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# Robert Louis Stevenson, *Kidnapped*

By Tess Maginess

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## Summary

Robert Louis Stevenson's *Kidnapped* is one of the most famous historical novels written. Many of you may have read it as children. But don't worry if you have not. The class aims to be very accessible and enjoyable.

In this class we will cover the following aspects of the novel:

- A little bit about Stevenson's life
- The historical situation the novel deals with – a very turbulent time in Scotland
- Some links to film adaptations of the novel
- What kind of plot does the novel have?
- What kind of characters does Stevenson create?
- What styles and different kinds of language does Stevenson use? We will talk here a bit about dialect and I am sure you will reocgnise many of the words, like 'thole' and 'whist'

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## Learning outcomes

What will you learn in this class?

- You will gain some information about the historical situation in Scotland in the eighteenth century
- You will gain an insight into various features of a novel – plot, characterisation, point of view and language/style
- You will  gain an insight into the craft of novel writing

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## Brief biography

Perhaps this is not a bad novel for us to read at the moment, cabined and confined, as most of us are.

Here are extracts from *Britannica* on line written by David Daiches

**Robert Louis Stevenson**, in full **Robert Louis Balfour Stevenson**, (born November 13, 1850, Edinburgh, Scotland—died December 3, 1894, Vailima, Samoa), Scottish essayist, poet, and author of fiction and travel books, best known for his novels *Treasure Island* (1881), *Kidnapped* (1886), *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), and *The Master of Ballantrae* (1889).

Stevenson was the only son of Thomas Stevenson, a prosperous civil engineer, and his wife, Margaret Isabella Balfour. His poor health made regular schooling difficult, but he attended Edinburgh Academy and other schools before, at age 17, entering Edinburgh University, where he was expected to prepare himself for the family profession of lighthouse engineering. But Stevenson

had no desire to be an engineer, and he eventually agreed with his father, as a compromise, to prepare instead for the Scottish bar.

He had shown a desire to write early in life, and once in his teens he had deliberately set out to learn the writer's craft by imitating a great variety of models in prose and verse. His youthful enthusiasm for the Covenanters (i.e., those Scotsmen who had banded together to defend their version of Presbyterianism in the 17th century) led to his writing *The Pentland Rising,* his first printed work. During his years at the university he rebelled against his parents' religion and set himself up as a liberal bohemian who abhorred the alleged cruelties and hypocrisies of bourgeois respectability.

Later in 1873 Stevenson suffered severe respiratory illness and was sent to the French Riviera . . . . He returned home the following spring. In July 1875 he was called to the Scottish bar, but he never practiced. Stevenson was frequently abroad, most often in France. Two of his journeys produced *An Inland Voyage* (1878) and *Travels with a Donkey in the Cévennes* (1879). His career as a writer developed slowly. His essay "Roads" appeared in the *Portfolio* in 1873, and in 1874 "Ordered South" appeared in *Macmillan's Magazine,* a review of Lord Lytton's *Fables in Song* appeared in the *Fortnightly,* and his first contribution (on Victor Hugo) appeared in *The Cornhill Magazine,* then edited by Leslie Stephen, a critic and biographer [and father of Virginia Woolf]. It was these early essays, carefully wrought, quizzically meditative in tone, and unusual in sensibility, that first drew attention to Stevenson as a writer.

In 1876 Stevenson met Fanny Vandegrift Osbourne, an American lady separated from her husband, and the two fell in love. Stevenson's parents' horror at their son's involvement with a married woman subsided somewhat when she returned to California in 1878, but it revived with greater force when Stevenson decided to join her in August 1879. Stevenson reached California ill and

penniless (the record of his arduous journey appeared later in *The Amateur Emigrant,* 1895, and *Across the Plains,* 1892). His adventures, which included coming very near death and eking out a precarious living in Monterey and San Francisco, culminated in marriage to Fanny Osbourne (who was by then divorced from her first husband) early in 1880. About the same time a telegram from his relenting father offered much-needed financial support, and, after a honeymoon by an abandoned silver mine (recorded in *The Silverado Squatters,* 1883), the couple sailed for Scotland to achieve reconciliation with the Thomas Stevensons.

