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Preface

We celebrate our fifth birthday with a special digest issue that brings together a selection of articles from past issues that focus on the body, its identities and rhythmic capabilities. From Symons's infatuation with flamenco, to non-normative masculinity in *Monsieur Phocas*, to decadent Hollywood, to the medico-literary in Lombroso and Nordau, to staged historicism: we have travelled a long way since our first issue on Arthur Symons in 2018. The current special issue is in anticipation of Goldsmiths' grand return to an in-person conference on *Decadent Bodies* this summer which includes a screening of Jack Smith's *Flaming Creatures* (1963), keynotes by Ana Parejo Vadillo and Martin O'Brien, a petite exhibition of decadent art objects, and a performance night at IKLECTIK. The conference runs 28-29 July; for the programme click here. Co-organized by the British Association of Decadence Studies and the Departments of English and Creative Writing and Theatre and Performance at Goldsmiths, the conference will transport us out of the Zoom ether and into a physical space. Not that the digital world is a bad thing. We in the virtual editorial office of *Volupté* are passionate about our download stats and like to tap and stroke our phones as much as the next aesthete, but as we blow out the candles on our photoshopped cake, we know that decadence is best experienced in the full flesh.

… or in free, voluptuous, Open Access form. This issue of *Volupté* is the last solstice issue. From now on our bi-annual publication dates will coincide with the spring and autumn equinoxes in March and September. We have an exciting line-up of forthcoming issues. Next up in September 2022 is an issue on Vernon Lee, guest-edited by Sally Blackburn-Daniels and Patricia Pulham. And in March 2023, Robert Stilling guest-edits an issue on Decolonizing Decadence, a theme that complements a new project on Transnational Decadent Pedagogies at the Decadence Research Centre. He asks two important questions: 'What would it mean to "decolonize decadence", to decentre, "undiscipline", and displace literary and artistic imaginaries so enmeshed with Western myths of progress, decline, and racial degeneration? How can Decadence Studies and studies of aestheticism engage with concepts such as coloniality or highlight indigenous voices or epistemologies that might imagine decadence and aestheticism otherwise?' The deadline of the call for submissions for this issue (V6.1) is open until 15 September 2022.

We continue to publish creative work on decadence and new translations, and every autumn we will include the winning submission of the BADS Translation Prize, supported by the Decadence and Translation Network, alongside the winners of the BADS Essay Prizes. We especially encourage proposals and submissions from Early Career Researchers, writers, artists, and translators. In this issue we are delighted to be able to showcase two brand-new translations by Stephen Komarnyckyj and Karólína Rós Ólafsdóttir. Stephen provides us with the first translation into English from Ukrainian of Lesya Ukrainka's prose piece, 'Your Letters Always Smell of Withered Roses' (composed around 1900 but unpublished in her lifetime), and Karólína introduces us to a little-known Icelandic goth poet, Davíð Stefánsson, whose poetry collection *Svartar Fjaðrir* [*Black Feathers*] made a huge impact on its publication in 1919. If any publishers are interested in more translations of Ukrainka's and Stefánsson's work, please get in touch.

Finally, my personal thanks to the stellar *Volupté* team: Alice Condé, Jessica Gossling, and Robert Pruett-Vergara, who will see the journal into its new equinoctial form, and to Sasha Dovzhyk, Maura Dooley, and Richard Scott, who advised on translation matters. As always, and perhaps even more so in this troubled year, we wish our readers a soft summer.

Jane Desmarais
Editor-in-Chief
21 June 2022

'Inarticulate cries': Arthur Symons and the Primitivist Modernity of Flamenco

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In his essay 'Moorish Secrets in Spain' (1899), the British poet and critic Arthur Symons (1865-1945) described Spanish flamenco music as the expression of primal creative forces, which were nonetheless connected to modernity: 'it is music before rhythm, music which comes down to us untouched by the invention of the modern scale, from an antiquity out of which plain-chant is a first step towards modern harmony.'[1] Symons revealed flamenco as an art form caught in transition, faltering between Romantic spirit, Orientalist eroticism, and an emerging Modernist primitivism.

Symons's hitherto unexplored reception of Spanish flamenco was central to his conception of the interconnectedness of all the arts, as well as to his formulation of vernacular and cosmopolitan culture. For Symons, flamenco was constituent part, on the one hand, of a Decadent discourse of sensuousness and pleasure, and, on the other, of a Symbolist and proto-Modernist discourse of primitivism. At the same time, flamenco was a contested locus for the prevailing Orientalist discourse of his time. The British writer often reinforced the stereotypical myth that the Spanish Gypsy 'native' was intrinsically enigmatic and impenetrable, and fetishized the 'primitive' nature of the flamenco art form. Yet, this article shows that these ideas also responded to a sincere and aesthetic effort to modernize and dignify flamenco and Gypsy culture.

As I argue here, Symons found in the, often exoticized, primitiveness of Spanish flamenco the quintessence of art, a paradigmatic representation of the symbolism and modernity in the arts that he was so intensely seeking in the 1890s. For Symons, the new expressive ideal he found in the language of music in this period, and especially of dance, was perfected in Spanish flamenco: '[Flamenco dancing] is the most elaborate dancing in the world and, like the music, it has an

abstract quality which saves it from ever, for a moment, becoming vulgar.'[2] Watching a Spanish Gypsy dancing, Symons recalled, he 'thought of the sacred dances which in most religions have given a perfectly solemn and collected symbolism to the creative forces of the world.'[3] The emphasis on flamenco as an elaborate art form and on the perfect symbolism that it reveals suggests a profound engagement with a culture that went deeper than the crude outlines of Orientalist caricature.

In order to explore Symons's multifaceted relationship to flamenco in the 1890s, I focus here on certain critical and poetic texts of the period. In particular, I examine the essays 'A Spanish Music-Hall' (1892; 1918), 'Moorish Secrets in Spain' (1899; 1918) and 'Seville' (1901; 1918), and a few of his multiple reviews of Spanish dancers for the popular evening newspaper *The Star* in the 1890s. I also analyse the poems 'To a Gitana Dancing' and 'Spain (To Josefa)', included in his volume of verse *Images of Good and Evil* (1899). Before further developing my argument, however, I first need to frame Symons's attraction to flamenco within the context of his artistic interests in the early 1890s.

Spanish Gypsies and Music-Halls

Symons's early interest in flamenco is rooted in the distinct features of this popular Spanish art form, which can be seen as a 'primeval' *Gesamtkunstwerk* [total work of art]. Flamenco involves several artistic expressions: *cante* [song], *baile* [dance], *toque* [guitar music], *jaleo* [vocalisations], *palmas* [handclapping], and *pitos* [finger snapping].[4] Despite the diverse conjectures concerning its origin, consensus situates the early history and development of flamenco in the Spanish southern region of Andalusia, where Gypsies began to settle in the latter half of the fifteenth century and with whom flamenco is most strongly associated.[5] Flamenco draws then from traditions several centuries old, but it was not until the first half of the nineteenth century that it emerged as a distinctive form of Andalusian art. As Peter Manuel notes, Andalusian music culture 'was itself an eclectic entity, syncretizing the legacy of the Arabs, Berbers, Jews, Christians' and Gypsies

who cohabited for several centuries.[6] As a public, performing art, flamenco developed in the second half of the nineteenth century, with the appearance of the *café cantantes* or music-halls. Symons found then in flamenco an art form with all the elements that occupied his mind in the early 1890s: music-halls, dance, music, and Gypsy culture.

Symons's interest in flamenco art was a component of his wider fascination with Gypsy culture. A member of the Gypsy Lore Society for most of his life, Symons perceived in the Gypsies the sense of freedom he sought in life and art, a mysterious and symbolic aspect of reality, and his own ambition to identify with both. Symons saw himself as a 'vagabond' from his childhood; he felt that he had been 'born […] cruel, nervous, excitable, passionate, restless, never quite human, never quite normal'.[7] His upbringing (his father's work as a Wesleyan preacher entailed moving to a new location every three years) led him to believe that he could never root himself in any place in the world, which, in exchange, had freed him 'from many prejudices' in giving him 'its own unresting kind of freedom'.[8] As a result, Symons travelled, or rather, wandered, extensively throughout his life. He spent long spells of time in France, Italy, and Spain, but he also visited Belgium, Germany, Russia, Poland, Hungary, Austria, Switzerland, Ireland, Turkey, and the Czech Republic. It was this fascination with wandering and restlessness that led Symons to the Romani people and culture of Ireland, Wales, England, Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Spain.

Critics have considered Symons's interest in Gypsies as a patronising idealisation of elements of Gypsy culture that reinforced or simply inverted earlier derogatory stereotypes. Indeed, Symons tends to repeat all of the nineteenth-century tropes of Orientalism and race, mysticism, and ahistoricity surrounding the Gypsies. Deborah Epstein Nord has gone as far as to qualify Symons's views on Gypsies as 'repugnant'.[9] Other critics, such as Janet Lyon, however, offer alternative political readings, and, most importantly, add an aesthetic strand that needs to be considered in order to historically understand *fin-de-siècle*, and Modernist, Gypsophilia. These

opposing understandings of Symons's relationship to Gypsy culture would be replicated in his reception of flamenco, as we shall see later on.

Lyon underlines how Symons's views on Gypsies, most famously gathered in his essay 'In Praise of Gypsies' (1908), albeit deficient as activist journalism, reflect 'an uncharacteristic awareness of the particularities of the Gypsy plight as a political event unfolding in a more general political plot'.[10] Symons wrote 'In Praise of Gypsies' amidst the impending passage of the Movable Dwellings Bill, which aimed to register, regulate, and provide for the sanitary inspection of the vans and tents of British Gypsies and Travellers, and to make the education of their children mandatory. Lyon argues that the shift in representations of Gypsies during this period from 'hazy and inscrutable natural subjects to objects' of a discourse of legislation, prosecution, and control had 'concretely reifying effects both for Gypsy populations and within British narrations of nationhood.'[11] Alongside this political reading, Lyon foregrounds an aesthetic component of *fin-de-siècle* and Modernist Gypsophilia: 'Gypsy culture, as construed and aesthetically reworked by Modernist *gadže* [non-Romani] like Arthur Symons […] forms an eccentric bulwark against rationalist modernity, especially in the matrix of London'.[12] In some sense the circulating image of the Romanies' communal strangeness becomes, in bohemian subculture, 'a projected form of a self-authenticating community within the structures of modern disenchantment.'[13] Symons's reception of Spanish Gypsy flamenco would prove to be equally complex: both politically conservative and reactionary, but primarily a site of aesthetic investigation.

