story tradition to her legacy, I note that the only other critical recognition of Stevenson's stories in existing scholarship, until this thesis, is Carpenter and Kolmar's edited *Ghost Stories by British and American Women: A Selected, Annotated Bibliography* (1998), which lists—but does not further engage with—two of Stevenson's stories, "Anne," and "Miss Pringle's Neighbors," as being within that genre. Stevenson's attitude, as well as her supernatural inclinations, made her especially unyielding to the popular, the acceptable, and the conventional. One critic declared her to be a "combination of profound courage, stubbornly-held convictions, and a certain lack of practical perceptions" (Bryson 52). Almost everyone who met her found her unusual, and

her writing reflects that: her characters are compelling, but the particular anxieties, grief, and spectral phenomena creeping across her texts are often profoundly disturbing.

These unconventional qualities are what makes her writing so valuable and worthwhile to include in the canon of nineteenth century American women's writing: her fiction forcefully tests the limits of models and theories of that oeuvre. Indeed, Henry James's letters suggest that Stevenson's unpredictability and fierceness were a key part of what drew him to her.<sup>9</sup> Mackay maintains that Stevenson always appreciated James's novels more ardently than Louis did, probably because "she understood them more deeply under the skin" due to her complicated relationship with her American identity (135). Rumours have long circulated surreptitiously, often conveniently free of citation, that various stories and novels by James, some quite celebrated, took the Stevensons as inspiration for some of his characters: he was reportedly "fascinated" by the Stevensons' marriage, visiting them regularly with his sister Alice, and the two families reportedly admired each other "for qualities opposite to their own" (Mackay 142-144). Whatever the perspective of outsiders, however, Louis described his marriage as "the most successful in the world" (Sanchez 108; Jolly 22). The two regularly collaborated, either on plays, their 1885 volume *The Dynamiter*, or on more daily tasks such as scribing, rewriting, or editing.

There is little evidence in Stevenson's archives about her relationship with her own writerly identity. In her introductions to Louis's volumes and in her letters, she deflects this issue and avoids self-reflection. One brief glimpse into her perspective on the literary market comes in a letter to her mother-in-law, Margaret Stevenson, in March 1881. Stevenson's son Lloyd was under the tuition of several scholars at the time, and Stevenson writes with a great concern for his future, "So far he seems to show no bent for anything more than literature, and that is an uncertain reed to lean upon" (1881.015). The "uncertain reed" of public authorship, however, did not stop Stevenson from writing on her own terms. In her introduction to Stevenson's travel journal *The Cruise of the Janet Nichol*, Jolly draws attention to a letter to Sidney Colvin written in May 1889, in which Stevenson details her frustration with Louis's equivocation in writing a volume on their Pacific travels. Stevenson laments that with her "own feeble hand" she could "write a book that the whole world would jump at" (39). Yet, in Stevenson's own preface to *Janet Nichol*, she declares that the whole diary was "only intended to be a collection of hints to help [her] husband's memory" as he wrote his own accounts (49).

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<sup>9</sup> James wrote to Edmund Gosse on 28 September 1911, "I have treasures of lurid revelations for you, both oral and documented, about Fanny Stevenson ... such as these celibate walls alone may listen to!" (James 1911).

She continues with the warning that “consequently, it frequently happened that incidents given in [her] diary were re-written (to their great betterment), amplified, and used in his.” The tension between Stevenson’s claim in her letter to Colvin and the latter qualifications and modesty, gives some indication of the many sacrifices Stevenson made in her own writing in order to support the literary ambitions of her husband. The image of Louis rewriting and appropriating Stevenson’s experiences as his own is an apt symbol of her literary career on the whole, which has for so long been obscured by her husband’s legacy. This thesis serves to intervene into these imbalances and amplify Stevenson’s own writing for the first time, as part of an under-acknowledged tradition of late nineteenth century women’s writing.

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Thus far I have not offered a set definition of the short story as it pertains to Stevenson’s fiction. This is a conscious choice arising from the divergent nature of the tales. Throughout this thesis, each chapter engages with the short story differently: the first chapter with the late-century tales of the New Woman and the social spectres which haunt her, the second with local colour writing and the ghosts of historical trauma, the third with stories about empire and short adventure tales which diverge in both form and content from other fictions of imperialism, and the fourth with the wonder tale, which has often been considered a form distinct from the typical short story “tradition” although the two share several qualities and tendencies besides length. Every chapter within this thesis handles the short fiction form differently.

However, there are nonetheless a number of critical assertions about the short tale which resonate with Stevenson’s work, and which I offer here as a way of opening up my readings of her stories. In *The Lonely Voice*, Frank O’Connor contends that within the short story there exists “something we do not often find in the novel—an intense awareness of human loneliness” (18). I argue that this loneliness as it manifests itself in Stevenson’s stories leads to an intense awareness of difference, as the spaces between people, and amongst identities, are heightened and dramatised. Kate Krueger also posits a palpable sympathy between subjects within short fiction. For Krueger, the form exposes the “constructed nature of everyday life,” and with that revelation comes a “realisation that can affirm the humanity of characters that extends beyond their prescriptive roles” (5). For women in particular, Krueger argues, the fictive “reclamation of coded social spaces” by women writers becomes a surrogate for the “internal manipulation of systems” which allows room for subversive and dissident activity (5). Though operating differently in different generic contexts, that manipulation—often taking

the form of metamorphosis—can be seen as a common thread running between each of Stevenson’s stories considered here.

Evaluating, in all, twelve stories, this thesis moves through Stevenson’s stories not in a linear but in a cyclical manner. Beginning with supernatural experimentations of individual gendered spaces and relationships, it moves outwards to apply those mediations across the interior of the United States, then eventually overseas, before returning to the interior and imagined realm of the wonder tale to demonstrate how feminine identities might function in a realm free from specific historical and political pressures.

Chapter 1 examines how Stevenson’s writing engages with the transatlantic New Woman literary figure and the uncanny spectres of domesticity and public life which plague her. In this chapter I provide close readings of three stories published in *Scribner’s*, “Miss Pringle’s Neighbors,” published in 1887, “The Nixie,” from 1888, and “Anne,” from 1899. These three stories are the most readily traceable as part of the tradition which Weinstock identifies, and all three demonstrate the possibilities for women writers to fictively evaluate, subvert, and manipulate the traditions of the American Gothic as a form of institutionalised masculinity. I build upon Patricia Murphy’s theories of the New Woman Gothic, applying her ideas to an American context, and also explore the engagement of the characters in these three stories with the discursive boundaries of domesticity: the boundaries between house and garden, or civilisation and nature, are complicated by supernatural phenomena in these tales. Shifting understandings of domesticity as a symbol of interiority in the three stories foregrounds the wonders and mysteries of what might lie beyond.

Blending the house and the garden, and by extension complicating the division between public and private spheres, as well as Self and Other and subject and object, Stevenson’s New Woman Gothic tales, I argue, take up a kind of domestic ecological project which reworks the conventions of gendered space. As the characters work towards, or fail at, establishing bonds of sympathy with those around them, so they become more or less in tune with their natural surroundings, suggesting the possibility for symbiotic intersubjectivity. Such intersubjectivity raises the optimistic possibility that the polarised interior and exterior identities which the New Woman was expected to gracefully navigate can be peacefully negotiated. Supernatural occurrences, rather than standing in for patriarchal oppression, function as a tool through which these New Women attempt to re-exert control over their environments, both internal and external.

Chapter 2 focuses on Stevenson’s Californian stories, and reads across the layered hauntings and traumas of that region and its inhabitants through an analysis of “The Warlock’s

Shadow,” published in 1886 in *Belgravia*, and “Sargent’s Rodeo,” a tale from the January 1880 volume of *Lippincott’s*. These stories extend the range of feminine American identity across the wider landscape, to the edges of the contiguous United States and to California, where it encounters the state’s particular set of hauntings and historical traumas. In this chapter I put forward what I term the Californian Uncanny, as a way of understanding the region’s distinct palimpsest of cultural encounters, settler-colonial violence, and attempts at renewal and resettlement. Kolodny argues for this type of multiply-contextual reading in frontier literary history, although as I will explain, California is not quite the frontier, but rather the point at which the frontier must turn back and face itself. Frontiers, considered as a theoretical construct, are more productive when “viewed as fluid and ongoing, or as a continuously unfolding palimpsest” of both chronology and geography which allow for non-hierarchical exchanges of power (“Obsessions” 9). Drawing from Gloria Anzaldúa, Bergland, Michael Kowalewski, and scholars of the Frontier Gothic and the Settler Gothic, I define the Californian Uncanny through Stevenson’s stories as participating in a regionally specific emergence of historical spectropias.

Such spectropias also align femininity with the wilderness, in a subversion of now-canonical assumptions about androcentrism on the frontiers of the territory of the United States. The multiple forceful Californian recolonisations, first of indigenous nations and subsequently of Spanish-American and mixed communities, contribute to a regional literature which defies linear or singular generic forms. This chapter places the differentiated genres of local colour writing, the Frontier Gothic, and the Sagebrush aesthetic all in the same narrative space, and imbues those three genres with a feminine agency which was atypical of Californian writing, though not entirely absent, as Ida Rae Egli explores in *No Rooms of Their Own* (1991). The Sagebrush school of writing, which “mixed reality with a little western mythology and a bonanza hyperbole,” maintained a “pathos or humor and sometimes an abnormality that was intimately exclusive” to California (xx). Through melodramatic scenes of horror and an uncanny mystification of the landscape, as well as further spatiotemporal ambiguities, Stevenson’s Californian Uncanny questions numerous boundaries and borderlands.

Chapter 3 explores the ways that Stevenson’s tales of U.S. imperialism extend the American colonial literary imagination overseas. Waldroup maintains that Stevenson’s travel narrative, *The Cruise of the Janet Nichol*, sheds “extensive light on the political and social theatre of the Pacific Islands at a key moment in both Island and Western colonial history” (2). However, Stevenson also published two stories set across the Pacific sphere, one an uncanny tale set in Hawai‘i and one an imagined wonder tale set in China. These stories have not been

considered by scholars alongside other investigations of U.S. literary-imperial dynamics, even though they contribute to the textuality of expansionism as the latter is defined by Elleke Boehmer. My evaluation of these texts, then, brings into view Stevenson's globalised view of an American imperial femininity which reaches to the political bounds of the United States and beyond. "Chy Lung, the Chinese Fisherman," published in *St. Nicholas* in 1880, and "The Half-White," published in *Scribner's* in 1891, comprise the focus of this chapter, and throughout I investigate the way these texts implement Gothic and otherwise supernatural conventions and imagery in order to imaginatively test the boundaries of the United States' overseas territories and colonies, such as Hawai'i, as well as the regions in which Americans exercised cultural and economic influence, such as China.

Through manipulations of space and time, and through various literal and metaphorical metamorphoses, Stevenson's tales of American Empire probe the borders of nation, gender, and selfhood. The questions this chapter works to answer are whether Stevenson's stories uphold or confound the axiomatics of American empire, and more specifically, how, where, and why they do so. Likewise, in the instances where these axioms are confounded, what kind of discursive alternatives do the texts offer? The response to these issues is as ambiguous as much of the surrounding critical work on imperial writing: Stevenson's stories neither categorically accept or reject the imperial framework but rather display a deep ambivalence towards it, interrogating it, pushing its boundaries and exploring the contradictory borderlands of American subjectivity.

Drawing on theories from Mary Louise Pratt, Sara Mills, John Eperjesi, Ann Laura Stoler, Katarzyna Ancuta, Kaplan, and others, I evaluate Stevenson's shifting and transitional positionality as both coloniser and also subject of patriarchal imperialism. This tension often emerges through Gothic phenomena which allow feminine subjects to more comfortably occupy multiple realms. Uncanny effects, then, in Stevenson's tales of American empire, provoke discomfort not only because they invoke a general phenomenon of displacement, but also because the context for that displacement is laden with additional cultural trauma. I also invoke Melissa Edmundson's work, in her 2018 volume *Women's Colonial Gothic Writing 1850-1930: Haunted Empire*, in interrogating the extent to which Stevenson's tales might be considered as part of that eponymous category.

Chapter 4 investigates five of Stevenson's wonder tales, three of which I discovered during archival research, pencilled onto pages of a family scrapbook which is undated, though the stories likely date from the late 1870s. Titled "The Grand Borriballoo," "The Hunchback," and "Easy Reading for an Old Bachelor; or, the Ravening Sheep," the tales contribute a wealth

of thematic material to Stevenson's oeuvre.<sup>10</sup> I also include in this chapter readings of Stevenson's published tales "Too Many Birthdays" from an 1878 issue of *St. Nicholas*, and "Under Sentence of the Law: The Story of a Dog", published in 1893 in *McClure's*, both of which foreground questions of authority, anxiety, and paternalistic hegemonies.

I distinguish the wonder tale from the fairy tale through Warner's own definitions, and I further deploy Warner's theories of metamorphosis throughout the chapter as a primary tool for reading these tales. However, I also bring a Gothic critical lens to bear on these often gruesome, anxious, and disturbing stories. Following Warner and Braidotti, I argue that the problems and solutions of metamorphosing identity in a world which often imposes strict limitations and linearity are both wondrous and uncanny. The wonder tales move that struggle for identity from the geographical realm to a psychic and sometimes symbolic one, although they signify very real oppressions and social problems. These fairy tales reconnect to the initial chapter, and draw closed my argument through underlying themes of grief, trauma, entrapment, and conventionality.

Finally, in concluding I position Stevenson's stories within the frameworks of nineteenth century American women's writing, as a part of the tradition out of which modernist innovation grew and evolved. I draw comparisons between protomodernist and early modernist American women writers such as Edith Wharton and Charlotte Perkins Gilman. In finishing my study, I move beyond the argument for Stevenson's rightful placement within the canon, and transition into a demonstration of what can be learned from her stories once she has been relocated there.

My arguments work to bring attention to the ways in which nation, genre, and identificatory anxieties shape women's literature in this period, by locating Stevenson's writing in relation to other traditions of late nineteenth century women's fiction. Reading the multiple meanings of Stevenson's texts, each chapter brings distinct generic tendencies within turn of the century women's literature into a common narrative. By considering the crucial role this experimental genre work plays in understandings of late nineteenth century literature, this thesis demonstrates the utility of reintegrating work like Stevenson's into mainstream women's literary narratives, and argues for the inclusion of more diverse and lesser-known voices within literary history and criticism.

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<sup>10</sup> A fourth manuscript story is located in Stevenson's archive alongside these three, titled "Ah Choon and the Sorcerer" (see Appendix D), but it is clearly an early draft of "Chy Lung, the Chinese Fisherman". I have thus separated my discussion of this tale, as I evaluate the latter story in chapter 3.



## Chapter 1

### “Wicked Heathen Goddess”: The American New Woman Gothic

On May 20<sup>th</sup>, 1885, Fanny Van de Grift Stevenson sent a letter to her mother in law expressing her frustration with the fact that she constantly felt like a comma in her own life, “and a superfluous one at that” (1885.010). This expression has followed Stevenson through the last 130-odd years, representing her unwilling relegation by critics and even friends to being an auxiliary feature of her husband’s literary career. Stevenson’s anxieties about independence and selfhood echo across New Woman fiction of the late nineteenth century, in which the protagonists reject conventional feminine roles and demanded political recognition, and through which polyphonic voices sounded off transatlantically on women’s emancipation from the domestic sphere. Often, as was the case with Vernon Lee, Edith Wharton, Katherine Mansfield, and many others, the sense of social liminality of white women in the period also manifested as ghostly phenomena in fiction.

As explored in Patricia Murphy’s *New Woman Gothic* (2016), there is a sense of the uncanny in many texts of the New Woman era, whether these hauntings are by actual spectres, psychological ones, or the phantoms of the patriarchy. Connecting the Female Gothic tradition as described originally by Ellen Moers in *Literary Women* in 1976, and since reworked by many scholars, to the New Woman novel in Britain, evaluated by Lyn Pykett, Ann Ardis, Angelique Richardson and Chris Willis, Sally Ledger, Ann Heilman, Margaret Beetham, and scores of others, Murphy points out that “the fascinating intersections of the two narratives have rarely been addressed, other than in probing the New Woman as social menace” (1). The New Woman processed “an extensive array of cultural anxieties as she acted as advocate for improved educational, marital, and professional opportunities for her sisters” (1), and Stevenson’s stories certainly do the same, focusing particularly on deconstructing and protesting familial constructs. This chapter reads her short stories “Anne,” “The Nixie,” and “Miss Pringle’s Neighbors”—1899, 1888, and 1887, respectively—predominantly through this lens. Each tale engages with the discourse of normative gender expectations and is suffused with a dry, witty mockery of authoritative men. Drawing from scholarship on New Woman fiction and from multiple theorists of the American Gothic, particularly the American uncanny and its psychoanalytical consequences, I chart Stevenson’s navigation of, and rebellion against, the anxieties of American womanhood through her long-ignored writing.

Several theoretical and critical frameworks developed by scholars in adjacent fields contribute to my analysis of these tales. These include, as mentioned, Murphy's 2016 work, from which I draw significant structural and generic inspiration, but also notably Amy Kaplan's *The Anarchy of Empire* (2002), which illustrates the contradictions and ambiguities—and the consequent chaos and anarchy—of the pull between the domestic and the foreign in the United States in the late nineteenth century. Murphy offers what might be productively seen as a structuralist perspective of the New Woman genre, analysing a set of common tropes and themes, namely blurred boundaries, reimagined conventions, and shifts in villainy. Such themes contribute to the stigmatisation of the self-aware woman, as Murphy argues, and as I will show through Stevenson's stories, those themes return in literature via the New Woman Gothic, in which feminised “anxieties that had been repressed can instead be accorded expression” (Murphy 3). Boundaries and borders are a consistent preoccupation of this genre due to “its dualistic quality; a text can situate the New Woman as either a monstrous aggressor or as a maligned victim ... Gothic motifs illuminate the situation of the late-century woman with her culturally imposed secondary status in multiple realms” (2). I expand on the idea of women's tendency to occupy multiple realms by reading Stevenson's stories as vehicles of an adaptive femininity, showing how “Miss Pringle's Neighbors,” “Anne,” and “The Nixie” all explore the possibilities facing women who refuse to remain within one realm or sphere. Murphy's study is comprehensive and incisive, and displays a significant depth and breadth given the limitations of any one study. Yet, her focus is on the British New Woman, and European Gothic traditions, which diverge in both context and content from the American New Woman Gothic genre, to which Stevenson's stories belong, and which are closely related to the rebellious nature of these three tales.

In this chapter, then, I take Murphy's insights about the British tradition of the New Woman figure, and its associated genres, and readapt them across the Atlantic, and from there still further across the United States towards Stevenson's Californian and Pacific tales, which I will discuss further in subsequent chapters. The “social menace” of empowered and self-aware women has comparable but distinct connotations in the United States, where the “cult of domesticity” (Kaplan 24) reigned supreme in a particular way. Kaplan addresses this issue of domesticity in *The Anarchy of Empire*, but does not focus exclusively on the New Woman figure, choosing rather to examine wider themes and issues of national identity writ large. Engaging with the shifting definitions and symbols of American femininity, Kaplan describes the inherently uncanny aspects of domesticity and the “woman's sphere” in an era in which the United States was obsessed with the boundaries of its own national identity and “homeliness,”

both as related to domesticity in a literal sense, and to the inverse “unhomeliness” of uncanny phenomena.

The suggestion that the New Woman functions as a foil or contrasting figure to the adventurous male hero so prevalent in American fiction in the expansionist era is crucial to my analysis of Stevenson’s stories, because the abrogation of normative gender roles in these short tales is ultimately reliant on those roles being upheld in other places. A productive critical concept which Kaplan suggests is the “double meaning of ‘domestic’ as both the space of the nation and of the familial household”; this domesticity is therefore “inextricably intertwined with shifting notions of ‘foreign’” (18). The relationship between the cult of domesticity on the one hand and the perpetual drive to incorporate more territory into the U.S. domestic landscape reflects the tensions between Self and Other at the heart of the Gothic, and particularly the American Gothic as it reformulated the borders of feminine and masculine space. As Stevenson’s stories depict suspicious neighbours, fantastic gardens, and unclear familial relationships, the idea of the domestic as anything free from corruption is thwarted. How can the domestic sphere ever be stable if the national domestic is constantly in flux? This is the question that Kaplan asks, and to which Stevenson’s stories respond.

Stevenson’s engagement with themes of borderlands in their many forms reinforces the very contradiction Kaplan highlights. “Manifest Domesticity,” as Kaplan labels it, turns “an imperial nation into a home by producing and colonizing specters of the foreign that lurk inside and outside its ever-shifting borders” (50). This haunted U.S. identity is uncanny because it inhabits an unsettled territory, neither domestic nor foreign. American identity, like Stevenson’s work, flouts the expectation that “spatial representations of domesticity and Manifest Destiny” would clarify women’s and men’s spheres by classifying “the home as a bounded and rigidly ordered interior space as opposed to the boundless and undifferentiated space of an infinitely expanding frontier” (25). Rather, the ever-changing and ever-more-fluid categories of masculine and feminine, foreign and domestic, home and abroad, Self and Other, are complicated again and again by Stevenson’s narratives in conjunction with that uncanny American identity which “unsettled the ‘domestic sense’ of the American nation as home and threatened to turn it into a haunted house” (6). Stevenson’s stories, I will argue, go one step further to suggest that women rebuild their own domestic spaces in these liminal areas using their tools of adaptation, honed by years of unwilling acquiescence to an “unsympathetic society” (Murphy 186). Stevenson’s stories utilise the expectations of the Gothic genre to illustrate an anarchic American feminine identity capable of navigating nearly anything.

My study positions Stevenson's renegade New Women at the meeting point of Murphy's genre theory and Kaplan's historicisation, taking these scholars' shared critical paradigms of subjectivity as a lens through which to view the rebellious characters. Though the stories differ in their locations, motivations, and degrees of the uncanny and the supernatural, they centre around shared themes such as the renegotiation of subjective thresholds. The stories feature men as well, rendered equally anxious by the ongoing shifts in authority over various gendered social spaces. In examining "Miss Pringle's Neighbors," "Anne," and "The Nixie," I will deconstruct the various ways Stevenson's stories engage with Gothic and uncanny imagery and tropes, aesthetics and themes, and show how they renegotiate boundaries between the interior and the exterior. The borderlands in Stevenson's tales include those of social, psychological, and supernatural ambiguity, but each suggest a lack of settlement fundamental to the American Gothic and American national identity in the era of expansion. Stevenson's stories, especially when understood not in isolation but rather as integral to critical understandings of American women's writing, express the consequences of women reappropriating their own spectrality to find, or build, a settlement in the interstitium through which they are able to adapt to aspects of both realms, generating new forms of fluid agency.

Analysis of each story includes the tales' preoccupation with refiguring or invalidating spatial, social, or psychic partitions, often those involving families, which results in a reframing of such uncertainties as a source of agency rather than disempowerment. The renegotiation of family structures in other American writing of this era has been helpfully evaluated by Cindy Weinstein in *Family, Kinship, and Sympathy in Nineteenth-Century American Fiction* (2006). Weinstein examines how marriage, adoption, and other non-biological relationships became the ideal of affection by the end of the century, and how these exchanges of influence in kinship bonds subsequently meant that late nineteenth century fiction facilitated a "perpetual questioning of the relation between naming and identity" (186). This idea is also at the heart of the American Gothic, according to David Punter ("Dream" 24), and at the core of Stevenson's stories, in which women are trying to "name," and account for, their identities, the challenges they face, and their positions in society. In Stevenson's stories, this discursive journey through naming, and processing one's community and surroundings, is accompanied by a navigation of a natural environment which prioritises symbiosis and adaptation. In other words, rather than the hegemony of blood relations, the most influential relationships in Stevenson's tales are those of cooperation, sympathy, and the balance between interiority and exteriority, whether through the human body, built structures like houses, natural frameworks like gardens or

forests, or social systems like communities and neighbourhoods. Fluctuations between interior and exterior contribute to the uncanny experiences the characters face in all three works.

Stevenson's writing constructs what I will call a "domestic ecology" to uncouple the historically-bound woman-and-home duality which often underpins the uncanny as a psychoanalytical construct and the Gothic as a genre. Her stories indicate the relevance of "woman plus habitat," a slightly expanded manipulation of the defining image of the Female Gothic, "woman-plus-habitation" (Smith and Wallace 47). Rather than domesticity representing anxieties of *being* a home, as in pregnancy and childbirth, or being *trapped* within a home, as in a claustrophobic marriage, Stevenson's texts suggest it may be the relationship between a woman and her environment that is more prone to hauntings. The quest to "name," as per Punter's terminology, brings in Stevenson's tales a certain geographic and environmental dimension to the navigation of social norms; spaces such as the garden, forest, and field take on specific consequences and become sites of feminine power that are neither fully domesticated nor foreign. All three stories end with various ambiguities between the feminine body and the natural landscape. They all also depend upon the garden or natural landscape to uphold that ambiguity.

Kate Krueger sees a trend in turn of the century women's writing, and in the New Woman narrative, which follows a similar pattern, one which involves "female protagonists surmounting the limitations of their prescribed roles by redefining their literal boundaries" (4). This transformation applies as much to cultural and familial conventions as to generic and architectural ones. As Hogle observes about the Gothic, the genre's "flagrant mixture of different genres and ideologies" both responds to and instigates "conflicts between retrogressive and progressive views of the world" (4), and as such is the ideal breeding ground for the kind of revolution for which the New Woman character can often be seen to long. Throughout analysis of the three stories, I examine how Stevenson's texts manipulate both the New Woman narrative and the Gothic genre in the way Krueger and Hogle suggest, reworking concepts of domestic and foreign, and, analogously, interior and exterior, in order to manifest a third realm of feminine agency defined by its uncanniness.

Though the Gothic and the uncanny are often used interchangeably, as a point of distinction I return to my definition of the latter term from Itzhak Benyamini, that "when the new penetrates and destabilizes the usual and known, it leads to a feeling of disorientation" (71). The Gothic is a genre built upon certain aesthetics and effects, including such experiences of the uncanny. Thus, the uncanny can exist independently of the Gothic, but most, if not all,

Gothic texts employ the uncanny. I invoke the uncanny to signify the destabilisation between usual and unusual which provokes such anxiety.

Allan Lloyd-Smith has also defined a specifically American uncanny which I repeatedly invoke because of its striking imagery. In his understanding, the uncanny is “simply a reading-effect in which the perhaps inevitable disjunction between words and things produces a space of ambiguity in meaning and affect” (29). Ultimately, “the uncanny itself does not exist,” but is rather “at most an effect caused by a sidelong look, something seen out of the corner of the eye” (ix). As Benyamini and Lloyd-Smith both assert, the uncanny relies on the break between identity and the unidentified, and on changing understandings of identity over time, particularly the breakdown of various binaries in categories of selfhood. Such a breakdown requires scholars to continue to reevaluate and reinterpret the possibility that the uncanny signals the fallibility of the binaries and other rigid distinctions that structure social relations.

Representations of the New Woman also exhibit such concerns about liberation from past repressions and navigations of the spaces between the usual and the unusual. Fiction in this category is characterised by “strong heroines who rebel against the limitations placed on their lives and demand the same education and economic opportunities as men enjoy” (Nelson 1). Yet, because of their American context, there is a sense of ambiguity within Stevenson’s stories over the motivations of this renegade, rebellious persona. Divergence from conventional femininity and domesticity is attributable both to life in the American West, which shaped Stevenson’s experience of both constructs, and to the shifts associated with urban centres and political commentary, which tend to be associated with New Womanhood. Texts of the American West, in addition to negotiating the dynamics of femininity, also involve the many competing histories and identities struggling for autonomy on the frontier and the less obvious distinctions between home and environment in a space such as, for example, the mining camp. Either way, the revolutionary spirit Stevenson developed during her years on the frontier interlocks with the “social nonconformity” typical of New Woman characters (Showalter, *Jury* 210), seen in the work of comparable writers such as Kate Chopin, Charlotte Perkins Gilman—who also lived in California—Gertrude Atherton, and Alice Dunbar-Nelson as they strove to “write a fully emancipated fiction” (237). Often, as in Stevenson’s stories, this struggle for various types of enfranchisement manifested itself through new forms of hybrid writing combining traditionally feminised forms such as fables with Gothic aesthetics and “disturbing content”, which served as potent metaphors for the frustration women felt in being trapped within domestic spheres or being confined to limited literary spaces.

Stevenson's texts reflect the severe uncanny anxiety between familiarity and unfamiliarity noted by Lloyd-Smith, Benyamini, and Murphy, as well as the inconsistencies between the domestic and the foreign which Kaplan identifies as characteristic of narratives of the late nineteenth century United States. As New Woman tales, these short fictions embrace the myriad of diverse ways in which women can participate in society and claim their own identities within the interstices between the domestic and foreign spheres. Bringing together the uncanny dissociations of American identity with the New Woman narrative, then, I note that the American Gothic genre has often been especially concerned with issues of self-construction. Since Washington Irving's short stories of the early nineteenth century, the American Gothic has employed the supernatural "to establish a kind of mythology for a newly established country, populating the landscape with invented spirits of white, European America" (Weinstock, "Monsters" 47). For David Punter, those spirits are also constantly in dialogue with concerns over "naming, rootlessness, the wilderness, [and] past signifying systems" ("Dream" 27). The American Gothic has thus always been plagued by ghosts attempting to control national narratives, but in "Miss Pringle's Neighbors," "Anne," and "The Nixie," Stevenson adapts the issues foregrounded by Punter in order to represent a spectral and ghostly femininity which cannot be contained within the carefully-constructed, but habitually inconsistent, conventions of U.S. identity as explored by Kaplan. As I will go on to show through Stevenson's American Gothic New Woman tales, the relationship between the New Woman and her natural, familial, and social environment is linked to the national Anglo-American quest for settlement, for identity, and for mastery of one's surroundings at any cost.

### Miss Pringle's Neighbors

"Miss Pringle's Neighbors," published in 1887 in *Scribner's Magazine*, is the story of a reserved and conservative young woman—the titular Pringle—who is bothered by even the slightest changes, and whose life is altered by the arrival of a new family next door. The family comprises only mother and son, Helen and Felix Mainwaring, and they, according to Miss Pringle, function as if "a serpent had entered her garden of Eden" (693). Helen, it emerges, was never married to Felix's father, and her lack of shame, paired with the exaggerated responses of Miss Pringle, neatly encapsulates the New Woman-era tension between sexual freedom and traditional domestic life. Religious dynamics, narrative irony, and questions about what constitutes labour or work, are at the core of this short uncanny tale of what happens when

femininity projects itself beyond social constraints. Felix, a prodigious artist even as a young child, falls ill and dies, and Helen soon comes to Miss Pringle in the middle of the night, claiming to see and hear things that cannot be explained. The two women feel “supernatural terror” (699), and Miss Pringle is overcome by loneliness as she watches her neighbour slip into death, a smile on her lips as she calls for her child. The Mainwaring home, the final words of the story claim, is henceforth believed to be a haunted house, watched over by a gentle lady, the only one who remembers the former inhabitants. In examining the story, I will draw in particular on Fred Botting’s claim that the Gothic is a genre of “excess” (8) and David Punter’s claim that the American Gothic relies on “rootlessness” (“Dream” 27), as I explore the tension between domesticity and foreignness, over what can and should be amalgamated into a home, a family, or a neighbourhood.

Navigation of different types of space offers Miss Pringle and the Mainwarings various degrees of power and authority, with their gardens and houses being at certain times places of work, worship, or play. The psychic spaces Miss Pringle and Helen Mainwaring navigate are, however, more ambiguous: Helen’s atheism causes Miss Pringle deep distress and there is a sense of ongoing anxiety throughout the tale over the fates of the Mainwaring souls. Murphy’s *New Woman Gothic* emphasises that the New Woman is haunted and plagued by these kinds of tensions between the familial relationships she may *want* to have—partners, children, friends—and the relations to which she actually has access. The threat of being buried alive, so to speak, within the institutions of marriage or motherhood are at the core of Helen Mainwaring’s flight to her new neighbourhood, and her maternal bonds with Felix are strong enough to transcend even life and death.

Through movement between the spaces of house, garden, and neighbourhood, Helen and Miss Pringle both find themselves negotiating symbolic shifts and changes in their identities, and the text ultimately suggests that the liminal spaces between two states might offer the women the most authority. Interrogating the value of rigid structures of difference is a common theme throughout Stevenson’s stories, and one which resonates with the deconstructive impulse to expose the instability of binary divisions. This particular story is centrally concerned with navigating and adapting to the specific differences between interiority and exteriority, in their physical, social, and domestic manifestations. It is, it seems, adaptation *to* ambiguity which saves Miss Pringle and Miss Mainwaring, though in uncannily opposing ways. Stevenson’s text blends distinctions of work and play, Self and Other, and invokes the Gothic haunted house in order to complicate the construct of the domestic, and women’s “place” in relation to structures of power.

### *Psychic Space*

Interstices of psychic space in this story fall along the continuum between deistic faith and atheism, with anxiety arising alongside the presence of an intermediate spiritual realm throughout the tale. The contrast between religious belief and secular thought establishes the normative spiritual framework of the narrative, as the two protagonists find themselves at either end of that spectrum at the outset of the story, with “the dividing line between them a[nother] source of anxiety” (Murphy 27). Miss Pringle is pious, repressed, and biblically-oriented. By contrast, Helen Mainwaring is, in the opinion of the former, a “profanation of womanhood” (693). Discovering that Helen has never been married, Miss Pringle’s realisation that Felix must have been born out of wedlock comes like a “physical blow,” with the transgression viewed as the “most damaging” any woman could face (693). With the further revelation that Helen and Felix are atheists, that “Felix has never heard of even the elements of what [Miss Pringle would] call religion, and [that they do] not believe in them,” Helen even goes as far as to declare they “are much better and happier than most of those whom [she would] call Christians” (697). Helen explains that she was raised in an atheistic intellectual and artistic community, to be as educated as men, and that she grew up reading Mary Wollstonecraft and George Sand, believing marriage was “abhorrent” and “monstrous” (697). Yet, the reason she moves to Miss Pringle’s neighbourhood is because her previous community held childrearing to be a base task. Helen dearly wants to raise her child, so she departs the only home she has ever known. Neither community seems to have room for the Mainwarings, and certainly not for Helen who defies both ends of the New Woman spectrum and occupies a marginal space in between.

Miss Pringle, on the other hand, has little tolerance for either play or divergence from Christianity. The independence and openness Helen shows, in the eyes of Miss Pringle, is enough to morph her into the “wicked heathen goddess” of any Christian woman’s nightmares (694). Felix and his mother, playing in the garden, seem to Miss Pringle like “circus people” (694). “As though in defiance,” every day Helen’s voice comes up “full and clear and joyous” from the garden (694), despite the fact that Miss Pringle does everything she can to ignore Helen and Felix and to shut them out. Helen runs and jumps into trees, “[swinging] back and forth from a pink blossomed branch” and “flying through the air like a bird” (694). Yet the Mainwarings are not perfect. Felix is precocious and blunt, prone to physical violence, and Helen is aloof, “artificial and constrained” with Miss Pringle (696). The emphatic differences between the two families at the start of the text engage with the Gothic pattern of “setting up

an oscillation between two poles, opposing extreme rationality and modernity” set against “impenetrable mystery, superstition and the past” (Lloyd-Smith 66). Both women see themselves as the rational force, and the other as the “impenetrable mystery.”

Only in learning about each other and tempering the most rigid aspects of their personalities are they able to comfort each other and find resolution within the uncanny and Gothic hauntings that arise around them. The sympathy that eventually develops between Helen and Miss Pringle over the shared anxieties of not damnation, but a relegation to eternal purgatory, comes alongside the increasingly chaotic atmosphere which follows Felix’s death. Indeed, Miss Pringle realises just before the Gothic conclusion to the tale that she has been decidedly unchristian in her enforcement of Christian values. As the distinctions between life and afterlife are tempered by the death of Felix, there is also a revelation for Miss Pringle: “a curtain seemed lifted from before her eyes, and she saw herself, narrow, cold, and self-righteous, lacking in Christian charity, no true follower of the cross” (696). Her sensitivity towards Helen develops just in time for the latter to arrive in distress at Miss Pringle’s door.

Miss Pringle has, however, already become alienated from herself, and her own domestic realm, by this point, and it is only through readapting to new ideas of femininity and motherhood which stretch beyond the pale that the women find their resolutions. The failings of Miss Pringle’s religion to ensure the sanctuary of her surroundings become even more apparent when she and Helen navigate the house together, overcome by “a supernatural terror”: Miss Pringle attempts to comfort the grieving mother with the Bible, but this act seems “to savor of an attempt at exorcism” (699). Making “an effort to subdue the terror creeping through her veins, which she felt to be both unseemly and unchristian,” Miss Pringle tries to speak and finds she has already dissociated from herself, as “the sound of her own voice startle[s] her unexpectedly” (699). Her faith alone cannot help her in the realm of the uncanny: sympathy for and adaptation to her environment is a necessity. Helen quickly adapts in such a way to the supernatural realm, and her anxiety for Felix’s well-being, that “the little child is lost in the outer darkness,” is much more powerful than any concern she has for her own safety: “radiant with hope and love and joy,” rather than with fear, she decides to enter the afterlife to accompany Felix and guide him into the unknown (700). As Helen literally fades away in front of her, Miss Pringle hears “a child’s laugh of joyous surprise” echo around the house (700). The solace and peace both women find in a psychic space previously unfamiliar and foreign to them is, the text suggests, accessible only because they have adapted to their changing environments.

In “Miss Pringle’s Neighbors,” then, resolution comes from the embrace of—and adaptation to—chaos, instead of the attempt to control it, and the Self and the Other ultimately supplement rather than oppose each other. The “blurred boundary,” described by Murphy as one of the most common tropes in the New Woman Gothic, “undermines the ability to make sense of existence and establish orderly categories that help an individual survive in a chaotic world” (27), yet Stevenson’s stories position this obfuscation not as an undermining process but a survival tactic.

I argue that such a shift in the purpose of the blurred boundary is one divergence of the American New Woman from her British counterpart: it is the inherent lack of settlement, the rootlessness, of the American Gothic, as Punter and others have asserted, which makes room for the kind of ambiguity and anarchy which can in fact offer women the opportunity to redefine their own environments. Claire Drewery offers further support for this claim, arguing that short fiction of this period appropriates “threshold states” like “mourning, the literal or metaphorical journey, the uncanny, the transient moment” in order to push towards more fluidity in genre (3). “Miss Pringle’s Neighbors” crosses each of these threshold states, while simultaneously indicating the possibilities for a more open and fluid engagement with one’s neighbours, literal or otherwise, and a less rigid structure between the domestic and the foreign.

### *Environment*

Certain spatial binaries are deconstructed in this tale to indicate the importance of the anarchic interstices: spaces of interiority and exteriority are conflated with oppression and freedom respectively. Through the activities of Miss Pringle and the Mainwarings, and because of the uncanny transformation of the home, this story figures agency and empowerment as the consequence of a woman’s ability to adapt to an ambiguation between Self and Other. The bounds of home and garden are blurred by the Mainwaring family from the outset, and consequently, to recall Amy Kaplan’s theories of domesticity, so are those between subject and object. That is, the merging of the spaces within-house and beyond-house articulates the relationship between the Mainwarings and Miss Pringle. Fostering sympathy and relaxing discord between within-self and beyond-self opens uncanny doorways to other realms of consciousness.

The spatiality of the story illustrates the importance of such thresholds. “Miss Pringle’s Neighbors” initially suggests that the interior of the home is a location of domestic labour and feminine interment, while the exteriors, the gardens especially, are portrayed as realms of freedom and masculine, or at least unfeminine, unfettering. Miss Pringle draws more of a

distinction between the inside and outside of her house, whereas the Mainwarings embrace movement between those spheres. Indeed, the story opens with Miss Pringle staring “wistfully” from within her home at her garden, a “wilderness” which is a “riot of color and perfume” surrounding the “ill-repair” of the Mainwaring cottage (692). The contrast between interior and exterior is the first defining image of Miss Pringle, and across that threshold bursts Felix’s voice, permeating the boundary and foreshadowing the way the child will eventually come to help both women navigate multiple other borderlands. Much of the dialogue between the families occurs in entryways, with doors opening onto and closing off various assumptions and possibilities until they come together in understanding and shared uncanny trauma towards the end of the story. When Miss Pringle runs in distress from the Mainwaring house after their first disastrous meeting, she draws her blinds, but she cannot keep herself from feeling the intrusion of the outside world (694), and the Mainwaring’s laughter traverses the interior and exterior of the house, bringing the joys of the garden into Miss Pringle’s home with or without her consent. Once the boundaries of home and garden are effectively voided, other thresholds become more accessible as well.

Miss Pringle’s constant negotiation between her desire to remain within her home and her observation of and interest in what is happening just outside illustrates the permeable boundaries of the house both architecturally and as a symbol of selfhood. In viewing, through her windows, the burial of Felix’s cat, and then shortly afterwards the boy’s own funeral, Miss Pringle becomes emotionally tied to her external environment and the inescapable realities of her neighbourhood. Both memorials take place in the garden, and Miss Pringle, though she watches from within her house, finds herself moved to sympathy and grief. The garden’s uncanny devolution from a space of joy into a space of grief coincides with the liberation of the two women from their inability to connect, and the natural landscape between their two houses transforms from a physical threshold into an affective one. The sympathy between the two women fosters emotional freedom but comes alongside a shift towards an uncanny terror. Given the initial difficulties the Mainwarings and Miss Pringle have in understanding each other, the story’s refusal to place Helen and Miss Pringle on common ground except through tragedy renders the rest of the story a Gothic subversion of the biblical teaching to love thy neighbour.

Miss Pringle and Helen’s neighbourhood is a space as vulnerable to Gothic spectralisation as any other haunted house. The sympathy and symbiosis that develops between the two women in the last act of the tale shows an evolution of a shared domestic ecosystem—comprising both houses and gardens—which complicates the relationship between domesticity

and the interior of the house. Domestic settlement, in the wake of Felix's death, is the result of the neighbourhood itself becoming one shared interiority between the two women. They both finally occupy the same space without conflict, and are both united against a shared threat, that of the uncanny presences around them. The women work together to help Helen realise that her proper place is in the realm of the uncanny with her son's lost spirit, because there she will finally be able to raise him free from the restrictions of social convention. Thus, the opening up of literal doorways in Miss Pringle's neighbourhood leads as well to a more symbolic threshold across which Helen is able to pass in order to reclaim agency in motherhood, not within a marginal space but one in which she is finally free from the rigid social structures she has been navigating her whole life. As this realm is allegedly the afterlife, the text also conveniently tempers the subversive nature of such a resolution through the veneer of the supernatural, which poses the whole tale as ultimately impossible and therefore nonthreatening.

The motivation of the nineteenth century Gothic, in Murphy's view, is to emancipate fear and terror from the castle and allow it to manifest anywhere, for example darkened city streets or within a body through possession (7). Turn of the century tales reframe hauntings even further, through symbolically significant "sites of crisis," as Krueger describes them, which position the uncanny as more abstract, psychological, or even social (3). Kaplan engages with such emblematic figurations of the Gothic at the turn of the century through the image of the "disembodied shades" which tend to destabilise understandings of interiority and exteriority, or the known and the unknown (26). For Helen and Miss Pringle, the site of crisis is the state of isolation, and the disembodied shades of the uncanny are represented by the pressures of social normativity against which the two women react. For example, the "darkness around the house," just after Felix's funeral "blot[s] out all familiar landmarks, [making] it seem strangely isolated" (699), as Helen is from both mainstream society and the artists' community from which she has come. Her house's "emptiness and silence [strikes] the senses with a more chilling impression of loneliness than the widest expanse of open moor," in a reflection of Helen's loneliness. Her "gaunt and haggard" appearance and her "sunken eyes" (699) prefigure her later spectralisation, and indicate all that which she cannot resolve or repress.

Rather than a haunted house, Helen faces social hauntings, the ghosts and spectres of the oppressive institutions she has been running from her whole life. In fact, it is the uncanniness of the house which allows Helen access to the supernatural, and thus the afterlife. In the presence of the Gothic darkness of the house, frightening though it is, Helen is able to adapt the phantom presence she holds within society into a fluidity which empowers her to

move between realms towards a reunion with her son. The macabre ending of “Miss Pringle’s Neighbors” is tinged with social transgression, as the limitations of the New Woman-era binary for women—independent single woman or conventional housewife—are shown to be inadequate.

### *Social and Familial Space*

The permeability of affective boundaries between characters is suggested early on in the story. The first time Miss Pringle meets Felix, he says she is “too ugly” to be the subject of a portrait. When she tries to depart, clearly in distress, Helen begs her to kiss the boy goodbye anyway. She acquiesces, but as soon as she exits the Mainwaring house “a couple of tears [Miss Pringle] had been repressing broke from their boundaries and rolled down her face” (693). Miss Pringle’s sensitivity and self-consciousness is enough to weaken her own conduct and “boundaries,” but not enough for her to disengage from the child altogether. This first encounter, upsetting as it is for all three characters, frames the transformations of the two women throughout the rest of the story, and emphasises the antagonism and difference which does eventually give way to understanding and sympathy between them.

The anxieties of Helen and Miss Pringle are revealed to be the result of sinister social pressures, and the relationship that develops between them suggests the possibilities for sympathetic bonds between women more generally. Their friendship offers an alternative framework for domesticity as opposed to marriage, which was at the core of the reproductive metaphor for the growth of the nation at the turn of the century. Kaplan investigates this metaphor, which underpinned the United States’ territorial expansion in the late nineteenth century, and compared the nation to “an organic body, which must continue to grow or die” (Kaplan 99). Marriage, along with its political doubles of colonisation and annexation, was a tool of that metaphor. The suggestion of texts in which women choose marriage over work is that, when voluntarily “chosen” by women, rather than “forcibly imposed,” marriage represents the “modern alternative to both empire and revolution” (108). Helen and Miss Pringle, neither of whom have chosen marriage, replace the matrimonial bond with one of sympathetic friendship, and therefore threaten the implied power dynamics of that symbolic heterosexual marriage, democratising the national metaphor and evading the binary of man/woman, outside/inside, and foreign/domestic.

Literary New Women, although theoretically free to have numerous partners and bear children whenever and however they like, tend to face consequences for following through with such sexual liberation, with many even succumbing to a biblical Fall and ruin. If not

punished for their subversive behaviour, New Women often “submit gladly” to marriage by the end of the novel anyway (Rutledge 224), as is the case in many novels by Edith Nesbit, who also notably wrote Gothic and ghost stories at the turn of the century. The tragic trajectory of Lily Bart in Edith Wharton’s 1905 novel *The House of Mirth* follows both patterns: Lily’s flirtatious behaviour leads to her social stigmatisation, but when she becomes increasingly desperate to marry to prevent her utter ruin, no one will accept her, and her social descent ultimately leads her to addiction and death. The novel revolves around various failures of sympathy, first on Lily’s part as her arrogance and pride result in a series of missteps, and then through the wider lack of sympathy within society for women who transgress against propriety. Though Wharton’s and Stevenson’s texts differ in form and genre, and are separated by almost twenty years, the two writers’ critiques of the rigidity of familial and social structures gesture towards similar issues. Miss Pringle and Helen Mainwaring represent two threatening manifestations of women “failing” to conform to domestic expectations: the bitter spinster and the unwed mother. Yet, by the end of the text, Helen has been symbolically removed from society through her passing away, and the final depiction of Miss Pringle is of her many years later, as a “gentle little lady” who “carefully tend[s]” her garden “in loving remembrance of those who, except by her, have long been forgotten” (700). This very feminine image, alongside Helen’s departure, somewhat diminishes the subversion these two women nearly, but do not quite, represent. Nonetheless, given the tension and anxiety present throughout the text, Helen’s joyous exit from the realm of the living and Miss Pringle’s loving and sympathetic remembrance gives an uncanny and tragic story an unexpectedly settled ending, in which both women find happiness and peace without depending upon marriage.

Questions of renegotiated partnerships and social expectations also lead to issues of labour and its gendered connotations. “Miss Pringle’s Neighbors” demonstrates the complexity of discussions about the many types of labour and responsibility associated with femininity, and deeper concerns over art and domesticity versus industry and capital. Helen is an artist, a singer and painter, both professions which, in the late nineteenth century, would have been transgressive: Lyn Pykett contends that in that era, “the female artist is represented as an invader of a masculine (or, at least, male-controlled) domain”, and “artistic expression and the life of the artist are seen as in themselves both liberated and liberatory activities” (138-139). Helen is anxious about her own artistic skills in a way she is not about any other aspect of her life: she “cannot paint” and, by her own admission, her “work is hard, unsympathetic, dry, and mechanical” (696). It is rather Helen’s son Felix, at only five years old, who is the artist in his household, with a talent so notable it stuns observers like Miss Pringle. Helen’s self-

consciousness about her talent contrasts the effervescence and cheer with which she undertakes various recreational aspects of mothering such as climbing trees or tossing Felix in the air, which Miss Pringle observes from within her neighbouring home. Balances between the different types of work taken up by Helen and Miss Pringle—maternal, artistic, and domestic—complicate the gendered expectations of labour throughout the narrative.

By disrupting such expectations of “seemingly already-constituted entities of femininity and masculinity,” Krueger suggests women can “rewrite themselves and the world” (4). “Miss Pringle’s Neighbors” contributes to such rewritings by questioning boundaries and spaces in which “work” is more valued or economically significant. Miss Pringle and her student Mary Jane are often occupied with “work” throughout the story, which is in effect domestic labour, but also a task that could have been a paid job in a millinery, the stitching of a “strip of cambric muslin” (694). By contrasting the two spheres of work and play in an environment so otherwise invested in questioning boundaries, the inconsistencies of that binary emerge, particularly as they relate to the issues of feminine roles and expectations. Miss Pringle declares work is a “great solace, and a refuge ... a great safeguard” (694). These safeguards are an aspect of her carefully constructed identity, and as she slowly recognises Helen’s motherhood as a form of labour, and the play with which the Mainwarings occupy themselves as a possible type of domestic work, she allows that construct to become permeable: though she risks relinquishing some part of herself in the process, she also gains knowledge of and appreciation for other perspectives and behaviours which lead to her affective development and maturity.