Stevenson was frequently abroad, most often in France. [In 1881 he was in Davos, Switzerland, hoping this might be a suitable climate for his TB, he returned to Scotland and during this time wrote *Treasure Island*]

In 1882 [he wrote] . . . two of his finest short stories, "Thrawn Janet" and "The Merry Men," produced lung hemorrhages, and in September he went to the south of France. There the Stevensons finally settled at a house in Hyères, where, in spite of intermittent illness, Stevenson was happy and worked well. He revised *Prince Otto,* worked on *A Child's Garden of Verses* (first called *Penny Whistles*), and began *The Black Arrow: A Tale of the Two Roses* (1888), a historical adventure tale deliberately written in anachronistic language.

The threat of a cholera epidemic drove the Stevensons from Hyères back to Britain. They lived at Bournemouth from September 1884 until July 1887, but his frequent bouts of dangerous illness proved conclusively that the British climate, even in the south of England, was not for him. The Bournemouth years were fruitful, however. There he got to know and love the American novelist Henry James. There he revised *A Child's Garden* (first published in 1885) and wrote "Markheim," *Kidnapped,* and *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. The poems in *A Child's Garden* represent with extraordinary fidelity an adult's recapturing of the emotions and sensations of childhood; there is nothing else quite like them in English literature

In August 1887, still in search of health, Stevenson set out for America with his wife, mother, and stepson. On arriving in New York, he found himself famous, with editors and publishers offering lucrative contracts.

In June 1888 Stevenson, accompanied by his family, sailed from San Francisco in the schooner yacht *Casco,* which he had chartered, on what was intended to be an excursion for health and pleasure. In fact, he was to spend the rest of his life in the South Seas . . .

In October 1890 he returned to Samoa from a voyage to Sydney and established himself and his family in patriarchal status at Vailima, his house in Samoa. The climate suited him; he led an industrious and active life; and, when he died suddenly, it was of a cerebral hemorrhage, not of the long-feared tuberculosis. https://www.britannica.com/biography/Robert-Louis-Stevenson/Romantic-novels

## Stevenson's works:

***1870s***

**An Inland Voyage** (1878)

**Edinburgh: Picturesque Notes** (1878)

**Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes** (1879)

**"The Story of a Lie"** (1879)

***1880s***

**Virginibus Puerisque and Other Papers** (1881)

**Familiar Studies of Men and Books** (1882)

**New Arabian Nights** (1882)

**Treasure Island** (1883)

**The Silverado Squatters** (1884)

**"The Body Snatcher"** (1884)

**A Child's Garden of Verses** (1885)

**More New Arabian Nights: The Dynamiter** (w/ Fanny, 1885)

**Prince Otto** (1885)

**Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde** (1886)

**Kidnapped** (1886)

**The Merry Men** (1887)

**Memories and Portraits** (1887)

**"The Misadventures of John Nicholson"** (1887)

**Underwoods** (1887)

**The Black Arrow** (1888)

**Memoir of Fleeming Jenkin** (1888)

**The Master of Ballantrae** (1889)

**The Wrong Box** (with Lloyd, 1889)

***1890s***

**Ballads** (1890)

**Father Damien** (1890)

**A Footnote to History** (1892)

**Three Plays** (1892)

**The Wrecker** (with Lloyd, 1892)

**Across the Plains** (1892)

**Island Nights' Entertainments** (1893)

**Catriona** (1893)

**The Ebb-Tide** (with Lloyd, 1894)

***Posthumous Works***

**The Amateur Emigrant** (1895)

**Songs of Travel and other Verses** (1895)

**Fables** (1896)

**Weir of Hermiston** (1896)

**In the South Seas** (1896)

**St. Ives** (1898)

**Letters** (1898)

Taken from the official Robert Louis Stevenson website: http://robert-louis-stevenson.org/rlsworks/

***Kidnapped***

*Kidnapped* was published, in 1886, initially in serial form in the magazine, *Young Folks,* suggesting that it was originally intended to be an adventure story for young people.