Symons's interest in flamenco is also framed within his increasing fascination with music-halls, and popular dance and music. Symons's intellectual interest in the music-hall (he would be referred to as 'a scholar in music halls' by W. B. Yeats in 1892) has served to further the perception of Decadence as a high art movement nonetheless linked to and interested in popular culture.[14] As Linda Dowling observes, there was a 'genuine contribution of the music-hall cult to the emergent modernistic aesthetic' and, in this emergence, 'Symons's part was crucial, and he

fulfilled it largely because he found in the art of the music-hall a new model for poetic language, one that freed it from the paralyzing choice between Pater's Euphuism and shapeless colloquial speech.'[15] More crucially, Dowling suggests, 'Symons found a new expressive ideal in the music-hall's language of physical gesture, and specifically in the language of the dance.'[16] The pivotal contribution of Symons's fascination with music-halls and dance to the dawning Modernist aesthetic has been extensively studied. What is insufficiently acknowledged, however, is that the first extensive theoretical statement on music-halls that Symons wrote was the travelogue 'A Spanish Music-Hall', published in 1892, a few months after coming back from his first trip to Spain in 1891. In the essay, Symons describes his experience of a soirée in a Spanish music-hall, where he mainly witnessed flamenco acts. Symons foreshadows the cultural studies intellectual's concern with the popular in this essay, and he does it in Spain, and in Spanish. The music-hall intellectual is translated into a Spanish term; at the beginning of the piece Symons described himself as an '*aficionado*, as a Spaniard would say, of music-halls.'[17] Symons was certainly a devotee of music-halls before going to Spain, but he only became professionally and intellectually committed to them after being in Spain and, I argue, coming into contact with its popular culture. The dates here are crucial: nine months after coming back from Spain, in February 1892, Symons became the critic of music-hall and dance for the popular evening newspaper, *The Star*. He had first contributed to the newspaper in October 1891 with a short piece on music-halls, four months after coming back from his first trip to Spain.

The Spanish music-hall that Symons referred to in his 1892 article was the Alcázar Español, located in the *Barrio Chino* or red-light district of Barcelona, the first Spanish city that Symons visited in 1891. From the beginning of his essay, there is evidence for a reading of Symons as an Orientalist tourist. The British dandy, seeking 'the most characteristic place [he] could find', ended up at a place that ordinary Barcelonans perceived as extraneous to their own reality, a quarter that had become 'a sexual and folkloric theme park featuring a gypsy underworld of shady flamenco performers.'[18] And yet, the Decadent Symons was not seeking

ordinary life, but uniqueness, artifice and exaggeration. His choice of place in this instance had to do more with his idea of Decadent cosmopolitanism than with an Orientalist lens.

Symons's cosmopolitan Decadence was connected to the Decadent quest for '*la vérité vraie*, the very essence of truth' that he described in 'The Decadent Movement in Literature' (1893); 'the truth of appearance to the senses, of the visible world to the eyes that see it; and the truth of spiritual things to the spiritual vision', which he could only find in his own idea of what 'true' Spanishness meant.[19] Hence the constant allusions to the 'Spanish' character of things: he noted that 'the overture sounded very Spanish' and praised the 'typically Spanish way of walking' of a dancer, while lamenting that another dance 'was not so typically Spanish as I had expected'.[20]

Symons's experience of Spain replicates what he underwent in Paris, which, as Alex Murray argues, transforms 'the model of representation into one that disrupts the confluence between place and identity.'[21] In his essay 'Montmartre and the Latin Quarter' (written in 1904, but first published in 1918), Symons described these areas as 'the two parts of Paris which are unique, the equivalent of which you will search for in vain elsewhere.'[22] As a result of their uniqueness, these quarters were for Symons 'typically Parisian'.[23] In contrast, the Champs Élysées and the Grand Boulevards, where the majority of English tourists congregated, were the 'least Parisian' areas of the city.[24] For Symons,

> the Grands Boulevards, which are always, certainly, attractive to any genuine lover of cities, to any real amateur of crowds, they are, after all, not Parisian, but cosmopolitan. They are simply the French equivalent of that great, complex, inextricable concourse of people which we find instinctively crowding, in London, along Piccadilly; in Berlin, down the Unter den Linden; in Madrid, over the Prado; in Venice, about the Piazza: a crowding of people who have come together from all the ends of the earth, who have, if tourist likes to meet tourist, mutual attraction enough; who have, undoubtedly, the curiosity of an exhibition or an ethnological museum; but from whom you will never learn the characteristics of the country in which you find them. What is really of interest in a city or in a nation is not that which it has, however differentiated, in common with other nations and cities, but that which is unique in it, the equivalent of which you will search for in vain elsewhere.[25]

Here Symons is outlining his own definition of cosmopolitan Decadence, a kind of cosmopolitanism that differs from that exercised by middle-class tourists. This is why Symons's

search for the soul of Paris leads him to Montmartre and why, later on in Barcelona, Sevilla, and Málaga, he would go to the cafes where Gypsies sing and dance.

Decadent Artifice, Irony and Camp

The 'true', unique Spanish characteristics that Symons often highlights in his writing constitute stereotypes of extreme seriousness or extreme caricature, which can be interpreted as the adoption of an Orientalist and patronising stance. Such an interpretation, however, may be too simplistic, in which case Barry J. Faulk's discussion of Symons's distinct expertise in popular culture in relation to 'camp' and modernity proves especially useful.[26] Camp offers a much needed complementary, and alternative, explanation for Symons's Orientalist approach to Spanish popular culture, and enriches and complicates a post-colonial critique of his writing.

If the essence of camp is 'its love of the unnatural: of artifice and exaggeration', as Susan Sontag asserts, 'A Spanish Music-Hall' serves as a primer on camp pleasures.[27] 'The art of the music-hall is admittedly frivolous – the consecration of the frivolous', admits Symons at the beginning of his essay.[28] Being 'frivolous', it becomes 'culturally peripheral'.[29] For Faulk, 'the oxymoron – "the consecration of the frivolous" – remains suggestive: it suggests that frivolity contains enough charisma to reorganize a life', which in exchange makes it 'reductive' to read Symons's appreciations of the music-hall, and of Spanish popular culture, as simply 'iterating his critical' and colonialist authority.[30] His camp views, concludes Faulk, more likely 'ironized the whole business of taste making'.[31]

This notion is equally connected to the Decadent cult of artifice, which Linda Dowling has described as a 'counterpoetics of disruption and parody and stylistic derangement, a critique not so much of Wordsworthian nature as of the metaphysics involved in any sentimental notion of a simple world of grass and trees and flowers.'[32] The apparent Decadent frivolity, the parody, the irony, alongside the very serious quest for a new aesthetics are thus all essential components of Symons's approach to and engagement with Spanish popular culture.

One of the first spectacles Symons alludes to in 'A Spanish Music-Hall' is the *zarzuela*, a traditional Spanish operetta. For Symons, the zarzuela 'was amusing in its wildly farcical way – a farce of grotesque action, of incredible exaggeration.'[33] The interest of this art form is rooted then in its vulgarity, in its hyperbolic character. Symons distances himself from the old-style dandy who hates vulgarity and becomes a modern dandy, 'a connoisseur of Camp' in the age of mass culture, who turns his back on the 'good-bad axis of ordinary aesthetic judgement'.[34] He is seeking Spanishness, which he translates as excess, extreme states of feelings. It is the excess that Symons finds in Spanish popular culture that enables him to articulate his Decadent campiness.

The article 'A Spanish Music-Hall' is indeed packed with playful comments and observations. The irony marking Symons's description of the Alcazar, notes Faulk, 'signals both his distance from and his extreme empathic proximity to what he surveys': 'The entrance was not imposing, but it was covered with placards which had their interest.'[35] The audience in the hall, Symons writes, in a clearly facetious manner, 'was not a distinguished one'.[36] We find the same camp, ironic attitudes in Symons's later texts on Spanish popular culture. In 'Seville' (written in 1898, but first published in 1901), for example, Symons writes:

> All Spanish dancing, and especially the dancing of the gipsies, in which it is seen in its most characteristic development, has a sexual origin, and expresses, as Eastern dancing does, but less crudely, the pantomime of physical love. In the typical gipsy dance, as I saw it danced by a beautiful Gitana at Seville, there is something of mere gaminerie and something of the devil; the automatic tramp-tramp of the children and the lascivious pantomime of a very learned art of love.[37]

As camp does, this passage both discloses innocence and corrupts it.[38] For Symons, flamenco dancing is Decadent, camp, and modern, because it offers 'the proper mixture of the exaggerated, the fantastic, the passionate, and the naïve.'[39] When Symons writes that flamenco dancing is 'full of humour, fuller of humour than of passion', he is epitomising Decadent parody and advancing Sontag's notion of camp as 'a comic vision of the world'.[40] Symons's camp and proto-Modernist sensibility towards flamenco is even more dramatically displayed in the poem

'Spain (To Josefa)' (1899), in which Symons blends the figure of a flamenco singer named Josefa with Spain itself:

> You sing of Spain, and all
> Clap hands for Spain and you, and for the
> song;
> […]
>
> Spain, brilliantly arrayed,
> Decked for disaster, on disaster hurled,
> Here, as in masquerade,
> Mimes, to amuse the world,
> Her ruin, a dancer rouged and draped and
> curled.[41]

In clear allusion to the contemporary 'Spanish 1898 Disaster', in this poem Symons portrays a campily pathetic Spain.[42] Symons displays the pathos that comes out of seriousness and belittles the dramatic situation of the country: 'She', writes Symons in allusion to Spain, 'who once found, has lost | A world beyond the waters.'[43] This loss is nonetheless unimportant because

> […] she stands
> Paying the priceless cost,
> Lightly, with lives for lands,
> Flowers in her hair, castanets in her hands.[44]

In parallel, when the Spanish singer Josefa sings, 'with clapping hands, the sorrows of | your Spain', Symons thinks 'how all the sorrows were in vain.'[45] The whole point of camp is to dethrone the serious. Camp is playful, anti-serious. More precisely, camp involves a new, more complex relation to 'the serious', as 'a sensibility that, among other things, converts the serious into the frivolous'.[46]

And yet, as some of the extracts above show, camp and Decadent irony can have problematic effects. The agents of cultural redefinition are often of upper- or middle-class standing who could, as Andrew Ross notes, 'afford, literally, to redefine the life of consumerism and material affluence as a life of spiritual poverty.'[47] A camp approach may thus perpetuate certain prejudices by veiling them as irony. Indeed, this camp proto-Modernist reading of Symons's reception of flamenco is not to argue there is no evidence for a reading of Symons as

Orientalist tourist. After all, Symons insisted on his descriptions of the 'native' dance, which, as Faulk observes, 'appears to provide the English spectator definitive proof in an uncertain space of his own aplomb, status, and essential remove.'[48] 'Spanish dances have a certain resemblance with the dances of the East', wrote Symons, and flamenco 'no doubt derives its Eastern colour from the Moors'.[49] His writing repeatedly bestowed animal, savage-like and uncivilized characteristics (which he undoubtedly considered unproblematic) on to flamenco artists. In other words, although Symons believed he was celebrating and defending flamenco, he also participated in the outlook of his time and nationality to a greater extent than he realized. In the guise of celebrating them, he objectified the Spanish Gypsy artists all over again.

