# SMELL, SMELLS AND SMELLING IN VICTORIAN SUPERNATURAL FICTION OF THE FIN DE SIÈCLE

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# Abstract

My PhD examines how writers at the fin de siècle responded to new understandings of smell, smells and smelling in their representations of the supernatural, demonstrating how those understandings were harnessed to nascent disciplines and technologies concerned with the limits and potential of the human subject. It recovers a lost history of smell and explains how shifts in the meaning of 'smell' (verb and noun) were witnessed and interrogated by writers in the period. Drawing attention to significant omissions from foundational accounts of olfaction in the nineteenth century, the thesis performs five key reclamatory readings to illuminate a number of supernatural stories. Firstly, it considers cross-channel influences on the articulation and reception of smell-description, drawing out a specifically British experience of scent that relates to the defaecalisation of the River Thames between 1858 and 1875. It then uncovers the origin, and demonstrates the literary manifestation, of analogies between music and scent. The thesis analyses how smells and noses in fin-de-siècle supernatural tales responded to new discursive possibilities afforded by late nineteenth-century developments in rhinoplasty, anaesthesia, nursing and Tractarian theology. The possible over-estimation of H. G. Wells's reputation for early alignment with Darwinian theory is also considered through a recuperation of George William Piesse's *The Art of Perfumery* (1855). Finally, it considers smellers and noses in Henry Rider Haggard's *She* (1887), Richard Marsh's *The Beetle* (1897), Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) and a range of prose fiction by Vernon Lee and Arthur Machen. Overall, it argues that in fin-de-siècle supernatural fiction the epistemology of smell, smells and smelling provided writers with new ways of testing, expanding and representing the boundaries of human identity.

For my family

# Acknowledgements

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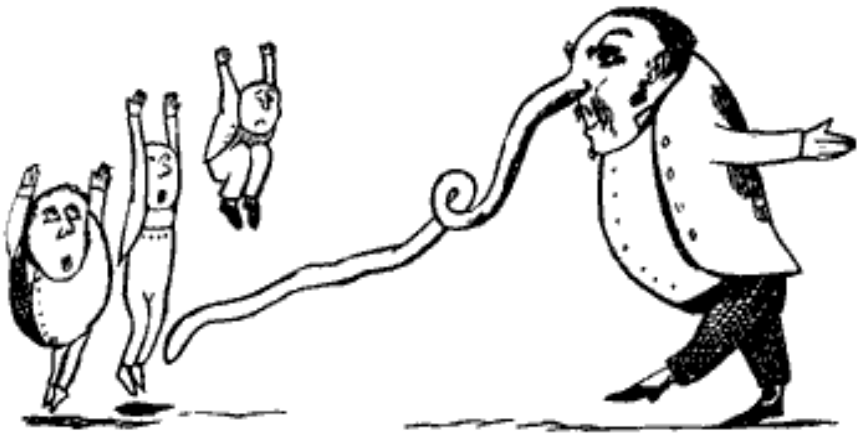
# Notes on Presentation

In line with the argument that manufactured and bottled perfumes themselves became texts that were understood in terms of artistic composition, the names of manufactured scents will be rendered in italics throughout, like novels.

**Definitions**

Unless specifically stated in the text, all quoted definitions and etymological derivations are drawn from the second edition (1989) of the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) and appear, unaltered, in its most recent online version at the date of submission

# Frontispiece



There was an Old Man with a nose,

Who said, ‘If you choose to suppose

That my nose is too long, you are certainly wrong!’

That remarkable Man with a nose.

**From *A Book of Nonsense* by Edward Lear (London: Routledge, Warne & Routledge, 1861)**

# Introduction: 1

> A genuine ghost-story! But they are not genuine ghost-stories, those tales that tingle through our additional sense, the sense of the supernatural, and fill places, nay whole epochs, with their strange perfume of witchgarden.
>
> - Vernon Lee, Preface to *Hauntings* (1889)[1]

Vernon Lee's Preface to *Hauntings* touched on a conflation of 'strange perfume' with 'the sense of the supernatural'. That conflation of the supernatural with bizarre smells is the subject of this thesis and my argument that writers regularly used ideas about smell, smells and smelling during the fin-de-siècle period to challenge materialist classifications of being a human. This study excavates the origins, demonstrates the widespread incidence, and ultimately reveals the wider implications of authors' use of smell, smells and smelling in supernatural fictions of the fin de siècle.

In work by writers including Arthur Conan Doyle, Arthur Machen, George MacDonald, Richard Marsh, Oscar Wilde, H. G. Wells, Bram Stoker and Vernon Lee, smells erupt, ooze, leak, percolate, diffuse, throb and fade at moments of ontological crisis according to principles, the narrative implies, that may or may not be of this world. The writers of these fin-de-siècle documents use noses, smells and smelling in their tales to destabilise notions of what is a human experience. Anticipating the formulation of transcendental phenomenological ideas in the first quarter of the twentieth century by Edmund Husserl, the fictional noses in these fin-de-siècle texts are already blurring the traditional Cartesian dualism of subject and object positions through an epistemological complication of the transforming interplay between the

[1] Vernon Lee, *Hauntings and Other Fantastic Tales*, ed. by Catherine Maxwell and Patricia Pulham (Peterborough: Broadview, 2006), p. 38.

perceiver and the perceived.[2] What is this smell?, asks many a fin-de-siècle narrator at the threshold of the supernatural: is it a smell because it is a material emanation from some Other or is it a smell because I am smelling it? This is the question set at the heart of Magnus's haunting by the song of the Castrato in Vernon Lee's *A Wicked Voice* (1890), of Lord Henry Wotton's spellbinding effect upon the protagonist in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (published as the lead story in *Lippincott's Magazine* in July 1890 and in its novel form in 1891), of Jonathan Harker's first Transylvanian encounter with the vampire Count in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), and of Charles Phillipps's appraisal of occult murder in Arthur Machen's *The Three Imposters* (1895).[3] These texts – along with the others pursued in the following three chapters – all fit into Lee's category of 'not genuine ghost-stories' because not one of them features a conventional chain-rattling, sheet-wearing phantom such as the example affectionately parodied in Oscar Wilde's mock-gothic 'The Canterville Ghost' (1887),[4] but between them they introduced new subjects such as vampires, reanimated Egyptian mummies and are-they-or-aren't-they psychological teasers to the traditional spooky genre. A recovery of the link made between their concern with supernaturality and their engagement with 'strange perfumes', however, allows those familiar nineteenth-century

[2] This estimate of time is based on Paul Ricoeur's calculation that the transcendent aspect of Husserl's phenomenological writings was comprehensively worked out between 1907-ca.1925, and collected in Husserl's *Idean I* (first published 1913) and *II* (posthumously published in 1952). Husserl's follower, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, extended Husserl's original argument in *The Phenomenology of Perception* (1945) to include the problem of embodiment (that is, a concern with the impact upon perception of non-reflexive sensory modalities), but, although he wrote about touch, Merleau-Ponty (like Husserl) never referred to smell. See: Paul Ricouer, *Husserl, an Analysis of his Phenomenology* (Evanston: Illinois, 1967), pp. 30-38.

[3] Although the story is framed not as a 'supernatural' but as a 'scientific' romance, another literary example of olfaction used at the fin de siècle to imply the interweaving of external objective positions and internal subjective positions is in H. G. Wells's *The Time Machine* (1895), where the Time Traveller comes first to understand the cannibalistic Morlocks and their relation to his own ancestral self through the medium of smell. See: H. G. Wells, *The Time Machine: An Invention* (Rockville, Phoenix: Arc Manor, 2008), p. 56.

[4] 'The Canterville Ghost' was Wilde's first published short story, and it tells how the old-fashioned apparition of the ancient aristocratic mansion, Canterville Chase, is made over (and eventually won over) by the sensible, modern American residents and their endearingly pragmatic daughter. First published in the *Court and Society Review*, February 1887, collected in *Lord Arthur Saville's Crime and Other Stories* in 1891.

texts to become quite strange. Put back into place, the link reveals the social and technological innovations that were attached to classificatory structures and mimetic paradigms associated with smell, smells and smelling and that were to develop more fully in the twentieth century as nurse training, anaesthesia, rhinoplasty and germ warfare.

As the word 'smell' stands in for several nouns and a verb, there is a strong practical benefit to this thesis in using the words, 'smell, smells and smelling' which have meanings that overlap each other.[5] Although the descriptor 'olfaction', and its precise derivatives 'olfactive' and 'olfactory', have been preferred in recent academic work such as *Common Scents* (2004) by Janice Carlisle,[6] 'Scents and Sensibility: The Fragrance of Decadence' (2013) by Catherine Maxwell[7] and '"Wicked with Roses": Floral Femininity and the Erotics of Scent' by Christina Bradstreet[8] to describe motifs of smell, smells and smelling in nineteenth-century art and literature, the words 'smell', 'smells' and 'smelling' could refer in different contexts to 'that which emits odour', to 'detecting odour' and, simply, to 'odour' itself. Such semantic slippage reveals the presence of an ontological confusion where subject ('I smell') and object ('it smells') positions are self-entangled and mutable. The old joke 'My dog has no nose' / 'How does he smell?' / 'Terrible!' is instructive here, as is Monty Python's deliberate faux-German nonsense 'translation' of the joke ('Wenn ist das Nunstück git und Slotermeyer? Ja! ... Beiherhund das Oder die Flipperwaldt gersput. ….'), which plays on the idea that different operative meanings of 'smell' and 'smell' have value for

[5] The *OED* dates a first usage of 'olfaction' to 1833, although 'olfactive' and 'olfactory' have seventeenth-century origins. Entries for 'smell', 'smells' and 'smelling' are much older, and date to 1175 CE.

[6] Janice Carlisle, *Common Scents: Comparative Encounters in High-Victorian Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[7] Catherine Maxwell, 'Scents and Sensibility', in *Decadent Poetics: Literature and Form at the British Fin de Siècle*, ed. by Jason David Hall and Alex Murray (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

[8] Christina Bradstreet, '"Wicked with Roses": Floral Femininity and the Erotics of Scent', *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide: A Journal of Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture*, 6:1 (2006) <http://www.19thc-artworldwide.org/index.php/spring07/144-qwicked-with-rosesq-floral-femininity-and-the-erotics-of-scent > [accessed 9 December 2013].

wordplay only in the English language.[9] As this thesis is concerned with the historical development of self-entanglement and linguistic mutability in ideas about smell, smells and smelling at the Victorian fin de siècle, and is engaged with considering relationships between British and Continental models of olfactory experience, so the older English words 'smell', 'smells' and 'smelling' will be retained where appropriate.

Without an appreciation of how smell, smells and smelling were described at the fin de siècle as having overlapping subjective and objective boundaries, no explanation has so far been able to account for the gap between nineteenth-century (and earlier) ideas that humans have an innate facility to 'smell' out something that is not quite in order and the later, twentieth-century custom of ascribing a suspicious smell to the suspicious person or object itself. The first usage of 'smell' is shown by Janice Carlisle to have reached an apogee in British literature during the 1860s, and is based on Plato's explanation of smell as separating the wholesome from the noxious.[10] Examples of smelling out something amiss appear in English texts as early as *Piers Plowman* (1377)[11] and are often drawn from hunting imagery, such as the line from Thomas Middleton & Thomas Dekker's play *Roaring Girl* (1611), 'Now I do smell a fox strongly',[12] or in William Rufus Chetwood's *Voyages* (1736), where a suspicious woman will 'smell a rat'.[13] Here, smelling is a dynamic act of rational discernment. Although the activity of olfactory discernment had been metonymically transferred to become the property of some abstract nouns (such as by Shelley's third Fury, for

[9] The nonsense 'translation' reads: 'When is the Nowpiece git and Slotermeyer? Yes!...Beiherdog that or the Flipperwaldt gersput!'. Monty Python (Comedy troupe), *The Complete Monty Python's Flying Circus: All the Words,* Vol. I (New York: Pantheon, 1989), pp. 12-13.
[10] Carlisle, *Common Scents*.
[11] 'Þere smit no þinge so smerte, ne smelleth so soure / As shame'. See: William Langland, *The Vision of William Concerning Piers Plowman:* Everyman *translation of 'B' text* (London: J.M. Dent, 2003 [1978]), p. 188.
[12] Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker, *The Roaring Girle: or, Moll Cut-Purse* (London: T. Archer, 1611), I. 4. 106.
[13] 'I ask'd her so many Questions, that, tho' a Woman ignorant enough, she began to smell a Rat'. See: William Rufus Chetwood, *The Voyages, Travels and Adventures of William Owen Gwin Vaughan* (New York: Garland, 1972 ), l. 170.

example, for whom 'hope' smells,[14] or by Shakespeare's Hamlet who gnashes 'O, my offence is rank. It smells to Heaven'[15]), the second and later usage of 'smell' and 'smelly' did not arise until the early twentieth century. From that time, the words 'smell' or 'smelly' acquired their meaning 'to give rise to suspicion; to have an air of dishonesty or fraud' (*OED*) and were applied to something described as materially emanating a strange odour that designated its unsavouriness. In Joseph Manchon's 1923 lexicon of French-English slang, for instance, the English word 'smelly' is defined as '*louche, véreux'* ['louche, shady'].[16] The first citation (1939) of this nature in the OED even has quotation marks around it, to indicate its neologistic status: 'What 'smelled' about the […] case appeared to have been saved by committee counsel for later inquiry'. A second citation dates from 1950, where the neologism is given first in italics and then defined: 'It *smells*, it is something to be wary about; highly suspicious'. The shift in lexical patterns that accompanied 'smell' in its earlier sense (as the discernment or emanation of scent) to 'smell' in its later sense (as an indicator of suspicious or doubtful phenomena) had occurred sometime between the 1860s, when the prevalence of the former had been observed by Carlisle, and 1923 when the new forms of the word appeared in its slang, civil and judicial contexts.

Part of the task of this thesis is to show how that previously unexplained shift in the meaning of 'smells' had been witnessed and explained by writers who ascribed the quality of smelliness to the supernatural at the end of the nineteenth century. By 'supernaturality', I refer to the state of being outside of 'nature', as normatively defined by the rules of physical science. So, for example, the time-traveller's temporal transgression in Grant Allen's *The British Barbarians* (1895) is accompanied by both

[14] 'The hope of torturing him smells like a heap /Of corpses, to a death-bird after battle'. See: Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Prometheus Unbound: A Lyrical Drama* (Classic Reprint), (Central, Hong Kong: Forgotten Books, 2012), p. 24, l. 340.
[15] William Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, ed. Edmund K. Chambers* (London & Glasgow: Blackie 'Warwick Shakespeare series', undated), III. 3. 36.
[16] Joseph Manchon, *Le Slang: Lexique de l'Anglais Familier et Vulgaire* (Paris: Payot, 1923), p. 278.

the 'weird sense of the supernatural'[17] and the strong and incongruous odour of violets that overcomes its witness.[18] Smell in many supernatural 'not ghost-stories' of the Victorian fin de siècle can be understood as 'habitus' in Pierre Bordieu's sense, in which writers who broadly belong to the same social, ethnic, generational and linguistic group share similar ideas across many fields of symbolic practice. Recurring themes of smell, smells and smelling were used by writers with remarkable frequency at the turn of the nineteenth century to indicate the supernatural. The unexpected smell of a crypt that intrudes inexplicably upon the gilded palace museum in Vernon Lee's 'Winthrop's Adventure' (1881) is the harbinger of a ghostly apparition at the harpsichord. In another example, the 'queer sort of scent in the study' that puzzles the servant and chills the narrator of Arthur Machen's 'The Novel of the Black Seal' (1895) accompanies the shifting of a plaster bust that subsequently reveals the occult interference of evil fairies.[19] Each text employs smell to register a supernatural disorder of the expected and reasonable.

For the writers examined in the following chapters, smell, smells and smelling became figures for categorical indeterminacy. By 'categorical indeterminacy' I mean both the slippage of phenomena between classifications and the privileging of their indescribability; the smell of categorical indeterminacy is the 'faint odour of patchouli' that an anonymous reviewer objected to in Arthur Symons's first edition of *Silhouettes* (1892).[20] Categorical indeterminacy is the opposite of category determinism, the peculiar semiotics of which have been explained by the historian of consumerism Thomas Richards as being part of the economic process that commenced in Britain

[17] Grant Allen, *The British Barbarians* (London: Dodo Press, 1895), p. 201.
[18] Ibid, p. 84.
[19] Arthur Machen, 'The Novel of the Black Seal', in *The Three Imposters and Other Stories*, ed. by S. T. Joshi (Hayward, Chaosium, 2007 [1895]), p. 160.
[20] Symons 'defended' himself in a preface to the second edition (1896), wherein he murmured: 'I am a little sorry he chose Patchouli, for that is not a particularly favourite scent with me. If he had only chosen Peau d'Espagne, which has a subtle meaning, or Lily of the Valley, with which I have associations!' See: Arthur Symons, *Sillhouettes* (London: Leonard Smithers, 1896), p. xiii.

during the 1820s with statutory price protection, regulation and fixing. According to Richards, the arrangement of the Great Exhibition of 1851 epitomised the Victorian establishment of orders, divisions, subdivisions, arrangements, departments, dispositions and sections, with its taxonomic roots in both the eighteenth-century *philosophe* tradition championed by Prince Albert and the newer, commercial imperatives held by the Exhibition's planning commission. Although visitors to the Great Exhibition were allowed a 'certain amount of mobility within a confined space of Exhibition', daily attendance rates of up to 16,000 people a day led the 4,000-strong Exhibition Police service to encourage a brisk traffic through the rooms: 'like a modern shopping mall, the Crystal Palace set up an elaborate traffic pattern for channelling people around things'.[21] Richard's use of the Great Exhibition as a paradigm of Victorian mania for classification suggests in turn that channelling people around things also required the new ideological structures provided by the flourishing universities, Mechanics' Institutes and their diverse publications (such as the *Penny Cyclopædia*, offered from 1833-43 by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge) as well as by the new public spaces of gallery and museum. This thesis finds that smell – indefinable, uncontainable and involuntary smell – was posed by writers at the Victorian fin de siècle as counter to that mid-century urge to determine fixed categories.

While category determinism valorised dreams of comfort and control, categorical indeterminacy offered a taxonomic nightmare. One of the worst horrors in the late-Victorian imagination is the thing that bursts out of the confinements of its category: Roger Luckhurst's 2005 collection of representative late-Victorian Gothic short fiction contains the Mummy in the study that casts off its ancient case and walks free into Oxford, the ancient pagan deity that leaps out of an avant-garde neurological procedure gone horribly wrong, and the anonymous 'patient' who becomes a victim of

[21] Thomas Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England: Advertising and Spectacle, 1851-1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), p. 32 and p. 4.

medical torture.[22] Other texts that will be examined in the following pages will include an ancient Egyptian dung-beetle that projects vile corruption into a fashionable Mayfair ballroom, an enchanted song that kills the listener, and the vampire's blood type that is alien to records in the medical encyclopœdia. As John Jervis has shown, such shattering of categories necessarily accompanies the notion of the 'supernatural' that 'only makes sense by contrast with the category of the '"natural"', the notion of nature as secular, law-governed, available for scientific investigation'.[23] The following thesis will show that the sense of smell, the act of smelling and smells themselves become primary vehicles for textual allusions to the categorically indescribable in supernatural stories of this period. Following the example of Carlisle in *Common Scents*, I shall pursue an 'olfactory critique' that is alive to comparative encounters between characters and ideas, but that also takes into account the particular historical contexts that caused perceptions of the functions and associations of smell, smells and smelling to change rapidly at the end of the nineteenth century.

At this point, it must be noted that the examination of categorical indeterminacy practiced in this thesis is not the same thing as an examination of phenomenal liminality, although both methodologies do share an attention to imagined alternative ontologies. Liminality is a fin-de-siècle construct drawn from ethnographic observations about initiatory rites of passage through neophytic hardship.[24] It is a perspective that belongs to the nineteenth-century praxis of creating, maintaining, policing and enforcing taxonomic boundaries: liminality is concerned with the thresholds between states and

[22] The stories, respectively, are 'Lot No. 259' by Arthur Conan Doyle (pp. 109-140), 'The Great God Pan' by Arthur Machen (pp. 183-233) and 'The Case of Lady Sannox' by Arthur Conan Doyle (pp. 141-150). All in: Roger Luckhurst (ed.), *Late Victorian Gothic Tales* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
[23] John Jervis, *Exploring the Modern: Patterns of Western Culture and Civilization* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), p. 183.
[24] For the coinage of the term 'liminality', see: Arnold van Gennep, *Les rites de passage; étude systématique des rites de la porte et du seuil, de l'hospitalitéde l'adoption, de la grossesse et de l'accouchement, de la naissance, de l'enfance, de la puberté de l'initiation, de l'ordination, du couronnement des fianeailles et du mariage, des funérailles, des saisons, etc.* (Paris: É Nourry, 1909).

objects on the one hand, while on the other it delimits the indescribable by permitting it a brief, safe existence in between two conventionally fixed identifications.[25]

A liminal reading may offer insights into some aspects of the supernatural fiction treated in the following discussion, such as Mark M. Hennelly Jr.'s observation that the *Dracula*'s Count needs to be invited in over the threshold,[26] or Katie Smith's demonstration that the butler provides a link between high and low society in Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891).[27] The initiatory structural arc of liminality fails, however, to account either for the sheer narrative primacy of the 'betwixt and between' fantasy worlds encountered in other texts here, such as George Macdonald's *Lilith* (1894) and Henry Rider Haggard's *She: A History of Adventure* (1887), or for the imagined inadequacy of their protagonists' reintegration as fully actualised adults within their original societies.[28] Many characters in the texts examined in the following chapters have been labelled by critics, including Kelly Hurley and Noël Carroll, as 'liminal', but this label is insufficient.[29] Smelling is *not* a stable activity that can be experienced in the same way by two people on the same day, or even by the same person on two consecutive days: the experience and meaning of smell, smells and smelling keeps shifting according to when, where and to whom, the experience occurs.[30]

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[25] Although Arpad Szakolczai allows for a state of 'permanent liminality', which comes close to the categorical indeterminacy pursued in this thesis, he still sees it as a result of dysfunction of the initiatory stages, as though something has gone wrong and become 'petrified or frozen' during transmission. See: Arpad Szakolczai, *Reflexive Historical Sociology* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp.133-134.

[26] Mark M. Hennelly,'Betwixt Sunrise and sunset: Liminality in Dracula', *Journal of Dracula Studies*, 7 (2005) <http://www.blooferland.com/drc/index.php?title=Journal_of_Dracula_Studies> [accessed 21 March 2011].

[27] Katie Smith, 'Liminal Butlers: Discussing a Comic Stereotype and the Progression of Class Distinctions in America' (unpublished Master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 2007).

[28] By which I mean how Vincey and Holly cannot settle back home in England after their adventures in *She* and have to disappear, literally, from the text in order to find further esoteric destinations in Thibet. In *Lilith*, Adam's reintegration involves simply settling down to wait until death.

[29] For the relationship between categorical indeterminacy and 'abhumans', see: Kelly Hurley, 'British Gothic Fiction 1885-1930', in *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, ed. by Jerrold E. Hogle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 189-208. On the categorically interstitial, see: Noël Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror or, Paradoxes of the Heart* (New York: Routledge, 1990), pp. 32-45.

[30] In human brains, olfactory bulbs are situated adjacent to the limbic system, and so olfactory neural connections go straight to memories and emotions while bypassing the parts of the brain responsible for cognition and reasoned interpretation. Luca Turin explains that two identical molecular structures can therefore smell quite differently to two individuals, according to their personal psychohistories and

This thesis does not assume a static epistemology of the senses that are acted *upon*, but it does map themes and patterns across which fluctuating ideas of smell, smells and smelling were manifested during the fin de siècle.

As a piece of olfactory cartography, this thesis works by grounding something as nebulous as scent in material facts, dates and numbers and then by noting, collecting and verifying recurrences of themes to establish an ideal network related to smell, smells and smelling. It seeks and develops examples of neologisms that support an historicist version of smells in literature, and it locates writers in their biographical and historical contexts to account for the presence of thematic architectures as evidence of personal and cultural anxieties expressed safely in literature. In addition, I have borrowed an interest in *avantes-textes* from French genetic literary studies, paying particular attention to the production and reception of canonical texts. As a crucial aim of this thesis is to draw new attention to how the experience and meanings of smell, smells and smelling were changing at an unprecedented rate at the turn of the nineteenth century, I have dispensed with Freudian and post-Freudian analyses of olfaction in literature that have dealt with noses as displaced phallic symbols, and that subsequently have deflected attention from their primary olfactory roles: sometimes, a nose is just a nose.

The second part of this introduction will go on to look at the current state of olfactory studies, and furnish evidence for four contributory factors that between them changed the social understanding of olfaction at the fin de siècle. They are the influence of contemporary French writing, some repercussions of the medical paradigm shift from miasma theory to germ theory, the rise of the perfume industry and the acquisition by scented products of the lexicon of music. The three following chapters take different aspects of late nineteenth-century thought and show how these aspects were

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previous experiences of the smell: 'same data, different filters'. See: Luca Turin and Tania Sanchez, *Perfumes: The Guide* (London: Profile, 2008), p. 48.

interrogated, implicated or revealed by authors' use of olfactory motifs in supernatural stories. Descriptions of noses will be first examined, since the organ of olfaction is so implicated in the act of smelling. Subsequently, the chapters look at the new insights gained by olfactory analysis and consider their historical and critical contexts. The danger of this kind of syncretic approach is that the chapters' focus can seem to wander, so each chapter tethers its wider conclusions to one of three particular themes. Chapter One concerns itself with evolutionary theory. It contains a survey of unusual noses in George Macdonald's *Lilith* (1894), Richard Marsh's *The Beetle*, Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and H. G. Wells's *The Invisible Man* (all 1897), suggesting that the authors were problematising the Darwinian hierarchy and moulding their evolutionary models upon earlier work by Cuvier, Lamarck and Erasmus Darwin. The undermining of Charles Darwin by Wells via T.H. Huxley is discussed, as are the contributions of the medical disciplines of Ear, Nose and Throat surgery and rhinoplasty to other fictional noses of the fin de siècle, including Carlo Collodi's *Pinocchio* (1887) and Edmond Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac* (1897).

Chapter Two discusses the appearance of the Hollow Earth trope in Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (first published in *Lippincott's Magazine*, 1890 and in complete book form in 1891) and in Henry Rider Haggard's *She: A History of Adventure* (serialised in *The Graphic* October 1886-January 1887, first published in book form, with revisions, in January 1887), showing that the disposition of fragrance in both texts figures the Earth as an active protagonist with the power to confer or delimit immortality, and that geonomic power in these novels is related to contemporary anxieties over the age of the planet. Fragrance in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is demonstrated to be 'anaesthetic' which, I argue, provides the necessary paradoxical converse to 'aesthetic' in the novel. In addition, Wilde's up-to-the-minute attention to perfume merchandising and cosmetic innovations is highlighted, as is the contemporary

association between floral smells and the nascent lexicon of 'homosexuality'. The role of smell in *She* is explored, showing not only that Haggard privileges scent in the novel as a signifier of categorical indeterminacy and a pre-linguistic touchstone of 'Truth', but also that he plays with neologistic notions of 'essence', which is conflated in the text with energy, existence and fragrance. I go on to suggest that Haggard's descriptions of Queen Ayesha's fragrant potions, contrary to some recent critical interpretation, engages with advocacy of women in pharmacology and nursing.

Chapter Three engages with some associations of smell, smells and smelling with theories of incarnation. It considers odour in Vernon Lee's 'A Wicked Voice' (1890), where strong perfume indicates the interpenetrability of past (that is, scent invoking recollection) and future (that is, scent inviting anticipation). Lee's dismantling of binary categories of time is mirrored in the stories by the similar dismantling of male and female, self and Other, where scent signifies the disruption of stable identity: 'the supernatural is nothing but ever-renewed impressions, ever-shifting fancies'.[31] Lee's exploration of ever-shifting transformation through the medium of scent is contrasted with Arthur Machen's in his supernatural fiction of the 1890s, where ritualistic savours of sacrificial incense highlight the roles of incarnational scent in contemporary Anglican and Tractarian self-identifications.

In sum, this thesis treats recurring themes of developing discursive patterns of smell, smells and smelling in late-nineteenth-century supernatural tales. I show how writers used themes of smell, smells and smelling in supernatural literature of the fin de siècle to present a fracture with mid-nineteenth-century category determinism – a fracture that anticipated the formal disjunctions of twentieth-century Modernism.

[31] Vernon Lee, 'Faustus and Helena: Some Notes on the Supernatural', in *Belcaro* (London: W. Satchell, 1881), p. 47.

# Introduction: 2

In undertaking an 'olfactory reading' (that is, a reading to show the centrality of smell) to fin-de-siècle texts concerned with the supernatural, this thesis expands on some of the work of other commentators on smell in fin-de-siècle literature from the last three decades. To that extent, the label 'fin-de-siècle' refers less to a particular decade and more to an identifiable cluster of values and ideas that formed at the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries' hinge. The historiographical notion of the fin de siècle as a hinge is helpful here in getting past the question of whether the 1890s were the end of the Victorian period or the beginning of the twentieth century.[32] Although the cluster of values and ideas in the years 1880-1914 has been negatively characterised by Raymond Williams as an 'interregnum' between the Victorians on the one hand and the Moderns on the other, it may more usefully be considered in the context of this study to have been a period of active engagement with political and intellectual transitions necessitated, as Peter Keating opines, by 'the twin forces of electoral reform and Darwinism'.[33] In addition to Keating's twin criteria for engagement with transition, however, was writers' exploration of the resonances and repercussions of smell, smells and smelling.

**Smells and the -isms**

Much critical debate about the writers whose texts have formed the basis of this discussion has revolved around the attribution of characteristic features that often overlap in fin-de-siècle literary Aesthetic, Decadent, Symbolist, Naturalist and Realist

[32] For a helpful summary of ongoing historiographical debates around 'Victorian' periodicity, see: Miles Taylor and Michael Wolff (eds.), *The Victorians Since 1901: Histories, Representations and Revisions* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

[33] See: Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society 1780–1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983) pp. 162–198. See also: Peter Keating, *The Haunted Study: A Social History of the English Novel 1875-1914* (London: Collins Fontana, 1991), p. 3.

movements. Henry James, for instance, complained in 1884 to Vernon Lee that her first novel proved her to be incorrigibly an Aesthete: 'you take the aesthetic business too seriously'.[34] For Elaine Showalter in 1993, Lee's 1892 short story 'Lady Tal' (which reciprocatively depicts an abject caricature of Henry James being humiliated by a budding young woman writer) defines its author as a 'daughter of Decadence'.[35] Ruth Robbins has argued that Lee is not generally thought of as a decadent writer because she was a woman,[36] whilst in Patricia Pulham's and Catherine Maxwell's *Vernon Lee: Decadence, Ethics, Aesthetics* (2006), Lee is both an Aesthete and a Decadent too. This double-labelling is symptomatic of a general difficulty in tracing ideological allegiances to the various artistic movements at the fin de siècle, not least because writers associated with one movement (such as J.K. Huysmans, who started off as a Naturalist) might become associated with another movement during their career (as the author of *À Rebours*, Huysmans became lionised by followers of the Aesthetic Movement after its publication in 1894), or else might seek deliberately to distance themselves from controversial attitudes and values they had formally been seen to espouse. The poet Lionel Johnson is a good example: once intimate with Wilde, the 'Sultan' of literary London, he sought deliberately to repudiate both his former mentor and his former literary style in the accusatory poem 'Destroyer of a Soul' (1892) and his lament for the 'death of beauty and the death of grace' in 'The Dark Angel' (1893).[37] As this thesis will be considering the various manifestations of olfaction in a selection of literary texts from the period 1881-1911, it will be useful to set out, from the beginning, an opening résumé of current views of literary movements within this period together with some

[34] Leon Edel, *The Letters of Henry James Volume III: 1883-1895*, 4 vols (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1980), II, p. 86.
[35] Elaine Showalter, *Daughters of Decadence: Women Writers of the Fin-de-Siècle* (UK: Virago, 1993), pp. 192–261.
[36] Catherine Ruth Robbins, 'Decadence and Sexual Politics in Three *Fin-de-Siècle* Writers: Oscar Wilde, Arthur Symons and Vernon Lee' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Warwick, 1996), p. 9.
[37] Arthur Alfred Lynch, *Our Poets!* (London and Sydney: Remington & Co, 1898), pp. 7-10.

observations on their different approaches to olfaction.

Despite their ideological differences, the British Aesthetic, Decadent, Symbolist, Realist and Naturalist literary movements of this period had a lot in common, including their responses to rising industrialism and growing urbanism, to scientific evolutionism, to the calls for emancipation of women, to nationalist rivalry and to the rhetoric of Empire. In their separate ways too, the members of all literary movements at the fin de siècle were united in resistance to the inherited Romantic conception of Nature. For followers of the Aesthetic movement, this resistance took the form of an elevation of Artifice, while for Naturalists it led to unflinching depictions of the grimy social realities determining behaviour and temperament. The various literary movements were also united by a common interest in prevailing modes of reading; the 1890s was famously the decade of the 'little magazines' and of 'the New Journalism' (to use Matthew Arnold's 1887 phrase) that aimed at making print culture more accessible to working-class and female readers. Mass-market periodicals created an explosion of interest in fiction 'both as a genre and as a commodity',[38] while the Education Acts passed between 1870 and 1891 had created a new, literate and culturally aspiring 'mass' readership. The number of writers, as well as of readers, increased: the 1881 census included 3,400 self-declared authors, the 1891 census included 6,000 and the 1901 census revealed 11,000.[39] Although these census figures pertain only to Britain, historians of literary movements from 1870 to 1914 invariably cite the influence of movements current in France upon British writers. Regardless of such influences however – as Anthony Pym points out in his example of Arthur Symons (a Symbolist) translating Emile Zola (a Naturalist) into English in 1894 – diverse standards of

[38] Winnie Chan, Rev. Madeleine A. Vala 'The Economy of the Short Story in British Periodicals of the 1890s', *Victorian Studies*, 52:1 (2009), 166-168.
[39] Nicola Bown, Carolyn Burdett and Pamela Thurschwell, eds, *The Victorian Supernatural* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 247.

translation from French into English often had the effect of blurring the ideological allegiance of an original text.[40]

The depiction of smell in Realist writing in Britain stemmed not only from the particularisation of character and accumulation of detail which had characterised the earliest seventeenth-century English novels, but also from the two features defined by Georg Lukács as typical of Continental Realism.[41] Firstly, Lukács looked for an interest in the historical forces and contradictions which impact on individual human lives, and secondly, for a focus on the lived experience of ordinary people. The term 'Realism' was often used interchangeably with 'Naturalism' in the period, although the latter movement was defined in 1880 by Emile Zola as 'the scientific method applied to surroundings and character' and sought not to *give* a realistic impression of life, but to *be* a realistic impression of life.[42] To that end, compendious research had to supplement the historical events and geographical locations of the stories while the subjective biases of the author were to be extinguished, leading often to a tone of ironic detachment at variance with the sordid or brutal subject matter. George Moore's novels *A Mummer's Wife* (1885) and *Esther Waters* (1894), for example, portray without sentiment the degradation engendered by seduction, alcohol and illiteracy while George Gissing's *New Grub Street* (1891) proposes that the only sensible approach for a 'man of today' to such dreadful news as a public hanging, is to cheerfully and unsentimentally keep eating one's breakfast egg 'and really excellent buttered toast'.[43]

Opposing Realism's and Naturalism's concern with the quotidian verisimilitude of smell was the Aesthetic movement and its literary offshoots, Symbolism and

[40] Anthony Pym, 'Late Victorian to the Present', in *The Oxford Guide to Literature in Translation*, ed. by Peter France (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 73-81 (p. 74).
[41] 'The wealth of the characterisation, the profound and accurate grasp of constant and typical manifestations of human life is what produces the great reverberation of these works [by Cervantes, Shakespeare, Tolstoy, Balzac, Gorky, Thomas and Heinrich Mann]'. See: György Lukacs, 'Realism in the Balance', in *Aesthetics and Politics* (London: Verso, 1977), pp. 28-59 (p. 56).
[42] Emile Zola, *The Experimental Novel and Other Essays*, trans. by Belle M. Sherman (New York: Cassell, 1893), p. 268.
[43] George Gissing, *New Grub Street* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 5.

Decadence. A defining slogan of the Aesthetic movement, 'Art for Art's sake', had been coined in 1818 by Victor Cousin and borrowed by Théophile Gautier (*'l'art pour l'art'*) in exposition of the principle that art should not be measured by its degree of representational accuracy or the moral, pedagogic or narrative meaning it implied but instead should be valued as an independent and autotelic object on the grounds of its intrinsic beauty. Mary Anne Stankiewics understands the interests of the Aesthetic movement as escapist and as drawing upon 'the artistic styles of cultures removed in time and space from the nineteenth-century urban industrial environment'.[44] The Aesthetic movement in Britain (according to the movement's first historian, Walter Hamilton) had originated with Dante Gabriel Rossetti from the foundation of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in 1849, and was best articulated by the two writers, art historians and fellow lecturers at Oxford University, Walter Pater and John Ruskin.[45] According to Richard Ellmann, Ruskin and Pater were to become understood as the two poles of British Aestheticism, embodying opposite notions of the social, practical and moral functions of art: 'Ruskin spoke of faith, Pater of mysticism […]. Ruskin appealed to conscience, Pater to imagination. Ruskin invoked disciplined restraint, Pater allowed for a pleasant drift. What Ruskin reviled as vice, Pater caressed as wantonness'.[46] As the broad Aesthetic movement included such various impulses, it is perhaps not surprising that small groups of writers should seek to define themselves within it.

Although it is commonly associated with many of the authors whose use of olfactory motifs will be examined in the following chapters, the British literary 'Decadent' movement is something of a nebulous concept, as it includes writers such as Arthur Symons and Ernest Dowson, who may also be considered to be Symbolists, and a writer such as George Moore, who is considered by Linda Bennett to be a Realist with

[44] Mary Anne Stankiewicz, 'From the Aesthetic Movement to the Arts and Crafts Movement', *Studies in Art Education*, 33:3 (1992), pp. s165-173 (p. 165).
[45] Walter Hamilton, *The Aesthetic Movement in England* (London: Reeves & Turner, 1882), p. 4.
[46] Richard Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1987), p. 47.

Naturalist tendencies.[47] Furthermore, Arthur Symons himself defined the movement as being entirely French, citing Paul Verlaine, Stéphane Mallarmé and (the later) J.K. Huysmans as representative members.[48] The critic and editor of Symbolist and Decadent literary fragments, Gustave Leopold Van Roosbroeck, conceded in 1927 that the word 'decadence' had been 'delightfully vague' and 'applied at random to […] divergent literary figures', signifying ideas of decay, degeneration, immorality and identification with the last days of the Roman Empire (or 'decadence').[49] It may be considered, however, that the facility of the term 'literary Decadence' to convey vague, resonant and ambiguous meanings is entirely consonant with its origins in the Symbolist movement. Symbolist poets' efforts to recover human meanings from myths and rituals that they deemed to be lost in the industrial-mechanical nineteenth century depended upon references to smell, smells and smelling that figured the dissolution of boundaries and identities.[50] They defined art as being concerned with revealing hidden realities through symbolic motifs and employed vague and unspecific allusions to smell, smells and smelling in order to further the Symbolist aesthetic of mystery and suggestion.

Although the significance and purpose of olfactory motifs varied widely between fin-de-siècle literary movements, their proponents' stylistic relationships and allegiances were often sufficiently fluid to embrace or parody the appearance of olfactory themes in work by writers from another generic background.[51] Whether aligned with Realism, Naturalism, Aestheticism, Decadence or Symbolism, all writers at the fin de siècle were exposed to wider cultural changes in the production, dissemination and meaning of smell, smells and smelling.

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[47] Linda Bennett, 'George Moore and James Joyce: Story-teller versus Stylist', *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, 66:264 (1977), 275-291.
[48] Arthur Symons, 'The Decadent Movement in Literature', *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* (November 1893), 858-67.
[49] G. L. Van Roosbroeck, *The Legend of the Decadents* (Columbia: Institut des Études Françaises, 1927), p. 12.
[50] For examples of olfactory Symbolist poetry, see: Sally Banes, 'Olfactory Performances' in *The Senses in Performance*, ed. by Sally Banes and André Lepecki (New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. 29-37.
[51] See the discussion of H. G. Wells's spoof on Huysmans's purple prose in Chapter 1 of this thesis.

**Literary Historiographies of Smell**

Having first proposed a context of literary movements and fluid affiliations for the authors of fin-de-siècle texts examined in this olfactory analysis, this introduction will turn now to the research context of this thesis. This research has been accelerating over the last four decades. David Watson and Peter Gale may have regarded their own work on the sociology of odours as revolutionary in 1972, but the figure with the greatest influence over recent work on the manifestation of smell in literature is the Annales-trained historian of sensibilities, Alain Corbin.[52] Corbin's *Le miasme et la jonquille: L'odorat et l'imaginaire social XVIIIe-XIXe siecles [Miasma and the Daffodil]* (1982), translated into English as *The Foul and the Fragrant: Odor and the French Social Imagination* (1986), proposes that the Enlightenment project in France, made concrete by late eighteenth-century and post-Revolutionary hygiene administration (which in turn resulted in the cleaning-up of the River Seine), permitted a fresh olfactory space in which a new discourse of fragrance could flourish.[53] Corbin pays attention to the impact of the practical defaecalisation of the Seine – dating from the application of the 'new' anti-putrefactor, lime chloride, to the blocked-up sewers of Amelot in 1826 – upon the nineteenth-century French writers Honoré de Balzac, Edmond de Goncourt, Emile Zola, Charles Baudelaire and J. K. Huysmans. Following upon Corbin's work, the

[52] Watson and Gale mused that 'sociologists […] have either ignored odors or regarded them as an insignificant dimension of human interaction – a curious fact for the sociology of knowledge'. See: David Rodney Watson and Peter Largey Gale, 'The Sociology of Odors', *The American Journal of Sociology,* 77:6 (1972), 1021-1034, p. 1021. Meanwhile, the historian Mark Jenner has circumvented the influence of Corbin by tracing back British historians' interest in olfaction to the pioneering employment in 1984 of strategically-released odours by the Jorvik Viking Museum at York that were intended to enhance visitors' experience of the recreated tenth-century city, and to the publication of Roy Porter's work on the physiological models by which olfaction was understood in *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind: A Medical History of Humanity* (1997). See: Mark Jenner, 'Follow Your Nose', conference paper delivered at *Embodied Values*, Edinburgh University, 7-9 December 2011, available at: <conferencehttp://www.reverbnation.com/tunepak/3580762> [accessed 8 October 2012].

[53] The English translation 'Miasma and the Daffodil' does not quite convey the associations of 'jonquille' to French readers; the jonquil variety of narcissus is the most fragrant and one of the most prized of traditional French perfume ingredients, having been grown en masse in the South of France since the eighteenth century.

Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Concordia University in Montreal supported a three-year research project (1988-1991) by Constance Classen, David Howes and Anthony Synnott which culminated in the study *Aroma: The Cultural History of Smell. Aroma* placed olfaction in a global and transhistorical context, ranging from the Hausa witches of Northern Nigeria who purportedly enter their victims through the nose, to synthetic additives that render flavour to food products in modern Western supermarkets. Like Corbin's study, *Aroma* included a focus on the incidence of olfactory themes in literature of the nineteenth century among French writers, but registered a difference in the way smell had been employed by the 'Realist' writers Victor Hugo, Honoré de Balzac and Emile Zola on the one hand, and 'Symbolist' writers Charles Baudelaire, Stéphane Mallarmé and Paul Verlaine on the other: 'literary odours thus served both Realists, who employed them to give their writings the pungent scent of truth, as well as to make moral statements, and Symbolists, who transformed them into lush, emotion-laden images to convey an essence of dreams'.[54] In *Aroma*, the metonymic power of smell, which like Proust's *petit madeleine,* can conjure a lived experience, is assigned to the Realists while the Symbolists are assigned the metaphoric power of smell which (in the words of Baudelaire's poem 'Correspondences') 'sometimes yield[s] perplexing messages'.[55]

Essays on smelling and noses (or 'rhinology') from various theoretical and disciplinary perspectives in *The Nose Book: Representations of the Nose in Literature and the Arts* (2000), edited by Victoria de Rijke, Lene Ostermark-Johansen and Helen Thomas, added both to Corbin's observations of the ascendancy of olfactory themes in late nineteenth-century French literature, and also to the focus on smell qua smells in *Aroma: The Cultural History of Smell.* This collection of essays contributed a

[54] Constance Classen, David Howes and Anthony Synott, *Aroma: The Cultural History of Smell* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 85-7.
[55] Charles Baudelaire, *Les Fleurs du Mal*, trans. by Richard Howard (London: Picador, 1982), p. 15.

distinctively etymological flavour to olfactory enquiry (including the etymological pleasure of 'getting one's nose stuck in to a good book') which has been a useful starting point for this thesis as, while acknowledging the influence of the French writers listed by Corbin and Classen et al., it seeks to give an account of changes in British nineteenth-century writings on smell and is consequently alert to neologisms and invented taxonomies that occurred within the English language. In addition to demonstrating its etymological bias, *The Nose Book* expanded the field of study by drawing attention to representations of the organ of smell itself: a recurring theme throughout the collection is the punning, comic or grotesque assault to human dignity with which literary noses are assailed at the fin de siècle. Examples of noses thus given are those in Edward Lear's 'The Dong with the Luminous Nose' (c. 1878), Carlo Collodi's *Pinocchio* (1883), Edmond Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac* (1897) and Gaston Leroux's *Phantom of the Opera* (1911).

Revisiting the dichotomous theme of smell in Realist texts versus smell in Symbolist texts with which *Aroma* had engaged, *Nose Book* editor Lene Østermark-Johansen argued that the engagement of 'effeminate' and 'decadent' fin-de-siècle writers with olfaction was a 'counter-revolution' against the 'bourgeois stress on sobriety' (as usual, critical categories are not always very categorical: Østermark-Johansen labels Baudelaire, whom Classon et al. had considered to be a Symbolist, as a Decadent).[56] Østermark-Johansen's depiction of Decadent writers' use of smell as a species of political activism was at variance with David Barnes's argument in *The Great Stink of Paris and the Nineteenth-Century Struggle against Filth and Germs* (2006), that it was the writers of Literary Realism, not of Literary Decadence, who were especially engaged with the olfactory at the end of the nineteenth century. Barnes cites as evidence the infamous faked 'commissioning' of Naturalist writer Emile Zola by *Le*

[56] Victoria de Rijke, Lene Ostermark-Johansen and Helen Thomas, eds., *The Nose Book: Representations of the Nose in Literature and the Arts* (Hendon: Middlesex University Press, 2000), p. 3.

*Figaro* in 1880; in a move intended to be provocative to their commercial print rivals, the conservative newspaper *Le Figaro* had published a descriptive piece of Zola-esque parody to describe the public nuisance of stinking waste from the Parisian sewers. The parody was timed to coincide exactly with the newspaper's widely bruited recruitment of the celebrated writer. Although Zola was not to submit his first article to *Le Figaro* for another three weeks, the timing of the announcement and the characteristic olfactory intensity of the imitation rendered the anonymous piece believably by Zola: 'it was like a vast infection of tooth decay, like the flatulence of a rotting stomach, like the emanations of a man who has drunk too much, like the dried sweat of wallowing animals, like the sour poison of a bedpan'.[57] There is no question in recent literary historiographies of smell at the end of the nineteenth century that writers' olfactory themes were attached to civic or wider political aims: the question remains only whether that attachment was stronger among members of some literary movements than others.

**Recent Debates on the National History of Smells**

Despite the debate about whether Naturalist or Symbolist writers had shown most attention to smell, all work to date on the various cultural manifestations of smelling by Corbin, Barnes and Classen et al. agrees in referring almost exclusively to French writers. Drawing upon the analysis of specifically French social and economic practices for a historiography of smells in French literature, Corbin and Barnes illuminate literary texts that in turn are displayed as evidence supporting their analyses of social and economic practices. With regard to this thesis, and its exclusive focus on British supernatural texts of the fin de siècle, there is a question that might be raised here about the appropriateness of applying methods and causal conclusions based on uniquely French legal, cultural, economic, social, military, territorial, political and religious

[57] David Barnes, *The Great Stink of Paris and the Nineteenth Century Struggle Against Filth and Germs* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2006), p. 246.

circumstances to texts generated by British writers under quite differently British circumstances. Having said that, (since the following chapters will explore texts written exclusively in English by British writers and since they seek to add to current scholarship by providing or drawing out a specifically British historical context for the appearance of smells in literature), this thesis will certainly rely on the fundamental assumptions that French cultural experience was widely understood – and frequently emulated – by British writers at the end of the nineteenth century. It also assumes that the French perfumes that were sold and used in Britain during the fin de siècle maintained a common cultural position in the two countries. After all, how *can* one explain the appearance of olfactory motifs in English supernatural fiction of the fin de siècle, without accounting for authors' use of this French term for the period itself?[58]

Peter Frances observes that, as journals and periodicals in English became popular among a wide community throughout the mid-nineteenth century, publication in magazines of original texts in French diminished. Translations were published instead, suggesting the collapse of former assumptions of an élite readership that would be able to read French fluently.[59] Amongst aspiring Realists, Naturalists, Aesthetes, Symbolists and Decadents, however, the French language had remained or had become (literally) the lingua franca: when Wilde had, as an undergraduate, sought out the poet Swinburne's acquaintance, he received a copy of *Studies in Song* (1880), inscribed:

> To Oscar Wilde from Algernon Ch. Swinburne.
> Amitié et remerciements [Translation: 'To Oscar Wilde from Algernon Ch. Swinburne, with friendship and thanks again'].[60]

Other instances of particular familiarity and affection for France and French among

[58] Lady Narborough immediately corrects the phrase 'fin de siècle' with the sigh in French, 'fin du globe', emphasising that dominant pessimism in that period was widely associated with French ennui. See: Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (London: Vintage, 2007), p. 156. Further references to this edition will be given in parentheses after quotations in the text, where the title is abbreviated to *Dorian*.
[59] Peter France, 'Looking Abroad: Two Edinburgh Journals in the Early Nineteenth Century', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 46:1 (2010), 2-15.
[60] See: Richard Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1987), fn. p. 31

many of the writers discussed in the following chapters abound: Vernon Lee was born in 1856 at Château St Leonard near Boulogne, and lived with her improvident parents in Nice in 1866 and in Paris during the siege of 1870 (her half-brother was attached to the British Embassy there); 'Richard Marsh', aka Bernard Heldmann, was jailed for eighteen months for passing forged cheques throughout France and the South of England in 1883; Arthur Conan Doyle taught himself French at the age of fourteen so that he could read novels by Jules Verne in the original; H. G. Wells became, from 1899, a pillar of the Parisian Symbolist journal, *Mercure de France*, that had been founded by Alfred and Margaret 'Rachilde' Vallette (although he was not to take up permanent residence in France until the years 1924-33); Bram Stoker visited France many times, *en route* to see his parents who had taken up residence in Switzerland and as a honeymoon destination after his marriage to Florence Balcombe in 1878, while the plot of *Dracula* is widely considered in France to have been inspired by Stoker's reading of Belgian Marie Nizet's French-language novel, *Le Capitaine Vampire* (1879); Arthur Machen worked as a French translator between 1884 and 1897, producing translations for private publication of Margaret of Navarre's *Heptameron*, *Le Moyen de Parvenir* ['*Fantastic Tales'*] of Béroalde de Verville, and the *Mémoires* of Casanova.

Despite the particular affection and familiarity for France and French among many of the writers discussed in the following chapters, the Anglo-Gallic admiration was not all one-way, as holidays in Scotland and visits to Holyroodhouse, trips to the races and suits from English tailors were all the rage in Paris during the brief mid-century rapprochement of Queen Victoria and Louis Phillipe, King of the French.[61] Jennifer Higgins's work on the fluctuating reception and transmission of ideas among writers in France and England during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries

[61] In 1843, Queen Victoria became the first English monarch to visit a French monarch since the Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1520. After his abdication in 1848, Louis Philippe I sought exile in Britain and died in Surrey in 1850. See: F. C. Green, *A Comparative View of French and British Civilization 1850-1870* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1965), p. 2.

has established that cross-channel influence called forth a variety of responses but, while a detailed history of Franco-British relations is outside the scope of this study, it is also germane to the transmission of literary fashions during this period that aspirations to acquire French culture and the French language penetrated a wider group than that of professional authors at the fin de siècle.[62] Several francophone and Francophile organisations were set up in London during the final decades of the nineteenth century, including the Alliance Française, which was established in 1885 by a committee including Louis Pasteur and Jules Verne. The first '*cours commerciaux*' were launched in London as early as 1894 to prepare English businesses for the forthcoming commercial benefits enshrined in the Entente Cordiale (1904) between the United Kingdom and the French Republic, and guaranteed freedom of passage through the Suez Canal, uninterrupted British control in Egypt and territorial rights in portions of West and Central Africa.

This is not to be understood, however, as meaning that admiration in fin-de-siècle Britain for all things French was unmitigated by exasperation or hostility. In the Imperial Library edition of *Idylls of the King* (1873), for example, Lord Tennyson added the epigraph 'To the Queen', warning of the threat to Britain of Cowardice, Softness, Lust for gold and 'Art with poisoned honey stolen from France'. During the same period, as pointed out by Walter M. Kendrick, in mid-nineteenth-century British novels, to have a French novel on one's bedside table was 'a sure sign of sophistication and of questionable morals'.[63] The French novels that are slipped apparently innocuously onto the boudoir cabinet in Aubrey Beardsley's two versions of 'The Toilette of Salome' (1893, published 1894) allude playfully to this association between French literature

[62] Jennifer Higgins, 'Sea-change: English Responses to French Poetry between Decadence and Modernism', in *Franco-British Cultural Exchanges, 1880-1940: Channel Packets*, ed. by Andrew Radford and Victoria Reid (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 17-33.
[63] Walter M. Kendrick, 'Balzac and British Realism: Mid-Victorian Theories of the Novel', *Victorian Studies*, 20:1 (1976), 5-24 (5).

and bedroom behaviour. The first, suppressed, version of the illustration to the English translation of Wilde's play *Salomé* (1891) depicts an unmistakably erotic toilette and a recognisable edition of Baudelaire's *Les Fleur du Mal* next to Zola's *Nana* on the dressing table shelf. In the second, censored and published version of the illustration, Salome is far more modestly clothed and her scandalous retinue has been hygienically dispersed, but the French books, in compensation, are more prominent, and naughtier. In the second version, the works of the Marquis De Sade are featured, along with the Abbé Prevost's *Manon Lescaut*, and not only Zola's *Nana*, as before, but also Zola's *Les Fêtes Gallantes*. On the shelf above the French novels are drawn Salome's perfumes: there is an elaborate rose-strewn flacon, a glass atomiser spray and what appears to be a slim case for incense sticks. The tradition which Kendrick described and to which Beardsley alluded may have been associated with the British Imperial rivalry that had been piqued by the 1860 secession to France of the flower-growing area of Nice (the then-Italian city of Nice neighboured Grasse, the French centre of perfume horticulture), as a territorial reward for assistance by the armies of Napoleon III in the unification of Italy. This annexation effectively granted economic control of the world's biggest area of supply for raw perfume materials to Paris, whence the existing canals and new *Compagnie des chemins de fer de Paris à Lyons et à la Méditerranée* (or, 'PLM' railway, created 1858-62 from the amalgamation of small, independent lines) carried bulk, dried or macerated seeds, pods and petals to the markets and factories of the French capital. It is possible, consequently, to read some of the debates about scent in France and Britain in fin-de-siècle texts as rival nationalist discourses.

Rather than examining olfactory texts as productions of rival nationalist discourses, however, some recent work on the fin-de-siècle period has stressed similarities of the shared experience of smell, smells and smelling among different national and cultural groups. The art historian Christina Rain Bradstreet, for example,

has plotted out the relationship of notions of smell in fin-de-siècle works from British, French and other national traditions. Bradstreet's work on 'floral femininity and the erotics of scent' is based upon Victorian constructions of gender in pictures of women sniffing flowers – which theme, she argues, is a transatlantic commonality, appearing equally in paintings of the period in Britain, France and North America: 'despite cultural differences in perception, ideas about smell readily diffused across monarchical reigns, national boundaries and the century divide, due to the international and on-going nature of intellectual exchange'.[64] While Bradstreet argues for a transnational percolation of ideas in nineteenth-century painting, the recent international exhibition at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, curated by Stephen Calloway, concentrated on the isolation of British Aestheticism from its European context, characterising Aestheticism as the 'wellspring' of subsequent nineteenth-century artistic movements and as a moral and ethical negotiation between the fine art and design traditions.[65]

Notwithstanding the opposing art historical positions taken by Bradstreet and the Victoria & Albert Museum on the problems of reconciling local trends and international movements, Carlisle offered an altogether different approach in *Common Scents*. Whereas previous work on nineteenth-century authors in France, by Corbin and Classen et al., had called upon statistics from medical reports, civil engineering inspections, municipal accounts, legal verdicts and trade publications to explain attention to smell in sliterature, Carlisle instead borrowed the notion of 'osmology' from anthropology where it describes the interpretive tool of an onlooker to assess hierarchies of class and gender by smell in a given cultural context. In *Common Scents*, Carlisle proceeded by scrutiny of smell in comparative social encounters between characters in seventy-eight novels published in England, in English, during the 1860s. Uncovering the use of smell

[64] Christina Rain Bradstreet, 'Scented Visions: The Nineteenth-Century Olfactory Imagination' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, Birkbeck College, 2005), p. 31.
[65] 'The Cult of Beauty: The Aesthetic Movement 1860-1900', exhibition curated by Stephen Calloway, Victoria & Albert Museum (April-June, 2011).

as a signifier of patriarchal libidinal economics exercised at the extension of the franchise to 1,500,000 men in Britain by the Second Reform Act of 1867, Carlisle demonstrated that a discriminating smeller in these texts is a person of 'substance', while characters of inferior social importance or potential are unable to detect or exude smell very much at all: 'those who have substance smell; those who smell them do not'.[66]

While Carlisle's *Common Scents* focused on English texts from a particular decade, Hans Rindisbacher's *The Smell of Books* (1992) applied osmotic scrutiny to a wide range of canonical nineteenth and twentieth-century prose fictions. Beginning with German bourgeois realist novels from the 1840s, Rindisbacher traced the rising current of olfactory themes in French, German, Russian and English novels to examples from the 1980s by Italo Calvino and Patrick Suskind. In this pan-European context, Rindisbacher refuted the contentions offered by Barnes and Østermark-Johansen that attention to the olfactory at the fin de siècle is a distinguishing feature of *either* Symbolist *or* Realist writing. Instead, *The Smell of Books* posited the lack of smells depicted in Continental literature before the 1890s as evidence of the bourgeois capitalist project to suppress radical sensory epistemologies. In short, Rindisbacher's synthesis of European approaches to smell in the fin de siècle and Bradstreet's contention that olfactory conventions during this period were spread by transatlantic cultural osmosis are at odds with the attention drawn by Carlisle and Calloway to the peculiar and local nature of particular responses to the theme of smell. It is the contention of this thesis however, that a useful explanation of those critical differences is that the semiotic functions of smell, smells and smelling were changing during this period; I shall shortly set out the manner and variety of some of these changes below.

[66] Carlisle, *Common Scents*, p. 158.

**Considerations for Contemporary Research**

Before moving on to the manner and variety of changes to smell and smells in the nineteenth century, the context should be examined in which recent North American and European critical attention to smells in literature has emerged because commercial and national interests have substantially affected the ways in which odour may be described, classified and understood. The original anthropological research by Classen, Howe and Synott in 1998-1991, leading to the publication of *Aroma: the Cultural History of Smell* (1991), was sponsored by the Olfactory Research Fund in New York. The Olfactory Research Fund was set up in 1981 as the 'Fragrance Foundation Philanthropic Fund', the charitable wing of the Fragrance Foundation, which itself had been established in 1949 by six perfume industry leaders affiliated with Elizabeth Arden, Coty, Guerlain, Helena Rubinstein, Chanel and Parfums Weil. Manufacturers and suppliers only are permitted full membership of the Fragrance Foundation, although voting rights are extended to media and advertising companies, financial services firms and packaging designers. Between 1982 and 2004, the Fragrance Foundation offered grants and fellowships to fifty-four other research scientists whose investigations cohered with the Fragrance Foundation's primary aim: 'to develop educational programs about the importance and pleasures of fragrance for the American public'.[67] Projects were supported in the fields of developmental, perceptual, social and cognitive psychology, anthropology, biology and neuroscience, totalling $1.4m.[68] In 1986-9, the Olfactory Research Fund – which was re-branded in 2001 as The Sense of Smell Institute – coined and promoted the term 'Aroma-Chology'. Aroma-chology describes: 'the concept which was developed to scientifically study the interrelationship of

[67] 'The Fragrance Foundation', *The Free Library* (Gale: Engage Learning, 2007) <a href='http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Fragrance+Foundation.-a0171888354'> [accessed 5 August 2013].
[68] 'About', *The Fragrance Foundation* <http://www.senseofsmell.org/about/history.php> [accessed 6 February 2010].

psychology and fragrance technology.[69] Based around the practical applications of investigation into smell (such as the discovery by the Psychology department of Northumbria University in 2003 that an ambient spray of rosemary essential oil enhances overall quality of memory but also produces impairment of the speed of memory, whereas an ambient spray of lavender produces a significant decrement in performance of working memory, and impaired reaction times for both memory-and attention-based tasks in the workplace), Aroma-Chology insists upon a redefinition of the procedures, vocabulary and regulation of 'traditional' aromatherapy, which had rocketed in popularity during the previous decade.[70] Throughout the same decade, the U.S. National Institute of Health doubled its funding for basic and clinical research in olfaction from $4.3 million in 1980 to $9.8 million in 1988, promoting research into the anatomical, environmental and neurobiological processes of olfaction.[71] A similar growth of interest in the commercial possibilities of scent developed in France during this period. In 1984, the Versailles Val d'Oise Yveslines Chamber of Commerce – which is the state's largest provider of vocational training – backed the existing 'Institut Supérieur International du Parfum', which subsequently enlarged its brief from perfume to fragrance additives in the food and beverage industries, and which since then has become known as the 'Institut Supérieur International du Parfum, de la Cosmétique et de l'Aromatique alimentaire' ('the International Higher Institute for Perfume, Cosmetics and Flavourings'). The Institut is considered to be 'the most prestigious perfumery school in the world' and offers postgraduate courses with industrial placements to

[69] 'Aroma-chology', *The Fragrance Foundation*, <http://www.senseofsmell.org/resources/aromachology.php> [accessed 9 March 2010].

[70] Aromatherapy practitioner Jan Kusmirek suggests that the rocketing popularity of aromatherapy from the 1980s to 1990s was a media phenomenon, particularly attributable to articles in women's journals. See: Jan Kusmirek, 'Defining Aromatherapy', in *Fragrance: The Psychology and Biology of Perfume*, ed. by Charles S. Van Toller and G. H. Dodd (Barking: Elsevier, 1992), pp. 278-279.

[71] Robin Eisner, 'Olfaction Scientists: Sniffing Out Some New Applications', *The Scientist* (1990) <www.the-scientist.com/article/display/10408/> [accessed 9 March 2010].

chemists.[72] In its grounds, a coalition of the Comité Français du Parfum, the Société de Parfumeurs Français and the Versailles Chamber of Commerce founded in 1988 the Osmothèque, the museum of fragrance and the world's first institution of its kind, in order to conserve and promote the French tradition of perfumery.