In *Kidnapped* the fruit of his researches into 18th-century Scottish history and of his feeling for Scottish landscape, history, character, and local atmosphere mutually illuminate one another. https://www.britannica.com/biography/Robert-Louis-Stevenson/Romantic-novels

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## Historical context

Here is an accessible summary:

In 1707, after an act of union between England and Scotland was agreed upon, the Scottish parliament was brought to an end and the two kingdoms became one. George I from the House of Hanover ascended the throne in 1714. This Hanoverian family and George II in particular are referenced in *Kidnapped*. David feels proud to be the subject of George II. When Colin Campbell inquires about his relationship with James of Glen, David says, "I am neither of his people nor yours, but an honest subject of King George, owing no man and fearing no man." A royalist at heart, David, like Stevenson, nevertheless shows leanings towards the Jacobites in the novel.

In 1715 the Jacobites made a determined effort to restore the Stuarts to the throne. James, who had shown fire and grit, turned out to be a melancholy man. As a result, the first Jacobite rebellion fizzled out. In 1745, Prince Charles Edward, son of James, sailed over from France with his little group of seven supporters and arrived in the Highlands. At twenty-five years of age, Charles was charming, adventurous, spirited, and courageous. Through his confidence and enterprise, he won over supporters from various clans.

In mid-September, Charles entered Edinburgh and was well- received by the people. He encouraged them to join his forces and fight. They defeated the British army and began marching towards London. They suffered a setback, however, when the English people failed to support them. As a result, Charles and his men returned to Scotland, and the Jacobite movement died down.

The end came in April of 1746 in Culloden, when the Duke of Cumberland caught the Highlanders by surprise and routed them completely.

After their defeat, Charles was a hunted fugitive until he was rescued by a French ship and went into exile on the Continent. The Jacobites and their families faced persecution and suffering: the red

soldiers hunted them day and night. These facts are brought out in *Kidnapped*, which is a historical novel with enough adventure to hold the interest of both young and old.

http://pinkmonkey.com/booknotes/monkeynotes/pmKidnapped10.asp

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Illustrations from *Kidnapped*

Slides 15,16

Films based on *Kidnapped*

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## Plot

A young Scottish man, David upon the death of his father, is sent to see his uncle, Ebenezer. The uncle attempts to kill him and then pays to have him kidnapped and 'trepanned' to the Carolinas, North America, as a slave. This is to ensure that the young man, David, does not inherit the family Estate. A storm blows up and a small boat comes to rescue them but only one survives, Alan Breck Stewart. It turns out that they are on the western coast of Scotland. I will not tell you the rest of the story but only to say that the two have several adventures together and that, as the book is set in and around 1750 and based on true events; expect Jacobites and anti-Jacobites. Whether the ending is a happy one, I must leave you to judge.

The plot is, at times, quite slow moving and then it suddenly fires into life – the battle for the ship or later the shooting of the Red Fox and the device of mistaken identity – Davy is erroneously blamed for killing him. (ch 17).

And after the dreary tramping through the Highlands, there are moments of excitement – for example when Alan rescues Davy as they leap over a waterfall (ch 19, p.195).

