

European Stevenson

European Stevenson

Edited by

Richard Ambrosini and Richard Dury

CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS

P U B L I S H I N G

European Stevenson, Edited by Richard Ambrosini and Richard Dury

This book first published 2009

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2009 by Richard Ambrosini and Richard Dury and contributors

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-4438-1436-9, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-1436-2

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Illustrations	ix
List of Abbreviations	xi
Introduction: Stevenson and Europe.....	1
Richard Ambrosini and Richard Dury	

Part I: European Experiences

Chapter One.....	19
Stevenson and the European South	
Roslyn Jolly	
Chapter Two.....	37
“Of some use to me afterwards”: Stevenson’s Pivotal Experience	
in Mentone	
Robert-Louis Abrahamson	
Chapter Three	53
Stevenson and the Davos Winter Landscape	
Ann C. Colley	

Part II: French travel narratives

Chapter Four.....	73
The Time of His Time: <i>Travels with a Donkey</i> and <i>An Inland Voyage</i>	
Laurence Davies	
Chapter Five	91
I Have a Little Shadow: Travellers after Stevenson in the Cévennes	
Lesley Graham	

Chapter Six	109
Donkeys, Englishmen, and Other Animals: The Precarious Distinctions of Victorian Interspecies Morality	
Morgan Holmes	

Part III: European Influences and Reception

Chapter Seven.....	127
The Miracle: Robert Louis Stevenson in the History of European Literature	
Richard Ambrosini	
Chapter Eight.....	147
Proust and Stevenson: Natives of an Unknown Country	
Alan Sandison	
Chapter Nine.....	171
The Strange Cases of Doctors Haeckel and Jekels: Fake Onomastic European Associations as Interpretation	
Jean-Pierre Naugrette	
Chapter Ten	185
Cocteau and Stevenson	
Vincent Giroud	
Chapter Eleven	199
One of Stevenson's Most Important French Encounters:	
Michel de Montaigne	
Cinzia Giglioni	
Chapter Twelve	211
Stevenson, Calvino and All the Devils in Italy	
Michela Vanon Alliata	

Part IV: European translation

Chapter Thirteen.....	227
A Yiddish <i>Treasure Island</i> Translation and its Cultural Background	
Joachim Hemmerle	

Chapter Fourteen	241
Lost and Found in Translation and Adaptation: Walerian Borowczyk and <i>Docteur Jekyll et les Femmes</i> (1981) Guy Barefoot	
Chapter Fifteen	253
Twopence Coloured: The Translation of <i>Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde</i> into Comic-book Text Sara Rizzo	
Contributors	273
Index	277

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- 15-1: Playbill for Mamoulian's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1931)..... 255
© Paramount Pictures
- 15-2: Cover of Classic Comics 13, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1943)..... 256
© 2009 First Classics Inc. All Rights Reserved. By permission
of Jack Lake Productions Inc.
- 15-3: Dino Battaglia, *Lo strano caso del dottor Jekyll e del signor Hyde*
(1974), *Linus* 196 (Jan. 1974), p. 79..... 259
© Eredi Battaglia
- 15-4: Dino Battaglia, *Lo strano caso* (1974), panel on p. 82..... 260
© Eredi Battaglia
- 15-5: Tiziano Sclavi and Corrado Roi, *Dylan Dog* 33, *Jekyll!* (1989),
panels from p. 19 262
© 1989 Sergio Bonelli Editore.
- 15-6: Tiziano Sclavi and Corrado Roi, *Dylan Dog* 33, *Jekyll!* (1989),
pp. 74-75..... 263
© 1989 Sergio Bonelli Editore
- 15-7: Lorenzo Mattotti, *Jekyll & Hyde* (2002), p. 11 265
© 2002 Casterman and Giulio Einaudi Editore
- 15-8: Lorenzo Mattotti, *Jekyll & Hyde* (2002), p. 16 266
© 2002 Casterman and Giulio Einaudi Editore
- 15-9: Lorenzo Mattotti, *Jekyll & Hyde* (2002), p. 63 268
© 2002 Casterman and Giulio Einaudi Editore

ABBREVIATIONS

Manhattan Edition

Robert Louis Stevenson. 1906. *The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson*.
Manhattan Edition. 10 vols. New York: Bigelow, Smith & Co.

Skerryvore Edition

Robert Louis Stevenson. 1924. *The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson*.
Skerryvore Edition. 30 vols. London: Heinemann/Chatto & Windus/
Cassell/Longmans.

Swanston Edition

Robert Louis Stevenson. 1911-1912. *The Works of Robert Louis
Stevenson*. Swanston Edition. 25 vols. London: Chatto & Windus.

Thistle Edition

Robert Louis Stevenson. 1924. *The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson*.
[Thistle Edition]. 25 vols. New York: Scribner's.

Tusitala Edition

Robert Louis Stevenson. 1923-24. *The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson*.
Tusitala Edition. 35 vols. London: Heinemann.

Vailima Edition (1912)

Robert Louis Stevenson. 1912. *The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson*.
Vailima Edition. 15 vols. New York: P. F. Collier & Son.

Vailima Edition (1922-23)

Robert Louis Stevenson. 1922-23. *The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson*.
[Second] Vailima Edition. 26 vols. New York and London: Scribner's
and Heinemann

Ltrs

The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson. 1994-95. Ed. B. A. Booth and E.
Mehew. 8 vols. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Swearingen

Roger G. Swearingen. 1980. *The Prose Writings of Robert Louis
Stevenson: A Guide*. Hamden and London: Archon Books and
Macmillan.

