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**Better Late: Belated Space in *Travels with a Donkey in the
Cévennes***

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Better Late: Belated Space in *Travels with a Donkey in the Cévennes*

1. Abstract

This paper examines the portrayal of space within Robert Louis Stevenson's *Travels with a Donkey in the Cévennes*, in particular its use of intertextuality. It firstly establishes a critical context for travel writing, and the context of reception of *Travels with a Donkey in the Cévennes*, before looking at how space in the book is related to historical information which Stevenson gathered outside of his time in the area. The paper suggests that space in the book is depicted as belated, and that the intertextuality of the work complicates its customary classification as an 'off-the-beaten-track' text. A comparison with *The Cévennes Journal*, Stevenson's record of his journey, draws attention to how he presented this experience through the prism of information about the region's history. An examination of Stevenson's integration of material about the Camisards shows the extent to which his text was shaped by his reading and research, and his concern to present the space as he had come to understand it through texts. Comparisons with both contemporary and more recent travel texts show how Stevenson's use of such sources to describe space prefigures postmodern travel writing.

2. Introduction

Robert Louis Stevenson achieved success with fictional narratives such as *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and *Treasure Island*, but his career as a published author began in the field of travel writing. After *An Inland Voyage*, a brief account of a trip by water through Belgium and France, Stevenson wrote *Travels with a Donkey in the Cévennes* (hereafter *Travels*), which related his experience of a journey through a remote and largely unknown (to his British readers) region of France, accompanied by Modestine, the animal mentioned in the book's title. Stevenson gives an account of his time in the Cévennes, the difficulties of motivating Modestine to advance, the people he encounters, and the scenery of the mountainous area. He also introduces his readers to the history of

the Cévennes, which had long held a fascination for him, and this is an integral element of the book.

Though cited as a signal moment in the travel sub-genre of ‘roughing it’ or getting ‘off the beaten track’, in *Travels* Stevenson makes use of historical sources to add an intertextual element to his portrayal of place which complicates this characterization and foreshadows so-called ‘postmodern’ travel writers. I will situate *Travels* within the broader history of travel writing and criticism, and then show, through an exploration of how Stevenson employed his sources, how his figuring of the place known as ‘The Cévennes’ is mediated through these sources, achieving its effect through a comparison of a heroic past accessed through research with the contemporary location whose traversal is the ostensible subject of the book. Thereby, I will demonstrate that the text engages in a belatedness of space more reminiscent of late-twentieth century travel writing than that of the late-Victorian period.

3. Travel Writing: Theoretical and Historical Approaches

Travel writing as a genre has been defined in various ways. Das and Youngs point to two main types of travel writing: “the mythological or supernatural on the one hand ... and the documentary function on the other.” (2) They emphasize the importance of “voice” in identifying the particularity of a given travel text (3), the individual's experience of a place or voyage shaping the way in which information is subsequently presented. Carl Thompson posits an admittedly “somewhat reductive” definition of travel itself as “the negotiation between self and other that is brought about by movement in space” (9). Thompson's exploration of what may or may not constitute travel writing leads him into dialogue with the work of Paul Fussell, who insists on a distinction between the so-called 'travel book' and “other forms of travel-related text” (Thompson 13). This 'travel book' takes the form of an “extended prose narrative” (14), offering “the author's own experience” of travel. Fussell's insistence on this more restrictive definition of travel writing is problematic for Thompson, who is more willing to admit fictional novels about travel into the ambit of travel writing criticism (16).

However Thompson accepts the usefulness of Fussell's focus on the 'travel book', an appellation which he refines by adding the qualifier "modern" (17). The highly personal nature of the writing within such texts sets them off from their predecessors (19): rather than relaying details and practical information, they are concerned with communicating *experience*. Thompson accepts Fussell's description of the travel book as "a sub-species of memoir" (qtd. in Thompson 14), a belief more expansively glossed by Helen Carr when she states that "All travel writing is a form of autobiography" (79). He nevertheless maintains that "the boundaries of the travel writing genre are fuzzy" (26) and cites critics such as Borm and Von Martels who will accept other forms as travel writing, including fictional narratives and poetry (24-25).

Blanton makes sense of this huge variety of potential travel texts through an understanding that "travel books are vehicles whose main purpose is to introduce us to the other, and that typically they dramatized an engagement between self and world" (xi). Again, the idea of voice or the particularity of the experience is crucial: for Blanton, the study of travel texts is "a matter of focusing on the various ways the observing self and the foreign world reverberate within each work" (xi). We can see from these attempts at defining travel as a genre that there is a general consensus as to the essence of such writing being the interaction between, on one hand, the authorial voice which conveys lived experience, and on the other, the place posited as a *locale* for movement. Although an acknowledgment of the presence of other texts as sources or influences is made, particularly when describing 'postmodern' travel writing, for the most part this dichotomy of authorial subjectivity and the physical world it reports goes unquestioned as a paradigm, albeit complicated by questions of reliability and influence. An investigation of the extent of intertextual negotiation within a book like *Travels* suggests that this framework can be usefully problematized, revealing the way space is depicted in travel writing as a more of a writerly construction than an 'authentic' account of movement in the world.

Critics identify periods within which particular aspects of this interaction between author and place are foregrounded or problematised as the travel book develops. Homer's *Odyssey* and the

Mesopotamian *Epic of Gilgamesh* are cited as early examples of texts which show a concern with travel (Das and Youngs 2, Thompson 35). Accounts of travels by ancient writers evince a continuity within which “Writing and travel have always been intimately connected” (Hulme and Youngs 2). Many of these authors were concerned to relay information about distant or difficult-to-access places for their readers, and therefore present “geographical or ethnographical material” (Burgess 19).

This role continues into the medieval period, where the pilgrimage generates its own specific travel genre, the *peregrinatio*. (Campbell). The pilgrimage becomes a key trope in travel writing; due to the requirements of the religion in whose name it was carried out, excessive curiosity about the places visited is rarely on show, and “the element of travelogue is often strictly subordinated to the text's practical and religious concerns” (Thompson 38). In more secular societies later travel writers will return to the pilgrimage narrative as a form to structure their accounts.

Two writers working outside of the pilgrimage tradition are invoked by several critics as exemplifying the development of the travel genre from the medieval to the early modern period – Marco Polo, whose *Travels* (1298) recounts his experiences at the court of the Mongol Great Khan Qubilai, and Christopher Columbus's letters. For Blanton, Polo's narrative affirms existing prejudices for its readers, and offers an authorial voice stripped of the narrator's personality. By contrast, Columbus offers a sense of “an intense personal experience mediating our response to his New World” (8-9). Thompson notes the “incredulity” with which many contemporary readers read Polo, before hailing Columbus's four voyages as “a watershed in the history of European travel and travel writing, and a key point of transition from medieval to early modern attitudes, practices and conventions” (40). Kinoshita emphasizes both the collaborative nature of Polo's work, “dictated to and retold by Rusticello”, and the work's focus on information about the places named rather than the visitor's reaction - “less in the experiential language of the traveller or through a vocabulary of wonder than in the administrative language of the functionary”, this information often betraying the

way in which generic conventions and the use of pre-existing material dominated travel writing at the time (56-59). By contrast, for Lindsay, Columbus's narrative (although presenting questions of authorship due to having been transcribed) repeatedly invokes the sense of wonder which the Genoese captain felt, this perhaps a narrative strategy to please the eventual readership of such texts, his sponsors back in Europe (Lindsay 223). Whatever his motives, this is seen to inaugurate a move towards the increasing importance of personal reaction in travel writing, posited in opposition to merely conveying information gathered.

Through the early modern period and the eighteenth century the growth in both travel to newly discovered or newly accessible lands (as 'exploration') and the widening of leisure travel from the institution of the Grand Tour (the birth of 'tourism') both stimulated travel writing (Thompson, *Travel Writing* 45). The careful observation of natural phenomena required by organizations such as the Royal Society is held in tension with a greater concern with the affective – Leask lauds Wollstonecraft as “the triumphant culmination of a century of travel writing, representing a Romantic synthesis of detailed observation, philosophical reflection, social critique, and 'affective realism' (105). Accounts from the nineteenth century maintain the theme of a literary turn in accounts of travel, with differing opinions as to when this became apparent. For Blanton, under the influence of Romanticism “travel writing veers toward the self” by the close of the eighteenth century (15), while Thompson describes the influence of this movement as belatedly felt within the genre and not clear until the “nineteenth century was well advanced” ('Nineteenth-Century' 111).

With an increase in the number of people travelling for leisure and the turn towards the primacy of individual experience in accounts of travel came an increased distinction between types of travellers and a rhetoric of 'travellers' contrasted with 'tourists' (Thompson, *Travel Writing* 54). The former affected a sensibility superior to that of the 'herd' who blindly followed their guidebooks, the increasing popularity of such published material on where to go and what to do bringing the more personal aspect of the travelogue into sharper focus as the need to supply

information was met by other publications (Buzard, 'The Grand Tour' 49). Buzard's work on this period demonstrates the importance of the tourist to the role of the traveller; the latter defined himself ('travellers' were usually men, and often employed a rhetoric of masculine independence) against the tourist, whose inability to penetrate to the true nature of the *locale* denied them the insight granted by the traveller's more refined sensibility (*Beaten Track*, 10).

