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Introduction

At a time when Jules Verne is making a comeback in the United States as a mainstream literary figure, one of his most brilliant and famous novels remains unavailable in English. Although half a dozen works carrying the title “The Mysterious Island” are in print, all follow W. H. G. Kingston’s 1874-75 translation, which omits sections of the novel and ideologically skews other passages.¹

The real *Mysterious Island* is nearly 200,000 words long. For Sidney Kravitz, this first-ever complete translation has been a long labor of love, resulting in a highly accurate text which captures every nuance and will be the undisputed reference text in English.

L’Ile mystérieuse (*MI* – 1874) needs little presentation. In 1865 during the American Civil War, a violent storm sweeps a balloon carrying a group of Unionists to an island in the Pacific. After satisfying basic necessities, Cyrus Smith the engineer, Spilett the reporter, Pencroff the sailor, Harbert the adolescent, and Neb the Black find a single match and grain of wheat, and proceed to rebuild most of modern civilization. They construct a boat and rescue Ayrton from the neighboring island of Tabor, abandoned there as a punishment in Verne’s *Captain Grant’s Children* (1865) and now in an animal state. However, a series of puzzling incidents leads the settlers to believe they are not alone on the Mysterious Island, including a lead bullet and a washed-up chest. At the end of the novel, they discover that Captain Nemo from *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Seas* (1869) has been helping them all along. Nemo reveals his true name to be Prince Dakkar, then dies, and is entombed in his *Nautilus*. Following a volcanic eruption, the Island disintegrates, leaving just a small rock, from which the settlers are rescued.

Astoundingly, no scholarly edition has ever been produced of this rich and influential work in either French or English. Yet studying the real-world references and the inceptions of Verne’s other works has thrown up some amazing results in recent years. For what Roland Barthes once called “an almost perfect novel,”² two distinct manuscripts have survived, together with two earlier drafts, published in 1991 under the title *L’Oncle Robinson* (“Uncle Robinson”). This annotated edition, then, studies *MI* in terms of its literary themes but especially its origins, including the four manuscripts and the correspondence between Verne and his publisher, Hetzel, published only in 1999.³

Verne’s imagination is fired by unique events. The dark continent, the poles, the interior of the earth, the dark side of the moon, the bottom of the ocean were unexplored when he began writing. Their two- or three-dimensional spaces were not only virgin, but were defined by a height, depth, or distance out or in. In each case a central point then

1. Amazon lists twenty-four editions of *The Mysterious Island*. Those currently selling best are the Signet Classic reprint of Kingston’s defective translation and Bair’s version which, however, omits more than half the text (Bair normally translates erotic novels). Further details are provided on pp. xx-xx.

2. Roland Barthes, “Nautilus et Bateau ivre,” in *Mythologies* (1957), 80-82 (80).

3. Olivier Dumas, Piero Gondolo della Riva, and Volker Dehs, *Correspondance inédite de Jules Verne et de Pierre-Jules Hetzel (1863-1886): Tome I (1863-1874)* (1999) 139-218. This volume is reviewed in Arthur B. Evans, “Hetzel and Verne: Collaboration and Conflict,” *Science Fiction Studies*, 28.1, 97-106.

represented a maximum exoticism, an ultima Thule. The first dozen novels in Verne's series of Extraordinary Journeys exultantly explore these limits; these are the ones which sold the best and remain the best-known today.

But eventually the series runs out of room. A second period in the novelist's production deals with less prestigious territories, and increasingly with social, political, and historical issues, in novels like *Mathias Sandorf* (1885), set in the Mediterranean, or *North against South* (1887), about the American Civil War. Other novels cover ground anew: three novels visit interplanetary space, three the Poles, half a dozen the air, and at least four the heart of Africa. Verne's "Robinsonades," or desert-island stories, are particularly numerous, including of course "Uncle Robinson" ("UR") and *MI*, but also *The School for Robinsons* (1882), *Two Years Vacation* (1888), and *Second Homeland* (1900), as well as major parts of *The Boy Captain* (1878), "Edom" (1910), and "In the Magallanes" (1987).

The transition between periods is evasive, however. *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1872) forms both a last fling and a sign of the constraints of the new order. But it is itself a repetition, as *Captain Grant's Children* and *Twenty Thousand Leagues* had already gone round the globe. Even while writing *MI*, Verne was working on *The Chancellor* (1874), which he describes as the archetypal shipwreck story, and *Hector Servadac* (1876), an inter-planetary Robinsonade. *MI* perhaps constitutes the final cul-de-sac of the exploration phase, for it represents an escape to the south Pacific but is enclosed in a island. The novel thus not only provides a gripping conclusion to the eight-volume trilogy started with *Captain Grant's Children* and *Twenty Thousand Leagues*, but echoes all the preceding works and resoundingly closes the cycle.

At the time of composition, 1871-74, Verne's life was turbulent. The Franco-Prussian War and occupation of 1870-71 had caused tremendous damage to the physical structure and confidence of France. Verne even thought of giving up literature, according to a letter to his publisher of 22 July 1871. Also, *MI* was his first book to be entirely written in Amiens, away from the bohemian stimulation of Paris where he had spent most of the previous twenty-three years.

Even before his first novel for Hetzel, in about 1862, Verne is reported to have said that he was going "to continue the tradition of Robinson Crusoe. It's modern, it's new, it's scientific magic. If it succeeds, I'll give everything up."⁴ *MI* is the work with the longest incubation, the one Verne worked hardest at, and the longest in his series of the Extraordinary Journeys.

Although it reproduces the history of mankind, from living in caves to the most recent technology, *MI* can in no way be considered a science-fiction novel, if only since no new science is involved. The best pigeon-hole for it is simply Literature (French) (Nineteenth Century). The main interest of the novel derives indeed from its specifically literary interpretation – and undermining – of the Robinsonade, with repeated echoes of *The Swiss Family Robinson* (1812). The writer himself said: "*MI* must have been begun because I wished to tell the young boys of the world something about the marvels of the Pacific." (*Textes oubliés* (1979), 385)

4. Félix Duquesnel, "A Propos de la statue de Jules Verne," *Journal d'Amiens*, 23 April 1909.

Verne's sources are a complex area. Nor is this simply an exercise for academics keen to rescue obscure works from oblivion, since *MI* is defined by its relationship with its predecessors. The novelist is invariably writing "against" his influences as much as he is writing any positive "message": imitating and "modernizing" his predecessors only in order to ironically show them up, as he himself emphasized.⁵ Indeed the previous Robinsonades include his own earlier works, but even earlier parts of the same work. *MI* is only one in a series of Vernian desert-island works that parody and satirize previous writers, each other, but above all themselves.

This introduction will study the correspondence during the difficult gestation period from 1865 to 1871; the manuscript of "UR" in relation to *MI*; Hetzel's critical comments on *MI*; and the understanding of the novel generated by the knowledge of its writing. The characters will be studied, then the Island itself: first in terms of its shape and naming, then its ideological and geographical aspects, and lastly its many implausibilities. Finally, an attempt will be made to pull the threads together and make sense of the novel as a whole.

The correspondence between Verne and Hetzel is vital for understanding the novelist's intentions and the often difficult relationship. Substantial extracts will accordingly be cited here, so that we can study Verne's the sequence of events:

[18 September 1865] I'm dreaming of a magnificent Robinson. It is absolutely necessary for me to do one, it's stronger than me. Some wonderful ideas are coming to me, and if ... it succeeds in bringing in just three times as much as *The Swiss Family Robinson*, you'll be happy, and I will as well. If it isn't for us, let it be for our children, and still we won't complain ... I'm thinking enormously of this new machine and I'm taking notes. (*Corr.*, 35)

[14 July 1869] Next year, we'll see, either I'll begin the modern Robinson, or ... (115-16)

[25 July 1869] As for the five *Robinsons* of M. Helouis, that doesn't specially bother me. There have already been fifty *Robinsons*, and I believe [I] will stay outside of everything that has been done. (118)

[17? February 1870] I'm completely in the *Robinson*. I'm finding astonishing things ... ! I've plunged into it body and soul, and can't think of anything else. (131)

[25? February 1870] If you want to announce some new *Verne* to the readers of the *MER*, can't you do it without giving the title? ... We're snowed under, and my feet are frozen. The *Robinson* is going well, and it's great fun to do. (132)

[14 May 1870] I've entirely written the 1st volume of "Uncle Robinson." I'm in the middle of recopying it. (138)

On 20 June 1870, Hetzel announced publication in the *MER* for, we can deduce, the period 1871 to 1873:

"Uncle Robinson" – by Jules Verne // We are happy to be able to announce to our

5. "I took the common facts in *Robinson Crusoe*, *The Swiss Family Robinson*, *Le Robinson de douze ans* (a memory from my childhood), Cooper's *Robinson*, and still others that I know, and I wanted everything that was given as true in those books to be false in mine" (letter of 1883 about *The School for Robinsons*, but perfectly applicable to *MI*). "Cooper's *Robinson*" is presumably Fenimore Cooper, *The Crater, or Vulcan's Peak* (1847), translated as *Le Cratère, ou le Robinson américain* (1850 – Gallica).

subscribers that in addition to *The Exploration of the World: Famous Travels and Travelers*, M. Verne was preparing a surprise for us. / Under the title “Uncle Robinson,” the author of *Captain Grant’s Children* will give us in due course, so as to follow *Twenty Thousand Leagues*, a work destined to complement *Captain Grant’s Children*. For a truly original writer, exhausted information does not exist . . . It is evident that a modern Robinson, *au fait* with the progress of science, would solve the problems of life alone quite differently from *Robinson Crusoe*, the model for all those that followed him. / We do not wish to say any more about M. Verne’s book. Our readers will be able to read between the lines that on such a subject this inventive mind has been able to find and create new things of the most varied sort.

Hetzl’s evasive presentation in fact preceded his reading of the manuscript. Then came a twin thunderbolt. The publisher wrote a 1,000-word letter dated 21 July 1870, announcing the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War and his opinion of Verne’s long-cherished project: “it’s a sketch, but the clay is too soft and too gray ... [the characters] are not at present interesting ... suppose Hugo doing this scene ... your people get out of situations worse than the most innocent robinsons [*sic*] of the past” (*Corr.*, 143-46).

Verne changed tack:

15 [February 1871] It’s not the Robinson that I’ve continued with. I need to discuss it with you again. You know that I stick to my ideas like a Breton. Yes, Paris did a Robinson on a grand scale. But that is the *business* of my second and third volumes and not *the first*. When you have three volumes to do ... if you do not husband your effects and your climax you are lost. (154)

The correspondence, then, gives us important information about the desert-island project in its very early stages. We will now look at the resultant changes in the four drafts of the novel. These are of exceptional importance, since for Verne’s other novels the manuscripts often most accurately reflect his wishes more than the serial and, *a fortiori*, the book versions. The publisher frequently had preconceptions as to the readership his novelist should be aiming for, the nature of what he should be writing, and its political, religious, and moral ideology. Many of the ideas even originated from Hetzel. We must, in other words, assume that the many changes, even those in Verne’s handwriting, were made under pressure. In any case, it is surprising that modern publishers have invariably followed Hetzel’s often shortsightedly commercial editing of Verne.

The only part of each manuscript of “UR” to have survived is the first out of three, perhaps because the others were never written. The plot of the second manuscript can be summarized as follows: on 25 March 1861, Americans Mr. and Mrs. Clifton, with their four children, Marc, Robert,⁶ Jack, and Belle, plus a dog called Fido, are heading home across the northern Pacific on board the *Vankouver* [*sic*]. However, some of the crew mutiny and take over the ship; and Mrs. Clifton and the children are put into a boat near an island. They are accompanied by Flip, a sailor from Picardy, who shows great affection, cheerfulness, ingenuity, and teaching skill, thus becoming “Uncle Robinson.” With Flip’s help the family discover a shelter and food, and start a fire with a single match. At a sec-

6. The name Marc probably comes from *The Crater, or Vulcan’s Peak* (1847); Robert from Louis Desnoyers, *Aventures de Robert Robert et de son fidèle compagnon Toussaint Lavenette* (1839).

ond stage, Harry Clifton, an engineer, escapes from the *Vankouver* and joins his family, although receiving less attention than Uncle Robinson. More ambitious ventures are carried out, like growing wheat and tobacco and exploring and measuring the island. An orang-utan is captured and a lake discovered containing a strange boiling, as well as a cock with a recently trimmed crest. Part I ends with the discovery of a lead bullet in a leveret. (Extracts from “UR” and further information appear on pp. xx-xx.)

Even before its publication in 1991, “UR” aroused controversy as to its literary quality. As Christian Robin points out,⁷ its tone and style are unique in Verne’s works, undoubtedly because written for young people. It is also his only book to convincingly portray child psychology and a family without possessions succeeding on an island. The main reason Hetzel did not like it, Robin surmises (233), is that he disapproved of children in Verne’s works, perhaps because it was his own speciality as a writer. Philippe Burgaud finds the work pleasant and readable,⁸ for it is a highly polished, fluent work (it even has chapter heads for the initial chapters). Indeed Part I of *MI*, which is less gripping than Parts II and III, may be considered only slightly more interesting than “UR.” While Verne destroyed several manuscripts in 1886, his retention of both manuscripts of “UR” implies that he did not share his publisher’s negative view of it.

Nevertheless, Jean Guermonprez calls “UR” a “lemon” and Jean Jules-Verne, Olivier Dumas, and Jacques van Herp agree that it is unimaginative.⁹ “UR” certainly does not compare with the series of masterpieces Verne produced from 1863 to 1870, if only because “the Clifton family is too similar to the pedantic and edifying family” of Wyss.¹⁰

Verne proceeded to write the two surviving manuscripts of *MI*.¹¹ While *MI* visibly derives from “UR,” it is also different in both style and content. Many phrases and even episodes are copied wholesale, but the characters are transformed, and instead of the four months of “UR,” Part I of *MI* covers seven months. In an interesting cross-over, the margin of “UR” (“UR,” 54) contains a diagram showing the triangulation done in *MI* (I, 14),¹² plus a first draft of the corresponding dialogue, including Cyrus Smith’s name (Robin, 237). In “UR” there is only one watch, but two are needed in *MI* for making the fire and

7. Christian Robin, “Postface,” in *L’Oncle Robinson* (1991), 223-34.

8. Philippe Burgaud, “A Propos de *L’Oncle Robinson*,” *BSJV* 104 (1992): 3.

9. Jean Guermonprez, “Du Navet au chef-d’œuvre,” *BSJV* 113 (1995): 4-7 (4); Jean Jules-Verne, *Jules Verne* (1973); Olivier Dumas and Jacques van Herp, “Un *Oncle Robinson*, une *Ile mystérieuse*, et autres, sous influence,” *BSJV* 111 (1994): 31-41.

10. Jean Guermonprez, unpublished “Notes,” kept in the Centre de documentation Jules Verne, Amiens.

11. Verne’s letter of 25? February 1873 says: “it will be easy for me to write the three volumes of *MI* within the year.” On 26 September Hetzel praises “the first fifteen galleys of Part I,” but on 11 and 13 October complains that Verne has sent his corrected galleys to the printer rather than through him. On about 15 December Verne requests “a complete set of page proofs” for Part I. As late as 29 September 1874, Hetzel is still suggesting substantive changes to Part III.

12. References to *MI* will generally be of the form (I, 14), i.e. Part 1, ch. 14. For “UR,” however, given that only one edition has appeared to date, page numbers rather than chapter numbers are given.

for calculating the longitude. Episodes absent from “UR” include the mysterious saving of the engineer, the dog’s fight with the dugong, and the making of nitroglycerin. Contrariwise, the turning of the turtle and the acquisition of Jup are displaced from “UR” to Part II of *MI*. The huge amounts of science in *MI* are presumably a reaction to Hetzel’s acerbic remark on “UR”: “Where is the science in all that?” (Guermonprez, “Du Navet,” 6) Similarly the splendors of Granite House and its hydraulic lift may derive from his comment about the “banal grotto” (Robin, 243). Making bricks, iron, steel, and soap in record time may be due to his remarks on the Cliftons’ ineffectuality.