INTRODUCTION

STEVENSON AND EUROPE

RICHARD AMBROSINI AND RICHARD DURY

Edinburgh, late 1860s. Two young gentlemen, two cousins, their heads buzzing with ideas and artistic ambitions (one dreaming of becoming a painter, the other a writer), hang over North Bridge “watching the trains start southward and longing to start too”,¹ the Walter Scott Monument a short way behind them, but their eyes fixed on the tracks leading South—not just to London, but also, and especially, to Paris.

For any young and adventurous Edinburgh-born writer, that impressive Monument—an enormous Gothic shrine covering the seated writer with his characters in niches like saints, perhaps still the largest free-standing architectural monument to a writer in the world, and certainly so in Stevenson’s day—must have been a continual and daunting reminder of literature as a national institution, literally set in stone. It dominated a central strip and linked, with a “barbaric display of contrasts to the eye” (Stevenson 1878: 138), not just the New and Old Towns of Edinburgh, but also a host of oppositions, such as Present and Past, Restraint and Liberty, Home and Adventure. The monument stood close by another celebration of the work of Sir Walter Scott, that Waverley Station which the two youths associated with freedom. This urban scene is a forest of symbols in which we can distinguish the elements that went into making the self-styled reincarnation of Robert Fergusson² into a European writer; and it also provides us with the spatial coordinates in which we can set the ideas and experiences that shaped Stevenson’s entire literary career.

Stevenson’s writings in the 1870s constitute a flight from that monumental shadow, and in this sense it is important to understand that his exploration of a variety of essayistic forms and his emphatic refusal to write novels do not reflect simply a choice among literary genres. Rather, his subjects and chosen forms appear to have been as many testing grounds for using words as if they were paint strokes, the aesthetic project around which he constructed for himself an artistic identity unlike that of

any contemporary Scottish or British writer.³ His travels southward were not only towards freedom—the exhilarating outward bound experience of students then and since—but were also his way of participating in an international exchange of ideas on art to which he was uniquely open among his peers in the English-speaking world. Only by physically going to France (as he was to recall in a 1890 letter from Samoa to his French translator Marcel Schwob) could he assimilate the atmosphere of art and become himself an artist:

I have lived much of my time in France, and loved your country, and many of its people, and all the time was learning that which your country has to teach—breathing in rather that atmosphere of art which can only there be breathed. (*Ltrs* 6: 401)

This tribute might stimulate thoughts linked to variations on *ah! le bonheur*: the artists’ colony in the forest of Fontainebleau, the smoky garret in the Latin Quarter: “the sugar-candy pastorals of Murger” (Stevenson 1877: 126), the stereotypical bohemian dream-world, a game into which Stevenson undoubtedly playfully entered and which he later explodes in *The Wrecker* (1892). To understand the true significance of this *Drang nach Süden*, however, one must pause a minute longer over the scene on North Bridge. Numerous letters to his cousin, Robert Alan Mowbray Stevenson (“Bob”), justify our imagining that their longing for that trip South was not simply connected with pleasures more stimulating than regular Edinburgh office hours, morning calls and formal dinners at home to which parents invited suitable young people.

In Stevenson’s case the European dimension, in large part, coincided with an exposure to the culture of Scotland’s Auld Allie, France, which for a period was very much a second home for him. His six months in Mentone from November 1873 (narrated in Robert-Louis Abrahamson’s chapter below) was a turning point, not only as the real start of Stevenson’s publishing career but also as the beginning of his period of frequent visits to France: from the spring of 1874 (on his way back from Mentone) to the autumn of 1878 (at the end of his “travels with a donkey”), he spent a third of each year in Paris and the Fontainebleau area.

This immersion in French life in the period 1874 to 1878 had manifold effects: one of the most obvious being the choice of France as a setting for his early short stories: “A Lodging for the Night” (1877), “The Sire de Malétroit’s Door” and “Providence and the Guitar” (1878), to be followed by the later “The Treasure of Franchard” (1883), the first two developing from his study of fifteenth-century French history, the latter two containing characters and landscapes inspired by his bohemian days

around Fontainebleau, particularly Grez. Early essays—“Ordered South” (1874), “Charles of Orleans” (1876), “François Villon” (1877)—and the two French travel works, *An Inland Voyage* (1878) and *Travels with a Donkey* (1879), confirm how his early career (before the watershed first journey to the USA in late 1879), was characterised by this contact with French culture. Of course, this experience also interacted with cultural stereotypes and a personal world-view, as Roslyn Jolly reminds us in her chapter on Stevenson’s representation of the European South and its meanings in his works.

However, for the two cousins, the daydream of getting to France, the home of artistic innovation and discussion, as they watched the trains starting south, was also associated first of all with their attempt to outline a shared poetics in which painterly and narrative techniques were combined.

The ideas he had elaborated during his exchanges with Bob allowed Stevenson to explain his artistic ambitions to the man who was to become his mentor, Sidney Colvin, the best suited person in England to tutor him in his parallel concern for painting and words. Up to that summer of 1873 when he met Colvin, the only audience he had for his ideas was Bob, an art student. Suddenly, he had available one of the best known art critics of his time, Slade Professor of Fine Art at Cambridge, friend of John Ruskin, Sir Edward Burne-Jones, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Colvin was also a fine literary critic, best known today for having launched the twentieth-century re-consideration of John Keats, in a study that remained the standard work on this poet for much of the twentieth century.⁴ No one else in Great Britain could have been in a better position to understand the poetics of Stevenson’s apprenticeship, and encourage him towards further achievements.

