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### STEVENSON'S 'AULD ALLIANCE': FRANCE, ART THEORY AND THE BREATH OF MONEY IN *THE WRECKER*

'O do you not know how much this money question begins to take more and more importance in my eyes every day. It is an old phrase of mine that money is the *atmosphère* of civilized life; and I do hate to take the breath out of other people's nostrils.'<sup>1</sup>

(Robert Louis Stevenson to Fanny Sitwell, 28 November 1873)

'Well, some of us like theory.'<sup>2</sup>

(Robert Louis Stevenson in *The Wrecker*)

To begin at the beginning may not be the obvious first move in a discussion of Robert Louis Stevenson's and Lloyd Osbourne's *The Wrecker*. For one thing, 'the story proper' does not begin until a third of the way into the book<sup>3</sup>; such a 'beginning your yarn anywhere but at the beginning, and finishing it anywhere but at the end' characterizes 'that very modern form of the police novel or mystery story' (pp. 404-5), a genre at once attractive and repellent to Stevenson, and in which *The Wrecker* was his first experiment<sup>4</sup>. Moreover, as Stevenson writes in a letter to Charles Baxter<sup>5</sup>, the 'Preface' to *The Wrecker* actually takes the form of an Epilogue. Nevertheless there is something to be said for starting at the beginning of *The Wrecker*, with its framing narrative which is not so much a Jamesian circle 'round the fire' as a Stevensonian circle round the bar (actually the *Cercle Internationale, à l'heure de l'absinthe*, in Tai-o-hae in the Marquesas Islands) (pp. 8-9). Into this motley crew of 'English, Americans, Germans, Poles, Corsicans, and Scots' (p. 5) comes Loudon Dodd, supercargo of the ship that has just made a dramatic entrance into the harbour. The bar-room banter in the *Cercle Internationale* about such heady topics as opium dealing, insurance swindling and blackmail is threatening to turn into a brawl, before Dodd defuses the situation by boasting of an inside knowledge of all these activities. This boast is assumed by the Englishman Havens, Dodd's friend on the island, to be nonsense, a mere divertissement; 'But it was none of it nonsense,' insists Dodd during their subsequent tête-à-tête, and he proceeds to deliver the 'queer yarn' which constitutes the central narrative of *The Wrecker*<sup>6</sup>.

For Loudon Dodd is a queer fish to have domiciled in the main cabin of a topsail schooner. His cabin has all the trappings of an aesthete: antique furniture, Renaissance French books, Venice mirrors, and 'daubs' by Dodd and his sleeping partner. There is also a bust of the latter – 'and a very nice-looking fellow' remarks Havens – among the bronzes by Dodd, who 'began life as a sculptor' (p.7). This is true in more than one sense because Dodd is partly

based on the young American sculptor Pardessus who in 1876 had urged Fanny Vandegrift to make the fateful move from Paris to Grez-sur-Loing. But for the most part of course Loudon Dodd is based on Stevenson's artist friend Will H. Low. Stevenson was later concerned that, like other characters in *The Wrecker* which are 'portraits, almost undisguised', the portrait of Low is '*devilish recognizable*'<sup>7</sup>. Low had already been unsettled by Stevenson's seemingly cynical view of the artistic vocation as akin to that of the dancing-girl and the 'Daughter of Joy' (to use the 'romantic evasion' of the French)<sup>8</sup>. In a gesture at once conciliatory, playful, and provocative, Stevenson further destabilizes the autonomy and perhaps the dignity of art, and any binary opposition between art and life, by addressing to Low the Epilogue of *The Wrecker* where *characters* in the novel are referred to as if they were real contemporaries of Low and Stevenson. As will be shown below, in *The Wrecker* Stevenson repeatedly disrupts and subverts any comfortable distinction between art and life.