In about 1871, Verne had apparently received lots of letters from women across the globe, begging him to reveal the identity of Nemo, left a mystery at the end of *Twenty Thousand Leagues*; and he wrote: “They will have the key to the enigma, but not immediately like that! They will have to be patient for a while yet” (cited without reference by Guermonprez, “Du Navet,” 6). In other words, the somber captain was possibly not at this stage part of the Robinsonade. However, in Part I of *MI* and even in “UR” there is already a human presence. The question then arises whether it is Nemo responsible for the bullet in the leveret, the strange boiling, and the trimmed crest. After all, the boiling in *MI* will be his doing and no one else can act under water. Although Verne’s letter of 2 February 1873 mentions Nemo for the first time, he often claimed never to have started a book without planning it out in detail. Since the main alternative, Ayrton, is still thousands of miles away in the southern hemisphere, the captain may have appeared in the missing Part III of “UR.”

In judging Hetzel’s reactions, we note with amazement that he was nearly as critical of *MI* as “UR.” Given the uninformed nature of most English-language criticism of *MI* to date, it is again important to quote substantial extracts from the exchanges between Verne and his mentor¹³ (retaining Hetzel’s poor style and punctuation):

[May? 1873] The framework [of Part I] is good ... but your characters ... do not have enough variation, except the engineer and Harbert. Cracrof [*sic*] can pass, but the reporter is a nullity who can not survive, and ... it’s not worth paying for a Negro if you’re not going to enjoy him a bit more ... One does not send mere commercial travelers on missions like the ones [the reporter] did, for a newspaper as important as his. We need men of steel in mind and body ... When I think that your 4 fellows spend the whole volume without saying a word of the America they left in those conditions, of their past, of anything, I say to myself that you must be the most astonishing and the most indifferent of creatures to find the thing plausible. (199-200)

[21? September 1873] While writing this work, I am above all concerned to invent *episodes* and especially the climax which must be produced from start to finish. There are incidents in the 3rd volume which are prepared from the beginning of the first. (204-05)

[22? September 1873] Overall, the [second] volume is better than the 1st ... But what is missing from this book as a whole is that your people do not seem very close to each other. Nor are they sufficiently distinct in their language or character. Good humor is too rare, your lively philosophy too often absent ... The scientific material and the execution of the works they accomplish have made you leave their humanity, their moods, their sentiments and thoughts too much in the shadows. One

13. Other relevant letters were written on 27 February, 10 April, 28 July, 3, 4, and mid-September, 22, 26, 29, and 31 October, and 3 November 1873 and 16 and 23 January, 5, 14, and 16 March, 5 April, 5 August, and mid- and 19 September 1874.

doesn't sufficiently wish to be with them." (205-06)

[23 September 1873] Everything you say about Ayrton's savagery is for me without importance. All the mental specialists in the world won't change a thing. I need a savage. I tell the public, here is my savage. And you think people will worry about knowing whether after 12 years of solitude, he has become *that* savage! No! What is important is that having been a savage he becomes a man again ... Do not forget: the Robinson subject has been done twice. Defoe, who took *man alone*, Wyss who took *the family*. / These were the two best subjects. I myself have to make do with a third which is neither one nor the other. / Several times already you have created doubt in my mind about this work. / And yet I have the conviction – and I speak to you as though it were by someone else – that it will not be inferior to the preceding ones, that, properly launched like them, it will succeed. I have the profound conviction that the reader's curiosity will be stimulated, that the sum of the *imagined* things in this work is greater than in the others, and that what I call the *climax* develops, as it were, *mathematically*. (208)

22 January 1874. On the whole [Part III] is excellent well-constructed well-planned well-balanced in its details, the capital weakness is the endless description of Harbert's illness, it's as long and frustrating and irritating as if you were a nurse who has to listen to a medical lecture by a doctor who thinks only of ensuring his lesson sinks in ... you put your foot in your soul when you hoped that your process of scientific popularization could apply to medicine, like better-known subjects ... In this episode there are also attempts at sensibility which do not work. There are good sentiments, and you tried them thinking of me perhaps ... but we should not be doing reverence ... The end of Nemo with the removal of a few unhappy efforts in the same vein will remain very fine but it is important that Nemo not die before knowing what might happen to the Island ... Your destruction of the Island is a masterpiece. / The whole preparation of Nemo's death and the escape as well, and only details need to be amended. But you have to add a last chapter, a chapter conclusion [*sic*] of 3 pages. / In your fatigue and after all your effort you dump everybody in America like dirty washing, first of all it's not appropriate and next it makes the interest fall flat on its face or its arse as you will ... You will reduce the value of the pearl, you will say that it might be worth millions but you will put it in the middle of 8 or 10 millions of diamonds, jewels, etc. / You will send the pearl to Lady Glenarvan my good fellow and with the diamonds our settlers back in America will make themselves another Lincoln Island on dry land. / They will found a little State wherever you want, in 4 pages you will say that very well you will show them without embellishment, you will show them to us united like the fingers of a glove in a peace-time America and in a colony that is already prosperous with kids and all the trimmings: church schoolhouse a monument to Nemo Glenarvan and Robert Grant. / They must be darlings and your public must say that you are one too. (229-31)

[18 September 1874] It's completely agreed for the ending of *MI*. I'll stick their island back on dry land in America for them. (259)

29 September 1874 ... a confidence that Nemo should share with Cyrus on his own, about the possibility of upheaval of the island, perhaps soon ... That explains why Nemo did not die alone. He had some advice of capital importance to give them. / The question of the chest would be insufficient to explain why he wished to interrupt his solitary existence, for he could very easily have put the chest in their hands or under their table ... Incidentally for the conclusion. Jup and the dog must be saved. (261-62)

Despite Verne's valiant resistance, both manuscripts of *MI* underwent a harrowing series of cuts, additions, and changes. Some of the alterations are presented on pp. xx-xx;

here it can be noted that the meaning of the conclusion is totally changed. In the published version, but not in the manuscripts, we read of a deathbed remorse by Nemo and a pompous and presumptuous assessment by Smith of his life as an “error.” In the book, Nemo gives the settlers Hetzel’s jewelry, whereas in the manuscript they get the giant pearl he had so carefully nurtured in *Twenty Thousand Leagues*. In Verne’s original idea, the destruction of the Island is the end of the novel; in the “Hetzelized” version, the settlers have to start again in Iowa. The captain’s dying words, the absurd “God and my country!” were brutally, criminally, imposed by Hetzel. The manuscript read simply “Independence!”

Our exploration of the origins of “UR” and *MI* has, in sum, thrown up several major problems with accepting the work as published. Because the Nemo of the third part is not what Verne wanted him to be, this falsifies his destiny and hence that of the settlers, and in turn the whole meaning of the novel.

Understanding the links between *MI* and *Twenty Thousand Leagues* is in turn rendered difficult. One problem is simply consistency. In *MI* the “true” origin of Nemo and all his crew is revealed to be Indian – although at least one of them had been French in the earlier masterpiece. His victims were, it seems, British; and so on. The Nemo of *MI* in fact bears little resemblance to the earlier Nemo; even the most basic facts do not tally, such as his age and the dates, which are all wildly off. The captain of *MI* claims that he sank the warship “in a narrow, shallow bay ... I had to pass, and I ... passed” (III, 16). However, the claim is wrong, for in the 1870 novel the sinking takes place several hundred miles from land (III, 23). The only merit in the claim is its identity with Hetzel’s implausible suggestion that he made in the correspondence – and which the earlier Verne indignantly rejected. But the rot goes deeper, for even the Nemo of *Twenty Thousand Leagues* was adulterated, since Verne had already conducted a running battle over two or three manuscripts and a score of anguished letters, where he demonstrates, point by logical point, that Hetzel is insisting on radical changes while not understanding the most basic aspects of Nemo’s behavior.

The links between the two novels, as encapsulated in Nemo and the *Nautilus*, are therefore of little help in understanding the gloomy captain, and may indeed create misconceptions. *MI* is disappointing if judged purely as a sequel, for it contradicts and undermines the previous work, with its heroic defiance of human society and its magical exploration of the ocean depths. However, as an independent work, *MI* remains a resounding success. It is probably best to ignore the links between the two novels.

On top of the ambivalence and irony invading Verne’s work in the 1870s, then, we must add our own skepticism as to every sentiment and deed in *MI*, especially the pious or noble ones. Behind each episode and phrase lurk a line of darker copies, like Macbeth’s ghosts, running through the correspondence with Hetzel and the four manuscripts but even into *Twenty Thousand Leagues* and its manuscripts and correspondence.

A naive reading is no longer possible.

Verne's degree of identification with his seven characters varies. Guermonprez lucidly analyzes the settlers: “Instead of the usual trio of men, representing intelligence, courage, and fidelity, he spreads these qualities over five men.” (“Notes,” 18) Four of them are in

the force of age and all are energetic, in the Anglo-American mold. In contrast with the Scottish Ayrton and their European predecessors in the genre, the Americans are omnipotent and fearless.

The novel seems in some ways an English-language one from the beginning, as indicated by its English place-names and its emphasis on practical reality. In his approximately twenty-three novels partly or entirely situated in the US, Verne often gives a positive image. America is for him a nation of engineers, mechanics, balloons, telegraphs, and railways, one where science is discussed and nothing is feared. The novelist is systematically anti-slavery, from a humanitarian consideration since he royally ignores economic arguments. However, he also writes devastating criticisms of over-engineering and destruction of nature. One of Verne's major criticisms of the US in his later years, for instance in *Propeller Island* (1895), is the power of money. The other is the lack of culture, as in "In the Year 2889" (1889), whose critical passages were apparently censored when published in New York, and in "Humbug: The American Way of Life," which remained unpublished in English until 1991.¹⁴

Nevertheless, as Guermonprez indicates ("Notes," 29), the settlers' characters and daily habits are not always well-defined or plausible. They rarely talk of their origins from different parts of New England, or even the reasons for the Civil War. They have no petty jealousies or nicknames; they rarely smile or laugh; and they almost never go for a swim in their Pacific paradise. We know little of their washing or toilet arrangements, perhaps because twenty-five to thirty gallons per day (I, 19) does not allow such refinements. But their waste water must go down the well – up which Nemo comes to eavesdrop. Although the bedrooms are not heated, the settlers' health is perfect: not a sniffle, despite the humid environment caused by the shaft.

Within the group, Smith is invariably seen in a good light, with his polyvalence and his Unionist officer's cap, in the illustrations if not in the text. Michel Tournier says of him that "engineer" is a superb word, "combining both genius and ingenuity" (*Le Vent paraquet*, 214). He is forty-five, Verne's own age in 1873, and represents values of sociability and practicality. While he indulges in the pleasure of enclosure in the womb-like cave, it must still have a window. He is above all an over-achiever. As Kravitz points out (private correspondence), the list of his scientific and engineering accomplishments is endless: a fire made with watch lenses; a knife made from Top's collar; bricks, then a kiln, then clay pots, jars, and cups; determining the coordinates of the Island; calculating the height of the granite wall; making bellows from seal skins, then steel; sulphuric acid, nitric acid, and nitroglycerin; tallow candles; baskets and maple sugar; a bridge over the Mercy; pyroxylyte; glass panes; a large boat; a mill to press wool; a windmill to grind wheat for bread; and a drawbridge, iron wire, and a battery.¹⁵

But while Verne's rational mind sympathizes with Smith, his instinctive preference often goes to Nemo. The captain is in touch with the past, literary and artistic values, the

14. Translated with an Introduction and Notes by William Butcher.

15. Respectively: I, 10; 13; 13; 13, 14; 14; 15; 17; 20; 22; II, 7; 8; 9; 10; 11; 16; 18. It is surprising he does not build a railway or at least a tram, given his previous occupation as railway manager.

invisible, the unconscious, and the fantastic – and he uses the telegraph for real communication rather than as a toy. The essential contrast is between the creativity of the tormented genius and the heartiness of the positivistic settlers. Nemo and Smith correspond to a Latin-Anglo-Saxon split, but also to a Romantic-Realist one: although Nemo has a technologically advanced vessel, he is a professional loner and meeting him is compared to meeting a dying God. His fate is appropriate: enclosed in bed, in his submarine, in the crypt, in the Island, at the bottom of the sea.

Ayrton, in contrast, is the typical gritty Scot. Despite Verne's protests, his descent into animality does not seem entirely realistic, for many real-life cases exist where comparable isolation had little visible effect. As the only solitary Robinson in the *Extraordinary Journeys*, Verne seems to be making a moral point of him. But because of the sincerity of his repentance, Ayrton does not give up like his fellow settlers, and is rewarded by being the person who sees the *Duncan* and who saves the chest of jewelry.

What should not be glossed over is the systematic racism of the novel. Verne's and the settlers' prejudice is blind and unrelenting, in common with much of their century. While sympathetic, Neb the Black is described in terms of his distinctive physical appearance, but also behavior (close to animals, lack of intelligence and perseverance, etc.). Indeed unfavorable comparisons are made with Top the dog and Jup the orang-utan. A whole Chain of Beings is in fact in evidence, based on social, political, and racial factors. It ranges from blacks to whites, passing from Neb, Top, Jup, the pirates, Ayrton, Smith, Nemo, and God to the author! As François Raymond has pointed out,¹⁶ each stage "apes" the ones above it. Thus Jup, who, like Nemo, has a God's name, imitates Pencroff's use of a mirror. Ayrton is a pastiche of Crusoe and Nemo – but is himself parodied by the orang-utan. However, the hierarchy, which must symbolize Verne's trepidation vis-à-vis Hetzel and even his severe father, undergoes sudden underminings and reversals. Raymond wisely concludes that, rather than seek ideological coherence in *MI*, it is more fruitful to study the structures by which the complex meaning is conveyed.

Verne is not an acute observer of character differences, but he does create personal significance through powerful innovations in two other psychological areas.

The first is hypnotism and electrical phenomena in general. The scene where Ayrton receives Smith's care, "like a person under the gaze of a hypnotist" (II, 16), is a defining moment of the novel, although an even more dramatic scene was cut from MS1 (see p. xx). The idea of restoring speech by taking the sufferer back to the traumatic events that provoked his illness is of course an anticipation of Freud's seminal idea.

Throughout his life, Verne demonstrated interest in mental phenomena. There is a probable influence by Poe's "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" (1844), summarized in Verne's essay "Edgar Allan Poe and his Works" (1864) as a "tale where death is suspended ... by the use of magnetic sleep." On 28 June 1850 he wrote to his parents about a "miraculous" *magnétiseur* (mesmerizer or hypnotist) called Alexis who gave public performances (Dumas, *Jules Verne* (1988), 280). Starting from his early twenties, Verne suffered from paralysis on one side of his face, but was treated in 1851 by means of electric-

16. François Raymond, "Utopie et aventure dans l'œuvre de Jules Verne (Second volet)," *BSJV* 108 (1993): 4-10.

ity. From about 1873, the health of his son Michel gave him cause for concern, and in 1874 resulted in his hospitalization in the clinic of Dr. Antoine Blanche (1828-93), a renowned mental specialist who treated Nerval and Maupassant.¹⁷ It is clear, then, that Verne's interest in the hidden workings of the mind in *MI* is original and is connected with his fascination at the power of electricity, most dramatically displayed through Nemo's submarine.

The other innovation is the personification of Lincoln Island. The characters remain so strongly in our memory because of their collective relationship with their home. The only native, however, is Jup, also the only survivor from "UR," and who will perish with the Island. Lincoln is perhaps even the novel's main character, with its energies and changeability, its nooks and crannies, its birth and death. Accordingly, we will study its role and characteristics in detail.

The Island resembles a starfish, whereas what was originally called "Flip Island" in "UR" is a quadrilateral, of length "about 20 to 22 leagues, bigger than Elba and twice as big as St. Helena": a clear reference to Napoleon, imprisoned on both islands. The shape of Lincoln Island, characterized as "a sort of monstrous pteropoda" (I, 11), has variously been suggested as based on Saint-Pierre, Rawaki, Cyprus, Jan Mayen, or Celebes (see Note on p. xxx).