One strategy for the traveller to distinguish themselves from the tourist was to travel to sites or destinations 'off the beaten track'. This would allow them to escape their less-refined counterparts (Thompson, *Travel Writing* 54) and furthermore provided new subjects for description, a means of combatting the emerging affliction of 'belatedness', the feeling expressed by many travellers that they were following in the footsteps of their forebears, and the concomitant challenge of saying something new (Buzard, *Beaten Track* 158).

Critics situate changes in the formal structure and concerns at different points in the modern period. Thompson asserts that "The decades after 1840 also saw travel writing's traditional mode – a retrospective, fairly summative reporting of incidents and observations – frequently supplanted by a more detailed novelistic rendering" ('Nineteenth-Century' 123). Helen Carr sees three distinct stages from 1880 – 'heroic' tales, told in a realist fashion, from 1880 to 1900; a more subjective and literary turn from 1900 to the First World War; and the 'literary travel book' in the inter-war period, often written by authors known for novel writing or as poets (75). For Blanton, the Romantic period's concern with an individual's personal response to and negotiation with the world, the play "between the empirical and the sentimental, signals the beginning of the richest period of travel writing: the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries" (19). Whilst the precise genealogy of 'the modern travel book' varies among critics, its formation as a literary object is ascribed to this period dating from the mid-eighteenth century onwards, when, as Thompson notes, "Many of these literary travelogues were intended to be read as much for the quality of the writing they contained, and for the insights they offered into the idiosyncratic personalities of their authors, as for the useful information they contained about the places being described" (*Travel Writing* 55). In this 'classic'

phase of the travel book, sensibility and literary effect have pushed out the inclusion of factual information, or relegated it to a secondary position.

A subsequent 'turn' in travel writing is seen in the 1970s, with the publication of books by new authors such as Bruce Chatwin, Paul Theroux, and Peter Matthiesen, which mark “a decisive shift in modern travel writing” (Hulme 87). Chatwin's work is cited by Thompson as an example of postmodernism in travel writing, his work “comprised in large part of extensive quotations from other authors” (127). This 'dialogic' narrative technique works against the traditional subjectivity of the modern travel book, allowing for the presence of other perspectives than that of the travelling writer's. Blanton too notes the inclusion of “chunks of historical data or synopses of other travel books” as typifying the “self-reflexivity” of contemporary travel writing (27). Pfister describes Chatwin as a writer who “moves as much among texts as among Patagonian places” (259).

4. *Travels with a Donkey in the Cévennes*: Critical Reception

How is *Travels* situated within this historical context? Thompson uses the book alongside Stevenson's *The Silverado Squatters* and Twain's *Roughing It* to exemplify the strand in nineteenth-century travel writing which eschewed the more comfortable transport options associated with tourism and the masses, and thereby signalled more authentic experience. He notes that “such suffering ostensibly distanced travellers from the pampered, lazy tourist, aligning them instead with the revered explorer, whose arduous travelling supposedly yielded real knowledge”. These “Accounts of tramping and other lowlife experiences soon constituted a new subgenre” ('Nineteenth-Century' 122). Sobocinska and White concur in a laudatory fashion: “The art of travel for many serious writers became an otherworldly immersion in the exotic, cut off from modern life. Heroically avoiding the increasingly insistent tourist presence, Robert Louis Stevenson was a crucial figure for literary travel...in 1878, as railways revolutionised tourism throughout Europe, he famously travelled with a donkey” (574). Helen Carr suggests it is possible indeed to credit Stevenson with inventing the notion of “travelling in ostentatious discomfort” (78).

Carr also mentions Stevenson in the context of late-nineteenth century writers who “incorporated their travels in parallel in fiction and travel writing” (74), placing him firmly in the lineage of Modernism, a classification with which recent scholarship on his oeuvre agrees (Hill 1). Blanton associates Stevenson with both contemporaries and exemplars of Modernism such as Auden and Lawrence, noting the influence of “the democratization of travel” on the demand for more literary accounts of travel (19-20). This strand of thought accentuates Stevenson's writerly response to his experience of 'roughing it', conveying his subjective impressions of place in line with travel writing's turn away from being a 'knowledge genre' to something more literary. Citing the influence both of Romanticism and American mid-nineteenth-century travel writing, Blanton emphasizes how travel writing in this period “becomes resonant with the interactions between traveler and world” (19). The “complex interplay between self and world, between the empirical and the sentimental” (19) is, for Blanton, the hallmark of travel writing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; as we shall see, this is complicated by Stevenson's use of ‘knowledge’ of the local area in forming his travel narrative.

Writing specifically on *Travels*, Hayward draws attention to Stevenson's choice of peripherality, both in destination and mode of transport (269), as well as his defiance of “generic conventions”, the work's exploration of Scots history and identity prefiguring a focus on these concerns in his later work in fiction (270). Hayward notes the presence of “proto-Modernist” elements, through the use of the pilgrimage trope as a “scaffolding”, and the text's drawing attention to “the narrator's subjectivity” (271). With its “post-Romantic emphasis on interiority” (278), the text moved beyond the existing conventions of the genre, and Hayward sees Stevenson as intending to “redefine the travel genre in order to move toward a deeper exploration of interiority that hearkens back to its Romantic predecessors while adding a new self-consciousness for a new era” (280). In another paper which devotes attention to *Travels*, Kenneth Simpson remarks on the centrality of movement to Stevenson's life and work - “He is kinesis personified” (231) – while accepting the importance of interiority to the work: “There is ... undeniably a psychological

dimension to the significance of the journey: it functions as a quest for self” (235). His analysis also foregrounds Stevenson's awareness of the past, both literary and historical, as bearing upon the writer's negotiation of his experiences (238-239).

Travels, then, seems to fit neatly into the standard chronology of travel writing. It also contains features which are recognised as typifying travel writing as examined from a formal viewpoint. As noted above, the use of the pilgrimage as a structure is a long-established device which the text employs. Another approach used by travel writing critics is to examine the 'principle of attachment' which a writer uses to communicate the unknown to the reader so that it can be apprehended and understood (Thompson, *Travel Writing* 67-70). This is the technique by which the unfamiliar can be likened or compared to that with the reader is already familiar, thereby attaching the new to the known, integrating it within an existing system of understanding. A reference point used by Stevenson is the Scottish Highlands, which he likens to the Cévennes, and the historical religious community of the Covenanters, who are used as a simile for the Camisards who once dwelt in the area he visits in the latter part of *Travels*. He also makes use of literary references, for example quoting Keats's poetic description of Cortez's wonder upon seeing the Pacific (62), and as Simpson notes, “Despite the emphasis on adventurism, Stevenson plainly derives comfort from the validation of his experience by the precedents offered by history” (239).

The lines from Keats occur within the context of Stevenson reaching the highest point of the Gévaudan, the Pic de Finiels, and from there enjoying “a view into the hazy air of heaven, and a land of intricate blue hills below my feet” (62). The traveller's view from a high point, elevating himself over the land in a literal sense but also over its inhabitants in a symbolic sense, is a common trope in travel writing which Mary Louise Pratt has described as the 'monarch-of-all-I-survey' scene (qtd. in Thompson, *Travel Writing* 120). Though Stevenson, unlike the heroes of Victorian exploration narratives who typify this scene, is not travelling through a territory which will be absorbed into the British Empire, his language is redolent (perhaps ironically) of the proprietorial pretensions of such figurings: “I took possession, in my own name, of a new quarter of the world”

(62). The invocation of Cortez also alludes to land annexed by colonizers, and the ensuing description of the lands visible from this height includes both a sweeping generalization wherein with regal disdain he dismisses the inhabitants on one side of the peak - “peopled by a dull race” (62) – and a reference to Louis XV - “the Grand Monarch with all his troops and marshals” - and his efforts to subdue the rebellious Camisards. Stevenson himself marshals his literary and historical knowledge to imbue the scene with significance, while casting doubt upon the reliability of the locals who had to some measure informed him about the place: “I have spoken with people who either pretended or believed that they had seen, from the Pic de Finiels, white ships sailing by at Montpellier and Cette” (62). Thompson, describing a similar scene in Henry Morton Stanley's *Through the Dark Continent*, glosses it with “This is a traveller, it seems, whose soul can soar not only above the scenes it surveys, but also above its circumstances more generally; and this is a traveller, we are clearly meant to infer, who possesses a mind and a sensibility vastly superior to that of the local population” (*Travel Writing* 120), words which could easily be applied to Stevenson's self-presentation here.