Stevenson can register extremes of weather also as a way of intensifying the drama – Alan and Davy are first freezing and wet and later baked (ch 19)

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## Characterisation

***Main characters***

The novel is, of course, a rip-roaring adventure, but it can also be read as a kind of coming of age or Rite of Passage (Bildungsroman) novel. Other famous examples would include *David Copperfield*, *Catcher in the Rye* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Characters often mature because of harsh experiences. The story is told by an older David and this enables Stevenson to create comparisons between the younger and older versions of himself and also, within the unfolding story, to register how Davy begins to become more discerning and less arrogant. Thus, for example, as he realises his situation – kidnapped, disoriented, sick and giddy , he begins to develop a more nuanced view of the sailors, 'kind when it occurred to them, with some glimmerings of honesty' (p.61).

And his views change to some extent also in terms of politics. Though on the English side, he begins to see admirable aspects in Jacobites, for example, his admiration for the poor people who end up paying two rents – one to George 11 and the other to the Jacobite cause; 'I'm a Whig . .. . I call it noble (ch 12, p.110). He is influenced by Alan's chagrin at how 'the good cause went down' and his horror at 'the Butcher Cumberland' (ch 12, p.110). Davy is moved by Alan's account of the

humiliation of the Jacobites, their weapons plucked off them. . . 'the very clothes off their back. It was now a sin to wear a tartan plaid. (ch 12).

The other main character is Alan Breck Stewart, who is really a foil to the innocent and virtuous Davy. Leslie Fiedler the great critic of fiction, characterise him as a 'beloved scoundrel' – one of a long line of characters who are mischievous, reckless but often charismatic. And like Satan in Miilton's 'Paradise Lost' Breck steals the show a bit and we can see this in the depiction of the characters in the film posters we see on the slide 12. Typically, Alan is depicted as a wee bit adolescent, even though he seems to be older than Davy after they defeat the rascals on the ship, the narrator tells us that Alan was bright with victory, like a child with a new toy (Ch 10, p.93). He even composes a song and David, himself is overcome, buy this or the whole scene, and sobs like a child (p.93). Davy is not in awe of Alan, though and shrewdly notes the vanity behind his grand gesture – cutting off a silver button from his fine coat as a keepsake to reward Davy (ch 11, p.98).

Davy's attitude to Alan is ambiguous, politically, they are on opposing sides in the conflict between the Jacobites and the English. Davy is a Whig but he is shocked but the treachery and greed of the ship's captain and Ruaich. He, therefore, chooses the moral over the political in siding with Alan when they are on the ship. (ch 9, p.83) . Later, when he suspects that Alan may have had a handin a murder, he resolves that he and Alan must 'twine' (part) (ch 18, p.172) But Alan convinces him that he had neither art nor part in it. Davy concludes: 'Alan's morals were tail-first; but he was ready to give his life for them, such as they were.' (ch 18, p.175). Later, Alan has good cause to be vexed with him as he loses all their money at cards, but, at the same time, Davy reproaches himself as a 'sick, silly and bad-hearted schoolboy'. They quarrel but, to his credit, Alan refuses to fight him – so the ups and downs between the pair constitutes its own drama within the story. Alan might be impulsive, but he is also generous spirited, conceding, in a piping contest with Robin Oig, one of the sons of Rob Roy, that his rival is the superior player. (ch 25, p.264).

Alan Breck Stewart is one of a number of historical figures appearing in the novel, including Colin Roy Campbell, James Stewart, Cluny MacPherson and Rob Roy MacGregor. Red Fox – Campbell - Colin of Glenure is certainly not painted in a favourable light. He declares the farms are all to let, to evict those with Jacobite sympathies and replace them with tenants loyal to George 11.

Even bonnie Prince Charlie makes an appearance, via the stories told by his followers. Davy gathers he was a gracious spirited boy, but even then, often drunk. The older narrator comments sadly, 'the fault that has snice, by all accounts, made such a wreck of him' (ch 23, p.233)

***Minor characters***

There are many memorable minor characters, particularly Roach. The unofficial ship's surgeon – a laird's son, 'more than half a doctor who has no story; 'never had one, said he. 'I liked fun, that's all,' And he skipped out of the forecastle' (p.65).