*The Wrecker*, then, both is and isn't fiction; as a work of art it both isn't and is life. In the last sentence of the novel Stevenson urges Low: '... if you care for naught else in the story, be a little pleased to breathe once more for a moment the airs of our youth' (p. 406); and in a letter to Burlingame of late August 1890<sup>9</sup>, Stevenson expresses niggling doubts about the historical accuracy of *The Wrecker*. Among other chronological worries, he wonders whether the early part of the novel, set in Paris, is too early in relation to the rest of *The Wrecker*, for it depicts, he says, the Latin Quarter of '73, though 'a little stretching of dates might even bring Dodd back as far as '75, which is near enough'. In terms of the Dodd/Low connection, 1875 would be about right, because it was in the spring of 1875 that Low first met Louis Stevenson. Low gives a vivid description in *A Chronicle of Friendships* of that first meeting at the Gare St. Lazare, and of the subsequent *flânerie* with the Stevenson cousins through the streets of Paris to the Pont des Arts, whence they took an open carriage to Lavenue's restaurant in Montparnasse. Much of this and other scenes from Stevenson's Bohemian life at this time find their way into *The Wrecker*: the celebration following the successful examination of Dodd's statue by 'the master' takes place in Lavenue's, where the Stevenson cousins appear, 'devilish recognizable' in 'the brothers Stennis, – Stennis-ainé and Stennis-frère, as they used to figure on their accounts at Barbizon – a pair of hare-brained Scots' (p. 53). And it is to Barbizon that the Stennis brothers lead the revellers, pooh-poohing any effeminate wish to stop *en route* to collect personal effects; for the Stennis had come from London 'with nothing but great-coats and tooth-brushes', having embraced the radically Bohemian theory that: 'A fellow has to get rid gradually of all material attachments; that was manhood; ... and as long as you were bound down to anything, – house, umbrella or portmanteau, – you were still tethered by the umbilical cord' (p.56).

This 'esthétique et ... philosophie du nomadisme', to use the phrase of Michel Le Bris<sup>10</sup>, according to which: 'No baggage – there was the secret of existence' (ibid.), has been incorporated into Stevensonian hagiography. The

admittedly expensive consequence that '... every time you had to comb your hair, a barber must be paid, and every time you changed your linen, one shirt must be bought and another thrown away (ibid.) has come to associated with the Stevenson cousins as much as 'the Stennis boys'<sup>11</sup>. But Stevenson himself invites this kind of blurring of the boundaries between fiction and reality, and not only inadvertently, as when in a slip of the pen he addresses Colvin as 'My Dear Carthew'<sup>12</sup> (Carthew is Loudon Dodd's 'sleeping partner'); he also does so quite deliberately, as when in the Epilogue to *The Wrecker* he talks of his involvement in the project of 'my friend Loudon', and of Havens (whom we have not met since the Prologue), to publish Dodd's narrative. As Stevenson (or at least the narrator who is addressing Will H. Low, who discusses the genesis and growth of *The Wrecker* on board the schooner *Equator*, and who evidently lives on Samoa) puts it, with not a little irony:

*The truth is, since I have been mixed up with Havens and Dodd in the design to publish the latter's narrative, I seem to feel no want for Carthew's society. Of course I am wholly modern in sentiment, and think nothing more noble than to publish people's private affairs at so much a line. (p. 403, my emphasis)*

This intrusion of fictional characters, treated as if they were real people, into the Epilogue by the real author addressed to the real Will Low, corresponds paradoxically to the intrusion into the novel of the real author as if he were one of the characters. Robert Louis Stevenson is certainly present in the novel as one of the Stennis boys in the sequence mentioned above. And one of the Stennises is also present in Chapter XXI when Dodd tracks down Carthew at Barbizon, though, since it is not specified whether it is Stennis *ainé* or Stennis *frère*, it is unclear whether the Stennis who banter with Dodd is a cameo of Bob Stevenson or a self-cameo by Louis. Thus it *could* be a case of the author appearing in his own work, thereby producing an effect of self-reflexivity in this chapter entitled 'Face to Face'.