The country Stevenson enters upon his descent from the Pic is described using another trope associated with travel writing. Thompson writes “Many travellers have complained that comparisons and analogies do not suffice to convey the true nature of the thing, people or place they wish to describe. Hence the frequency in travel writing of tropes of inexpressibility...” (*Travel Writing* 70). Having made a clear distinction from the peak between the dull country behind and the romance of “the Country of the Camisards” ahead, Stevenson now struggles to articulate just how the two differ when viewed close at hand, and yet insists upon this difference: “I should find it difficult to tell you in what particulars Pont de Montvert differed from Monastier or Langogne, or even Bleynard; but the difference existed, and spoke eloquently to the eyes. The place, with its houses, its lanes, its glaring river-bed, wore an indescribable air of the South” (66). What Stevenson does here is to communicate difference, which is germane to the structure of his book, within the conventions established by his invocation of other tropes, such as the ‘monarch-of-all-I-survey’

scene: we can trust his perceptions, coming as they do from a narrator of elevated sensibility.

As we have seen, *Travels* also belongs to a nineteenth-century subset of travel writing which depicts 'tramping' or travels undertaken in less comfortable conditions, away from the increasing numbers of tourists who benefited from the mobility provided by mass transport. Buzard notes the equation of walking and knowing in Wordsworth (34) and concern that places such as the Lake District would be overrun and lose what made them special (38, 40). Stevenson makes clear in *Travels* that he revels in the freedom and solitude of walking, and indeed sleeping outside, in the thinly populated landscape of the Cévennes. He contrasts the comfort of sleeping 'among the pines' - "A faint wind, more like a moving coolness than a stream of air, passed down the glade from time to time; so that even in my great chamber the air was being renewed all night long" (57) - with the impositions suffered through the presence of others at more conventional accommodation: "I thought with horror of the inn at Chasseradès and the congregated nightcaps" (57). The selection of a donkey as a companion (a 'peripheral' choice of animal, as Hayward has described it, referring to its unconventionality as a choice) makes clear the engagement with the idea of 'tramping', and Stevenson is at pains to tell the reader that his project is viewed as quixotic even by the locals: "I was looked upon with contempt, like a man who should project a journey to the moon, but yet with a respectful interest, like one setting forth for the inclement Pole" (7).

5. Intertextuality and History: Belated Space

Having shown how *Travels* fits into the standard chronology of travel writing, and how it exemplifies certain aspects of travel writing which receive critical attention, I will now turn to an examination of the intertextuality of the book, and how this necessarily complicates the nice distinctions made between late-nineteenth century and later periods of travel writing. Hagglund, defining intertextuality in the context of travel writing, notes that the concept, coined by Julia Kristeva in 1967, "suggests that a text needs to be read in the light of its allusions to and differences from the content or structure of other texts" (133). Lesic-Thomas draws attention to the differences

between Kristeva's concept and Bakhtin's dialogism, which it purports to replace, and gives a "liberal definition" of intertextuality as "that it refers to any form of interrelation between any numbers of texts, from the instances of clear reactions of one text to another (as in parody, for example) to the more general idea that there is not a single text that does not possess traces of other texts within itself" (1). Hulme, writing on Chatwin, notes that "since travel writing is often so *explicitly* intertextual, 'history' in its more general meaning is most effectively introduced through an analysis of partially denied or unacknowledged intertexts" (223). For the purposes of this paper, I will use the term intertextuality as referring to the presence, overt or unacknowledged, of other texts within Stevenson's *Travels*, texts which he used in the creation of his own account, and whose negotiation is crucial to his portrayal of space.

A key resource for study of *Travels* is *The Cévennes Journal* (hereafter *CJ*), Stevenson's record of his trip, from which he elaborated the text of *Travels* by working up his notes into a publishable form and by adding material which he sourced from texts about the area. An examination of *CJ* shows the extent to which Stevenson added to his original notes, and the debt which these additions held to sources which Stevenson used to learn about the history of the region.

Biographical information can also illuminate the process by which Stevenson's experience of the Cévennes was mediated into a written account. Despite the perception among some biographers that he did not have knowledge of the area before leaving for France (Bell 131), Stevenson's prior interest in the Cévennes is attested by several sources. Golding points to Guthrie's discovery in the archives of the Advocate's Library in Edinburgh that Stevenson had borrowed a number of books related to the region (*CJ* 203), and suggests that he was conducting literary research into the subject as far back as 1873, based on remarks in his correspondence. He also took some books with him on his trip, notably Napoléon Peyrat's *Histoire des Pasteurs de Désert* in the original French (Bell 134, *CJ* 203). This text, a history of the region and the battle of the Camisards against the forces of the crown, is crucial to our understanding of Stevenson's process, and I will treat his use of it in detail in a later section. Stevenson also sent a letter to his mother requesting books on the Covenanters,

who he would compare with the Camisards in the finished work (Letters, 2: 263-264).

With what did Stevenson concern himself in fleshing out the somewhat meagre text of his notebook? Two principal themes emerged from his reading to become recurring motifs in the first and second sections of the text respectively: wolves, specifically the 'Bête de Gévaudan' (Beast of Gévaudan), and the Camisards. Mention of the Bête is absent from the journal, and the Camisards appear on one occasion (CJ 12). I will first treat his use of the Bête and the imagery of wolves, before moving on to his more thoroughgoing integration of the Camisard history into his figured journey.

In the chapter 'I Have a Goad' from the 'Velay' section of *Travels*, Stevenson recounts his approach to Pradelles, noting the relative absence of company on the road, and, when he joins the high-road, “the song of the telegraph wires” (22). Further evidence of man's civilizing influence is to be seen around Pradelles, “surrounded by rich meadows” (22). The work done to maintain this state is indeed present to the senses: “They were cutting aftermath on all sides, which gave the neighbourhood, this gusty autumn morning, an untimely smell of hay” (22). From his vantage point Stevenson observes the “white roads wandering through the hills” (22), more signs of man's imposition upon the environment. His proximity to the line dividing Velay from the adjacent area prompts an exclamation which invokes the romance of an age before nature was brought to heel: “For I was now upon the limit of Velay, and all that I beheld lay in another county – wild Gévaudan, mountainous, uncultivated, and but recently deforested from terror of the wolves”. The sentence lays bare the dichotomy, indeed antagonism, which Stevenson sees between civilized man (cultivating, deforesting) and wild nature, at home in inaccessible places.

In the following paragraph Stevenson elaborates on the theme of wolves, in particular “the ever-memorable BEAST” (23), the 'Bête de Gévaudan'. For three years from June 1764, a series of attacks occurred on the inhabitants of the Gévaudan. A wild animal (or animals) held responsible for the attacks became known as *La Bête de Gévaudan*, or Beast of Gévaudan. The pattern of attacks

showed the supposed beast's proclivity for children and women, employed as auxiliary labour tending to livestock grazing in higher slopes after transhumance. Francois Antoine, sent by the king Louis XV to track and hunt the Beast, shot a large wolf in September 1765 which was formally presented at Versailles, and after the attacks resumed a second large wolf was shot by Jean Chastel, a local resident, in June 1767, drawing the affair to a close (Moriceau 11-12, Smith 1-2).

Stevenson associates wolves with outlaws, reinforcing the nature/civilisation dichotomy set up in the previous paragraph: “Wolves, alas! like bandits, seem to flee the traveller's advance; and you may trudge through all our comfortable Europe, and not meet with an adventure worth the name” (22-23). The somewhat ironic note of regret makes clear Stevenson's awareness of conventions arising from the relative safety of Europe in the post-Napoleonic wars period, when tourists (in the eyes of those who identified against them as 'travellers') could 'trudge' in their thousands around a Europe rendered accessible to classes hitherto restricted to domestic tours. Buzard contends that “after the Napoleonic Wars, the exaggerated perception that the Continental tour was becoming more broadly accessible than before gave rise to new formulations about what constituted 'authentic' cultural experience ... and new representations aimed at distinguishing authentic from spurious or merely repetitive experience” (6). Stevenson's tone alludes to the need for the traveller to find such 'authentic' experiences so that they can then be reported - “worth the name”, or worth retelling within a travel narrative. The irony continues with a faux-earnest expression of the promise of such an experience: “But here, if anywhere, a man was on the frontiers of hope” (23). Introducing the 'Beast' to the narrative, Stevenson also alludes to the time when a 'trudge' across Europe was unimaginable due to political conditions: “the Napoleon Bonaparte of wolves” (23).