New attention paid to smell by governmental and business agencies in the 1980s and 1990s has had a two-fold impact on the cultural historiography of olfaction. On the one hand, there is funding and interdisciplinary support for researchers on smells in medical history, on psycho-social behaviours determined by smell (such as the effects of burning incense in church) and on what may be considered to be innate response to smell, as opposed to what is learned in a given cultural context. On the other hand, there is the increasing rendering of smell description in scientifically 'neutral' chemical molecular codes that in fact obscures smell descriptions to all but inducted specialists. Figure 1 for example, shows the smell of wild strawberries:

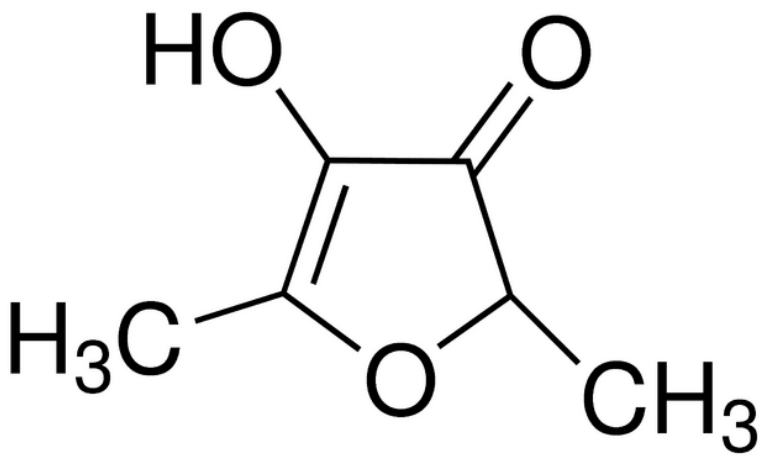


**Figure 1: The scent of ripe wild strawberries [$C_6H_8O_3$], or 2,5-Dimethyl-4-hydroxy-3(2H)-furanone[73]**

[72] Victoria Frolova, 'Jean Patou Perfume Bar', *Bois de Jasmin* (2006) <http://boisdejasmin.typepad.com/_/2006/05/patou_cocktail.html> [accessed 9 March 2010].
[73] Furaneol by Sigma-Aldrich Co. LLC, <http://www.sigmaaldrich.com/catalog/product/aldrich/w317403?lang=en&region=GB> [accessed 28 October 2013].

In test cases of the early 1990s, courts of first instance and appeal in France decided that perfumes were works of art, like novels or paintings, and so eligible for copyright protection. The higher court, the Cour de Cassasion, subsequently overturned these decisions and ruled that perfumes are, like meals, a matter of recipe and know-how. In a similar vein, the defence in the 1994 case Daniele Ryman Aromacology v. Chantecaille Beauté Inc. depended upon the argument that smell-descriptors were in the public domain and consequently were impossible to register as Trade Marks.[74] As it was and is not yet possible to copyright a smell, the manufacturers of fragrance therefore have commercial protection only in maintaining strict secrecy over the precise composition of their products. For researchers interested in nineteenth-century literary engagement with smell, the further difficulty in penetrating sources of information regarding bottled scents is that any surviving records are partial, scattered and often self-contradictory – which may be due as much to the marketing strategy of an industry that sells fantasies by embracing mystique, as it is to the suppression of information about formulae and ingredients required by the commercial maintenance of 'trade secrets'.[75] For example, a tension is presently maintained between public access to the 'Superscent' database, a free online service which holds records of 2100 separate

[74] Trade Marks inter parte decision 0/229/05 ARAMACOLOGY, 2199395 [sic], <https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:9kBnstudR0QJ:www.ipo.gov.uk/types/tm/t-os/t-find/t-challenge-decision-results/o22905.pdf+aromatherapy+products+sold+1980s&hl=en&gl=uk&pid=bl&srcid=ADGEESgl8mePZNiEjVP9TWTI2RA3Yc4CYR-evLEHZabvntvn5Vgm7RSSO0Hmds5Zd81S7fC6gBt0BR2ayTpf-eMKOp-NzJXMZNTAYr-nSeCw1qaHFMKxPq00_QYPCT1f9PR0bjKZ2VI1&sig=AHIEtbT9BH18wLfu62peppWijzFTWiBHTQ> [accessed 12 October 2012]

[75] The curator of New York's Centre of Olfactory Art (a permanent department of the New York City Museum of Arts and Design, founded November 2011) derogatively described the rival *Museo del Perfum* in Barcelona, Spain, as a 'Museum of perfume *bottles*', emblematic of Western cultural tendency to translate 'challenging' olfactory art into 'familiar' visual art. See: Elisa Gabbert, 'Learning to Read Perfume: A Talk with Chandler Burr', *Open Letters Monthly: an Art and Literature Review* <http://www.openlettersmonthly.com/learning-to-read-perfume-a-talk-with-chandler-burr/> [accessed 23 October 2012].

odorants, and the encrypted impenetrability of the database's specialised notation which, while avoiding ambiguous interpretative frameworks, promotes the understanding of smells as discrete material phenomena, not as the molecular triggers for subjective and evanescent experiences that may be mapped by cultural historians.

Current research into nineteenth-century perfumery therefore occurs within the context of partial or missing archives, the habit of secrecy to ensure copyright protection and the massing and dissemination of information by large organisations with vested commercial interests. Since mapping a history of scent is an important part of current academic interest in many issues of embodiment, and because understandings of this history are hindered by access only to selective or inaccurate records, the following section will set out in detail the historical underpinnings of smell, smells and smelling in fin-de-siècle fictions.

**'Go thrust him out at gates, and let him smell / His way to Dover': The primacy of vision over smell**

Regan in Shakespeare's *King Lear* acknowledges the cultural primacy of vision over smell when her husband rips out Gloucester's eyeballs.[76] Writers about olfactory themes share with Regan and the Superscent database the problem that there is no accurate convention for *textual* representation of a smell; literature does not provide a language for this sensory modality – hence, Barthes's dictum: 'écrite, la merde ne sent pas' ['written, shit doesn't smell'].[77] Accordingly, as Hans Rindisbacher points out, 'an associative and expansive […] linguistic detour through the metaphoric' is encountered

[76] See: William Shakespeare,'King Lear', in *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, ed. by W. J. Craig (London: Oxford University Press, 1914), III. 7. 93-94.
[61] Roland Barthes, *Sade, Fourier, Loyola*, trans. by Richard Miller (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976 [1971]), p. 137.

and indeed required to describe smells.[78] Whereas writers have access to richly suggestive terms to describe tiny subtleties of shade, tint, texture and hue in the visual field (for example; lobster, tawny, rubescent, hectic, bloody, rufous, sanguine, rubicund, lateritious, cardinal, crimson, scarlet, coral, russet, vermilion and rosy are all 'red'), the sheer poverty of the semantic field of smells (other than the lexical subcategories of general terms such as 'stench' and 'perfume') promotes an engagement with conceptual categories which are contiguous, not consistent, with the smell itself.[79]

The psychophysicist Trypp Engen has debated reasons why the semiotics of smell-description are considered to be unstable, proposing in his work on sensory memory that the potentiality for metaphor in smell-description is neurologically predetermined by the biological process of odour perception itself.[80] Smell occurs as information from airborne odour molecules, which dissolve in mucus on the roof of each nostril, and are transmitted by olfactory bulbs at the back of the nose straight into the limbic system where they influence memory and emotion without mediation by linguistic or conscious thought. Unlike the senses of touch and taste, where information travels to the brain through the body via neurons and the spinal cord, the sense of smell is the only faculty where the central nervous system is exposed directly to its environment. Contrasting the detection of smell in olfaction to the detection of colour in vision, Engen states: 'Unlike colors, odors are not encoded at the receptor level but higher up in the nervous system, where odor sensations become intimately integrated with other information'.[81] Engen understands the very act of smelling as a breach of

[78] Hans Rindisbacher *The Smell of Books: A Cultural-Historical Study of Olfactory Perception in Literature* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), p. 15.
[79] For a more detailed consideration of the lexical poverty of smell description, see: Dan Sperber, *Rethinking Symbolism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 116.
[80] Trygg Engen, *Odor Sensation and Memory* (New York: Praegar Publishers, 1991).
[81] Engen, pp. xi-xii.

reference levels, pointing to the privileged status afforded to memories evoked by smell as evidence of the intrinsic exchange between smell and cognitive description.[82]

While Engen sees the instability of a semiotics of smell-description as being materially consonant with the mechanical function of olfaction, other commentators have argued that the paucity of terminology to record or suggest olfaction is culturally determined. Rindisbacher has argued that the paucity devolves in the first place from early Christian Neoplatonist thought. Pointing out that, in *Confessions* (c. 385), St Augustine reinforces the bifurcation of sensory discourse in the West into 'the cognitive-scientific and the hedonistic-aesthetic realms,[83] Rindisbacher quotes Plato as the source of this model:

> All smells are of a half-formed nature […] wherefore the varieties of smell have no name, and they have not many, or definite and simple kinds; but they are distinguished only painful and pleasant, the one sort irritating and disturbing the whole cavity which is situated between the head and the navel, the other having a soothing influence, and restoring this same region to an agreeable and natural condition.[84]

Rindisbacher traces the cultural determination of impoverished smell-description to St. Augustine's promotion of Plato's model, although the cultural determination of smell-description was also substantially affected by Aristotelian notions of smell that were incorporated into the dialectical scholasticism of the thirteenth-century philosopher and theologian, St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274). Thomas Aquinas was one of the first generation of Western Europeans to have read Aristotle on smell: he had been enrolled at the Studium Generale at Naples between the ages of fourteen and nineteen years old, and was introduced to Aristotle's views on olfaction by Peter of Ireland, author of two influential commentaries on hitherto lost Aristotelian texts that were reintroduced into

[82] Marcel Proust's celebrated 'petit madeleine' episode, involving smell's impact on involuntary memory in *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* (1913), illustrates Engen's point admirably but, by virtue of its date of publication and nationality, is outside the scope of this thesis.
[83] Rindisbacher, p. 5.
[84] Plato, *Timmaeus* (360 B.C.E.), trans. by Benjamin Jowett <http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/timaeus.html> [accessed 6 May 2010].

the West after the Spanish *Reconquista* had permitted copies, translations and commentaries on Greek philosophical texts to be circulated in the new European universities.[85]

To Aquinas, the senses – including the sense of smell – are sanctified by the Incarnation of Christ as a fleshly, living, sensitive human body yet, in his *Summa Theologica* (1265-74), it is still sight and hearing which precede smell in importance to the 'operations of the sensitive soul'.[86] In Aristotle's *De anima* (350 BCE), the foundational text for Thomist doctrine on the human sensorium, the primary senses are determined as being five in number (seeing, hearing, touch, taste and smell), but the sensory modalities of touch, taste and smell, which permit discrimination to occur between substances which are good for one and substances which are dangerous, are shared with all locomotive animals. The sense of smell is distinguished from the sense of taste (described as the counterpart of smell in discriminating flavour via air and water) by reference to its stimulant: so, the sense of smell is that which is stimulated by odour and, in turn, an odour is that which stimulates the sense of smell. The fact that we smell only when we are inhaling – and not when we are breathing out or holding our breath – is accounted for by the hypothetical presence of a 'nose-cover' which must, argued Aristotle, be opened when we inhale, in a fashion similar to the management of perception by shutting and opening the eyelid. The faculty of smell is assigned most useful expression among the lower animals:

[85] Although Aristotle's (and consequently Aquinas's) ideas were officially condemned in 1277 by Etienne Tempier, the Bishop of France, who stipulated that God's absolute power transcended any principle of logic that Aristotleans might assert, the formerly 'heretical' Aquinas was canonised fifty years after his death by John XII from the papal seat in Avignon, and ranked by Pius V in 1567 among the four Latin 'fathers' of the Church: Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome and Gregory. By the end of the nineteenth century, Aquinas's prestige was unprecedentedly high after Pope Leo XIII declared in the encyclical of 4 August 1879 that Aquinas's theology was henceforth to be regarded as the definitive exposition of Catholic doctrine. All seminaries, colleges, universities and schools were henceforth to teach Thomist (i.e., based upon the theology of St Thomas Aquinas) doctrine; a year later in 1880, Aquinas was declared patron saint of all Catholic educational establishments.

[86] St Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologica*, trans. by Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger Bros., 1947), Question 78 article 3.

> It is less easy to give a definition concerning the sense of smell and what can be smelt than concerning those we have talked about [i.e., vision and hearing]. For it is not clear what sort of quality odour is, in the way that it *was* clear what sort of quality sound or colour was. The reason is that our sense of smell is not accurate but worse than many animals. For man smells poorly.[87]

In the higher animals, however, Aristotle argues that the senses of seeing and hearing are paramount in affording the opportunities for rational discourse, memory and imagination.[88] In particular, the sense of hearing is conflated with the acquisition of language, under the general rubric that 'each word is a thought-symbol', and that 'accordingly, of persons destitute from birth of either sense, the blind are more intelligent than the deaf and dumb'.[89] As rational discourse, memory and imagination are manifestations of the immaterial agent intellect in *De anima*, which Aquinas associated with the Christian God, the spiritual qualities of all mimetic writings, as established by Aristotle and subsequently promulgated by Aquinas, were assumed to be located in the primacy of vision (or words about seeing) in a logocentric system. Writings about smell, in consequence of Aristotle's and Aquinas's doctrines, occupy a lower position on the hierarchy of literature than writings about sound and vision.

The low positioning of all things olfactory applied to other hierarchies too. Writing of the smell of drains as they appeared to physician Jean-Nöel Hallé, first incumbent of the Parisian chair of public hygiene in 1794, Alain Corbin notes that 'such interests (i.e., interests in smell), thought to be essentially savage, attest to a proximity to animals, a lack of refinement, and ignorance of good manners'.[90] It does not seem to be irrelevant, therefore, that the British national satirical character par excellence should have lent his name in 1841 to the masthead of Britain's, and Henry Mayhew's, newest,

[87] Aristotle, *De anima*, trans. by D.W. Hamlyn, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 110.
[88] Aristotle, *On Sense and the Sensible*, trans. by J. I. Beare (Adelaide: Ebooks of Adelaide, 2007) <http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/a/aristotle/sense/> [accessed 24 February 2010].
[89] Ibid.
[90] Alain Corbin, *The Foul and the Fragrant* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 7.

and 'often scurrilous, controversial' satirical journal, *Punch*.[91] 'Mr Punch' fitted Corbin's summary exactly: he was a crocodile-toting, baby-bashing yob with an enormous nose.

Separate historical explanations, such as Engen's, Rindisbacher's or Corbin's, about *why* smell-description is lexically restricted and paid scant attention in literature (as briefly sketched out above) may provide alternative (or, in my view, complementary) epistemologies for smell, smells and smelling. Those rival epistemologies, however, are united in agreement on the paucity of a 'lexicon of osmology'.[92] It is remarkable, therefore, that the osmologically-impoverished English language should at the fin de siècle have so quickly developed a range of slang epithets that referred to smell, smells or smelling. The insult 'stinkard' for example, had been in use since the early seventeenth century, but the first recorded complaint that someone was 'a stinker and a stinking idiot' came from 1898.[93] In a similar fashion, the organ of olfaction itself achieved new currency in the phrases 'keeping one's nose clean' (i.e., keeping out of trouble),[94] 'getting it up the nose' (i.e., becoming truly smitten by something – such as rage or love),[95] and, eventually, in 'getting right up my nose'.[96] The fictitious character of 'Mr Nosey Parker' was first alluded to in print in 1890, although the character did not became fully delineated as a skinny, fussy, red-nosed

[91] John Dux of Liberty Publishing, cited in Christopher Johnston, 'After 4 Years, Punch Pops Back', *New York Times*, 6 September 1996.
[92] Paul Fauré, *Parfumes et aromates de l'Antiquite* (Paris: Fayard, 1987), p. 12. For a discussion of global variations in lexical impoverishment of olfactive descriptors, see also: Claude Boisson, 'La dénomination des odeurs : variations et régularités linguistiques' in *Intellectica*, 1997, 1/24, 29-49.

[93] 'He had called her "a stinker" and "a stinking idiot"'. See: *Daily News*, 23 July 1898 [quoted OED].
[94] 'There's worse fellows than you looking for it, and if you only keep your nose clean, we'll let you have it'. See: *The Lantern* (New Orleans), 13 October 1887 [quoted OED].
[95] 'The quiet School Trustee kind of a Man is the worst Indian in the World when he does find himself among the Tall Houses and gets it Up his Nose'. See: George Ade, *More Fables* (New York: Herbert S. Stone, 1900), p. 167.
[96] 'DEF: *Nose, get up one's*, to upset, annoy, irritate, render 'touchy'', in Eric Partridge (ed.), *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English: Colloquialisms and Catch-phrases, Solecisms and Catachreses, Nicknames, Vulgarisms and such Americanisms as Have Been Naturalized* (New York: Macmillan, 1951), p. 1120.

little man until 1907, in the popular cartoon postcard, *The Adventures of Mr Nosey Parker*.[97]

Even more remarkable than the fin-de-siècle escalation of slang words and phrases that alluded to smell, smells or smelling is the rise in the latter half of the nineteenth century of what came to be a dominant fin-de-siècle metaphor whereby scents, like musical tunes, are 'composed' of 'notes' (see Fig. 2). In this discursive framework, the 'composition' around those 'notes' is known as an 'accord'; a repeated accord is a 'signature', the steeply shelved and curved enclosure in which a perfumer works is an 'organ' and the rate of evaporation of a particular ingredient in a perfume recipe is an 'octave'.


**Figure 2: Early twentieth-century Perfumers' Organ at the Fragonard Museum, Grasse, France. The notice fixed to the case on the left of the picture says 'PERFUME ORGAN. A three sided piece of furniture containing precision scales and a large number of bottles used by the perfumer known as the nose to create perfumes. This is called an organ since perfumes are composed like music. GRASSE XXth CENTURY'.[98]**

[97] 'You're a askin' too many questions for me, there's too much of Mr. Nosey Parker about you'. See: *Belgravia Mag.,* May 1890. Eric Partridge mooted that the term 'Nosy Parker' may have originally derived from the voyeuristic toilet-attendants at the Great Exhibition of 1851.

[98] Photo credit: Flickr: theperfumebee Photostream <http://www.flickr.com/photos/75597492@N00/ > [accessed 14 December 2013].

The following section of this introduction will clarify, therefore, the ways in which nineteenth-century writers 'discovered' the articulation of scent as music, and will look closely at a discourse of odour that emerged during the period to indicate the nature of a major strand of contemporary thought not just on scent, but specifically on a scent 'language' or scent 'phrase'. These notions were particularly pertinent to the attempts by the supernatural authors discussed below to 'write' smell, particularly as this new discourse of odour likened odour to the 'anti-language' of music.

**Scent as Musical Composition**

Antecedents to the association between music and smell are few; there are the opening lines by Count Orsino to *Twelfth Night* (1563):

> If music be the food of love, play on;
> Give me excess of it: that surfeiting,
> The appetite may sicken, and so die.
> That strain again, it had a dying fall:
> O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound,
> That breathes upon a bank of violets;
> Stealing and giving odour. [99]

There is also Keats's injunction in *Ode to a Grecian Urn* (1819) to the clay pipes: 'Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard / Are sweeter' (this can, however, be read as a gustatory metaphor since the word 'sweeter' has a gustatory as well as an olfactory meaning).[100] Although examples of metaphors which pair music and smell are rare in literature before 1855, the association between music and perfume had become sufficiently conventional by the beginning of the twentieth century to appear, unremarked, among the weekly serialised romances in the *Penny Illustrated Paper and Illustrated Times* of 1903, where the hearty and good-looking new Squire in 'Barbara's Stormy Wooing' is discovered, to the blushing consternation of Barbara while she innocently perambulates his woods, as he sings: 'I spend the noontide hours / Amidst

[99] William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night* (London: Penguin, 2001) I. 1. 1-7.
[100] John Keats, 'Ode to a Grecian Urn' (1819), ll. 11-12.

thy leafy bowers / And thy beauty and thy perfume run like music through my dreams'.[101] A generation later, in *Private Lives* (1930), Noël Coward was to satirise the commodification of the association between perfume and music in Amanda's crisp reflection that conflates 'potency' (i.e. the intoxificating efficacy of a fluid or drug) with sentimental melody; 'Extraordinary how potent cheap music is'.[102]

If Coward's whimsical phrase suggests that the association had become a cliché by 1930, it was a startling protologism in the mid-nineteenth century, 'a crucial time in the evolution of the perfumery market, an age of transition combining unique conditions within the industry and the marketplace'.[103] Although there is no connection that I have been able to determine other than the nebulous claims of *zeitgeist,* the earliest nineteenth-century printed articulations in English of scent as music date from two consecutive years. In late 1856, the chemist Dr George Wilson, then Director of the Scottish Industrial Museum (now known as the Royal Scottish Museum in Chambers Street, Edinburgh) and Regius Professor of Technology at Edinburgh University, elaborated in *The Five Gateways to Knowledge* on the wonders of the five senses (or 'gateways to knowledge'), which had been originally described by Aristotle in *De anima* (c.350BCE). Wilson's authoritative and handsome volume is prefaced by a quotation from Bunyan's novel, *The Holy War Made By King Shaddai Upon Diabolus, to Regain the Metropolis of the World, Or, The Losing and Taking Again of the Town of Mansoul* (1682). As the religious and epistemological references to Aristotle and Bunyan suggest, Wilson's explanation of olfaction is determined in terms of its material benefits in discriminating between good and bad food; the content had originally been

[101] 'Barbara's Stormy Wooing', in *The Penny Illustrated Paper and Illustrated Times*, 5 Dec 1903, p. 362.
[102] Noel Coward, 'Private Lives', in *Three Plays: 'Blithe Spirit', 'Hay Fever', 'Private Lives'* (London: Vintage, 2008), p. 207.
[103] Eugénie Briot, 'Fashion Sprayed and Displayed: The Market for Perfumery in Nineteenth Century Paris', conference paper delivered at *Economic History Society Annual Conference*, University of Exeter, 30 March-1 April 2007.

prepared by Wilson for a Sunday School in Leith and was delivered orally as a series of two lectures to the Philosophical Institution of Edinburgh in 1853.[104] In Wilson, as in Aristotle and Bunyan, the five 'gateways' are The Gate of the Eye (seeing), The Gate of the Ear (hearing), The Gate of the Tongue (tasting), The Gate of the Hand (feeling) and The Gate of the Nose (smelling), which is the least of the Gates. The value of an epistemology based on the faculty of smell is deplored by Wilson, who declares that dogs do it better and that, since such is the case, humans had better avoid odiferous matter as much as possible, especially since so much of it smells noxious.[105] That the human capacity for smell is limited, and that odours are momentary sensations to which one quickly becomes desensitised is, he observes, evidence that the interactive principles of sight and hearing are more suitable guides to knowledge than the passive and instinctual capacity to smell.

Despite Wilson's prejudice against smell, however, there is the following injunction buried in the chapter on 'The Gate of the Nose':

> Let those who doubt this [i.e., Wilson's previous assertion that there are as many odours as there are colours] visit a scientific chemist's laboratory and examine his specimens one by one, and they will easily satisfy themselves that a fac-simile of the largest church-organ might be readily constructed, in which each organ-pipe, sounding a different note, should be represented by a phial exhaling, when opened, a different odour.[106]

The idea that an organ-pipe might release (in addition to musical noise) an odour to which each note corresponded, may have been based on the proposal of Isaac Newton – who, in *Opticks* (1704), divided the colour spectrum into seven, which he synaesthetically twinned with concordant notes – or on work by the Jesuit monk Louis Bertrand Castel, who designed the *clavecin oculaire* (1742), a light-organ which paired sound and coloured light – or upon the scheme outlined by Polycarp Poncelet in 1755,

[104] Jessie Aitken Wilson, *Memoir of George Wilson* (Edinburgh: Edmundston & Douglas, 1860), pp. 433-4.
[105] George Wilson, *The Five Gateways to Knowledge*, 2nd edn (London: Macmillan & Co, 1861) p. 53.
[106] Ibid, p. 86.

to combine musical tones with taste-sensations. Wilson's suggestion to match musical notes with smells, however, was almost unprecedented.

Wilson's suggestion was 'almost' unprecedented because, in the preceding calendar year, 1855, a similar musical analogy was published in *The Art of Perfumery and Methods of Obtaining The Odours of Plants, with Instructions for the Manufacture of Perfumes for the Handkerchief, Scented Powders, Odourous Vinegars, Dentifrices, Pomatums, Cosmetiques, Perfumed Soap, etc., with an Appendix* by the London chemist and perfumer, George William Septimus Piesse. Piesse's *The Art of Perfumery* was split into two halves, the first half being an anecdotal outline of the history of perfumes from the incense used by ancient Egyptians up to the pomades employed by 'modern' barbers, while the other half consists of simplified perfume recipes that could conceivably be produced at home. The passage that proposes that perfume may be compared to music is added as an afterthought to the description of 'Sweet Pea' in an alphabetical list of 74 other 'simple extract' fragrance ingredients:

> Scents, like sounds, appear to influence the olfactory nerve in certain definite degrees. There is, as it were, an octave of odors [sic] like an octave in music; certain odors coincide, like the keys of an instrument. Such as almond, heliotrope, vanilla, and orange-blossoms blend together, each producing different degrees of a nearly similar impression. Again, we have citron, lemon, orange-peel, and verbena, forming a higher octave of smells, which blend in a similar manner. The metaphor is completed by what we are pleased to call semi-odors [sic], such as rose and rose geranium for the half note; petty grain, neroli, a black key, followed by fleur d'orange. Then we have patchouli, sandal-wood, and vitivert, and many others running into each other.[107]

*The Art of Perfumery* was published at first as a marketing ploy to coincide with the opening of Piesse's Mayfair shop 'The Laboratory of Flowers' in New Bond Street, London, but it became a vital component of the emerging nineteenth-century discourse of perfume as music, a correlative to contemporary ideas about synaesthesia, and is a

[107] G.W. Septimus Piesse, *The Art of Perfumery and Methods of Obtaining The Odours of Plants, with Instructions for the Manufacture of Perfumes for the Handkerchief, Scented Powders, Odourous Vinegars, Dentifrices, Pomatums, Cosmetiques, Perfumed Soap, etc., with an Appendix on Preparing Artificial Fruit-Essence, Etc.* (Philadelphia: Lindsay and Blakiston, 1867), p. 36.

source of much illumination over the role of perfume in J. K. Huysmans's influential fin-de-siècle novel, *À Rebours* (1884). Since the time of publication, however, the book has been almost entirely neglected or miscredited by critics, leading to an impoverished understanding of *À Rebours* and raising questions about the validity of some perfume scholarship. The following description of *The Art of Perfumery* is consequently intended to recover an important part of the history of odour in the nineteenth century.

Piesse's *Art of Perfumery* was a great success, going through ten editions in the thirty-six years between 1855 and 1891, including five major English editions as well as two revisions for the American market and translations in German, Italian and French. The translated French edition of 1877 also provided the factual basis for the magisterial guide and catalogue to the perfume section of the 1900 International Exhibition in Paris [Exposition universelle et international de Paris], written by Comte Robert de Montesquiou-Fezensac (1855-1921).[108] Montesquiou's aristocratic origins, eclectic artistic interests, passion for collecting and profound olfactory sensitivities were and are commonly supposed to have been the inspiration and model for the hero, Des Esseintes, of Huysmans's *À Rebours*.[109] In addition, Montesquiou served as a model for the character of Charlus in Marcel Proust's *À la recherche de temps perdu* (1913-27) whose epiphanic reminiscences are famously summoned by the smell of a madeleine dipped into a cup of lime-blossom herbal tea.[110] That Proust's and Huysmans's model for olfactory sensibility should have derived his knowledge of perfume in the first instance from Piesse's *Art of Perfumery* is fascinating but, due to various factors, the

[108] Willa Z. Silverman, *The New Bibliopolis: French Book Collectors and the Culture of Print 1880-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2008), p. 145.
[109] Edmond Goncourt's journal gossips about this connection as early as Wednesday18 June 1884. The 1897 portrait of a very dandified Montesquiou by Giovanni Boldini (1842-1931) is on the cover of the 1986 Penguin *À Rebours* edition translated by Robert Baldick, although it is there misattributed to G. Baldini, an earlier painter (born 1834) of Italian historical genre scenes.
[110] A recent reference to this tradition is by Laura Tunbridge in *The Song Cycle: Cambridge Introductions to Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 96. Proust biographer Edmund White, however, points out that Charlus also bears a lot in common with Montesquiou's contemporary Jacques Doasan 'who ruined himself showering gifts on a Polish violinist'. See: Edmund White, *Marcel Proust* (New York: Viking, 1998), pp. 57-59.

understanding of Piesse's place in the development of a discursive analogy between perfume and music has been occluded. These factors include the loss at the British Library of the first and second editions of Piesse's volume, meaning that conscientious researchers have found it difficult to trace changes to particular editions, and an 'imaginative' recreation of Piesse's association with perfume and music in 1945 by chemist and perfume historian Edward Sagarin that has since been cited as historical fact.[111] Sagarin's imaginary recreation reads: 'Septimus Piesse pictured himself in his laboratory coat, a white-haired maestro banging away with inspired harmony at the keys of a fantastic odor piano, his agile fingers bringing forth, not musical sounds, but fragrant vapours'.[112] Sadly, not one bit of Sagarin's persuasive image is consonant with the facts as, although standardised laboratory coats were indeed introduced by George Armstrong (1855-1933) in Montreal hospitals in the late nineteenth century, the garments were still considered to be strictly protective workwear at the time of the first appearance of Piesse's gamut of odours in 1867, and would not have been pictured as appropriate garb to be worn at the keys of a musical instrument (it was not until the 1920s, following international customary adoption of white lab coats by physicians, that the garment came to represent a scientist's uniform).[113] In addition, contemporary photographs reveal Piesse, who died at the age of 62, never to have been a 'white-haired maestro' with 'agile fingers', but a stocky, jowled, dark-haired and bearded figure, somewhere between William Morris and a bear.

One scholarly difficulty of appraising the influence of *The Art of Perfumery* lies in the dramatic expansion of each subsequent British edition from its predecessor,

[111] In June 2010, the Integrated Catalogue of the British Library listed the 1855 and 1856 editions of Piesse's *Art of Perfume* but returned requests for the books, respectively, as 'DESTROYED' and 'MISSING'. It was suggested to me by staff at the Library at the time that these missing books may have been due to bombing of the Library's stock by the Luftwaffe in 1941.

[112] Edward Sagarin (pseud. Donald Cory Webster), *The Science and Art of Perfumery* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1945), p. 148.

[113] Maura C. Flannery**,** 'Dressing in Style? An Essay on the Lab Coat', *The American Biology Teacher*, 61:5 (1999), 380-383.

between its first in 1855 and its last in 1891, so that it is hard (if not sometimes misleading) to speak of a definitive 'text'. The enlarged fourth edition of *The Art of Perfumery* in 1879, for instance, ran to 502 pages whereas the 1855 version had run to only 287 pages. The compendious fifth and last edition of 1891 was published 'in-house' by Piesse & Lubin and was even more greatly expanded by G. W. S. Piesse's son, Charles Henry Piesse, who inherited a share of control of the company after his father's death in October 1882.[114] C. H. Piesse's intervention added dense tables of industrial statistics (such as currency data and excise duties at all major foreign ports) to his father's book of perfume recipes, and an impassioned Prologue that exhorted the British perfume industry to catch up with its rivals in France: 'the exportation of perfumery has exactly doubled in value since the date of the first edition of this work; and this too, in spite of the almost prohibitory tariff levied by our Indian government and the falling-off of trade with the two Americas'.[115] Accordingly, while each of the five English editions of *The Art of Perfumery* does contain some reference to perfume as music, the attention afforded to that reference is accumulatively expanded.

The first edition of *The Art of Perfumery*, in 1855, meditated briefly on the influence of scents that, like sounds, affected 'the olfactory nerve' and no alteration to this singular part of the text which deals with perfume and music occurs either in the second (1856) edition or in the 1857 edition of *The Art of Perfumery* that was published in Philadelphia for the American market. A profound change to the tenor of the volume occurs in the third edition of 1862, however, which is renamed *The Art of Perfumery and Methods of Obtaining The Odours of Plants, the Growth and General Flower Farm System of Raising Fragrant Herbs with Instructions for the Manufacture of Perfumes for the Handkerchief, Scented Powders, Odorous Vinegars, Dentifrices, Pomatums, Cosmetiques, Perfumed Soap, etc., to which is added on Preparing Artificial Fruit*

[114] G. W. S. Piesse's will reported in 'Middlesex Sessions', *Daily News* (London), 22 December 1882.
[115] G. W. S. Piesse, *The Art of Perfumery*, 5th edn (London: Piesse & Lubin, 1891), p. 313.

*Essences & etc.* In this, as in subsequent editions, an expository chapter is given to the subject of the 'gamut of odours', along with a diagrammatic scheme for Piesse's gamut of notes and corresponding fragrances (see Fig. 3).

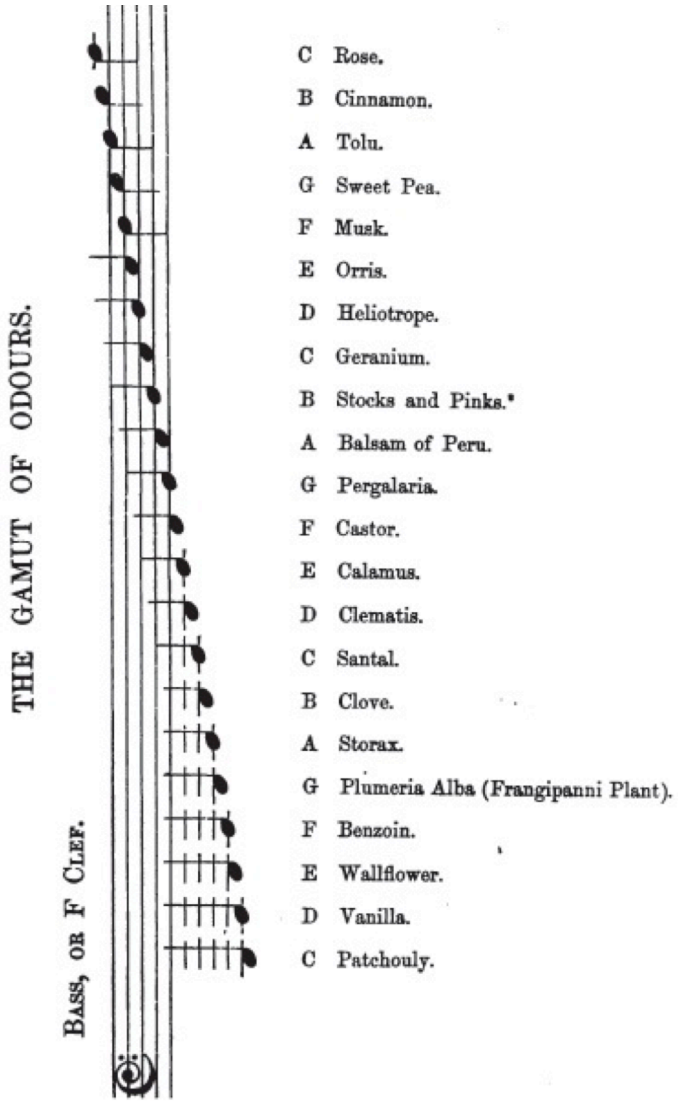


**Figure 3: Piesse's 'Gamut of Odours' (London: Longmans, Green, 1879), p. 48.**

In addition to including the diagrams of the gamut of odours, the 1867 edition enlarged the description of pimento scent to include the remark: 'The odour of pimentos very much resembles that of cloves, and in a gamut of odours would be placed on the scale one octave higher'.[116] The bizarre circumstance that none of the scent recipes contained

[116] G. W. Septimus Piesse, *The Art of Perfumery*, 3rd edn (Philadelphia: Lindsay and Blakiston, 1867), p. 145.

in the book actually conform in any way to Piesse's gamut of odours suggests that the notion is whimsical: the gamut is a worked-out version of George Wilson's 1855 odour-releasing pipe-organ.

The idea that G. W. S. Piesse had expressed in 1855 of 'an octave in odours like an octave in music', and his 1867 diagram of the gamut of odours, have since been inaccurately conflated with the notional organ-like musical instrument for releasing fragrances – the 'odophone' – that was introduced in *Olfactics and the Physical Senses* (1887) by Charles Henry Piesse, who took over editing *The Art of Perfumery* from 1876. Despite his own involvement in naming and explaining the odophone, C. H. Piesse was always adamant that the credit should lie with his father:

> The discovery, if such it may be called, by my late father of a gamut of odours, gave rise to a great deal of discussion in the press at the time. I will now give it in full, simply explaining that the highest note in the treble or G clef is the note F – civet, and that the lowest note in the bass or F clef is C – patchouli.[117]

Specifically disclaiming any intention to comment on the odophone, C. H. Piesse nonetheless invokes praise for it from the highest authority, according the final words on the subject in his treatise to John Henry (then Cardinal) Newman:

> Professor Newman has remarked that there is a point at which all sciences oscillate. This becomes more apparent daily. The chemist must be a mathematician, so must the thorough musician. […]What shall we say of Piesse's theory which finds close analogy between scents and musical notes? There is a 'continuity pervading the universe; everything gives proof of it'.[118]

In other words, implies Piesse junior, the odophone is no less than an instrument revealing the omnipresence of God.

C. H. Piesse's publishing strategy for enhancing the analogy between perfume and music and for turning his father's compendium of perfume recipes, *The Art of Perfumery*, into a polemical industry manual, had benefits and disadvantages. Among the benefits were favourable reviews in journals customarily antipathetic to feminine

[117] Charles Henry Piesse, *Olfactics and the Physical Senses* (London: Piesse & Lubin, 1887), p. 142.
[118] Ibid, p. 157.

cosmetics and perfumery. *Lloyds Weekly Newspaper* observed: 'Dr Piesse is not a perfumer as the world understands the word. He is a *scientific man* of no mean order, who makes the rose, by other names, smell even sweeter than when on the wild bush'.[119] The *Pall Mall Gazette* remarked: 'Readers who care little for the toilet may be interested in the statistics given with regard to flower-farming and in the writer's "theory of odours"'.[120] For the *Newcastle Courant*, G. W. S. Piesse represented a modern man of culture:

> The Greeks educated eye and hand, but the education of the ear is recent. Next will come the education of the nose – which has been strangely neglected. Odours have their gamut like sounds, as Mr Septimus Piesse has ingeniously shown. Blossom of hawthorne strikes the same note as Gruyère cheese.[121]

The pinnacle of C. H. Piesse's efforts to promote his father's invention was achieved when, as author of *Olfactics and the Physical Senses* and public analyst for the Fulham district, member of the Royal College of Surgeons and Fellow of the Chemical Society, he was invited to contribute the article on Perfume to the tenth *Encyclopedia Britannica* of 1902. There, G. W. S. Piesse's notional odophone is listed alongside categorical facts about the physical properties of odorous substances, methods of manufacture, a brief history of incense in the Old Testament and some recipes for blended tinctures. The late Dr. Piesse, his son added,

> endeavoured to show that a certain scale or gamut existed amongst odours as amongst sounds, taking the sharp smells to correspond with high notes and the heavy smells with low. He illustrated the idea by classifying some fifty odours in this manner, making each to correspond with a certain note, one-half in each clef, and extending above and below the lines. For example, treble clef note E (4th space) corresponds with Portugal (orange), note D (1st space below clef) with violet, note F (4th space above clef) with ambergris. It is readily noticed in practice that ambergris is much sharper in smell (higher) than violet, while Portugal is intermediate. He asserted that properly to constitute a bouquet the odours to be taken should correspond in the gamut like the notes of a musical chord, one false note among the odours as among the music destroying the harmony. Thus on his odophone, santal, geranium, acacia, orange-flower, camphor, corresponding with C (bass 2d line below), C (bass 2d space), E (treble

[119] *Lloyds Weekly Newspaper* (London), 16 July 1865. Emphasis mine.
[120] Review of *Art of Perfumery*, 4th edn. in *Pall Mall Gazette*, 10 January 1880.
[121] *Newcastle Courant*, 11 October 1878.

1st line), G (treble 2d line), C (treble 3d space), constitute the bouquet of chord C.[122]

While C. H. Piesse's vigorous promotion of the odophone had the effect of incorporating an imaginary construction into 'factual' contexts, the confusion engendered over different editions of *The Art of Perfumery* had the unwelcome, converse effect of rendering its original inventor's name quite obscure.

Examples of mistaken or omitted citations abound. *The Art of Perfumery* has variously been described as having been written by 'the famous Perfumer Charles Piesse', or as by 'G. W. Septimus Piesse, a French chemist expert in the art of perfumes'.[123] He has been described as 'Septimus Piesse: A famous French perfumer,' and even as 'Dr. Septimus Piesse, one of the most famous, if not *the* most famous of French perfumers'.[124] The *Oxford English Dictionary* mistakenly credits G. W. S. Piesse as a 'French chemist' and attributes to him the invention of the odophone, although every cited reference to the odophone occurs after his death and is authored by C. H. Piesse. Fighting shy, perhaps, of confused and self-contradictory citations of the instrument and *The Art of Perfume*, contemporary scholars on smell in the nineteenth century have avoided them altogether: neither Piesse nor the odophone is to be found in Barnes's *Great Stink of Paris*, in Carlisle's *Common Scents*, in Classon et al.'s *Aroma* or in Østermark-Johansen's *Nose Book*. In *The Foul and the Fragrant*, Corbin refers to Piesse only once and that briefly, as the subject of mockery among nineteenth-century Parisian perfumers who deplored lumpish Englishmen who 'appropriated the vocabulary of the masters of the Conservatoire, except that they offered no theoretical

[122] C. H. Piesse, 'Perfumery' from The *Encyclopædia Britanicca*, Eleventh Edition, Vol XXI PAYN to POLKA (Cambridge: University Press, 1911), pp. 142-3.
[123] Maria Rosaria Belgiorno, 'Cinyra, Cyprus and the notes of music, of wine and perfumes', ITABC-CNR, ROMA < http://www.erimiwine.net/erimiwine_g000002.pdf> [accessed 16 June 2010].
[124] See: *The Rosicrucian Digest*, ed. by the Rosicrucian Brothers (unknown location: unknown publisher, 1948), and O.A. Wall, *Sex and Sex Worship* (St Louis: C. V. Mosby Co: 1919), p. 230.

treatises, only practical measures'.[125] Corbin also traces, incorrectly, the odophone back to 1855. Piesse and the odophone are to be found in a footnote to Chapter Three of *The Smell of Books*, in which Rindisbacher ascribes a wrong name and a wrong nationality to 'Septimus Piesse, the famous French perfumer' from Edward Sagarin's 'fascinating' although 'somewhat dated now' little book.[126] The honourable exception to the otherwise imperceptibility of Piesse and the odophone in cultural histories of nineteenth-century smells is Richard Stamelman's *Perfume: Joy, Obsession, Scandal, Sin* (2006), which devotes two densely argued paragraphs on the odophone to his discussion of the 'music of perfume' in Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal*.[127]

The exclusion of Piesse from the canon of nineteenth-century writers on smell has led to an impoverished understanding of the rapidity with which the discourse of perfume as music evolved, of the mercantile and economic implications of such a rapid evolution, and to an understanding of key themes in late-Victorian texts which treat of perfume as art. In particular, the exclusion of Piesse has led to an unbalanced critical view of contemporary Parisian industrial contexts in Huysmans's *À Rebours*, in which residual odours of perfumers' and chemists' chimneys in the new suburban manufacturing valley of Fontenay send half-formed vapours of frangipane through cracks in the hero's windows, and in which text Piesse is alluded to by name as one of the 'great masters' whose 'syntax of smells' must be studied by Des Esseintes.[128] At this point, although it is outside of the scope of this thesis to comment in any detail on works written in French at the fin de siècle, it is instructive to observe that C. H. Piesse's first mention of an odophone dates from 1887, some three years after the publication of Huysmans's *À Rebours.* In *À Rebours,* an organ-like musical instrument

[125] Corbin, p. 198.
[126] Rindisbacher, fn. 68, p. 177.
[127] The histrionic flavour of the title is deliberately misleading, as 'Joy', 'Obsession', 'Scandal' and 'Sin' are all names of perfumes. See: Richard Stamelman, *Perfume: Joy, Obsession, Scandal. Sin: a cultural history of fragrance from 1750 to the present*, (New York: Rizzoli, 2006), pp. 124-125.
[128] J. K. Huysmans *Against Nature*, trans. by Robert Baldrick (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), p. 120.

is invented that, in a similar fashion to C. H. Piesse's odophone, translates musical notes into fragrant liqueurs: 'each and every liqueur […] corresponded in taste with the sound of a particular instrument'.[129] It has not been possible to confirm the guess that Huysmans had read Piesse's *Art of Perfumery* (although we know that Montesquiou, Huysmans's model for Des Esseintes had), but it is difficult to resist the notion that C. H. Piesse's still-unformed concept of the odophone, based on his father's 'gamut of odours' had been influenced by *À Rebours*, especially as it mentions his family's own scents and the factories of other trade rivals by name. Since its publication in 1884, *À Rebours* has been translated into English by John Howard as *Against the Grain* (1922) and by Rodert Baldick (1956) and Margaret Mauldon (1998) as *Against Nature*. Prior to 1922, however, the novel was read in French and seemed to epitomise the new literary fascination with odour: as Wilde wrote of it, 'the heavy odour of incense seemed to cling about its pages and to trouble the brain' (*Dorian*, p. 111) (I shall return to Wilde's response in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* to Huysmans's themes of perfume and smell, in Chapter One of this thesis).[130]

Chronologically following George Wilson's and G. W. S. Piesse's published analogies between perfume and music in 1855 and 1856 came the article 'Britannia's Smelling Bottle', collected in *Our Social Bees; or, Pictures of Town & Country Life, and other papers* (1861) by Dr. Andrew Wynter. Wynter was a popular journalist who, as a member of the College of Physicians, a former editor of the *British Medical Journal* and a specialist in insanity, undertook to explain medical subjects for a general readership in the periodicals *Ainsworth's Magazine*, the *Cornhill Magazine*, *Fraser's Magazine*, the *Edinburgh Review*, the *Quarterly Review*, the *London Review*, *Good Words*, and *Once a Week*. A humane voice in emerging nineteenth-century psychiatric

[129] Ibid., p. 58.
[130] This is assuming that the yellow, French novel with an identical plot to *À Rebours* that Dorian Gray borrows from Lord Henry is indeed *À Rebours*, although the paperback is unnamed in Wilde's text.

practices, Wynter took in prosperous 'lunatics' as residential patients at his own house at Chestnut Lodge, Bolton Road in Chiswick, a few streets away from Piesse's own Chiswick residence at 1, Merton Place.[131] In the short article 'Britannia's Smelling Bottle', Wynter quotes, mocks, expands and gives a lot of free publicity to his neighbour, claiming to have found inspiration for his theme in an unspecified article in *Chambers's Journal of Popular Literature, Science and Arts*:

> A writer in 'Chambers's Journal' has very subtly remarked that scents, like sounds, affect the olfactory nerve in certain definite proportions. Thus there are octaves of odours, the different notes of which agree with each other. […] There is another series of perfumes which constitute a higher octave, such as citron, lemon, orange-peel, and verbena. Again, we have half-notes, such as rose, and rose-geranium; and minor keys, such as patchouly, vilivart; and, lowest in the scale, musk and other animal odours strike a deep bass note.[132]

Although Wynter fails to credit the 'subtle remark' about perfume and music to Piesse, Piesse's publication is made the centrepiece of his discussion throughout 'Britannia's Smelling Bottle'. Alluding to the book, and appealing to an imaginary Mr. Piesse whom he dramatises bewailing the want of 'heliotrope pomade', Wynter archly satirises the content of Piesse's commercial catalogue:

> All the fashionable world, like the Three Kings of Brentford, but a little while ago were smelling at one nosegay in the celebrated 'Ess Perfume'; later still, we have imposed upon us 'Kiss-me-Quick'; and now the latest novelty of the season is 'Stolen Kisses,' with its sequel, 'Box his ears'. Why are the Messrs. Piesse & Lubin so amatory in their nomenclature?[133]

Wynter's tone of assumed outrage is punctuated not only by the mock-heroic 'Three Kings of Brentford' (a densely mysterious reference, as it conflates the theatrical *two* kings of Brentford who are presented sniffing at a nosegay in *The Rehearsal* [1641] by George Villiers, second Duke of Buckingham with the Biblical three 'Wise Men' who

[131] I have found nothing but proximity to connect Wynter and Piesse, partly because Piesse's house and street no longer stand. It is difficult to imagine that Wynter would not at least have known of Piesse as a colourful fellow resident, especially since Piesse had generated local antiquarian research and contributed anecdotes about the traditional Chiswick Christmas mummers' play to the journal *Notes and Queries* [X, 15 December 1860, 466-467].
[132] Andrew Wynter, 'Britannia's Smelling Bottle', in *Our Social Bees; or, Pictures of Town & Country Life, and Other Papers* (London: Robert Hardwicke, 1865), pp. 101-2.
[133] Ibid., p. 105.

provide expensive presents, and the then-contemporary drive to create a new Local Urban Governmental District of Brentford out of three formerly separate areas; an achievement reached finally in 1874, following the Local Government Act of 1848), but also by his satirical allusion to the comic products produced by Piesse in his incarnation as half of the Bond Street perfumery firm, *Messrs. Piesse & Lubin*.

Piesse & Lubin were known for their perfumed novelties and frivolous bibelots such as *Little Dorrit's Nosegay* (a souvenir for Christmas 1855) and the *Fountain Finger-Ring* (designed to squirt an admonitory dose of *Kiss-Me-Quick* into the face of any suitor so bold as to squeeze a young lady's hand: 'the practical application of this invention causes a good deal of merriment and laughter').[134] The company advertised its new scents widely, and created a promotional showcase 'boudoir' at the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden which sold perfumed fans, nosegays, bouquets and colognes to theatregoers.[135] By distancing the perfume/music metaphor from the frivolity of Piesse's products and crediting it instead to an anonymous article in *Chambers's Journal,* which had been 'set out to attract the newly literate, mainly urban, readership of the large towns',[136] Wynter was imbuing the association between fragrance and music with the gravitas afforded to 'the manners and maxims of the middle ranks of society'.[137]

For all that he had been lampooned by Wynter, and his perfume/music conceit had been borrowed without attribution, Piesse added a graceful tribute to the recently deceased Wynter in the concluding sentiments to the 1867 edition. In it, he observes the expression 'to be "in good odour" denotes moral purity' to be pertinent and then quotes from Wynter the question, 'why […] should we not know our fair friends by the

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[134] G. W. S. Piesse, *The Art of Perfumery*, 5th edn, p. 313.
[135] 'Amusements of the Month', *The Ladies' Cabinet of Fashion* (London: date unknown), 330.
[136] Joanne Shattock's review of Ian Haywood, '*The Revolution in Popular Literature: Print, Politics and the People, 1790-1860'*, *Victorian Studies*, 49:1 (2006), 149.
[137] William and Robert Chambers, *Spirit of the Chambers's Journal: Volume 2* (Edinburgh and London: W. & R. Chambers, 1835), Frontipiece '*Notice'*.

delicate odours with which they are surrounded as we know them afar off by the charm of voice?'.[138] This is the edition wherein appears the first diagram of the gamut of odours: whether one interprets the inclusion of Wynter and the diagram of the gamut of odours within the 1867 edition as genuine affection or as a species of intellectual copywriting, there is no doubt that Piesse was reclaiming the analogy between perfume and music as his own, and that he was making it quite clear that he had read what Wynter had to say.

Here is a knotty problem, though: even if Wynter had indeed borrowed the analogy between perfume and music from Piesse, it still begs the question of what both Piesse and Wynter meant by 'music', and whether they meant the same thing? In Piesse's 1855 comparison, where the 'effect upon the smelling nerve [may be thought of as being] similar to that which music or the mixture of harmonious sounds produces upon the nerve of hearing', perfume is compared to music because they are both external stimuli which produce a predictable result upon the physiology of the smeller or auditor.[139] In Wynter's later elaboration of the musical analogy, however, it is the *perfumer*, not the perfume, who is responsible for the effect of scent upon the nose: 'his department [i.e., that of the manufacturing perfumer] is the higher duty of combining [odours]: give him a fuller scale of notes, and he will afford the public more varied airs'.[140] According to Wynter, the quality of the pleasure occasioned by an intelligent arrangement of odours is superior to the quality afforded by nature:

> The skilful perfumer with this full gamut before him can make a thousand different harmonies; indeed, the combinations are endless, but they must be made with a full knowledge of the art. He can no more jumble half-a-dozen perfumes together, and expect to be able to please the nose, than he could strike half-a-

[138] G. W. S. Piesse, *The Art of Perfumery*, 3rd edn, pp. 355-56.
[139] This comment is especially relevant to the first edition of Piesse's book, as subsequent editions in 1862, 1879 and 1891 in London and in 1865 and 1877 in Paris (in translation into French) expressed increasingly greater detail on the nature of the musical effects intended.
[140] Wynter, p. 99.

> dozen notes at random, and expect to charm the ear with the harmonious effect of a chord.[141]

While Piesse's employment of the analogy between perfume and music had been predicated on an essentialist understanding of art, Wynter offered the same analogy with the significant difference that his understanding was dependent on Romantic musicology of the early and mid-nineteenth century which stressed the non-narrative formal qualities of tone and timbre, the value of novelty and the individual genius of its composer. In particular, Wynter's account of the connection between perfume and music embraces the 'romantic fantasy of emancipation' that, for Lisa Fishman, marks the dialectical urge to imprison and escape which accompanied post-Revolutionary, early-romantic music as it emerged from the confines of its eighteenth-century subservience to literary narrative.[142] Wynter asked:

> Did the reader ever ask himself, as he passed the perfumer's shop, - How are these delicate odours that strike so sweetly upon the sense taken prisoners! What chains can we forge fine enough to enslave the delicious breath of the rose? what trap can we set sufficiently subtile to seize the odour of the violet? By what process do we manage to 'bottle' the hawthorn-scented gale?[143]

Although Wilson, Piesse and Wynter had between them laid out between 1855 and 1861 the original analogy that paired perfume with music, and perfumers with musicians, it was not until the publication of Eugene Rimmel's *The Book of Perfumes* in 1865 that the conceit and the classificatory structure that was based upon it became a default industry standard around which all new perfumes were fashioned until 1983.[144]

Rimmel's taxonomic authority in 1865 depended upon his impeccable credentials as a businessman: he was a second-generation perfumer in London, having

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[141] Wynter, p. 104.
[142] Lisa Fishman '"To Tear the Fetter of Every Other Art": Early Romantic Criticism and the Fantasy of Emancipation', *19th-Century Music*, 25:1 (2001), 75-86.
[143] Wynter, p. 96.
[144] Michael Edwards, editor of the annual survey publication *Fragrances of the World: Parfums du Monde*, introduced 'The Fragrance Wheel' in 1983, consisting of three sub-categories beneath the major divisions of Floral, Oriental, Woody and Fresh. See: Miguel A. Teixeira, Oscar Rodriguez, Paula Gomes, Vera Mata and Alirio E. Rodrigues, *Perfume Engineering: Design, Performance and Classification* (Oxford: Elsevier, 2013), 4.2. This fragrance wheel has been updated since 1983, to account for the category *fruity* and to incorporate *fougere*, which had formerly been at the centre of the wheel.

arrived from Paris at the age of fourteen to set up a successful business with his father, who in turn had been trained as a perfumer for Lubin, the most prestigious of French perfume Houses that had been established in 1798 under Napoleon Bonaparte.[145] Holder of the Royal Warrant from Queen Victoria as well as from the Queen of Spain and the King of Portugal, Rimmel was not only brought to public attention as the celebrated inventor of the giant perfume fountain which scented the Entrance Hall to the Great Exhibition of 1851, but also as the architect of the steam perfume vaporiser (first used to scent the fairy extravaganza *A Rose Without a Thorn* (1858) at the Lyceum Theatre in London and subsequently employed to counteract unpleasant odours in hospitals). Rimmel promoted the respectable use of cosmetics to enhance natural features (the word 'rimmel' is still the correct term for 'mascara' in the Turkish, Portugese, Romanian and Italian languages), and was elected member of the Society of Arts and the chief exhibitor, juror and official reporter for the 1862 Great International Exhibition's perfumery class.

Rimmel's *Book of Perfumes* revisited the existing taxonomy of odour that had been proposed by Linnaeus in 1752. This taxonomy consisted of seven odoriferous qualities: 'aromatic'; 'fragrant'; 'musky'; 'garlicky'; 'goaty'; 'repulsive' and 'nauseous'. Deploring these as 'more theoretical than practical', Rimmel put forward an isotonic classification consisting of eighteen representative types of fragrance, grouping each into a class with other materials having a similar fragrance. The eighteen types are:

Almondy (including laurel, peach kernels)
Amber (including oak-moss)
Anise (including dill, caraway, coriander and fennel)
Balsamic (including vanilla, heliotrope, benzoin)
Camphoraceous (including rosemary, patchouli)
Caryophyllaceous (including carnation, clove pink)

[145] For Rimmel's family background, see 'Rimmel, Eugene' entry in *The New Perfume Handbook*, ed. By Nigel Groom (London: Chapman & Hall, 1997), p. 285. G. W. S. Piesse's products were sold as by 'Piesse & Lubin', although I have found no evidence that there ever was a Mr Lubin with whom Piesse was in partnership. It may be that Piesse was simply capitalising on existing associations of the name 'Lubin' with perfume, luxury and status.

Citrine (including lemon, bergamot, lime)
Fruity (including pear, quince, pineapple)
Jasmine (including lily of the valley)
Lavender (including thyme, marjoram)
Minty (including spearmint, rue, balm, sage)
Musky (including civet)
Orange flower (including acacia, lilac)
Rosaceous (including geranium, sweetbriar, rosewood)
Sandal (including vetivert, cedarwood)
Spicy (including cinnamon, mace, nutmeg)
Tuberose (including lily, jonquil, hyacinth)
Violet (including cassie, orris-root, mignonette). [146]

This new classification was based neither on botanical genus, nor on the chemical composition of the odorants. In this extraordinary departure from Linnaeus and all existing nineteenth-century scientific paradigms of taxonomy, Rimmel favoured instead a subjective, and hedonistic, epistemology:

> I have attempted to make a new classification, *comprising only pleasant odours* by adopting the principle that, as there are primary colours from which all secondary shades are composed, there are also primary odours with perfect types, and that all other odours are connected more or less with them.[147]

In other words, Rimmel's new classification was asserting the intrinsic value of smells as material for art, and including perfumers among other practitioners of the fine arts such as musicians and artists whose task is imagined to be that of imitating nature:

> When I say 'the art of the perfumer', let me explain this phrase, which otherwise might appear ambitious. The first musician who tried to echo with a pierced reed the songs of the birds of the forest, the first painter who attempted to delineate on a polished surface the gorgeous scenes which he beheld around him, were both artists endeavouring to copy nature; and so the perfumer, with a limited number of materials at his command, combines them like colours on a palette, and strives to imitate the fragrance of all flowers which are rebellious to his skill, and refuse to yield up his essence. Is he not, then, entitled to claim also the name of an artist, if he approaches even faintly the perfections of his charming models?.[148]

The penetration of perfume into the sphere of middle-class aesthetics, as well as Rimmel's success in associating perfume with women and domestic respectability, may be seen in Figure 4.

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[146] Eugene Rimmel, *The Book of Perfumes*, 5th edn (London: Chapman & Hall, 1867), p. 19.
[147] Ibid., p. 10. Emphasis mine.
[148] Ibid., p. 3.


**Figure 4: 'Scents and Scentsations', *Funny Folks,* 254, 11 October 1879, p. 326.**

The humorous strip presents Rimmel's book as the most advanced in the hierarchy of writing on perfume and contrasts the library of bookspines behind the Governess in Panel One with the library of scent bottles behind the languid young woman in Panel Two. The four panels show young girls' education in the discrimination and application of scents, as its opening panel depicts a governess directing the early study of her young

charge, the second shows a bored teenager dropping her printed 'perfumes' primer by Piesse and Lubin and lolling against bottles of the real thing, the third shows girls fighting at school because they have yet to control their applications of scent and the last shows an adult doctor using perfumes benignly to effect remedies. Although the final panel involves a man, the cartoon's preamble describing 'the female character' and the emphasis throughout on girls' education suggests strongly that an accomplishment is being described and that scent discrimination is being critiqued, albeit humourously, alongside similar pursuits such as those satirised by W. M. Thackeray in *Vanity Fair* (originally serialised in *Punch* Magazine 1847-8) as 'music, dancing, orthography, [and] every variety of embroidery and needlework'.[149] The cartoon 'Scents and Scentsations' was published in an eight-page, satirical, political, tabloid, penny weekly aimed at adult middle-class audiences. It relies for its humour on the incongruous novelty of putting scent discrimination alongside firmly established educational contexts, but it also shows the absorption and popularity of perfume manuals such as those by Piesse and Rimmel.

The affinities between perfume and music that had been stressed in the 1850s and 1860s, and that Wynter had imbued with Romantic musicological interest in abstract qualities of tone and timbre and compositional genius, were developed by Walter Pater's famous dictum in his essay on 'The School of Giorgione' (1873) that '*[a]ll art constantly aspires towards the condition of music'*.[150] Pater's phrase invoked music as the paradigm of an art that transcends referential meaning. The problem of pursuing the musicological importance of this dictum, as Patricia Herzog has pointed out, is that Pater in fact shows very little interest in any sort of music;

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[149] For Miss Sedley's accomplishments upon departing Miss Pinkerton's academy for young ladies, see: William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair* (Ware: Wordsworth Classics, 2001), p. 4

[150] Walter Pater, 'The School of Giorgione', first published in *Fortnightly Review*, October 1877, and reprinted in *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry*, 3rd edn, (London: Macmillan, 1915 [1888]), p. 140. Emphasis in original.

> Not in 'The School of Giorgione', where this statement occurs, nor anywhere else in *The Renaissance,* his slight but enormously influential volume of essays on Renaissance painting, sculpture and poetry, does Pater give the reader any indication of a type of music or specific musical work.[151]

Even if Pater's words, as Gene Bell-Villada argues, were merely the latest expression in a long line of notions of 'disinterested Taste' stretching backwards to the eighteenth century, even if they were, as Brad Bucknell suggests, only a 'pithy (though not revolutionary) recasting of the musical romantic ideal of music's self-presence', and even if the comparison urged between music and the aspirations of '*[a]ll art*' was singularly unexamined, the impact of Pater's maxim that '*[a]ll art constantly aspires towards the condition of music*' was profound among his contemporaries.[152] Although the 'School of Giorgione' essay was not included in editions of *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* until 1888, Pater's words constituted a rallying-cry to the younger generation of Aesthetes whom Pater taught at Oxford, including Wilde, who described *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* as 'my golden book' and who, according to his biographer Richard Ellman, had much of it by heart.[153] Like Pater, Wilde was much more comfortable with visual, rather than aural, art. The review he composed for the *Dublin University Magazine* of 1873, for instance, reported on the cultural highlights of May of that year. Three events were under discussion in the article: the 'Spinning Chorus' from *The Flying Dutchman* that was conducted personally in London by its celebrated composer Richard Wagner, Beethoven's *Sonata Apassionata* as performed by the famous Russian virtuoso, Anton Rubinstein, and the opening of the Grosvenor Galleries. In Wilde's review of the cultural highlights however, the Spinning Chorus and the Rubinstein concert are both dispatched in one paragraph each (in which Wilde

[151] Patricia Herzog, 'The Condition to Which All Art Aspires: Reflections on Pater on Music', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 36:2 (1996), 122-134, 122.
[152] See: Gene Bell-Villada, *Art for Art's Sake and Literary Life: How Politics and Markets Helped Shape the Ideology and Culture of Aestheticism, 1770-1990* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), pp. 14-15; and Brad Bucknell, *Literary Modernism and Musical Aesthetics: Pater, Pound, Joyce and Stein* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 37.
[153] Richard Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1987), p. 46.

mistakenly alludes to the *Impassionata*), while the paintings at the Grosvenor Galleries are accorded the remaining thirty-nine paragraphs.[154] As for Wagner, Wilde was to make him the butt of Lady Victoria's disingenuous comment in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*: 'I like Wagner's music better than any other music. It is so loud that one can talk the whole time without people hearing what one says. That is a great advantage' (*Dorian*, p. 42). While it is possible therefore to measure with caution the extent to which either Pater or his followers engaged comprehensively with 'the condition of music', it should be noted nonetheless that Pater's maxim about music inevitably implicated perfume, thanks to the musical analogy expounded by Wilson, Piesse, Wynter and Rimmel. Furthermore, Pater's exaltation of musical art that transcended referential meaning was inextricably linked to the exaltation of abstract scent.

