R. L. STEVENSON'S SAMOAN GOTHIC: REPRESENTING LATE NINETEENTH-CENTURY PLANTATIONS

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Sāmoa's plantation landscape haunts Robert Louis Stevenson's 1892 text, *A Footnote to History: Eight Years of Trouble in Samoa.* Stevenson represents the German-run plantations as sites of gothic terror, which are haunted by the ghosts of indentured laborers. In this essay, I examine Stevenson's accounts of German plantation culture alongside corollary narratives from Sāmoa's three commercial newspapers: the *Samoa Times and South Sea Gazette* (1877–81) the *Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser* (1888–96), and the *Samoa Weekly Herald* (1892–1900). By juxtaposing some of Stevenson's primary texts and local newspaper coverage, I not only identify the divergent discourses that shaped the perceptions of laborers but also reveal how the novelist constructed a form of gothic to participate in debates regarding the ethics of plantation labor in Sāmoa.

> You ride in a German plantation and see no bush, no soul stirring.... We must add the yet more lively allurement of a haunted house, for over these empty and silent miles there broods the fear of the negrito cannibal. (Stevenson, 1892)

Sāmoa's plantation landscape haunts Robert Louis Stevenson's *A Footnote to History: Eight Years of Trouble in Samoa* (1892).[1] After guiding his reader across Mulinu'u, "the proper residence of the Samoan kings" (1996, 11), and into the port town of Apia, home to an eclectic group of European merchants, planters, and beachcombers, the narrator reaches

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the "centre of trouble, the head of the boil of which Samoa languishes" (1996, 14): the "German firm" or, the Deutsche Handels-und Plantagen-Gesellschaft (DHPG). Sāmoa's landscape bears the corporation's imprint in the shape of "zones of cultivation" that stand out against "the dark vest of forest" (1996, 15). Next, the reader is invited to "walk for hours in parks of palm trees alleys" and to admire the "carpet of clean sward, [where] troops of horses and herds of handsome cattle may be seen to browse"; in fact, "to one accustomed to the rough luxuriance of the tropics, the appearance is of fairy-land" (1996, 15). Despite the pastoral charms of these emerald plantations, the description that unfolds in my epigraph discloses their sinister aspects: empty, endless miles of "cocoanut alleys" over which "broods the fear of the negrito cannibal" (1996, 20).[2]

Stevenson's evocation of the Pacific plantation as a gothic site haunted by the "negrito cannibal" invites us to consider how settler colonials represented the German plantation system and its relation to Melanesian laborers.[3] In this essay, I examine Stevenson's accounts of German plantation culture alongside corollary narratives from Sāmoa's three commercial newspapers: the *Samoa Times and South Sea Gazette* (1877–81) the *Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser* (1888–96), and the *Samoa Weekly Herald* (1892–1900).[4] By juxtaposing some of Stevenson's primary texts and local newspaper coverage, I not only identify the divergent discourses that shaped the European perception of laborers but also reveal how the novelist constructed a vision of Samoan gothicism and thus participated in debates regarding the ethics of plantation labor.[5] These debates, diverse visions, and gothic perceptions bring us closer to understanding how Sāmoa's colonial settlers understood plantations, the nameless thousands bound to them, and the Samoans that resisted them.

The abolition of slavery across the British Empire in 1833 and the spread of western capitalism abroad commodified the labor of Pacific Islanders. From the 1860s until the early twentieth century, Islanders were contracted, acquired through deceptive means, or kidnapped outright to work on foreign-owned plantations in Queensland, Fiji, New Caledonia, Tahiti, and Sāmoa.[6] In the trade's early years, kidnapping, or "blackbirding," was widespread throughout the southwestern and central Pacific (Moore et al. 1990, xxxi).[7] The British government responded to cases of illegal recruiting by instituting regulations such as the Pacific Islanders Protection Act in 1872 and 1875, which effectively established Queen Victoria's "jurisdiction over her subjects within any islands and places in the Pacific Ocean not being within Her Majesty's dominions, nor within the jurisdiction of any civilized power" (*The Pacific Islanders Protection Act*, clause 6). While the act covered the labor-trading activities of Victoria's subjects, it also provided a legal definition for kidnapping and supplied naval officers with instructions on what measures

to take when they encountered a slaving vessel (Docker 1970: 92–93). The appointment of the first Pacific High Commissioner for the Western Pacific in 1877 was a further attempt to control trade in areas of British commercial interests. His responsibility, among others, was to "supervise labour recruiters and traders in Melanesia and Micronesia" (Scarr 1968, xvi).[8]

When Stevenson and his wife Fanny sailed into Pacific waters in 1888, island communities were still struggling with the aftermath of recruiting. Although there was a marked drop in the incidence of blackbirding in the 1870s, social degradation, or "cultural kidnapping," prevailed (Moore 1985: 47–48). In 1890, during the cruise of the *Janet Nicoll,* Stevenson and Fanny observed the effects of cultural kidnapping in the islands and atolls of Micronesia. In her diary, Fanny recounts an incident when two American vessels landed at Funafuti in 1886 and lured two-thirds of the population aboard their ship by promising them an education. "It is needless to add," remarks Fanny, "that the vessels were slavers, and the entrapped islanders were never seen again" (2004: 120–21). Their next stop was Natau, and again, the Stevensons learned that Natau had been "a favourite recruiting place for slavers and worse still, a haunt of the loathsome 'Bully Hayes'" (2004, 126). The terrible effects of recruiting practices that Stevenson observed during the cruise of the *Janet Nicoll* led to his recognizing the urgent need to reduce the harmful impact of indentured labor.[9]

In February 1892—now settled at his Vailima plantation in Sāmoa—Stevenson announced that *Sophia Scarlet*, his new novel, was "entirely planned." Although the fledgling literary project never made it past an outline (1994, 7:231),[10] its initial fifteen pages contain the themes of illegal recruiting and plantation violence. *Sophia Scarlet*'s fictional Tahitian plantation was inspired by William Stewart's plantation at Atimaona in Tahiti (Balfour 1922, 358).[11] In a letter to his mentor Sidney Colvin, Stevenson explained that Stewart's historical plantation would give *Sophia Scarlet* an "Uncle Tom flavour" (1994, 7:231). From the novel's early stages, Stevenson was adapting Harriet Beecher Stowe's popular abolition novel (1851–52) for a Pacific setting.[12]