The tension between Helen’s roles as mother and as artist strikes at the anxieties over women’s entrance into the professional world, which, though hard-fought for, also ensured a fresh set of social pressures to navigate. The female artist figure in the New Woman text is often “engaged in a complex negotiation of various forms of self-sacrifice” of which Helen becomes emblematic (Pykett 142). The constraints Helen must negotiate match those identified by Pykett: the “accommodation of her aesthetic ambitions to the demands of the marketplace” and the “abandonment of [those ambitions] for domestic duties” being foregrounded in particular (142). Miss Pringle also voices the apparent importance of Helen abandoning her creative pursuits in order to prioritise Felix, claiming what a “precious charge is thus vouchsafed” to Helen in caring for her son (696). These pressures, from her artist friends, from the marketplace, and from social expectations of her motherhood, compress Helen to the point of breaking, and after Felix’s death, when her friends suggest that she is now free to resume her own work, her life becomes unbearable. In the transformation of her home into a Gothic

uncanny nightmare, Helen makes the only choice she can, to abandon society altogether and join her son in the interstices between life and death, preferring to take her chances in an altered reality rather than remain mired in grief.

Both women in this text are focussed on establishing roots and settling themselves in a way which speaks to the shifting gender dynamics of the late century. The narrative trajectory moves from rigidity, to fears of anarchy, through a Gothic devolution, and into sustained ambiguity between affective and supernatural boundaries which appear impenetrable at the outset of the story. This tale is about two unmarried women, and the possibilities for sympathy and growth which lie outside of traditional wedlock. Two poles of feminine opposition are abandoned throughout the narrative as the women meet in the middle, both psychically and emotionally. The text indicates that the only way to survive, as Miss Pringle does, or to find peace in any realm, as Helen does, is to learn how to balance, adapt, and sympathise. The spatial relationships in “Miss Pringle’s Neighbors” stand in for negotiations of identity within a rapidly changing social environment in which women were increasingly able to define their own standards of femininity, and the uncanny hauntings they face become tools for their liberation rather than barriers preventing them from thriving.

## Anne

Stevenson’s 1899 story “Anne,” also published by *Scribner’s*, is another investigation of the boundaries between life and afterlife, of duality, the uncanny, and the relationship between death and fear. “Anne” hints at the sort of uncanny unsettling of New Woman Gothic texts as described by Murphy, though “Anne” also diverges from Murphy’s schema as it focuses upon the possibilities that lie on the other sides of reality rather than on the dangers. The story begins by introducing an aging woman, the titular Anne, who awakens one morning feeling better than usual, and strolls through her gardens, noting the exceptional beauty and wonder she sees, and feeling “uplifted as with a wholesome, altogether delightful intoxication ... like being a child again” (116). Anne explores the landscape until she encounters the ghost, or spirit, of Marian, an old friend long passed away. Anne realises she must be in a dream, and returns to her home, which is almost “blotted out by the fog” which has risen up everywhere (119). She calls out to her husband, who sits inside, “feeble,” his face “leaden grey” (120). He eventually sees her, and in closing the narrator explains Anne and her husband John have “passed out of the house, paying no heed to what has been left behind, nor to the terrified call of the serving-maid, “Help, help, master is dead!” (119). The text’s ambiguous ending leaves

it to the reader to decide where Anne has been, how long she has been away, and how she has been able to successfully negotiate her desire to reunite with John.

One of Stevenson's most literally ghostly tales, written five years after her husband's death, it provides a striking image of genuine domestic affection which favours a fluidity between not just life and death, but also femininity and masculinity, and passivity and proactivity. "Anne" displays a domestic contentment which resituates spatial symbolism: husband and wife need not be within a house to be at home. Oppositional structures in this story are diffused across shifting and fluctuant scales, first through the balance between home and garden, then between realms of life and afterlife, and finally between femininity and masculinity as the expectations for gendered family roles are overturned in favour of alternative possibilities for sympathetic relations within a shifting domestic ecosystem.

### *House, Garden, Spirit: Gendered Spatialities*

"Anne" draws an initial binary between house and garden as respective realms of entrapment and freedom, but the protagonist herself overcomes the limitations of a constructed home and leads her husband into a realm of symbiosis between mind, body, and environment. Elisabeth Bronfen, Diana Wallace, and others have written about the spectralisation and haunting of women both in houses and as symbols of houses, and the importance of women's death as both entrapment and release from domesticity: in this story, Anne finds a similar agency in her own fluid movement between realms. Laurence Talarach-Vielmas posits that this kind of feminine spectrality in literature allows a woman "to probe the nature of the supernatural just as it allows her to witness another example of woman's limited choices outside marriage and lack of freedom in patriarchy" (33), but in this story Anne's marriage is a happy one and therefore her frustrations are displaced from her husband onto systems and structures which dictate women's "proper place". Anne's journey complicates one such construct, which Kaplan identifies within late nineteenth century American texts as the balance between "the home as a bounded and rigidly ordered interior space as opposed to the boundless and undifferentiated space of an infinitely expanding frontier" (25), but the story also shows that the subjective experience of feeling at home and feeling settled need not rely on physical spaces, and may instead depend on systems of orderly and satisfying relationships between flora, fauna, and other aspects of the natural environment.

Ambiguities between interior and exterior are complicated from the outset of "Anne," with the narrative opening onto Anne already outside her house, but remembering the early days she and her husband John spent in their home. She feels some sadness that the two of

them are elderly and their dreams are “all over” (116), and in particular Anne notes her fondness for her garden, and that “one of her grievances against time” and aging is her loss of strength in tending the plots and beds around their home (117). More than worrying about the upkeep of her home, she feels connected to her habitat as a source of comfort and settlement. As Anne crosses the garden and fields, she is “light on her feet,” and “uplifted as with a wholesome, altogether delightful intoxication” which reminds her of childhood, the “first day in the garden after a winter’s illness.” This “pure joy in living” grows as she ventures to the meadow where she and John used to “tryst” (117). Her anxieties are gone, she has no aches or pains, and the encumbrances of aging have vanished. The animals emerge from the woods and she sees “what no naturalist has ever beheld, God’s creatures at home and unafraid” (118). When she encounters her old friend Marian, however, she is forced to reckon with her surroundings. As Marian explains that she must be dead, for them to be meeting each other, Anne feels a “thrill of terror,” though Marian’s staunch assertion that this spirit realm is not heaven—while immeasurably better than the world they left behind—comes alongside advice that “[m]aterial or immaterial only means a point of view, not a difference” (118). From the blurring of home and garden in the opening paragraphs to the safety, comfort and sympathy of all living beings within this mystic ecosystem, the balance between domestic and foreign shifts, as do the barriers between other constructs of difference.

Rather than falling under Murphy’s definition of what constitutes a Gothic landscape, then, Stevenson’s story illustrates a hopeful and joyous environment in contrast to the typically “unnerving architecture” (29) of the uncanny home. Anne’s unwillingness to follow Marian forward into this third realm without collecting John first means she must turn back towards the glen where her house is located, in the direction of a fog which has emerged to obscure her past, her house, and her husband. In stark opposition to the settlement and serenity of the natural landscape, the area around her home has become unfamiliar: whenever she is “just about to recognize a familiar place or object,” she cannot quite place herself, and finds herself having literally stepped into the realm of the uncanny. As she approaches the house, it “loom[s] up, large and imposing, but in some intangible way different”: the features of the house are “all in their appointed places,” but try as she might, Anne cannot name the “indefinable change” (118). Where John is inside, trapped, incapacitated by distress over the loss of his wife, seemingly incapable of even functioning, yet another subversion of convention appears. Though the New Woman Gothic often depicts the woman becoming or becoming trapped within habitation, this story sees a woman liberated from her home, and a husband confined inside, inverting the

expectations for domestic femininity and masculine exteriority, and subsequently complicating other binary frameworks as well.

Anne's attempts to overthrow the natural order of things leads to discomfort, fear of uncertainty and disaster, but also to freedom and empowerment, and she does ultimately exert enough influence over her surroundings to help John cross over. It is not the supernatural itself that is malevolent, however. Anne's trouble is her refusal to accept her place in this paranormal third realm. As she arrives back at her home, she laments, seeing her husband in a weakened, "feeble," and pathetic state, and the possibility of his death becomes a remedy for lost or threatened identity (120). In an afterlife full of joy and rejuvenation, she feels more herself than she has done in years, but without her husband, she cannot be happy or settled, as he will never be without her. Anne cannot grasp any sense of domestic comfort without John: being without him is foreign, and makes her feel she does not "quite know where [she is]" (119). Thus, to maintain domestic stability, John must die and rejoin Anne in her new paradisiacal ecosystem.

In this reading, the story can be understood as an endorsement of a woman who manages to exert control over the forces seeking to influence her, and who successfully manipulates both the natural and supernatural realms in order to secure her own happy ending. Anne not only maintains her own identity, but she brings John with her and saves him from his grief, suggesting a more complicated concept of romance and partnership than was usually granted to fictional women in the New Woman era. For Stevenson's New Woman stories, this descent—or perhaps it is an ascent—into the third realm is seen less as a threat and more as indicative of the possibilities that await women if they can manage to understand and exercise their agency before it is too late. This is a less habitual take on the trope of the New Woman as a "disrupter of social harmony" (Murphy 236), which, negative as it may have often been, also signifies the raw power available to women and the fearful way patriarchal society viewed them. This is the possibility Stevenson seems to refine in her tales, with her use of the supernatural and the uncanny affording women power they would never normally have had. "Anne," in other words, is an example of the power women can wield when they are allowed a sphere in which to fully understand and recognise themselves.

### *Psychic Interstitiality*

Caught in a dream, or in death, or in whichever realm she may be, Anne is uniquely connected to the supernatural, with the ability to bridge interstitial gaps and exist, if only partially, in both worlds. She does metaphysically what many women in the late nineteenth century did socially: she resists entrapment within a single category or sphere. Such rebellion

against the laws of the third realm renders her both a subjective figure and a representative object of transitionality, both caught, and freed, by her intermediacy. For example, Marian warns her against returning to find John, and when she does, the threat of the fog almost consumes her. Yet as she comes to terms with the fact that navigating “other” spheres includes a degree of uncanny risk, Anne also knows that she will not leave her husband behind. Her empowerment to make her own choices, to fully recognise herself and her desires, comes alongside additional risks, some of them sinister and uncanny, and this is perhaps the most renegade, yet realistic, aspect of her renegotiation of different categories. Anne represents the chaos and contradiction of empowerment: her freedom to try, and possibly fail, to rebalance her own personal ecosystem takes precedence over the perfection and serenity of the third realm.

Anne herself is an example of the failure of strict borders and boundaries between spheres, and the experiences she has had with spirits throughout her life positions her as a threshold figure. When she first enters the supernatural world, Anne is at her most innocent, childlike, and free: there is no visible or perceptible gateway through which she passes, and the transition is seamless. As she begins to realise something has changed, and tries to regain her bearings in what she believes to be a dream, Marian appears to inform Anne that her Edenic new environment is not a dream, and that instead she has passed on. This, Marian argues, Anne ought to know already, because throughout her life Anne has been prone to sensitivity to ghosts, and the paranormal. Notably, Marian explains that Anne “might, as a mortal, possibly see [her], but [she] could not be conscious of [Anne]” unless she were “as real” as Marian (117). Anne confirms that she has “imagined [she] saw spirits,” but they were “phantoms, ghosts, immaterial” and not so humanlike as Marian (117). Anne wonders aloud whether heaven is different to how she thought it might be, and Marian replies, ““Did you think you were in heaven? Oh, no, this is not heaven. I trust there may be a heaven, and a future life, but this is not heaven”” (117). The realm of beauty and peace is not quite domestic or earthly, and not quite foreign or ethereal, so to speak: it is an interstitial plane, where, to recall Marian’s phrasing, immaterial and material are all a matter of perspective.

The ambiguity between the categories of foreign and domestic, which Kaplan sees as crucial to American identity, can also productively explain the consequences of Anne’s ability to fluctuate between layers of consciousness. Kaplan asserts that issues of domesticity also extend to “the interiority of female subjectivity” (43), in other words that women’s subjective experiences can be linked to the concept of the domestic, not because of inherent differences, but because of sustained social pressures. Women’s subjectivities, that is to say, are their own

domestic spheres because women carry domesticity with them in every space they occupy, because they are historical symbols of “homeliness”. Pykett similarly contends that “women are not the victims of their affectivity and their inferior physical makeup, but of a specific ideology of femininity and specific social and material conditions” (“Woman Question” 144). To synthesise Kaplan’s and Pykett’s insights, an exploration of feminine interiority can also act to deconstruct rigid boundaries which define domestic matters and social expectations. Anne is an example of a woman challenging ideologies. Her influence over, and rebellion against the rules of, the third realm between life and death allows her to physically experience a new freedom outside of the home, and psychically facilitates her navigations of the boundaries of subjectivity and sympathy, seen in her connection to John. Subjective shifts in Anne’s perception or consciousness radiate outwards and impact understandings of what it means to push back against the parameters of domesticity, and by extension ideologies of femininity.

Alongside constructs of home, gender, psyche, and family, the form of the story also “hinges upon a disturbance of the everyday; a moment wherein the structures that ordinarily dictate the parameters of a character’s life fall away and a character undergoes a shift in perception” (Krueger 64). Thus, the form lends itself well to depictions of the fantastic. While Anne is in the gardens, before she encounters Marian, she looks into a pool of water and realises she has no reflection: this disturbance becomes for her the pivotal moment where her doubts about her consciousness are raised and her ontological parameters are shifted. “This enchanting rejuvenation, then, was only a dream. She could almost have wept; not quite, for the dream still held her as in an embrace of joyousness” (116). Anne’s willingness to thrive in and accept a mystical and paranormal revitalisation of her body and spirit is disrupted by the fact that it may not be sustainable: rather than being frightened by a supernatural transformation, she instead feels sorrow that it may only be a trick of the mind. As Krueger puts it, “women writers pen heroines who surmount the limitations of their prescribed roles by redefining their boundaries, and, in doing so, revise dominant narratives of femininity” (2). In Stevenson’s stories, those borders and peripheries are those of natural and supernatural, realism and the fantastic, and interiority and exteriority.

### *Familial Renegotiation: Husband and Wife*

In the context of an inverted gendered spatiality, a reversal of familial agency, and a chaotic and ambiguous continuum of life/afterlife, “Anne” suggests a restructuring of the boundaries of femininity and feminine agency. In many nineteenth century ghost stories, as

Emma Liggins argues, “the angry or jealous revenant prompts the revelation of the secrets of the past, putting what was unspeakable into discourse in order to stabilise family relations through inheritance and diffuse concerns about property and propriety” (32). Whatever type of ghost Anne is, her role is very different. The love between Anne and John is remarkably pure. Yet, in some ways, Anne’s efforts are in pursuit of the same comparable stable family order which other ghosts seek, albeit an order in which domestic peace is based around bonds of sympathy rather than the property Liggins cites. Rather than serving as the source of Anne’s ghostliness, the unspeakable is instead presented as the idea of familial separation and the unresolved grief of Anne and John’s untimely parting. The fact that the two of them have no children is salient, as it modifies their dynamic: they have no issues of inheritance to threaten their bond, and there are no textual indications that their house holds any family secrets within. Instead, the natural landscape around the house, representative as it is of the supernatural, is what offers the potential for family reunification, which transforms the idea of domesticity from a product of built structures to one of adaptive and affective ones such as sympathy which might travel anywhere. In other words, Anne is not a revenant working to unearth family secrets, but a spectre of feminine identity empowered by her otherworldliness to ferry her family beyond the traditional boundaries of the domestic hearth.

Kaplan speaks to the function of other fictional New Woman in similar situations, the heroines who signal the approach of the future by “freeing [themselves] from traditional hierarchies” (108). Anne, like such heroines, does not need to be saved by a traditional hero. On the contrary, she has saved both herself—by rebelling against the laws of the supernatural realm—and her husband by liberating *him* from the home. Yet, in the restoration of her marriage, and claiming finally that the spirits of neither her “mother, nor father, nor friends beloved can come between John and [her]” (119), Anne’s affirmation of love engages, in the short story form, what Ann Ardis calls “boomerang” novels (140). Such stories involve the New Woman seemingly striving for independence, only for her trajectory to be interrupted in the final chapters by her agreement to marriage. “Anne” follows this pattern in some ways but with an adjusted perspective. Though Anne’s liberation from her home into a realm of unlimited possibility and serenity is followed by her determination to return to her husband and marriage, the power dynamics of such a boomerang trajectory are inverted in a way which “dramatis[es] the vulnerability of the boundaries of the house” (Krueger 58), rather than the vulnerability of women themselves. In this case, Anne, as a representative of femininity, is strong and capable, and is made even more so by her phantasmal freedom from bodily weaknesses such as pain or fatigue. Thus, through its supernatural and uncanny elements, the

text manipulates the boomerang plot as Anne frees herself from the uncanny hauntings which represent social expectations, and transforms marriage—accompanied by the bond of true love—into a liberatory construct.

Anne's rescue of John is threatened by an uncanny force trying to keep them apart, in a reversal of the "marital Gothic" defined in Michelle Massé's *In the Name of Love: Women, Masochism, and the Gothic* (1992). In such matrimonial nightmares, which Murphy also foregrounds in suggesting the New Woman Gothic, marriage is itself an example of the uncanny, as the reality of incarceration within a harmful relationship contrasts the romantic ideal of love and affection. The marital Gothic would place the romanticised image of matrimony in the public sphere against the dark opposite of private domestic entrapment and violence, but in "Anne," such dynamics of interiority and exteriority are exchanged as well as rendered uncanny.

The uncanny and the Gothic often allowed nineteenth century women a voice in previously uncommon ways, empowering them "within a culture that denied them freedom before marriage, but denied them identity after it" (Lloyd-Smith 74). Concerns about live burial, marriage as social death, entrapment within domestic space, and the corporeal transgressions of pregnancy and childbirth are all present in both New Woman fiction and the Gothic or uncanny tale, and in all three of Stevenson's stories studied in this chapter, to varying extents. In Murphy's evaluation of these tropes, Kristevan theories of abjection also feature within the New Woman's understanding of her place in society (129-143). Kristeva's abject image of the living viewing the dead, and death thereby "infecting life" (129), is a reflection of the self-awareness the New Woman has of her own mortality, of all those who have the power to end, or nullify, her life. "For the New Woman, the corpse seems to loom within her, as if a constant companion" (129), and the weight of various familial traditions and expectations threatens to bury her alive. Yet, in "Anne," the destabilisation of corporeality does not have the expected negative connotations. The protagonist, realising she might be dreaming, thinks of her sleeping body, frail and aging, with pity, "as if it were a thing separate from herself" (117). Anne is not distressed by this metamorphic split, which Marina Warner has called "the severance of the spirit from its bodily envelope" (*Metamorphoses* 120). Instead, she hopes her body rests well. If anyone in "Anne" faces abjection, it is John: the loss of Anne renders him "feeble" and anguished. Where Anne adapts to, and copes with, her new surroundings, John, as a signifier of masculinity, is in distress over his mortality and the social pressures which have rendered him unable to control his own home. Furthermore, for Anne, the threat of death and mortality in this text is assuaged by the fact that the afterlife offers peace

and serenity. The foreign presence “looming” within Anne’s consciousness, threatening her comfort, is rather the uncanny, shadowy fog separating her from John. The latter severance is far more threatening to Anne than any which comes alongside death.

Thus, while the borders between the living and the dead are permeable in this tale, the source of abject terror is not death itself but the fear of separation from one’s “home,” in this case a home figured through sympathy and love. Cindy Weinstein, in *Family, Kinship, and Sympathy in Nineteenth Century American Fiction*, looks at the specific way that sentimental literature and its affective components shifted, or encouraged a shift, in conceptions of the family after the Civil War, gradually favouring contractual and chosen family bonds over consanguinity. Alongside this transformation comes a necessity for new methods of reading affect, Weinstein notes, ones which include the “kinds of modes of expression not usually associated with sympathy, such as irony, citation, and facts ... to begin to use the expanded repertoire of sympathy” (94). Such affective reconfiguration extends to Stevenson’s stories as well, and while the uncanny is often an effect of defamiliarisation, in “Anne” it ultimately reinforces the bonds of sympathy, as both the nonthreatening mystical properties of the otherworldly realm and the shadows which emerge around Anne’s house, “forbidding in the extreme,” only convince Anne further that she must return to John. The “deep affection that belongs to the habit of a lifetime” draws her to her home even as it appears to her through the uncanny fog as “a place where wrong things had happened, or might happen” (119). Anne struggling to recognise her own house, but having no trouble recognising her husband, speaks to the way the uncanny in this text actually brings bonds of sympathy into clearer focus. Reconceptualising the way that loving relationships can act as their own vehicle of “homeliness” shifts the locus of various realms, such as those of domesticity and foreignness, from built structures to subjective experiences such as affect.

The de- and re-stabilisation of Anne’s parameters for her own consciousness reflect a wider trend in the period Stevenson was writing in, with the quick cycles she revolves through—past reality, dream, fantasy, and afterlife—indicating the kind of multiplicitous narratives which Ammons characterises in *Conflicting Stories* as common within women’s writing at the close of the nineteenth century. Written much later than Stevenson’s other tales, in 1899, “Anne” makes tangible the precipitation of a new century in the way it contrasts a past filled with exhaustion and failed dreams with a utopian future full of love, sympathy, and possibility. Though the story concludes with death, it also suggests rebirth, and a form of progress which abandons stale prescriptions and allows new systems of sympathy and

connection to forge themselves from the ashes of the old. Elaine Showalter astutely dissects the gender dynamics of such forward movement, noting that

while male artists in the *fin de siècle* feared an apocalypse and the destruction of the existing culture, including literature, women writers had less to lose in the disappearance of old cultural forms, and much to hope for in the transformation of gender and marriage. Despite the bitterness of their parables, their critique of marriage, and their truncated careers, American women writers of the 1890s demanded recognition as artists, and invented new forms rather than adapting old ones for their self-expression. (*Jury* 238)

Showalter also observes that women writers in this period produced a significant volume of fantasy writing such as fables and allegories, which “acknowledged the bitter disappointments of personal life and literary ambition,” and which were often labelled “dreams” in order to “tame their disturbing content” (237). Stevenson’s story offers a hopeful, positive substitute for those dark tales, although the macabre and mortal aspects of “Anne” connect to a similar objective. “Anne” moves from a binary of house/garden as realms of respective entrapment and freedom, to an uncanny ambiguity in which Anne’s spectral powers restructure thresholds between realms of consciousness, exhibiting a feminine agency which signifies the importance of permeable borders. The Gothic ending to the tale opposes the awareness of Anne and John’s happiness in being together, once more displaying the inadequacy of relying on a single perspective or framework.

## The Nixie

While the first two stories in this chapter are based around the idea of “homeliness” and domesticity, “The Nixie” (1888) decentres the home and shifts attention to a broader urban-versus-rural dynamic. The tale follows a man and his relationship with a strange young girl, the Nixie, as the two encounter each other in a train carriage one day. The man, Willoughby, is leaving the city on his way to spend an afternoon fishing, and notices the girl tucked into the shadows of their shared carriage. He views her disparagingly as being out of place, beyond her means, and in all likelihood a runaway, until a “curious sense of familiarity” washes over him (279). A “wave of terror” similarly crosses the girl’s face. In a series of purely uncanny flailings, Willoughby “[wracks] his mind for the clue which was playing hide and seek with his memory,” and again later, memories “flying on a barren quest” (279). Eventually as the pair disembark the train together, drawn together by some intangible bond, they travel towards

a nearby river (280). As they wander, Willoughby tries to chastise the child for stealing grapes from over a fence, and she finally breaks her silence, talking circles around him until he finds himself in a “confused reverie” (280), having visions of the woman he wants to marry, Lady Maud. Looking into the river, Willoughby sees himself reflected, then “blurred” and “shattered into a thousand sparkles” (283). Feeling he is “in a dream,” he wades into the river, dreaming of “ancient tales, mixing naiads, and gods, and water-sprites,” and then more sinister images (284). In horror, Willoughby loses consciousness. As he is imminently revived in the nick of time by a kindly man passing by, the latter proclaims it must have been sunstroke that caused his collapse. There is nothing in Willoughby’s pockets but a “messy old flower” (284), given to him by the girl on the train.

Throughout the tale, despite the complete confidence Willoughby has in his superiority from the outset, he is increasingly overwhelmed by forces of femininity. This shift in gender dynamics accompanies the sudden turns towards the tragic and uncanny which in “The Nixie” are connected to the natural environment. Confinement within either a city or a rigid social setting is figured as toxic to that earthly balance. All three of the stories discussed in this chapter examine the consequences of upholding or deconstructing social norms within particular spaces, but where “Anne” and “Miss Pringle’s Neighbors” distinguish between home and garden, “The Nixie” frames the differentiation between urban and rural spaces largely in terms of the difference between the realms of convention and idiosyncrasy, respectively.

### *Urbanity, Nature, and Gender*

The first act of “The Nixie” takes place on a train, and the continued prominence of transitional spaces and states gives the story momentum: symbols of change and growth abound and suggest a more abstract interest in the trappings of progress. The fecund motifs of girlhood, rivers, and flora, all thrown into relief by Willoughby’s stagnating inflexibility, all seem to lead towards an association of urbanity, masculinity, and impotence, which is contrasted with a truly supernatural feminine power. Liggins theorises how the train functions as one of the threshold spaces in late-century uncanny fiction which foreshadows later iterations of the genre, as the “perils of public transport” meld with industrial anxieties to “acquire a modernist edge through an examination of the spectrality of machinery” (39). As I will show in chapter 2, the train also features as a meaningful space in Stevenson’s story “The Warlock’s Shadow”. In “The Nixie,” the train is in a fluctuant state, journeying between “smoke and darkness” and “a glimmer of light” (278). Likewise, Willoughby floats between realms of sleep and waking, barely ascending into “that land of negative gravity” before being “startled into sudden wakefulness

by an animal-like shriek of terror so close at hand that it tingled in his ears” (278). Realising the girl is in his compartment causes Willoughby to feel his privacy is “violated,” and “his comfort destroyed.” The train, then, is a metamorphic space functioning as a gateway between not only urban and rural arenas, but also between states of consciousness, and between the usual and unusual.

Krueger analyses spaces like these through the lens of cultural geography, arguing that under scrutiny, “the artificial and over-used abstract dichotomy of public and private spheres” fades. Spaces like “the pallor, the threshold, the omnibus, the stairwell, the street” deconstruct that binary and instead “resonate with larger cultural concerns about the place of women in society” (2). The train is one such space, and Willoughby’s distaste at sharing it with the Nixie has implications for both class and gender: he is repulsed by her not only because of her girlhood but due to “every detail of her appearance being so frankly suggestive of that station in society for the members of which third-class carriages are specially designed” (278).<sup>11</sup> Together with her gender, these qualities emphasise the Nixie’s lack of acceptability within society, her failure to fit within appropriate social spaces.

Spatiotemporal fluidity in “The Nixie” is thus focussed less on domesticity and “homeliness” and more around ideas of the expected and the unexpected, or the conventional and unconventional, with “civilized” places depicted as normative, and spaces of nature and wilderness as chaotic and unpredictable. Willoughby is a product of such civilised spaces, and the Nixie of the wild. This order/disorder binary is often gendered within other New Women fiction as well, particularly the New Woman Gothic; to borrow from Patricia Murphy, the journey via train from town into the wild, and the girl’s initial silence reads as a “marker of the muted female voice in the male-controlled city” (107). Only upon re-entry into nature does the Nixie find her voice. Once she does speak, the young girl proves “shrewd” and puzzling (281). When the Nixie and Willoughby reach the banks of the river, she “begins disrobing” and laying out lilies in her clothes; the flower symbolises death, but within nature the Nixie seems to come to life. Willoughby begins to feel incapacitated as the girl begins to take on a more ephemeral form, and he mistakes her metamorphosing shape for Lady Maud. His images of the two women blend further together, and the flighty girl becomes wilder and wilder, water weeds caught in her hair, and a crown of leaves passing between them, until “[t]he dull blue of the girl’s skirt, the unbleached linen of her chemise, harmonized with the tints of tree, and grass,

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<sup>11</sup> The mention of class distinctions also gestures towards the importance of the train as a historical signifier of transnational settlement, which is how the vehicle is figured in the story “The Warlock’s Shadow.” I explore this story, and the colonial function of train lines leading to the Pacific, in chapter 2.

and sky” (283). The Nixie, disembodied, calls to Willoughby, seemingly from every direction, but most strongly from the opposite shore of the river. He hears a “jocund piping” and suspects the god Pan may be about. A cacophony erupts around him, with laughter, music, and chattering coming out of the water. The orderly and structured train, with its class system, gendered expectations, and literal compartmentalisation, gives way to an unruly, almost bacchanalian chaos in nature. The subtextual sexual suggestions of this scene are therefore linked to the New Woman-era threats of an increasingly unrestrained femininity linked to fluidity. The Nixie, emblematic of such a figure, morphs throughout this text from a silent and childlike creature into an authoritative nymph, a sexually empowered force of nature.

Though the Nixie begins the story as a girl, she undergoes a supernatural maturation into womanhood, and for a time occupies a transitional “adolescence” which signifies an ambiguous third state in which her femininity is both infantilised and sexualised. Indeed, Willoughby notices, even early on, that the Nixie has both “delicately turned contours” and “the angularities of early girlhood” (278). This story demands an attention to the archetype of the Gothic girl child stranded at what Lucie Armitt terms the “fixed point of becoming” (61). This girl, both within Armitt’s theory and as figured through the Nixie, emphasises a duality of “bothness” and “neitherness”. In applying the concept of the girl-always-becoming to the New Woman plot in the late nineteenth century, a helpful point of comparison is the patriarchally-enforced perpetual adolescence which, socially speaking, encouraged young women to mature as quickly as possible to be suitable for marriage and motherhood without maturing enough to ever become independent or self-reliant. The Gothic blurred boundary between childhood and adulthood is more frightening and even uncanny to young women because it indicates the dangers they face at the hands of men once they come of age. The Nixie, facing a man who sees her as both a delicate child and, later, mistakes her for his intended wife, embodies the social confusion engendered by encouraging young women to remain childlike enough to be governable, but mature enough for marriage and motherhood.

Even the nomenclature of the New Woman suggests part of this tension between childhood and maturity, as the “New” qualities in question are all standard parts of *masculine* adulthood. The New Woman was, for example, responsible for making her own decisions about how to balance work and family, for accessing employment and education, and more broadly acting upon “her determination to set her own agenda in developing an alternate vision of the future” (Richardson and Willis 12). Following on from and growing out of earlier feminine American literary figures, the New Woman has often been conflated with the “significantly different vision of the 1880s American Girl, which Henry James and William Dean Howells

imagined ... [and who was] more naive and ‘pert’ than the savvy, statuesque New Woman in the marketplace” (Patterson 15). I also note the development from American Girl to New Woman as another example of feminine adolescence in the American literary imagination. Both of the latter figures, however, are imagined within an urban setting: the American Girl and the New Woman are both linked to progressivism and capitalism in a way which is intriguingly divergent from Stevenson’s image of the Nixie as an extension of the natural world.

The city, in “The Nixie,” is presented as a space of rigidity and inflexibility in contrast to the relative freedom and ambiguity associated with the countryside or wilderness. As the protagonists move from the train and the nearby village, and approach the more sylvan environment, the “spirit of the morning” which invigorates Willoughby enough for him to decide to make his journey in the first place appears to finally stir “even the dull current in the veins of the workhouse waiif” (280), who becomes reanimated as she strays further from civilisation. The figuration of femininity in “The Nixie” is *supernatural* in the most basic sense of the word: the Nixie is not an aberration of nature but rather embodies nature in its most evolved and concentrated form. The spectrality and mysticism surrounding the Nixie is an example of the kind of power afforded to women when they are liberated from the oppressive structures of masculinity which attempt to govern them. Across each of Stevenson’s New Woman stories, there is a constant presence of such gardens, fields, and forests, which function as spaces of ambiguity which lead to rejuvenation and refreshment as well as the reconfiguration of social norms.

This environmental symbolism resonates with other pastoral utopian texts from the turn of the century such as William Morris’s *News from Nowhere* (1890) and W.H. Hudson’s *A Crystal Age* (1887), as well as engaging with the themes of texts featuring matriarchal utopian societies such as Mary E. Bradley Lane’s *Mizora* (1880), Elizabeth Burgoyne Corbett’s *New Amazonia: A Foretaste of the Future* (1889), and Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s slightly later text *Herland* (1915). The reference to the Pan’s flutes and the mysterious reverie that nearly causes Willoughby’s death also invites comparison to Arthur Machen’s Gothic tale, *The Great God Pan* (1894). All of the above texts involve conventional masculinity coming into conflict with the possibilities for forms of femininity which have been allowed to evolve and grow without limitation, placing Stevenson’s New Woman stories within a well-established literary tradition of science fiction, utopian writing, and fantasy in the late nineteenth century which process anxieties over women’s transforming roles in public life.

## *Psyche*

Phantoms might be “ethereal figures, after all, but they are capable of almost anything” (O’Brian, *Ghost Story* 84). Although the spectrality of women in Gothic tales can be both a cause for and the result of disenfranchisement, in “The Nixie” the titular character uses her ability to transform and move fluidly through realms as a means of demonstrating her agency. As explained above, the key to the Nixie’s power in this story is her innate connection to the natural environment, with her preternatural ability to manipulate and draw strength from the landscape functioning as the equal-but-opposite manifestation of the ethereal, evanescent literary presence with which many women in the nineteenth century were associated. Just as Stevenson’s other women characters find solace and freedom in their liminality and their *otherworldliness*, the Nixie embraces her fluidity and uses it to reclaim a sense of Self outside the anonymising brutality of the city, and in this case its extension, the train.

Her ability to move freely beyond the realm of the “real,” as represented by Willoughby, places the Nixie in the tradition of generically similar texts in which “[a]ctual women disappear and the focus shifts to constructing an associative chain in which one [New Woman] text’s characteristic emotional charge can reverberate down the line of its successors” (Richardson and Willis 47). That is to say, rather than being a fully-developed character with a history, motivations, and desires, the Nixie exists more as a symbol of the possibilities for women who are empowered to embody their essential natures, the idea of the “nature” of women in this story being one which embraces the flora and fauna of the wilderness in order to transcend, and move between, various realms. The “emotional charge” of the Nixie is figured through her erratic and whimsical behaviour, which is linked to her ability to be multiple things at once and to the way she is suspended between various states and places. Her symbiotic relationship with the environment also makes her a physical manifestation of the sublime experience and the terror and awe inspired by the unfathomability of nature which features in many Gothic texts.

The journey into nature made by Willoughby and the Nixie can also be read in light of the sublime, as she causes him to lose his grasp of boundaries, and undermines his “ability to make sense of existence and establish orderly categories that help an individual survive in a chaotic world” (Murphy 27). Even while still on the train, Willoughby’s conflation of the Nixie with various flora and fauna stands out. Her eyes have the “expression of a wood animal troubled with the vague suspicion of instinct at a loss,” though underneath is “the stare of a cat at bay,” while her small body harbours a “lurking terror” with the “sly intelligence” of a predator (279). The Nixie embraces this dynamic herself, explaining once in the forest that she

had been “caught ... in a trap,” and that whoever had removed her from her natural habitat had “shut her up” (280), though it is ambiguous whether she means vocally or physically. The more time he spends with the Nixie, the blurrier the boundaries of Willoughby’s reality become. She has “the fitting resemblance to an intangible image that he could not lay hold of, had been playing odd tricks in some remote corner of his brain,” and Willoughby finds himself “unconsciously fitting this charity stray upon a pedestal” (279). He racks his mind “for the clue which was playing hide and seek” with his conscious mind, “his memory flying on a barren quest” (279). Once he actually touches her hand he falls suddenly into a “confused reverie” (280). What is it, he wonders, that gives him “such a new and vivid sense of kinship with the earth,” so that he seems to “feel within himself its very essence and component parts?” (283). The Nixie thus becomes a vehicle of the sublime, her incomprehensibility blending together with the environment to cast her as representative of the mysteries of nature.

Rebecca Munford has written that due to its “cultural associations with the territories of irrationality, otherness and corporeal excess, femininity has been particularly and peculiarly susceptible to ‘spectralisation’” (120), and in this case, the Nixie represents exactly that spectrality. Yet her “irrationality” is much more closely linked to a sublime mystery than a dangerous degeneration, a positive, though fearful, value judgment about the possibilities for feminine fluidity rather than a negative one.<sup>12</sup> In the end, Willoughby is left with nothing but the “messy old flower” that the Nixie had on the train (284). The psychic ambiguity of Willoughby’s tale, the incomprehensibility of whether or not he experienced something “real” speaks to the tale’s invocation of uncanny uncertainty as a protective barrier around subversive femininity.

Just as in “Anne” and “Miss Pringle’s Neighbors,” Willoughby’s sudden psychic displacement and hesitation over the reality of the Nixie in the final moments of the story foregrounds an ambiguity between reality and fantasy which allows the contravention of norms to remain only slightly controversial. Although realism was the preeminent mode of New Woman texts, many other women produced non-realist, and especially uncanny tales, for example E. Nesbit, Edith Wharton, and Charlotte Perkins Gilman. Nesbit in particular “questioned patriarchy” in her texts as critically as her more well-known counterparts, but in “mixing precise social observation with elements of Gothic fantasy,” she offered an example of the possibilities for the New Woman beyond the literary boundaries of realism, which as

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<sup>12</sup> The siren-call of the Nixie leading Willoughby into the water is part of a recurrent mermaid trope which I will explore in my analysis of “Chy Lung, the Chinese Fisherman” in chapter 3.

usually the most closely associated genre with the rebellious feminine figure (Freeman 455). Where Nesbit attempted to free the New Woman from realism, other women writers in the late-century strove to liberate women characters trapped within Gothic texts by exploring the possibilities for spectrality as a protective force for femininity. Such writing suggested a spectral interiority in opposition to a spectrality of Otherness, a threatening force against which femininity must defend itself. This balance of Self and Other which Kaplan sees as being particularly fraught for the American subject was an important component of late-century writing which placed a new emphasis on subjective narrative forms and psychologically-oriented subject matter.

If American identity was in a state of flux at the turn of the century, the early years of the twentieth century saw chaos and fragmentation consciously adopted as literary strategies rather than simply experiences or symptoms of cultural anxieties. Critics have identified New Woman writers as preparatory figures for the later and more significant literary accomplishments of male modernists, but in the early 1990s, Ann Ardis in *New Woman, New Novels* (1990) and Pykett in *The Improper Feminine* (1992) asserted the importance of New Woman fiction as a fully-fledged movement of its own, as a precursor to modernism but with its own significance and value, and which merited inclusion in considerations of the various literary movements intersecting at the turn of the century. The first decades of the twenty-first century have seen a significant increase in critical writing about and around the New Woman, but much more attention has been devoted to the British context. Martha H. Patterson's *Beyond the Gibson Girl* (2005) takes up the responsibility of delineating the specifically American New Woman figure, accounting for race, class, the role of capitalism, and more. Centring around the New Woman's representation of the "synthesis of the personal and the political," Patterson describes the feminine iconoclast as an "anxious and paradoxical" one (3-4). That paradox aligns with both Kaplan's and Murphy's analyses of the repressive and chaotic environments which ushered forth this particular feminine icon. If the Nixie is a resonant symbol of the transformation of American womanhood, she also represents the shifting, malleable experimentation with identity which would become increasingly visible in the literature of the decades to come.

### *Sympathy and Society*

"Anne" and "Miss Pringle's Neighbors" attest to the importance of building and maintaining sympathetic bonds, while "The Nixie" shows the risks of not doing so, but intriguingly "The Nixie" is the only one of the three written from the perspective of a man. The

gaze of Willoughby on the Nixie and the way he positions her in relation to the rest of society is very distinct from the way the titular characters in the other two stories sympathise with those around them. As a young girl, the Nixie appears to Willoughby to be a delinquent, either pathetic or potentially dangerous, and socially inferior. As he begins to view her as a young woman he conflates her with another feminine object of his attraction, Lady Maud. He never sees the Nixie as a full, dynamic person, and this contributes to both her spectrality and her ability to metamorphose. Patricia Murphy notes the prevalence of the problematic gaze of men in New Woman narratives, the incomplete portrayals of women, and their positioning as half-formed or unevolved beings, something which further ghosted them within society and made it harder for them to be seen as individuals deserving of sympathy. As this type of ghost, the figure of the New Woman “became a powerful tool of critique, highlighting the various forms of disenfranchisement suffered by women in American culture” (Weinstock, “Monsters” 48). The men in these stories act as agents of women’s “circumscribed possibilities for self-actualization” (48). Weinstock identifies both Mary E. Wilkins-Freeman and Edith Wharton as writers whose texts fully embody that spectrality, and Wharton in particular, even in her more realist novels such as *The Age of Innocence* (1920) or *The House of Mirth* (1905), focusses on women who are truly cast into the shadows because of the whims of powerful men. In both of these novels, as well, the power, and the limitations, of sympathy prove some of the most influential social forces. In these three New Woman stories, the development of sympathetic bonds is what allows women to thrive, and in “The Nixie,” the masculine arrogance and prescriptivism which prevents Willoughby from giving in to sympathetic impulses are what eventually leads him to the brink of self-destruction.

Willoughby’s efforts at trying to control the Nixie, judge her and govern her, ultimately lead him to suffer the consequences of his arrogance. Upon first noticing her, Willoughby thinks she may be a child, but he discerns “with increasing annoyance” that she is a schoolgirl (278). As mentioned earlier, his irritation at the disruption of his space, the train compartment, is palpable, but eventually “the sympathy of youth with rebellion somewhat softened his heart toward the fugitive” (278). Only his own experiences with childhood rebelliousness are able to sway his judgment: significantly, Willoughby *is* able to develop sympathy but seems unable to process or understand the importance of empathy. Such a distinction offers a more nuanced reading of this story’s relationship with identity formation.

Willoughby’s ability to sympathise is also related to the experience of the sublime. As he remembers the fears of his own youth, an anecdote comes to his mind of hiding in a tree and watching a hare escaping from a pack of hounds. When the hare is finally caught, Willoughby

recalls “he shut his eyes with a sick heart, and joined with the [hunters] in their loud acclaim” (278). His discomfort at the human destruction of the ecosystem is the sentiment which enables him to finally connect with the Nixie on a sympathetic level. Yet she completely baffles him and he continues to tell her what to do and how to behave, even after they disembark from the train. The New Woman story often includes this kind of anxiety-ridden masculine behaviour, identified by Murphy as stemming from “the lack of worthy paternal figures who protect a dependent, unmarried female and guide her into a contented adulthood” (19). Willoughby fancies himself a protector of this young creature, but ultimately as she gains confidence and is reinvigorated by their journey into the wilderness, she reclaims a nymph-like form and morphs into an embodiment of social fears for those women not “guided” to adulthood: she becomes a siren, an agent of sexual freedom and a source of temptation more widely symbolic of the 1880s and 1890s, a period when, in Showalter’s words, “all the laws that governed sexual identity and behaviour seemed to be breaking down” (*Sexual Anarchy* 3). Aestheticism, a movement which foregrounded the representation of this kind of sexual decadence, has largely been seen as a masculine one, but the Nixie acts as a feminine example of the decadence and sensuality promoted within aestheticism. Playfulness, paradox, and purple prose are the Nixie’s fortes: as she steals some grapes from beyond a walled garden, just because she feels like it, and Willoughby protests, she begins to weave circles around him with her words, questioning his ethics and posing existential problems. She lulls him further into reverie with her rhetoric, but his protest turns the dream into a nightmare. Before long, “shadows thicke[n],” “cold mist” creeps over the ground, and as Willoughby is called into the river, he looks straight into a face, which “sank deeper and deeper, the smile upon it changing grotesquely through the water from gay mockery to the grieved expression of a sobbing child, lost in blackness” (284). The Nixie appropriates the above kind of masculinised, decadent behaviour, and when Willoughby fails to assimilate, he is led to danger. The lack of sympathetic bond formation in “The Nixie” leaves both characters without suitable resolution or settlement, and suspended in uncanny uncertainty.

Finding a foothold for “The Nixie” in the canon of *fin-de-siècle* feminine aestheticism is already challenging because the movement was so heavily masculinised. Talia Shaffer’s *The Forgotten Female Aesthetes* (2000) notes that every “now-canonical male aesthete once competed with the female aesthetes whose critical and popular success made them formidable contemporaries”, and that recovering “this missing half of aestheticism, this world of women, necessarily alters our view of the movement” (2). Moreover, the New Woman genre has been so largely constructed within a British context that situating an American New Woman identity

creates further difficulties. Specifying the New Woman of the American West—or indeed anywhere outside the urban areas of New England—is more complex still. As Shaffer asks, how do you define someone “according to a definition her inclusion ought to challenge?” (3). This is so often the central issue of positioning Stevenson’s short stories, with their complex and hybrid themes and motifs, and their constant blending and rewriting of generic expectations, all of which combine to suggest that she inhabits a genre of her own altogether, and also that her work deepens critical understandings of the unruly nature of American women’s literary identity in the late nineteenth century. As Willoughby looks into the river, he sees himself reflected, then “blurred” and “shattered into a thousand sparkles” (283). Feeling he is “in a dream,” he wades into the river, dreaming of “ancient tales, mixing naiads, and gods, and water-sprites” (284). This anarchic imagery, blending mythology, religiosity, and the sublime, with its implication of fractured and multiplicitous selfhood, is a significant example of the process Stevenson’s work undertakes. This fragmentation recalls Marie Mulvey-Roberts on the power of hybridity, and the idea that breaking things apart also allows for them to be reworked in myriad different ways, that “the stuff of monstrosity, particularly when seen as a collection of incongruent parts,” can be a constructive, rather than destructive process (111). Stevenson’s New Woman stories break down expectations of femininity to their very core, rebuilding them in a new design.

### Conclusion: “Like-Minded Women”

Showalter has asserted that literature at “ends of centuries tends to have special preoccupations with the past and future. It can be pessimistic, looking despairingly to the end, or utopian, dreaming of a new beginning” (*Jury* 219). Stevenson’s stories do a little of both, in keeping with her reputation for rebelliousness. So many aspects of womanhood in the late nineteenth century United States can be linked to the Gothic that the New Woman genre, centred as it is around the liberation of women from historical ghosts, could hardly avoid featuring a few literal spectres as well. All three of Stevenson’s stories discussed in this chapter show points of breaking from reality, from social norms, even from life itself. Social and historical tensions culminating in the appearance of revenants and ruptures are the bread and butter of the New Woman tale, and similarly lie at the heart of the Gothic. In each of Stevenson’s narratives, a character collides ungracefully with the forces of femininity, either as socialised expectations or as manifestations of a character’s identity. Stevenson’s tales figure such collisions through certain tropes typical of the New Woman story and the uncanny, such

that her work can be situated amongst several transatlantic genres and movements. While doing this in slightly different ways in each of the stories in question, across the board the result is a body of work which eschews strict literary bounds and expectations in favour of the transitional, the hybrid, and the interstitial.

Though New Women were defined in part by their independence, they were also situated within a group of “comfortably middle-class, vigorous participants in a well settled community of like-minded women” (Richardson and Willis 44). In other words, the New Woman is who she is because of the existence of other New Women. Though often intended to be a white, privileged, and able-bodied character, the New Woman was often “co-opted by writers deemed Other,” that is, Othered in ways beyond gendered distinctions, be that through race, class, nationality, religion, or other identities which add various layers of subversion or counter-hegemonic resistance to her representation (Patterson 4). This necessarily dissident aspect of the New Woman text challenged fictional norms, but also social and moral norms, bending and rewriting expectations for women. Questions around isolation, sympathy, disenfranchisement, and identity-building could be felt in political texts, but also in the realm of the uncanny, and the political subtexts of the New Woman genre are the same ones which served to fuel the fire of social change.

The witty and self-reflexive narratives of these stories echo other instances of comic techniques—particularly dramatic irony and acerbic asides—in Stevenson’s tales which contrast with their uncanny aesthetics, prompting me to suggest a sort of sarcastic Gothic that embodies the generic “variety” and “turmoil” which Ammons sees as a cornerstone quality of late-century American women’s writing (4). Stevenson’s narrators are well aware of themselves as they comment on the absurdity of both overzealous religion and adamant secularism, the frustrating gaze of men upon young women, or the whimsically confusing realms of the afterlife, but the characters themselves feel deeply affected by what they view as frightening realities. The discord between narration and character is jarring in a way which again ties back to Ammons’s suggestion of difference as a building block of women’s writing in the period rather than a side effect. That differentiation of comedy and terror within Stevenson’s stories is blended uniquely with the manifestation of American identity—with all its Gothic traumas—and the resultant coping mechanisms, both textual and psychological. As I go on to show in the next chapter, Stevenson’s integration of socially-dissenting discourse with irony and the uncanny gives way to a very different shadowy paradigm on the American frontier, and in her stories of the Californian landscape.



## Chapter 2

### Something Wicked Westward Goes: The Californian Uncanny

The dynamics of domesticity and femininity so omnipresent in Stevenson's writing evince a deeper historical significance when inscribed upon a specific region. Two of her short fictions in particular, "Sargent's Rodeo" (1880) and "The Warlock's Shadow" (1886), interrogate the supernatural phenomena haunting Central California and probe the consequences of repressing the historical traumas of that landscape. Linking regionality with uncanny storytelling techniques, these tales foreground the insufficiencies of various social and spatial boundaries in adequately containing the multiple identities of the region. What arises from this conjunction of genre and history is a phenomenon I define in this chapter as the "Californian Uncanny," an aesthetic that reflects the redoubled anxieties undermining the United States' westernmost periphery. I designate the Californian Uncanny as the literary product of multiple displacements of trauma and identity across layers of regional recolonisation. Sublime wonders of the Californian landscape, mythically familiar as they have become, are thrown into unstable contrast through narrative engagements with the repressions of the historical ghosts of not only indigenous nations, but also estranged Spanish settlements and early white settlers of the mining boom.

Stevenson spent a great deal of her life in California, and particularly in the rural areas of the state, the "soft air and peaceful atmosphere" granted her a serenity she was not afforded elsewhere (53). The American presence in the California territory exploded in 1849 after the discovery of gold, and thirty years later the state was in a burgeoning phase of urban expansion and industrial development. Stevenson moved to California with her first husband in the 1860s, so he could attempt to make his fortune in the mines. Their young family was emblematic of the fascination with the region which was reliant upon, among other matters, the myth of prosperity so closely linked to the American Dream on the one hand, and the Edenic climate and beauty of the landscape on the other. Stevenson's sister Nellie Van de Grift Sanchez writes in *The Life of Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson* that on first visiting her sister in California in 1879, she too was stunned by the magic of the region. Sanchez muses that by the end of that decade, "there remained one spot in practical America where the Spirit of Romance still lingered, though even there she stood a-tiptoe, ready to take wing into the mists of the Pacific" (55). This Spirit of Romance links directly back to the myths of the American Dream.