The Island is in many ways a Utopia: not in the literal sense of "nowhere," since Verne provides precise coordinates, but in terms of an ideal community. Lincoln represents a return to paradise, to roots, to agrarian calm, even if the dream is adulterated by the encroachments of modern existence and the luxuries derived from the Industrial Revolution. It attracts us because we can imagine the world remade, with new social relations. In *MI* the result is indeed a model, in marked contrast with later instances such as *The School for Robinsons*, *Two Years Vacation*, or William Golding's *The Lord of the Flies*. It is a model also in the sense of a microcosm, an escapist reduction of the complexities of the real world. As a result, its success would be difficult to generalize, for the community is limited in size, has an unusual leader, and depends crucially on finding a native-free area.

The naming of Lincoln's features in terms of "back home" symbolizes its colonial appropriation and the settlers' dream of attaching themselves to the Union. Amongst the many paradoxes, of course, is that America was at this time a recently emancipated colony itself, with a strongly anti-colonial ideology. Another is that the rebel Nemo supports the colonization of the Island; another, that the model, taken from *Captain Grant's Children*, is colonies founded by Scotland, itself a colony in some ways. A final irony is that the colonists' frenetic attempts culminate merely in the derisory recreation of the colony within the motherland. Given all these tensions, we should avoid imposing an ideology on to Lincoln Island.¹⁸ Nemo's Indian nationalism is different from Smith's American one –

17. Another hypnotism scene in *Mathias Sandorf* (1885) lists doctors specializing in mental illness, including the co-founder of modern neurology, Jean-Martin Charcot (1825-93). Charcot was renowned for his attempt to use magnets and hypnotism to find an organic cause for hysteria, for his disciple Pierre Janet's development of the idea of the unconscious – and for interesting his student, Sigmund Freud, in the origins of neurosis.

18. Michel Serres, *Jouvences sur Jules Verne* (1974 – 275) concurs with Raymond in

and Verne supports neither.

At the beginning of the Extraordinary Journeys, the British were viewed very favorably, for instance in *Five Weeks in a Balloon* or *Adventures of Captain Hatteras*. During the 1870s, however, their image became less attractive, and in *MI*, British colonialism in India is criticized. In *The Steam House* (1879) a chapter entitled “The Indian Mutiny” (I, 33) shows that Verne’s views were not always anti-colonialist, but also provides information about Tippto-Sahib, Prince Dakkar’s uncle and historical model: “Under Lord Cornwallis, in 1784 ... battle [was made] with Tippto-Sahib, killed on 4 May 1799, in the last assault given by General Harris on Seringapatam ... In 1806, perhaps even under the inspiration of Tippto-Sahib’s son, the garrison of the native army of Madras ... cut the throats of the officers and their families, shot the ill soldiers even in the hospital ... through the hatred of the invaders by the invaded.” Verne’s source for *MI* is perhaps M. de Valbezen, cited in *The Steam House* and who praises the British as having brought great benefits to the whole of India.¹⁹ In sum, Verne’s opinions on even Tippto-Sahib are contradictory; and it would therefore be unwise to attempt to summarize his overall views on the British in India.

An additional inconsistency in Verne’s political views is that even the concept of progress is fraught with problems. In *MI*, the destruction of the Island at the end, meaning that all has been in vain, is part of a cyclical vision of human affairs. Circular repetition of life had indeed been earlier emphasized by Cyrus Smith (I, 21); it will form the central theme of “Edom” (1910), where the annihilation of civilization happens several times and may perhaps continue indefinitely in the future, generated by man’s excessive pride in his scientific achievements. The novelist’s popular reputation as an apologist for science and progress is clearly mistaken.

The island moves from the north Pacific in “UR” to the south in *MI*. The reason is presumably so as to be close to Ayerton’s Tabor island. Kravitz (*Ibid.*) remarks that in the move many landmarks are rotated through 180°: the landing place and the granite wall, for example, shift from the western to the eastern shore. More generally, Guernonprez (“Notes,” 14) points out: “Verne ... transports ... a whole fauna unknown to this region, such as the mouflon, (European) porcupine ... the onager of Mongolia, the orang-utan, the tragopan; and endows the Island with a variegated flora such as the deodar, dragon tree ... nettle tree, mastic tree, horse-radish ... ficoids ... American maple.” Lincoln certainly contains an amazing variety of animals and plants, including a jaguar (I, 13), even if Verne shows each exotic animal once before hiding it again. Many studies have pointed out that

strongly criticizing Jean Chesneaux, *Une Lecture politique de Jules Verne* (1971) and Marie-Hélène Huet, *L’Histoire des Voyages extraordinaires* (1973), with good reason, for being selective in their readings of *MI*. Verne is often pro-colonialist in his attitudes, which in any case change from book to book, sometimes from chapter to chapter.

19. In referring to the events of 1857, the same chapter (I, 33) refers to the “extreme precision [of M. de Valbezen] in his *Nouvelles études sur les Anglais en Inde*.” *Les Anglais et L’Inde* by E. de Valbezen (1857) and its enlarged edition *Les Anglais et L’Inde (Nouvelles études)* (1875) praise especially the introduction of telegraph, canals, railways, and roads: “Britain shows herself truly worthy of the civilizing task that Providence has entrusted to her.”

the ecology of a small island would not support the number of predators necessary to avoid inbreeding. Many have also pointed out the number of northern flora and fauna, claiming that this is because they were imported from “UR.” But such comments lack logic. Verne is simply mixing up all sorts, whether from the eastern or western, northern or southern hemispheres: the orang-utan and onager were no more at home in the north Pacific than the south. In *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*, indeed, Verne explicitly comments on such juxtapositions (ch. 39),²⁰ which extrapolate the general tendency of fiction to condense reality, but were especially prevalent in writers influenced by Romanticism.

For those seeking total authenticity, the position of the Island may also cause problems, quite apart from the surprising amount of snow and ice at 35° S. Even today, there are many Pacific islands and reefs whose existence is in doubt. Verne deliberately plays with the frontier between fact and fiction, but a further complication is in his calculation of longitude. In *MI*, the settlers use the Greenwich meridian (I, 14), but the narrator uses the Paris meridian, at least for Norfolk Island, which he places at longitude “165° 42' E” (III, 2) whereas it is 168° 3' from Greenwich. The difference between the Greenwich and Paris meridians is 2° 20', or about 140 miles at this latitude.

Smith places the Mysterious Island at “34° 57' S” and “150° 30' W” (II, 9) – which is the site of persistent but unconfirmed reports of authentic land. Krauth reports that an “Ernest-Legouvé Reef” is situated at 35° 12' S, 150° 40' W, which is very close.²¹ Although absent from the 1859 Admiralty Chart, the reef was recorded in “Paris notice to mariners 164/1122/1902,” and the International Hydrographic Bureau stated on 9 February 1957: “Ernest-Legouvé Reef was reported in 1902 by the captain of the French ship the *Ernest-Legouvé*. The reef was about 100 meters long and another reef was sighted near it.”

Tabor is similarly elusive. Although *MI* surprisingly omits the idea, *Captain Grant's Children* claims that Ayrton's home has more than one name: “Maria Theresa on British and German maps, but Tabor on French ones” (III, 21).²² In reality, its existence and even French name are doubtful. Verne admits that it is “low ... scarcely emerging from the waves ... If an eruption produced it, can one not fear that an eruption might carry it away?” (III, 20). In *Captain Grant's Children* Verne gives its coordinates as “37° 11' S, 153° W” (III, 21); the Paris meridian is normally used by the narrator in this novel, for instance for Tristan da Cunha (II, 2) or in the maps (I, 20 and III, 2). Smith also states that Tabor is “37° 11' S, 153° W” (II, 9) but using the Greenwich meridian this time. Clearly Verne and Smith can not both be right.

Tabor/Maria Theresa's existence was reported in three contemporary newspapers as a dangerous reef seen at 37° S, 151° 13' W on 16 November 1843 by a Captain Asaph P. Tabor, of the *Maria Theresa*, a whaler from New Bedford, Massachusetts.²³ According to

20. References to books of Verne's without separate parts are given as (ch. 3), so that any edition can be referred to.

21. Bernhard Krauth, “Le Récif Maria-Thérésa,” *BSJV* 84 (1987): 32.

22. The German name is in fact “Maria-Theresia.”

23. Krauth, 32. Jean-Paul Faivre reports that map no. 5356 of the (French) Naval Hydro-

Krauth (32), who makes, however, several mistakes, the logbook of the *Maria Theresa* may read “Saw breakers.” Krauth further claims that Tabor (and therefore presumably the Mysterious Island) would be in French waters if they existed. Perhaps borrowing from Captain Tabor’s account, a Don Miller achieved great fame in the US in the 1960s by claiming to be broadcasting from a radio station on “Maria Theresa Reef,” south of Tahiti, and even published a photograph of himself “On the Rock’s [sic].” However, Miller subsequently spent a decade in prison for fraud-related cases. Hugh Cassidy, discussing his escapades (WWW), claims that “A nautical chart ... issued by the W. Faden Company, Oceanographers to the King [George III], in 1817 lists Maria Theresa”; the shoal also apparently appears in US Hydrographic Office chart no. 2683 (1978), together with others in the vicinity; and a minority of charts continue to indicate its existence. But unfortunately, Cassidy and Krauth’s information as to the date of first naming can not both be true, and in any case little direct proof has ever been produced. A government scientist, Henry Stommel, sardonically points out in his book, *Lost Islands* (1984), that if Tabor did exist, it would be an independent country, and so would have immense financial worth. He seems to be correct in both his view of national limits and his skepticism about the island’s existence.

To sum up a complex situation, Verne positions Tabor 153° W of both Paris and Greenwich, whereas in real life it would be about 151° or 153° W of Greenwich. Smith seems to be wrong in his calculation of Tabor’s position, possibly by as much as four degrees. Since the Mysterious Island is positioned with reference to Tabor, this in turn means that the position of the Island can not reliably be determined.

Given that the real-life Ernest Legouv  (1807-1903) was a friend of Verne’s who promised to help satisfy his cherished ambition of joining the Acad mie fran aise,²⁴ there may be a hidden connection somewhere. If Legouv  and Theresa reefs had a common origin, based on the misreading of a meridian, then Tabor and Lincoln would also be one and the same island. Certainly, amongst all the reports and inventions, Verne seems to lose or gain two degrees so often as to be beyond mere carelessness. Just as the missing day of *Around the World* emerges in the most surprising places, so the Mystery of the Island is a wide-ranging one.

While all of Verne’s novels, with their huge density of real-world information, have naturally generated considerable discussion of their mistakes and inconsistencies, *MI* seems more vulnerable than most. In the surprising absence of authoritative texts of the works, the following paragraphs will continue the attempt to indicate the implausibilities in *MI*.

Sometimes the narrator actively misleads the reader. One example is when Smith explores the shaft and erroneously concludes that it had not been “used as a staircase either

graphic Office and the folding map in “Malte-Brun revised by E. Cortambert, vol. 4” (without further reference) both mark “Maria-Th r sa,” apparently 153° W of Greenwich, and that no. 5356 also marks Ernest-Legouv  Reef (“Jules Verne (1828-1905) et le Pacifique,” *Journal de la soci t  des oc anistes* 11 (1965): 135-47 (141)).

24. Gilles de Robien, *Jules Verne, le r veur incompris* (2000), 185.

recently or in the past” (II, 11).²⁵ Other problems must be due to poor copy-editing. “Ten thousand francs” (I, 1) should logically be Unionist or Confederate currency. Prisoners of war were not usually “left at liberty” (I, 2 – as shown also in the illustration). Smith is recorded as being “in all the battles of the Civil War” but simultaneously and implausibly “entrusted ... with the management of the railroads” (I, 2). Given that the distance from Richmond to the Mysterious Island is about 6,850 miles and that the balloonists travel for 91 hours, their average speed is a remarkable 75 mph. It is strange that Harbert does not accompany Spilett and Neb in their search for Smith when he is feared dead, and does not even look very actively himself (I, 4). It is surprising that the settlers do not celebrate Christmas (the reason presumably being that France did not either). Verne refers to “the winter of 1866-67” (II, 11), but in the southern hemisphere it should simply be “the winter of 1866.” The narrator mentions “Flotsam Point” in Part I (I, 21), although the colonists only give it this name later (II, 2). When Smith first explores the shaft he takes “a revolver” (II, 11), but its origin is mysterious since no such weapon is listed in the contents of the chest (II, 2). The narrator refers in 1866 to “the thirty-seven stars representing the thirty-seven states of the Union” (II, 11), whereas the thirty-seventh star was added only in 1867. Throughout the book, the settlers work incredibly quickly: only five days to unload the *Speedy*, transport four huge cannons a considerable distance, recover the chains and anchors, and remove the copper plating from the hull; a few months to construct the first vessel, 110 feet long; and a matter of days to build a hydraulic lift. It also seems implausible that the six settlers and the dog are unharmed by the explosion of the Island; that they manage to save the chest and provisions when the Island is crumbling beneath their feet; and even that the *Duncan* arrives just as they are dying.

More seriously, the central theme of the novel, Nemo’s actions, seems highly suspect, for many of the final explanations (III, 16) of “The Secret of the Island” do not make sense. Although only Smith’s footprints are found outside the excavation (I, 10), Nemo is meant to have rescued him from the water and taken him there. When “Top [is] thrown ... by some unknown force ... ten feet above the surface of the lake” (I, 16), huge power must have been used to catapult him without being seen.

Verne’s shipwreckees and castaways have an easy time of it compared with real-life stories. As Pencroff points out, the whole Mysterious Island is in fact self-consciously artificial, “created especially for people to be shipwrecked on, where ... poor devils can always manage” (II, 9). The reason, of course, is again Captain Nemo, who is heavy-handedly falsifying everything from the backdrop. Nemo’s backstage meddling is indeed a direct citation from *Robinson Crusoe*, with the single line of footprints, the message in a bottle that floats by at just the right moment, and above all the chest containing every object conceivably useful to a Robinson – even a Polynesian dictionary. The captain may in fact be deliberately showing up the artifices used in the previous works. As an ironic re-reading of *Robinson Crusoe*, or rather of *The Swiss Family Robinson*’s reading of *Robinson Crusoe*, the novel simultaneously reinforces its own narration and undermines it. By referring so insistently to its fourth-level nature, as a text reading another text

25. Grateful acknowledgments are recorded to Sidney Kravitz for providing some of the ideas in this paragraph. Further implausibilities and mistakes are indicated in the endnotes.

which is itself reading Defoe, himself perhaps based on real events, Verne's novel is emphasizing its own fictional status. The logical consequence is that Nemo, *the Nautilus*, and the Island will have to disappear at the end.

Of course Verne anticipates some of the reader's objections by putting the same objections in the characters' mouths. The novel contains its own critical commentary, making it very modern; but such an idea will not stop readers from continuing to dig out the mysteries. Some slips must be blamed on the editor's repeated changes, making complete coherence more difficult. But many of the implausibilities may even have been deliberate. Many seem to constitute a weary defiance to Hetzel's interference, as if Verne's heart was no longer in producing plausible solutions.

The inconsistencies are inseparable from our interpretation of the novel as a whole. As regards the closing chapters in particular, we need to reject as misconceived the Iowa episode and the implausible religious sentiments and hold on firm to Nemo's dying "Independence!" However, such a position still leaves many important questions unanswered.

Is Smith (or Hetzel) correct to accuse Nemo of "fighting against necessary progress"? Is Nemo's life really an "error" because it is solitary? Or does the amazing luck of sharing his remote desert island with the five settlers cancel the error? Was British colonialism in India negative? What should we do when confronted with forces we know to be wrong but irresistible? Should Christian values of forgiveness be replaced by more straightforward Old-Testament ideas? Is revenge sometimes a legitimate action, as it appears to be in both *Twenty Thousand Leagues* and *MI*?

The answers are complex, and my conclusion will skirt round many of them. As we have seen, the responses reside in the multiple intersections of the characters and the Island, the historical and geographical circumstances, the French literary canon and the long series of previous Robinsons, exploration and comfort, the new and the old, and the writer and the publisher.