Sophia Scarlet's outline opens with a description of Dan Scarlet, an English planter, and his "cargo" of laborers, who have been obtained by an ex-officer who "makes no secret of the nature of his employment [recruiting]" (Stevenson 2008, 129).[13] When Dan Scarlet reaches his vanilla and coconut plantation, he is greeted by his three daughters. Sophia, the youngest, is intelligent, passionate, and unafraid to decry the injustices that she observes on her family's plantation. One day, she informs her father that his German overseer, Strelitz, has been "cowhiding a labour boy" (2008, 131); on another occasion, the young woman witnesses her sister "beating" a Gilbertese

servant "with a switch" (2008, 131). Sophia's compassion only increases when a laborer appeals to her, "saying he has been whipped and robbed by one of the white misis [*sic*] on the plantation" (2008, 132). The politics of plantation violence are addressed when a visitor asks Sophia whether she "like[s] the labour business," to which she insists that the "business" is akin to "slavery" (2008, 138). Later, a dispute breaks out when Sophia is accused by her sister of being a "political woman." Casting aside her role of dutiful daughter, Sophia cries out that she cannot bear to live at the expense of others' dignity and "eat[s]" her "bread with tears of shame" (2008, 140). Once more Sophia asserts her independence when she goes against her father's explicit order not to go into the bush because of the "black boys" that linger there (2008, 131). As she treks through the jungle, Sophia encounters a "black boy," a "huge old islander" who stands "feeding a fire … crooning and muttering to himself." When he turns suddenly around, Sophia notices his "red eyes," which are a result of the "devil-work" he has been practicing. As he begins to lead Sophia "to his house, a wretched shed roofed with stolen sheet iron," a "labour woman" arrives and swears her "to secrecy as to the old man and his house" (2008, 133).

When Stevenson succumbed to a brain hemorrhage in 1894, *Sophia Scarlet* remained incomplete.[14] In a letter from May 1892, Stevenson explained to Colvin that he was putting the plantation novel on hold in order to finish *Weir of Hermiston,* the final novel in the Scottish trilogy that began with *David Balfour*: "*Sophia* is a book I am much taken with; and mean to get to" but "*David Balfour* and *The Young Chevalier* must be finished first" (1994, 7:282). He went on to remark that since "*The Young Chevalier* is a story of sentiment and passion," it will "prepare me for *Sophia* which is to contain three ladies, and a kind of love affair between the heroine and a dying planter who is a poet!" (1994, 7:282). Stevenson's off-handed description of *Sophia Scarlet*'s plot echoes an earlier dismissal of his novel as merely "regular," with its "heroine and hero, and false accusation, and love and marriage, and all the rest of it" (1994, 7:231). The author's nonchalance about his use of the popular Victorian literary trappings—heroines, intrigue, romance, marriage, and "all the rest of it"—are not to be taken at face value. *Sophia Scarlet*'s dysfunctional plantation and bush-dwelling "black boy" are distinctly un-Victorian, and the novel's outline is thoroughly imbued with references to European colonialism in the nineteenth-century Pacific.[15]

The novel's themes belong to the context of Stevenson's contemporaneous *A Footnote to History.* The depiction of the cruel and callous treatment of the laborers at the hands of the German overseer Strelitz echoes Stevenson's poignant critique of the DHPG's Samoan plantations. In *A Footnote to History,* Stevenson insists that Germans' impressive plantations are built on

the sweat of "seven or eight hundred men and women" who "toil for the German firm on contracts of three or five years." The duration of the contract, however, is not always honored by the Germans, because as a form of "punitive extra labour," the "thrall's term of service is extended" so that "even where that term is out, much irregularity occurs in the repatriation of the discharged" and abuses "flourish" (1996: 15–16). While both *Sophia Scarlet* and *A Footnote to History* feature German overseers and unscrupulous plantation owners, they also highlight the figure of the "black boy," the indentured Melanesian laborer. The old islander whom Sophia encounters parallels the Sāmoa-wide phenomenon of plantation fugitives who, according to Thomas M. Dawson's consular report, are "treated more like slaves than anywhere else" and thus feel compelled to "fle[e] into the bush" (1882, 19). Despite opposing the practices of the DHPG, Stevenson was integrated into a colonial plantation culture and benefited directly from being a DHPG neighbor.

In 1890, the novelist found himself "a landholder and a farmer with paths to hew in tropical bush, weeds to deracinate, weeders and diggers to supervise" (Stevenson 1994, 7:18). Happily, he assumed the role of a small tropical farmer and confided to Colvin that, perhaps in "five or six years," Vailima might "support us and pay wages" (1994, 7:202). Years later, when the American businessman Harry J. Moors commented on his relationship with the celebrity, he recalled the latter's particular interest in cacao: "As Mr Stevenson cleared off his acreage, to make room for his new house, he began to think that he should also plant cacao, and he increased his force of boys" (1986: 96–97). Moors helped to clear Stevenson's 300 acres of land and oversaw a force of laborers. Stevenson was not the only ambitious British settler: in all, Sāmoa's British plantations employed 210 Gilbert Islanders between 1877 and 1886 (Macdonald 2001, 56; Munro 1989, 174). In the late 1870s, the majority of these workers were sent to the former London Missionary Society missionary Frank Cornwall, who with the help of Moors, ran the Magia and Lata plantations.

Cornwall's plantations were notorious, and Moors was at the heart of the controversy. In 1877, Cornwall had recruited 135 Gilbert Islanders, half of whom were sent to the Lata plantation, where they were denied adequate amounts of food and water.[16] At the time, Moors was Lata's overseer, and he had a nasty reputation for being "driving and callous" and frequently using "corporal punishment" (Munro and Firth 1993, 111).[17] The conditions at Cornwall's plantations were so notorious that nearly twenty years later, in 1899, the *Samoa Weekly Herald* reminded readers that 130 "colored laborers" had been kept at Lata "for five months … upon miserably bad and insufficient food … [and] that men and women were alike cruelly flogged at the caprice of the manager [Moors]" (2 September 1899).