Rankeillor is a beautifully drawn study of the shrewd solicitor, whose sympathies tend towards the Jacobite. He is a useful character also, since he is able to provide Davy with the true story of his father and uncle.

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## Point of view:

Some of us may be reflecting on a lot of things at the moment – we have time on our hands. And perhaps, thinking how we would have survived had we been in such a predicament as young people. In this novel, Stevenson deploys just such a perspective as the narrator frequently looks back at his younger self. This is, as you will recognise, a quite common device in novels, creating an interesting doubleness between the teller of the tale – the narrator and the narrator as character or hero. Early in the novel, as the older David recounts his youthful arrogance, but with some degree of equanimity: 'But I was young and spirited and like most lads that have been country-bred, I had a great opinion of my shrewdness' (Ch v, p.38).

Eventually, he is rescued by local boatmen who have great fun at his expense – Davy had not realised he could walk on to the mainland when the tide is right. Davy, to his credit, takes himself to task for his foolishness.

And, as at the beginning of the novel, the reader is made aware of the wider picture – the focus is not solely on the predicament of the hero. And Davy's compassion is evident. As he tramps through the country on the Ross of Mull, he is moved by the terrible poverty of the people and touched by their great kindness. Stevenson manages to depict the conditions of the people as a natural part of the story, rather than 'shoehorning' social concerns into the work in a clumsy or didactic fashion. We see the people through the compassionate eyes of young Davy, ' grubbing in little miserable fields that wouldn't keep a cat (ch 15, p.141). Referring to how the people are dressed, he notes that, while tartan is forbidden by the English regime, the people are dressed in a kind of motley. There are many beggars as a result of all the upheavals, and a lot of them, Davy observes 'stood on their dignity, asked alms only to buy snuff ( by their account)and would give no change' in contrast to the 'flattering Lowland beggars. The Highland people do not want to let on how poor they are, so they let on the money is not for essentials. We have seen that attitude her I think too, in days gone by.

A little later, after he has been looked after by a kinsman of Alan's, Davy, thinking to be decent and honest, but culturally a little untuned, offers Neil Roy money, but his host his very offended, asking does he not look like a gentleman., Davy, again admirably self-critical, reproaches himself (ch 16, p.155).

## Language and Style

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***Dialect***

One of the features which might appeal to some of you is the use of Lowlands Scots dialect. There are loads of examples and, of course, it is pretty close not just to Ulster Scots but to dialect spoken in

other parts of Ulster like Tyrone and Armagh. The dialect registers itself not only in vocabulary but also in syntax, the captain warns Davy; 'Mind this' (ch 10, p.87), meaning 'Heed this' rather than 'recall this'. Shortly after there is an instruction to 'Wheest' ( ch 10, p.90), ie 'keep quiet', probably derived from the Scots Gaelic, 'Bi tost' (Irish Gaelic, 'Bi I do thoist' - be in your quietness, literally) after this we have the expression' got his hurt', ie 'sustained his wound'( ch 10, p.95). Or a little later, we have the delightfully vivid description of a one of the ship's crew, 'birling the wine' (ch 12, p.115). We have simple dialect words like 'jouk' used also in Ulster, meaning duck or move quickly out of the way. Or we have 'twine', meaning to part or separate (perhaps like Elizabethan English, 'cleave in twain').

Other examples abound: 'thole' (stop, our endure), dirdum ( blame), gleg ( brisk), bristle (burn) gomeral (fool), bottle of hay (armful), rickle ( untidy heap), deave ( annoy), all be in a bizz ( everything and everybody rushing around like bees), gowls ( howls or lets out a loud cry) Athol brose (whiskey, honey and cream), by extension, a brose is any kind of a confection – sometimes dubious.

Stevenson is able to use dialect very subtly – sometimes for humour, sometimes to create credibility for his highlanders and sometimes to present their predicament in language that seems to combine biblical gravity and dialect – as when the fate of the tenants, evicted from their farms is described: 'And the kindly folk of that country must all pack and tramp, every father's son out of his father's house (ch 12, p.113-114).