Such metafictional games obviously appealed to Stevenson<sup>13</sup>; and by undermining the distinction between fiction and reality, and between the artist and the artwork, they create multiple levels of irony. Not the least of these ironies is that in this artwork which goes out of its way to *include* the author both as a character in his own fiction, and also as one of its co-writers reflecting metafictionally, and with a 'prodigious quantity of theory' (p. 405), on the genesis and growth of his own production, there is embodied in the figure of Loudon Dodd the counter-theory that 'the public had no concern with the artist, only with his art' (p. 49). Dodd is appalled by the write-up Pinkerton gives him in the Saint Joseph *Sunday Herald* under the headline

**ANOTHER OF PINKERTON'S SPICY CHATS  
ART PRACTITIONERS IN PARIS  
etc**

Dodd's reaction to this – 'I could have fallen on Pinkerton and beat him' (p. 48) – springs from natural diffidence and snobbery, confirmed and strengthened by the ideal of *l'art pour l'art* which had been around in Paris at least since Gautier's famous Preface to *Mademoiselle de Maupin* in 1835. The so-called 'Parnassiens', whose anthology *Le Parnasse contemporain* appeared in 1866, 1871 and 1876, and on whom the young Stevenson had wanted to write a series of papers<sup>14</sup>, are now generally reckoned to have continued Gautier's *l'art pour l'art* principles, though in 1875, without the benefit of the literary historian's hindsight, Stevenson writes of the Parnassiens: 'I clapped my hands when I found ... a new generation had arisen that did not remember Gautier'<sup>15</sup>. Stevenson's attitude to Gautier remained ambivalent<sup>16</sup>. Indeed Stevenson's attitude to *l'art pour l'art* remained ambivalent, the negative side being most famously expressed in his refusal to create only the 'refined, high-toned, bejayed-damn masterpieces'<sup>17</sup> which his friends expected of him, rather than the copy he needed to produce to keep 'Byles the Butcher' from the door<sup>18</sup>.

This tension between the *l'art pour l'art* ideals of Bohemia (and Paris), and the need for money as 'the atmosphere of civilized life', haunts not only Stevenson's life but also *The Wrecker*. It is embodied in the relationship between Dodd and Pinkerton. To the former's protestations against the latter's none-too-*haute vulgarisation* of the artistic *life* (as opposed to the work), the details of which are, according to Dodd, of interest to no-one, Pinkerton replies: 'O, there now, Loudon, you're entirely wrong. That's what the public likes; that's the merit of the thing, the literary value. It's to call up the scene before them ... an artist, in his studio abroad, talking of his art – and to know how he looked as he did it, and what the room was like, and what he had for breakfast' (pp. 49-50). The irony is that Pinkerton is right, insofar as Dodd's work fails to sell (and is thus, even on his own terms, a failure), while Pinkerton's philistine journalism procures for Dodd his father's acceptance of his choice of the artistic vocation, and at least the promise (sadly never realized) of financial support for that vocation – issues which were very close to Stevenson's heart. A further irony is that in writing *The Wrecker* as a pot-boiler to finance his *real* writing, for example, *The Pearl Fisher* (ultimately entitled *The Ebb-Tide*),<sup>19</sup> Stevenson is more or less consciously banking on the fact that the public would be interested in a novel which is transparently about *his* life. Stevenson's concern with the survival of his letters illustrates that he suspected in advance that the public would be 'randy for relics', to use Julian Barnes's phrase from *Flaubert's Parrot* (the example Barnes gives of the manipulation of such 'randiness' is precisely 'Cummy' Cunningham selling 'enough of Stevenson's hair to stuff a sofa'<sup>20</sup>). And to ask about how *knowing* was Stevenson's use of autobiographical material (was he simply resorting to what was ready to hand, or was he in some sense already milking his own fame?) might be, ironically, to commit 'the intentional fallacy' made notorious by Wimsatt and Beardsley in an essay<sup>21</sup> whose concerns are embryonically present in Loudon Dodd's scruples over Pinkerton's literary journalism.