It was with Colvin, of course, that he spent an important part of his time in Mentone, and a sense of their “endless talk” in those weeks (Colvin 1921: 112) can be gleaned from a letter the young writer sent to the professor while Colvin was in Paris in January, in which he launches straight into his ideas on writing (“my convention”) which he sees as connected to “the realistic conventions of the age”. His idea is “to put in [a story] nothing that would not naturally have been noted and remembered”. And to illustrate this he recalls a talk with Bob about how the Quadrangle of the University of Edinburgh could be represented in different arts. For literature he basically rejects the set-piece static description of the Quadrangle that one might find in Scott, Balzac or Dickens in favour of focussing on narrative and mentioning only those elements of the surroundings that come into the story. “That is the best example of my theory that I can give”, he declares at the end of the letter, and adds: “it

seems rather like sending coals to Newcastle, to write a lecture to a subsidised Professor” (*Ltrs* 1: 476-7).⁵

“Breathing in that atmosphere of art” in France in the 1870s meant having a chance to join the critical conversation on *japonisme*, Impressionism, artistic techniques and French writers, both new and old.

The enthusiasm for the Japanese aesthetic grew especially in France in the 1860s and 70s and had a sweeping influence on French artists, including the Impressionists. Colvin sent Stevenson two sets of Japanese prints for possible purchase in October 1874 (*Ltrs* 2: 69). His immediate enthusiasm for them is recorded in a letter to Bob Stevenson in the same month (*Ltrs* 2: 64-5), in which he praises their attention to formal qualities (the way they tell a story “not for the story’s sake but so as to produce always a magnificent decorative design”), their non-realistic representation (“the pattern, the splendid hurly-burly of bright colours and strange forms”) that is yet close to “imaginative truth”. Later, he used his first big earnings, for *Treasure Island* in 1883, to buy “a complete Hokusai”—volumes of Hokusai’s prints (now in the Silverado Museum in California) (*Ltrs* 4: 122). He then promised Henley to write an article on the artist, which however did not materialise (*Ltrs* 4: 130, 132). The influence of Japanese prints and Impressionism is suggested by Sidney Colvin’s comment (in his review of *Inland Voyage*) that Stevenson’s descriptions “are not in the nature of an inventory of facts: it is landscape-writing like the landscape-painting of the Japanese, setting down this or that point that happens to have made itself vividly felt, and leaving the rest” (Maixner 1981: 50), a comment which also suggests an affinity with Impressionism.

Stevenson’s knowledge and appreciation of Impressionism is largely reconstructed from clues. The first Impressionist Exhibition opened on 15 April 1874 and Stevenson was then in Paris and remained until 22 April. Staying with art students, for whom the Salon was an important event, we may suppose that the breakaway exhibition was also discussed—and we know that later Bob Stevenson was to be one of the two art critics “who did most to introduce the theories of the Impressionists to the non-specialist public” in England (Flint 1984: 86-88). With the French word *Impressioniste* coined in a review article of 24 April 1874 and *Impressionist* not used in English until 1876 (by Henry James, according to the OED), Stevenson is clearly searching for the best English term when in “An Autumn Effect”, written only a few months after returning from Paris (in December/January 1874/5), he uses the word “impressional” when describing a long line of single trees along the skyline like “a Japanese picture”, the colour of which “was so abstract and correct, and there was something so sketchy and merely impressional about these

distant single trees on the horizon that one was forced to think of it all as of a clever French landscape” (Stevenson 1875: 69; cf. Ambrosini 2002: 203n). (The OED does not record this use of *impressional* and has *impressionalist* only in a later citation of 1876.) The *tache* (“patch” or “blot”) of colour creating a sharp contrast with its background was typical of Manet’s style and the Impressionists used smaller patches or flecks of colour. Stevenson uses the term when describing landscape in terms of painting-techniques (rather than in terms of typical painting *composition*, as might be found in Scott and others), for example “here and there a white irregular patch to represent a cultivated farm, and here and there a blot where the Loire [...] wandered in a gorge” (Stevenson 1879: 157). On another occasion he uses the term when referring to the form of the writing itself, when he explains the unexpected remark “Tiens!” at the end of “The Treasure of Franchard” as “a patch of realism” (*Ltrs* 4: 141). And he also uses the word *tache* when talking about verbal effects (“I know what kind of effect I mean a character to give—what kind of *tache* he is to make”, *Ltrs* 8: 364). The American painter John Le Farge reports a conversation in 1890 when Stevenson said he had been among the first to recognise “the value of Manet, the so-called impressionist, upon his first sight of a painting by him” (La Farge 1894: 4), which confirms Stevenson’s appreciation of the artistic movement in the work of one of its founders.⁶

The new writing would include Baudelaire (*Les Fleurs du mal* was first published in 1857), which he knew before his long sojourns in France, since he writes to Bob in March 1870 “in a state of intellectual prostration, fit for nothing but smoking, and reading Charles Baudelaire. By the bye, I hope your sisters don’t read him: he would have corrupted St Paul” (*Ltrs* 1: 193-94). He later writes with apparent approval of the *troublante* poem “La Géante” in a letter to Mrs Sitwell in late 1874, and in the same period, writing to Bob’s sister Katherine, he praises the “consummate polished perfection” of *Petits poèmes en prose* (*Ltrs* 2: 63). He then sent her his copy, which she read and sent on to Bob (63n)—exchanges which give us an idea of the interconnected discourse between these young people.