The heightening of language from the previous reportage of local conditions to a more epic register continues as Stevenson recounts for his readers' benefit the exploits of the 'Beast', likening it to a bandit and emphasizing the difficulties which the authorities had in ending its reign of terror:

What a career was his! He lived ten months at free quarters in Gévaudan and Vivarais; he ate

women and children and 'shepherdesses celebrated for their beauty'; he pursued armed horsemen; he has been seen at broad noonday chasing a post-chaise and outrider along the king's high-road, and chaise and outrider fleeing before him at the gallop. He was placarded like a political offender, and ten thousand francs were offered for his head. (23)

The use of literary figures which belong more in the telling of romances - "at broad noonday" - as well as the typographical acknowledgment of Stevenson's sourcing of information (the use of capitalization for the "BEAST", and the placing of some description within quotation marks), create a space within the text where the pleasures of heightened literary language can be enjoyed without being judged from the perspective of the criteria of veracity, this immediately after the reference to the authentic experience which the traveller seeks.

There is also an intensifying effect within the description as the exploits of the 'Beast', and the response of the civilised world, both accumulate and seem to expand beyond the normal parameters of a wolf's behaviour. The threat to the post-chaise contrasts with Stevenson's description of "a pair of post-runners" (22) on the previous page as he remarked upon the tranquillity of the road to Pradelles. Further narrative effect is achieved with the revelation that "And yet, when he was shot and sent to Versailles, behold! a common wolf, and even small for that" (23). Another exclamation, this time to draw a close to the irruption of an epic past into the text, and accentuating the ensuing sense of comic deflation. The figure of the wolf has moved, within the space of this single paragraph, from absence, to presence, then expanding to the scale of a Napoleon, before the comic denouement.

Stevenson then introduces a literary quotation, before again referencing Napoleon: "Though I could reach from pole to pole,' sang Alexander Pope; the Little Corporal shook Europe; and if all wolves had been as this wolf, they would have changed the history of man." (23) Oddly enough the quotation given does not appear in Pope, but it does aptly express the grandeur of ambition which the person of Napoleon represents. The insistence on evoking Napoleon shows both the importance of this figure to the Romantic imagination, if we take Stevenson to exemplify the late arrival of the

Romantic movement's concerns into the travel genre, and also an important notion which we have already mentioned in the context of the nineteenth century, belatedness.

As Buzard notes, “For the nineteenth-century (anti-) tourist, to the problem of being one of the crowd was added that of being late on the scene” (107). Indeed Buzard links this to both the pause in travel to the continent during the period of the Napoleonic Wars and the late flowering of Romanticism within travel discourse. In his words (using tourist here in a general rather than pejorative sense), “the tourist after 1815 was likely to feel burdened by the Romantic dilemma of 'belatedness'. Seeking new forms of accreditation, post-Romantic tourists would object to the tired classical associations of the tour; more importantly, they chafed at imitation and repetition as such.” (110). This burden of originality might lead one to, in the first place, travel to somewhere like the Cévennes, where nobody “had preceded them, laying down preferred routes, establishing a hierarchy of attractions to be seen, fostering conventions of response” (Buzard 110), and also to do so in a similarly 'peripheral' manner, travelling with a donkey, a companion whose recalcitrance would signal the journey's 'authenticity'. The break in Continental travel is understood through this interpretation to be the grounds for a renovation of the Grand Tour: “Here was another way that the hiatus of the Napoleonic Wars seemed to give a wholly new start to the Continental tour: tourists could adopt the sentiments and ideals of Romanticism” (Buzard 110).

Having chosen this peripheral region, Stevenson would then have encountered the problem of what exactly to write about, given the lack (in his own journal) of significant events and the general pastoral calm which prevailed. Invocation of Romantic imagery could be used, for example in the celebration of wild nature, sleeping under the stars, and the figuring of the sublime through the views of the landscape. However, in order to give his work some particularity and justify his choice of the Cévennes, he would resort to historical information gleaned from sources. The use of the 'Bête' exemplifies this process, as the becalmed countryside, tamed by man's intervention and absent of incident, is reinvested with wild nature, a sense of struggle between man and beast, and the historical context of Napoleon's struggle against the British.

This section was absent from Stevenson's record of his trip, and several other references to the 'Bête' or wolves were also inserted during his revisions of the text. Frustrated in his attempts to get directions to Cheylard, he remarks on receiving misleading advice from two girls that "The Beast of Gévaudan ate about a hundred children of this district; I began to think of him with sympathy" (26-27). Another local, whose refusal to accompany Stevenson to Cheylard is interpreted as cowardice, is ironized with "Here was the Beast of Gévaudan, and no mistake" (29), and his family then described as "the Beasts of Gévaudan" (30) for their inhospitality. This contrast between the Romantic purity of the past and the grubby self-interest of the present is soon followed by a scene where Stevenson, having slept outdoors, awakes with a heightened sense of what travel is and can be, and this is expressed in highly Romantic language:

With that, I shook myself, got once more into my boots and gaiters, and, breaking up the rest of the bread for Modestine, strolled about to see in what part of the world I had awakened. Ulysses, left on Ithaca, and with a mind unsettled by the goddess, was not more pleasantly astray. I have been after such an adventure all my life, a pure dispassionate adventure, such as befell early and heroic voyagers; and thus to be found by morning in a random woodside nook in Gévaudan – not knowing north from south, as strange to my surroundings as the first man upon the earth, an inland castaway – was to find a fraction of my day-dreams realised. (32)

The idealization of a heroic past chimes with the sense that the historical version of this place, with its wolves and adventure, was, and continues to be, more interesting than its contemporary state. Aside from the Romantic imagery of primitive man, these lines also perform the role of 'traveller', as opposed to 'tourist'. Stevenson is so far from the beaten track that he finds himself completely disorientated, and this is an agreeable state; in fact, it is the very object of his wanderings to find himself so 'astray'.

In revising his text Stevenson sprinkled mentions of wolves throughout the text, giving coherence to a theme which was absent from *CJ*. In preparing his departure from Monastier at the

beginning of *Travels*, he is warned of various dangers by the locals: “threatening me with many ludicrous misadventures, and with sudden death in many surprising forms. Cold, wolves, robbers, above all the nocturnal practical joker, were daily and frequently forced up my attention” (10). These supposed difficulties, now in fact absent from the countryside and thus 'ludicrous', are contrasted with the rather more prosaic issue of how to balance his pack on the pack-saddle. Such is the lack of incident in this first “dull district” traversed by Stevenson, that upon crossing into 'The Country of the Camisards' he states that heretofore he had travelled “in the track of nothing more notable than the child-eating Beast of Gévaudan, the Napoleon Bonaparte of wolves” (63). Once again, the interest of the place lies in its past, and is visibly absent from its present.

While this might be thought of as an example of 'belatedness', there is a crucial difference between how Stevenson figures this 'afterwards' with regard to space and the standard Romantic notion whose popularization Buzard has described. In examining Stevenson's notion of belatedness, we should examine his concept of progress and historical change, and also the ideas about historical change which became prevalent in the late-Victorian period. As mentioned previously, before *Travels* Stevenson had published *An Inland Voyage*, a short work also in the travel genre which recounted a trip by canoe with a friend in Belgium and France. Stephen Arata has described it as “an odd book” which “does almost none of the things travel books do” (Idleness 4), perhaps an exaggeration, as the account does give descriptions of the landscape traversed and details of the people encountered along the way. Arata more importantly identifies the strand of 'idleness' which runs through the work, and the way in which Stevenson more generally stood in opposition to an increasing cultural emphasis on attention, linked as he sees it to the growth in industrial production (Idleness 6-7).

There is certainly a recurring motif of over-developed civilisation in *An Inland Voyage*, and the lack of authentic contact which results: “We now lay in towns, where nobody troubled us with questions; we had floated into civilised life, where people pass without salutation” (86). The theme, once announced, is taken up with reference to religion - “When people serve the kingdom of

Heaven with a pass-book in their hands, I should always be afraid lest they should carry the same commercial spirit into their dealings with their fellow-men, which would make a sad and sordid business of this life” (94) – and then again to extol the romance of life on the road: “Any stroller must be dear to the right-thinking heart; if it were only as a living protest against offices and the mercantile spirit, and as something to remind us that life is not by necessity the kind of thing we generally make it” (98). The pedlar, and the author's misidentification as one by those he meets, is an image to which Stevenson returns repeatedly in both *An Inland Voyage* (30) and *Travels* (39, 88).

Stevenson's romanticizing of life on the road is mirrored by his disdain for the realities of contemporary life, and the compromises made with the workaday world, with its insistence on focusing one's attention on the business at hand leaving no room for the aimless peregrinations, either of the mind or in person, which he extolled (Arata, 'Idleness' 8). That this conscientious application of reason to one's activity in the name of industry was for him a reduced vision of the world, a falling away from a previous, superior age, is made clear in statements he made to friends. “Small is the word; it is a small age, and I am of it”, he would write in 1894 (qtd. in Bell 19), and having been introduced to tales of the Scottish Covenanters during his youth, he maintained throughout his life a vision of the past as a place where heroic deeds were possible, perhaps leading to his choice of the Cévennes with their Camisards as a historical parallel. Hayward goes so far as to suggest that the region was selected owing to its having remained in a pre-modern state: “in the metaphorical stadial past – an earlier, more “primitive” stage of human existence” (277).