Despite the haziness evinced by Wilde and Pater on the finer points of music in its own right, the notion that music – and by extension, musical composition – represented the apogee of artistic achievement, was received enthusiastically by other Aesthetic practitioners. James McNeill Whistler had already begun to title his paintings musically from 1871 as *Nocturne*, *Caprice*, *Symphony* or *Harmony* to emphasise their formal lack of narrative qualities. Referring to Edward Burne-Jones's large painting *The Depths of the Sea* (1886), Suzanne Fagence Cooper has argued that Whistler's example and Pater's dictum became widespread as musical subjects freed artists and audiences from the conventions of narrative interpretation, and allowed them instead to concentrate on exploring mood: 'critics were not just aping the musical terminology, made fashionable by Walter Pater or James Whistler. Instead, they contributed to the development of this distinctive theme in Victorian art, with articles on 'The Musical Work of Art' and repeated phrases such as the 'chord of colour'.[155] Perfumers

[154] Oscar Wilde, 'The Grosvenor Gallery', *Dublin University Magazine* (July 1877), 119.
[155] Suzanne Fagence Cooper, 'The Liquefaction of Desire: Music, Water and Femininity in Victorian Aestheticism', *Women: A Cultural Review*, 20:2 (2009), 186-201, 187.

themselves rapidly adopted the association with music and explored the new discursive possibilities: with the exception of single-note fragrances, all manufactured perfumes since 1923 have adopted the compositional paradigm of music. The chemist Walter Poucher supplemented Piesse's gamut of odours with a table of the molecular evaporation of 'top', 'middle' and 'base' notes in the publication *Poucher's Perfumes* (1923), which standardised the format for description in professional and industrial directories.[156] More recently, the perfumer Christopher Laudamiel has suggested that twenty-first century molecular chemistry may in the future provide alternative perfume structures to those of the dominant model:

> Traditionally, scents are classified as notes based on their olfactory character. Top notes are detected and fade first providing freshness (such as light scents that are usually citrus or wet greens lasting 5—30 minutes). Middle notes last sometimes a few hours and are the most prominent within the fragrance (usually combinations of floral, spicy, or fruit scents). Base notes give a perfume depth, last the longest, and are generally musky or woodsy notes. This classification of top, middle, and base notes designed to give a particular harmony is presently being challenged with a more exact approach.[157]

Despite Laudamiel's reservations regarding the less 'exact approach' of the 'traditional' analogy in 2005, the general adoption of an association between perfume and music, as proposed by Wilson, Piesse, Wynter and Rimmel, offered to writers at the Victorian fin de siècle not only a vocabulary for perfume, but also a new way of imagining music.

**Smell, Hygiene and Disease in fin-de-siècle London**

Another factor at the fin de siècle that complicated the British social experience of smell that Carlisle describes as underpinning fiction in the 1860s was the increasing ease with which otherwise humble members of the public could scent their bodies and garments with household soaps and detergents. Gladstone's 1853 repeal of the 3*d*/pound duty on

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[156] See: Hilda Butler (ed.), *Poucher's Perfumes, Cosmetics and Soaps: Tenth Edition* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2000).

[157] Megan Sullivan, 'An Interview with Perfumer Christopher Laudamiel', *The Science Teacher* (2004), 64-5 <http://www3.nsta.org/main/news/stories/science_teacher.php?news_story_ID=48898> [accessed 21 April 2010].

soap had encouraged soap sales, which rose from 47,768 tons in 1831 – or the equivalent of twenty-eight bars of soap per person, to 150,000 tons in 1871 – the equivalent to fifty-three bars of soap per person.[158] In addition, Gladstone removed the previous legal requirement to make no less than one ton of soap at a time; the requirement had been designed, in the reign of Charles I, as a practical impediment to deter artisan soapmakers, and to 'confine the actual manufacture of that article to the hands of a few capitalists'.[159] Furthermore, Alfred Nobel's invention of dynamite in the same year as Gladstone's repeal of soap duty had the effect of subsidising soap laundry powders as glycerine (a discarded waste product from soapmaking since 1811 when boiling with caustic soda became the dominant industrial process) acquired a new commercial value as the main ingredient of the explosive nitroglycerine. Yet while members of many economic classes in the 1890s had access to soap and soap products which, removing offensive personal smells, conferred identical, socially-coded aromas, not even the wealthiest inhabitants of cities were assured of a distinctively superior cleanliness. The writer and advocate of 'Home Decoration and Management by Correspondence', Jane Ellen Panton, recommended that up to three hairbrushes be kept in daily rotation to avoid the quantity of dust, dirt and soot that fell onto metropolitan dressing tables.[160] In addition to the confusion of class indicators that accompanied the rotation of hairbrushes and the detection and emanation of soap smells, the experience of smell in the 1890s underwent a significant change in response to the decline in belief in *miasmata.*

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[158] These figures are based on census population figures for England and Wales of 13,896,797 in 1831 and 22,712,266 in 1871. The number of bars is calculated according to a modern bar of Pears soap weighing 125g, although John Hunt points out that a 'bar' of soap, correctly speaking, is a slice cut from a much larger cake of soap. The individual 'bars' we have been buying since A. & F. Pears won the prize medal for soap in the 1851 Great Exhibition should be referred to as 'tablets', since they are poured liquid into moulds and left to dry out for up to three months. See: John Hunt, 'A Short History of Soap', *The Pharmaceutical Journal*, 263:7076 (1999), 985-989.

[159] G. W. S. Piesse, *The Art of Perfumery*, 3rd edn, p. 263.

[160] Jane Ellen Panton, *From Kitchen to Garrett: Hints for Young Householders*, 4th edn (London: Ward & Downey, 1888), p. 119.

*Miasmata* referred to the particles of decomposing matter which, air-borne, were recognisable by their foul smell and presumed to be poisonous. Miasma theory had offered an explanation of the association of dirt with disease since at least the first century A.D.: in *de Architectura* (15BCE), Vitruvius advises on the siting of healthy cities well away from foul-smelling marshland.[161] The ancient doctrine persisted even after John Snow's pioneering 1854 epidemiological demonstration that a cholera outbreak could be traced to a municipal water pump in Broad Street, Soho. Snow's demonstration had provided a rival to the dominant hypothesis that bad smells signified airborne particles which could spontaneously generate disease, but it was the combination of Louis Pasteur's research into fermenting micro-organisms in 1862, Joseph Lister's 'discovery' of antiseptics in 1865 and Robert Koch's isolation of the bacilli for anthrax (1877), tuberculosis (1882) and cholera (1883) which, for many physicians, sundered the link between smells and contagion. The dominance of miasma theory did not disappear overnight, however. As late as 1890, the year of his death, Edwin Chadwick (who, as Commissioner to the Metropolitan Commissioner of Sewers had reported to a parliamentary committee in 1846 that 'all smell is disease')[162] defended the miasmatic theory at a Royal Society of Arts discussion on sewage disposal, 'advocating the bringing down of fresh air from a height, by means of such structures as the Eiffel Tower, and distributing it, warmed and fresh, in our buildings'.[163] Chadwick's impassioned plea did not move *Builder,* a campaigning weekly journal concerned with the sanitary and housing conditions of the working class, who reported it as 'somewhat prolix'.[164] While Chadwick defended the old theory of miasmasis, Florence Nightingale kept a pragmatic foot in both camps, attending to

[161] Vitruvius, *The Ten Books on Architecture [Books I-X]* trans. by M. H. Morgan (London: Penguin, 2009), p. 20.
[162] 'Metropolitan Sewage Committee proceedings', Parliamentary Papers, 1846. p. 10.
[163] 'The London Sewage Question', *Builder*, 1 Feb 1890, 78-9.
[164] Ibid., 79.

miasma theory and germ theory together. While she allowed her 'utterly miasmatic' practical manual, *Notes on Nursing* (1856),[165] to remain in print, unedited until 1901, she simultaneously championed new theories:

> germ theory received rudimentary coverage in lectures at the Nightingale School as early as 1873, and by 1891 she was advocating the use of magic lantern shows at village lectures in India to demonstrate the existence of bacilli, 'the noxious living organisms in foul air and water', as a way to encourage villagers to adopt strict hygiene measures.[166]

In addition to encompassing beliefs promoted by such prominent champions of hygiene as Chadwick and Nightingale, local conditions in London that governed the paradigm shift away from miasma theory included the Great Stink of London in 1858.

Referring to the traditional analogy between the River Thames at any given historical moment and the state of the nation that surrounds it, Peter Ackroyd argues that the formlessness and reflectivity of river water makes the Thames an ideal conduit for the transmission of wider national tendencies.[167] In a gratifying illustration of Ackroyd's conceit, The Great Stink of London brought together reeking Thames water and national politics on 2 June 1858 when, during the summer heatwave, dry weather conditions had dried up the water to an especially low level and the smell from the Thames became so bad that Parliament, fearing miasmatic contagion, had to be disbanded. The Great Stink may be traced back to the Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace in 1851, at which the flushing Water Closet was introduced to a mass audience. During the Exhibition 827,280 visitors paid one penny to use the WCs, for which they were provided a clean seat, a towel, a comb and a shoe-shine (hence the euphemism, 'to spend a penny'). Subsequent sales of WCs were so high that they completely overwhelmed the system of cesspools that had served London for generations, so that human effluvia flooded out of the surface drains, into the streets and ran off into the

[165] Hugh Pennington, letter to *London Review of Books*, 31:1, 1 Jan 2009.
[166] Lynn MacDonald, letter to *London Review of Books*, 31:2, 29 Jan 2009.
[167] Peter Ackroyd, *Thames: Sacred River* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2008), pp. 6-10.

Thames. The Great Stink intensified governmental pressure to clear up the river and, within the year, parliament had passed the enabling act which permitted Joseph Bazalgette, the engineer to the Metropolitan Board of Works, to transform the sewers, the river and the city with a massive interceptory system involving 318 million bricks, 880,000 cubic yards of concrete and mortar, the excavation of 3.5 million cubic yards of earth and work throughout the coldest winter and the wettest summer of the century.

It is not possible to overestimate the impact upon English literature of the progressive defaecalisation of the Thames from the Great Stink in 1858 to the completion of Bazalgette's new sewerage system in 1875. Disruptions entailed by the building of new embankments were unmissable by any resident or visitor to the capital; between them, the Victoria Embankment, Chelsea Embankment and Albert Embankment reclaimed fifty-two acres from the river, to be used as new roads, walkways and parks. Daily vehicular congestion in The Strand, London's busiest thoroughfare, was diverted by Bazalgette into the Victoria Embankment, providing an alternative route between the Empire's administrative centre at Westminster and its financial centre at the City. Forty-two major streets were added or realigned in the city, including Shaftesbury Avenue, Northumberland Avenue, Charing Cross Road, Great Eastern Street and Garrick Street. Duty of 9*d* per ton of coal brought to London by rail or sea and 4*d* duty per tun of wine brought by sea was assigned to meet the costs of the works, and the River itself visibly flowed faster as its course became narrowed. In addition, progress of the work was marked, forewarned and commented upon daily by the national press, for whom the Thames had become 'a foul sewer, a river of pollution, a Stream of Death, festering and reeking with all abominable smells, and threatening three millions of people with pestilence as the penalty of their ignorance and apathy'.[168]

[168] Front page story 'The Purification of the Thames', *The Illustrated London News,* 24 July 1858, 71-72.

Attitudes to the deleterious effects on health of noxious smells in Paris during a similar period, among members of the *Conseil général,* have been measured by David Barnes. Using differences between the two Great Stinks of Paris (one in 1880 and one in 1895) as a barometer of shifting medical paradigms, he concludes that 'the consensus of medical opinion [offered to the *Conseil*] held that the Great Stink of Paris of 1880 spread disease, while in 1895 a similar consensus reached the opposite conclusion'.[169] Although the fifteen-year collapse in miasma theory which Barnes identifies is specific to Paris and based on the defaecalisation of the Seine, there are a number of resemblances to the collapse of miasma theory over a similar period in London, due to the defaecalisation of the Thames. Each successive year following the commencement of the clean-up operation, for example, had resulted in a healthier London according to death rates reported in the Metropolitan Board of Works' *Annual Reports*. The *British Medical Journal* reported a drop in the London death rate from 24.4 per 10,000 heads of population during 1861-70 to 20 per 10,000 people in 1890: fewer deaths than at any time since 1850, before the introduction of the WCs (although the celebrated Wimpole Street physician, G. V. Poove, queried the official figures, pointing out that such statistics failed to account for a simultaneous drop in the birthrate and that inner London had been depopulated by 100,000 since 1861).[170] When reporting how London's death rate had become aligned with the national standard in 1896, however, there was no doubt that cholera had been almost removed as a threat altogether, as the disease became classified for the first time in that year's government statistics as 'exotic'.[171]

While there are a number of resemblances between the collapse of miasma theory in London and Paris during the late nineteenth century, there are a number of differences too. Studies since the 1980s on the reception of smell during the 1880s and

[169] David S. Barnes, *The Great Stink of Paris* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2006), p. 254.
[170] G. V. Poove, Letter to Editor, *British Medical Journal*, 1:1578 (1891), 727-728.
[171] *Parliamentary Papers* (1896) vol. 37: Supplement to 24th Report of the Local Government Board 1894-5, p. v.

90s have been based upon the influential conclusions of Corbin and his analysis of municipal records regarding the cleaning-up of the Seine, but the degree of disturbance to London's public spaces, the creation of new routes between financial and administrative zones, and the regular canvassing of public opinion (through design competitions for projects such as lampposts and street benches) suggest that deodorisation of the Thames was accompanied by particular notions of sovereignty and citizenship that are peculiar to its location. The metonymic appearance of the River Thames in popular literature between 1838 and 1907 illustrates the point: the River becomes progressively less miasmatic and more of an alternatively-constituted state for utopian self-transformation in writings from the mid- to the late-nineteenth century.

**Defaecalisation of the River Thames: Successive literary depictions from miasma to 'messing around'**

The collapse of former certainties regarding smells and disease is illustrated by the presentation of the Thames both early and late in Charles Dickens's career. Dickens's second novel, *Oliver Twist* (1838), written before defaecalisation, presents an uncompromisingly miasmatic river Thames (which in the novel is London and, by extension, England). Nancy stands on London Bridge – a bridge both literally and metaphorically between her life and her murder at her lover's hands:

> 'What!' repeated the girl. 'Look before you, lady. Look at that dark water. How many times do you read of such as I [i.e., a prostitute] who spring into the tide, and leave no living thing, to care for, or bewail them. It maybe years hence, or it may be only months, but I shall come to that at last'.[172]

Here, the 'dark water' is a foul thing that will consume her and her fellow prostitutes inevitably. There is no recourse available: Monks and Bumble intend to consign Oliver's identifying locket and ring to the dark waters in the same novel. In *Our Mutual*

[172] Charles Dickens, Oliver Twist (London: Penguin English Library, 2012), p. 445.

*Friend* (1863-4), Dickens's final complete novel, the Thames is a vile and corpse-strewn horror:

> And everything so vaunted the spoiling influences of water – discoloured copper, rotten wood, honey-combed stone, green dank deposit – that the after-consequences of being crushed, sucked under, and drawn down, looked as ugly to the imagination as the main event [i.e., death].[173]

In comparison to the revolting Thames of 1838's *Oliver Twist*, the miasmatic influence of the Thames in *Our Mutual Friend* is combined with a fantasy of the Thames's innocence: 'in those pleasant little towns on Thames [i.e., Chertsey, Walton, Kingston or Staines] … you may see the young river, dimpled like a young child, playfully gliding away among the trees, unpolluted by the defilements that lie in wait for it on its course'.[174] The novel was written and published in 1863-4, just four to five years into Bazalgette's massive building and sewerage works on the river.

In *Our Mutual Friend,* reports of John Harmon's and Eugene Wrayburn's watery 'deaths' in the novel prove to be much exaggerated, as both characters escape death in the Thames to emerge morally and literally as new men. Opposed to their watery regeneration, however, is the sanitary, controlled, domesticated and publicly convenient water that self-satisfied Mr Podsnap requires in his pompous domicile: 'the time had come for flushing and flourishing this meek man down for good'.[175] That recurring symbol of 'flushing' associates Podsnap with the new-fangled WCs that were being sold as evidence of self-proclaimed social refinement, and with his pointless refusal to confront anything he finds challenging:

> 'I don't want to know about it; I don't choose to discuss it; I don't admit it!' Mr Podsnap had even acquired a peculiar flourish of his right arm in often clearing the world of its most difficult problems, by sweeping them behind him (and consequently sheer away) with those words and a flushed face. For they affronted him.[176]

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[173] Charles Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend*, 4 vols (New York: John Bradburn, 1865), I, p. 258.
[174] Charles Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend*, 4 vols (New York: John Bradburn, 1865), III, p. 139.
[175] Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend*, I, p. 213.
[176] Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend*, I, p. 193.

Flushing away unpleasantness, implies Dickens, is no substitute for confronting it. For Mr Podsnap, there can be no spiritual rebirth as, unlike John Harmon and Eugene Wrayburn, he will not risk immersion in the River and its potential for offering literal or metaphorical wealth hidden in the mire. Instead, Podsnap expels his waste down the pan where, as Dickens's contemporary audience would be aware, it would fester with calamitous results.

Sharing with *Our Mutual Friend* a concern with the miasmatic links between odour and sickness, Charles Kingsley's *The Water Babies* (also 1863) offers an attention to the improving quality of public water and similarly depicts the river as the location for moral and physical transformation.[177] Although the opening is nominally set in a 'Northern' town, the references to Michael Faraday, The British Association, Charles Darwin, T. H. Huxley and Richard Owen (and, by implication, to the site of the Natural History Museum which was newsworthy that year, having been purchased to house the overflowing and ill-ordered collection of the British Museum) render the grown-up world as London into which Tom 'as a great man of science' will grow.[178] The fear of miasma is ambivalent in *The Water Babies*. Although the narrator admonishes against 'taking them [i.e. children] to some nasty smelling undrained lodging, and then wondering how they caught scarlatina and diphtheria; … people won't be wise enough to understand that till they are dead of bad smells,' the river in which Tom drowns is the source of the 'quietest, sunniest, cosiest sleep that he had ever had in his life'.[179] The formerly miasmatic Thames permitted the young chimney sweep

[177] David Morse proposes that Tom's occupation of chimney-sweeping should be read in terms of the 'cleanliness is next to Godliness' motif in the story. See: David Morse, *High Victorian Culture* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993), p. 19.
[178] Charles Kingsley, *The Water Babies: A Fairytale for a Landbaby* (Ware: Wordsworth, 1994), p. 212.
[179] Kingsley, p. 93.

(as the Thames had done for Harmon and Wrayburn in *Our Mutual Friend*) a rebirth from crime and grime into wealth and health.[180]

As well as being affected by the Great Stink of 1858 and by the gradual replacement of miasma theory with germ theory, Dickens and Kingsley were heirs to the classical literary tradition that figures river water as Death through the image of Lethe, the river of oblivion that runs around Hades. Nineteenth-century poetic examples include Edgar Allen Poe's 'The Sleeper' (1831), Charles Baudelaire's poem 'Lethe' (1857) and Algernon Charles Swinburne's long dramatic monologue, 'Anactoria' (1866). Poe's 'The Sleeper' mourns Irene, dead on the bed with miasmatic mists from the lake ('looking like Lethe') rolling in through the window. Baudelaire's 'Lethe' personified the necrotic river as the poet's mistress. In the culminating image of Swinburne's 'Anactoria' (1866), the poet Sappho wills her release from the torments of unassuageable desire in a miasmatic triangle of lotus (smell), Lethe (oblivion) and sea (death in the water). The appearance of the post-defaecalised Thames in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century fiction, however, resists these Lethean and miasmatic associations. The resilient artilleryman in H. G. Wells's *War of the Worlds* (1898), for instance, offers the drains of London as a refuge to the narrator, while the familiar 'brown scum that drifted down the Thames' is now only the residue of Martians who have been brought low by ordinary human bacteria.[181] The narrator of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899) presents the defaecalised Thames as a 'venerable' bearer of 'greatness' and as being benignly (i.e. not miasmatically) vaporous: 'the very mist on the Essex marshes was like a gauzy and radiant fabric hung from the wooded rises inland and draping the low shores in diaphanous folds'.[182] It was only in former times, Marlow concludes, that the River had embodied miasmatic nightmare: 'cold, fog,

[180] Kingsley, p. 39.
[181] H. G. Wells, *The War of the Worlds* (London: Pan, 1975), p. 189.
[182] Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006), p. 4.

tempests, disease, exile and death – death skulking in the air, in the water, in the bush. They [the ancient Romans] must have been dying like flies here'.[183] Marlow's imaginary recreation of the miasmatic Thames, as it appeared to the Roman soldiers who perished beside it, both prefigures the ensuing voyage to the African interior and also summons the theme of inevitable decline of Empire.

If Conrad's fin-de-siècle response to the collapse of miasma theory was to displace it historically in England and geographically into the Congo, Jerome K. Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat* (1893) evinces considerable delight in disregarding it altogether. Subverting the miasmatic reputation of the Thames, Jerome has the river chosen by the eponymous three men (and the dog) specifically for its health-restoring properties. The river's Lethe-like propensity to cause sleep is gently mocked: 'Harris said he didn't think George ought to do anything that would have a tendency to make him sleepier than he always was, as it might be dangerous', while the foulest smells are caused by nothing more sinister than paraffin gas and cheese.[184] In novels of the 1890s by Conrad, Jerome and Wells, the miasmatic association of foul smells and disease in the river Thames is deemed finally to be over, but it is the 'messing around on the Thames' in Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind on the Willows* (1907), by nice mudbank animals and the jolly smells of 'bijou riverside residences', that signals the final demise of miasmatic theory that equated smells with sickness.

**Synthetic Smells**

Taking into account the collapse of miasma theory which had formerly reinforced the connection between smell and disease, the prominent effects upon Londoners of the

[183] Conrad, p. 6.
[184] Jerome K. Jerome, *Three Men in a Boat (to Say Nothing of the Dog)* (Bristol: J. Arrowsmith, 1898), p. 16.

Great Stink of 1858 and its repercussions, as well as increased consumption of soap and its by-products which had camouflaged some of the social distinctions which formerly accompanied personal smell, it is fair to expect the experience of detecting smell at the fin de siècle to have changed from the experiences available in the 1860s that Carlisle describes in *Common Scents*. However, it was not merely the experience of smells that was changing; unprecedented synthetic odours and combinations of odours were being created throughout the late nineteenth century, and smells themselves were changing. The compound Heliotropine (aka piperonal), for example, was discovered in 1869 by the chemists Fittig and Mielk, and its structure determined by 1871. This aromatic aldehyde substitute for the scent of heliotrope was produced industrially from 1874, appeared in Guerlain's catalogue as 'heliotrope' in 1880, and by the turn of the century it was in every perfumer's catalogue.[185] Along with heliotropine, vanilla vanillin was created in 1874, while other artificial smells were synthesised in the same few decades: cinnamic aldehyde in 1856, coumarin in 1875 (which is widely used in perfume and gives fougère scents their particular characteristics of moss and new grown hay), bitter leather quinolines in 1880, artificial musk in 1888, citronell in 1889, violet ionones in 1893 and peachy lactones in 1906. One advantage of these new chemical syntheses lay in the stronger molecular structures that could be engineered, allowing the scents to lend themselves to versatile uses: previously, the unstable components of most natural oils had unpredictably degraded and altered both their smell and their colour when added to alkaline washing powder or to detergents with a high pH. Discoveries in fields only loosely associated with scent were quickly adapted to the perfumery market; vanilla vanillin was at first extracted for addition to bakery products and the artificial musk that was created by Albert Baur in 1888 was the unanticipated result of experiments in the

[185] Prices for heliotrope dropped from 3,790 francs per kilo in 1879 to 37.50 francs per kilo in 1899. See: Eugénie Briot 'Fashion Sprayed and Displayed: The Market for Perfumery in Nineteenth-Century Paris', conference paper delivered at *Economic History Society Annual Conference*, University of Exeter, 30 March-1 April 2007.

explosive potential of trinitrotruluene (TNT). Coumarin was forged from coal tar in 1874 by the British chemist William Perkins, researching new forms of aniline dye (Perkins had previously isolated the purple colourant that made mauve-coloured soap possible), and its properties were subsequently investigated for the House of Houbigant in new laboratories set up from 1880 in Neuilly-sur-Seine. The scent *Fougère Royale* (1882), composed by Paul Parquet for Houbigant, became the first commercially packaged fragrance using coumarin and was distributed between 1880 and 1910 to England, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, Poland and Romania.[186] Unlike any previous fragrance, the Houbigant recipe for *Fougère Royale* (1882) was a notional construct: its creator Paul Parquet acknowledged that ferns ('*fougères*') do not 'really have an aroma, but if they did, it would be the aroma of *Fougère Royale*'.[187] Parquet's representation of an odourless thing through the medium of odour involves exactly the sort of metalinguistic paradox to which Michael Riffaterre has pointed as an essential constituent of Decadent writing.[188] Parquet's ground-breaking new scent of 1880, therefore, publicly aligned perfume with the processes of artistic expression.

The success of *Fougère Royale* in 1882 was followed by the innovative fragrance *Jicky* by Aimé Guerlain in 1889. Prior to Houbigant's and Guerlain's olfactory experiments in the 1880s, all fragrances had either been manufactured from single or combined floral notes or else, like eaux de cologne, evinced a therapeutic and remedial purpose. Guerlain's *Jicky* became the first composition specifically designated by the term 'perfume' and the first perfume to have been deliberately designed around the musically analogous structure of 'top' (or 'high') notes', 'middle notes' and 'base'

[186] 'Houbigant', *Perfume* Projects <http://perfumeprojects.com/museum/marketers/Houbigant.shtml> [accessed 14 March 2010].
[187] 'Fougère Royale', *Perfume* Projects <http://www.perfumeprojects.com/museum/bottles/Fougere_Royal.shtml> [accessed 14 March 2010].
[188] Michael Riffaterre 'Decadent Paradoxes', in *Perennial Decay: On the Aesthetics and Politics of Decadence*, ed. by Liz Constable, Dennis Denisoff and Matthew Potolsky (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), pp. 65-82.

(or 'bass') notes'. The structure of *Jicky* unfolds in time, like music, and the top, middle and base notes became the basis of the 'guerlainade' upon which all subsequent Guerlain perfumes, including *L'Heure Bleue* (1912), *Mitsouko* (1919), *Shalimar* (1925) and *Vol de Nuit* (1933), have been based.[189] Combining newly synthesised coumarin and vanillin with natural ingredients such as bergamot, mink oil and lavender, *Jicky* was presented to the Parisian public at the 1889 Universal Exposition beside the (then) 'temporary' erection of the Eiffel Tower and contrived to associate with the Tower's controversially modernist aesthetic. Designed to look like a medicine bottle topped (in the bottle design from 1908) by a champagne cork, the square glass flagons in which *Jicky* was distributed alluded both to eau de cologne's traditional hygienic practice and to a luxurious and exclusively French form of intoxication.[190]

In addition to the synthetic aromas employed by Houbigant and Guerlain in *Fougère Royale* and *Jicky*, the development in 1896 of amyl salicylate by chemist Georges Darzens at Paris' *l'Ecole polytechnique,* contributed the usefully multifaceted 'herbal-floral-clover-azalea-green-sweet-chocolate' aroma to L. T. Piver's perfume *Le Trèfle Incarnat* (1898), or 'Three-leaved Clover', which was distributed throughout Piver's European market, the United States, Mexico and Japan. *Le Trèfle Incarnat* was initially marketed on the basis of the scent's rustic simplicity (in tall bottles decorated with red and green celtic patterns and distinctively faux-naïve medievalist lettering superimposed on a trailing ribbon on the clover leaf-shaped label), but subsequently became so popular among the *demi-monde* by 1919, noted the composer Francis Poulenc, that the brothels and fairgrounds of Paris and Marseille reeked with it, along

[189] Nancy M. Booth repeats the anecdote that the famous perfume *Shalimar* was created when Jacques Guerlain experimentally poured a sample tube of vanilla into a bottle of *Jicky*. See: Nancy M. Booth, *Perfumes, Splashes and Colognes* (North Adams, MA: Storey Books, 1997), p. 7.

[190] Writers Colette and Marcel Proust were known to wear *Jicky*, while there is an apocryphal association of Wilde with the ambiguously-gendered perfume. This last, however, may be just wishful thinking, as he is also reputed to have worn the crisp and spicy *Malmaison Carnation* (supplied from 1830 by Floris), which complemented the flower he adopted as a buttonhole, *Eau de Quinine* by Geo. Trumper and *Blenheim Bouquet* by Penhaligon's (although, as Wilde would have been dead for two years when *Blenheim Bouquet* was introduced, the association there is somewhat tenuous).

with 'the smell of chips and the [music of] the accordion'.[191] In the Victorian Language of Flowers, the three-leaved clover was understood to mean 'be mine' and consequently conveyed a prescribed set of floriographical associations which, rustic simplicity notwithstanding, would indeed be commercially relevant in a brothel.[192]

Abstract synthetic scents such as *Fougère Royale*, *Jicky* and *Trèfle Incarnat* transformed the relationships with which personal odour could be described or associated at the fin de siècle. The new perfumes were imagined according to the vocabulary of musical composition that had been developed by Wilson, Piesse, Wynter and Rimmel between 1855 and 1865. In Britain as in France, the scents were experienced within a society where faecal smells had been recently diminished by substantial improvements to the public drains, and where old miasmatic theories that had linked smells to contagion were being challenged and replaced by microbiological models of disease. In addition, the invention of chemically synthesised substances that were indistinguishable (or almost indistinguishable) from rare, expensive and natural olfactory resources had enabled the cheap diffusion of scented commodities among non-aristocratic patrons. Although the quotidian experience of smells in Britain encompassed vastly wider types and sources of olfaction than perfumery, the creation and cultural reception of perfumed commodities in Britain followed Pater's celebrated phrase in 'The School of Giorgione' that '*[a]ll art constantly aspires towards the condition of music*'.[193] Music, and perfume, admitted discursive possibilities that embraced ambiguity and suggestion rather than mimesis and correlative association.

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[191] '….avec odeur de frites, d'accordéon, de parfum Piver'. See: Francis Poulenc, *Journal de mes Mélodies* (Paris: Cicero editeurs, 1993), p. 15.

[192] The lingering hint of *Trèfle Incarnat* alerts Mrs Monkhouse to a ghostly presence in Elizabeth Bowen's 1939 ghost story 'The Cat Jumps' (1934). Mrs Monkhouse demonstrates as much incredulity about the notion of anyone choosing to wear such a strumpet's scent as she does about its supernatural origins. See: Elizabeth Bowen, 'The Cat Jumps', in *Collected Stories* (London: Vintage, 1999), pp. 362-370.

[193] Walter Pater, 'The School of Giorgione', first published in The Fortnightly Review, October 1877, and reprinted in *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry*, 3rd edn (London: Macmillan, 1915 [1888]), p. 140. Emphasis in original.

This is the context in which authors' use of smell, smells and smelling in fin-de-siècle stories of the supernatural is situated: description of arranged olfactory structures offered writers a highly contemporary discourse of new possibilities.

# Chapter One

> 'Bah!' says the rhinologically-challenged stranger, 'the thing is not a nose at all, but a bit of primordial chaos clapped on to my face!'
>
> - H. G. Wells, 'The Man With a Nose' (1894)[194]

One particular and neglected short story by H. G. Wells illustrates how writers used ideas of smell, smells and smelling at the fin de siècle to link supernaturality and the categorically indeterminate, and it provides a key to understanding how those representations were involved in describing ideas and technologies of the period. The above quotation illustrates how rhinological challenges were frequently set by Wells to counter the idea that humans had emerged from 'primordial chaos' (MWN, p. 48). This chapter will pursue a number of bizarre and unstable noses in British supernatural literature of the fin de siècle, and will demonstrate how writers anchored ideas of supernaturality to the organ of olfaction in their stories to interrogate assumptions of incremental, teleological evolutionary progress. Wells's 'The Man with the Nose' (originally published in the *Pall Mall Gazette* in February 1894) is one of his earliest published stories, as well as his earliest treatment of the theme of noses. It was included as one of two stand-alone bonus tales in Wells's first published volume, *Select Conversations with an Uncle (Now Extinct)* (1895), unrelated to the principal, avuncular thrust. However, the story was not reprinted later that year in *The Stolen Bacillus* (also 1895), Wells's first collection of previously published short stories. Unlike the contents of *The Stolen Bacillus*, 'The Man with a Nose' was consequently not gathered into the definitive edition of *The Complete Short Stories of H. G. Wells* (1927), and the story

[194] H. G. Wells, 'The Man with a Nose', in *Select Conversations with an Uncle (Now Extinct): and Two Other Reminiscences* (Minneapolis: Filiquarian Publishing LLC, 2010), pp. 47-49 (p. 48). Further references to this edition are given in parentheses after quotations in the text, where the title is abbreviated to 'MWN'.

languished in critical obscurity until it was unearthed and republished in 1984 by J. R. Hammond in *The Man with a Nose: And Other Uncollected Short Stories of H. G. Wells*. Given firstly that 'The Man with a Nose' remained uncollected and out of the field of Wells studies between 1895 and 1984, and secondly that an interest in manifestations of olfaction has been widely presumed by followers of Corbin in *The Foul and the Fragrant*, and Classen et al. in *Aroma*, not to have existed from 1880 after defaecalisations of the Rivers Seine and Thames (see section below for further discussion), it is unremarkable that 'The Man with a Nose' has not previously been recognised as important to an understanding of Wells's work during the fin de siècle. Its obscurity, however, has occluded Wells's frequent positioning of olfaction in his early work as a privileged field of discourse.

The plot of 'The Man with a Nose' is slight; a young man strikes up a conversation with a stranger on a bench overlooking Primrose Hill at twilight. The stranger, who is otherwise admirably wise, articulate, gently educated, witty and with 'an infinite capacity for love and sympathy', reveals that he is 'cursed' by possessing a large and unusual nose ('MWN', p. 49). Showing his nose, the stranger 'illuminates' the attendant social and romantic difficulties that his 'preposterous' nose has caused, and leaves the young man wondering how it may be possible 'to console a soul under such a burthen' ('MWN', p. 49). In 'The Man with a Nose', Wells embraces lexical inadequacy to create a tension between the material realm, which is realistically described (i.e. the man's nose in all its veined and reddened excrescence), and the metaphysical realm, which is either associated or implied by the Shakespearean epigraph, 'I never see thy face but I think upon hell-fire, and Dives that lived in purple, for there he is in his robes, burning, burning' ('MWN, p. 47). The Shakespearean reference comes from *Henry IV Part 1*, where Falstaff baits Bardolph, his friend and drinking partner, with ludicrous hyperbole regarding the latter's red drunkard's nose,

but the internal reference to the scriptural parable of Lazarus and the rich man (Dives), for whom earthly wealth has been no protection against eternal torment, serves two purposes. Firstly, it advertises the presence of bathetic humour in the story to follow. Secondly, it introduces the notions of eternal torment and resurrection that metaphorically cluster around the man with the nose. The story plays upon the 'Flying Dutchman' motif. Wagner's *Der fliegende Holländer: Romantische Opera* ['The Flying Dutchman: Romantic Opera'] (1841) puts forward the solution of a woman's love unto death as the cure for the flying Dutchman's eternal peregrination – precisely the solution from which the stranger in 'The Man with a Nose' claims he is debarred. Wells could safely assume that the operatic motif was appreciated by many of his readers, given Emma Sutton's claim that the prestige and dissemination of Wagnerism was 'central […] to the cultural history of 1890s Britain'.[195] The preposterous nose is clearly of strategic theological importance: the stranger declares himself to be 'cursed', the night is 'miraculous' and neither an archbishop nor an angel, it is declared, may wear with impunity a nose the like of his ('MWN', p. 48). Martyrdom itself, reports the stranger, is put to the stake by such a nose and, as the final lines report, the encounter leaves the young man pondering the existence of the soul. The narrator expressly declares the nose to give access to other, supernatural, realms of experience: 'revelation shall come […] But one must not anticipate' ('MWN', p. 48).

Wells's allusion to a luminous nose in 'The Man with a Nose' ["I see nothing wrong with your nose" [says the young man], "If it were luminous you might," says the first speaker. "However, I will illuminate it." ('MWN', p. 47)] invokes Edward Lear's tragicomic ballad 'The Dong With a Luminous Nose' (1877).[196] Diane Ponterotto's linguistic analysis of 'The Dong with the Luminous Nose' and Lear's other nonsense

[195] See: Emma Sutton, *Aubrey Beardsley and British Wagnerism in the 1890s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 199.
[196] Edward Lear, 'The Dong with the Luminous Nose', in *The Complete Nonsense and Other Verse* (London: Penguin, 2001), p. 423.

poetry points out not only the fragmentation and reconfiguration of words which Lear made 'fuzzy' to describe places and things, but also the immense popularity of his disordered nose-limericks; the first of which to be published (1846) is at the head of this thesis.[197] Ponterotto records that, although the designation 'limerick' was a fin-de-siècle innovation of 1893, the formal structures and rhythms of the limericks published and illustrated by Lear (under pseudonym in his first edition of 1845 as 'Derry Down Derry') were traditional.[198] By the end of the nineteenth century, reading Lear's nonsense verses 'had become one of the favourite pastimes of children and adults alike', confirming predictions made in 1876 by the London *Examiner* of Lear's *Nonsense Songs, Stories, Botany and Alphabets* (1871) that extolled Lear's popularity and skill: 'nor is it possible to believe that a nonsense poet can ever arise who shall surpass, even if he should equal, these little *chef-d'oeuvres*'.[199] Lear provides the exception to Wells's general avoidance of poetry, since Wells himself pastiched Lear's style in a letter to his second wife ('Fearful Pome to Scare and Improve a Bits').[200]

The allusion to Lear's Dong's luminous nose predisposed Wells's readers strongly to the poignancy and absurdity that characterises Lear's poem, and that reinforced existing ideas (cf., Mr Punch, see Introduction) that big noses are intrinsically grotesque, incongruous and funny. In Lear's poem, the Dong (who admits that 'What little sense I once possessed/Has quite gone out of my head!') corrects the impoverishment of his vision (i.e., he can't see in the dark) with a homemade lantern which synaesthetically improves the ability of his nose to 'scent' the beloved quarry, his long-lost Jumbly girl:

He gathered the bark of the Twangum Tree

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[197] Diane Ponterotto, 'Rule-Breaking and Meaning-Making in Edward Lear', *Revista Alicantina de Estudios Ingleses*, 6 (1993), 153-61, 157.
[198] Ibid, p. 160.
[199] Ibid, p. 157.
[200] See: Gene K. Rinkel and Margaret Rinkel, *The Picshuas of H. G. Wells: A Burlesque Diary* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2006), pp. 135-137.

On the flowery plain that grows.
And he wove him a wondrous Nose,
A Nose as strange as a Nose could be!
Of vast proportions and painted red,
And tied with cords to the back of his head.
In a hollow rounded space it ended
With a luminous Lamp within suspended,
All fenced about
With a bandage stout
To prevent the wind from blowing it out;
And with holes all round to send the light,
In gleaming rays on the dismal night.[201]

Despite customary interpretations of Lear's Dong's luminous nose, it is still possible to read the Dong's nose as a nose. Although the creation and adhesion of a luminous nose has been critically understood in a Freudian fashion, which promotes the idea of the artificial nose as a phallus and its corseting with cords and bandages 'as if in censorship of the "wild" feeling the Dong suffers, like the infamously wrapped piano legs in Victorian drawing rooms',[202] the poem is equally capable of supporting a medical hermeneutic, with its central rhinological reconstruction, illuminated cavities and stout bandaging.

Rhinological reconstruction had only recently become elective as, before the arrival of ether in 1842, the pain of submitting to the knife – as well as the fifty per cent chance of dying from trauma or sepsis – put off all but the owners of noses most tragically affected by syphilis, lupus or scrofula from voluntarily undergoing reconstructive nasal surgery.[203] In Britain, the first illustrated account of European rhinoplasty techniques (developed since c. 600CE in India where cutting off the nose was a traditional punishment for theft) was published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of October 1794, and inspired plastic surgery innovations by Joseph Constantine Carpue

[201] Lear, 'The Dong with the Luminous Nose', p. 423.
[202] Victoria de Rijke, 'Trompe-nez: Folk, Fairy Tale and Nonsense Noses – Long, Luminous and Lecherous as Licorice', in *Nose Book: Representations of the Nose in Literature and the Arts*, ed. by Victoria de Rijke, Lene Østermark-Johansen and Helen Thomas (Middlesex: Middlesex University Press, 2000), pp. 115-136 (p. 129).
[203] Blair O. Rogers, 'The Development of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery: A History', *Aesthetic Plastic Surgery*, 1:1 (1976), 3-24.

(1764-1846) in London and Johann Friedrich Dieffenbach (1792-1847) in Berlin.[204] Building on that ancient imported technology, the first modern endoscopic rhinoplasties, by John Orlando Roe in 1887 and Robert Weir in 1892, introduced a new social concern for elective aesthetic surgery.[205] There may be a variety of motivations for the actions of Roe and Weir, including those argued by Weir's contemporary in Berlin, the German-Jewish surgeon Jacques Joseph, who was quite sure that rhinoplasty offered a solution to acute distress that was psycho-social in nature. Sander Gilman links Joseph's cosmetic fragmentation and reorganisation of noses to 'the meaning associated with anti-Semitic bias at the fin de siècle […] it is clear that Joseph's initial clientele was heavily Jewish and that he regularly reduced "Jewish noses" to gentile contours'.[206] Irrespective of the racism that Gilman detects in Joseph's rhinoplastic innovations, however, the new medical techniques employed by Roe, Weir and Joseph confirmed that clients from the 1890s were able to deliberately reorganise or augment their original social status according to the choice of the shape of their nose. Writers' attention to the willed malleability of noses at the fin de siècle was not subject to the influence of the rising discipline of rhinoplasty alone, however, as the plastic malleability of noses had already been conveyed to audiences through widespread advertisements of Alexander Ross's ubiquitous novelty device. Between 1871 until at least 1892, Ross's 'Nose Machine' was sold through London and provincial newspapers

[204] This surgery used an attached skin flap cut in a broad V-shape upwards from just between the eyebrows and twisted over to be stitched around the nasal dorsum. Carpue's use of this method of rhinoplasty was published as 'Account of Two Successful Operations for Restoring a Lost Nose from the Integuement of the Forehead' in 1816 and was subsequently known as 'Carpue's operation' in Europe. See: Joseph Carpue, *Account of Two Successful Operations for Restoring a Lost Nose from the Integuement of the Forehead* (Exeter: Edward Bowditch, 2009).

[205] Robert Weir retrospectively claimed to have performed endonasal surgery in 1885, two years before John Orlando Roe had published in New York, but Roe is still considered to be 'the father of Aesthetic Rhinoplasty' by the US Society of cosmetic surgeons that bears his name. See: John Orlando Roe, 'The deformity termed "pug nose" and its correction, by a simple operation', *The Medical Record*, 4 June 1887; and Robert F. Weir, 'On Restoring Noses Without Scarring the Face', *New York Medical Journal*, 36 (1892), 443.

[206] Sander Gilman, 'The Jewish Nose: Are Jews White? Or, The History of the Nose Job', in *Encountering the Other/s*, ed. by Gisela Brinker-Gabler (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), pp. 149-198 (p. 167).

(such as the *Examiner* and the *Daily News* in London, the *Preston Chronicle* and the *Birmingham Daily Post*) as 'a simple successful contrivance which, applied to the nose for an hour daily, so directs the soft cartilage of which the member consists, that an ill-formed nose is quickly shaped to perfection'.[207] On the streets, furthermore, the insulting gesture of 'cocking a snook' (that is, of indicating derision by extending the thumb and little finger of one hand from the nose, with the other fingers curled) became neologistically entangled with the phrase 'take a sight' (i.e., lowering the sights of a hunting rifle in order to shoot), such that the Slang Dictionary of 1860 recorded 'a vulgar action employed by street boys to denote incredulity, or contempt for authority, by placing the thumb against the nose and closing all the fingers except the little one, which is agitated in token of derision' [*OED*]. Taken together with the popularity of Lear's 'Luminous Nose' in the final decade of the nineteenth century, the new gestures, novelties and cosmetic operations presented fecund territory for the representation of bizarre and unstable noses by British authors at the fin de siècle.

Wells's story 'The Man with a Nose' does provide a useful interpretive key to noses that were figured in British fiction during the late-Victorian period, but it is hardly fair to make any great claims for the influence upon posterity of this neglected and obscure short story. The story, however, belongs to a wider canon of other more popular stories about noses from translated continental sources. Mary Alice Murray's 1891 translation of Carlo Collodi's *The Adventures of Pinocchio* (1883) had described an extending wooden nose sensitive to mendacity or veracity, and was sufficiently bestselling to be published in an Everyman's Library edition in 1911. Edmond Rostand's play *Cyrano de Bergerac* (1897) had occasioned such celebrity that one English translation by Howard Thayer Kingsbury opened in New York on 3 October 1898, and another, rival, translation by Helen Dole opened in Philadelphia on the very

[207] 'Nose Machine', advertisement in the *Examiner* (London), 10 February 1872.

same night. In addition to these continental examples, 'The Man with a Nose' should be considered in the context of the earlier Ukranian dream-story, 'The Nose' (1838), by Nikolai Gogol. Although Gogol's short fantasy of a man whose nose had a mind of its own was not to be translated into English until 1918, its reputation was cemented in the English-speaking world during the 1890s in connection with the translated works of acclaimed Russian authors upon whom Gogol had influence. Foremost among those was Ivan Turgenev, whose novels were translated and assimilated into Britain and Western Europe from the 1870s, leading to his honorary doctorate from Oxford University in 1879, and Fyodor Dostoevsky, whose novels *Crime and Punishment* (1866) and *The Idiot* (1868-69) repeatedly name-checked Gogol.[208] Wells's earliest fictional nose, like Gogol's, gestures implicitly at the uncomfortable eruption of disagreeable ancestral characteristics into the modern world, but noses in Wells's work over the next few years dealt more explicitly with evolutionary theorists and their rival claims. This work includes 'The Flowering of the Strange Orchid' (1894), 'The Moth' (1895), *The Island of Dr Moreau* (1896) and *The Invisible Man* (1897). Primordially chaotic noses in fin-de-siècle supernatural stories by other authors, which will be examined below, include Arthur Conan Doyle's 'The Ring of Thoth' (1890) and 'Lot No. 249' (1894), George MacDonald's *Lilith* (1894), Richard Marsh's *The Beetle* (1897) and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897).

All of the stories and novels listed above share a common thematic preoccupation with evolutionary theory and illuminate the critical question of how much, and how quickly, earlier versions of evolutionary myth were overturned at the fin

[208] Dostoevsky's novels *Crime and Punishment* and *The Idiot* were both published serially in Moscow's prestigious literary magazine, the *Russian Messenger,* and translated into English in 1886 and 1879 respectively by Frederick Whishaw.

de siècle by the work of Charles Darwin.[209] The speed and degree of cultural assimilation of Darwin's evolutionary work has been hotly debated by differing theoretical camps. In the one corner there is the 'adaptionist' notion of an almost-immediate Darwinian revolution. This position is championed by Joseph Carroll: 'the *Origin of Species* was published in 1859 and within a decade it had almost completely changed the general view of evolution in the minds of the educated public'.[210] On the opposing hand, there is a post-structuralist critical interest in the osmotic percolation of cultural ideas (critical interest in which Carroll has called 'sheer egotism… professional vanity').[211] Among the post-structuralists, George Levine actively repudiates the idea of Darwin's first-hand influence on fin-de-siècle writers, quoting Gillian Beer that 'ideas pass more quickly into the state of assumptions when they are *unread*'.[212] Between these two poles (and diplomatically embracing Carroll's fundamentalist materialism on the one hand, and Levine and Beer's cultural constructionism on the other), John Glendening employs Darwin's own image of ecological diversity to address not only the muddle of order and chaos which Glendening finds in late-Victorian responses to evolutionary theory, but also the shrillness of conflict in twenty-first-century critical responses to late-Victorian evolutionary narratives.[213] The following remarks on the

[209] For a comprehensive discussion of developments in eighteenth-and nineteenth-century evolutionary theory, see Peter J. Bowler's, *Evolution: The History of an Idea*, 3rd edn (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), pp. 27-134.

[210] Joseph Carroll, *Literary Darwinism: Evolution, Human Nature and Literature* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. viii.

[211] Joseph Carroll interview, *On Literature and Science* (Part 3) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-tx00yV_qNQ> [accessed 28 December 2010].

[212] George Levine, *Darwin and the Novelists: Patterns of Science in Victorian Fictions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp. 2-3. Levine changes the meaning of Beer's phrase by italicising the word 'unread' without acknowledgement although, in the context of her Introduction to *Darwin's Plots*, Beer was in fact making a value judgement about the extent to which cultural assumptions are challenged by 'the question-raising procedure' of reading. See: Gillian Beer, *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 4.

[213] As it refers only obliquely either to olfaction or the supernatural, this chapter will not examine Samuel Butler's novel, *The Way of All Flesh* (1903), except to claim it for an example of 'late-Victorian evolutionary narratives'. The semi-autobiographical novel explores the themes of biological determinism and hypocritical societal 'advancement' that taxed Butler's own life. Butler had at first lionised Darwin as a great originator of evolutionary theory, but having in the meantime encountered the previous evolutionary theories of Buffon, Lamarck and Erasmus Darwin, he publicly defamed what he saw as

evolutionary implications of the appearance of noses in some late Victorian texts are intended to contribute to that debate by showing how 'Darwinism' provided only one of several evolutionary discourses.

The dispositions and associations of noses in stories by Wells from the 1890s reveal a diverse repertoire of models for human evolution and a contiguity of various historical evolutionary explanations. In *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896), for example, the act of surgically altering the nose becomes a metaphor for the monstrous transformation of the whole creature:

> 'All in good time,' said he, waving his hand at me; 'I am only beginning. Those are trivial cases of alteration. Surgery can do better things than that. There is building up as well as breaking down and changing. You have heard, perhaps, of a common surgical operation resorted to in cases where the nose has been destroyed: a flap of skin is cut from the forehead, turned down on the nose, and heals in the new position. This is a kind of grafting in a new position of part of an animal upon itself'.[214]

Wells's surgically hybridised human-animals' offspring are expected to resemble their parents by Dr. Moreau, who is frustrated again and again by the beasts' reversions to type. Moreau's understanding of heritability devolves from Lamarck's theory of inheritance of acquired characteristics that had become widely discredited by the late nineteenth century.[215] Although Wells had already specifically distanced himself from Moreau's Lamarckian convictions in the brief essay 'The Limits of Individual Plasticity' (1895), he set out the future possibilities for surgical transformation that

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Darwin's plagiarism; his 'lying' and 'duplicity' and 'God knows what', Charles Darwin's unexpectedly devout phrase from his letter to T. H. Huxley, Feb 2 1880. See: Henry Festing Jones, *Samuel Butler: Author of Erewhon (1835-1902): A Memoir*, 2 vols (London: Macmillan, 1920), II, p. 488.

[214] H. G. Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (London: Penguin Classics, 2005), p. 71. Further references to this edition are given in parentheses after quotations in the text, where the title is abbreviated to *Dr Moreau*.

[215] Jean-Baptiste Pierre Antoine de Monet, Chevalier de Lamarck (1744-1829) published *Philosophie zoologique ou exposition des considérations relatives à l'histoire naturelle des animaux* [*Zoological Philosophy: Exposition with Regard to the Natural History of Animals*] (1809), arguing for the transmission of peculiar characteristics between parent and child that reflected the parent's individual adaptive modification. A giraffe calf, for example, would inherit a long neck if its parent had spent a long time trying to reach the highest branches. Darwin, on the other hand, argued that the inheritance of characteristics depended upon sporadic mutation and took place over many generations: the reason why giraffes have long necks (to use the same example) is that the short-necked giraffes have all died out, and only the ones with the evolutionary advantage have remained to pass on their long-neck characteristic to giraffe calves.

would challenge (what he perceived of as) the problems of integrating Darwinian notions of natural selection with older ideas about biological determinism and theological predestination.[216] For a paradigmatic example in 'Individual Plasticity' of current surgery that currently characterised 'a living being […] as raw material, as something to be shaped and altered', he cited 'the making of a false nose' as the 'most familiar' ('Individual Plasticity' p. 37). This exemplary, transforming, false nose, in Wells's view, supports the questioning and dismissal of evolutionary conclusions that are based upon anthropometric understandings such as those credited by Darwin in *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872).

Another example of a nose in Wells's early fiction that confounds corporeal classification appears in *The Invisible Man* (1897) where, in the opening lines of the novella, the landlady at the 'Coach and Horses' in Bramblehurst peers curiously at Griffin, the begoggled scientist, but all she can see of her new guest is the 'shiny tip of his nose'.[217] It turns out that this sole clue to Griffin's human appearance has been worthless when the nose is later revealed to have been made of cardboard. Written and published in the same decade as the first modern 'nose jobs', *The Invisible Man* describes the pointlessness of attempts to define or delimit personality through the appearance of the nose. The sole but misleading clue to Griffin's appearance is one of several examples in Wells's stories of the 1890s of a mistaken visual assumption that is first confounded, and then replaced, by nasal or olfactory certainties. When, for example, Griffin (who has mysteriously arrived on the twenty-ninth of February, that most uncommon of days, and who has checked in to his rooms without submitting a

[216] H. G. Wells, 'The Limits of Individual Plasticity', in *H. G. Wells: Early Writings in Science and Science Fiction*, ed. by Robert A. Philmus and David Y. Hughes (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), pp. 36-40. Further references to this edition are given in parentheses after quotations in the text, where the title is abbreviated to 'Individual Plasticity'.

[217] H. G. Wells, *The Invisible Man: A Grotesque Romance* (Rockville: Arc Manor, 2008), p. 7. Further references to this edition are given in parentheses after quotations in the text, where the title is abbreviated to *Invisible Man*.

name) has determined, following the row about not paying his bill and accusations of burglary, to reveal in anger 'who I am and what I am', the first thing he rips off is his nose:

> The centre of his face became a black cavity. 'Here', he said. He stepped forward and handed Mrs Hall something which she, staring at his metamorphosed face, accepted automatically. Then, when she saw what it was, she screamed loudly, dropped it and staggered back. The nose – it was the stranger's nose! Pink and shining – rolled on the floor (*Invisible Man*, p. 34).

Here, the horrid removal of Griffin's nose – which had served alone to provide him a human identity in Bramblehurst – uncovers the incoherence of his ostensible identity.

On another, fictional, Wellsian island it is not noses but smell that signifies the eruption of disagreeable ancestral characteristics into the modern world. The appropriately named explorer, 'Butcher', has found three great dinosaur eggs preserved in the swamp: 'Like creosote it smells […] to think of it brings that odd tarry smell back even now'.[218] Having been prompted by starvation to eat the embryonic contents of two of the three eggs, Butcher observes the hatching of the third, for which he develops a quite tender regard before trapping it in his fishing line and hacking it to death with his knife: 'I told him straight that I didn't mean to be chased around a desert island by any damned anachronisms' ('Æpyornis Island', p. 270). The gap between the tarry smell of Butcher's egg and its improbable contents, as well as the Invisible Man's artificial nose, Doctor Moreau's operations on noses, and the nose of the unnamed stranger in 'The Man with a Nose', demonstrate the pointlessness of judging character by outward appearances. These gaps represents Wells's challenge in fiction to the anthropometric and materialistic purposes towards which Darwin's evolutionary explanations were put.[219]

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[218] H. G. Wells, 'Æpyornis Island', in *The Complete Short Stories of H. G. Wells* (London: Ernest Benn Ltd, 1974), pp. 260-72 (p. 260). Further references to this edition are given in parentheses after quotations in the text.

[219] Proposers of anthropometric and materialist purposes for 'Social Darwinism' (including Karl Pearson [1857-1939], Francis Galton [1822-1911], Herbert Spencer [1820-1903] and Cesaro Lombroso [1835-

The recurrent motif in Wells's early narratives of visual certainties that are confounded and then replaced by olfactory certainties has not hitherto been subject to critical attention, although the extent to which Wells presents the collapsing of linear certainties, in *The War of the Worlds* (1898), based on a *visual* epistemology has been previously documented.[220] In that novel, the four-foot heads of the enemy Martians have no noses or anything resembling nostrils. Martian evolution has favoured only their enormous eyes and triangular mouths: the creatures 'do not seem to have had any sense of smell'.[221] Their noselessness provokes the irony therefore of their eventual demise from having caught the common cold: humanity is finally triumphant on account of its ability to survive a runny nose. Other allusions to the epistemological insufficiency of vision are self-evident in many of Wells's titles during this period: in 'The Remarkable Case of Davidson's Eyes' (1895), which deals with simultaneously seeing one's surroundings and seeing 'at a distance';[222] in 'A Slip under the Microscope' (1895), which deals with the uncertainty of ostensibly scientific 'results'; in *The Invisible Man* which deals with liberation from, and damage to, the moral and social structures that are governed by visibility; and, a little later, in 'The Country of the Blind' (1904), which deals with the variable cultural contexts of all sensory information. While the sense of vision in these texts is repeatedly shown to be materially insufficient, the sense of smell is repeatedly privileged as giving access to other, supernatural, realms of experience. In 'The Flowering of the Strange Orchid' (1894), as in 'Æpyornis Island' (1894), it is again the scent of the unknown that connotes a dangerous and hypnotic allure. Set beside Wells's realistic depiction of a

1909]) allowed for Darwin's claim as a justificatory, 'survival of the fittest' (Spencer's phrase), paradigm of society.

[220] Keith Williams, 'Alien Gaze: Postcolonial Vision in *The War of the Worlds*', in *H. G. Wells: Interdisciplinary Essays*, ed. by Steven McLean (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), pp. 49-75.

[221] H. G. Wells, *The War of the Worlds* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), p. 162. Further references to this edition are given in parentheses after quotations in the text, where the title is abbreviated to *War*.

[222] H. G. Wells, 'The Remarkable Case of Davidson's Eyes', in *The Complete Short Stories of H. G. Wells* (London: Ernest Benn Ltd, 1974), pp. 273- 283 (p. 282).

suburban household and the rather silly and ineffectual man who inhabits it, the grand swell of a 'decadent' literary register in 'The Flowering of the Strange Orchid' achieves a comic effect. Wells's story parodies the decadent register and rhetorical flourishes of the eighth chapter in Huysman's *À Rebours*, in which monstrous plants are collected for their unusual aesthetic appeal. Wells' orchid is, in every way, a Baudelairean *fleur du mal*:

> There was a new odour in the air, a rich, intensely sweet scent, that overpowered every other in that crowded, steaming little greenhouse. Directly he noticed this he hurried down to the strange orchid. And, behold! the trailing green spikes bore now three great splashes of blossom, from which this overpowering sweetness proceeded. He stopped before them in an ecstasy of admiration. The flowers were white, with streaks of golden orange upon the petals; the heavy labellum was coiled into an intricate projection, and a wonderful bluish purple mingled there with the gold. He could see at once that the genus was altogether a new one. And the insufferable scent! How hot the place was! The blossoms swam before his eyes.[223]

The rich and insufferable odour is that of the new orchid, which has been previously unidentifiable by scientists on the grounds of its visual appearance alone. The orchid turns out to be a rare flower whose roots thrive upon human blood, and it represents a vegetable affront to the theory of natural selection, as expressed in Darwin's *On the Fertilisation of Orchids by Insects* (1862), that the 'ordinary orchid-flower was contrived in order that moths might carry the pollen from plant to plant' ('Orchid', p. 208). Wells's vampire orchid, in other words, specifically challenges Darwin's categorical assurances of evolutionary purpose:

> 'There are such queer things about orchids', he said one day, 'Such possibilities of surprises. You know, Darwin studied their fertilisation, and showed that the whole structure of an ordinary orchid-flower was contrived in order that moths might carry the pollen from plant to plant. Well, it seems there are lots of orchids known the flowers of which cannot be used for fertilisation in that way […] The puzzle is, what are the flowers for?' ('Orchid', p. 208).

Wells and the vampire orchid manage to have their cakes and eat them, however, as the

[223] H. G. Wells, 'The Flowering of the Strange Orchid', in *The Complete Short Stories of H G Wells* (London: Ernest Benn Ltd, 1974), pp. 203-211 (p. 209). Further references to this edition are given in parentheses after quotations in the text, where the title is abbreviated to 'Orchid'.

ostensible puzzle is solved by the realisation of what both the flowers and the roots are *really* for. Nonetheless, the story is a warning against accepting the authority of uninformed evolutionary botanists.

The fictional orchid's challenge to Darwin's authority in 'The Flowering of the Strange Orchid' is not the only instance during the period of Wells having fun at the expense of Darwinian evolutionary theory. In the short story 'A Vision of Judgment' (1899), the narrator explains that he has died and gone before God for settling his earthly moral account. He awaits his turn among Kings, prophets and beggars, but first, before them all, an individual appears: '"There's Darwin", points out the little man beside him, "*He'll* catch it!"'.[224] Regardless of such teasing, however, in the short stories from 1894 – 'The Man with a Nose' 'The Flowering of the Strange Orchid' and 'Æpyornis Island' – as well as in the novel *The Island of Doctor Moreau* and novella *The Invisible Man*, Wells uses noses and smells to figure the disruption of Darwinian evolutionary discourses and to attach instead to rival evolutionary theories.