The correspondence reveals that Verne put his heart and soul into his Robinsonades and that they represent for him the conceptual core of the Extraordinary Journeys. Yet the catastrophic fate of "UR" showed that for the publisher something was lacking, that the center could not hold. The key to the enigma may lie in what Verne calls "the search for the absolute." The entire second half of his production suggests that Hetzel's premonition was partly justified, for after *MI* any element of transcendence, any approach of the sacred has disappeared: "the thrill has gone." While explanations of the discrepancy in terms of Verne's life and historical circumstances must be relevant, the works themselves are where we must continue to look for answers.

Verne's characters inhabit their space passionately. They seek the most economical and powerful *modus operandi*, as if carrying out a minimax factorial analysis to produce the unique best solution. But to what problem? The works previous to *MI* center on exploration towards a unique goal. The heroes are able to sustain a moving equilibrium en route by balancing precariously between the inside and the outside, the present and the past. They calmly eat sea-food before venturing into the midst of the raging depths or study man's greatest works as preparation for confronting the secret of destiny in the ruins of Atlantis or the center of the earth. Once the goal is reached, however, what Verne invariably calls the climax subsides and the heroes limp bedraggedly back home. It is in the

movement towards the unknown, in other words, that the Vernian novel finds its reason for existing.

MI lacks the geographical goal, but compensates by incorporating the unknown into its very heart. Left to their own devices the colonists would be unable to say why they are there, where the transcendence lies. But part of the absolute quest of *MI* is in the exploration of the Robinsonade and the nature of the Island, and it is these ongoing experiences that define the happiness of the settlers. The Island is a world away from the battles of the Civil War, and from the natives of the south Pacific; hanging over it, nevertheless, is the awareness that soon there will be no mysterious bolt-holes left. Lincoln represents then the limit of the series of transcendent points on the globe and of the marvelous vehicles to get to them: an unstable island not much bigger than the monstrous vessel that forms *Propeller Island* but still not completely explorable since concealing in its subconscious, uterine bowels a semi-mechanical, semi-divine monster. The revolutionary Secret of the Island complements the bourgeois habits of the settlers.

Verne knows his classics, and the influence of Rousseau, Chateaubriand, Stendhal, Balzac, and even Zola is visible on every page of *MI*. The paradox is that he has set himself an apparently sub-literary goal: to go one better than the series of preceding Robinsons, to sum them all up but especially show them up, to synthesize their experience into one mega-Robinsonade that will start from the bottom but go higher if not faster than anything that has gone before. In his naiveté Verne forgets that the Robinsonade is not a recognized French literary genre, and so destroys his lingering chance of joining the Académie française.

The other problem in his pursuit of transcendence is the publishing contract tying him to a single partner tighter than any marriage. Verne has, however, perfected a method over the previous novels: he will incorporate the problem into the solution, he will absorb the grit of the ideological, moralistic, or religious principles Hetzel dumps in, like a mollusk producing a pearl. Nemo has the settlers' interests at heart but can not resist repeatedly writing himself into the story. He will not only absorb into himself the angst Verne feels at Hetzel's constant suggestions, but also serve to undermine the too-perfect machine for living of the settlers.

Machine-based perfection carries within it the seeds of its own destruction, for if all goes too smoothly, there is no plot. Verne is not writing a mathematical monograph of brevity and elegance, but a serialized novel at about ten centimes a word, with nothing for the reprints, and so his characters must encounter repeated difficulties. If the ideal situation or machine emerges, someone must quickly insert a grain of sand; and Nemo and Hetzel provide enough to build a small island. Verne needs the editor's ideas, if only as a punching-board to discover, by reaction, what he himself really feels. The solitude of the writer was never really practicable. Ultimately, then we can not separate the sum of Verne's success from the parts of Hetzel's suggestions.

Verne's enduring popularity in America is built on the impressive quantities of real-world information he provides and on a naive reading of his works as adventure stories in the Anglo-Saxon mold. But this is a dangerous half-truth. Much of the information in *MI* is tedious or erroneous. It may be more useful to view the adventures as founded on an encyclopedic knowledge of the predecessors and on a systematic – European? – irony

and distrust of any fixed system of meaning. Verne's many implausibilities must be decoded as signs of the imperfectly absorbed foreign bodies, themselves incorporating the problems from the previous desert-island literature. The writer ignores his contractual obligation of producing a message encapsulated in both specific national-linguistic boundaries and the publishing conventions of the time. He follows his own literary muse in requiring a satisfying story to have its own internal logic. History has proved him right to have concentrated on the deeper meaning of his novels. The large numbers of subsequent works citing or even bodily recreating the Island²⁶ show that the questions he asks in *MI* are still vitally alive in the third millennium.

The real solution to the enigma in the crowning work of the Extraordinary Journeys is to be found in the energetic and intelligent endeavors of Smith, Neb, Ayrton, Nemo, and Top. Verne's belief that he has found the perfect novel is triumphantly vindicated, for the joy of generations to come.

[I would like to thank the Centre de documentation Jules Verne and Jean-Michel Margot for their help with the Bibliography, Stuart Williams for setting up the Jules Verne Society of Great Britain (26 Matlock Road, Bloxwich, Walsall, GB WS3 3QD), Arthur Evans for his scholarly and judicious series editorship, Sidney Kravitz for his encyclopedic knowledge of the Mysterious Island, Jean-Paul Tomasi for his devotion to things Vernian, and Angel Lui for all her love and help.]

26. The French novelist, Georges Perec, often cites *MI*, for instance in *La Vie mode d'emploi* (1978 – ch. 8). So do Raymond Roussel, in *Comment j'ai écrit certains de mes livres* (1935 – ch. 2), and Umberto Eco, in *Il Pendolo di Foucault* (1988 – *Foucault's Pendulum* – ch. 84) and to a lesser degree in his *L'Isola del giorno prima* (1994 – *The Island of the Day Before*). Hergé's *L'Etoile mystérieuse* (1946) bears many resemblances, not least the final illustration of survivors being rescued from a bare rock and the title which is *L'île mystérieuse* plus “eto” or, written backwards, “ôté” (taken away)! Michel Tournier's *Vendredi, ou les limbes du pacifique* (1969) ironically re-interprets the whole genre, including *MI*. The famous science-fiction author Michel Jeury has written *Les Colmateurs* (1981) based on a parallel universe consisting of Verne's *MI*.

In a different domain, the first edition alone of the game *Myst*, situated on Verne's Mysterious Island, sold about two million copies (email dated 17 April 1996 from the publisher, Cyan, to Steven Jones, reported in his “The Book of *Myst* in the Late Age of Print” (WWW)).

In the July/August 2001 issue of the *Atlantic Monthly* a short story written by Mark Twain in 1876 was published for the first time. Ch. 8 (pp. 62–64) contains the ironic confessions of a criminal: “At last, in an evil hour, I fell into the hands of a M. Jules Verne, an author . . . He turned my simple experiences into extravagant and distorted tales . . . Just as we sailed [into the air] he put into my hands his distortion of my last trip--a book entitled *The Mysterious Island!* I glanced into it--that was enough. Human nature could stand no more. I hove him out of the balloon!”

Note on Previous Translations

The only translations of *MI* in print follow W. H. G. Kingston's one published by Sampson Low in 1875, also available from many sites on the internet. Much of this translation is, in my view, above average, for it provides an accurate and readable translation of most of Verne's text, albeit in nineteenth-century English. What is unacceptable, though, is the way it changes the names (for example, "Harding" for Smith) and deletes some of the passages, such as criticism of British India or the phrase where Pencroff speaks of rewarding his crew with "a quarter liter of wine by watch!" (II, 13). It is unfair, however, to ascribe such censorship to the nationality of the author. After all, the (British and American) publishers are more likely to be guilty, and in any case passages describing the Americans as "illiterate ... asses" are still deleted from present-day translations of *From the Earth to the Moon* (ch. 6), of whatever nationality.

The only other translation to date, Stephen W. White's of 1876, with a simpler style but also more deletions, has apparently not been reprinted since, although nearly as good as Kingston's. I. O. Evans's 1959 and Lowell Bair's 1970 Bantam editions derive directly from Kingston's but are severely abridged versions. They thus seem to break the law in passing themselves off as authentic Verne, and have criminally contributed to Verne's reputation in the English-speaking countries. The prize for ignoring the author's rights, however, must go to the Bibliothèque verte edition of 1963, which cuts five-sixths of the text.

Further information about previous editions appears below, with the approximate length provided to indicate the degree of abridgement. The French text contains about 199,000 words¹.

1. *The Mysterious Island* [*Dropped from the Clouds, The Abandoned, The Secret of the Island*] (London: Sampson Low, trans. W. H. G. Kingston, 1875)² about 195,000 words – notable reprints: (a) New York: Vincent Parke (vols. 5-6), 1911 (b) New York: Scribner, 1918 (c) New York: Signet Classics, 1986.³
2. *Mysterious Island* (Warburton, 1876 [original printing: Philadelphia: *The Evening Telegraph*, 1876], trans. Stephen W. White) about 175,000 words.⁴
3. *The Mysterious Island* [*Dropped from the Clouds, Marooned, Secret of the Island* (in 2 vols.)] (1959, Hanison/Associated, Fitzroy Edition, trans. erroneously indicated as I. O. Evans) about 90,000 words.⁵

1. Most of the information in this section was provided by Arthur B. Evans, to whom grateful thanks are recorded.

2. Apparently reproducing earlier serial publication as follows: *The Mysterious Island* (1874–75, Sampson Low in *St. James Magazine*, trans. not indicated) and *Mysterious Island* (Part I: *Wrecked in the Air*; "Smith" rather than "Harding," 1874–75, Scribner in *Scribner's Monthly Magazine*, trans. not indicated).

3. The opening words are: "'Are we going up again?' / "'No! On the Contrary – ' / "'Are we descending?' / "'Worse than that, captain! we are falling.' / "'For Heaven's sake heave out the ballast!'"

4. "'Are we going up again?' / "'No. On the contrary; we are going down!' / "'Worse than that, Mr. Smith, we are falling!' / "'For God's sake throw over all the ballast!'"

5. "'Are we rising again?' / "'No. On the contrary.' / "'Are we descending?' / "'Worse

4. *The Mysterious Island* (1970, Bantam, abridged by Lowell Bair, erroneously indicated as trans.) about 90,000 words.⁶

As the present volume went to print, confirmation was received of the publication by Random House Modern Library of a new translation of *MI* by Jordan Stump, due to appear in 2002. Although omitting the majority of Verne's illustrations, the translation itself is excellent. (The opening words are: "Are we rising?" / "No! Quite the reverse! We're sinking!" / "Worse than that, Mr. Cyrus! We're falling!" / "For the love of God! Drop some ballast!") The introduction is, however, superficial, generally ignoring the genesis of *MI* and the French literary context.

than that, captain; we are falling!" / "For heaven's sake heave out the ballast!"

6. "Are we rising?" / "No, we're sinking." / "It's worse than that, Cyrus; we're falling!" / "For God's sake, throw out some ballast!"

A Chronology of Jules Verne¹

- 1828 8 February: birth of Jules Verne on the Ile Feydeau in Nantes, to Pierre Verne, a lawyer and son and grandson of lawyers, and Sophie, née Allotte de la Fuÿe, from a military line. Sophie's ancestor, N. Allott, was a Scot who joined Louis XI's Scottish Guard, to be ennobled in 1462.
- 1829 Birth of brother, Paul, later a naval officer, but retired in 1859 and became a stockbroker; followed by those of sisters Anna (1836), Mathilde (1839), and Marie (1842).
- 1833/4-38 Goes to school: the teacher, Mme Sambain, is the widow of a sea-captain, whose return she is still waiting for.
- 1838-41 Ecole Saint-Stanislas. Performs well in geography, translation from Greek and Latin, and singing. During the holidays for many years, the Vernes stay at Chantenay, near Nantes.
- 1841-46 Goes to Petit séminaire de Saint-Donitien, then to Collège royal de Nantes. Above average; probably wins a prize in geography. Passes *baccalauréat* without difficulty. Writes short prose pieces.
- 1847 Studies law in Paris; his cousin, Caroline Tronson, with whom he has long been unhappily in love, marries. Writes scores of poems, a play called *Alexandre VI*, and a novel entitled *Un Prêtre en 1839* ("A Priest in 1839").
- 1848 June: revolution in Paris. Verne is present at the July disturbances. He is in love with Herminie Arnault-Grossetière, but she gets married. Continues his law studies, sharing a room at 24 rue de l'Ancienne-Comédie with Edouard Bonamy. His uncle Francisque de Châteaubourg introduces him into literary salons. Meets Alexandre Dumas *père* and *filz*. Writes plays, including *La Conspiration des poudres* ("The Gunpowder Plot").
- 1849 Passes law degree. Father allows him to stay on in Paris. Writes more plays.
- 1850 12 June: his one-act comedy *Les Pailles rompues* ("Broken Straws") runs for twelve nights at Dumas' Théâtre historique, and is published.
- 1851 Publishes short stories "Les Premiers navires de la Marine mexicaine" ("A Drama in Mexico") and "Un Voyage en ballon" ("Drama in the Air"). Has a first attack of facial paralysis.
- 1852-55 Becomes secretary of the Théâtre lyrique. Publishes "Martin Paz," "Maître Zacharius" ("Master Zacharius"), "Un Hivernage dans les glaces" ("Winter in the Ice"), and the play *Les Châteaux en Californie* ("Castles in California") in collaboration with Pitre-Chevalier. His operette *Le Colin-maillard* ("Blind Man's Bluff"), written with Michel Carré, is performed to music by Aristide Hignard.
- 1856 20 May: goes to a wedding in Amiens, and meets a young widow with two children, Honorine de Viane.
- 1857 10 January: marries Honorine, becomes a stockbroker in Paris, and moves several times.
- 1859-60 Visits Scotland and England with Hignard, and is greatly marked by the experience. Writes *Voyage en Angleterre et en Ecosse* (*Backwards to Britain*).
- 1861 3 August: birth of only child, Michel.
- 1862 15 June: travels to Norway and Denmark with Hignard.

1. This Chronology first appeared in *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* (1992), *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1995), and *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Seas* (1998) (all translated and edited by William Butcher). It appears here with grateful acknowledgments to Oxford university Press.