In October 1874 he finished reading the latest Flaubert, the *Tentation de St Antoine* (1874), for the second time and declares (warning Mrs Sitwell that this was in the first flush of enthusiasm after completion): “it’s the finest thing I ever read!” (*Ltrs* 2: 66). Though in 1881 (again, shortly after publication) he found *Bouvard et Pécuchet* “a most loathsome work” (*Ltrs* 3: 174), when Flaubert’s printed correspondence appeared at Vailima in 1891 he sat down to read it every day between three and half-past five in the afternoon (*Ltrs* 7: 92). No doubt in that daily reading he would have

been interested in ideas of the great French artist that had affinities with his own. For example, reading Flaubert's comment in a letter to Louise Colet (25 June 1853) "There is no artistic subject beautiful in itself and [...] Yvetot is worth as much as Constantinople", Stevenson must have nodded agreement, remembering his own similar thought in a letter of 1876: "a book about a journey from York to London must be clever; a book about the Caucasus may be what you will" (*Ltrs* 2: 189).

His friend the American painter Will Low recalls their times in Paris together and "interminable discussions concerning Balzac, Théodore Faullin de Banville, or Villon on life or conduct" (Low qu. Stott 1994: 14).⁷ (Banville—whose recent 1875 collection of *Rondels*, uniting modern subject-matter with an old fixed form is praised in the last paragraph of Stevenson's essay "Charles of Orleans" [1876]—would also have been appreciated over the café tables because of his Parnassian interest in form and technique over Romantic emotion.)⁸

But older writing came into the discussions and exchanges of letters too, as this was one way of defining his own emerging poetics: Montaigne, of course, who is identified more than once as a favourite author and who he read throughout his life (and whose influence on Stevenson is examined in the present volume by Cinzia Giglioni). Three other names that come up frequently are of great nineteenth-century novelists: Balzac, Hugo and Dumas.⁹ Stevenson's thoughts about the latter two can be found in the 1874 and 1887 essays devoted to them but the letters are full of references as far back as 1866 when he tells Bob of his impressions on finishing Dumas' *Le Vicomte de Bragelonne*. Balzac, who we have just seen was much discussed by the young students experiencing first hand the Paris he celebrates, was a writer about whom Stevenson had mixed feelings. An Edinburgh friend recalls a dinner-party of young people (probably in the early 1870s) in which Stevenson's brilliant conversation turned to realism and the novel, showing how "[h]e was fascinated by Balzac; steeped in Balzac" (Masson 1922: 127). A decade later, in one of the two important letters on art to Bob written from Hyères in the autumn of 1883, he complains about Balzac's excessive details (proposing the maxim, "there is only one rule of art: to omit!").

An interest in French literature in his youth and throughout his life is shown by the fact that a fifth of his library in Vailima was composed of books in French (Brown 1997: 22).¹⁰ Other favourites that emerge from his correspondence include Barbey d'Aurevilly, Bourget, Daudet, George Sand and Anatole France (22-23).

His opposition to Zola, first mentioned, and criticised, in a letter of 1882 (*Ltrs* 3: 302), belongs to a rejection of a certain type of realism that

oversteps the mark of literary decorum (and includes *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and Goethe's *Werther*). It was actually attenuated towards the end of his life, when he, too, was writing more starkly realistic narratives (nowhere more than in the "terrible" yet artistically measured account of the massacre of the crew of the *Flying Scud* in *The Wrecker* of 1892, described with a grim relentlessness worthy of the end of *Werther* itself). An understanding of his affinity with Zola would explain why it is in a paragraph beginning with a defence of *The Ebb-Tide*, that he writes in 1894: "truly the *Debacle* was a mighty big book [...]. But Zola is big anyway; he has plenty in his belly; too much that is all" (*Ltrs* 8: 103).

The French writers that interested him were not confined to poets and novelists, but also included many historians and political scientists such as Ernest Renan, Jules Michelet and Adolphe Taine and a whole series of primary sources for late-medieval and Reformation-period French history, which he used for his own writings on the period,¹¹ as well as the source books on the Camisards which he used in preparation for writing *Travels with a Donkey*. This former engineering student also seems to have looked at French scientific journals—at least in one famous instance: "a paper he read in a French scientific journal on sub-consciousness" (Fanny Stevenson 1905: xvi) that may in part have inspired *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (Dury 2006: 243-46). Finally, Stevenson used French translations to read works written in other languages, such as St. Augustine's *Confessions* (his copy with his annotations is now in the Beinecke Library) and Dostoevsky's *Le Crime et le châtement*, which influenced the writing of "Markheim".

The thoughts stimulated by living and learning in and around Paris in the 1870s bear fruit later in the important literary essays of the 1880s—"A Gossip on Romance" (1882), "A Note on Realism" (1883) and "A Humble Remonstrance" (1884)—in which he attempts to create a theoretical grounding for the personal poetics of prose fiction that was to guide his novel writing. After his first trip to the USA, his marriage and his sojourn in California (August 1879 to August 1880), from 1881 we have a new phase of his career in which he is now writing and publishing narratives rather than essays. Although he was not to spend any long period in painters' colonies again, in an illuminating passage from the 1884 essay "Fontainebleau: Village Communities of Painters" quoted by Alan Sandison in his essay below, he talks again about apprentice painters and writers together:

There is something in the very air of France that communicates the love of style. Precision, clarity, the cleanly and crafty employment of material, a

grace in the handling, apart from any value in the thought, seem to be acquired, become at least the more appreciated. The air of Paris is alive with this technical inspiration! (Stevenson 1884a: 103)