Agency and Inarticulate Art

Camp and Decadent parody permits Symons to sustain certain prejudices by thinly disguising them as irony, and to legitimize himself, but it also endows others with agency. The question of artistic agency here is crucial. In 'A Spanish Music-Hall', for instance, Symons clearly establishes that 'in a music-hall the audience is a part of the performance', wielding almost equal levels of authority to the British tourist, the local audience, and the flamenco artists.[50] In a similar vein, Havelock Ellis, with whom Symons often travelled in Spain, also wrote in *The Soul of Spain* (1908) that

> In flamenco dancing, among an audience of the people, every one takes a part, by rhythmic clapping and stamping, and by the occasional prolonged 'oles' and other cries by which the dancer is encouraged or applauded. Thus the dance is not a spectacle for the amusement of a languid and passive public, as with us. It is rather the visible embodiment of an emotion in which every spectator himself takes an active and helpful part; it is, as it were, a vision evoked by the spectators themselves and up-borne on the continuous waves of rhythmical sound which they generate.[51]

Ellis clearly established that in flamenco there were blurred boundaries between observer and observed, complicating the traditional power relations between 'native' and 'colonizer'. Throughout 'A Spanish Music-Hall', Symons also pays attention to how the artists utilize space. In this context, Faulk underscores how it is particularly important to note the special care that

Symons takes to situate flamenco artists 'back in the everyday once their performance is finished'.[52]

The close of the performance by the flamenco singer Villaclara, for example, underscores the performer's control and agency: 'When the applause was over she returned the hat, came back to the table at which she had been sitting, dismally enough, and yawned more desperately than ever.'[53] Similarly, the flamenco dance of Isabel Santos and her daughter is the most erotic event Symons witnessed at the Alcazar: 'The dance grew more exciting, with a sort of lascivious suggestiveness, a morbid, perverse charm, as the women writhed to and fro, now languishingly, now furiously, together and apart.'[54] However, after 'two encores and two more dances', Symons adds, 'the women went tranquilly back to the corner where they had been drinking with their friends.'[55] Symons is here fracturing the setting that surrounds the artwork as commodity and, as a result, showing both the aesthetic context and the social context which it is contingent upon. These dancers and singers alternate effortlessly from performers to mundane people. This could be interpreted as a reinforcement of the clichés about Spanish daily life, as it depicts a world ruled by, as Faulk points out, 'high passion, fierce desire, and violent turmoil'.[56] And yet the return to passivity suggests 'quite the opposite' as the performers calmly 'negotiate different spaces, in control of their performance', able to turn their charisma off and on.[57]

In fact, Symons gestures towards the vernacular expertise of the local flamenco artists throughout the essay 'A Spanish Music-Hall'. At the end of the piece, Symons suggests a sort of mutual recognition when he describes the flamenco dancer Isabel Santos as a 'great artist', who had 'a profound artistic seriousness'.[58] Likewise, in Symons's poems on flamenco, the 'native' dancer or singer appears to have agency and be in control of both Symons and the audience. 'Therefore you hold me, body and soul, in your | hold', writes Symons in 'To a Gitana Dancing' (1899).[59] Whatever the dancer does, Symons 'follows' and he only awakens when she pauses:

> It brightens, I follow; it fades, and I see it afar;
> You pause: I awake; have I dreamt? […][60]

In the poem 'Spain', the artist Josefa also

> […] sing[s] of Spain, and all
> Clap hands for Spain and you, and for the
> song;[61]

These lines suggest that Josefa's artistic power is recognized – her voice is heard: she sings and all clap hands – uniting the British tourist once more with the local audience and the flamenco artist. The moment that Symons, as audience, becomes 'part of the performance', and, as artist, acknowledges flamenco artists as 'professional', one could argue that he is no longer seeing them as 'other'. Symons crucially described the Spanish flamenco *cante*, or singing, as 'the crying of a wild beast in suffering, and it thrills one precisely because it seems to be so far from humanity, so inexplicable, so deeply rooted in the animal of which we are but one species.'[62] The pronoun 'we' becomes crucial here, as Symons aligns himself with the observed Other.

At the same time, to say that Symons's writing solely orientalizes Spanish flamenco is to neglect to consider a crucial artistic angle. Linda Dowling has foregrounded how Symons's understanding and inclusion of the dance in his poetic work caused him 'to shift aesthetic authority from the intellectual *to* the sensuous' and highlights the 'importance of visceral perception in understanding artistic performances'.[63] Symons's iterated insistence upon the 'visceral, animal knowledge of the blood, upon "dance as life, animal life, having its own way passionately" […] specifically challenges verbal language […] rather than the possibility of expressive language in general'.[64] The gestural language of the dance seemed 'wonderfully fresh, immediate, and uncompromised by "impurities"', as opposed to 'the Victorian tyranny of "abstraction" and "discursiveness"'.[65] Hence, Dowling concludes, Symons's characteristic portrayal of the dancer as at once 'innocent and yet almost narcissistically or onanistically self-sufficient.'[66] For this reason,

> To say that the narrators of Symons's poems find this self-sufficiency erotic is merely to insist upon the sensual, visceral basis of the gestural language. Yet clearly to celebrate gesture in this way was to prefer a language even more 'primitive' than the lower-class vernaculars, for it was assumed that the more physically overt the linguistic sign, the cruder the mental capacity of the sign-maker.[67]

The primitiveness and vernacular condition of Spanish flamenco becomes instrumental to Symons's understanding of artistic language. Of all the dances, flamenco for Symons is revealed as the purest, the most authentic, the most perfect. Dancing, as the emblem of the ideal work of art:

> in the [Spanish] dancing, inherited from the Moors, which the gipsies have perfected in Spain, there is far more subtlety, delicacy, and real art than in the franker posturing of Egypt and Arabia. It is the most elaborate dancing in the world, and, like the music, it has an abstract quality which saves it from ever, for a moment, becoming vulgar. As I have watched a Gitana dancing in Seville, I have thought of the sacred dances which in most religions have given a perfectly solemn and collected symbolism to the creative forces of the world.[68]

These remarks recall those in the short story 'Dolores' by Edith Ellis, with whom Symons also spent some time in Málaga in 1898. Written in 1899, but published in April 1909 in *The Smart Set*, the story was based on her only visit to the country in 1898 with her husband, Havelock Ellis, and Symons. It is the story of a young British wife who accompanies her journalist husband and his friend to witness flamenco in a southern Spanish music-hall. In the piece, the British woman, Ju, undergoes a moment of revelation when she watches Dolores, a Spanish Gypsy woman, dancing:

> Ju felt she needed a hundred eyes; she had rarely been so alive. The magnetic power of all those happy people on and off the stage entered her veins like strong wine. […] Ju could scarcely breathe. […] All the mad, wild beauty of the world seemed singing in her head as her eyes followed the retreating figure of the woman who had danced life into her tired brain. Never, even in church, she thought, had she felt so rested, so uplifted as now; rarely had she been so absurdly happy. Her child's fingers against her breast, a lark singing in the early spring, the first primrose gathered for the year, all the simple, delicate joys of life had not given her the exquisite sense of rest that the vigorous movements of this dancing girl had done.[69]

Ju had never felt 'so rested' and yet 'so uplifted', pointing towards the revelatory cultural and experiential moment she encountered in Spain. Perhaps Ju had never felt such zeal because, as she declared, she had 'never seen real dancing before'.[70] It was in this Spanish music-hall where 'for the first time in her life she saw passion, grace, joy and vigor combined in the movements of a beautiful woman, who was as free from vulgarity and self-consciousness as a flower.'[71]

These claims imitate those noted by Symons in his essay 'Moorish Secrets in Spain' (written in 1899, but first published in 1918) about flamenco dancing being 'the most elaborate dancing in the world', and, having, like the music, 'an abstract quality which saves it from ever […] becoming vulgar.'[72] Both Symons and Edith Ellis perceived a core of intensity and artistry in flamenco that was attached to an internal, elemental, and primitive nature.

Symons described Spanish flamenco music as 'no other passion' mainly because it 'is inarticulate, and so it brings a wild relief which no articulate music could ever bring.'[73] This music, he added, is 'the voice of uncivilised people who have the desires and sorrows common to every living being, and an unconsciousness of their meaning which is, after all, what we come back to after having searched through many meanings.'[74] Symons inverts here the hierarchy of 'savage' and civilized, showing a clear preference for this 'savage', 'inarticulate' form of language to the civilized verbal, articulate language: 'A few words seemed to be repeated over and over again, with tremulous, inarticulate cries that wavered in time to a regularly beating rhythm. The sound was like nothing I have ever heard. It pierced the brain, it tortured one with a sort of delicious spasm.'[75]

Symons equates what he calls the 'inarticulacy' of flamenco art and its lack of articulation with the ideal of Decadence: 'to be a disembodied voice, and yet the voice of a human soul'.[76] Flamenco art is divested of articulated language, of 'joints', in the same way that Decadence is divested of 'a body'. Flamenco is revealed as a perverse pleasure which, being primitive and eternal, seems unprecedented. Tantalized by its immateriality and inarticulacy, Symons would try to replicate the primitiveness of Spanish flamenco in his own syntax. As Dowling notes, 'in his brief poems of "primitive" syntax [Symons] sought to embody […] truth in language', creating a 'concerted effort at verbal gesture, at reincarnating the disembodied voice'.[77] In the aforementioned poem 'To a Gitana Dancing', for instance, Symons combines descriptions that allude to the ancient, primitive condition of flamenco: 'And the maze you tread is as old as the

world is old', with a simple, almost primitive syntax that lacks adverbs and gives prominence to the verb, that one element capable of indicating an action, like dancing:

> You laugh, and I know the despair, and you
> smile, and I know
>
> […]
> It brightens, I follow; it fades, and I see it afar;[78]

Symons openly declared his preoccupation with replicating the inarticulate and rhythmic character of flamenco. In an 1898 letter from Seville to the Scottish politician and writer Robert Cunninghame Graham (1852-1936) in which Symons enclosed the poem 'To a Gitana Dancing', he explained that the piece was done 'with a most elaborate attempt to express the thing by the coiling of the rhythm, repetition of words and inner rhymes, and unusual pauses. To get exactly the rhythmical effect I have intended, read aloud and read for the sense, allowing the voice to pause where it naturally would.'[79] By asking Cunninghame Graham to read the poem aloud and allow the voice to pause, Symons emphasized the rhythmic inarticulacy of flamenco, its unvoiced condition. Flamenco art enabled Symons to express in writing an 'inner', 'disembodied' rhythm.