Although Magia's and Lata's deplorable living and working conditions led to an official inquiry and eventually to Moors's consequent dismissal, the latter's participation in the labor trade was by no means over. By 1879–80, Moors was working as a recruiting agent for the Jaluit-based firm of Hernsheim in the Marshalls (Bennett 1976, 15). During the same period, he also worked for the Hawaiian government as a recruiting agent, for which the Hawaiian Evangelical Association recognized "his conscientious efforts in fairly engaging his recruiters" (*Cyclopedia of Samoa* 1907, 88). Based on his experiences as a labor recruiter in Micronesia, Moors wrote two novels in the 1880s, both unpublished, titled *The Tokanoa: A plain tale of some strange adventures in the Gilberts* and *Tapu: A tale of adventure in the South Seas.* Both texts purport to be compilations from the diary of the fictional "John T. Bradley, labor agent" and belong to the popular genre of "South Seas" adventure fiction featuring labor recruiters confronted by hostile and violent islanders. While his fiction leaves much to be desired, Moors is best remembered by literary historians as the author of *With Stevenson in Samoa* (1910), a biography of Stevenson's final years in Sāmoa. Stevenson was all too familiar with Moors's unsavory associations with "'blackbirded' labour" (McLynn 1994, 368), and in a March 1890 letter he acknowledges that Moors is "not of the best character" because he "has been in the labour trade as supercargo; [and] has been partner with Grevsmuhl, the most infamous trader in these waters" (1994, 6:381). Grevsmuhl spent four years recruiting laborers for J. C. Godeffroy und Sohn, and Moors was his junior partner for three years (*Cyclopedia of Samoa* 1907, 100). Despite his discomfort with Moors's connections to the labor trade, the latter was certainly up to the task of helping Stevenson settle his plantation. Moors explains that while Stevenson was undertaking the cruise of the *Janet Nicoll,* he hired laborers to clear the overgrown property (1910, 22). When Stevenson returned to Sāmoa, he found that the road leading to his new estate "had been widened and improved" and that "a crew of Melanesian laborers, who were employed by Harry Moors, were hard at work cutting and burning trees and bush" (Holmes 2001, 204). Land clearing, however, was only the first step toward establishing a working plantation. In time, Stevenson turned to his German neighbors from the Vailele plantation to purchase trees and other species of vegetation, such as coconut seeds. With such support, banana, breadfruit, mango, orange, guava, and coconut trees flourished at Vailima. In addition, "several acres" were set aside for pineapple and kava (Balfour 1922: 334–35). The success of the plantation, however, depended on reliable manpower; "black boys" were indispensable to Stevenson's ambitions as a small planter in Sāmoa.[18] While the exact number of workers that were employed at Vailima has not been established, for Sāmoa's German plantations, the figures are as follows. Between 1867

and 1894, more than 2,000 workers were engaged from the Carolines, the Gilberts, and the Marshalls (Firth 1973, 309). Roughly the same number were recruited from the New Hebrides, the Solomon Islands, and the Bismarck Archipelago between 1878 and 1885 (Munro and Firth 1987, 27). Between 1887 and 1912, another 5,000 workers were recruited from the Bismarck Archipelago and German Solomons (Firth 1982, 179). Between 1883 and 1886, thirty laborers were recruited from the Cook Islands (Firth 1973, 12), and during the same time period, another twenty workers were engaged from Tuvalu (Munro 1982: 276–77).[19]

The German labor trade was aligned with Germany's political interests in the Pacific; in 1884, when Germany annexed northeastern New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago, the Samoan branch of the DHPG gained exclusive access to recruitment in these areas.[20] German plantations were managed by notoriously strict overseers who made liberal use of corporal punishment (Munro and Firth 1990, 20). Since the German consul in Sāmoa backed the interests of the DHPG, abusive methods for instilling discipline went unchecked, a state of affairs that the British and American consuls found deplorable.[21] J. C. Williams, for example, reported that German overseers were "beat[ing] and flog[ing]" their workers—including women and children—and getting away with it, because the abuses occurred "in the presence of the German consul, who was also the firm's manager" (quoted in Firth 1973, 19). Williams, like everyone else in Sāmoa, knew that "German rule … meant Godeffroy rule" (Kennedy 1974, 7); however, in contrast to Williams's complaint about the German consul overlooking transgressions, an 1877 *Samoa Times* editorial argued for the superiority of the German system in Sāmoa in comparison to that of the British in Fiji. The columnist explains that, upon arrival in Sāmoa, indentured laborers are inspected by the "solicitous" German consulate:

> A register is kept of the name, sex, date of recruiting, and name of employer of each emigrant, together with the term of service and amount to be paid per month to each.… It is also arranged that families are never separated.… The person employing these people are held responsible for them, and have to report deaths and other casualties to the Consulate, and be prepared to send them home at the end of their term. (3 November 1877)

Despite the columnist's insistence that Sāmoa's laborers were confident about the "probability of being returned home when their term of service has expired," William B. Churchward maintained that the DHPG often resorted to retaining workers beyond the expiration of their contracts to

produce docile laboring bodies (1887: 62–63).[22] In 1883, 540 of 1,250 laborers were being retained (Munro and Firth 1990: 20–21). Like his British colleague, the American consul expressed dismay over the German practice of extending a laborers' period of indenture without consent and, in his consular report, referred to the case of a worker who was forced to spend an extra five years on a DHPG plantation (Dawson 1882, 18). An anonymous letter to the editor of the *Samoa Times*—signed "Sceptic"—reflects the public interest in the issue of repatriation. In response to an earlier article about a detained plantation worker, the writer argues that "the boy's assertion … cannot be implicitly relied on.… [Because] little reliance can be placed upon a black boy's estimate of time, and I would not be surprised if the boy had worked, according to his own statement, 25 years" (March 1, 1890).

The *Samoa Times*'s response to "Sceptic" suggested that "all imported labour under contract can tell almost to a day the expiration of their engagement" (March 1, 1890). The debate over appropriate repatriation and a worker's ability to gauge the duration of his work reflected the way in which plantations distorted workers' time: within the boundaries of the DHPG plantation, the period of indenture was subordinated to the "rhythm"[23] of economic production. The assumption that islanders were incapable of telling time was based in the ideology that they were rooted in a timeless and unchanging past, the antithesis of progress and modernity.

A series of natural disasters in the 1860s and the civil war of 1869–73 induced Samoans to part with large tracts of land in exchange for food supplies, guns, and ammunition (Hempenstall 1984, 21; Munro and Firth 1987, 26). Many Samoans, displaced by this "mad rush" (Hempenstall 1984, 21) or "land grab" (Meleiseā 1987a, 35), did not hesitate to express their displeasure, including the "three Samoans who were charged with having been guilty of riotous conduct on the plantation of Mr. von Gertz, Vaitele, and also with using threatening language towards that gentleman" (*Samoa Times*, 24 July 1880). Each man was forced to pay a fine and spent eighteen days in prison. Others organized themselves into raiding parties, a striking phenomenon that prompted Churchward to accuse Samoans of being "addicted to thieving [food] from the plantations," which they justified by claiming that the crops originate from "stolen" land (1887, 391).[24] Additional supplies were not, however, all that Samoans encountered on the plantations. Relations between Samoans and foreign workers were rarely cordial and often resulted in the injury or death of either party (Gilson 1970, 287; Munro and Firth 1993, 107).[25] Conflicts were sparked when Samoans threatened to steal from the laborers' food crops or when laborers attempted to stop Samoans from trespassing on the plantation; for example, on October 20, 1877, the *Samoa Times* reported that "some plantation labourers got roughly handled by some