Arata identifies in the late-Victorian period a feeling of loss, noting that “In the last years of the nineteenth century English writing was especially rich in such stories” (*Fictions*, 1), with the decline or 'degeneracy' represented in various forms: “national, biological, aesthetic” (2). A sense of a malaise in society brought by changes wrought by modernity led to concerns about “irreversible social decline” such as those expressed in the essays of Buchanan (17-18). Arata notes that “certain aggressive forms of reading” were used to decipher the hidden presence of degeneracy, and that “the text to be read took many shapes – bodies, cells, cultures, nations, races, historical periods, as

well as works of literature” (19), all subjected to “hermeneutic reading” in the quest to diagnose the 'sickness' from which society was suffering.

We can certainly see in Stevenson a willingness to interpret a landscape or a region as a text to be read, and, in a somewhat 'aggressive' reading, to be critiqued against its own history. In *An Inland Voyage* there is an interesting remark on the relationship between place, names, and history, in the context of consulting maps: “The names of places are singularly inviting; the contour of coasts and rivers is enthralling to the eye, and to hit, in a map, upon some place you have heard of before, makes history a new possession” (87). It is clear from the use of historical sources in *Travels* that Stevenson does not by any means privilege the direct, unmediated experience of a place, represented in his case by the journey he undertook and the thoughts he recorded in *CJ*. Place is used within the work rather as the site of historical event, a history which is now absent from that place. Stevenson reinvests the site with its history, gleaned from texts *other than the place itself*. In so doing, he creates a hierarchy of value where the present place, experienced in a performatively physical manner, is of a second order, the 'real' or 'authentic' place to be found in that location's history, now hidden to the unlearned eye.

In what way does this differ from the *fin-de-siècle* pessimism and the nostalgia of self-identified travellers which Arata and Buzard have identified? An interesting perspective on space, travel, and history is provided by Paul Carter's *The Road to Botany Bay*. This work examines the process through which modern-day Australia was explored, named, and thereby 'discovered' by European settlers. Carter remarks upon the difficulty for contemporary Australians to envisage their country as a site of exploration, rather than of 'discovery': the latter presupposes an Australia that already existed and was waiting for Europeans to arrive and claim it, rather than accepting the contingency of events: “A cloud of historical consciousness must affect our vision, attributing to doubtful contours a permanent significance” (xiii). It is these “doubtful contours” that Carter seeks to reclaim through examining, among other sources, the journals of explorers, a form which “travelled without a map” and in so doing “did not imagine itself at the end of the journey looking

back” (71).

Carter makes an analogue between “the continuity of the journal” and the explorers' traversing of this unknown landscape; “travelling was not primarily a physical activity: it was an epistemological strategy, a mode of knowing” (69). This is contrasted with the modern-day encounter with the same landscape, now named and known, brought under the control of a master narrative, that of the 'discovery' and population of Australia by Australians, a story told not to reveal the historical reality but to substitute for it a theatrical representation of events which both justifies the present and elides the present moment's own historicity. In speaking of these explorers, for Carter, “to picture their activities theatrically, according to the conventions of a unified viewpoint is, by a curious historical trick, to efface the historical nature of the events described at the very moment their importance is apparently, and piously, asserted” (xvi). The place itself, and its role within these events, its historical reality, is subordinated to serving as a setting for the unfolding of an official narrative: “This kind of history, which reduces space to a stage, that pays attention to events unfolding in time alone, might be called imperial history” (xvi).

For Carter one way in which such 'imperial history' is told is through the interpretation of place names by historians, who “translate the name into psychological, biographical or empirically historical terms”, thereby, for Carter, neutralizing the names, divorcing them from their association both with the place and with the historical instance of naming. “The corollary of interpreting place names as disguised historical facts is that, more than ever, the name itself becomes an arbitrary imposition on the place, a linguistic gesture without a local topographical or traditional justification” (13). The narrative thereby asserts its primacy over the events it purports to relate; the incoherent mass of historical data is marshalled and given form to buttress the assumptions underlying the linear progression of the 'history' being told. In this way the actual experience of space by the explorers is neglected.

A further consequence of this way of thinking is the inability to see one's contemporary moment as historical. As all events are interpreted as leading in some way to the present, and the

master narrative of imperial history serves to justify the current state of affairs, this present conjuncture is naturalised, made to seem inevitable, and goes unquestioned. “Even as we look towards the horizon or turn away down fixed routes, our gaze sees through the space of history, as if it was never there. In its place, nostalgia for the past, cloudy time, the repetition of facts. The fact that where we stand and how we go is history: this we do not see” (xiv). A parallel process in the aesthetic field is revealed by Buzard's analysis of Henry James's censure of the decrepit state of contemporary Rome, and James's acceptance of the Romans' moral shortcomings in the name of his own picturesque sensibility: “It is when they resemble their representations that the Romans become fit objects for the tourist's tenderness. James has equated the deeper knowledge and 'love' of Rome that depend on outstaying premature distastes with the capacity to treat everything as aesthetic spectacle” (207).

Stevenson encounters the Gévaudan as a site for the repetition of historical facts, which are elaborated not during his time *in situ*, but later on when he revises the text (the references to wolves all having been added after his return to London). The use of this material serves not merely to add colour to the account of his travel, but to order it: almost in a negative image of Carter's reinsertion of space and exploration (as opposed to place and discovery) into the narrative of the first European travellers to what is now Australia, and the recognition that they were unaware of what that space was or would become, Stevenson rather uses an account of his physical experience of travel to occasion an exploration of texts, which contain the 'truth' of the place he visits, and against which the current inhabitants are to be judged, ironized, and found wanting (or, as we shall see in the case of the Camisards, adequate to those representations). The narrative effect within this interpolation is provided by Stevenson's engagement with the text, not with the contemporary place, whose inhabitants he laughs at for their pretension (24).

A difference to be made between this type of intertextuality in Stevenson and in other travel writers of the late nineteenth century is the particular type of belatedness his text seeks to represent. Buzard indeed notes that writers such as James were highly, and often uncomfortably, conscious of

the weight of written material treating the places which they visited:

By working so consciously in the shadow of previous sovereign texts, nineteenth-century travel-writers had heightened an unwelcome sense of the overall *textuality* of travel – on the way only those features of a culture that had been catalogued, celebrated, indeed *captured* in texts were considered worthy of notice, and thus of ever-repeated textualization. (215)

The crux of the difference lies in this continuity of identity between the historical place, the historical texts, and the contemporary space, the performance of this identity within the text (while signalling the correct sensibility) standing for authenticity, and inscribing the traveller within that tradition. The place itself, while overrun by 'hordes' of 'tourists' lacking the required sensibility, and inhabited by problematically recalcitrant locals who persist in living lives unreconcilable to a picturesque aesthetic, remains accessible as itself, as the place described in the tradition of description. Stevenson is describing a place which *has already been*, and whose essence is now absent or present as an echo. If the main current of late-nineteenth-century travel literature was concerned with the belatedness of the traveller, Stevenson gives us a belatedness of *space*. This is all the more striking given, as we have seen, *Travels* is a text which presents a region assumed to be new to its readers, and which was in fact new to Stevenson as a destination as he traversed it.

6. Travels with Peyrat: The Camisards

This belatedness of space, achieved through intertextuality, is most apparent in the second section of the book, where Stevenson travels through “The Country of the Camisards” and recounts their history. Stevenson had long held an interest in the Camisards, a group of French Protestants who resisted the revocation of religious tolerance in 1685 by Louis XIV, at first passively through continued public observation of their faith, and then in the form of armed rebellion as a response to persecution by the religious authorities and royal troops. In a letter written in Paris from November 1873, he tells a friend of his intention to visit “some good booksellers to inquire about a lot of books on the French Calvinists which are necessary to my little Covenanting game” (Letters 1:

357). This makes clear that he came to an understanding of the Camisards through literary sources before he had set foot in the Cévennes; that he assimilated their story to the tradition of Covenanter tales he was familiar with from childhood; and that he had conceived of their place within a literary project of his own production long before beginning *Travels*.

Stevenson's interest in the Covenanters and his use of their story is analysed by Ken Gelder in a short paper on 'Covenanter Gothic' which sheds some light on the use of history within the writer's oeuvre. Gelder cites Duncan's reading of the Scottish Gothic as a useful perspective: this particular national Gothic literature “plays out a radical disjuncture between modern, metropolitan Scottish predicaments and older, provincial Scottish forms, which it then folds together: reactivating the latter as a kind of uncanny disturbance in the field” (138-139). The cultural other is figured as pre-modern, and then reintegrated as part of “an organic national culture” (Duncan qtd. in Helder 139). Helder's reading of Stevenson's reference to the Covenanters in *Travels* focuses on this absence from the 'modern' or contemporary place as a paradoxical source of legitimation within the work: “The marginalization of Covenanters by history and by modernity is however, precisely what lends the Covenanter Gothic its force. It functions as a kind of distant or remote voice that is nevertheless still able to inhabit the present (addressing those moderns who have forgotten all about it) and pull it back into the past” (143). Part of Gelder's gloss on Stevenson's stories written in Lowland Scots about the Covenanters - “Stevenson has reanimated a moment in Scottish history defined both by its obscurity and typicality” (146) – could also be applied to his mining of Camisard sources for *Travels*.