As I hope to have shown, Symons's reception of and engagement with flamenco remain dialectical and complex. When Symons writes that flamenco 'no doubt derives in Eastern colours from the Moors',[80] and that flamenco dancers are 'primitive and elemental [with] the slumbering inner glow of the sombre passion of their race, and have the alertness of a young and wild animal', it is difficult to avoid a reading of Symons as an Orientalist tourist and writer.[81] While partly accurate, I have argued throughout that such a reading is reductive. Rather than focusing on Symons's Orientalist and primitivist discourse regarding flamenco, I have been primarily concerned with interrogating how the relationship between the 'describer' British intellectual and the 'described' Spanish 'native' voices could be understood as further enriching and complicating cross-cultural exchange.

Flamenco was taken seriously by Symons, as an object of scholarship and as an intellectual and physical art form. He attempted to replicate the essence of flamenco in his 1890s poetry, and

he wrote articles and reviews on flamenco art throughout his life.[82] Flamenco was crucial for the development of his ideas on the symbolic power of the dance and of music. For Symons, the primitiveness of flamenco became paradigmatic of the essence of art. In flamenco, Symons recognized an elemental and inarticulate condition that he linked to the Decadent and the Symbolist movements, and which anticipated the Spanish Modernist Federico García Lorca's (1898-1936) notion of *Duende,* or the spirit of evocation.[83] Symons acknowledged the same mysterious power and spontaneous creativity that motivates flamenco art, which he interpreted as the body and musical language of Spanish modernity. The primal, elemental nature of flamenco unveiled for Symons both a corporeal and intangible sense of artistic modernity.

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[1] Arthur Symons, 'Moorish Secrets in Spain', in *Cities and Sea-Coasts and Islands* (London: W. Collins, 1918), p. 102. This essay was first published on 12 August 1899 in the *Saturday Review*, and then reprinted in *Cities and Sea-Coasts and Islands*.

[2] Ibid., p. 104.

[3] Ibid., pp. 104-05.

[4] Israel J. Katz, 'Flamenco', *Grove Music Online* (2001) <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.09780>.

[5] For more information on the origins, history and style of flamenco see, for example, Ángel Álvarez Caballero, *Historia del cante flamenco* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1981); Manuel García Matos, *Sobre el Flamenco: Estudios y Notas* (Madrid: Cinterco, 1987); and Michelle Heffner Hayes, *Flamenco: Conflicting Histories of the Dance* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2009).

[6] Peter Manuel, 'Flamenco in Focus: An Analysis of a Performance of Soleares', in *Analytical Studies in World Music*, ed. by Michael Tenzer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 92-93.

[7] Arthur Symons, *Dramatis Personae* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1923), p. 133.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Deborah Epstein Nord, *Gypsies and the British Imagination, 1807-1930* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), p. 137.

[10] Janet Lyon, 'Gadže Modernism', *Modernism/Modernity*, 11 (2004), 517-38 (p. 524).

Karl Beckson also notes that in the months before his breakdown, Symons wrote two pieces which are unique in his oeuvre, precisely for their engagement with social issues: the essay 'In Praise of Gypsies' and the play *The Superwomen: A Farce*, a satire of suffrage activism. Beckson, *Arthur Symons: A Life* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), pp. 250-51.

[11] Lyon, 'Gadže Modernism', p. 524.

[12] Janet Lyon, 'Sociability in the Metropole: Modernism's Bohemian Salons', *ELH*, 76 (2009), 687-711 (p. 704).

[13] Ibid.

[14] 'Arthur Symons is a scholar in music halls as another man might be a Greek scholar or an authority on the age of Chaucer.' W. B. Yeats, 'The Rhymers' Club' [23 April 1892], in *Letters to the New Island*, ed. by Horace Reynolds (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934), p. 144.

[15] Linda Dowling, *Language and Decadence in the Victorian Fin de Siècle* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 238.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Arthur Symons, 'A Spanish Music-Hall', in *Cities and Sea-Coasts and Islands*, p. 145.

This essay was first published in May 1892 in the *Fortnightly Review*, and then reprinted in *Cities and Sea-Coasts and Islands*.

[18] Ibid., p. 146; Joan Ramon Resina, *Barcelona's Vocation of Modernity: Rise and Decline of an Urban Image* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), p. 100.

[19] Arthur Symons, 'The Decadent Movement in Literature', *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 87 (November 1893), 858-67 (p. 859).

[20] Symons, 'A Spanish Music-Hall', pp. 147-50.
[21] Alex Murray, *Landscapes of Decadence: Literature and Place at the Fin de Siècle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p. 74.
[22] Arthur Symons, 'Montmartre and the Latin Quarter', *Colour Studies in Paris* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1918), p. 24.
[23] Ibid., p. 29.
[24] Ibid., p. 23.
[25] Ibid., pp. 23-24.
[26] Barry J. Faulk, 'Camp Expertise: Arthur Symons, Music Hall, and the Defense of Theory', in *Music Hall and Modernity: The Late-Victorian Discovery of Popular Culture* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2004).
[27] Susan Sontag, 'Notes on "Camp"', in *Against Interpretation and Other Essays* (London: Penguin, 2009), p. 275.
[28] Symons, 'A Spanish Music-Hall', p. 145.
[29] Faulk, 'Camp Expertise', p. 53.
[30] Ibid., pp. 53-54.
[31] Ibid., p. 54.
[32] Dowling, *Language and Decadence in the Victorian Fin de Siècle,* p. x.
[33] Symons, 'A Spanish Music-Hall', p. 148.
[34] Sontag, 'Notes on "Camp"', pp. 286-89.
[35] Faulk, 'Camp Expertise', p. 56; Symons, 'A Spanish Music-Hall', p. 146.
[36] Symons, 'A Spanish Music-Hall', p. 147.
[37] Arthur Symons, 'Seville', in *Cities and Sea-Coasts and Islands* (London: W. Collins, 1918), p. 18. This essay was written in 1898, but first published in March 1901 in *Harper's Monthly Magazine,* and then reprinted in *Cities and Sea-Coasts and Islands.*
[38] Sontag, 'Notes on "Camp"', p. 283.
[39] Ibid., p. 283.
[40] Symons, 'Seville', p. 18; Sontag, 'Notes on "Camp"', p. 288.
[41] Arthur Symons, 'Spain (To Josefa)', in *Images of Good and Evil* (London: William Heinemann, 1899), pp. 151-52.
[42] An allusion to the Spanish–American War fought between the United States and Spain in 1898. The defeat and loss of the last remnants of the Spanish Empire was a profound shock to Spain's national psyche and came to be known as the 'disaster'.
[43] Symons, 'Spain (To Josefa)', p. 152.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid., p. 151.
[46] Sontag, 'Notes on "Camp"', p. 276.
[47] Andrew Ross, *No Respect: Intellectuals and Popular Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1989), p. 137.
[48] Faulk, 'Camp Expertise', p. 57.
[49] Symons, 'A Spanish Music-Hall', pp. 151-52.
[50] Ibid., p. 145.
[51] Havelock Ellis, *The Soul of Spain* (London: Constable, 1908), p. 180.
[52] Faulk, 'Camp Expertise', p. 60.
[53] Symons, 'A Spanish Music-Hall', p. 155.
[54] Ibid., p. 153.
[55] Ibid., p. 155.
[56] Faulk, 'Camp Expertise', p. 59.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Symons, 'A Spanish Music-Hall', p. 156.
[59] Arthur Symons, 'To a Gitana Dancing (Seville)', in *Images of Good and Evil* (London: William Heinemann, 1899), p. 107.
[60] Ibid, p. 108.
[61] Symons, 'Spain (To Josefa)', p. 151.
[62] Symons, 'Moorish Secrets in Spain', p. 103.
[63] Dowling, *Language and Decadence in the Victorian Fin de Siècle,* p. 239.
[64] Ibid., pp. 239-40.
[65] Ibid., p. 241.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Symons, 'Moorish Secrets in Spain', pp. 104-05.
[69] Edith Ellis, 'Dolores', in *The Smart Set*, 24.4 (1909), 121-28 (pp. 125-26).
[70] Ibid., p. 126.
[71] Ibid.

[72] Symons, 'Moorish Secrets in Spain', pp. 104-05.
[73] Ibid., p. 103.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Symons, 'A Spanish Music-Hall', p. 154.
[76] Symons, 'The Decadent Movement in Literature', p. 862.
[77] Dowling, *Language and Decadence in the Victorian Fin de Siècle,* pp. 242-43.
[78] Symons, 'To a Gitana Dancing (Seville)', p. 108.
[79] Arthur Symons to Robert Cunninghame Graham, [November] 1898, National Library of Scotland, Cunninghame Graham Papers, Acc.11335, fol. 56.
[80] Symons, 'A Spanish Music-Hall', p. 152.
[81] Arthur Symons, 'Amalia Molina', in *Notes on Spanish Dancers and Spanish Gypsies*, 22 May 1920, Box 13 Folder 18, Arthur Symons Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, Princeton New Jersey, USA.
[82] As well as his essays, articles, and reviews of the 1890s, Symons penned several unpublished articles and reviews on Spanish flamenco dancing in 1920 and 1921. Arthur Symons, *Notes on Spanish Dancers and Spanish Gypsies*.
[83] Lorca first developed the aesthetics of *Duende* in a lecture he gave in Buenos Aires in 1933, entitled 'Juego y teoría del duende' ['Play and Theory of the Duende']. Four elements can be isolated in Lorca's vision of duende: irrationality, earthiness, a heightened awareness of death, and a dash of the diabolical. For more on Lorca and the notion of *duende* see, for example, Federico García Lorca, *In Search of Duende,* ed. and trans. by Christopher Maurer (New York: New Directions, 1998).