- 1863 31 January: *Cinq semaines en ballon* (*Five Weeks in a Balloon*) appears, three months after submission to publisher Jules Hetzel (contract dated 23 October 1862), and is an immediate success. Writes *Paris au XX^e siècle* (*Paris in the Twentieth Century*), rejected by Hetzel.
- 1864 New contract with Hetzel. Publication of “Edgar Poe et ses œuvres” (“Edgar Allan Poe and his Works”), *Voyages et Aventures du capitaine Hatteras* (*Adventures of Captain Hatteras*), and *Voyage au centre de la Terre* (*Journey to the Centre of the Earth*). Gives up his unsuccessful stockbroker practice, and moves to Auteuil.
- 1865 *De la Terre à la Lune* (*From the Earth to the Moon*), *Les Enfants du capitaine Grant* (*Captain Grant’s Children*), and “Les Forceurs de blocus” (“The Blockade Runners”). Death of Mme Estelle Duchêne of Asnières, close friend of Verne’s.
- 1866 *Géographie de la France et de ses colonies*.
- 1867 16 March: goes with brother to Liverpool, thence on the *Great Eastern* to the United States. First English translation of any of the novels, *From the Earth to the Moon*.
- 1868 Buys a boat, the *Saint-Michel*. Visits London.
- 1869 *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers* (*Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Seas*), *Autour de la Lune* (*Round the Moon*), and *Découverte de la Terre* (“Discovery of the Earth”). Rents a house in Amiens.
- 1870 Hetzel apparently rejects *L’Oncle Robinson* (“Uncle Robinson”), an early version of *L’Ile mystérieuse* (*The Mysterious Island*). During the Franco-Prussian War, Verne is a coast-guard at Le Crotoy (Somme).
- 1871 3 November: father dies.
- 1872 *Le Tour du monde en quatre-vingts jours* (*Around the World in Eighty Days*). Moves to 44 boulevard Longueville, Amiens; becomes member of Académie d’Amiens.
- 1873-74 *Le Docteur Ox* (*Dr. Ox’s Experiment, and Other Stories*), *L’Ile mystérieuse* (*The Mysterious Island*), and *Le Chancelier* (*The Chancellor*). Begins collaboration with Adolphe d’Ennery on highly successful stage adaptations of novels (*Le Tour du monde en 80 jours* (1874), *Les Enfants du capitaine Grant* (1878), *Michel Strogoff* (1880)).
- 1876-77 *Michel Strogoff* (*Michael Strogoff, the Courier of the Tsar*), *Hector Servadac*, and *Les Indes noires* (*The Child of the Cavern*). Buys second, then third boat, the *Saint-Michel II* and *III*. Gives huge fancy-dress ball. Wife critically ill, but recovers. Michel rebels, and is sent to a reformatory. René de Pont-Jest sues Verne for plagiarism in *Voyage au centre de la Terre*.
- 1878 *Un Capitaine de quinze ans* (*The Boy Captain*). June-August: sails to Lisbon and Algiers.
- 1879-80 *Les Cinq cents millions de la Bégum* (*The Begum’s Fortune*), *Les Tribulations d’un Chinois en Chine* (*The Tribulations of a Chinese in China*), and *La Maison à vapeur* (*The Steam House*). Michel marries an actress called Thérèse Taton, despite the opposition of his father. Verne sails to Norway, Ireland, and Scotland, including Edinburgh and possibly the Hebrides. Probably has an affair with Luise Teutsch.
- 1881 *La Jangada* (*The Giant Raft*). Sails to Rotterdam and Copenhagen.
- 1882 *Le Rayon vert* (*The Green Ray*) and *L’Ecole des Robinsons* (*The School for Robinsons*). Moves to a larger house at 2 rue Charles-Dubois, Amiens.
- 1883-84 *Kériban-le-têtu* (*Keraban the Inflexible*). Michel abducts a minor, Jeanne Reboul. He will have two children by her within eleven months. Verne leaves with his wife on a grand tour of the Mediterranean, but cuts it short. On the way back, is perhaps received in private audience by Pope Leo XIII.
- 1885 *Mathias Sandorf*.
- 1886 *Robur-le-conquérant* (*The Clipper of the Clouds*).

- 15 February: sells *Saint-Michel III*.
- 9 March: his nephew Gaston, mentally ill, asks for money to travel to Britain. Verne refuses, and Gaston fires twice, laming him for life.
- 17 March: Hetzel dies.
- Michel divorces, and marries Jeanne.
- 1887 *Nord contre sud (North against South)*.
- 15 February: mother dies.
- 1888 *Deux ans de vacances (Two Years Vacation)*. Elected local councillor on a Republican list. For next fifteen years attends council meetings, administers theatre and fairs, opens Municipal Circus (1889), and gives public talks.
- 1889 *Sans dessus dessous (Topsy-Turvy)* and “In the Year 2889” (published in New York: signed Jules Verne but written by Michel and translated into English by an unknown person).
- 1890 Stomach problems.
- 1892 *Le Château des Carpathes (Carpathian Castle)*. Pays debts for Michel.
- 1895 *L’Île à hélice (Propeller Island)*, the first novel in a European language in the present tense and third person.
- 1896-97 *Face au drapeau (For the Flag)* and *Le Sphinx des glaces (An Antarctic Mystery)*. Sued by chemist Turpin, inventor of melinite, depicted in *Face au drapeau*, but is successfully defended by Raymond Poincaré, later president of France. Health deteriorates. Brother dies.
- 1898 *Le Superbe Orénoque (The Mighty Orinoco)*.
- 1899 Dreyfus Affair: Verne is initially anti-Dreyfusard, but approves of the case being reviewed.
- 1900 *Seconde patrie (Second Homeland)*. Moves back into 44 boulevard Longueville. Sight weakens (cataracts).
- 1901 *Le Village aérien (The Village in the Treetops)*.
- 1903 *Bourses de voyage (Traveling Scholarships)*.
- 1904 *Maître du monde (The Master of the World)*.
- 1905 17 March: falls seriously ill from diabetes.
- 24 March: dies, and is buried in Amiens.
- 1905-14 On Verne’s death, *L’Invasion de la mer (Invasion of the Sea)* and *Le Phare du bout du monde (The Lighthouse at the End of the World)* are in the course of publication. Michel takes responsibility for the remaining manuscripts, and publishes *Le Volcan d’or (The Golden Volcano – 1906)*, *L’Agence Thompson and C^o (The Thompson Travel Agency – 1907)*, *La Chasse au météore (The Hunt for the Meteor – 1908)*, *Le Pilote du Danube (The Danube Pilot – 1908)*, *Les Naufragés du “Jonathan” (The Survivors of the Jonathan – 1909)*, *Le Secret de Wilhelm Storitz (The Secret of Wilhelm Storitz – 1910)*, *Hier et Demain (Yesterday and Tomorrow – short stories, including “Le Humbug” (“Humbug”) and “L’Eternel Adam” (“Edom”) – 1910)*, and *L’Étonnante aventure de la mission Barsac (The Barsac Mission – 1914)*. In 1978 Gondolo della Riva proves that Michel in fact wrote considerable sections of these works, and between 1985 and 1993 the original (i.e. Jules’s) versions are published, under the same titles except for *En Magellanie* (“In the Magallanes”), “Voyage d’études” (“Study Visit”), and *Le Beau Danube jaune* (“The Beautiful Yellow Danube”).

1. Inception of the Novel

A. The Manuscripts of “Uncle Robinson”

The manuscripts of “UR” and *MI* are kept in the Médiathèque in Nantes. Robin (234) states that the first of the two manuscripts (“the manuscript”) of “UR” contains twenty-four chapters, with almost no crossings-out or additions, except in chapters 20 to 24. “UR” (i.e. the second manuscript) has the same twenty-four chapters of approximately the same length, in the hand Verne used for final manuscripts, except that from the middle of chapter 18 (159) it is in Honorine Verne’s writing, without any crossings-out. The principal differences between the manuscript and “UR” are stylistic and in the names.¹

Parts of an early draft may have been written before the fateful meeting with Hetzel in September 1862. Given that the internal action of Part I ends on 29 December 1861, “UR” itself must have been begun in 1861 or later. Moreover the first manuscript is dated “186.,” implying that it can not have been begun before 1860. Guernonprez and Robin think it dates from 1861; Jules-Verne, about 1860, with “UR” from 1866.² But the action of a three-volume work presumably covered a few years – *MI* takes four – which would mean a correspondingly later date of writing. The correspondence showed that Verne was “taking notes” in September 1865 and recopying Part I in May 1870. Dumas and van Herp (31) argue that the handwriting of the manuscript is similar to that of 1870..

The cover of the manuscript reads “‘UR’ / First Part” but also contains a table of calculations in pencil, with “Hetzel” followed by “8,500” and, in the following line, “5,000,” presumably francs. According to Guernonprez (“Notes,” 46), Verne’s jottings in the manuscript record that “Honorine ... had brought him 60,000 FF of dowry and 50,000 in prospects” – considerable sums, and ones that have not received attention in the biographies. Both sets of jottings again support an earlier manuscript, given that the wedding took place in 1857.

“UR” begins:

The north of the Pacific Ocean – An abandoned boat – A mother and her four children – The man at the helm – May Heaven’s will be done! – A request without a response.

The most deserted portion of the Pacific Ocean is that vast stretch of water limited by Asia and America to the west and east, and by the Aleutians and Hawaii to the north and south. Merchant vessels venture rarely on to this sea. No point for putting in is known and the currents are capricious. The ocean-going ships transporting goods from New Holland³ to West-America [*sic*] remain at lower latitudes; only the commerce between Japan and San Francisco follows the route of the great circles of the globe, slightly lower. Here there accordingly exists what one can call “a desert” from the fortieth to fiftieth degree of latitude north ... / Do unknown islands still exist in this sea the size of Europe? Does Micronesia⁴ stretch as far as this latitude? ... In this part of the globe, two natural phe-

1. The crewman Bob Gordon (a Scottish name) in “UR” was initially Bob Lander (Richard Lander (1804-34) was a famous explorer of Africa) or Bob Lanver: the name Bob is possibly drawn from Cooper’s Bob (see above) and may give rise to Bob in P.-J. Stahl (Hetzel), *Histoire de la famille Chester et de deux petits orphelins* (1873 – Gallica) and Bob Harvey, the pirate in *MI*.

2. Jean Guernonprez, “Une Œuvre inconnue de Jules Verne,” *Livres de France*, 6.5 (1955): 9-10 (9); Christian Robin, ed., *Un Editeur et son siècle* (1988), 132-35, 331-60 (333); Jules-Verne, 201.

3. Australia. [JV]

4. Archipelagoes situated in the northwest of the Pacific. [JV]

nomena cause the appearance of new islands: on one hand, plutonic action which can suddenly raise a piece of land above the waves. On the other, the permanent work of Infusoria⁵ slowly creating coral-based shoals, which in a few hundred thousand years will form a sixth continent in this part of the Pacific.⁶

Guermonprez (“Notes,” 38) comments that the Clifton family are not aware of their coordinates, and are generally rather apathetic. Of course they have the children to look after and fewer possessions than most desert-island characters. Nevertheless, during the same first four months the settlers of *MI* have rebuilt most of civilization.

When Belle dreams of “a fine grotto, with diamonds on the walls” (“UR,” 62), this is a reference not only to *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* but to the “salt grotto” of *The Swiss Family Robinson*. Many pointed comments are indeed made about the Robinsons’ easy life, such as: “[the] climate where the rigors of winter are not to be feared. Each day they find, almost without searching, the animal or vegetable they need. They possess arms, tools, powder, clothing; they have a cow, ewes, a donkey, a pig, and a chicken; their wrecked vessel abundantly provides them with wood, iron, and seeds of every species!” (“UR,” 137)⁷

Hetzel commented on the manuscript, devastatingly and at length, as follows:⁸

The beginning lacks life, it’s slow. I think that the beginning should be a dialogue interrupted by a few lines of narration from time to time ... the characters ... are unformed and lifeless (fo 1); begin the description – + on 25 March 1861 a vessel was floating on the surface of the pacific [*sic*] which is called deserted. (fo 2); what language does he speak? (fo 3); you’ve already got a Robert in Grant? (fo 36); [Flip] has not yet shown himself to be alive, even very lively” (fo 40); say it briefly (fo 68); it’s awful, my good fellow, laugh [?], and it’s not gay, this mystery of the fire. It annoys without result (fo 141); have them rub some wood! ... As soon as they’ve got fire, why don’t they make tinder with clothing, a flint, his knife. Flip and the children and the other person lack improvisation, imagination, and surprises. They don’t astonish, and don’t yet interest;⁹ suppose that Flip has been to the

5. Microscopic unicellular animals. [JV]

6. The manuscript contains similar information, but in different form (Charles-Noël Martin, “*L’Oncle Robinson et L’Ile mystérieuse* d’après leurs manuscrits,” *BSJV* 60: 145-51 (148)):

A little frequented portion of the Pacific Ocean is that which extends over the northern hemisphere between on the one hand America and Asia, and on the other Hawaii and the Aleutian Islands. Here there exists a vast stretch of sea frequented by few merchant vessels; no point for putting in is known; in addition it is not the route of the ocean-going ships that carry produce from New Holland to west America [*sic*], and commerce is rather infrequent between Japan and California.

7. Robin (“Postface,” 232) considers that there may be an influence from Rousseau’s *Rêveries* or *Confessions*, with references to natural philosophy (195), “fine views” of nature (71), “secret consolations” of “suffering souls” (71), active pedagogy, the open air developing body and brain, and the need to take from nature only what is needed (159), together with lessons in geography, mineralogy, zoology, and botany, with a huge variety of plants and trees. The children learn to recognize the plants used to make common household items, again like Rousseau. However Rousseau was highly influenced by *Robinson Crusoe*, so Verne may simply be echoing Defoe directly.

8. Christian Robin, “Extraits,” in Christian Robin, ed., *Un Editeur et son siècle*, 343-59 (343). Complementary information appears in Hetzel’s letter of 21 July 1870.

9. Claudine Sainlot, Christian Robin, and Jacques Davy, “Notes,” in *L’Oncle Robinson*, 235-45 (238). Hetzel’s following reference to “Chester” is presumably encouraging Verne to imitate his own *Histoire de la famille Chester et de deux petits orphelins* (1873) – an irony

school of Chester ... and find amusing or curious things. Sixty-two pages and not an invention that the last nitwit wouldn't have found ("UR," 238); let them make arms: a bow, a sledgehammer, a sling and arm the children. Relate their happiness to have a house to sleep in (239); but my friend ... one calculates six days by the nature and occupation of the days, and it is puerile and absolutely impossible to make believe that they don't know after six days where they've got to without making them pass for cretins (239); a hedgehog doesn't need to be knocked out ... say porcupine, if not the spines won't be any use ... also it's not good as food (240); give them a telescope lens, with the sun they can light a fire (241); have a storm set fire to the wood, the children use their ingenuity to replace the knife, they replace the blade (241); one mustn't put them in a banal grotto. Good god imagine something else, even if you have to stick them in a tunnel, a former volcano ... have them enter the grotto by water, have chance send them there, have them fall in (243); you should shove them underground, in a former volcano. Everything needs to be extraordinary, nothing needs to produce repetition (243); make twenty-five pages from these 150 ... They are too slow, not one of them is alive, your characters in all your books are life itself, energy itself; here, it's a pile of languid beings. None is alert, lively, witty. Leave all these fellows and start again with new places and facts (242).

B. The Manuscripts of *The Mysterious Island*

MS1 of *MI* contains only the untitled second part and the third part, and has no comments by Hetzel; but it contains many corrections in red in the right-hand margin. MS2, often similar to the printed text, contains Part I, headed "The Castaways from the Sky," plus Part II, without a title. It has not been recorded to date that Part III of MS2 carries the surprising title "~~Cyhiel Anardill~~" (or "~~Eghiet Anardill~~." No trace has been found of any of these names, although "Anardill" shares a root with "anarchist." Moreover, it is strange that the title should be "Prince Dakkar" in MS1 (added in blue, whereas Verne usually used black) and then "~~Cyhiel Anardill~~" in MS2, since Prince Dakkar is of course the final form.

Part II of MS2 begins with a list in red at the top: "Cyrus Smith / Gideon Spilett / Harbert / Pencroff / Neb. // Lincoln Island / Granite House / Rock-Funnel [in English]." Folio 81, naming the parts of the Island (*MI*, I, 11), is totally crossed out and replaced by *80bis* and *80ter*; fo 9, by *8bis* and *8ter*. In MS1 the sailor is called Cracroft until the return from Tabor (II, 15), and thereafter Pencroff; but "~~Cracroft~~ Pencroff" in Part I of MS2 and "Pencroff" in Parts II and III. This implies that Part I of MS2 was written *before* Parts II and III of MS1. Guérmonprez ("Notes," 60) says that in MS2 Verne rubbed out Hetzel's pencil comments; and that from fo 33 onwards the publisher's comments are in ink, with Verne crossing them carefully out but also attaching pieces of paper to cover them up, although this practice has never been mentioned by other commentators.

Many dialogues are deleted from the first chapter of MS2, which ends: "Off we go, my friends: let's save our leader." In MS1 the reporter is initially a stuffy and rigid Unionist officer, perhaps Smith's adjutant, unlike the cheerful Spilett; and he is called "Captain Robur"! Robur, meaning "oak" in Late Latin (cf. "Verne" which means "alder"), is of course the hero's name in Verne's *The Clipper of the Clouds* (1886) and *Master of the World* (1904). In MS2 Spilett, whose earlier name is "Nol," "Not," or "Nat," admits he does not know how to swim well (fo 19); and "~~Smyth~~ Smith"¹⁰ (fo 10-12) has "a thick clump of beard" (fo *8bis*) but no moustache, and "does not smile very often" (fo *8bis*). Given that he is "lean, bony, and lanky," he may be modeled on Lincoln (although the illustrator does not see him like that).

when we consider the posterity of the two authors.

