

*Ain Shams University
Women's College for
Arts, Science, & Education*

**JUVENILE ADVENTURE FICTION IN
BRITAIN BETWEEN 1858-1954 AS MANIFEST IN
BALLANTYNE'S CORAL ISLAND, STEVENSON'S
TREASURE ISLAND AND GOLDING'S LORD OF
THE FLIES.**

**A Thesis
Submitted to**

*The Department of English language and literature
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**In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree of M.A. in English Literature**

By

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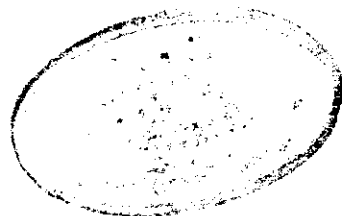
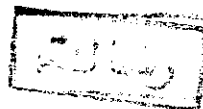
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E. Saigh

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

"الحمد لله الذى هدانا لهذا
وما كنا لنهتدى لولا أن
هدانا الله."

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ
الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

(الأعراف ٤٣)

*For my husband Muhammad; a
token of thankfulness and love.*

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Abbreviations

Coral Island

CI

Treasure Island

TrI

Lord of the Flies

L.F.

Abstract

Juvenile adventure fiction first appeared as exciting reading material for children. Awareness of its independence as a literary genre, however, emerged from its being concerned with the fictive potentiality of adolescence as a stage between childhood and maturity. Significant landmarks on this track have been R.M. Ballantyne's Coral Island (1858), R.L. Stevenson's Treasure Island (1883), and William Golding's Lord of The Flies (1954). The three novels testify to the development of this literary form from the middle of the nineteenth century to the first half of the twentieth. This study compares and analyses the three works as juvenile reading material ; adventure stories ; desert island themes; and important literary stages in the careers of Ballantyne, Stevenson, and Golding respectively.

To achieve this end , the thesis is divided into four chapters together with an introduction and a conclusion. In general , the comparative procedure selects a given point of analysis and traces its manifestations in the three works. Nevertheless, individual characteristics that denote the uniqueness of each writer's vision and style are also set off. Thus, the introduction highlights this process of analysis together with the significance of choosing these particular novels as being correspondences to the social, historical and literary connotations of their age. Chapter One points out the general characteristics of juvenile adventure fiction thus offering a background to its origin and first attempts . Chapter Two discusses the social and moral forces that were at work during the writing of Coral Island, Treasure Island , and Lord of the Flies. It then pinpoints their reflection as artistic works and their transformation into fictive themes. Chapter Three introduces the three adventures as works of art through an analysis of the major character types that appear in these stories thus locating each writer's share of repetition and/or innovation. Chapter Four follows the prominent technical features of Ballantyne's , Stevenson's and Golding's styles and their influence upon the genre in general. Finally, the conclusion summarizes the most notable results of the research.

Introduction

Introduction

I am monarch of all I survey;
My right there is none to dispute ;
From the centre all round to the sea .
I am Lord of the fowl and the brute .
O Solitude ! Where are the charms
That sages have seen in thy Face ?
Better dwell in the midst of alarms
Than reign in this horrible place .

I am out of humanity's reach,
I must finish my journey alone .
Never hear the sweet music of speech ;
I start at the sound of my own .⁽¹⁾

William Cowper

Inspired by the factual adventures of Alexander Selkirk (1676 - 1721), Daniel Defoe (1660 - 1731) wrote the first English Robinson Crusoe (1719). Though originally dedicated to adult readers, the island adventure has been recognised as suitable reading material for children and adolescents ever since Rousseau (1712 - 1778) selected it for the education of his fictive child Emile. The present study tracks out the development of this literary genre through a comparison of three classics that invested Crusoe's island situation: Ballantyne's Coral Island (1858), Stevenson's Treasure Island (1881), and Golding's Lord of the Flies (1954). Within a time-span of virtually a

(1) From "The Solitude of Alexander Selkirk" by William Cowper, in A Book of English Poetry. Chaucer to Rossetti, collected by G.B. Harrison, (Middlesex : Penguin Books Ltd, 1985).