'Vers le sabbat' : Occult Initiation and Non-Normative Masculinity in Jean Lorrain's *Monsieur de Phocas* (1901)

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> The new socialism is a movement that is not just political, but also magical and sexual.[1]

Jean Lorrain (1855-1906) is considered one of the most representative authors of French decadence, with A. E. Carter presenting him as the prime example of *fin-de-siècle* literary debauchery.[2] Like his own queer literature, Lorrain often rose to notoriety and was known for his effete style.[3] An alleged homosexual and the manifestation of the dandy-aesthete, Lorrain declared that 'je ne suis qu'un miroir et l'on me veut pervers' [I am only a mirror that people wish to be perverse].[4] This extravagance, as well as his role as a journalist – the 'fanfaron de vices' [braggart of vice][5] – positioned him perfectly as a 'literary observer of the *bas-fonds* of society'.[6]

Although Lorrain has fallen into obscurity in recent years, much like Decadence itself, 'inferior to the canon from which it has fallen away',[7] the connections between homosexuality and transgression have generated much discussion by critics of Lorrain's *Monsieur de Phocas*, with most agreeing that the author provides us with a homosexual discourse.[8] This article aims not only to reclaim a non-canonical author and text, but to address also the dearth of attention paid to occult overtones that run parallel to the narrative of male homosexuality in the novel, which subvert the traditional (misogynistic) assumption of witchcraft in particular as an exclusively female 'crime'. I will focus on what I identify as the apex of the narrative – the Witches' Sabbat – arguing that the representation of witchcraft tropes in the novel links to the presentation of non-normative masculinity through comparable engagement with marginal practices.

Hugh B. Urban's assertion that religious and sexual transgression can be mobilized against dominant social discourse will be demonstrated, providing a 'profound transformation from a terrifying medieval nightmare of heresy and social subversion into a modern ideal of personal

empowerment and social liberation'.[9] This will ultimately reveal Decadence to be a similarly iconoclastic and rebellious practice through which mainstream ideologies are rejected and agency is asserted.

Fin de Siècle, Fin de Sexe

It is axiomatic that the end of the nineteenth century saw a crisis of gender.[10] However, critical engagement with occult undercurrents that ran parallel to these debates has been scarce even though in *Là-bas*, perhaps the most notorious Decadent text to deal with the occult, Joris-Karl Huysmans explicitly states that 'alors que le matérialisme sévit, la magie se lève' [while materialism rages, magic rises].[11] This quotation suggests that recourse to the occult was seen as an attempt to re-enchant an increasingly banal, commercialized world. Just as Charles Baudelaire once exclaimed that 'le vieux Paris n'est plus' [the old Paris is no more],[12] so too did his *fin-de-siècle* successor, Huysmans, declare that he sought to find 'une compensation aux dégoûts de la vie quotidienne' [compensation for the disgusting nature of daily life].[13] Robert Ziegler illustrates this stagnant modernity with an illustration from Lorrain's 'Lanterne magique', in which two theatregoers lament the loss of Gothic fantasy in favour of modern rationality.[14]

Interestingly, this is the only reference to the work of Lorrain in a text devoted to the occult in *fin-de-siècle* culture, which also contains no mention of the construction of masculinity within Lorrain's narratives. This article aims to demonstrate that this has been a scholarly oversight: it builds on Amy Clukey's assertion in her study of English modernist and occult enthusiast Mary Butts that 'the body of literary criticism exploring modernist engagements with occultism remains small, considering the extent of the occult revival' at the *fin de siècle*, with much scope for development, especially with regards to gender.[15] This oversight is unusual when we consider the role that gender played in late nineteenth-century occultism. Indeed, Urban describes the rise of a *magia sexualis* in tandem with a *psychopathia sexualis* in the West at the same time,[16] a relationship that both Alex Owen and Joy Dixon problematize in relation to sexual

'immorality', masculinity, and their connections to occultism. Dixon suggests that *fin-de-siècle* occultism was 'a man's world',[17] while Owen notes the establishment of magic in the Golden Dawn as the exertion of one's willpower upon the world, drawing on medical concepts of a 'masculine temperament'.[18] However, when we consider that sexologists such as Havelock Ellis and Edward Carpenter theorized 'a connection between the function of priest and invert',[19] it becomes clear that marginality and transgression are potent features of *fin-de-siècle* Decadent occultism.

Occult Practices, Occult Sexualities: Theorizing the Marginal

Fin-de-siècle occultism tapped into historically marginal and transgressive practices which ran counter to Christian and patriarchal society. George McKay notes that while the word 'occult' refers to what is hidden, it can be extrapolated to refer to 'hidden or marginal figures or narratives'. In this way, 'occulture' becomes a 'culture of resistance' through its engagement with the marginal.[20] Occulture can thus be considered as a crystallized form of social anxiety associated with patriarchal disruption, and can be appropriated in order to subvert dominant discourses.

Critics such as Urban have pointed out that the black arts and illicit sexuality have historically gone hand-in-hand,[21] with Dixon noting the longstanding links between religious and sexual unorthodoxy.[22] Charges of sexual indecency have historically been brought before several religiously marginalized and disenfranchised groups throughout history.[23] In particular, such charges have been levelled against those accused of witchcraft, whose alleged practices represented 'a forceful and popular challenge to the existing structure of power'.[24] In a late nineteenth-century context, the links between the occult and sexual transgression can be seen in the work of Aleister Crowley, who utilized the 'psychologised magic of the *fin de siècle*' and an 'anarchic sexuality'[25] to undercut Victorian morality with the aim of the 'renegotiation of the self'.[26] For this reason, it is useful to bring these theories of marginality together through the lens of Gayle Rubin's 'charmed circle', which compares acceptable sexual practices to those which are

detrimental for the patriarchy, creating an inner, acceptable circle of practices in contrast to an outer, marginal circle.[27] Apart from the obvious lexical connections between a 'charmed' circle of sexuality and the occult, it is clear that occult practices are equally located on the periphery of society, providing some *locum tenens* through which to explore and interrogate sexuality.

Decadence, Occultism, and the Appeal of Witchcraft

The end of the nineteenth century saw a proliferation of occult fraternities which emerged at the same time as new social identities, and as such were characterized by the anxieties surrounding gender at that time.[28] Matei Călinescu has described Decadence as 'the rejection of the tyranny of tradition', and so it is unsurprising that some Decadent writers saw fit to engage with occultism, given this atmosphere of iconoclasm and gendered rebellion.[29] Owen notes that *fin-de-siècle* occultism was founded on 'the inadequacies of a life stripped of any meaningful spiritual component, the perceived threat to individual and aesthetic autonomy posed by a developing mass culture, the dependence of modes of modern rationality on a particular characterization and positioning of the irrational',[30] but also that this aestheticization of nineteenth-century *ennui* drew from the 'modernity' of the Decadents.[31] This modernity, with its love of artifice, was founded in turn on the Schopenhauerian tenet of 'perception as intellectual'[32] – Decadence, like occultism, offered the artist-initiate the opportunity to dismantle and shape their world.[33] Indeed, it would seem at times that *fin-de-siècle* occultism and Decadence were one and the same, with parallels between Owen's criteria for occultism and Arthur Symons's description of Decadence, characterized by an 'intense self-consciousness, a restless curiosity in research, an oversubtilizing refinement upon refinement [and] a spiritual and moral perversity'.[34] As such, while literary representations of black magic provided new perspectives, 'the value of occultism lay in its ethical transgressions', with Decadence providing a unique space in which to comment on sexual and gender taboos, ultimately highlighting the artificial and illusory nature of these social constructs.[35]

While the connections between Decadence, occultism, and gender have been examined,[36] few scholars have looked at the peculiar image of witchcraft in novels, which is surprising when we note Corinne Fournier Kiss's assertion that the nineteenth century was obsessed with the witch hunts.[37] Images of witchcraft appear in George Sand's *La Petite Fadette* (1849), and it has been noted that Jules Michelet's pseudo-historical treatise *La Sorcière* (1862) was based on Sand's reconciliation between Christ and the Devil in *Consuelo* (1842-1843).[38] This particular use of occult imagery becomes interesting for my argument in relation to non-normativity because whereas membership of an actual occult fraternity often meant conforming to bourgeois expectations, witchcraft has always been viewed as inherently transgressive.

As Samuel puts it in the Bible, 'rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft',[39] and both Michelet and Charles Leland use the image of a witch leading a Sabbat to conjure forth images of peasant revolt against a patriarchal, Catholic aristocracy, with Michelet's coven fighting for class equality[40] while Leland's subversive, Italian messiah Aradia leads her coven with the charge to poison their feudal lords.[41] Witchcraft has historically been considered as feminine, and as a specifically patriarchal marginalization of femininity. Indeed, the Witch Hunts are popularly thought of as a female holocaust, but nearly 25% of the accused were men.[42] This is a key point in my argument that witchcraft presents us with a unique, and often elided, form of transgression for men, and specifically homosexual and non-normative men. As Arthur Evans notes in his study of historic witchcraft and homosexuality, 'heresy became a sexual rather that a doctrinal concept', which demonstrates the 'intimate connection between Gay men, heresy, and witchcraft'.[43] Although the freedom espoused by Aradia and Michelet's witch refers to liberation from the medieval feudal system, it will become clear in the following study of *Monsieur de Phocas* that Lorrain is able to build on these images of social revolt and emancipation and apply them to the manumission of non-normative masculinity. In this way, witchcraft becomes a unique trope to be appropriated by Decadence in order to reflect its remit of a schism with establishment culture.

