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Creators of Paradise: Representations of Samoa in Somerset Maugham's "The Pool"

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In this essay I will examine Somerset Maugham's "The Pool", one of his Pacific short stories in *The Trembling of a Leaf: Little Stories of the South Sea Islands* (1921); and suggest the meaning of its geographical settings, Samoa and Scotland. As Neil Rennie points out, however, it is a generally accepted view that "[t]he South Sea stories of Somerset Maugham . . . could have been set almost anywhere hot" (Rennie 220). Such an evaluation might be applicable to almost all of Maugham's fiction, and one might wonder that the setting of "The Pool", Samoa and Scotland, is also replaceable to any pair of exotic and western region, such as somewhere in South Asia or a suburb in England. However, critics have reduced its geographical meaning to the simple banal opposition of the Oceania and the West. Besides, as is often pointed out, Maugham was said to have gone to the South Pacific as a British secret agent "to acquire vital information about Samoa" (Meyers 117), where Germany and the United States struggled for supremacy. Therefore "The Pool" can be read as a political allegory, in which Maugham describes something more than the degeneration of white colonisers.

Moreover, as I shall suggest in more detail later on, "The Pool" and some of the Samoan short stories in *The Trembling of a Leaf* cannot be understood without investigating the relation with Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894), the self-exiled Scot, who lived in Samoa in his later life. In *The Summing Up*, Maugham looks back on the motivation of his going to the South Seas, admitting the influence from Stevenson's later realistic novels set in the Pacific:

I wanted to recover my peace of mind . . . so made up my mind to go to the South Seas. I had wanted to go ever since as a youth I had read *The Ebb-Tide* and *The Wrecker*, and I wanted besides to get material for a

novel I had long been thinking over based on the life of Paul Gauguin.
(The Summing Up 192-3)

Generally speaking, critics have considered that there is little point in comparing Maugham and Stevenson, and Maugham's Pacific fiction is paid little attention to when they argue the relation between Stevenson and contemporary Samoan writers.¹⁾ Therefore, the second purpose of this essay is to interpret Maugham's Samoan fiction in the context of Pacific literature in English, on which Stevenson has had a profound influence. In order to explain these points, I will first refer to the basic understanding of representations of the Pacific Islands in western culture. Then I will analyse Maugham's three short stories set in Samoa, mainly "The Pool", comparing them to the life and work of Stevenson, and contemporary Samoan writers.

I

Since the "discovery" of the Pacific Islands around the eighteenth century, the Polynesian Islands have been represented as the earthy Paradise in the western popular culture.²⁾ Though they were important as supply bases for ships, "[t]he region was marginal to the economic needs of Europe and North America and had little strategic importance" (Edmond 130) until the end of the nineteenth century. During the colonial period, however, western powers such as France, Britain, German, and the United States, had fought for the domination of these islands as they had done in other parts of the world.³⁾ In the first place, "[w]hat mattered most was national prestige" (Pagden 127) to them. Secondly, as Rennie points out, the South Pacific, the last frontier in those days, was necessary as the location of the imaginary Paradise:

Given the Christian world-view of the Middle Ages it was natural that the location of Paradise should be of geographical importance. In Christian belief the word 'Paradise' referred both to a lost Garden of Eden and to a future otherworld. But there was another possibility also, that the earthy Paradise still existed, that Paradise was not located only in the distant past or the otherworldly future but in the distant present, somewhere in the world. The Bible was vague about the location of the 'garden eastward in Eden', but it gave hope that Paradise still existed,

for God had placed cherubim to guard it after the fall. (Rennie 11)

According to his argument above, the notion of the earthy Paradise, derived from both biblical and classical ones (such as the Golden Age and the myth of Blessed Isles in the Hellenistic myth), still remained around the eighteenth century. Therefore, the newly-found Pacific Islands, especially Polynesian Islands, were appropriate to the requirements of this tradition because of their isolated location, tropical climate, vegetation, and the natives, who seemed to be free from social restraint unlike civilized Europeans. Anthony Pagden also notes that while the fantasy of the earthy Paradise was in doubt or denied from the very moment of the encounter between the West and the South Pacific, Europeans had continued to be fascinated by the Pacific and reproduced "the Polynesian Paradise" in many kinds of discourses, such as ethnographical travel writings, accounts by the missionaries, and boy's adventure novels:

... Bougainville's elegiac and Cook's somewhat more matter-of-fact description of his encounter with the Tahitians created an enduring image of the Pacific as a place where it was possible to act out all the European fantasies of sexual freedom and complete liberty from social constraint. It was an image that was still powerful enough over a hundred years later to persuade the painter Paul Gauguin to abandon home, family, and secure job for a life in the South Seas. There, however, he found, alas, a very different Tahiti, riven by European disease, its tranquillity turned to despair by Christian missionaries. (Pagden 119-120)⁴

The editors also persuaded the writers not to shatter this Pacific fantasy by writing bare facts since "[t]he South Seas became a marketing category for publishers, who expected the replication of benign stereotypes rather than their dismantling" (Edmond 162). In other words, the representations of the Polynesian Paradise were so popular in the metropole that the work with unpleasant realities was not well received. Ironically speaking, some European settlers, such as Gauguin and Stevenson, were romanticised after their death because of their dramatic lives and the image of the Polynesian fantasy was promoted as a result, in spite of their ardent appeal against the cruel "reality" of the Pacific. Tourists read their works before going to the Pacific, followed

the traits of these artists as pilgrimage, and enjoyed the image of the Paradise offered by the tourism. In this way, the image of the Polynesian Paradise is still persistently maintained.

II

Although their literary tradition is rather brief compared with such old colonies as Caribbean Countries, Contemporary Pacific writers resist these stereotypical representations of the Pacific and re-tell their stories from their own points of view. Let us now consider some Samoan writers, since this is my main concern here. Albert Wendt (1939-) writes in his *Leaves of the Banyan Tree* (1979) the gap between the reality of native Samoan people's life and the western fantasy imposed on their country:

But beyond these tales and the familiar and secure world contained within the coral reefs lay a fairyland ruled by papalagi, the builders of those aeroplanes and the messengers of Jehovah, the papalagi who, after establishing Christianity in Samoa, had themselves reverted to pagan ways. (Wendt 8)

Another Samoan writer, Sia Figiel (1967-), expresses her anger and hesitation more directly than Wendt. In her first novel, *Where We Once Belonged* (1996), Alofa, a girl protagonist, laughs away the famous dispute about the adolescence of Samoa between two major anthropologists, Margaret Mead and Derek Freeman. Figiel's claim is summarised in the speech of Alofa's aunt, Siniva, who obtains M. A. in history in New Zealand but goes mad after she comes back to her village. She yells at tourists that "Go back to where you came from, you fucking ghosts! Gauguin is dead! There is no paradise!" (Figiel 192) On the other hand, it cannot be denied that Samoans, or the Polynesians in a broader sense, also make use of this western fantasy for the sake of tourism. Siniva accuses not only tourists seeking the traits of Paradise but also her own people who depend on western technology and culture too much and lose their own identity. Yet, as she keenly realises that their indigenous culture has already changed under the strong influence of western civilization, she commits suicide in the water, with her identity torn between Samoan tradition and western culture.⁵⁾

As for contemporary writing of Samoa, we cannot ignore the influence of Stevenson, who was called *Tusitala* (a writer) by Samoan people. Stevenson and his family left San Francisco in 1888 and sailed the Pacific through Marquesas, Tahiti, Hawaii and other islands. In 1890 he reached Upolu, the main island in the western part of Samoa and lived in Vaillima near Apia, being involved in local political affairs to support Samoans. According to Rod Edmond, it would not be proper to classify him as a stereotypical colonialist, since his South Sea fiction is "culturally hybrid" (Edmond 192): that is, he "had non-western readers in mind" (Edmond 186) and mixed both western and Polynesian forms:

The contradictions in Stevenson's position are too obvious to need labouring. They were also unavoidable. His ballads and tales were a fascinating experiment whose success or failure seems less important than the attempt itself. In many ways they anticipate the South Pacific literature in English which emerged almost a hundred years later in the 1970s and 80s. If Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* provided African novelists with a founding text against which to write back, Stevenson's tales and ballads, and his use of tales in 'The Beach of Falesá' offered Pacific writers a less antagonistic model to work on (Edmond 193).

If Stevenson is "a less antagonistic model" to contemporary Pacific writers, the opponent to whom they must "write back" must be someone like Maugham, who dismisses, or neglects, native people and focuses on white settlers in his work.