The one mention of the Camisards in *CJ* occurs when Stevenson meets “a dark, military-looking wayfarer” on the road to Cassagnas (*CJ* 154), a meeting retained in *Travels*. Upon asking the man's religion, he is surprised by the response: “I make no shame of my religion. I am a Catholic” (*Travels* 83). This sign that the man is aware of his status as a minority in the area - “The phrase is a piece of natural statistics” (83) in Stevenson's words – leads the writer to speculations on the enduring nature of faith, and the ineffective nature of intervention from outside to change

confessional identity. “I thought with a smile of Bâville and his dragoons, and how you may ride rough-shod over a religion for a century, and leave it only the more lively for the friction” (83) - the essence of the place living on through the travails wrought by forces from outside, now a subdued note to be read in the text of the place, revealing the drama which once took place there.

On the facing page of *CJ* Stevenson had marked references to Peyret's *Pasteurs du Désert*, as we have seen one of Stevenson's main sources on the Camisards (*CJ* 234). He was also familiar with *Le Théâtre Sacré des Cévennes* by Maximilien Mission, which he read in the Advocates Library of Edinburgh (*CJ* 236). Golding points to Michelet's *Louis Quatorze et la Révocation de l'Edit de Nantes* as a possible source of Stevenson's interest in the Camisards (*CJ* 204), as in a letter of September 1873 he urges Frances Sitwell to read this work (*Letters* 1:318). This extensive reading in the history of the region somewhat complicates the notion of Stevenson as a hero of the beaten track: undoubtedly, he was visiting a remote region, unfrequented by tourists, and in a quixotic fashion which occasioned him no small amount of discomfort, but he did not encounter the place from a position of ignorance, and his work shows a clear concern to fashion a description of the Cévennes consistent with the material he had collected before setting out.

Stevenson's method is clear in 'The Heart of the Country', the section which details his arrival at Cassagnas (*CJ* 156-164, *Travels* 84-90). A comparison of the journal notes and interpolated sections shows a contrast between the quotidian experience recorded by Stevenson during his trip, noticing his surroundings and speaking with locals, and the material from historical sources added later which not only frames these experiences but also serves to interpret them as signifiers of this past. In *Travels* the section opens with material added to the journal, which initially underlines the remoteness of this place: “The road along the Mimette is yet new, nor have the mountaineers recovered their surprise when the first cart arrived at Cassagnas” (84). This is then juxtaposed with a deeper, historical significance: “But though it lay thus apart from the current of men's business, this hamlet had already made a figure in the history of France” (84). This turn, reminiscent of the contrast between the now peaceful hills and the Beast-inhabited forests which

once covered them, is the signature of Stevenson's depiction of place in *Travels.*, a place whose uneventful tranquillity belies its 'authentic' historical identity, which is revealed by the traveller's insight.

What was the figure made by this place? “Hard by, in the caverns of the mountain, was one of the five arsenals of the Camisards” (84); or, as Peyrat has it, “Chaque chef avait dans son canton, son grenier, son magasin, son arsenal ... Salomon, à Cassagnas” (337). Here we see how Stevenson transposes information directly from Peyrat to give the landscape described a narrative element which would otherwise be missing. He continues in the same vein when describing the Camisard Salomon in further detail: “He was a prophet, a great reader of the heart, who admitted people to the sacrament or refused them by 'intensively viewing every man' between the eyes; and had the most of the Scriptures off by rote” (85). The description of Salomon as a prophet is taken from Peyrat (428, 496), as is his method of choosing those who would receive the sacrament (429). This latter is rendered in a more succinct fashion in Stevenson's retelling, befitting its place in a list of attributes which made Salomon such an impressive figure, as opposed to its anecdotal role in Peyrat. This listing in order to create the sense of a larger-than-life figure is again reminiscent of Stevenson's description of the Beast. There is a concern to show that the past was more heroic, that events took on a greater scale and significance than the rather more mundane activity which Stevenson is witness to.

The text relates this now absent heroism to the landscape, again using Peyrat as source material: “It is only strange that they were not surprised more often and more effectually; for this legion of Cassagnas was truly patriarchal in its theory of war, and camped without sentries, leaving that duty to the angels of the God for whom they fought” (85). Stevenson makes use of this detail from Peyrat (497) in creative fashion. Peyrat suggests that this behaviour was characteristic specifically of the Camisards from the uplands, “plus pieux et plus rustiques que ceux de la plaine” (“more pious and more rustic than those from the plain”, my trans. 497). Stevenson's paraphrase of this, which, unlike Peyrat's comment which introduces the detail, occurs immediately afterwards,

reads “This is a token, not only of their faith, but of the trackless country where they harboured” (*Travels* 85). He eliminates the comparison with other Camisards, which complicates their history, and makes the anecdote relate to the landscape through which he is travelling, again referring to a time when it was less 'civilised'.

The interpolation continues with an association of this hardiness with the unchanging faith of the inhabitants, before the text returns to that of *CJ*, the writer noting that there is only one family in the village which “is not Protestant, but neither is it Catholic” (*Travels* 85). The villagers' disapproval of this “Catholic *curé* in revolt” (85) becomes, by way of the preceding interpolation of Stevenson's research, a confirmation of their identity with their forebears' steadfast adherence to their faith: “'It is a bad idea for a man,' said one, 'to go back from his engagements’” (85). The opinion of this man becomes a synecdoche for the Camisard inheritance and a symptom of the remote territory's influence on its people's character. The understatement with which it is expressed also underlines the distance between the drama of Camisard times and the ordinariness of rural life now, this reinforced by Stevenson's following the villager's remark with his own opinion on the contemporary inhabitants of the village, who “seemed intelligent after a countrified fashion, and were all plain and dignified in manner” (86). This and the respect which he received for his “acquaintance with history” are part of a section added after his travels, showing a concern to create a consistent vision of the locality's relationship to its history.

As the revised text continues, Stevenson draws a parallel between the inhabitants of this place and the highlanders in Scotland. Observing that the locals in Cassagnas have a large-hearted acceptance of difference, and criticize only the changing of opinions in religious matters, Stevenson links their tolerance to the region's history: “perhaps the same great-heartedness that upheld them to resist, now enables them to differ in a kind spirit” (86). This happy inheritance he compares to the situation in Scotland: “The true work of Bruce and Wallace was the union of the nations; not that they should stand apart a while longer, skirmishing upon their borders, but that, when the time came, they might unite with self-respect” (86). Stevenson both understands his own encounter with

the place through the lens of his knowledge of its history, and also figures the present as the necessary result of the events which this place has 'staged'.

Within this section the alternation of material drawn directly from *CJ* and that added later, most often consisting of detail from Peyrat or other historical sources, or an interpretation of Stevenson's experiences as demonstrating the influence of history upon the area, continues as he leaves Cassagnas and takes “a ragged path southward up a hillside covered with loose stones and tufts of heather” (87). The description of his ascent is little changed from *CJ*. Reaching another viewpoint - “before me was the basin of the Rhone” (87) – the text in *CJ* focuses on the absence of human activity, and foregrounds the sublime beauty of the landscape: “it was perhaps the wildest view of my journey; peak upon peak, chain upon chain of hills ran surging southward, channelled and guttered by winter streams, feathered from head to foot with chestnuts and here and there breaking out into a coronal of cliffs” (*CJ* 161). With slight alterations this is reproduced in *Travels* (87), but between the ascent and the rhapsodic lyricism of Stevenson's reaction to place is added a lengthy interpolation which adds historical depth to the scene, and relegates the landscape *qua* landscape to a secondary position, as the stage for historical action: “Hence, as from the Lozère, you can see in clear weather the shining of the Gulf of Lyons; and perhaps from here the soldiers of Salomon may have watched for the topsails of Sir Cloudesley Shovel, and the long-promised aid from England” (*Travels* 87). History intrudes upon Stevenson's solitude as unfulfilled destiny, and he leaves the reader in no doubt as to the place's true, deeper significance: “You may take this ridge as lying in the heart of the country of the Camisards: four of the five legions camped all round it and almost within view” (87). Once again, the peaceable state of affairs and absence of antagonism is taken by Stevenson as a cue to reintroduce dramatic interest to the scenery through reference to his research. Indeed, he directly contrasts the devastation occasioned by historical passions and the calm of the contemporary scene:

... and when Julien had finished his famous work, the devastation of the High Cévennes, which lasted all through October and November, 1703, and during which four hundred and

sixty villages and hamlets were, with fire and pickaxe, utterly subverted, a man standing on this eminence would have looked forth upon a silent smokeless, and dispeopled land. Time and man's activity have now repaired these ruins; Cassagnas is once more roofed and sending up domestic smoke; and in the chestnut gardens, in low and leafy corners, many a prosperous farmer returns, when the day's work is done, to his children and bright hearth”

All of this was added subsequent to Stevenson's travel, showing the critical importance of his use of texts on the area to his presentation of, as Blanton would have it, his “engagement between self and world” (xi). Stevenson's book undoubtedly reports an instance of leaving 'the beaten track', and it is not my purpose to deny this aspect of the work. Rather, we must recognise the writerly way in which that experience is depicted, and indeed mediated, and the importance of intertextual interpolation to Stevenson's representation of 'place'.