Samoans. It appears, from what we can learn, that some of the hands of the plantation, in taking a ramble over the grounds, came upon Samoans stealing vegetables." In more extreme cases, Samoans targeted laborers to divert attention from raiding missions (Firth 1973: 78–79). As the *Samoa Times* observes, indentured workers were the plantations' sentries, because it was necessary "to keep a watch on Samoans, to prevent them from stealing the produce" (2 May 1891). According to local newspaper coverage, most violent conflicts were instigated by Samoans that trespassed upon the plantations. For example, Oba and Kauai were severely beaten by Samoans wielding cricket bats (*Samoa Weekly Herald,* 11 March 1893); the face of an anonymous "black boy" was sliced open by Samoans on the Vaivase plantation when he tried to prevent them from stealing breadfruit (*Samoa Weekly Herald,* 16 September 1899); the Samoans Vagai and Levi assaulted Tomu, a worker, with an axe while they stole from the plantation (*Samoa Weekly Herald,* 19 March 1895)[26]; and a "black boy" was murdered by Samoans while they stole coconuts (*Samoa Times,* 1891). On 4 October 1890, an article described "one of the most disgraceful riots" that had taken place between Samoans and workers from the Matafele plantation. After a laborer had been jailed for being inebriated, his friends, "who were also under the influence of liquor," assembled twenty more laborers and marched on the jail. One hundred Samoans arrived on the scene, "armed with clubs and stones," and began to fight with the laborers. The article claims that "one of the most inhuman acts we have ever witnessed" ensued: roughly twenty Samoans began "clubbing and dragging [an] unfortunate wretch in the most inhuman manner." When a group of European bystanders asked the Samoans to stop, the latter responded that it "was none of their business" (*Samoa Times,* 4 October 1890).

Such news reports not only offer us a rare glimpse into the daily violence of plantation culture but also reveal the warped expectations of some colonial settlers concerning the behaviors of the different ethnic communities. While crimes committed by Samoans were recognized as expressions of resentment and restlessness, Melanesian violence was posited as a fundamental, biological "savage" trait. In her discussion of Queensland plantation violence in the 1880s, Tracey Banivanua-Mar observes that "Melanesian violence … was seen to be located deep within Islanders' racial programming, and in inquiries into the most serious of violent incidents, motive was frequently subsumed by reference to innate characteristics" (2007, 151). Samoan newspapers relied on the same essentializing discourse by implying that Melanesians were indiscriminate in their choice of victims and would become "desperate through jealousy or ill-treatment, and … under their temporary fit of madness, slaughter any person they meet, black or

white" (12 July 1890). The Melanesian regression to bloodthirsty "madness" is reiterated in an article describing opposing factions of workers: "one party attacked another and killed three of them in the most brutal manner, cutting their throat, cutting off their limbs and disemboweling them" (*Samoa Weekly Herald,* 8 December 1894). The scene of the workers' hyperbolic violence contrasts the, ostensibly, rational setting of the colonial plantation.[27] A particularly shocking case is recounted in an article from April 26, 1890. According to the report, the remains of an old plantation worker named Taro were found near the Vailele plantation: "the bones of the body were almost bare with the exception of the left arm which was considerably shrunk up, and the head lying several yards away."[28] Upon examining Taro's remains, Apia's German doctors Dr. Stuebel and Dr. Funk speculated that Taro had been decapitated "by some sharp instrument"; however, they could not understand how his "flesh disappeared from the bones within the short period of four or five days." If the colonial doctors were befuddled by Taro's remains, the locals were not. A report remarks that the nearby community insists either Taro was "eaten by some of the escaped black fellows from the German plantations" or Taro's companions were the "murderers and cannibals" (*Samoa Times*, April 26, 1890). Despite Stuebel and Funk's reticence, Taro's death suggests a perversion of plantation labor: the skinning of Taro's flesh evokes the husking of a coconut in the production of copra, and the "sharp instrument" that decapitated him is, in all likelihood, a farming instrument; thus, bodily desecration and cannibalism are savage drives that point to the dehumanizing effects of the plantation system. According to colonial logic, the violence of plantation overseers was a necessary requirement for the disciplining of primitive bodies, while the violence that resulted from such excesses was dehumanized and perceived as the laborers' regression to animalism. By attending to these newspaper accounts, we see the intersections between corporal brutality and discursive violence, as well as the pervasive manner in which the dialectic relationship between plantation violence and Melanesian "counter-violence" was obscured and denied.[29]

Like Sāmoa's colonial newspapers, Stevenson's writings identify the ever-lurking threat of plantation violence; however, he also offers an alternative depiction of Melanesian laborers. According to Kenneth McKenzie, Stevenson not only "befriended" laborers but also helped them "whenever their paths crossed" (1978: 162–63). Regardless of Stevenson's true feelings about them, he recognized their literary potential; the system of organized labor gave him privileged access to a race of supposed cannibals who, he claimed in a January 1892 letter, "cook and eat men's flesh" and who are "ugly as sin" and "shabby and small … like sick monkeys" (1994, 7:227). Stevenson's degrading portrayal of laborers echoes a leitmotif in eighteenth- to

nineteenth-century writing that depicted Melanesians as bestial.[30] In Sāmoa, therefore, Stevenson encountered the embodiment of a literary trope.

In a letter to Austin Strong from November 1892, Stevenson offered his step-grandson a full report on the renovations at Vailima and the work being undertaken by the "four gangs" of laborers: some "hundred black boys" carry lumber on their shoulders as they trudge up a deep and muddy road under the supervision of two drunken German overseers. Stevenson delights in the extravagance of his building project and represents the construction site as an exhibit of Pacific exotica. Dwelling on their distinctive appearance, he observes that "many of the boys had a very queer substitute for a pocket. This was nothing more than a string which some of them tied about their upper arms and some about their necks, and in which they stuck their clay pipes … some had feathers stuck in their hair, and some long stalks of grass stuck through the holes in their noses" (1994, 7:427–28).

As he walks up and down the side of the road, Stevenson narrates the visual spectacle of the exotic and strangely attired "black boys" by identifying an array of curios. The passage highlights the way in which organized labor functions as a framing device: the laborers are spatially organized in rows and "squads of two" and become accessible to the planter's gaze. Among Sāmoa's "black boys," however, some were more interesting than others: the "thralls, many of them wild negritos from the West, have taken to the bush, harbour there in a state partly bestial.… Further in the bush, huts, small patches of cultivation and smoking ovens have been found by hunters" (1996, 16).