On the other hand, while Polynesia and Polynesians are represented as Paradise and noble savages (or cannibals) in western discourse, Europeans represented in Polynesian writers' work are also simplified just as 'papalagi' (white people) in turn. However, as the Polynesian people have diverse social backgrounds, 'papalagi' also have diversities in their nationality, class, and sexuality. Therefore, as Wendt and Figiel describe suicides to signify the confused and hybrid identity between the two cultures, so did Maugham in each Samoan short story concerning his own people on the periphery of the declining British Empire. Compared with Stevenson, who got deeply involved in politics in Samoa, and supported Samoan people by accusing the attitude of

western countries in his essays, it would be fairly right to accuse Maugham of being a colonialist without concern towards the indigenous people and culture, since native characters in his work are treated as the background and given little identity. Admitting these deficiencies, however, we can find some examples of complicity on the part of colonisers in his short stories, overlooked by critics till now. In the following section, I would like to examine Maugham's "The Pool", in which some colonial aspects of the dismemberment of Samoa are implied.

III

Somerset Maugham travelled to the South Pacific and stayed there for about half a year from November 1916. His aim was, in principle, to get material for his work. As other writers of the South Pacific in those days, he admits the influence from Herman Melville, Pierre Loti, and Robert Louis Stevenson (*The Summing Up* 193). That is, one might say that he was one of the typical tourists whom Siniva accuses; a tourist seeking for the Polynesian Paradise already highly textualised in western discourse. Based on the materials and experiences he got there, he wrote *The Moon and Sixpence* (1919) modelled on the life of a French painter, Paul Gauguin, who settled and died in Tahiti; and some other short stories compiled into *The Trembling of a Leaf*. It contains six short stories: "Mackintosh", "The Fall of Edward Barnard", "Red", "The Pool", "Honolulu" and "Rain". Among them "Mackintosh" and "The Pool" are set in Samoa, and "Rain" is set in American Samoa. There are some similarities between these Samoan short stories, especially "The Pool" and "Mackintosh". Firstly, each male protagonist commits suicide at the water-side. Secondly, protagonists in the "The Pool" and "Mackintosh" are educated Scots suffering from tuberculosis. Keeping these two points in mind, I would like to analyse these short stories, mainly "The Pool".

"The Pool" is set in Apia (the capital city of Samoa in Upolu) and somewhere around Aberdeen in Scotland. At the beginning of the story, the narrator from London meets Lawson at the lounge of the Hotel Metropole at Apia, and drinks with him and Chaplain, the manager of the hotel. The narrator at first is irritated by Lawson's "cunning and shifty" (111) attitude at first, but gradually realises that Lawson is actually a clever and good fellow when he is

sober. Though he is a drunken beachcomber despised by all the people in Apia except Chaplain now, Lawson was a manager of the English bank at Apia before. Originally, he came to Samoa because of his tuberculosis. At first, as a member of the white middle class, he enjoyed both social life and the beautiful landscape and "natural life" (119) of Samoa: he talked with other white settlers and played cards or "pool" (a kind of billiards), and often went to bathe in "the pool a mile or two away from Apia" (115), where he met a beautiful half-caste girl, Ethel, swimming in the pool like "the spirit of the pool" (118). Ethel's father was a Norwegian called Brevald, "who had come out to the islands forty years before as mate of a sailing vessel" (116), and "had once been captain of a schooner engaged in the slave trade, a blackbirder they call it in the Pacific" (118), but lost most of his property in the great hurricane in the nineties. He had had four native wives and many children, among whom Ethel was the last daughter at home. For all her native blood, Ethel was "no darker than a Spaniard" (114), and there was "something extremely civilized about her" (115) when she wore a western dress. She tactfully wore both western style dress and bright coloured native dress, called Mother Hubbard.

Despite the advice from his friends not to marry natives or half-castes, Lawson married Ethel and lived in a small house with her. At first, Lawson did not worry about slander and gossip from his fellow whites, especially from ladies, to whom Lawson was a desirable catch because of his "position as manager of the bank" (120). He began to associate with Samoan people and the white planters with native wives, for "[h]is marriage had made him one of themselves" (121). However, he was shocked by the birth of his son, Andrew, since he "had not expected it to be so dark" (122). For fear of being involved in indigenous Samoan society, Lawson went back to Scotland with his son and Ethel. He wanted his son to be "a real Scot" (125), become a doctor and marry a white woman. On the contrary, Ethel gradually became silent and listless despite his efforts to amuse her. One summer day, Lawson heard that Ethel was seen to bathe in the pool near the house, which was "just like that pool at Upolu where Ethel had been in the habit of bathing every evening" (126) regardless of the coldness of the water. Soon, she went back to Samoa with his son without notice to her husband, who followed her to Samoa, giving up his job in Scotland.