A great thundering form of dialect is delivered by the catechist, who tartly describes Red Colin as 'putting his head in a bee's byke' [ putting his head into the mouth of a bee?] (ch 16, p.158).

We may note that when Davy is rescued by the Highlanders, few have English and even if they do have a dialect version, they prefer to use Gaelic – a kind of defiance also at the abnegation of their culture (ch 15, p.143).

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***Humour***

There is a lot of fun and good natured humour in the novel – even at times of great drama and danger. Thus, for example, when Alan and Davy fight the crew for mastery of the ship, they take command of the Roundhouse and two of the thirstiest men on the ship, the Captain and Ruaich – are locked in the forecastle – condemned, the narrator gleefully reports, to what they hated most – cold water' ( ch11,p.97)

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***Lyricism***

Stevenson has a very lyrical eye – evident throughout the novel. Here is a lovely early example: It is the month of June;

The grass was all white with daisies and the trees with blossom but to judge by our blue nails and aching wrists, the time might have been winter and the whiteness a December frost.

Much later in the novel, when Davy is in the Highlands, we have a rather more Sublime kind of lyricism:

The mountains on either side were high, rough and barren, very black and gloomy in the shadow of the clouds, but all silver –laced with little watercourses where the suns hone upon them ( ch 17, p.162).

There is a very plangent example later in the novel as Alan reveals to Davy what their outcast life will be like:

Your bed shall be the moorcock's on the run. And your life shall be like the hunted deer's. . . (ch 18, p.178).

Place is ever important and, as Henry Glassie, the anthropologist, observed about Ireland, 'space is temporal'. As the hunted men circle back through the Highlands, they bend 'somewhat eastwards, in a fine, mild dark night, and over much of the same broken country as before' (ch 19p.192). Broken

maybe by war. Davy speculates they might be in Glencoe, 'where the massacre was in the time of King William (ch 19, p.194).

Stevenson can also expertly combine the sublimity of the Highlands landscape with the inventiveness of the adventure story, as in the marvellous construction of Cluny's Cage; the trunk sof several trees are wattled across, the gorund behind levelled up to make a floor. A tree is the centre beam of the roof and the house 'half hung, half stood in that steep hillside thicket, like a wasp's nest in a green hawthorn' (ch 23, p.228).

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***Pathetic Fallacy and prolepsis***

The use of Pathetic Fallacy, where nature seems to reflect the mood of the character – is a kind of extension of lyricism. Perhaps one of the most famous examples of Pathetic Fallacy is *King Lear* where the raging storm on the barren heath mirrors and intensifies Lear's desolation.

Sometimes combined with Pathetic fallacy is 'prolepsis' or 'foreshadowing'. Early in the novel (ch 4), as Davy and his uncle walk towards the port, the characterisation of the landscape is ominous, portending some dire reversal of fortunes. Shortly afterwards, there is another prolepsis – or rather, very cleverly, what we might call an anti-prolpesis. Davy looks in the fire but does *no*t see – an interesting inversion of the folk belief that the future can be told by looking at the flames in a fire. The young Davy does not see what the older Davy has seen: ' a seaman with a hairy cap . . . a big bludgeon for my silly head, or the least sign of all those tribulations that were ripe to fall on me.' ( Ch v, p.39).

As Davy goes on board the Covenant of Dysart, Stevenson leaves us in no doubt about the kinds of business the crew are embarked on. She is a slaver – people captured and sent to North America and 'still more unhappy innocents who were kidnapped or trepanned (as the word went for private

interest or vengeance. Thus, Davy hints at what his own fate will but connects this with the fate of many others.