*The Wrecker* subverts any binary opposition between art and life. Not only do Dodd's aesthetic pretensions founder, and become contaminated by commercial considerations (he submits to 'the knotted horrors' of being advertised in San Francisco as *H. Loudon Dodd, the Americo-Parisienne Sculptor* (p. 88)); but also Pinkerton demands to know why the artist should have the monopoly of idealism and 'romance'. To the romance of art there corresponds what Dodd condescendingly calls the 'romance of dickering' (p. 60). For Pinkerton 'Reality was romance'; though he might 'realise a greater material spoil', a man who had dug up a galleon and was able 'by the blaze of a great fire of wreckwood, to measure ingots by the bucketful on the uproarious beach ... should have no more profit of romance than Pinkerton when he cast up his weekly balance sheet' (p. 92). The issue expressed here in a light-hearted way was of real existential concern to Stevenson as we can see from his letter to Low in which he refers to *The Wrecker*:

And then the problem that Pinkerton laid down: why the artist can do nothing else? is one that continually exercises myself. He cannot: granted. But Scott could. And Montaigne. And Julius Caesar. And many more. And why can't R.L.S.? ... I think *David Balfour* a nice little book, and very artistic, and just the thing to occupy the leisure of a busy man; but for the top flower of a man's life it seems to me to be inadequate. Small is the word; it is a small age, and I am of it. I could have wished to be otherwise busy in this world. I ought to have been able to build lighthouses and write *David Balfours* too.<sup>22</sup>

Loudon Dodd's father, James K., says much the same thing when he asks:

'And do you think, Loudon, ... that a man who can paint a thousand dollar picture has not grit enough to keep his end up in the stock market? No, sir, this Mason (of whom you speak) [actually Meissonier] or our own American Bierstadt – if you were to put them down in a wheat pit tomorrow, they would show their mettle. (pp. 21-22)

But if James K. Dodd is as much sold on 'the romance of dickering' as Pinkerton, Loudon has other ideas. He writes: 'Every man has his own romance; mine clustered exclusively about the practice of the arts, the life of Latin Quarter students, and the world of Paris as depicted by that grimy wizard, the author of the *Comédie Humaine*' (p. 30). But it is another author who provides the intertext which structures Loudon's life in Paris, a life of some squalor which he (at this point) actively chooses over the more privileged existence in the Quartier de l'Étoile which his 'profuse allowance' would have permitted (p. 30). For Loudon wants to be:

a Latin Quarter student, Murger's successor, living in flesh and blood the life of one of those romances I had loved to read ... At this time we were all a little Murger-mad in the Latin Quarter. The play of the *Vie de*

*Bohème* (a dreary, snivelling piece) had been produced at the Odéon, had run for an unconscionable time – for Paris, and revived the freshness of the legend. The same business, you may say, or there or thereabout, was being privately enacted in consequence in every garret of the neighbourhood, and a good third of the students were conscientiously impersonating Rodolphe or Schaunard to their own incommunicable satisfaction. (p. 30)

Such *soi-disant* Bohemians are examples of the 'imaginary Bohemian' castigated by Stevenson in 'Lay Morals': 'the Bohemian of the novel, who drinks more than is good for him and prefers anything to work, and wears strange clothes, [and] is for the most part a respectable Bohemian, respectable in his disrespectability, living for the outside, and an adventurer'<sup>23</sup>. Another 'imaginary Bohemian', though of a much more diluted variety, is Silas Q. Scuddamore, a rich young American who like Loudon Dodd prefers to slum it in the Latin Quarter, and who appears in *The Suicide Club*<sup>24</sup>, published ten years before *The Wrecker*. Scuddamore has a mysterious assignation at 'the Bullier Ball' [sic]<sup>25</sup>, which the Stevensons and Low briefly visited on the day of Louis Stevenson's arrival in Paris described by Low in *A Chronicle of Friendships*. Low writes: 'At the close of this eventful day we sauntered leisurely up the Boulevard St. Michel, entering, for a few moments, the Bal Bullier, which we surveyed philosophically, as prudent youths taking their pleasure otherwise, and having small interest in the riotous scenes enacted there'<sup>26</sup>. This distanced attitude towards the excesses of Bohemia presumably mark out Low and the Stevensons as what Louis calls in 'Lay Morals' 'the true Bohemian'.