Noses in stories from the 1890s by Wells reveal aspects of his approach to evolutionary theory during the fin de siècle which are at variance with the ascription of the label 'Darwinist' to Wells by critics such as such as Kirby Farrell, who situates Wells's *The Time Machine* (1895) as a manifestation of general assimilated cultural shock at the post-Darwinist discourse of death.[225] On the contrary, an olfactory analysis of rival explanations of evolution in Wells's early fiction confirms Nicholas Ruddick's view that such work demonstrates an eclectic and journalistic mixture of evolutionary themes.[226] Such contrasting arguments as Farrell's and Ruddick's, for the Darwinism or

[224] H. G. Wells, 'A Vision of Judgment', in *The Complete Short Stories of H. G. Wells* (London: Ernest Benn Ltd, 1974), pp. 109-114 (p. 110).
[225] Kirby Farrell, 'Wells and Neoteny', in *H. G. Wells' Perennial Time Machine: Selected Essays from the Centenary Conference 'The Time Machine: Past, Present, and Future', Imperial College, London July 26-29, 1995*, ed. by George Edgar Slusser, Patrick Parrinder, Danièle Chatelain (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001), pp. 65-75 (p. 66).
[226] Ruddick's contextualising extracts are divided into three evolutionary categories: 'biology', 'society' and 'culture' in the appendices to the Broadview Library edition of *The Time Machine*. See: H. G. Wells,

un-Darwinism of Wells's early writing, may have been retrospectively affected by Wells's own twentieth-century pronouncements on eugenics, and by recent critical concentration on specifically Darwinian evolutionary themes in nineteenth-century fiction that have been spurred since 2009 by anniversary celebrations of the 150th year since publication of *Origin of Species* and the 200th year since Darwin's birth. Unfortunately, they also serve to camouflage the full diversity and complexity of Wells's philosophical speculations. Wells's near-contemporary G. K. Chesterton (1874-1936) protested in 1922 against what he saw then as reductionist labels for Wells:

> […] an enormous number of newspaper readers seem to have it fixed firmly in their heads that Mr. H. G. Wells is a harsh and horrible Eugenist in great goblin spectacles who wants to put us all into metallic microscopes and dissect us with metallic tools. As a matter of fact, of course, Mr. Wells, so far from being too definite, is generally not definite enough. He is an absolute wizard in the appreciation of atmospheres and the opening of vistas; but his answers are more agnostic than his questions. His books will do everything except shut. And so far from being the sort of man who would stop a man from propagating, he cannot even stop a full stop. He is not Eugenic enough to prevent the black dot at the end of a sentence from breeding a line of little dots. [227]

Chesterton's recognition of Wells's eclectic ideological allegiances runs counter to critics' reductionist idea of Wells's steadfast allegiance to Darwinism in the 1890s. Much has been made of Wells's intellectual debt during this period to T. H. Huxley, 'Darwin's bulldog', under whom [228]Wells studied biology at the Normal School (later Royal College) of Science in South Kensington. The notion of a straightforward relational transmission of evolutionary theory from Darwin to Huxley to Wells pervades contemporary scholarship. For example, John S. Partington's collection of essays from nearly thirty years of the *Wellsian* (journal to the H. G. Wells Society) is judged accordingly by Elun Gabriel: 'The dominant theme running through many of the essays

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*The Time Machine: An Invention*, ed. by Nicholas Ruddick (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2001).

[227] G. K. Chesterton, *Eugenics and Other Evils* (Forgotten Books: Charleston, 2010), p. 69.

[228] Major public attention was drawn to the implications of Darwinian theory in 2009 by UK institutions such as the Natural History Museum in London, Cambridge University, the British Association and the BBC. For a list of 309 worldwide events in 2009 (including lectures, exhibitions, debates and film screenings), 156 publications (including new editions of Darwin's works as well as anniversary responses by biologists and cultural historians, in addition to popular explanatory texts) and 59 scholarly articles or periodicals devoted to the subject, please see: Darwin-online.org.uk.

is Wells's pessimism about the fate of humanity, largely stemming from a Darwinian view of the struggle for existence imbibed from his early teacher T. H. Huxley'.[229] The difficulty in accepting this account, though, is that T. H. Huxley's version of evolution differed in many important respects (including a disregard for the still hypothetical mechanisms of natural selection) from Darwin's version.[230] Moreover, records of the syllabi that Huxley taught contain 'hardly a word on evolution'.[231] Wells had attended some of Huxley's lectures at the Normal School in biology, between February-June 1885, where he observed the effects of pain and alleviative cocaine on his increasingly drawn and 'yellow-faced' teacher: Huxley, who was about to retire due to ill-health, was not at his peak.[232] Wells made a very small personal claim upon Huxley when he wrote to Huxley in May 1895 and included a presentation copy of *The Time Machine*:

> I am sending you a little book that I fancy may be of interest to you. The central idea – of degeneration following security – was the outcome of a certain amount of biological study. I daresay your position subjects you to a good many displays of the range of authors, but I have this much excuse, I was one of your pupils at the Royal College of Science.[233]

Wells's message does not sound like that of a loyal disciple: the letter and enclosed book were addressed to 'Professor Huxley' c/o the college, although Huxley had retired from his teaching position in 1885, ten years previously.[234]

The role that olfaction plays in disrupting evolutionary discourses and in introducing supernaturality in Wells's earliest stories and novellas from 1894-7 suggests that the extent to which he agreed at that time with the rational, empirical, cause-and-effect materialism espoused by T. H. Huxley has been seriously overestimated. Wells's

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[229] See: Elun Gabriel, 'Review of *The Wellsian: Selected Essays on H. G. Wells*, ed. by John S. Partington', *Utopian Studies*, 16:3 (2005), 446-449.
[230] Huxley's latest and raciest biographer, Adrian Desmond, also posits a straightforward discipleship between Huxley and Wells. See: Adrian Desmond, *Huxley: From Devil's Disciple to Evolution's High Priest* (Cambridge MA: Perseus Books, 1999).
[231] Michael Ruse (ed.), *Evolution and Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), p. xii.
[232] Desmond, p. 539.
[233] H. G. Wells, Letter to T. H. Huxley dated May 1895, in *The Correspondence of H. G. Wells*, ed. by David C. Smith, 4 vols (London: Chatto & Pickering, 1998), I, p. 238.
[234] Huxley did not reply to the message or the gift because he died shortly afterwards.

reservations regarding Huxley's scholarly methodology are at the heart of the short story, 'The Moth' (1895). In 'The Moth', a fictional Professor Hapley (a caricature of Huxley) is driven by guilt to monomaniacal madness as a result of the energetic and pugilistic passions that he fears have been responsible for the death of his old adversary, Professor Pawkins (who is a caricature of Huxley's long-term rival, Sir Richard Owen, portrayed as languid, old-fashioned and 'jobbing [for] museum appointments').[235] Ridiculously painstaking footnotes and bibliographic references from an imaginary *Encyclopædia* refer to 'the Hapley-Pawkins feud', parodying the inadequacy of evolutionists' published attempts to limit and define the world. The two Professors' 'epoch-making controversies […] that have convulsed the Geological Society of London' ('The Moth', p. 302) are framed in the story by near-homicidal critical reception of the *Encyclopædia*'s new scholarly 'treatment of the Mollusca' from a scientific community shown by Wells to be murderously riven by anxiety over definitions. If there had been any remaining doubt in the contemporary reader's mind over the satirical targets of the story, the reference to the 'treatment of the Mollusca' confirmed, unmistakably, the fictional Hapley to be the real Huxley and the fictional Pawkins to be the real Owen, as Owen had published his *Memoir of the Pearly Nautilus* in 1832.[236] Moreover, as many of the first readers of Wells's 1894 short story would have been aware, the National Portrait Gallery in London had acquired and shown Henry William Pickersgill's celebrated 1845 three-quarter-length oil portrait of Owen the previous year: the sitter stares amiably into the distance, cradling a gigantic nautilus shell in his left hand with the mollusc (that once had inhabited the shell) in a jar to his

[235] H. G. Wells, 'The Moth', in *The Complete Short Stories of H. G. Wells* (London: Ernest Benn Ltd, 1974), pp. 302-312 (p. 303).
[236] Richard Owen, *Memoir on the Pearly Nautilus with Illustrations of its External Form and Internal Structure* (London: Royal College of Surgeons, 1832).

right.[237] As for 'Hapley', who is celebrated by his students in the short story for his pugilistic vigour, 'the young men gathered around and applauded him', just as Wells's contemporaries at the Normal School of Science had once been accustomed to do for Huxley.[238]

In 'The Moth', Wells explores the logical consequences of Darwinian evolutionary theory as Hapley's aggressive vigour at first appears to succeed incrementally over his older, less 'fit' rival. The moth (which may or may not be real) obsesses Hapley's thoughts and in its ontological ambiguity is the very antithesis of an encyclopaedic definition. The inscrutablity of the Death's-Head Moth is connected in 'The Moth' with a critique of the epistemological boundaries of science which shows the observed and the observer to merge: the phantom insect appears to be 'perfectly clear and solid-looking' while, ironically, Hapley himself looks 'like a ghost in his white shirt and trousers' ('The Moth', p. 310). Sensory modalities fail before the phantom. The insufficiency of visual information is raised as the evidence of Hapley's eyes (and his optical equipment) is to be doubted, as is also that of the Vicar and the medical practitioners who cannot see the moth: 'the eye of faith is no better than the eye of science' ('The Moth', p. 309). The sense of touch, too, is illusory; Hapley feels the moth fluttering through his hair, although no one else can detect it. Not only the Vicar but all other figures of rational authority fail as the nurse falls asleep, the general practitioner is 'a blockhead' and the asylum doctor is an absurd reductionist who insists upon rational explanations for irrational behaviours. Hapley, by the end, is an incarcerated lunatic who seeks obsessively, despite all evidence to the contrary, to bring everything in line with his personal convictions.

Wells's expression in 'The Moth' of reservations regarding the state of

[237] The portrait by Henry William Pickersgill was donated to the National Portrait Gallery in 1893 by Owen's daughter-in-law, a year after Owen's death in 1892.
[238] See: H. G. Wells, 'Huxley', *Royal College of Science Magazine*, 13 (1901), 209-211 (p. 209).

contemporary scientific debate undermines the idea of him as the uncritical mouthpiece of scientific materialism, as posited by Robert Philmus and David Hughes: 'It is not simply certain scientific ideas that impressed themselves decisively on his mind while he was studying at South Kensington, but also – and more tellingly – the scientific method, the perspective, and many of the philosophical assumptions of the sciences'.[239] The portrayal of Hapley's/Huxley's classifying activity as mania, the depiction of the detrimental effect of personal antagonisms on scholarship, the overarching narrative trajectory whereby the 'survival of the fittest' leads only to madness, and the strong suggestion that the Death's-Head Moth is indeed the supernaturally revenging shade of Professor Pawkins, peeving his rival from beyond the grave, represent a grave criticism by Wells of materialist explanations of the world. On the contrary, taking into account the nasal 'primeval chaos' presented in 'The Man with a Nose', as well as encountering the ontological malleability of Griffin's nose in *The Invisible Man*, the rhinoplastic surgery and employment of Lamarckian inherited characteristics in *The Island of Dr Moreau*, as well as the preternatural odours to which naturalists are exposed in both 'Æpyornis Island' and 'The Flowering of the Strange Orchid', it would appear that Wells regularly presents smell, smells and smelling as the obverse of evolutionary materialism in his fiction from 1894-97.

**I: 'A man without a nose is, God knows what, neither fish nor fowl'**[240]

Wells was not alone in treating olfaction as a conduit for supernatural experience in 1894-97, nor in offering through an olfactory medium a wide variety of imagined paradigms for human evolution that challenged the scientific accounts of Huxley and

[239] Robert M. Philmus and David Y. Hughes, 'Introduction', in *H. G. Wells: Early Writings in Science and Science Fiction*, ed. by Robert M. Philmus and David Y. Hughes (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), pp. 1-12 (p. 2).
[240] Nikolai Gogol, 'The Nose' (1838), in *Diary of a Madman, The Government Inspector, & Selected Stories*, trans. by Ronald Wilks (London: Penguin, 2005), pp. 113-139 (p. 128).

Darwin. George MacDonald's novel, *Lilith: A Romance* (1895), reframed the 'apes or angels' question that had accompanied Darwin's theories since their first public exposition, and offered a shapeshifting Raven's nose as the index to angelic transfiguration.[241] MacDonald's shapeshifting Raven's nose was also not alone: the above quotation from Gogol's story 'The Nose', which pairs noses and birds, touches on the nineteenth-century conflation of humans and birds that reached a particular height in Europe after 1884, when the excavated, headless classical sculpture, the 'Winged Victory of Samothrace', was placed to preside over visits (including post-Paterian pilgrimages to the *Mona Lisa*) to the art-historical treasures in the Denon Wing at the Louvre. As Valery Rees has pointed out, statues of angelic winged human figures in British public places became more numerous after 1861 and the funerary commemoration of Prince Albert.[242] In that Christian funerary tradition, birds' wings on human backs refer to supernatural experience and post-mortem existence. Although the novel *Lilith* is acutely concerned with gradual metamorphosis ('"I see that serpents grow birds here, as caterpillars used to grow butterflies!" remarked Lona')[243] and the narrator is established in the fifth paragraph cosily in his library with a copy of 'Darwin', the text is entirely devoid of the words 'evolve' or 'evolution', as the old French meaning of 'develop' (from *desveloper*), or 'unfurling'; 'unrolling'; 'opening out of its enfolding cover' is preferred instead. According to Robert J. Richards, the replacement of the term 'evolution' by the term 'development' marked a specific phase in late-Victorian thought which sought to recapitulate the seventeenth-century meaning of preformational evolution – which was based upon embryological observations such

[241] Benjamin Disraeli had condensed the debate between Huxley (for Darwin) and Bishop Wilberforce at the Oxford Union that centred on Darwin's claims that humans had evolved from primate ancestors thus: 'What is the question now placed before society with an assurance the most astounding! The question is this Is Man an ape or an angel? My Lord, I am on the side of the angels' (in a speech at the Oxford Diocesan Conference, 25 November 1864).

[242] See: Valery Rees, *From Gabriel to Lucifer: A Cultural History of Angels* (London: I. B Tauris, 2013), pp. 78-81.

[243] George MacDonald, *Lilith: A Romance* (London: Alison & Busby, 1986), p. 237. Further references to this edition are given in parentheses after quotations in the text, where the title is abbreviated to *Lilith*.

as the unfolding of individual members of species into examples of a general type, such as foetuses that turned into crows which, looked at only a few weeks' earlier, had been indistinguishable from foetuses that turned into leopards – and to amalgamate it with the late-nineteenth-century meaning of evolution, which referred to species descent with modification.[244] The purpose of 'development' or 'developments' in *Lilith* is regarded as being both the species' and the individual's ascent to perfection, and the functions of smell, smells and smelling in MacDonald's fantasy novel is not to inform, but to confuse the conscious brain into a realisation of the occult interconnectedness of experience.

MacDonald's turn to fantastic literature had been occasioned in the first place by being 'sacked' in 1853 as a Congregational Minister,[245] and the novel is an heretical plea against the doctrine of Calvinist Predestination, which stated that only a limited and predestined number of the elect would be saved from eternal damnation. Mr Raven's unexpected nose is encountered first as the (symbolically named) narrator, Mr Vane, stumbles over the threshold of the region of the seven dimensions and lands, 'nose to beak', with the librarian.[246] Mr Raven, the librarian, is also Adam, the oldest of all human beings in Christian myth, and appears sometimes as a man and sometimes as a raven.[247] Although Mr Raven can appear as any creature, the librarian most often adopts, in his role as intermediary between God and humans, a beak and wings (*Lilith*, p. 31). As such, 'Mr Raven' represents the dark shadow of, and complement to, the

[244] Robert J. Richards, *The Meaning of Evolution: The Morphological Construction and Ideological Reconstruction of Darwin's Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. xiii.
[245] I should add that MacDonald was never officially 'sacked'; that is, he 'resigned' after his salary was cut in half and the enraged church deacon had accused him on three counts of heresy.
[246] For Swedenborgian correspondences between the 'reality' of the library and the 'reality' of the mystical world, see: George Raeper, *George MacDonald* (Tring: Lion Publishing, 1987).
[247] The raven is the traditional Christian symbol of death. I have found no external evidence at all, and not much internal evidence, that 'Mr Raven' is connected to the enigmatic bird from Edgar Allen Poe's 'The Raven' (1845), other than that in both texts the narrators are introduced reading 'many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore' before becoming rapt by an avian messenger's news. In both texts, the ravens perch like 'prophets' on the pediment above the threshold (in the case of *Lilith*, the pediment surmounts the enchanted mirror which leads to the other world), and both contribute to the ambiance of gothic fantasy that characterises the texts.

white dove that emerges like a prayer from the ruins of the home-farm on Vane's estate (the pure white dove is the traditional Christian symbol for the Holy Spirit, which the spiritually maladjusted Vane takes at first for a pigeon) (*Lilith*, p. 27). The pairing of the white dove and the black raven also alludes to Noah's vanguard for finding a salvation from the floods in Genesis 8:7-12 and reinforces the reader's apprehension that the nose/beak figures the librarian as an angel in the process of development. Using the librarian's nose/beak to reframe the 'are we apes or angels' debate provoked by *The Origin of Species*, MacDonald proposes that we are, at one and the same time, both. Even the title of Darwin's text is satirised in Vane's splutter while the librarian counters evolutionary progress by making butterflies out of worms: '"You see what comes of making creatures forget their origins!"' (*Lilith*, p. 21). Explicitly rebutting 'Darwinian' anthropometric determinism, *Lilith* figures the ontological liberation of all Creation through a transforming proboscis.

In *Lilith*, Mr Raven's nose and mouth are not merged into the one beak while he is in human form, but maintain two separate identities. Although they are distinct features, the lips are colourless and spare beneath the handsome beak: 'His face was, like his wife's, very pale; its nose handsomely encased the beak that had retired within it; its lips were very thin, and even they had no colour, but their curves were beautiful' (*Lilith*, p. 31). The anatomical subjugation of mouth to nose is repeated by the behaviour of the librarian as, once incarnate as a bird, Mr Raven pointedly abjures all verbal and oral aspects of his beak, frequently declining to speak through his nose/beak, despite his ability to do so. With his nose/beak, he digs up worms (not to eat but only to toss them into the heavens) and remains silent to Vane's questions: 'The raven stretched his neck, held out his beak horizontally, turned it slowly to all points of the compass, and said nothing. I followed the beak with my eyes' (*Lilith*, p. 28); 'he pointed with his beak' (p. 46); 'pointing with his beak' (p. 25); 'the raven pointed his beak downwards'

(p. 27); 'I looked whither he pointed […]; He gave a strange whistle through his long black beak' (pp. 148-9). The subjugation of mouth to nose in *Lilith* reinforces MacDonald's subjugation of oral appetite to olfactory discrimination throughout the text. While human mouths in *Lilith* are either the seat of lies (as in the skeletons' dialogue) or of beastly appetites (as Lilith sucks blood and energy throughout), the human mouth of Mr Raven diminishes in importance to his nose which, in *Lilith*, is responsible for catching the outward symbol of spiritual synaesthesia, or the overlap between music and smells in the garden (pp. 86-88).

Mr Raven describes smells of the garden in the region of seven dimensions aurally, as music. The paradigmatic association between perfume and music that had been introduced by mid-nineteenth-century perfumers (see Introduction) results in a transdimensional overlap of the piano in Vane's breakfast room with the garden's roses and wild hyacinths (which, in the British climate, are not usually understood to co-exist).[248] Doubting Mr Raven's synaesthetic connection between scent and music, Vane checks for himself:

> I went to the rose-bush and listened hard, but could not hear the thinnest ghost of a sound; I only smelt something I had never smelt before in any rose. It was still rose-odour, but with a difference, caused, I suppose, by the Wedding March (*Lilith*, p. 24).

Vane's initial incredulity, however, is overcome by the end of the novel where he catches once again the 'sweet tin-tinning' music of the flowers as his sensory modalities are shown to develop: 'sense after sense, hitherto asleep, awoke in me – sense after sense indescribable because no correspondent words, no likenesses or imagination exist, wherewithal to describe them' (*Lilith*, p. 232). MacDonald had previously drawn

[248] Scottish 'wild hyacinths' are commonly known in England as bluebells. While bluebells scent the woods in April and early May, a rose bush will produce its fragrant blooms some time later, in late July until September. The simultaneous odour of both plants in Vane's garden introduces the theme of thaumaturgic horticulture which forms the core of the following chapter: '"The season for the hawthorn to blossom," he replied, "is when the hawthorn blossoms"'. See: MacDonald, *Lilith*, p. 25. See the Introduction to this thesis for observations on the development of the analogy between scents and music in descriptions of manufactured perfumes.

attention to the lexical potential of smell, smells and smelling, two years before the publication of *Lilith*, in the Introduction to the US edition of *The Light Princess* (1893). Writing there of the capacity of language to diminish strict definitions and to evoke vague or mystical associations, MacDonald compares his writing to the correspondence of musical composition and fragrance: 'To one the sonata is a world of odour and beauty, to another of soothing only and sweetness'.[249] In *Lilith*, the nose represents access to supernatural realms of experience.

**II: 'A characteristic of the face – and an uncomfortable one!'**[250]

If Mr Raven's subjugation of mouth to nose in *Lilith* demonstrates that the bird-beak is not a seat of lies and evil appetites, the opposite is true of the appalling proboscis of the Priestess-Scarab in Richard Marsh's *The Beetle* (1897):

> The nose, on the other hand, was abnormally large; so extravagant were its dimensions, and so peculiar its shape, it resembled the beak of some bird of prey. A characteristic of the face – and an uncomfortable one! – was that, practically, it stopped short at the mouth. The mouth, with its blubber lips, came immediately under the nose, and chin, to all intents and purposes, there was none. This deformity – for the absence of chin amounted to that – it was which gave to the face the appearance of something not human.[251]

Robert Holt, the narrator of the first quarter of the novel who becomes the Beetle's first hypnotic victim, is the first to report the unexpected characteristic of the Beetle's nose[252] that aligns the creature's supernatural powers with its categorical indeterminacy. Despite specific identification of the Priestess as a scarab beetle with sticky insect legs, its nose is continually associated with avian, and not coleropteran, features.

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[249] George MacDonald, 'The Fantastic Imagination' (Introduction to the US edition), *The Light Princess* (Puttnams, New York, 1893)

[250] The unexpectedly aquiline nose of *The Beetle*.

[251] Richard Marsh, *The Beetle* (Plymouth: Broadview, 2004), p. 16. Further references to this edition are given in parentheses after quotations in the text.

[252] Because of the Beetle's atavistic indeterminacy of gender and species, I have chosen 'it' in the following examples (where the text wavers between 'he', 'she' and 'it' to describe the Priestess-Scarab), in order to maintain the 'neither-nor' of the creature's ontological ambiguity.

Comparisons with bird-noses undermine the species-identification of the novel's title. Holt comments on the avian outlines of the Beetle's nose, which he believes to soften after it has just supped on some human misery; it 'was not by any means so grotesque; its beak-like quality was less conspicuous' (*The Beetle*, p. 24). Holt's comparison between the Beetle's nose and a bird's beak is repeated by Sydney Atherton, narrator of the second quarter of the story, who complains that the 'portenteous size of [its] *beak-like nose* would have been, in itself, sufficient to damn [the Beetle] in any court of beauty' (*The Beetle*, p. 99; emphasis mine). Still later, the cockney cabman tells Augustus Champnell how the Beetle 'shoves [its] old nose right through the smash in the pane, and wags [its] old head at me like a chattering magpie' (*The Beetle*, p. 218). Although the narrative does not linger on the subject of the Beetle's features during the climactic railway chase as the Beetle and abductees are in disguise, the avian theme nonetheless continues and the escaping Beetle is viewed through the 'pigeon-hole' when boarding the train that will eventually wreck its hopes (*The Beetle*, p. 288). '"The birds have flown!"' declaims the platform inspector, bemoaning their escape (*The Beetle*, p. 290).

The association of the Beetle's nose with birds (and not with beetles) works as a displacement of the text's engagement with national identity onto species identity. The Beetle in Marsh's novel is Egyptian and consequently a subject of colonial control, but it is also of ancient and aristocratic lineage (so, 'noble') and it is walking the streets of London. The avian metaphors which inscribe the Scarab-Priestess in *The Beetle* as 'aquiline' – literally meaning 'eagle-nosed' – are exploded as the text problematises the connotations of imperial power that had become embedded in the notion of aquilinity. The aquiline, 'eagle-nosed' or 'Roman' nose was familiar to nineteenth-century Britons from the busts of Emperors and warriors in classical Roman statuary, such as those encountered in Italy by Grand Tourists, or domestically in exhibited antiquities such as

the Townley Collection that formed the core of the British Museum's Graeco-Roman holdings from 1805.[253] Eden Warwick's popular humorous publication *Nasology* (1848) had attributed the characteristics of imperial Romans to contemporary bearers of aquiline, or eagle-beaked, nose shapes:

> The persevering energy, stern determination, and unflinching firmness of the conquerors of the world; their rough, unrefined character, which, notwithstanding the example of Greece, never acquired the polish of that country, all indicate the accuracy of the mental habit attributed to the owner of this nose.[254]

Victorian self-identifications of the empire with Roman characteristics, accounting not only for optimistic justifications of British military vigour but also for pessimistic associations with classical decadence, are often remarked upon. The encouragement by *Nasology* for readers to self-identify with Roman nose-types suggests that physiognomic explanations of the nose were also subject to such 'togafication' of the Empire.[255] The list of twenty-two historical personalities who, in Warwick's view, had most notably possessed the aquiline bird-nose, for example, includes only two ancient Romans (Julius Caesar and Cato the censor) but boasts nine Britons: the Duke of Wellington, Robert the Bruce, Sir William Wallace, Edward I, Henry VII, Elizabeth I and William III of England, Sir Francis Drake and King Canute.[256] As the possession of an aquiline nose is supposed in *Nasology* to convey imperial vigour, it is surprising to find that the aquiline nose of *The Beetle* belongs to an Egyptian: a woman and an enemy to London.

The Beetle's transforming nose is one of the other instances in the text of transgression over the boundaries of caste, species and nation. Julien Wolfreys has

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[253] The British Museum's website describes the acquisition of Roman statues, busts and sepulchral chests by Charles Townley (1737-1805) during his three Grand Tours and by postal order from his home in London. See:
<http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/galleries/ancient_greece_and_rome/rooms_83-84_roman_sculpture.aspx> [last accessed 5 March 2011].

[254] George Jabet (pseud. Eden Warwick), *Notes on Noses* (London: Richard Bentley, 1852), p. 13.

[255] For an exploration of the national impact of nineteenth-century provincial archaeological Roman digs, see: Victoria Hoselitz, *Imagining Roman Britain: Victorian Responses to a Roman Past* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2007).

[256] Jabet, p. 18.

speculated that the character of the Beetle represents an orientalised personification of Sudanese resistance to British Imperialism in Egypt, in which case the Beetle's transforming yet aquiline nose would suggest that the military energy and unflinching determination that Warwick had condensed in his description of aquilinity in *Nasology* were being ascribed to the national Other and that reverse colonialisation in *The Beetle* is enacted rhinologically.[257] The Beetle's nose slides between oppressed and oppressor, characterised by an incoherent jumble of human, coleopteran and avian nasal features. The transmigration of the Beetle's 'razor-sharp' proboscis onto Robert Holt's emaciated dying nose suggests the fatal contamination that Holt fears during the Beetle's intimate embrace: 'it enveloped my face with its huge, slimy, evil-smelling body, and embraced me with its myriad legs. The horror of it made me mad, I shook myself like one stricken with the shaking ague' (*The Beetle*, p. 52). The Beetle also slides between definitions of gender as 'he', 'she' and 'it', troubling the categories of sexual identity:

> 'You are sure this thing of beauty was a man?'
> 'No sir, that is exactly what I am not sure.'
> There was a note in Sydney's voice which suggested that he had received precisely the answer which he had expected.
> 'Did you think it was a woman?'
> 'I did think so, more than once. Though I can hardly explain what made me think so.' (*The Beetle*, p. 212).

While species and gender boundaries are already confounded by the Beetle, the status of the Beetle as a living or dead thing is challenged by odours in the penultimate chapter, where the only surviving residue of the Priestess-Scarab is an unidentifiable viscid secretion, from which emanates a 'most unpleasant smell' (*The Beetle*, p. 318). The Beetle's extinction is presumed, but not secured, as its story resists conclusion. That final unidentifiable yet unpleasant smell defies analysis and prediction in its categorical indeterminacy.

[257] Julian Wolfreys, 'Introduction', in Richard Marsh, *The Beetle* (Plymouth: Broadview, 2004), pp. 20-22.

Whereas in *Lilith* the bird-beak of the librarian had represented his proximity to the angelic, the bird-beak in *The Beetle* is not only represented as a vile thing that connotes the Beetle's intrinsic Otherness, it is also a feature that protectively maintains the Beetle's immortality, appearing to Paul Lessington only at the moment he believes he may have strangled it (*The Beetle*, p. 245). The Beetle's material organ of olfaction is linked in this way to the immaterial role of olfaction in the novel, which is to signal the presence of death. A binary pattern of opposition is established in the text to mark the smellers and the smelled as, among the characters, the Beetle alone exudes a smell: 'an uncomfortable odour greeted our nostrils, which was suggestive of some evil-smelling animal. Sydney seemed to share my thought. "A pretty perfume, on my word!"' (*The Beetle*, p. 233). With the exception of Sydney Atherton, all human others are responsible only for detecting smells, not for dispersing them. While Marjorie Lindon is cross-dressed as a tramp, it is only her visual appearance that discomfits her fellow Britons since, even as a dirty and dishevelled vagabond, she emits no odour. The Beetle actively exudes smells that are associated with death, but death is inhaled passively through the nose in the Beetle's human victims, as olfaction and respiration are mingled in a manner commensurate with the new integrative medical category of otorhinology.[258]

The contribution of otorhinolaryngology, or, 'Ear, Nose and Throat' [ENT] depends in *The Beetle* upon Sydney Atherton, the narrator of the second quarter of the novel.[259] Atherton is the one exception in the novel to human olfactory vulnerability,

[258] Not just human victims inhale death – in an appropriately rhinological manner, the poor black cat also 'snuffs it' (*The Beetle*, p. 137).

[259] The influence of Viennese psychoanalytic discourse of the 1890s, incorporating Freud's and Fliess's notion of the nose as a displaced phallus, has been excluded from this chapter's study of 'scientific' ideas' impact on supernatural texts written in Britain at the fin de siècle on the grounds of its much later adoption into British 'scientific' abstractions. See: G. G. Meynell, 'Freud Translated: An Historical and Bibliographical Note', *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 74 (1981), 306. For an interesting and voluminous bibliography of continental European sexological work on olfaction at the turn of the century, including Freud's and Fliess's, see: Marcello Aspria, 'Sex Smells: Odor, Sexuality and the Erotic Imaginary' <http://www.scentedpages.com/pdf/aspria.pdf> [accessed 5 March 2011].

inventing and adopting a prototypic home-made gas-mask that protects him not only from the toxic effects of the chemical weapons he engineers in his home laboratory but also from the mesmeric influence of the Beetle. The gas mask covers both Atherton's nose and mouth, synthesising a number of scientific discourses that embraced new ways of understanding olfaction, or that challenged features of old ways. In old-fashioned miasmatic theory, for example, disease is caused by the inhalation of foul odours (see Introduction). In Atherton's modern otorhinological understanding of chemical warfare, however, weapons of respiration *cause* foul odours and disease. Atherton's olfactory experiments include the 'Magic Vapour' nerve gas that is demonstrated to Percy: 'squeeze this under your nose – it wants but a gentle pressure – and in less time than in no time, you'll be in the land where they say there are no broken hearts' (*The Beetle*, p. 96). Following physicians' adoption of the laryngoscope from 1855, the neologism 'otorhinology' had absorbed the component prefixes 'oto-' (ear), 'rhino-' (nose) and 'laryngo-' (throat), as all three parts were revealed to be interconnected by the pathology of adjacent structures in the ear and throat in disorders, distensions, infections and diseases of the nose.[260] A definition may only have appeared first in the authoritative *American Illustrated Medical Dictionary* of 1900 ('the sum of knowledge of ear, nose, and larynx and their diseases') but a formal curriculum for otorhinolaryngologists had already begun to be systematised from the mid-1890s in the London Throat and Ear Hospital (founded 1874) that included lessons in anatomy and physiology from the hospital's pathologist.[261]

[260] Although there are several competing claims for the laryngoscope's invention, Alfred Kirstein performed the first direct laryngoscopy (i.e. viewing without mirrors) in Berlin in 1895, using an œsophagoscope he had modified for this purpose.

[261] There is no official published account of the Hospital's earliest years but, according to the archivist of the Royal Free Hampstead NHS Trust, lecture rooms and classroom space were not allocated at the CLTEH until the period of the First World War. Without these, I am guessing that education was delivered, 'hands-on' fashion, in the wards, theatres and dissecting rooms, as it had been earlier in the century at St Thomas' Hospital in London in the 1820s, where upward of 400 medical students would cluster in the theatre. For further details, see: Glenice G. Gould, 'A History of the Royal National Ear Nose and Throat Hospital 1874-1982', *The Journal of Laryngology & Otology*, 112:22 (1998), 1-9.

The 'Magic Vapour' nerve gas against which Atherton's gas-mask had been primarily designed to protect is the destructive, western, scientised counterweight to the Beetle's own destructive, eastern, magic vapour that arises as incense from human sacrifice and that trails in the insect's wake.[262] Magical vapour permeates the text and, although the Beetle is struck by terror at Atherton's parlour trick of igniting phosporus-bromide and defers to Atherton as a superior 'magician', the Beetle's olfactory malignity and Atherton's olfactory imperviousness can be read as a fantasy of imperial immunity against a context of the British military occupation of Egypt in 1882.[263] Throughout the novel, the qualities of breath, vapour, liquor, and cloud are at the service and under control of the Beetle: the state of hypnosis is a 'mist of blackness' (*The Beetle*, p. 76), the Beetle's apartments were 'miasmic' (p. 69) and its furnishings 'evaporated into smoke' (p. 215). Demonstrating its control over atmosphere, the Beetle creates turbulent wind on the unfortunate night in which events are set in motion that 'amounted to a gale' and Holt succumbs to oblivion as the Beetle, shrieking, falls atop his body and *breathes* upon him (*The Beetle*, p. 88; emphasis mine). The mask that protects Sydney from both nerve gas and the Beetle's supernatural influence exposes the link in *The Beetle* between olfaction and respiration or, as Marina Warner puts it, the cluster of ideas involving 'breath, vapour, liquor, and cloud', which represent *ruāch*, or *pneuma* – the animating breath upon which the children of Isis subsist.[264]

The connection between olfaction and respiration underlies the central revelation of the novel concerning a past relationship between the upright modern English parliamentarian Paul Lessingham and the ancient Egyptian Beetle while in seductive

[262] For more on the trope of rivalry for power-knowledge between western and eastern epistemologies in fin-de-siècle mummy-tales, see: Karen Macfarlane, 'Mummy Knows Best: Knowledge and the Unknowable in Turn of the Century Mummy Fiction', *Horror Studies*, 1:1 (2010), 5-24.
[263] Atherton's 'Magic Vapour' is an early and fictional example of the bacterial agents that accounted for 88,498 deaths by 1918 through the medium of poison gas.
[264] For Marina Warner's meditation on *ruach*, see: Marina Warner, *Phantasmagoria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 61.

oriental *femme fatale* mode. The human sacrifices that Lessingham witnessed during two months' of 'drugged oblivion' and 'orgies of nameless horrors' at the Temple of Isis were procured alongside 'the most extraordinary odour. An altar stood about the centre […] the fumes which rose from it were no doubt chiefly responsible for the prevailing perfumes' (*The Beetle*, p. 241). Those prevailing perfumes are the scents released by the sacrificial victims' burnt flesh, which the Scarab-Priestess offers to 'the gods of the shadows' as 'the sweet incense of [their] suffering' (*The Beetle*, p. 87). The connection between Lessingham and the Beetle is conducted by olfaction and respiration, while the smell of burned human sacrifice is an etymological reminder that 'perfume', or *per fumen*, literally means 'through burning'. As an olfactory critique of the Beetle's appalling proboscis reinforces the notion that the novel plays out colonial and imperial anxieties, I submit that the Beetle's transforming nose demonstrably pertains to the links between gender-based oppression and imperialism in the text. In addition, the Beetle's transforming nose should be considered among other examples of bizarre and unstable noses at the fin de siècle that followed the success of early rhinoplastic surgery. Moreover, the mutuality of olfaction and respiration in the Beetle's bird-beak and Atherton's gas mask points to an engagement with the new medical discipline of otorhinology.

The perceived similarity of aquiline nose types in ancient Egypt and modern times accounts for the plot of Arthur Conan Doyle's short story, 'The Ring of Thoth' (first published in the *Cornhill Magazine*, January 1890), which concerns deathless ancient Egyptians who survive into the nineteenth century. In Conan Doyle's drama of mummification and incarnation, both the modern hero of the piece and his four-thousand-year-old adversary have identical noses. Darwinian evolutionary theory is introduced at the outset and then dismissed as the clever English hero of the story, John Vansittart Smith, is described as having 'shown an aptitude for zoology and for botany

which caused his friends to look upon him as a second Darwin' before changing his investigative attentions first to chemistry and then to Egyptology for 'the extreme importance of a subject which promised to throw a light upon the first germs of human civilisation and the origin of the greater part of our arts and sciences'.[265] Vansittart Smith's studies take him to the Egyptian Hall at the Louvre Museum where he fancies himself described by a British tourist as 'half a mummy himself', although the overheard comment turns out to have been concerning Sosra, the immortal Egyptian museum attendant. The blurred distinction between Sosra and Vansittart Smith, it transpires, is because of Vansittart Smith's singular, birdlike nose in profile:

> His high-beaked nose and prominent chin had something of the same acute and incisive character which distinguished his intellect. He held his head in a birdlike fashion, and birdlike, too, was the pecking motion with which, in conversation, he threw out his objections and retorts ('Thoth', p. 2).

The Egyptian, too, is seen in profile. His features were 'the exact counterpart of the innumerable statues, mummy-cases and pictures which adorned the walls of the apartment' ('Thoth', p. 3). Segueing in this fashion from noses, to birds, to ancient Egyptians in profile, the olfactory motifs in Conan Doyle's 'The Ring of Thoth' are encountered again in his 'Lot No. 249' (first published in *Harper's Monthly Magazine*, December 1892), where an Oxford undergraduate fits out his rooms with 'a thousand strange relics from Egypt' of arcane and occult purpose, rendering his chambers 'a museum rather than a study'.[266] Among the weird trophies is a mummy he has just purchased at auction – the 'Lot No. 249' of the title. Summoning the mummy to work its nefarious mischief upon his academic rivals (mischief that is credited by the scandalised

[265] Arthur Conan Doyle, 'The Ring of Thoth', in *Tales of Unease* (Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 2008), pp. 1-16 (p. 1). Further references to this edition are given in parentheses after quotations in the text, where the title is abbreviated to 'Thoth'.
[266] Arthur Conan Doyle, 'Lot No. 249', in *Tales of Unease* (Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 2008), pp. 165-194 (p. 170). Further references to this edition are given in parentheses after quotations in the text, where the title is abbreviated to 'Lot'.

townsfolk as being caused by a giant ape)[267] the student burns balsamic resin to bend the mummy to his will: 'a pungent, biting odour filled the chamber' ('Lot', p. 172). The smell of the mummy's reanimation is revived at the mummy's destruction as, dismembered with an amputating knife and burned on a convenient fireplace, it reeks of 'burned resin and singed hair' ('Lot', p. 193). Meanwhile, the medical student who lives in the room upstairs from the mummy (and from whose narrative the story is putatively taken) consistently disbelieves the evidence of his other sensory modalities, symbolically lending out his anatomical models of skull and ear to an old schoolfellow. In the symbolic absence of the ear and (noseless) skull (representing vision, taste and cognition), only his sense of smell remains to reveal the infernal secret of Lot No. 249. In both of these prototypical examples of the 'many mummy tales that began to emerge in the late Victorian era', smells and noses identify the eruption of the past into the modern, conforming to the principle of re-incarnation and troubling the western understanding of mortality.[268]

Both 'The Ring of Thoth' and 'Lot No. 249' are set in museums, and noses in both these stories represent a chronotopic portal that enables mutual transfusion between the past and the present. In 'Lot No. 249', the modern mummy master animates his ancient artefact, in his personal museum, through the medium of odour. In 'The Ring of Thoth', the identical noses of Vansittart Smith and Sosra signal the confusion of observer and observed in the Egyptian Hall of the Louvre Museum, as the central story-within-the-story elides the authority of who is narrating and who is narrated. Roger Luckhurst has assigned a context of negotiated colonial guilt for the two waves of mummy tales that he describes at the fin de siècle, including Henry Rider Haggard's *Cleopatra* (1889) and

[267] The townsfolk's surmise that the violence had been wrought by an ape may contain a sublimated reference by Conan Doyle to Edgar Allen Poe's simian malefactor in 'Murders in the Rue Morgue' (1841).

[268] Roger Luckhurst, ed., *Late Victorian Gothic Tales* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. xxvii.

Bram Stoker's *The Jewel of the Seven Stars* (1903), as well as Marsh's *The Beetle*.[269] Although the two Conan Doyle short stories, 'Lot No. 249' (1890) and 'The Ring of Thoth' (1892) both predate the moment that Luckhurst assigns for the origin of his second wave of mummy stories, their disposition of smells and noses undoubtedly, if anachronistically, share many of the features of what Luckhurst identifies as the 'complex understanding of the continuities as well as the discontinuities between the traditional and the modern' of that second, later, wave, including being set within the artificial temporal boundaries of a museum and involving the confusion of dream states.[270] These mummies shatter out of their museums, and connect to the present through noses and smells.

While it is possible to read the integration of the notion of 'nose' into the general surgical category of otorhinolaryngology as a sign of the dispersal of the autonomy of the nose's identity, it is possible at the same time to interpret the categorical incorporation of the nose into ENT as an augmentation of nasal identity; that is, that the job of olfaction became an integrated function for which a much larger portion of the body was needed than had been previously considered. In the first case, the primacy of the Foucauldian 'clinical gaze' is established, rendering the patient – or in this case, the patient's nose – as the passive recipient of institutionalised and institutionalising diagnoses. In the second case, the discipline of ENT may be seen to have liberated the human sensorium from that traditional limitation of apprehending the world via Aristotle's five separate senses as, in ENT, the senses are indistinct and interdependent. In either case, however (that is, the case of identity dispersal, or the case of identity augmentation), the cultural relationship at the fin de siècle of the signifier 'nose' is modified in otorhinolaryngology alongside principles of fragmentation and

[269] Luckhurst, 'Introduction', *Late Victorian Tales*, pp. xxvi-xxvii.
[270] Roger Luckhurst 'The British Museum in the Empire of Shadows' <http://projects.beyondtext.ac.uk/spiritualismandtechnology/uploads/roger_luckhurst_british_museum.pdf> [accessed 21 February 2011], p. 8.

reorganisation of perception and phenomena. This accords with the observation by Rindisbacher that instances of olfaction in continental poetry at this time began to concern themselves with the human circulatory and respiratory systems (especially with the heart).[271] Rindisbacher's argument presents fin-de-siècle poetry merely as the cultural canary, poised earliest on account of its traditional generic subjective and contemplative nature to manifest the fragmentation and rearrangement of perception and phenomena which were mediated in the period through smell, smells and smelling and which were subsequently to permeate all other fields of Western discourse. It is not within the scope of this study to examine the contribution of olfactory themes of fragmentation and perceptual rearrangement to Modernist prose, but it is certainly useful to show that those themes were in place from the beginning of the Modernist period.

**III: Cultural 'Deodorisation' v. Smell, Smells and Smelling after 1880**

It is a crucial point that representations of noses at the fin de siècle were becoming inflected by new evolutionary narratives and new medical understandings of olfaction, because olfactive motifs during this period and later have generally been presumed not to exist. This is due in part to borrowings without context of Roy Porter's foreword to the English translation of Corbin's seminal study *The Foul and the Fragrant*, in which Porter writes 'today's history comes deodorized'.[272] It is also due to over-literal readings of the book in which Corbin characterised Parisian civic deodorisation, and especially Parisian efforts to clean up the Seine between 1750 and 1880, as 'the decisive

[271] Rindisbacher finds that the 'I' subject is broken down: 'it is more and more given to the unpredictable antics of the nervous system with its open, raw surfaces presented to the outside'. See: Rindisbacher, p. 205.
[272] In the context of the Foreword, Porter was writing approvingly of histories that brought the past to life by involving the sense of smell. See: Roy Porter, 'Foreword' in Corbin, p. v.

action' of what he termed 'the olfactory revolution'.[273] Smells after 1880 received no attention from Corbin other than very brief allusions to the increasingly segregationist attribution of bad smells to different ethnic groups and the association between fashionable women and the perfume of flowers and vegetables in Symbolist art.[274] It should be remarked, however, regardless of subsequent interpretation, that at no stage did Corbin record or suggest that smells after 1880 were less important to the people who smelled them or the culture that defined them.

Though Zygmunt Bauman's 'Sweet Smell of Decomposition' (1993) concerned smell in Modernism, rather than smells at the fin de siècle, it nonetheless based its hypothesis on the assumption that olfaction had become less important after the late nineteenth-century sanitary improvements described by Corbin. Bauman answers his own rhetorical question, 'Was it an accident that modernity declared war on smells?' with an ingenious link between assumed cultural anosmia [or, 'unsmellingness'] and Baudrillardian perceptions of simulated 'reality' in the twentieth century.[275] The 'war on smells' involves the simulated ambient aromas sprayed from ducts around the bread aisle in supermarkets that have come to represent simulacra of artisan bakery: 'the territory vacated by natural odours was to be colonized by the artificially produced, and therefore controllable and controlled, scents'.[276]

Bauman's mistaken assumption, that smells became culturally insignificant after Corbin's 'olfactory revolution' cut-off date of 1880, was shared during the following year by *Aroma: The Cultural History of Smell*. The anthropologists Classen, Howes and Synott concluded in *Aroma* that, 'following what Alain Corbin has called the "olfactory revolution" [i.e., since 1880], fragrance had moved out of the realms of religion and

[273] Corbin, p. 229.
[274] Ibid., p. 209 and p. 195 respectively.
[275] Zygmunt Bauman, 'The Sweet Smell of Decomposition', in *Forget Baudrillard?*, ed. by Chris Rojek and Bryan Turner (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 22-46 (p. 24).
[276] Ibid., p. 25.

medicine into those of sentiment and sensuality'.[277] In support of this rather large claim, though, the only supporting evidence is 'the works of many writers of that period, such as Baudelaire and, later, Proust who used olfactory symbolism in their writings to create an evocative atmosphere'.[278] It must be noted, in caution, that as Baudelaire's first collection of poems, *Les Fleurs du Mal,* was published in 1857 (twenty-three years before the given date) and Proust's *À la Recheche du Temps Perdu* was published in seven volumes between 1913 and 1927 (thirty-three to forty-seven years after the given date), it would be reasonable to look out for additional or alternative accounts with which to supplement this claim. Having referred to Corbin's notional period of olfactory revolution, Classen et al. go on to state that 'whereas [nineteenth-century] literature tended to glorify smell, […] science tended to depreciate it',[279] citing both Corbin's authoritative work on the social meanings ascribed to smell until 1880, and the sundering of the link between public health and miasmatic stenches which had been initiated by Louis Pasteur's pioneering microbacterial discoveries in the 1850s and 1860s:

> Pasteur's discovery that most familiar diseases are caused by germs led scientists to conclude that foul odours themselves were not agents of illness, but merely rather unimportant byproducts. The medical community left smells behind and moved onto microbes. In the scientific paradigm of the universe, odours had become inessential.[280]

In Classen et al.'s analysis, therefore, the scientific 'progress' initiated by Pasteur was indirectly responsible for the scientific relegation of odour. Another influential critic who has argued for the orthodoxy that posits olfactory motifs in literature as a victim of the ascendency of science is David Barnes, whose 2006 survey of defaecalisation, *The Great Stink of Paris and the Nineteenth-Century Struggle Against Germs and Filth* quotes Classen et al. to establish that the story of olfaction in nineteenth-century science

[277] Classen at al., p. 6.
[278] Corbin, pp. 6-7.
[279] Classen et al., p. 88.
[280] Ibid., p. 89.

is the story of bacteriological sanitisation in general (and bacteriological sanitisation of the River Seine in particular) and lasts only until around 1880.

While Corbin's, Classen et al.'s and Barnes' descriptions of olfactory revolution have been dominant, some extremely contorted scholarly logic has resulted from the absence of a literary context for smells in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century science. Revisiting the theme of late nineteenth-century smells which he had previously explored in collaboration with Classen and Synott, Howes (founder and editor of the *Senses and Society* sensory anthropological journal, established 2006) performed the difficult task in 'Freud's Nose: The Repression of Nasality and the Origin of Psychoanalytic Theory' (2000) of reconciling his argument with a reaffirmation of *Aroma*'s thesis. According to Howes in *Aroma* and 'Freud's Nose', there 'had occurred a precipitous decline in the cultural significance of smell during the nineteenth century […] for example, where bad smells spelled disease and good smells served as cures in premodernity […] smells lost their life-and-death meaning'.[281] That observation does not align, however, with the following argument in 'Freud's Nose' that Sigmund Freud's lack of attention to olfaction (as compared to the sheer volume of his theorising on tactility and taste) was an example of sensory repression. While the inquisitive reader is inclined to wonder how it may be possible to repress something that allegedly is not there, Howes proposes two additional psychohistorical causes of Freud's elision of nasality: on the one hand, that the elision had been caused by personal trauma resulting from Freud's falling-out with the Ear Nose and Throat (ENT) surgeon and fellow psychologist, Wilhelm Fliess (with whom Freud had developed the idea of phallo-nasal substitution from both its folkloric background and its elaboration earlier in the century by Pierre Jean George Cabanis [1757-1808]) or, alternatively, that the

[281] David Howe, 'Freud's Nose: The Repression of Nasality and the Origin of Psychoanalytic Theory', in *Nose Book: Representations of the Nose in Literature and the Arts*, ed. by Victoria de Rijke, Lene Østermark-Johansen and Helen Thomas (Middlesex: Middlesex University Press, 2000), pp. 265-279 (pp. 276-277).

elision represented merely an unfortunate 'oversight on Freud's part'.[282] Howes's difficulty in squaring these explanations may be seen to result from Corbin's, Barnes's and Classen et al.'s focus on a specific period of olfactory revolution that concluded in c.1880.

The argument that olfactive motifs did not exist at the fin de siècle and later is given short shrift by Mark Jenner, an historian of odour. Jenner queries the proposition made by Jacques Derrida and repeated by Bauman that the cultural value of smell at the end of the nineteenth century had sunk in inverse proportion to the increasing claims of stereoscopic vision. Pointing out that there is no logical requirement that one sensory modality must necessarily shrivel as another develops in importance, he urges: 'we need to distinguish more clearly between the [two] narratives of deodorisation […] Cultures may banish faecal or other odours from public space without devaluing odours or olfaction in general'.[283] Rather than 'following the grand evolutionary narratives', Jenner urges, the critic needs to read specific examples of olfaction carefully, and must resist 'the tendency […] to generalize about the sensory regime of an entire culture'. As there is disagreement between the school of thought represented by Bauman, Barnes and Classen et al., that supports cultural anosmia after 1880 on the one hand, and Jenner, who resists their grand olfactory narratives on the other, the following section of this chapter will accommodate both views. The following analysis will demonstrate that these two positions are not irreconcilable. Both Marsh's *The Beetle* and Stoker's *Dracula*, two bestselling novels from 1897, may be regarded as dramas of post-sanitation reform. They both deal with the unwelcome effects of things surviving from the past that should already have been well gone and buried, and they both articulate anxiety about what might come crawling out of shit.

[282] Ibid., p. 279.
[283] Mark S. R. Jenner, 'Civilisation and Deodorisation?: Smell in Early Modern English Culture', in *Civil Histories: Essays Presented to Sir Keith Thomas*, ed. by Peter Burke, Brian Howard Harrison, Paul Slack and Keith Thomas (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 127-144 (p. 143).

**IV: Smell, Smells and Smelling in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897)**

To the horror of Jonathan Harker, a familiar smell oozes out of cracks in the architrave of Carfax Abbey's chapel. Harker recognises the percolating stink of the Count's night 'soil' and becomes alert to its transitive implications:

> […] a faint, but malodorous air seemed to exhale through the gaps, none of us ever expected such an odour as we encountered. […] Here the place was small and close, and the long disuse had made the air stagnant and foul. There was an earthy smell, as of some dry miasma, which came through the fouler air. But as to the odour itself, how shall I describe it? It was not alone that it was composed of all the ills of mortality and with the pungent, acrid smell of blood, but it seemed as though corruption itself had become corrupt.[284]

The Count's emitted smell is topographical as well as hæmatological, as the land of his relatives is soaked in blood. He explains: 'there is hardly a foot of soil in all this region that has not been enriched by the blood of men, patriots or invaders' (*Dracula*, p. 28). Dracula smells of the earth beneath his Carpathian castle, which he transports from Transylvania in fifty boxes, and which had previously carpeted the floor of his private chapel, at the foot of the winding staircase from his bedroom: 'At the bottom there was a dark, tunnel-like passage, through which came a deathly, sickly odour, the odour of old earth newly turned' (*Dracula*, p. 55-56). The 'soil' of his forefathers is Dracula's bedlinen, bandage, excrement and food.

The idea that the Count emerges from dung to challenge the assumed primacy of the West resonates with an olfactory reading of Marsh's similarly ageless and threatening Priestess-Scarab in *The* (Dung-) *Beetle*. The Report of the Committee for Sanitation recorded in 1897 (the same year of publication as Marsh's and Stoker's dung-monsters) that

> sewers, public and private, are to-day better constructed and more carefully planned than in the past, but the question of the best method for the disposal of sewage has yet to be solved and is becoming of more pressing importance every

[284] Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 267. Further references to this edition are given in parentheses after quotations in the text.

day.[285]

It is revealing to contextualise *Dracula* and *The Beetle* against a cultural background of pressing need to dispose of excrement. Van Helsing's original solution to the Undead pestilence is sanitary, after all: 'we must capture or kill this monster [i.e., Dracula] in his lair; or we must, so to speak, sterilize the earth, so that no more he can seek safety in it' (*Dracula*, p. 311). Themes of olfactory pollution and contagion in Marsh's and Stoker's novels that coincided with contemporary efforts to dispel human waste suggest strongly that Corbin's notional cut-off date of 1880 for the olfactory revolution may have been too abrupt. Furthermore, historians' attempts to fix an end-point to nineteenth-century cultural manifestations of concern regarding smells, based around the creation and disposal of sewage, should accommodate post-sanitation reform.

As one might expect from the previous examples in this chapter of Mr Raven in *Lilith* and the scarab-Priestess in *The Beetle*, Count Dracula possesses an uncanny proboscis that is transforming, as well as aquiline. When Dracula's nose transforms into a bat's, or a wolf's, or those of a knot of rats, he is metamorphosing into a nocturnal hunter who will find prey by scent. Vision is an irrelevance to creatures of the night as scent is their primary guide. Despite Colin Blinderman's list of the many ways in which the Count is figured in the text as a great Ape, there is no statistically consistent identification in the text between the vampire and any one particular species.[286] Instead, the overlap between the Count and his beasts presents an evolutionary muddle, where proximity of the human to the 'meaner things' (as Van Helsing describes them) implies both the innate bestiality of humanity and confers an innate depravity to animals (*Dracula*, p. 252). While there is certainly a Darwinian evolutionary hierarchy at work

[285] J. W. Hughes, 'Report of Committee on Sanitation, with Special Reference to Drainage, Plumbing and Ventilation of Public and Private Buildings', in *Public Health Pap Rep.*, 24 (1898), 192–195 <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2329295/ > [accessed 22 March 2011] (para 2 of 5).
[286] Colin Blinderman, 'Vampurella, Darwin and Count Dracula', *Massachusetts Review*, 21:2 (1980), 411-428.

in Renfield's zoophageous pyramid of flies, spiders, moths (including that same iconic Death's-Head Moth that so troubled Professor Hapley in Wells's short story 'The Moth', published three years before *Dracula*), Renfield's condition is, as Robert J. Frost points out, 'natural selection run mad'.[287] The Count's transgression of species barrier and the distaste expressed by Renfield for natural selection insinuate that, although the novel is inflected deeply by Darwinian evolutionary debate, themes of smell, smells and smelling in *Dracula* evoke a range of models of evolutionary concerns.

Noses in *Dracula* are an important index of access to supernatural experience. The two most significant noses in *Dracula* belong to the Count and his oppositional doppelganger nemesis, Van Helsing. It is fair to surmise that since the novel was originally conceived as a stage play, there may be practical, theatrically expedient reasons for the similarity of their noses. While there is general agreement that the tall, thin, bushy-eyebrowed Count Dracula was modelled on the actor-manager of the Lyceum Theatre, Henry Irving, no such model for Van Helsing has been agreed. It is possible, however, that Van Helsing was also modelled on Irving: the 1924 production at the Lyceum successfully transposed the actor who was supposed to play the part of Dracula with the part instead of Van Helsing.[288] Right from the beginning of the novel, *Dracula* instructs its readers on the Count's nose and how to interpret it as 'a very marked physiognomy' (p. 24). Upon his first encounter with the Count, Jonathan Harker confides to his diary that 'his face [i.e., Dracula's] was a strong – a very strong – aquiline, with high bridge of the thin nose and peculiarly arched nostrils' (*Dracula*, p. 24). It is significant here that the Count's whole face – not just his nose – is

[287] Robert James Frost, '"A Race of Devils": *Frankenstein*, *Dracula*, and Science Fiction', *Journal of Dracula Studies*, 5 (2003), p. 8 <http://blooferland.com/drc/images/05Frost.rtf> [accessed 24 March 2011].

[288] Alternative role-models for Van Helsing have variously been claimed as the Hungarian Orientalist Ármin (Armenius) Vámbéry, the German philologist Max Müller, and Robert Roosevelt (uncle of the US President Theodore Roosevelt), who was introduced to Stoker's circle of acquaintance by Wilde. See: Christopher Frayling, *Vampyres: Lord Byron to Count Dracula* (London: Faber & Faber, 1991), p. 342. See also: Daniel Farson, *The Man Who Wrote Dracula* (London: St Martin's Press, 1975), p. 93.

metonymically described as 'a strong aquiline', attaching the characteristics of aquilinity (which, as in *The Beetle*, literally means 'eagle-nosed' and which indicates military energy and unwavering persistence) to his entire being and purpose. The aquilinity of Dracula's features defines him: of the three vampire women who attack Jonathan in Transylvania, two 'were dark and had high aquiline noses like the Count', prompting Clive Leatherdale's speculation that the women are Dracula's daughters.[289] Even in trance, the Count's bird-beak aquiline nose helps Mina Harker to identify him 'from the description of the others. The waxen face, the high aquiline nose, on which the light fell in a thin white line' (*Dracula*, p. 305). The reader recognises that Mina has unknowingly encountered the vampire before, though; earlier in the novel as she stared across a London street, she saw 'a tall thin man with a beaky nose' (*Dracula*, p. 183). The aquilinity of Dracula's nose is sufficient to identify the anonymous stranger who, quelling wild wolves at the Zoological Gardens, is reported by the *Pall Mall Gazette* as 'a tall, thin chap with a 'ook nose and a pointed beard' (*Dracula*, p. 148). If the Count's aquilinity inscribes him as an 'eagle-nosed' bird of prey, the docility of his victims is inscribed in their own rhinological apparatus: the duped agent who transports the coffins of Transylvanian dirt has 'a nose like a sheep'.[290] Dracula's female victims have sweet, little, childish noses: Lucy Westenra wrinkles up her 'nice nose', her 'charming nose' (*Dracula*, p. 140). Mina, hypnotised, is brought to lap at the vampire's blood with 'a terrible resemblance to a child forcing a kitten's nose to compel it to drink' (*Dracula*,

[289] Clive Leatherdale, *Dracula: The Novel & the Legend* (Brighton: Desert Island Books, 1985), p. 28.
[290] Hildesheim is described as 'a Hebrew of rather the Adelphia theatre type, with a nose like a sheep and a fez'. This is speculation but, as the Adelphia (now Adelphi) Theatre in the Strand was a commercial rival to Bram Stoker's and Henry Irving's own dramatic initiatives at the Lyceum Theatre on Wellington Street, just off the Strand, I am assuming that the reference is derogatory, perhaps indicating an overblown hamminess of style (the Adelphia was known for its melodramas). It is interesting that Hildeheim, characterised by Stoker as a stagey Jewish stereotype, carries the wide, flat, herbivorous nose of a sheep rather than the stagey, hooked, prominent 'Jewish' stereotype nose applied at the Adelphia to Dickens's character Fagin in *Oliver Twist* (which had been played there intermittently since 1838). This would make sense if Stoker not only wished to portray the human dupes of the vampire as ovine pacifists who were at the mercy of their eagle-nosed predator, but also wanted to make the Count and his nemesis, Van Helsing, the only ones with big noses.

p. 300).

Van Helsing is equipped with a dynamic physiognomy equal to the Count's: 'a good-sized nose, rather straight but with quick, sensitive nostrils that seemed to broaden as the big, bushy brows come down and the mouth tightens' (*Dracula*, p. 194). The Count's and Van Helsing's noses and eyebrows are described in similar terms: the Count's eyebrows 'were very massive, almost meeting over the nose' while, in fury, the 'thick eyebrows that met over the nose now seemed like a heaving bar of white-hot metal' (*Dracula*, p. 46). The conjunction of nose, eyebrow and contracted *corrugator supercilii* is repeated in Van Helsing's face, which 'grew as set as marble and his eyebrows converged till they almost met over his nose' (*Dracula*, p. 130). In each case, the hardness and the pallor of metal and marble convey the strength and self-restraint being practiced by the two enemies upon their noses.

The Count and the Professor's capacity for nasal self-restraint is not shared by the other characters, who are betrayed by their insubordinate senses of smell. Renfield detects Dracula's arrival at Carfax by scent and reveals his excitement to onlookers, despite his master's prohibition against telling: 'at about eight o'clock he began to get excited and to sniff about as a dog does when setting' (*Dracula*, p. 110). Jonathan's nostrils 'twitch' and Arthur Holmwood's 'quiver' at proximity to the shed blood of their lovers, as suppressed internal passion works against their gentlemanly impassivity (gentlemanly quivering noses also operate in these examples as metaphors for phallic tumescence: at the moment of exchanging blood with Mina, for example, the Count's 'eyes flamed with devilish passion; the great nostrils of the aquiline nose opened wide and quivered at the edge' [*Dracula*, pp. 303, 131 and 299-300]). In addition to being distinguished by their large noses, Van Helsing and the Count are the only characters in the novel who emit scent. The Count leaks the uncontrollable odour of moral and physical corruption from between his 'reeking lips', which confuses Jonathan at first: 'it

may have been that his breath was rank, but a horrible feeling of nausea came over me, which, do what I could, I could not conceal' (*Dracula*, p. 306 & p. 25). Van Helsing has no inherent odour but he purposefully employs the peasant remedy of garlic stink to mark his territory, rubbing the fibres of the plant into door jambs and window sashes.