This emphasis on technique “apart from any value in the thought” is probably partly due to his contact with young painters—who formed communities based on a studio, and who had to concentrate for a long time on technical matters before moving on to artistic invention: preparing colours, learning how to produce various effects of solidity, distance and colour, making studies. Another confirmation of the way he linked painting and writing is to be found in a 1883 letter from Hyères, in the South of France, to Arthur Trevor Haddon, a young painter who had just won a scholarship for the prestigious Slade School. In this letter Stevenson sets out a vademecum for a young artist with no distinction between writer and painter,¹² the first article of which is the injunction to devote oneself to one’s art, because “you will never weary of an art at which you fervently and superstitiously labour”, to the point that one “forget[s] the world in a technical trifle”. “In your own art”, he then writes, “bow your head over technique”:

Think of technique when you rise and when you go to bed. Forget purposes in the meanwhile; get to love technical processes, to glory in technical successes; get to see the world entirely through technical spectacles, to see it entirely in terms of what you can do. Then when you have anything to say, the language will be apt and copious. (*Ltrs* 4: 140-141)

A little later in the same year, again from Hyères, he sent, just ten days apart, two of his most important letters on art to his painter cousin, Bob. It is clear that in this period, as he was fully committing himself to fiction writing, his early thoughts on style were resurfacing, showing how much he had benefited from an osmosis of ideas about art he had experienced in France and from the “interminable discussions”, first with Colvin in Mentone, then in Paris with Bob, Low and other painters.

By the time Stevenson was “ordered South” in late 1873, and left the oppressive atmosphere of Edinburgh, he had already worked out the transition, from a literary apprenticeship centred on landscape writing, to those “on-the-road” “personal narratives”, as Roger Swearingen calls the works that throughout the 1870s marked Stevenson’s transition from essay- to fiction-writing (Swearingen 1979). Having “learned how to transform the landscape painter’s ‘eye’ into the ‘I’ of a young Victorian Sage keener on reflecting than on observing”, at that point he was able to “separate the description of a landscape from the registering of the

impression it made on a particular fictional persona: a young wanderer enjoying the solitude and freedom of some remote corner of Scotland, England, or France” (Ambrosini 2002: 190). The experiences he was to have on the Continent further complicated the nature of the walking-tour essay, a form he had inherited from William Hazlitt. As we see in the chapters by Laurence Davies, Lesley Graham and Morgan Holmes in this volume, Stevenson’s transition from short essay to personal travel narrative led to a complication of the traveller’s persona, a development of a non-unitary, unstable subject (unstable in its perception of space and time as well as of itself), trying out voices and ideas, which, among other things, enabled him to cast an ironic light on the young protagonist’s dreams of adventure—most clearly in *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes*.

That he refused to render in purely descriptive terms the frozen, static Alpine landscape, at the time the most celebrated sight in Europe, suggests (as Ann Colley proposes in her chapter) a mind-style attentive to movement and irregularity,¹³ and to process in the consciousness of the observer (as Sandison shows in his stimulating comparison with Proust). Human drama was the next step in his existential and creative trajectory, which was to bring him back to confronting Walter Scott’s shadow and monumental legacy, when he left behind travel writing and finally started writing fiction. He is able to return to Scotland in his fictions (something which, for health reasons, he was never able to do himself): strengthened by his European experiences, conversations and readings; changed by them, he is able to forget the semi-religious national monument to Sir Walter Scott and write prose narratives, including prose narratives about Scotland, in a spare yet artistically aware style that gives new life to the adventure tale and creates a kind of epical romance.

At the heart of Stevenson’s oeuvre lies the enigma: why did the celebrated champion of the “new cult of prose stylism” (Merritt 1968: 27) choose as a subject for his first novel of all things a pirate story? For too long this enigma has been trivialised by perpetuating the idea that Stevenson was indeed the champion of an autochthonous novelistic tradition, which his fellow Scot, Andrew Lang, tried to use as a bulwark against the decadent art of French and Russian authors. That such gross, vulgar deformation of Stevenson’s entire approach to the “art of *fictional narrative in prose*” (Stevenson 1884b: 133) is still operative, among critics who echo Lang’s call for “more claymores, less psychology” (Gross 1969: 150), suggests how the present collection of essays may help readers rethink the Scottish author’s position in the English-language literary canon.

Ultimately, what the notion of a “European Stevenson” contributes to our understanding of the writer is the *continuity* between the early interaction with Continental aesthetics and his later manipulation of the traditional conventions of historical adventure fiction. Anglo-American critics and readers learned to see the adventure stories in terms of genre alone and to judge their very personal style in isolation (labelling one as second-rate and the other as false);¹⁴ the result was the exclusion of Stevenson from the literary canon for over half a century. In contrast, twentieth-century European reception of his work reveals an enduring appreciation of the continuity between his aesthetic and theoretical approaches and his later choice to become an adventure novelist.

The rejection of Stevenson by many Anglo-American critics after 1914 (Ambrosini and Dury 2006: viv-xviii; Dury 2008: 62-64) contrasts with his reception, for example, in Italy, where from 1920 onwards he was never without support from critics and intellectuals and in the 1950s and 60s was frequently praised by a writer like Italo Calvino (as Michela Vanon shows in her chapter below). The situation in France (as traced by Jean-Pierre Naugrette, Vincent Giroud and Richard Ambrosini in their chapters) was similar: here, translations began as early as 1885 and substantial studies from 1886, and he was actually taken as a model to renew French narrative by the young intellectuals who congregated around *Nouvelle revue française* from 1908 onwards.