After going back to Samoa, Ethel became pregnant again, but refused to live with Lawson like before, insisting on living with her own large family. Moreover, with all his efforts in Scotland, Andrew became like native children and spoke only Samoan language. Ethel also preferred to live in the native way because of her experience in Scotland. Then Lawson began to drink. He grew quarrelsome and had a dispute with his white employers. Finally, there was no white man who was willing to employ Lawson and he had to ask Pedersen, a half-caste, for a job. Thus he was completely ignored by the white settlers' society in Samoa:

From that time his degeneration was rapid. The white people gave him the cold shoulder. They were only prevented from cutting him completely by disdainful pity and by a certain dread of his angry violence when he was drunk. He became extremely susceptible and was always on the lookout for affront. (131)

Lawson was also despised by natives and half-castes, for he put on airs and "no longer the prestige of the white man" (131). Ethel began to associate with Miller, a fat German-American, who was a shrewd businessman and employed Lawson before. At the end of the year, when the narrator is to leave Samoa soon, Lawson finally discovers his wife's adultery with Miller and challenges him to a fight and is beaten. The narrator meets Lawson and goes to the chapel with him on New Year's Eve. This is the last time the narrator sees the living Lawson. After he leaves Lawson, the narrator drinks and plays a card game with Miller and other white men in the English Club through the night. In the morning, they go to bathe in the pool, where they find the body of Lawson at the bottom of the water, who had committed suicide "with a great stone tied up in his coat and bound to his feet" (143).

We can easily recognise some distinctive themes which are all-too-common in other colonial and postcolonial fiction: degeneration of the white male protagonist, hybridity of the cultures, and miscegenation. As Erling B. Holtsmark sums up, Ethel's characteristics embody them:

As a half-caste, Ethel enjoys a displaced liminality that hovers, on the mythic plane, between the human and the divine, and on the narrative

plane of the present story, between European and Samoan. (Holtsmark 220)

He also argues that Lawson's degeneration and drawing represent the decline of the British Empire (Holtsmark 227).

IV

Before moving on to a more detailed analysis of the story, a brief explanation of modern Samoan history would help our understanding. Although Holtsmark says that the scene is set in "British Samoa" (Holtsmark 226), it is not a precise explanation. The Samoan archipelago, or the Navigators Islands, is divided at 171° W longitude. The western part of it is Samoa, or The Independent State of Samoa more precisely, consists chiefly of two larger islands, Savaii and Upolu. Its capital city is Apia. The eastern part is American Samoa, whose main city is Pago Pago. Among the six short stories in *The Trembling of a Leaf*, "The Pool" and "Mackintosh" are set in Samoa, and "Rain" is set in American Samoa. Samoan archipelago was sighted by the Dutch navigator, Jacob Roggeveen in 1722; and the French navigator, Louis Antoine de Bougainville, landed for the first time in 1768. In the latter half of the nineteenth century Apia had flourished as a supply base for whaling ships. With the rise of nationalism, the Samoan archipelago had been involved in struggles between the western great powers; Britain, Germany, and the United States. They were on the verge of the violent conflict, which was avoided because of the great hurricane in 1889. For a while, Apia had been co-ruled by these three powers. In 1899, German annexed the western part of Samoa and the United States the eastern part, while Britain retreated from Samoa in exchange for its acquisition of Fiji. At the beginning of WWI, New Zealand invaded western Samoa and mandated it from 1919. In 1962 it became independent as Western Samoa, and the name of the country was changed to Samoa in 1997. Considering the fact that Maugham visited the South Pacific in 1916, the period of the story is probably the beginning of the annexation by New Zealand.

The economy in the South Pacific was ruled by German companies from the second half of the nineteenth century to the beginning of WWI. For

example, Stevenson describes in his *A Footnote to History* a detailed description of Samoa ruled by the German company.⁶⁾ When Maugham visited the Pacific, German companies still had a great influence on the local economy despite the retreat of Germany from the Pacific:

... then you come to the large buildings of the German Firm: this is the name by which are known the offices and headquarters of the great German company which had something close to a monopoly of the South Pacific commerce.... (A *Writer's Notebook* 100)

What is more important is, besides, that the United States gradually took Germany's place comparing the fall of Germany and Britain in those days.