Yet, something distinctly unsettling also plagued the new Californian residents, particularly those in Central California, where Stevenson and her family lived. Many

European-Americans displayed an inability to cope with the stunning, but difficult environment. Linda Nash argues the basis for this contradiction was “[b]oth the strangeness and the variability of the California landscape” (31). A “sense of physical vulnerability” was pervasive among white settlers, accompanied by frequent sickness across the settler population (26). Despite “the seeming abundance and beauty of the California environment” (26), the “rhetoric of conquest existed alongside and in tension with a fear of ... human-induced environmental change” (27). Contradictions were unavoidable between the familiarity of the remarkable flora and fauna of the state and the continued fear and trauma through which white settlers “acknowledg[ed] that they might be a race out of place in Central California” (38). Despite this, Stevenson and her family lived all over the region, in Monterey, the Napa Valley, San Francisco, Oakland, and elsewhere. Stevenson even resettled in California permanently after Louis’s death in 1894. “The Warlock’s Shadow” and “Sargent’s Rodeo” are both set in and around Monterey, a coastal village about one hundred miles south of San Francisco, and both texts are intimately concerned with the dynamics of Californian identity.

Stevenson’s writing illuminates the ambiguities of the territory which was so enigmatic and awe-inducing for European settlers, who struggled to fully understand, let alone control, California. Stevenson’s story “The Warlock’s Shadow” capitalises on these tensions, featuring as it does a nameless narrator, a young woman, who travels to California to begin a new life, and who in the process upsets the balance between different communities, between magic and reality, and between convention and revolution. She finds a place within a new family and with them must find a way to put to rest the haunting forces upon which she has intruded with her very presence in the region. Published in 1886 in *Belgravia*, the magazine edited by Mary Elizabeth Braddon, the tale invokes common features of the nineteenth century Gothic text, set against the backdrop of a post-Gold Rush Californian landscape, and leaning dually on the Gothic genre and palimpsestic Californian identities as tools for redefining expectations for feminine protagonists. Employing Gothic tropes such as, to reference one list of the genre’s traits, “ghosts, magic, and blood” (Miller 144), “The Warlock’s Shadow” sets in counterpoint unstable boundaries, psychological imbalances, and truly paranormal occurrences. “Sargent’s Rodeo,” published in *Lippincott’s* in January 1880, is a pseudo-travel narrative turned uncanny ghost story detailing the experiences of a group of friends who travel out to the Carmel hills near Monterey to assist an acquaintance, Sargent, in a cattle roundup. Again narrated by a nameless feminine figure, the story collapses boundaries between home and abroad, and features a spectral character who unsettles the others from their conventional expectations and helps them test the boundaries of their own subjectivities.

This chapter explores the specificities of the geographically-bound textual aesthetic which governs Stevenson's two Californian stories, and connects them to larger patterns in Stevenson's writing and in the literary traditions of California. The uncanny, to reiterate Benyamini's definition, emerges when the unusual "destabilizes the usual," and provokes a feeling of disorientation (71). The Gothic genre takes advantage of these porous constructs, and in the Californian Uncanny of "The Warlock's Shadow" and "Sargent's Rodeo", such instabilities stem from California's multiple recolonisations by various settlers and further delimit the establishment of consistent borders and boundaries. The new settler presence in nineteenth century California, in other words, complicated the concept of the "usual" through traumatic resettlements and erasures, creating a sense of anxiety tied to reminders of the past in the form of the natural environment. The nameless narrator of "The Warlock's Shadow", for example, uses her Gothic spectrality as a tool for transcending her role as victim, while simultaneously envisioning a new future for the feminine American subject. Conversely, the instability of boundaries between wilderness and domesticity in "Sargent's Rodeo" upsets what it means to be "at home." This chapter demonstrates the utility of the Californian Uncanny as a frame through which to interrogate Stevenson's texts, and their renegotiation of nineteenth century U.S. femininity, and identity in general, which primarily occurs through images of the home, the environment, and the threat of the unassimilable inhabitant.

In understanding Stevenson's engagement with conventions of genre, gender, and national history, this study builds on Kaplan's understanding of the chaotic nature of American identity in the nineteenth century, as well as the assertion from Renée Bergland's *The National Uncanny* that the entire country is "haunted because it is stolen" (9). Both critics see American selfhood as being governed by corrupted constructions of domesticity, but if the American nation is understood as a haunted house, Kaplan illustrates how its ghosts constantly prove the inadequacy of walls or borders as protective forces. Bergland, conversely, shows that the ghosts of American selfhood have been inside the home all along. These two positions may at first appear contradictory, but I argue that they supplement each other to indicate that the American subject is plagued by anxieties about *both* past repressions and ongoing threats from "the particular darkneses of a ghostly Other" (7). While this signifies confusion between interiority and exteriority, that confusion is precisely the point: there are "contradictions, ambiguities, and frayed edges that unravel at imperial borders, where binary divisions collapse and fractured spaces open" (Kaplan 14). Furthermore, the significance of discussing domesticity is that the double meaning of both "the space of the nation" and "the familial household" illustrates how the construction of home-interior-subjective is inextricable from fluid constructs of world-

exterior-objective. What Kaplan terms “manifest domesticity” encapsulates this tension between the feminine interiority of the domestic realm and the American project of westward expansion which was not limited only to men or to masculinity.

In Stevenson’s stories, borders and boundaries are always shifting due to influences such as manifest domesticity, but the conventions of the domestic, wherever they *do* manifest, are always linked to evolving forms of femininity. If the domestic sphere is enmeshed with femininity, then femininity is likewise enmeshed with all these hauntings. Indeed, discursively, domesticity and spectrality both also extend to “the interiority of female subjectivity” (Kaplan 43), and therefore the domestic space is analogous to both the nation as a construct and to feminine identity. If nation is home and home is womanhood, and if that home is haunted, so too is American femininity. Showing that Stevenson’s Californian Uncanny supports both the notion of inescapable American haunting and that of inescapably haunted femininity, I carry these theories forward to assert that her texts demonstrate that the only way to put the hauntings to rest, at least in California, is to better understand and adapt to the uncanny landscapes, and by doing so collapse and diffuse binary frameworks.

The American Gothic, a tradition which I have been positioning Stevenson’s stories within, has remained consistently concerned with issues of self-construction, and consequently the construction of Others as well. These Others include the populations that American literary characters met as they traversed a land already settled by indigenous nations, while trying to reinscribe layers of new signification onto the territory. Punter describes the American Gothic in a similar way to Bergland’s uncanny: it encompasses “naming,” and “rootlessness,” and evinces an obsession with “how and whether it is possible to come to rest” (“Dream” 25-27). I agree with Bergland and Punter that there will always be a double-bind in American literary identity which will not allow that settlement or identification while the same privilege is denied to those who originally inhabited the land. A number of inescapable historical ghosts haunt the U.S. landscape, not only those of original nations but also, in California, of those who have themselves been both colonised and colonisers.

As an example of such duality, Maria DeGuzmán has explored the shifting and uncanny representations of Spanish identity and constructions of whiteness in *Spain’s Long Shadow* (2005). Anglo-American settlers in the mid-nineteenth century “created a fantasy of racial purity” by depicting Spaniards as figures of “morally blackened alien whiteness or *off-whiteness* and doomed hybridity” (xxiv). In Stevenson’s stories, Spanish hybridity is posed as productive, adaptive, and progressive, but either way, as DeGuzmán notes, the composite identity fosters a close association with the Gothic genre through the realms of liminality and

ambiguity. Spanish settlers in California, to refer back to Kaplan, are an example of the failures of U.S. nation-building to adequately distinguish between domestic and foreign.

Critics have identified the aesthetics of both the Settler Gothic and the Frontier Gothic as related, though distinct, responses to North American internal colonisation, and I suggest that the Californian Uncanny is a regionally-specific iteration of certain aspects of both categories. Stevenson's tales manage a similar "cultivation of often-unstable border zones, of hazy demarcations between self-reliance and self-delusion, between the humane and the monstrous," upon "intersecting borderlands and failed repression, of a haunted national psyche" (Sivils 85, 92-93). The literary origin of these Gothic subgenres is the captivity narrative, in which a "combination of racial oppression, violence, and the American environment resulted in a harrowing psychological landscape" (90). The California region has experienced its own reproductions of such narratives, and thus the Californian Uncanny responds to regional histories in a particular way. That said, according to John Eperjesi in *The Imperialist Imaginary* (2005), geographical regions are not "natural givens": they "take shape under specific historical conditions and in relation to particular sets of power relations" (3). In what follows, I describe the Californian Uncanny as a result of the Frontier or Settler Gothic moulding itself to one such set of power relations, and consider the distinct commentaries, aesthetics, and effects which those dynamics enable.

The literary heritage of the American frontier before the 1849 Gold Rush, and more specifically of the Californian frontier, where Stevenson's stories are set, has received little critical attention. Most studies of Californian literature do not consider much material at all from the period before 1900.<sup>13</sup> Stoddard Martin wrote in 1983 that the first important novel about California was written in 1901, and hailed Jack London and John Steinbeck as the earliest notable writers of the American West (10). Martin's privileging of novels above other genres does a disservice to other modes of writing about California, all of which contributed to the configuration of its regional identity in the Gold Rush era. Indeed, the California Gold Rush was a "profoundly writerly event," which was defined by "noteworthy prose efforts to report, mediate, and meliorate the experiences of those affected by it" (Witschi 76). Martin's account also ignores the commercial and social impact of earlier novelists such as John Rollin Ridge, Richard Henry Dana, Jr., and importantly, Helen Hunt Jackson. Jackson, author of the 1884

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<sup>13</sup> Jack Hicks edited *The Literature of California* (2000) which offers a solid overview of Californian writing from before the Gold Rush. Curiously, this collection also features *The Silverado Squatters* by Robert Louis Stevenson but does not mention Fanny Van de Grift Stevenson.

novel *Ramona*, was an essayist and novelist who was concerned with social welfare, and *Ramona* tackles this subject in relation to late nineteenth century California. The novel was sufficiently well-received and culturally prominent to be adapted several times, including into an annual outdoor play, which began its run in 1923. One corrective to Martin's account which insists upon those voices being heard is Ida Rae Egli's *No Rooms of Their Own* (1997), an anthology of women's writing in nineteenth century California which will be investigated in detail below.

Martin's claims that only in the twentieth century was there any Californian literature of value also elides the novel most identifiable as a precursor to Stevenson's story "The Warlock's Shadow": *The Life and Adventures of Joaquín Murieta: The Celebrated California Bandit*. Published in 1854 and written by John Rollin Ridge, also known as Yellow Bird (Cherokee Nation), this text has been considered the first novel published by a native North American, with Nicolas Witschi explaining its importance in parsing and responding to "the fluidity of individual and national identities that were being negotiated by border communities in the wake of the Mexican-American War," and in consolidating "many of the vague whispers and often paranoid assertions about banditry and bigotry running rampant in the mining country at the time" (83). The influx of gold prospectors made the 1850s synonymous with the resettlement of California by white American settlers searching for their fortunes, and it was communities like Ridge's who were most immediately displaced. For the first time in U.S. colonial history, there was little land left west of the Mississippi River that was inaccessible to those living further east, as the construction of a transnational railway began almost immediately after the events of 1849. The mining industry, and the new California, was subsequently built, forcefully, atop California's indigenous communities and came at the expense of the mixed Spanish and native populations who had been resident in California before the mid-century. Incoming Californian settlers thus felt compelled to "define themselves anew" (Witschi 76), and write themselves a fresh literary identity in which they controlled the narratives about their own role in the changes to their environment.

The Frontier is often drawn as an inherently individualistic masculine space, full of danger, yet Stevenson's stories insist that a cooperative feminine literary identity was present and needs to be accounted for in California. Stevenson writes about this domineering masculinity in detail in her letters, and her biography by Sanchez includes detailed descriptions of the frustration and chaos of being amongst a handful of women in mining camps surrounded by overwhelming numbers of men. In literature, masculine archetypes were a productive tool through which Californian settlers were able to write themselves a new identity in which they

controlled the narratives about their environment, and “define the [Gold Rush] retrospectively as something other than a time of disruption and trauma” (Witschi 76). Some of the central literary consequences of the Gold Rush, include, crucially, exertion of “a great deal of pressure on models of community organized around traditional gender roles” (75). In Frontier adventure literature, as Tania Zulli argues, “journeys and the life in unknown realms were ideal motifs to strengthen and revitalise...heroic masculinity” (60), and so the latter became the defining quality of writing in the American West. Frederick Jackson Turner’s Frontier Thesis solidified this myth of masculinity, but acted more as “cultural symptom than fact” (Eperjesi 27). Scholarship of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries has sought to complicate this mythology. Michael Kowalewski advocates “altering a paradigm of single-handed masculine conquest and resistance and emphasizing the neglected domestic elements of family and community” (2). Readjusting cultural studies of the Frontier to emphasise complex and long-standing networks, including those of indigenous communities, it becomes clear that the entire idea of the Frontier implies adaptation, new interactions between people and environment (Stoeltje 25). This is incompatible with the enforced stereotyping of the American West as a setting dominated by masculine individualism. Such inconsistencies indicate the non-normative and hybrid gender dynamics of the American West, which Stevenson appropriates in these two stories, and which also disrupt the ongoing repression of traumatic histories.

Such dominant literary myths of masculinity also minimise the significant amounts of frontier writing which was by and about women. Women’s portraits of homesteading life, such as Caroline Kirkland’s popular 1839 account *A New Home; Who’ll Follow?*, captured a new everyday and rebuilt conceptions of the American home. On the Frontier, while the home was still conceptualised as the woman’s “proper” place, domesticity included many masculine-coded responsibilities such as hunting or chopping wood. Thus, the forces of femininity and masculinity on the Frontier have never been set in direct opposition, “the female realm of domesticity and the male arena of Manifest Destiny [are] not separate spheres,” but were actually “intimately linked”: both frameworks “reimagined the nation as home” (Kaplan 19). Given these reconfigured gendered conventions of the everyday, women writing about their experiences in unfamiliar landscapes suggested shifts in the boundaries between the known and the unknown. In short, homesteading on the Frontier disrupted the distinctions between wilderness and domesticity which bolstered myths of masculine individualism.

Stevenson’s writing participates in this disruption by uncoupling the historically-bound woman-and-home duality which often underpins the uncanny as a psychoanalytical construct and the Gothic as a genre. “Sargent’s Rodeo” and “The Warlock’s Shadow” figure Californian

domesticity as an ecological sphere comprising both the organic and inorganic environment in a way which collapses distinctions of interior and exterior realms. This is not to say that the built home is irrelevant, but rather that it is only one part of the wider environmental home which Stevenson's texts imagine. I refer back to the image of "woman plus habitat" referenced in the previous chapter. Rather than domesticity representing anxieties of *being* a home, as in childbirth, or being *trapped* within a home, as in a claustrophobic marriage, Stevenson's Californian Uncanny suggests it may be the relationship between a woman and her environment that is more prone to hauntings.

To further explain the uncanny relationship that regional writing fostered between the mysteries of the natural world and the shifting role of women settlers on the Frontier, I draw on both Ida Rae Egli and Elaine Showalter, who have offered commentaries on local colour writing by nineteenth century women writers in their respective works *No Rooms of Their Own* and *A Jury of Her Peers* (2009). Showalter speaks more generally about the tradition of local colour writing by women across the United States, and identifies certain commonalities within the local colour genre, such as "prophetic American womanhood" and fascination with the figure of the old woman, the almost-witch, as well as "declining villages as shrines to the past" (187). Much of women's local colour writing also has "the power of legend as well as the grit of realism, dealing with the tragic lives of women" who are subject to tyrannical masculine figures (188). Women writers, Showalter argues, invoked such images in order to use "geography to talk about gender" (187), that is, words to discuss what I suggest are "regions" of Self and Other.

Egli's study focusses specifically on Californian regional literature and the distinctly Californian local colour tradition, sometimes termed the Sagebrush School. That genre's mixture of reality and mythology meant that "characters were often picturesque, and selections contained pathos or humor and sometimes an abnormality that was intimately exclusive to California" (xx). Such heterogeneous writing underscores the "intellectual spirit of revolution and personal freedom" which Egli views as a distinct feature of the West Coast: in California, women were able to abandon their "preconceived notions about what [they] should wear, should do, should be" (xiii-xvii). This sense of potential, of the possibilities as well as the dangers of a land shaped by constant revolt and redefinition, permeates Stevenson's Californian tales. The "abnormality" of the environment noted by Egli and the recurring prophetic, sibylline imagery which Showalter suggests both identify a conflict between history and future, as well as the usual and the unusual, and that discord manifests in Stevenson's two stories through uncanny phenomena.

“Sargent’s Rodeo” and “The Warlock’s Shadow” indicate the uncanny tension to be negotiated in recognising the incontrovertible potency of a region’s history while struggling to repress the traumas which have shaped it. This historical estrangement resonates with the image of “frayed edges” which Kaplan centres in her figuration of the inconsistencies within American identity (14). The Californian Uncanny, as I define it, therefore erupts because settlement and expansion fails to provide an escape, not only for the traditionally-conceived American hero fleeing west, but, in Stevenson’s stories, also for subjects of American femininity seeking to redefine their relationship with domesticity.

Connections between femininity and the uncanny, and more explicitly between femininity and the Gothic mode, have been extensively theorised. Rebecca Munford and Anne Williams in particular have both explored the spectralisation of femininity through “cultural associations” between women and “the territories of irrationality, otherness and corporeal excess” (Munford 120). Prescriptive social limitations for women resist such excesses, and thus function as “symptoms” of the very “fear [they] arouse” (Williams 95). In the mid-nineteenth century, ghostliness was “closely related to oppression and to the hope of denying or repressing the memory of that oppression” (Bergland 7), with both women and other marginalised people being “ghosted” in this way. Although American Gothic writing has been susceptible to what Monnet deems an “androcentric bias,” the Gothic genre has, she argues, in general been “a refuge for women writers and female protagonists” (218). Though this may seem contradictory, as I argued in the introduction to this thesis, American Gothic literature is androcentric only when the narratives considered are mainly those written by and about men. As I have affirmed, the dualities of man and nature, as opposed to women and domesticity, are complicated by the very presence of women on the Frontier, and I therefore modify the two conflicting aspects of Monnet’s argument. I suggest instead that although literary histories of the American Gothic have usually emphasised androcentrism, the existence of texts such as Stevenson’s two Californian tales indicates that the latter genre allows women writers and female protagonists to renegotiate their own understandings of what constitutes refuge.

The narrators and characters in Stevenson’s stories thus traverse an environment which suggests unfettered possibilities for the feminine subject. However, they undertake these journeys across a landscape haunted by ghostly historical presences all in competition. These Californian ghosts, phantoms of repeated resettlement, can be further understood through Michelle Burnham’s interrogation of the authenticity of American Gothic hauntings, in which she observes that “indigenous cultures and histories of storytelling in the Americas were *already* populated by Gothic elements, representing a literary and cultural history that not only

predates the importation of the European Gothic into the Americas, but predates the arrival of Europeans in the Americas altogether” (226). How, Burnham asks, might such discoveries “change, complicate, and enrich our understanding of the Gothic and its history?” (226). Stevenson’s two Californian tales respond to aspects of Burnham’s question by featuring indigenous and mixed-race characters who engage in various storytelling traditions themselves, which serves to emphasise how much the other characters do not understand about their surroundings and the associated history. The texts also embrace the sublime mysteries of the environment and acknowledge the power of the landscape to recall ghosts of past traumas.

Such ineffable phantoms of the past foreground exactly what Stevenson’s texts leave out: “The Warlock’s Shadow” and “Sargent’s Rodeo” only convey a shallow understanding of the kinds of cultural knowledge Burnham mentions. Her narrators’ roles as white settlers are complicated by their discourse on the destruction brought about by industry, commerce, and capital, but the shadows of disenfranchised Others lie in wait around each corner that the characters turn, to remind them of what they strive to repress. California holds a layered history which complicates borders between past trauma and future possibilities, between expectations and realities, and moreover, California represents the overwhelming contradictions produced by myths of American identity. Burnham’s question informs my readings of these stories, and in the analyses that follow, I work towards the beginnings of an answer.

### The Warlock’s Shadow

Instead of emphasising literary Otherness as a result or projection of any legitimate threat, and in response to Burnham’s question of the authenticity of the American Gothic as a mode, in my reading of “The Warlock’s Shadow” I place the burden of the conflict on the subjectivity of feminine American whiteness. In this way it is possible to, as Eugenia DeLamotte suggests, “see Gothic texts themselves as documents in the history of racial formation, documents that might give us a better sense of what the construction of whiteness involved, and in particular, of the white terrors it worked both to express and produce” (“White Terror” 19). “The Warlock’s Shadow” demonstrates a fluidity of identity which foregrounds the historical contradictions of American subjectivity, and provides a useful example of such constructions of both whiteness and femininity.

Stevenson’s 1886 tale opens onto a nameless narrator, “young, romantic, poor, and friendless” travelling west via train to California, to take a job as a teacher after the “death of

the last of [her] family” (29). After a distressing, macabre accident in the desert, the narrator settles in Monterey with new friends, Alberto and his aunt, Señorita Rodriguez, though the narrator is still suffering a “painful nervous fever” due to her experience (36). She begins to recover, until she must testify against the man responsible for her malady, Manuel, a *californio*.<sup>14</sup> On the day of the trial, Manuel curses the narrator with a “menacing gesture,” throwing her into a “great nervous depression,” and causing her to see a shadow, almost but not quite in the form of Manuel, passing in through her window every night. Finally, Dolores, a 120-year-old “witch,” agrees to help the heroine (41). Several days pass and Dolores teaches the narrator about the otherworldly, explaining what must be done. However, Dolores dies the next night, just before the phantom passes through the window. The narrator, “with the strength of madness,” takes a dagger from Dolores’s hands and plunges it into the spectre (48). The next day, Manuel is found dead in his cell, “with a knife-wound in the heart” (48). The narrator and her new family continue on in peace henceforth.

Read as part of the Californian Uncanny, “The Warlock’s Shadow” considers the dynamic between masculinised and feminised spaces, displacing femininity and a sense of domestic comfort from the physical home and shifting it to a more subjective realm. Rather than adhering to socially conventional binaries of domestic and foreign, home and world, the text negotiates its own structures of the domestic. For Stevenson’s narrator, the safe and homely is tied to a metaphysical comfort linked to understanding, sympathy, and agency, in relation to both her environment and its inhabitants. Often in Gothic fiction, the decay of a home, and the imminent danger of remaining trapped forever within its walls, indicates also the threat of being subsumed within the limitations of the domestic realm, something Kate Ferguson Ellis has thoroughly detailed in her analysis of the patterns of the Gothic home as a “place of danger and imprisonment” in her 1989 book *The Contested Castle* (x). Ellis elaborates on this inversion: rather than the home being a safe haven, “evil is thus enclosed in the home and freedom lies in the world beyond it, however dangerous.” Yet, in a country universally haunted, safety must be an individual, subjective journey. In other words, to extrapolate from both Bergland and Kaplan’s studies on the meaning of “settlement” in the United States: what is that country if not a home palpably estranged?

More so than “Sargent’s Rodeo”, this story relies on the melodrama of the Gothic mode to exaggerate and heighten the affective climate of the narrative. The conventions of Gothic ghost fiction were often seen in the nineteenth century as a less “serious” form of literature,

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<sup>14</sup> A person of mixed Spanish and indigenous background, but generally considered “native” to California.

with the “supernatural machinery, melodramatic episode, and exaggerated emotion that defined the genre,” making room for women to “give oblique expression to disturbing personal issues without fear of exposure” (Carpenter and Kolmar 60). Melodrama in this context is taken to mean a narrative which is not “literally credible” but rather deploys spiritual and moral “truths” as a means of communicating a deeper story, and this too facilitated women’s association with the Gothic (Ammons 27). In many cases, that deeper story was a social one: as Diana Wallace has observed, the Gothic story in particular “allowed women writers special kinds of freedom ... to offer critiques of male power and sexuality which are often more radical than those in more realist genres” (57). An additional freedom, the exploration of transgression, is also facilitated by the Gothic genre’s tendency to “straddle, even to collapse, boundaries between worlds and categories,” and to manifest “a distinct sensation of discomfort” in the process (Burnham 234).

Linda Nash has argued that white settlers in Central California experienced this kind of discomfort and uncertainty acutely, and felt they needed to “read and to adapt to, rather than simply to conquer” the landscape (26). This adaptation, a metamorphosis which strives to integrate the “foreign” settler symbiotically into the ecosystem of the new “home”, is analogous to what I see as one of the central endeavours of Stevenson’s stories, which is the attempt to redefine domesticity as distinct from the house, and instead as the place, or ecosystem, where one can feel safe, at ease, and settled in the many senses of the word. Threats to this sense of nurturing and growth become the core tension of the domestic ecosystem of “The Warlock’s Shadow,” and the additional layers of historical trauma which drive the Californian Uncanny further disrupt the balance between a “new” feminine American subject and that which cannot be domesticated, or at least, cannot be settled.

Threats of the Other in this story take on an ambiguity which tests the theories of Bergland, Kaplan, DeGuzmán, and other American Gothicists by illustrating an essentially colonial hierarchy, though one which troubles convention by posing femininity as the dominant force. “The Warlock’s Shadow” inverts the adventure tale’s gendered norms but upholds its racial ones, casting indigenous characters as grotesque and inherently connected to the supernatural. Yet, as Elleke Boehmer notes, the imperial “stress on sameness encouraged the portrayal of otherness—all that was not white and not male—as feminine” (78), and thus the act of showing feminine agents to be the dominant ones disturbs the representational hierarchies of colonialism even while reinforcing other normative constructs of Otherness. This story associates racial Otherness with evil, or at least the paranormal, but also entangles itself with anxieties of whiteness over the very destruction it perpetuates. The narrator’s assumed

whiteness is associated with purity, but also with a weakness which is only redeemed by the Spanish, Mexican, and native characters around her.

Indigeneity is, by definition, tied to the physical environment, but in this tale indigenous characters appear as manifestations of the sublime, inspiring both awe and terror, and throwing into relief the relative insignificance of interlopers. Yet, it is femininity, and its associations with a reconfigured domesticity, which ultimately survives. Gothic fears of miscegenation are here replaced by a form of feminine supremacy which does encourage adaptation, but which imposes a feminised colonial perspective to which masculine subjects must yield. In short, this story provides a compelling illustration of what Justin D. Edwards terms the “identificatory fluidity within gothic production” (xii). Through representations of such fluidities, “The Warlock’s Shadow” invokes the American myth of rugged individualism and resourcefulness but subverts its typical gender patterning, and by extension the basis of the myth itself, creating a Californian Uncanny story with hybridity and chaos at its core.

### *Home*

Homes in “The Warlock’s Shadow” display the ambiguity of built structures as signifiers of good or evil, as well as their incompleteness as doubles of the Self. Neither of the two houses in this story, Manuel’s and the Señorita’s, fully signify the realms of safety or danger. That is, houses themselves are shown to be only one aspect of the domestic ecosystem which will ultimately provide a sense of refuge. As Ellis argues, normalcy “must be restored by women’s activity, not only within its walls but outside in the world as well” (xvi). Both houses, then, are integrated into specific natural environs which form the basis of such outside worlds, Manuel’s into the sandy dunes of the desert, and the Señorita’s into her garden, with roses acting as a bridge between interior and exterior.

Manuel’s house represents all that is corruptible in the domestic ecosystem—home, environment, and inhabitants—and the sinister energy which does lie within his house is not contained by its walls. The narrator and others seek refuge there after their train crashes in the desert, but they find only danger. Manuel’s house evokes “the failed home” (Ellis ix), domesticity’s “dark opposite, the Gothic castle” (ix). A “great house once, in the days of the Jesuit padres” the structure is now “gone to wreck and ruin” and “eaten, and broken, and crumbled away” (Stevenson 32). The adobe house has an “earthy and gravelike smell,” there are spiders everywhere and a general sense of “dust and decay” prevails (33). Not only does the house fail to provide either comfort nor safety, but it is barely a building at all, as the very environment seems to be reabsorbing it bit by bit. When the narrator awakens in the middle of

the night, she feels the darkness crushing her “like something tangible,” and “something warm and wet” from the ceiling comes “drip, drip, drip, down the back of [her] neck” (34). She tells herself it is the long-awaited rain, until the “a cold chill [creeps] up [her] spine,” and she senses “the same thick odour” of blood that she smelled at the site of the train crash (35). Indeed, it is not rain but blood that covers her, and the narrator, along with her new friends, must immediately flee from Manuel and his Californian iteration of the uncanny castle, in a sequence which illustrates Ellis’s claim that the Gothic “foreground[s] the home as fortress, while at the same time exposing its contradictions” (xi). Kaplan’s discussion of the fallacies behind the “cult of domesticity”, which governed nineteenth century American life, also reflects Ellis’s notion (Kaplan 24), though the two critics dispute the idea of home as haven because the walls are always permeable and impermanent. The escape from the house made by the narrator and the Señorita is not enough to prevent further danger, even when they return to an otherwise normal home.

The inadequacy of built spaces in this text to constitute a refuge or a home is figured through thresholds, particularly windows and doors, as well as threshold states, such as dreams and visions. Both physical and psychic thresholds such as these facilitate uncertainty and unsettledness. The windows in “The Warlock’s Shadow,” usually ajar, function not as objects of partition but rather as gateways between realms. Everything outside the windows in the narrative—scents, sounds, images—eventually finds a way to reach what is inside, and the opposite is also true. The apparent example of Manuel’s phantom aside, the roses outside the Señorita’s house also seem to act as an external image of the narrator’s state as she lies within.<sup>15</sup> At first, the presence of the roses all around the house is pleasant, and the air, “saturated with the scent of Castilian roses” brings the narrator peace (36). As she fades in strength, so does the aspect of the garden, until “the sickly scent of the rose leaves mingle[s] with an indefinable, slightly sweet, slightly pungent odour, that [she] vaguely remember[s] to have heard of as the precursor to death,” and which eventually “impede[s] [her] respiration” (47). From the windows of the Señorita’s house, the narrator can see across the road and into the jail where Manuel is held, and thus even the “neglected garden of roses” and all their thorns which stands beyond the window is a more effective protective barrier than the built thresholds of the home (38). Windows, doors, and walls cannot keep anything in *or* out in this tale, signalling a failure of the house to preserve settlement, or refuge.

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<sup>15</sup> There is a similar reflection between plants and humans in “The Half-White,” which will be discussed further in chapter 3.

The narrator's sense of safety returns only through learning and adapting, rather than through finding physical refuge, because the houses themselves fail as the source of such security. When the narrator and her friends escape into the Monterey desert, it seems at first that they have fled the danger, and in doing so have enabled "the heroine to purge the infected home and to establish a true one" (Ellis xii). The narrator settles into her new home, she and Alberto fall in love, and for a moment it seems this new domestic serenity has corrected the Gothic disarray of Manuel's adobe abode. However, the initial binary of homely-unhomely which is at first grafted onto constructed spaces is shifted to psychic ones, as it becomes clear the narrator is being haunted in some way by her experience with Manuel, possibly by an actual curse, which follows her into her home and her body, causes her physical pain and anguish, brings on a depression and night terrors, and is otherwise destructive. The learning and adapting the narrator must undertake to break the spell comes mostly through her relationship with 120-year-old Dolores—described by Alberto and the Señorita as a witch—to whom the three friends turn for help. Dolores is drawn as effectively a part of the Californian landscape herself, emphasising the blurred boundaries between house, inhabitant, and environment within a domestic ecosystem.

The quest for order and settlement in the story cannot be fulfilled either through negotiating the built environment or one's psychic space: only through navigating and understanding the entirety of her habitat, Self, home, *and* environment, does that resettlement occur. The Gothic genre works to "subvert the idealization of the home, and by implication the ideology of "separate spheres" on which that idealization depends" (Ellis xiii). By relegating the houses in the story to liminal structures that belong neither to the distinct realms of house or exterior world, "The Warlock's Shadow" questions not only gendered norms of spatiality, as Stevenson's New Woman Gothic stories do, but also the difference between interior and exterior altogether.

Returning to Kaplan's notion of "Manifest Domesticity," as Kaplan terms it—combining the feminised "cult of domesticity" as it meets the masculinised, expansionist drive towards Manifest Destiny—problematizes the boundaries of the domestic sphere, because it constantly works to push them outwards. This proliferation becomes uncanny as it turns the nation "into a home by producing and colonizing specters of the foreign that lurk inside and outside its ever-shifting borders" (Kaplan 50). Manifest Domesticity in California is inscribed on both objects and subjects, as are the codes of Self and Other, familiarity and estrangement. Stevenson's text is a rich example of this anarchic construct: within the narrative, the false binary associations of feminine-domestic and masculine-foreign are subverted in order to

propose a gendered and spatial hybridity akin to the kind of home Kaplan suggests, with the text constantly returning to those spectres of the foreign which it has attempted to “domesticate.” For the narrator of “The Warlock’s Shadow” to settle into a peaceful life, free from destructive forces, she must also be able to occupy what is traditionally considered a masculine space of agency, in order to understand her whole ecosystem enough to control it, both at home and in the environment beyond.

### *Landscape*

The source of domesticity—in this case synonymous with the narrator’s settlement—is her adaptation to and integration with her environment, rather than her reliance on specific walls and structures for self-containment and self-definition, with the Californian landscape functioning as a fundamental aspect of that habitat. Typically, in the feminine Gothic, the heroine “reclaims the enclosed space that should have been a refuge from evil but has become the very opposite,” while masculine Gothic features those who are “exile[s] from the refuge of the home,” (Ellis xiii). “The Warlock’s Shadow” uses environmental transformations as a way of collapsing this binary, creating a chaotic and ambiguously Gothic ecology in which women and men move fluidly throughout home and nature, and hauntings come from subjective and psychic settlement instead, governed by acclimatisation to unfamiliar surroundings and forming bonds of sympathy with the inhabitants.

In the first scene of the story, the narrator learns to understand her environment through engagement with locals, making new friends who act as sources for the aforementioned sympathy and education. This is both a foreshadowing of her future mastery of her surroundings and an analogy for the overall arc of the story. Learning from Dolores the “witch”—who is referenced as an indigenous woman but whose name indicates Spanish heritage as well—about how to stop the curse, and accustoming herself to unfamiliar histories and communities, is the way the narrator eventually guarantees her own safety. Turning the strange landscape into the known and familiar—a part of her domestic habitat—the narrator carves out a space for herself based not on a house but rather on forging a *sense* of Self and home. Reaching the point of understanding one’s surroundings is central to identity development in the Gothic genre, with the blending of object and subject being “represented in fiction by reverberating obscurely signifying structures that have to be “read” by the heroine” (Lloyd-Smith x). Similarly, Ellis advocates for the ability of the Gothic genre to illustrate that the heroine “needs knowledge, not protection from the truth” (xiii).

Familiarising herself with her surroundings in terms of both people and places, the narrator of “The Warlock’s Shadow” is able to save herself and work toward the process of “naming” that David Punter sees as core to the American Gothic (27). Yet, readers never learn *her* name: the anonymity of the narrators in both this story and in “Sargent’s Rodeo” complicates the establishment of clear subjective boundaries and layers the uncanny across the text by rendering the “I” of the reader a double of the “I” of the narrator. For instance, the articulation that “I was so absorbed in looking and listening” on the train parallels the reading experience, and without a distinct name assigned to this “I” throughout the text, the gap between the reader and the narrator is narrowed. This ambiguity ripples metatextually across “The Warlock’s Shadow” and undermines the distinction between the inside and the outside of the narrative, in a way similar to the inversion of interiority and exteriority at work within the domestic ecosystems which the narrator navigates.

Shifting relationships with the natural environment foreshadow the narrator’s transformation throughout the tale, as the mysterious, “dreary and depressing” terrain of the desert is illuminated through sympathetic understanding (Stevenson 30). The heroine learns from the people she meets, and as Alberto and the Señorita Rodriguez explain the history and significance of the landscapes through which they pass, it is through sympathy with their stories that the terrain “acquire[s] a new interest” and becomes more familiar (29). Fully “absorbed in looking and listening” (30), she sees the “parched hillsides” are desperate for autumn rain, and the country is “barren in the extreme,” the climate “altering since the country had been denuded ... by the rapacity of the Americans” (29-30). As Alberto describes and explains the countryside to the narrator, she reconfigures her own identity in relation to her new surroundings. To understand the landscape fully, however, the narrator must first encounter several of the competing ghosts and hauntings of the region, because the search for a stable subjectivity, a domesticity of selfhood, necessitates navigating not only the terrain but also those who populate it.

### *Inhabitants*

The mysticism rendered throughout this story draws on the myths of Frontier masculinity, as well as Gothic ambiguities between the supernatural and the fallibilities of human perception. The narrator assumes the conventions of masculine heroism by saving herself from such psychic threats. Manuel and his curse occupy the role of the “foreign body” in the narrator’s mind, in her home, and in her community, functioning as the kind of “disembodied shades,” as Kaplan calls them, which blur the boundaries between the interior

and exterior of the American psyche (26). Manuel's curse also seems to have control over the heroine's dreams, which begin to affect her physical health, further complicating the distinctions between psychic states such as sleep and waking. Invocations of the supernatural in the tale are therefore linked by the tensions between magic, dreams, and madness.

The "great nervous depression" which Manuel provokes in the narrator is initially figured as a result of the fright and trauma she experienced in the desert, but as symptoms of anxiety manifest themselves in more physical, and then eventually more metaphysical and uncanny effects, the narrator, Alberto, and Señorita Rodriguez must turn away from medical assistance and seek a more ancient and historical regional knowledge through Dolores. The narrator, who is at first "beset by vague and fanciful alarms" of the sort which her friends suggest are consequences of her feminine constitution, her dreams transform into night terrors, and then to somnambulation: as she sleepwalks she passes violently through the very rose bushes that earlier signified domestic refuge, with her skin being "torn by thorns" (38). One night shortly after this, she has a dream that she is "accompanying her own voice on the Señorita's harp, when, to [her] terror, [she becomes] aware that though [her] lips are moving, it is not [she] who [is] singing" (40). Such dreams speak to what Bergland identifies as an aspect of the National Uncanny, the difficulty, across stolen and ghostly landscapes, of knowing "if any perceived other is in fact other, or is merely a projection of the haunted self" (8). This nightmarish severance of the narrator's voice from her body, and by extension the splitting of her identity, symbolises her dissociation from her environment and reality, as well as representing the uncanny phantoms of that very environment which she must repress in order to reunite her divided Self.

Alberto and the Señorita strive to reestablish the narrator's domestic settlement, but only within the walls of the house, and not by cooperation with her habitat, which makes their efforts futile. The two implore Dolores to aid the narrator, and the woman acquiesces, but even she at first suggests the narrator is "most likely suffering from the vapours of youth and idleness" (42). The insanity of the narrator is both implied and explicitly suggested at various points throughout the tale, and her symptoms are the same as what would likely at the time have been termed hysteria. However, the truth is revealed when Dolores stands watch in the night, and the two women both see the "impalpable shadow" passing across the chamber, "changing gradually into the appearance of a man's shadow, yet undefinably different and appalling" (44-5). Finally, the reliability of the narrator is established and the women begin to sympathise and support each other to mutually ensure the banishment of Manuel's uncanny spectral presence.

In processing her trauma through the banishment of Manuel's spectre, the narrator largely fails to establish a stable Self, and instead attempts to rebalance her identity through her identification and understanding of Others in the form of Manuel and Dolores. She attempts to cling to a sense of rationality throughout her experiences, although, as she claims, "when the vagueness and mystery of the hour compass us about: then the heart of flesh quakes, and the lessons of reason are forgotten" (46). When Dolores dies in her sleep, clutching the dagger with which she means to destroy Manuel, the narrator must try to instead rely on the lessons the woman has taught her, which involves replacing reason with an alternative wisdom drawn from intuition and history. In her first real act of agency in the whole story, the heroine plunges the dagger into the shadow herself. The dissociation and silencing that Manuel's curse imposes upon her similarly deconstructs her understanding of Self and Other, and she must quickly learn to adapt to that fluidity in order to survive. This adaptation would be impossible without Dolores, who is figured both as a racial Other "creeping" around the outskirts of nearby Carmello, and as the only person in or around Monterey who has a deep enough understanding of the environment to know how to stop Manuel. By the time Dolores visits the narrator, the latter has also learned enough Spanish to communicate with the older woman, and this additional adaptation is revealed to be fundamental to her integration into a new domestic ecology.

Dolores represents a sympathetic, educational relationship with the land and its history, as opposed to Manuel's threatening and destructive one. Though Dolores's identity is more stable and grounded than the narrator's—she has a name, for instance, while the narrator does not, and she speaks about her history far more than the narrator does—Dolores lives in a similar kind of crumbling ruin as Manuel, along "with the ghosts of her past." Acting as the "self-appointed guardian" of her community, she resides in her "temple of holy memories, receiving the bare necessities of existence from the impoverished remnant of the great tribe that such a little time since had been as numerous as the shells on the beach" (42). Thus, with all her wisdom and capabilities, Dolores is a survivor of the same destruction of the terrain that the narrator observes from the train in the beginning of the tale, the destruction which is a consequence of the "rapacity of the Americans" (30). The narrator, in her quest for self-definition, represses her own role in such rapacity, even though her survival is accomplished at the expense of Dolores's life, intentionally or not. Bergland sees the "ghosting" of indigenous people as a "technique of removal" (4), and to that point, Manuel and Dolores are "buried on the same day" (48). The dual inabilities of both Dolores and Manuel to survive their

encounters with the narrator of this tale functions as another textual consequence of the sustained violence of settlers on unceded land.

DeLamotte has theorised the pathological whiteness at the heart of such narratives in a way which resonates with the “Warlock’s Shadow.” She affirms the “Gothic suspicion” that the evil Other is ultimately “a projection of the darkness at the heart of whiteness,” and argues that this dynamic must be negotiated “completely inside the bounds of an ideology that defines dark people as profoundly “other” to begin with”—that is, within white subjectivity (27). The narrator’s unstable sense of Self is defined almost exclusively by such dark or unusual Others, at first through the “very dark and handsome” Mexican characters Señorita Rodriguez and Alberto, who become the narrator’s family, and then through Manuel and Dolores.

Throughout this story, Manuel as an Other is a product of the “mechanism of projection” which DeLamotte suggests, and which Maisha Wester has also identified as “a casting away and abasing of the inconsistencies within the projectors themselves,” such as, in this case, the narrator’s lack of stable identity (162). The narrator projects such racial anxiety onto Manuel in part because his history and characteristics are so well-defined and grounded while her own are so ambiguous. The narrator begins the story with no identity, no home, and no family, and by the close of the tale she has integrated herself into a new environment. Her continued anonymity takes up the process of constantly repressing the traumas perpetrated by white settlers and instead relies on the projections Wester and DeLamotte describe in order to reshape her subjectivity. By the time the narrator has redefined and resettled herself, she has successfully absorbed and appropriated the necessary knowledge, sympathy, and other resources from her habitat to continue forward as a fully-formed subject, but in so doing sets in motion events which eventually lead to the deaths of both indigenous characters.

Several racial identities emerge in tension with each other in this story, that of the ostensibly white narrator—assumed because of her projections of darkness onto the other characters—the ambiguous Spanish and Mexican identities of Alberto and his aunt Señorita Rodriguez, which as DeGuzmán notes are complex and often uncanny constructs in their own right, and the indigenous characters Manuel and Dolores, both of whom possess heightened abilities suggesting a preternatural relationship with the environment. Manuel is described as a native Californian, but with “Indian blood predominating almost to the exclusion of the Spanish” (33). His many forms of Otherness are emphasised from the outset: he is known to all as a “bad man,” with “blue-black hair ... in a tangled mass upon his shoulders,” his nose is “high, thin, and hooked,” and his eyes “dull black, deeply sunken above the high cheek-bones, ... dar[t] restlessly from side to side in disquieting contrast with the Indian immobility of the

rest of his countenance” (31-33). The narrator emphatically objectifies Manuel in this way at length. Not only is Manuel not white, he also fails to assimilate into the Spanish identity that Alberto and Señorita Rodriguez represent—even Alberto distances himself from the cowboy, adamant that Manuel’s curse is an indigenous one, that “there are no Spanish words like that” (40). Manuel is written with what Carlos Gallego has called an “excessive” and “uncontrollable” difference (176), as a Gothic Other who is unsustainably corrupt within the gaze of the narrator, whose white feminine identity attempts to control his, through violent erasure.

The narrator, in enacting this aggression, also removes herself from the passivity associated with heroines in need of rescue, stepping instead into the conventionally masculine role of resourceful Frontier individualist. Further foiling generic expectations for the Gothic heroine, the text also manipulates the marriage plot: the narrator does marry Alberto, but the marriage is not what saves her. An additional layer of complexity stems from this familial connection of the narrator and Alberto’s uncanny Spanish-American identity, “off-white,” as DeGuzmán describes it. The interweaving of so many identities, languages, and communities within Stevenson’s textual California also suggests the need for what Michael Kowalewski has argued is “a newly conceived literary history that emphasizes multilingual, hybridized tropes and forms of intercultural communication” (10), a framework which speaks to the desire lines of this thesis in its commensurate emphasis on differentiation and polyvalence.

Stevenson’s texts necessitate inclusion within both mainstream and marginal literary histories, as artefacts of what Eugenia DeLamotte suggests are “documents in the history of racial formation” (19). Drawing on DeLamotte as well as Kowalewski, I argue that “The Warlock’s Shadow” is just such a historical document, and that it also functions to interrogate the purpose of invoking “centres and margins in western writing rather than about interdependence, hybridity, and overlap” (Kowalewski 11). In this Californian Uncanny story, denials and repressions of trauma return through spectral manifestations, as ghosts of the nineteenth century explode out of the territory traversed by the nameless heroine.

### Sargent’s Rodeo

Stevenson’s tale “Sargent’s Rodeo” (1880) similarly investigates the realms of nature and domesticity. It is a story about cowboys and ranchers, as well as tensions between the growing towns along the Pacific coastline and the uncanny mysteries of the Californian desert

further inland. The tale adheres more closely to conventions of local colour fiction than “The Warlock’s Shadow,” and also engages with the “abnormality” which Egli sees as characteristic of the adjacent Sagebrush school of writing, suggesting the spectral possibilities of the wilderness. “Sargent’s Rodeo” therefore evokes a generic fluidity between ghost story and local colour narrative. The semi-autobiographical nature of the text, which is about a group of friends invited to observe a cattle roundup on a large ranch near Monterey, contributes additionally to its local colour flair: many characters in “Sargent’s Rodeo” share the names of Stevenson’s friends and family, rendering the namelessness of the narrator even more ambiguous. Though Stevenson and a group of her companions did reportedly make a similar journey to a rodeo in 1878, as reported in Sanchez’s biography, there is no evidence that the expedition included any of the supernatural and sublime events which this story details (53-54). The tale’s blurring of anecdote and supernatural speculation can be read as part of the process of re-mythologising California in the post-Gold Rush period, which both Showalter and Witschi identify as a particular effect of local colour tales in the California region. The invention of a local folklore aided the discursive construction of a new white American history and literature which was conveniently free from the violence of settlement in the west.

“Sargent’s Rodeo” thus functions as a product of both the American Gothic mode and the specific local colour tradition in California, and I assert that the lens of the Californian Uncanny is a means of reading across such intersections. Together, local colour and the American Gothic contribute to what Weinstock has called the “conscription” of ghosts and spirits into a nation-building project of inventing American mythology (“Monsters” 47). Marilyn Sanders Mobley identifies the way feminine identity intersects with this invention through a “mythic impulse,” which Mobley argues manifests in late nineteenth century writing as “imaginative realism” (11, 20). Women such as Sarah Orne Jewett, Frances Harper, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Mary Wilkins Freeman, as well as others have been considered within the local colour tradition of illustrating regional dialects, landscapes, and everyday occurrences, but their work also mixes myth, wonder tales, and the supernatural. I invoke “Sargent’s Rodeo,” which documents regional identity in a comparable way, as evidence of the necessity to include Stevenson with the aforementioned women. Mobley further argues that the use of these folkloric genres aids women in unconventional modes of storytelling, or, conversely in telling stories with unconventional or subversive content. While Mobley’s focus is not expressly on the Gothic, the tension between past and future within the concept of “imaginative realism” and its associated facilitation of American mythmaking is also useful to analyses of the uncanny in writing such as Stevenson’s.

Along with embracing these folkloric impulses, “Sargent’s Rodeo” also positions itself as a supernatural travel narrative. That is, the ostensibly real journey, which Stevenson took from Monterey into the nearby hills to watch a rodeo, transforms in this text into the kind of folklore which Mobley describes, creating a hybrid tale which is simultaneously travel writing, local colour, and ghost story. The sublime and uncanny encounters with the natural environment, which the narrator describes throughout the tale, link to the Gothic mode; they also reiterate images of “primitive lands” inspiring both “awe and anxiety” in visitors, which Edwards affirms as common within nineteenth century American travel narratives (*Exotic Journeys* 2). The concept of the Californian Uncanny parses these conventions of the sublime and of regionalism, as the two encounter each other in Stevenson’s tale. The shades of autobiographical local colour connect themselves to the Gothic in “Sargent’s Rodeo,” provoking—generically and narratologically—the same uncertainty which permeates the experiences of the characters.

Ambiguity in Stevenson’s tale therefore situates the text as coextensive with both Witschi’s contention that Californian literary history is one of “ambivalence and contradiction,” and with Kaplan’s and Bergland’s assertions about the instability of American identity formation (Witschi 84). “Sargent’s Rodeo” further engages with Witschi’s theories through the Gold Rush “dialectic of reinvention” which “deflects one mode of identity from another ... in the service of crafting a third” (82). “Sargent’s Rodeo” deflects masculinity and femininity in favour of a third synthesising identity which fits neatly into neither category. Similarly to “The Warlock’s Shadow,” “Sargent’s Rodeo” disrupts gender identity by also complicating boundaries between Monterey as a “home” and the wilderness of the rodeo as “foreign,” with the town becoming less familiar to the characters as the ranch becomes a new source of peace and comfort.