We get another measure of European interest when we realise that of the nine monographs on Stevenson published between 1930 and 2001, two were in German, one in French and one in Italian (see below, p. 141 n1). In the whole of the 1980s the only Stevenson monograph published in any language was Jean-Pierre Naugrette’s *L’aventure et son double* (1987).

That interest in Stevenson also continued elsewhere in Europe is shown by Richard Ambrosini in his analysis of the influence of Stevenson on the short stories written by Berthold Brecht between 1919 and 1921. Other indications of European interest are the plans for complete (or anyway substantial multi-volumed) translated editions in Germany (12 volumes edited by Curt and Marguerite Thesing for the publisher Buchenau & Reichert of Munich in the mid-1920s); in Italy by the publishers Corticelli in 1929 and Mursia in the 1950s (Dury 2008: 68); and in France under Cocteau at the Editions de la Sirène in 1920 (see below p. 192) and under Francis Lacassin in the 1970s (Kiely 1978: 336). Special mention has to be made of the outstanding—indeed unique—activity of Michel Le Bris who (having already edited the James-Stevenson texts and letters in 1987) between 1991 and 1995 (while publishing other books and organizing an annual festival of adventure

writing) edited ten volumes of Stevenson's essays, travel writings and short stories (including twenty-or-so short texts not at that date published in English—the fruit of research in the Beinecke Library and elsewhere), plus two volumes of letters translated from the manuscripts, a volume of rare writings by and about Stevenson and, for good measure, a 680-page biography of *Les années bohémiennes*. Since then he has also published a complete edition of the short stories in two volumes in 2001.

The story of the Yiddish translation of *Treasure Island*, as told by Joachim Hemmerle, captures the significance many of these translators ascribed to the enrichment this classic tale brought to their culture. Guy Barefoot and Sara Rizzo, for their part, help us to understand the mythical transcultural adaptability of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* in a European context by investigating complex cases of the novella's translations in cinematic and comic-book adaptations.

The ten years that separate Stevenson's first published essay ("Roads", 1873) from his first published novel (*Treasure Island*, 1883) were a time in which he was pursuing a personal, idiosyncratic path, responding to stimuli from different cultures, moving from the Parisian bohemia to a boarding house in San Francisco. All along, he stuck to a type of writing and a personal aesthetics that led him to steer clear of the programme of the British literary establishment. When it came, his transition to novel writing was guided by a clear-eyed assessment of the reality of the market in Britain, and an understanding of how genres had already come to shape any novel's reception. In addition he acknowledged that in contemporary English literature an honest treatment of the relationship between man and woman was impossible—as became only too clear at the end of his life after the censorship visited on "The Beach of Falesá" by a "perfect synd of appalled editors and apologetic friends" (*Ltrs* 7: 413), among them Sidney Colvin—no better sign, this, of how far Stevenson had travelled on his way southward.¹⁵

A number of European writers (at a time when he was being considered second-rate at home) used Stevenson as a guide for playing with genres as a way of exploring new forms of fictional writing. Others (including Borges, Nabokov, Calvino and—as Sandison shows—even Proust) lauded him, hailing him as one of the great masters. What is striking in the variety of these European responses is that no one outside the Anglo-American literary system appears to find any incongruity between Stevenson's stylistic excellence and his choice of subject matter. In fact, when it comes to Stevenson it is as if even the most intellectual authors seem to relinquish for once their attitude to adventure tales, as if indeed the choice

of using specific sub-genres on the part of the Scottish author was perfectly in line with his aesthetics. No greater recognition could be expected, and none more useful in view of a rereading of his opus.

Notes

¹ In *Edinburgh: Picturesque Notes* Stevenson himself recalls how in Edinburgh those “who love shelter and the blessings of the sun, who hate dark weather and perpetual tilting against squall” and who “aspire angrily after that Somewhere-else of the imagination, where all troubles are supposed to end” would lean “over the great bridge which joins the New Town with the Old [...] and watch the trains smoking out from under them and vanishing into the tunnel on a voyage to brighter skies” (Stevenson 1878: 135-36). And Gosse reports that “Stevenson told me that, as a youth, he used to hang over the Waverley Bridge watching the trains start southward and longing to start too” (Gosse 1920: 75). (“Waverley Bridge” is clearly a confusion, as trains going south do not pass under it.) The addition of Bob to the picture is an imaginative probability since we know they were close companions around Edinburgh in their student days and because Stevenson’s later journeys to France were usually with Bob or in order to visit him there.

² “[W]hat bonds we have [...]. I believe Fergusson lives in me” (*Ltrs* 7: 110).

³ Although Stevenson does not actually use the comparison of words with brush strokes in his writings on style, we suggest that some such comparison may well lie behind his poetic composition of prose, with the artist’s attention focussed on the addition of each carefully considered word. As the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins remarks: “Stevenson is a master of consummate style, and each phrase is finished as in poetry” (qu. Maixner 1981: 230). His application of the term *tache* or “patch” to his writing, seeing verbal art in terms of a carefully applied single element of the text, can also be seen as similar to contrastive or isolated brush-strokes (see below, p. 5), and in general the fragmentation of his texts through unexpected words and juxtapositions (combating therefore the smooth syntactical flow of the text), isolating attention on the fragment, would also seem to be comparable to the brush-stroke. Though the term “word-painting” is used of earlier “vivid” descriptions (first OED citation from 1795), the presentation of landscapes as landscape paintings by Ann Radcliffe or the rhapsodic prose of Ruskin is far from Stevenson’s spare style of unexpected juxtapositions and highlighted single elements. (Colley remarks on Stevenson’s preference for “irregular movement” in her chapter in this volume. For more on Stevenson’s juxtapositions and the fragmentation of his texts, see Dury 2005).