Possibly the best sketch of the ideals of 'the true Bohemian' is to be found in Stevenson's essay 'Fontainebleau: village communities of painters'<sup>27</sup>, which describes life in what is referred to in the context of another Latin Quarter ball, 'A Ball at Mr Elsinare's', as 'those artistic villages which are the Brighton and Scarborough of the Latin Quarter'.<sup>28</sup> Foremost among these 'artistic villages' was Barbizon, which Louis first visited with Bob Stevenson on the day after 'the morning after' the day described by Low, when, despite Low's assurances of their philosophical disdain of the riotous scenes at the Bal Bullier, Louis nevertheless drank half a tumblerful of 'chartreuse or curaçoa'<sup>29</sup>. Louis writes of that first visit to Barbizon in a way which again distances him from the 'imaginary Bohemians':

The date of my first visit [1875 – the year of Millet's death] was thus an epoch in the history of art: in a lesser way, it was an epoch in the history of the Latin Quarter. The *Petit Cénacle* [the original Bohemians of the 1830s] was dead and buried; Murger and his crew of sponging vagabonds were all at rest from their expedients; the tradition of their real life was nearly lost, and the petrified legend of the *Vie de Bohème* had become a sort of gospel, and still gave the cue to zealous imitators.<sup>30</sup>

Despite the foolishness and pretension of this 'purely artistic society', however, it is 'still excellent for the young artist' because of its very French preoccupation with *style*, the love of which 'the very air of France' communicates<sup>31</sup>. These young artists are 'mostly fools':

they hold the latest orthodoxy in all its crudeness; they are at that stage of education ... when a man [sic]<sup>32</sup> too much occupied with style to be aware of the necessity for any matter; and this, above all for the Englishman, is excellent. ... Here, in England, too many painters and writers dwell dispersed, unshielded, among the intelligent bourgeois. These, when they are not merely indifferent, prate to him about the lofty aims of art. And this is the lad's ruin. For art is, first of all, a trade. The love of words and not a desire to publish new discoveries, the love of words and not a novel reading of historical events, mark the vocation of the writer and the painter. The arabesque, properly speaking, and even in literature, is the first fancy of the artist; he first plays with his material as child plays with a kaleidoscope; and he is already in a second stage when he begins to use his pretty counters for the end of representation.<sup>33</sup>

This is practically a manifesto for *l'art pour l'art*, and looks forward to the characteristically modernist gesture of 'flinging representation to the winds'<sup>34</sup>. Stevenson says much the same thing in a letter to Low: 'Still anything that keeps a man to decoration is, in this age [of 'realism'], good for the artist's spirit.'<sup>35</sup>

However in *The Wrecker* this kind of anti-mimetic or formalistic aesthetic is playfully subverted in the scenes set, ironically enough, back in Barbizon, when Loudon Dodd discusses Carthew's painting in Siron's inn first of all with Stennis, and then with Carthew himself. Dodd's initial reaction is one of painterly appraisal: '[it was] a thing coarsely and wittily handled, mostly with the palette-knife, the colour in some parts excellent, the canvas in others loaded with mere clay' (p. 312). Yet his subsequent reaction goes far beyond any merely formalistic response:

But it was the scene, not the art or want of it, that riveted my notice. The foreground was of sand and scrub and wreckwood; in the middle distance the many hued and smooth expanse of the lagoon, enclosed by a wall of breakers; and beyond, a strip of blue ocean. The sky was cloudless, and I could hear the surf break. For the place was Midway Island; the point of view the very spot at which I had landed with the captain ... I had already been gazing for some seconds, before my attention was arrested by a blur on the sea-line; and stooping to look I recognized the smoke of a steamer.

'Yes,' said I, turning toward Stennis, 'it has merit....' (p. 312)

Dodd is of course disguising from Stennis that his response to the painting is far from aesthetic and far from disinterested. He keeps up the same pretence when he and Carthew discuss the picture, though Dodd knows that Carthew

knows that Dodd knows that they have both been to the spot depicted, and for reasons that have nothing to do with art (the place represented in the picture is, so to speak, the primal scene of the opium dealing, insurance swindling, and blackmail mentioned in the Prologue, and also, it transpires, of a hideous murder). The conversation between Dodd and Carthew thus contains some canny double-talk:

'That's a nice thing of yours,' I pursued, 'that panel. The foreground is a little clayey, perhaps, but the lagoon is excellent.'

'You ought to know,' said he.

'Yes,' returned I, 'I'm rather a good judge of – that panel.'