The narrative perspective ricochets around characters, who each tell stories-within-stories and who indulge in long monologues as the group of nine friends and family follow a man named Sargent, a gregarious rancher,<sup>16</sup> to assist with a rodeo, or cattle roundup. They make the journey in the hope of better understanding their environment and region. After all, “it isn’t often that [one’ll] get a chance now-a-days to see a real old-fashioned Spanish *rodeo*” (10, emphasis included). The whole group lives in Monterey, which is figured as a tranquil idyll of domesticity in direct contrast with the excitement of ranch life. The nine include Lizzie, “the

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<sup>16</sup> Likely modelled on Bradley Varnum Sargent, Sr., who ran the San Carlos ranch and was a Monterey County Supervisor. His son, Bradley V. Sargent, Jr. later settled in nearby Salinas, and lived adjacent to the Steinbeck family including John Steinbeck.

animal painter,” Joseph, “the figure-painter,” Bel, “a young lady who sketches,” Nolie, “fresh and sweet as a pink,” Antonio, “a handsome young Spaniard,” Sam, “the boy of eleven with a taste for history,” Nelly, no description offered, the narrator herself, no name or description offered, and Bob, without whom the party “should be lost indeed” (9).<sup>17</sup> Starting in the middle of a conversation, the narrative traces the characters across the Central Valley, away from the civilisation of Monterey and into the wilderness and a supernatural world. By the end of the tale, the characters are home again, and though the return journey is never mentioned, the group is permanently changed by what they have seen at the rodeo. The two journeys described in this story, the ostensibly real journey from Monterey to the ranch, and the journey from the natural world into the supernatural world, are parallel but distinct, and at the conclusion of the narrative it is unclear whether the source of the uncanny occurrences was the wilderness, or whether the entire region, Monterey included, is vulnerable to fantastic events.

### *Home*

Notions of domesticity are overturned from the first sentence of the tale, and as the narrative develops the distinctions of what constitutes the home blur into obscurity. Since “[t]he ladies will have to rough it,” as Sargent exclaims in opening the story, conventionality and stability will therefore be left behind (10). From the first words, both the geographic and social space of the story is placed on unsteady ground. The ladies will not be staying at home, this opening announces, and therefore they will not be limited to the boundaries of the town nor those of gender norms. In the hills, rules are more fluid and boundaries more malleable. The women must wear “short skirts and trousers”—which causes some level of shyness as they pass out of town—and behave in accordance with the “exigencies of camp-life,” which may change from moment to moment (10). As the party passes out of the urban setting and into a rural one, the narrator remarks that, while the women may be a bit embarrassed at their attire, the town “has not lain asleep by the sea for more than a century to be awakened to life and curiosity by the advent of a few women in Bloomers” (10). The tale’s point of departure from the known, and the entry into the realm of the unusual, thus foregrounds the necessity of adaptation.

Each of the group members have their own experiences on the journey, both natural and uncanny, but the narrator constantly refers to the entire party of nine as “we,” lending the expedition a sense of collectivity. Every character brings their newfound knowledge to a shared

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<sup>17</sup> A pink is a variety of flower, the *Dianthus plumarius*.

sympathy, understanding, and reliance, ultimately allowing them to reestablish a sense of domestic settlement even in their wild campsites. In other words, settlement and comfort—an affective domesticity—is available to the group due to their intersubjective experiences. Similarly, the text suggests that accessing the otherworldly realm is a fluid and dynamic process, rather than a matter of crossing a static threshold. The relevance of rigid boundaries, either architectural, symbolic, or social, diminishes as the party develops a stronger relationship with each other and their ecosystem. Cognizance in this way becomes a central motivation of the story: rather than a narrative conflict which must be overcome by a lone male hero, the resolution to this tale is a collective awakening, a realisation of the importance of adaptive, collaborative, and relational thinking about spatial distinctions as well as subjective boundaries.

The process of “coming to rest” through such self-actualisation shifts the burden of domesticity and settlement onto subjectivity rather than material objects. By the end of the tale the party is exclaiming about the “glorious housekeeping” of the ranch life, by which they mean the laxity of chores and responsibilities (19). After the cattle roundup is finished, the party feels so refreshed, alive, and at peace that their every experience takes on a hyperbolic aspect: “never before had coffee such an aroma,” and their rest is “the sweetest sleep [they] had ever known” (19-20). The group’s sense of the “usual” has shifted during their time on the ranch, and when they find themselves back in Monterey, the rodeo seems a world away, like a “different life” (20). The town, initially figured as an idyll of domesticity, has newly become estranged to the travellers, and the mundanity of Monterey has become so far exaggerated that “even Death has fallen asleep by the wayside,” allowing locals to live well past one hundred years old (20). The ladies who have had to “rough it” at the start of the tale finally come to terms with the possibility that the four walls of their “rose-covered adobe” in Monterey may no longer be an adequate source of comfort and settlement (20), failing to offer them the same kind of meaningful engagement with their environment as they experienced on the ranch. These superlative descriptions and the hyperbole of Monterey’s torpidity resonates with the kind of “abnormality” which Egli identifies as key to contemporaneous Californian writing.

Rewriting the meanings of home and abroad within “Sargent’s Rodeo” parallels another kind of reinscription in which the tale participates. The cross-cultural literary allusions and references which are rife throughout the story lend “Sargent’s Rodeo” an intertextual character which speaks to the drive for redefinition of Self, something to which Witschi, Showalter, and Egli all attest. The “Don Quixote-looking vaquero” who accompanies them on their trek (12), the “superstitions of the ancient Britons” referenced by the young boy Sam (11), Antonio’s

stories of the curses and ghosts of the Las Cruces region, and the references to Bob as both a Shakespearean and a Ganymede figure, all associate this journey with more well-known myths, legends, and cultural referents.<sup>18</sup>

Furthermore, the intensity of the narrator's affective response to the history of the region lends melodrama to the narrative, suggesting a tragic romance within Central California which contributes to the sense of the sublime which later arises in the hills. In passing the Carmel Mission Church, "round which cluster so many associations and legends," the narrator becomes stricken by distress at the area's dilapidation (10). Cursing the "sleek and prosperous merchants," and the "portly bankers," the narrator exclaims it is a "disgrace to the State that [the church] is allowed to decay and fall in pieces" (10). In almost a reverie of heartache, she attacks these men for living in domestic luxury, cruelly stripping away the region's "poor little bits of romance and poetry" (10). Finally, the narrator curses these men with "the ghosts of the eleven governors whose graves [they] have bared to the elements" commanding the spirits to "haunt [their] sleeping hours," and calling for Father Junipero Serra's voice to "whisper maledictions in [their] ears!" (10). This polemic outburst is entangled within the narrative's renegotiation of domesticity and the concept of the foreign. The unsettlement of the church as a symbol of the region's past engages with Kaplan's understanding of the fraught "contests over the writing of history" which emerge out of the literary project of mapping "the overlapping terrain of the foreign and the domestic" (22). The church, signifying the region as a whole as well as the associated "cluster" of legends, is both subject and object of the palimpsests which Kaplan suggests.

Like the narrator of "The Warlock's Shadow," the narrator in "Sargent's Rodeo" learns to "read" the world around her, and in doing so begins to transform the journey into a text as well. Sargent explains to the group as they travel towards the ranch that unusual occurrences often follow him across the desert, and reports of his experiences often circulate in papers and magazines. Once, Sargent claims, he was even "the foundation of a sensational story" in the "far East," a geographical referent which, in this case, means New York (20). After their return to Monterey, news reaches the group that a "seven foot lion" has been captured on the very spot of their encampment, and the narrator finds the reports "no more wild and improbable" than anything her own group experienced (20). The text's self-conscious storytelling, places it into the uncanny position of, as Lloyd-Smith describes it, "bend[ing] back upon itself, to

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<sup>18</sup> Ganymede is a mythological character, a man whose beauty confounded conventions of gender and sexuality, which suggests a further ambiguity of masculinity and femininity amongst the party.

observe its own process,” and to “dislocate the narrative by the inclusion of another writing within it” (ix). The acts of writing and reading are doubled several times throughout the text. This fosters a narrative ambiguity which complements the tale’s dissociation from conventional distinctions of gender and domesticity, and emphasises other uncanny phenomena like the Californian landscape and its supernatural inhabitants.

### *Landscape*

Central California as an ecosystem is a source of the uncanny in “Sargent’s Rodeo” because of its simultaneous wondrousness and impenetrability. It is the interruption of the known *by* the unknowable which provokes the uncanny: the narrator’s understanding of, and familiarity with, the terrain is disrupted by her moments of sublime awe, and these dissociative moments become unsettling. The unpredictability of the environment is emphasised in “Sargent’s Rodeo” early on: the sky turns to “thick blackness,” with an “icy wind” carrying “ghostly voices” which call out until the “hills [ring]” (11). When the group awakens the next morning, the world is “gray and shadowed and mystic” (12). As they venture onwards and reach the top of a hill, the “peculiarity of the weather in the Californian hills” becomes even more stark, the breeze “warm like the breath of an oven”—a pointedly domestic simile (12). With “the glamour of the hour” leading to sunrise, “[e]verywhere, at once, aw[akes] sound and light and colour” (13), and the sun rises “with a triumphant bound from the horizon and fill[s] the world with glory”. The magic of the region is unusual to the narrator, but her sublime awe at her surroundings also strikes a note of familiarity, of feeling at home. The disjunction between the “glory” of the morning and the “ghostly voices” of the previous night is the locus of the uncanny in “Sargent’s Rodeo,” because that duality indicates a simultaneous familiarity and unfamiliarity with the landscape.

The narrator’s understanding of her environment can be understood through what Barry Lopez views as a “compulsion” towards internalisation of the American exterior, that is, an internalisation of the landscape. Bergland similarly argues that this subjectification is a historical compulsion within American literature, and emphasises the way that the uncanny traumas of the terrain subsequently materialise as ghosts within representations of the American psyche (4). American subjects, Bergland and Lopez argue, seek knowledge of the land, as they cannot completely domesticate it. This “knowing” and familiarity as it manifests in Stevenson’s story is accessible only to those who are “more or less sworn to a place, who abide there, who have a feel for the soil and history, for the turn of leaves and night sounds” (Lopez 53). Stevenson’s narrator approaches this intimacy with her surroundings, but the

spectral presences which haunt the journey to the rodeo indicate that the travellers themselves are the foreign bodies which do not belong, even when they feel themselves to be “at home” in Central California. In other words, the understanding the narrator has of the landscape is continually interrupted by reminders that she is on land with which she does not share a history, land that is stolen, and therefore inherently haunted and uncanny.

The exchange between exterior and interior facilitated by such internalised anxieties also exemplifies American subjects’ attempts to “control and manage” their own inconsistencies, which are ultimately always in the state of being “questioned and redefined” (Kaplan 12). As a way of engaging with the historical traumas tied to its self-construction, white American identity projects that tension onto what David Mogen, Scott P. Sanders, and Joanne B. Karpinski identify as the “fundamental conflict shaping American experience, the battle between civilization and nature” (14-15). The symbolic “walls” of civilisation and domesticity are fallible and prone to collapsing, and “Sargent’s Rodeo” embraces this anarchy by dramatising the seemingly unending expanses of the world beyond Monterey. There is no description of the location of the ranch, apart from the fact that it lies amongst the vast expanse of forests and hills. The tale’s geography has vague borders both spatially and supernaturally, and the unforgiving, marvellous, and sublime landscape is occupied by myriad ghosts and hauntings who accentuate the interstitiality of the environment. Stevenson’s narrator, as in “The Warlock’s Shadow,” repeatedly critiques the way the region has been assaulted and weakened by the encroachment of white settlers, and eschews her relationship to this process by aligning herself with the wonders of the ecosystem instead.

The narrator, in her expedition, is undertaking the “truly difficult and lifelong task of discovering where one lives” (Lopez 54). She processes her own identity throughout her journey, attempting to ascertain where the borders of her own subjectivity lie in light of the incomprehensible wonders and mysteries of the natural environment. As the nine compatriots see the sublime daybreak over the hills, the narrator recognises herself “for a phantom, and one of a band of phantoms” (12). This self-spectralising defines “Sargent’s Rodeo”: regardless of her desire to integrate herself into the Californian ecosystem, the narrator is haunted by the reminders—some sublime and some uncanny—that she does not belong, and is foreign in her own home.

### *Inhabitants*

“Sargent’s Rodeo” acknowledges violence against the Californian ecosystem: its inhabitants, the environment, and the communities built by the former across the latter.

Stevenson was part of the settler conquest and (re)colonisation of the wider Monterey region post-Gold Rush which displaced the long-established Spanish presence, which was in turn imposed on the territory of the Ohlone, Esselen, and Miwok nations. To this point, DeGuzmán has argued that the “greatest and most ominous irony” of Anglo-American identity development in the nineteenth century is that such nationalistic self-invention “depended on a racially stigmatizing system” which resembled the similar, earlier Spanish efforts to name Others within a “campaign of national unification and self-aggrandizement” (185). The ghosts of indigenous erasure, which haunt Spanish identity in the nineteenth century United States, are therefore uncannily doubled and compounded amongst the spectres plaguing Anglo-Americans. These layers of historical unsettlement inform the tale, fixated as they are upon both identifying hauntings and the search for authenticity. The characters’ burial, deep within their identities, of their complicity as agents of such recolonisation, results in an abjection always at risk of morphing into a phantom revenant.

The story therefore displays an awareness of such palimpsestic histories indirectly through the experience of the uncanny and the ambivalence with which the narrator considers various possible supernatural phenomena. Manipulating the trope of the unstable and unreliable feminine narrator which features in “The Warlock’s Shadow”—and many other Gothic texts—the narrator of “Sargent’s Rodeo” is unhesitating in depicting encounters with the paranormal. Participating in what Carpenter and Kolmar term the supernatural tale’s narrative “claim to rationality,” this narrator describes several other characters’ *lack* of rationality to establish her “credentials” as a “credible” source (13). By calling on the spirits of the Carmel mission church, the latter a signifier of colonialism, the narrator further complicates the story’s anxiety over settlement of the land by condemning the bankers and merchants who disregard the value of regional history. In this way, she demonstrates a self-awareness of the complex contexts of her surroundings and history at odds with the ruthlessness and displacement of European-American settlers. That is, the narrator’s invocation of the uncanny in order to criticise powerful white men creates an uncanny irony, given her own association with such violence.

Conversely, Antonio, the Spanish-American member of the party more familiar with the indigenous storytelling traditions and legends of the region, recounts to the band of travellers several ghost stories which provoke a sarcastic response from the narrator. Antonio’s monologuing is also an instance within the text of a story within a story which destabilises the narrative perspective, despite the narrator recentring herself through various asides. After telling a tale of a man found dead on the road they are travelling following an encounter with a ghost, the narrator notes that not one of the party questioned “when the dead man had told

his story” (11). Immediately after, as Antonio continues recounting a legend of a baby who has morphed into a fanged beast, a shriek arises from the back of the group, and Nelly, convinced she has been bitten by a horse, has actually been startled by “only a glimpse of red flannel showing” from her sleeve (11). Positioning another woman in the group as irrational serves to solidify the narrator’s apparent trustworthiness, her capability of distinguishing between tricks of the light and truly mysterious occurrences.

Emphasis on the narrator’s ability to distinguish reality and fantasy earlier in the text provokes a deeper uncertainty when a phantom does appear: a Brownie, a grotesque and supernatural boy who works on Sargent’s ranch with the other vaqueros, and who plays a key role in the cattle roundup. An embodiment of uncanny perplexity, the Brownie crosses in and out of the action of the story unpredictably and with unclear motivations. As a diminutive creature, the boy blurs distinctions between a number of categories: adult and child, human and nonhuman, usual and unusual. The “elfin” child is “a Thing” borne from “dark mysteries,” but the designation of Brownie connects him to household fairies of British folklore (13). The image of a traditionally domestic elf from the British Isles taking up such tasks as lassoing bulls on a Californian ranch is a vivid example of the kinds of cultural and metaphysical ambiguities bred by the Californian Uncanny.

The Brownie is a jarring figure within his environment, representing as he does a spectral force displaced from his own culture. He represents the “shades” of the foreign, as Kaplan deems them, which complicate the interior and exterior delineations of the United States as a nation (26). Yet, he does not fall easily into the category of ghost, and he contributes meaningfully and materially to his surroundings: the Brownie participates in work, not conventionally domestic tasks as his British counterparts might do, but the responsibilities of the rodeo, and it appears little could be accomplished without him. For example, the narrator intuits that the boy is using the “black arts” to manipulate the bulls into their pens (17). While Sargent and the other vaqueros “applau[d] vehemently” at such feats, they make no mention of who the Brownie is, nor do they engage with him in any other way. Taking up a similarly ambivalent place along the spectrum from the human to the supernatural, upon the departure of the party homewards “the vaqueros scatte[r] to the four winds of heaven,” and “the elfin boy resolve[s] himself into the elements” (20). This imagery suggests the Spanish vaqueros’ association with the supernatural as well, situating them as interstitial figures. The narrator’s rhetorical framing, amalgamating such figures of speech and descriptions of fantastic events, works to generate ambiguity over what truly happened at the rodeo. In this way, the text not

only illustrates unsettling experiences, but also produces them within the reader: such crossroads of the known and unknown define the uncanny.

The contrast between the narrator's rationalisations and mockery of Nelly and Antonio on the one hand, and the ongoing disorientation of supernatural boundaries on the other, engages with Carpenter and Kolmar's assertion that women writers of ghost stories tend to position the paranormal "along a continuum" (12). That is, rather than being articulated through the binary of natural and supernatural, women's texts depict more fluid and metamorphic experiences with the fantastic. Likewise, these texts resist binary distinctions: the Spanish-American identity of Antonio and the vaqueros can be understood through what DeGuzmán describes as the application of "ethnicity" to their "third" racial identity, which is not quite white, but not black or indigenous either (xi). Such Othering as enforced by the narrator of "Sargent's Rodeo" also exemplifies the comparable "third" identity alongside the "dialectic of reinvention" of Californian history which Witschi has suggested (82). The way Witschi, DeGuzmán, Carpenter, and Kolmar's arguments coalesce to inform my reading of "Sargent's Rodeo" suggests that the Californian Uncanny is a relevant frame within which to situate the text, as it provides a way of taking the specificities of space, place, and history and using them to interpret the ambiguities of identity, such as race and femininity.

"Sargent's Rodeo" therefore functions as further evidence of the contradictions of Anglo-American identity. Kaplan contends that the kinds of stereotypes upon which American identity constructs itself become through repetition "unstable sites of ambivalence that distort and challenge the bedrock divisions on which they are founded" (14). In other words, those stereotypes become uncanny by disrupting the usual with the unusual, and their troubling of binary distinctions and immutable boundaries demonstrates that identity is more complex than distinctions of either Self or Other. As the "band of phantoms" travel from Monterey to the ranch, and back again, what they learn is that the process of journeying, and by extension transforming oneself, is more meaningful than any single destination.

### Conclusion: East Beyond West

Stevenson's two Californian stories demonstrate the ways in which, in nineteenth century uncanny American fiction, the white feminine subject is not singular or doubled, but multiple. Negotiating her own identity, she complicates the clear distinctions between Self and Other central to the patriarchal narratives of American adventurism, expansion, and colonisation both internal and external. Kaplan points to a similar pattern across depictions of

the American heroine in this era, observing that she, “as a composite figure, has at least a double function: she feminizes colonial subjects and masculinizes American women” (109). As such a transformative influence, she also suggests myriad other identificatory possibilities, consequently indicating the difficulties of constituting any unified national identity. In both of Stevenson’s Californian stories, the already-peculiar natural environment further estranges its inhabitants through the historical ghosts which traverse the terrain. This results in a Californian Uncanny effect which complicates the cultural construct of the mythic edge of the Frontier.

Hybridity and ambiguity define these Californian narratives. “Sargent’s Rodeo” responds to the tradition of local colour tales, combining travel diaries with a more exaggerated fictional spin, and drawing on the Sagebrush aesthetic described by Egli as invoking an “abnormality” which is “intimately exclusive” to California (xx). “The Warlock’s Shadow” is a highly stylised iteration of Gothic conventions which appropriates the imagery of Central California.<sup>19</sup> The texts maintain between them what Lloyd-Smith argues is the use of “indeterminacy” as the “primary feature of the setting,” which also contributes to the dramatisation of the “curiosity of the heroine,” and in these two cases, the narrator (13). The narrators’ attempts to read their environments are met with resistance from uncanny revenants of past traumas, or as Burnham describes such forces, symbols of the “persistent refusal” of past worlds “to remain buried” (225). The frame of the Californian Uncanny, given my suggestion of its emphasis on regional histories, is particularly useful in conjunction with Burnham’s readings, including her question of what happens to the American Gothic when we try to inform the genre with understandings of spectral hauntings and supernatural beings which predate European contact.

Despite their recognition of environmental destruction, these stories fail to imagine a Californian identity which is not tied to the destruction of earlier populations. In cultural consciousness, Bergland suggests, “the birth of the American nation and the death of the Native American were as closely related as light and shadow” (40). Over time, white settlers “referred to themselves and their culture as indigenous ... and in this way cemented their legitimacy and their own increasingly secure sense of moral, spiritual, and cultural belonging in the place they commonly (and revealingly) described as ‘new’” (Johnston and Lawson 363). Both of these texts’ narrators attempt to renegotiate their spatial boundaries, and consequently “domesticate”

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<sup>19</sup> The highly-wrought language in “The Warlock’s Shadow” aligns with the arguments Dorri Beam makes in *Style, Gender, and Fantasy in Nineteenth Century American Women’s Writing* (2010). Beam notes the gendering of linguistic style, and that “florid,” melodramatic prose was itself an undoing of expectations for the domestic sphere (3).

the landscape. Native lawyer, teacher, and activist, Vine Deloria, Jr. (Dakota) offers an understanding of such self-indigenising tactics, in arguing that the white settler “knows that he is alien and he knows that North America is Indian—and he will never let go of the Indian image because he thinks by some clever manipulation he can achieve an authenticity which can never be his” (xvi). Settler cultures are, in this way, “liminal sites at the point of negotiation between the contending authorities of Empire and Native,” of past and present, or new and old (Johnston and Lawson 370). They are, in other words, uncanny.

Other spectres haunting Stevenson’s Californian tales through absence include those of Black Americans and Asian Pacific Americans, who are often misrepresented or elided from the Gold Rush-era history of the region. Mae M. Ngai has written about the narratives which are usually left at the margins of Californian Gold Rush mythology, that of “capital investment, deep-mining technology, mass labor migration, and long-distance transportation” (1082), all of which underscore the destructive nature of resettlement at the “edge” of the Frontier. A similar misunderstanding has been applied to the whole Pacific arena, Eperjesi affirms, the latter being “a space of contradiction and conflict rather than temporal continuity and benign geographical contiguity” (15). That is, California, and its Pacific coast, have often been seen as the endpoint of a linear westward journey, a stable boundary between East and West, when in reality the borderlands of any region are always under constant renegotiation.

Consequently, California and the Pacific have developed a mythic identity in order to accommodate such contradictions and exaggerations, and this was true as well even further westward across the Pacific Ocean. Jeffrey Geiger notes that the concept of “traversing distance not only across space but also across time acquired a unique status in journeys to the South Pacific, where acts of travel were grounded in myths of discovering some version of a lost Eden” (17). To incorporate those spectralities into American identity, there was a further validation of “widely held myths as being grounded in historical truth, thus reviving the social role of mythical peoples, places, and events under the guise of presenting factual accounts” (7). Two of Stevenson’s stories produce similar “textual voyages of the imagination” across the Pacific (17). Kaplan notes that stories such as these indicate the core problem of American expansionism, that “the fantasy of American imperialism aspires to a borderless world,” but ultimately “the fruition of this dream shatters the coherence of national identity, as the boundaries that distinguish it from the outside world promise to collapse” (16). In the next chapter I read Stevenson’s stories of United States literary imperialism to consider the ways her writing reinforces this impossibility, and to demonstrate that when the fabric of American identity is stretched overseas, it threatens to unravel at its seams.



### Chapter 3

#### “We are Both Foreigners Here”: Tales of U.S. Empire

Stevenson’s Californian stories rely on transgression and transformation of various boundaries—of place, race, genre, and gender—in order to renegotiate the uncanny relationship between subject and nation. In her two tales of the Pacific region, similar forms of hybridity, ambiguity, and resistance to normativity extend the U.S. literary imagination to a different geographic location in an act of textual imperialism which undermines its own authority through its questioning of various hierarchies. Both Pacific stories apply the American Gothic mode—with its specific anxieties over heredity and concealed origins, as well as the quest for settlement in the face of an unknowable natural environment—to an external realm, which is not actually American at all and thus engenders an aesthetic and symbolic dissonance between narrative and history, which differs from the palimpsest of Californian history explored in chapter 2. That is, where the layered historical traumas of repeated resettlement in California are synthesised into compounded literary hauntings, the tales of Hawai‘i and China interrogated in this chapter manifest an estrangement between their textual spectres and the histories of each region. For example, fears of entrapment and estrangement, so central to the concept of the domestic sphere and feminine identity for many U.S. and European women, are at the core of these tales located in cultural arenas which had their own separate understandings and perspectives of those same anxieties. Conversely, the racial stereotyping in these two short fictions result in uncanny identificatory anxieties which are borne out of a white American context rather than a Hawaiian or Chinese one, rendering the ghosts and spectres within the tales to be those of U.S. literary imperialism rather than of the inhabitants of those lands themselves.

As a result of this dissonance, Stevenson’s stories embody an uncanny fiction of U.S. empire which specifically foregrounds the contradictions and paradoxes of those same imperial forces. Stevenson’s stories “Chy Lung, the Chinese Fisherman” (1880, henceforth “Chy Lung”) and “The Half-White” (1891) espouse U.S. empire-building by superimposing the authorial voice of an American woman onto milieux, imagery, and characters associated with other national and ethnic affiliations. What emerges out of these stories is an act of empire, but rather than consolidating the imperial subject against the baleful other, this act further fractures a stable American identity because of its refusal to adhere to conventional perspectives of domesticity and gender. Where chapters 1 and 2 examined Stevenson’s uncanny stories as occupying a feminine space located within the political boundaries of the United States, in this

chapter I will explore the consequences of stretching that feminised identity beyond California, the westernmost frontier of the United States at the end of the nineteenth century.

The stories argue against forcefulness and conquest, suggesting instead the importance of sympathy and adaptability—established above as central to Stevenson’s other stories—which lends the texts a complex and ambivalent relationship with literary imperialism. In both tales, Stevenson’s transpacific fiction, while it instigates an aggressive mockery and dismantling of gendered hierarchies and patriarchal power concurrently sustains various fetishistic and appropriative cultural and racial stereotypes. “Chy Lung,” which was published in *St. Nicholas* magazine, follows the young man of the title through a debacle with a sorcerer, a subsequent flight from an angry mob, and a haunting by a shadow creature which represents his own traumas. He seeks work in the kitchens of a nearby castle but when he cannot provide fish in this case either, he resorts to kidnapping a mermaid instead. The mermaid is strong, capable, and able to free herself and hide in a pond. Eventually she and her sister—another mermaid—work together with Chy Lung to resolve the man’s misfortunes and reestablish normalcy and balance. “The Half-White,” published in *Scribner’s*, is a meditation on love, power, and expectation, as a white priest, Father Canonhurst, living in Hawai‘i, attempts to control the community around him, largely to their disadvantage and harm. A young man, Laurence, also white, studies with Father Canonhurst, but falls in love with a mixed-race woman named Lulani. The couple’s struggle to begin a life together involves reckoning with uncanny phenomena, some of which also resonate with medical theories substantiated by imperialism and racism. “Chy Lung” and “The Half-White” employ American Gothic imagery and themes such as uncanny doubles, tyrannical patriarchal forces, anxieties over hereditary corruption, and the shifting tensions between domesticity and wilderness, but do so in order to problematise masculinity and prioritise femininity.

Exploring manifestations of the American Gothic such as those described above as they emerge in other geographical settings necessarily involves a projection of Western<sup>20</sup> thought where it does not naturally belong, effecting a protrusion of U.S. identity into an exterior realm it seeks to absorb and domesticate in an imperial manner. Most anxieties and psychoanalytic disturbances linked to the literature of the Gothic have been constructed in relation to European-American populations with contexts and sociocultural priorities reflective of that

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<sup>20</sup> In this case, “Western” refers to the industrialised west, but the forced construction of a continuity from the American West across the Pacific creates a western double-entendre. That being said, I note the importance of recognising the “all too familiar, and all too easy,” account of nineteenth century U.S. culture which positions the Pacific frontier as the “successor to the continental frontier,” which Eperjesi resists in his affirmation that the Asia-Pacific frontier has its own, separate, historical power structures (26).

positioning. In this way, the imperial or colonial Gothic invokes a variety of the meta-uncanny by unsettling universalist experiences such as fear, trauma, or agitation and forcefully defining them using the terminology of an unfamiliar culture. Katarzyna Ancuta reminds analysts that in relation to the Gothic in East Asia,

one has to remember that Western psychoanalytical theories were not developed with Asians in mind, relegated as they have been to the realm of the cultural Other, so they should be applied with caution. At the same time, the fact that Gothic theory has so far been informed exclusively by Western philosophies does not mean that it cannot benefit from exploring other systems of thought. If there is one thing we have learned about Gothic so far, it is that the concept is capable of great malleability and alteration. (218)

In this chapter I apply several of the constructs already explored, such as the ecology of domesticity and the geographically-motivated uncanny, to Stevenson's transpacific short stories, taking into consideration Ancuta's arguments and evaluating the way Stevenson's application of American Gothic frameworks upon both Hawaiian and Chinese subjects contributes to a literary imperialism whose contradictions are still more marked due to its suggestions of hegemonic femininity. Invoking a chaotic U.S.-feminine-imperial-uncanny, Stevenson's texts engage with the aforementioned meta-uncanny, in which recognised aesthetics of the Gothic genre are doubly unsettling because they signify hauntings culturally estranged from the subject they haunt. In other words, in Stevenson's transpacific tales, the characters are plagued by ghosts and phantoms bred by the traumas of a different national identity, and that clash creates a similar kind of chaotic disruption between interiority and exteriority which Kaplan describes in *The Anarchy of Empire*. Stevenson's tales are narratively and ideologically governed by the American Gothic, and as they encounter other global cultures and settings, they also emphasise femininity as the governing force of each location.

At the crossroads of the uncanny nature of empire and the uncanny nature of femininity, Melissa Edmundson's *Women's Colonial Gothic Writing 1850-1930* (2018) offers a pertinent critique. She explains how, fundamentally, in addressing issues of empire, "particularly from a Gothic slant," women could "write their own fears and anxieties back into the imperial narrative" (8). Mary Louise Pratt, Sara Mills, Ann Laura Stoler, Heather Waldroup and others have also discussed such "shifting positions of European and North American women in colonial spaces," as they navigated the tensions of being both "colonising agents and colonised subjects, as producers of imperial knowledge, and as margin dwellers" (Waldroup 4), a

balancing act which I argue emerges in the discursive contradictions of Stevenson's texts. Stevenson's short stories and travel writing normalise the inclusion of South Pacific and East Asian nations and peoples in "American" narratives at a time when their exclusion and erasure was both the official and unofficial policy, but do so regardless of whether or not those nations consented to that incorporation. In any case, her writing is so suffused with uncanny anxieties that any imperial might manifests more accurately as a "might not".

The awkward positioning between Stevenson's actual identity, within white womanhood, and the racial Othering which she faced regularly, compounded the underlying social disadvantages she faced as a divorcée and single mother. Stevenson was olive-skinned with dark hair and eyes, and throughout her life her appearance was noted for its strangeness. Her sister, Nellie Van de Grift Sanchez, reports that upon first meeting her, the staff in the Stevenson family home cried out that Louis had "merrit a black woman" (85). The crosshairs of social pressure within which Stevenson was caught, and which are articulated through such racial assumptions, are familiar to scholars of the late nineteenth century. Edwards, in *Gothic Passages: Racial Ambiguity and the American Gothic* (2002), argues that the kind of "crossing of identificatory borders" so common to Stevenson's own experiences becomes a source of Gothic dread because of the way such fluidity can "disrupt the epistemological certainties" of nineteenth century U.S. identity-formation (xxx). In "The Half-White" in particular, Lulani's ability to access multiple spaces due to her mixed racial background grants her a kind of spectral freedom similar to that granted to other, ostensibly white, women characters in Stevenson's stories, but given Stevenson's own navigation of various estrangements, the story takes up a different, more urgent, kind of investigation of marginal identities. Both tales, however, figure femininity and domesticity in the extended form I have been detailing, as a means of understanding multiplicity of identity, and of constructing bonds of sympathy across seemingly impermeable borders.

These stories' narrators axiologically prioritise the kinds of domestic ecologies already examined in prior chapters as being linked to white U.S. femininity, and in doing so overwrite the identities and subjectivities of Hawai'i and China. John Carlos Rowe finds a similar trend in other U.S. literature, which has been "preoccupied with imaginatively incorporating foreign cultures" while simultaneously "exorcising" racial and ethnic "aliens" (17). Political expansionism and the United States' flexing of strength often took place through the literary realm and other non-territorial "spheres of influence," as Rowe describes them (11). In other words, not only has the literature of the United States expanded outwith the reach of its borders in order to absorb other cultures, it has also purposefully elided the valuable distinctions and

differences of those Others in so doing. Kaplan's and Bergland's theories of haunted U.S. interiority gesture to Rowe's point: that elision fosters an abjection in identity which threatens to rise again as a phantom of past trauma.

Almost every aspect of U.S. transpacific activity in the late nineteenth century participates in this process. Even ostensibly "value-free terms such as "Polynesia," "Oceania," and "South Seas,"" notes Jeffrey Geiger, "have the ability to mask their roots in western histories and typologies, sublimating the roles they've played in producing universal fictions out of diverse localities" (3). As an example, Geiger explains, "Oceania" comprises the geographical categories of "Polynesia," "Melanesia," and "Micronesia"—islands that are "many," "black," or "small," respectively" (Geiger 3). Even the Pacific Ocean itself was named in the sixteenth century by Ferdinand Magellan, who was Portuguese. In examining Stevenson's stories, I attempt to self-consciously consider my use of such terminologies and foreground, where necessary, instances of such language falling short and disrupting accuracy. For example, I note the importance of the 'okina in the Hawaiian language—the phonemic glottal stop in words such as "Hawai'i"—and have attempted to reincorporate it even where others have removed or elided it.<sup>21</sup> I also use the qualifier "U.S." instead of "American" where possible so as to avoid generalisations that risk eliding the hemispheric differences of the two American continents as well as the different manifestations of empire, culture, etc., therein. In addition, particularly in drawing "The Half-White" and "Chy Lung" together within one chapter, I do not suggest colonial projects in Hawai'i and China were similar, or indeed that any interchangeability between them is appropriate. Rather, I show how Stevenson's stories manipulate both locations similarly, in the way Geiger suggests, and thereby inscribe homogeneity atop diverse subjectivities.

One key burden of my argument is to demonstrate the multiple ways Stevenson's stories carry the weight of the denial central to U.S. expansionism in the later nineteenth century elaborated by Kaplan in *The Anarchy of Empire*. The tales are arranged here in relation to each other because they show a similar projection of U.S. subjectivity beyond the "domestic" realm of the nation, as Kaplan describes it, but both nonetheless perpetuate the idea of domesticity as a primary component of settlement and identity formation. Any "attempt to disentangle the meaning of the domestic and foreign, to draw clear boundaries between them, only further entangles them by creating a hybrid liminal space that is neither fully outside the United States nor comfortably a part of it" (Kaplan 12). Furthering this contradiction, the United States spent

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<sup>21</sup> "Hawaiian" is considered an English word and therefore does not employ the 'okina.

the postbellum era displaying, in Rowe's words, "powerful imperial desire and a profound anti-colonial temper" (3). Donald Pease additionally points out that although white U.S. citizens "picture themselves as anticolonialist with regard to British rule, they nevertheless collaborated in the British Empire's colonial domination of indigenous populations" (209). Such perspectives inform my readings of Stevenson's depictions of both China and Hawai'i, and the underlying tensions the stories expose between the historical insistence of the United States that they were not and never would be an empire, and the reality that in political fact and in existing fiction, writing like Stevenson's enacted that very process.

The estrangement between U.S. history and U.S. consciousness is present in "Chy Lung" and "The Half-White" through the dual subversion-confirmation of various hegemonies: Stevenson's stories work towards upending certain structural hierarchies upon which imperialism relied. Karen Li Miller asserts that in particular, the "writings of American women offer rich and diverse views of the Chinese in the United States and abroad" (13), because of women's ability to engage with notions of domestic stability and with the undermining of various hierarchies. Colonial efforts in extending U.S. political borders past the Pacific Coast both "expanded territory externally and consolidated the idea of the nation internally," emphasising that interiority as synonymous with such discussions of domesticity, while literature "reinforced this project by creating a fictive group identity or affiliation" (Tunc 248). However, in terms of gendering such imperial writing, the colonial experience had a "textuality inscribed in a male hand" (Boehmer 78). This dissonance between masculinity and femininity has been identified by Mills as a pattern within the literature of empire through which women functioning as "active participants can barely be conceived of" (Mills 3). In short, colonial identity, and its textual double, was almost always figured as masculine until proven otherwise, even when the topic of these texts was the very domesticity with which women were meant to concern themselves. This contradiction is what Stevenson's stories speak to through their refiguring of U.S. interiority, which, as both Kaplan and Bergland explain, is ultimately a political and psychic construct which will always be defined by its unstable borders.

Thus, even where Stevenson's narratives superficially reinforce hegemonic power structures, her destabilisation of notions of conventional, gendered priorities makes way for the interrogation of other norms, be they generic, social, historical, or environmental. Frigga Haug has asserted the importance of such a contradiction, particularly as navigated by women, in *Female Sexualization* (1987), in her argument for the importance of analysing both resistance and compliance around feminised discourse. Haug affirms the value of women working "within pre-existing structures, by engaging with those structures, and at the same time negating them"

(44). Rowe ultimately agrees with Haug, calling on scholars to “learn how to tell the difference between literary practices that serve or challenge the dominant ideology while recognising how all cultural acts remain to some degree captives of their historical and thus ideological situations” (79). This is what I propose for Stevenson’s stories overall, but particularly in her transpacific writing where so many dominant discursive threads are visible but contradictory, such as the ongoing tension between interiority and exteriority which complicates understandings of what constitutes a home, and indeed who might be permitted to live there. Indeed, as Ken Gelder asks, “can an introduced species—like settlers (colonials, migrants, etc.)—ever be fully or properly at home? Introduced species are both home-building and habitat-destroying” (205). Colonial discourse is focussed upon constructing new or alternate realities—new identities and homes—while the Gothic poses as a fracture of reality, which indicates that Gothic writing in a colonial setting necessarily involves splintering the colonial identity.

Attempts to maintain a united, and unsustainably “uncorrupted,” identity leads to what Mills calls “textual unease,” which occurs when a literary occupation of liminal state is labelled, usually by men, “bad writing.” Unease in this usage connotes “contradictions and silences” (3) which expose the inconsistencies and failures of that “enlightened” subjectivity to accurately display the breadth of existing perspectives through writing. Mills is concerned with “exploring the possibilities of interpreting this writing within its period and its discursive constraints” (5), rather than arguing a single point or theory, which surely only perpetuates a similar problem. I will emulate this technique frequently, as it allows room for discrepant and abutting meanings to emerge as they actually exist, rather than sorting them into categories of greater or lesser value. Mills further proposes that much women’s colonial writing carries a sense of indecipherability in spite of “superficial readability” (5). That indecipherability is a product of a complexity, cerebral nature, or a thematic or aesthetic difference from the norm which would have been largely ignored or slated as consequences of “feminine” writing. For example, inscriptions of the colonial, as with other textual practices, implied that “women were supposed to write on certain topics, but [in] doing so their texts were judged inferior—a conventional literary double-bind” (Mills 82-83). Such inconsistencies speak to the role literature plays as an example of the “instability and contradictoriness of ideological categories” in a more general sense (Rowe 80). Stevenson’s stories can be read as examples of

all of these assertions, even, and especially, where her polyvalent narratives may leave some arguments unresolved or underdeveloped.<sup>22</sup>

One such complex function of Stevenson's tales is their inversion of masculine adventures into their uncanny feminine opposites through the extension of discourses of domesticity. Rather than conquest, control, or domination, literary imperialism in Stevenson's stories encourages a domestic balance and feminised power dynamic which is at odds with other discursive aspects of the colonising process. In "The Half-White," Lulani and Laurence strive to overcome the Gothic nightmare of Father Canonhurst's deception and establish for the first time a shared home for themselves. The textual Hawai'i written into the "Half-White" is a projection of U.S. colonial identity, but in prioritising feminine domestic influence over damaging and dangerous masculinity, it problematises the fragile colonial project of dominating various regions *by* feminising them. "Chy Lung" illustrates that the estrangement of a home cannot be resolved through simply occupying another home but must include an exorcism, symbolic or otherwise, of the ghosts which helped estrange the home in the first place. Both stories employ the uncanny in order to "understand what inaugurates narratives of identity and what haunts them" (Wald 5), and furthermore how the characters might find a stable dwelling-place. After all, it is the disruption of both temporal and spatial boundaries which "makes ghosts such effective figures of psychic and semantic disturbance" (Parkin-Gounelas 119). Nothing represents the relationship between heredity and property more than the family home, the realm which is meant to be under the auspices of women.

Stevenson's tales interrogate the uncanny abyss between Self and Other within intersecting systems of power. These identificatory anxieties are prevalent in the two stories examined here, "The Half-White" and "Chy Lung," as each of the titular characters suffers from inconsistencies of loyalty, confidence, or identity. The two texts feature characters who must choose between "conforming to cultural prescriptions and refusing comprehensibility" (Wald 3). However, with the additional projection of her writing onto other cultures, the consequences of U.S. colonisation weigh down these unsettling vacillations, and in a few cases, more explicit racism appears. In the case of "Chy Lung", the original publication includes illustrations by William Francis Brown, an artist who worked with writers as well-known as Mark Twain, which perpetuate virtually every visual and physical stereotype of Chinese men.

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<sup>22</sup> For example, the invisible presence of Black Americans in Stevenson's stories when her tales do not tend to shy away from discussions or representations of various identities is notable. Toni Morrison's argument that such an omission "obscures even as it makes a valiant effort at honest engagement," and leads to a "sycophancy of white identity" is salient in such a consideration of Stevenson's selective negotiation of racial issues (Morrison 19).

Boehmer's idea of the "Other as a historical palimpsest—or layering of interpretations—which combined different and changing ways of characterising the alien condition" is central to my conception of Stevenson's specific variety of engagement with empire (83). That layering function also intersects with Bergland's and Kaplan's readings of U.S. identity.

Colonial and imperialist relationships "were always heterogeneous and shifting" (Boehmer 82), and therefore they were ideal conduits for the uncanny. Yet, "we should not ignore the ways that psychological journey into the dark night of the soul has been metaphorized through use of minority bodies" (Wester 162), and certainly, Stevenson's stories do exploit bodies of colour in a comparable way. Ultimately, however, Stevenson resisted a "male-authored narrative of conquest and power over both women and indigenous people" (Edmundson 244), instead authoring a feminine one. In doing so, however, she touches on a core contradiction of the colonial project, therefore implicating herself in the discursive anarchy which illuminates the imperial fallacy of U.S. identity.

### The Half-White

"The Half-White," published in *Scribner's* in 1891, entered circulation at a time of unique uncertainty about Hawai'i's future, and as a tale largely about the fear of degeneration and heredity, is borne out of multiple tumultuous discourses. Hawai'i in the 1880s and early 1890s faced active annexation and colonisation by the United States, whose agents were increasingly, and forcibly, stripping back Hawaiian sovereignty and authority. As Manulani Aluli Meyer writes in the foreword to Tom Coffman's *Nation Within: The History of the American Occupation of Hawai'i* (2016), despite overwhelming attempts in the late nineteenth century, through books, magazines, and other textual channels, to argue that Hawaiians were amenable to the changes, almost "every Hawaiian alive at that time put their signature to paper to tell the American people they *did not* want annexation" (i, emphasis included). By 1891, Hawai'i had already faced years of social and political upheaval, and shortly afterwards, in 1893, the United States dethroned and imprisoned the queen, Lili'uokalani.<sup>23</sup> "The Half-White" therefore holds a certain degree of urgency and prescience within U.S. literary history, as it navigates the engagement of the two cultures and the damaging—and often unsettling or uncanny—ways in which tyrannical white men enforce their own versions of reality upon others.

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<sup>23</sup> The Stevenson family knew Lili'uokalani and met with her several times both in her own home in Hawai'i and later in San Francisco.

Stevenson's story layers Gothic generic conventions onto the landscape of Hawai'i, and a deconstruction of prescriptive gendered expectations for its characters to further destabilise hegemonic modes of literary construction of U.S. empire. Inescapably, even the title of this story makes reference to hybridity. However, the miscegenation anxiety surrounding the titular character is only one among a variety of fusions present in the text. "The Half-White" as a title, is, in many ways, only a red herring for the other types of blending and amalgamation Stevenson inscribes throughout her story. The tale acts as commentary on the negative consequences of appropriative and oppressive behaviour, whether patriarchal, colonial, or literary. I argue that the Gothic mode as it operates in "The Half-White" overturns gender hierarchies and questions frameworks of authority.

Reading the specificities of Gothic imagery which manifest in this story, I also address the tale's discursive rebellion against patriarchal normativity, the construction of a complex Hawaiian Other via a white feminine imagination, and the regendering of an Edenic garden of delights. The narrative opens onto a discussion between Laurence Cathcart and his priest, Father Canonhurst, discussing poetry and marriage, the latter of which Laurence dismisses. The appearance of two young women with a basket of mangoes spurs a discussion of "the marks of Hawaiian origin" (283), and local adoption practices. Later, when Laurence returns home, the narrator reveals the man is already in love with his mixed-race neighbour, Lulani, though they have only ever spoken across the "narrow abyss" between their balconies (283). They wish to marry, but Lulani admits, distraught, that they can never be together fully, that she is "accursed; a pariah, an outcast from the homes of men," a leper (284). Laurence runs to Father Canonhurst's dark, silent, "ascetic" bungalow, acting on a "restless desire" for resolution, though he finds the priest is sickly and ill. After an exchange of rising tempers, the Father explains that *he* raised Lulani, and kept her in isolation because of her hereditary risk of leprosy. Laurence protests, arguing that Lulani is asymptomatic and therefore may not be ill. The priest lashes out, the atmosphere becomes tense and foreboding. Suddenly, Lulani appears out of the darkness, accompanied by her friend Kaloia. Lulani tells Laurence of her plans to leave Hawai'i for a convent, feeling that since she cannot be with him, she must be "chosen" for a holy life. The priest, ranting about Laurence's weakness and lack of fortitude, is himself wracked with illness and on the brink of death. Finally, as he dies, he confesses that Lulani was secretly adopted at birth, and therefore is free from, and always has been free from, the dangers of leprosy. The priest has kept her imprisoned to save her "from the contaminating influences of the world," but in the final sentences the truth emerges that it was Father Canonhurst who suffered from leprosy all along.

“The Half-White” thus positions the United States’ exertion of authority over colonised nations as being akin to more familiar forms of Gothic violence, which conventionally depict a corrupt racialised other as a foil to innocent or naive whiteness. Tania Zulli has written, in *Colonial Transitions: Literature and Culture in the Late Victorian Age* (2011), about similar features underlying colonial literature at the close of the nineteenth century. In a turn of phrase that reinforces the uncanniness of the *fin-de-siècle*, Zulli argues that there is present in much colonial literature a “[f]oreboding caused by ambivalent relationships with a faraway past and a vulnerable present” (18). Continuing to foreground the “existential fracture” of negotiating choices between old and new ways of thinking, Zulli identifies “[d]iscontinuity, inbetweenness, and a sense of looming dissipation” (19) as characteristic of late-century tales of empire, even by those critiquing it. Such themes are all at play in “The Half-White,” through racial hybridity, disjunctures in relationships and across balconies, and even by the suggestion of escape to other islands. Hawai‘i was a settler culture at the time of the story’s creation, and was thus, similarly to the regions described in chapter 2, a “liminal [site] at the point of negotiation between the contending authorities of Empire and Native” (Johnston and Lawson 370). One of Stevenson’s problems in writing Hawai‘i was what Rowe has argued to be the “omnipresent clash” between discovering a culture’s “most authentic voice” and at the same time facing the “complexities and paradoxes” of the United States (128). These conflicts breed the uncanny and turn a real setting into a ghostly reflection of itself.

Refusal of settlement within one place or category in texts like Stevenson’s implies an inherent fluidity of identity. This adaptability emerges in “The Half-White” through the sudden shifts of strength and weakness between subjects at a moment’s notice. In the representations of two doubled Hawaiian women and two white Anglo-American men, the presence of these striking parallels suggests at least the existence of various pairings and categories, even if these are disrupted over the course of the story. Ultimately, in the use of so many Gothic tropes and conventions these spectra between men and women, native and foreigner, Self and Other, begin to blend together too closely to allow for a superimposition of any one perspective onto Stevenson’s tale. In a close reading of the text I will interrogate each of the identified intersecting commentaries and techniques—Gothic aesthetic, racialised discourse, gender subversion—in order to display the specific ways in which the text gestures towards literary imperialism and then subsequently undermines it by rendering it uncanny and unstable.

*“Phantoms of a Vision”: The Gothic Island*

Punter has theorised that “what is held in common (yet also, naturally, in secret) between the history of American literature and the history of the Gothic is a concealment of origins” (“Dream” 21). Thus, in the American Gothic, such repression is not only present but compounded, and “The Half White” can be read as invoking the mode’s aesthetics and techniques as part of the attempt to establish a coherent U.S. Self. At the core of the story lies hidden parentage and obscured histories, which chimes with the theory of the Gothic as always involving “a theory of origins; of beginnings which have been obscured, written over, overwritten, and which therefore invite us as readers into the fiction of a return” (23). As discussed in chapter 2, Punter sees the American Gothic as similarly tied to naming, rootlessness, and the quest to come to a point of rest—in other words the American Gothic is restless and unsettled, as reflected in literary colonialism.