Stevenson's interest in plantation fugitives was topical. When he moved to Sāmoa in 1890, mass desertions had just occurred as a result of the Samoan war of 1888–89 (Firth 1973, 70). In the early 1890s, hundreds of laborers were fleeing the beatings and long hours of toil. In 1888–89, 17 percent of laborers of Sāmoa's laborers became runaways; from 1891 to 1894, the number of runaways fluctuated from roughly 11 to 13 percent before falling to about 4 percent annually between 1895 and 1898 (Munro and Firth 1993, 117). The deserters lived in the bush or among Samoans who did not deliver them back to the Germans for a cash reward (Firth 1973: 77–78). In the early 1890s, some fugitives found "refuge" at Vailima (McKenzie 1978, 163), and in some cases, Stevenson rehired them as his own workers, admitting that "much of my land was cleared by [runaways'] hands; a round a dozen were arrested on my property" (Beinecke 1891).[31] In a letter to Adelaide Boodle from September 4, 1892, Stevenson offers a portrait of the "bestial" and "wild negritos": "Black boys sometimes run away from the plantations, and live behind alone in the forest, building little sheds to protect them from the rain, and sometimes planting little gardens of food, but for the most part

living the best they can upon the nuts of the trees and yams that they dig with their hands out of the earth" (1994, 7:370).

The fugitives were both "wild" and capable of domestication: they establish a makeshift civilization by growing "small patches of cultivation," constructing "little shed[s]," and planting "little gardens." Not only is their means of existence "small" and "little," but their vegetarian diet contrasts the tired trope of cannibalism. In addition to their diminished existence, the runaway "black boys" live in isolation. "I do not think," laments Stevenson in a melodramatic tone, that "there can be anywhere in the world people more wretched than these runaways. They cannot return, for they would only return to be punished. They can never hope to see again their own land or their own people" (1994, 7:370). Although the runaways adapt to their new circumstances by mimicking the markers of settlement—they build homes and cultivate the land—their status is that of unwanted and unclaimed refugees.

The pathetic portrait of "black boy" refugee veers again toward melodrama in an 1892 letter in which Stevenson recounts the sudden and tragic appearance of two young runaways who arrive on his doorstep seeking shelter. The first "poor rogue" shows him the "marks on his back," and a second boy pleads for compassion. Although he cannot bear to turn the boys back "into the drenching forest," he is unable to "reason with them, for they had not enough English, and not one of our boys spoke their tongue." Instead, he offers them food and shelter for the night and concludes that "tomorrow I must do what the Lord shall bid me" (1994, 7:241–42). Here, the reader assumes that Stevenson will turn the boys in to the authorities. The scene's heightened pathos, compounded by the sheer onslaught of human violence (the whip "marks") and elemental forces (the "drenching" rain), culminates in the insurmountable barrage of language: Stevenson's compassion remains unspoken, and the boys, in turn, cannot articulate their grievances. Stevenson's melodramatic depiction of runaways as the uprooted and marginalized victims of the system of indenture effectively subverts colonial discourse: he stresses a fundamental humanity—shelter and protection, the longing for one's homeland and people—rather than absolute difference. Stevenson's humanitarian rhetoric, however, undergoes a radical shift when he depicts the fugitives from the Samoan perspective.

As Tarcisius Kabutaulaka stresses, the myth of "the ignoble Melanesian savage" is present not only in the European imagination but also in "Pacific Islander minds" and is "reflected in the languages, perceptions, and relationships among Pacific Islanders" (2015, 122). Kabutaulaka gives the example of *mea uli,* the Samoan phrase to describe darker-skinned Melanesians: "*Uli* is the word for 'black,' and one of the most common meanings of mea is 'thing.' Hence, one could argue that the use of the term *mea uli* … reduces him or

her to a 'thing'" (2015, 122). While Kabutaulaka focuses on Pacific Islanders' current perception of Melanesians, his observations belong to the history of nineteenth-century representations of the "true savage" (Brawley and Dixon 2015, 59). Nineteenth-century Samoan prejudices against Melanesians, however, had nothing to do with any indigenous Samoan cultural trope; rather, they were part of the European missionary inheritance. The "literal scriptural interpretation of human history" (Samson 2001, 112) included the biblical parable of Noah's curse upon Ham's descendants, the Canaanites, as a teleological explanation for black skin and slavery. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, European missionaries identified the consequences of Noah's curse among the populations of Melanesia. For example, the Scottish missionary John Inglis wrote that in the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu), "we see this curse lying in all its crushing weight. The Papuans, the poor descendants of Ham, are lying in the lowest state of degradation" (1890, 10). Samoans, as lighter-skinned Polynesians, were spared such intense racialized condemnation and generally embraced the teachings of the Old Testament.[32] Based on the history of encounters between Samoan missionaries and Melanesians, Sione Latukefu argues that Samoans "had no doubt whatsoever of their physical, mental, and cultural superiority to the Melanesians" and adds that Samoans "tended to look down on others, particularly the Papua New Guineans and Solomon Islanders" (1996, 28).[33] Meleiseā agrees that Samoans "had been taught to despise them as inferiors by the colonial authorities and by Samoans missionaries" (Meleiseā 1987a, 111).[34] Thus, in the plantation context, the Samoan discourse of "cultural superiority" (Meleiseā 1987a, 111) was reinforced "by the menial work performed by Melanesians on the plantations" (Steinmetz 2008, 306).[35]

Certainly, Stevenson registers the animosity between Samoans and "black boys" when he narrates an incident concerning five plantation runaways from 'Upolu "who had grown weary" and "under cloud of night" had "fashioned a raft" and sailed to Tutuila:

At the time of their landing, the refugees had a leader, a man from the Gilberts of great stature and courage; as long as he lived, they maintained a fierce front and raided the inhabited lowlands; but so soon as he was shot down, in the act of carrying off the maid of a village, the survivors shrank into the forest. There, in the rains, in the rude thickets, they await age and death. Stress of hunger occasionally goads them from their woods to steal bananas; in all else, since the death of the Gilbert Islander, they are quite harmless; but the fear of them is not the least abated. (Beinecke manuscript, "Tutuila: the American Harbour")

Stevenson's rhetorical flourishes lend this case of desertion an air of romance: for the novelist, the laborers are more than runaways; they are

"melancholy warriors" who defend their freedom to the death and rise above the miserable conditions of the plantations (Beinecke 1891). The romantic slave heroes and the alleged kidnapping of a Samoan virgin reappear in *A Footnote to History,* where Stevenson observes that it is one numerous "tales that run the country" and make "the natives shudder about the evening fire" (1996, 16). His reference to gossip concerning runaways returns in a letter to Boodle: "The people of this island hate and fear them because they are cannibals, sit and tell tales of them about their lamps at night in their own comfortable houses, and are sometimes afraid to lie down to sleep if they think there is a lurking "black boy" in the neighbourhood" (1994, 7:371).