⁴ On the importance of Colvin’s 1917 *John Keats, His Life and Poetry, His Friends, Critics, and After-Fame* see Bate (1964: 6).

⁵ What a satisfaction it must have been for the professor when John Everett Millais later told Colvin that he considered Stevenson “the very first of living artists. I don’t mean writers merely, [...] but painters and all of us. Nobody living can see with such an eye as that fellow, and nobody is such as a master of his tools” (Colvin 1899: xxvii). Henry James defined this quality in Stevenson’s writing as

“the note of visibility”, which he claimed was lacking in *Catriona* (qu. *Ltrs* 8: 193n). A striking example of Stevenson “seeing” with great accuracy but also with great syntactic simplicity and economy is his spare, sketched-out description of a painting by Ruisdael in Edinburgh in a letter to Colvin in 1875 (*Ltrs* 2: 119). A recent critic invites the reader to verify in the National Gallery of Scotland how exact are the details of the description and especially how “implicit in their listing [...] is an aesthetic principle shared with the painter: all objects are treated with the same care, the same seriousness” (Wilson 1983: 73-74).

⁶ In an 1884 essay Stevenson seems to have a slightly disparaging comment on Impressionism (and a preference for “strong and beautiful effects”) when he refers to “that strange turn in the history of art, of which we now perceive the culmination in impressionistic tales and pictures—that voluntary aversion of the eye from all speciously strong and beautiful effects—that disinterested love of dulness which has set so many Peter Bells to paint the river-side primrose” (Stevenson 1884a: 100). Here Stevenson seems to be using “impressionistic”, a term at that date not yet clearly defined, to refer more to small uninspired studies of *en plein air* painters, like those he may have seen working around Fontainebleau (the reference to Peter Bell is to Wordsworth’s simple rustic for whom “A primrose by the river’s brim” was just a primrose with no accompanying emotion).

⁷ Stott introduces the quotation as follows: “When Stevenson was in Paris, Low reports that [...]”. However, this passage is not to be found in Will H. Low’s *A Chronicle of Friendships* (New York: Scribner’s, 1908) and Low seems to have written only one other piece on Stevenson (a magazine article on Stevenson and tobacco, reprinted as *Stevenson and Margarita*) and this does not contain the quotation either. It is therefore probable that Stott has confused his sources.

⁸ Théodore de Banville (1823-1891) was a leading “Parnassian” poet, a close friend of Baudelaire, who had already revived late-medieval forms in half of the poems of *Odes funambulesques* (1857) and continued the experiments in the more recent *Trente-six Ballades joyeuses* (1873), “à la manière de François Villon”, and *Rondels* (1875) “à la manière de Charles d’Orléans”—the latter of which inspired Stevenson to write a series of “rondeaux” in 1875 modelled on “Charles d’Orléans, Villon and Banville” (Lewis 2004: 560). His sensuous style (“Aimons-nous et dormons”) no doubt also appealed to the young men, as did his anti-bourgeois stance, and Stevenson would have been particularly interested in Banville’s insistence, like the other Parnassians, on technique as the basis of poetic art.

⁹ The two French authors he includes in “Books Which Have Influenced Me” are Montaigne and Dumas (Stevenson 1887: 65).

¹⁰ This percentage is confirmed by an analysis of the database of Stevenson’s Library presently being created as a resource for the new Edition of Stevenson planned by Edinburgh University Press (<http://spreadsheets.google.com/pub?key=ppfchUIR5vJFJKjS8rKqIWA&output=html>). Brown in his 1996 article mentions “well over a hundred volumes”; the number of French items (and one item may be a collected works of several volumes) in the database at present is 257, but the percentage of the whole has remained the same (19.8%). Scottish books made up about 25% of the total (Brown 1996: 15).

¹¹ “Charles of Orleans”, *Cornhill Magazine* 34 (Dec. 1876); “François Villon, Student, Poet, Housebreaker”, *Cornhill Magazine* 36 (Aug. 1877); “A Lodging for the Night: A Story of Francis Villon”, *Temple Bar* 51 (Oct. 1877); “The Sire de Malétrait’s Door”, *Temple Bar* 52 (Jan. 1878). He also planned “another XVth century paper”, on Antoine de la Sale (author of a satirical chivalric romance) in the autumn of 1877 (*Ltrs* 2: 218).

¹² The painter and all-round graphic artist John La Farge also reports a conversation with Stevenson in Samoa in 1890 when “he talked of what we artists call ‘shop’, and of certain ideas we have in common as to the advantage and pleasure of being able to look upon ourselves as workmen” (La Farge 1894: 4).

¹³ Stevenson himself refers to his method as “kinetic” in a letter to Colvin in January 1892: “I have already a better method [than Balzac]—the kinetic, whereas he continually allowed himself to be led into the static” (*Ltrs* 7: 231).

¹⁴ Stevenson is “a writer of the second class” and his art is “tedious virtuosity, a pretence, a conscious toy” (Swinnerton 1914: 207, 209).