First of all, the title of the story would give us a clue to explain its allegory. According to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, the 'pool' has the following meanings: (1) a small body of standing or still water, (2) a game played on a billiard-table, (3) (as a verb) to throw into a common stock or fund to be distributed according to agreement; to share or divide (traffic or receipts). As Holtsmark suggests that "[t]here is surely paronomastic irony in the safe "pool"-playing of the Europeans at the hotel" (Holtsmark 220), it is apparent that Maugham arranges the first and second 'pool' in the story:

The life of the island is pleasant and easy. He [Lawson] enjoyed the long idle talks in the lounge of the hotel and the gay evenings at the English Club when a group of fellows would play pool.... The country was indescribably fertile. In parts the forest was still virgin, a tangle of strange trees, luxuriant undergrowth, and vine; it gave an impression that was mysterious and troubling.

But the spot that entranced him was a pool a mile or two away from Apia to which in the evenings he often went to bathe. (115, emphases added)

In the quotation above, the 'pool' as the small area of still water and the 'pool' as billiards are arranged in the same page. As for the third meaning of the 'pool', to share or divide something, we can speculate on it from the Samoan history as I have explained: the co-ruling of Apia by Britain, Germany, and the United States. We can also assume this third meaning from the diverse

nationalities of the white settlers in the story, such as Lawson (Scot), Miller (German-American), Brevald (Norwegian), and Caster (Australian). That is to say, Samoa had been literally pooled, or shared, by those western nations, as is represented by various European male characters in "The Pool". In addition, as we can imagine from the characterisation of Miller, the fat German American, he is personified as German and the United States which ruled not only Samoa but also the major parts of the Pacific in those days.

The meaning of the pool, thus, can be concluded as follows: (1) the pool where Ethel swims. It also implies the state of hybridity and miscegenation: (2) the pool as a kind of billiards game which white male characters play: (3) the state of Samoa co-ruled by European powers both politically and economically. In addition to these three meanings, we can add the fourth implication derived from the second meaning if we compare the South Pacific Islands to the balls of the billiards game, vast Pacific Ocean to the table, western powers to the players of the game.

V

If drowning Lawson symbolises the downfall of the British Empire, we must notice the fact that he is emphasised not as a British citizen but as a Scot in the story. As Charles Strickland in *The Moon and Sixpence*, Maugham also makes use of actual people and events in "The Pool":

L. He was an estate agent in London and came to Samoa originally for his health. . . . He is married to a half-caste and has a small son, but she lives with her parents and he at the hotel. He has rather a cunning, shifty look and does not impress you as honest or scrupulous; but he is anxious to be thought a good sort and is full of a surface jollity. He is quite intelligent. He drinks a great deal and is dead drunk three or four days a week, often by mid-afternoon. Then he is quarrelsome and wants to fight people. (*A Writer's Notebook* 100)

Comparing the case of Strickland, whose nationality is changed from French to English, Lawson is, probably, changed from English to Scottish, as is often emphasised in the story (I must use "probably" here, for Maugham does not describe L's nationality clearly in *A Writer's Notebook*). Moreover, he is

embellished by his tuberculosis. Speaking of a Scot, who suffers from tuberculosis and dies in Samoa, we will again remember Stevenson, whose name is mentioned in "The Pool" by Lawson himself (113).

A Stevenson-like character appears in "Mackintosh", too. "Mackintosh" is set at Savaii, the largest island in the Western Samoa. Its main characters are Walker, the Irish island administrator, and his Scot assistant, Mackintosh. Mackintosh, a native of Aberdeen, comes to Samoa from London because of illness like Lawson:

To Mackintosh, who had lived the sheltered life of a government official in London till at the age thirty-four an attack of pneumonia, leaving him with the treat of tuberculosis, had forced him to seek a post in the Pacific, Walker's existence seemed extraordinarily romantic. ("Mackintosh" 146-7)

Walker, a tyrannical administrator, had "ruled his small kingdom with efficiency" ("Mackintosh" 150) for 25 years, behaves like God and treats natives as his children. Mackintosh, who is represented as a son of the God-like Walker, instigates Manuma, a son of a Samoan chief, to kill Walker with his gun. Even though Walker unreasonably punishes natives with his "judgement of Providence" ("Mackintosh" 152) when they do not obey him, it becomes evident, on his deathbed, that he had been protecting the natives in his own way. Realising his hidden affection for Walker confronted by his death, Mackintosh goes to the sea and kills himself with the same gun:

He [Mackintosh] walked down to the sea and walked into the lagoon; he waded out cautiously, so that he should not trip against a coral rock, till the water came to his arm-pits. Then he put a bullet through his head.