In both passages, Sāmoa's word of mouth is akin to the stuff of ghost stories: rumors about the "occasional disappearances and the occasional discovery of bones" generate "in the minds of the [Samoan], a profound terror of these black skinned and cannibal alien refugees." The wild and irrepressible rumors about runaways who raid villages to kidnap and eat men, children, and virgins are so pervasive that they penetrate Samoan folktales and prevent people from sleeping at night lest they be taken and eaten (1994, 7:227, 370–71).[36] The fear in some Samoans' minds of these runaways may have stemmed from a combination of missionary teachings, as mentioned previously, and Samoan beliefs that forests were places inhabited by *aitu* (spirits or ghosts). As the proverb *e aʻoloa le vao* (be careful the forest is haunted) suggests, forests were to be avoided, and Melanesians' apparent ability to coexist with aitu highlighted their perceived otherness.

Stevenson's fascination with local gossip resonates with a column from the *Samoa Weekly Herald,* which reports that "a peculiar story has been going the rounds of the local gossip to the effect that the body of a "black boy," wrapped in a blanket, had been found near the swamp of Matautu" (December 15, 1894). Here, local, oral culture, in the form of "gossip," supersedes the textual authority of the colonial archives: with no discernible source of origin, rumor and personal narratives spread and become indistinguishable from folktales.

Stevenson's knowledge of "black boys" bleeds into his reception of Samoan folklore: the spectral figure of the runaway is collapsed into that of the *aitu fafine,* or the "female devil of the woods," that is said to haunt the jungle that surrounds Vailima (1994, 7:215, 356). Aitu, explains Stevenson in one of his letters, are dangerous spirits who adopt different shapes: "some are like pigs, and some are like flying things, but others [aitu fafine] … come in the shape of beautiful young women and men" (1994, 7:227). In a letter from January 4, 1892, Stevenson turns himself into the character of personal gothic fiction where paranoia and fear abound:

> All these noises [of nature] make him feel lonely and scared, and he doesn't quite know what he is scared of. Once when he was just about to cross a river, a blow struck him on the top of his head and knocked him head-foremost down the bank and splash into the water. It was a nut, I fancy, that had fallen from a tree … but at the time he thought it was a black boy. (1994, 7:226–27)

Stevenson's parallel narrative of aitu and runaway laborers reoccurs when the author, mistaking the sounds of "birds" for those of "runaway blacks," imagines the presence of a "black boy." The mistaken nut and birdsong force the author to confess his fear of "black boys," and he launches into a lengthy exposé about the phenomenon of foreign labor, which brings him back to the supernatural tales of "women-devils" who are said to inhabit the forest (1994, 7:227–8). Like the aitu that lie in wait for vulnerable victims, Stevenson remarks in "Tutuila: the American Harbour" that during his walks in the bush, predatory "blacks" are forever watching him with their "bright eyes" (Beinecke 1891). Here, the terror of being cannibalized is reimagined as a fear of the supernatural. Sometimes, reports Stevenson to Boodle, the runaways become "bad and wild and come down on the villages and steal and kill; and people whisper to each other that some of them have gone back to their horrid old habits, and catch men and women in order to eat them;" likewise, the aitu "go down out of the woods into the villages" to seduce the young "out of their wits … and go mad and die" (1994, 7:227–28). Despite their tangential nature, Stevenson's gothic narratives of aitu and runaway "black boys" are analogous. The juxtaposition of recent and ongoing cases of plantation fugitives with supernatural accounts of ghosts highlights Stevenson's gothic vision of Samoan plantation workers: both are imagined as "Polynesian stories," which are "generally pretty grim" (1994, 7:228).[37] The spectral threat that permeates Sāmoa's jungle echoes Stevenson's remark from *A Footnote to History*—my epigraph—that the German plantations possess the "allurement of a haunted house, for over these empty and silent miles there broods the fear of the negrito cannibal" (1996, 20). Stevenson's gothic rendering of the plantation, with its accompanying ghostly "negrito cannibal," effectively blurs the boundary between the pastoral plantation and the nightmarish jungle: the vulnerability of Germany's all-powerful colonial machine is exposed by the negrito cannibal penetrating the plantation.

The threat of fugitive laborers was echoed by Apia's newspapers, which suggested that they not only were armed but also were a unified collective. In 1880, the *Samoa Times* warned its readership that "some fifty labourers … [have] escaped from the Vaiusu plantation" and now live in the bush, and "armed with large knives supplied to them for clearing purposes, it is feared

that considerable difficulty will be experienced in effecting their capture" (November 20, 1880). In 1890, the *Samoa Times* ran another story highlighting the threat of fugitives: another "80 runaway labourers or, I might say, cannibals, in the bush. They are supplied with knives and axes from their friends on the plantations. Some of these days they may all combine to make a raid on the town" (July 12, 1890). The latter column exemplifies the ideology of evolutionary regression when the author corrects his use of the term "labourers" and instead describes the runaways as "cannibals." Thus, laborers who have broken colonial rule have also rejected civilization and regressed back into a state of savagery. Through association, the Samoan bush is incorporated into the discourse of savagery, because it is the macabre site of human feasts; for instance, when one reporter for the *Samoa Times* claims that "for many years there have been from 40 to 90 escaped laborers from German plantations living as they can in the bush, and as these people in their own country look upon human flesh as their ordinary food, it is not surprising that when they get an opportunity to kill a man and eat him, they would take it." The reporter adds that "in case of no such chance coming in their way, they would kill and eat the weakest of their number" (January 24, 1891).

The representation of laborers in Apia's local newspaper articles confirmed, or at least gave voice to, the suspicions and widespread convictions that plantation laborers were unalterably alien, savage, and dangerous. Their complete otherness, in turn, supported the pervasive rhetoric of the plantation as a site to civilize, and thus modernize, a supposedly savage and primitive people. Runaway laborers represented both an ideological and a physical threat to colonial settlers: by absconding from the plantations, fugitives undermined the civilizing mission and regressed into savagery and cannibalism. Such racial ideologies, however, were not fixed but rather were capable of shifting in form and meaning. Stevenson engaged in a complex rethinking of the prevailing representations of Melanesian otherness. He understood the figure of the plantation "black boy" in various terms: as the victim of German brutality, as the boogeyman of Samoan nightmares, and as a savage. Nowhere was his indeterminacy about the identity of the laborer more evident than in his account of Arrick, a "black boy" who came to live temporarily at Vailima in 1892.