American Gothic narratives are also rife with what Maisha Wester calls “monsterizings,” which morph out of white U.S. identity through abjection of the very inconsistencies and instabilities Punter notes (157). That is to say, the Gothic genre’s “monstrous others” are an “articulation of white humanity’s own [fractured] psyche” (162). Wester’s and Punter’s analyses converge upon the idea of self-denial and abjection, the recognition of the irreconcilable and unnamable in oneself. This lack of identification has been at the core of “the American Gothic hero’s flight towards ever-new frontiers” (Hogle 6), away from one’s past and its fraught origins. Rather than tracing this journey, Stevenson’s “hero” Laurence Cathcart is already at an imaginative border: he is settled as a foreigner in a land where “everything is new, and strange, and enchanting” (282). His enchantment with the unfamiliar and the strange indicates a similar repression of the usual and the past, a self-denial which often leads the literary colonial hero to encounters with the uncanny.

Father Canonhurst, however, recognises Laurence as existing outwith the stereotype of the enterprising colonial protagonist, for he is “too fanciful; a dreamer of dreams; a lotus-eater” (282). Laurence, as the focus of the story—though not the narrator—is the figure through which the image of Hawai‘i is mediated to the reader, and the immediate recognition that Laurence may be unreliable places the reader in an uncanny position from the beginning. Lloyd-Smith and Ellen Peel have both theorised this unstable readerly identity, maintaining that the “place of the Other is a vacancy which we as readers are forced to inhabit” (Lloyd-Smith 34). Processing this involves “both fear and eeriness—a sense of supernatural potential” (Peel 410). Drawing on Lacanian subject analysis, Mladen Dolar interprets the “split” involved when reading the uncanny *becomes* uncanny: “I cannot recognise myself and at the same time be one

with my self” (12). As Laurence reaffirms several times that his relationship with reality may be unstable, and that his sense of Self is flawed and fluid, so the other characters begin to vacillate between dream and waking as well.

The filter of the uncanny thus overlays “The Half-White,” while underneath there are several Gothic motifs which deconstruct binaries. One of these motifs is Laurence’s fluid perspective on reality, which is conveyed from Father Canonhurst’s original assertions that Laurence is a “dreamer of dreams,” through his perception that Lulani disappears from her window and reappears suddenly behind him at the priest’s bungalow, as well as in the way he realises his own otherness from his environment. Multiple times, he becomes “suddenly aware” of certain emotions flowing through his space, yet “comprehend[s] nothing” (287). When he sees Father Canonhurst burn himself he has a revelation “that some unknown tragedy” is taking place, provoking in Laurence a “deep anxiety.” When, fittingly, he “[can]not divine” its origin, the possibility occurs to him that “the whole scene, so singular, and devoid of explanation, might be illusory, and but the vagary of a dream or madness,” and that “at this very moment his body lay sleeping in San Francisco, and Lulani, Kaloia, all, were but the phantoms of a vision” (287). This anxiety breaks down even further the boundaries between reality and “dream,” “vision,” or “phantom,” and re-emphasises the malleability of borderlines and peripheries. Laurence eventually asks for the details of Lulani’s story, as tales often “become so exaggerated” (285). Even after Lulani has explained her history—as she believes it to be—to him, Laurence is uncertain whether it is true: he intuits that some revelation is missing, that something has been repressed. He looks to Father Canonhurst for clarity, as the priest is a personification of the many patriarchal, colonial constructs which are meant to signify truth and objective reality.

Empire and the Gothic both depend on the figure of the omnipotent patriarch, whether they are divine, tyrannical, or otherwise, and in “The Half-White” this archetype becomes both all-consuming and inherently doomed. Father Canonhurst, as the patriarch of this text, represents the colonising missionary forces of U.S. empire, is obsessively compelled towards displays of strength and “virtue,” and finds weakness in gentleness and vulnerability, traits which are feminised. The very environment he seeks to control ultimately destroys him, and the leprosy which has slowly consumed him from the inside for the last seven years provides a corporeal repercussion of his lies and the secrets of his affection. The priest is selfish, undiscerning, and responds to matters of the heart with an “unconcealed antagonism” (285), as Laurence’s very first conversation with the priest shows. Thus, Father Canonhurst is positioned as a malevolent, rather than benevolent patriarch, and his authority is unsettled as a result.

Through all his demands upon Laurence and others, the cloak of the church remains his major tool of influence.

When Father Canonhurst's sense of Self breaks down and he loses control over his environment, that environment begins to consume him. In the midst of the crisis at the story's climax when all seems on the verge of destruction, Father Canonhurst rushes outside into the rain, and upon his return, he is changed. "His hair, crisped by the dampness, and sparking here and there as a raindrop caught the lamp-light, rose round his tonsured head like an aureole." Picturesque, the priest looks "like a mediaeval saint" (287). As the story proceeds, Father Canonhurst ceases to carry the weight of human life but instead becomes a phantom, moving "as with a deadly faintness" (287), and blending into the revenants of religious figures who came before him. Laurence returns to the priest's "ascetic apartment" after learning of Lulani's supposed affliction, under the clouds of an impending storm, and the house is "silent as sleep or death." Father Canonhurst, "the sole watcher, [sits] staring at the opposite wall. A neatly folded document [lies] on the table beside him; torn papers litter[ing] the floor. His face [i]s very pale, and its fixed expression of deep thought intensif[ies] the marks of fatigue or illness" (284). Reflecting the man himself, the home is split between neatness and disarray, and suspended between life and death. Curiously, rather than the "obsession with blackness and darkness as markers for evil" (DeLamotte, "White Terror" 21) typical of Gothic texts, this story positions the "pale" priest, with hair "sparking" like a halo, as a figure of both light and evil. A destructive force of lightness, or whiteness, associated with fire, Father Canonhurst brings chaos to all he touches. Much like in "The Warlock's Shadow," his house is haunted because it engages with the spectrality of what lives within. Though at the start of the tale the priest appears to represent the creation of a stable environment and the building of a family line, through his suggestion that Laurence should get married, by the end of the tale he has lost control. Similarly, despite his attempts to act as the "man of the house" by controlling all those he sees as part of his flock, the power balance shifts as Laurence and Lulani create their own bonds of sympathy and faith in each other, fostering an egalitarian relationship rather than a hierarchical one.

Each home in "The Half-White" involves its inhabitant in a Gothic doubling, but as I have argued up to this point, Stevenson's transformations of the "home" result in that space being misunderstood by various characters as the only important factor of domesticity when in fact the whole ecosystem, flora and fauna included, must be balanced in the attempt to attain a feeling of settlement. Moreover, in the transpacific stories, those habitats are laden with the added traumas of imperial conquest: the idea of being out of place further destabilises men like

Father Canonhurst. As a physical manifestation of American presence where it does not belong, Father Canonhurst's house feeds into the "feeling of unease" within colonial buildings such as cottages or bungalows, which have given rise to the concept of the "architectural uncanny" (Edmundson 149). Though Laurence's house and Lulani's balcony have similarly uncanny atmospheres, their respective connotations are divergent. While Laurence's chamber is "quite dark, and the air [i]s close and heavy," he is only "a little uncertain of the position of things" (283). Rather than being foreboding in the way Father Canonhurst's home is, Laurence's home seems to lie in wait for a settling, for a *rehomeing* of displaced energy, which remains consistent with his efforts to build a life for himself. Lulani's balcony shows "no signs of life," though the windows, "festooned with wisteria," remain "closed and silent" (283). Even in a phase of repose, there is a floral aspect to Lulani's home which implies that there is in fact life within, that beneath the disengaged exterior, there is another revelation waiting to emerge. Laurence and Lulani, within their homes, seem to be awaiting each other, rather than being doomed to extinction.

Relations between homes and inhabitants such as this call into question the separation of human and nonhuman figures. Weinstock has referred to this kind of ambiguity as a violation of "binary thinking requiring a clear delineation between the living and the dead," or in this case, person and environment ("American Monsters" 47). Even threats to these enigmatic abodes indicate the precarious state of that which resides within. For example, when in an "impetuous movement of anger" Laurence's "dramatic sweep of the arm" threatens catastrophe by knocking a lamp to the floor, "the acrid smell of burning kerosene [blows] about the room" (287). The smell becomes an omen foreshadowing the fate which rapidly approaches the priest. House-human hybridity therefore necessitates a redefinition of the barriers and boundaries between interior and exterior, and Self and Other.

Haunted homes house haunted families, and in this story, the paternalism of Father Canonhurst carries the echoes of biblical anxieties. Lulani's secret heritage, or rather, the secret of what her heritage is not, offers a particularly critical commentary on Father Canonhurst. The priest has isolated her for her whole life, trapped her, lied to her, and purposefully kept her from society in order to control her. The young woman believes she is "accursed; a pariah, an outcast from the homes of men" (284), and is prepared to sequester herself forever in a convent in order to find purpose in her own world. The connotations of a statement like this call to mind a fallen woman, or, given the Edenic setting, a postlapsarian Eve. Drawing into place the image of Laurence as her counterpart, Adam, Father Canonhurst's role becomes all the more symbolic, as an omnipotent patriarch. Furthering this dynamic, Father Canonhurst also

describes Lulani's supposed leprosy, highly scriptural itself, as a subject of "naked horror" (285). In his words, Lulani "grew up, partly by means of her very isolation and partly by the grace of God, with a soul as pure as her body is foul" (286). Men in uncanny tales "do not respond to the woman as person but as body ... and therefore they deny/erase female selfhood and autonomy" (Wallace 63). Father Canonhurst's focus on Lulani's anatomy splits her into two selves, body and soul, and further destabilises her identity, already fractured by society through her mixed-race heritage. The inherited trauma Lulani supposedly carries, leprosy, is both biblical and Gothic, but rather than repressing the trauma in order for their own children to repeat it, Lulani and Laurence focus on adaptation and sympathy, as well as processing anxieties as they arise rather than repressing them. Lulani's hybridity thus becomes a tool for survival and well-being in the midst of uncanny forces.

Laurence and Lulani ultimately rewrite the American Gothic quest for settlement by asserting the irrelevance of hereditary hauntings and choosing a new, blended future, free from unnecessary boundaries. This is enabled by their unconventional natures. Where Father Canonhurst works to unsettle Lulani by way of bifurcation, through Laurence's eyes she is able to become the opposite, an ethereal, fluid, and free being. Her first appearance within the narrative leads to her vanishing without a word. Laurence tries to call out, but before "the words [leave] his lips the girl [is] gone, the window closed, and her light extinguished" (284). Her ability to move amongst realms allows an openness between her and Laurence which undermines the stigma of her alleged disease. When confronted about Lulani's leprosy, Laurence queries the severity of the situation by questioning a significant claim underlying nineteenth century pseudoscientific racial theory. Laurence asks, "is heredity so strong a factor, after all? I have heard it disputed. I have heard men of authority in their profession assert that, if after the lapse of seven years the disease has not declared itself, all danger is passed" (286). Laurence's optimism and hopefulness strikes back against the hegemonic discourse of degeneracy. Father Canonhurst, speaking as the voice of the Gothic and the voice of colonial fear at once, retorts that if leprosy skips a generation, "the probability is strong that the malady will attack the next with renewed vigor" (286). In asking Laurence if he is willing to trade the "sin of self-indulgence" for consequences in future generations (286), the priest is asking Laurence if he wishes to condemn his family line to an uncertain future, to a repression which will, in his view, inevitably haunt them. Laurence believes that "to take into consideration hypothetical, unborn generations is ... fantastic," which flummoxes the priest and ruptures the conventions of Gothic hauntings.

“The Half-White” foregrounds amalgamation and deconstruction, positioning both as ultimately entangled. Lulani’s innocence symbolises the possibilities for a blending of cultures focussed around femininity, open-mindedness and kindness, threatened only by men like Father Canonhurst and the domination he represents, with their refusal to adapt, sympathise, and respect the habitat’s own integrity. Father Canonhurst’s idea of domesticity involves construction atop an ecosystem, while Lulani and Laurence attempt to integrate themselves into their environment. The Gothic forces in this story favour and yield to the latter efforts, and eventually work to exorcise the former. In this story, the landscape itself holds power and the inhabitants must adapt to resettle themselves and banish the uncanny displacement of their own identities.

*“I am Gathering Honey”: The Hawaiian Other*

This tale negotiates a complex balance of racial identities constantly struggling to distinguish themselves from their surroundings. From the ghostly whiteness of Father Canonhurst to the darkness which describes the character Kaloia—an indigenous Hawaiian woman, who is Lulani’s “friend, servant, and relative combined”, and who functions textually as Lulani’s shadow—there is a spectrum of racial difference figured throughout “The Half-White” (286). Between Father Canonhurst, representing Anglo-American whiteness, empire, and religious oppression—in other words, institutional colonisation—and Kaloia who is written as a manifestation of the Hawaiian indigene through the lens of the white imperial imagination, Lulani’s position of racial Otherness is also tied to an otherworldliness. She appears at and disappears from the balcony like a phantom within a slumbering house, and as detailed earlier, she shifts between the codes of Father Canonhurst, Laurence, and whiteness on the one hand, and those of Kaloia and indigeneity on the other, whenever necessary. Though Kaloia does stand apart as a construct of the imaginary native Other, Lulani’s hybridity operates to complicate these binaries. If, as Boehmer argues, the way to “manage alterity was to homogenize it” (55), hybridity, then, offers one means of challenging this homogeneity, because it includes differences by definition.

If Kaloia signifies what Gallego has labelled “excessive, unassimilable, and uncontrollable difference” (176), Lulani’s character creates the opportunity for a more complex commentary, given Laurence’s willingness to ignore her socially-imposed degenerative markers as he “wonder[s] at nothing but [her] marvellous beauty.” This, of course, may be because of the emphasis on Lulani’s whiteness: the story is not called “The Half-Hawaiian.” A close reading of Father Canonhurst and Kaloia brings out the central contradiction of the text:

both pathological whiteness, embodied by the priest, and native Hawaiian identity, through Kaloia, are written as unassimilable Others, while Lulani and Laurence are put forward as palatable and adaptable midpoints between them. “The Half-White,” along with Stevenson’s other stories, depends too much on adaptation and fluidity for those boundaries to resist being destabilised.

Kaloia’s dynamism extends only as far as her usefulness in navigating what has become an uncanny setting. It is she, after all, who eventually saves the rest of the characters from fiery destruction, when the men and even Lulani are helpless in their shock at the falling lamp. If it were not for “Kaloia’s adroitness, a catastrophe might have taken place” (287). Kaloia is a servant, who “creeps” around the margins of the story, positioning herself “in the crouching gait assumed by natives before superiors” for most of the time she appears, and “disappearing into the shadows” and “compress[ing] herself into a dark corner” to take up as little space as possible (286). Kaloia fits into the colonialist project of what Boehmer cites as a necessary transferable generalisation, or travelling metaphor, as an “essential constitutive element of an intensely imagined colonial system” (52). Likewise, Edmundson sees a pattern in women’s colonial Gothic writing in which “anxieties are embedded in something that is both unique to a specific location and yet manages to transcend geographical space” (19). Rather than an actual representation of a native Hawaiian woman, Kaloia is written into the image of a primitive “dark” Other described using subhuman language which solidifies the place of whiteness as the unspoken norm. As another example, the background noise to the uncanny scene in Father Canonhurst’s apartment is the “mingling”—a word choice which emphasises hybridity—of heavy rain and the “barbarous notes” of the hula-hula (286). This sinister description poses Hawaiian music as part of the “unassimilable,” somehow different from the song Laurence sings earlier on.

“The Half-White,” through the figure of Kaloia, engages with broader patterns identified by postcolonial theorists about the representation of indigeneity and its uncanny role in the construction of the colonial Self. Kaloia cannot be read beyond her Otherness, because as Gayatri Spivak has argued, “the project of imperialism has always already historically refracted what might have been the absolutely Other into a domesticated Other that consolidates the imperialist self” (253). Boehmer identifies this consolidating practice as well, through the “prevailing quality in colonial interpretation of sameness across difference” (53), which Kaloia symbolises. The text fails to grant Kaloia almost any traits beyond her conjectured racial distinctions, effacing any nuance of character unless it aids the white (or half-white) characters. Gallego argues that phenomena “which [are] deemed too different to be

assimilated, in this case racial difference, [are] framed as monstrous or ... too irrelevant to be acknowledged” (185). Kaloia represents the latter.

Inverting the expectation of indigenous weakness and the strength of the coloniser, pathological indigeneity—via leprosy—is suggested throughout the text only to be subverted by a declaration of truth in the final paragraphs. This revelation further transforms expectations through the subversion of a powerful man who is revealed to be manipulating a young woman. With the admission that it is Father Canonhurst, not Lulani, who suffers from leprosy, the power balance becomes even more unsettled, but because this truth is recovered only in the last words of the story, the onus is on the reader to reinterpret all of what has come before, a self-reflexive technique which necessitates rereading the story and which creates an uncanny sense of narratological displacement. The lies the priest tells about Lulani’s background, the language he uses around her “accursed” state as an “outcast from the homes of men,” and the “naked horror” he notes of her disease and family history take on a new villainy through the exposure of the truth. The final twist displays the utter corruption and exploitation of Father Canonhurst’s actions: he “love[s] this girl,” not as her “spiritual father,” but as an oppressive, masculine, “carnal” force (288). The text suggests only that Father Canonhurst desires Lulani, rather than that he has assaulted her, although there is some lack of clarity in his expression which leaves room for either possibility.

Father Canonhurst places Lulani in the role of the degenerate, diseased racial Other, using the same frameworks of fear and anxiety governing representations of colonised peoples “as lesser: less human, less civilised, as child or savage, wild man, animal, or headless mass” (Boehmer 79). In other words, he has been treating her the way he, and the text, treat Kaloia, drawing a parallel between indigeneity and disease. His role as antagonist signals that his colonial gaze is as destructive as his patriarchal one: the text suggests all of his perspectives to be dangerous and thus challenges the legitimising, and moral authority, of a dominant Christian white man.

Father Canonhurst’s fall from power to a position of vindictive hatred reflects an ultimately counterhegemonic perspective on both imperialism and gender even in the face of normative whiteness, because the very existence of contradiction opens a space for protest. Laurence, sympathetic and mild-mannered, goes as far as to condemn Father Canonhurst’s fears of leprosy, which reveal themselves by the end of the narrative to be a façade. The young man rebels against his closest friend and most trusted companion, the figure who guides him and teaches him, to declare he is not “coward” enough to fear Lulani’s heritage, or whatever her heredity may bring to his, and their, future family (286). Laurence’s objection to Othering

is therefore put forward as a textually-endorsed act of bravery.

Abdul JanMohamed's "The Economy of Manichean Allegory" asserts that all colonial narratives of encounters with an Other are in fact narratives of imperial domination even if the Other is seen as "good" rather than "bad", as rather than "being an exploration of the racial Other, such literature merely affirms its own ethnocentric assumptions" (qtd. in Ashcroft et al 19). Whether through direct binary reflections of the colonial self, or propagandistic images of coloniser and colonised, JanMohamed argues that "[g]enuine and thorough comprehension of Otherness is possible only if the self can somehow negate or at least severely bracket the values, assumptions, and ideology of his culture" (18). Stevenson's text upholds the typically ethnocentric strategy of seeing Kaloia as a representative of the whole Hawaiian indigenous population, something which reinforces JanMohamed's claims. Further, Lulani, who is lighter-skinned, and thus more assimilable to a colonial narrative than Kaloia, is the one who secures a happy ending for the protagonist, a white man. Yet, there is also a palpable destabilisation of such hierarchies as these in this text, which leads to several incompatible notions: Laurence's defence of Lulani undermines the basis of ethnocentric pseudoscience, which in turn problematises the imagery of Kaloia in the first place. Thus, the conceptual frameworks on which imperial rhetoric are built reveal their own instability. This incongruity creates a symbolic epistemological gap from which further subversion of imperial thought might emerge. The bonds of sisterhood between the two women, along with the bond between Laurence and Lulani, act as foils to the pathological whiteness and masculinity that Father Canonhurst embodies in his diseased state by the end of the story, and the Gothic nature of the story further blurs boundaries and deconstructs once-stable borders.

Writing which emphasises heterogeneity and sympathy is thus revealed to be counterhegemonic in a system such as colonialism built upon enforcing perceived differences. What Edmundson, Kaplan, Mills, Rowe, and others see as an inherent unsettledness, refusal to enforce narrative commitment, or even pure evasiveness within women's colonial writing, is not a failure but an acknowledgment of the intersecting tensions of selfhood, as well as an interrogation of the multiplicity of identity and its dynamic rather than static qualities. In writing contradiction into their narratives, women writing literature of empire signal the precarity of imperial identity. Rowe argues that even "[u]nveiling the faults of whites meant disrupting assumptions of the omnipotence of the Western world and at the same time looking at indigenous culture with higher appreciation" (137), something visible in Stevenson's decision to put forward a white man as the ultimate villain of her story in the face of an unconventional interracial couple hoping to finally be together. Thus, the disruption of identity

extends to race as well as gender: Stevenson's work subverts several gendered norms of the era and draws on a fluid sense of femininity and masculinity to exemplify the heterogeneous nature of Selfhood.

*"Don't Spoil the Harmonies": Regendering Eden*

Hawai'i, as Stevenson paints it, is both a paradise at risk of being spoiled by tyrannical father figures, and a Gothic garden populated by various liminal beings, though in both instances, men and forces of masculinity are a primary cause of trouble. The text's disruption of gendered expectations comes into conflict with normative influences of white colonial supremacy and necessitates adjusting the expectations and frameworks of what it means to be a man or a woman. Hogle asserts that the Gothic comprises a "flagrant mixture of different genres and ideologies, an arouser of the fears instigated by visible conflicts between retrogressive and progressive views of the world" ("Progress" 4). In "The Half-White," the progressive views in question are largely those of masculinity and femininity extending beyond conventional boundaries. Supporting much of the above analysis, Hogle's argument acknowledges the importance of "flagrant" hybridity and of both conventional and subversive discourse coexisting to create the uncanny defamiliarisation for which the Gothic genre is known. Destabilising the foundations of the masculine hero figure, Stevenson upends conventional gender norms, and with them the imperial project they so often reinforced.

With his musicality and his sympathetic nature, Laurence acts more as a manifestation of colonial concerns of assimilation, of the fears that one might become comfortable and supportive within an Othered community rather than dominating it, than the fears of losing one's Self through the humanisation of those Others. Laurence sings in Hawaiian, writes poetry, and is altogether uninterested in the maritime adventures other young men in the fiction of the period were depicted as undertaking, for example in the fictions of Kipling, Forster, Conrad, and R.L. Stevenson, in which both "journeys and the life in unknown realms were ideal motifs to strengthen and revitalise ... heroic masculinity" (Zulli 60). To recall a salient point highlighted in the previous chapter, what Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet identifies as the "androcentric bias" of the American Gothic means its texts usually feature men as "victim-heroes" (218), but Laurence is neither a victim or a hero in any conventional sense. He "could not live without sympathy" (284), but has no other goals or ambitions, other than to be with Lulani. Laurence does not take any journeys, and indeed actually refuses to return to San Francisco, baulking at the idea of Father Canonhurst and Lulani making any journey themselves. Laurence seems to know and understand Hawaiian customs and language to at

least some extent, and his comfortable sense of familiarity undercuts the possibility of heroism from his narrative and works against the trope of the powerful man dominating the feminised landscape.

Despite the narrative focus on Laurence, his function in the story is predominantly to mediate the process of self-identification which Father Canonhurst and Lulani undergo in order to come to a place of rest and homing. Laurence's affections and actions seem based on the hypothetical rather than the real, which is why the world around him appears so uncanny. Insofar as Lulani is not quite Hawaiian and not quite white, Laurence is also not quite man and not quite hero, because he defies so many expectations of the genre to which he ostensibly belongs. Even the possibility of a marriage plot seems "extreme" to Laurence (Stevenson 282): when Father Canonhurst suggests that the young man should marry, he protests, speculating that his faults may be "so heinous" that his "penance is to be life-long" (282). Furthermore, his "tastes" apparently keep him out of the way of "marriageable young ladies", and the idea of being "settled" by a wife causes Laurence to "affec[t] a shudder." Father Canonhurst, Laurence argues, should be the one to arrange "the affair," as Laurence himself cannot "put enough heart into it himself" (282). Laurence's affection for women seems based on ideas rather than experiences, and throughout his conversation with Father Canonhurst it becomes difficult to distinguish the extent to which Laurence's exaggerations are genuine or performative.

Rather than a masculine hero and feminised supporting characters, there is a quadrangle of gendered relationality in "The Half-White." In addition to the two Hawaiian women, there is another doubling in the story, that of Laurence and Father Canonhurst. While the orientalisng stereotypes of indigenous women as either fearful or temptresses appear on the surface through Kaloia and Lulani, there is also a similar bifurcation of the two men within the story. Laurence and the priest are mirror images of each other in many ways, and are linked together through many habits and through friendship, though they are at opposite ends of a spectrum of masculinity. Father Canonhurst is a corrupt, Gothicised, sinister, hypermasculine and paternalistic version of Laurence, who is characterised by gentleness and openness. The priest engages in abuses of power and exercises tyrannical control over the sexuality of young women, and constantly denigrates Laurence for his "affectations of manner," which the priest says "lead people to think [Laurence is] a fool" (282). Though he admires and attempts to emulate the priest, Laurence is not a typically masculinised colonial protagonist, but rather plays the guitar, writes poetry, feels deeply, and admits his own faults. His sensuality is his defining quality. Through their lack of conformity to traditional masculine-feminine gender roles, Lulani and Laurence renegotiate aspects of the traditional family unit, forming bonds of

sympathy, rather than a relationship of dominance and subordination, while adapting to and cooperating with their environment. The domestic realm is exchanged in this story for a multiplicitous domesticity which draws on nature and allows for the balance of masculinity and femininity to shift and change as necessary.

The “flowering” throughout “The Half-White” leads to additional gendered commentary throughout the tale, from the first conversation between Father Canonhurst and Laurence, in which Laurence describes himself “idly fluttering [his] wings over the flowers,” all the while “gathering honey” (282) in order to write new poems and find new inspirations. Where all of Hawai‘i, for Laurence, is as “new, and strange, and enchanting,” as the first bloom of the year, the discussion of bees repels Father Canonhurst, as he feels too much honey is “bad for the digestions.” By “[h]elping himself to a rosy-cheeked mango,” brought to the men by two Hawaiian women, Laurence is aligning his gaze on the women with the act of consumption, identifying the women and the fruit as having the same blush. Yet, Laurence’s gaze is figured not as aggressive or insistent but rather curious and experimental. Laurence’s home, and Lulani’s next door, are also covered by plants: “[b]lossoming trees and creepers flaun[t] their banners over garden walls, and from the flanks of houses, showering the street with their gaudy petals ... with tropical generosity” (283). Such verdant imagery is repeatedly invoked to contrast the threat of a corrupted heredity. When Lulani first emerges onto her balcony, she too is covered in flowers, but ones which reflect her internal state, and the weight of the lies told to her about her heritage: “the red hibiscus blossoms stuck behind her ear, and fastened in her bosom, were crushed and broken” (283). Laurence and Lulani’s blossoming relationship reflects fertility and possibility, in a foreshadowing of the truth of her parentage.

Conversely, a sense of death and storminess pervades the natural elements of Father Canonhurst’s milieu. Beneath the surface of the Edenic Hawaiian landscape is the possibility of degeneration, not only for the characters but for the future progeny which the widespread flora implies. Though it is important to keep in mind Geiger’s point that for white settlers in the South Pacific “acts of travel were grounded in myths of discovering some version of a lost Eden” (17), the prevalence of gardens and natural imagery in Stevenson’s writing is also tied to shifts in feminine agency. Lulani’s proximity to floral imagery is the basis of her femininity just as Laurence’s associations with nature are central to his masculinity. Lulani is an embodiment of a domestic ecosystem in which the blending of habitat and inhabitants leads to a new, and feminised, form of settlement which replaces the old reliance on strict architectural and social divisions. Symbiosis is at the core of her relationship with Laurence, and their ties to each other are based on mutual compatibility and fecundity.

The bond between Father Canonhurst and Laurence, on the other hand, is based on control, hierarchy, and abuses of power, in a way which resembles the normative framework of the nineteenth century Gothic love story. The Gothic and the uncanny have at times been vehicles for “paranoid male fantasies of a threatening femininity” (Monnet 218), or of a feminised racial Other, however in “The Half-White,” the gender threat is that of the oppressive tyrannical white patriarch. In a manner akin to the Brontës’ Heathcliff or Mr. Rochester, Father Canonhurst tries to control and manipulate a younger partner. The priest is a guiding force to Laurence, and as the young man says, “the very best friend [he has] in the world” (284). When the priest explains his plans to leave the island, Laurence is “staggered” by the “unexpected calamity” (285), fearing that he will “not know where to turn” and claiming to need Father Canonhurst “so bitterly” (285). Underlining Laurence’s femininity, the descriptions of this relationship and the frequent occurrences of “long intercourse” with the priest, there is a connection between the two men which seems to move beyond the simply homosocial. Father Canonhurst appreciates Laurence’s skill on the guitar, but declares that he lies in “wait for the organ note,” that is, for Laurence to join the Church (282). Their relationship renders Laurence self-conscious: “[o]nce, when involved in a labyrinth of prevarication, Laurence caught his own reflection in an opposite mirror, and the sight was not a pleasing one” (285). Though primarily religious, the dual implications of this language are suggestive. The church, particularly Catholicism, with its focus on transgression and priestly celibacy, is a frequent presence in the Gothic, and the Church’s missionary efforts were fundamental to imperial expansion.<sup>24</sup> The problem with Father Canonhurst’s relationships, this text suggests, is that he uses his influence to oppress, marginalise, control, and otherwise unsettle and destabilise the forces of nature which ultimately rebound and regenerate from his withering patriarchal grip.

The final act of “The Half-White” deconstructs the paternalism of missionary colonialism. In the end, Father Canonhurst’s confessions of his various malefactions stand out from the rest of the text as a denunciation of patriarchal control, the pre-eminence of the church, and ultimately, though less explicitly, the dominion of foreigners over the lives of indigenous peoples. Through the spectralisation and hybridity of Lulani, there are echoes of what Weinstock describes as “various forms of disenfranchisement suffered by women in American culture,” including women of colour, though rather than via the actual supernatural, that impotence is figured via “the terrors of the known, including abuse by fathers and husbands,

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<sup>24</sup> See for example Diane Hoeveler’s “Anti-Catholicism and the Gothic Imaginary” (2012) and George Haggerty’s “The Horrors of Catholicism: Religion and Sexuality in Gothic Fiction” (2004).

economic dependency, the demands [or possibilities] of motherhood, and circumscribed possibilities for self-actualization” (“American Monsters” 48). “The Half-White” engages with the textual practices of U.S. imperialism, but destabilises certain key frameworks upon which that imperial expansion relied for its articulation.

“The Half-White” occupies a nebulous, shifting position in literary space, in which the imperial adventure plot meets with an uncanny, feminised, reflection of itself. The tale navigates various manifestations of anxieties over which kinds of knowledge and understanding are more legitimate or more valuable. This epistemological ambiguity is compounded by the short story form, which heightens the melodrama of the narrative and suggests the urgency of resolution. Clare Hanson has noted that the short story tends to subvert expectations in this way, in order to give voice to “knowledge which may be in some way at odds with the “story” of dominant culture” (*Re-Reading* 6). The consequences of imperialism such as shifting dynamics of race, religion, Otherness, language, and social boundaries underlie every interaction between characters. Aligning herself with arguments made by Edmundson, Ammons, Mobley, and others, Hanson asserts that the short fiction form prioritises “disjunction, inconclusiveness, obliquity,” to represent “its ideological marginality” (6). The form’s “compressed narrative” is crucial to “symbolic significance,” as Krueger writes, because “the short story provides women writers a way to challenge the cultural codes of society by depicting normative spaces as sites of crisis. These short stories hinge upon catalytic moments that urge protagonists to disrupt the spaces that press conventional behaviours and feminine identities upon them.” (3) As I have argued, Stevenson’s use of the form of the tale assists in an undermining of cultural hegemonies, and “The Half-White” participates in this catalytic process, revealing the hypocrisies and inconsistencies of U.S. identity by positioning those identities in a realm where they have not organically arisen.

Suffusing the story with humour and irony further disrupts the epistemological foundations of the tale, by foregrounding a narrative self-consciousness which undercuts the serious political subject matter of the text. I view this narrative reflexivity as opening a space between the text and the reader, to provoke further defamiliarisation. The metatextual aspects of this story double the displacement of U.S. identity because they employ irony, which Zulli identifies as “one of the main literary devices used to accomplish the demythologization of white empire” (136). Discussing the poetry Laurence has written, the latter jests with the priest, asking if his praise was “in irony,” stating that he is “so simple” and “easy to fool” (282). Without the “fortitude to bear” mockery from the priest, Laurence admonishes Father Canonhurst, telling him that sarcasm is “incongruous in this garden of Eden.” Furthermore,

Laurence cites the “hideous thought” of “compiling a dictionary” or becoming a journalist—both tasks more closely related to the concept of objective knowledge than writing poetry. Laurence’s joke about the priest being unable to differentiate between San Francisco and Boston exposes the hypocrisies of an imperial U.S. identity which attempts to elide differences across other nations when it cannot even manage its own regional distinctions.

At the end of the story, there is no resolution, only revelation: as mentioned above, the tale ends with Father Canonhurst’s admission of sickness. Readers are given no confirmation whether Laurence or Lulani are happy, let alone if they become happy *together*. Edmundson finds tactics of this sort to function a purposeful, meaningful critique of colonial narrative expectations. Tales that “refuse narrative closure and that leave characters with a lingering sense of danger and uncertainty by the narrative’s end” create a “sense of disunity [which] works beyond the narrative to function as a critique of a greater uncertainty that underlies the colonial enterprise” (5). In Ammons’s words, difference “need not be hierarchical, opposites need not be in conflict, polarity need not be the basic principle” (65). Searching for a tidy or coherent argument or critique in Stevenson’s writing prevents some of the most informative readings because she does not tell tidy or coherent stories. They range, often wildly, across genre and inscribe countless meanings into a small amount of text. The ending of “The Half-White” is indicative of what all of Stevenson’s stories achieve at their most poignant moments: an affirmation of polyvalence.

### Chy Lung, the Chinese Fisherman

When the American literary imagination reaches overseas, do American hauntings travel with it? Stevenson’s 1880 story “Chy Lung the Chinese Fisherman” works towards an answer to that question. Returning to Ancuta’s arguments noted at the beginning of this chapter, the concepts and aesthetics of the Gothic have often been applied to Asian—particularly Chinese, Korean, and Japanese—ghosts and spectres when their cultural contexts are divergent enough to displace many of the assumptions upon which the genre actually relies. “Chy Lung” is a story about a young man from a family of fishermen who, for many generations, have been self-sustaining; his parents, while they are alive, encourage him towards autodidacticism and ensure he has the tools to live a simple yet fulfilling life. Chy Lung’s obsession with the sea leads him to write poetry and daydream often, but he is faced with a harsh reality when his nets suddenly yield no fish. Desperate and hungry, he remembers a fable about the Sorcerer of the Sea, who is often disguised in rags, and implores one such man in the street for help. Luckily,

the man is indeed a sorcerer. Magical intervention goes awry as the wizard's powers help Chy Lung catch nets full of fish, but ones that turn to ash within a matter of hours of the fisherman selling them. An angry mob of customers berate and attack him, but the sorcerer returns to distract the crowd with a trick: animating figures drawn in mud upon a wall. One of the outlines breaks free from the wall and attaches itself to Chy Lung, who escapes to wander the countryside in search of work. Finding a fishing position on a nearby estate, fate strikes again as Chy Lung attempts, and fails, to draw in fish for an upcoming banquet. Resorting to the same dark magic as he did before, he instead reels two mermaids in with his nets. He tries to bring one of them to the cook, hoping he will be able to keep his job and somehow save her life before she is cooked, but is forced to grapple with the consequences of his decisions as the mermaids, who are sisters, try to find their way back to each other. In the end, all is well, but the "mermaidens" and Chy Lung must move through a series of progressively more distressing emotional journeys in order to restore balance to their environments.

With the whole story set in China—no more specific location is offered—the narrative avoids the trope of colonial confrontation which erupts in the Californian tales. Where the latter texts demonstrate failures of various types of borders, "Chy Lung" questions the validity of those boundaries in the first place. The story is untethered from partitions, actively demonstrating the ambiguities which emerge at the thresholds where those walls might have been. Partially because this story is an imaginative extension of U.S. empire, with the fairy tale frame offering a level of ahistoricism eliding political context, there is a less palpable tension between historical ghosts and present repressions the way there is in Stevenson's tales of California and Hawai'i.

The story appropriates and assimilates "foreign" imagery into a discursive and didactic tradition of Western storytelling—the fable or wonder tale—which was used to develop and preserve the idea of the domestic sphere. In other words, "Chy Lung" brings Chinese characters and concepts, filtered through a gaze of whiteness, into the U.S. home, and to U.S. children. *St. Nicholas*, the magazine in which the story was published, was a well-known and popular periodical which published work from other notable women authors of children's literature such as Frances Hodgson Burnett and Louisa May Alcott, whose more adult Gothic writing is comparable with Stevenson's in many ways. "Chy Lung" takes advantage of the malleable nature of supernatural genres like the Gothic and the wonder tale, as well as the relative freedom afforded to children's fiction as an ostensibly less sophisticated genre, or at the least, a genre facing less critical scrutiny. The tale, through invocation of tropes, themes, and imagery

common to both the Gothic and wonder tale genres, enforces U.S. cultural imperialism while simultaneously displaying the powerful possibilities of sympathy.

The wonder tale and the gothic mode are not binary oppositions but “related forms on a gradating curve of common features—the fantastic, the unreal, fear and, most importantly . . . desire” (Hirst 7). Wonder tales “can flow with the irrepressible energy of interdicted narrative and opinion among groups of people who have been muffled in the dominant, learned milieu” (Warner, *Beast* 11), much like the Gothic genre finally enables spectralised subjects to move freely. Women-authored wonder tales and the Gothic both “contest fear” by focussing their attentions on “the phantasm of the male Other,” either “rendering it transparent and safe,” or banishing it “by destruction or transformation” (276). “Chy Lung,” though it centres around a masculine protagonist, engages in such dialogues by concentrating on the most damaging and harmful aspects of masculinity—Anglo-American masculinity, that is, but inscribed on a Chinese character—into one spectral figure, a shadow of Chy Lung’s traumas, and banishing that ghostly manifestation, leaving the man himself to his happy ending.

From the crossover of several disparate textual modes, emotional growth and empathy rise to the surface of this tale as its thematic nuclei. Contextualising this story is difficult because the appropriation of Chinese characters and settings to tell a story which is ultimately about the struggle to find one’s identity in the face of crisis means the subtext can be more difficult to discern behind the racist caricatures. However, Shih-Wen Chen, in *Representations of China in British Children's Fiction, 1851–1911* (2013) argues that interrogating the nuances in white writers’ perspectives on China can be more productive than simply assuming such writing always perpetuates the same problematic ideas.<sup>25</sup> As Chen elaborates, “some scholars criticize children’s texts for racist misrepresentations of the Chinese, [but] they often misrepresent the texts by choosing passages selectively to support their argument or by only discussing books of a particular genre” (11). Due to “children’s literature [being] a less restrictive genre,” it creates space for authors “to explore contentious issues such as mixed-race identity and miscegenation” (17), and I propose that Chen’s argument intersects with Rowe’s call for an innovation in literary value judgment, to account for historically lesser-valued texts, like children’s fiction, “that nevertheless bring into sharp relief historical and ideological issues crucial to the formation of dominant cultural values” (Rowe 99). Both Chen’s and Rowe’s affirmations are connected to DeLamotte’s suggestion that texts which

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<sup>25</sup> Although Chen’s research focuses on British literature, many of the same stereotypes and representations echoed across U.S. texts.

interrogate racial imagery through fantasy ought to be considered as “documents in the history of racial formation” and the “construction of whiteness” (“White Terror” 19). Reading “Chy Lung” through the perspectives suggested by DeLamotte, Rowe, and Chen allows for nuanced readings of how and when writers rebelled against or upheld conventional expectations, and how such manipulations contribute to understandings of literary history.

Such conventions—of genre, domesticity, and national identity—are breached in this story. Mixing Gothic imagery and uncanny doublings with the generic trappings of wonder tales leads to a questioning of structured boundaries and a reinterpretation of what domesticity means and why it matters. Building a home for oneself in this story, as in Stevenson’s other narratives, is an affective process rather than an architectural one, and the blurring of boundaries extends to national borders and identities, which facilitates the imposition of American subjectivity onto an external location. The affiliations formed through emotional connections and relationships, feminised as these are, form the foundation of the domestic realm, and interiority as a construct and a condition for that domesticity is revealed to be insufficient.

#### *Narratives of Synthesis: Metamorphosis*

The text hybridises the genres of the Gothic and the wonder tale in order to reflect a more general focus on blending and to suggest that rigid boundaries are not conducive to narrative resolution or settlement. The wonder tale form offers a more deconstructed glimpse into the connections Stevenson’s writing does build: many of her other stories inspire a sense of uncanny displacement in order to indicate limitations which should be broken down, but the suspension of disbelief required by the wonder tale inspires a sense of what might be synthesised instead. These two genres share an interest in supernatural phenomena. However, the Gothic “differs in its emphasis on darkness, uncertainty, transgression and fear,” and whatever haunts the Gothic text is more often “questioned or doubted within the narrative” than not (Hirst 3). The contrast between absence and metamorphosis, personified respectively by the outline figure and the mermaids, underscore the two options for Chy Lung’s resolution: he can fade into obsolescence—become a shadow of himself—or forge new pathways through emotional bonds, empathy, and affective frameworks, metamorphosing to become “more than”, just as the mermaids are. Though Chy Lung does make the textually appropriate choice, either way, the emphasis in this story is on the admixing of various categories and the rejection

of binary, polarised, or singular taxonomies in favour of those which are blended, nuanced, and multiple.

Both the fairy tale and the Gothic narrative tend to feature a protagonist who discovers a negative space which must be resolved, filled, or a displacement which must be settled. In this tale, Chy Lung discovers his inability to self-sustain and the narrative follows his search to repair the imbalance. The “Gothic convention of nothingness and absence” (Edmundson 51) links to a similar tendency within the fairy tale, a beginning in which the protagonist experiences a “lack” of some sort (Brewer 27). Hirst illuminates the “desire that lies at the heart of both forms” (3), the search for anything which might aid the characters in self-definition. Chy Lung experiences this desire through his failure to feed himself, and the imagery of the disappearing fish, which prompts his customers to turn to violence in search of retribution, also signifies a loss of agency which he must recover. The affective oscillations which Chy Lung experiences as he tries to understand the dearth of fish lead to terrifying visions and dreams, with “the deepest anxiety” fostering nightmares of death and starvation (396). At the thought that the beggar-sorcerer’s rags might ameliorate his despair, he casts his nets again into the water and “[feels] his heart quicken with excitement” (397). The false resolution of his character’s “lack” coming to light through the disappearance of the fish later on means Chy Lung must turn elsewhere to fill his internal absence. In this case that lack is physical, as hunger, and also emotional, through loneliness and displacement from his community.

Over the course of the story another absence materialises in the form of the outline figure that the sorcerer conjures, which functions as a literal ghost of Chy Lung’s past traumas that follows him everywhere, mocking him and keeping him from finding a new place of settlement. In Gothic conventions, “the double as shadow or image is also a threat, a prediction of death ... [to] gaze at your reflection/soul for long enough is to lose it, as the Narcissus myth shows” (Parkin-Gounelas 109). “Chy Lung,” presents the shadow figure as a signifier of the protagonist’s lowest point, his most traumatic moment, and signifies the destruction to which Chy Lung himself is ultimately vulnerable. The outline is a sketch of Chy Lung’s possible degeneration; though a “wonderful thing” which “appall[s]” the crowd and leaves Chy Lung “spell-bound,” the figures the sorcerer draws are grotesque, “grimacing and gesticulating at the open-mouthed crowd of astonished gazers” (399). As a Gothic haunting, and a corrupt shadow of humanity, the shapes indicate, to borrow Kelly Hurley’s words, “that there are no limits to the plasticity of form: any morphic trait can be admixed with any other” (156). As uncanny abhuman creatures they inspire horror precisely because they reflect the repressed aspects of the Self. The carnivalesque behaviour of the animated outlines intensifies as the sorcerer draws

more of them, “each more grotesque in shape” than the last. They “lea[p], they no[d], they bo[w], they see[m] to crack their shadowy fingers in the air; and every moment their gestures bec[o]me swifter and more extravagant, until a cry of fright burst[s] from the mob” (399). Chy Lung watches “spell-bound” but, as he turns to escape, one outline figure leaps from the wall and flees with him, following him everywhere and “throwing its arms aloft in derisive mirth” (399).

These outline figures can be understood in several different ways, but in each case, they indicate the fracturing of Chy Lung’s identity as he tries to rediscover where he belongs within his community. The shadows display what Hurley refers to as an “ominous mutability,” a threatening lack of stability which replicates, in its imagery, the psychological anxiety caused, in this story’s case, by Chy Lung’s ostracisation (77). The figures also denote the psychological process of splitting, which, as Warner theorises, separates a person into the “mortal husk on the one hand and the disembodied, roaming spirit on the other,” reinforcing the symbolism of Chy Lung’s journey to find a new home. The instability suggested by both Hurley and Warner extends to the shadow figure’s movement through the rest of the tale: not only does the architecture of the wall not limit the outline figure’s movement, but no other boundaries can control it either. As an outline, this figure is humanlike, but not human: it is a phantom tied to Chy Lung’s identity, representing all of his failures to sustain himself in a traditionally masculine way, but unsettles him and continuously confounds his attempts to redefine himself, by haunting Chy Lung with memories of his past, and forcing him to find another way to resolve the “lack” at the core of his identity.

The concept of metamorphosis offers a means through which to resolve and fill these identificatory gaps, and in “Chy Lung,” the mermaids are figured as symbolic of such transformations because they signify coalescence as well as disruptions of categories usually perceived as stable. Like the outline figures, that is to say, the mermaids represent fluidity of identity. Though typical figures of myths and fairy tales, mermaids are figured in terms of a Gothic “destabilization of what had formerly been a fixed boundary between [wo]man and animal” (Hurley 56). While Chy Lung obviously recognises the mermaids’ humanity, he is also estranged by their aquatic animality, and his desire to objectify them and view them as food to ensure his own survival. In a by now familiar pattern, Chy Lung overcomes this uncertainty by forming affective connections such as friendship with the mermaids and undergoing a subjective transformation.

As an additional symbol of metamorphosis, the Sorcerer of the Sea signals to Chy Lung that in order to resolve his traumas, it is not sufficient to change one’s appearance alone: an

affective metamorphosis is the only way for the protagonist to reach anagnorisis, the narrative point at which he understands his own purpose, makes a critical realisation, or becomes otherwise able to close the gap within his identity. His various metamorphoses reflect the sorcerer as a corporeal instantiation of the kind of instability of identity which Chy Lung is on a quest to resolve. In other words, metamorphosis of the body becomes a surrogate through which to communicate the urgency of seeking a “profoundly altered,” and subjective, “concept of the self” (Warner, *Metamorphoses* 115). Such self-recognition is what finally leads a character to anagnorisis. Chy Lung’s misuse of the sorcerer’s magic thrusts him into crisis, and as he escapes from the only home he has ever known, he must try to transform and reestablish his own identity in this way.

Resettlement is only possible if Chy Lung can resolve his emotional traumas, and by so doing secure his future and his family line, which acts as a “home” in place of a material house. Chy Lung’s lineage has a stronger foundation, so to speak, than the cottage he lives in: his family have all been “honest and kindly people, but never well to do” (396). All the patriarchs in his family have been fishermen, while Chy Lung himself has been “carefully reared” to be “virtuous,” pious, and well-educated (396). His personal traumas do not come from his repressions within his family line, but rather the possibility that he will fail his family. Many Gothic hauntings come from the risk of losing “the family dynasty, that index of continuity,” which is often symbolised by the family home (Parkin-Gounelas 121). Chy Lung, however, is not haunted by threats of relinquishing property, but by his failure to sustain himself through the trade of fishing, which is a family tradition, his own index of continuity. Chy Lung’s inability to self-sustain necessitates a journey through wonder tale conventions of metamorphosis, as Warner poses them, in order to recover his stability and domestic comfort—his dynastic settlement. This text engages the Gothic risks of breaking from one’s lineage with the wonder tale’s requirement for self-transformation in order to enable Chy Lung’s quest for affective healing, and his search for a happy ending.

### *Thresholds of Affect: Domesticity*

Both Hurley and Sara Ahmed have theorised the kinds of affective shifts applicable to Chy Lung’s resettlement and anagnorisis. Hurley’s extensive unpacking of the terrors of degeneration has shown that the body—white and European as it was usually assumed to be—in late nineteenth century literature was effectively always under threat of attack, at risk of mixing with “foreign bodies” in their many figurations. Exploring fears that the white body might be permeable, the Gothic genre explores the possibility of morphing into “something in

between which, in resembling both, resembles nothing at all” (103). In “Chy Lung,” it is a similar kind of bodily inadequacy which represents anxiety about threats to identity. Conventional understandings of domestic boundaries within the narrative, which images of the home and the body dually signify, are prone to splintering. The particular anxieties and affective consequences of having one’s interiority assaulted by “foreign” forces are further complicated by this text because it is white U.S. femininity which holds authority over the tale, and over the portrayals of Chinese identity within the narrative.

Sara Ahmed, in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2004), posits that “the everyday language of emotion is based on the presumption of interiority” (8), but that “objects of emotion take shape as effects of circulation” which complicate any static understanding of interiority in the first place (10). Circulating in and out of the body, attachment and sympathy create a new “dwelling place” (11), in other words, a variation of domesticity. This kind of domesticity is more akin to the type of sympathetic and psychic engagement which Stevenson’s tales tend to position as the fundamental aspect of the domestic realm in whatever form it takes. The bodies, and the outlines of bodies, in “Chy Lung,” as well as the houses and buildings, are depicted as fallible, and inadequate, and the open expanses of the sea, the gardens, and other unbounded spaces are seen as loci of healing, of possibility, and of growth. In a similar way, in “Chy Lung,” parallels are drawn between emotional growth and the security of one’s identity, but neither of those concepts are linked solely to material comforts such as homes or money.

In its positioning of borders and thresholds as the foundations of a new understanding of domesticity, “Chy Lung” offers another way of understanding Hurley and Ahmed’s theories in conjunction with each other. Rather than deploying material boundaries or spatial distinctions to signify a return of settlement—a narrative “domestication”—the text suggests affective bonds and empathetic pathways as a source of resolution. Thus, bodies in “Chy Lung,” instead of functioning as protective structures for one’s identity, betray themselves to be gateways between inside and outside, a binary which also signifies Self and Other, or domestic and foreign within U.S. subjectivity, according to Kaplan. Furthermore, these distinctions collapse into each other at the slightest manipulation, devolving entropically, or more hopefully, suggesting the need for expanded understandings of movement between such categories.