10. By an interesting parallel indicating the source of the name, "Smith" without further identification in *Twenty Thousand Leagues* (II, 7) means Rear Admiral William Henry Smyth, author of *The Mediterranean* (1854).

On fo 51 in MS2, Verne adds a variant: “~~Gédéon Spilett, in turn but calmly, kneeled down near Cyrus ... Then he got up again, saying: / ‘I see full well that I will have to change my article.’~~” The reason that it is deleted again must be the poor taste of the joke that he had thought Smith dead. On fo 70 we read “Neb, on a piece of paper which he found in the pockets of his master, wrote the word ‘Come’ with his blood and attached it to the collar of the dog.” This sentence was perhaps removed because Neb cannot easily draw his own blood.

In MS1 a couple of jaguars reluctantly retreat from the settlers. In MS2 Hetzel adds a cryptic comment that the Island has not always been uninhabited (Guermonprez, “Notes,” 60). In the inventory of items found in the chest is included “a history of British domination in India.”¹¹ On fo 34, Verne crosses out a long section of Hetzel’s comments, but does not seem to have changed the text as a result.

The portrait of the settlers’ qualities (I, 13) is added in the margin of fo 90, presumably under Hetzel’s pressure. “Divine Providence” (fo 95) is replaced by “the Author of all things” (I, 4). The publisher comments that Verne has not left enough time for the settlers to complete their various tasks; Verne accordingly replaces “The third week in December” (MS2) with “The first week in January” (II, 8). Hetzel also suggests that the settlers entrust a message to a bottle or a bird, but Verne pointedly replies: “Gideon Spilett had already thought several times ... of throwing into the sea a message enclosed in a bottle ... But how could they seriously hope that pigeons or bottles could cross ... 1200 miles ... ? It was pure folly.” (II, 11)

When Jup is captured, Hetzel says “why don’t you make him an ape tamed by Nemo ... Very comical ... things could follow on from this, like for example during their first meal ... / Cyrus is flabbergasted, goes pale, and does not say another word for the rest of the meal.”

Hetzel suggests “Balloon Harbor” to replace Verne’s “Secret Harbor”; and where Verne had written in English “North Mandible Cape” and “South Mandible Cape,” he scrawls “Hell, these names are incapable of striking French ears. If they mean anything, why not translate them?” (fo 158). Guermonprez (“Notes,” 17 and 73) states that most of the place names of Lincoln Island started off with French names but have (pseudo-)English names throughout MS2: the French names published must have been re-inserted at proof stage.¹²

11. “1 [une] histoire de la domination anglaise aux Indes”: while this may be a title, the book can not be identified, unless it is simply Valbezen’s.

12. In the following list, each locality has up to four forms: the initial French name, the English name used by Verne in MS2, the final French name, and the name used in this translation:

- creek Yowa [*sic*], Red creek, Creek-Rouge, Red Creek
- Lac Ontario, Heart lake, lac Grant, Lake Grant
- Bois Caroline du Nord, Bois d’Arkansas, bois du Jacamar, Jacamar Woods
- Forêts du far West, – , Forêts du Far-West, Forests of the Far West
- Baie de l’union, Union Bay, Baie de l’Union, Union Bay
- Baie Washington, Washington Bay, Baie Washington, Washington Bay
- Mount Franklin, Franklin-Mount, Mont Franklin, Mount Franklin
- – , Serpentine Peninsula, presqu’île Serpentine, Serpentine Peninsula
- Promontoire Massachusetts, – , promontoire du Reptile (Reptile-end), Reptile End
- cap New Jersey (previously Halifax), – , cap Mandibule (Mandible-cape), Mandible Cape
- Cap Vineyard, – , Cap de la Griffé (Claw-cape)/le cap Griffé, Cape Claw

Guermonprez (“Notes,” 60-61) reports that, after the words “The envelope, except for the tear, was in good condition, and only its lower portion was torn.” (fo 52 – II, 5), Hetzel adds: Nevertheless, Cyrus Smith appeared to be plunged in a deep meditation contemplating a gap in the envelope. A piece was missing which had not [been] ripped away and which seemed to have been cut out by someone. The material was cleanly cut, as if a tailor’s scissors had been at work. / “It’s unbelievable,” he exclaimed, using his eyes to direct the reporter’s attention to this strange detail.

Once again Verne crosses out the addition and leaves his text unaltered, presumably since there is no reason for any sane person to perform such an action. The incident therefore illuminates the Verne-Hetzel relationship, implying that many of Nemo’s most pointless actions may have been suggested by Hetzel. One central scene in *Twenty Thousand Leagues* is very similar, and again is never explained: “The engineers then carried out an inspection of the *Scotia*, which was in dry dock. They couldn’t believe their eyes. Two and a half meters below the water-line appeared a neat hole in the form of an isosceles triangle.” (I, 1) Without going into Freudian interpretations, the neat cutting by Nemo in both novels parallels Hetzel’s cutting to a remarkable degree.

Porcq (165) quotes an important scene included only in MS1, involving Smith’s hypnotism of Ayrton:

“My friend,” he said in a firmer voice, “look at me, I want you to.”

It seemed that the eyes of the poor creature slowly fixed on him.

“Listen to me! I want you to!” the engineer then said.

The savage was apparently listening. He seemed to be under the influence of Cyrus Smith as a hypnotized person is in the power of his hypnotizer.

Everyone was breathing heavily.

“Understand me,” Cyrus Smith said at last.

He held the two hands of the savage. He was squeezing them with force. It looked as though he was transfusing his soul and his intelligence into him, and the other looked at him now, he listened to him, he wanted to understand him. His lips moved, they began to stutter ...

“Speak, speak!” exclaimed Cyrus Smith.

Several moments passed. The savage’s lips were little by little re-finding that faculty of articulating words to which they were no longer accustomed, and finally these words escaped:

“Tabor, Tabor!”

His first words were for that deserted island [where] his reason had disappeared. (II, 16)

The reason this powerful and dramatic scene was cut might be the echo of Christ’s healing but also the sexual undertones between the two men, including the transfer of fluid implied by the “transfusing.”

In MS2, a personal description of Dakkar in Stendhalian terms appears, and we may again very much regret its deletion:

Eghiet Anardill, who was intelligent ... / had traveled to all the courts of Europe. His birth and fortune made him sought after, but the temptations of the world, so pretentious and at the same time so empty, never had any attraction for him. Young at that time and handsome,

-
- Rivière Delaware, Mercy River, la Mercy, the Mercy
 - Ilot Grant, – , îlot du Salut (Safety-island), Safety Island
 - – , East Land, Plateau de grande-vue, Grand View Plateau
 - Marais Kentucky, Ducks Fenn, Marais des tadornes, Tadorn Marsh
 - Rock House, Rock-funnel, Les cheminées, the Chimneys.

Massachusetts, New Jersey, and “Vineyard” are presumably included in the initial list as the homes of Smith, Harbert, and Pencroff. The following manuscript names are absent from the book: canal du Maine, dunes d’Albany, Cap Gédéon, and baie Vermont.

with all the charm adorning Byron's immortal characters, he remained serious and gloomy, devoured by an implacable hatred riveted to his heart. / Eghiet Anardill hated. He hated the only country where he had never wished to set foot, the only people whose overtures he refused. He hated Britain.¹³ (quoted by Martin, 148)

In a series of articles, Dumas has emphasized the variants of the ending visible in the manuscripts of *MI*, although presenting only disappointingly brief extracts, and omitting to indicate whether he is citing MS1 or MS2:

A single souvenir will remain to you of the Prince Dakkar whose history you now know. A pearl is there, behind that pane. This pearl, the biggest in the world, I left to grow for twenty years in the Tri-dacna which produced it, at the end of a submarine grotto in the Ocean. It is worth more than ten million. It is yours. (fo 145)

In the published version the pearl is replaced by a coffer of diamonds, an inappropriate gift from a libertarian disdaining material values and one that removes an elegant link with *Twenty Thousand Leagues* (II, 3).

Nemo's death was originally different: "Finally, a little after midnight, he made a last movement and, not without difficulty, succeeded in crossing his arms on his breast, as if he wanted to die in this attitude." The following paragraph is identical apart from the published "Then, murmuring these words: 'God and country!' he quietly expired." (III, 17) being originally "Then, murmuring this word: 'Independence!' he quietly expired." (fo 149)

In the manuscript we read "Cyrus Smith then leaned over and closed the eyes of Prince Dakkar, that great patriot who was Captain Nemo." In other words, the inappropriate religious sentiments, including "May God receive his soul!" must be Hetzel's rather than Verne's. The moralistic and judgmental speech of Cyrus Smith and the idea of prayer are also absent from the manuscript:

"Do you think me a criminal?" / Cyrus Smith took the captain's hand, and, on his request, he replied only in these words: / "God will judge you, Prince Dakkar. As for us, we are under an obligation to Captain Nemo, and those under an obligation do not judge their benefactor!" (fo 143)

The closing scene is also different:

A fortnight later, the settlers disembarked in America; Ayrton, their courageous and honest companion, wished to stay with them. And never would they forget that Lincoln Island, on which they had arrived poor and naked, which their knowledge and intelligence of all things had civilized, which, transformed by them, had satisfied their needs for four years, and of which there now remained only a piece of granite, the isolated resting-place of Captain Nemo, buried with it at the bottom of the seas! (fo 175)

This sober passage marks the end of the novel.

If there is a thread running through Hetzel's ideas, it is that he keeps wishing to change Nemo's behavior in strange ways – and thus shows that he has no comprehension of him at all. Verne's view of the repeated attacks over several years on his most cherished character must, one imagines, have been comparable to Cyrus Smith's flabbergasted reaction.

C. Publication of *The Mysterious Island*

The first page-proofs of Part I were ready on 26 September 1873. *L'Île mystérieuse* was published in installments in the *MER* from no. 217 of Vol. 22 (1 January 1874) to no. 264 of Vol. 19 (15 December 1875). In no. 217, the subtitle "The Castaways from the Sky" was omitted and the text was preceded by Hetzel's "A Few Words to the Readers of *MP*" (reproduced on pp. xx-xx).

13. From the manuscripts and correspondence of *Twenty Thousand Leagues*, we know that Nemo's hatred was originally that of a Polish count against the Russians who had destroyed his country and raped his daughters, but Hetzel censored this for political reasons.

In volume form the first part was published on 10 or 12 September 1874, the second on 12 April 1875, and the third on 28 October 1875. As was usual, the single large in-octavo volume appeared later, on 22 November 1875, “illustrated with 154 drawings by Férat.”

The serial publication in the *MER* contains one rather ugly engraving that has never been reprinted, of a large waterfall descending to the sea from a rock above the level of the surrounding cliffs (I, 22, p. 134). It also includes a phrase missing from the book editions, “and you fought against the present,” after the word “past” in Smith’s (Hetzl-imposed) judgment of Nemo: “Captain, your error was in believing that you could bring back the past.” The chapter headings are also sometimes shorter: for instance “The Torn Envelope – Nothing but the Sea in Sight” (I, 1) is omitted. All the captions to the illustrations are missing. Since the grouping of the chapters influences the structure of the novel, with each serial ending persuading the reader to purchase the next issue, it is interesting to note that most chapters appear singly, except for the following pairs: Part I chs 2 and 3, 9 and 10, 16 and 17, 18 and 19, 20 and 21, Part II chs 4 and 5, 9 and 10, 17 and 18, 19 and 20, and Part III chs 3 and 4. More generally, the list of contributors to the *MER* in 1874-75 is a regular Vernian roll-call, including P.-J. Stahl, of course, but also Ernest Legouvé, Margollé and Zurcher, Eugène Muller, E. Reclus, and H. Sainte-Claire Deville. It also contains a story by a M. Maréchal called “Le Secret d’Elie,” so close to the title of Verne’s Part III, “Le Secret de l’île” (“The Secret of the Island”) as to have to be its origin.

The word “rrhymes” in the first grand-octavo edition of *MI* (II, 7, p. 270) is a misprint for “rhizomes.” The words “... was found to be 10°. Consequently, the total angular distance between the pole and the horizon ...” (“était de dix degrés. Dès lors la distance angulaire totale entre le pôle et l’horizon” – I, 14) were absent from the serial and first editions, but appear in subsequent editions.

Notes to Inception of the Novel

2. Prefaces to *The Mysterious Island*, *Two Years Vacation*, and *Second Homeland*

A. A Few Words to the Readers of *The Mysterious Island*¹

Who has not read and reread *Robinson Crusoe* and *The Swiss Family Robinson* with passion at the different ages of his life? ... No one better than M. J. Verne had more right to say to himself that between these two works ... there still had to be room for a truly original and new work on the subject of “the individual separated from his fellows” ...

Would a contemporary Robinson, a Robinson in touch with the progress of science today need to demand from his author’s imagination ways to overcome the difficulties of his position? Thanks to modern progress, would he not find in himself, would he not bring to him the resources that at every instant Defoe and Wyss are obliged to demand on his behalf from all those strokes of miraculous fortune, which will not completely fool even the kindest of readers? ...

“Well,” M. Verne said to himself, “why should I not show either a man of our time or a group of men, faced with real nature and not with a generous Eden, fighting against realities and triumphing, not through strokes of luck, but thanks to the resources they find in their acquired knowledge, in the practice of science?” ...

The heroes of M. Jules Verne’s *MI* have nothing but their brains. But science multiplies their

1. Published only in the *MER*, vol. 19, first semester 1874, 1-2.

strength a hundredfold. Their arms and their ten fingers, guided by practical ideas of every sort, will soon provide them with not only necessities but, should they so desire, luxuries.

The aim of M. Jules Verne's new work, one of the most considerable he has attempted, will therefore be achieved if he succeeds in demonstrating that science is not only useful to man in society, but indispensable even to an isolated man, a man alone, and that it necessarily shortens his trials and sooner or later restores to him the well-being he has lost ...

It emerges from M. Verne's book that the man who despairs neither of God nor himself, that the individual, however separated from human help he is imagined to be, can in any place and in all circumstances overcome fortune and nature provided he is educated, hard-working, and intelligent.

There is no need to add that the progress of the action in which the heroes of *MI* move contains the thousand practical lessons implied when such a subject is treated by such a writer.

J. Hetzel

B. Preface to *Two Years Vacation*²

Many *Robinsons* have already aroused the curiosity of our young readers. Daniel Defoe, in his immortal *Robinson Crusoe*, presented a man alone; Wyss, in *The Swiss Family Robinson*, the family; Cooper, in *The Crater*, society with its many different elements. In *MI*, I confronted scholars or scientists ["savants"] with the necessities of this situation. People have further imagined the *Robinson de douze ans*, the *Robinson des glaces*, the *Robinson des jeunes filles*,³ etc. In spite of the infinite number of novels composing the series of *Robinsons*, it seemed to me that, in order to close the series, it remained to show a band of children of eight to thirteen years old, abandoned on an island, fighting for life in the midst of passions generated by differences in nationality – in short, a school for *Robinsons*.

In addition, in *The Boy Captain*, I undertook to show what a child's courage and intelligence can achieve when faced with the perils and difficulties of a responsibility above his age. Now I considered that, if the teaching contained in that book was perhaps profitable to all, it needed to be completed.

It is with these twin aims that the new work has been written.

Jules Verne

C. Preface – Why I Wrote *Second Homeland*⁴

The *Robinsons* were the books of my childhood, and I still retain an indelible memory of them ... It is clear that my taste for this sort of adventure instinctively engaged me on the path I was later to take. This is what led me to write *The School for Robinsons*, *MI*, and *Two Years Vacation*, whose heroes are close relatives of Defoe's and Wyss's ...