In a letter, Stevenson remarked that upon his arrival, Arrick was malnourished and sickly but, regardless, had a mesmerizing smile, "the sort that makes you half wish to smile yourself, and half wish to cry" (1994, 7:369). Once Arrick had regained some strength, he became a playmate to young Austin, Stevenson's step-grandson. Together, the boys built forts and played music on an instrument that Arrick made. Arrick's gentleness prompted Stevenson

to remark sarcastically that "of all the dangerous savages in this island Arrick is one of the most dangerous" (1994, 7:369). However, instead of debunking the myth of the savage, Arrick's presence demanded a refined understanding. For example, while Arrick played his instrument for Austin, Stevenson hypothesized that his foreign songs were most "likely all about fighting with his enemies … and killing them, and I am sorry to say cooking them in a ground oven and eating them for supper when the fight is over." According to him, Arrick could not help being a savage, because his defining childhood experience of being wounded by a poisoned spear had ushered him into savagery (1994, 7:370). He clarified that although "Arrick is really what you call a savage," a "savage is a very different sort of person in reality, and a very much nicer, from what he is made to appear in little books." Thus, for Stevenson, popular literature—the "little books"—had distorted the "reality" of what a savage was, and Arrick, "for all his good nature," remained a "very savage person" (1994, 7:370).[38]

The fact of Arrick being a "very savage person" raises the question, for the modern reader, of how the author defines "savagery." How could a person (an individual subject) also be a savage (a stereotype)? Stevenson's contradiction and ambivalence reminds us that although hard scientific racism emerged during the nineteenth century, racial identities could be subject to manipulation. While Stevenson may have descried the abuses of the labor trade in the Pacific and, more specifically, German brutality in Sāmoa, his personal interests relied on some ideological flexibility that would legitimatize his participation in a colonial system of exploitation. Thus, his writings evoke the potential of Melanesian laborers to become a civilized people if they are treated benignly. Repeatedly, he depicts laborers as existing in an early, primitive stage of progress: runaways can survive in the bush, but they are always at risk of killing one another, and Arrick may possess the ability to construct and play an instrument, but he can only sing of cannibalism. Unlike the colonial plantations "in Queensland, Fiji, New Caledonia and Hawaii," where the "labour traffic" has "been either suppressed or placed under close public supervision" (1996, 15), German plantations not only failed to promote their laborers' moral development but also exacerbated their savage tendencies by driving them into the literal and moral darkness of Sāmoa's bush.

NOTES

1. This essay does not cover the history of European colonialism in Sāmoa during the second half of the nineteenth century. For histories of Sāmoa, see Gilson (1970), Kennedy (1974), Hempenstall (1984), and Meleiseā (1987a, 1987b). Consistent with contemporary

orthographical conventions of the Samoan language, an apostrophe represents a glottal stop *(komma liliu),* while the macron *(kahako)* indicates an elongated vowel. The macron is not included in the word "Samoan" because the adjective is an English word, as opposed to Sāmoa. I have, however, retained original spellings in direct quotations.

2. Nineteenth-century anthropological discourse defined the "Negrito" as a small, dark-skinned individual who resided in the islands south of Asia. The late-Victorian ethnologist Augustus H. Keane, for instance, constructed a model of evolution in which the branch of the "Generalised Negro" was subdivided into the African Negro and two Negrito branches: the Indo-Oceanic and the African. According to Keane, the Negritos were the earliest humans: "the Negrito appears to represent the primitive stock, from which the Negro diverged later" (1896, 243). He later theorized that "in Oceania the Negrito … survives only in four widely separated enclaves—the Andaman Islands, the Malay Peninsula, the Philippines, and parts of New Guinea" (1900, 158). For more on nineteenth-century racial science concerning the Pacific Island region, see Douglas and Ballard (2008). In popular Victorian literature, the most famous Negrito appeared in Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Sign of the Four* (1890), in which the man is an Andaman Islander.

3. Although the category of Melanesia is a colonial construct based on perceived racial difference, I use the term as a shorthand reference to the islanders from New Guinea, Bougainville, Malaita, and the Bismarck Archipelago who were indentured on Sāmoa. In the Pacific plantation context, indentured laborers were frequently referred to as "black boys." I use this racialist term in accordance with its appearance in the texts under discussion. For a history of the lives of Melanesian laborers in Sāmoa, see Meleiseā (1980).

4. All newspaper articles cited in this essay are publicly available in New Zealand's digital National Newspaper Collection (www.paperspast.natlib.govt.nz). By 1889, the *Samoa Weekly Herald* was the last remaining Apia-based newspaper. At the end of 1900 the newspaper was sold to the German colonial government and by April 1901, the first issue of *Samoanische Zeitung* appeared. After the New Zealand takeover of German Sāmoa in 1914, the *Samoanische Zeitung* was renamed the *Samoa Times.* For an extensive bibliographical analysis of Sāmoa's nineteenth-century newspapers, see Spennemann (2003). For an analysis of the contents of the *Samoanische Zeitung,* see Riese (2012).

5. In developing my notion of Stevenson's Samoan gothicism, I have found the literary criticism dealing with nineteenth-century American plantation fiction particularly helpful; see Flora, MacKethan, and Taylor (2002).

6. For a history of indentured labor around the world, see Northrup (1995) and Lal et al. (1994).

7. There is a substantial scholarly debate concerning the issue of Pacific Islander agency and resistance during labor migration. Islander-oriented approaches have highlighted the considerable amount of voluntary recruitment that occurred; for notable examples, see Scarr (1973), Corris (1973), and Moore (1985). For a concise overview of scholarship on the Pacific labor trade, see Munro (1995).

8. For more on the role of the High Commission, see Scarr (1968). For some key differences between British legislation and German labor policy, see Munro and Firth (1990: 18–19).

9. In a March 1890 letter to his mother, Stevenson mentions his desire to compose a ballad about Walter Oates, a "beachcomber [and] slaver captain" (1994, 6:379). Oates recruited labor in the Gilbert Islands during the 1860s and was killed when the islanders revolted and blew up the *Moroa.* One month later, Stevenson writes: "'The Ballad of the Barque *Moroa*' is begun" (1994, 6:383); however, it was never finished and no manuscript survives. For more on Stevenson's use of the Pacific labor trade in his fiction, see Jolly (2007). Stevenson was by no means the only author who represented the Pacific labor trade in his fiction. Louis Becke and Jack London both dealt with the theme; see Castille (2012) and Phillips (2012). I am also grateful to Michelle Elleray for alerting me to the subgenre of Victorian boys' adventure texts that focused on blackbirding; see Elleray (2014).

10. The earliest reference to *Sophia Scarlet* appears in a letter to Colvin from September 1891, in which Stevenson describes three stories he intends to collect into a volume called *Beach de Mar* (1994, 7:154). The last title to be included in this volume is "The Labour Slave," but as Stevenson remarked later, the latter was eventually "sucked into" *Sophia Scarlet* (1994, 7:282).

11. For a discussion of Stewart's plantation in Tahiti, see Willmott (2004).

12. The author was not alone in using Stowe as a touchstone for the treatment of laborers on Pacific plantations; Dawson compared the brutality of the German overseers to that of "Simon Legree in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*" (1882, 18).

13. Dan Scarlet's acquisition of laborers recalls the character of Attwater in Stevenson's novella *The Ebb-Tide.* In this text, Attwater illegally acquires island labor for his pearl fishery. During a conversation, Attwater evokes the tentacle-like intrusion of the labor trade across the Pacific Island region. When he is asked from where he gets his labor, he responds: "Ah, where not?... we had to go far and wide and do the best we could. We have gone as far west as the Kingsmills and as far south as Rapa-iti" (2008, 215). Stevenson's outline does not specify whether Dan Scarlet is a former naval or army officer.