¹⁵ “This is a poison bad world for the romancer, this Anglo-Saxon world; I usually get out of it by not having any women in at all” (*Ltrs* 7: 231; cf. also 230 n3). In May 1892, to Bob—the last spell of his intimacy with his cousin—he explained why he never wrote love stories: “I am afraid my touch is a little broad”. “I cannot mean one thing and write another”; and in an adventure novel, “If I have got to kill a man, I kill him good”, in a novel with a man and a woman “if my characters have to go to bed to each other—well, I want them to go”. As for the treatment of woman, “I am a little in fear of grossness”—a problem for a writer “of my prosaic literalness and pertinency of point of view” (*Ltrs* 7: 284).

References

- Ambrosini, Richard. 2002. “Painting and Words”: Landscape Writing in R. L. Stevenson’s Early Essays. *Merope* 14 (special issue: “Victorian Landscapes”. Ed. Mariaconcetta Costantini and John Woolford): 179-204.
- Ambrosini, Richard and Richard Dury. 2006. Introduction. In *Robert Louis Stevenson, Writer of Boundaries*. Ed. Richard Ambrosini and Richard Dury, xiii-xxvii. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Bate, Walter Jackson. 1964. *Keats: A Collection of Critical Essays*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Brown, Neil Macara. 1996. Stevenson’s Scottish Books. *Scottish Book Collector* 5.iii: 15-18.
- . 1997. The French Collection. *Scottish Book Collector* 5.ix: 22-25.
- Colvin, Sidney. 1899. Introduction. In *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson to His Family and Friends*. 4 vols. Ed. Sidney Colvin, vol. 1, xv-xliii. London and New York: Methuen and Scribner’s.
- . 1921. *Memories and Notes of Persons and Places, 1852-1912*. New York: Scribner’s.

- Dury, Richard. 2005. Strange Language of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. *Journal of Stevenson Studies* 2: 33-50.
- . 2006. Crossing the Bounds of Single Identity: *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and a Paper in a French Scientific Journal. In *Robert Louis Stevenson, Writer of Boundaries*. Ed. Richard Ambrosini and Richard Dury, 237-51. Maddison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
- . 2008. Stevenson in Italy and in Italian. *Scottish Studies Review* 9.i: 61-78.
- Flint, Kate. 1984. *Impressionists in England: The Critical Reception*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Gosse, Edmund. 1920. Address to the First Annual Dinner of the Robert Louis Stevenson Club, 13 November 1920. In *Masson* 1922, 72-75.
- Gross, John. 1969. *The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters: English Literary Life Since 1800*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson. Repr. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1992.
- Hill, Robin A. 2001. *R.L.S. in Germany: Robert Louis Stevenson's Earliest Travels in Europe*. Edinburgh: privately printed.
- Kiely, Robert. 1978. Robert Louis Stevenson. In *Victorian Fiction: A Second Guide to Research*. Ed. George Harry Ford, 333-47. New York: Modern Language Association.
- La Farge, John. 1894. Stevenson's Life at Samoa. *New York Times* (30 December 1894): 4. In *New York Times Archives* at http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archivefree/pdf?_r=1&res=940DE2DD143EEF33A25753C3A9649D94659ED7CF (accessed 1 June 2009).
- Lewis, Roger C. 2003. Textual Notes. In *The Collected Poems of Robert Louis Stevenson*. Ed. Roger C. Lewis, 339-608. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Low, Will H. 1908. *A Chronicle of Friendships, 1873-1900*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.
- Maixner, Paul. 1981. *Robert Louis Stevenson: The Critical Heritage*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Masson, Rosaline. 1922. *I Can Remember Robert Louis Stevenson*. Edinburgh and London: Chambers.
- Merritt, Travis R. 1968. Taste, Opinion, and Theory in the Rise of Victorian Prose Stylism. In *The Art of Victorian Prose*. Ed. George Levine and William Madden, 3-38. New York, Oxford University Press.
- Stevenson, Fanny van der Grift. 1905. Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. In *Registration Prefaces to Robert Louis Stevenson's Works*, xv-xviii. New York: Scribner's.

- Stevenson, Robert Louis. 1875. An Autumn Effect. Tusitala Edition vol. 30, 67-85.
- . 1877. François Villon, Student, Poet, Housebreaker. In *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*. Tusitala Edition vol. 27, 118-45.
- . 1878. *Edinburgh: Picturesque Notes*. Tusitala Edition vol. 26, 135-197.
- . 1879. *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes*. Tusitala Edition vol. 17.
- . 1884a. Fontainebleau: Village Communities of Painters. Tusitala Edition 30: 99-116.
- . 1884b. A Humble Remonstrance. In *Memories and Portraits*. Tusitala Edition vol. 29, 132-43.
- . 1887. Books Which Have Influenced Me. Tusitala Edition 28: 61-68.
- Stott, Louis. 1994. *Robert Louis Stevenson & France*. Milton of Aberfoyle: Craig Darach Publications.
- Swearingen, Roger. 1979. "Essays on the Enjoyment of the World": The Place of *Travels with a Donkey* in Stevenson's Work and Literary Career. *Cahiers d'études et de recherches victoriens et édouardiens* 8: 25-38.
- Swinnerton, Frank A. 1914. *Robert Louis Stevenson: A Critical Study*. London: Secker.
- Wilson, James. 1983. Landscape With Figures. In *Robert Louis Stevenson*. Ed. Andrew Noble, 73-95. London and Totowa, NJ: Vision Press and Barnes & Noble.

PART I:
EUROPEAN EXPERIENCES