Flight to the Sabbat: *Monsieur de Phocas* (1901)

Non-normative masculinity and corruption are at the core of Lorrain's novel. The protagonist, the duc de Fréneuse, is a typically Decadent anti-hero who is beset with fetishes and philias which the core antagonist, Ethal, feeds with art, whilst purporting to cure Fréneuse from his afflictions, noting that 'la génie dénué [sic] de la raison enfante des monstres' [genius devoid of reason gives birth to monsters].[44] This narrative of corruption and subversion builds to a zenith in the chapters concerned with a dinner party culminating in a traditionally Sabbatic gathering that takes place in a recognizably Decadent environment. The dinner party consists of guests whom Ethal refers to as 'quelques cosmopolites' [some cosmopolitans], with 'cosmopolitan' referring to the implied decadence and debauchery of contemporary Parisian culture (139), which echoes Carter's description of *fin-de-siècle* Paris with its 'rouged cheeks, painted lips, drugs, dance-halls, theatres, vice-haunted quays and boulevards'.[45] Non-normativity seems to be a common attribute of all the guests, with the hint of male homosexuality most notable, as well as the implied incest between two English siblings. Ethal tells Fréneuse that he would perhaps prefer the brother of Maud White, and it could be argued that the incestuous relationship between the two siblings provides an almost acceptable, heteronormative paradigm through which Fréneuse can experience his attraction to Reginald. Indeed, we are told that 'tant cette ressemblance de l'un et de l'autre les désexuait' [their resemblance to each other desexed them] (141), both 'androgynizing' the siblings and fulfilling Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's queering of Réné Girard's 'erotic triangle', by which 'a calculus of power [is] structured by the relation of rivalry between the two active members of an erotic triangle […] often in which two males are rivals for a female'.[46]

In this way, by amalgamating societal undesirables and deviants, Lorrain presents us with the traditional image of the Witches' Sabbat, a choice reflected in the name of this chapter, and from which this article takes its name. In his study of male witchcraft, Schulte notes that 'by attending the Sabbat, [a man] had become a member of a subversive group of felons whose moral standards represented the reverse of contemporary norms'.[47] In a late nineteenth-century

context, this early modern imagery still evoked sentiments of counter-cultural revolt, with the well-known anti-Semite Drumont comparing the Dreyfus Affair to the Witches' Sabbat, saying that 'c'est bien le Sabbat, c'est-à-dire la parodie sacrilège et le blasphème contre la Vérité et la Patrie' [it is well and truly the Sabbat, that is to say, a sacrilegious parody and blasphemy against Truth and the Fatherland].[48] Thus, engagement with the occult and in particular that of traditional witchcraft marks a turning away from patriarchal, heteronormative society.

The Witches' Sabbat can be broadly understood as a regular gathering of witches in order to worship the Devil. However, medieval imagery of the Witches' Sabbat has its roots in the conflation of many folkloric strands, notably the Wild Hunt led by Diana.[49] In this way, the Witches' Sabbat can be held as a symbol of feminist revolt, as seen in the works of Michelet and Leland. As such, it is unsurprising that Lorrain's Sabbat should feature the feminine as a focal point. Maud White can be considered to open the Sabbat with an intertextual, almost liturgical, reiteration of Albert Samain's 'Le Bouc noir passe au fond des ténèbres malsaines' [The Black Goat Goes to the Bottom of Unhealthy Darkness], alluding both to unconventional love with its references to 'l'amour qui doit demain engendrer la haine' [the love that must tomorrow engender hatred], but also to witchcraft, with Samain noting that 'minuit sonne au coeur des sorcières obscènes' [midnight rings in the heart of obscene witches] (147). Fréneuse muses that this recitation 'semblait incarner un rite, un rite de religion oubliée' [seemed to embody a rite, a rite of a forgotten religion], whilst Ethal notes that this 'appel aux larves' [call to the larvae] has seemingly summoned guests to the salon, with Fréneuse suggesting that 'la voix lente de Maud les évoquait' [the slow voice of Maud evoked them] (146-47). This of course has further significance, not only suggesting that the guests of the party itself are ghoulish, not of this world, and ultimately non-normative, but that they have been summoned there by an unknown force.

Decadent imagery of apostasy and atavism flows through the allusions to non-normative religion, which are furthered by calls to prelapsarian Egyptian religion, and particularly the cult of Isis, with Ethal declaring: 'mettons Prêtresses de la Bonne Déesse, n'est-ce pas? puisque aucun

homme n'était admis aux mystères d'Isis' [let us appoint Priestesses of the Good Goddess; since no man was admitted to the mysteries of Isis] (150). This once again marks the refusal of patriarchal religion, and indeed the Patriarchy at large. Max Nordau's 1892 treatise *Entartung* [*Degeneration*] described a 'dying world',[50] and Brian Stableford notes that the cultural pessimism that emerged from this theory caused the Decadents to associate the implied decline of Europe with the decline of several historic civilizations, even Sodom and Gomorrah.[51] Indeed, the decline of Rome is often attributed to the introduction of Greek decadence, including 'homosexuality, whoring, and elaborate and costly banquets',[52] while John Addington Symonds asserted that 'the pursuit of beauty in Greece had ended in death' – both features that returned and characterized *fin-de-siècle* Decadence in conjunction with the emergence of new sexual and social identities.[53]

The narrative has been associated with the Sacred Feminine from its outset via the reference to the goddess Astarté in the subtitle of the novel as well as her narrative implication: it draws upon the 'simultaneous [historical] cult of Astarte, Isis, and Aphrodite', an unsurprising syncretism given the shared attributes of these goddesses.[54] As the Sabbat continues, Lorrain builds on the Isian imagery (perhaps as a syncretic proxy for Astarté) but contradicts the suggestion that no man was admitted to her cult by placing all the men at the salon – even those non-heteronormative men – around Sophie, noting that no woman was presented (154). This syncretic and queer nature of deity was previously presented to us in the novel with the description of a dancer who was 'à la fois Aphrodite et Ganymède, Astarté et Hylas' [at once Aphrodite and Ganymede, Astarte and Hylas] (78). This androgynous syncretism is significant for non-normative masculinity when we consider Sarah Waters's assertion that both Ganymede and Hylas (alongside Antinoüs) have historically also been associated as 'homoerotic icons', providing the 'nineteenth-century Greek Lover [i.e. homosexual or invert] not just with a historical precedent but with a model for his own retrospective yearning'.[55] This marks an archetypally Decadent inversion of the traditional masculine-feminine binary and could be viewed as a non-

normative male identification with the transgressive female archetype epitomized in the patriarchal disruption that the Sacred Feminine represents.

Traditional notions of gender stability are further subverted in typically Decadent fashion by the introduction of the Javanese androgynes, a stability that is only further subverted by their distinct Otherness as Javanese. As Fréneuse notes, 'le sexe est si ambigu dans cette race' [sex is so ambiguous in this race] (155). It is thus only fitting that they should lead the ad-hoc coven into what is jokingly described as 'le commencement de l'orgie' [the beginning of the orgy] (156), which would have traditionally been considered as the zenith of Sabbatic action.[56] This orgy comes to a close with the Duchess of Althorneyshare being described as 'la madone du Vice, stigmatisée sous le surnom de Notre Dame de Sept-Luxures' [the Madonna of Vice, denounced by the nickname of Our Lady of Seven-Luxuries] (158). The anti-Marian imagery of this description of the duchess is clear, and also draws her into Phillip Winn's suggestion that Astarté – the shadowy personification of Fréneuse's fetishes – is an anti-Madonna, deifying the duchess as Astarté.[57] The Sacred Feminine can thus be considered to run throughout this passage as a deliberately subversive counterpoint to patriarchal, normative discourse.

Another traditional trope of the Witches' Sabbat is presented as the Sabbat continues with the consumption of opium, which in this setting is a specifically self-inflicted phenomenon that establishes associations with the flight to and from the Sabbat. The opium acts as a catalyst for imagined flights over 'un fantastique et silencieux Paris vu à vol d'oiseau' [a fantastic and silent Paris seen as the crow flies] (162) as well as 'l'Inde légendaire et védique après l'Égypte mystérieuse' [legendary and Vedic India after mysterious Egypt] (166). This use of a narcotic to initiate a spirit-flight echoes both Alexander Kuklin and Edward B. Tylor's descriptions of psychotropic ointments that allegedly transported the witch to the Sabbat.[58] Indeed, these 'flying ointments' consisted of several intoxicating plants of the *Solanaceae* family, which cause a similar psychotropic effect to opium.[59] It is clear that Lorrain was aware of such a concoction, noting in his more overtly occult short story 'La Princesse au sabbat' that 'la princesse, debout toute nue

devant la cheminée, se sent oindre et frotter d'une étrange pommade' [the princess, standing naked in front of the fireplace, anointed and rubbed herself with a strange ointment], only to find herself at the Sabbat.[60]

In addition to the narcotic nature of both the flying ointment and the opium, Michael J. Harner argues that this intoxication often took a distinctly erotic aspect, which builds on Erich Hesse's assertion that 'the hallucinations are frequently dominated by the erotic moment'.[61] This leads Harner to assert that the image of the witch and her broomstick 'was undoubtedly more than a symbolic Freudian act, serving as an applicator for the atropine-containing plant to the sensitive vaginal membranes', highlighting both the vehicular and phallic nature of the broomstick.[62] The distinctly sexual aspect of the flying ointment can be symbolized both through the Javanese dance in which the androgynes 'ne faisaient qu'un seul corps à deux têtes' [became one body with two heads], as well as the guests circulating and fraternizing together in a manner that could be reminiscent of sexual congress (162). We read that Maud White '[était] allongée auprès de son frère' [was lying next to her brother] (160), while Ethal 'venait alors s'étendre entre Welcôme et [Fréneuse], et les danses du poison commençaient' [came to lie between Welcôme and [Fréneuse], and the poison dances began] (161), which once again alludes to Sedgwick's erotic triangle, albeit with three men, rather than requiring a female lens through which homosexual desire can be safely expressed.

Another witchcraft trope – the witches' teat – appears towards the end of the Sabbat in the passage entitled 'Smara' which takes its name from a vampiric reverie by Charles Nodier, further implying the evocation of an occult power.[63] The witches' teat was held to be the spot on the witch's body from which she suckled her familiar, an act that Deborah Willis has suggested represents a perversion of maternal power – another powerful image of gender-bending.[64] Fréneuse notes that an 'effroyable ennemi conquérait [sa] chair. Toute une armée d'énormes chauves-souris [...] de l'espèce dite vampire, suçait [son] sang' [a dreadful enemy conquered his flesh. An entire army of enormous vampire bats were sucking his blood], an act that he

reciprocates, instinctively biting the bat and drinking its blood (167). The image of the bat of course evokes associations of vampirism in addition to the implication of a witches' teat, but Fréneuse's reciprocation of the act further underlines his non-normativity and marks his now willing compliance with the Sabbatic actions, while also representing the Decadent obsession with death and decay.[65]

'Vivre sa vie': A Coming Out Narrative

The Sabbat and its aftermath are linked inextricably with a homosexual conflict against society as both Ethal and an Irishman named Welcôme vie for Fréneuse's attention with Welcôme suggesting that 'vivre sa vie, voilà le but final; mais […] nous avons contre nous notre éducation et notre milieu, que dis-je?' [living one's life is the ultimate goal; but […] our education and environment are against us, what can I say?] (181). This ultimately highlights Ethal's actions up to this point of the narrative as a toxic obstacle to liberation. Welcôme suggests that by meeting one's demons head-on and internalizing them, Fréneuse will overcome his anxiety. He is told,

> laisser entrer l'univers en soi et prendre ainsi lentement et voluptueusement possession du monde […]. Là seulement, Astarté vous apparaîtra dans quelque belle fleur humaine, robuste et suant la santé, trop rose et trop rousse avec yeux mystérieux de bête, telle la bouchère au profil d'Hérodiade
>
> [let the universe enter you and you will easily and sensually take possession of the world. Only in this way will Astarté appear to you as some beautiful human flower, robust and emanating health, too pink and auburn with mysterious eyes of a beast, like the butcher with the profile of Herodias] (180).