Continuing towards Alais, Stevenson encounters “A very old shepherd, hobbling on a pair of sticks” (88) and recounts this man's query as to what he was selling, likening Stevenson to a pedlar. These details are present in *CJ* (162) but for the final version Stevenson adds between the first encounter and the shepherd's question some detail from his reading: “Not far off upon my right was the famous Plan de Font Morte, where Poul with his Armenian sabre slashed down the Camisards of Séguier” (88). The story, recounted in Peyrat (304), is used to provide interest to the man, with whom Stevenson has but a brief interaction: “This, methought, might be some Rip van Winkle of the war, who had lost his comrades, fleeing before Poul, and wandered ever since upon the mountains. It might be news to him that Cavalier had surrendered, or Roland had fallen fighting with his back against an olive” (88). As with the landscape shorn of trees but reanimated with the figure of the Beast, here a brief encounter absent of incident is used by Stevenson to insert information about the past, which relates it to a present which here comically intrudes, the old shepherd's question about Stevenson's supposed wares creating another effect of contrast within the narrative. This repeated sense of expansion, created through the listing of heroic deeds or the description of fantastic events in a now-disappeared past, comes to depend upon the ordinariness of

those it is attached to for both its signifying power and the quasi-narrative effect it achieves as that which Stevenson encounters changes shape, achieves a semi-mythical prominence, then shrinks again to fit the contemporary landscape which in reality he traverses.

That Stevenson would filter his encounter with the Cévennes through the prism of his reading was apparent before he even set off on his travels; indeed, it appears to have formed his conception of the journey. In a letter written to his mother from France in August 1878 he announces that “I am reading up the Camisards and shall go a walk in the scene of their wars, the Hautes Cevennes” (*Letters* 2:263). It is clear then that Stevenson went looking for the 'scene' or stage of historical events with which he was already familiar, the locale's worthiness then assessed as to how it conformed or contrasted with his reading. From the outset to the destination: Stevenson's penultimate chapter, entitled 'The Last Day', consists entirely of material absent from *CJ*, including a description of the flight of the *curé* (priest) Louvrelenil, which is sourced from Peyrat (305). The uneventfulness of the current age is contrasted with the contestation of bygone times: “That these continual stirrs were once busy in St Germain de Calberte, the imagination with difficulty receives; all is now so quiet, the pulse of human life beats so low and still in this hamlet of the mountains” (91). The present place, even Stevenson's first journey through it, is reflexively referred to the stratified history legible to the writer: “My passage was the first event, you would have fancied, since the Camisards” (91).

This concern to shape the text, and the place it describes, to the contours of the history it is answerable to, is apparent in many details of Stevenson's revisions. In the section 'Camping in the Valley of the Tarn', Stevenson relates his efforts to find a suitable place to sleep for the night, and settles upon “a little plateau large enough to hold my sack” (72) where he unloads his belongings before tying Modestine to a nearby chestnut tree. Observing that “The position was unpleasantly exposed” (72), leaving him prey to the curiosity of passers-by, Stevenson, in the final version used in *Travels*, notes that “One or two carts went by upon the road; and as long as daylight lasted I

concealed myself, for all the world like a hunted Camisard, behind my fortification of vast chestnut trunk; for I was passionately afraid of discovery and the visit of jocular persons in the night” (72). In *CJ*, the detail on the volume of traffic is both more precise and suggests (through its alteration) Stevenson's concern to depict the contemporary Cévennes as not overly troubled by human activity: “As long as daylight lasted, and carts kept going below, to the number of four in all...” (*CJ* 136). The reference to “a hunted Camisard” is also absent from *CJ*, where he instead likens himself to “a hunted criminal” (*CJ* 136). Small changes and additions to the text add patterns which create a sense of place for the reader that is not so much a recording of Stevenson's direct experience than a negotiation with his idea of what that place *means*.

Stevenson does get to sleep on his little plateau, and this occasions another interpolation, absent from *CJ*, which relates an anecdote again seemingly drawn from Peyrat (461-462). Noting that “the Camisards had a remarkable confidence in God” (72), Stevenson tells us that

... a tale comes back into my memory of how the Count of Gévaudan, riding with a party of dragoons and a notary at his saddle-bow to enforce the oath of fidelity in all the country hamlets, entered a valley in the woods, and found Cavalier and his men at dinner, gaily seated on the grass, and their hats crowned with box-tree garlands, while fifteen women washed linen in the stream. (72-73)

The addition of this material, after the writing of the journal, and prefaced with the lapidary, or simply disingenuous, “a tale comes back into my memory”, shows again how Stevenson's notion of space within the Cévennes is as a stage for these events, and also that he is concerned to present the material as emerging naturally from his journey. The journal form used in *Travels* also lends a legitimacy to his observations, and suggests that the description of his movement through the area and his recounting of historical facts have a contemporaneity that is contradicted by examination of his working method. Kinsley, writing on the epistolary and journal forms commonly used within travel writing, observes that “Framing the experiences of travel within the daily routines of correspondence and epistolary exchange embeds its structures within the realm of the quotidian, and

arguably domesticates discourses that are otherwise public and professional. The same can be said of the journal or diary” (414). The attachment of intertextual interpolations to sites which Stevenson had visited during his journey suggests that they are integral to the experience of the place, their recollection springing organically from the hardships encountered there. This is true even if the place Stevenson is describing does not coincide with the site of the historical event, as is the case here, and also extending to the inclusion of historically inaccurate material, the title of 'Count of Gévaudan' having belonged to a figure uninvolved in military action (note in *CJ*, 228).

A concern is shown by Stevenson, through his revisions, to blur the distinction between the journal record and his later insertions of historical material, and to give the text a coherence belied by its fabrication. A passage present in *CJ* - “I had made a very late start, in honour as usual of this disgusting journal” (150) – is absent from *Travels*, the sentiment glossed as “we left Florac late in the afternoon, a tired donkey and tired donkey-driver” (81). This refocuses the text on the 'beaten track' theme, suppressing the reference to the making of the journal which could problematise the status of the text itself in the mind of the reader. Another small textual revision occurs when, having woken on the aforementioned small plateau, Stevenson meets “a man and a boy” who have arrived on the hillside to prune the chestnut trees. Their questions as to his purpose there answered, in *CJ* the man responds, “without the slightest preparation, 'All right'” (140), which in *Travels* is retranslated (we can assume) to “*C'est bien*”, a change which, while without doubt truer to what the man in fact would have said, indicates the writer's consciousness of his craft shaping the reader's response to the depiction of place.

7. Comparisons: Contemporary and Postmodern Travel Texts

A profitable examination can be made of the use of space, belated in *Travels*, in both contemporary travel texts and so-called 'postmodern' travel writing. It will be clear that Stevenson's depiction of space through intertextuality has parallels in a technical sense with these postmodern texts. I do not by stating this wish to claim that Stevenson is a 'postmodern' writer, and it is

important to note the ways in which his reasons for using intertextuality in this way differ from that of such writers. A useful distinction can be made between the way in which a travel text 'traverses' other texts, and the ends to which this interpolation of source material is put. As described in the first section of this paper, the late-nineteenth-century travel book is accepted to be a more consciously 'literary' text than its forebears. Thompson states that

Many of these literary travelogues were intended to be read as much for the quality of the writing they contained, and for the insights they offered into the idiosyncratic personalities of their authors, as for the useful information they contained about the places being described. Or alternatively, they claimed to capture impressionistically or poetically the 'spirit' of a place or culture, rather than offer a comprehensive, factual account of it.

(Travel Writing 55)

A writer who exemplifies these tendencies was the American Mark Twain, whose *Innocents Abroad* (1869) Thompson enrols alongside works by Dickens and Stendhal as examples of the trend. His *A Tramp Abroad* was a return, at the height of his career, to the travel genre, and was published in 1880, thus roughly contemporaneous to *Travels*.

Twain's irreverent style foregrounds the comic aspects of his travels, and his wry observations on the business of tourism and the performance of 'travelling' show a detachment from the discourse which Buzard sees many writers of the nineteenth century as participating in. David Seed, analyzing Twain's response to place in *The Innocents Abroad*, sees a scepticism as to the response demanded by such a discourse (in this case the sublimity evoked by a guidebook), and a prioritization of the writer's immediate response. Twain rejects the guidebook's lyrical description of the rather ordinary landscape before him, and in so doing draws attention to his own sensibility: "Twain simply appeals to empirical observation in order to separate the discourse from its unattractive referents, producing comic bathos as a result" (3).