Van Helsing's supernaturally effective garlic smell confirms another similarity between the Count and the Professor, as Van Helsing's garlic flowers are produced asexually from clones and partake of the same challenge to the autonomy of sexual reproduction as does the vampire plague that menaces the 'teeming millions' of London (*Dracula*, p. 191). The garlic 'flowers' are specially bred in Haarlem by Van Helsing's friend Vanderpool, where they are raised 'in his glass-houses all the year' (*Dracula*, p. 141). The presence of garlic provokes an unstated inference about Van Helsing's connection with Vanderpool: the cultivation of garlic necessarily entails the separation and nurture of bubils from the stalks – the 'flowers' are misnamed, being sterile in cultivation, and reproduction occurs only by cloning from the individual cloves of a healthy bulb from which the scape and bubils have been cut off at an early stage of growth. In *Dracula*, therefore, Vanderpool's exertions in the glass-house must have been to pursue the garlic flowers *at the expense of* the garlic bulbs, which would otherwise be the sole commercial imperative for the plants' nurture. From this it can be deduced that the very purpose of Vanderpool's work was to produce the garlic 'flowers' for occult ritual purposes. This in turn suggests that Van Helsing is part of a European community of specialists in aspects of the supernatural. The stink of asexually reproduced garlic flowers also fits into the novel's ambiguously staged encounters between generational fertility and sterility which are played out in the various relationships of adoption (such as Mr Hawkins' relationship to the Harkers, and Van Helsing's to Arthur Holmwood, who looks like his dead son), incest (such as the ensemble in Transylvania of Dracula's putative daughters and wife), familial neglect

(such as Mrs Westenra's thoughtless exposure of her daughter to her terrible fate, or the inverted Madonna-with-child iconography as Lucy drops the baby) and which are stabilised in the culminating birth of the Harkers' son on the birthday of the late Quincy Morris, after whom he is nicknamed.[291] At the end of the novel the full name of the Harkers' son takes in the total cast of the 'Crew of Light', indicating that conventional patterns of inheritance have been restored.[292]

In the olfactory warfare between Dracula and Van Helsing, layers of scent notes are deliberately structured in a manner congruent with late nineteenth-century composition of perfumes where the scent is designed around a faecal or 'earthy' base note which lies beneath a fragrance and which lingers longest. As host in Transylvania to Jonathan, Dracula at first conceals the rankness of his breath and his soil by uncorking the bottle of aromatic old Tokay wine for his guest's consumption. Two glasses of the dark, sweet, treacly drink, and a cigar to follow, fail to arrest Jonathan's nauseated shudder, however, when the Count approaches.[293] The next vampire to come close to Jonathan causes the same olfactory effect: 'The fair girl advanced and bent over me till I could feel the movement of her breath upon me. Sweet it was in one sense, honey-sweet, and sent the same tingling through the nerves as her voice, but with a bitter underlying the sweet, a bitter offensiveness as one smells in blood' (*Dracula*, p.40). The presence of sweetness that almost, but not quite, masks bitterness is repeated in Lucy's reminiscence: 'I have a vague memory of something long and dark with red eyes, just as we saw in the sunset, and something very sweet and very bitter all around

[291] Lucy dropping the baby: 'With a careless motion, she flung to the ground, callous as a devil, the child that up to now she had clutched strenuously to her breast' (*Dracula*, p. 181).
[292] For more on forms of inheritance in the novel, see: Christopher Craft, '"Kiss Me with Those Red Lips": Gender and Inversion in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*', in *Speaking of Gender*, ed. by Elaine Showalter (New York: Routledge, 1989), pp. 216- 242.
[293] Elizabeth Miller discusses cigar smoke and smoking in *Dracula* as a marker for homosocial community. Miller also interprets Jonathan Harker's acceptance of the cigar – and the Count's abstention from it – in the light of understanding that the Count was born in the fifteenth century, before the introduction of tobacco into Transylvania. See: Elizabeth Miller, 'Coffin Nails: Smokers and Non-Smokers in Dracula', *The Journal of Dracula Studies*, 1 (1999) <http://blooferland.com/drc/images/01Miller.rtf> [accessed 25 August 2013] para 4 of 21.

me at once' (*Dracula*, p. 108). The contrast between 'sweet' and 'bitter' is invoked as 'insincere' and 'genuine' in the Count's bland 'sweet' courtesy and Jonathan's 'bitter' disappointment as well as appearing in Van Helsing's regular exhortions that 'we […] will have to pass through the bitter water before we reach the sweet' and 'you are now in the bitter waters my child. By this time tomorrow you will, please God, have passed them and drunk of the sweet waters' (*Dracula*, pp. 57, 58, 215 and 227). The use of gustatory terms 'sweet' and 'bitter' in *Dracula* to refer to layered scent notes both reinforces the cannibalistic motif and embeds the novel within a conventionally religious framework, conflating several Biblical passages that point to the interchangeability of sweetness and bitterness. These include Isaiah 5:20: 'Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!'; James 3:10: 'Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet [water] and bitter?'; and Exodus 15:22-27, which tells of the miraculous transformation of bitter desert water into sweet water that sustained the followers of Moses on the third day of their escape from tribulation in Egypt.[294] In *Dracula*, the combination 'sweet and bitter' is not simply oppositional: it also refers to a contemporary practice of olfactory layering.[295]

In another appropriation of the language of perfumery, Van Helsing layers the pungent throb of garlic with the fragrant roses and aromatic lilies that the undertakers have wound around Lucy's corpse: 'Lucy lay in her coffin, strewn with the wild garlic flowers, which sent, through the odour of lily and rose, a heavy, overpowering smell into the night' (*Dracula*, p. 182). Although garlic is today included among the *alliaceae*

[294] I note that modern translators of the Bible typically substitute 'fresh' for 'sweet' water and 'salt' for 'bitter' water, but the King James version, with which Bram Stoker and his original readers would have been familiar in 1897, maintains the sweet/bitter dichotomy.

[295] Mark M. Hennelly Jr. suggests that Van Helsing's rehearsal of the scriptural terms 'sweet water' and 'bitter water', 'perhaps most paradoxically sums up liminal initiations in *Dracula'*. See: Mark M Hennelly Jr., '"Betwixt Sunset and Sunrise": Liminality in *Dracula*', *Journal of Dracula Studies*, 7 (2005) <blooferland.com/drc/images/07Hennell.rtf > [accessed 21 March 2011].

(i.e., alliums like onions, leeks, shallots and chives), garlic was considered at the time of writing in 1897 to be part – admittedly a rather oniony part – of the Lily family (*liliaceae*). Van Helsing introduces the garlic blossoms to Lucy as being 'like the lotus flower, [able to] make your trouble forgotten' and heeds at once the contribution of poppies (i.e., laudanum) to her maids' stupor (*Dracula*, pp. 140, 158). When Van Helsing meets Mina, he commiserates at once on the loss of Lucy, 'that poor lily girl' (*Dracula*, p. 195), although it is unclear whether he means that Lucy is like a lily because she became excessively pale when drained of blood, or whether she is like a lily because she was of the leisured class and, like 'a lily of the field', did not burden herself with labour, or whether she was lily-like because she had assumed the quality of the lilies that surrounded her in the undertakers' makeshift *chapelle ardente*, or else because she was associated with the 'lily flowers' of garlic. As a white 'flower', garlic may have been considered adjacent to the floriographical association of white lilies with virginity and white roses with innocence and purity, although garlic appears not to have been listed in any of the six representative late-nineteenth-century compendia on the Language of Flowers that have been collated by Katherine L. Bryant.[296] The low status and floriographical dumbness of garlic causes it to be disparaged by Lucy ("Oh Professor, I believe you are only putting a joke on me. Why, these flowers are only common garlic') and tidied away by her mother as superfluous mess (*Dracula*, p. 141). The garlic is effective, however, as Lucy acknowledges before she is symbolically de-

[296] Katherine L. Bryant lists the six compendia as: Mary Chauncey, ed., *The Floral Gift, from Nature and the Heart* (New York: Leavitt & Allen, 1853); John H. Young, *Our Deportment, or the Manners, Conduct, and Dress of the Most Refined Society; including Forms for Letters, Invitations, Etc., Etc. Also, Valuable Suggestions on Home Culture and Training. Compiled from the Latest Reliable Authorities* (Detroit: F.B. Dickerson,1883); Thomas E. Hill, *Hill's Manual of Social and Business Forms* (Chicago: Hill Standard Book Co., 1883); *Kate Greenaway's Language of Flowers*, 1885 (From a plain text file provided by BrentRoss); and Nugent Robinson, *Collier's Cyclopedia of Commercial and Social Information and Treasury of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge* (New York: P. F. Collier, 1892) and *Parsons' Hand-Book of Forms: A Compendium of Business and Social Rules and a Complete Work of Reference and Self-Instruction, with Illustrations*, 13th ed. (Battle Creek, MI: The Central Manufacturing Co.,1899). See: Katherine L. Bryant, *The Language of Flowers*, 16 September 2002 <http://home.comc.ast.net/~bryant.katherine/flowers.html> [accessed 21 March 2011].

flowered: 'I never liked garlic before, but now it is delightful! There is peace in its smell' (*Dracula*, p. 143).

The humble and disregarded but wholesome smell of Van Helsing's garlic on one side and the wealthy and aristocratic but disgusting stench of Dracula's soil on the other, would appear to support the idea that olfaction in *Dracula* involves the mutually imbricated, hierarchy-supporting binary divisions of rich and poor, woman and man, alive and dead, good and bad that have been catalogued by Jean Paul Riquelme (although the combination 'sweet and bitter' may usefully be added to that list).[297] It is also the case, however, that smells in the novel, such as Dracula's stealthily invading stink and Van Helsing's garland of white flowers, provide the point of encounter where one extreme confronts the other. As noses and smells in the novel confusingly deliver binary division and yet also the point of contact between each extreme of the binary division, it seems fair to ask what was Stoker's purpose in so frequently referring to smell, smells and smelling? The answer, I suggest, is that Stoker positions olfaction in *Dracula* as the evolutionary advantage advanced by Van Helsing who, according to the patient Renfield, has 'revolutionised therapeutics by his discovery of the continuous evolution of brain-matter' (p. 260). This evolutionary advantage, in short, is the property of the Undead and includes the episodes of unconscious cerebration, hallucination, mesmerism, sleepwalking, prophetic dreaming, hypnotism and cranial injury, all of which manifest themselves in the novel whenever the Count's stink or his nose are nearby. An olfactive epistemology represents newer and truer ways of knowing than merely rational observation, which repeatedly misleads, confounds and disappoints: 'Tell me', pleads Seward of Van Helsing, 'I can hazard no opinion. I do not know what to think, and I have no data on which to found a conjecture' (*Dracula*, p. 203). While logic fails Seward, encroaching vampirism gives Mina access to extra

[297] Jean Paul Riquelme, 'Introduction: Toward a History of Gothic and Modernism: Dark Modernity from Bram Stoker to Samuel Beckett', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 46:3 (2000), 585-605.

psychic faculties of occult knowing, permitting her to detect in trance the Count's movements which otherwise would be unguessable.

It is unclear from Stoker's novel whether 'continuous evolution of brain-matter' means the brain-power of the race, and that each successive generation will improve upon the previous, or whether it means that the blueprint for future development is carried as potential within each individual's cerebrum, within their own lifetime. Tantalisingly, the text supplies support for both interpretations. The first idea, that the race is progressing as each generation passes, is supported by both Van Helsing's conclusion that the Count's great age puts him at an intellectual disadvantage, and by the novel's closing hope that Quincy Harker, representative of the next generation, will be the one to finally puzzle out the story's reverberations. The second evolutionary interpretation that contrarily privileges individual destiny, however, is supported by Jonathan's 'brain-fever' that is shown to stunt his physical and moral development, implying that the blueprint for his own future development has been carried as potential within his individual cerebrum and will be blocked until he regains proper health. Stoker's startling flight of science fantasy requires a radical re-shaping of evolutionary hierarchies in *Dracula*, as Stoker supplies a neurological version of evolutionary myth through the persona of Van Helsing, in which brain development is paramount.

Outward signs of inward evolutionary development in *Dracula*, such as the Count's conspicuous nose that signifies his acute olfactory sensitivity, are framed in the novel by reference to the criminal anthropometry practised and promoted from 1878 by Cesare Lombroso.[298] The Count's depravity is explained to Mina on precisely this basis:

[298] During his tenure as Professor of Forensic Medicine and Hygiene at Turin University, Cesare Lombroso identified an atavistic criminal 'type' (low brow, sloping forehead, short or hollowed nose, long arms, cold but vacant eyes) in *L'uomo delinquente* (1878), which went quickly through five editions in Italy and was translated into German (1887-90), Russian (1889), Spanish (1889) and French (1887), in which edition it was read in England, as an English translation did not exist until a mangled version of the original was published by Lombroso's daughter in 1911. Lombroso's proposition in *L'uomo delinquente* averred firstly that physical anomalies and defects are marks of evolutionary deviance; secondly that biology is destiny, and finally that criminals consequently have little choice in their criminality: the best

‘“The Count is a criminal and of criminal type […] Lombroso would so classify him, and *qua* criminal he is of imperfectly formed mind”’ (*Dracula*, p. 363). While Lombroso’s emphasis on the coincidence of physical appearance and personality quirks lingered on the degenerative (rather than the regenerative) features of asocial ‘throwbacks’,[299] Anne Stiles has drawn attention to Stoker’s interest in nineteenth-century cerebral localisation theory.[300] Stiles shows how Stoker located emotional and rational behaviours in specific areas of the brain, demonstrating a link between his interest in enlarged cerebral development and the phrenological reading of the bumps on the back of Van Helsing’s head which Mina invites. The restorative antidote to the dreadful smell of the enemy in *Dracula* is cutting with a knife, as the two doctors Van Helsing and Seward take their dissection kit to Lucy’s tomb and as Quincy dispatches Dracula with his Bowie knife. The notion that surgical excision of bad smells will restore a situation of health to an otherwise compromised society has a bearing on the idea of degeneration, which describes society in pathological terms as diseased, or senile.[301] It also has a bearing on discursive transformations affecting understandings of olfaction at the fin de siècle, which included the new medical knowledge of rhinoplasty and otorhinology and the possibilities of nasal modification that they entailed.

## V: Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has shown a trio of recurring concerns regarding smells and noses in

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that society can do to defend itself is to intervene early enough to foil the otherwise inevitable havoc. See also: William P. Greenslade, *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel: 1880-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

[299] Joseph Valente links ‘regeneration’ in *Dracula* to themes of martyrdom and blood sacrifice as discursive expositions of resurrection and rejuvenation in fin-de-siècle Irish Nationalism. See: Joseph Valente, *Dracula’s Crypt: Bram Stoker, Irishness and the Question of Blood* (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois, 2002).

[300] Anne Stiles, ‘Cerebral Automatism, the Brain, and the Soul in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*’, *Journal of the History of the Neurosciences*, 15:2 (2006), 131-152.

[301] For further observations on fin-de-siècle metaphors of cultural disease in degeneration theory, see: Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder c.1848– c.1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). p. 2.

British fin-de-siecle fictions. Firstly, noses challenge. Anthropometric and phrenological models of noses fail to explain the passions and temperaments of characters in Wells's early short stories where smell, smells and smelling represent the obverse to Darwinian evolutionary materialism. Aquiline nose types, associated with Roman qualities of military skill and endurance, are associated with birds and worn by immortals in *Dracula, The Beetle* and *Lilith.* The eventual triumphs in these texts, of 'modern' fictional Victorians over those immortal characters and their noses, rehearse an enquiry into the ancient and aristocratic power they represent. Secondly, the nose is unstable. Transforming noses are common to supernatural texts of the fin de siècle. A variety of rival theories about evolution are retraced in each of these, as are responses to new medical and scientific discourses. Finally, noses give access to supernatural experience. As Wells's 'Man with a Nose' observes: 'There is a gap in the order of the universe in front of my face, a lump of unwrought material left over' ('MWN', p. 48). Apart from Wells's unfortunate fictional nose, other bizarre and unstable noses in British supernatural literature from the fin de siècle have been pursued in this chapter, showing how writers anchored ideas of supernaturality to the organ of olfaction in their stories to interrogate assumptions of incremental, teleological evolutionary progress. The next chapter will build on the observations that smells and noses challenge, transform and give access to supernatural experience, as it shows how noses and smells were involved in fictions that equated individual human destiny with that of the planet.

# Chapter Two: Smells of Hollow Earth

Any analysis of smell, smells and smelling in Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and Haggard's *She* shows that recurring themes of supernatural agency in both books are supported by a dense web of odour references. The olfactory analysis in this chapter goes deep into the wider implications of Wilde's and Haggard's smells to show how olfactory readings may sometimes overturn commonly-accepted interpretations of texts and supply fresh furrows to be ploughed into a familiar critical field. In the chapter, I describe first how innovative fin-de-siècle smell descriptors in each of these novels are associated with themes drawn from contemporary medical practice. After stating that case, I return to the points already made and demonstrate how those smell-descriptors are brought into the novels' internal cosmologies. Finally, I address the critical tradition that fails to acknowledge such geocentrically olfactory texts as being inflected by the genre conventions of 'hollow-earth' stories, and conclude by bringing attention to the insights available from situating these two novels within the context of a hollow earth genre. The chapter returns to the theme of geocentric anxiety and the hollow-earth genre after examining links between smells in these novels of the fin de siècle and contemporary developments in anaesthesia and nursing.

## I: Aesthetic and Anaesthetic Smells in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

Since the novel's aphoristic narrative voice in the Preface chimes so thoroughly with Lord Henry's antithetical, circular and paradoxical pronouncements in the exposition, it is not surprising that the soubriquet awarded to Lord Henry – 'Prince Paradox' – should also have been applied to the novel itself.[302] This olfactory reading of *The Picture of*

[302] '[…] it is his [Wilde's] masterpiece, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, that represents his most complex, nuanced and surprisingly contemporary meditation on the paradox of artistic creativity'. See: Elana Gomel, 'Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, and the (Un) Death of the Author', *Narrative*, 12:1 (2004), 74-92, 75.

*Dorian Gray* differs from analyses by previous critics as it depends upon the paradox surrounding its central issue, which is the nature and limits of aesthetics. Although Richard Ellmann has called *The Picture of Dorian Gray* 'the aesthetic novel par excellence', this chapter will show that an extraordinary amount of attention is given in the novel to defining and demonstrating the opposite of 'aesthetic' (here, the word 'aesthetic' is used in its precise sense, meaning that the novel belongs to the branch of philosophy that concerns itself with judgment about sensorial values).[303] Previous critics have elided the precise meaning of aesthetics with the nineteenth-century Aesthetic movement, with which Wilde is ineluctably associated.[304] Internal struggles of the Aesthetic movement centred on opposing arguments for art as a potent moral and social instrument on the one hand, and 'art for art's sake' on the other. The opposition of 'ethics versus aesthetics' as binary opposites in the novel, by critics such as Sheldon W. Liebman, Dominic Manganiello and Michael Patrick Gillespie, has therefore taken priority in discussions of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Despite this critical tradition, the antithesis of 'aesthetics' upon which a dialetheic paradox may revolve is not 'ethics' at all. The opposite of 'aesthetics' is '*anaesthetics*'. As this chapter will show, anaesthetics in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* are conveyed exclusively through scent and represent the evasion of categorical social 'realities'.

Defined first in 1846 by Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr as an 'agent inducing insensibility', anaesthesia became adopted as standard in British surgical cases following the introduction of ether by Robert Lister in University College Hospital,

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[303] See: Richard Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1987), p. 297.

[304] See: Dominic Manganiello, 'Ethics and Aesthetics in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*', *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, 9:2 (1983), 25-33; and Michael Patrick Gillespie, 'Ethics and Aesthetics in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*', in *Rediscovering Oscar Wilde*, ed. by Constantin-George Sandulescu (Gerrards Cross: Princess Grace Irish Library, 1993), pp. 137-155. Sheldon Liebman's take on the 'ethics v. aesthetics' debate is to strip away the critical 'Ruskin v. Pater' gloss and acknowledge Wilde's debt to Nietzchean morality. See: Sheldon W. Liebman, 'Character Design in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*', *Studies in the Novel*, 31:3 (1999), 296-316. For comparison, see also Patrick James Colbert's earlier MA thesis, 'The Conflict between Ethics and Aesthetics in the Prose Works of Oscar Wilde' (unpublished MA thesis, Simon Fraser University, British Columbia, 1968).

London in December 1846 and chloroform by James Young Simpson, Professor of Midwifery at Edinburgh University, in November 1847.[305] In *Dorian Gray*, anaesthesia consists of the pervading draughts of lily, rose, and lilac that Dorian inhales to sedate his terror as he plunges into a life of elective sensibility. From the first line of the novel, the scent of flowers is prioritised:

> The studio was filled with the rich odour of roses, and when the light summer wind stirred amidst the trees of the garden, there came through the open door the heavy scent of lilac, or the more delicate perfume of the pink-flowering thorn (*Dorian*, p. 7).[306]

According to the *OED*, the first definition of the floriferous noun 'bloom' to describe the perfume exhaled from wines dates from 1888.[307] In *Dorian Gray*, just two years later, Wilde explored the neologistic connection between flowers and wine to describe anaesthetic floral intoxication.

The link between flowers and wine had arisen in British middle-class circles following the free-trade treaty of 1860 between Britain and France that had drastically reduced duty on French wines. The treaty was succeeded in 1861 by Gladstone's further cut in duty for table wines, from the same duty imposed on more intoxicating fortified wines such as port and sherry to just 40% of this amount. Between 1859 and 1878, annual sales of French wines, largely from Bordeaux, rose from six million to thirty-six million bottles and enthusiasm for claret became standard amongst an upwardly-mobile middle-class.[308] The publisher and prolific wine writer Henry Vizetelly (1820-1894)

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[305] Letter by Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr, to William Morton who had performed the first public dental extraction to have successfully used pain-killing drugs that induced a state of temporary unconsciousness: 'The state should, I think, be called anæsthesia. This signifies insensibility, more particularly (as used by Linnaeus and Cullen) to objects of touch. The adjective will be anæsthetic. Thus we might say, the "state of anæsthesia", or the "anæsthetic state." The means employed would be properly called the "anti-anæsthetic agent."' See: Oliver Wendell Holmes, letter to to William Morton, Boston, 21 November 1846 < http://www.general-anaesthesia.com/misc/index.html > [accessed 21 June 2011].

[306] First published in serial form Lippincott's Magazine in 1890 and in complete book form in 1891 by Messrs. Ward, Locke & Co. London.

[307] 'Bloom – the smell common to all wines (which remains in an empty wine cask after the bloom proper has gone)' (*OED*).

[308] For an entertaining narrative of British wine-drinking habits alongside nineteenth-century restaurant establishments, see: Paul Lukacs, *Inventing Wine: A New History of One of the World's Most Ancient Pleasures* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2012), pp. 128-30.

translated and disseminated facts, myths and information from French vineyards in *The Wines of the World Characterized & Classed: with some particulars respecting the beers of Europe* (1875); *Facts About Champagne and Other Sparkling Wines Collected During Numerous Visits to the Champagne and Other Viticultural Districts of France, and the Principal Remaining Wine-Producing Countries of Europe* (1879); and *A History of Champagne with Notes on the Other Sparkling Wines of France* (1882).[309] Vizetelly reinforced the culinary loan term 'bouquet' that had appeared, italicised, in English books on French cookery since 1846, and repeated the anecdotal legend that Champagne had originally been florigraphically presented in 'flower-wreathed' bottles by 'blooming' girls.[310] Vizetelly's link between wine and intoxicating flowers operates as Dorian Gray bursts disconsolate into the garden of Basil Hallward's studio. Disturbed by his first experience of Lord Henry's stirring words, Dorian cries out that the room is too stifling and goes outdoors to breathe in some fresh air: 'Lord Henry [following him] went out to the garden and found Dorian Gray burying his face in the great cool lilac-blossoms, feverishly drinking in their perfume as if it had been wine' (*Dorian*, p. 21). As Dorian is seduced by Lord Henry's persuasion, he lets fall the anaesthetic spray of lilac to the ground; the drug has done its work on him: 'Dorian Gray listened, open-eyed and wondering. The spray of lilac fell from his hand upon the gravel' (*Dorian*, p. 23). The heavy scent of flowers has been inhaled deeply to steady his nerves and calm his terror.

Draughts of that heavy lilac scent are reprised at the moment when the mysterious bargain, and Dorian's wish, is predicted by Basil: 'The wind shook blossoms from the trees, and the heavy lilac blooms, with their clustering stars, moved

[309] Vizetelly championed translations of new writing in Britain and France. His translations brought about the bankruptcy of his family printing business after his prosecution for translating and distributing Emile Zola's 'obscene' novel *La Terre* (1887).
[310] Henry Vizetelly, *Facts about Champagne and Other Sparkling Wines* (Charleston: Createspace, 2013), p. 14.

to and fro in the languid air' (*Dorian*, p. 9). This is the lilac to which Lord Henry refers eighteen years later, when he confesses that there 'are moments when the odour of *lilas blanc* passes suddenly across me, and I have to live the strangest month of my life again' (*Dorian*, p. 189) Although the title of the fragrance bears no capitals in the novel, *Lilas Blanc*, a single-note perfume released by Rimmel in 1886, was one of the company's more popular products, suggesting the elision in Lord Henry's memory between the bottled scent commodity and the lived experience of lilac odour. Lord Henry's confession recalls the uncorrupted state of Dorian eighteen years previously, via the traditional floriographical association of purple and white lilac with first love and innocence. It also identifies the 'strangest month' with the smell: the strangeness *is* the smell, and the chain of mysterious events has been set in motion by the wind, the air, the trees, the roses and the lilac. Floral odour reappears as the mysterious bargain is concluded and Basil executes his final strokes upon the monstrous canvas: 'in the slanting beams that stretched through the open doorway the dust danced and was golden. The heavy scent of the roses seemed to brood over everything' (*Dorian*, p. 24). The brooding odour of flowers, in other words, signifies the magic.

Whereas the first conversation between Dorian and Lord Henry has revealed Dorian to be a seeker after olfactory anaesthesia, their final conversation reveals that the older man has also become accustomed to using smell as an anaesthetic:

> 'Death is the only thing that ever terrifies me. I hate it.'
> 'Why?' asked the younger man, wearily.
> 'Because,' said Lord Henry, passing between his nostrils the gilt trellis of an open vinaigrette box, 'one can survive everything nowadays except that' (*Dorian*, p. 184).

It should be noted at this point that Lord Henry's open vinaigrette box was, for all practical purposes, absurdly outmoded by the time of the book's publication. Containing sponge or gauze that had been soaked in a reviving aromatic fluid dissolved into vinegar beneath their decorative grilles, the tiny, hinged, silver vinaigrette boxes

were gilt-lined (to protect the silver from corrosion by acetic acid) and either carried in a pocket or suspended from a chatelaine in public places – such as the street or the theatre – where the stench of public streets or armpits might become overwhelming, by both men and women.[311] Their heyday lasted from 1780 to 1820, but by the 1840s they had become entirely feminised, associated with matrons and dowagers.[312] The traditional vinaigrette design was superceded, between 1850 and 1875, by fashionable designs for double-ended bottles with perfume at one end and smelling salts at the other.[313] The superfluity, therefore, of Lord Henry's gesture towards his anaesthetic vinaigrette box in his own house, away from either public drains or tight lacing, makes him appear to be rather old and silly. It also underlines the severity of his fear of death: 'Death and vulgarity are the only two facts in the nineteenth century that one cannot explain away,' he quips defensively (*Dorian*, p. 184).

Another fine box of anaesthetic smell is hidden in the secret drawer of an ebony Florentine cabinet, and it marks Dorian's descent into the moral and criminal underground. Having almost betrayed his guilt in the murder of Basil Hallward through nerves, Dorian disposes of his victim's last compromising items, at the end of which 'he felt faint and sick' (*Dorian*, p. 159). Attempting to assuage his revulsion with scent, he lights 'some Algerian pastilles in a pierced copper brazier' and bathes his 'hands and forehead with a cool musk-scented vinegar' (*Dorian*, p. 159). These olfactory solaces are insufficient to numb his nervous sensibility, however, and his eyes fall upon the

[311] The reviving smells were intended to be bracing, not pleasant. A popular choice of aroma for vinaigrettes in the mid-nineteenth century was the ammoniac *hartshorn*, or rendered deerhorns. See: Mary Spaulding and Penny Welch, *Nurturing Yesterday's Child: A Portrayal of the Drake Collection of Paediatric History* (Toronto: Natural Heritage/Natural History, 1994) p. 204.

[312] In Grant Allen's 1897 short piece, 'The Episode of the Mexican Seer', for example, Madame Picardet pulls a vinaigrette 'such as our grandmothers used to wear' out of her pocket. See: Grant Allen, 'The Episode of the Mexican Seer', in *An African Millionaire: Episodes in the life of the Illustrious Colonel Clay* (Charleston: Bibliobazaar, 2006), p. 14.

[313] In addition to flourishing his vinaigrette, Lord Henry also keeps 'a large gold-topped bottle' of perfume on his library table (*Dorian*, p. 66) next to the statuette (typically terracotta, of a faun or nymph) by Claude Michel or 'Clodion' (1738-1814) and an aristocratically-bound copy of *Les Cent Nouvelles* (*Dorian,* p. 53). The perfume's homage to *haute* French culture is only by association, but quite clear.

promise of a much heavier scent:

> It was a small Chinese box of black and gold-dust lacquer, elaborately wrought, the sides patterned with curved waves, and the silken cords hung with round crystals and tasseled in plaited metal threads. He opened it. Inside was a green paste, waxy in lustre, the odour curiously heavy, and persistent
> (*Dorian*, p. 160).

In the Limehouse opium den, a heavily persistent scent confronts Dorian, who 'heaved a deep breath, and his nostrils quivered with pleasure' (*Dorian*, p. 163) as he hurries to the darkened chamber 'where one could buy oblivion' (*Dorian*, pp. 160-161). The opium dreamers themselves are pharmaceutical patients in a hellish field hospital:

> Dorian winced, and looked round at the grotesque things that lay in such fantastic postures on the ragged mattresses. The twisted limbs, the gaping mouths, the staring lustreless eyes, fascinated him […]. They were better off than he was […]. Memory, like a horrible malady, was eating his soul away (*Dorian*, pp. 163-164).

The odour of opium, here, signifies the utter retreat from sensibility. Poppies, from which the opium had been made, had long been a signature accessory of the author, satirised in Gilbert & Sullivan's *Patience* (1881) with its Wildean 'fleshly poet', Bunthorne, who liked to 'walk down Piccadilly with a poppy or a lily in his medieval hand'.[314] For Dorian, however, poppies merely duplicate the narcotic effect of other blooms that may dull the pain of fully sensual living.

The role of poppies in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* has not been fully understood by previous critics. Yes, there is the opium association, but there is also the 'Poppy-land' connection to popular culture that has been missed by commentators such as Philip Hoare, who traces a straight line of descent from 'Wilde's opium poppies', through Laurence Taihade's decadent influence on French poetry, to Wilfred Owen's scarlet poppies of the battlefields.[315] Hoare's observation is relevant to the poppies in Wilde's 1877 sonnet 'The Theatre at Argos', where 'the poppies of oblivion' grow

[314] First performance on 23 April 1881 at the Opera Comique, London, moving to the larger Savoy Theatre in London from October of that year where it was celebrated as the first theatrical performance to be lit by electric light.
[315] Philip Hoare, *Oscar Wilde's Last Stand: Decadence, Conspiracy, and the Most Outrageous Trial of the Century* (New York: Arcade, 1997), p. 14.

around the ruins of the old theatre as a symbol of 'forgetfulness in the modern world that such a glorious civilization had existed'.[316] Between 1886 and 1897, however, the meanings and associations of poppies in popular culture were affected substantially by a song, a holiday resort and a newspaper column. Back in 1886, the singer Isidore de Lara had set a poem by Clement Scott (1841-1904), 'The Garden of Sleep', to romantic ballad music that he performed privately for exclusive drawing room salons in the West End of London.[317] Scott, one of the most popular poets of the period and a prominent theatre critic for the *Telegraph*, had written 'The Garden of Sleep' about Cromer and its surrounding area, which he popularised from his travel-columns as 'Poppy-land', and the poppy-strewn cemetery he found there in the little village of Overstrand. Scott's 'The Garden of Sleep' set the vogue for holidays in Cromer, in which area literary and artistic celebrities such as Wilde, Algernon Charles Swinburne and Theodore Watts-Dunton, Henry Irving, Ellen Terry, George du Maurier and Alfred Tennyson took houses.[318] The ballad achieved extensive popularity in widening circles; by 1887, Chappell & Co. had published the sheet music for 'The Garden of Sleep' (to be followed in 1890 by 'The Garden of Sleep Waltz on the Popular Song The Garden of Sleep'). It is to this highly popular song that Dorian alludes, in what elsewhere has been greeted as a puzzling *non sequitur*, when he reflects on Sybil's death: 'I must sow poppies in my garden' (*Dorian*, p. 90). This reflection alludes to the lines by Clement Scott 'In my garden of sleep, where red poppies are spread / I wait for the living, alone with the dead!'.[319] The swift reply, 'There is no need […] Life has always poppies in her hands', confirms the allusion to Scott's poem, trading the 'Garden of Sleep' image

[316] Karl Beckson and Bobby Fong, 'Wilde as Poet', in *The Cambridge Companion to Oscar Wilde*, ed. by Peter Raby (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 57-68 (p. 58).
[317] According to the *Dictionary of National Biography*, De Lara's success was attributable to his light baritone, ardent big brown eyes and luxuriant moustaches. He was doted upon by duchesses.
[318] For a local history website of celebrities' visits to Cromer, see: 'Welcome to Overstrand', <overstrandonline.org/> [last accessed 14 April 2014].
[319] Clement Scott, 'The Garden of Sleep', Stanza 2, ll. 1-2, see: <http://www.literarynorfolk.co.uk/Poems/the_garden_of_sleep.htm> (last accessed 13 April 2014),

of Poppies and Death for a reverse image of Poppies and Life, in Lord Henry's own typically antithetical manner (*Dorian*, p. 90). Wilde's inclusion of a reference to 'Poppy-land' in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is a tactful bow to the influential theatre critic Scott.

The narcotic odour of orchids is introduced as Dorian is holding a house party for twelve people in Selby Royal, his ancestral estate. An exchange of witty banter is going on between Dorian, Lord Henry, and Lord Henry's cousin Gladys. Dorian excuses himself to collect flowers for Gladys' evening corsage when there is a sudden thump on the floor and he is discovered lying unconscious on the conservatory floor (he has just seen the face of his enemy through the window) (*Dorian*, pp. 172-3). Dorian has just been collecting orchids. The fin-de-siècle trope of Man Felled By Orchid in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is not only a connection to (and potential source for) Wells's parody 'The Flowering of the Strange Orchid' (discussed in Chapter One) but also to the episode in Huysmans's *À Rebours*, in which the character Des Esseintes dreams of his hot-house flowers turning into voracious murderers who will punish his past sexual misdemeanours.[320] In each of these stories, the foetid smell of orchids is the stench of rotting meat, and a dialetheic paradox is provided by the contrast between the rank fume of corruption and the exotic purity of the plant's cherished blooms. The odour of the orchid is not alone in signaling simultaneous preservation and corrosion, as it mimetically apes the picture of Dorian Gray that permits simultaneously the preservation and corrosion of its subject.

Although Ruth Robbins has flagged up the dangers of confusing Wilde's life with his writing, it must be acknowledged that an important determining factor in Wilde's early life was occasioned by anaesthetics.[321] Wilde's father William (1815-1876) was a middle-class surgeon and ophthalmologist who had achieved considerable

[320] Huysmans, *À Rebours*, pp. 103-6.
[321] See: Ruth Robbins, *Introduction to Oscar Wilde* (London: Continuum, 2011), pp. 3-5.

wealth and influence in Dublin. William Wilde owned his own hospital, edited the *Dublin Journal of Medical Science*, directed the Irish Census of 1841 as its medical commissioner and was knighted by Queen Victoria in 1864. In the same year as achieving that zenith of professional success, his reputation, health and prosperity were seriously and permanently damaged by the allegations of a former patient that she had been raped under chloroform while receiving treatment from him.[322] Although the trial resulted in an ambiguous settlement (the plaintiff received one farthing in pointedly sparse compensation), Sir William Wilde was found guilty of abusing anaesthetics and young Oscar was sent away from the scandal at home to Portora Royal School. The confusion of scandal, imputations of sexual impropriety and anaesthetic medicine in Wilde's personal life may therefore be seen to be relevant to themes in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Wilde's only novel, where the combination of flowers and anaesthetic invariably includes the notion of defloration, but where Dorian's female victims are excluded from pain relief. Sybil, for example, will lie wounded by Dorian's cruelty 'like a trampled flower' (*Dorian*, p. 99), while almost-seduced Hetty, whose white face at the window is 'like a spray of jasmine', will remain (apparently despite her will) 'as flower-like as I found her' (*Dorian*, p. 183). Unlike Dorian's doomed female victims, Lord Henry's marital victim, 'poor Victoria' Wotton, has at least the option of running away. Her 'forget-me-not' eyes and frangipani perfume associate her with flowers, but she runs off with a Chopin-playing musician in an amusing inversion of Tolstoy's recently notorious *The Kreutzer Sonata* (1889).[323]

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[322] James McGeachie, 'Wilde, Sir William Robert Wills (1815–1876)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29403>[accessed 25 April 2014].

[323] Tolstoy's novella became a cause célèbre in Britain where it was widely circulated in mimeograph after being forbidden in 1889 by the Russian censors. The US Post Office refused in 1890 to carry American newspapers that serialised translations of the story. The painting *Kreutzer Sonata* (1901), by René François Prinet, showed the illicit passion between the violinist and adulterous pianist and was used for many years in *Tabu* perfume advertisements, neatly demonstrating the affinity between music, perfume and fin-de-siècle literature.

The implication of sexual defloration that is conveyed in the novel by Dorian's flower-sniffing recurs during the final conversation between Dorian and Basil Hallward. Dorian crushes the flower that he pretends to admire as he murderously outgrows his former, aging, mentor:

> The young man was leaning against the mantelshelf, watching him with that strange expression that one sees on the faces of those who are absorbed in a play when some great artist is acting. There was neither real sorrow in it, nor real joy. There was simply the passion of the spectator, with perhaps a flicker of triumph in his eyes. He had taken the flower out of his coat, and was smelling it, or pretending to do so.
> 'What does this mean?', cried Hallward, at last. His own voice sounded shrill and curious in his ears.
> 'Years ago, when I was a boy', said Dorian Gray, crushing the flower in his hand, '[…] you introduced me to a friend of yours' (*Dorian*, p. 137).

John-Charles Duffy's work on gay-related themes in Wilde's fairy stories has pointed out that florists in particular and flowers in general were popular euphemisms in 1890s London for what was becoming known as 'homosexual' identity, although the terms 'homosexual' and 'heterosexual' were not introduced into English until the published translation of Richard von Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* in 1892, the year following the publication of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.[324] It is possible, therefore, to read the fragrant blooms in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* not only as references to anaesthesia, intoxicants and as images of sexual purity, but also as an encoded discourse for emergent ideas about homosexuality.

Some recent work has taken up this theme. Courtney Hansen has argued that Wilde's project in garnishing *The Picture of Dorian Gray* so lavishly with flowers was the insinuation of homosexual application into conventional heterosexual floriographical expectations.[325] Hansen's thesis provides that the language of flowers – which in mid-Victorian Britain had been assumed to refer only to the material culture of

[324] John-Charles Duffy,'Gay-Related Themes in the Fairy Tales of Oscar Wilde', *Victorian Language and Culture*, 29 (2001), 327-349.
[325] Courtney Hansen, 'Queer Love: Floral Discourse in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray'*, paper given at *The National Conference On Undergraduate Research (NCUR)*, Ithaca College, New York, March 31-April 2, 2011.

women who would understand such silent messages as red roses for 'passionate love', or tuberose for 'dangerous passion' – had been hijacked at the fin de siècle to articulate the wordless communication of 'the love that dare not speak its name'. Dominic Janes has pointed out that flower-arranging in churches and homes had already became increasingly identified in newspaper and journal cartoons of the mid nineteenth century with the assumed effeminacy of Anglo-Catholic clergy following Tractarian revival of pre-Reformation customs.[326] Janes also cites the explanation proffered by T. C. Marsh, the first winner of a British Table Decoration competition (1861), who described the Victorian craze for arrangements of flowers, vegetation and fruit as having become necessary to fill a table, and show opulent hospitality, once the eighteenth-century custom of piling all the food in the centre of the table had been replaced by the bourgeois custom of dining course-by-course *à la Russe*.[327] In such circumstances, it would be fair to say that Wilde's floral garnishes are part of the novel's assessment of middle-class luxe connoisseurship, as well as discursive sexual identification.

Close olfactory analysis of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* sheds light not only on Wilde's incorporation of anaesthetic themes and late nineteenth-century homosexual cant, but also on an aspect of Sybil Vane's death that affects the moral panorama of the whole book. The smell of sulphur in gas lighting is perhaps not so apparent to a twenty-first century reader but to Wilde's own contemporary audience the sulphurous ambiance would have been immediately evoked by the description of Sybil's theatre which is lit up in the night: 'the heat was terribly oppressive, and the huge sunlight flamed like a monstrous dahlia with petals of yellow fire' (*Dorian*, p. 92).[328] In addition, the

[326] Dominic Janes, 'The Catholic Florist: Flowers and Deviance in the Mid-Nineteenth Century Church of England', *Visual Culture in Britain*, 12:1 (2011), 77-96.
[327] T. C. March, *Flower and Fruit Decoration* (London: 1862), quoted in Dominic Janes, *Victorian Reformation: The Fight Over Idolatry in the Church of England, 1840-1860* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 15-16.
[328] Victorian theatres were brightly lit inside during performances so that the audiences could easily follow programme notes and libretti, while curved gas lighting tubes were frequently arranged into a central pendant 'sunlight' shape that flared 222 times brighter than candles. See: George Rowell, *The*

behaviour of Sybil's mother is explicable only in terms of the presence of sulphur. The reader has already been told in Chapter V that the actress mother has 'bismuth-whitened hands' (*Dorian*, p. 55) and Sybil's mother is first encountered backstage 'with back turned to the shrill, intrusive light' since bismuth powder, as the majority of Wilde's contemporary readers would have known, had the unfortunate characteristic of turning coal-gray when exposed to the sulphurous fumes of gas lighting (*Dorian*, p. 55). Mrs. Vane's bismuthed appearance is underscored by her choice of seating position and in this instance (although it is also the case that the smell of sulphur has a relationship with the infernal regions and that it associates the theatre and Sybil's family with Hellishness), sulphur points directly to the physical cause of Sybil's death in a way that has not previously been critically explored.

The news of Sybil's death is delivered to Dorian by Lord Henry, who announces that she had swallowed 'some dreadful thing that they use at theatres': 'I don't know what it was, but it had either prussic acid or white lead in it. I should fancy it was prussic acid, as she seems to have died instantaneously' (*Dorian*, p. 87). Based on the choice between white lead and prussic acid, the Victorian scholar Renata Kobetts Miller has opted for white lead as the 'dreadful thing', quoting approvingly an article from 1867 by the chemist and writer, John Scoffern, that advertised the highly toxic chemical as 'used to impart whiteness to the skin'. From this, she concludes that Sybil's death, from 'a cosmetic that contributed to the artifice of the theater', underscores the conflict in the Dorian-Sybil romance between 'lived feelings and theatrical performance'.[329] Kobetts Miller's premise and her conclusion, however, do not take into account the substantial shift in attitudes towards cosmetic preparations that had taken place during

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*Victorian Theatre 1792-1914,* 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp. 21-23 and Richard W. Schoch, *Shakespeare's Performing Stage: Performing History in the Theatre of Charles Kean* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) pp.34-5.

[329] Renata Kobetts Miller, 'Imagined Audiences: The Novelist and the Stage', in *A Companion to the Victorian Novel*, ed. by Patrick Brantlinger and William B. Thesing (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 207-24 (p. 221).

the period between Scoffern's article in 1867 and the publication of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* in 1890. As Lord Henry's remark on its dreadfulness makes clear, it had become well known by 1890 that white lead was highly toxic. Its use in theatres, as in society, had dwindled as cosmetic preparations for skin-whitening drew instead upon powdered pearl (for the very rich) or bismuth-powders, often incorporating Venetian chalk and zinc white. When Lord Henry recalls from the inquest therefore that Sybil, in the theatre dressing room, may have swallowed either white lead or prussic acid, Wilde's contemporary readers would have known, having been told twice, that there was no white lead in the room because bismuth was being used instead.

While white lead can be ruled out as the cause of Sybil's death on the grounds of the presence of bismuth and sulphur in the dressing room, the remaining choice of poisoning by ingestion of prussic acid [hydrogen cyanide, or HCN] reinforces the theme of age-avoidance in the novel, to which Lord Henry's celebration of Dorian's youth and Dorian's supernatural preservation is constantly referred. Prussic acid had been famously responsible at the fin de siècle for two widely reported deaths in New York in 1885, deaths that resulted from the accidental ingestion of hair-dye in a barber's shop.[330] Prussic acid was never a popular instrument either of homicide or deliberate suicide.[331] Its unpopularity as a poison may have been the result of its excruciating effects and the tell-tale aroma of bitter almonds that exude from the convulsed corpse for some hours after death. Although easily available from pharmacists – it was used in small quantities for photographic processes and in lotions for varicose veins – prussic acid was most typically bought for dying hair black. If the prussic acid that Sybil Vane had swallowed

[330] 'They Drank Prussic Acid', *New York Times*, 3 February 1885 <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=F30810F8345F15738DDDAA0894DA405B8584F0D3> [accessed 24 June 2011].

[331] Karen Jane Merry's thesis points out that it has only ever been the cause of death in four murder cases in England and one in Scotland. See: Karen Jane Merry, 'Murder by Poison in Scotland during the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Glasgow University, 2010) p. 177.

in the dressing room had indeed been from blackening hair-dye, then a key question is *whose* blackening hair dye had she swallowed? Not her own, because (apart from being only seventeen years old and not, consequently, in need of such restoratives) we are told that she and her brother have brown hair (James' is 'rough' [*Dorian*, p. 56], while Sybil's hair is 'plaited' into glossy 'coils' [*Dorian*, p. 47]). Nor did it belong to her mother, who is merely 'faded' in her 'sort of magenta dressing-wrapper' (*Dorian*, p. 63). Rather, as she was playing Juliet on the night of her death, the blackening hair-dye can by the process of elimination only have belonged to the 'stout elderly gentleman, with corked eyebrows, a husky tragedy voice, and a figure like a beer-barrel' who played Romeo against her (*Dorian*, p. 46). Sybil's death, despite Kobetts Miller's assertion, did not result from theatrical artifice: Sybil died of her Romeo's age-avoidance.

This olfactory analysis of smell, smells and smelling in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* has shown scent to be anaesthetic and consequently implicated in the novel's central, structural, paradox of 'aesthetics'. It has shown that Wilde's discussion of the narcotic power of opium was influenced by the celebrity of 'Poppyland' and that Wilde ascribed the potency of poppies to the ordinary blooms of a London garden. While Wilde's own personal relationship with anaesthesia had been early and painful, the anaesthetic blooms in his novel signified an artificial avoidance of ageing and a consolation against the grief of being alive, and feeling.

**II: Scent and Noses in *She: A History of Adventure***

A violent African storm has come smashing wild foaming rushes of burning wave against the little dhow in the moonlit river. It has exhausted the explorers Holly and Vincey, and eighteen of their fellow sailors have miserably drowned. As the storm subsides however, and a rosy dawn breaks over their battered and drifting boat, there

appears the great flattened salience of the stone Ethiopian Head's nose, to point the right direction and provide the comfort of certainty to the lost travellers.[332] This section of the present chapter shows how the great stone nose of the Ethiopian Head represented the epistemological priority that Haggard conferred on smell, smells and smelling in *She: A History of Adventure* (1888), and how this epistemological priority connotes abilities at odds in the text with rational achievements of the bourgeois west. It will also explore the relationship between smells and 'scent' in Haggard's text and draw parallels between Haggard's depictions of fragrance in Ayesha's potion-making and late-nineteenth-century claims for women's medical education.

Throughout *She*, scent is presented as the touchstone of 'Truth', supplanting rival sensual epistemologies and mocking the intellectual efforts upon which Holly, Job's employer, has prided himself. Job is the book's comedy manservant, whose function, like that of his Biblical namesake, is constantly to lament the trials of life. Unlike the laments of grand existential crisis by his Biblical namesake, however, Job's laments are bathetically comic, consisting only of complaints about such trivia as the heat abroad, the natives' manners and women: 'they give me the creeps, the whole lot of them' (*She*, p. 63). As he is the social, educational and intellectual inferior of the Westerners who travel into the world's interior in search of occult wisdom, it is ironic that Job alone gains access to supernatural ways of knowing. Job's insight derives from smell: he has been passively 'scented' in a dream by his Old Dad who transcends the barriers of space and time to warn his son of impending death and who complains: 'such ado as I have had to nose you up' (*She*, p. 236). Smell, scent and noses are all conflated in Old Dad's vocabulary for tracking a way.

Noses, in other words, are associated in *She* with scenting out and tracking a

[332] Henry Rider Haggard, *She: A History of Adventure* (London: Penguin, 1994), pp. 63-5. Further references to this edition are given in parentheses after quotations in the text, where the title is abbreviated to *She*.

way, while noselessness connotes mystery, and being lost. The Ethiopian Head is contrasted by Holly with the monumental Egyptian Sphinx, that famous icon of noselessness whose notorious dilapidation included the loss of its nose.[333] The monumental Egyptian Sphinx at Giza had epitomised enigma to many writers at the fin de siècle who admired the Sphinx's mythological habit of setting riddles.[334] In Wilde's short story 'The Sphinx Without a Secret', for example, Lady Alroy works hard to hide her face behind a veil and maintain the socially correct degree of mysteriousness, despite her unfortunate personal un-inscrutability.[335] For Wilde in this example, and for Haggard in *She*, the overlap between smell and direction is figured by a nose.

Etymologically, Haggard's transference in 1886 of the *activity* of scenting to human noses – the reified organ of scent – belongs to the relatively new verb, 'to nose'. Nineteenth-century neologistic conflation of the behavior of animals with the attributes of a human nose is arrestingly consonant with Darwin's evolutionary theory that showed all forms of life to be fundamentally related at an ancestral level.[336] The verb 'to nose' had existed since at least the fifteenth century in relation to dogs and hunting, but it was not applied to human activity of tracing a trail until the second half of the

[333] The Sphinx at Giza was still being excavated at the time of the publication of *She* and its crouched position within the ancient funerary complex on the West bank of the Nile was not revealed (insofar as it is understood at all), although detailed drawings of its noseless head and eroded shoulders made by Napoleonic French Egyptologists were circulated in the West from 1798. These included influential drawings by Vivant Denon, the first director of the Louvre Museum. Although there are conflicting theories about whether iconoclasm, racism or the weather contributed most to the noselessness of the Sphinx, no image drawn, engraved or painted after 1809 showed the Sphinx with a nose.

[334] In Greek mythology, the riddle of the Sphinx at Thebes was: What goes on four legs in the morning, on two legs at noon, and on three legs in the evening? Oedipus solved the riddle, and the Sphinx destroyed herself. Previous guessers who could not answer the riddle had been strangled by the Sphinx, from whom our word 'sphincter' derives.

[335] Oscar Wilde, 'The Sphinx Without a Secret', first published 1887 in *The World*. Other fin-de-siècle sphinxes include Gustav Klimt's, Odilon Redon's and Sigmund Freud's. Carl E. Shorske has designated the late nineteenth-century fascination with Sphinx figures as having derived in the first place from Nietzche's child-eating mother in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872). See: Carl E. Shorske, *Fin-de-siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), pp. 221-2.

[336] For an acute analysis of the relationships formed between animal and human scenting in Conan Doyle's 'bloodhound' detective character Sherlock Holmes and in fin-de-siècle pedigree dog fancying clubs, see: Neil Pemberton, 'Hounding Holmes: Arthur Conan Doyle, Bloodhounds and Sleuthing in the Late-Victorian Imagination', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 17:4 (2012), 454-67.

nineteenth century.[337] Whereas James Fenimore Cooper, for example, had written the straightforward simile in 1848: 'these savages seem to be hunting around like so many hounds which are nosing for a trail,'[338] the comparison in 1861 between human smelling and the physical human organ of scent was still so sufficiently slangy that Florence Nightingale adopted quotation marks for it: 'Although we "nose" the murderers in the musty, unaired, sunless room'.[339] The new usage of 'nose' had been thoroughly appropriated by 1882 when, in 'The Story of the Physician and the Saratoga Box', Robert Louis Stevenson wrote 'The New-Englander nosed all the cracks and openings with the most passionate attention'.[340] The word 'nose' had become a verb associated with activities that emphasised humans' intrinsic animal status.

Attention to the depiction of noses in *She* shows that Haggard's take on the fundamental relationship between all forms of life is consistent, although it has not always been recognised as such by critics. Sandra Gilman and Susan Gubar, for example, assert enthusiastically that Holly's, Vincey's and Job's animal names are 'given during their stay in Her [i.e., *She*'s] land'.[341] They are not though; Vincey and Holly were already compared respectively in the Preface by Alan Quatermain to a wild stag and a gorilla while they were still in Cambridge (*She*, pp. 9,10). Holly regularly describes himself as having 'short, thick-set, deep-chested' simian features with 'long, sinewy arms, heavy features, deep-set grey eyes, [and] a low brow' (*She*, p. 15), or as being proof of 'the monkey theory' (*She*, p. 16), while Vincey's baptismal name, Leo, indicates leonine attributes bestowed upon him at birth (*She*, p. 16). Of the three who

[337] See: *OED*.
[338] See: James Fenimore Cooper, *The Oak Openings: or, the Bee-Hunter* (New York: W. A. Townsend, 1860), p. 91.
[339] See: Florence Nightingale, *Notes on Nursing: What it is and What it is Not* (New York: Appleton, 1860), p. 14.
[340] R. L. Stevenson, 'The Story of the Physician and the Saratoga Box', in *The New Arabian Nights: Tales from the Prince of Storytellers* (Eveston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1993), pp. 66-90.
[341] Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, 'Heart of Darkness: The Agon of Femme Fatale', *La Bibliotèque du Cenacle* < bibliotheque.cenacle.free.fr/biblio/affiche.php?id=502&l=fr> [accessed 3 October 2011] para. 26 of 89.

stay in Her land, only Job acquires his nickname 'Pig' freshly among the Amahaggar. Gilbert's and Gubar's assertion may be congruent with a straightforward acceptance of Holly's awed description of Ayesha as 'a modern Circe' who might be expected, like the sorceress prototype, to turn men into swine, but Ayesha herself decries the association with sorcery ('I tell thee I deal not in magic – there is no such thing. 'Tis only a force that thou dost not understand' [*She*, p. 189] and 'Fear not, my Holly, I shall use no magic. Have I not told thee that there is no magic though there is such a thing as understanding and applying the forces which are in Nature?' [*She*, p. 201]), and she shows no interest at all in turning men into animals. Instead, she recommends a diet of fruit, bread and water and eschews the meat and milk of other life forms, conflating meat-eating and cannibalism in a withering address to the Amahaggar: 'Dogs and serpents… eaters of human flesh!' (*She*, p. 701). Ayesha's understanding of humans and animals as being mutually imbricated accounts for her vegan diet, although also for her casual indifference towards the Amahaggar, whom she sees as being no different in their human guises from their appearance in animal disguises adopted during the Black Goat ritual: 'In two thousand years these caves have not changed, nothing is changed but the beasts, and man, who is as the beasts' (*She*, p. 148). Further to Gilbert and Gubar's error, *all* of the characters are associated with animals. Billali is compared to a snake and is commanded by Ayesha to 'crawl up'. Ustane is a 'wild cat' who dresses as a leopard in her attempt to escape from the ritual of the Black Goat and Ayesha's disapproval (*She*, p. 165). Ayesha herself is described by the narrator Holly as moving initially like a snake and shrinking finally in retrograde evolutionary stages to become first a slow, blind tortoise and then 'no larger than a big monkey' (*She*, p. 140 & p. 280). It is not age-old Ayesha but the contemporary denizens of Cambridge and Kôr who give animal nicknames to each other.

The conflation of smell, scent and noses that may be seen in Haggard's

treatment of the Ethiopian Head and Job's Old Dad's quest is echoed in the attention given by Holly, the narrator, to the aquiline noses of the Amahaggar tribe.[342] In this context, however, it should be borne in mind that aquiline noses were associated in nineteenth-century physiognomy with the qualities of classical imperialism. Holly reports the aquiline noses of the People of the Rocks as signifying their ancestral European and classical heritage, at variance with the local racial 'type' of flattened nose that the Ethiopian stone head had portrayed:

> generally their appearance had a good deal in common with that of the East African Somali, only their hair was not frizzed up, but hung in thick black locks upon their shoulders. Their features were aquiline and in many cases exceedingly handsome (*She*, p. 80).

With their aquiline noses and varied skin tones ('some being as dark as Mahomed and some as yellow as a Chinese') and waving hair – 'not crisped like a negro's' – they represent a hybrid link between nineteenth-century human racial categories that were emerging from continental drift theories dating from the 1850 that explained human racial dissimilarities in terms of environmental adaptation by transitional links within a chain of being (*She*, p. 80).[343] The leader of the Amahaggar leader is singled out in the narrative, set apart from the People of the Rock by his unique nose; Billali has a 'hooked nose above which flashed out a pair of eyes as keen as a snake's, while his whole countenance was instinct' (*She*, p. 81). There is a dichotomy at work in the depiction of actual noses here, because while the African noses of the Amahaggar people and the Ethiopian Head are dynamic, prominent and prominently described, the

[342] For an extended meditation on aquilinity, its association with martial ability, its consonance with ideas of British 'togafication' and notions of decadence, please see Chapter One of this thesis.

[343] Although 'continental drift theory' only became known by this term following Alfred Wegener's address on the subject to the German Geological Society meeting of 6 Jan 1912, the idea that continents had once been a single landmass that subsequently fractured had proliferated from 1849, after work on Mount Shasta by the American mineralogist and geologist, James Dwight Dana. Dana's study had been instrumental in maintaining impetus for the California Gold Rush (i.e., from1849-55), as he had successfully predicted seams of gold throughout the Sacramento valley in California. In addition, the French geologist Antonio Snyder-Pellegrini proposed in *La Création et ses mystères dévoilés* (1858) the existence of an original unique landmass from the continental distribution of fossil relics. Furthermore, the HMS Challenger Expeditions of 1872 and 1873-6 had discovered a tectonic ridge in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean and the mechanics by which underwater continental shelves were created.

European noses of Holly, Job and Vincey are completely occluded from the narrative. Vincey's nose is so occluded in fact that he covers it with a coat and it passively becomes a meal for the mosquitoes that were attracted by 'the unaccustomed smell of a white man for which they had been waiting for the last thousand years or so' (*She*, p. 71). The rhinological distinctness of the Amahaggar and their European visitors provides a connection to Krafft-Ebing's 1898 equation of women and 'primitives' as being interchangeably un-evolved compared to white men. Haggard's attention to Amahaggar noses also demonstrates the discursive tradition of 'smell subordination' that Mark Jenner has described as 'one of the grand narratives of civilisation' pointing out that scent-awareness was central to understandings of other cultures as being earlier, simpler or less literate.[344] Noses in *She* therefore deliver an ideological tangle. Whereas, on the one hand, Haggard uses descriptions of noses and neologistic forms of 'nosing' to indicate the parity of humans and animals, he distributes on the other hand an unequal quantity of attention to the noses of his European and African characters to insist on hierarchies among human races, some of whom are clearly more equal in the text than others. Haggard's stance on noses categorises racial difference, while yet still consigning all humanity to a fundamental, shared, animal nature.

Haggard's approach to defining difference, while simultaneously emphasising parity, offers an ideological comb with which to untangle the internal conflict in Holly's narration that provides plenty of sensational content while contrarily insisting on its dry and neutral status as reportage. Daniel Karlin has commented that the combination of incredible features and purported authenticity in Haggard's novel may be a hallmark of its foundation in Gothic Romance,[345] but truth-claims in *She* are also attached to Daniel

[344] Mark S. R. Jenner, 'Civilisation and Deodorisation? Smell in Early Modern English Culture', in *Civil Histories: Essays Presented to Sir Keith Thomas*, ed. by Peter Burke, Brian Harrison and Paul Slack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 127-44 (p. 129).
[345] Daniel Karlin 'Explanatory Notes', in H. Rider Haggard, *She* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. xi.

Defoe's and Samuel Richardson's original truth-claim strategies for the Romance genre. In that fashion, *She* calls on the authority of the whole novel genre, by purporting to be an authentic journal fixed within a document published for the intellectual benefit and moral edification of the outside world (in the manner of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* [1719] and *Moll Flanders* [1722], and Richardson's *Pamela* [1740] and *Clarissa* [1753]). An olfactory reading of *She* would assert in addition that one of Haggard's primary goals is to oppose 'official' viewpoints with olfactory and corporeal experiential knowledge, and to show that official viewpoints are inadequate *without corporeal* experiential knowledge as they are both necessary components of understanding. Alan Quatermain's job in Africa as a local guide negotiates the twin requirements of theoretical information and practical expertise, and he shares the priority afforded by the narrators to matters that are judged by subjective embodied sensation over those by mediated cerebration.[346] The white marble allegorical statue of 'Truth' for example, which is discovered by the explorers hidden deep within the ancient city, is clad only in a gauzy veil, surmounting the Globe.[347] That truth comes half-veiled is Haggard's epistemological stance. It is true that the veiled virgin on the Globe is an image drawn from the occult tradition of Freemasonry, but it is also highly suggestive of the veils drawn around Ayesha that disguise her appearance and the dazzling potency of her senses, and the metaphorical veil that cloaks human purpose: 'the veil between that which we see and the great invisible truths' (*She*, p. 267).

The serialised episodes of set-piece adventure in *She* dutifully rehearse imperially correct procedures of masculinity (such as physical bravery, loyalty, feats of endurance and self-reliance), but the main narrator continually refuses to pass any overt formula of western moral judgment upon the social, sexual and economic conditions of

[346] Ibid., p. xi.
[347] Jessica Leigh Harland-Jacobs, 'The Essential Link: Freemasonry and British Imperialism, 1751-1918' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Duke University, 2000).

the African tribe with whom he is resident: 'It is very curious to observe how the customs of mankind on this matter [i.e., marriage] vary in different countries, making morality an affair of latitude, and what is right and proper in one place wrong and improper in another' (*She*, p. 85). The novel's central framing device of ostensible documentary authenticity is therefore parallelled in *She* by Haggard's representation of 'truths' that are undercut or enhanced by olfactive and other sensory faculties.

Holly's suspension of moral judgment is shared by Billali, the novel's 'wise father' figure, who only shrugs at Ustane's marital claim to Vincey and then again at cannibalism. 'I know not what to say', he says, in defence of 'the custom' (*She*, p. 114). It may be that the text's tangle of sensationalism and studied neutrality is class-based; the live-and-let-live attitudes of leaders Holly and Billali imply the superiority of their position of silent observation over the expostulations such as those of the comical servant Job ('The hussy – well I never!' [*She*, p. 84] and 'Be off with you – you minx!' [*She*, p. 90]). The two leaders' relative degrees of silence dramatise the class distinction operating in *sang-froid* that sports historian Richard Holt associates with late-nineteenth-century public school assimilation of Darwinism as, albeit from different continents, Holly and Billali would have been expected as leaders to participate, not win, in the game.[348] Their live-and-let-live attitudes are not a manifestation of cultural relativity, however.[349] Although 1887, the year in which *She* was published, saw the opening of a number of world ethnographic collections that imposed a historical reading of objects from different regions, it would be anachronistic to explain Haggard's alternating radical engagements and disengagements of subject positions in this text as

[348] Richard Holt, *Sport and the British: A Modern History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 97.
[349] For an original statement of cultural relativity in 1887, regarding the ordering of displays within ethnological museums so that they would demonstrate the unique lifestyles of particular ethnic groupings, rather than being lumped together in a case as 'pots', or 'masks', 'coins' or any such western idea of a cross-cultural category, see: Franz Boas, 'Museums of Ethnology and their Classification', *Science*, June 17 1887, 587-589 (589).

being manifestations of cultural relativity or even normative moral relativity.[350] Instead, Paula Krebs has shown how Haggard's detailed and sensational reportage of violence in *She* is a discursive manifestation of the New Journalism that engaged with the First Boer War (1880-1881).[351] Krebs' insight may account for the looser edges of Haggard's ragged story where, if questions are raised, no answers are offered: 'I have no wish to prejudice your mind about the matter', writes Vincey senior stiffly, while simultaneously handing over the enticing two-thousand-year-old plot of sinking boats, crusaders' swords, naked ladies and attacking lions (*She*, p. 26).