There was a considerable pause. (p. 315)

This is almost a parody of the Stevensonian tenet that, if it a work of art should be judged in *the first place* as a work of art, nevertheless *ultimately* all art is inadequate to, cannot 'compete with' life, as Stevenson famously put it in 'A Humble Remonstrance' to Henry James<sup>36</sup>. For 'Life is monstrous, infinite, illogical, abrupt and poignant; a work of art, in comparison, is neat, finite, self-contained, rational, flowing and emasculate. Life imposes by brute energy, like inarticulate thunder; art catches by the ear, among the far louder noises of experience, like an air artificially made by a discreet musician'<sup>37</sup>. Yet paradoxically it is the adjectives which here qualify 'life', rather than those which qualify 'art', which seem to apply to *The Wrecker*. As a work of art *The Wrecker* may be badly made; but it is (among other things) a kind of monstrous, illogical, abrupt and at times poignant metafiction *about* the relation between the brute energy of life and the discreet charms of Bohemia, a relation which subsists in the pervasive atmosphere of money, in the breath, which bloweth where it listeth, of the Almighty Dollar. As Stevenson himself puts it in the Epilogue to *The Wrecker*, his tale is:

full of the details of our barbaric manners and unstable morals; – full of the need and the lust of money, so that there is scarce a page in which the dollars do not jingle; – full of the unrest and movement of our century, so that the reader is hurried from place to place and sea to sea ... (p. 404)

It may be that in his development as a writer Stevenson had ultimately to move beyond a theory that art should be 'neat, finite, self-contained, rational, flowing and emasculate' (a theory, which like most versions of aesthetic formalism, has a Kantian ring to it). Perhaps in *The Wrecker* he anticipates a postmodern art which blurs the boundaries between art and life, and which prefers the Kantian 'sublime' to the 'beautiful'<sup>38</sup> (not that *The Wrecker* is in any ordinary sense 'sublime', though it does contain one of the great literary descriptions of a storm at sea<sup>39</sup>). Michel Le Bris expresses a rather similar view when he writes that, in order to become a real writer (rather than a literary

poseur), Stevenson had to overcome the Bohemian posture, and the *l'art pour l'art* aesthetic, epitomised by his cousin Bob; or as Le Bris rather melodramatically puts it, Louis Stevenson had to kill 'the Bob in himself'. Le Bris writes:

During these evenings at Vailima ... he [Louis] was not the last to speculate aloud on what such a genius [Bob] could have produced, if only he had deigned to, but on each occasion his heart froze at having to keep silent about his secret: that, in order to be, to affirm himself as a writer, he had had to kill in himself his cousin Bob.<sup>40</sup>

Although, I suspect, it is not at all intentional, the way in which Le Bris paints this perhaps rather fanciful scene of an artist with murder on his conscience is reminiscent of the conclusion of *The Wrecker* in Barbizon. Which leads one to wonder about the abrupt departure of the Stennis brother whom Dodd finds in residence at Barbizon (the question of whether it is Stennis-*ainé* or Stennis-*frère* is hardly crucial here since, in terms of the psychodrama being played out, it is *either* 'Bob' or 'the-Bob-in-Louis'). Such a sudden exit from the final scene of novel about the inadequacy of the *l'art pour l'art* aesthetic of a character who epitomizes just such an aesthetic seems, even if we set aside Le Bris's melodramatic way of putting it, hardly accidental. And to stay for a moment longer with the theme of unconscious identifications, it is curious that at the time he was writing *The Wrecker* Stevenson should have 'accidentally' addressed Sidney Colvin as 'Carthew'<sup>41</sup>. For Colvin too represented for Louis the epitome of the aesthete, though of a much more respectable variety than Bob Stevenson. And in a way Colvin, like Carthew, was haunted by a crime: for much of his life he was short of money, that 'atmosphere of civilized life', largely because of having to pay back the substantial cost of a set of prints which, due to his negligence, had been stolen while he was Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.<sup>42</sup> After the abrupt departure from *The Wrecker* of the radical Bohemian Stennis/Stevenson, we are left with the haunted aesthete Carthew/Colvin. But in the end, in the Epilogue to *The Wrecker*, Stevenson the writer wants nothing to do even with him (p. 403).