hundred years, the three writers re-shaped the original island story so as to cover the physical, behavioural, educational and psychological characteristics of the adolescent stage. Through employing innovative fictional, narratorial and technical features, they endowed the genre with rewarding artistic fabrics. Thus in the following chapters, the analysis will cover:

- a) The general characteristics of juvenile adventure fiction as subscribed by the works of such writers as Defoe, Wyss, Marryat, Kingsley, Kingston, Henty, Ransome --- etc.
- b) The social, political and literary trends that dominated the times in which Coral Island, Treasure Island, and Lord of the Flies were published and their influence upon the social and moral themes tackled within the texts.
- c) The development of character types in the three novels.
- d) The individual techniques of Ballantyne, Stevenson, and Golding respectively and their correspondence to their aesthetic visions.

Through the above points, the comparison illustrates points of evolution rather than abrupt changes, proving that juvenile adventure fiction assumes an ascending line from overtness to suggestion and from describing an outer journey to depicting a tour inside man's mind and consciousness. It also stresses the potentialities of juvenile adventure fiction as both enjoyable reading material and genuine works of art.

In his essay, "The Young Adult Novel", Frances Duncan writes that children literature is "The only kind of writing in which the

emphasis is removed from the creation and placed on the consumer... [when this occurs] the focus changes from that of a writer trying to create the best, most honest writing he is capable of to that of trying to communicate a message to a specific audience".⁽²⁾ Duncan's words are those of a writer privileged by a heritage of literary production that enables him to speak disparagingly of writers who are keen to satisfy the demands of the audience. For if we apply this statement to juvenile adventure fiction, we would soon realise that it was these very demands that gave impetus to the genre thus providing bases and standards towards which subsequent writers would comply or revolt.

In the wake of the French Revolution (1789), the European aristocratic milieu experienced a threat to its domination over the poor and working classes. The threat was even more gravely felt in Britain, the traditional center of monarchy. Eager to maintain the status quo, the upper classes bethought of improving the educational condition of the poor in the hope of lessening their bitterness over their wretched conditions. Measures were immediately taken to grant the working boys a meagre stock of information that would reduce their illiteracy as well as teach them endurance and pacification. But once they were able to read, the poor turned away from the dull religious stories of martyrs and resorted to the penny dreadfuls that were easy, exciting, and satisfying to their dreams and ambitions. Disapproving of the quality of these books yet acknowledging their instant appeal, educators searched for other formulas that would contain a fair share of excitement and yet would be morally acceptable. They found their

(2) Frances Duncan, "The Young Adult Novel" in Children's Literature, History and Criticism: Reflections on Literature for Children, ed. Francelia Butler and Richard Rotert, (New York: Library Professional Publication, 1989), p. 170.

object at first in travel writing and in adventures recounted by sailors and voyagers.

Chapter One starts with a record of the effect of travel writing on the early versions of adventure fiction. The interests recorded in these roughly written texts were primarily secular and subjective. They preached the ethics of traversing the world as an initial step in a complicated process of acquisition. Themes of adventure and heroism flourished in such contexts. Imperialism crept within the fabric of adventure under pretexts of scientific expeditions, missionary efforts, overseas commerce or exploration. Britain, as a great imperial power, encouraged these aspirations and cultivated their presence in the new generations who would be future servants of the empire. This need had been catered for by a host of adventure writers who deployed their fiction to propagate knowledge of the natural world, promotion of inferior races, salvation of heathens as well as the achievement of personal and national glory.

The word "adventure" implies outdoors or overseas undertakings. In the desert island adventure, the story is enacted upon some remote spot of the world. Chapter One proceeds to relate the significance of the island as a setting for most of the works written in this form. It also marks the development in handling the insular details from being a description of environmental background to symbolising the world in general. The role of the ship as a naval vehicle for the adventure is also examined in detail.

Always laying claim to authenticity and plausibility, adventure fiction exhibits a display of realistic, common types of character who are not endowed with a royal or princely status. Manly attributes,