Smells in *She* provide a circular structure to the narrative. An olfactory perspective of the novel reveals that the adventure both begins, and ends, in mist, miasma and 'the all-prevailing flavour of fever' (*She*, p. 298).[352] Miasma, as more thoroughly described in the Introduction to this thesis, had rapidly become outmoded by 1887, since Louis Pasteur's microbiological discoveries in the 1870s had been supplanting the idea that bad smells themselves were the cause of disease. Haggard's project in describing the adventurers' circular journey between miasmas was not to be bacteriologically up-to-date, however, but instead to elaborate the similarities between the vague, miasmic, hallucinatory, olfactory context in which She is found, and left, by Holly and Vincey. The theme of reincarnation actively recruits the reader's perception of circular, not linear, time and even the final words are a meditation upon possible future incarnations of Leo and She.[353] The smells of miasma in *She*, in other words,

[350] Museums of ethnography that opened in 1887 include the Natural History Museum in London, the Penn Museum in Pennsylvania, the National Museum of Singapore and the Ethnographic Museum at the Trocadèro in Paris. The Russian Academy of Sciences acquired an exhibition site for their Kunstkamera Ethnographic Exhibition in 1887, but it did not open for a further two years.

[351] Paula M. Krebs, *Gender, Race, and the Writing of Empire: Public Discourse and the Boer War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 9.

[352] I have noticed unexplained textual differences between editions of *She*. Unlike the Penguin version, the Forgotten Books edition on the GoogleBooks site reads 'all-pervading flavour of fear', not 'fever'.

[353] The prominence of circular time is also important throughout Haggard's sequel, *Ayesha: The Return of She* (1905, but previously serialised in *The Windsor Magazine* 1904-5), where the accumulated insights of fifty generations of reincarnated Buddhist monks send Holly and Vincey on their way to re-acquaint

problematise the binary code of past and present that have been described as the dominant structural mode of the novel.[354] Having discovered Leo Vincey, Ayesha chants the circularity of existence that equates beginnings and ends, rendering Kallikrates' remains into a dense vapour of choking fumes and a handful of white powder: 'Dust to dust! – the past to the past! – the lost to the lost! – Kallikrates is dead and is born again!' (*She*, p. 230). Another neat illustration of circular time that is expressed as smell in the novel is Ayesha's fragrant mandorla of hair (*She*, p. 152). That perfumed auriole of hair is all that remains of Ayesha as she crumbles to dust, connecting the beginning to the end of her two millennia.

The reminder here that perfume, or *per fumen*, refers etymologically to the smell of sacrifice recurs throughout the text. Ayesha's exhortation to bathe in the pillar of fire that contained the 'Spirit of Life' is an extreme example of ritual perfume manufacture: 'the moment is at hand. When the great flame comes again thou must bathe in it […] Thou must stand in the fire while thy senses will endure, and when it embraces thee suck the fire down into thy very heart' (*She*, p. 276). Haggard's theme of burning human sacrifices is revived by the flaming 'torches' of mummified human corpses that illuminate the Dance of the Black Goat and the aromatic Amahaggan braziers containing damped-down fragments of smouldering mummy (*She*, p. 214). Sacrifice is also involved in the manufacture of the Amahaggar embalming fluid that ironically preserves the appearance of life. The plant leaves from which it is compounded must be boiled in a hotpot to achieve their full potency, signified by the 'aromatic odour from them [that is] so strong that one can hardly bear it' (*She*, p. 180). Holly regards the

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themselves with the strangely familiar Khania of Kaloon who must remember her other existences. See: Henry Rider Haggard, *Ayesha: The Return of She* (London: Ward Lock, 1905).

[354] See: Patricia Murphy, 'The Gendering of History in *She*', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 39:4, *The Nineteenth Century* (1999), 747-72, 750. While warning of the reductionist tendency of such binary oppositions to over-systematise complex discourses, Julia Reid sees the novel's fundamental structural tension as that between fact and fiction. See: Julia Reid, 'Novels', in *Reading Primary Sources: the Interpretation of Texts from 19th and 20th Century History*, ed. by Miriam Dobson and Benjmin Ziemann (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), p. 166.

ancient carvings in Ayesha's catacombs that show Kôr's professional embalmers pinching their nostrils against olfactory contagion: 'either I suppose because of the stench arising from the body, or more probably to keep out the aromatic fumes of the hot fluid which was being forced into the dead man's veins' (*She*, pp. 134-5).[355] The pungent vapour of Kallikrates' mummy is an aromatic sacrifice: 'Instantly a dense vapour arose, and the cave was filled with choking fumes that prevented us seeing anything while the deadly acid (for I presume it was some tremendous preparation of that sort) did its work' (*She*, p. 230). The Queen leaks the sweet smell of her burnt offerings into the antechamber where Holly waits beside the prostrated figure of the old Royal retainer for his first audience: 'there lay Billali like one dead before the heavy curtains, through which the odour of perfume seemed to float up towards the gloom of the arched roof above' (*She*, p. 139). It is from her long dark hair, we are told, that the embalmment fragrance unfolds: 'She shook her heavy tresses, and their perfume filled the place' (*She*, p. 159). The emanation of Ayesha's hair permeates her environment: 'the air and the curtains were laden with a subtle perfume. Perfume too seemed to emanate from the glorious hair and white-clinging vestments of She herself' (*She*, p. 121). The hair that smells of embalmment remains when, stepping into the Pillar of Fire at last, Ayesha's immortality is unexpectedly reversed: 'did it, perhaps, from time to time send forth an essence of Death instead of an essence of Life?' (*She*, pp. 247-8). It turns out that the 'essence' of Ayesha is both her smell and her suffusion with the Spirit of Life, and that the two are indivisible.

Whereas the professional embalmers had held their noses, Ayesha dresses the stinking corpses and absorbs the aromatic embalming fluid that she manufactures and

[355] I have often wondered why the professional embalmers were depicted in this way, as a professional embalmer would surely have needed both hands for work and have devised a functional nose-clip instead of wasting a hand by pinching nostrils. This depiction only makes sense if the image is iconographic (rather than realistic) and is intended to signify the presence of aroma, which is otherwise extremely difficult to carve convincingly.

radiates from her perfumed hair. The Queen's superior chemical competence is described by Holly:

> Ayesha was a great chemist, indeed chemistry appears to have been her only amusement and occupation. She had one of the caves fitted up as a laboratory, and, although her appliances were necessarily rude, the results that she attained were […] sufficiently surprising (*She*, p. 134).

The cave laboratory connects *She* with the then-contemporary fad for the domestic practice of chemistry. Thomas Edison had set up the first purpose-built research laboratory in Menlo Park, New Jersey in 1876 but, until that decade, 'the immense amount of scientific knowledge built up before the 1870s was the result of individual work in essentially private labs' (Eugene Rimmel's 1867 *Book of Perfumes,* for example, had assumed the use of a domestic still room and a cupboard for its readers' preparation of recommended recipes).[356] The Queen's chemical pursuits also connect to ideas in Britain about suitable occupations for young women. The affinity of British women with chemistry had already been taken for granted by Maria Edgeworth in 1795. Edgeworth approved of chemistry as:

> a science particularly suited to women, suited to their talents and to their situation. Chemistry is not a science of parade, it affords occupation and infinite variety, it demands no bodily strength, it can be pursued in retirement, […] there is no danger of its inflaming the imagination; […] [because] the mind is intent upon realities, the knowledge that is acquired is exact; and the pleasure of the pursuit is a sufficient reward for the labour.[357]

Throughout the nineteenth century, access in Britain to chemical education for women widened. The British Association for the Advancement of Science had opened its chemistry section to women in 1838, due to its previous success in admitting women to its Geology and Botany lectures in 1834, although places at lectures were allocated on

[356] Dennis Moralee, 'The Foundation of the Cavendish Laboratory', in *A Hundred Years and More of Cambridge Physics*, <http://www.phy.cam.ac.uk/history/old> [last accessed 14 April 2014] para. 2 of 6.
[357] Maria Edgeworth, *Letters for Literary Ladies* (New York: Garland, 1974), p. 66. Originally published in 1795.

the basis of whether there were any spaces free in the ladies-only section.[358] G. W. S. Piesse added the footnote to the 1867 edition of *The Art of Perfumery* that opined:

> The amount of instruction that can be derived from a private laboratory is far more than at first sight may be conceived, and the entertainment, changeable as a kaleidoscope, is intellectually considered immeasurably superior either to crochet or Berlin work. The delicate manipulations of chemical experiments are well, even better, suited to their physical powers than to the sterner sex, and to the ladies, therefore, we commend the charge of becoming the *chefs* of the modern still-room.[359]

In France meanwhile, the Goncourt brothers reminisced in 1862 about the vogue for 'serious' pursuits among fashionable ladies in France ('novels disappeared from the dressing-tables of women: only treatises of physics and chemistry appeared on their chiffonières').[360] From 1880, the curricula of the new women-only Cambridge colleges Girton and Newnham included Chemistry, taught at first in their own separate laboratories and from 1884 in purpose-built joint laboratories. In 1887 (the year of *She*'s publication), Ida Freund became the first woman to become a University Chemistry Professor. This olfactory analysis of Chemical study in *She* differs slightly from Steven Arata's, who draws attention to the setting of the novel in 1881, the year in which women were admitted to the Cambridge Tripos. Arata sets Ayesha's chemical interests alongside her other self-confident comments on philology, political science and theology to argue that Ayesha is a camouflaged new student; Arata however offers only two examples of her chemical interests, and does not make a distinction between Ayesha offering an opinion on a subject and Ayesha actively performing the subject.

Recent research at the University of Edinburgh, culminating in the exhibition 'Women, Welfare and Caregiving' at the Surgeon Hall's Pathology Museum (13 June

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[358] Stephen Arata, *Fictions of Loss in the Victorian Fin de Siècle: Identity and Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 98.
[359] G.W. S. Piesse, *The Art of Perfumery* 3rd edn., pp. 22-23.
[360] Marelene and Geoffrey Rayner-Canham argue that the requirement for celibacy amongst teaching staff at the only two English universities (until the foundation of Victorian red-bricks after 1825) had significantly impoverished family access to chemical knowledge that was enjoyed by the wives and daughters of French professional scientists during the eighteenth century. See: Marelene Rayner-Canham and Geoff Rayner-Canham, 'British Women and Chemistry from the 16th Century to the Mid-19th Century', *The Bulletin of Hist. Chemistry*, 34:2 (2009), 117-23, 117.

2013-1 December 2013), has investigated the development of women's involvement in public science and medicine in the late nineteenth century, and it is a shame that the chemical and scientific abilities which Ayesha demonstrates in *She* have been muddled up with retrograde witchy potion-making, alongside Medea's and Circe's, by influential critics of the femme fatale trope at the fin de siècle, including Ann Ardis, Bram Dijkstra and Rebecca Stott.[361] The attribution by those writers of the monstrous desirability of Medea, Lilith, Circe, Salome and their fin-de-siècle iterations to displaced cultural anxiety about the 'New Woman' is not in dispute, except to point out that Ayesha does not fit well into that mythological clique. Unlike the potions of other mythological fatales (whose association with Haggard's character also accounts for the J. W. Waterhouse 1907 painting *Medea* on the front cover of the popular Wordsworth Classics edition of *She*), Ayesha's fragrant potions are shown to be concerned only with preservation and healing.[362] Moreover, she is not a magician. The processes of distillation and admixture are precisely explained in footnotes, the relevant compounds are made from specific (if fictional) plants, and the Queen herself dismisses Holly's silent accusations of sorcery, insisting on a scientifically empirical basis to her practice: 'it is no magic, that is a dream of ignorance. There is no such thing as magic, though there is such a thing as a knowledge of the secrets of Nature' (*She*, p. 149). It is therefore strongly suggested, despite previous critical abduction into the femmes fatales' pantheon of Medea, Circe, Lilith and Salome, that the Queen's preparation and administration of solutions should be regarded in terms of Haggard's engagement with contemporary claims of women to become admitted to medical and scientific training.

[361] See: Ann Ardis, *New Women and New Novels: Feminism and Early Modernism* (New Jersey:Rutgers University Press, 1990); Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-Siècle Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986); and Rebecca Stott, *The Fabrication of the Femme Fatale: Kiss of Death* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1992).

[362] Frederick Sandys's *Medea* (1868) and J. W. Waterhouse's *The Magic Circle* (1886), *Circe Invidiosa* (1892), *Jason and Medea* (1907) and *Circe the Sorceress* (1911) contain images of the fuming illicit potions made by these femmes fatales, depicted in a late 'pre-Raphaelite' style.

This is not an apologist version of *She*. Neither is it an apologist version of Haggard, although it is fair to say that his correspondence with *She*'s editor and dedicatee, Andrew Lang, reveals a playful and provocative sense of public opinion and what he could get away with saying.[363] It is not enough for this chapter to prove any connection between Haggard's novel and contemporary calls for the scientific education of women by citing various contextualising historical circumstances, but it does seem appropriate to set this author's reputation as a 'witch-burning […] misogynist' against the evidence of the text of *She* itself and the literary context in which Ayesha performs her ministrations.[364] The primacy of educational exploration is emphasised in the narrator's manuscript, where Holly, the Cambridge mathematics don, pursues the unknown in Africa, returns to Britain, and then leaves once more in search of 'wisdom' (*She*, p. 11). Holly's one regret in the esoteric enterprise is expressed in the Preface as pedagogic: 'we did not better avail ourselves of our opportunities to obtain more information from that marvellous woman' (*She*, p. 12). Even the ostensible fictional purpose of *She*'s publication, along with fourteen other books that Haggard wrote between 1885 and 1927 that featured Allan Quatermain, revolves around the supply of educational opportunities. In these fictions, the nominal purpose of Quatermain's status as editor was to provide funds sufficient for the tuition fees of Quatermain's medical student son, Harry.[365]

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[363] Haggard was very good at juggling what he thought should be in the public domain. The *Sydney Morning Herald*, for instance, reviewed the posthumous publication of his carefully crafted memoirs as revealing 'a singularly kindly and generous personality, who is always eager to think the best of human nature, and who goes out of his way to speak of his contemporaries in complimentary terms.' His private diaries for the same period 1914-1925, on the other hand, revealed a sour catalogue of harangues about Jews, communists, trade unionists, the Irish, Bolsheviks and Indians. See: 'RIDER HAGGARD', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 January 1927, 10/1 <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/16345883> [accessed 17 June 2013].

[364] Conor Reid meditates on the 'racist or misogynistic' reputation of Haggard's novels *She* and *King Solomon's Mines* (1885). Ann Ardis describes the immolation of Ayesha as patriarchal 'witch-burning'. See: Conor Reid, 'We are men, thou and I: Defining Masculinity in H. Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* and *She*', *Journal of Postgraduate Research*, 6 (2007), 10-21, 18; and Ann Ardis, *New Women and New Novels: Feminism and Early Modernism* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1990), p. 140.

[365] Haggard's reverence of educational opportunities in *She* may have had an autobiographical element. The youngest of seven brothers (there were also three girls), he recorded in his memoirs *Days of My Life*

There is a tension between the emphasis laid upon the empirical 'science' of Ayesha's aromatic discoveries (i.e. her laboratory provision and chemical competence) on the one hand, and the 'art' (i.e. the individual, performative nature) of her aromatic applications on the other. The statuses of both 'Art' and 'Science' were notoriously fluid and subject to continuing redefinition during the later nineteenth century; Ayesha's epistemological inclusivity of both Science and Art troubles the taxonomies of her Cambridge-educated interlocutor, Holly. Holly's customary resort to classical precedent involves describing the Queen as a 'modern Circe' (*She*, pp. 34-5), as 'that awful sorceress' (*She*, p. 203) and on two occasions as 'the white sorceress' (*She*, p. 133). Such imprecations are hardly to be taken by the reader at face value though, as Holly's pedantry has already been flagged up the text as ridiculous in the thirteen pages of Chapter Three that are devoted to incomprehensibly scholarly translations of Amenartas' message into uncial Greek, cursive Greek, Latin, medieval black-letter Latin and medieval English.[366] Holly's declarations on the scholarly pages are deadpan comic (and sufficiently remote from the author's own classical expertise to have been necessarily composed for Haggard as a favour by old friends who included his former Headmaster, the classical specialist Hubert Holden), as, without explanation or analysis, he launches into: 'Well […] that is the conclusion of the whole matter Leo, and now you can form your own opinion on it… I have already formed mine' (*She*, p. 51). Since the reader is encouraged by the text to dismiss the academic narrator's judgments as

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(1927) that he was the only boy in the increasingly impoverished family who was not sent to public school and offered the opportunity to go on from there to Oxford or Cambridge university. Haggard left Ipswich Grammar School at the age of seventeen and was sent off to join the army. He either failed or did not take (depending on which account you choose) the army entrance test, and was sent off to work as an unpaid assistant to the secretary of the Lieutenant-Governor of Natal in what is now South Africa. Ayesha's ability to seek out and impress Holly, the Cambridge don, with a command of language and philosophy that is derived from her practical experience (and not from her formal education) may just have had an edge of Haggard's own chip on shoulder.

[366] Here, this thesis differs from Stephen Arata's view, which states the thirteen pages of translation to have been evidence of Haggard's irrational obsession with masculine genealogy and patriarchal compensation for the longevity of Ayesha. I do not agree: I think he is taking the mickey. See: Stephen Arata, *Fictions of Loss in the Victorian Fin de Siècle: Identity and Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 98-101.

hasty assumptions, the Queen's epistemic combination of practical craft and accumulated learning is preferred instead.

The ambivalent positioning of knowledge and craft that relates to Ayesha's aromatic potion-making also relates to the wider 'Art v. Science' debate as it was debated in institutional, cultural and ideological settings during the last few decades of the nineteenth century. The debate had been made a matter for enthusiastic public discourse in 1853 by the formation of the Department of Science and Art as a subdivision of the British Board of Trade. The Department benefitted from funds and interest generated by the Great Exhibition of 1851 and supported the opening of the applied art musea in South Kensington from 1852. The links between art and science were expanded upon by John Ruskin's *The Eagle's Nest: Ten Lectures on the Relation of Natural Science to Art* (1870) and were applied to the expanding perfume industry by the entrepreneurial second-generation perfumer, Alexander Ross the Younger.[367] The mid to late-Victorian 'Art v. Science' debate epitomised central concerns of the new nursing profession that developed in Britain alongside calls for medical and hygienic improvements after the Crimean War (1853-1856). It must be added that although the first (non-statutory and voluntary) register of nurses in the UK was drawn up by the Hospitals Association in 1887 (the same year as the establishment of the British Nurses' Association (BNA) and the publication of *She*), the precise occupational status and disciplinary identity of nurses was still unclear at that time. The same word 'nurse' that had been used to nominate domestic servants (such as the children's nurse in Haggard's childhood who had thoughtfully supplied the title 'She-Who-Must-Be-Obeyed' to a rag doll that she kept in a 'dark recess' to frighten the children at teatime when they were getting too naughty) was also used to describe members of an increasingly regulated professional community of women. Having said that, the term 'nurse' was sufficiently

[367] Alexander Ross the Younger, *The Art and Science of Personal Beauty, exemplified by a narrative* (A. Ross: London: 1888). Ross was the son of Alexander Ross the Elder, the 'Nose-Machine' merchant.

vague to allow of many interpretations, as even medically trained nurses were not necessarily differentiated from each other. Of the 16,000 single women who emigrated to New Zealand from Britain between 1860 and 1883 for example, 582 identified their occupation as 'nurse' (including monthly nurse, sick nurse, trained nurse, nurse girl, midwife, hospital nurse or professional nurse). Women's economic independence, conditions of employment and career development in nursing altered many aspects of female prospects during the High Victorian period and the relationship of nursing to art and science exercised the first nursing theorist, Florence Nightingale. Nightingale defined nursing as 'an art requiring an organised practical and scientific training'.[368] Nightingale's synthesis of art and science persists on the spines of late nineteenth-century professional manuals aimed at women, such as nurses, midwives and teachers, that are still on the shelves at the British Library.[369] By contrast, those aimed at traditionally masculine occupations – such as Astrup Cariss's instructional *Book-keeping by Double Entry: Explaining the Science and Teaching the Art* (London: Effingham Wilson, 1883) aimed at accountants, clerks and auditors – linguistically separate the disciplines of Art and Science which are shown as being parallel but distinct, rather than as being mutually compatible.[370]

Association with the practices and discourse of nursing is reinforced in the novel by allusions to Ayesha as a nun, as nuns had been the traditional palliative caregivers in pre-Crimean hospitals (the religious title 'sister' is still given to the highest-ranking nurse on the ward). The virginal Ayesha is forever wandering silently down corridors, in charge of her own domain, with her hair pulled back underneath her long white linen

[368] Florence Nightingale, from 'Notes on Nursing' in *Florence Nightingale on Public Health Care Vol. 6*, ed. by Lynn MacDonald (Waterloo, ON: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2004), p. 207.
[369] I am assuming that teaching manuals were aimed predominantly at women because, notwithstanding the many men who taught, the representative 1861 census in Liverpool revealed 76% of the teaching workforce in that area to be female.
[370] For prosopographical research by historian of Nursing, Susan Hawkins, that fits census data with local archives to challenges the idea that 'science' became solely the territory of male doctors in hospitals, see: Susan Hawkins, *Nursing and Women's Labour in the Nineteenth Century: The Quest for Independence* (Oxford: Routledge, 2010).

shroud-like garments and tending the bodies of the dead and dying. In *She*, moreover, there are thirty-one references to lamps, that iconographic nursing-and-saintly accoutrement of Florence Nightingale.[371] Lamps were made legendarily hers after publication of the engraving in the *Illustrated London News* on 24 January 1855, which showed Nightingale gliding angelically with her lamp through a hospital ward of stricken soldiers, and the subsequent publication of 'Santa Filomena' in 1858 by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.[372] Foremost amongst Ayesha's lamps is the one that Ayesha raises aloft to illuminate Kallikrates' prone body, on his stone bed with a spear or dagger wound inflicted upon his chest (*She*, p. 226). The Queen has been tending the body for millennia; the image is pure Lady of the Lamp.

The late-nineteenth-century post-Crimean backlash against newly trained nurses, as identified by Kristine Swenson, sought to reintegrate medically trained women into domestic capacities and employed discursive strategies that associated nurses with fallen women.[373] It is hard not to see Ayesha in this light. Haggard's own familiarity with nursing nuns dated from his familiarity with the Anglican community of All Hallows', led from 1859 by Sister Lavinia Crosse in a site that abutted the north east corner of Haggard's own estate at Ditchingham House, Norfolk. As churchwarden of his local parish church, St. Mary's in Ditchingham, Haggard was an early supporter of All Hallows' Community of Anglican nuns who expanded provision for 'fallen women' from their original base at Shipmeadow Penitentiary to new premises including a House

[371] References to lamps in *She*: pp. 88, 89, 99, 109, 110, 112, 135, 137, 157, 158, 176, 179, 210 [three times], 218, 225, 226, 228, 250, 251, 257, 258, 264, 266 [three times], 284, 287, 288, 291.
[372] Extract from 'Santa Filomena' by H. W. Longfellow (1958):
'Lo! in that house of misery / A lady with a lamp I see / Pass through the glimmering gloom, / And flit from room to room. / And slow, as in a dream of bliss, / The speechless sufferer turns to kiss / Her shadow, as it falls / Upon the darkening walls. / As if a door in heaven should be / Opened and then closed suddenly, / The vision came and went, / The light shone and was spent / On England's annals, through the long / Hereafter of her speech and song, / That light its rays shall cast / From portals of the past. / A Lady with a Lamp shall stand / In the great history of the land, / A noble type of good, Heroic womanhood'. See: John Greenleaf Whittier (ed.), *Songs of Three Centuries* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1883), p. 211.
[373] Kristine Swenson, *Medical Women and Victorian Fiction* (Columbia: University of Missouri, 2005), pp. 6, 174

of Mercy, an orphanage, a laundry and a hospital just over his garden wall.[374] The association of the Haggard family with the neighbourhood nursing religious sisters is not clear, although Lilias, Haggard's biographer and youngest daughter, was much later to be awarded a MBE for her work in auxiliary nursing during the First World War.

Haggard's discursive association of Ayesha with nursing is undoubtedly supported by an olfactory reading of *She*. His emphasis on the new verbs 'to nose' and 'to scent', along with the priority he asserts for 'truths' reached by smell, smells and smelling, strongly suggest his interest in the processes of hunting and a sympathetic parity between people and animals. Crucially, Haggard's ascription of animal olfactory features to his educated, white, male characters is a departure from the subordination of smell that is considered by Jenner to be a hallmark of the 'grand narrative of civilisation', and that has informed Haggard's differing descriptions of Western and Amahaggar noses. An olfactory analysis of *She* suggests that Haggard's imperialist ideology is often more nuanced than previously has been acknowledged.

## III: Hollow Earths and the Implications of Smell in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *She*

This chapter has so far described how innovative fin-de-siècle smell descriptors in Wilde's and Haggard's novels are associated with themes drawn from the contemporary medical disciplines of anaesthesia and nursing. It now observes in detail the overlooked implications of how those smell-descriptors are brought into the novels' internal cosmologies, and shows how olfaction in both texts reveals the impact of 'hollow earth'

[374] For a description of the layout in Ditchingham of St Mary's church, All Hallows' Convent and Ditchingham House, please see Nicholas Pevsner and Bill Wilson, *Norfolk 2: North-West and South* (London: Penguin, 1999), pp. 304-6. For a description of Haggard's association with the parish church and its black marble WWI memorial that (unusually) shows a female nurse among the male soldiers, see: 'St. Mary, Ditchingham', <http://www.norfolkchurches.co.uk/ditchingham/ditchingham.htm > [last accessed 14 April 2014]. For a discussion of founding the Community of All Hallows' (now All Hallows Healthcare Trust) on the order's own website, see: <http://www.all-hallows.org/our-history.php> [last accessed 14 April 2014].

genre conventions.

So, what does this thesis mean by the 'hollow earth genre'? The genre is comprised by a body of narratives that assume the planet to have an inhabitable centre that explorers find, experience and (usually) leave. Although there is some critical debate about how much texts do or do not qualify for hollow-earth status depending on whether they feature a full interior sphere or whether the action takes place in the centre of the earth through caves, cavities, tunnels and volcanoes, this chapter will regard the genre as containing both types.[375] While some eighteenth-century hollow-earth fantasies depend upon Enlightenment speculation about the composition of the Earth following calculations to explain anomalous compass readings by Sir Edmund Halley (1646-1742), the majority of hollow-earth titles listed by the US Library of Congress date from 1838-1938, when scientific expeditions to discover a real Hollow Earth had become scientifically disreputable and the trope passed into literary territory.

Historian of science Charlotte Sleigh has explained Hollow Earth stories in terms of the 'American Situation' that grew between 1838 and 1938 as a result of American colonial desire,[376] and David Standish has offered a critical paradigm that explains both French and North American Hollow Earths as post-revolutionary imaginings of social utopias or dystopias.[377] None of the present explanations for Hollow Earth fiction, however, accounts satisfactorily for the oddness of the societies inhabiting the underground spaces in British fictions of the late-nineteenth century, spaces including the various subterranean tunnels through which Alice tumbles in Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* (1865), which are inhabited by the antediluvian *Vril-ya* in

[375] Pierre Versins differentiates between hollow-earth *gruyère* (the holes are the caverns and subterranean tunnels) and *calabasse* (a hollow gourd). See: *Encyclopédie de l' Utopie, des Voyages Extraordinarires, et de la Science Fiction* (Lausanne: L'age d'homme, 1972), pp. 874-6.
[376] Charlotte Sleigh, *Literature and Science* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 97.
[377] David Standish, *Hollow Earth: The Long and Curious History of Imagining Strange Worlds, Fantastical Creatures, Advanced Civilisations, and Marvellous Machines Below the Earth's Surface* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Perseus, 2006), p. 13.

Bulwer-Lytton's *The Coming Race* (1871), or from which the degenerated Morlocks emerge in Wells's *The Time Machine* (1895). Consequently, this olfactory study of *She* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* will discuss the smells and noses in these texts relating to nineteenth-century geological concerns. Such anxieties, Adelene Buckland notes, have been edged out of literary critical analysis by scholars' anthropocentric concentration on evolutionary theory in nineteenth-century texts.[378]

**IIIa: Hollow Dorian Gray**

The presence of sulphur in the novel has previously gone unremarked by critics of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (although for a rigorous analysis of Dorian Gray's experimental perfume-making with other chemical substances and compounds in Chapter X of the novel, see Jill Vetri's comprehensive Seton Hall thesis).[379] Being chemically synonymous with biblical 'brimstone', sulphur in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* signifies a moral inferno.[380] Lord Henry muses:

> It was true that as one watched life in its curious crucible of pain and pleasure, one could not wear over one's face a mask of glass, nor keep the sulphurous fumes from troubling the brain and making the imagination turbid with monstrous fancies and misshapen dreams (*Dorian*, p. 66).

As this chapter has detailed above, the olfactory presence of sulphur leads to a recognition that white lead was not responsible for Sybil Vane's death, since cosmetic bismuth powder was used in the actors' dressing room. By elimination, clues in the text lead to prussic acid and the conclusion that Sybil Vane's death was precipitated by the

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[378] Adelene Buckland, *Novel Science: Fiction and the Invention of Nineteenth-Century Geology* (London: Chicago University Press, 2013), pp. 24, 180.

[379] See: Jill Veltri, *'Poisoned by a Book': Aesthetic Decadence and Plagiarism in The Picture of Dorian Gray* (unpublished MA thesis, Seton Hall, 2010).

[380] With reference to the continuing critical line that the novel dramatises Wilde's own sexual anxieties [cf. Patricia Flanaghan Behrendt's *Oscar Wilde: Eros and Aesthetics* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1991)], it may be pertinent that brimstone, in Genesis 19:24, is not only a toxic but also a homophobic chemical, being rained down upon the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah as punishment for the inhabitants' 'grevious sin', which is later identified as 'fornication, and going after strange flesh' (Jude 1:7) [*KJB*]. In accordance with Behrendt's interpretation, the presence of sulphur in the novel may resonate with a particular relationship to punishment for sexual 'transgression'.

age-avoidance of a fellow actor. It is possible that age-avoidance, in Brian Stableford's words, may have stemmed in the nineteenth century from 'rapid progress in medical science, which offered the hope that material means of preserving mortal life might prevail where supernatural ones had not'.[381] Stableford's formula rests on the idea that material improvements in medicine allowed writers to dream of characters having longer and stronger lives, but it does not explain why so many plots that involved the dissolution of supernaturally age-avoidant characters – such as Stoker's Lady Arabella Marsh in *The Lair of the White Worm* (1911) and Count Dracula in *Dracula* (1897), Marsh's Beetle in *The Beetle* (1897), Conan Doyle's Sosra in 'The Ring of Thoth' (1890) and Machen's Pan in 'The Great God Pan' (1894), as well as Wilde's Dorian Gray and Haggard's Ayesha – should have dated from the fin de siècle rather than from any other time when cures for ailments were looking hopeful.[382] Assuming that the same theme is common to all those texts – that of puncturing an antiquity that is disturbingly disguised as youthful – these stories resonate with a shared anxiety about the age of the planet that had been confirmed by Scottish geologist Charles Lyell (1797-1875) and Scottish physicist William Thomson, Lord Kelvin (1824-1897). Despite their different approaches and conclusions, Lyell and Kelvin both argued for a definitive understanding of the planet's shocking antiquity.[383]

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[381] Brian Stableford 'The Immortal', in *Icons of Horror and the Supernatural: An Encyclopedia of Our Worst Nightmares*, ed. by S. T. Joshi, 2 vols (Westport: Greenwood, 2006), I, 307-340 (p. 320).

[382] Some of these supernaturally age-avoidant characters literally 'come to a sticky end', as a 'horrible repulsive slime', a molten, dissolved 'jelly' and an unidentified viscous liquid is all that remains after the respective dissolutions of pre-diluvian Lady Arabella in Bram Stoker's *The Lair of the White Worm,* reincarnated ancient deity Helen Vaughan in Arthur Machen's 'The Great God Pan' and the two-thousand year old eponymous beetle in Richard Marsh's *The Beetle*. See: Bram Stoker, *Dracula and The Lair of the White Worm* (London: W. Foulsham, 1986), pp. 507-9, Arthur Machen, 'The Great God Pan' in *The Great God Pan and The Hill of Dreams* (Mineola: Dover, 2006), pp. 61-2 and Richard Marsh, *The Beetle* (Plymouth: Broadview, 2004), p. 318.

[383] Kelvin's thermodynamic estimate of 40-200 million years dated from 1862 but, troubled by the broader implications to which it was put by anti-Creationist advocates of Darwinian evolutionary theory such as T. H. Huxley, the deeply pious Lord Kelvin was later, in 1895, to narrow down this estimated figure from 20-400 million to 20-40 million. See: Joe D. Burchfield, *Lord Kelvin and the age of the earth*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990) p. 43. Lyell steered clear of giving a definitive figure for the age of the Earth, but clearly implied throughout the three volumes of his *Principles of Geology: being an attempt to explain the former changes of the Earth's surface, by reference to causes now in operation*

Is 'shocking' too strong a word? Critics Bryan H. Bunch and Alexander Hellemans do not think so. They point out that public outcries against scientific theories were quantifiably different in the nineteenth century from previous outcries, involving a wide dissemination of the issues through newspapers, satirical cartoons and well-attended public meetings held to denounce or support specific theories. Although they focus on the furore surrounding Charles Darwin, they write that the 'first issue to cause this kind of reaction was the age of the Earth. Geologists offered good evidence that it was older than most Christians, Jews, and Muslims, at the time believed'.[384] In this context, it is illuminating to read the scheme that allows Dorian Gray to keep the unsullied splendour of eternal youth while his hidden, painted double is secretly becoming coruscated by the vicissitudes of time as a displaced enactment of Lyell's and Lord Kelvin's disclosures that the earth was more ancient than it seemed.

Although Lyell's and Kelvin's revelations of the great age of the planet were shocking to their mid- and late-nineteenth century audience, it must be conceded that their conclusions were not unanticipated or unprecedented. Stephen Jay Gould has deplored a common tendency among historians to insist upon a consensus about the age of the earth before Lyell's publications, and to blame the individual figure of Archbishop James Ussher (1581-1656) for the erroneous calculation, based on scriptural genealogy, that the world was approximately 4,000-6,000 years old. In his punningly titled 'Fall in the House of Ussher', Gould points out that opinion on the age of the planet was far more divided throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries than Ussher's current notoriety would suggest.[385] Gould, however, misses two important

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(1830-33) that millions of years had been required to form the vast repository of sediment seen in the geological record.

[384] Bryan H. Bunch & Alexander Hellemans, *The History of Science and Technology: A Browser's Guide to the Great Discoveries, Inventions, and the People who Made Them, from the Dawn of Time to Today* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2004), p. 311.

[385] Stephen Jay Gould, 'Fall in the House of Ussher: How Foolish was the Archbishop's Precise Date for Creation?', *Natural History*, 100 (1991), 12-21 <*http://www.sjgarchive.org/ library/text/b16/p0009.htm*> [accessed 21 June 2011].

points that are germane to the argument in this chapter that geocentric anxieties were figured as hollow crucible earth stories. First, in the Edgar Allen Poe story to which his title refers, 'The Fall of the House of Usher' (1839), both the literal and the personified House of Usher are swallowed up by a crack in the earth. Secondly, it is stated by Poe that Roderick Usher's own preferred reading material includes the first ever Hollow Earth story – *The Subterranean Voyage of Nicolas Klimm* (1741) by Baron Ludvig Holberg. Bearing in mind that an interest in new geomorphic theories is evinced in Poe's other fiction – most notably in *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* (1838) – it is entirely possible that Poe himself intended the conflation of 'Usher' and 'Ussher'. Wilde's discovery of the writings of Poe through his reading of Baudelaire, and the adoption in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* of the particular content and manner of Poe's short story 'William Wilson' (1839), have been recently drawn out by Brynjar Björnsson.[386] It is consequently not unreasonable to speculate that Wilde also shared Poe's interest in new geomorphic theories, especially since Dorian's is such a hollow world, literally.

The cosmology of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* seems at first to be entirely pre-Copernican, as would befit a novel where the laws of the universe appear to warp and bend around the central character. The Ptolemaic universe of geocentric spheres, with the *primum mobile* as the outermost and Earth as the central sphere, is implied by the narrator in the first scene where reference is made to 'the little clouds that, like raveled skeins of glossy white silk, were drifting across the hollowed turquoise of the summer sky' (*Dorian*, p. 11). Later on in the novel, the sky is revealed to have 'hollowed itself into a perfect pearl' (Dorian, p. 79), and then into 'an inverted cup of blue metal' (*Dorian*, p. 175). Wilde appears to fix his narrative beneath the unchangeable dome of Ptolemaic fixed stars that signify 'the note of doom that like a purple thread runs

[386] Brynjar Björnsson, 'Oscar Wilde and Edgar Allen Poe: Comparison of The Picture of Dorian Gray and "William Wilson"' (unpublished MA thesis, University of Iceland, 2012).

through the texture of *Dorian Gray*'.[387] Inside those celestial and terran spheres, however, lies not only the postmortem underworld that Ptolemy had conceived of as a fiery Hades (and that later Christian theologians identified with Hell), but also a sulphurous hollow earth; a 'pit', a 'hole of a place' (*Dorian*, p. 46) wherein Dorian will be transformed.[388]

The hollow earth, in Wilde's version of the myth, is filled by a theatre with its own gas-powered, internal, infernal sun. Not one world but several worlds fill the dramatic void beneath the labyrinth of London streets, as the artificial sun of the theatre illuminates Verona (*The Two Gentlemen of Verona*), Milford Haven (*Cymbeline*) and the Forest of Arden (*As You Like It*) in turn. Sybil's dramatic art transports Dorian away to 'a forest that no man had ever seen' (*Dorian*, p. 86). As Rosalind and Sylvia, she is allied to the trees: 'I left her in the Forest of Arden, I shall find her in an orchard in Verona' (*Dorian*, p. 87).[389] Love, however, turns her eyes from the seeming Forest scenery to 'the *hollowness*' of her world (*Dorian*, p. 98; emphasis mine).

The theatre at the centre of the labyrinth is the personified hollow centre of Dorian's soul, or the 'stage of the world' created by 'his imagination […] in his brain and in his passions' (*Dorian*, p. 161). The stage of the world is a platform for human performance: there are sixty-three references in the novel to 'the world' and only five to 'the earth'. This is due to Wilde's punning conflation of 'the world' defined as the literal sphere of the planet and 'the world' in its élite social sense (akin to *le beau monde*). Lord Henry, for example, teases in riposte to Lady Narborough's remonstrance and slap with a fan: '"but what world says that? It can only be the next world. This world and I are on excellent terms"' (*Dorian*, p. 155). Although the words 'world' and

[387] Oscar Wilde, *De Profundis* (Mineola, New York: Courier Dover Publications, 1997), p. 55.
[388] For Wilde's comments in 1882 upon the singular popularity of Dante's *Divine Comedy* among prisoners in America, see: Joseph Pearce, *The Unmasking of Oscar Wilde* (London: HarperCollins, 2000), p. 347.
[389] Dorian Gray is describing Sybil's roles as Rosalind in *As You Like It* and Sylvia in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

'earth' are occasionally used interchangeably in the text (as in Lord Fermor's expostulatory '"What on earth?"' [*Dorian*, p. 33] and Basil Hallward's '"the world is wide and has many marvellous people in it"' [*Dorian*, p. 16]), the planet is customarily anthropomorphised as being indifferent to any human's individual life experience. The careless earth, laments Lord Henry, will prosper while the individual decays:

> 'the common hill-flowers wither, but they blossom again. The laburnum will be as yellow next June as it is now. In a month there will be purple stars on the clematis, and year after year the green night of its leaves will hold its purple stars. But we never get back our youth' (*Dorian*, p. 30).

The sole palliative available from the vast, spinning, mysterious globe and its incomprehensible operations is, as we have seen, the solace of floral anaesthetic smell: 'worlds had to be in travail, that the meanest flower might blow' (*Dorian*, p. 44).

Dorian's journey to the stage at the centre of the indifferent and hollow earth narrows continually in focus from 'London' to 'the Park' and on through the broad thoroughfare of Piccadilly, whereafter Dorian becomes lost in 'grimy streets' and 'black, grassless squares' that lead to the entrance of the theatre, up to the 'monstrous… hideous Jew' who stands before it, finally zooming in to the solitary diamond 'in the centre of his [the 'hideous Jew's'] soiled shirt' (*Dorian*, p. 58). The mined diamond is the tiny culmination of Dorian's first descent to the criminal underworld (literal here, as well as metaphorical) and exposes the commodification of that underground world. The rare, valued, sparkling treasure has been discovered in the dirt, as is the coal from seams exploited in the same manner by Lord Fermor, Harry Wooton's uncle, who manages the family trait of leisured indolence from the security of his collieries in the Midlands (*Dorian*, p. 39). Harry's money, in other words, that underwrites his interesting psychological 'vivisection' of Dorian, comes from underground (*Dorian*, p. 66). The identification extends even to Harry's hair, which is 'coal-black', in contrast to Dorian's crisp golden waves. The geomorphic language of fissures and cracks permeates his

discourse: '"when thought has seared your forehead with lines and passion branded your lips with its hideous fires […] you will feel it terribly"', he warns (*Dorian*, p. 29). '"Do you think my nature so shallow?"' cries Dorian angrily. '"No, I think your nature so deep"', replies Henry gravely (*Dorian*, p. 58).

Adelene Buckland's work on geology in nineteenth-century fiction has addressed the 'geological anti-narrative' of writing on the history of the planet.[390] Buckland challenges the model derived from literary theorists of evolutionary theory, such as Gillian Beer and George Levine, who bring attention both to the adoption of modes of literary transmission by scientists, and to depictions of scientific activity in literary texts. Although Buckland's attention is on the mid-century rather than the fin de siècle, her conclusion that geological narratives fought shy of historical realism in order to espouse complex and ambiguous forms of scientific 'romance' has a bearing on Wilde's perverse and humorous aphorisms. Whereas the study of geology is gently ribbed as being, like German, 'improving' by Cecily and Miss Prism in Wilde's later play *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895),[391] the Preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray* warns its readers that 'those who go beneath the surface do so at their own peril' (*Dorian*, p. 6). The irony of Dorian's journey to the hollow centre of his soul is that, ultimately, there was no point in going there.

Wilde's concern with the dangers of sedimentary progression in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is metaphorical as well as geological. Mixing a topographical narrative with a moral map, Gray's descent through narrowing London streets to the theatre where he finds Sybil also borrows from the imagery of the mythological Cretan labyrinth where Duke Theseus was pursued unsuccessfully by the Minotaur, anticipating the eventual abandonment of the guide, Ariadne (i.e., Sybil), whom Dorian

[390] Adelene Buckland, *Novel Science: Fiction and the Invention of Nineteenth-Century Geology* (London: Chicago University Press, 2013).
[391] Oscar Wilde, 'The Importance of Being Earnest', in *The Plays of Oscar Wilde* (Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 2000), II. 1, p. 382.

wishes to 'bring out' of the labyrinth into the West End (*Dorian*, pp. 63-4). The implied correspondences in early chapters are that angry, misshapen young James Vane, violent half-brother to Ariadne, is the Minotaur who must be overcome, and James' mother is foolish, deluded Pasiphaë, punished for her unnatural lusts. When the theme of the Cretan labyrinth is reintroduced at Dorian's final encounter with James, it is signalled by the concurrent odour of orchids as the overwrought Dorian loses consciousness.

Dorian's own ancestral landscape is a microcosm of the planet's 'crucible of pain and pleasure' (*Dorian*, p. 66). The hollow planet is expressed through sulphurous fumes from its subterranean spaces and anaesthetic fragrant blooms from its surface. The connection between flowers and an interior earth that is thirsty for blood is made, within three lines of the introduction of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, by a seemingly casual aside alongside the neat homage to Walter Pater's adumbration, '*[a]ll art constantly aspires towards the condition of music*', that Wilde had paraphrased in the Preface to the novel as 'From the point of view of form, the type of all the arts is the art of the musician' (*Dorian*, p. 66). Dorian is disclosed at the opening of Chapter Two: 'As they entered they saw Dorian Gray. He was seated at the piano, with his back to them, turning over the pages of a volume of Schumann's "Forest Scenes"' (*Dorian*, p. 22). The cycle of nine short pieces in 'Forest Scenes' is Robert Schumann's final work from 1848-1849 before mental illness diminished his capacity, and it was originally based on six poetic verses in the Biedermeier style.[392] The connection between flowers and an interior earth that is hungry for blood is made in 'Ill-omened Place', the chilling melody from 'Forest Scenes', and the only one of the cycle of nine parts to have retained its original poetic preface after Schumann's continuing revisions and polishings of the

[392] For a scathing description of musical Biedermeier styling as taking 'the fear and torment out of Romanticism, leaving in its place only some vaguely menacing motifs and exciting titillation', see: James J. Sheehan, *German History 1170-1886* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 541.

piece in 1849-52.[393] The song lamented:

> Die Blumen, so hoch sie wachsen
> Sind blass hier, wie der Tod;
> Nur eine in der Mitte
> Steht du in dunkeln Roth.
> Die hat es nicht von der Sonne;
> Nie traf sie deren Gluth;
> Sie hat es von der Erde,
> Und die trank Menschenblut.[394]
> [The flowers waxing tall here
> Are pale, like Death;
> Only one in the middle
> Stands there, dark red.
> Not coloured by the sun,
> It never met its glow;
> But rather from the Earth
> And drinking human blood.]

Foreshadowing in miniature the plot of Wilde's novel, 'Forest Scenes' is the Overture (to borrow the musical metaphor) to Dorian's drama. It contains a thematically interwoven narrative that counterpoints mournful dirge with innocence and nostalgia ('Entrance' and 'Lonely Flowers'), with rowdy scenes of intoxication ('Auberge'), a spectral prophecy of doom ('Prophetbird') and a comic hunting scene like Dorian's in the woods at Selby.[395] Dorian broods over Selby by allusion to the title of the Schumann piece: 'it was an ill-omened place. Death walked there in the sunlight. The grass of the forest had been spotted with blood' (*Dorian*, p. 228). Selby, Dorian's own land, echoes Schumann's archetypal crucible of pleasure and pain.

Another piece of music in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* performs the same predictive function as 'Forest Scenes'. Wagner's 'Prelude' to *Tannhäuser* contains similar musically narrated motifs of hunting, little woodland animals, and a terrifying hunt to the death counterpointed with mournful dirge, and it leaves Dorian 'seeing in the

[393] 'Ill-omened Place' – '*Veruffene Stelle*' – has also been variously translated as 'Haunted Place', 'Haunted Spot' and 'Ill-Reputed Place'. It connotes eerieness but also disreputabilty, being a component part of the now-archaic phrase *veruffene Frau*, or 'scarlet woman'.
[394] The poetic preface by Friedrich Hebbel (1813-1863). Translation mine.
[395] For a discussion of Wilde's synaesthetic use of music in the novel, see: Phyllis Weliver, 'Oscar Wilde, Music, and the "Opium-tainted Cigarette": Disinterested Dandies and Critical Play', *The Journal of Victorian Culture*, 15:3 (2010), 315-347. Weliver also points out that Robert Schumann represents a kind of louche dandyism that she identifies with Lord Henry Wotton.

prelude to that great work of art a presentation of the tragedy of his own soul' (*Dorian*, p. 151). Music at the fin de siècle, as the Introduction to this thesis has shown, was bound up with descriptions of perfume, and music in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* articulates the pain of 'always searching for new sensations' in a comfortless universe stripped of faith, commitment or principle following confirmation of the age of the planet by Lyell and Lord Kelvin (*Dorian*, p. 30). In Wilde's novel, the notion and conventions of 'hollow earth' fiction are sustained throughout to provide a metaphorical map to Dorian's internal journey.

**IIIb: Hollow *She***

Early twentieth-century ideas on psychological gendering based on binary male/female polarities agreed that the character of Ayesha operates as projection of gender anxiety. Sigmund Freud, for example, described Ayesha as 'the eternal feminine' (which he defined elsewhere as castratory narcissism), and Carl Jung used *She* to illustrate the idea of *anima*.[396] More recently, Patricia Murphy compellingly made the argument that Ayesha's near-immortality, representing the destabilisation of otherwise compulsory timescales, is a manifestation of widespread cultural anxiety at the Victorian fin de siècle about the 'Woman Question'.[397] Notwithstanding the difference in emphasis between this chapter's olfactive-geomorphic and Murphy's, Jung's and Freud's feminist-materialist understandings of *She*, the two approaches do coincide over the observation that Haggard consistently figures the landscape in *She* as a woman. The landscape in *She*, with its undulating bumps, curves and penetrable hollow cavities, remark Gilbert and Gubar, 'seems increasingly like a Freudianly female *paysage*

[396] Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (Ware: Wordsworth Classics, 1997), p. 305 and Carl Gustav Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, trans. By R. F. C. Hull, 2nd edn. (New York: Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 71.
[397] Patricia Murphy, 'The Gendering of History in *She*', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 39:4, *The Nineteenth Century* (1999), 747-772, 750.

*moralisé*'.[398] Haggard furnishes lots of examples of a feminised landscape; the waters after the squall are 'heaving like some troubled woman's breast' which like the moon goes 'slowly down in chastened loveliness […] like some sweet bride into her chamber' (*She*, p. 61). Carted captive by the Amahaggar out of the swamps and into Ayesha's Kôr, the travellers penetrate suggestively 'swelling grassy plains towards a cup-shaped hill' (*She*, p. 80). Further however to Gilbert and Gubar's and to Murphy's observations of the feminised landscape, it should be noted that not only is the landscape figured as a woman, but it is figured as a *fragrant* woman and, as the title of the novel implies, She is it.[399] The travellers' approach from the wilderness into Ayesha's private apartments is an olfactory journey from foulness to fragrance as Holly passes the miasmatic swamps with 'the awful smell of rotting vegetation that hung about' them (*She*, p. 116), and camps outside the city with 'such appetite as the smell […] would allow' (*She*, p. 116). Holly approaches the 'essence […] to fortify these fleshly walls' (*She*, p. 119), then enters the plains of Kôr with the 'varied beauty of its semi-tropical flowers' (*She*, p. 126), and finally is led through the underground rocky passages for an audience with the Queen in the terminal cavern 'before the heavy curtains, through which the odour of perfume seemed to float (*She*, p. 139).

Ayesha identifies herself with the core of the world in Kôr:

> 'Draw near, draw near […] Behold the very fountain and Heart of Life as it eats in the bosom of the great world. Behold the substance from which all things draw their energy, the bright Spirit of the globe, without which it cannot live, but must grow cold and dead as the dead moon' (*She*, p. 274).

As Gilbert and Gubar have pointed out, the name of Ayesha's Kôr connects the ancient city to the underworld, as *Kore (*or *Kora)* is another name for Persephone, Queen of

[398] Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, 'Heart of Darkness: The Agon of Femme Fatale', *La Bibliotèque du Cenacle* < bibliotheque.cenacle.free.fr/biblio/affiche.php?id=502&l=fr> [accessed 3 October 2011] para. 21 of 89.

[399] For an analysis of the landscape in *King Solomon's Mines* as an expression of Africa itself, see: Rebecca Stott, 'The Dark Continent: Africa as Female', *Feminist Review*, 32 (1989), 69–89.

Hades, and as it chimes both with 'core' and '*coeur*' ['heart'].[400] The identification of the core of the realm with the core of its ruler is reinforced by the guided tour that the Queen provides to its interior via its 'clefts', its 'womb' and its 'bowels' (although, according to Jessica Leigh Harland-Jacobs, Vincey's travel to the earth's core is also central to the novel's metempsychotic enactment of Freemasonic ritual whereby Vincey goes down, like Orpheus, to the underworld but fails to bring back his Euridice/Ayesha).[401] The concave interior of Ayesha's pit may resemble 'a stony mother' (*She*, p. 211), but the infertile, dead-looking and desiccated sphere contains the Spirit of Life and is a pattern for the other spheres upon which Holly meditates, wishing to become '"like to those glittering points above me, to rest on high wrapped forever in the brightness of our better selves, that even now shines in us as fire faintly shines within those lurid balls"' (*She*, p. 118). Holly's list of spheres that line up 'round and continually round this rolling world' (*She*, p. 99) and the metaphorical spheres over which 'the Almighty strides' (*She*, p. 117) recall the massive sculpture in ancient Kôr of Truth surmounted upon a giant sphere of marble. Haggard's cosmic spheres serve as models and mirrors for the hollow core of this earth.

The expression in *She* of She as landscape reveals one of Haggard's wittiest tricks, which is the neologistic conflation of 'essence' – meaning the fundamental or inextractable qualities of a thing – and 'essence', meaning the aromatic distillation of some fragrant material. Both meanings derive from the Latin *esse*, or 'being'. The association in English between perfumed volatile oils and the integral characteristics of a substance dates at least from 1732, when Bishop Berkeley asserted that 'the soul of

[400] Gilbert and Gubar, Para 26 of 89.
[401] Jessica Leigh Harland-Jacobs, *The Essential Link: Freemasonry and British Imperialism, 1751-1918*, (unpublished doctoral thesis, Duke University, 2000). It may also be pertinent to the imaginative depiction of subterranean transgression that Orpheus, who turned to the company of young men after his romantic misadventures in Hades, was considered by Ovid to be the first 'pederast'. In Albrecht Dürer's 1494 drawing 'The Death of Orpheus', the legend *Orfeus der erst puseran* ['*Orpheus, the first sodomite*'] is affixed to the tree against which Orpheus is being bludgeoned by two strapping bacchantes.

any plant, rosemary for instance, is neither more nor less than its essential oil'.[402] What was new at the time of *She*'s publication in 1887, however, was the synchronic contribution of the evolving discourse of the perfume industry (an evolving cultural 'field' in Pierre Bourdieu's term, as described in the Introduction above) that figured essential oils for the first time as blend-able component parts of a whole composition, and the abduction of 'essence' as a transitive verb to indicate compressed synonymnity, or 'to essence' as making a smaller, concentrated version of a larger original. According to the *OED*, the first appearance of the loan word 'essence', in that sense, occurred in the anonymous *Punch* review of 1 December 1888: '*Diamonds Led* is a three-volume novel essenced into five pages'.[403] Haggard's use of 'essence' in the text, to convey the idea of a concentrated version of something, and his correlation of perfume with existence, is prefigured in the final words of the Preface. Referring to Leo Vincey's potential, Quatermain wonders if Vincey's soul 'would bloom like a flower and flash out like a star, filling the world with light and fragrance?' (*She*, p. 14). The neologistic definition of 'essence' meaning 'compressed synonymity' occurs regularly in descriptions of Ayesha. Not only is She herself a compressed synonym for the landscape, but She is also a concentrated form of the pillar of fire that contains the Spirit of Life: 'she paused, and stretched out her arms…as though she were the very Spirit of the Flame. The mysterious fire […] seemed to find a home in the glorious eyes that shone and shone, more brightly even than the spiritual essence'.[404] The connection between 'essence' meaning fragrance, and 'essence' meaning 'being' (or, *esse*), is reinforced as Ayesha renders down Kallikrates' original, preserved, body into dust and a pungent vapour: 'our existence is a link', she explains through the dust to Holly and

[402] George Berkeley, *Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher: In Seven Dialogues, Containing an Apology for the Christian Religion Against Those Who are Called Free-Thinkers* (New Haven: Increase Cooke & Co, 1803), p. 282.
[403] *OED*, 2nd edn. (1989).
[404] *Ayesha: The Return of* She (Charleston: Bilbiobazaar LLC, 2009), p. 17.

Vincey, in a generational chain that is recorded in the 'Book of Being', through which the Spirit (of 'Life') 'hath passed to work out the purpose of our being'.[405] 'Essence' is personified through the landscape and character of She.

The hollow cavities of Haggard's earth bear comparison with those of Edward Bulwer-Lytton, whose prototypical and best-selling utopian hollow earth novel, *The Coming Race*, was published anonymously in 1871 (although posthumously published, entitled *Vril: The Power of the Coming Race*, under Bulwer-Lytton's name, from 1873). Bulwer-Lytton's novel had gone into print four years before Haggard entered his first post as a seventeen-year old, in the service of Henry Ernest Gascoyne Bulwer (1836-1914), Bulwer-Lytton's nephew. The core of both Haggard's and Lytton's earths are filled with a mysterious fire that confers health and longevity. The inhabitants of both regions believe in reincarnation. Both maintain ancient building structures designed during the earliest Egyptian dynasties. Women in both hollow earths are described as being more powerful than men and take the amorous initiative. I have found no evidence in Haggard's diaries, letters or memoirs that he had read Bulwer-Lytton's best-selling hollow-earth adventure before composing his own, but the hollow earth genre is evoked at the very outset of *She* when we learn in the Prologue that the adventurers Holly and Vincey have already left England for a long sojourn in Tibet, 'where, if anywhere on this earth, wisdom is to be found' (*She*, p. 11). The prestige of Tibet within hollow earth theory had already been consolidated by the claims of theosophists, which Carolyn Burdett observes to have influenced Haggard, during the writing of *She*.[406] The prominent theosophist and occultist Madam Helena Blatavsky maintained in *Isis*

[405] The paragraph in Chapter 21 in which this explanation occurs is missing from the 1994 Penguin Popular Classics edition but present in the 2006 Broadview Press edition, which is based on the original periodical version published in *The Graphic*, July 1886-January 1887. See: Henry Rider Haggard, *She*, ed. by Andrew M. Stauffer (Plymouth: Broadview Press, 2006), p. 217.
[406] Carolyn Burdett, 'Romance, Reincarnation and Rider Haggard', in *The Victorian Supernatural*, ed. by Nicola Bown, Carolyn Burdett and Pamela Thurschwell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 217-238.

*Unveiled* (1877) that Tibet had been the site of her original initiations into Primordial Knowledge in 1855 and 1868, but the more recent literary reputation of Tibet in French and English had depended upon Louis Jacolliot's description of the inhabitants of Thule, a mythical 'lost' Aryan race reputed to be hiding in the mountains of Tibet, in *Les Fils de Dieu* [*The Sons of God*] (published in French and English in 1873).[407]

It is unfortunate that Haggard's *She* has until now escaped a critique that takes into account the novel's relationship with Bulwer Lytton's, but it is an even more regrettable circumstance that scholarly accounts have so fleetingly passed over the relationship between *She* and Jules Verne's widely translated hollow-earth fantasy novel, *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* (1864). Haggard belonged to the first generation of British schoolboys exposed to Verne's bestselling hollow-earth tale (although it has to be said that the first English translation [1871], by an unnamed translator, was eccentric: characters were renamed, and the tale was inexplicably shortened and lengthened by the insertion of episodes that were disconnected from the main plot, such as the chapter 'Ape Gigans').[408] In Verne's *Journey to the Centre of the Earth,* the pure, concentrated 'essence' that manifests as light bears a considerable resemblance to Haggard's flaming 'essence' of the Spirit of Life. This chapter has already pointed to evolving meanings of the word 'essence' in the nineteenth century to encompass the activity of compressing, as well as referring to aromatic perfume oils. Verne's prototype hollow-earth story added another layer to Haggard's use of the word 'essence' to describe Ayesha and the Spirit of Life, because 'essence' in French became

[407] Alexander Wilder, Madame Blavatsky's temporary proofreading editor, recalled in 1908 how Blavatsky had consulted Jacolliot's text during the composition of *Isis Unveiled* (1877). See: Alexander Wilder M. D., 'How Isis Unveiled Was Written' (Appendix 3) in H. P. Blavatsky, *ISIS UNVEILED: A Master-Key to the Mysteries of Ancient and Modern Science and Theology* < http://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/isis/iu2-ap3.htm> [last accessed 14 April 2014].

[408] For other French hollow-earth texts that shed light on Haggard's use of radiant central fire in *She*, see: George Sand, *Laura, ou Voyage dans le Cristal* (1864) – where the geodes in a small mineralogical cabinet unlock glittering subterranean landscapes of desire – and *Ignis* (published anonymously in 1883; the subsequent two editions in 1884 and thereafter are accredited to Comte Didier de Chousy), where an inventor harnesses fire from the earth's core.

the standard abbreviation for the light fuel oil made by distilling petroleum [‘essence de pétrol’] that was used in internal-combustion engines following Jean Joseph Etienne Lenoir’s first public demonstration in Paris of a petrol-fuelled, spark-ignition, motorised three-wheeled wagon in 1863, the year before the publication of *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*. Haggard’s uses of the word ‘essence’ were linguistically bang up to date. Newly associated at the fin de siècle with fuel, energy and concentrated existence, as well as with perfumed oils, the word ‘essence’ supported Haggard’s representation of the fragrant woman, Ayesha, who was also the hollow earth.

Ayesha’s fate and that of the earth’s ‘Kôr’ are bound together in age-avoidance. As two thousand years catch up with her and Ayesha shrivels to her simian ancestry, the caves at Kôr crumble to block any similar attempts to achieve immortality by bathing in the mysterious pillar of fire. The survivor, Leo Vincey, foiled at the last in attempting eternal youth, remains intact except that his golden curls have become white in a matter of hours; ‘besides, he looked twenty years older’ (*She*, p. 283). Leo, like the earth, looks older than you might think.

**IV: Hollow Conclusions**

This chapter has shown concern over the age of the earth to be endemic to *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *She*. It has supplied new insights into the relationship of smell, smells and smelling in Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* with medical anaesthesia, and the yoking of Haggard’s title character in *She* to contemporary ideas about nursing. It has stressed the ways in which smell, smells and smelling in these texts staged geocentric anxieties that figured as punctured immortality and subterranean transgression, and it has proposed that these two novels should usefully be examined in the light of the hollow earth genre. The appearance of hollow-earth tropes in nineteenth-century British writing has, so far, received scant critical attention, although they may

all be considered to bear a generic relationship to prototypes from North America and from France that were correlated by Standish with French and North American nineteenth-century cultural projects to address social meaning in the aftermath of political revolution.[409] Standish saw the French and American revolutions as catalysts for authors who imagined better ways to run the world, and chose to situate that world inside a version of our own. The exclusion of British writing from this post-revolutionary paradigm has led, I suggest, to an unbalanced understanding of the influences and borrowings of British fiction in its global context.

It is revealing to situate the theatre at the centre of the Hollow Earth in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* within a hollow-earth literary tradition of imagined utopias and dystopias. In that generic tradition, Wilde's treatment of themes in the novel of theatrical pretense, masks, social performativity and sexual play-acting may be read as part of the social and political critique of community through individualism in his essay 'The Soul of Man Under Socialism' (1891) that appeared in the same year as the one-volume edition of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.[410] As this chapter seeks to reclaim Ayesha from the critical pantheon of femmes fatales and reinstate her as a prototypical student, it is also rewarding to place the matriarchal world of the Amahaggar in *She* within that fantastic utopian context. The contributions of hollow-earth themes in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *She*, however, have been overlooked. This was, in the first instance, because of scandal attached to the novel in the wake of Wilde's trials in 1895 and that has subsequently conditioned response to it. Paul Barnaby's timeline of European attention to Wilde that was focused on his post-trial celebity, for example, shows that while just two European articles on the author were published in 1894, the

[409] Standish, p. 13.
[410] Wilde's argument in the essay that 'all imitation in morals and in life is wrong' is a summary of Dorian Gray's journey to his hollow interior. See: Oscar Wilde, 'The Soul of Man Under Socialism', in *De Profundis and Other Writings* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980), pp. 19-53, 30

year before the trials, twelve were published in 1896, the year after the trials.[411] In the second instance, the contributions of the hollow-earth genre to *She* have been overlooked because of British nationalist acclaim for the seminal role of *She* in the canon of 'Lost Race' (later known as 'Lost World') novels.

The conveniently Anglo-Saxon dominance of the 'Lost World' canon (that is, work by Rudyard Kipling, Doyle, R. M. Ballantyne, Marie Corelli, Andrew Lang, Wells, Dennis Wheatley and, of course, Haggard) imperils the rich connections to be made in analyses of English fiction in a global context. Lost World criticism also represents descriptions of cultural encounters in Victorian 'Lost World' texts narrowly, as reiterating the terms of contemporary and nostalgic relationships extended between the British and colonial subjects of Empire.[412] By contrast, critics of hollow-earth fictions may expect to find global and transhistorical utopian and dystopian themes in texts. Whether or not Lost World criticism is regarded as inherently imperialist – or frankly racist – it is certainly the case that more work is urgently needed on British authors' exposure to and influence by writing from other national traditions.