Somatic stability is complicated in “Chy Lung” most palpably by the outline figures, who underscore the possibility that the body is nothing but a “glob of undifferentiated matter” which might take any shape at any time (Hurley 42). Bordering on the ekphrastic, they are “figures” or “characters” drawn onto a white canvas wall, painted renderings of humanity.

Warner contends that “reproductions of art are the most potent sites of magical conjuration of lifelikeness” (*Metamorphoses* 168), and the outlines’ humanoid form therefore renders them particularly uncanny. The figures also represent grief and trauma, a manifestation of Chy Lung’s inability to outrun his desperate situation. Mocking him constantly and operating as external embodiments of his own anxiety, the outline figures physically indicate the permeability of Chy Lung’s body.

Chy Lung is similarly separated from his previous understandings of what constitutes domestic settlement or a “dwelling place.” Upon initially experiencing the Sorcerer’s magic, Chy Lung figures his success through constructs of domesticity, fantasising about building a bigger home, “building castles in the air” (397) and considering luxuries “which he felt, for the first time, to be necessary” (398). When it comes to light that his success is nothing but a magic trick, and he must flee from the angry mob, Chy Lung becomes a “wanderer.” The fisherman “who had been so proud of his honest independence, beg[s] his bread from door to door, while the figure follow[s] and laugh[s] at him” (399). When he reaches a wealthy estate, and finds employment along with the associated material benefits, he is nonetheless unable to resolve his emotional displacement. Surrounded as he is with the “comforts of life,” he might have been able to live in “peace and quiet, but for the annoying presence of the outline figure,” which still appears “whenever it ha[s] a chance.” He soon begins to “long for any change that might distract his thoughts” (399). When he does start to regain a sense of wonder it is not through the houses or structures but rather the “beautiful and extensive gardens” of the estate, where everything is “arranged upon a scale of the utmost magnificence” (400). The gardens lead onto the beach, both still within the grounds of the estate, and after the incident with the mermaids, when the cook condemns Chy Lung and he flees yet again, he finds refuge on the “bleak and lonely” shores (402). In his exile, he becomes an uncanny presence: the residents of the palace “whispe[r] that strange noises mingl[e] with the sound of the waves,” Chy Lung’s “groans and sobs” coalesce with another voice, the mermaid’s, “plaintive, and of an unearthly sweetness . . . singing the saddest of songs” (402). Isolated on the beach, still somehow within the domestic reaches of the estate, the wails of the two characters blend together and suggest a tidal flow—or a circulation, as Ahmed puts it—of feelings which foreshadow Chy Lung’s eventual rehabilitation of Self.

The mermaids are both physical and affective reminders of fluidity and thresholds: as both hybrid creatures and agents of sympathetic development, as well as mythic signifiers of femininity, they are the key to Chy Lung’s anagnorisis. As he hides in the cave, Chy Lung is in “helpless distress”, and “[u]nwonted gestures on the part of the outline figure at last attrac[t]

his attention.” The outline is “gesticulating violently, [and] pointing towards his heart,” and Chy Lung wonders if he has “lost it” but then “there it was, still in his bosom” (400). He soon finds further proof that his heart is still working, not by feeling it corporeally but through affective connections. Living in exile in the oceanside cave, Chy Lung hears the mermaid lamenting the loss of her sister with “a grief so intense and enduring, that Chy Lung’s heart was soon wrung with remorse ... Her gentle heart was touched by his sorrows ... she felt compassion for his miserable state” (402). Through an affective link, finally a change begins to take place within Chy Lung. As he comes to know the other mermaid—both still, of course, thinking he has been responsible for her sister’s death—she brings him some trinkets and gifts from the sea to temper his sadness, but she still sometimes sings in “so melancholy a strain that her voice pierced to the fisherman’s soul, and made him sadder than he was before” (402). His sympathy grows into empathy, her voice taking on an emotional power which intervenes with his own interiority.

Finally, in his moment of anagnorisis, Chy Lung realises he must heal the emotional traumas he has caused, he must be considerate and generous, rather than selfish, and rely on something other than the magic of the sorcerer to solve his problems. When the fisherman sneaks up to the estate gardens one day seeking “momentary forgetfulness of his miseries by watching the happiness of others,” he spots the other mermaid, who has hidden herself in a pond (402). They reckon with each other, and the mermaid asks whether Chy Lung’s “heart [is] less hard” now than when he pulled her from the sea and forced her into the kitchens (402). Chy Lung repents, and attempts to “repair the injury” by carrying the mermaid back to her sister (403). Reunited, the two “mermaidens” quickly decide to leave the place which has enabled “all the unhappiness of their lives” (403), but first the sisters ascertain that the Sorcerer of the Sea is to blame for all of the fisherman’s trouble, that the outline figure has “put selfish ideas into his head” (403). One of the sisters swims over to the shadow and “erase[s] the outline figure from the cliff with a handful of damp seaweed,” before the two swim away never to be seen by Chy Lung again (403). With this resolution of his trauma, after his moment of crucial self-recognition, Chy Lung is finally able to settle.

Chy Lung’s empathetic epiphany allows him a happy ending, but necessitates a redefinition of borders into a fluid, tidal, and notably, *feminised* partition between interior and exterior. The mermaids and the sea signify that shift throughout the tale. Chy Lung’s long-standing fascination with the ocean is established early in the story, and he has always been compelled to write “verses about the strange lands he could almost see” (396). In fact, it is not until “the sea fail[s] him, and refuse[s] him her treasures” that Chy Lung’s life is thrust into

chaos (396). This feminisation of the water also evokes the mermaids' mythic predecessors, the sirens embodying a fierce feminine power which destroys even the bravest and most self-assured men.

To return to Ahmed's and Hurley's frameworks, bodies, like homes, are ultimately unstable constructs, not just because of exchanges of physical material but because of circulatory emotional objects, as well, a malleability often positioned as tidal and therefore distinctly feminine. As Ahmed argues, emotions are "associated with women, who are represented as "closer" to nature, ruled by appetite, and less able to transcend the body through thought, will and judgement" (3). Hurley's assertion complements this position, observing that feminine objects have a historical link to the pathological: "the subject inhabiting that body [has been seen as] erratic and unstable, its fluctuability and incompleteness a function of the not-quite-human body" (120). Hsuan L. Hsu points to another symbolic association with water, contending that "images of water convey a diasporic sense of home and/as loss" (154). To synthesise Ahmed, Hurley, and Hsu, the femininity of the sea and its creatures in the story of "Chy Lung" offers a redefinition of one's "dwelling place," one's identity, by suggesting a more adaptive alternative to the rigid boundaries of the extended somatic analogy. The sea, as a feminine construct, takes on that emotional influence, and the circular, multiple nature of femininity opposes the linear, binary masculinity which upholds U.S. identity and which Amy Kaplan sees as constantly under the anarchic threat of entropic combustion. Using a feminine conception of tidal boundaries between interiority and exteriority eases the pressure on the systems of hierarchy which are so paradoxical in both this story and "The Half-White."

### *Femininity and Nationhood*

Warner offers another perspective through which the wonder tale aspects of "Chy Lung" can be read, in her suggestion that "tales of metamorphosis" tend to emerge at "crossroads, cross-cultural zones, points of interchange on the intricate connective tissue of communications between cultures" (*Metamorphoses* 17). "Chy Lung" engages with this trend in its blending of national and generic distinctions. The tale exchanges boundaries and walls for thresholds and gateways facilitated by affective connections, and those links render obsolete the same divergence of Self and Other which, as we have seen, attempts to hold American identity in place. Theories from Kaplan and Bergland discussed earlier explain the construction of that differentiation and the commonality of its failure because of hauntings both within and beyond national borders. As Kaplan argues, anarchy is "conjured by imperial culture as a haunting specter that must be subdued and controlled, and at the same time, it is a figure of

empire's undoing" (13). Stevenson's texts feature this anarchic contradiction, and I suggest that her authorial presence has a similar hybridity—her position as a white woman, and moreover one who faced racial Othering and who travelled extensively, therefore renders her both agent and subject of imperial hierarchies in a complex way which places her at the very crossroads Warner theorises.

"Chy Lung" responds to this layered understanding of identity and hierarchy, placing mermaids, affect, and femininity at the core of the story's resolution, complicating the idea of a masculine hero's journey and aspects of the imperial conquest narrative along with it. The fisherman does have his wonder tale happy ending, and his "daydreams c[o]me to pass after all." He has a "fine house," many children, and a loving marriage (403). However, in all the tales he tells his children, he "never mention[s] the Sorcerer of the Sea, nor [tells] how he caught a mermaiden when he expected to pull a fish" (403). There are some secrets he keeps, though perhaps this repression may not incur the same uncanny wrath as other Gothic family histories. More likely, this ending intersects with what Edmundson identifies as a literary foregrounding of "themes of fear and anxiety," which are often the result of a "troubled past of struggle and hardship that tends to be overlooked, or that official histories would keep buried" (3). While they may engage with the supernatural Gothic in theme, such endings as Chy Lung's point to the real consequences of imperialism and the anxieties faced by those who struggle to have their own stories recognised.

Despite the subversive elements of this story, there is still a significant display of this kind of literary imperialism in Stevenson's appropriation of the Chinese characters and setting. Throughout "Chy Lung," certain images indicate a lack of concern with specificity in cultural references, such as the fisherman placing an "offering before the idol called the God of Plenty" (397), which may represent Caishen, Taoist God of Wealth and Prosperity. Additionally, the temple Chy Lung visits, along with its incense, meat offerings, and statues, all appear "hideous" (397). Rowe and Boehmer, as discussed above, emphasise that this kind of erasure of culture is exacerbated when different racial, ethnic, or otherwise marginalised identities are imagined into a text such as "Chy Lung." Eperjesi calls this process the "regional imaginary," through which "differences are paved over" and questions of culture and politics are "sealed within the boundaries of the nation-state or structured by rigid distinctions between Same and Other" (20). With an awareness of these erasures, and a sensitivity to the shifts and tensions of power across the Pacific region, "Chy Lung" offers a compelling investigation of trauma, family lineage, the supernatural, and affective development. The story of "Chy Lung" uproots the woman-in-home, man-in-nature dyad typical of the American Gothic tale, and the story utilises certain

tropes of the wonder tale in order to accomplish this. Empowering a different type of domesticity to represent the unstable boundaries of body, mind, and society, the tale raises the possibility for fluid movement between various spheres of influence and complicates conventional understandings of the masculine hero's journey.

### Conclusion: Ah Choon, Chy Lung, and Transpacific Mimicry

An early draft of "Chy Lung" exists in the Robert Louis Stevenson Museum archives in St. Helena, California, amongst the pencil manuscripts which will be a focus in chapter 4 of this thesis. Titled "Ah Choon and the Sorcerer"—the former being the protagonist's original name—the manuscript ends with the disappearance of the sorcerer after Ah Choon asks the angry mob to confront the sorcerer about his trickery. The sorcerer himself is more well-developed in this early draft: he is defined by a great knowledge about death, the rise and fall of empires, and other mystical wisdom, even omniscience. Significantly less detailed and descriptive in general, however, the manuscript also features the outline figures being drawn out of spit rather than mud, and they are known as "little friends." At the end of the manuscript, a moralising concluding sentence states that Ah Choon no longer uses magic to increase his fishing profits. This earlier version of the story functions much more effectively as a fable or parable than the longer, more complex, and more opaque story of Chy Lung. However, in comparing the two, several compelling ideas emerge about both of Stevenson's Pacific tales, and indeed, about all of the ghostly hauntings bred out of traumatic histories featured across her short fiction.

In Stevenson's textual imagining of Hawai'i, California, and the other ambiguous locations figured through stories such as "Anne" or "The Nixie," the supernatural occurrences and phantoms which follow the characters are always tied to traumas of national identity, and sometimes more specific regional identities. However, "Chy Lung," as the "Ah Choon" manuscript indicates, was initially set in the city of Amoy, or as it is now known, Xiamen.<sup>26</sup> The published edition removes this detail, and does not otherwise ground the story in historical or cultural referents. The narrative moves through a series of magical events which could have taken place at virtually any point in time, anywhere in China. The separation of the text from context in this way means that the British and North American imperial links to East Asia haunt the text like one of the Sorcerer of the Sea's outline figures, and in the additional application

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<sup>26</sup> "Amoy" is the Hokkien language pronunciation of Xiamen.

of European-American narrative conventions to the tale through both the Gothic and the wonder tale genres, “Chy Lung” becomes an artefact of U.S. literary imperialism which can be productively understood through Homi K. Bhabha’s theory of mimicry.

Bhabha defines mimicry as an “elusive and effective” strategy of colonial power and knowledge, which functions as an “ironic compromise” between coloniser and colonised. Mimicry involves colonial subjects taking up practices, behaviours, or other trappings of colonial agents, while ultimately failing to attain a perceived authenticity in such appearances or actions (85-6). When a subject of imperialism appears almost the same as its object, “but not white,” we can understand it as an aspect of mimicry (89). The project of mimicry is therefore “stricken by an indeterminacy” because it both enforces imperial conventions while rendering those conventions meaningless through their impossibility (86). I have articulated a similar inconsistency within these two texts of Stevenson’s throughout this chapter, in explaining the contradictory ways in which Stevenson upholds and resists various discursive tendencies of U.S. literary imperialism. In exploring the tales’ selective adherence to certain expectations, and deconstruction of others, I have shown that the stories ultimately contradict the “logic” of colonial hierarchies in a way which responds to the concept of mimicry.

The story is one of mermaids, Gothic doubles, wizards, and otherwise discursively European-American content, but wearing a mask, so to speak, of stereotyped Chinese identity. Mimicry balances upon such stereotypes which, upon repetition, “also become different” (Bhabha 90). In this way, mimicry is also an inherently unsettling process, because as Lloyd-Smith argues, when a pattern is repeated, but with “slight differences,” we perceive an uncanny effect (ix). In “The Half-White” the absurdities of such repetitions are figured through Laurence’s questioning of hereditary degeneration in Hawaiian communities, whereas in “Chy Lung” these matters are raised through shadowy ambiguities, the “slippages” between the Chinese characters and the white, feminine American gaze through which those characters are figured. The authoritativeness of such representations is therefore called into question by the uncanny disjunction between the story and the identities it attempts to represent.

This invocation of Bhabha’s theories therefore aids in understandings of the consequences of narratives like “Chy Lung” and “The Half-White,” both of which participate in aspects of mimicry to different ends, although both engage with the concept of “passing,” which Edwards examines extensively in *Gothic Passages*. As Edwards identifies, passing—in this case passing for or as a specific racial identity—“repeats the gothic discourse of the double through the split between the performed self and the former identity” (xxxviii). “The Half-White” figures passing more literally, as Lulani attempts to move through the world in a way

which is a representative, if melodramatic, reproduction of genuine lived experiences. “Chy Lung,” on the other hand, attempts a more symbolic literary “passing,” as the story constructs itself as being attuned to Chinese subjectivity without possessing any understanding of that identity. Mimicry as Bhabha defines it relies upon such failures of passing, and the inability of a colonial subject to completely, or effectively, metamorphose into the colonial agent. Both Edwards and Bhabha, however, gesture towards the inherent uncanniness of such attempts whether “successful” or not. Uncanny, even Gothic, anxieties therefore develop out of the space between the demand for assimilation to whiteness, and the imperial desires for that assimilation to fail in order to ensure such whiteness remains dominant. Stevenson’s two Pacific stories consider these tensions through characters who must reckon with the authorities and epistemologies of whiteness either within the narrative, as in “The Half-White,” or by extension of Stevenson’s authorial gaze, as in “Chy Lung.”

“Chy Lung” and “The Half-White” draw on emotions such as grief, love, fear, and hope in order to stitch together the fabric of their narrative worlds, but they do so to the detriment of both Hawaiian and Chinese subjectivities. Both stories complicate expectations of gender within an imperial framework, which works to resist the dominance of the white masculinity which was the central assumption of such imperialism. Yet, the extension of the U.S. literary imagination across the Pacific to locations which transform from real places with their own histories into exoticised and orientalist realms of wonder, further alienates Hawaiian and Chinese subjects within U.S. literary history at a time when both Chinese- and Hawaiian-Americans who did live within the borders of the United States were facing sustained legal, political, and social ostracisation, exclusion, and often violence. There is no critical solution to these inconsistencies, and Stevenson’s stories therefore foster the “textual unease” which Boehmer, Mills, and Edmundson suggest as a way of explaining the simultaneous subversion and oppression between which white women’s colonial writing tends to vacillate. However, in unpacking the dynamics of Stevenson’s stories, we gain a clearer understanding of certain literary modes of resistance to U.S. imperial masculinity emerging at the turn of the century.

The movement that I have made from reading the kinds of historically-driven traumas figured through Stevenson’s Californian tales, which are more traceable through “The Half-White,” towards the ostensibly ahistorical, symbolic kind of wonder tale storytelling of “Chy Lung,” moves my argument into the next chapter as well. Following on from the Gothic fantasy which Chy Lung faces, in chapter 4 I move to consider the kind of Gothic American Wonderland which Stevenson’s more fanciful, though no less dark or macabre, short stories work to engender.

## Chapter 4

### Anxiety, Authority, and the American Gothic Wonderland

Moving with each narrative step towards an ideal of intersubjectivity, most of Stevenson's tales break down boundaries using Gothic tools. Rebuilding, however, does not seem to carry the same kind of generic specificity or connotations. As I showed in the previous chapter, "Chy Lung" uses the conventions of the wonder tale and the Gothic as tools of imaginative imperialism. Both the supernatural tale and the wonder tale utilise a "sense of ineffable presence, the immaterial materialized in another kind of body, another kind of self" (Newton xi). The split between identity and body is a central feature of each of the five of Stevenson's short fictions which I explore here, and within them, that split or metamorphosis synthesises conventions of both genres in order to comment on the danger and the absurdity of various social norms. In this chapter I show the way that five of Stevenson's stories, which I am calling wonder tales, employ various metamorphoses to problematise hierarchical social structures.

Focusing on the psychic and psychological ramifications of the kind of entrapment which evolves from overbearing forces of propriety, Stevenson's stories instantiate Fred Botting's claim that the Gothic is a "hybrid form, incorporating and transforming other literary forms as well" (14). The other forms, in this case, are wonder tales, which have never been, according to Michael Newton, "one kind of thing," but instead "might be interpreted in many contrasting, and even contradictory, ways" (xi). Overlapping ambiguities between the Gothic and the wonder tale are most potent in Stevenson's story "Too Many Birthdays" (1878), "Under Sentence of the Law: The Story of a Dog" (1893), and three of her unpublished short stories, which are described further below. "Under Sentence of the Law" is set in Switzerland, and the other four tales are located in geographically ambiguous, marvellous realms.

I use Marina Warner's theories of the wonder tale as a lens through which to read these five short stories. This interpretive frame depends not only on the lexical substitution of "wonder" in place of the more common "fairy", but on the critical foregrounding of metamorphosis. Warner's analysis of the wonder tale also includes the obligation to locate the requisite "universal significance" within the form, asserting that these tales respond to urgent dilemmas in variant contexts (*Wonder* 6). Addressing the naming convention, Warner explains that the phrase wonder tale "frees this kind of story from the miniaturised whimsy of fairyland to breathe the wilder air of the marvellous" (5). Regarding the latter point, as we saw in chapter 3, Warner identifies the primary feature of the wonder tale to be metamorphosis. More so than

the “presence of fairies, the moral function, the imagined antiquity and oral anonymity of the ultimate source, and the happy ending ... metamorphosis defines the fairy tale” (*Beast* xv-xvi). Wondering about who can change and how, as well as what transformation means about identity, contributes to the “huge theatre of possibility in the stories” where “anything can happen” (*Metamorphoses* xvi). Moreover, “boundlessness,” which Botting sees at the heart of the Gothic, emerges in the wonder tale to explore where boundaries lie in the first place. Drawing from the anxieties and ambiguities of the Gothic, Stevenson’s wonder tales suggest that the metamorphosis needs to take place not on the level of the individual but on the level of society.

At the heart of Stevenson’s stories is the question of why social conventions keep people from forming meaningful connections to each other for the sake of appearances. The tales may explore the difficult navigation of various realms, the danger and risk of not winding up in the right place, or the prioritising of emotional and sympathetic bonds as sources of resolution to narrative conflict. Yet, though such tropes are common to the wonder tale, these stories may not precisely fit the definition of that genre, because they do not have happy endings. Warner sees the optimistic conclusion as a generic touchstone: “After wonder, consolation; after inquiry, resolution; after shape-shifting or metamorphosis, the happy ending. Happy endings characterise the wonder tale” (*Wonder* 6). The endings of Stevenson’s wonder tales tend instead towards Gothic melodrama and tragedy, and it is therefore through a dialectic movement between the Gothic and the wonder tale that a coherent picture of these stories’ consequences begins to emerge.

Metamorphosis, which is so central to each of Stevenson’s wonder tales, cannot escape the uncanny. The recognition of Self in a changed form is at the core of both phenomena. Though adjacent to each other, metamorphosis and the uncanny are not quite the same: the uncanny often splits a figure into a bicameral entity of Self and Other, while metamorphosis conjures a spectrum of shifting identities suspended between two endpoints. The uncanny erupts when those two binary categories fail, while metamorphosis suggests they may never have worked in the first place. To reiterate what Holly Hirst argues of the overlap between the wonder tale and the Gothic, the two genres are not just in binary opposition, but “related forms on a gradating curve of common features—the fantastic, the unreal, fear,” and desire. Breaks in traditional wonder tale narratives by “seemingly ‘alien’ gothic elements” emphasise the “sometimes-irreducible differences” of each mode (7), and Stevenson’s stories, from “Miss Pringle’s Neighbours” and “Anne” to “The Half-White,” all feature elements of the fantastic communicated through disruptions of categories, whether distinctions of time and space,

natural and supernatural, or those of social norms. Furthermore, I argue for the importance of the relationship, in Stevenson's short fiction, between the moralising possibilities of the wonder tale and the "fresh, ironic scrutiny" that the literary Gothic evokes (Wisker, "Suburban" 20). Both allow a certain critical eye without sacrificing narrative fluency. To add the form of the short story itself into this generic mix, Clare Hanson asserts that short fictions enable and empower "those writers who are not writing from within a fixed and stable cultural framework" (*Short Fictions* 12), a description that certainly applies to Stevenson in her many identities.

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The Robert Louis Stevenson Museum in St. Helena, California, is a fascinating but little-discussed piece in the puzzle of the Stevenson family's archival presence, and is host to an overwhelming amount of Fanny Van de Grift Stevenson's archival material. Indeed, her personal scrapbooks and papers contain at least four unpublished story manuscripts and it is those newly-discovered tales which are presented here for the first time. In a box on a top shelf of the archive room, there is an assortment of oversized scrapbooks which hold press clippings, letters, and other notes which may have been arranged by Stevenson, her daughter Belle Osbourne Field, or possibly both. One such scrapbook, labelled only "Fanny Osbourne Scrapbook 1876", also features a set of oversized lined pages, written in pencil, some with other letters stacked atop them. They are manuscript stories, written in Stevenson's handwriting, which have not previously been accounted for.<sup>27</sup> These four unpublished stories are not dated, and while it is difficult to triangulate with perfect certainty when they might have been written, there are some clues which help with their dating. The scrapbook, although dated 1876 by the museum archivists, mostly holds materials from around 1878, which is the year Stevenson published her first story in *St. Nicholas* magazine. Given the similar content of the manuscripts and her early tales, as well as Stevenson's position as a single mother in need of income in the late 1870s—by which time she had met Louis, and had long since been separated from her first husband, but had not yet secured a divorce—it seems reasonable to assume that the stories were written in 1878, or the last years of that decade.

These three tales combine the aesthetic and structural components of traditional Anglo-European folklore with the thematic and psychological trappings of other *fin-de-siècle* fiction including economic problems, personal success, and power dynamics. The longest tale in this

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<sup>27</sup> One of the tales, "Ah Choon," is the first pass at "Chy Lung," as detailed in the last chapter.

collection of four is “The Grand Borribaloo,” a fable about a young girl named Belinda and her encounter with a family of giants who attempt to marry her off to a prominent local politician, the Grand Borribaloo, who turns out to be a one-eyed forest creature with hair made from flowers and a tail several dozen feet long. A macabre turn of ill luck leads to an increasingly tragic and horrifying series of events and a conclusion which is both tragic and ambiguous. The tale has no obvious moralistic message, though some twenty-first century readers might discern a critique of marriage laws and concepts of purity. The form of the story is much like any example of mid-nineteenth century didactic short prose such as those by the fairy tale writers mentioned above, but the subtext of the tale is a Gothic interrogation of the consequences of imposing social expectations on young women.

The presence of the supernatural itself is not directly associated with feminised identities in these unpublished tales, but the corruption of the otherworldly into something sinister certainly is. The story of “The Ravening Sheep,” somewhat opaquely subtitled “Easy Reading for an Old Bachelor,” also manipulates many of the expectations of a moralistic fable, as it is a very short, literally pastoral, piece about a sheep who loses her lamb to the cold of winter. In her grief, she lashes out at a young wolf cub, who becomes so frightened that he spreads a rumour among the wolves that the sheep has gone mad, which she herself begins to believe. The way that the masculine characters around the sheep manipulate her causes her to doubt not only her health, but her entire perception of reality. This tale, rather than adhering to the expectations for a narrative about sheep and wolves, instead anticipates the turn of the century New Woman story’s focus on “character psychology and on ordinary realities” (D’Hoker and Eggermont 296), such as the loss of a loved one and social ineptitude. The psychological manipulations and descriptions of grief in this story can also be seen as prefiguring much of women’s short fiction at the turn of the twentieth century, which frequently focused on emancipated, working women and/or mothers, the dynamic between interiority and exteriority, and attempts to balance social and emotional power. This story, like many of Stevenson’s others, links genre-bending with gender-bending, carefully manoeuvring narrative expectations whilst commenting on feminine identities.

The next tale, “The Hunchback,” takes the Icarian story of risk, flight, and falling, and deconstructs it in order to convey the moral that nature should be trusted to run its course. The story sits at the intersection of what one might term the didactic marvellous supernatural and the more sinister Gothic supernatural, appropriating recognisable folkloric characters on the one hand, and narrative formulae from early nineteenth century children’s stories on the other. In “The Hunchback”, the parents of a young boy try various radical and painful medical

treatments on the boy in order to cure him of his deformity, so that he may live a happy and healthy life, but which have exactly the opposite result. Rather than recklessness, in this version of the Icarus myth the downfall of the boy's family is prompted by their overprotectiveness, and their hastiness to force change instead of trusting in his natural differences. While centring the story around a young boy is a divergence from the highly gendered stories mentioned previously, there is still a notable continuity: the prince's relationship with his parents is at the core of his struggles, and his disabilities marginalise him and strip him of agency in a way very similar to both *Belinda* and the Ravening Sheep. "The Hunchback" draws established character and narrative tropes from earlier periods forward to the *fin-de-siècle*, blending them in with late century supernatural subversions often employed by writers of the Gothic, and later by the uncanny tales of New Woman writers.

I also include, as aforementioned, the final two published stories from Stevenson in this chapter, "Too Many Birthdays" (1878) and "Under Sentence of the Law: The Story of a Dog" (1893). In the former, a young princess is offered, by a new royal physician of eminent knowledge, named Doctor Aigew, a casket full of "birthdays" in the form of sugar crystals. Any time the princess wants to celebrate a birthday, she eats a crystal, and so she indulges regularly. Yet, the constant celebrations lead her nation into a state of degeneration and despoilment, and so her parents attempt to marry her into a neighbouring kingdom. When the prince arrives, and hears at the gates that the princess has celebrated more than forty birthdays (though, unbeknownst to him, her body has not aged), he leaves in a rage. His father is not perturbed by a woman of forty, so he travels to marry the princess himself, yet she has celebrated another thirty birthdays by the time he arrives. After a second failed attempt, the princess's mother and father threaten to send her to a convent, and she throws the remaining birthday crystals to the birds. As soon as they eat them, several natural disasters wipe away all memory and evidence that any birthday trouble ever existed.

"Under Sentence of the Law" centres around a dog, Rick, placed on trial for the murder of a sheep. Yet Rick, who is anthropomorphised throughout, is known to all in the local Swiss village where he lives as a dim, happy, optimistic fellow. When he is called to the town hall, which is figured as an imposing Gothic castle, for a trial, he takes a nap and then wanders off, and in absentia the magistrate sentences him to death. The townspeople petition for his sentence to be commuted, a request which is granted, and Rick is instead punished by being muzzled for life. Never one for obedience, Rick wears the muzzle hanging loose around his neck for the rest of his days.

In all five of Stevenson's tales, the presence of the supernatural, the uncanny, or the macabre, is tied closely to the trajectories of feminised or Othered characters. Tatiana Kontou has postulated that "[w]omen form a strong affinity with the occult because, just as the occult suggests a world beyond that of our immediate senses, so do women represent potential beyond those manifested in their usual roles" (276). I apply this reasoning to the darker uncanny aspects of Stevenson's wonder tales as well as the more moralistic didactic aspects of their narratives. Moreover, much of the darkness in the stories stems from those characters' inability to process or take control of their own identities.

Stevenson's writing in these stories shows the influence of the marvellous aesthetics of George MacDonald and Andrew Lang, and places her characters in worlds aligned with the morals, consequences, and melancholy atmospheres of Edgar Allan Poe or the Brothers Grimm. Yet, still, this comparison is not quite adequate, as the visceral Gothic tales of Poe and the Grimms are not precisely matched with the psychological explorations upon which Stevenson embarks. It is, rather, the uncanny supernatural tales of the New Woman era by authors such as Vernon Lee and Charlotte Perkins Gilman that present themselves as more appropriate comparators, registering as they also do the shift in supernatural fiction from a focus on largely external phenomena to interior, psychic spectres. While Stevenson's stories are folk tales at their core, part of their significance lies in the way that they bear the clear influence of other trends in short fiction throughout the nineteenth century.

My argument here is that Stevenson's stories, unexceptional as they are in their subject matter, should not be considered an island in the sea of American writing in the late century. On the contrary, these tales are connected both to less-acknowledged writing by other women, and to other highly celebrated works like those of L. Frank Baum. In building the world of Oz, and in writing his collection *American Fairy Tales*, Baum created "a fairyland that America's children could be homesick for" (Philip, qtd. in Davidson and Chaudhri 53). Stevenson's stories anticipate the birth of Baum's American wonderland, though she does no world-building of her own. However, rather than inspiring nostalgia or homesickness as Oz does, the wonder tales from Stevenson's imagination warn children, and adults, of the dangers of believing too fervently in anything. Instead, these wonder tales suggest one must exercise caution and constantly question structures of power.

In *A Jury of her Peers*, Showalter comments on the way that fantastic works by other late nineteenth century American women writers perform a similar interrogation of hegemonic norms. Much like Stevenson, this era saw women producing "a number of feminist allegories, fairy tales, and anti-utopian fables that acknowledged the bitter disappointments of personal

life” (237). Often labelled “dreams” to “tame their disturbing content,” as discussed in chapter 1, these short fictions “were darker than the short stories and novels of the decade, involving cross-dressing, gender confusion, and anger towards men” (237). While I would posit that Stevenson’s stories promote gender non-conformity rather than confusion, they certainly exhibit anger towards men, as well as the invisible structures which allow them to continue to claim authority and control. With these connections in mind, I assert that Stevenson’s tales deserve to be acknowledged in the literary historical narrative of American women’s writing as the nineteenth century drew to a close.

To return to Oz for a moment, it is worth noting further how Baum’s stories are comparable to Stevenson’s. Dorothy Gale is separated from her family like Belinda is, she is held to the standards of a scheming scientist-magician like the princess in “Too Many Birthdays,” and like the “ravening” sheep, Dorothy questions her own sanity and self-control in the face of tragic violence and grief. The absurdities and ironies of Baum’s fictional world bear similarities to those of Stevenson’s tales: both writers’ texts note the risk of overconsumption, caricature political figureheads, feature natural disasters as tools of narrative movement, and frame nervousness as the governing force of their diegeses. Dorothy’s anxiety about returning home, the Cowardly Lion’s fear, the Tin Man’s frustration: these are what constitutes the affective scaffolding of Oz. On a lighter note, both Stevenson and Baum represent dogs as valid indicators of moral justice. I assert these two writers’ “wonderful” worlds are tied together in a more distinctly American way than may be immediately obvious. Stevenson was from Indiana, and the relationship between Oz and Kansas is a well-understood cultural referent: the two Midwestern identities suggest a certain wholesomeness, a kind of literary homesteading which would later be continued by Laura Ingalls Wilder and Willa Cather. Baum, Wilder, and Cather emphasise self-representation, institutional oppression, and above all, uncanny instability between the land and the people populating it, to touch upon specifically American identity crises which ought to be considered alongside the hauntings which, as we saw in chapter 2, Renée Bergland so comprehensively explains in *The National Uncanny*. Given these similarities, and the adherence of Stevenson’s stories to the patterns of the other aforementioned subversive fantasy writing by women, I see her wonder tales as distinct from—though still engaged with—her other fiction.

These wonder tales exchange the social and political weight of those in preceding chapters for a more affective honesty and plainness. Even in the presence of the grotesquely floral Grand Borribaloo, Belinda’s fears of marriage and entrapment are visceral and troubling. The tragedy of the Ravening Sheep is haunting, a sort of zoomorphic preempting of “The

Yellow Wallpaper,” as it positions motherhood meeting with tragedy, and depicts a paternal figure spinning the heroine into emotional chaos. The dread and panic of aging and running out of time, meanwhile, underlies “Too Many Birthdays.” Where I have interpreted most of Stevenson’s tales as cultural commentaries, these wonder tales are more reactive and affect-driven.

Horrible tragedy plagues these stories, with death the common denominator. The characters seem doomed by their inability to form the necessary emotional bonds which would save them from their despair. In each case, developing sympathy for, or empathy with, another character has the power to divert the central figures from their confusion and loss of identity, and from the choices they make which have disastrous consequences.

Three significant thematic foci arise from these tales. The first is nature, which functions as a constituent, irreplaceable part of domesticity. The second is anxiety, which forms an affective barrier which must be overcome by forming sympathetic bonds, with the latter also contributing to domestic settlement. The third is paternalism, which reigns as a destructive, antagonistic, and ultimately fatal force which prevents happiness and domestic comfort of any of the characters. These stories echo Gothic themes, though in a more psychological way, with the ghostly realms examined in “Anne” and “The Nixie” exchanged for the inner demons of “The Ravening Sheep.” The fears of marriage and motherhood which many Gothic heroines face are felt acutely by Belinda in “The Grand Borribaloo,” but instead of a Bluebeard figure she has a clumsy giant to blame.

The short story form was ideal for this genre-bending, given that the form underwent rapid and significant changes throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As Showalter observes in *The Daughters of Decadence*, the short story offered “flexibility and freedom from the traditional plots of the three-decker Victorian novel,” plots which largely hampered women characters, and in which freedom was thoroughly explored (viii-ix). The absence of both precise boundaries and generic norms for the form meant it offered writers a considerable degree of freedom “to experiment, adapt, and combine” (D’Hoker and Eggermont 304). However, the comparative lack of critical attention to cross-genre stories means that eclecticism and hybridity within the form are easily read as “failures and inconsistencies” (304). Rather than generically experimental, Stevenson’s stories might be more accurately described as fluid, hybridised, or blended. Her tales are, for the most part, very much like standard fairy tales one would expect to find in magazines in both Britain and North America in that time, standalone pieces familiar in their uses of giants, hunchbacks, and anthropomorphic animals. Earlier in the century these would almost exclusively have been

intended as didactic “class literature” for children and “common” audiences (Shacker 1), but ties between reading, morals, and social guidance had begun to fray by midcentury (Bratton 17), leaving apertures in the folkloric literary sub-sphere, which was governed primarily by women, through which more and more varied material could filter in. The Gothic and sensation novel, both often written by women, were at their height in these same decades. Women were also writing hybrid stories like Stevenson’s: Caroline Sumpter has produced a compelling analysis of the mixed-genre fairy tales of Anne Thackeray, also published in the late nineteenth century, though in Britain. Thackeray’s short stories, like Stevenson’s, “manipulat[e] the ‘traditional’ fairy tale’s ideological codes” and present a “subtle critique of the convention of the passive heroine” (67). Women like Flora Annie Steel, Louisa May Alcott, and Charlotte Perkins Gilman, also wrote folk, Gothic, or wonder stories which amalgamated several trends from different genres.

These unpublished stories, then, merit prominence within the body of scholarship dealing with the development of these discourses, and by holding them up to some of the prevailing critical ideas about folk and fairy tales they may be more precisely situated with the field of nineteenth century cultural production. In addition, I call attention to the generic boundaries of that field as Stevenson’s tales encounter them. Her literary subversions morph the folktale, a genre typically seen as an escape from complex realities, into a commentary on psychological and social issues through the invocation of certain tropes from the late century supernatural or uncanny short story.

Stevenson’s tales show an authorial mind keenly attuned to representing the weaknesses of human nature and an ability to negotiate the constraints of various genres while preserving her own distinctive voice.<sup>28</sup> By presenting her stories here I hope to not only spark further interest in Fanny Van de Grift Stevenson the author, as opposed to Mrs. Stevenson the literary wife, but also to provide compelling evidence that scholarship needs to reinterpret, re-evaluate, and adequately recognise late nineteenth century women’s writing in all its diversity. Situating her stories within the category of uncanny folklore helps us to better understand Stevenson’s standing in relation to her contemporaries, and to nineteenth century women’s writing, while also raising the possibility of a more nuanced and varied set of taxonomies for short fictions of this period.

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<sup>28</sup> Stevenson’s awareness of the gruesome possibilities for fairy tales is well-recognised by biographers: her sister Nellie recalls one instance in which Stevenson helped her children put on a play of the story of Bluebeard, and was not satisfied until the whole set was adequately covered in “blood” in the form of fabric props (Sanchez 37-38).

## Anxiety

Anxiety weaves these wonder tales together: in each story anxieties arise, and the characters face a conflict which ultimately results in the failure of those frameworks which instigated that anxiety. The genre blending between the wonder tale and Gothic hybridity—with its fascination with transgression, its “anxiety over cultural limits and boundaries” and its “ambivalence and uncertainty [which] obscure[s] single meaning” (Botting 2, 3)—only furthers the ambivalence of the stories themselves, impacting the characters in ways which lead them to a darkness not all of them can escape. Similarly, in the wonder tale, there is a central contradiction between a desire to rebel and a need for resolution, which, together with the genre’s “fabulism,” contributes to its role of “moral arbitration and soothsaying” (Warner, *Beast* 409). Though situated in different contexts, the vacillatory tendencies of both genres are accounted for in Stevenson’s wonder tales. Uncertainty as such causes anxiety, and only in some of these tales is that anxiety able to be settled by the end of the story with a “fairy tale ending”. The other tales leave the reader to deal with the characters’ unresolved Gothic distress.

To define anxiety in this instance, I draw on Justine Murison’s reading of American anxiety in the nineteenth century, and her Foucauldian assertion that anxiety is “the affective underside of discourse and power” (9). In other words, within my application of this theory to Stevenson’s wonder tales, anxiety acts as an emotional undercurrent which consistently responds to manipulations enacted through hierarchies of power. Socially, then, to follow Murison’s argument, anxiety is also “an efficient term for the productive nature of all that an individual or society represses,” which “evokes power projected, experienced, and embodied” and, “at its richest ... restores to texts political meanings that may lurk in their margins and lacunae” (9). Tracing the way these concepts are articulated in Stevenson’s wonder tales, I will show the ways in which the generic functions of the texts and their embodiments of certain types of anxiety indicate that those power structures are fallible.

Within the five tales considered here, conventions of both the Gothic and the wonder tale bring to light ambiguities and metamorphoses which inspire anxious responses in various characters. Grief, loss of innocence, and issues of containment are the three dominant—though not the only—concerns of the characters, leading to anxiety-driven blurring of various boundaries, including the social, emotional, and corporeal. As Botting observes, Gothic writing tends to “blur, rather than distinguish the boundaries that regulat[e] social life, and interrogate, rather than restore, any imagined continuity between past and present, nature and culture, reason and passion, individuality and family and society” (47). Complementing this fluidity,

the wonder tale, particularly its transformational qualities, also foregrounds “moments of clash and conflict between one intellectual hegemony and another: it is characteristic of metamorphic writing to appear in transitional places and at the confluence of traditions” (Warner, *Metamorphoses* 18). Conflicts of selfhood, culture, and social expectations, all flow through these five tales, often with disastrous consequences. However, in identifying the characters’ anxieties, following Murison, we might also seek to understand how and why the forces responsible maintain their power and further interrogate how to subvert them and resolve the agitation at its source.

The most visceral anxieties in these tales are those which centre around the experience of, and the response to, loss. That loss may be of family, or of one’s identity, both of which lead to an eruption of “excessive emotion” (Botting 4). Questioning the ability of any one person to contain themselves in a state of grief, the stories thus position women and, in particular, girls, both human and animal, as holding a “capacity for love and action [which] tragically exceed[s] the permitted boundaries of their lives” (Warner, *Beast* 393). This lack of clarity leads to anxious and “increasingly uncertain subjective states dominated by fantasy, hallucination and madness” (Botting 11). For some characters, this haze of ambiguity is fatal, while for others it leads to a bearable, but uncomfortable, continuous state of anxiety and uncertainty reflective of the human psyche. Taking the examples of “The Ravening Sheep,” “The Grand Borribaloo,” and “The Hunchback,” I show the particular ways that anxiety and grief engage with each other in the characters’ affective spheres. Loss, and loss of Self, contributes thematically in these stories to the more generalised fantastic ambiguity of the tales and reinforces the characters’ inability to control forces they do not understand or cannot identify.

The Grand Borribaloo and the Ravening Sheep both risk losing their identities within their own grief and anxieties; they nearly devolve into constellations of nerves, wandering aimlessly across various landscapes. Warner sees this devolution as akin to, or part of, the process of zombification. While grief and anxiety are affective, the zombie itself, as Warner posits, “is not simply a product of a different psychological approach to mental illness; it is a literary expression of political clashes and their effects” (*Metamorphoses* 25). Both the Borribaloo and the sheep respond to social influences in their grieving process, but in particular, the grief of the former enacts transgressions against convention and expected behaviour which destroy his psyche. At the wedding of Belinda and the Borribaloo, when Belinda finally reveals her mutilated thumbless hand to the guests, even the narrator interjects, asking why “[would] not the fates allow [them] to stop here, nor further follow this tale which

so suddenly changes to a scene of gloom and horror” (6). The entire room descends into an anxious disaster, “so frightfully indecorous that the priest fell into a rage ... so deep that no ropes would reach him, where he remains to this day” (6-7). The giant declares he will “burst with mortification” and then does so “with a loud report” (6). Most of the guests flee in terror, “some of them mortally wounded” (6). The wedding guests’ anxiety over the lack of propriety in Belinda’s grotesque appearance literally leads to somatic collapse. As Murison points out, the body is “not a stable unit precisely because the nervous system governed it” (2), and nerves are perceived as unpredictable, turbulent, and always in flux.

Where the guests face anxious disaster, the Borribaloo is “sad beyond belief” (7). Knowing his marriage to Belinda is impossible, he falls into “a low state, weeping incessantly, neglecting the affairs connected with his rank and office, which consequently [fall] into other hands about whom his old friends rallied” (7). The grief leads to further physical transformation and grotesqueness, and he becomes “so wearisome to those about him that he was left alone more and more, so that when he had wept his eye out no one was aware of the piteous fact” (7). The Borribaloo wanders for days through the woods, “vainly seeking his way out” (7), approaching the zombie-like state Warner suggests. Eventually he collapses from thirst and hunger. He cries out wishing he had never known Belinda, and in his “anguish he accidentally place[s] the end of his tail into his mouth; unconsciously, in his delirium, assailed by the pangs of hunger, he [begins] devouring it, and absently ate himself up”—no remains are ever found except a “few tail scales that his stomach was unable to digest” (7). It is significant that his anxiety begins with grief but leads to a frenzied consumption: themes of eating and consumption are prevalent throughout this tale as proxied critiques of propriety. I will expand upon this dynamic below, but my point is that the Grand Borribaloo himself is a victim of his own aggrieved anxiety, which the governing customs of the land exacerbate because they prevent his union with Belinda, whom he longs to marry. To borrow from Derek Brewer, some wonder tales “recognise dangers to such an extent as to offer warnings rather than happy endings” (34), and this is what happens to the Grand Borribaloo. It is not only the characters themselves, but social conventions, which result in the Borribaloo’s death. Belinda, at the end of the tale, is never heard from again, simply vanishing into the abyss and obscurity of the fallen woman.

Bereavement also defines the anxiety the Sheep faces, but like Belinda and the Borribaloo, wider social pressures and inequalities, as they are depicted within the tales, lead to her prolonged suffering. Indeed, poor management of the land and the community is what causes her lamb’s death in the first place. As the Sheep descends into a nervous spiral

heightened by grief, she is threatened with a loss of her sense of self, questioning her own memory and identity. Warner argues that in wonder tales, “the stories of the past offer divining instruments for present grounds of anxiety and terror” (*Metamorphoses* 202), and for the Ravening Sheep, these stories are those of her own personal history. Her grief is distorted by stories and gossip into a fearful spectre within her own consciousness. When the Sheep’s lamb declines as a result of hunger and exposure, the sheep “tried to warm it with her own body, but her wool was wet, and she, too, was starved with the cold; she could only watch her lambs innocent eyes grey, and its little legs stiffen, with a breaking heart” (2). Her lack of control over her own child’s life fractures her psyche, and drives her to despair. However, “she could not replace the shelter, nor could she make the grass grow again, though she would gladly have watered the grass with her blood, and torn the fleece from her back to keep the cold from the lamb” (2). After burying her lamb, “in her grief, [the sheep] hope[s] and [thinks] she might die too; but she [is] older and stronger and more used to hardship” (2). She spends most days staring at the burial place of her baby, or “wander[ing] about the bare pasture where it had frisked and played in happier days” (3). In her trancelike state, a little wolf cub approaches one day, so “plump, and sleek, and well cared for, that when she felt her weak heart giving way because of the injustice of things ... in a mad rage [she] chased the wolf-cub howling away to its mother” (3). This is the basis of the Sheep’s reputation as “ravening,” and her weakness, despondence, and devastation devolves in a moment into a Gothic wonder tale discourse on the bad parent. Wicked stepmothers being the most recognizable of these archetypes, the bad mother or bad parent in general “has become an inevitable, even required ingredient in fantasy, and hatred of her a legitimate, applauded stratagem of psychic survival” (Warner, *Beast* 212). Stevenson’s tales take a different perspective: they focus on the panic and anxiety of being a bad parent instead of centring around the Gothic results of bad parenting.

Though the zombification of the Borribaloo and the Sheep is exchanged in “The Hunchback” for a true metamorphosis in the form of hatching, the issues of grief and identity are nonetheless similarly tied together by the recurrence of the bad parent motif. The hunchback’s mother and father, “in their anxiety” and grief over their son’s irregularity, try to “fix” their child (1). His father,

being what is called a man handy with tools, had invented this cruel arrangement of straps and buckles which seemed to have cut into the very soul of the boy. He grew gloomy and despondent, dull at his books, and took no apparent pleasure in the society of others of his age. The burden seemed to grow with his years, to lie as heavily on his heart as on his shoulders. (1)

This anxiety develops into a kind of grief when the boy dies, his wings failing, but rather than being a part of the narrative, the tragic irony is only accessible to the reader: we never see the boy's parents react to, or understand, their role in the disaster. The boy's death is communicated through the eyes of a bird, "flying over the marshes to meets [sic] its love," which "in a bare and desolate place ... discerned a gleam of color" and "found the poor boy dead and cold in the slump of the marsh" (2). The muscles of the boy's wings, "for so many years unused to action had become flaccid and weak," and in his "elation at the discovering of his marvellous powers he had miscalculated his strength, attempted too high a flight, and thus failed miserably in this outset of his career, and so had died in the mire, the green ooze rising about his face and his purple wings trailing broken and soiled" (2). Despite his parents' best intentions, the boy meets with destruction and death because they have not adequately acknowledged or respected his body.

For the Sheep, the Borribaloo, and the Hunchback, the anxiety and grief coursing through the narrative seems held within particular bodies, while also passing between characters as they try to navigate the hierarchies of their worlds. Sara Ahmed maintains that "the language of pain operates through signs, which convey histories that involve injuries to bodies, at the same time as they conceal the presence or 'work' of other bodies" (*Emotion* 20-21). For example, their son's grotesque and uncontainable body causes the parents of "The Hunchback" pain, but in reality, that pain comes in part from the social pressure to produce and raise healthy offspring. Belinda's mutilation causes emotional breakdowns from each wedding guest, but in fact the customs of their world are responsible for that pain. In each case, causes and effects of anxiety are complicated and cast into a fantastic Gothic ambiguity and darkness. Ahmed, gesturing towards Marx, argues that "emotions accumulate over time, as a form of affective value" (11). In Stevenson's wonder tales, the networks of authority enmesh constellations of feeling to underpin an intricate balance of identity which might shatter at any moment. To bring together Ahmed's ideas with wonder tale theories from Warner, the "work" of locating pain and anxiety in various bodies creates an "economy of bodies and souls [which] runs through the stories of possession; the competition for ownership, for self-possession, for mastery" is fierce (Ahmed 21; Warner, *Metamorphoses* 129). In the case of some of Stevenson's characters, the struggle for self-possession and autonomy is entangled with the construction of innocence, integrity, and virtue, as a way of distinguishing what is *valuable* in these worlds of wonder.

Behind the affective surface of grief in these five wonder tales lies a set of codes regarding propriety, innocence, and the correct way to participate in wider society. These codes govern the diegeses, but the narratives manipulate them with Gothic and fantastic tools in order to distinguish the ways that those codes are at best misinformed, and at worst corrupt. The “bodies” which the language of pain helps to conceal, to use Ahmed’s phrasing, are social forces. Anxiety over grief, pain, or other forms of loss obscures contentious late-nineteenth century narratives over the “proper” place of women because the overflow of affect places responsibility onto individual failures rather than onto the pressures which drive that affect in the first place. More explicitly, hegemonic institutions or entities blame women for their inability to maintain adequate boundaries, rather than critically evaluating the purpose of those boundaries. In these stories, the spaces into which women are expected to fit are the roles of wife and mother, and their failures to adhere to that heteronormative framework lead straight into a realm of uncontainable anxiety.