These titles ... were *Le Robinson de douze ans* by Mme Mollar [*sic* for Mallès] de Beaulieu and *Le Robinson des sables du désert* by Mme de Mirval. There were also of the same kind *Les Aventures de Robert Robert* by Louis Desnoyers, published in the *Journal des enfants* with so many other stories that I will never forget. Then came *Robinson Crusoe*, that masterpiece which

2. Published in the first illustrated edition of *Two Years Vacation* (1888).

3. Mme Mallès de Beaulieu (?-1825), *Le Robinson de douze ans* (1818). Ernest Fouinet, *Robinson des glaces* (1835 – Gallica); Hetzel (using a draft by Verne) wrote in *MER* (March 1865, 2, 375) about *Adventures of Captain Hatteras*: “[the last part] could have been called the *Robinson des glaces*”; however, Fouinet's novel shows few similarities to Verne's works. Catherine-Thérèse Rieder Woillez, *Emma, ou Le Robinson des demoiselles* (1834/5).

4. Published only in the first illustrated edition of *Second Homeland* (1900).

is, however, only one episode in the long and tedious tale by Daniel Defoe. Finally, *The Crater* by Fenimore Cooper could only increase my passion for the heroes of the unknown islands of the Atlantic and Pacific ...

If Mme de Montolieu was not the only person to translate *The Swiss Family Robinson*, she is also not the only one to give it a sequel, since I have attempted to do so, under the title *Second Homeland*.

In addition, Hetzel and Co. published a new translation of this story in 1861 due to the collaboration of P.-J. Stahl and E. Muller, who revised it and gave it a more modern style and contents. Strictly speaking, it is from this edition, revised also from the scientific point of view, that *Second Homeland* follows on ...

And then, by dint of dreaming ... a phenomenon occurred: I came to believe that this New Switzerland really existed, that it was an authentic island situated in the northeast of the Indian Ocean ...

Jules Verne

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List of Abbreviations

c.	circa (about)
cf.	compare
ch. or chs	chapter(s)
<i>Corr.</i>	<i>Correspondance inédite de Jules Verne et de Pierre-Jules Hetzel (1863-1886): Tome I (1863-1874)</i>
fo	folio(s)
<i>MER</i>	<i>Le Magasin d'éducation et de récréation</i>
<i>MI</i>	<i>The Mysterious Island</i>
MS1	the first manuscript of <i>MI</i>
MS2	the second manuscript of <i>MI</i>
“UR”	“Uncle Robinson”

Note: except where indicated, all longitudes in the critical material refer to the Greenwich meridian. Given the power of search engines, references to the World Wide Web will generally simply be indicated as “WWW,” or “Gallica” for texts available at the French National Library (<http://gallica.bnf.fr>). All translations in the critical material of French works (other than *MI*) are my own.

Appendix A: The Origins of *The Mysterious Island*

Verne generally drew information from a huge variety of sources for his writing on the desert-island theme. However, many claims made in studies to date are superficial, based on mere similarity of ideas. In rapid summary, Verne's favorite work is Wyss's *The Swiss Family Robinson* (1812); but his frequent mention of "Robinson(s)" does not necessarily mean that Defoe influenced him a great deal, for he uses it as a generic term. While Verne often cites travel writing for adults in his correspondence and in the novels themselves, the works he quotes in his prefaces, perhaps to please Hetzel, are invariably children's books. He cites many other writers as influential on his writing on the Robinsonade: most importantly Mallès de Beaulieu, Fenimore Cooper, Daniel Defoe, M. de Mirval, and Edouard Raynal. But he also cites: Louis Cortambert and F. de Tranaltos,¹ William Dampier, Ferdinand Denis and Victor Chauvin, Louis Desnoyers, Ernest Fouinet, Captain Marryat, Mayne-Reid, Captain Péron, Woodes Rogers, Xavier-Boniface Saintine, Captain Sharp, Catherine-Thérèse Rieder Woillez, and [Frédéric] Zurcher and [Elie] Margollé. Other possibilities for influence on *MI* include many contemporary periodicals of popularization, Paul Rollier, E. de Valbezen, Louis Figuier's *Articulés, poissons, reptiles, zoophytes, mollusques* (c. 1871), various writings by Charles Sainte-Claire Deville, the Garnier brothers' *Encyclopédie de connaissances utiles* (1852), and Larousse's *Grand dictionnaire universel du XIX^e siècle* (1866-76).

A broad similarity can be detected with several works from his childhood reading, although common details are not always easy to identify, as Verne could not read English or German and the translations were often highly adapted and abridged. The most prudent course is therefore to concentrate on what he himself wrote on the subject; and here there is an abundance of information.

As early as the first chapter of his first novel, Verne reveals the origins of his enthusiasm for desert islands:

Soon [the hero] ... dreamed of fame like that of the Mungo Parks, the Bruces, the Cailliés, the Levallants,² and even a little, I believe, of Selkirk, that Robinson Crusoe, whom he placed on as high a level. What absorbing hours he spent with him on his island of Juan-Fernandez! ... one thing is sure: he would never have fled that blessed island, where he was as happy as a king without subjects!

In other words, the many criticisms of solitude in the *Extraordinary Journeys* may be merely to please Hetzel.

An important passage in *Captain Grant's Children* reveals more of Verne's sources:

In 1827 the British ship the *Palmira*, passing near [Amsterdam] Island, spotted smoke ... The captain ... saw two men making distress signals ... Jacques Paine a boy of twenty-two and Robert Proudfoot, forty-eight. These two unfortunates were unrecognizable ... For eighteen months, almost without fresh water [the two Scots had been] living off seashells,

1. Verne gave an oral review of their *Histoire de la Guerre civile américaine, 1860-1865* to the Société de Géographie on 20 March 1868.

2. The four explorers are: Mungo Park (1771-1806), Scottish author of *Travels in the Interior of Africa* (1799); James Bruce (1730-94), Scottish author of *Travels to Discover the Sources of the Nile, in the Years 1768-1773* (1790); René Caillié (1799-1838), author of *Journal d'un voyage à Tombouctou et à Jenné, dans l'Afrique centrale* (1830); and François Levallant, author of *Voyage dans l'intérieur de l'Afrique* (1790). Verne's *The Exploration of the World* devotes twenty pages and four illustrations to Caillié (I, 2, 2).

fishing with a useless bent nail ... spending up to three days without eating, watching like vestals over a fire lit with their last piece of tinder ... / The second adventure ... is that of Captain Péron,³ a Frenchman this time, [the story of] forty months of abandonment ... Péron had disembarked with four sailors, two Frenchmen and two Britons; the aim being to engage in hunting sea-lions ... but when the ship did not appear at the end of the fifteen months, when the provisions slowly disappeared ... the two Britons rebelled against Captain Péron, who would have died ... without the help of his compatriots. Starting from this moment, the two parties, watching each other day and night, permanently armed ... led a nightmare existence of misery and anguish ... / In the end, this Amsterdam Island was destined to become and to remain French. It belonged first of all, by the right of first occupant, to M. Camin, shipowner of Saint-Denis in Réunion; then it was ceded, by virtue of some international contract, to a Pole, whose Madagascar slaves cultivated it. Polish is virtually the same as French, so that from Polish the island became French again in the hands of M. Otovan. (II, 3)

This passage contains, in sum, two episodes that seem to have inspired *MI*, especially the chapters where the convicts fight the settlers; a brief discussion of the law of new lands; rare signs of patriotism in Verne, and even nationalism; and the idea of colonies being founded by countries (Poland) not normally associated with colonial endeavor, perhaps linked to Nemo's original Polish nationality.

The famous account of life on Juan-Fernandez (now Robinson Crusoe or Más a Tierra) appears in *The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (1719). The story by Daniel Defoe (c. 1660-1731) was derived from the adventures of Alexander Selkirk (1676-1721): while off the coast of Chile, the Scot had a dispute with his captain, William Dampier (1652-1715). Perhaps at his own request, he was put ashore in 1704, and lived alone on Juan-Fernandez until rescued in February 1709.⁴ The similarities between *MI* and *Robinson Crusoe* include features like the grotto or the wrecked ship. But it is not clear whether the influence is from Defoe, Selkirk, or from the many stories imitating these two.

Verne cites a "Sharp"⁵ in presenting Selkirk's discovery in *The Great Navigators of the*

3. François Péron (1775-1810), physician and author of *Mémoires du Capitaine Péron, sur ses voyages aux côtes d'Afrique, en Arabie, à l'île d'Amsterdam ...* (1824), including a map of Amsterdam Island, reviewed in the *Journal général de la littérature française* (1824, X, 310 – Gallica): the book "will add to nautical knowledge of ... reefs and islands until now absolutely unknown or inexactly reported." The review refers to Péron's "forty months of sojourn and misery [on Amsterdam Island]." *MI* probably also borrowed from Péron's *Voyages aux Terres australes* (1807).

4. In many of Verne's books, the characters cite Defoe as if he were true. As just two examples, in *The Boy Captain* (I, 15) Mrs. Weldon congratulates her young son on finding a cave like Crusoe's; and in *Two Years Vacation*, the cook systematically checks the doings of the young boys to see if they tally with *Robinson Crusoe*.

5. Captain Bartholemew Sharp (flourished 1679-82) was the author of a "Journal" printed as Additional Volume 2 in *The Voyages and Adventures of Capt. William Dampier* (1776). Verne's information may easily come from an anonymous article in *Le Magasin pittoresque* (1842, vol. 1, 188-91), "Ile de Juan Fernandez" (Gallica). Juan-Fernandez is "irregular ... The southern part offers only a slightly undulating surface, dry, stony, and without trees; but the northern part [is] covered with high mountains ... punctuated with valleys where clear brooks flow and adorned with brilliant greenery, sometimes of a beautiful appearance." Although general, this description is tailor-made for *MI*.

Eighteenth Century (ch. 21):

At this period, nearly all the maps disagreed on the position of Juan-Fernandez Island. So Wood Rodgers⁶ found it almost without looking for it. / On 1 February [1709] a large fire was noticed on the shore ... the boat ... brought back a man dressed in goat skins, with a face even wilder than his clothing. [Selkirk] had been put ashore ... with his clothes, his bed, a gun, a pound of powder, some bullets, tobacco, an axe, a knife, a cooking pot, a Bible and a few other religious books, his instruments, and his naval books.

Selkirk constructed two huts, some distance from each other; and ate Jamaica pimento (cf. *MI*, II, 3). "He had so much lost the habit of speaking that he had difficulty in making himself understood ... The misfortunes of Selkirk have been recounted by a modern writer, Saintine, in the novel entitled *Seul!*"⁷ The importance, of course, is the sections of *MI* dealing with Ayrton's abandonment as punishment, descent into animality, loss of speech, and rescue. Other ideas visible in Verne's book are the confusion over the position of the island, a fire which draws attention, the list of books and tools, dual habitations, and interference between French and English names of plants. Further investigation is required to confirm the extent of Captain Sharp's and Saintine's influence on *MI*.

The Swiss Family Robinson (1812) by Johann Rudolf Wyss (1782-1830)⁸ marked Verne indelibly. He mentions two translations; that of Isabelle de Bottens, *Le Robinson suisse* (1814), presumably read as a boy, and the adaptation by P.-J. Stahl (pseudonym for Hetzel) and E. Muller, also *Le Robinson suisse* (Hetzel, 1864). Wyss's medium-sized New Switzerland is greatly influenced by *Robinson Crusoe*, but contains rhinoceroses, hippopotami, lions, and tigers; in his preface to *Masterman Ready*, Marryat inveighs against it simultaneously having elephants and penguins. "UR" and *MI* show huge influence, especially the opening and closing scenes of "UR," the name "Safety Island" (I, 11 – "Safety Bay" in *The Swiss Family Robinson*), plus: "the turning over of the enormous turtle (which also occurs in *The School for Robinsons*), the stranding of the whale, Jack's use of the pick in the grotto containing the stalactites, and close parallels between the discoveries of Jenny and Ayrton, following similar messages" (Guermonprez, "Notes," 3). Amongst the animals and plants in *MI*, we can observe especially Wyss's porcupine and fla-

6. Captain Woodes Rogers, author of *A Cruising Voyage round the World* (1712).

7. Xavier-Boniface Saintine (1798-1865), author of *Seul!* (c. 1860).

But of course Selkirk himself had several predecessors. Dampier, Verne continues, had already picked up a miserable Mosquito [Indian], left on the island from 1681 to 1684; and one reads, in the ... adventures of Sharp and other privateers, that the sole survivor of a vessel wrecked on these coasts lived here for five years.

Verne gives a complementary account in *Famous Travels and Travelers* (596): the "model who served Daniel Defoe for his *Robinson Crusoe*" was a Nicaraguan, left on Juan-Fernandez in 1680 by Captain Sharp. Verne again cites Dampier:

This Indian remained alone on the island for more than three years. He was in the woods hunting goats, when the British captain re-embarked his men and sailed without noticing his absence. He had only his gun and knife, with a small powder horn and a little lead. He used his knife on the barrel of his rifle to construct hooks and a longer knife.

8. Wyss was a Swiss writer, educated at German universities, who taught philosophy and was a librarian in Bern. A first draft was written by his father, Johann David Wyss.

A book called *Robinsonnette suisse* by E. Muller is reported to have been in Verne's personal library (Charles-Noël Martin et Olivier Dumas, "La Bibliothèque de Jules Verne," *BSJV* 114 (1995): 49-55 (54)), but this would seem to be an error for *Le Robinson suisse*.

mingo (ch. 7 in Hetzel's version), the grouse (ch. 16), sago (ch. 18), the onager (ch. 19), and cotton (ch. 21). Verne's tone and style are in all probability a homage to Wyss and his French translators.

In his prefaces to both *Two Years Vacation* and *Second Homeland*, Verne cites Mme Mallès de Beaulieu (?-1825), author of at least eleven books for young people. *Le Robinson de douze ans: Histoire curieuse d'un jeune mousse français abandonné dans une île déserte* (1818) was reprinted about 30 times. When the ship young Félix is on is wrecked, he is saved by his dog – like Smith in *MI*. As in Verne, the difficulties met are progressive. Félix has only tinder, a lighter, a knife, a ball of string, and a top. He eats eggs and agouti, and climbs a mountain at dusk, but can not see much from the summit, as it is dark (cf. *MI*, I, 11). He discovers a chest containing carpenter's tools, finds a replacement for tinder, and moves into a cave, in which he constructs a window (as in *MI*). When he goes back to his first home, he finds the hut destroyed (in *MI*, the Chimneys are damaged by the sea). He goes through a period of penance for his earlier faults (like Ayrton) and, having witnessed a sea monster attack a boat, he adopts the only survivor, a baby. A few years later, he saves another person from a wreck, who turns out to be his mother. Despite its implausibilities, Beaulieu's work is evidently similar to Verne's novel.

In "Why I Wrote *Second Homeland*," Verne also cites Louis Desnoyers, *Aventures de Robert Robert et de son fidèle compagnon Toussaint Lavenette* (1839). Amongst links are the illustration captioned "Shipwreck of the *Rapide* – The Raft" (ch. 16), presumably the origin of Verne's *Speedy*; but especially the striking description and illustration of the "Death of Captain Flottard" (ch. 19), the origin of the death of Captain Nemo.

Verne cites, thirdly, *The Crater, or Vulcan's Peak* (1847 – translated, significantly, as *Le Cratère, ou le Robinson américain* (1850 – Gallica)).⁹ In this novel, Mark Woolston (probably borrowed from Wyss's Wolston) goes to sea in 1793, but encounters an uncharted reef west of Valparaiso. With animals from the boat, the two survivors, Mark and Bob, settle. They eventually move to another island, Vulcan's Peak, with coconut palms and breadfruit, and build an eighty-ton schooner. After various adventures, other settlers arrive; and Mark eventually becomes governor of a full-scale colony, with his wife Bridget and 500 other people, a governing council, and even a postal system. Pirates attack, newcomers upset the social harmony via the newspaper's columns, and Mark is ousted. He and Bridget go home; then head back to Vulcan's Peak, but divine retribution and an earthquake have made it sink beneath the waves, leaving no survivors, just the rim of the volcanic crater.