**V: Chapter Conclusion**

This chapter has mapped the extent to which *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *She* presented smell, smells and smelling as a subversion of social order. In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, smells are anaesthetic and enable Dorian Gray to withstand becoming his own canvas, despite his personal horror and the disapproval of society. In *She*, smells accompany the Queen and represent the continuation of life into the real presence of death. In each text, analysis of smells' and noses' implications leads to a recognition

[411] Paul Barnaby 'Reception Timeline', in *The Reception of Oscar Wilde in Europe*, ed. by Stefano Evangelista (London: Continuum, 2010), pp. xxi-lxxiv (p. xxiv).
[412] For 'Lost Race' transvaluation of savagery that engrossed popular culture during the New Imperialism (1871-1914), see: Bradley Deane, 'Imperial Barbarians: Primitive Masculinity in Lost World Fiction', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 36 (2008), 205-225.

that both novels borrow hollow-earth motifs in order to dramatise geocentric anxiety prompted by revelations of the age of the earth.

Against the background of sanitary reform and discursive patterns shown by the Introduction to have been admitted by new understandings of hygiene, music and fragrance at the fin de siècle, this thesis so far has shown how smells and noses in supernatural stories of the time were implicated in marking territory made scary by evolutionary theory, where a human being could also be a beast. It has also shown how smells figure the ancient planet as a person who thinks they are immortal but ends up destroyed. The following, final chapter of olfactory analysis adds to the picture of how smell, smells and smelling were identified at the fin de siècle with categorical trespass, by engaging with aspects of smell, smells and smelling that played out as themes of incarnationalism and supernatural possession in stories from the 1890s by Vernon Lee and Arthur Machen.

# Chapter Three: Vernon Lee, Arthur Machen and Supernatural Scents of the Past

Many of Machen's characters in stories of the 1890s and Lee's character Magnus in 'A Wicked Voice' (1890) are driven mad by the glimpse of unexpected realities that are hidden by appearances and revealed to them by smell, smells and smelling. In a thesis that intends to demonstrate that smell, smells and smelling act like a historiographical 'hinge' between sensorial epistemologies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it is remarkable that scent, in these instances, provokes the 'unhinging' of Magnus's and Machen's characters' minds. Etymologically, the metaphor of becoming 'unhinged' is drawn from architecture and early examples of the analogy refer to Biblical temple

doors (*OED*); the implication of 'unhinged' is that the whole structure of the building has become unstable and that the gaping, empty hole in its façade no longer affords protection from invasion. The submerged architectural analogy expressed in 'unhinged' (i.e. that a mind is like a building with its front doors off), has a relationship to the Gothic Romantic 'Haunted House' trope that, according to commentators including Geoffrey Gilbert and Eve M. Lynch,[413] is at the heart of Victorian and Edwardian supernatural tales.[414] This chapter will end by considering how Machen used smells to disturb and to reinforce characters' un-hinged-ness within the 'haunted house' trope.

As affirmed in the Introduction, this olfactory study differs methodologically from many recent critical studies by avoiding liminality, itself an ethnographical construct of the fin de siècle describing an initiatory drama found in a third, dream space fixed between two stable identities. Since 2003, an increasingly common critical convention has it that Lee's and Machen's interest lay in the destabilisation of binary opposites (such as man/woman, in/out, past/future, good/evil) in order to imagine a liminal tertiary space in which the author could negotiate his or her own complex set of identity issues.[415] Liminal positions suggest a way out of paradoxes of duality, and they attach to critical constructs of the Gothic genre that value narratives as dialectical workings-out of polar extremes, such as life and death, or love and hate. This thesis is concerned, however, with the ways in which smell, smells and smelling coincide at the

[413] Eve M. Lynch, 'Spectral Politics: The Victorian Ghost Story and the Domestic Servant', in *The Victorian Supernatural*, ed. by Nicola Bown, Carolyn Burdett and Pamela Thurschwell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 67-86.
[414] Geoffrey Gilbert, 'The Origins of Modernism in the Haunted Properties of Literature', in *The Victorian Supernatural*, ed. by Nicola Bown, Carolyn Burdett and Pamela Thurschwell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 239-257.
[415] A focus on Lee's literary disruptions of dichotomies underpinning nineteenth-century discourses of sexual identity is common to Vineta Colby's *Vernon Lee: A Literary Biography* (London: University of Virginia Press, 2003); Christa Zorn's *Vernon Lee: Aesthetics, History and the Victorian Female Intellectual* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2003); and Catherine Maxwell and Patricia Pulham's *Vernon Lee: Decadence, Ethics, Aesthetics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006). See: Catherine Anne Wiley, '"Warming Me Like a Cordial": The Ethos of the Body in Vernon Lee's Aesthetics', in *Vernon Lee: Decadence, Ethics, Aesthetics*, 2006), pp. 58-74 (p. 59); and Sara Bjärstorp, 'The Margins of Writing: A Study of Arthur Machen and the Literary Field of the 1890s' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Lund University, 2005).

fin de siècle with stories representing phenomena that completely evade such binary distinctions through a process of synaesthetic overlapping. Rather than being concerned with pursuing social and psychological models of liminality, therefore, the olfactory analysis in this chapter will engage with how Lee and Machen use smell, smells and smelling in their stories to signal transformation, collapse time distinctions and dissolve *all* certainties and *all* fixed identities.[416]

Lee (1856-1935) and Machen (1863-1947) were dissimilar in very many respects. Machen's impecunious removal at the age of eighteen from rural Wales and from the leafy expanses surrounding Hereford Cathedral School to the grimy suburbs of urban London reverberates throughout many of his early works that seek to locate a Precambrian or occupying Roman past beneath solid nineteenth-century civic appearances. Lee, on the other hand, was cosmopolite but awkward, being hauled around Europe by her rootless parents and becoming fluent in English, French, German and Italian languages and cultures from a very young age; discrepancy and overlap between cultures is a frequent motif in her writing. Despite their differing attention to social appearances, both Machen and Lee were similar in their periodicity; they both wrote their supernatural stories in the final years of the nineteenth century, and consciously adopted new subjects and styles after 1899. Moreover, they provided copious evidence of the links they made between olfaction, categorical indeterminacy

[416] Critical applications of 'liminality' with respect to Lee have themselves varied. While Patricia Pulham's original, careful, modulated pursuit of 'transitional objects' in Lee's fiction had depended upon Donald Winnicott's psychological model of adolescent liminality, the characteristics of various models of social and psychological liminality appear subsequently to have become fused. In 2011, for example, Liz Delf appropriated the notion of liminality to accommodate not only the fiction but also the author and the period:

[…] she [Lee] is herself a transitional figure in literary, social, and gender history. As a writer in the *fin de siècle*, which Showalter refers to as a 'borderline' in time and history (*Sexual Anarchy* 1), Lee's writing exists in a space between Victorian realism and modernism; as a woman interested in aestheticism, she crosses over between the Decadents' worship of beauty and the New Women's moral narratives. As I argue throughout this piece, Lee's intermediary position is crucial.

See: Liz Delf, '"Born of Ourselves": Gendered Doubling and the *Femme Fatale* in Vernon Lee's Ghost Stories' (unpublished Master's thesis, Oregon State University, 2011), p. 10. See also: Patricia Pulham, *Art and the Transitional Object in Vernon Lee's Supernatural Tales* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).

and supernaturality within their self-reflexive meditations on the practice of writing, Machen's *Hieroglyphics* (1902) and Lee's essay, 'Faustus and Helena: Some Notes on the Supernatural in Art' (1881). While maintaining an historical sensitivity to the span of over two decades that separated the publication of these essays, it is the intention of this chapter to look at Machen's and Lee's fiction in the context of these two pieces.

**I: Smells in 'A Wicked Voice' by Vernon Lee**

Lee's aesthetic meditation 'Faustus and Helena' and her first supernatural stories date from 1880-1, when she was in her early twenties.[417] Lee had enjoyed a precocious childhood, publishing her first short story at the age of fourteen. It is not surprising therefore that she later repudiated her early work as evidence of artistic immaturity or, as she lightly grimaced in the preface to the 1930 edition of *Hauntings*, of her 'Yellow Book period'.[418] Notwithstanding their author's own literary scruples, the stories collected and published in 1890 as *Hauntings: Fantastic Stories* have been regularly reprinted and anthologised in some recent collections of late Victorian Gothic tales.[419] The self-sufficient identity of these stories, and their contextualisation alongside other spooky tales of the fin de siècle has often had the effect of separating off critical interest in Lee's nineteenth-century fiction from corresponding critical interest in Lee's twentieth-century concerns with psychology and aesthetics. Hilary Grimes, for example, covers the supernatural stories within a single paragraph of her chapter on Lee, although

[417] Lee was 'un enfant précose' according to Giovanni Ruffini (1807-81), poet and librettist of Donizetti's opera, Don Pasquale, whom she had met in Paris during the Franco-Prussian war. Lee's correspondence with Ruffini and his English partner, Mrs Turner, occurred while Lee was in her late teens to early twenties, but while Ruffini and Mrs Turner were towards the ends of their lives. See: Beatrice Corrigan, 'Giovanni Ruffini's Letters to Vernon Lee 1875-1879', *English Miscellany*, 13 (1962), 179-240 (p. 187).
[418] Vernon Lee, *For Maurice: Five Unlikely Stories* (London: John Lane, 1927), p. xiii.
[419] Short supernatural stories written between 1886-1904 by Lee have been anthologised in collections based on both genre and period, including: Robert Aickman, ed., *Sixth Fontana Book of Great Ghost Stories* (London: Fontana, 1964); Richard Dalby, ed., *Dracula's Brood* (New York: Dorset Press, 1987); Angela Carter, ed., *Wayward Girls and Wicked Women* (London: Virago, 1986); Joseph Black et al, eds., *Broadview Anthology of British Literature: Volume B of the Concise Edition* (Plymouth: Broadview Press, 2007); and Roger Luckhurst, ed., *Late Victorian Gothic Tales* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

she does say briefly that Lee's 'aesthetic and supernatural writing are inextricably intertwined'.[420] Lee herself sought to make a distinction between her nineteenth- and twentieth-century work, writing to Wells in 1904 that she had nothing representative of hers that she wanted to send him to read since her previous output did not match up to her present interests.[421] Nonetheless, the following analysis of smell, smells and smelling in Lee's nineteenth-century supernatural story 'A Wicked Voice' is grounded in the correspondence between Lee's early fiction and her later writings on psychology and aesthetics, and relates particularly to Burdett's description of the author's twentieth-century experimental observations regarding how the human body reacts to aesthetic experience.[422] It is also grounded in the relationship that Burdett describes between Lee's experimental observations of aesthetic response and her indebtedness to Grant Allen's *Physiological Aesthetics* (1877), which reinforced and conversely provoked her fictional representations of the trespassing smells of the exterior world through apertures of sweat, tears, blood and semen.

The date of the title page inscription on Lee's own copy of Allen's book – '*Violet Paget, 1879*' – indicates that Lee's interest in aesthetic responses to smells predated her fictional output.[423] Allen had devoted a whole chapter of *Physiological Aesthetics* to 'Smell & Taste', considering smell to be on the 'lowest' scale of the human sensorium and an evolutionary relic of requirements for survival.[424] According to Allen, the status of artworks that represented olfaction would be dependent upon their congruity with the pain/pleasure principle expounded by the dedicatee of the book,

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[420] Hilary Grimes, *The Late Victorian Gothic: Mental Science, the Uncanny, and Scenes of Writing* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), p. 120.
[421] Vernon Lee to H.G. Wells, August 15-16, 1904, *Letters of Vernon Lee to H.G. Wells*, <http://students.ctsdh.luc.edu/omeka/items/show/21> [accessed 18 December 2013].
[422] Carolyn Burdett, '"The subjective inside us can turn into the object outside": Vernon Lee's Psychological Aesthetics', *Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth-Century*, 12 (2011) <http://www.19.bbk.ac.uk/index.php/19/article/view/610/712> [accessed 1 July 2013].
[423] Florence, British Institute Vernon Lee Collection, (FBIVLC) VL.85 ALL [Grant Allen, *Physiological Aesthetics* (Henry S. King: London, 1877)], p. 76.
[424] Lee's library of approximately 420 volumes was donated in 1935 by Irene Cooper Willis to the British Institute of Florence, Italy.

Herbert Spencer.[425] Excellent pictures, therefore, must necessarily represent healthful and attractive smells. A great painting consequently might indicate a delicate odour such as that of peaches, but never the strong or unwholesome odours of Gin or bacon.[426] Over-stimulation by the depiction of too much of a normally pleasant smell (Allen cites the floral odours of white flowers, jasmine and stephanotis) may be cloying but could never be disgusting.[427] In addition to Allen's *Physiological Aesthetics*, Lee's other source for mapping a history of the senses in her supernatural fiction was *The Power of Sound* (1880) by her friend Edmund Gurney.[428] Gurney's discussion of contributions by anatomical structures to musical appreciation predated his work as a founding member and Secretary of the Society for Psychical Research (SPR) by two years, although he was by then already engaged in SPR's work of rationalising art as a material response to concrete external phenomena. The sheer volume of pencilled marginalia in Lee's own heavily annotated copy of *The Power of Sound* suggests that she found much in Gurney's account to inspire and provoke over a period of time. Her copy is inscribed '*V. Paget, London, 3 August 1881*', and there is evidence of her re-reading the text much later, between 1895 and 1898.[429] Gurney agreed with Allen's relegation of scent but added the following musical comparison:

> A sensation of fragrance (provided it be not over-strong) remains enjoyable, but gradually increases in vividness up to the point when we become insensible to it; while a continuous musical tone, however sweet, will force itself more and more

[425] Spencer's explanation of phenomena on the grounds of its evolutionary advantage has been loosely described as 'Social Darwinism before Darwin'; he assumed that the drive to pleasure and the avoidance of pain was the ethical and practical basis of culture.
[426] Allen excludes all Dutch still lifes from the canon of 'Art' on grounds of the gross smell of their subject. See: (FBIVLC) VL.85 ALL, pp. 76.
[427] For the purpose of this thesis, 'disgust' may be considered as extreme aversion to filth and excess. See: Ibid., p.76-7.
[428] According to Gurney biographer Gordon Epperson, the friendship had begun when Gurney wrote to Lee in Florence in 1882 in approval of her article on vivisection for *Contemporary Review*, May 1882. See: Gordon Epperson, *The Mind of Edmund Gurney* (London: Associated University Presses, 1997), pp. 22-3. Lee was a subsequent dinner guest of the Gurneys whenever in London, and wrote to Matilda Paget (letter 1 Jul 1888, Colby Collection) in sadness at reading in the newspapers of Gurney's (still-unexplained) death, aged forty-one, from chloroform overdose in a hotel room in Brighton.
[429] Shafquat Towheed, '"Music is not merely for musicians": Vernon Lee's Musical Reading and Response', *Yearbook of English Studies*, 40:1-2 (2010), 273–294. See especially pp. 293-294 that considers evidence of Lee's re-reading of Gurney between 1895-8.

on our attention, and end by thoroughly annoying us.[430]

As Burdett and Shafquat Towheed have pointed out, Lee's marginalia have provided a useful source of information to scholars about what she was reading and where her eclectic ideas came from.[431] In this instance however, it is just as useful to see what Lee was disassociating herself from, as her short story 'A Wicked Voice' (1890) constitutes a sprightly disavowal of Gurney's and Allen's conclusions regarding smells.

Although Gurney contrasts the effect of a continuing note of fragrance with a continuing note of music, the music and fragrance in Lee's 'A Wicked Voice' do not contrast but are insinuating equivalents of each other. They overlap while the narrator is intoxicated, enervated and poisoned by sweet and toxic odours in an olfactory duplication of the initial intoxication, subsequent enervation and eventual poisoning of the Countess by music: 'the third song could kill her off on the spot, kill her for love, there under his very eyes, if he [i.e., the murderous singer] only felt inclined'.[432] In 'A Wicked Voice', Lee turns Allen's and Gurney's assurances on their heads. Despite their agreement upon the evolutionarily vestigial nature of olfaction, and their specific instances of the delicate odour of peach and the sweet floral odour of the white flowers jasmine and stephanotis, Lee delivers the scent of peaches and white flowers in the text as simultaneous and synaesthetic versions of the killing music. This music suspends linear time. This suspended time stinks.

Time stinks in Lee's 'A Wicked Voice', while breath – the quotidian breath that measures mortal span – is suspended in singing. In this short, first-person narrative, Magnus (a contemporary composer and a fist-waving, cursing, unsociable parody of Richard Wagner) wishes to participate in the Wagnerian project of articulating Northern

[430] Florence, British Institute Vernon Lee Collection, (FBIVLC) VL 781.23 GUR [Edmund Gurney, *The Power of Sound* (London: Smith, Elder & Co, 1880)], p. 4.
[431] See: Towheed p. 273; and Burdett, 'Vernon Lee's Psychological Aesthetics', p. 4.
[432] Vernon Lee, 'A Wicked Voice', in *Supernatural Tales*, ed. by Irene Cooper Willis (London: Peter Owen, 2004), pp. 127-158 (p. 132). Further references to this edition are given in parentheses after quotations in the text, where the title is abbreviated to 'Voice'.

heroic mythology through orchestral music. Instead, he is overcome by the sultry attractions of the rococo South and, in particular, by the ghost of Zaffirino, an eighteenth-century Italian castrato singer and owner of the 'Wicked Voice' of the title. The comparison between the stifling airs of Venice and Mistrà, and the stifling arias (or 'airs') of the eighteenth century is drawn out punningly. The introduction to this thesis has dwelt on the changing nature of fears of miasmatic transmission in the nineteenth century, but this study of British literature from the Victorian fin de siècle has until now not considered Continental fears of malarial infection, resulting from the blood-sucking bite (most prevalent usually at dusk and in the early evening) of a mosquito breeding in warm, brackish water. In 'A Wicked Voice', Lee makes much of the connections between 'malaria' and 'mal aria': 'A shiver ran through me and my head suddenly filled as with the fumes of some subtle wine; I remembered all those weedy embankments, those canals full of stagnant water, the yellow faces of the peasants; the word malaria returned to my mind' ('Voice', p. 153). The airs and the 'airs' are both suspended in time as the past permeates the present. The castrato's deadly air 'that was visibly killing the poor young lady' ('Voice', p. 133) is simultaneously the tune and the essence of that 'cursed human voice, violin of flesh and blood, fashioned with the subtle tools, the cunning hands, of Satan' ('Voice', p. 127) which results fatally and perpetually in the 'hideous gurgle of breath strangled by a rush of blood' ('Voice', p. 127). The breath-stopping wicked song inscribes itself onto the local area: Magnus's eternal wait for musical inspiration among the 'little islands, like moored black boats' is attended 'with baited breath' ('Voice', p. 141), Venice in the moonlight is 'stuffy' and 'breathless' ('Voice', p. 128), Magnus's bedroom air is full of 'heat and closeness' ('Voice', p. 136). Even Magnus's gondola is motionless and suspended without forward movement, swaying to and fro 'stationary on that sea of moonbeams' ('Voice', p. 140). The removal from Venice to Mistrà is recommended as a change of 'air' (the doctor asserts

that the 'air of the great lagoons' had 'pulled [Magnus] down a little,' whereas Count Alvise had 'said the air was so good' in his ancestral estate), although the mysterious fever that strikes Magnus there, and from which Magnus only partly recovers, is evidence that the oppressive 'air' is only nominally atmospheric, and that the musical 'air' is every bit as potent and deadly ('Voice', p. 140).[433]

The stagnant presence of air (in both senses of the word) in 'A Wicked Voice' is designated by perfume. Venice under the full moon 'seemed to swelter in the midst of the waters, exhaling, like some great lily, mysterious influences, which make the brain swim and the heart faint' ('Voice', p. 128). Neither aural nor olfactory senses can account for the mysterious fragrance 'of that white flower (it must be white) which made me think of the taste of peaches all melting into the delicious freshness of falling dew' ('Voice', p. 153), while the air in Magnus's sleepless bedchamber 'seemed laden with the scent of all manner of white flowers, faint and heavy in their intolerable sweetness: tuberoses, gardenias and jasmines drooping I know not where in neglected vases' ('Voice', p. 136). Magnus's prophetic dream of the murderous song is later accompanied, as noted previously, by 'a heavy, sweet smell, reminding me of the flavour of a peach' ('Voice', p. 138). The smell of a peach, however, has been previously singled out in the narrative as actually disappointing: the house in which Magnus boards has provided for its lodgers 'heaps of those huge hard peaches which nature imitates from the marble shops of Pisa' ('Voice', p. 129). Whereas the actual, edible, table peaches in 'A Wicked Voice' are hard and underripe, the visionary dream peaches approach the status of a platonic ideal of peachiness, recalling in Mistrà, yet again, the smells of Venice and Venetian dreams:

[433] In transcribing the occult tenor of the disembodied song onto the air and local topography, Lee is subverting her own definition of *genius loci in* 'Faustus and Helena' which she ascribes to human imagination, *plus* the spirit of its surroundings. The notion of *genius loci* was to become increasingly important to Lee throughout the 1880s and 1890s, although her most worked-out definition did not appear until 1907. See: Vernon Lee, *Genius Loci: Notes on Places* (London: John Lane, 1907).

> There was the sharp cry of an owl; the barking of a dog; a sudden whiff of warm, enervating perfume, a perfume that made me think of the taste of certain peaches, and suggested white, thick, wax-like petals. I seemed to have smelled that flower once before: it made me feel languid, almost faint ('Voice', p. 152).

Here, the visionary scent of dream peaches is attached to the description of white flowers (tuberoses, gardenias and jasmine) from Magnus's bedchamber and to the olfactory description of Venice. The stylised presence of yet more flowers surround Magnus's fitful slumber on the sofa that is 'painted with little nosegays and sprigs like an old silk' ('Voice', p. 136). It may be noted that the exotic white blossoms which Magnus dreams/recollects in his vision ('tuberoses, gardenias and jasmines drooping I know not where in neglected vases') were extremely unlikely ever to have ever co-existed in 'neglected vases' as, in the first instance, a tuberose flowers only at night and, in the second instance, gardenias are thirsty little bush plants with slim, short stems (popular in the late-nineteenth century for buttonholes) that would last no more than a couple of hours in a neglected vase. Tuberoses, gardenias and jasmines, however, were fragrances that had became artificially synthesised in the late-nineteenth century and were the basis for the heavy, spicy, 'oriental' scents then fashionable.[434] The horticultural implausibility of Magnus's 'neglected vases', then, reinforces Lee's privileging of the *scent* of flowers above the *appearance* of flowers. Lee's preference for artificial floral scents over naturally occurring combinations of flower smells aligns the author with the trademark stylistic manners of decadent fin-de-siècle writers like Wilde in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and Max Beerbohm in 'A Defence of Cosmetics' (first published in the *Yellow Book* magazine, April 1894) who, following the example of Des Esseintes in Huysmans's *À Rebours*, eschewed 'Nature' for 'Artifice'.[435] In 'A

[434] Catherine Maxwell has pointed out the prominence afforded to newly-synthesised fragrances in turn-of-the-century poems by Arthur Symons such as 'White Heliotrope'. See: Catherine Maxwell, 'Scents and Sensibility', in *Decadent Poetics: Literature and Form at the British Fin de Siècle*, ed. by Jason David Hall and Alex Murray (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 201-225 (p. 218).

[435] Dennis Denisoff cavills, however, that for all her stylistic alignment with Decadence, Lee's work during this period evinces her discomfort with the 'ungrounded assumption of privilege' that underlay

Wicked Voice', the particular scents of peaches and white flowers, that Gurney and Allen had used to illustrate their convictions that smells in art are non-hazardous and must necessarily be delicate, are used contrarily and conversely to indicate the potential toxicity of art.[436]

The moral malaria of Venice is touched upon by Count Alvise's story, which recalls that the peculiar and fatal decision to expose the Procuratessa to Zaffirelli as a 'cure' for her ailment had been relayed from a vision of St. Justina, the patron Saint of Venice. While Venice itself is implicated by association with Zaffirelli's phantom odours of peaches, white flowers and miasmatically unhealthy smells, another site of olfaction in 'A Wicked Voice' is the Church. Olfactory terms are used to describe not only the unique and specific Cathedral church of St Anthony's in Padua, but also the generalised institution of the Church that has sponsored Zaffirino's castration. Church authority is personified in the exposition of Zaffirino's history by the voice from 1785 of 'Father Prosdocimo Sabatelli, Barnalite, Professor of Eloquence of the College of Modena and member of the Arcadian Academy', who practiced 'with the approbation of the Superiors' under the name 'Evander *Lily*bæan' ('Voice', p. 130, emphasis mine).[437] Evander Lilybæan triumphantly recounts Zaffirino's short life and 'wonderful […] vocal gift' ('Voice, p. 130-1).[438] He estimates the singer's worth solely in terms of the secular fame, adulation and influence commanded by 'that great cultivator of the human voice, the Devil' ('Voice', p. 131). It is precisely the lack of those diabolical

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much Decadent writing. See: Dennis Denisoff, 'Vernon Lee: Decadent Contamination and the Constructivist Ethos', in *Vernon Lee: Decadence, Ethics, Aesthetics*, ed. by Catherine Maxwell and Patricia Pulham (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 75-89 (p. 79).

[436] For further examples of floral malevolence, please see Chapter Two of this thesis.

[437] Lilybæum is mentioned in Virgil's *Aeneid* as a river in Sicily, so 'Lilybæan' presumably means 'from Lilybæum'.

[438] There is no explanation in the text about why Zaffirino's life should have been so short, except that we last encounter him in his travelling clothes under the certain apprehension of having offended a powerful family. Endocrinological reports suggest that there are no deleterious impact of castration upon life-span; indeed the eighteenth-century castrati 'Farinelli' (Carlo Broschi) upon whom Zaffirino was based, lived pampered and prosperous until he was aged 77. See: Jean D. Wilson and Claus Roehrborn, 'Long-term consequences of Castration in Men: Lessons from the Skoptzy and the Eunuchs of the Chinese and Ottoman Courts', *Journal of Endocrinolgy and Metabolism*, 84:12 (1999), pp. 4324–4331, 4324.

charms cited by Lilybæan that renders the midday mass at St Anthony's Basilica in Padua so hilariously grotesque to the narrator, for whom it offers 'an insane, insanely merry jumble of bellowing and barking, mewing cackling and braying, such as would have enlivened a witches' meeting, or rather some medieval feast of fools' ('Voice', p. 147).

The evening service of Vespers at St Anthony's has finished by the time that Magnus returns there from dinner and a smoke at a local inn: 'it was already night in that vast Cathedral' ('Voice', p. 148). The fleeting, fleeing human contacts afforded by St Anthony's last stragglers do not distract Magnus from its smell, which is that of 'stale incense' and 'a crypt-like damp' ('Voice', p. 148). This is topsy-turvy: it would have been hardly necessary to remind Lee's contemporary readers that crypts are meant to be subterranean, while incense is meant to ascend and neither would it have been necessary in most cases to have reminded readers in the late-nineteenth century that the icon most associated with St Anthony is the lily.[439] The perplexing association of St Anthony's with strangely immobilised incense, with unwelcome savours of the crypt and with iconographical lilies (which then as now, according to Douglas Keister, were popular in church funeral arrangements on account of their strong fragrance which camouflages the stench of decomposition) attenuates the complexities of experience that are introduced by olfaction in 'A Wicked Voice' as nothing in this story of the supernatural goes where it ought.[440]

The accumulating associations of fragrant lilies, white flowers, peaches and

[439] In the nineteenth century, St Anthony of Padua was second only to St Francis in the frequency of representation of Franciscan saints. As a distributor of bread and of aristocratic origins, Anthony was iconographically associated with charitable activity and social reform. Counting up the number of conventional Roman Catholic churches, chapels and collection boxes in central Paris in 1978 (missing out Nôtre Dame because it is full of tourists, not locals), Stephen Wilson calculated that St Anthony of Padua came third in iconographical importance, after the Virgin Mary and St Theresa, but before the Sacred Heart of Jesus. See: Stephen Wilson, *Saints and their Cults: Studies in Religious Sociology, Folklore, and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) pp. 233-260.

[440] Douglas Keister, *Stories in Stone: A Field Guide to Cemetery Symbolism and Iconography* (Layton, Utah: Gibbs-Smith, 2004), p. 50.

incense in 'A Wicked Voice' contribute to the confusion of gender certainties that are contained within the disembodied wicked voice itself. I say 'confusion' (or even better, 'con-fusion') because although critics Vineta Colby, Christa Zorn, Catherine Maxwell and Patricia Pulham have applied scrutiny of the binary divisions between male and female and between past and present in the text to argue that Lee was recasting the castrato's ambiguous sexual status as a liminal third space, the perfumes tell a different story. The stink of stagnant time confounds any binary division: the imaginary smell of peaches that turn out to be simultaneously real, unreal and dreamed, the exhalations of lily flowers that attract while they nauseate, and the incense that fails to rise in St Anthony's while instead the stench of the crypt permeates the air, suggest that Lee is using themes of odour in 'A Wicked Voice' to reject themes of antagonistic binary opposites, and affirm ideas that had been set out nine years previously in Lee's youthful polemic, 'Faustus and Helena: Some Notes on the Supernatural in Art' (1881).

In 'Faustus and Helena', Lee had argued that the role of the supernatural in art was to be a restoration to things of their original metamorphic, protean nature. 'Why?', she responded to her own rhetoric, 'Why? Because the supernatural is nothing but ever-renewed impressions, ever-shifting fancies'.[441] In 'Faustus and Helena', the act of creating meaning (an act which she deplores as necessarily but tragically reductive) is coterminous with the body that records subjective or objective 'realities'. Exploring the delimiting aspects of aesthetic practice, Lee dates the obsolescence of cosmic powers to the earliest human attempts to make signifiers for them as fetishised pagan 'gods', including 'rude work, ugly, barbarous, blundering scratchings on walls, kneaded clay vessels, notched sticks, [and] nonsense rhymes'.[442] In all such cases, Lee brings attention to the corporeal, averring that

[441] Vernon Lee, 'Faustus and Helena: Some Notes on the Supernatural', in *Belcaro* (London: W. Satchell, 1881), pp. 70-105 (p. 85).
[442] Ibid., p. 80.

> art is the definer, the *embodier*, the analytic and synthetic force of form. Every artistic *embodiment* of impressions or fancies implies isolation of those impressions or fancies, selection, combination and balancing of them; that is to say, diminution—nay, destruction of their *inherent* power […] art is proportion, and proportion is restriction.[443]

Lee situates artistic practice within the gesturing body, arguing that *all* artistic representations of the supernatural are ritual enactments, since gesturing towards the supernatural will contain 'ghostly' echoes of 'the divinities of old [and] the imaginative power which they possessed'.[444] A revealing exception from the definition of art in 'Faustus and Helena' as being fundamentally gestural and corporeal, however, is made in 'A Wicked Voice' for smell.

In 'Faustus and Helena', Lee overtly characterises the artwork as *evidence* of human agency. In 'A Wicked Voice', she reverses priority so that the pre-existing song and scent *impose themselves* upon human agency. In Lee's story, the possessing scent exists prior to the humans who are doomed to articulate or encounter it, and it is the wicked voice that garners corporeality as it urges its pattern onto defiled and leaking human bodies. This incongruity between Lee's advertised and actual practice in the writing of supernatural fiction may be, as Zorn has explained, due in part to the peculiar burden of synthesising the differing traditions of essay composition from the British and Continental models to which Lee had been exposed. It may alternatively be the case, however, that simultaneous embodiment and disembodiment in the story disrupts Lee's own definition of art as being gestural and corporeal, by presenting a radical inclusivity of the phenomenal and noumenal worlds, with its cessation of linear time (as signified by the holding or withholding of breath), its depiction of the omnipresence of history (i.e. the violation of temporal laws by Magnus's ghostly visions) and the multifarious associations of its hypnotic blossoms.

It does not anywhere say specifically to what botanical variety of lily Lee was

[443] Ibid., pp. 85-86. Emphasis mine.
[444] Ibid., p. 93.

referring, but this study assumes the blanched pallor of Lee's *liliae candidae* ['Madonna lilies'] to have been synonymous with other fin-de-siècle lilies such as the ones in the famous painting by Lee's childhood friend, John Singer Sargent, *Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose* (1886).[445] Referring to the evocation of Ernest Dowson's personality in a review of Dowson's *Verses* (1896) by Symons as having been 'delicate, mournful, almost colourless but very fragrant', Holly Laird points out that 'gender noticeably seeps into Symons's portrait, such that if the "delicate" adjectives had not already feminised Dowson, then the following association of Dowson with lilies (albeit weedy) would'.[446] Laird's (and, possibly, Symons's) construction of lilies as essentially 'feminine' fragrant plants may have had significant currency in mid-nineteenth-century thought, but that significant currency is thought by Adrienne Auslander-Munich to have been undergoing revaluation by the end of the century.[447] Auslander-Munich has focused on the phallic lilies (and Lilys) that populate fin-de-siècle texts, such as Wilde's *Salomé* (published in French 1891, translated by the author into English in 1894) and Henry James' *What Maisie Knew* (1897) and *The Turn of the Screw* (1898*)*, arguing that lilies in texts of this period manifested the dissolution of virginal semiotics and the rise of sexually knowing, self-deflowering emblems of femininity. Christina Bradstreet's art-historical critique of the specific cultural associations wrought by floral fragrances in Charles Courtney Curran's painting, *Scent of the Rose* (1890) and John William Waterhouse's painting, *The Soul of the Rose* (1908) also brings attention to the fragrant and flagrant 'insinuation of a solitary woman attending to her own sexual desires […] suggestive of contemporary challenges to prevailing attitudes to sexual relations made

[445] About whom, it is maintained by Sophie Geoffroy-Mentoux, it is the *middle* name that is germane to the genesis of Lee's musical interest in voices.
[446] Holly Laird, 'The Death of the Author by Suicide: Fin-de-Siècle Poets and the Construction of Identity', in *The Fin-de-siecle Poem: English Literary Culture and the 1890s*, ed. by Joseph Bristow (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005), pp. 69-100 (p. 71).
[447] Adrienne Auslander-Munich, 'What Lily Knew: Virginity in the 1890s', in *Virginal Sexuality and Textuality in Victorian Literature*, ed. by Lloyd Davis (New York: University of New York Press, 1993), pp. 143-158.

by the New Woman and her male supporters'.[448] Bradstreet's and Auslander-Munich's arguments hold much interest to a student of olfactory images in literature of this period, except that they neglect to consider pre-existing tensions between lilies as a symbol of idealised femininity and lilies' pistils as self-fertilising or even phallic symbols (as they are in traditional tarot iconography and as they are understood in relation to the dynastic French symbol of *fleurs de lys*). In particular, given that Lee's first published story, 'Les aventures d'une pièce de monnaie' (published in Lausanne's monthly journal, *La Famille,* in May, June, and July, 1870), indicates its author's interest in numismatics, it is not illogical to expect that Lee would have noticed the florentine lily stamped upon the reverse of early renaissance florins from the city in which she resided from 1873. Given also that the coffer in 'A Wedding Chest' is purchased by Messer Troilo 'duly by Florentine lilies' and the observations in Chapter Two of this thesis on shifting floriographical meanings in homoerotic discourse at the turn of the century, I would go further than Auslander-Munich and assert that Lee's insertion of the scent of lilies in 'A Wicked Voice' consciously introduces a literary trope that was then undergoing discursive transformation.[449] The destructive scents of lilies and white flowers also associate the story with the title of Baudelaire's notoriously decadent, symbolist and scent-soaked volume of poetry, *Les fleurs du mal* [*Evil flowers*] (1857).

I will now briefly consider the implications entailed by Lee's own English translation of 'A Wicked Voice' from its French prototype, 'La voix maudite' (first published August 1887 in the Parisian journal *Les Lettres et les Arts*). Although it is outside the scope of this thesis to comment at length on texts written in French during

[448] Christina Bradstreet, '"Wicked with Roses": Floral Femininity and the Erotics of Scent', *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide: A Journal of Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture*, 6:1 (2006) <http://www.19thc-artworldwide.org/index.php/spring07/144-qwicked-with-rosesq-floral-femininity-and-the-erotics-of-scent> [accessed 21 April 2012].
[449] Vernon Lee, 'A Wedding Chest', in *Supernatural Tales*, ed. by Irene Cooper Willis (London: Peter Owen, 1987), pp. 73-85 (p. 78).

the fin de siècle, it is relevant to Lee's presentation of smell, smells and smelling as simultaneously embodied and disembodied that she should have enhanced the status of smell in 'A Wicked Voice' by reinforcing its association with Baudelaire's *Les fleurs du mal.* There had been no need to labour the association of 'La voix maudite' with *Les fleurs du mal*: the 'poetically' declamatory diction, the frequent apostrophising, the repetitious listing of examples, the regular use of alliteration, the punctuatory ellipses that segue from paragraph to paragraph and the distinctively Baudelairean lexis all did the job anyway. It was only when Lee adapted 'La voix maudite' as 'A Wicked Voice' in 1889 that she inserted the name of Baudelaire into the text, adding for the benefit of an English readership the genre direction: 'when I read Swinburne and Baudelaire' to Magnus's reminiscences of boyish romantic dreams ('Voice', p. 135). The title of the French story had unmistakably alluded to the literary circle of '*Poètes maudits*' whom Paul Verlaine had thus eulogised in his eponymous collection of previously published material by Tristan Corbière, Arthur Rimbaud and Stéphane Mallarmé (1884).[450] Although the term 'poètes maudits' had been in circulation at least since 1832, Verlaine's engagement with the term to describe a movement of poets (including Baudelaire amongst its maudits literary ancestors) concerned with bourgeois-baiting, absinthe-quaffing, devil-worshipping sociopathy had been sufficiently popular to warrant a second edition in 1888, particularly after endorsement by Huysmans in *À Rebours*, within its chapter about the writings of the Classical Decadence.[451] Although Lee herself was to translate the title 'La voix maudite' into 'A Wicked Voice', the word 'wicked' is not really an adequate substitute for 'maudit', which conveys more of doomed, tragic accursèdness than does 'wicked', with its English associations of deliberate moral naughtiness. The second edition of *Poètes maudits* (1888) was

[450] Paul Verlaine, *Les poètes maudits* (Paris: Léon Vanier, 1884).
[451] Alfred de Vigny's philosophical novel *Stello* (1832) used the term 'maudit' [i.e., more or less an updating of Caroline Lamb's epigraph on Byron: 'mad, bad and dangerous to know'] to support Vigny's Romantic conclusion that all poets must forever be despised and alienated within their own societies.

published two years after the publication of the Symbolist Manifesto (1886) and had incorporated writings by and about the Symbolist writers Marceline Desbordes-Valmore, Villiers de L'Isle-Adam and Paul Verlaine himself, all accompanied by line drawings of the poets' faces transfixed uncomfortably as medallions upon a nib surmounting an Apollonian lyre. At the time of publication of 'A Wicked Voice' in 1890, therefore, the original title carried some resonant and contemporary baggage that demanded of its readers an a priori expectation that the story would contain Symbolist and Baudelairean aspects, commensurate with the elevation of scent.[452]

Lee's own implicit claim to a relationship with the vogueish poètes maudits is simultaneously illuminated and problematised by differences between the presentation of olfaction in the English and French versions of the story. In the first place, it should be acknowledged that the plots in 'La voix maudite' and 'A Wicked Voice' are exactly the same. The plot is so much the same, and the details of phrasing are so similar, that the stories have been presented interchangeably to French and English readerships. In Sophie Geoffroy-Menoux's edition of *La voix maudite: Nouvelles* (2001), for example, Lee's short stories 'Winthrop's Adventure' and 'The Virgin of Seven Daggers' are translated into French, while 'La voix maudite' is merely republished intact as an appropriate substitution for 'A Wicked Voice'.[453] Despite Geoffroy-Menoux's critical line, however, the translation of 'La voix maudite' into 'A Wicked Voice' is no straightforward linguistic transposition. For one thing, comparisons between the stifling airs of Italian cities and the stifling arias [or 'airs'] of the eighteenth century are drawn out in the English version. For another, the central pun of 'malaria' and 'mal aria' is

[452] For further discussion of this topic, see the Introduction of this thesis.
[453] Geoffroy-Menoux [now Geoffroy] does briefly acknowledge that stylistic and cultural modifications were entrained by the linguistic transposition of 'Voix maudit' in French (which she names the '*langue plus propice a dire le Mal*' ['best language in which to talk about evil']) into 'in Lee's 'maternal tongue' as 'A Wicked Voice', but she otherwise refers to the two versions as being the one and same text. See: Vernon Lee, *La voix maudit: Nouvelles*, ed. by Sophie Geoffroy-Menoux (Rennes: Terres de Brume, 2001), p. 17.

subdued in the English version where Magnus's final malaria becomes an unspecified 'fever', caught as his body becomes 'fluid and vaporous' listening for the third and final time to the fatal song.[454] Lee's drawing out and subsequent restraining of the translated 'malaria' and 'mal aria' pun, and the insertion of Baudelaire's name into 'A Wicked Voice', indicate that the author was encouraging readerly attention to the presence of embodied, visceral sensation that summons 'the spectre of the antique' in her story.[455] At the same time, though (and perversely, since the story's content deals with the horror of artistic influence), Lee's translation of her own existing story from one tongue to another to another is not only the subject of the story but also the circumstance of its literary production.

Geoffroy-Menoux has proposed that the ever-shifting fancies of metamorphic and protean desire in 'A Wicked Voice' are primarily indicated by undulation; the waves that lap around Venice, she declares, and the sinuous line of a serpent (archetypal icon of temptation) are the same. Quoting the dictionary definition of 'wave', she writes: 'The wave, be it audio, visual, or olfactory, in its motion to fold, unfolding, refolding, brings together opposites: water and fire, air and stone. It is "the initial meeting place between the universe and what we understand of it"'.[456] Geoffroy-Menoux's attention to undulation in 'A Wicked Voice' invokes the presocratic notion of 'flux' as advertised by Heraclitus (c. 500BCE) as the perpetual state of existence and a challenge to the illusion of permanence. The evanescent and self-contradicting presence of Heraclitan flux in 'A Wicked Voice' accounts not only for Lee's incorporation of the evolving discursive potential of lily fragrance to incorporate a fluid notion of polyvalent

[454] It may or may not be relevant to Lee's association of malaria in 'A Wicked Voice' with literary decadence that one of the main industries of Mistrà in 1880-90 was the manufacture, bottling and distribution of 'Mistrà', a milky-white digestif that was based on the scent and taste of aniseed and similar to *maudits* poets' favourite tipple, absinthe.

[455] For Lee's historicism, see: Angela Leighton, 'Ghosts, Aestheticism and Vernon Lee', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 28:1 (1999), 1-14, 1.

[456] Sophie Goffroy-Mentoux, *Les voix maudites de Vernon Lee: du bel canto à la mal'aria dans 'Winthrop's Adventure' (1881), 'La voix maudite' (1887), 'The Virgin of the Seven Daggers' (1909)* <http://laboratoires.univ-reunion.fr/oracle/documents/348.html> [accessed 3 April 2012].

sexuality, but also for the incoherence of popular accounts of the mysterious singer:

> […] they were long-drawn-out notes, of intense but peculiar sweetness, a man's voice which had much of a woman's, but even more of a chorister's, but a chorister's voice without its limpidity and innocence […] the strangest thing in this strange business was, that even among those learned in music there was no agreement on the subject of this voice: it was called by all sorts of names and described by all manner of incongruous adjectives; people went so far as to dispute whether the voice belonged to a man or to a woman: everyone had some new definition ('Voice', pp. 144-145).

Geoffroy-Menoux's attention to patterns of appearance and reappearance and to submerged continuity in 'A Wicked Voice' suggests a useful way to connect the story with Lee's own, twentieth-century definition of the fundamental aesthetic quality of writing as manifesting 'the perpetual flux of action and thought [that] represents reiteration, and therefore stability'.[457] The mysterious and suggestive smells of miasma, peach and white flowers in 'A Wicked Voice' undermine Gurney's and Allen's allocations of a proper place for scent in art, they dissolve binary oppositions and they represent aesthetic flux (or, as Lee had defined the supernatural in 'Faustus and Helena' (1881), 'ever-renewed impressions, ever-shifting fancies'). These smells, simultaneously embodied and disembodied, provoke a sillage that trails from Lee's nineteenth-century supernatural stories to her twentieth-century work on aesthetics and empathy.

**II: Perfume and Wagnerism in 'A Wicked Voice'**

The Introduction to this thesis set out the discursive borrowings of the emerging nineteenth-century perfume industry from the existing lexicon of music. This section of the chapter develops those observations, and is intended to engage with some affinities in 'A Wicked Voice' between perfume and music that explain aspects of Lee's occupation with newly influential theories of gesture, as influentially promulgated from

[457] Vernon Lee, *The Beautiful* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1913), p. 110.

the 1870s by the composer and dramatic conductor Richard Wagner (1813-1883).[458] While the section above has argued that the aesthetic of the senses that Lee had outlined in 'Faustus and Helena: Some Notes on the Supernatural' accounts for the olfactory representation of aesthetic flux in 'A Wicked Voice', this section will show how smells in 'A Wicked Voice' relate to Lee's description of art in 'Faustus and Helena' and the theory of gestural performance urged by Wagner in 'Uber des Dirigierens' ['About Conducting'] (1869).[459]

The first six paragraphs in 'A Wicked Voice' are scene-setters. Magnus addresses his readers and confesses that he is beset by a bewitching malady that is distracting him from the business of finishing his operatic work by forcing him to write neo-eighteenth-century vocal music as though by dictation, and that the following text will now constitute his record of the strange business. The record begins with the central parallel of smells and music as expressed in Venice, the story's location: 'Venice seemed to swelter in the midst of the waters, exhaling […] a moral malaria, distilled, as I thought, from […] the musty music books of a century ago'. Venice's synaesthetic facility for being two overlapping things at once is repeated in Magnus's description of the boarding-house dining-room – once a palazzo ballroom – wherein begin the hauntings; 'scintillating, undulating like the other lagoon, the real one' ('Voice', p. 131). Distinctions of time collapse as the images of both of these ballrooms become

[458] It also suggests a particular way in which the one-way transference of language from music to perfume may have been reciprocated. More critical work needs to be done on the influence of the evolving lexicon of music upon musical composition at the fin de siècle but, in this context, it is worthy of note that the Parisian composer Claude-Achille Debussy (1863-1918) used the structure of perfume as a metaphor for the structure of his music. Debussy, who had set to music five of Baudelaire's olfactory poems, including 'Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir' ['sounds and perfumes swirl in the evening air'] in *Préludes* (1890), described music in terms of scent in 1903 as: 'an instrumental preparation where the perfume of the harps mixes itself with the lemon scent of the oboes, bathed in the juices of string sonorities and interrupted by pauses'. See: Claude Debussy, *Monsier Croche et autres écrits* (Paris: Gallimard, 1987) p. 154. A few years later, Debussy's early twentieth-century piece, *La Parfum de la Nuit* ['Night Perfume'] (1905-8) was constructed around repeating parenthetical sections, interpolations and uncompleted chord progressions that recalled the triple-layered composition of fin-de-siècle perfumes.

[459] Wilhelm Richard Wagner's 'Uber des Dirigierens' ['About Conducting'] (1869) advocated the interpretative authority of musical conductors and was read widely throughout Europe in the original German, a language in which Lee was fluent. It was translated into English by William Reeves in 1887.

subsumed in Magnus's subsequent dream, which is later discovered to have been prophetic and yet also ghostly. The different versions of the ballroom overlap each other in Magnus's feverish account, and vague recollections of dream-smells prompt his retirement from supper with the family at Mistrà: 'I seemed to have smelled that flower before: it made me feel languid, almost faint' ('Voice', p. 152). Magnus's awakening from a reverie of the past and his dawning realisation of the present is also signalled by odour: 'whence spread a sickly smell of damp and mildew, [where] there stood a long, thin, harpsichord, with spindle legs, and its cover cracked from end to end' ('Voice', p. 157). The reverie had been precipitated by Magnus's illicit opening of shutters to the night air (despite his hosts' warnings of its malarial nature) and his thirsty draught of the night's 'blue moon mist, this dew and *perfume* and silence, which seemed to vibrate and quiver like the stars that strewed the depths of heaven' ('Voice', p. 152; emphasis mine). The infinite potential of existence seems to reside in the night air and stirs his soul. 'What music could ever compare with this great silence?', wonders Magnus. 'What music, even Wagner's […] ?' ('Voice', p. 153). Here, at the crucial narrative climax in 'A Wicked Voice' that shows Magnus's mind and health breaking, the central parallel that Lee draws is between the night's perfume and Wagnerian music.

Wagner's polemic 'About Conducting' had argued for the primacy of the podium. It disagreed with the then-customary regard for the act of conducting as a matter of keeping time, as though a Kapellmeister were merely a particularly sophisticated metronome, and it proposed a new role for the orchestral director. Henceforth, the conductor's dynamic bodily movements were to drag interpreted meaning out of the otherwise silent score; the conductor was to be the artistic equal of the composer and, consequently, a conductor's spot of re-scoring was to be considered perfectly acceptable. Wagner's Nietzschean proclamation of dynamic modern superiority over more traditionally-minded contemporaries, his use of emotive words

like 'passion' and 'energy' and his outrageous rudeness about various musical court appointees all made the essay an unlikely bestseller in 1869, when it appeared simultaneously in New York and Leipzig. It was published by the cosmopolitan twice-weekly music magazine founded by Robert Schumann, *Neue Zeitschift für Musik*, and thereafter circulated in book form and as part of the eighth volume of a ten-volume set of Wagner's writings published between 1871-1883. Controversy, celebrity and a great book deal secured the fame of Wagner's essay. The popularity of Wagner and Wagnerian music as shorthand for 'Controversial Genius' among the poètes maudits – with whom Lee associated herself by titling her story 'La voix maudite' – is remarked upon by Raymond Furness.[460] George Bernard Shaw had amusingly anatomised fin-de-siècle pro-Wagnerian and anti-Wagnerian positions in 1898, imagining that only cultural philistines, hardline musical conservatives and sceptics of leitmotiv (as leitmotiv structure permitted a composer to get away with a very few, recycled, tunes) could possibly inhabit the anti-Wagnerian camp.[461] Lee fitted in to none of these descriptions, and it is possible to perceive her noisy distaste for the celebrity composer as edged with a tinge of piquant pleasure at going against the crowd. Lee was never a stranger to choosing perversely unpopular positions, but the current critical consensus that Lee detested Wagner and his music needs to be tempered by consideration of the implications of smells in 'A Wicked Voice' that revolve around Wagner's polemic. [462]

All of Lee's biographers and critics have set out Lee's opposition to Wagner as a keystone of her relationship with developments in nineteenth- and twentieth-century

[460] Raymond Furness, *Wagner and Literature* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1982), p. 7.
[461] Shaw explains Wagner's 'Ring' as a Marxist allegory of the downfall of capitalism, for all that it may look from the outside like 'a struggle between half a dozen fairytale personages for a ring, involving hours of scolding and cheating, and one long scene in a dark gruesome mine, with gloomy, ugly music, and not a glimpse of a handsome young man or pretty woman.' See: George Bernard Shaw, *The Perfect Wagnerite* (Fairfield, IA: 1st World Library – Literary Society, 2004), p. 42.
[462] Lee made regular, testy, anti-Wagnerian comments to her friends – such as that written on the train journey back from Bayreuth, where she moaned that listening to Wagner's music was 'like finding oneself in a planet where the time is bigger than ours; one is on the stretch, devitalized as by the contemplation of a slug'. See: Vernon Lee, Letter to Maurice Baring dated 25 September 1906, quoted in Colby, p. 223.

musical culture. Lee's earliest biographer, Peter Gunn, ascribed her 'strong dislike for the music of Wagner' to aesthetic territorialism, and Carlo Caballero has traced Lee's prejudice against Wagnerian music to her temperamental need to maintain a proper *sang-froid* at all times. Emma Sutton follows Caballero in locating Lee's distaste for Wagner's music as a projection of her fear of its emotional affect.[463] Anthony Teets connects the political offence of Wagner's consumerist staged operas (or, 'phantasmagoria […] by stealth') with the occluded nature of Zaffirelli's surgically-formed voice: 'Lee inserts a barb against Wagnerism in the context of a reference to castration'.[464] Regardless of the particular biographical or critical explanation of her aversion to Wagnerian music, however, the universal apprehension is of Lee's perpetual hostility. Given this hostility, it is interesting to speculate on the reasons why Lee had played down the anti-Wagnerianism of 'La voix maudite' when she came to reissue the story in English translation.

In translation, the English version of Lee's story had grammatically smoothed over the embedded allusion to Wagner's opera *Götterdämmerung* [*Twilight of the Gods/Crépescule des Dieux*] (1876). The theme of cosmic decadence is appended in 'La voix maudite' to a dramatic image of decayed heroism via a semi-colon:

> Ma gondola se berçait immobile sur cette mer de rayons et je songeais à ce crépescule du monde héroïque; il me semble entendre dans le petit bruit de l'eau sur la coque, le bruissement de toutes ces armures, de tout ces épées se rouillant les longs des murs, abandonnées depuis les années par les fils étoilés des grands preux [My gondola rocked stationary on that sea of moonbeams and I thought over this twilight of the heroic world; it seemed audible through the little noise on the hull, the noises of all that armour, of all those swords rusting along the walls, abandoned for years by the starcrossed sons of the great warriors. '].[465]

In Lee's 'A Wicked Voice', however, the embedded allusion to Wagner's opera is

[463] Emma Sutton, *Aubrey Beardsley and the British Wagnerites in the 1890s: Imperfect Wagnerites* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 68-72.
[464] Anthony Teets, 'Singing Things: The Castrato in Vernon Lee's Biography of a "Culture-Ghost"', *The Sibyl: A Bulletin of Vernon Lee Studies*, 4 (2008/9) <http://www.oscholars.com/Sibyl/four/singing.htm> [accessed 10 June 2012].
[465] Lee, *La voix maudite*, p. 94.

curtailed in translation by a full stop: 'While my gondola rocked stationary on that sea of moonbeams, I pondered over the twilight of the heroic world'.[466] Information about the lapping of water on the prow of the boat, and the resemblance of the noise to fading sounds of military grandeur is forthcoming in the next sentence, but it is not attached grammatically to Magnus's perception. The paraphrase is repeated, moreover, to emphasise its visual, not musical, provenance: 'the vision of heroic days had vanished' ('Voice', p. 140). Additionally, whereas the opening paragraph of 'A Wicked Voice' contains one reference to 'the new-fangled nonsense of Wagner', the same paragraph in 'La voix maudit' had contained two (the second of the two references is 'cette blague de leitmotiv' ['this trick of leitmotif'], see below for a discussion of how the word 'leitmotiv' signified Wagnerism) ('Voice', p. 127). Unlike the English story, the final word of the first French paragraph is 'wagnerisme' and the subject of the first line of the second French paragraph is Wagner: in the French version of the story, the reader has been far more directed towards Magnus's specifically Wagnerian musical obsessions than in the English version.

Hypotheses about Lee's motivation in toning down the anti-Wagnerism of her story of revenant singing might include the possibility that French readers would have found the satire of Magnus's ridiculous posturing funnier than would English readers, as a literary discourse of 'wagnerisme' had been longer established in France.[467] The French publication of 'La voix maudite' occurred shortly before the closure of the celebrated avant-garde periodical, *La revue wagnérienne*, with its editorial roster of literary luminary decadents including Huysmans, Verlaine, Mallarmé and Villiers de

[466] Ibid., p. 140.
[467] Further work needs to be done on the differing receptions in England and France of decadent writings as being funny, but it would appear from contemporary reviews that French reviewers treated Huysmans's novel *À Rebours* as a black comedy, whereas English readers regarded it at face value as the 'guidebook of decadence'. See: Richard Ellman, *Wilde* (London: Vintage, 1988) p. 252. See also Nicholas Ruddick's comments on Brian Stableford's *Glorious Perversity: The Decline and Fall of Literary Decadence* (1988) in: Nicholas Ruddick, 'The Aesthetics of Descent: Recent Books on Nineteenth-Century Decadence', *Science Fiction Studies*, 27:3 (2000): 478-84.

l'Isle Adam, while the English story 'A Wicked Voice' appeared only at the beginning of the periodical's more sedate English-language incarnation as *The Meister* (published by the London Universal Wagner Society 1888-95). On the other hand, Lee must have been reasonably secure in believing that most English readers would understand her references and allusions, having acquired at first hand a vivid impression of English interest in Wagner's work during her 1887 visit to Newcastle upon Tyne, where, she wrote, the 'hellishness' of workers' lives was in stark contrast to men and women 'clean, well-dressed, appreciative of art and music and literature, with whom we can sympathize vastly about Wagner, and Swinburne, and Whistler, and Venetian sunsets'.[468] Conjecture notwithstanding, Lee had consciously chosen to moderate her polemic during the transcription of 'La voix maudit' into 'A Wicked Voice'.

Although Lee's more overt references to Wagner were occluded by her translation of 'A Wicked Voice' into English, the musicologist Lorraine W. Wood has drawn attention to the frequent use of 'Wagner's own musical tools, the leitmotiv and musical transformation' that structure the story.[469] Lee uses leitmotiv in 'A Wicked Voice' to associate Magnus's frustrated quest (i.e. to compose a recurring theme for the 'Prowess of Ogier' which will reveal to the hero that he is 'one of a long-dead world'), with the collapse of other temporal distinctions. Although the word 'leitmotiv' (or, 'leitmotif') was not printed until 1871 (to describe Carl Weber's work) and was never used by Wagner other than in disparaging quotation marks, the idea of leitmotiv was indissolubly associated with Wagner (Wagner himself preferred the term *hauptmotiv*, implying a hierarchical structure of intertwining motives such as those that characterise

[468] Vernon Lee, *Juvenilia: Essays on Sundry Aesthetical Questions*, 2 vols (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1887), I, pp. 16-17.

[469] Wood's discussion of leitmotiv in Vernon Lee's work ties in to the fragmented streams of consciousness she finds in twentieth-century modernist writers Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, T. S. Eliot and William Faulkner. See: Lorraine W. Wood, *The Language of Music: Paradigms of Performance in Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Vernon Lee, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf* (Ann Arbor: UMI Dissertation Publishing, 2011).

his *Ring* cycle written between 1853-1869).[470] One such leitmotiv is designated by Alexandra Milsom as referring to the moon and the classical moon goddess, Artemis, whose omnipresence governs the violence associated with the castrato and castratory activity in the story.[471] To Milsom's designation should be added the strong presence of scent in 'A Wicked Voice' (as discussed above) as another such intertwining hierarchical structure that has the function of pointing in the text to the recurring theme of murderous singing. In both 'La voix maudite' and 'A Wicked Voice', the revenant singing and occult possession appears following very swiftly behind scent. Milsom's approach to the leitmotiv function of scent in Lee's story is not incompatible with Geoffroy-Menoux's attention to Heraclitan flux in 'A Wicked Voice' (see above), as both perspectives depend upon the notion of an oscillating, submerging and re-emerging, central and uniting theme.

The equivalence drawn by Lee in 'A Wicked Voice' between music and perfume addresses parallels drawn in writings of the 1850s and 1860s by George Wilson, G. W. S. Piesse, Andrew Wynter and Rimmel (see Introduction), and that also involves the personality of Wagner himself.[472] Sutton has argued that the reception in Britain of Wagner's music during the 1890s was conditioned by the composer's very public reputation as a perfumed dandy, and that 'fundamental cultural conditions and

[470] For the widespread adoption of form and function in Wagnerian leitmotif during the 1880s and 1890s, see: Sutton, p. 176.
[471] Alexandra Milsom, 'Manlier than Mozart: The Anti-Wagnerian Stance of "A Wicked Voice"', *Thinking Gender Papers*, UCLA Center for the Study of Women (2010) <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/1517r1q9#page-4> [accessed 10 June 2012].
[472] While the composer Magnus in 'A Wicked Voice' is an overt parody of Wagner, Zaffirino's victim also resonated with Wagnerian associations. The Procuratessa Vendramin shares her name and location with the Palazzo Vendramin (in Venice) in which Wagner died and is commemorated with a memorial verse plaque by Gabriele D'Annunzio on the garden wall:
*'In questo palagio*
*l'ultimo spiro di Richard Wagner*
*odono le anime pepetuarsi come la marea*
*che lamb' i marmi'*
['In this palace / the spirits hear Richard Wagner's last breath / become eternal like the tide / that lapped the marble walls'].

values'[473] at the turn of the century were substantially affected by Wagner's famously 'sartorial extravagance, and fondness for perfume [that] augmented perceptions of his effete, even neurotic, character'.[474] The equivalence between perfume and music is repeated in 'A Wicked Voice' as the lived experience of the effete, even neurotic, character of the singer, Zaffirino, merges through song and scent with that of the irascible Northern composer, Magnus. In Magnus's dream, for example, the song is killing him softly with its scent:

> I looked around me, wondering where I was: a heavy sweet smell, reminding me of the flavor of a peach, filled the place. Little by little I began to perceive sounds: little, sharp, metallic, detached notes, like those of a mandolin; and there was united to them a voice, very low and sweet, almost a whisper, which grew and grew and grew, until the whole place was filled with that exquisite vibrating note […]. Suddenly there was a horrible piercing shriek, and the thud of a body on the floor ('Voice', p. 138).

In another location, it is the 'smell of stale incense' and the 'incense-laden air' of St. Anthony's basilica in Padua that announces Zaffirino's unanticipated possession of the organ ('Voice', p. 149). The smell of peach and unbidden thoughts of miasma announces the summoning voice of Zaffirino in the ballroom at Mistrà. In each of these cases, scent anticipates the phantom singing and reinforces the connection between Magnus and Zaffirino.

It is puzzling that the relationship of Zaffirino to Magnus has been so frequently attributed to 'literary revenge' or 'repudiation' of Wagnerism by critics including Carlo Caballero and Grace Kehler.[475] It is true that the character of Magnus himself invokes

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[473] Sutton, p. 4.
[474] Ibid., p. 72.
[475] Kehler's discussion of late-Victorian fascination with castrati voices involves some fascinating parallels between the mid-century commodification of operatic voices and the invention and application of the laryngoscope in 1854, but unfortunately contains two central readings of the text of 'A Wicked Voice' that undermine some aspects of her argument. In one, she mistakenly reports that the narrator, Magnus, 'implausibly hears [Zaffirino's 'wicked voice'] performing while on an extended visit to Venice', although the whole point of the wicked voice is that its owner has been dead for a hundred years and was consequently a supernatural apparition/delusion: implausibility does not come into it. In the other, she contextualises a passage as evidence that Zaffirino's revenant voice has transported the narrator 'out of the empirical world of the five senses' as 'Magnus literally stands in a decrepit ballroom during this scene', although the revenant voice appears most un-literally, as the climax of an existing

the idea that Zaffirino is after revenge: having parodied the baroque singer's imagined trills and flourishes, he shakes his fist at his engraving of Zaffirino. Magnus addresses the engraving and exclaims: 'Ah! You would like to be revenged on me also! […] you would like me to write you nice roulades and flourishes, another nice *Aria dei Mariti*, my fine Zaffirino!' ('Voice', p. 136). Although Magnus's hubristic exclamations are frequently held by Lee at counterpoint to normative versions of empirical 'reality' (for instance, as Magnus withholds information from his doctor, or while he refuses to engage in public speculation about the owner of the mysterious voice), it certainly seems from the nature of the ensuing curse of unwanted baroque melody that Magnus's fist-shaking exclamation in this case has been prophetic.[476] It is important, however, to distinguish between revenge for the slight to which Zaffirino was put while Magnus reduced his boarding-house audience to 'dull, brutal' laughter by parodying the former's eighteenth-century vocal pyrotechnics, and revenge for Magnus's Wagnerism ('Voice', p. 136). The antagonism between Magnus-as-Wagner and Zaffirino-as-Voice has been explained as being fundamentally driven by Lee's anger at the contemporary subjugation of human 'Voice' by the full clattering orchestras of Wagner, but that explanation does not account for Wagner's own writings as, rather than being against 'Voice', Wagner based his entire theory of performance upon it. In his 'About Conducting', the superior proficiency of French musicians is lauded as attributable to their training in the Italian style of singing, while the diligent, wooden monotony of his native fellow German musicians is castigated for its insufficient consideration of vocal expressiveness and phrasing. Wagner puts it with characteristically thundering

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hallucination that has been previously but partially experienced during Magnus's 'dreams'. See: Grace Kehler, 'Occult Charms and Social Ills: Vernon Lee's "A Wicked Voice" and George du Maurier's Castrated Texts', *Opera and Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 34-35 (2004), at *Romanticism on the Net* <http://www.erudit.org/revue/ron/2004/v/n34-35/009438ar.html> [accessed 9 June 2012].