That word 'Dysart' may well be familiar to Irish as well as Scottish readers - named from Gaelic dìseart 'hermit's cell', 'church' (from Latin *desertum* 'desert', 'waste', 'solitary spot'). There are areas in Armagh City called Desart Lane, and there is also in Tyrone, Desertcreat – all signifying hermit communities. The name of the ship, Desert Covenant, thus is a kind of code, making ironic the experience of the hermits who willingly absented themselves from society, cut themselves off from their normal world. The ship may have got its name also from William Murray, Earl of Dysart (1600?-1655), whipping boy to Charles 1 and related to leading Covenanters.

***Flashback***

Another device, interacting dramatically with prolepsis or flash forward is flashback. So, as the older Davy recollects the wretched figure of Ransome, he confesses that the 'poor child . . . still comes about me in my dreams' (P. 64).

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***Intertextuality***

One aspect that is perhaps worth noting is ow the narrator creates a further perspective by referring, from time to time, to other stories as he is telling his own. This might be classified as 'intertextuality', and I think it adds a lovely dimension – Stevenson relies on his readers to have read other adventure stories – perhaps, Robinson Crusoe, in the example which follows. At one point, Davy and Alan become separated as the brig is lost against the reefs and, while Davy manages to get ashore , near Iona, he is ill prepared for the hostile and desolate environment must endure a severe privation. Davy ruefully notes that, as a young man, marooned on the island, he was not equipped like those in books with useful things in their pockets. The simplicity of the diction helps set up a sort of internal distance between the 'real' hero and the storybook hero: There was no one part of it [the

island] better than another; it was all desolate and rocky' (p.130). Yet, Stevenson does not allow his narrator protagonist to succumb to self- pity. Indeed the maturing young hero, is capable of sardonic humour;

Charles the Second declared a man could stay outdoors more days in the year in the climate England than in any other. This was very like a king, with a palace at his back and changes of dry clothes' ( ch 14, p.132).

Much later there is another reference to books and a contrast drawn between the ideal experiences in stories as opposed to the reality of life (ch 22). Davy' s weariness in not the heroic variety but something a lot less sublime. They are rescued by one of the leaders of the Great Rebellion which had occurred six years since, but Davy is full of premonitions, and experiences a kind of bodily dissolution, 'I could have wept at my own helplessness' (ch 22, p.227).

Later, Davy has a grandiose vision of himself, knocking at the solicitor's door to claim his inheritance' like a hero in a ballad and here was I back again, a wandering, hunted blackguard, on the wrong side of Forth (ch 26, p.268).

But, as it turns out, 'the beggar in the ballad had come home, fiction now aligns with fact. (ch 29).

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***Filmic techniques***

Stevenson sometimes uses what we would describe now as cinematic techniques – for example, when he has first been rescued in the Highlands - Davy sees a shape in the distance and Stevenson uses a wonderful camera pan technique to enable Davy and the reader to see eventually as they move closer that it is  emigrant ship, and out of the ship, comes a great sound of mourning, and the ferryman sings a melancholy song, Lochaber No More; ' I saw the tears run down the cheeks of the men and woman in the boat, even as they bent at the oars ( ch 16, p.153). The passage is truly

affecting and all the more so because Davy has just been duped by a blind man trickster. The reader can set the personal fate of the young man against the baleful tragedy of a whole community.

And later, when Davy and Alan see 'a moving clump of scarlet – which turns out to be soldiers in the service of George 11 and among them, the infamous Red Fox ( ch 17, p.163).

Stevenson gives us memorable close ups, where both sight and sound are invoked to convey the tense drama of the scene. As the hunted pair, Davy and Alan, come into Stirling, Davy remarks that 'the shearers worked all day in a field on one side of the river . . . and we could hear the stones going on the hooks and the voices and even the words of the men talking and they lie hidden in burdock, butterbar and the like low plants' (ch 26, p.266)

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## Reflective questions

1. How does this novel compare with other historical novels you have come across?
2. Who do you think is the hero?
3. What do you think of the mixture of styles?
4. Write down 3 dialect words you have come across