An hour later half a dozen slim brown sharks were splashing and struggling at the spot where he fell. ("Mackintosh" 174)

As for another Samoan short story, "Rain", the protagonist of the story, Reverend Alfred Davidson, whose nationality is uncertain, also committed suicide at the seaside cutting his throat with a razor.

One of the reasons why Maugham gives his protagonists the image of this Scottish writer is that Stevenson is "a supreme example of the Scots

abroad" (Shepperson 335). After the Union of the English and Scottish parliaments in 1707, Scotland acquired the opportunity to venture in colonization and commerce in abroad under the protection of the British navy, and played an important role in the creation of the British Empire. In Maugham's work, Lawson and Mackintosh are represented as typical examples of Scots abroad: the Scots, who are in the remote colonies as Pacific, being in the state of both coloniser and colonised. Lawson, for example, values the trend in London, speaks in standard English, and behaves as a model gentleman except for his drinking habit. Although he hopes that his son becomes "a real Scot" (125) becoming a doctor and marrying a white woman, his word, "a real Scot", signifies the imperial elite with education and trained skill. It seems that Scotland (or Ireland) is laid the major blame for the downfall of the British Empire in Maugham's Pacific writing; and it accords with the fact that there were a lot of Scots in the Pacific in those days. Yet, this does not mean that the decline was actually due to them. On the contrary, as "Scotland had, after all, been a victim of English policies" (Colley 5), Maugham also makes use of the Scots in his work to avoid criticism from editors or implied readers in his homeland.

The other reason of their having the image of Stevenson is that, as Maugham makes use of the popularised image of Gauguin in *The Moon and Sixpence* and makes it a kind of quasi-biography of this painter, in "The Pool" and "Mackintosh", he also takes advantage of the romantic image of Stevenson: the Scot, who was exiled in the South Pacific with his tuberculosis and never returned to his native country. For these reasons, the setting of "The Pool" must be Samoa and Scotland rather than other regions.

Notes

- 1) Samuel J. Rogal, for example, concludes in his *A William Somerset Maugham Encyclopedia* that "other than occasional similarities in locale, their lives, their personal philosophies, and their art really did not reside upon common ground" (Rogal 267).
- 2) Vasco Núñez de Balboa was the first European who sighted the Pacific in 1513. But it was around the seventeenth and eighteenth century that most of the Pacific Islands were "discovered" by Europeans. The term "the South Pacific" includes Polynesia, Melanesia, Micronesia, and New Zealand; and

"Oceania" includes Australia in addition to them. Generally speaking, "Polynesians were upheld by 19th-century writers because the women seemed attractive, because they had made a step or two closer to our own exalted state of civilization, and because they displayed some readiness to adopt a variety of Western goods and practices, which Melanesians conservatively and intransigently resisted" (Thomas 31). Besides, as Vanessa Smith points out, Polynesians "were given an intermediary status within the hierarchy of otherness in the Pacific: the brown mediator between the civilised white missionary and the black and savage Melanesian or the primitive Micronesian (Smith 83). In addition to the difference of physical appearance, the difference of the geographical location also caused the distinction of their representations; the relatively friendly Polynesians living in the seaside and xenophobic Melanesians usually living in the mountainous district. However, such a dichotomous distinction is a kind of prejudice resulted from a large number of "'proto-anthropological" writing" (Thomas 29), on which Captain Cook and Joseph Banks were so influential, for instance. Polynesians are also represented as savages or cannibals at times, as we can see in *Typee*. See Smith 83-88, and Thomas 29-31.

- 3) As for Britain, its involvement in this region is owing to the pressure from the governments of Australia and New Zealand, which demanded the dominance of these islands for economical, political and religious reasons. See Edmond 131.
- 4) As for boy's adventure novels and the Pacific, see Edmond 142-154.
- 5) Suicide is one of the main themes in contemporary Pacific literature. Actually, South Pacific Islands are said to have the highest rate of suicide in the world.
- 6) Stevenson criticises a German trading company, Godeffroy und Sohn, comparing it to "Gulliver among the Lilliputs" (Stevenson 16). He also describes "many varieties of whites", German, English and Americans, and so on. See Stevenson's *A Footnote to History*, 10-19. As for Godeffroy and its ruling of the South Pacific economy, see Campbell 96-8.

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