[476] The distance between Magnus's rhetoric and the empirical 'reality' of other people in Venice exemplifies what Zorn has described as Lee's troubling of 'contemporary assumptions of objectivity'. Whereas Zorn sees that troubling as evidence of a Lee's liminal creation between the binary opposites of 'real' and 'fantastic', this study is interested in the synaesthetic overlapping of 'realities'. See: Zorn, p. 64.

capitalisation: 'OUR CONDUCTORS SO FREQUENTLY FAIL TO FIND THE RIGHT TEMPO BECAUSE THEY ARE IGNORANT OF SINGING'.[477] The critical notion, therefore, that the 'wicked voice' of the title was articulating Lee's hostility to Wagner's rebuttal of the voice, does not stand up to scrutiny. Neither does Caballero's explanation for the anti-Wagner bias in 'A Wicked Voice', which he bases on Lee's distaste for crude emotional manipulation as well as her desire to distance herself from the literary Decadent movement following the appearance of Max Nordau's *Degeneration* (1892).[478] That first insight is certainly consonant with Lee's consciousness of her inherited tendency to oversensitivity as it was expressed in Lee's letters home between 5 and 25 August 1887, wherein she sought to come to terms with her invalid brother's latest diagnosis of hyperaesthesia just before she was herself prostrated by 'nervous' shock at news of the engagement of her intimate friend, Mary Robinson. The dates of publication, however, do not square with Caballero's second insight. As 'A Wicked Voice' was published two years before the appearance of *Degeneration*, and as Lee was to continue to publish 'Prince Alberic and the Snake Lady' in the notoriously Decadent *Yellow Book* (July 1896) four years after Nordau's *Degeneration*, it may be that Caballero's explanation is simply conflating Lee's mature style and the declared intentions expressed in her nostalgic 'Preface' to the 1927 re-edition of the *Hauntings* stories with her earlier, decadent, supernatural pieces of the fin de siècle.[479]

This chapter proposes other, possible, olfactory explanations for Lee's back-pedalling on the anti-Wagnerism in the English version of 'A Wicked Voice'. In this

[477] Richard Wagner, *On Conducting*, trans. by Edward Dannreuther (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger LLC, 2011), pp. 10-11.
[478] Carlo Caballero, '"A Wicked Voice": On Vernon Lee, Wagner, and the Effects of Music', *Victorian Studies*, 35:4 (1992), 385-408.
[479] Lee's attribution of immaturity to the *Yellow Book* was widely shared. After the scandal attaching to Wilde's trials in 1895, the chastened *Yellow Book* was seen to moderate its decadent reputation. John Stokes quoted the anonymous correspondent to the *Daily Chronicle*, who reported that he has 'watched the *Yellow Book* turn grey in a single night'. See: John Stokes, *In the Nineties* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989), p. 7.

explanation, the sense of smell, enhanced in the English version, is there to *compensate* for the anti-Wagnerism. As observed in the previous section, 'A Wicked Voice' confounds Lee's own definition of the supernatural in art by reversing priority, so that the pre-existing song imposes itself upon the listener. In that respect, it is quite different from the nature of art as it is expressed in Lee's stories 'A Wedding Chest' (written in 1888 but first published in *Pope Jacynth and Other Fantastic Tales*, 1904), and 'Prince Alberic and the Snake Lady' (first published in the *Yellow Book* magazine, 1896). These stories involve the latent potential of an aesthetic object drawn haltingly into existence by the gestural dynamics of the human conductor and illustrate Lee's definition in 'Faustus and Helena' (1881) of the Supernatural in art being fundamentally gestural and corporeal. They also correspond to Wagner's own theory of gestural aesthetics as described in 'About Conducting'. The word 'conductor' was available to Lee in many senses at the end of the nineteenth century, indicating a 'guide' [from *conductour*, used from the 1520s], a 'carrier' [from *conduitour*, used from the early fifteenth century], a 'transport official' [used in steam railway contexts from 1832], and an 'object that transmits energy' [used to describe electrical conductivity from 1737], as well as a 'leader of an orchestra or chorus' [used from 1784]). Just as Wagner's 'About Conducting' had advocated the power of the musical conductor to wring meaning from an otherwise defunct score, so does Lee show artworks to be inert, faded or incomplete until the point at which they are reinvigorated by the sensitive who conducts them to life. The quickened aesthetic objects in Lee's stories of the fin de siècle (which are a tapestry in 'Prince Alberic', the painted panels of a wooden coffer in 'A Wedding Chest' and a song in 'A Wicked Voice') bear a startling similarity to Sutton's suggestive trinity of quintessential fin-de-siècle tropes: 'magic book', 'fatal picture' and 'debilitating music'.[480] Lee's artworks differ, however, from the many other affective or

[480] Sutton, p. 69.

emotive and compelling fin-de-siècle versions of magic books, fatal pictures and debilitating music that Sutton describes, in the symbiotic relationship they assume with human conductors without whom they remain inert. Unlike the suddenly-appearing 'fatal picture' that tantalises Dorian Gray for example, or the mysterious 'magic book' (or library shelf) in *Lilith* that opens into another world, Lee's magical aesthetic objects are conducted into corporeality only through the sweat, smells, tears, blood and semen that figure the elision of their hosts' fixed personal identity boundaries.[481] A further dissimilarity between Sutton's magic objects and the aesthetic artifacts affirmed in 'Faustus and Helena', 'Prince Alberic' and 'A Wedding Chest', because there is an equally important focus in Lee's story of revenant singing on Magnus's frustrated *inability* to make art. Or, at least, the art he wants to make.

Possession by the ghostly past, and involuntary impregnation with the dictates of bygone artistic styles, had rendered Magnus's modern compositions superfluous.[482] In other words, Magnus's parallel haunting by scent and music is itself the source of his composer's block, since he is already pervaded by 'the corrupt and corrupting music of the Past' ('Voice', p. 128). It is therefore proposed that the source of Lee's diminution of anti-Wagnerism when she translated the story 'La voix maudite' from French into English was threefold. First, Lee's story was addressing a different national audience

[481] Lee's understandings of art as the result of a performative subjectivity comes close to Julia Kristeva's critique of horror as residing in the violation of bodily boundaries. Unlike Kristeva, however, Lee allows for smells to be transcendent signifiers indicating Kantian intuition of *a priori* phenomena. The statue of the Virgin of the Seven Daggers, for example, is present only in perfume: 'the church was filled with ineffable fragrance'. See: Vernon Lee, 'The Virgin of the Seven Daggers', *Supernatural Tales*, ed. by Irene Cooper Willis (London: Peter Owen, 2004), pp. 190-224 (p. 193). The story was first written by Lee in French, and translated by her two decades later into English for inclusion in *For Maurice: Five Unlikely Stories* (1927). See also: Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror*, trans. by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia Press University,1982), p. 4.

[482] For an alternative approach to Lee's theme of possession by ghostly music, see Martha Vicinus's discussion of 'A Wicked Voice' as Lee's resort to nostalgia following her disappointed affections for Mary Robinson. See: Martha Vicinus, 'A Legion of Ghosts: Vernon Lee and the Art of Nostalgia', *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 10:4 (2004), 599-616 <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_lesbian_and_gay_studies/v010/10.4vicinus.html> [accessed 25 July 2013].

from that of 'La voix maudite', so there was no need to flaunt Symbolist/Wagnerian artistic allegiances quite so provocatively. Secondly, 'A Wicked Voice' confounds Wagner's stance in 'About Conducting', along with the many other short stories that Lee wrote at the fin de siècle and her own observation on supernaturality in 'Faustus and Helena' that art is composed of a ghostly phantom of imagination directed by the interpretative gestures of a sensitive conductor. In the process of translation, I suggest, Lee tweaked her criticisms of Wagner accordingly. Finally, the story focuses on the artistic invidiousness of becoming haunted by the past, and makes an end to Lee's long-running obsession with the theme of revenant singing.

It is not impossible to see 'A Wicked Voice' as a rejection of the power of the past and a validation of engagement with contemporary, Wagnerian, values. As Angela Leighton has pointed out, the theme of occult possession by a voice from the past in 'La voix maudite' and 'A Wicked Voice' was played out regularly in Lee's earlier work (i.e. in 'A Culture-Ghost: or, Winthrop's Adventure' [1881] and back still further in 1874, when she began a version of 'Winthrop's Adventure' during research for her first book on Italy).[483] Leighton sees the recurring theme of revenant singing in these early works as part of Lee's first theoretical and historicist considerations of aesthetics, and as a juvenile attempt to rebut the Ruskinesque argument that great or good art must necessarily have an ethical dimension (in all of Lee's stories on this theme, Leighton notes, the haunting voices are Great, but not in the least bit Good).[484] Leighton does not mention, however, that 'A Wicked Voice' was the last.[485] The lastness of Lee's translated story is the point: her letter to Wells in August 1904 clearly expresses the distance that she put between her youthful fiction and her mature work on psychology

[483] Leighton.
[484] Ibid.
[485] See: Leighton. Geoffroy-Menoux makes the point that Lee's drama in five acts, *Ariadne in Mantua* (1899), also repeats aspect of Lee's song-from-the-past trope, but I would protest that, as *Ariadne in Mantua* is a play (i.e. not in prose), and as the memories prompted by the song are fleshly, then if it does repeat Lee's song-from the-past trope at all, then it does it very differently.

and aesthetics. Lee's retreat in 'A Wicked Voice' from wholeheartedly attacking Wagner and Wagnerism prefigures her twentieth-century withdrawal from fiction, demonstrates her awareness that the story compromises her argument that writing on the supernatural is a glyphic diminishment of the potential of the universe and accounts for the magnified and compensatory presence of fragrances, leitmotived as a corporeal representation of 'ever-renewed impressions, ever-shifting fancies' in an effort to restore to things their original metamorphic, protean nature.[486]

## III: Smells in Arthur Machen's 'The Great God Pan' (1894), *The Three Imposters or, The Transmutations* (1895), and *The Hill of Dreams* (1907)

'The odour would betray me', pronounces Miss Leicester in Machen's *The Three Imposters* (1895).[487] She appears at first to be talking only about tobacco, but her words absorb many meanings as the first-time reader of this novel has already become aware that 'Miss Leicester' is one of the eponymous 'three imposters', and that the ingenious narrations of betrayal by her and her two accomplices will supply much of the forthcoming entertainment in the story. Smell, in Machen's Decadent stories of the 1890s, repeatedly betrays the 'true' reality under the appearance as, more than any other fin-de-siècle writer considered in this study, Machen used the sense and constituents of smell as the pivot around which his representations of 'supernatural' categorical indeterminacy revolve. This section of the chapter will address Machen's privileging of smell, smells and smelling in 'The Great God Pan' (1894), in the stand-alone stories that together comprise the portmanteau novel *The Three Imposters*, and *The Hill of*

[486] Lee, 'Faustus and Helena', p. 47.
[487] Arthur Machen, *The Three Imposters*, in *The Three Imposters and Other Stories: Best Weird Tales of Arthur Machen Vol. 1*, ed. by S.T. Joshi (Hayward: Chaosium, 2001), pp. 101-234 (p. 202). Further references to this edition are given in parentheses after quotations in the text, where the title is abbreviated to *Imposters*.

*Dreams* (1907, but written 1895-6) and it will situate Machen's interest in the transcendence of smells alongside the reintroduction of incense during Anglican worship in the 1860s and 1870s following Tractarian revival of Pre-Reformation customs in England and Wales.

Critical commentary on Machen's writing in the 1890s has yet to discuss the function of scent in his fiction, or the observation that smells in Machen's stories of the fin de siècle belong only to things, rather than to people. Substances and processes emanate odours but people do not, and there is no comparative osmology between the characters who are particularly sensitive to scent or whose own bodies generate fragrance or stench. Instead, Machen's fictions repeatedly introduce the supernatural by countering ostensibly realistic appearances with a smell that does not fit, just as Miss Leicester's continuing narrative makes clear. In her story, the unexpectedly 'strange, sickly smell, vaporous and overpowering' of the flaky white powder consumed by Miss Leicester's fictional brother reveals the 'truth' that his medication is not the quotidian and innocuous muscle-relaxant Sulphate of Quinine that the chemist intended to supply, but is instead *Vinum Sabbati*, the dreadful, centuries-old powder from which witches' Sabbath wine was prepared (*Imposters*, p. 210).

Kirsten MacLeod has brought attention to the 'unknown' and the 'misknown' aspects of less significant writers such as Machen who are associated with Decadent literature in the first part of the 1890s.[488] MacLeod's recuperative study places Machen in the literary and publishing context of the late-Victorian canon, and this work is set to continue in the next few years as the 150th anniversary of Machen's birth was commemorated in 2013.[489] As no book-length critical commentary on Machen so far

[488] See: Kirsten MacLeod, *Fictions of British Decadence: High Art, Popular Writing and the Fin de Siècle* (New York: Palgrave, 2006).
[489] For example, in 2013 *The World Fantasy Convention* in Brighton devoted a stream of programming to Machen and his contemporaries, along with promoting a collection of Machen facsimiles and manuscripts.

exists, despite a number of biographies and editions of collected letters, and apart from discussions of his place in the Decadent Movement, scholarly articles generally refer to one or more of three customary perspectives.[490] The first is his influence on twentieth-century horror writings such as those by H. P. Lovecraft, whose half-human twin monsters in 'The Dunwich Horror' (1928),[491] were famously modelled on Machen's miscegenetic human being/pagan god in 'The Great God Pan'. Included in this view is the scholarly observation, prevalent since the 1990s, that Machen's terrifying beast-humans exemplify a fascination with post-Darwinian evolutionary retrogression.[492] Then, secondly, there is a good-sized body of work on Machen's preoccupation with occult and esoteric fashions at the turn of the century and, in particular, on his participation in Alastair Crowley's 'Order of the Golden Dawn' into which he was initiated for a time on the advice of his friend Arthur Edward Waite in 1899-1900, following episodes of depression after the death of his first wife. Finally, there is critical interest based on Machen's use of Celtic folklore and his Welsh roots at Caerleon-on-Usk in Gwent.[493] These three perspectives supplement the biographical details that contextualise a reading of Machen's work, many of which were supplied either by the author himself in his trilogy of autobiographies *Far Off Things* (1922), *Things Near and Far* (1923) and *The London Adventure* (1924), or by his bereaved relatives and descendants. Machen's second wife, Purefoy, wrote the memoir of her life with Machen

[490] I am excluding David Trotter's fascinating introduction to the Everyman edition of *The Three Imposters*, which briefly considers odour as part of Machen's juxtaposition of disgust and style. It is a superb essay, but mentions olfaction only fleetingly. See: Arthur Machen, *The Three Imposters* (London: Everyman, 1995).

[491] First published in *Weird Tales* magazine, April 1929, pp. 481-508.

[492] See: Adrian Eckersley, 'A Theme in the Early Work of Arthur Machen: *Degeneration*', *English Literature in Transition 1880-1920*, 35:3 (1992), 277-87; and Greenslade.

[493] A sold-out walking tour of Machen's Caermaon birthplace, valley and pubs was organised in July 2012 by the organisation *Literature Wales*, who ascribed the recent resurgence in Machen's popularity to the film *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006). Although the plot of *Pan's Labyrinth* may only be described as being loosely based upon Machen's work, the film's director, Guillermo del Toro, credited Machen's work as inspiration for the film, and supplied the foreword to the recent paperback edition of Machen's *The White People and other Weird Stories* (London: Penguin Classics, 2011).

that was published as *Where Memory Slept* (1991).[494] Other reminiscences that illuminate Machen's writing of the fin de siècle are by journalist Anthony Lejeune (a much younger family friend who was introduced to Machen by the poet John Betjeman), and have been preserved by Purefoy Machen's niece, Joan Huddleston.[495] The British Arthur Machen Literary Society was founded in 1986, and later became The Friends of Arthur Machen, publishing the literary journal *Faunus* and a newsletter, *Machenalia*, twice a year. In line with other custodial examples of Machen's posthumous literary management by relatives his daughter Janet was its patron until her death in 2008.

Although none of the customary critical perspectives, nor the family-guarded biographical studies, supply much in the way of information for olfactory analysis of Machen's work during the 1890s, the following examination of themes of odour in the novella 'The Great God Pan' and the novels *The Three Imposters* and *The Hill of Dreams* will depend upon all of them and also, crucially, upon historical accounts of the changing role of scent and incense in Welsh Anglican churches. This approach builds on that of Nicholas Freeman, who locates Machen within the broad discursive field of Anglicanism in a survey of the theme of 'epiphany' in Machen's work from 1894 to 1922.[496] As Freeman is looking for evidence that Machen anticipated secular epiphanies in modernist writings by Joyce, Woolf and Katherine Mansfield, he covers a range of attitudes and publications by Machen over three decades as manifestations of one particular religious world-view. This chapter differs from Freeman's argument, as the forms and content of Machen's writing at the fin de siécle became so utterly different after the death of his first wife in 1899, his turbulent disavowal of writing, his taking up

[494] Purefoy Machen, *Where Memory Slept* (Carleon: Green Round, 1991).
[495] *Joan Hyde's (née Huddleston) Scrapbook – created by David Hyde* <http://www.angelfire.com/art2/frankhyde/joan/index.html?http://www.angelfire.com/art2/frankhyde/joan/pagesj/monica_4.html> [accessed13 August 2012].
[496] See: Nicholas Freeman, 'Arthur Machen: Ecstasy and Epiphany', *Literature and Theology*, 24:3 (2010), 242-255.

of stage acting in 1901 with a touring repertory company and his eventual, stoical, return to writing as an impoverished remarried man and salaried journalist for the *Daily Mail* and the *Evening News* in 1908-1910, that it seems more practical and fair to treat of religious themes in Machen's work of the 1890s as belonging to a unique and separate period.

Luckhurst founds his analysis of Machen's occultist understanding of science on the writer's early years working as a publisher's clerk in London, but Machen's allegiances may be traced back still further back to his childhood and schooldays.[497] Although it is far more common for Machen's work to be examined in the light of emerging fin-de-siècle esoteric religious and spiritual cults and practices, it is the contention of this chapter that Machen's descriptions of scent in his work of the 1890s are best understood as being conditioned by his early experiences, tastes and prejudices formed within the diocese of Llandaff in the years following the Oxford Movement and its crystallisation during the period 1833-c.1857. Machen was born in 1863, and published his first poem in 1881 at the age of 18. His early days were therefore exposed to the fully crystallised Oxford Movement, although it was still in the early stages of being disseminated through the Church. Locating this author in the institutional field of the Church of England in Wales is appropriate, since Machen had been educated and had boarded among Welsh Anglicans at Hereford Cathedral School from the age of eleven (with a year's absence) until the age of 18, and since he came from a very long line of Welsh Anglican clerical ancestors.[498]

If the list of friends and family members who have nurtured Machen's literary reputation is extensive, then so too is the list of Welsh Anglican clerics from whom

[497] See: Roger Luckhurst, *The Invention of Telepathy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 201.
[498] Machen's arrived as a choral scholar at Hereford Cathedral School in 1874, under the Precentorship of Sir Frederick Arthur Gore Ousby (1825-1889). Ousby inspired the rising musical standards and breadth of repertoire in Anglican Cathedral cultures that were shared by Machen's fictional contemporary, John Jasper, in Charles Dickens's *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870). See: Martin Dubois, 'Diverse Strains: Music and Religion in Dickens's *Edwin Drood*', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 16:3 (2011), 347-362.

Machen descended. Machen's father had been appointed rector of the tiny parish of Llandewi Fach, under the patronage of his *alma mater* Jesus College, Oxford; his grandfather had, for twenty-six years, been vicar at the busier and more prosperous St. Cadoc's church in Caerleon, some five miles south; his great-grandfather was a priest at St. Fagans in Glamorgan, his first cousin twice removed was the archdeacon of Bangor Cathedral in the 1860s – and so renowned for his scholarship that he earned the soubriquet 'John Classical Jones' – while John Classical Jones's own father (and Machen's great-great-uncle) Hezekiah had been renowned between Glamorgan and Newport for his fiery preaching and renamed for the colour of his beard as 'the red priest of Castleton'. Through his family and through his school, therefore, Machen was exposed to ideas about the ritual purpose and spiritual nature of scent, and particularly of incense and sacrificial perfumes. Those scents not only permeate his early fiction but also derive from contemporary controversies surrounding the influence of the Oxford Movement.

Before moving on to explore the relationship of scent to the supernatural in Machen's work of the 1890s, it seems sensible first to briefly explain how the Oxford Movement was regarded throughout England and Wales. For the purposes of this thesis, the Oxford Movement may usefully be described as arising in the mid-1830s from discontent expressed among some Oxford scholars, including John Keble, John Henry Newman and Edward Bouverie Pusey, who argued against the plainness of Protestant worship styles and for the compatibility of post-Counter-Reformation doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church with the Thirty-Nine Articles (1571) that provided the original doctrinal foundation of the Church of England. Known sometimes as 'Tractarianism' on account of its dissemination through the publication of its series *Tracts for the Times* (1833-41), the Movement sought the multi-sensory reintegration of incense, bells and elaborate vestments into church services as a liturgical manifestation of complete,

synaesthetic response to worship: 'for the Tractarians […] there was no clear distinction between Scripture, the theological, the doctrinal and the spiritual: there was a common unity of vision'.[499] Susan Navarette reads Dr. Chamber's revelation of the 'truth' of the *Vinum Sabbati* in *The Three Imposters* as Machen's clear statement of this universalising Tractarian doctrine:

> The whole universe, my friend, is a tremendous sacrament; a mystic, ineffable force and energy, veiled by an outward form of matter; and man, and the sun and the other stars, and the flower of the grass, and the crystal in the test-tube, are each and every one as spiritual, as material, and subject to an inner working (*Imposters*, p. 209).

The status of this declaration as a piece of object language is stressed so heavily, however, that it might conversely be purposed to convey the exact opposite of Machen's own beliefs.[500]

The important attribute of the Tractarian Oxford Movement in respect to this study of olfaction is its engagement with theories of incarnation. Very broadly speaking, the English church of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century had been a 'Resurrectionist' church that awaited the perfection of human beings in the Kingdom – which is to say, either in Death, or else in the Second Coming.[501] The Oxford Movement, on the contrary, promoted an Incarnationist theology that drew attention to the capacity of all human beings to achieve individual perfection in the present moment, by allowing themselves to become incarnations of Christ.[502] Whereas the Resurrectionist message had encouraged the thrifty, middle-class deferment of gratification, the Incarnationist message was to prove popular in the new urban slums of

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[499] Fr. William Davage, 'Pusey House and the Welsh Connection', Address given to the Friends of St David's Cathedral, 12 September 2009.

[500] Susan Jennifer Navarette, *The Shape of Fear: Horror and the* Fin de Siècle *Culture of Decadence* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998), p. 181.

[501] Dominic Janes points out the eschatological hurry: 'The anti-Christ was expected and many identified him with Rome and the Tractarians'. See: Dominic Janes, *Victorian Reformation: The Fight Over Idolatory in the Church of England, 1840-1860* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 8.

[502] Owen Chadwick traces the pervasive theology of Incarnationism to Pusey's mystical writings that embraced the transcendent presence of divinity in human bodies. See: Owen Chadwick, *The Mind of the Oxford Movement* (London: A & C Black, 1960), p. 49.

mid-Victorian Britain where it became allied to calls for social improvements and an aspirational self-help culture.[503] At the same time, however, the secular nineteenth-century vogue for spiritualism, clairvoyance, séances and spirit possession had offered more sinister implications of Incarnationalism, implications that are ascribed by Sarah Willburn to a radical rejection of liberal materialism.[504] Machen's fiction of the 1890s makes much of the sinister aspects of Incarnationism, which he regularly attaches to description of smells. These sinister smells provoke questions about Machen's denominational orientation as, despite claims by critics such as S. T. Joshi that Machen was 'a rigidly orthodox Anglo-Catholic',[505] and Freeman's description of Machen as 'a radical yet traditional Anglo-Catholic',[506] an olfactory analysis of his writing at the fin de siècle suggests on the contrary that Machen's work was riven with anxieties about Anglo-Catholicism, its threat to orthodoxy and its promulgation of Incarnationist theory. A general move to Anglo-Catholicism among other British writers of the 1890s has already been documented, not least by Marion Thain and Ellis Hanson who also demonstrate the association of Catholicism with transgressive sexual identities.[507] Geoffrey Reiter's diachronic examination of Machen's personal philosophy and his fictional output argues that Machen's novels and novella of the 1890s 'are not the work of a Christian author with a belief system buttressed by an eschatological hope, but rather a skeptic who views the unknown with horror rather than wonder'.[508] It is consequently of some interest to read Machen's fiction of the 1890s, and his hijacking

[503] The theological impetus for social work among Tractarian parish priests is brought out by S. A. Skinner in *Tractarians and the Condition of England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), p. 8.
[504] Sarah Willburn, *Possessed Victorians: Extra Spheres in Nineteenth-Century Writings* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).
[505] S. T. Joshi, 'Introduction' to Arthur Machen, *The Three Imposters and Other Stories: Best Weird Tales of Arthur Machen Vol. 1*, ed. by S.T. Joshi (Hayward: Chaosium, 2001), p. xii.
[506] Freeman, p. 243.
[507] See: Marion Thain, '"Damnable Aestheticism" and the Turn to Rome: John Gray, Michael Field, and a Poetics of Conversion', in *The Fin-de-Siècle Poem: Literary Culture and the 1890s*, ed. by Joseph Bristow (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005), pp. 311-336 (p. 311); and Ellis Hanson, *Decadence and Catholicism* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1997).
[508] Geoffrey Reiter, *Man is Made a Mystery: The Evolution of Arthur Machen's Religious Thought* (unpublished doctoral thesis, Baylor University, Waco, Texas, 2010

of current Anglo-Catholic olfactory fashions, as critical meditation on the Tractarian Anglo-Catholicism that re-introduced 'smells and bells' into services after they had dropped entirely from favour following the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation.[509] Until the 1870s, incense had been banned in Anglican churches in accordance with directions in the Book of Common Prayer (1662).[510] Tractarian calls for the reinstatement of incense during worship revolved around the materialisation and incorporation of divinity into the worshippers; incense represented the process of making the immaterial immanent.

Machen's frequent thematic employment of incense and sacrificial odours in his fiction of the 1890s appears always against a background of jarringly disappointed belief systems. The financial fortunes of Machen's father, who had been expensively educated at Charterhouse School and then at Jesus College, Oxford during the 1840s and early 50s (the period of the Tractarians' first successes and controversies) were substantially reduced by the rivalry of new urban non-conformist chapels that diverted attendance and revenue from Anglican churches in Wales.[511] Machen was withdrawn from school by his father altogether between 1875 and 1876 due to financial hardship and, although Machen returned to complete the remaining years of his education at Hereford until he was eighteen, complete bankruptcy ensued in 1883, when Machen was twenty. Machen did not train for ordination (despite family expectations and his education at Cathedral School) because his father had run out of money for paying the

[509] Following Tractarian arguments, some 393 churches in England and Wales were calculated by 1901 to have rebelled against official Church of England policy and to have adopted the use of incense during public worship. The stained glass window at St Martin's Anglican parish church in Caerphilly (built 1878-1879), depicting an angel wafting incense from a thurible, suggests that the practice may have been even more widespread in Wales than officially recognised.

[510] Clerical adoption of incense moved slowly. In 1868 Sir Robert Phillimore (Dean of the Arches) pronounced the ceremonial use of incense to be illegal in the suit of *Martin* v. *Mackonochie.* The first prosecution of an ordained Anglican minister for adopting incense ['ritualistic innovations'] was 1870's trial of John Purchas. Twelve years later in 1882, only ten churches in London used incense. See: Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, Part 2 (London: A & C Black, 1967), p. 319.

[511] The Welsh Church Act of 1914 introduced 'The Church in Wales' as an independent part of the worldwide Anglican Communion, partly in response to Welsh Non-conformists' resentment at paying tithes to churches they did not attend.

fees. Machen wrote of his father as 'Mr Taylor' in his semi-autobiographical novel *Hill of Dreams* (1907):

> Mr Taylor the parson, as his parishioners called him, had read the fine books and loved the hills and woods, and now knew no more of pleasant or sensational surprises. Indeed the living was much depreciated in value, and his own private means were reduced almost to vanishing point, and under such circumstances the great style loses many of its finer savors [sic]. He was very fond of Lucien [the parson's son, the semi-autobiographical Arthur Machen figure], and cheered by his return, but in the evening he would be a sad man again, with his head resting on one hand, and eyes reproaching sorry fortune.[512]

Although it would be irresponsible to accept an author's semi-autobiographical interpretation of his father's plight as truth, it is nevertheless indisputable that Arthur Machen was the first male of his family for several generations not to train for ordination in the Church of England and to pursue a career in writing fiction.

The appearances of incense and odours throughout 'The Great God Pan', *The Three Imposters* and *The Hill of Dreams* are constantly associated with incarnation and sacrifice. Like 'perfume', 'incense' is also from late Latin, deriving from *incensum*, or *thing burnt*.[513] In *The Hill of Dreams*, the burning in the first line – 'There was a glow in the sky as if great furnace doors were opened' – alludes to the flames of 'the furnace' that engulfs the ruins of an old Roman hill fort close to the childhood home of Lucien Taylor (*Hill*, p. 75). In the final lines, however, the same flames have taken possession of the adult Lucien Taylor's dying body: 'The flaring light shone through the dead eyes into the dying brain, and there was a glow within, as if great furnace doors were opened' (*Hill*, p. 236). Whereas the opening line of the novel encourages orthodox Christian interpretation of the furnace as a metaphor for Hell, and whereas immediately subsequent paragraphs situate the narrative within traditional Anglican territory (dealing

[512] Arthur Machen, *The Great God Pan and The Hill of Dreams* (Mineola: Dover, 2006), pp. 67-236, (p. 81). Further references to this edition are given in parentheses after quotations in the text, where the title is abbreviated to *Hill*.

[513] For the metonymic relationship of incense to whole holocaust, see: Susan Ashbrook Harvey, *Scenting Salvation: Ancient Christianity and the Olfactory Imagination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), pp. 13-29.

with Lucien's trip to the Rectory and to his clerical, antiquarian father) the Anglican discourse is complicated by the final, circular allusion to the light of the furnace. The symbolism of the furnace refers back to the flames of the pagan orgy that predated Christianity in the old Roman fort where, in his mystical coupling, Lucien's 'desire rose up like black smoke' (*Hill*, p. 234). Lucien has himself become 'incense' through burning, and becomes an incarnate sacrifice to the old world that had captivated him as a boy.

Machen's earlier novel, *The Three Imposters*, also entangles pagan symbolism with the symbolism of Christian belief-systems through the medium of smell. As in *The Hill of Dreams*, the novel ends with immolation by fire and a ritual sacrifice that manifests itself to the casual observer only as 'a black vapour' (*Imposters*, p. 234). Whereas the audience for sacrificial burning in *The Hill of Dreams* resembles an eager congregation comprising the 'thousands who gathered thick around them' (*Hill*, p. 234), the conman Phillipps in *The Three Imposters* is a far more casual observer: '"Do you know"' [says Phillipps],'"it seems absurd but I could almost fancy that the smell is that of burning flesh"' (*Imposters*, p. 234). *The Three Imposters* offers smells as pieces of evidence that bear witness to humanity's fallen nature: everywhere in the novel are references to postlapsarian smells. The house in which the story begins and ends was once fine and handsome but is discovered to have gone to damp and seed, with the once-lovely garden covered in slime that 'smelt dank and evil' (*Imposters*, p. 103):

> […] it was now rough and ragged, and nettles and great docks, and all manner of coarse weeds, struggled in the places of the flower-beds […] In the middle of the rank grass of the lawn was a desolate fountain; the rim of the basin was crumbling and pulverized with decay, and within the water stood stagnant, with green scum for the lilies that had once bloomed there (*Imposters*, pp. 231-2).

The decline of the garden stands in for the Edenic myth, as Machen inserts a Christian variant into fin-de-siècle self-identifications with the Classical decadence. The effects of neglect are featured as algae thar replaces one-blooming lilies. Lilies convey the

floriographical significance of innocence (although undergoing discursive transformation at the fin de siècle: see Chapter Two for details), and so the replacement of the garden's blooming and fragrant lilies by slimy accretions caused by neglect represented an enactment of innocence decaying.

The theme of malodorous putrefaction extends not only to the consequences of the individual's Fall, but also to the state of humanity en masse. Putrefaction is the fate of Miss Leicester's *Vinum Sabbati*-taking brother, who reenacts the primal Fall on his wild nights out when 'the awful thing veiled in the mythos of the Tree in the Garden was done anew' (*Imposters*, p. 207) and ends up as a 'putrid mass, seething with corruption and hideous rottenness, neither liquid nor solid, but melting and changing before our eyes, and bubbling with unctuous oily bubbles like boiling pitch' (*Imposters*, p. 211). Rottenness exudes from ordinary streets:

> A man is sauntering along a quiet, sober, everyday London street, a street of grey houses and blank walls, and there, for a moment, a veil seems drawn aside and the very fume of the pit steams up through the flagstones, the ground glows, red-hot, beneath his feet, and he seems to hear the hiss of the infernal cauldron (*Imposters*, p. 110).

Pavements may represent a falling-off of hope, but wherever gardens smell sweet in *The Three Imposters*, it is a signal that something horrible is going to happen in the next sentence:

> It dawned on me that I would write the history of a street […] – a street that I know and have passed down a hundred times, with some twenty houses, prosperous and mean, and lilac bushes in purple blossom. And yet it was, at the same time, a symbol, a *via dolorosa* of hopes cherished and disappointed, of years of monotonous existence […] and on the door of one of those houses I saw the red stain of blood, and behind a window two shadows, blackened and faded on the blind, as they swayed on tightened cords (*Imposters*, p. 193).

In a similar vein, the ill-fated house into which Miss Leicester lures Dyson with her nightmarish story is apparently charming on the outside:

> The houses stood a little back, with gardens where the lilac, and laburnum, and blood-red may blossomed gaily in their seasons, and there was a corner where an older house in another street had managed to keep a back garden of real extent, a

> walled-in garden, whence there came a pleasant smell of greenness (*Imposters*, p. 191).

The pleasant scent of Miss Leicester's Edenic surroundings, however, masks the corruption about to be encountered within. She reports:

> The air was sweet and pleasant, and the hazy form of green leaves, floating cloud-like in the square, and the smell of blossoms, had charmed my senses, and I felt happier and walked more briskly. As I delayed a moment at the verge of the pavement, waiting for a van to pass by before crossing over to the house, I happened to look up at the windows, and instantly there was the rush of deep cold waters in my ears, my heart leapt up and fell down, down as into a deep hollow, and I was amazed with a dread and terror without form or shape (*Imposters*, p. 204).

In *The Three Imposters*, the Edenic smells are rapidly countered by horror as the characters' former belief-systems prove to be jarringly inadequate to explain the present circumstances in which they discover themselves. Glen Cavaliero has situated Machen's use of odour adjectives in *The Three Imposters* and *The Hill of Dreams* (such as 'gangrenous' and 'reeking') alongside the author's 'adolescent fear of, and curiosity concerning, sex'.[514] Machen's odours, however, are also odours. Their role is revelatory, as well as sacrificial.

Miss Leicester's comment that 'the odour would betray me', and the tell-tale foul smell of the white powder whose odour turns out to be that of *Vinum Sabbati*, are foreshadowed in *The Three Imposters* by an earlier story in which 'Miss Lally' (a.k.a. Miss Leicester) is exposed to a similar revelation through smell. In Miss Lally's tale, Anne the housemaid gabbles out a version of the truth that Miss Lally is beginning to suspect. In Anne's reminiscence, she has been bothered by the mysterious disappearance of a grimy old bust of Pitt (the text does not specify whether it is a bust of the Elder or the younger Pitt, but I would hazard that it is the name itself, homonymous with '[diabolical] pit' that is significant) that has reappeared on her employer's desk on the other side of the library. The bust mysteriously moved during

[514] Glen Cavaliero, *The Supernatural and English Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 73.

the night at the time of the servant boy's occult possession:

> There was a queer sort of smell in the study when I came down and opened the windows; a bad smell it was, and I wondered what it could be. Do you know miss, I went a long time ago to the Zoo in London with my cousin Thomas Barker, one afternoon that I had off, when I was at Mrs. Price's in Stanhope Gate, and we went into the snake-house to see the snakes, and it was just the same sort of smell; very sick it made me feel, I remember, and I got Barker to take me out. And it was just the same kind of smell in the study as I was saying, and I was wondering what it could be from, when I see that bust with Pitt cut in it, standing on the master's desk, and I thought to myself, now who has done that and how have they done it? […] So I passed my hand over it, without thinking what I was doing, and where that patch was it was all sticky and slimy as if a snail had crawled over it (*Imposters*, p. 161).

The smells of Anne's remembered reptiles and the oozy residues of their trail reinforce the text's engagement with the theme of the Fall, with its hint of the serpent cast as the traditional incarnated agent of destruction. Miss Lally's revelation, that the servant boy's occult possession was accompanied by a slimy herptile tentacle that pierced and emerged through his back, continues the prelapsarian and serpentine theme.

An anonymous reviewer of *The Hill of Dreams* in 1907 saw Machen's interest in scent as being typical of his generation, aligning the novel with the 'curious morbid phase of English fiction in which sound, color, and scent are put to superfine uses by neurotic young gentlemen who should be shut up, or set at manual labor'.[515] Machen himself tended to agree, writing in his preface to the novel's publication in 1907 that it had been finished ten years previously (i.e. in 1897) after eighteen months of nervous 'dithering' (*Hill*, p. 72). In *The Hill of Dreams* and *The Three Imposters*, pleasant and unpleasant smells alike are evoked to hint at the presence of an abhorrent, nameless, shapeless, polyvalent, polymorphous and categorically indeterminate flux of generative original Being. Machen's post-Darwinian abhorrence of and fascination with ancestral origins runs curiously counter to the appeal to antiquity that characterised the Tractarian's justificatory claims, and also to the orthodox Anglican position that

[515] 'Current Literature', *Nation, LXXXV*, 11 July 1907, p. 37.

baptised Christians merely emerge from the same physical state to which they will eventually return: 'dust thou art and unto dust shall thou return'.[516] Smell-references in *The Hill of Dreams* and *The Three Imposters* that deal on the one hand with the odours of sacrifice, and on the other to Incarnationist theology, are also prominent in the novella 'The Great God Pan'.

Machen kept a scrapbook of the harshest reviews of his first popular succès de scandale, 'The Great God Pan'. While contemporary reviewers were appalled by 'the most acutely and intentionally disagreeable book yet seen in English' as the *Manchester Guardian* notoriously put it, none appears to have spotted that the novella revolves around incarnatory anxieties containing an extremely blasphemous and odiferous inversion of the Biblical Incarnation.[517] As critical attention is focused on the story's influence on early forms of science fiction and Machen's treatment of the mad scientist who operates on his ward's brain, most modern plot summaries – with the exception of critic Kostas Boyiopoulos' – neglect also to mention the aspect of the story that most overturns scriptural orthodoxy.[518] The following details of the contribution of odour towards Machen's inverted Christian religious context are consequently a supplement to Boyiopoulos' analysis. The incarnation of the God Pan as Helen Vaughan has been managed through the medium of Doctor Raymond's teenaged ward – it is no surprise to find that her name is Mary. This Mary is no Virgin, however, as is made clear by the witness's furtive questions about her status, her endearments to the doctor and his kisses on her mouth. Like the Biblical Mary, she accedes with trust and 'with the feeling of submission strong within her', crosses her arms on her breast 'as a little child about to

[516] *Standard Book of Common Prayer: Burial of the Dead (Rite One)*, (1979).
[517] Quoted in Arthur Machen, *Precious Balms* (London: Spurr & Swift, 1924), p. 8.
[518] Kostas Boyiopoulos, '"Esoteric Elements": The Judeo-Christian Scheme in Arthur Machen's 'The Great God Pan'', in *Neophilologus* (2010) 94:363-374 <DOI 10.1007/s11061-009-9186-4> [accessed 14 April 2014].

say her prayers'.[519] Mary's prayers do not ascend and her deluded faith in the doctor is abused as the process of incarnation wrecks her body and her reason. What does ascend, unexpectedly, is 'an odd odour, at first the merest suggestion of odour, in the room' that surprises Clarke, the witness, by smelling neither 'of the chemist's shop [n]or the surgery'. This 'odd odour' is puzzling in many respects, not simply because it is not evocative of laboratory disinfectant:

> above all there came to his nostrils [i.e., Clarke's, the witness's] the scent of summer, the smell of flowers mingled, and the odour of the woods, of cool shaded places, deep in the green depths, drawn forth by the sun's heat; and the scent of the good earth ('Pan', p. 5).

The summery odour of growing green things has emerged from a phial that sends Clarke, the witness, into an anaesthetised sleep for what the reader surmises must be the 'couple of hours' to which the doctor has previously referred. It is implied, although not stated, that the phial contains a substance drawn from Clarke's dream, and that his invitation to witness the surgical procedure had been instigated and exploited by the doctor who does not sleep despite the anaesthetic odour, but who works away and collects 'an oily fluid' into a green phial. This needs some unpacking: as the purpose of putting an oil into a phial made from coloured glass is to protect the contents from the environmental effects of sunlight, and as the text makes it plain that the oil needs to be freshly collected, and it is used only once, there is no point to the phial being green unless the shade is entirely decorative, or meant to associate the contents with the sylvan odours of the 'cool shaded places, deep in the green depths' ('Pan', p. 5). In view of the sacrilegious inversion of the nativity, however, it is likely that the oily fluid is a 'chrism', the sacramental anointing oil. Chrism is usually an olive oil, scented with sweet balsam, used at baptisms in the Anglican Church and for coronations, where it

[519] Arthur Machen, 'The Great God Pan' in *The Three Imposters and other stories: Best Weird Tales of Arthur Machen Vol. 1* (ed. S.T. Joshi) (Hayward: Chaosium, 2001 reprinted 2007) pp. 1-50 (p. 7). Further references to this edition are given in parentheses after quotations in the text, where the title is abbreviated to 'Pan'.

proclaims the King or Queen to be God's representative on earth. The cool green floral scent of chrism marks not only the baptismal invitation of Pan into the world, but also his coronation as a mortal monarch.

The incorporation of the antithetical dream and reality of Incarnation in the laboratory sequence of 'The Great God Pan' is managed by Machen's familiar stylistic device of following the depiction of floral and garden smells with the immediate introduction of something horrible. The olfactory segue introduces Helen Vaughan's/Pan's conception, and later it introduces the purchase of rope that will end Helen Vaughan's/Pan's life:

> It was a joyous morning and men and women looked at the sky and smiled as they went about their work or their pleasure, and the wind blew as blithely as upon the meadows and the scented gorse. But somehow or other I got out of the bustle and the gaiety, and found myself walking slowly along a quiet, dull street, where there seemed to be no sunshine and no air, and where the few foot-passengers loitered as they walked, and hung indecisively about corners and archways' ('Pan', p. 44).

Elsewhere, it is retracted into a single sentence:

> For many hours I strayed through the maze of the forest […] lying on the short turf of a clearing where the faint sweet smell of wild roses came to me on the wind and mixed with the heavy perfume of the elder, whose mingled odour is like the odour of the room of the dead, a vapour of incense and corruption ('Pan', p. 48).

In these examples, the proximity of natural green smells to supernatural horrors forms a pattern that indicates the potential of odour to awaken (or loose) that which is dormant or buried.

Machen's natural green smells defy conventional floriographical interpretation but, as keen contemporary readers of James Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1900) and students of Celtic symbolism would have twigged, the 'heavy perfume' of the elder tree signified powerful, unlucky magic. Evil spirits lived in it, witches lurked underneath it, and the leaves were said to give out 'a toxic scent which, if inhaled, may send the

sleeper into a coma and death'.[520] Machen's reference to the scent of elder and his allusion to trees (and, by extension, the natural world) as habitations applies also to houses, reinforcing the Gothic and semantic association between 'house' (as in, domicile) and 'house' (as in, 'race' or 'clan'). The house of Helen Vaughan in Soho is said to be 'in very bad odour' with the neighbours, and an illicit exploration of the premises reveals it to be in bad odour indeed ('Pan', p. 19). The illicit trespasser reports:

> I had hardly put my foot inside the passage before I noticed a queer, heavy feeling about the air of the house. Of course, all empty houses are stuffy, and so forth, but this was something quite different; I can't describe it to you but it seemed to stop the breath ('Pan', pp. 22-23).

Later, the trespasser repeats his story of olfactory shock: 'it was as if I was inhaling at every breath some deadly fume, which seemed to penetrate to every nerve and bone and sinew of my body' ('Pan', p. 27). The evil-smelling house is symbol of its owner; a passing *flâneur* remarks of the house that it held 'the most unpleasant physiognomy he had ever observed' ('Pan', p. 18). Eventually, the affinity between the house and its occupant is revealed by Dr Raymond to have been a species of 'incarnate horror', as 'when the house of life is thus thrown open, there may enter in that for which we have no name, and human flesh may become the veil of a horror one dare not express' ('Pan', p. 50). The smell of evil houses in 'The Great God Pan' is a reminder of the Gothic 'Haunted House' trope and the architectural origins of the epithet 'unhinged'.

Machen's use of odour in his supernatural fiction of the 1890s expresses a common theme of anxiety about Tractarian theological insinuations into the older Anglican traditions with which Machen and his family were familiar. The anxiety was pervaded by attraction too, as the seductive and erotic impulses of Machen's fiends make clear. Nonetheless, the implications of Machen's use of odour challenges the conclusions of other critical studies of the writer during this period. They challenge

[520] Donald Watts, *Dictionary of Plant Lore* (Burlington: Elsevier, 2007), p. 131.

Joshi's and Freeman's assertions that Machen was a 'rigidly orthodox', or a 'radical yet traditional' Anglo-Catholic, as the nature and reception of Anglo-Catholicism was undergoing a restructuring in the mid-to-late nineteenth century, which meant that the words 'traditional' and 'orthodox' had very little meaning in the historical context. Moreover, Machen repeatedly allied Tractarian notions of incense with Incarnationism in his stories to convey something alluring and yet, ultimately, terrible and to be avoided at all costs. The thematic introduction of figures from Classical mythology (such as Pan) into the Judeo-Christian schema, and the concomitant eruption of protean forces into ordinary suburban lives, suggests strongly that Machen was sceptical of the Oxford Movement's main contention that they were just recuperating the past: just because it is old, his fictions hiss, does not mean it is any good.

Machen's own theory of literature was to be outlined in *Hieroglyphics* (1902). The content of *Hieroglyphics* makes the claim for 'fine literature', which it distinguishes from 'writing', which Machen archly called 'a number of grammatical, or partly grammatical, sentences arranged in a more or less logical order'. The defining feature of 'literature', argues Machen in *Hieroglyphics*, is its concern with 'ecstasy', defined in the text rather broadly as meaning epiphanic moments of revelation that unveil cosmic realities.[521] Machen extrapolates some interesting, if confused, arguments from his definition, although it is hard to see the value of an argument that specifically excludes *Pride and Prejudice* and *Vanity Fair* from its consideration of literature (*Hieroglyphics*, pp.41-3). Since *Hieroglyphics* is little read and its content may be suspected for primarily conveying a retrospective justification of Machen's own literary output from the 1890s, this chapter addresses only its narrative frame.

[521] Arthur Machen, *Hieroglyphics: A Note Upon Ecstasy in Literature* (New York: Albert Knopf, 1923), p. 17. Further references to this edition are given in parentheses after quotations in the text.

The monologue *Hieroglyphics* is an ambiguously non-fictional volume of criticism that engages with its own status as a piece of interpretative fiction. It combines recurring elements from Machen's recent fictional output and it purports in its 'Prefatory Note' to be the recorded wisdom of an 'obscure literary hermit' that has been penned and introduced by a faithful acolyte who has striven to reproduce the hermit's words exactly (*Hieroglyphics*, p. 5). This obscure literary hermit shares many qualities with Machen's semi-autobiographical character Lucien Taylor in *The Hill of Dreams*, but he is a variant who survived the traumatic breakdown that killed Lucien and who retired to lead a quiet life in two rooms in a big old house on the outskirts of London. The hermit's house has an arresting similarity to the house described in *The Three Imposters* – like that house, it has ancient origins, an eighteenth-century central wing and hotchpotch later additions. Like that house, it is mouldy and decayed and set away from others on the street. It also has black, overgrown shrubs in its seedy garden, and it has the same ruined red flock wallpaper in its principal rooms, as does the house in *The Three Imposters* in which the smell of human sacrifice is discovered.

The ancient origins, eighteenth-century golden years, intermittent additions and subsequent neglect of the house provide a neat thematic parallel to Machen's conception of the Gothic genre. It also contains a mysterious odour. The hermit's rooms on the *piano nobile* are said to lie above the cellar, from which noises may occasionally be heard.[522] The 'crypt-like odour of the cellar', mingled with 'a faint suggestion of incense' rises into the room while the hermit speaks, reinforcing Machen's depiction of half-glimpsed realities that may be uncovered in ecstatic revelation (*Hieroglyphics*, p. 7). The architecturally improbable 'subtle suggestion of incense sweetening the dank odours of the cellar' appears later in the 'Prefatory Note', in conjunction with the

[522] As a piece of realistic architectural detail, this is inexplicable as a whole floor of basement and kitchens have gone missing. The only explanations that make sense are either that Machen was employing his writer's privilege to select which bits of the metaphor suited his purpose, or that the cellars belonged to an older building and extended beyond the present perimeter of the house into the gardens.

hermit's meditation on Samuel Taylor Coleridge's 'esoteric system' (*Hieroglyphics*, p. 8). Read in conjunction with *The Hill of Dreams* and *The Three Imposters*, Machen's allusion to crypt smell and incense in *Hieroglyphics* has three functions. The first supports the narrative; the lingering residue of incense over the smell of dead bodies hints that the house itself was involved in the traumatic breakdown of the 1870s that drove the hermit to retreat from the world inside its two safe rooms (bearing in mind my contention that the house symbolises the literary Gothic tradition, Machen's insinuation would be that a traumatic 'break' to that genre had occurred during the 1870s, the same decade in which the writer's family had decisively lost their former financial and professional security). The second function of incense and crypt smells that appear in the Prefatory Notes to the ambiguously non-fictional *Hieroglyphics* is directional, and it encourages the reader to conclude that Machen's other fictional representations of human sacrifice in evil houses were based on 'real', authoritive, non-fictional, examples. The third function is inferential. Despite the narrator's assertion that the smells were evidence merely of precautionary hygienic dispersal, the implied reader understands from the surrounding discussion of 'ecstasy' as an epiphanic moment revealed in fiction by adopted and discarded literary modes that the aromatic conflation of death and incense coming up from the bottom of the house is not only a figure for the act of writing Gothic fiction, but also Machen's figure for the fundamental basis of all human endeavour in corruption and sacrifice.

**IV: Conclusion**

Olfactory analysis in this chapter has shown how themes of smell, smells and smelling were used in fin-de-siècle stories by Lee and Machen to highlight the presence of the supernatural, signal transformation, collapse time distinctions, and dissolve certainties and fixed identities. Smells that recur as themes of sacrifice and decay in work of the

1890s by Machen are associated with his questioning of Tractarian incarnationism, suggesting that Machen's current critical reputation as a stalwart Anglo-Catholic may usefully be revalued. The strong identification of perfume with music in 'A Wicked Voice' implies that Wilson's, Piesse's, Wynter's and Rimmel's mid-nineteenth-century analogies between perfume composition and musical composition (see Introduction) had provided a new discursive field for authors addressing themes of creativity and, conversely, artistic sterility.[523] In both writers' work, the sense of smell is described alongside characters' disorientation, and is shown as blurring the boundaries between dreams and visions of the supernatural and quotidian, normative realities. Lee and Machen defied the mid-century Victorian urge to categorical determinacy by privileging in their fin-de-siècle fictions a subjective and embodied sense with superior access routes to occult 'truths' than those available from mere conventional reason. Their stories, which use smell, smells and smelling to convey characters' ideopathic perceptions and narrative fragmentation, demonstrate the significant part played by olfaction in setting out some characteristic concerns and features of twentieth-century European Modernism.

[523] Outside the scope of this thesis but briefly relevant to the theme of perfume and artistic production here is Gaston Leroux's *Le fantôme de l'opéra* [*The Phantom of the Opera*](first serialised in Parisian daily newspaper *Le Gaulois* from September 23, 1909 to January 8, 1910), in which a frustrated musical genius poses as the 'Angel of Music' (i.e. source of musical inspiration) while maintaining secrecy over his cadaverous face and absent nose (which is implied to have been the congenital result of inherited syphilis). See: Gaston Leroux, *The Phantom of the Opera*, trans. by Mireille Ribière (London: Penguin, 2009) p. 280. Leroux's previous novel *La parfum de la femme en noir* [*The Perfume of the Lady in Black*] (first serialised in French weekly paper *L'illustration* in 1908, published in book form 1909) also dwelled on scent, and its absence, as a stimulus for creative enquiry. See: Gaston Leroux, *The Perfume of the Lady in Black* (Cambridge: Dedalus European Classics, 1998), esp. Chapter IV, 'En Route'.

# Conclusion

Right from the beginning, this thesis has drawn attention to how we so often find smell, smells and smelling to be funny. Consequently, the thesis began with a hop, skip and a jump, and a Monty Python joke. People do enjoy a good nose-joke; in seven years of writing this thesis, I scarcely ever met an academic who failed to laugh when I explained my subject of study. Alongside the fun and games surrounding smell, smells and smelling, however, I was also at pains to stress the dreadful and macabre aspects of olfaction that manifested in the 1890s as the tragedy of Cyrano de Bergerac's misshapen nose (in Edmond Rostand's 1897 eponymous play), in the Count's feral snout in *Dracula*, and the sweet, appalling tang of burning human flesh in stories by Haggard, Marsh and Machen. The horror, in short, accompanies the laughter.

It is a critical commonplace of comedy to say that we laugh at whatever it is we most fear, and so the three chapters of this thesis have pursued the ghastliness that is revealed by smell, smells and smelling in stories from the Victorian fin de siècle, often at the expense of common sense, or indeed (as Wells's earliest short stories show), any other sense. British novels and short stories from the end of the nineteenth century commonly described supernatural experiences in terms of smells and noses and, conversely, smells and noses in terms of the supernatural, not least because writers' references to the stubbornly indescribable experience of olfaction pointed readers to a plane of existence beyond this immediate, material world. Whereas the Symbolists recognised this, and Symbolist poets followed the odour-drenched examples set by Baudelaire, the literary and cultural associations between smell and the supernatural were also exploited by other, mainstream writers of prose fictions. Discrepancies in the translation by Lee of her 'La voix maudite' into 'A Wicked Voice' show her dealing precisely with the problems of associating, and disassociating, olfactive work with the

Symbolist movement. More rugged works than Lee's showed up the connection between olfaction and weirdness: the two bestsellers of 1897, Marsh's *The Beetle* and Stoker's *Dracula,* both relied on the same trick of identifying the immortal villain via having his or her nose transform from the aquiline to the bestial.

Transforming noses in stories from the fin de siècle belonged to an important historical shift in the way that humans assessed their own and each other's worth. During those years, it became possible to choose a new nose, with anaesthesia beforehand and professional nursing care afterwards; accordingly, fin-de-siècle stories set scents and noses against earlier, physiognomic and anthropometric explanations of human beings that assumed convergence between external and internal qualities. Dorian Gray's portrait in the attic was part of Wilde's cautionary tale against what happens when people no longer wear their own faces, and its gilded frame confers a traditional immortality upon its subject that is at ironic variance with the surgical and anaesthetic cosmetic concerns of the text.

As noses were in this period suddenly no longer the index of character previously assumed by phrenology and evolutionary materialism, other noses and the smells they detected offered fin-de-siècle writers the question of what else one could be – apart from flesh. Consequently, noses and smells were implicated in representations of becoming something other than oneself. MacDonald's association of noses with bird beaks in *Lilith*, for instance, figured humans as incipient angels but circular motifs of miasma, and perfumed hair in *She* contributed to Haggard's presentation of reincarnation. Incarnatory desire that was expressed as smells in stories by Lee and Machen described an oscillating longing and loathing for supernatural possession.

In addition to assimilating the introduction of rhinoplasty and anaesthesia, the period was also marked by technical innovations in the material production and dissemination of perfumed products such as soap and bottled scent. Fin-de-siècle

authors engaged with the process of combining and layering that became available to perfumers, due to inventions of cheap synthetic substitutes for natural fragrances, who could previously have produced only single-note fragrances (such as 'rose' or 'violet', or 'vanilla'). Following initial and whimsical comparisons in the 1850s and 1860s between the design of musical and olfactory structures by George Wilson, Andrew Wynter and the self-publicising perfumers G. W. S. Piesse and Eugene Rimmel, the manufacture and experience of layered scents increasingly became described in terms of musical composition and reception. Although Lee's 'A Wicked Voice' most explicitly showed the way that music haunts to be straightforwardly equivalent to the way that perfume haunts, other authors engaged with the same new connection between perfume and music. The person and work of Wagner underlay the symbolic imbrication of the castrato in 'A Wicked Voice' by perfume and music, as did the Wagnerian opera to which Dorian Gray was drawn immediately following Wilde's elaborate descriptions of esoteric perfume and musical experiments. Meanwhile, Wells comically inverted the association between Wagnerian music and olfaction by plotting the melancholy fate of his 'Man With a Nose' against submerged references to the theme of Wagner's 'The Flying Dutchman' opera. The process of combining 'notes' and the conflation of music with perfume continued to be relevant into the twentieth century. Texts that are illuminated by their olfactory genealogy include Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) and Boris Vian's *L'ecume des jours* (1947), where their respective 'Scent-organ' and 'Clavicocktail' clearly refer back to mid-nineteenth-century descriptions that paralleled music with layered scent.

The process of layering scent affected authors' depictions of magical gardens where lots of fragrant plants are in bloom (despite horticultural verisimilitude) at once. Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* put laburnum branches (flowering in early spring) next to lilac blossoms (flowering at Easter) next to roses (high or late summer). Lee's

'A Wicked Voice' most improbably set together tuberose, jasmine and gardenias. MacDonald's *Lilith* not only set summer roses beside spring bluebells, but also beautifully illustrated the late nineteenth-century conflation of music and scent by setting the fragrant rose bush inside the ghost of a piano. In *Dracula*, layered scents staged the point of contact between binary opposites such as 'sweet' and 'bitter' and confounded the characters' easy distinctions between good and bad, inside and outside, alive and dead. The synaesthetic quality of being lots of things at once was managed through the Beetle's nose in *The Beetle*, and through smells in stories by Lee and Machen where incense and nauseatingly sweet perfumes collapsed temporal distinctions and blurred identity boundaries. Conversely, Haggard borrowed the neologistic verb 'to essence' (newly coined in the 1880s from its linguistic origin in describing the preparation of aromatic oils) not only to reinforce Queen Ayesha's chief interest in preparing her own aromatic mixtures, but also to perpetuate the line that Ayesha, Kôr and the planet itself were manifestations of one, indivisible, Spirit of Life.

This thesis has shown how smell, smells and smelling in fin-de-siècle texts offered characters a strategy for reaching authenticity and 'truth'. The privileging of the faculty of scent above vision and hearing, its traditional superiors in the hierarchical model of the senses, informed Dorian Gray's descent into opium and Lord Henry Wotton's into his vinaigrette. Dracula's nose conferred epistemological privileges that cut through limitations of space and time. In *The Three Imposters*, the half-remembered smell of the reptile house betrayed the presence of the ancient serpentine fiend. In Lee's story 'A Wicked Voice', the smell of ripe peaches offered Magnus a peep through time to the original song of the castrato. Among the fin-de-siècle writers who figured truth as smells or noses, Haggard was paramount: the giant stone Ethiopian Head that points the travellers to Kôr in *She* was the acme of dreamed and actual noses that pointed out the right direction. Haggard's concern with tracking quarry was expressed by his use of the

new verbs ‘to scent’ and ‘to nose’ and the novel’s dramatisation of being ‘led by the nose’ presented a fracture with the High Victorian ‘grand narrative of civilisation’ that had formerly ascribed scent discrimination only to women and ‘primitives’.

Although that grand narrative of civilisation was demonstrably ruptured in the fin-de-siècle period by a significant quantity of attention to smell, smells and smelling, the usual critical take on the subject of smell, smells and smelling in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is that they do not exist any more. Or rather, that smells exist only in an ersatz, commercially controlled way that simulates ‘reality’. I have argued that part of the reason for this misunderstanding lies in selective misreadings of Corbin’s foundational study of cultural olfaction, and part is due to Bauman’s transliteration of Baudrillard’s theory of simulation into the area of smells. That misunderstanding of the significance of smell, smells and smelling in texts from the fin de siècle has been a serious critical obstruction. It has restricted work not only on the extent to which Victorian categorical determinacy became eroded by new cultural attentions to phenomenological interplay (see Introduction), but also on the extent to which aspects of texts that we identify as Modernist can be excavated in writings of an earlier period. My opening referred to Miles Taylor and Michael Wolff’s central, vexed, historiographical question about whether the 1890s had been the end of the Victorian period or the beginning of the twentieth century? This thesis has shown that an answer was in front of our noses all the time.

A central concern throughout this project has been to flesh out more fully a picture of writers at the end of the nineteenth century who grabbed hold of changing ideas about smell, smells and smelling, and harnessed those ideas to challenge standard orthodoxies of what it was to be a human being. Their work defied mid-Victorian categorical determinism and set out a radical version of the world that was subjective, fitful, evanescent, and in which a considerable amount of the action happened in dream-

states. That version of the world established a template for Modernist texts that also engage with subjectivity, evanescence and dream-states, such as Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain* (1924), Franz Kafka's *The Trial* (written 1914 and 1915, published 1925) and *The Castle* (1922), James Joyce's *Ulysses* (serialised 1918-1920, published in one volume 1922) and *Finnegan's Wake* (1939) and Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* (1931). Recovering the lost history of smell in supernatural texts of the fin de siècle allows us to confirm the presence of a literary hinge between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that was carved, at least in part, out of references to smell, smells and smelling. Since this thesis owes a lot to other, previous, critics for their observations about thematic appearances of olfaction in work from the Victorian and Modernist periods, I hope that my contribution will be helpful in turn to future researchers. In the meantime, I would like to exit this thesis gracefully, and so this last page has been especially printed for you on aromachologically-scented paper (using a cunning blend of jasmine, to tickle your limbic system into thinking it exciting, and rosemary, to encourage you to think it clever).

Which words might tingle in your olfactive memory, I am keeping my fingers crossed, almost as well if you are reading this online!

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