Discerning who deserves their anxieties and tragedies, and for what reason, is a central task of these stories, and innocence therefore stands as the ideal against which all transgressions are measured. Innocence is also linked to identity formation through the construction of trustworthiness and integrity: Warner describes the role of metamorphosis within the negotiation of who and what is virtuous, revealing the difficulties of discerning someone’s true nature. Metamorphosis works towards “communicating a profoundly altered concept of the self” (*Metamorphoses* 115). When someone has transformed, for example through a mutilated hand as in Belinda’s case, or into a ravaging monster, as with the Sheep, that transformation is not necessarily an act of “self-knowledge,” but rather one which, Warner maintains, “destroys the possibility of self-recognition” (115). Hurley also speaks to this disjunction between identity and exteriority in her analysis of the “contradiction that fractures the ideology of femininity” (122). The double standards which uphold the binaries of angelic and fallen women, which Hurley investigates, also echo across Stevenson’s stories as women fail in these roles because the pressures upon them to remain self-contained are unsustainable, either because of Gothic or wondrous happenstances, or because of patriarchal influences such as parental encouragement, which impact the women in the story in a similar way to the actual historical and political climate of the late nineteenth century.

Whether or not Belinda is innocent of any wrongdoing for biting her own thumb off stands out as a conflict which the reader must interpret, and the question of her marriageability undercuts the grotesque tragic ending to the story. In both the diegetic society of giants and Borriballoos, and the nineteenth century American consciousness, the ideal state for women

was often presented as maintaining the innocence and naivety of a child, while the fantastic elements of the story also make room for “fantasizing gender relations, both exposing injustice in the real world and opening up the possibility of other social models” (Newton xxvi). Belinda’s “grotesque transmogrification” (Warner, *Metamorphoses* 87) from maiden and bride into a figure of terror, doom, and destruction, is a hyperbolised glimpse into the risks for women who do not meet the standards of virtue their own societies impose upon them. Belinda must prove her innocence and right to existence from the outset of her misadventure, and she lists all the achievements of her own family so that the giant may have “some fear of incurring the enmity of so great and influential a race” (3). Yet, when he asks her if she has any interest in marriage, a “horrible fear took possession of [her]” (3). Her mind races, she is terrified of losing her identity within someone else’s, and furthermore worries that “giants might, anyhow, have as many wives as old Brigham,” so that she would only be one possession amongst many, and she immediately “burst[s] into tears” (3). Even before Belinda knows the identity of the Borribaloo, or whoever her future spouse might be, she is torn between the fear of being a wife and the fear of saying no to the giant.

When the giant reveals that it is the Grand Borribaloo that Belinda might marry, her perspective changes, but she understands the benefits of such an advantageous alliance and she sees the possibility for a “brilliant future” (4). The giant, who is the “Confidential Matrimonial Adviser to his highness,” arranges the marriage because “a personage of his rank could not take the trouble to choose a wife for himself” (3). Foregrounding Belinda’s innocence, virtue, and respectability, the giant notes that Belinda is “certainly of a good family, belonging to a long line of Smiths,” and to be “a protegee of [the giant] gives [her] standing,” it is “a very suitable match on both sides” (4). Though the anxiety over the transformation from maiden into wife sends Belinda into a “whirl of agitation,” she is not afraid, regardless of who the Borribaloo is: he might, “to be sure, be as old and ugly as the giant himself,” but the “bliss of being “My Lady Borribaloo” cover[s] any unpleasant suggestions that ar[i]se in her mind” (4). In the typical wonder tale, heroines often “agree with alacrity to the change of outward form, in order to run away from the sexual advances of a father or other would-be seducer” (Warner, *Beast* 353), and this is often a desperate bid to retain their innocence, but Belinda embraces the empowering possibilities for marriage. Manipulation of the narratives of innocence and propriety replace her agreement to metamorphosis: the loss of her thumb, accidental as it is, negates her marriageability and therefore stands as a symbol of her virtue, integrity, purity and even virginity.

The question of whether or not Belinda is guilty of transgression leads to the ambiguity which I have shown is central to many of Stevenson's stories. The narrative suggests that arbitrary physical traits ought not be the basis on which one's innocence or propriety are judged, with the absurd reactions of the wedding guests satirising the frantic indignation of those who position the feminine body's ability to keep things in—or out—as the foundation of a romantic union. Yet, nonetheless, it is Belinda's "one ugly habit," sucking her thumb, which leads to her mutilation and grotesqueness. As she considers her impending marriage, Lallagagog, the giant's son, "who had been drowning flies in the cream, and amusing himself in other kindred ways, now turned his attention to Belinda, stepping up softly behind her, he place[d] one great hand upon her head, the other under her chin, and suddenly snap[ped] her teeth together with a loud laugh" (4). So, rather than Lallagagog being solely responsible for the accident, "Belinda [is] placed in the awkward predicament of having bitten off her *own* thumb" (4, emphasis mine). Belinda's anxiety at this tragedy impacts her in a way she does not quite understand, and she retires, "weeping, to her chamber to bind up her mutilated hand" (4) and making an excuse for missing dinner. When she does not emerge, she complains of a headache, "a feeling of uncertainty and insecurity prompting her not to complain of Lallagagog" (5). Above all, her "woebegone" (5) silence and anxiety over speaking out against her assaulter frames her complicated relationship with her own innocence and self-knowledge in the gruesome events.

Belinda's ambiguous vacillations over her own guilt for what has been done to her is a striking illustration of Hurley's argument about the way the feminine body has been pathologised and made responsible for its own instability, particularly in the late nineteenth century. Due to women's perceived lack of corporeal reliability, "the subject inhabiting that body was erratic and unstable [as well], its fluctuability and incompleteness a function of the not-quite-human body" (120). The unclear cause of Belinda's loss of innocence is the real mystery in Stevenson's tale and the dramatic bloody terror of the act itself is more notable because of its destructive consequences for society than because Belinda is afraid. Belinda seems to be genuinely happy with her own decision to marry, but the social implications of her mutilation are what leads to a Gothic marital disaster.

More obviously than Belinda, the Ravening Sheep's innocence is only undermined by gossip, hearsay, and biased information. Her rash actions in the wake of bereavement seem justifiable and logical, but the sheep herself is surrounded by forces that uphold her offenses and further encourage her to doubt herself, her character, and her integrity. The Sheep only hears of her ravening reputation when her neighbour, the blind shepherd, comes in a rage to

condemn the Sheep for the wolf's "fearful tale" of the Sheep attacking the cub "with a mouth a yard wide, full of blood and foam; with eyes the size of dinner plates, from which shot blue and green flames, and with an awful, deafening roar like a wild lion" (3). The sheep does not remember the events passing in that way, "but full of trouble [goes] off alone to think it over; and wonder[s] if all this were really true, and she had actually become a mad ravening sheep" (3). She wonders if she has a divided personality, her unawareness of the incident leading her to question her perception, innocence, virtue, and honesty. This shadow twin which she does not remember, acts as the doubling which Warner contends is a crucial aspect of wonder tale metamorphosis. The double, which often "solicits hopes and dreams for yourself, of a possible becoming different while remaining the same person, of escaping the bounds of self" (*Metamorphoses* 165), can also become the Gothic opposite, the dark psychic truth of one's self. For the Ravening Sheep, her grief and anxiety not only over her innocence, but also over the public perception of her as corrupt is too much to bear, and she is never able to feel at ease with herself even at the end of her days.

In "Too Many Birthdays," the princess never compromises her innocence, but her marriageability is mitigated by the ambiguous arcane alchemy of the birthday crystals which leads both the foreign prince and his father to believe she is too old to be worthy of their partnership. Furthermore, her father blames her for the actions of Doctor Aigew, whose motivations are unclear and who represents an overindulgence which threatens the safety of their island nations. These rejections are illogical, as the princess is only ever identified by her good character and adherence to the island's rules. She is an only child who comes from a long line of only children, "goodness and beauty being hereditary" (584). Never spoiled, "despite the risk of such," the princes and princesses remain during their lives "as simple, gentle, and unpretentious as though born to the humblest lot" (584). Birthdays are a great occasion on the island, offering "the greatest and most sincere rejoicing" from the people, which "seemed even greater at each repetition of these blessed anniversaries" (584). Around this nation, "crimes were almost unknown; and so generous and confiding were the people, that they imagined all the world were as good as themselves" (584). Innocence and virtue define the princess's world, family, and surroundings. However, when Doctor Aigew becomes the royal physician, he introduces new distractions and possibilities to the island which destabilise the princess and her realm. The birthday crystals cast the princess in the tradition of Eve or Pandora, becoming "the woman who disobeys and, through curiosity, endangers her life" (Warner, *Beast* 244). The princess, though, does not endanger her life as much as she does her own reputation, and the public perception of her family. She risks her marriageability and her childbearing capital

because she cannot contain her urges to consume the birthdays. The crystals work as a sort of counter-love potion, repelling her suitors through a false aging process. For wonder tales, which “constantly cast and recast” love spells and their kind, evaluating “the beloved, and how she survives” often includes critiquing “her silencing, among other trials” (Warner, *Beast* 408). This princess also faces silencing: she is “used to obedience, she acquiesce[s] in everything, and [tells] no one of the bitter tears she nightly shed upon her pillow” (587) at the thought of being married against her will.

The tale ends with the suggestion that the prince and the princess eventually reunite after the crystals are destroyed, and an earthquake and a hurricane cause the island to revert back to its original state. The narrator implies they will go on to marry, and that it was only the meddling of the Doctor and their families which initially kept them apart. Lack of narrative closure, however, reinforces the folkloric elements of this particular text and highlights the fictive possibilities therein. Yet, the honesty of the text about the pressures of young womanhood and the incessant need to please others and be accommodating are foregrounded in “Too Many Birthdays” in a way which signals the possibilities for social critique within the wonder tale. The princess literally devours her own life force in order to both keep her island in a state of happiness and celebration and to protect herself from an unwanted marriage, and, presumably the loss of innocence which would accompany that union.

The question of innocence is indistinguishable within these three stories from the ability of feminine subjects, both human and animal, to contain themselves. Mary Russo, in *The Female Grotesque*, argues that women and girls risk becoming a spectacle at any moment: by being too “large” or “shrill,” or even aging too obviously, women risk “a kind of inadvertency and loss of boundaries” (53). A grotesque body, according to Russo, is “open, protruding, irregular, secreting, multiple, and changing,” but it is also identifiable with “social transformation” (8). The spectacle of the grotesque body, it follows, is closely related to consumption, the possibility of engorgement and the transgression of boundaries, and “spilling over” is a constant threat both corporeally and within the body’s spheres of influence. In Stevenson’s wonder tales, uncanny and fantastic happenings take the place of political commentary, and images like overconsumption stand in for critiques of social limitations. In this way, wonder tales, as Newton has posited, “engage with modernity, but do so surreptitiously” (xxi). As an immediate example from Stevenson’s tales, Rick, the dog, suffers from a constant “[i]ndulgence in sweets,” and regularly gorges himself at the confectioners (34). Rick’s consumption can be directly traced to his social transgression, and his lack of awareness or regard for rules, boundaries, and systems of power.

While symbolism around eating, devouring, and consuming is common throughout both wonder tales and the Gothic, in Stevenson's texts it is generally the threat of consumption that is portrayed as more potent than the act itself. While "the metaphor of devouring often stands in for sex," as in, for example, Bluebeard, who consumes his wives and is both a Gothic and a wonder tale character (Warner, *Beast* 259), the princess, Belinda, the Borribaloo, and the Ravening Sheep face the threat of vanishing within their grief, shame, or pain. While some anxieties can relate to sexuality, nervousness in these stories is more widely connected to propriety, moral authority, and the maintenance of a stable, integral Self. The imagery of consumption and the changing body in Stevenson's stories speak to the process of metamorphosis not because corporeal change is in itself the primary focus of interest, but because individuals "can be changed, and concealed within another shape" (*Metamorphoses* 164). Physical shifts, then, are only representative of the broader necessities of fitting in to certain spaces, the dissonance between one's interiority and the many forces of exteriority including hegemonic cultural influences.

"Too Many Birthdays" frames corporeal change or stasis as more influential in theory than in reality, as the idea of the princess's ageing causes far more consternation than any actual changes in her body. While the princess's body never in fact ages, she does *consume* crystals in order to occasion another birthday, and, in a way, to change her body's "age". The crystals from Doctor Aigew are packaged within a "little casket," with the double meaning of this word evoking the threat of death that accompanies growing older (584). It looks "wonderfully like a pill-box," but within, "in the tiniest compartments, [are] marvelously small and beautiful figures exactly like herself in miniature, except that, beginning at the right, each one [is] a little older in appearance than the one preceding" (584-5). Whenever the princess "wish[es] to have a birthday," she has only to place a crystal "in [her] little mouth" and it will come to pass (584). However, she must never "mention the circumstances to a living soul," even the physician (584). Rather than the passing of time, the crystals seem to represent a kind of life force, as although the princess eats many birthdays, and her body stays the same, it is instead public perception which changes. As I will detail below in relation to paternalistic structures of power, the princess consumes her birthdays in response to pressures from her family and community, not to change her form. Yet, her putative transgression against propriety manifests itself as if she *has* changed: both the prince and the king are disgusted by the idea of her aging body even when they have not seen her face to face. This text shifts the grotesque metamorphosis of the princess's body, rendering the issue one of identity rather than corporeality.

Overconsumption relates to one of Warner's central arguments about the role of metamorphosis in the wonder tale, namely that "permutations of inner and outer selves catalyze uncanny plots about identity" (*Metamorphoses* 163). The Ravening Sheep is condemned for threatening the wolf cub—the term ravening means hungry, hunting for prey—and is also subsumed within her grief, so she can be read as both consumed and consumer. This creates an ambiguity of agency that casts the Sheep into a Gothic suspense between subject and object. When the Haymaker warns her that there may be something worse than being a Ravening Sheep, the "awe-stricken" sheep presses him (6). He continues that there is "a lower depth still" to which she might sink, speaking "in a voice [so] hollow and ghastly that a thrill [runs] through the veins of the sheep, and chill[s] her very heart" (6). Worse still, the Haymaker reveals, would be for the other animals to find out about her affliction. With a "cry of horror, the sheep [falls] swooning upon the ground," as in her "ignorance and stupidity she had thought nothing could be worse than to know one's self to be a ravening sheep." Yet, that the other animals might know her to be ravening, or ravenous, leaves her "[c]rushed and humiliated." Later, as she tries to recover from her grief and anxiety by reintegrating herself into nature, "the awful dread" remains within her, "like a stone in her heart," that others might see her as an all-consuming monster (6). Much like the princess, her physical changes are minimal or nonexistent, and it is her potential metamorphosis and shape-shifting in the minds of her community that strikes anxiety and fear into the Sheep. Even the Haymaker feels anxious about his association with her, stating that he is "terrified" that "it should be whispered about that a man as staid and respectable as he had once known a ravening sheep" (6). The ghostly threat of the uncanny double within the psyche of the Sheep is also the spectre of insufficient propriety, self-containment and self-control. Fearing that this double, as Warner argues about the role of the double in wonder tales, "while wholly dissimilar, unnervingly embodies a true self" (*Metamorphoses* 163), the Sheep removes herself to a seaside pasture, cloistering her identity as well as her body, and hiding herself from the world as she tries to resolve her grief, trauma, and anxiety.

Where the grotesque metamorphosis is only a figment of imagination for the princess and the Sheep, for Belinda, in "The Grand Borribaloo," it is real, and also leads to the destruction of those who observe the mutilation. Furthermore, it is Belinda's bad habit of sucking her thumb which leads to that physical change in the first place. Though theoretically it is only a prank gone wrong, there is a lack of clarity over whether the giant's son, who assaults Belinda and leads to the self-amputation of her thumb, is more responsible for the accident, or if Belinda herself ought to have been more careful. This incident is not the only

act of consumption within the story. At the start of the tale, the narrator describes how “Belinda Smith found herself in a very unpleasant position,” although how it happened “is not part of [the] story, which opens with Belinda hanging by the [belt] on a hook in a giant's kitchen” (1). The cook is already “preparing the unhappy girl for the giant's table ... studying Belinda's length and breadth with an eye to a dripping pan of the right proportions” (1). Belinda is figured from the opening sentences as a product to be consumed: objectified first as sustenance and then as a commodity for marriage and political alliance. This, naturally, provokes anxiety within Belinda, who, upon seeing the giant for the first time can discern “nothing in her terror but a huge unshapely bulk of frightful aspect” (1). The giant asks the cook if Belinda is “nice and plump,” but after reading a note fallen from Belinda’s pocket, and recognising the writing to be from Belinda’s mother, whom he once knew, he spares Belinda, having her “served with [his] guests instead of to them” (1, 2). The literal consumption of Belinda soon turns to her figurative consumption within the identity of the Borribaloo through their marriage, which as I have elaborated above, is no less destructive.

Anxieties about consumption and being consumed reflect wider concerns regarding the stability of one’s identity and the boundaries of the body. In traditional wonder and fairy tales, Warner argues, “the threat of being eaten stands for the dread of being immured, confined” (*Beast* 260). Marriage, in traditional wonder tales, incites the same apprehension, that of losing agency, becoming trapped. Both becoming a prisoner within one’s own body and having one’s identity detached from that body altogether act as iterations of the disquietude upon realising one’s lack of control. In the next section, I turn to the broader forces which lead to these characters’ anxieties in order to identifying the motivations they have in enforcing various restrictions, adapting Warner’s claim that the wonder tale is “essentially a moralizing form, often in deep disguise and often running against the grain of commonplace ethics” (25). In Stevenson’s texts, the moralising impetus that emerges through the narrative voice speaks up for women, and for those who are also at risk of being lost within social structures. That loss of identity is often, in these tales, the result of another figure’s assertion of authority over the protagonist, and advocacy for their own superior knowledge. Tragic consequences, such as the threats of consumption, tend to arise from an overstepping of authoritative force, although eventually in these wonder tales, the balance of power rights itself regardless of the destructive outcomes.

## Paternalism

The central influence affecting the aforementioned anxieties is social paternalism. Diverging from the usual expectations for fairy tales, this paternalism is embodied less by figures such as wicked stepmothers or grotesque beasts, and more by tacit agreements, social contracts, and invisible hierarchies. Typically, Warner affirms, “stories which centre on a heroine, on a young woman suffering a prolonged ordeal before her vindication and triumph, frequently focus on women as the agents of her suffering” (*Beast* 202), but Stevenson’s tales, regardless of the gender of her protagonists, focus instead on the systems which allow those ordeals. Sometimes this is the power wielded by an angry king, sometimes a legal framework, but in every case paternalistic forces exert themselves upon the characters. This is a distinguishing factor of Stevenson’s stories, particularly in her wonder tales but to varying extents in the rest of her work as well: rather than a single malevolent force working only to destroy the hero(in)es, the antagonists almost always exert their influence specifically for the supposed good of the characters. I am using the term paternalism here rather than patriarchy, or any comparable signifier of social systems, to indicate that the limitations placed upon the characters are intended to be helpful and beneficial, as illustrated for instance by the king in “Too Many Birthdays” who thinks he is acting for the good of both the princess and his nation by forcing her to marry, and later by demanding that she enter a convent. Likewise, the giant in “The Grand Borribaloo” sees his role as Matrimonial Adviser as a position of benevolence, and believes that he should be able to assist the whole community by making a suitable match.

Paternalistic influence in Stevenson’s wonder tales is largely enforced through a tripartite system comprising a moment of entrapment, justification for that entrapment through a dual emphasis on privileged knowledge and silencing, and eventually a shaming or assertion of righteousness which leads back to as reassertion of established conventions that ought not to be subverted. This narrative patterning takes up both Gothic and wonder tale conventions in order to demonstrate the threatening nature of “shifts in sexual and domestic organisation” (Botting 3). Both genres deal with the imposition of limits, and, as Warner argues, “limits often set fear” (*Beast* 276). The presence of magic, anthropomorphism, and the otherwise fantastic in these tales offers hypothetical ways of testing these boundaries and structures, “of thinking up alternatives as well as living daily reality in an examined way” (411). To put it another way, “starkly simplified political worlds of these tales offer satirical but also symbolic representations of power and inheritance” (Newton xxii). When these tales devolve into Gothic scenes of terror or horror, the stories reveal themselves to ultimately manifest “uncertainties

about the nature of power, law, society, family and sexuality” (Botting 5). Paternalism is entangled with the governances of patriarchy, masculinity, and other hegemonic powers, but the nefarious agent in Stevenson’s wonder tales is more often society in general rather than any single force, meaning the villain metamorphoses into a fluid, ambiguous influence more representative of social institutions at large than a discrete antagonist. The intentions of each paternalistic character are consistently figured as justifiable or at least explainable, and thus tragedy cannot be blamed on one antagonist—in Stevenson’s wonder tales, everyone must answer for their complicity in harmful structures.

The moment of entrapment in each of the wonder tales takes a different shape, but in each case the protagonists recognise their inability to step beyond the reach of certain rules, be they family rules, political systems, or legal requirements. Belinda begins her story ensnared by the giant, but her emotional entrapment is not revealed until her mutilated hand prevents her marriage. For Rick the dog, both a rogue tanner and the rule of law define the boundaries around him. The hunchback’s entrapment is more physically apparent, although his parents’ rigid, if well-meaning, actions are the real incontrovertible barrier to his ability to thrive. The birthday princess sees herself, doubled eighty times over in miniature, trapped within a casket, but she does not really feel trapped until her future is commandeered because of her father’s desperation. The sheep is trapped psychologically within her grief and self-doubt, and led to realise the limitations of her own mind in a society which has failed her. Several of these trajectories resonate with Lucie Armitt’s identification of a pattern in Gothic narratives in which girls “become ensnared in patriarchy’s refusal to let them mature” (61). Transcending the gendering of this trope, both the hunchback and the princess are kept from making their own decisions and becoming autonomous adults, both being instead “fixed at a point of ‘becoming’” (61). Confined within their families rather than imprisoned within a castle, they both find within their entrapment “the allure and the dread” of fantastic possibilities—be they birthday crystals or broken wings (Warner, *Beast* 265). Through both Gothic and the wonder tale elements of the text, the community is presented as the transformed “place of foreboding where the heroine will be enclosed” (265). Eventually, these enclosures lead to a Gothic “release of repressed energies and antisocial fantasies” (Botting 15), which enact a magical, or otherwise supernatural, rebellion against hegemonic structures.

The eruption of a pair of purple wings in “The Hunchback” is the most obvious of these wondrous rebellions. The boy is “older than his appearance would indicate,” infantilised and limited as he has been in his growth (1). He is “deformed,” and therefore feminised as well, and in this respect he is an interesting departure from the Gothic and wonder tale traditions

which are often focussed on women and girls. Rather than confining their subjects within the latter two categories, Stevenson's texts also evaluate the entrapment of *feminised* subjects. The boy is "a lovely child with a face and temper like an angel's" but "his parents, worthy people, had discovered that there was something strange and unusual in his appearance totally unlike that of other children" (1). The hunchback is a boy, but his family infantilises, and feminises him because of his disability, something which manifests itself in his lack of agency. His parents have power over him in a way which is redolent of the princess's situation in "Birthdays," in which being a woman or a girl has connotations of physical weakness which implies the lack of other abilities. Further positioning the hunchback as grotesque and an anomaly, the narrator asserts the family's surprise at his differences: they themselves come from "decent folk, and nothing had happened in their family for many generations out of the usual course" (1). The men are "straight and tall," and the women are "comely and excellent housewives," with both families being "of the most eminent respectability"—the hunchback's predecessors have all, as the narrator claims, "lived and died in the regular orthodox fashion" (1). The divergence from the norm which the young boy represents causes "distress and horror" to all his relatives, with his "unsightly protuberance" creating a social irritant which nobody knows how to resolve. The boy is "pitied by his parents, and scoffed at by his brethren, all alike as two peas" (1). Positioning itself somewhere between the Icarus myth and the story of the ugly duckling, this wonder tale mixes a Gothic anxiety over the risks of flying and falling with the suggestion that children who break from convention or expectation should be honoured and cherished for their individuality.

Illness in general is feminised in the late nineteenth century, as Hurley comprehensively argues in *The Gothic Body*: turn of the century doctors invoked physiognomy and pseudoscientific techniques to uphold various categorical binaries and patterns which uniformly positioned the able-bodied white man as the ideal of the human species. In Stevenson's tale, the hunchback is feminised, entrapped and pathologised in the same way "degenerates" were when they showed signs of deviation. This pathologisation is also what the hunchback's parents enact, and in the tragic irony of the boy's death, the fantastic wings he sprouts become a symbol of the narrative's moralistic and subversive elements. It is his parents' anxiety and their assumption that they know better than their child which manifest as a nervous confinement which utterly consumes the boy. The power of propriety, expectation, and the structures of paternalistic influence swirl about the boy and confine him within the category of Other. Only as he breaks free from his physical and familial bonds does he taste freedom for the first time as he spreads the wings which his parents have worked so hard to bind.

Rick, the canine protagonist of “Under Sentence of the Law”, faces a more literal entrapment within codified law and social convention. However, Rick is largely “unconcerned” with norms and does not let the anxieties of the world around him sway his good nature and haphazard optimism (36). When he is on trial for the murder of a sheep, he takes a short nap, and then “make[s] a little excursion” away from the courtroom (36). Disregard for rules is what has led him to be detained and imprisoned in the first place, and his charm and blissful ignorance continues to lead to misadventures and mishaps even as he faces legal consequences. The beginning of the story, before the narrator recounts Rick’s history, sees the dog wandering around the village with a muzzle “hanging under his chin” (34). His muzzle is meant to be a device of entrapment which literally silences him, while also preventing him from exerting a ravening ferocity the likes of which the Sheep fears she may embody. Once again, Rick disregards the regulations. His sentence, “muzzlement for life” is only nominal, and for the rest of his life he wanders around with the muzzle swinging free (36). Rick shows a simplistic happiness in abiding by his own rules and in casting off the expectations placed upon him.

Anthropomorphising Rick enables the story to provide a veneer for mockery of the political and legal system and the reverence in which these are held by society. Caroline Sumpter finds a similar “wry exposure” of social systems in her reading(s) of Anne Thackeray’s late Victorian fairy tale retellings (72), which were published around the same time as Stevenson’s early work. Although the wonder tale “conventionally places emphasis on individual virtue or villainy,” Thackeray’s work positions the social system as the villain, “more destructive and rapacious than either suitor or grandmother” (70). “Under Sentence of the Law” takes up comparable condemnations of influential bodies which overstep their rights, and aligns with Stevenson’s other stories by questioning authority and centralised power at every turn. Rick’s early encounter with a renegade vigilante is nearly disastrous. “Poor Rick, flat on his side, his head turned piteously towards the door of his friend,” is spotted by locals “being dragged along the road at the tail of a terrible cart—the cart of a man who bought dead and living cats and dogs for the sake of their skins” (Dog 35). Soon after the staff of a nearby hotel rescue Rick comes “the appearance of the officers of the law with an official document—a summons for Rick” (35). The accused dog must “appear, on a given date, at the Ratthaus, under the appellation of Tiger Hund” (35).<sup>29</sup> The Tiger Hund, allegedly, has attacked and mauled a sheep and must answer in court for destruction of property. No one can believe this beast could really be Rick, and the townspeople are “shaken to their base” by the threat.

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<sup>29</sup> The “Ratthaus” is the Town Hall.

“Foreign counsel was appointed to plead his case” (35). When Rick approaches the “ancient Ratthaus,” the narrator imagines it as a kind of Gothic castle, “the gloomy aspect” of whose exterior, with its “narrow, barred, windowy and high-pitched roof under the eaves of which were many a row of wolves’ heads now dried into mummies, should have thrilled with apprehension the heart of the least imaginative dog” (35-6). Rick, however, trots around, lies down, gets up and leaves, and altogether does what he pleases, startlingly free from the anxiety which plagues the other characters in this, and all of Stevenson’s wonder tales.

These stories displace the site of entrapment from the body onto paternalistic structures: rather than having the characters engage with metamorphosis in a physical way, the narratives portray these transformations as psychological. Hurley affirms one “cultural tradition, older than the Victorians but nonetheless prominent within the late nineteenth century, [which] identifies women as entities defined by and entrapped within their bodies, in contrast to the man, who is governed by rationality and capable of transcending the fact of his embodiment” (119). Applying that concept here requires once again a relaxation of the way such patterns are gendered. However, in coupling Hurley’s analysis with Stevenson’s tales, what emerges is the suggestion that all subjects who are *subjected* are feminised within masculine hierarchical and hegemonic systems, with the implication being that the process of becoming subjectified is a feminine experience. In other words, Hurley’s position allows us to view Stevenson’s stories as highlighting the way that patriarchal and paternalist values negatively implicate and impact figures of all genders, and in this case, species.

Both the hunchback’s parents and the dog’s lawyers advocate for their charges in a way which seems to indicate a desire for their well-being, but the natures of both Rick and the boy lead them to escape from the restrictions and regulations placed upon them. The physicians around the boy all offer his parents the same advice, to leave him alone, to let him grow and develop on his own terms. They advise his parents to “give him some active useful employment and trust him,” not to be forceful, “for the boy is of more delicate clay than the rest, and must be managed carefully” (1). Yet his parents do not listen, and they attempt instead to physically limit the boy with an “elaborate contrivance of straps and buckles.” For Rick, the locals go to “[s]trenuous efforts” in “pleading for mercy” for him (36). Unlike the hunchback’s parents, the magistrate acquiesces, adjusting his expectations, commuting the sentence and breaking normative patterns in order to help the dog. Assertions of knowledge, dominance, and ascendancy, then, work to justify and legitimise the various traps within which these characters find themselves.

Governing all of the realms of these wonder tales is the assumption of a normative epistemology to which only certain figures have access. Submitting to that episteme would resolve the characters' anxieties, and would help them contain themselves, or so the figures of authority would have them believe. The Haymaker, the island king, and the giant all assert their superiority and their reliability, while promoting their own paternalistic benevolence. In so doing, they silence anyone without adequate knowledge or wisdom, usually the protagonists, and the function of the narratives can be understood as rebalancing the scales by overturning that authority and returning to a state of nature in some way. Silencing, in these stories, is often a passive act rather than a forceful one: the princess hides her tears, Belinda remains in her room in self-imposed confinement, and the Sheep removes herself to a faraway paddock. While the influence of parents, authority figures, or other supposedly "wise" figures is ultimately at the core of these characters' anxiety and reclusivity, the self-questioning and equivocation which the hegemonic epistemologies evoke is deep enough to cut to the core of the characters' identities, suggesting they themselves are at fault. Warner sees this passive expectation of self-surveillance and regulation as directly linked to "the desires of the more powerful" given that "the desirability of silence, or at least reticence, and of women's silence in particular, lies enmeshed in a web of other ideal criteria" (*Beast* 395). Even the masculine characters in these stories are trapped within versions of such webs, and of social and psychological presuppositions. Yet, there is an undercurrent of rebelliousness throughout these tales which, though the texts often end in tragedy or destruction, is also an acknowledgment of resistance in whatever form is possible.

Acceptable knowledge within these narratives is contrasted to the traditional forms of wonder tale knowledge such as gossip, oral storytelling, and folklore. I draw on Warner to position such folk narratives as dependent on sympathy: the "pedagogical function" of the wonder tale enmeshes itself in both the social context and fictive qualities of the texts (*Beast* 21). Stevenson's short fiction utilises the wonder tale form, through which women have traditionally conversed with each other, to portray worlds in which nobody can seem to adequately communicate because anxiety renders their various bonds of sympathy and compassion insufficient. The exception here is Rick the dog, who has wide nets of sympathetic connection which are attributed to his simplistic and carefree nature. If, as Warner asserts, wonder tales "exchange knowledge between an older voice of experience and a younger audience, ... present pictures of perils and possibilities that lie ahead, ... use terror to set limits on choice and offer consolation to the wronged ... [and] stand up to adversity with dreams of vengeance, power, and vindication" (21), then Stevenson's tales enact their critique of

hierarchies which privilege a single episteme in a world of multiplicity. These stories accomplish that critique by dramatising the gap between the fluid and intersubjective narrative possibilities of the wonder tale form, and the constant conflict between knowledge and sympathy.

While patriarchal wisdom and knowledge are presented as being held in a position of esteem and high regard within all of these tales, this is not without ambivalence, as seen in the figure of Doctor Aigew in “Too Many Birthdays” who is supposedly a significant source of knowledge, but who only brings further anxiety and destruction to the island nation. Aigew has a reputation as a “great physician” who is “wise and of great book-learning”, and the king and queen conflate his knowledge with integrity and trustworthiness, granting him the “closest intimacy in their private life” (584) and accepting his “guidance and counsel as that of a superior being.” Furthermore, when the former royal physician questions the admiration with which the islanders view Aigew, the consensus from the nation, and particularly from the king, is that “it is best not to trouble ourselves with what we cannot understand” (584). While the princess initially wavers in her reliance upon the doctor, it takes some time before she begins to wonder if “the misfortunes that have befallen [her] and all the world” are due to the unrestrained veneration of the physician’s knowledge (588). Yet the princess has no significant agency: she is “used to obedience, she acquiesce[s] in everything” (587). It takes an alternative deconstruction of Aigew’s knowledge and power, along with an indirect rebellion against his demands that no one ever taste her birthday crystals—she throws them to the birds—for nature to rebalance its scales and take its course. The princess’s tacit acquiescence throughout the tale connects her to the tradition of other silenced princesses throughout literary history, in which “speechlessness” complements the “desires of the more powerful” (Warner, *Metamorphoses* 395), but by the end she becomes an unlikely heroine. Only in a quiet, circuitous way does she take the action that no other character is inclined to do, by breaching the chosen epistemology of the kingdom. It is, the tale suggests, her sympathetic nature which allows her to see possibilities which others have wilfully eschewed.

Held up in opposition to the knowledge which Doctor Aigew, the king, and the queen enforce is knowledge of Self, and alongside it an emotional awareness which links to sympathy: this is what the princess herself works to develop throughout the narrative. Despite her parents’ demands, such as their order that she marry in order to solve the problems of the kingdom, the princess finds her own way to redefine her boundaries, and to assert her own agency as something distinct from her parents’, continuing to have birthdays as a distraction and as a way of ensuring the subjects of the kingdom are happy and able to celebrate. The sympathetic

relationship between the princess and the other *subjects* is particularly noteworthy, as it exposes the intersubjective possibilities made visible within this and other tales. When both the neighbouring prince and his father reject the princess because she has had too many birthdays to be eligible, the king flies into a rage, screaming at his daughter that she must relocate to a convent, as she, “weeping, frightened,” cannot find a way to protest (588). Her father tells her to “[d]on apparel suitable to [her] years, and offend [his] sight no more” (588). As she metamorphoses into a reflection of her “age,” wearing a “beldame’s cap” and “a plain gown of black” (588), her family alienates her and punishes her for failing to adhere to their chosen systems of knowledge and power. To draw on Botting’s description of the Gothicised family, dissociations like that of the princess from her parents turn the family unit into “a place rendered threatening and uncanny by the haunting return of past transgressions and attendant guilt on an everyday world shrouded in strangeness” (Botting 11). While the princess hopes only to know herself, and maintain autonomy, her parents reinforce her subjection to their will because of her rebellions against them.

The princess’s disfigurement in the imaginations of her parents acts as the story’s central metamorphosis, and links the construction of identity with a subversion of expectations and conventions. The princess only realises her purpose and reaches anagnorisis at her moment of utmost despair, as she decides to throw the remaining crystals to the birds. As Warner affirms of the wonder tale in general,

a hero or heroine who journeys through numerous ordeals, through misprisions and neglect, finally to arrive at selfhood, follows this model of metamorphosis: the protagonist’s true self generates itself in its proper character after undergoing several transformations; the larger transformation of their circumstances and the appearance of the person’s fullness of being unfolded through several smaller transformations. (*Metamorphoses* 85)

The metamorphoses in this case are both her continuing birthdays, which are technically an ontological manipulation, and her metamorphosis in the minds of those around her. Going through a kind of reverse metamorphosis, the princess keeps eating birthdays and growing older, but the salient transformation is not in her appearance, but within others’ perceptions.

“Too Many Birthdays” hypothesises that this knowledge leads to the destruction of the land—resulting from an over-reliance on the doctor’s knowledge to support industry, commerce, and an obsession with extraction of resources—which natural disasters reverse and erase thanks to the princess’s disobedience of the physician’s directives. As the birthday celebrations carry on and on, Aigew invites more chemists from his own land to build

laboratories which “zealously compoun[d]” ever more pills and concoctions, sending “black clouds of physic-laden smoke,” to “hang like a pall over the city.” Aigew and the chemists repurpose all the fields to support their industry, and the children of the nation grow “as yellow and bilious as Aigew himself” (586). The alienation of the princess from her family coincides with the dissociation between the people and their environment. The island’s money is all going to the doctors, no shops are open except “chemists and confectioners”, and the country is “plainly going to ruin” (586). When the princess realises she will not want to celebrate birthdays after she enters the convent, she “strew[s] the sugary mites” for the birds to take away (588). An earthquake suddenly “convulse[s] the land, a violent hurricane [sweeps] over it.” During these “changes of nature, everything that had been affected by the unnatural birthdays return[s] to its former state” (588). All memory of the events is “wiped from the memory of man” (589), nature overturns the industrialised progress which was held with such regard, and the island continues to be known for the sylvan tranquility which had originally reigned.

Similarly to Doctor Aigew, in “The Ravening Sheep,” the Haymaker is known to all for his wisdom, though in contrast to “Too Many Birthdays”, the narrative voice ironises the Haymaker’s wisdom early on through a series of inaccurate aphorisms. He is a man who frequents “paths and places where the shadows were heavy,” casting him as an uncanny presence in an already anxious realm (3). All the “people” go to the Haymaker for advice—in this case people implies both animals and humans, and he is “thought to be wise because he had many books,” not because he has *read* many books, and also because he has a “solemn” aspect (3). The Haymaker’s use of incorrect maxims like “policy is better than honesty” and “don't whistle too much for your pay” uses irony to undermine him: as the narrator notes, these sayings show “a profound intellect, and a habit of deep thought” (3-4). The Sheep is “in awe of so great a man” (4). She struggles to understand herself, and looks to him for assistance, and he “insist[s] that she listen to him, and be guided by him” (4). This exertion of authority and superior knowledge inspires readerly suspicions, as it is clear that the wisdom he proffers is suspect and may compromise the delicate Sheep’s well-being, and put her sense of Self at risk.

The Sheep at first attempts to exert her own autonomy, crying ““I know myself what is best for me,”” a refrain that echoes silently across every one of Stevenson’s stories (4). Taking advantage of her vulnerability and the way that her anxieties are threatening a Gothic splitting within her identity, the Haymaker causes her to question her own forms of knowledge. Desperate for rest and respite, the Sheep desires to “go away off to some quiet place,” to be alone, to “recover [her] former tranquility of mind”. She suspects she is in “too dangerous a state to be allowed to roam about freely,” and her anxiety deepens as she questions the extent

of her dissociation, the “dreadful” uncertainty of metamorphosing into a Ravening Sheep accompanying ambiguities of knowing “what wild deed” her “fevered mind may prompt”. The Sheep fears she might “suddenly spring upon the wild bull, drag him to the ground, and tear his vitals from his quivering body” (4-5). The Haymaker exploits her worst fears, suggesting that soon the whole community could discover her instability. She punishes herself for not recognising this, in her self-described ““ignorance and stupidity,” she had thought nothing could be worse than to know one’s self to be a ravening sheep; but oh heavens! That the pigs and the grasshoppers should know!” (Sheep 6). Her self-consciousness continues to send her into a further uncanny anxiety over the collapse of her identity. The shame of being the subject of gossip, even hypothetically, speaks to the potency of that form of communication, and as Warner points out, discourse which “exhibit[s] fear of gossips’ influence ha[s] persisted in singling out the ageing woman as culprit” (*Beast* 43). In this case, the anxious mother, who is also an ageing woman, is the threat. Accompanying the Sheep’s uncertainty over the ambiguity of her social role, and the stability of her identity is the fact that she is also silenced from communicating with her wider community.

Belinda’s tragedy, like the Sheep’s, stems from a series of social codes and traditions to which she is either not privy or accidentally trespasses against, as it is Belinda’s lack of knowledge of the sacred quality of thumbs and other customs which isolates her from her surroundings and prevents her from building sympathetic relationships such as her marriage. The excessive violence of the wedding scene dramatizes the negative impact of a subject’s misunderstanding of their cultural surroundings. The priest’s “cry of horror,” the Borriballoo’s “deathlike swoon,” and the spontaneous combustion with which the giant meets his doom all contribute to the heightened state of alienation into which Belinda sinks (6). In their distress and degeneration, the wedding guests stigmatise Belinda. From the point at which the Borriballoo and the giant stipulate that Belinda must “remain in strict seclusion until the day of the ceremony, in accordance with the customs of his ancestors” (5), to the moment she raises her “maimed” right hand at the ceremony (6), more and more tension accrues between her expectations and the expectations others have for her, until their irreconcilability is exposed and social order devolves into a scene of chaos.

I read this disintegration alongside what Warner describes as wonder tale “non-sequiturs and improbable reversals” (*Beast* xvii). These fantastic phenomena manifest through the dualism, or even polyvalence, of wonder stories which show parallels between “perennial drives and terrors,” and “actual, volatile experience.” The latter parallel maps, for example, the relationship between universal anxieties and the realities of the everyday within different

systems of oppression and privilege. The wonder tale can be contextualised within the association of worry and lived experience. Fantastic iterations of realistic concerns, hyperbolised in Belinda's and the Sheep's horrifying experiences, offer a way of probing the friction between one's own personal sovereignty and wider systems of authority.

Variations of hegemonic knowledge across Stevenson's stories lead to a justification of silencing, with paternalistic systems of governance playing the role of silencing agents within these particular wonder tales, and the collapse or failings of those authoritative frameworks generally constituting the conclusion of the narrative. Only one of the women figures in these stories finds vindication of any sort, and then only by accident, when the princess destroys her birthday crystals and thus rights the imbalance of power and the natural order.

The narrative endings of these wonder tales require such paternalistic systems to break, or at least to begin to display cracks and fissures. The failure of various boundaries also suggests a more purposeful "boundlessness" (Botting 3). Ambiguity, fluidity, and exchange in the wonder tales, along with their failure, contributes to the tales' ability to "grapple with reality" (Warner, *Beast* xvi). Warner claims that the "breaking of rules of natural law and verisimilitude creates the fictional world with its own law" (*Metamorphoses* 18), and this relates to both the Gothic traditions upon which these stories' anxiety constructs itself and the wonder tale framework which moralises and surreptitiously critiques wider social norms. In assembling what I am calling an American Gothic Wonderland within these tales, Stevenson's texts challenge the privileging of some forms of knowledge over others, some forms of narrative over others, and some experiences of identity over others, aspiring in their stead to the valorisation of sympathetic forms of (inter)subjectivity.

## Conclusion: American Gothic Wonderland

Nature operates within Stevenson's wonder tales as a bane for the anxieties bred by conflicting systems of knowledge, and threatens those who argue for their supreme authority. That delicate balance raises questions about the meaning of nature, both human and otherwise, which play out across the wonder tale realm, the wonderland, and their enabling of ambiguous and fluctuant states. Hurley comments on the Gothic mode's comparable relationship with such heterotopias: the Gothic suggests that there are "no limits to the plasticity of form" (156). Stability, the Gothic affirms, is a façade, and so limitations ought to be as well. The uncanny and fantastic elements of Stevenson's texts, as they problematise centralised power and the inappropriate enforcements of singular authority, while calling for a respect for individualism,

lead me to propose an understanding of her wonder tales as depicting an American Gothic wonderland. Wonderlands, as Warner characterises them, offer flexible territories in which women might, both discursively and literally, “set their own seedlings and plant out their own flowers” (*Beast* xix). The American Gothic usually presents the wilderness as a threat, manifesting as it does all that is unknown and all that can never be known, but in the shadowy wonderlands of Stevenson’s tales the splendour of nature and the fantastic possibilities of myth and folklore admix to create a particularly mystic and ambiguous area.

Each story I explore here points towards the power of ambiguity and exchange as realms of potential even in the face of tragedy, anxiety, and oppressive frameworks. I see the “contrary directions” of the wonder tale genre—pulling as it does at once towards “acquiescence” and “rebellion” (*Metamorphoses* 74)—as indicative of the ability of both wonderlands and Gothic worlds to settle otherwise irreconcilable differences within society and across communities. Stevenson’s Gothic wonderland “brings impossible things into existence” (169), but positions these fantasies as analogies to the characters’ waking lives that they might use to fulfil various desires and trouble certain boundaries. Largely through the idylls of the natural world, these wonder tales suggest that human *natures* are always more renewable, stranger and therefore more expansive, than human interiorities, and the anxieties within them, would have us believe.

Stevenson’s tales present this Gothic wonderland as a function of various facets of human nature: heredity, resourcefulness, and animality. Metamorphosis encompasses all three of these devices. As “divine fantasy, as vital principle of nature, as punishment, as reprieve” (Warner, *Metamorphoses* 74), metamorphosis allows our imaginations, and along with them our identities, to move across almost any space as if it constituted our own personal, and therefore cultural, wonderlands.

Parenthood, fertility, marriage, and childhood emerge in these stories as sites not just of shifting normativity but also of constant fluctuation, with shifts in influence and authority usually leading to a fantastic metamorphosis which explodes outwards towards the expanses of the wonderland. In evaluating Katherine Mansfield’s suburban Gothic fairy tales, Wisker sets out the many opportunities for the family, and the domestic realm in general, to foreground already-present ambiguities. Within the realms of femininity especially, Gothic modes “fundamentally question and undermine” conventions of “cultural, gendered and social hierarchies and versions of the normal or real,” making space for more “oppositional readings” (“Suburban” 24). Transgressive iterations of femininity or feminised subjects, figured through the Ravening Sheep, the princess, Belinda, and the hunchback, speak to canonical Gothic

anxieties of degeneration, hereditary corruption, and, to refer back to my points earlier in this chapter, the grotesque possibilities for those who do not contain themselves and their bodies in an appropriate way. These figures all seek refuge in natural resources, or within nature, unless nature rescues them of its own omnipotent accord.

“The Hunchback” offers the most extensive image of the possibilities for a natural wonderland, and the Gothicisation of the boy’s form and his tragic death results not from any corruption of the land but from a family which refuses to let nature take its course. Nature is the only refuge for a young boy whose parents otherwise deny him bodily autonomy. Finding peace alongside “clear and cool” water, blooming flowers, blue and “gentle” skies, the boy sees “heavenly ... calm and holy beauty” across “all nature” except his own heart, which lies heavy with the burden of his trauma (1). Natural and fantastic images commingle as the boy’s deformity gives way to the metamorphosis of his wings, as the shower of autumn leaves, “crimson and gold,” bring a “sudden light, like distant lightning after a tropical day,” to the boy’s eyes. The song of a brown bird, with its “wild joyous rollocking” notes, quickens the boy’s pulse and he feels his heart “bonding with the harmony”. The wind brings a “breath of the sea,” and “with eager hands [he tears] furiously” at his restrictive, mechanical apparel. His “two great wings of purple and gold quive[r] in the sunlight” with a beauty “not of this earth”. Hatching, in this way, manifests in the wonder tales as a metaphor for human development through the fantasies of “winged creatures whose habitat encompasses the heavens” (Warner, *Metamorphoses* 76). With some of the most overblown prose of all Stevenson’s texts, the boy seems to metamorphose into nature itself, his wings signalling an uncanny ambiguity between the air, the trees, and the boy’s expanding wings.

Though tragically cut short, the boy’s life is also governed entirely by his parents’ decisions to force him into a mould he can never fit, within which he cannot be contained nor will willingly contain himself. His own knowledge and understanding of nature, and of his own identity, has little value to his family or family line, provoking a Gothic disruption between nature, history, and subjectivity. Shortly after the boy takes off into the skies, the same bird flies over the marshes to a “bare and desolate place,” and sees “the poor boy dead and cold in the slump of the marsh” (2). With many years of restraint and entrapment, the muscles of the wings had grown “flaccid and weak”—a particularly emasculating description. His “marvelous powers,” representative of growth, departure from the family, and maturation, are “miscalculated,” and he has “failed miserably in this outset of his career” (2). The boy dies in the “mire,” the “green ooze rising about his face and his purple wings trailing broken and

soiled” (2). The magic of the natural landscape has been turned into a Gothic wasteland at the hands of an unsympathetic, if well-meaning, family hierarchy.

A walking embodiment of the Gothic wonderland, the Grand Borribaloo is a humanoid manifestation of nature who signifies ambiguity. He is “majestic, and at the same time of a very peculiar grace,” with “three legs, instead of the usual number.” The Borribaloo has a “glittering tail” long enough to require being borne up by “five and twenty pages.” Heavy locks of “ferns and field flowers fell to his waist.” His single eye, in the centre of his forehead, is “large and lustrous and full” (5-6). He is a beast, in the tradition of the wonder tale, but he is magnificent, inspiring awe and not fear, and as a peculiar symbol of masculinity he also disrupts attachments between nature and womanhood. Warner argues that representations of beastliness in wonder tales “provide a gauge of changing evaluations of human beings themselves, of the meaning of what it is to be human,” and specifically, given the context of the tales, “what it is to be a man” (*Beast* 279). In Gothic texts, the human body “is utterly chaotic, unable to maintain its distinctions from a whole world of animal possibilities” (Hurley 94). Drawing the two together, as Stevenson’s story does, engenders a new fantastic world in which femininity, masculinity, nature, and sympathy can coexist in new configurations.

Stevenson’s characters yearn for empathic connection, and within their bonds there is a multiplicity that must be acknowledged. That is to say, empathy is not limited to a single event but is rather constituted by “a large constellation of interrelated and many-layered experiences” (Jensen and Moran 126). As another more literary way of conceptualising its polyvalent nature, one can think of the constellation of empathy as textual, as a kind of “mind reading,” which becomes intertextual amongst a community. This form of knowledge is what Stevenson’s texts suggest might prevent the anxieties which plague the characters. If the parents, the authority figures, the lawyers and so forth could *know* the subjects of these wonderland misadventures in a deeper, more empathetic way, their tragedies might not have come to pass.