The reference to Herodias here once again underlines the connections to witchcraft, with Leland equating his pagan messiah Aradia with Salomé's mother,[66] while Hutton suggests that Aradia is simply the Italianized form of Herodias.[67] As such, I would argue that, in this scene, Welcôme gives expression to an act we would today refer to as 'coming out', using a rehabilitated image of Astarté and witchcraft as a metaphor for homosexual desire and self-acceptance.

This ultimately provides a stark counterpoint to Ethal's misogynistic, *vagina dentata*-inspired version of Astarté, who 'entre ses cuisses fuselées, au bas renflé du ventre, à la place du sexe,

ricanante, menaçante, [avait] une petite tête de mort' [had a small sneering and menacing skull between her tapered thighs, below the low bulge of the belly where her genitals ought to have been] (207). This image not only perpetuates male fears of the feminine at the *fin de siècle*,[68] but also acts as a prophylaxis against normative sexuality. Indeed, queer desire is often presented in Decadent texts as the new norm to which people may aspire, perhaps best demonstrated by Raoule's longing for a brand new, strange love in Rachilde's *Monsieur Vénus*.[69] Welcôme's call to arms thus acts as a panacea for Fréneuse against all the false promises that Ethal has made throughout the narrative, with the protagonist noting that 'j'écoutais cet homme [Welcôme], comme on boit un philtre' [I listened to this man as one would drink a potion] (182). This once again draws on occult imagery, while associating it with a curative 'coming out' narrative.

Fréneuse later notes that because of Ethal he walks through the forest of Tiffauges described by Huysmans as 'un envoûté, un misérable et fol ensorcelé des magies noires d'autrefois' [an enchanted, miserable fool bewitched by black magicks of yesteryear] (211). By intertextually imposing Durtal's hallucinations of the historical Gilles de Rais from Huysmans's *Là-bas*, Lorrain once again underlines the occult influences upon his protagonist, as well as his non-normativity. Huysmans's text represents Decadent occultism *par excellence*, atavistically bringing the Medieval to the Modern, while Gilles de Rais' involvement in the occult, child murders, and rapes all serve to bring forth the Decadent fascination with death, decay, and perversion.[70] However, this reverie galvanizes Fréneuse into action, and making his choice between the two men, he kills Ethal by forcing him to ingest his own poison. This act, I suggest, completes Fréneuse's initiation into the witch-cult and fulfils the expectations of the Sabbatic sacrifice. Indeed, it would seem that the protagonist has taken on a new identity after the incident, one presented in the language of rebirth.

On exiting Ethal's workshop we are told that he 'ouvri[t] la porte de l'antichambre et descendi[t] l'escalier' [opened the door of the antechamber and went down the stairs] (276). This exit is evocative of a yonic image of a child's passage from the womb along the vaginal canal

during birth. He goes on to say that 'je ne me reconnais plus' [I do not recognize myself anymore] (280), and it is significant that the protagonist is never again referred to as the duc de Fréneuse but as the eponymous Monsieur de Phocas after the murder. This 'rebaptism' is confirmed in the publisher's office at the beginning of the novel (which takes an epistolary form following this expository episode) where the protagonist tells us that 'le duc de Fréneuse est mort, il n'y a plus que M. de Phocas' [the duc de Fréneuse is dead, there is only M. de Phocas] (53). This echoes the Jesuit del Río's assertion that witches were rebaptized by the Devil during the Sabbat.[71]

Conclusion

This article has shown that occult and marginalized sexual identities and behaviours can be considered non-normative and inherently interlinked due to their shared marginality, both in historical texts as well as in the works of Jean Lorrain. I have suggested that Lorrain's engagement not only in non-heteronormative behaviours in *Monsieur de Phocas*, but also the underlying imagery of occultism – through the transgressive and iconoclastic lens of Decadence – helps to queer the dominant discourse as per Urban's exploration of challenges to established social orders. As such, the occult can be considered to inhabit a position 'outside' of Rubin's 'Charmed Circle' of sexual behaviours and identities, which in the case of the novel ensures that the protagonist is 'doubly' transgressive due to his engagement with non-normative sexuality and the occult. For this reason, he is allowed a further route to authority via multiple methods of subverting the status quo. The result is that the protagonist's engagement with non-normative religious modes effectively triggers a rebirth within him and allows him 'vivre sa vie' [to live his life] as commanded by Welcôme.

The imagery of witchcraft offers a further method of subverting the status quo, turning the gendered expectations of the witch on their heads while engaging with Decadent tropes of apostasy and rebellion. Men were also historically accused of witchcraft, which had implications

for their masculinity as, by being associated with witchcraft, they were necessarily feminized.[72] As Elizabeth Kent puts it, 'male witches were masculine others, whose poor practice of patriarchy cut across paradigmatic idealization of masculine virtue'.[73] This article has revealed that witchcraft and Decadence intersect in the work of Lorrain through engagement with marginality and 'otherness' in order to highlight the struggle of non-normative masculinity at the *fin de siècle*. Following Georges Bataille's conception of transgression as the construction and subsequent overstepping of laws[74] as well as historical links between illicit sexuality and religious apostasy, Lorrain empowers a peripheral, transgressive protagonist. He subverts the status quo, permitting him avenues to power, and ultimately readdressing the balance of power between heteronormative masculinity and non-normative, subordinate masculinity.

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In the Shambles of Hollywood: The Decadent Trans Feminine Allegory in *Myra Breckinridge*

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When Twentieth Century Fox announced there would be a 1970 film adaptation of Gore Vidal's controversial novel *Myra Breckinridge* (1968), Candy Darling considered it her prime opportunity to break into mainstream cinema. The novel follows its titular character, an addled trans woman obsessed with the films of the 1940s, as she seeks to claim her inheritance from an uncle who runs an acting academy in Hollywood. Darling, a trans woman herself, had begun her acting career in Andy Warhol's movies, where she formed an important part of the Factory set along with other trans feminine people such as Holly Woodlawn and Jackie Curtis. But these underground films had a limited circulation, and it was Darling's deepest-held ambition to become a legitimate starlet. When she applied for the role, she was rejected in favour of the cisgender actress Raquel Welch [fig. 1]. 'They decided Raquel Welch would make a more believable transvestite', she recounted.[1] While Welch obviously lent the production some star power at the time, Darling's exclusion seems counterintuitive: she was about the same age as Myra in the novel and was also obsessed with vintage Hollywood, modelling herself after peroxide blonde actresses such as Lana Turner, Kim Novak, and Jean Harlow. She could recite whole passages from films such as *Picnic* (1955), demonstrating something of Myra's encyclopaedic film knowledge; in fact, Warhol thought 'she knew even more about forties movies than Gore Vidal did'.[2] In the novel there are several references to Myra's career as an underground film star prior to her transition that may well allude to films such as Warhol's *Flesh* (1968), a film that Darling had actually been in. She was, in other words, already engaged in the sexual avant-gardism Myra Breckinridge apparently represented, as well as what in the novel becomes a tragi-comic obsession with the Golden Age of Hollywood.

Fig. 1 (00:49:37): Raquel Welch as Myra Breckinridge (detail).

But Darling's rejection plays into a larger cultural tradition of trans women's representation, where the supposed symbolism of trans femininity obscures the actuality of trans lives.[3] The film and the novel that inspired it both participate in what Emma Heaney describes as the trans feminine allegory, where trans feminine figures are tasked with illuminating the functioning of cisgender sex. In her recent book, Heaney charts the emergence of the allegory in medical discourse around the fin de siècle, where it is portrayed as symptomatic of broader shifts and contestations in traditional gender roles.[4] The advent of the New Woman and the debased man are shadowed by the figure of the trans feminine invert who 'reveals' the androgyny and malleability of social codes, but also, ultimately, reinstates them. Sexologists such as Richard von Krafft-Ebing investigated the perceived social degradation of their times by extracting pathological case studies from gender and sexually non-conforming people, reasserting a new sexological norm in the face of the perverse, extreme example. The emphasis placed on narrative in these accounts

paved the way for the transmission of the trans feminine allegory into key literary texts. Heaney charts this passage, demonstrating an ongoing power dynamic that elevates cis reflections on gender norms while delegitimizing trans women as constructed foils, emergent in the extremity of modern society.

The ongoing influence of the trans feminine allegory is evidenced in the film adaptation of *Myra Breckinridge*, which tilts Myra's trans status into a postmodern endorsement of surface over depth. The dialogue with contemporaneous medical discourse is aestheticized in the central scene of her genital surgery, taking place in a silver-walled operating theatre complete with an audience in director's chairs [fig. 2]. Welch acts out a rather forced, campy pastiche of feminine codes, and she bears almost no resemblance to the actor Rex Reed, who plays her pre-transition self as Myron. The ghosting presence of Reed and his commentary on Myra's behaviour makes explicit the functioning of the allegory, casting trans womanhood as a non-specific combination of the binary sexes. The conversation between these two selves forms the centrepiece of the plot, culminating in a scene where Myron is seen to perform oral sex on Myra in a paroxysmal haze. Such a misleading representation of gender transition is embedded in the complex temporality that comes through in the film as a whole. Scenes are intercut with archive footage from well-known Hollywood classics, and there are multiple cameos from vintage screen stars, most notably Mae West, who had come out of retirement to appear in the film. The presence of old Hollywood personalities, 'exhumed in the flesh', as one review had it, alongside new ones such as Welch, made the film a special affront to the tastes of the time [fig. 3].[5] This affront was compounded by the portrayal of trans femininity, which, though regressive in the ways I have mentioned, was widely reviled for the fact of its inclusion. As such, the film was almost universally panned by contemporaneous critics, emblematized by a scathing review in *Time* that named it 'some sort of nadir in American cinema'.[6] This characterization as a new low evinces the complex temporal play in the film and its reception – dealing with cinematic tradition so closely while at the same time breaking into debased or extreme forms. I am not necessarily interested in recuperating these

'unseemly seams', as David Scott Diffrient has done, in a reparative vision of the joy in the film's 'badness'.[7] Rather, what interests me is the special fact of the film's perception and self-stylization as an exposé of degraded extremity – what is intimately tied to a sense of general social deterioration and to a vision of the newly-forged trans feminine body as a hallmark of that deterioration. The very concept of a cultural nadir urges examination of cultural precedents, and in this case the sense of decadence surrounding Myra's trans feminine body provides a critical starting point.