#### Notes

1. Letter to Fanny Sitwell, 28 November 1873 in Booth, Bradford A. and Mehew, Ernest (eds.), *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson* in 8 volumes (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994-5) vol I, p. 380. Subsequent references to this edition of Stevenson's letters will appear as: Booth and Mehew plus volume number in Roman numerals. References to *Selected Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. Ernest Mehew (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1997) will appear simply as Mehew.

2. *The Wrecker* (1892; Tusitala Edition, vol. XII (London: Heinemann, 1924)), p. 405. Subsequent references to *The Wrecker* are from this edition and will be cited parenthetically in the text.
3. See letter to Burlingame, 4 December 1889, Booth and Mehew VI, p. 339.
4. Letter to Burlingame, February, 1980, Booth and Mehew VI, p. 366. The 'experiment' is not simply with the detective genre itself, but rather in the *mixing* of this genre, which Stevenson calls in a letter to Henry James 'a police machine' (25 May 1892, in Mehew, pp. 492-3), with the genre of the 'novel of manners'.
5. Letter to Baxter 1 January 1894, Booth and Mehew VIII, p. 226.
6. *The Wrecker* is 'queer' in the literal sense that it is 'the oddest and most intriguing of all RLS's productions', as Frank McLynn puts it in *Robert Louis Stevenson* (London: Pimlico, 1994), p. 359. In terms of 'Queer' readings of *The Wrecker*, Elaine Showalter's approach in *Sexual Anarchy* (London: Virago, 1992) to the male quest romance and its homosocial context has been applied to Stevenson by Rod Edmond in *Representing the South Pacific: Colonial discourse from Cook to Gauguin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 177-179. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's work (see *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985)) had already been used by Wayne Koestenbaum in his reading of the collaborative works of Stevenson and Lloyd Osbourne including *The Wrecker*; see Koestenbaum, *Double Talk: The erotics of male literary collaboration* (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 145-151.
7. Letter to Burlingame, 11 March 1890, Booth and Mehew VI, p. 376, Stevenson's emphasis.
8. For Stevenson's notorious comparison of 'the career of art' with the oldest profession, see his 'Letter to a young gentleman who proposes to embrace the career of art' in *Essays Literary and Critical* (Tusitala Edition, vol. XXVIII (London: Heinemann, 1924)), p. 8. References to Low's response to Stevenson's 'literary prostitute' can be found in Roger Swearingen, *The Prose Writings of Robert Louis Stevenson* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1980), p. 124.
9. Booth and Mehew VI, p. 411.
10. Michel Le Bris, *R.L. Stevenson: Les années bohémiennes* (NiLEditions, 1994), p. 562.
11. Already in his *Life* Balfour had transferred the passage from *The Wrecker* under discussion to the two Stevenson cousins. See Graham Balfour, *The Life of Robert Louis Stevenson* (Third Edition, in One Volume) (London: Methuen, 1906), p. 149.
12. Letter to Colvin, 24 October 1891, in Mehew, p. 471.
13. cf. the hilariously metafictional 'A Fable: The Persons of the Tale' in which the characters of *Treasure Island* discuss 'the Author'. See *Treasure Island* (Tusitala Edition, vol. II (London: Heinemann, 1924)), pp. 223-6. I am indebted to the anonymous *Scottish Studies Review* reader for reminding me of this passage.
14. Letter to Colvin, 14 January 1875, Booth and Mehew II, p. 107.
15. Letter to Colvin, 14 January 1875, Booth and Mehew II, p. 106-7.
16. Letters to Henley, late August and 19 November 1878, Booth and Mehew II, pp. 264, 288.
17. Letter to Henley, early March 1882, Booth and Mehew III, p. 293. Stevenson continues his attack on his refined friends with the following splendid piece of incentive: 'I don't want to hear more of such effeminate, unjust, cultchaw, filthy, pragmatic, affected snot...!'