14. From 1888 to his death in 1894, Stevenson produced a large body of work focused on contemporary Pacific issues: a novel *(The Wrecker),* a novella *(The Ebb-Tide),* two works of nonfiction *(In the South Seas* and *A Footnote to History),* and a volume of short stories *(Island Nights' Entertainment),* as well as pamphlets, public letters to the *London Times,* poems, and ballads.

15. Many Victorian novelists portrayed colonial plantations in the tropics (i.e., Charlotte Bronte and Anthony Trollope), but to the best of my knowledge, Stevenson is among the rare authors to represent a Pacific plantation.

16. For a discussion of Cornwall's activities, see Munro (1989).

17. On 2 September 1899, the *Samoa Weekly Herald* printed a letter to the editor in which the writer reminded readers of the investigation led by Deputy Commissioner

Maudeslay into the "alleged cruelties perpetrated on Native Laborers" on the Lata plantation in 1878. At the time, Moors was Cornwall's overseer: the laborers were "brutally treated … one sick woman was as a punishment [for running away] and for example, carried on a pole to which she was hanging by the hands and feet like a dead pig, and the same night she was publicly flogged so cruelly that the wounds in her back required to be dressed." The deputy's report included the following statements about Moors: "he is not a proper person to be left in entire charge of a large number of laborers and their families. I very much regret that the 'Pacific Islanders Protection Act' … gives no power to Consuls or Commissioners to enforce regulations for their proper treatment when employed on the estate of British subjects."

18. Stevenson also employed Samoans to work as household staff at Vailima. According to McKenzie, Stevenson boasted that "he alone of all foreign overseers in Samoa was able to obtain hard work and loyalty from his Samoans. He credited this neither 'to high wages nor to indulgent treatment,' but to the discipline and 'scrupulous justice' with which he handled them" (1978, 159).

19. For a useful introduction to labor recruiting in the Pacific Island region, see Moore et al. (1990: xxvii–xxxvi).

20. Munro and Firth explain that "there were two ways in which the German consul could assist in procuring labour. The first was to place no restrictions in the way the firm obtained labourers. For the first eighteen years the German labour trade to Samoa was untouched by legislation.… The second way to ensure the DHPG's recruiting right was by annexation of 'appropriate island groups'" (1990, 16).

21. Munro claims that the Germans, unlike the British, did not face "humanitarian concerns of philanthropic pressure groups" (2000, 216). For a broader history of British imperial and humanitarian interventions in the Pacific Islands, see Samson (1998).

22. British planters did not evade criticism; for instance, Churchward describes the following case that was "brought on behalf of a mob of island labourers on a plantation owned by a British subject, who on receiving an adverse decision in a case of debt, had bolted and left the poor fellows without wages or means of subsistence" (1887, 152).

23. I borrow the term "rhythm" from Mary Gallagher's discussion of temporality on French Caribbean plantations and her glossing of Edouard Glissant. Glissant observes that in plantations in the Caribbean, Brazil, and the islands of the Indian Ocean, "the same organization would create a rhythm of economic production and form the basis of a style of life" (quoted in Gallagher 2002, 146). Banivanua-Mar discusses the spatial organization of plantations in Queensland (2007: 60–62).

24. In 1893, under the auspices of the 1889 Berlin Act, Britain, Germany, and the United States created a commission to investigate foreign land claims.

25. Samoans were unwilling to work regularly on foreign plantations and only did so at high wages (Gilson 1970: 181–82; Munro and Firth 1987, 26). For more on labor recruiting in the Gilbert Islands, see Macdonald (2001: 54–74).

26. Less violent incidents included the cases of the Samoans Malafou, Tuauli, and Vili and Alu. Malafou and Tuauli were charged with stealing from and assaulting "Tagu a black boy." Both Samoans confessed that they had "knocked Tagu down with a stick for no other reason than they wanted the duck for themselves" (*Samoa Weekly Herald*, 19 March 1895). Vili and Alu were also charged with stealing and threatening a black boy with a knife (*Samoa Weekly Herald*, 23 November 1895).

27. Banivanua-Mar also identifies the tendency to depict Islander violence as an "ahistorical act of spontaneity that was abstracted from its material and social context" (2007: 151–52).

28. The headline reads "Murder of a Black Boy Near Vailili," but I assume the writer is referring to Vailele.

29. I borrow the phrase "counter-violence" from Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) and his theorizing of colonial violence.

30. For more on the literary depictions of Melanesians, see Brawley and Dixon (2015: 59–75).

31. "Tutuila: The American Harbour" (1891) is unpublished and is based on Stevenson's three-week visit of Tutuila with Harold Sewall, the American consul to Sāmoa.

32. European perceptions of Samoans crystallized around the trope of the "noble savage." Jean-François de Galaup de la Pérouse was the first European to land on Samoan soil and propagated the notion that Samoans were treacherous barbarians. In 1824, the Russian navigator Otto von Kotzebue confirmed La Pérouse's account of the inhabitants of Tutuila but found the inhabitants of the western islands to be friendly and hospitable. The London Missionary Society's John Williams (1984) was responsible for reaffirming Samoans' "noble savagery."

33. For a detailed discussion of the behavior of evangelical Samoan missionaries in eastern Papua New Guinea during the second half of the nineteenth century, see Wetherell (1974: 67–100).

34. For a concise history of missionary work in Sāmoa, see Meleiseā (1987a: 52–70).

35. By the German colonial period, this highly charged racialist rhetoric was exacerbated by the policies on physical segregation imposed by the Germans. Workers were kept in "barracks on DHPG plantations around the edges of Apia and, because they were deliberately segregated from local populations, found it difficult to form relationships with Samoans" (Macpherson and Macpherson 2009, 42).

36. The Samoan fear of Melanesian cannibalism may be traced back to what Sinclair observes in her discussion of early Samoan missionaries who died in New Guinea: "Part of the legend in Samoa is that the cannibals of Papua ate some Samoans in the early days. I have been unable to find any written evidence to support this. Perhaps it derives from stories of the Cook Islanders who were massacred at Kalo in 1881" (1982, 17).

37. Jolly also discusses Stevenson's conception of the Samoan bush and suggests that "at a supernatural level, the physical properties of the forest combined with the local legends about it to produce emotions of irrational fear and 'horror,' which Stevenson also explored in his letters about clearing the bush" (2010, 128).

38. Later, Arrick was wounded in a fight with plantation laborers from Malaita and eventually returned to work for the German firm. He died on the plantation (1994, 7:369, 416).

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