Dissonance between object and subject within these wonder tales is at the core of nearly every narrative development. Transformation is at the heart of all wonder tales, which have been “endlessly transforming themselves throughout history and, by some strange alchemy, endlessly staying the same” (Philip, in Davidson and Chaudhri 40). The flux between knowledge, authority, and subversion that emerges in Stevenson’s texts can be linked to what Botting describes as the “dynamic of limit and transgression that both restores and contests boundaries” (9). For the subjects of metamorphosis, another ambiguity is at work: in “being both” they become “neither” (Hurley 149). Yet, as Elizabeth Ammons argues, in reference to

the heterogeneous, fluid, flexible, and often contradictory writing by American women in the late nineteenth century that difference “need not be hierarchical, opposites need not be in conflict, polarity need not be the basic principle” (65). In Stevenson’s Gothic wonderland, these tenets work together to form a discursive framework. Concentrated around themes of identity formation, Stevenson’s pencilled lines on tall paper manifest echoes of grief, anxieties over loss of control, and the repeated conflict involved in making one’s voice heard. It is my hope that the publication of these previously unknown stories will ignite a critical discussion of and further investigation into Stevenson’s work.



## Conclusion

### Stevenson and Modernity

In 1992, almost a century after Stevenson last published a short story, Elizabeth Ammons asked scholars of American women's literature what might happen to the "academic construction" of the narratives of American fiction, if we were to "unite women writers at the turn of the century rather than scatter or ignore them" (vii). In this thesis, I have responded to Ammons by demonstrating that seemingly-disparate genres popular in the late nineteenth century all resonate with Stevenson's stories. Sometimes these combined genres have the effect of overdetermining meaning and overemphasising particular messages, for example where the blending of the New Woman tale's anxiety and the historical anxieties of the Gothic mode redouble each other resulting in highly-wrought melodrama. At other times, the use of several genres works towards a balanced exchange of symbols, storytelling techniques, and discursive elements, as is the case with the Gothic wonder tales, which allow explorations of authority and anxiety which complement each other. Every case of genre-bending, including the adventure story, supernatural short fiction, the political New Woman tale, the wonder tale, and more, prevents easy categorisation of Stevenson's short fiction and demands the further analysis which I have offered across the last four chapters.

The stories function analeptically and proleptically to connect narratives of women's literature across the nineteenth century and beyond. Showalter claims in *A Jury of Her Peers* that literature at "ends of centuries" usually has "special preoccupations" with both past and future. She notes that literature can be "pessimistic, looking despairingly to the end, or utopian, dreaming of a new beginning" (219). Stevenson's tales, I argue, perform both functions, with the traumas of the past and the hopeful possibilities for the future engaging with each other through representations of uncertainty and ambiguity. One overarching question Stevenson's stories ponder is whether patriarchal and social forces will continue to stand in the way of characters who are trying to stabilise their own identities.

Moving gradually as they do away from hierarchies towards heterogeneity and multiplicity, Stevenson's stories suggest that metamorphosis and mutability need not be temporary or transitional states but purposeful, sustainable ways of understanding differences and connecting subjects and interiorities, without the need for the mediation of objects or external influences. With the use of narratives that push at the boundaries of space, fantasy, and consciousness, in which the characters must develop sympathetic or empathetic bonds in order to survive, or else face anxiety and destruction, Stevenson's writing exemplifies that

Saltzman's observation that, because "certain structural contradictions ... especially concerning women in western societies, are neither logical nor easily resolved, scholars have tended to overlook or undervalue them" (549). Yet, I see the contradictions and multiple meanings in Stevenson's stories as a foreshadowing of what would later be seen as the groundbreaking, form-manipulating innovations that would come to characterise a significant amount of literature in the early twentieth century. This is to say that earlier women writers' acts of challenging conventions, and blending literary elements together in unconventional ways, as Stevenson does, facilitated the achievements of later writers in the construction of something new.

I have detailed the historical links between Stevenson's writing and those of her American and British predecessors and contemporaries, and in this coda, I shift the perspective to position Stevenson as one of the innovators of an altered literary framework on which future writers were able to build. Rather than influential women writers of the early twentieth century emerging out of the ashes of Victorian transatlanticism, what might be labelled the "minor" writing of women like Stevenson flowed organically—and should be understood as a key part of the *fin-de-siècle* transition—into the works of "major" women such as Wharton, Katherine Mansfield, Willa Cather, and Virginia Woolf. Indeed, Wharton's first collection of short fiction was published in 1899, within several months of Stevenson's final publication, "Anne".

Within *The Greater Inclination*, as Wharton's collection is titled, a story called "A Journey" begins with an unnamed woman on a train. The tale follows her gradual disenchantment with her chronically ill husband, and as they travel together across the state of New York in the hope of improving his health, the protagonist details ways in which an affective "sheet of glass" has begun to descend between them (65). She cannot manage being his caretaker, and the claustrophobic train journey throws her apathy into relief, making it impossible for her to avoid facing the changes in her husband as well as the changes in her own identity. The story is constructed through affective changes and fluctuations of connectivity between the interiorities of the woman and her husband, the touch of whose hand at one point feels to her as if he is "calling her from far off" (67-8). Awaking the next morning in her compartment, the woman feels "full of life and elasticity" (69). She suddenly realises, however, that her husband has died, and stifling her screams for fear of being removed unceremoniously from the train, secludes herself in the compartment, drawing all the curtains and hiding in "a kind of sepulchral twilight" (70). As the woman attempts to conceal his body until the train reaches New York, her psychological and emotional processes are traced through striking images, such as the way her thoughts become dissociated as if they are "stepping-stones set far

apart across a whirling flood” (71). The faces outside the compartment window become progressively more uncanny and frightening, blending with her own anxieties and terrors, and she descends into a fog of indistinction. The psychological experiences the protagonist faces within this story take on a material aspect, from the way “the subtler sympathies developed by long contact with suffering [are] making her aware of a certain coarseness of texture” in the sensibilities of her own family, to the visions and memories she has of her husband’s face, “hanging between her eyeballs and lids like a waxen mask against a red curtain” (68, 74). Though she “trie[s] to steady herself by clutching at her thoughts as they swept by” they nonetheless slip “away from her like bushes on the side of a sheer precipice down which she seem[s] to be falling” (73). The tangibility of her descent into psychological crisis is a striking feature of the story. With her anxieties almost physically consuming her, her eyes become transfixed upon the “monotonous arabesques” of the curtain fabric (74). After finally falling asleep, she awakens just outside New York City, as the conductor enters the compartment to wake her husband, and in her terror, she strikes her head against the berth, knocking herself unconscious at the tale’s end.

This story is worth recounting for several reasons: first, for its parallels with several of Stevenson’s narratives, and second, to substantiate the value that Stevenson’s fiction has within discussions of transitions from nineteenth to twentieth century writing in the service of foregrounding the contributions of women writers to that shift. Speaking to the first reason, Haytock identifies a concern throughout Wharton’s writing which is also present in Stevenson’s, and which I have framed as Stevenson’s resistance to being “relegated” to one “place in literature” (11). Anxieties over such limitations, in Wharton’s “A Journey,” are figured through the compartmentalisation, so to speak, of the train, which can be read as a symbol of socially approved places for women, and the dangers of moving beyond or subverting them. Wharton’s stories, Haytock argues, question such literal and figurative compartments and “allow greater room for suspicion” of gendered spaces (99). Commenting more directly on the everyday traumas of women within patriarchies than Stevenson tends to, given her reliance upon the supernatural and the Gothic, Wharton in this story takes up the pressing concerns and social changes of the new century. Both Kaplan and Ammons have commented on Wharton’s relationship with early twentieth century literary developments, Kaplan in *The Social Construction of American Realism* (1988) and Ammons in *Edith Wharton’s Argument with America* (1980). Haytock draws from Kaplan, Ammons, and others in her 2008 study *Edith Wharton and the Conversations of Literary Modernism*. Examining Wharton’s “uneasy dialogue” with modernity (Kaplan 66), literary and social, Ammons,

Haytock, and Kaplan all locate Wharton as part of an important literary shift in the early twentieth century.

In considering these stories alongside Wharton's, it is worth noting Stevenson's use of trains and journeys, from the actual trains in "The Warlock's Shadow" or "The Nixie," to the more general journeys across landscapes taking place in "Anne," "Sargent's Rodeo," or "Chy Lung." Rather than "the perils of public transport," and its class-driven fears, which earlier nineteenth century supernatural tales explored through the use of trains, railway accidents or highwaymen, later short fiction gains a "modernist edge" through the "spectrality of machinery" and discourses of control, the unknowable, and the limitations of human nature (Liggins 39). Claire Drewery also argues for the centrality of "in-between" or "transitional" spaces such as trains, adding to the list gardens, coastlines, hotels, or waiting rooms in modernist short stories by women (3). Kathy A. Fedorko, in *Gender and the Gothic in the Fiction of Edith Wharton* (1995) similarly engages with such spectral conventions throughout Wharton's writing, and foregrounds the ways that Gothically-coded tensions allow Wharton's women characters to negotiate shifting gender expectations in the new century.

In both "A Journey" and "The Warlock's Shadow," a train actually signifies a psychological journey of self-knowledge for the nameless narrator or protagonist, who must face a grotesque encounter with mortality to understand her own consciousness and those of the people around her. Furthermore, in Stevenson's "Anne," just as in "A Journey," a woman's concern over her husband's health contrasts with her own experience of an unstable interior world or the realm of the otherworldly. Anne, however, loves her husband and bends the boundaries of natural and supernatural to remain with him, as opposed to Wharton's protagonist who experiences a macabre wish-fulfilment. Where "The Warlock's Shadow" figures a happy ending, or at least a resolution of sorts for the narrator, both "Anne" and "A Journey" conclude with shocking twists, leaving a narrative door ajar through which the reader might imagine their own conclusions for the characters. Poised on the edge of a century, the latter stories speak to similar concerns and anxieties, reifying technological and psychological metaphors which would continue to emerge throughout twentieth century writing.

Alongside the boundary-shifting journeys Wharton's protagonist shares with so many of Stevenson's, it is possible to observe a transition from the varying failures of sympathy and empathy ubiquitous within Stevenson's stories to the more fluid and graceful explorations of affect and intersubjectivity in Wharton's tale. Though uncanny and jarring in "A Journey," methods of illustrating connections between subject and subject—as opposed to subject and object—are more artfully expressed in Wharton's story, and the imagery of the protagonist's

interiority gestures towards self-exploratory experimentation, with the protagonist finding herself, for example, beset by “vivid and urgent” thoughts and fears which she “trie[s] to separate and restrain,” but which ultimately, and clamorously, like “school-children at the end of a hot day,” are too overwhelming for her to resist (74). Her inability to govern her own consciousness, and to protect herself from her “uncontrollable” interior—even subconscious—urges, is the protagonist’s fatal flaw. Compared to Stevenson’s protagonists, such as the nameless narrator of “The Warlock’s Shadow” who faces similar struggles for agency through the symbolic spaces of the house, garden, and desert, Wharton’s character takes up a more obviously psychological consideration of the boundaries of identity in her failure to ask for help, and her fear of the ‘others’ on the train. Thus, Wharton’s text succeeds in coalescing, in no more than a dozen pages, what so many of Stevenson’s stories as a collective struggle to articulate: the idea that understanding oneself and understanding someone else might be mutually inclusive, and that seeing the Self in the Other might be a tool of growth rather than a means of alienation.

In terms of women’s writing, the issues of authority and agency with which such an estrangement engages is related to the ongoing investigation of “power and knowledge” which links, rather than separates, the authorial projects of Wharton and Stevenson (Haytock 78). Though Wharton writes more fluidly what Stevenson articulates more disjointedly and indirectly, what both writers have in common is an overarching anxiety that these epistemologies of authority “occur outside and completely indifferent to the realm of women” (78). Stevenson and Wharton feature characters who, in different ways, both face fears of entrapment within social structures, though where Stevenson looks backward to Gothic and historical techniques to illustrate those boundaries, Wharton looks forward to modernity.

Seen in this way, Stevenson’s texts lead into, and frame, the literature which succeeded them. It is as if Stevenson passes a textual baton to Wharton, as they both reconfigure the ghostly presences of the subconscious in a way which Liggins has elsewhere described as a conflict “between old and new uncanny” (36). As stories like “The Warlock’s Shadow,” “Anne,” and “Miss Pringle’s Neighbours” reveal, Stevenson’s writing was engaged in diffusing hauntings and other iterations of the uncanny across the threshold of the home, showing how those structures—and all they represent—were inadequate to explain the anxieties and terrors of femininity. Rather than the revenants of the nineteenth century, Liggins proposes, the spectres of the new in the early twentieth century manifest themselves through more abstracted representations of the “unknowability of the past” such as “empty, or strangely new, houses, indistinct shadows or spatial and temporal disruption” which “address the

unsettling allure of the past and fears around an increasingly mechanised future” (32). If reinscribing the haunted house or the embodied ghost into social frameworks and psychic instability is the result of the transition to twentieth-century modernity, Stevenson’s stories’ use of both physical ghosts or supernatural beings *and* spectral planes and spatiotemporal uncertainties displays the early phases of that textual metamorphosis.

As psychoanalysis led to greater uncertainties about the unconscious drives and desires which governed human behaviour and cognition, short fiction in the early twentieth century supernatural story relinquished its material associations and became more intensely focused upon narratives which showed hauntings as suspended ambiguously between being a cause and an effect of psychosis. The ghosts themselves became less relevant, especially for women who, as Liggins notes, by “employing liminal female narrators,” were able to deconstruct and evaluate “gendered reactions to uncanny representations of modernity” (33). Furthermore, as was the case for Wharton’s stories, early twentieth century tales both realistic and uncanny “suggest a curiosity about and fear of what happens between men when women are not present” (Haytock 79), or indeed when women are physically present but are otherwise silenced. Several of Stevenson’s narratives gesture towards this process, initiating it by illustrating how women come into conflict with uncanny barriers and limitations put in place or supported by patriarchal or paternalistic forces, and then showing how those women cast those threats into obsolescence.

Stevenson’s characters can be read as part of a tradition which later women writers would expand, deepen, and develop. Haytock’s understanding of the specific issues considered in early twentieth century writing, by men as well as women, include several questions also significant to readings of Stevenson’s tales:

What is the nature of the self, that it can be shaped and controlled by society? What is the fate of women who break the rules that govern behavior? How can an individual communicate with another, and what happens when that communication fails? How does an individual cope with visions of devastation that belie the truths on which civilization is founded? In a literary marketplace profoundly affected by capitalism, what is the role of the artist and of art? (8)

Each chapter of this thesis considers one or more of these questions. Chapter 1 explores the role of the New Woman in the renegotiation of behavioural norms. Chapters 2 and 3 discuss the effects of various historical traumas buried beneath the façades of civilisation and progress. Chapter 4 enters into a dialogue with social control and authority. All four chapters include analysis of the nature of the Self and the importance of various forms of communication. Such correspondences clarify the thematic continuity which I have argued for, between Stevenson’s

stories as representative of the late nineteenth century literary tradition identified by Ammons and this subsequent tradition put forward by Haytock. Boundaries and their transgression, metamorphoses, and the development of a shared consciousness or blending of subjectivities are all present within texts of the early twentieth century, but Stevenson's tales show a near-obsessive focus on similar matters.

Claire Drewery, in her book *Modernist Short Fiction by Women* (2011), outlines many tendencies and patterns of that literary category with a view towards redefining "the liminal." In doing so Drewery suggests that that liminality "centres on an interrogation of a temporal interface which both exists and yet, paradoxically, cannot exist in any tangible form" (2). What Drewery labels the "threshold state" or the "transient moment," and which she positions as central to early twentieth century short stories (3), I see as related to the tendency of Stevenson's fiction to place characters at, or near, various literal thresholds such as house and garden, and at the boundaries between realms of reality and the supernatural. Stories such as "The Half-White" and "Miss Pringle's Neighbours" centre not only on spatial, cultural, or even generic heterogeneity, but also a mix of narrative techniques such as humour, irony, and anxiety in the face of influential agents, which suggest serious undermining, rather than fear, of structures of authority. Transience of form and narrative, as it manifests in Stevenson's stories, leads to the kinds of psychic transience which Drewery affirms in redefining literary liminality at the start of the twentieth century.

Anxiety has a liminal, in-between, unresolved nature which draws on fears of the past and the future. Connecting the concept of unsettlement to women's writing both before and after the turn of the century, I invoke Kate Krueger's understanding of the ways in which short fiction of the early twentieth century used anxiety and agitation to aid women protagonists in fictively "surmounting the limitations of their prescribed roles by redefining their literal boundaries" (4). Haytock argues that writers such as Wharton herself wrote into their narratives a nervous response to the possibility that the "masculine system of authority ha[d] no built-in controls to ensure that power travels decorously from one generation to the next" (94). The arbitrary nature of that power, then, follows women along generational lines as well, resulting in sustained and gendered social imbalances which manifest textually in the surrogate process of identity formation and stabilization taken up first by Stevenson, and later by other writers.

Transitions out of, transgressions of, and metamorphoses away from prescribed social boundaries such as appropriate spaces for women or expectations for children and adults, as I have demonstrated throughout this thesis, are all central thematic preoccupations of Stevenson's short fiction. The abrupt and inconclusive endings of her stories can be understood

particularly in relation to subsequent writers' breaks from narrative fixity. Many of Stevenson's stories, such as "The Warlock's Shadow," "Miss Pringle's Neighbours," and "The Nixie," are fairly self-contained, but the latter two feature narrative twists in the final stages of the story. "The Half-White" also finishes with a sudden shocking revelation. "Sargent's Rodeo," on the other hand, begins abruptly, and manipulates the spatiotemporal expectations of what is otherwise a conventional local colour tale. "Too Many Birthdays," the first story Stevenson published, in 1878, concludes in the middle of a sentence, broken off by an em-dash: "and they do say—" (589). These sudden beginnings and endings contrast the framing techniques of the traditional short fiction genres Stevenson builds upon: the supernatural tale, the wonder tale, the local colour story, and even the New Woman narrative all usually rely on the conclusion as a way to reestablish order or narratively negate the subversive contents which may lie deeper within the tales. The tragedies, twists, and melodramas of Stevenson's endings position them in a different schema, one which prefigures early twentieth century literary manipulations of narrative expectations. Such conclusions turn the narratives themselves into thresholds between literary periods.

Connecting Krueger's and Drewery's analyses, thresholds and metamorphoses of narratives themselves can be seen as "signifying change from one place or state to another" or as emphasising sites of crisis "wherein characters often find themselves in a world made suddenly unfamiliar" (Drewery 1; Krueger 3). Drewery hypothesizes that the short story form helps to convey ideas of potentiality, and of "crises of identity encapsulated" (1). Likewise, Krueger argues that shorter texts in the early twentieth century, positioned in transitional spaces, work to redefine and fracture the "over-used abstract dichotomy of public and private spheres" with a view towards interrogating women's "proper" place (2). In either case, the tale itself is a site where identity is negotiated. Stevenson's short fiction manipulates narrative expectations for a similar purpose, to display the Self at a vulnerable moment between construction and deconstruction. Defining the boundaries of the Self by striving to understand or circumvent the boundaries of one's surroundings is a project of both Stevenson's stories and her later fiction.

Failures to connect, or the threats of those failures, haunt the pages of stories like "Anne," "The Ravening Sheep," and "Miss Pringle's Neighbours." This sympathetic tension resonates with Wharton's stories as well, according to Haytock. Both Wharton and Stevenson indicate that "sensations can be magnified by the presence of another person and that it is not one mind alone that makes the sensation into something more" (Haytock 23). What Drewery identifies as a suggestion of "solidarity" and "intense community spirit" in the experiments

with form and structure of early-century short fiction (3), emerges in Stevenson's earlier writing through the formation of sympathetic and empathetic bonds which help the characters overcome the threats they face. In "Chy Lung," this occurs between the mermaidens and the titular character, in "The Half-White," Lulani and Laurence's connection allows them to question damaging cultural norms, and in "Anne" the love between the protagonist and her husband John is more powerful than death itself. "Sargent's Rodeo" sees the narrator's experience of the grandeur of the Californian landscape morphing from a traditional encounter with the sublime into an investigation of subjectivity through the construction of a common phenomenology amongst the others in the party and the imagery of the group as a "band of phantoms" (12). Whether efforts at building such sympathy or empathy succeed or fail, they are evidently omnipresent throughout Stevenson's fiction.

Characters suffering from grief and loneliness who struggle to form connections with the people around them also feature in many early twentieth century short stories. Haytock summarises this literary trend as it manifests throughout Wharton's writing as a part of various "modernist conversations about the isolation and alienation of the self" (129). Exemplifying this theory, all of Stevenson's stories from the 1870s onward figure isolation—through namelessness, bereavement, tragic separation, or other means—as a defining feature of selfhood, with each character striving to outrun or overcome their loneliness in order to reach a point of personal stability, settlement, or resolution. As an example of such isolation, Lulani, the Ravening Sheep, and the princess from "Too Many Birthdays" struggle to come to terms with their sequestration and continued threats of being cloistered, and they attempt to define themselves and their identities beyond what is prescribed by father figures or patriarchal forces which dictate what constitutes an acceptable place in society.

Dennis Brown opens his book *The Modernist Self in Twentieth-Century English Literature: A Study in Self-Fragmentation* (1989) with the claim that "Modernism in literature was a movement that radically probed the nature of selfhood and problematised the means whereby Self could be expressed," that Self being a "pluralist, heterogeneous and discontinuous" one (1-2). Brown suggests that "self-wholeness" is the assumed state of being until the modernist period, something I would contest by pointing to the Gothic mode itself, given its constant preoccupation with subjective splitting and fracturing. Either way, Stevenson's stories can be read as a precursor to the renewed twentieth century focus on such deconstructive activity which Brown suggests, through her consistent reconstitutions of subjectivity. I have argued throughout this study for an expanded understanding of a "dwelling" in Stevenson's tales, as an entity which acts as a double or analogue of subjectivity, and here

again Stevenson can be seen to prefigure the innovations of the modernist period. Krueger has argued that even before the turn of the century, the short story functions as a “fluent and fluid form expressive of radical shifts in the self and the world” (9), such as new gender norms, the rise of psychoanalysis, the relationship between technology, individual, and society. Stevenson’s stories engage with such conversations largely through foregrounding the necessity of developing meaningful understandings of, and relationships with, other people as a way of transcending or resolving anxieties over these and other socio-historical shifts.

Reconsideration and recognition of the unknowability of the psyche and of the subconscious, seen for instance in the use of stream of consciousness narration in the early twentieth century, initiates itself within Stevenson’s work through the relationship of intersubjectivity and empathy. Jessica Benjamin theorises that intersubjectivity often “destabilizes the active-passive dichotomy” which separates sympathy and empathy (xvi), while Jensen and Moran observe that empathy is “a particular topic within the larger discussion of the nature of intersubjectivity” (125). All three critics, however, suggest that intersubjectivity has a flexible, circular structure, and it is *through* theories of intersubjectivity that analysts have recognised that “empathy does not constitute a single phenomenon but is a rather loose term for a large constellation of interrelated and many-layered experiences and activities” (126). This is a productive frame through which to understand the contradictions and ambiguities that are present throughout Stevenson’s texts, and inform her characterisation: whatever each character’s motivations, Stevenson’s short fiction features people attempting to navigate, or at least understand, such constellations of ambiguity. A sense of community and connectivity, in which affective threads are tied together, is what many of Stevenson’s stories imagine as a hypothetical idyllic future, though so many fail, or even perish, in pursuit of that happiness. It is through this lens that I reposition several of Stevenson’s stories so to align them with that part of the nineteenth century literary tradition which led into the consciousness-exploring experiments of the modernist period.

The analogy of the house and corporeality in so many supernatural American tales from the nineteenth century lead, in my reading, to the intersubjective metaphor of “the extended body,” which occurs through “a process of interaction with another embodied being” (Jensen and Moran 131). “The Half-White” and “Miss Pringle’s Neighbours” are notable in this respect, as they position the extended body as a function of nature, using floral, arboreal, or other natural tropes which cross the thresholds of the home and also the body. Helen Mainwaring’s joyful playfulness in her own garden, replete with a shower of petals, penetrates Miss Pringle’s home and affects her perspectives towards the woman and her child despite the

social impropriety the two symbolise. Flowers function in a similar way for Lulani and Laurence, who understand each other and sense each other's interiorities through the presence and vitality of various plants and floral ornaments. In this way, the interpenetration of intersubjectivity also deconstructs the hierarchical frameworks which initially kept these characters apart.

To metacritically adapt the task of redefining hierarchies, I assert that future readings of Stevenson's work which seek to incorporate it as a point in the constellation of literary history would benefit from perspectives which strive to further deconstruct traditional epistemologies of criticism. The desire lines of this project acknowledge polyvalence as a critical and theoretical necessity and by doing so allow the amplification of voices which have often been muted or muffled. In short, I argue that Stevenson's stories are emblematic of the possibilities for (re)discovering women's literature.

Nina Baym observed in 1981 that, "perhaps not deliberately but nevertheless inevitably," scholars of American literature have continued to elide narratives which would enhance and deepen their understanding of the relationship between literature and society, or literature and Self ("Melodramas" 125). Rachele H. Saltzman puts this problem another way, pointing to the cognitive dissonance one feels when a specific figure "keeps messing up the model" of literary criticism (549). Ammons, as I have discussed in relation to Stevenson's place within literary history, argues that the "fault line" between Victorian-era transatlantic women's writers and their modernist counterparts can only be stabilised if we consider "variety" and "turmoil" to be an active thematic decision rather than one which indicates weakness, aesthetic or otherwise (4). Try as they might to deconstruct the inevitability Baym perceives, or the "messing up" of the model to which Saltzman alludes, scholars of American literature nonetheless remain haunted, by the "unacknowledged traditions" which Jeffrey Weinstock has more recently described in *Scare Tactics*.

These fault lines and omissions demonstrate the refiguring of literary history that is ongoing across a range of historical periods. Scholars are still working towards more complete, comprehensive understandings of how texts by women might be best understood not as discrete or atomised units, but as connected webs and intertexts in ways that the androcentrism and emphatic whiteness of canonical American literature and literary criticism has tended to sideline. This applies not only to fiction with a supernatural focus, but to work across a number of genres, and mandates the continued development of new or expanded methods to accommodate these literary constellations for women in all their variety, especially those outside the categories of heterosexual, white, middle-class women who occupy a significant

canonical space. Ammons argues that to write “is to be active, to take action, to be the actor—to own and create oneself” (38). Such ownership and creation is not a new project for American women: as Showalter points out, the latter identity has already been a subject of textual production for 350 years (*Jury* xiii). Yet, in the crucial period of the late nineteenth century, as I have argued throughout this study, the self-interrogative “radical experimentation” of women writers looks much more uncertain, unstable, and embryonic than the more authoritative and self-assured versions of experimentation such as can be seen in Wharton’s “A Journey,” steaming ahead into the twentieth century.

Though many scholars note this gap in critical study, the implementation of significant change will take time. Even approaching the third decade of the twenty-first century, after decades of productive criticism, there remains a significant amount of ground to cover: the further scholars move toward deconstructing frameworks which obscure certain voices, the more it becomes clear that additional work is necessary. There is no end point to readjusting literary history, which is a continuing project: as Kolodny notes, “we will know our incarceration only when we are willing to engage the possibility of dislodgings and reordered contexts” (296). Attempts to fit new narratives into previous workable frameworks will result “not in integration but in fundamental distortion” (296). In the case of Fanny Van de Grift Stevenson, rethinking what has often been seen as critical truth and renegotiating the cultural context of works as influential as *Treasure Island* is particularly important if the results alter our conceptions of widely-studied genres and literary movements.

Americanists—as well as other scholars and writers—have long been engaged in the process of forging new theoretical desire lines. The task now at hand for those drawing such lines is to find parallels and connections between texts, while noticing broader constellations of writing by women of all backgrounds and with multiply-burdened identities. Such constellations can then come into view as being tidal, shifting, nuanced, circulatory and dynamic, as opposed to rigid. Rereading stories of “female frustration” into American narratives as valid forms of protest is one possible starting point for new desire lines (Baym, “Melodramas” 135), but as new voices are included in canons, those lines will multiply and diverge, requiring more focussed attention. Furthermore, like the supernatural stories we read, we too will be haunted by spectres of the indigenous storytelling traditions which continue, even incidentally, to be silenced. Acknowledging more diverse traditions is one potential mode of textual reparation for the traumas which dominant literary histories have helped to uphold.

Contemporary studies of the nineteenth century tend to disconnect their own positionality from the perpetuation of various inequalities. There is a pressing need to exhume

women like Stevenson, Zelda Sayre Fitzgerald, Vera Nabokov, Jessie Benton Frémont, and Olivia Langdon Clemons, moving them away from the dedications pages of their partners' works and biographical studies into studies of the textual, editorial, and often literary work they did, as part of the ongoing recuperation of women's book history. Likewise, in readings of American writing, storytellers such as Nella Larsen, Alice Dunbar-Nelson, Emma Lazarus, and T'cetsa "Lucy" Young (Lassik) deserve a place at the centre, rather than within the footnotes, of prominent literary histories.

It is my desire line for future American literary scholars to "become the intellectual colleagues of those, from a variety of disciplines, who can teach us to read across cultural boundaries" (Kolodny, "Obsession" 15). Though her imputations have now been part of the critical project of feminism and its cognate fields for decades, I repeat, and renew, Kolodny's specific insistence that critical self-questioning needs to become a normative aspect of future literary histories, as whatever our "claims to universality or disinterestedness, critics and scholars have never functioned free of the inflections" of gender, race, sexuality, class, ideology, or other aspects of identity ("Integrity" 305). More recently, Sara Ahmed has voiced this concern in her argument that when scholars, and institutions, face attempts to "think strategically" about inclusion, they also have to acknowledge their own complicity, "forgo any illusions of purity," and "give up the safety of exteriority" (94). Ahmed further warns that the "fantasy of inclusion is a technique of exclusion": one must "keep pushing; otherwise things will be quickly reversed to how they were before" (112). My primary concern is to relocate scholarship around historically silenced voices, and to create a framework capable of sustaining that labour into the future. Reading Fanny Van de Grift Stevenson's stories back into critical existence has been my contribution to that tradition.



## Appendices

### Four Unpublished Wonder Tales by Fanny Van de Grift Stevenson

*Editorial note: Slight corrections to punctuation and spelling have been made throughout these tales for clarity, but the transcription follows the original text as closely as possible.*

#### Appendix A: "The Grand Borribaloo"

Belinda Smith found herself in a very unpleasant position. How it happened is not part of this story, which opens with Belinda hanging by the belt on a hook in a giant's kitchen.

The cook was heating water, and sharpening knives for the evident purpose of preparing the unhappy girl for the giant's table, she was just in the act of studying Belinda's length and breadth with an eye to a dripping pan of the right proportions when the giant entered.

Belinda could see nothing in her terror but a huge unshapely bulk of frightful aspect. Really, however, the giant possessed a jolly, big good-humoured stupid face. Jolly people are apt to be a little stupid.

"No luck again, today." He said, as he came thumping in. "A pretty dish to sit before the grand Borribaloo, one pitiful child with a spoonful of gravy; and too late today for any more hunting. Is she nice and plump?" as he advanced toward the terrified Belinda.

"Halloo! What's this?! Stooping to pick up a bit of paper that had dropped from Belinda's pocket. As he glanced over the note, which was only a wash bill from Belinda's mother, who did clearstacking, his countenance changed; he sighed heavily, and repeated the name signed to the note several times in a sad and touching voice; then reached up and unhooked Belinda whom he placed upon a table by his side.

"What is your name, child?" he asked, in a very different voice from that he had used when he entered. "Belinda Smith, you say? Ah yes, that name I have heard before. It is truly a sweet name. You would hardly believe now, that a bluff old fellow like myself had ever been in love? I have. It was your mother child. Many years ago she fell into my hands much as you have done; I had intended her for company, but before long she had somehow wound herself into my affections, she implored me to carry her to her father. I did so. From that day to this I have never beheld her. I know now that it would have been better to have eaten her as I intended to do, for then she would have been part of my own being forever. Now it is too late. Like you, she was very plump," looking dreamily at Belinda.

"I think, my dear, for the sake of old times, and the memories of my youth, I will have you served with my guests instead of to them. Come, I will call Lallagagog, my son to show

you to the guest chamber. Try to rest and sleep well that your eyes may be as bright, and your cheeks as rosy as your mothers were when I first saw her.”

Lallagagog came at his father's call and escorted Belinda to her room. He was a saucy awkward lout of a giant boy and disposed to be sulky at the change in the morrow's bill of fare.

Belinda was too tired to think of the strange things that had occurred, and begging Lallagagog to reach a pillow for her from the immense bed, she lay down upon it and slept until daybreak. In the morning it was some time before she could recall her scattered senses enough to recollect her whereabouts; but Lallagagog's hoarse voice calling her to breakfast, warned her to be in haste. She dressed rapidly and stepped into the hall where the giant was waiting for her. He led her into the breakfast room. A box had been placed upon a chair for her and the giant lifted her to her place. Her acutest fears now began to dissipate, and she ate her breakfast with a good appetite, and even carried on a conversation with the giant with some diplomacy, giving full accounts of all the members of the Smith family that she knew anything about, especially of those who had become famous or possessed much political influence, hoping that the giant might have some fear of incurring the enmity of so great and influential a race.

The giant listened politely, and looked impressed by what she had said. Suddenly a bright idea seemed to strike him.

“Belinda,” said he kindly, “How old are you?”

“Fifteen.”

“My grandmother was married at fifteen,” remarked the giant.

“Was she indeed?” said Belinda, not knowing what else to say.

“Belinda,” more kindly still, “How would you like to be married?”

A horrible fear took possession of Belinda. Perhaps he wished to marry her himself. He must be a widower, she had seen no woman, yet, about the house but the cook, and for all she knew, giants might, anyhow, have as many wives as old Brigham.

“I—I don't—know” faltered poor Belinda, bursting into tears.

“Tut, tut, Pshaw!” said the giant in not so kind a voice as before. “I'm not going to eat you, what are you crying for?”

The cry was swallowed instantly, as Belinda made haste to answer “I never thought of such a thing, I assure you! What were you about to say, please?” with a sickly attempt to smile.

“Only this,” said the giant, “that I am going to have company today to dinner; a personage of great importance;” his voice took a deeper tone. “His Highness the Grand Borribaloo! It is to be quite an affair as it is only a business interview he seeks. “I,” and he

swelled with conscious pride, “am Confidential Matrimonial Adviser to his highness! Of course a personage of his rank could not take the trouble to choose a wife for himself. That is my affair. I have been in much perplexity because I could not fix upon an eligible party, when it suddenly occurred to me, why not Belinda? You are certainly of a good family, belonging to a long line of Smiths. And being a protegee of mine gives you standing. Indeed, I consider it a very suitable match on both sides. Now, my dear, just think this matter over. At four precisely I will come for your decision.” Bowing politely he left the room.

Belinda was in a whirl of agitation. What a brilliant future was before her! The Borribaloo, might, to be sure, be as old and ugly as the giant himself: but the bliss of being “My Lady Borribaloo” covered any unpleasant suggestions that arose in her mind. An occasional thought of the red headed boy, who sat next to her at school, and to whom she had been engaged for the past three weeks came to her remembrance once or twice, but was soon forgotten. What chance had a red headed boy beside the grand Borribaloo.

Belinda had one ugly habit of which I am loth to speak. She was very apt to put her thumb in her mouth when thinking. She did so upon this occasion, as she sat wrapped in her reflections, Lallagagog, who had been drowning flies in the cream, and amusing himself in other kindred ways, now turned his attention to Belinda, stepping up softly behind her, he placed one great hand upon her head, the other under her chin, and suddenly snapped her teeth together with a loud laugh.

Lallagagog did a worse mischief than he had intended. His hands were so strong, and the little white teeth so sharp, that Belinda was placed in the awkward predicament of having bitten off her own thumb.

Lallagagog ran off and hid himself, and poor Belinda retired, weeping, to her chamber to bind up her mutilated hand and invent an excuse for not appearing at dinner; for she hardly liked to make her first appearance before the Borribaloo with a red nose and swollen eyes, and a bandaged hand.

She finally pleaded a headache, a feeling of uncertainty and insecurity prompting her not to complain of Lallagagog.

When the giant saw her woebegone face, he very readily excused her, saying that if such was her pleasure, he would make all necessary arrangements himself.

Ambition and pride rose in Belinda's heart, she gave her full consent to the proposed marriage.

In the evening, the giant said that the grand Borribaloo was perfectly satisfied with the description and account given of the bride elect, and only desired that she should be allowed to

remain in strict seclusion until the day of the ceremony, in accordance with the customs of his ancestors.

Preparations for the wedding went on apace, and at length the day arrived. The great hall of the giant's mansion was decorated with the most elegant taste, and hundreds of brilliant lights flashed upon the jewels and rich dresses of the guests.

At opposite ends of the hall were great doors. These were thrown open simultaneously. Through one entered the Grand Borribaloo leaning upon the arm of the priest, at the same moment that Belinda supported by the giant appeared at the other. Lallagagog followed bearing her train.

All eyes were turned towards the bride; but she saw nothing but the Grand Borribaloo, whom she now met for the first time. His carriage was majestic, and at the same time of a very peculiar grace, caused doubtless by his having three legs, instead of the usual number. His glittering tail was so long that as he stood in the centre of the room its extremity reached to the entrance where it was borne by five and twenty pages in gold and white. His heavy locks of ferns and field flowers fell to his waist. His eye, placed in the centre of his forehead, was large and lustrous and full. In short, the most fastidious person could have taken no exception to his personal appearance.

A sudden hush and expectant thrill fell upon the vast assembly as the grand Borribaloo advanced towards Belinda, tenderly took her hand, gazed long and earnestly into her face, and signed the priest to continue.

Why will not the fates allow me to stop here, nor further follow this tale which so suddenly changes to a scene of gloom and horror.

As Belinda, blushing, raised her hand to receive the ring from the Royal Borribaloo, the priest gently said "Your right thumb, if you please; it is the law that only thus a grand Borribaloo may marry.

Unconsciously Belinda raised her maimed right hand.

The priest shrank back with a cry of horror, and the Grand Borribaloo fell to the floor in a deathlike swoon.

"Ah I shall burst with mortification!" Groaned the giant, which he immediately did with a loud report.

The guests fled in terror, some of them mortally wounded.

The ring, which had dropped from the hand of the bridegroom rolled along the floor to the feet of Lallagagog, who shyly hid it in his mouth. It stuck in his windpipe. In the confusion caused by his father's explosion he was unnoticed, and soon choked to death.

The whole proceedings were so frightfully indecorous that the priest fell into a rage, which was so deep that no ropes would reach him, where he remains to this day.

The end of the grand Borribaloo was sad beyond belief. Knowing his union with Belinda was now impossible, he fell into a low state, weeping incessantly, neglecting the affairs connected with his rank and office, which consequently fell into other hands about whom his old friends rallied.

His society had become so wearisome to those about him that he was left alone more and more, so that when he had wept his eye out so one was aware of the piteous fact, and he wandered for days in a thick wood adjacent to the castle vainly seeking his way out. At last, glum and weary, suffering intolerably from thirst and hunger, he sunk upon the ground.

“Ah Belinda” moaned he, as he wiped the growing cavern where his eye had been, with his tail, “would I had never beheld thee!” In his anguish he accidentally placed the end of his tail into his mouth; unconsciously, in his delirium, assailed by the pangs of hunger, he began devouring it, and absently ate himself up. No remains were ever found except a few tail scales that his stomach was unable to digest.

As to Belinda, no one knows what became of her.

#### Appendix B: “Easy Reading for an Old Bachelor: The Story of The Ravening Sheep”

A weak minded sheep and her lamb once lived on a bit of barren land; there were several small spots where clover grew, and a little shelter of old brush. They were not well cared for, but they made the best of what they had, and were reasonably happy. One day a she wolf brought over to their place, from her own green fields, several sheep from her flock; they devoured all the clover that was the only sustenance<sup>30</sup> of the sheep and lamb, and carelessly threw over their shelter of boughs.

It sounds odd that a she-wolf should have charge of a flock; but this was a wily she-wolf; there were many wolves in the forest, and game was scarce and shy, so she got a place with a shepherd as a sheepdog. The shepherd was blind, and old, and foolish, and never knew the imposture. The neighbours, who were reluctant to meddle in other people's affairs, did not like, or did not choose to tell him; so the she-wolf and her cubs waxed fast and strong, while her kinsmen of the forest, gaunt and hungry roamed about, seeking their prey.

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<sup>30</sup> “Subsistence” struck through in MS, replaced with “sustenance.”

It was not that she particularly wished to harm the sheep and lamb that the she-wolf robbed them, but that her natural instincts inclining her to a guerrilla life occasionally overcame the teachings of civilization.

It was hard upon the sheep and the lamb. A cold rain fell, and winter was not far off. Before the clover had started to grow again, the shivering lamb was dead. The sheep tried to warm it with her own body, but her wool was wet, and she, too, was starved with the cold; she could only watch her lamb's innocent eyes grey, and its little legs stiffen, with a breaking heart. She could do nothing; she could not replace the shelter, nor could she make the grass grow again, though she would gladly have watered the grass with her blood, and torn the fleece from her back to keep the cold from the lamb.

When the lamb was dead it was thrown into a hole. The sheep, in her grief, hoped and thought she might die too; but she was older and stronger and more used to hardship than the lamb, so, sad and lonely, she held on and endured the cold and the hunger. Most of the time she either stood gazing at the hole where they had thrown her lamb, or wandered about the bare pasture where it had frisked and played in happier days. Once a cub of the she-wolf came that way; it was so plump, and sleek, and well cared for, that when the bereaved sheep looked upon it she felt her weak heart giving way because of the injustice of things, and in a mad rage chased the wolf-cub howling away to its mother.

The next day the blind shepherd came in a great rage to the sheep. The wolf-cub had come panting home with a fearful tale; the sheep, she said, had come at her with a mouth a yard wide, full of blood and foam; with eyes the size of dinner plates, from which shot blue and green flames, and with an awful, deafening roar like a wild lion.

The sheep could not remember these details, but full of trouble went off alone to think it over; and wondered if all this were really true, and she had actually become a mad ravaging sheep.

Soon she met the Haymaker who was fond of walking in paths and places where the shadows were heavy. He was called the Haymaker because he was supposed to make hay while the sun shone. All people went to him for advice, he was accounted so very wise; he was thought to be wise because he had many books, and he looked solemn, and he often said "policy is better than honesty," "don't whistle too much for your pay," and other things that showed a profound intellect, and a habit of deep thought. When he demanded the reason of the sheep's depression of mind, she, being in awe of so great a man, told her story.

"I must tell you what to do," said he.

“Oh no!” cried the sheep “you are so very respectable that it would never do that you should mix yourself up in the affairs of a silly sheep, and a beast of prey.”

The Haymaker insisted that she listen to him, and be guided by him.

“But I know myself what is best for me,” cried the sheep. “Let me go away off to some quiet place where I can be quite alone. There I may be able to recover my former tranquility of mind. As it is, I fear I am in too dangerous a state to be allowed to roam about freely. It is a dreadful thing to find out that one is a ravening sheep. How do I know, or how do you know, to what wild deed my fevered mind may prompt me. Suppose I should suddenly spring upon the wild bull, drag him to the ground, and tear his vitals from his quivering body.

“That would, indeed, be horrible,” said the Haymaker; “but worse yet than that may happen.”

“Worse than that!” Cried the sheep in an awe-stricken voice.

“Yes; there is a lower depth still,” and he spoke in a voice as hollow and ghastly that a thrill went through the veins of the sheep, and chilled her very heart.

“Suppose the pigs and the grasshoppers should find it out?”

With a cry of horror the sheep fell swooning upon the ground. She had never thought of that. In her ignorance and stupidity she had thought nothing could be worse than to know one's self to be a ravening sheep; but oh heavens! That the pigs and the grasshoppers should know!

Crushed and humiliated she was carried off to a small paddock by the sea; here she nibbled grass on the hillside, and trotted by the beach, and might have become reasonable, cheerful in her latter days, but for the awful dread that always lay like a stone in her heart, “Suppose the pigs and the grasshoppers should know.”

The Haymaker came in time to dislike all thought or mention of the sheep; for he, too, was terrified lest the pigs and grasshoppers should know, and it should be whispered about that a man as staid and respectable as he had once known a ravening sheep.

#### Appendix C: “The Hunchback”

A boy older than his appearance would indicate was sitting sullenly alone in the woods by the side of a stream. The water was clear and cool, flowers were blooming among the grass, the sky was blue, a gentle air was stirring. The day was heavenly, a calm and holy beauty pervaded all nature except the heart of this unfortunate boy.

And yet he deserved some communication, for he seemed to be deformed. An elaborate contrivance of straps and buckles passed around his shoulders, which appeared to be hunched in a peculiar fashion. Years ago, when a lovely child with a face and temper like an angels his parents, worthy people, had discovered that there was something strange and unusual in his appearance totally unlike that of other children. They were decent folk, and nothing had happened in their family for many generations out of the usual course. All the men were straight and tall, married comely and excellent housewives, and reared large families of the most eminent respectability. In short, lived and died in the regular orthodox fashion. The distress and horror of all the relatives may be imagined when the unsightly protuberance was first noticed. The lad was pitied by his parents, and scoffed at by his brethren, all alike as two peas.

The physicians of his native place said “Let the child alone; give him some active useful employment and trust to him. Don't use too much force, for the boy is of more delicate clay than the rest, and must be managed carefully.” But the parents in their anxiety, the father being what is called a man handy with tools, had invented this cruel arrangement of straps and buckles which seemed to have cut into the very soul of the boy. He grew gloomy and despondent, dull at his books, and took no apparent pleasure in the society of others of his age. The burden seemed to grow with his years, to lie as heavily on his heart as on his shoulders.

This perfect summer day he had wandered off, as usual, by the banks of the little stream. His brother had gone further up where the water was deeper, and trout were said to be in the pools. At times their laughter came floating down so merry and infectious that a smile almost reached the lips of the dull boy who stood brooding over the water.

The wind rose somewhat, shaking down the autumn leaves in a shower at his feet, brown, crimson and gold. The heavy eyes brightened at the sight with a sudden light, like distant lightning after a tropical day. A brown bird began singing over his head as it swung on a bough. Softly as first, then louder and stronger and fuller, such a wild joyous rollocking ronde lay that the boy felt his pulses quickening and his heart pounding with the harmony. The wind came stronger, with a breath of the sea. The song of the brown bird filled all the air. The boy stood upright, and with eager hands tore furiously at the ligatures that bound his shoulders. Buckles and straps parted and fell rattling to the ground. A very curious thing happened. Released from their bonds, two great wings of purple and gold quivered in the sunlight. A beauty not of the earth shone in the face of the boy, with a quick glance upward he thrust aside the overhanging leaves, pushed the air with his burnished wings and swept away towards the east. The brown bird looked up, ceased its song, and hid its head beneath its wing.

The next day, flying over the marshes to meet its love, in a bare and desolate place it discerned a gleam of color. Swooping down to examine closer a thing so unusual it found the poor boy dead and cold in the slump of the marsh. The muscles of his wings for so many years unused to action had become flaccid and weak. In his elation at the discovering of his marvellous powers he had miscalculated his strength, attempted too high a flight, and thus failed miserably in this outset of his career, and so had died in the mire, the green ooze rising about his face and his purple wings trailing broken and soiled.

#### Appendix D: “Ah Choon and the Sorcerer”

A Chinese fisherman of Amoy for many days had cast his nets only to draw them to land empty. Walking the streets that he might there-by forget in some degree the hunger that assailed him, he encountered a figure that arrested his attention. It was that of a beggar apparently in the most abject destitution. His skin was filthy, and he was clothed in rags; There was a weird strange look in his eyes, and a gleam of intelligence at variance with his condition shone through the dirt that encrusted his face. Ah Choon, the fisherman, felt that somewhere before he had met the beggar when he presented a very different aspect. At last it occurred to him that it must be an emperor's sorcerer, who had probably chosen this disguise that he might walk the streets undisturbed by the prayers and solicitations of those who believed in his powers.

This great magician was said to know all things known to man or devils. He could foretell deaths, and the rise and fall of empires, so great was his knowledge that the spirits of the air had limited him in his prophecies. If he told all he knew fierce lightning would burst from the sky and devour him in its fire.

Ah Choon bowed his head to the ground before the sorcerer and cried “give me something I beseech you” Give me something, I beseech you or I will implore you forever!”

“Rise my son,” said the sorcerer, “How can I give you what I have not myself? You see I am but a wretched beggar; it is you who must give to me.”

Ah Choon still besought him until the old man losing patience thrust him on one side. As he did so, Ah Choon snatched from his breast a handful of the beggar's rags and ran to cast his nets, throwing into them as he did a scrap of the rags. The nets came up bursting with fine large fish.

Ah Choon hied him to the market where he soon disposed of his fish for a good sum and went home his pockets heavy with cash.

The next day he cast his nets again with the same good luck. But when he went to the market to sell his fish a jabbering crowd surrounded him. "Cheat! Swindler!" They cried "Who sold us enchanted fish that were fat and large when we bought them, and but empty air when we opened our baskets!"

The Fisherman turned pale. Here, my friends, he cried. choose from those I have caught today, and if the same thing happens again you will help me to find and punish the wicked sorcerer who has put a cheat both upon you and me!" And he told his story to the gaping crowd.

When they turned to fill their baskets, no fish were there; only a few fresh leaves.

Ah Choon felt a chill at his back. Turning he beheld the sorcerer in his beggar's garb. All perceived him at the same moment.

"Tis he!" They cried, "Tear him to pieces!" And rushed forward to attack him.

He smiled. "One moment my children." he said, "and you may do with me as you will. Let me amuse you first."

As he said this he spat on the ground a black spittle into which he dipped the end of his long finger and drew figures upon a white wall. As he drew the figures sprang from under his fingers, writhing over the wall in a hideous manner. The gaze of all who waited upon the little friends who leered at the spectators changed heads with each other, spread their mouths from ear to ear in demonish glee, struck at each other, and contorted their limbs.

So frightful an exhibition did it finally become that the mob with one accord turned and fled.

Some of the boldest looking back saw the sorcerer, still serenely smiling, strike the figures dead with his staff, wrap with rags about him and melt into a light gray cloud, which gradually dissolved into the air.

After that time the fisherman's luck was variable, but he tried no more magic arts to increase his gains.

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