18. Letter to F.W.H. Myers, 1 March 1886, Booth and Mehew V, p.216, especially note 2.
19. Stevenson tends to rank *The Wrecker* below 'the far more important *Pearl Fisher*', for example, in a letter to Colvin in August 1890, Booth and Mehew VI, p.405.
20. See Julian Barnes, *Flaubert's Parrot* (London: Picador, 1984), p.12.
21. 'The intentional fallacy' was first published in the *Sewanee Review* in 1946, and subsequently in W.K. Wimsatt, *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* (Lexington, Ky: University of Kentucky Press, 1954).
22. Letter to Low, 15 January 1894, Booth and Mehew VIII, p. 235.
23. *Ethical Studies* (Tusitala Edition, vol. XXVI (London: Heinemann, 1924)), pp.46-7; cf. Joanna Richardson, *The Bohemians: La Vie de Bohème in Paris 1830-1914* (London: Macmillan,1969), p.81, on the difference between 'natural Bohemian' and 'the poseur' or 'cabotin'.
24. See 'The Suicide Cub: The Story of the Physician and the Saratoga Trunk' in *New Arabian Nights* (Tusitala Edition, vol. I (London: Heinemann, 1923)).
25. *ibid.* p.34.
26. Will H. Low, *A Chronicle of Friendships* (1908), extract in Jenni Calder, (ed.) *The Robert Louis Stevenson Companion* (Edinburgh: Paul Harris Publishing, 1980), p.60. On the celebrated Bal Bullier see Nicholas Hewitt, 'Shifting Cultural Centres in Twentieth Century Paris', in Michael Sheringham (ed.), *Parisian Fields* (London: Reaktion Books, 1996), pp.31;38-42.
27. In *Further Memories* (Tusitala Edition, vol. XXX (London: Heinemann, 1924)).
28. See 'In the Latin Quarter: A Ball at Mr Elsinare's' in Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Lantern-Bearers and other essays*, ed. Jeremy Treglown (London: Chatto and Windus, 1988), p.53; cf. Stevenson's letter to his Mother, January 1877, Booth and Mehew II, p.199.
29. Low in Calder, *op. cit.*, p.59.
30. *Further Memories*, p.107.
31. *Further Memories*, p.103.
32. Though it was precisely a woman artist (Fanny Vandegrift) who was to change Stevenson's life. On the previous pages (*Further Memories*, p.100-1) Stevenson writes about the impact of 'that essentially modern creature, the English or American girl-student' in 'the institution of the painters' colony' in France.
33. *Further Memories*, p.102.
34. See Virginia Woolf on Roger's Fry's view that 'writers should fling representation to the winds' in Virginia Woolf, *Roger Fry: A Biography* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1940), p.172.
35. Letter to Low, 13 March 1885, Mehew, pp.279-80.
36. 'A Humble Remonstrance' in *Memories and Portraits* (Tusitala Edition, vol. XXIX (London: Heinemann, 1924))
37. *ibid.* p.136.
38. The blurring of genre boundaries in *The Wrecker* (see note 4 above) also to some extent anticipates postmodernism. The practice of co-authorship similarly tends to undermine the pretensions to 'originality' and 'ownership' characteristic of 'the Great Tradition' (cf. Linda Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism* (London: Routledge, 1989), pp.93-4.
39. See the end of chapter XII, pp.188-193, in the course of which Nares makes a comment which it is hard not to see as a kind of parody of Kant (on the part of

- Stevenson if not Nares): 'Well, there's always something sublime about about a big deal like that; and it kind of raises a man in his own liking' (p.191); cf Kant on 'the Dynamically Sublime in Nature' in *Kant's Critique of Judgement*, trans. J.H. Bernard (London: Macmillan, 1931), pp.125-6.
40. 'Pendant les soirées de Vailima ... il n'était pas le dernier à spéculer à haute voix sur ce qu'un tel génie aurait pu produire, si seulement il avait daigné, mais son coeur à chaque fois se serrait, d'avoir à taire son secret: qu'il avait dû, pour être, pour s'affirmer comme écrivain, tuer en lui le cousin Bob.' (Le Bris, *op. cit.* p.335; the translation in the text above is mine). Le Bris repeats verbatim this passage (and indeed the whole page) in his later *Pour Saluer Stevenson* (Paris: Flammarion, 2000), p.88.
  41. See note 12 above.
  42. See Booth and Mehew I, p.50; and II, p.251.

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