Amongst the striking similarities with *MI* are: the sub-tropical island that exhibits characteristics of colder climes; the volcanic cone; discussion of previous shipwrecks; the need for tobacco; the dominance by an educated man; the obsessive naming in terms of American localities; the fatal delay of one night in launching the first boat; the instinct of animals in announcing natural disasters; the absence of shipping; the crack in the volcano through which sea water enters and creates steam, thus causing the earthquake; the eruption, with light ash like snow; the concealment of a ship in a sheltered bay; the ship which is permanently caught in an inlet by a change in the land's shape; the lake fed by a surprisingly large stream and overflowing into another stream; the little lake below the peak, with a concealed stream emerging; the paradisiacal plateau far from the bare cone; the network of channels, sounds, and islets; the settling on two islands, and the transfer from one to the other; the use of leagues for distance; birds with brilliant

9. Similarly, Verne is reported as saying: "As for Fenimore Cooper, I have the totality of his thirty volumes.' And Mr. Verne started talking about the dramatic qualities of *The Pathfinder* and *The Last of the Mohicans*." ("The Prophecies of Romance: Jules Verne on Scientific Progress," by Charles Dawbarn, in the *Pall Mall Magazine*, May 1904, 33)

plumage; the dark-skinned companion; the word “unconscious” referring to hidden mental states and the term “abolitionist”; the making of bricks and lime; ambivalence about leaving the Island; and above all the conclusion that even landmasses can be temporary and that the beginning often resembles the end.¹⁰

In the same preface, finally, Verne quotes “Mme de Mirval’s” *Le Robinson des sables du désert* (c. 1850), although the author is cited in the volume as “M. de Mirval.” Mirval’s “Avant-propos” quotes an “Indian *mokiste*” in “1861” (presumably an error for Mosquito and 1681) “abandoned on the island of Juan-Fernandez ... [he] lived there for three years, and obtained for himself, by hunting, fishing, and his industrious spirit, all the resources of life.” The appeals to Providence, being an orphan, the childhood spent reading of exotic foreign lands, and seeking one’s fortune in America (ch. 1) are perhaps generic, but must have influenced the young Verne. We observe such other Vernian ideas as a protector who, like Lidenbrock, has a “curious cabinet of mineralogy” and a departure from the ocean-going port of Nantes, with a description of the dangers of the “crossing from Nantes to Paimbœuf” (ch. 1 – cf. *Backwards to Britain*, ch. 5). The hero arrives on a barren sea-coast in a state of exhaustion and unconsciousness, accompanied by flotsam from the shipwreck; his first meal is uncooked shells; and he fears both lions and tigers (ch. 2). He rescues books, a telescope, barrels, and livestock, and makes sails into clothes (ch. 3). Using telescope lenses he makes fire together with tinder from paper and clothing (ch. 4). He uses natural cavities for storage; and prepares materials to make signals for passing ships (ch. 4). Although it is difficult to separate out the strands of “UR” and *MI*, Verne and Hetzel, virtually all these ideas must have contributed to *MI*. Some of Mirval’s phrases are quoted almost textually by Verne, for instance “Each time that I saw a vessel leaving port for some long sea journey, I felt a profound regret that I was not part of its crew” (ch. 6) or the indistinguishability of monkeys and humans (ch. 7). The ending (ch. 19), where the desert-island existence is recreated in a more civilized but still remote area, clearly presages Verne’s ending in Iowa.

A final source for *MI* may possibly be Edouard Raynal, *Les Naufragés, ou vingt mois dans les îles Auckland, 1863-1865*, published in the periodical *Le Tour du monde* (1866, 496-98), then by Hachette in 1870. This is the true story of five men: Raynal himself, a Norwegian, a Portuguese, a Briton, and an American called Captain Thomas Musgrave, author of *Cast Away at the Auckland Isles* (1866 – cf. the five men in *MI*). Following the shipwreck of the *Grafton*, the men spend twenty months on the rocky Auckland Isles, still uninhabited today. Raynal’s volume has forty drawings by Alphonse de Neuville, who illustrated *Twenty Thousand Leagues* and other works by Verne. There is a brief allusion in Verne’s *A Floating Island* (ch. 39): “On board the *Coringuy*, Auckland [*sic*] reefs. Finally we have been shipwrecked.” The name Harry Clifton in “UR” may come from Raynal’s Harry plus the *Grafton*. In *Two Years Vacation*, the same *Grafton* brings the heroes back to the same port of Auckland. Raynal uses seal skins to create a bellows for the forge, as Smith does. He also employs the saw in his pen-knife to make a hut and beds and other furniture, whereas Flip talks of his knife being able to build a house or a ship and Clifton also has a saw in his knife. Harry uses wet matches from his pocket to light a fire (158); in “UR” (33) and *MI* (I, 5), fire is made using one match found in a pocket. Smith’s soap-making (I, 17) may be derived from Raynal’s description of boiling a mixture of “plants ... soda ... potash ... lime ... [and] seal’s fat” (122). Raynal finds in his chest a Bible that his wife had secretly put there: the settlers are similarly surprised to find a Bible in their chest (II, 2). However, the two writers may simply be referring to common sources, especially as “UR” probably pre-dates Ray-

10. Verne’s “Edom” (1910), where an island rises from the ocean, surprisingly fertile humus is created from decaying seaweed and dead fish, and survivors sail past peaks and sound for sunken lands, may bear even greater resemblance to the ending of *The Crater*.

nal.

Appendix B: Verne's Other Writing on the Desert-Island Theme

One law of the Robinsonade genre is to include claims as to the excessive easiness of the predecessors. Another law is that influence is visible not only directly, but also because each previous work imitates and deconstructs the previous works, and so on, back to the ur-version or even beyond. A third law is that each new volume claims nevertheless to have discovered a novel situation. Verne follows all three laws, but often in unexpected ways.

Throughout his career, Verne wrote a great deal on desert islands in both the fictional and non-fictional mode. However, the constraints of his reputation as a writer for young people as well as his own personal inclination, mistrustful of any theorizing, mean that his observations are usually down-to-earth. The value, then, for understanding *MI* is in the information provided about such central ideas as social structure, the viability of living alone, and the concrete details of survival, especially fire, food, and shelter. Although Verne never repeats himself, the same concerns do frequently re-occur: at the age of ten or eleven his dreams already concern lost islands and rediscovered paradises, at least according to his sixty-three-year-old self (first extract). In discussing the Robinsonade, we must be careful, however, not to be influenced by modern hedonistic conceptions of hot climates, sunbathing, unpolluted skies, and beautiful natives. For Verne the essential attractions of islands are exploration of undiscovered territory and the new social relations that arise. The novelist in fact prefers cold and wet climates to an almost masochistic degree – his dream is invariably to head towards the poles, if possible via his beloved Scotland. In addition, the attraction of the Vernian Robinsonade is conditioned by an awareness that the number of “lost” islands is finite, that they are all destined to be annexed, sooner or later, by the nations of the Old and New Worlds.

The most important information appears in Verne's “Memories of Childhood and Youth” (written in about 1891):

One day, I was alone in a bad skiff without a keel. Ten leagues downstream from Chantenay, a plank broke and the water started pouring in. Impossible to stop the leak! I was now in distress! The skiff sank straight down, and I barely had time to throw myself on to an islet adorned with great dense reeds and plumes bent by the wind.

Now in all the books of my childhood, the one that I particularly liked was *The Swiss Family Robinson*, more than *Robinson Crusoe*. I know full well that Daniel Defoe's work has more philosophical depth. It is about a man abandoned to himself, a man alone, a man who one day finds the mark of a naked foot on the sand! But the work of Wyss, rich in information and adventures, is more interesting for young brains. It's the family – father, mother, and children with their diverse abilities. How many years I spent on their island! ... I was irresistibly pushed to portray the Robinsons of Science and Knowledge in *The Mysterious Island*, and a whole boarding-school of Robinsons in *School for Robinsons*.

But meanwhile, on my isle ... it was the heroes of Daniel Defoe who were incarnated in my person. Already I was thinking of building a hut from branches, making a line from a reed using thorns as hooks, and making fire, as savages do, by rubbing together two pieces of dry wood. Signals? I wouldn't make any, for they might be noticed too soon, and I would be saved more quickly than I wanted! First of all, it was advisable to satisfy my hunger. How? My provisions had sunk in the shipwreck. Go hunting for birds? I had neither dog nor gun! Well, what about shellfish? There weren't any! In the end, consequently, I knew the suffering of abandonment and the horrors of destitution on a desert island, as felt by the Selkirks

and other characters from *Naufragés célèbres*¹ who were not imaginary Robinsons! My stomach cried out ...

It only lasted a few hours and, as soon as the tide had gone out, I simply had to cross with water up to my ankles to reach what I called the mainland, the right bank of the Loire. And so I ... had to be content with a family dinner rather than the meal à la Crusoe I had dreamed of: raw shellfish, a slice of peccary, and bread made from manioc flour!

The information in this mini-autobiography is a revealing mixture of enthusiastic naïveté and knowing rehearsal of the age-old myth of escape to a distant shore, visible in *MI*, but also the long line of predecessors who have already worn out much of the genre. The essential opposition is between Defoe's independence and Wyss's cozy domesticity.

Another important revelation is made in "Jules Verne at Home" by Marie A. Belloc (*The Strand Magazine*, February 1895):

And yet perhaps I shall shock you by admitting that I myself prefer the dear old *Swiss Family Robinson* [to Defoe]. People forget that Crusoe and his man Friday were but an episode in a seven-volumed story. To my mind the book's great merit is that it was apparently the first romance of the kind ever written ... I never tire of Fenimore Cooper; certain of his romances ... will, I trust, be remembered long after the so-called literary giants of later ages are forgotten. Then again, I thoroughly enjoy Captain Marryat's breezy romances.² Owing to my unfortunate inability to read English, I am not so familiar as I should like to be with Mayne Read [*sic*]³ and Robert Louis Stevenson; still, I was greatly delighted with the latter's *Treasure Island*.

But Verne's thinking on the desert-island theme comes out most clearly in his works before *MI*. In *Captain Grant's Children*, Harry relates:

We began like Defoe's ideal Robinson, our model, by collecting the flotsam from the ship, the tools, a little powder, some firearms, and a bag of precious seeds. The first few days were very difficult, but hunting and fishing soon afforded us a sure supply of food, for wild goats abounded in the interior of the island, and marine animals on the coasts. By degrees our life became regular and organized (II, 3).

In the same novel, Paganel and Lady Helena debate the ideas of happiness and isolation on a desert island. The Frenchman argues that a kid or an "eloquent parrot or amiable monkey" are sufficient: "And if a lucky chance sends one a companion like the faithful Friday, what more is needed? Two friends on a rock, there is happiness." But Lady Helena counters:

You are thinking of the life of an imaginary Robinson, thrown on a carefully selected island and treated by nature like a spoiled child ... Man is made for society ... and solitude can only engender despair ... When death comes, which utter loneliness will render terrible, he will be like the last man on the last day of the world. Believe me, M. Paganel, such a man is not to be envied (I, 2).

1. Very probably Zurcher and Margollé, *Les Naufrages célèbres* (1872).

2. Captain [Frederick] Marryat (1792-1848), the author of *Mr. Midshipman Easy* (1836) and *The Children of the New Forest* (1847), is also cited by Verne in an interview in 1889. Kravitz (*Ibid.*) reports that the opening of "UR" is similar to Marryat's Robinsonade *Masterman Ready* (1841), for in each a family consisting of a mother and her four children is guided from a sinking vessel to a distant desert island by a kind-hearted and experienced seaman.

3. [Thomas] Mayne-Reid (1818-83), born in Northern Ireland but a naturalized American, published sixty-five novels, including five Robinsonades: *The Desert Home* (1852 – translated as *Le Robinson du désert*), *The Forest Exiles* (1854), *The Cliff Climbers* (1854), *Afloat in the Forest* (1866), and, significantly, *The Castaways* (1871). Hetzel published sixteen of the novels, and nearly all the others were available in French.

Just as Harry defines the material conditions governing every Robinsonade, thus announcing the structure of Part I of *MI*, so Paganel reflects both Defoe and the eleven-year old Verne, while Lady Helena anticipates Nemo's final dilemma of dying alone.

Twenty Thousand Leagues also informs Verne's attraction to islands. The opening chapter is entitled "A Shifting Reef," and emphasizes the parallels between shoals, sea-monsters, and submarines. Indeed, floating islands and shifting reefs are an obsession in the *Extraordinary Journeys*, undoubtedly due to the writer's childhood overlooking the moving sandbanks of the Loire. Gueboroar island (possibly Gabba Island, or Gilboa) in *Twenty Thousand Leagues* (I, 20) contains many similarities with the Mysterious Island. For a couple of days the guests/prisoners escape the oppressive atmosphere of the *Nautilus* to find exotic fauna and flora, breadfruit and barbecued meat, in a tropical paradise which again echoes Wyss and Defoe.

Even after *MI*, Verne comes back obsessively to the theme, but with an increasing tendency towards parody and self-destruction. On 7 November 1874, the novelist wrote to Ritt, director of the Théâtre de la porte Saint-Martin, presenting his plans for a play called *Captain Grant's Children*; the first draft was written by 1876, and the play was performed and published in 1878. Tabor is replaced by the imaginary "Balker Isle of the southern seas, situated not far from Adélie Coast": like Tabor, at 37° S, but with the longitude moved to 165° W.⁴

"The Mutineers of the *Bounty*" (1879) ends with an idyllic description of the colony on Pitcairn, mixing Old-Testament traditionalism with a Rousseauist primitivism of which Cyrus Smith would surely have disapproved:

the girls, above all, were admirably beautiful ... Money was unknown; all transactions were done by means of exchange, but there was no industry, for there were no raw materials. The only clothes worn by the inhabitants were vast hats and grass skirts ... Pitcairn Island has become the motherland of a gentle, hospitable, and happy population, amongst which prevail the patriarchal customs of the first age.

Verne calls *The School for Robinsons* (1882) a "false Robinson."⁵ In trenchantly rejecting Hetzel's criticism of the manuscript, Verne echoes "Memories of Childhood and Youth": "It seems to me that the philosophical depth you want to indicate is completely outside my subject and of a nature to weigh it down." The book satirizes the desert-island genre: a rich American buys an island to cure his nephew of dreaming of Robinsons, and places an implausible collection of animals on it, together with actors to play savages. A shipwreck is set up, which forces the hero to look after an eccentric teacher of dancing and deportment. Even the illiterate natives behave as if they have read Defoe. However, the island is then really invaded by wild animals, undermining the parody.

Two Years Vacation (1888) and *Second Homeland* (1900) are the only novels of Verne's to which he provided prefaces (reproduced in this volume, on pp. xx-xx and xx-xx). In *Two Years Vacation*, a group of fifteen British, American, and French boys are shipwrecked on the authentic Hanover Island off South America. They discover a new castaway (a woman), and from Robinsons, they become settlers, setting up a school. But soon national rivalries emerge, resulting in some of the British seceding – until pirates force them back. The novel is full of implausibilities: the youth of the protagonists, the lack of care by the ship's crew, the single rope attaching the ship to Auckland quay, the fact that they can not see the neighboring islands, and the variety of fauna and flora, including even hippopotami.

4. Information can be found in Pierre Terrasse, "Un Centenaire: *Les Enfants du capitaine Grant* au théâtre," *BSJV* 49 (1979): 21-31.

5. Letter to Hetzel in 1881 (Bibliothèque nationale, vol. 73, fo 502).

Second Homeland presents itself as a sequel to *The Swiss Family Robinson*, with the first chapters summarizing Wyss's novel. Imitating the Swiss castaways, one of the boys tries to ride various animals, including an ostrich, but with a comic lack of success. However, the heroes do not have the same personalities as in Wyss; and contemporary reality has meanwhile moved on. In both this novel and *MI*, the characters discuss the difficult transition from a small group of settlers to a full-scale colony, as happens with tragic results in Cooper's *The Crater* and Verne's "In the Magallanes" (1987).

The three later Robinsonades fail to re-capture the magical, pioneering adventures of *MI*. But of course the Mysterious Island carries within it the limits of paradise: the unique and implausible circumstances of its founding, its uncertain future if ever revealed to the world, and the impossibility of escaping the rest of humanity or the demons of the past. The three self-pastiches merely emphasize the paradoxes intrinsic to Verne's desert islands.