For all his weary, and highly amusing, cynicism, Twain is perfectly able to enjoy a destination for what it is, and more specifically for what it is *now*. In Heidelberg he remarks that "I

have never enjoyed a view which had such a serene and satisfying charm about it as this one gives” (19), and this view, rather than spoiled by the presence of modern man's intervention, is given a different quality at night by the presence of railway tracks: “One thinks Heidelberg by day – with its surroundings – is the last possibility of the beautiful; but when he sees Heidelberg by night, a fallen Milky Way, with that glittering railway constellation pinned to the border, he requires time to consider upon the verdict” (20). His subsequent trip to the Black Forest may be “customary” (134) but is enjoyed nonetheless, and the view of Mont Blanc is described with Romantic lyricism, the light upon the Alps in particular: “Its radiance was strong and clear, but at the same time it was singularly soft, and spiritual, and benignant” (305). What is to be enjoyed from the past of these places is visible in the present to Twain – for example Heidelberg Castle – and, at least in the case of the paltry rations available in Europe from his American perspective, there are some places which have not modernized enough (348-353).

Twain's digressions are a feature of his travel writing; however, unlike Stevenson, they are often digressions which deal with places other than the ones visited on his journey. A visit to the woods where Twain notices some birds takes the text to California, and a chapter about “Baker's Blue-Jay Yarn” (23), and another whole chapter is dedicated to the notion of digression and its affinity with walking (143-149). This interpolation of material gives us a sense of the writer's personality, his sense of humour, and perhaps the need to extend the narrative, but it does not serve as a commentary on the places visited. Where Stevenson seizes the opportunity to tell us what this place really is by way of an anecdote gleaned from Peyrat, Twain more light-heartedly tells us something amusing from another place entirely. He even pokes fun at the business of getting off 'the beaten track'; prospecting a journey along the Neckar, the “ruined castles” along the way are all the more appealing as “they had never been in print. There was nothing in the books about that lovely region; it had been neglected by the tourist, it was virgin soil for the literary pioneer” (64-65). Twain's performance of a 'transparent' sensibility allows for a more thoroughgoing deconstruction of how a travel text is put together. It also renders his text somewhat 'flat' – wherever we go, we are

with Twain, ironically to a degree that it starts to matter little where precisely he is.

Twain's lengthiest interpolation of material about a place visited occurs with 'Mr. Whympers Narrative', an account of an ascent of the Matterhorn which ended in tragedy with the deaths of several of the mountaineers involved (292-296). The events having taken place about fifteen years before Twain's trip, the use of this material reinforces the interest of the place as it is now, rather than harking back to a time now hidden from view and discernible only to the trained eye. Indeed, the story is present through a physical referent in the place itself: "Their graves are beside the little church in Zermatt" (296). The material is also transparently presented as the work of another, narrated in the first person and set off from the regular text, introduced and then commented upon by Twain, drawing attention to the text's construction.

Chatwin, as we have seen, is for travel critics a flagbearer for the postmodern turn. Pfister interrogates to what extent Chatwin is postmodern, and locates this sensibility in his use of textual material within the travelogue. For Pfister, "Chatwin's narrative presents itself as a compilation, an anthology, of quotations more or less directly related to Patagonia" (258). Acknowledging that travel writing has always made use of literary and other written sources for information on places described, he nevertheless asserts that

In Chatwin's *In Patagonia* the intertextuality is, however, of a different kind, and it is through this difference that it contributes to the postmodernization of the travelogue ... The difference is, above all, a functional one: these "pretexts" do not just enrich Chatwin's perceptions of Patagonia with further information, they are themselves part of the object perceived. (259)

One might just as easily describe Stevenson's "pretexts", in particular those on the Camisards, as operating in the same way within his text. For Chatwin and Stevenson alike, the travel described is a listing of places which function as nodes to which texts encountered outside of the voyage itself can be attached. In both cases these "pretexts", as Pfister describes them, expand within the travelogue to compete with the details of the author's own journey for precedence, or even relegate

them to a secondary role; in some sense both writers' movement within their chosen regions is the justification for a wider textual engagement with its history, the trip undertaken becoming a pretext (in the more common sense of the word) for relaying this information.

An excellent example of this approach begins in Chatwin's book with a visit to "Cholila, a settlement close to the Chilean frontier" (52). Chatwin describes a "log cabin" there, owned by "a Chilean Indian woman called Sepulveda" (53). As is the case in Stevenson, the eventual revelation of a grander history is given weight by attention to quotidian detail in the present which sets up the contrast: "The draught blew through the chinks where the mortar had fallen out"; "She had pasted newspapers over the cracks, but you could still see scraps of the old flowered wallpaper"; "She was short and stout and had a bad time with her husband and the rotten cabin" (53). In the following chapter we are told that "The builder of the cabin was a sandy-haired and rather thick-set American, no longer young in 1902" (55), maintaining the mood of entropy established in the initial description. A letter from this American is reproduced, with details of agricultural prospects in the region, before we are informed, at the chapter's close, that "The writer was Robert Leroy Parker, better known as Butch Cassidy, at that time heading the Pinkerton Agency's list of most wanted criminals" (57). Thus begins a long interpolation which recounts the exploits of 'The Wild Bunch' and guides Chatwin as he tries to follow in their Patagonian footsteps. The regularity with which both Chatwin and Stevenson suddenly pull back from quotidian or even squalid detail to an invocation of greater drama lying hidden within the text of the place makes clear not just the contrast shown, but the importance of such detail to this type of writing. The present must in some way be ordinary, perform its ordinariness, to cast into greater relief the heroic past. Carter, as we have seen, points to our ignorance of "the fact that where we stand and how we go is history" (xiv), a willed blindness that charges the events and facts of 'imperial history' with greater importance, and makes a static stage of the places associated with these facts.

A further similarity between Chatwin's and Stevenson's approaches is in their openness to using what Blanton, quoting James Clifford, describes as "inventions" (95), in so doing, as he says

“becoming what Laurence Sterne called “Lying Travelers”” (95). Chatwin revels in competing versions of what might be “the truth”; establishing the prosaic origin of the “brontosaurus skin” that serves as a justification for his wanderings in Patagonia, he notes “This version was less romantic but had the merit of being true” (3). Blanton sees in this Chatwin’s suspension of judgement on which version is superior, and goes on to note Chatwin’s acquisitiveness in collecting different versions of the Butch Cassidy story from people he meets in Patagonia. The veracity of these accounts is less important than their serving his purpose of shaping a text about Patagonia. Stevenson, too, prioritizes literary effect over ‘authenticity’ when he invents epigraphs for chapters, attributing the resulting pastiches to anonymous tradition – “Old Play” (53) – or a fabricated Scottish poet, W.P. Bannatyne (61).

There is, however, a crucial difference between Stevenson's portrayal of 'belated space' and Chatwin's. Pfister examines to what end Chatwin engages so fully with texts and not places:

In Patagonia is at least as much about the fantasies about Patagonia as it is about Patagonia itself. Or, to go one step further, it claims and demonstrates that Patagonia as a *Ding an sich* does not exist. The wide, empty spaces of Chatwin's Patagonia are not a *tabula rasa*, but written over with layers and layers of text, inscribed with the traces of the most diverse cultures. (259)

One cannot realistically claim that Stevenson held a similar purpose. Indeed, his writing almost wills into being a Cévennes that existed, for him at least, beyond the limitations of a brief trip, or the constraints of what one might encounter in the place now called the Cévennes. The everyday reality that he saw there may not have coincided with this place of the mind; no matter, for it could be brought into dialogue with what *he knew* the place was, and found either wanting in the performance of itself, or carrying echoes of this more intense version of itself. Stevenson's attitude towards this idealised or heroic past and its relation to the present, our “shabby civilisation” as he would later call it (Bell 246), can be inscribed within the tradition of late Victorian “fictions of loss” that Arata diagnoses as a strand within the era's literary work.

8. Conclusion

Stevenson's work does belong within a tradition of 'off the beaten track' narratives, and it has not been my purpose to dispute this. Rather, I have shown that this characterization is complicated by his extensive use of intertextuality, and that this aspect of the work foreshadows similar intertextuality in so-called postmodern texts. That his 'encounter with the world' is so mediated by 'pretexts' is all the more interesting given his travelogue's appeal to authenticity through the choice of a remote, untouristic area, and the way in which he travels, accompanied by his donkey, often sleeping rough under the stars. A close reading of the text in the context of Stevenson's sources reminds us of the need to examine closely how accounts of travel are constructed, and not to blindly accept an identification between the first-person voice of the narrator and the direct experience of the writer.

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