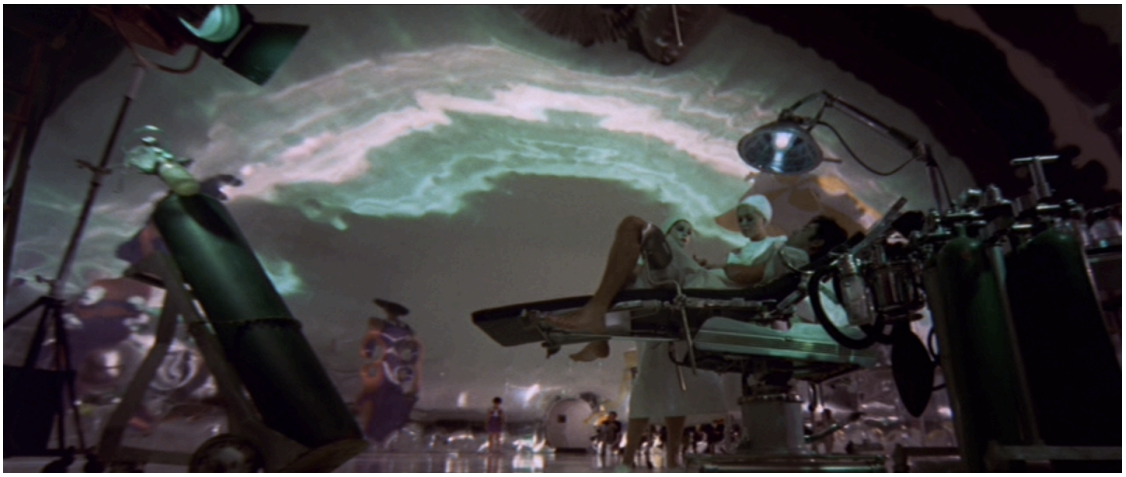

Fig. 2 (00:01:09): The operating theatre.

Fig. 3 (00:55:11): Mae West (detail).

The Decadent Connection

The term *decadence* carries a host of unstable connotations, but I am seeking here to draw a line between the decadence represented by Vidal's Myra and literary decadence – a cultural tendency that first became common in the late nineteenth century, carrying with it a sense of social decline emphasizing what is degraded, fallen, or late – not a movement per se, but a working between other literary traditions, with many decadent works having fluctuating relationships with romanticism, symbolism, naturalism, aestheticism, and later, modernism. Critics such as David Weir and Vincent Sherry have convincingly demonstrated the intimate relationship of decadence to the 'newness' of early twentieth-century modernism, complicating the basic temporal valence of both literary modes. Weir says that 'decadence is transition, a drama of unsettled aesthetics, and the mixture of literary tendencies constituting that transition is at once within and without tradition and convention'.[8] Sherry claims a connection of decadence to gender non-conformity, most explicitly in the queer personage of Oscar Wilde, that contributed to its elision in critical accounts of the development of modernism.[9] So in the years following the fin de siècle, the simultaneous influence and erasure of trans feminine presence that Heaney explores in the work of modernist authors is in fact mirrored in the characterization of decadence that soon became current: an uncomfortably fey or passive presence, disavowed by modernists even as it informed their work.[10]

The influence of decadence was also keenly felt in Hollywood, as a generation of screenwriters emerged in the twenties and thirties who were profoundly influenced by decadent literature. Most notable among these is Ben Hecht, who would pen many of the screenplays for the forties movies that Myra is transfixed on, thus providing a passage of influence into Vidal's novel. For Weir, 'the decadent Hecht' is suggestive of a point partly elaborated on here: 'that the various dilutions of European high decadence […] eventually trickled down into American popular culture through the medium of the movies'.[11] In a later work he also argues that cinematic decadence 'was not so much a transformation as a deformation: decadence disseminated into the

broader culture was also decadence dissipated'.[12] Many cultural products containing decadent tropes from the fin de siècle incorporate those tropes in new ways. *Myra Breckinridge* the novel is therefore partly a recuperation of literary decadence, presenting a vision of social decline and injecting that with an emphasis on sexual variance. But Myra departs from decadent languor in a self-declaration of herself as an 'activist', intent on reforming social codes in crisis rather than passively luxuriating in them.[13] Transformation and deformation become explicit themes in the novel, as it takes the body of the 'transsexual' – not medically described in full until the mid-twentieth century – and twists her towards a more active, but still decadent, allegorical purpose that finds expression in a sort of campy postmodernism.

Decadence and Sexology

The mobilization of trans feminine figures as allegories of extremity symptomatic of cultural decline has precedent in decadent texts, evincing a dialogue with medical discourse earlier than the one Heaney charts in her analysis of primarily modernist novels. The view of decadence as a proto-modernist tendency in late nineteenth-century texts is thus supported by the presence in those texts of allegorized trans femininity. Rachilde's *Monsieur Vénus* (1884) is probably the most explicit example, detailing the systematic feminization of a young male artist, Jacques, at the hands of the decadently perverse heiress Raoule de Vénérande. She takes the masculine role in their affair, using him for her own pleasure. When Jacques surpasses the feminized bondage in which he is placed, seeking to bed Raittolbe, an alpha male companion of Raoule's who finds himself irresistibly attracted to the youth, she engineers a duel between the two, and thus the murder of her lover. In the novel's notorious closing scene, 'armed with silver pincers, a velvet-covered hammer, and a silver scalpel', she removes Jacques' teeth, hair, and eyelashes so that a German artisan can incorporate them into a wax model of his body.[14] As the title suggests, she has him made into a sort of anatomical Venus, a wax medical model that was common in the nineteenth century. Such models were ordinarily of vivisected women, eerily eroticized with long flowing hair, make-up, and

sometimes strings of pearls.[15] Accordingly, Raoule regularly visits the sumptuous chamber housing her creation and takes her pleasure of it, via a hidden spring that 'animates the mouth' and 'spreads apart the thighs'.[16]

Monsieur Vénus enacts decadence in dialogue with sexology, the novel forming one picture in the 'portrait gallery of types of perversions' that Melanie Hawthorne identifies in Rachilde's oeuvre.[17] This is part of a broader trend within decadent literature as a whole, which Maxime Foerster has examined as one of parody, eroticizing and subverting the doctor-patient relationship, among other foundational tenets of scientific medical enquiry.[18] The use of the extreme trans feminine example is common to both decadent and sexological literature and is tied to a broader vision of social decline. And so Raittolbe is one of a series of Raoule's male acquaintances who are panic-stricken by their attraction to Jacques' feminine beauty. His becoming involved in the scandalous affair is explained only by the fact that 'the *century weighed on him*, an infirmity impossible to analyse other than by this phrase alone'.[19] The aside points to a nineteenth-century crisis of masculine sexual identity in response to the presence of trans feminine and same-sex-attracted inverts in the metropolis, increasingly visible due to their involvement in street-based sex work, and to the emergence of apparently masculinized New Women such as Raoule. The perceived newness of Jacques' and Raoule's behaviour is integral to the threat they represent, as it is part of their decadent charm. Upon the text's publication, Verlaine congratulated Rachilde on the invention of a new vice.[20]

Trans feminine undertones also appear in decadent novels such as Théophile Gautier's *Mademoiselle de Maupin* (1835) – despite depicting a woman disguised as a man, the action of the plot is as much about the feminization of a perceived male and the male narrator's crisis of attraction for that person. There is also the 'Miss Urania' episode in J.-K. Huysmans's *À Rebours* (1884), where Des Esseintes is drawn to a muscular circus performer, and later to a female ventriloquist who is able to speak in many unnatural, placeless voices.[21] In such examples trans femininity is in easy slippage with other forms of perversity, turned outwards into a general sign of artificiality and

sexual-moral decay. This trend is replicated in sexological texts: Krafft-Ebing, for example, posited a sliding scale of inversion through his case studies, with the milder examples of masculine men who are same-sex attracted giving way to extreme sexually-compulsive trans femininity. Likewise, he presents a sliding scale between same-sex-attracted women and those afflicted by trans masculine 'viraginity'.[22]

This sliding-scale model was contested in early homosexual-rights writing, most of which necessarily engaged sexology in order to depathologize same-sex attraction between cis people. The healthy, upstanding, masculine homosexual was repeatedly contrasted with the pathologically effeminate invert by writers such as Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, Edward Carpenter, and André Gide. The term *Homosexualität* [homosexual] was actually coined in an 1868 letter to Ulrichs in order to differentiate masculine men who desire men from trans feminine inverts.[23] In *Uranisme et unisexualité* (1896), the decadent sexologist Marc-André Raffalovich, an associate of Wilde and Walter Pater, charts for 'uranisme' an ornate and dramatic lineage from classical antiquity and early Christianity. In the process he advocates for the 'superior invert' who embodies 'virilised homosexuality' at the expense of the fatally effeminate 'weak' type.[24]

The works of Wilde also contain echoes of the decadent trans feminine, and there is evidence he was influenced by Rachilde – *Monsieur Vénus* in particular. He apparently spoke about the novel for several hours in front of Raffalovich, and there are several textual allusions to it in early versions of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890). In those early versions, the book that corrupts Dorian was originally called 'Le Secret de Raoul [*sic*]' by 'Catulle Sarazzin'.[25] The fictionalized author has been taken as an allusion to a member of Rachilde's decadent circle, Catulle Mendès, but also recalls Balzac's 1830 novella, *Sarrasine*, about a man who falls in love with a castrato singer named La Zambinella.[26] These traces indicate a tradition of feminized gender non-conformity Wilde was activating in the work that would become so influential in transmitting decadence into the twentieth century.

A Female Dorian

Wilde was a significant decadent influence on Hollywood, even if the stigma surrounding his trial and death had dramatic consequences for the fate of decadence in public life and later in the historical record. *Myra Breckinridge* is linked with Wilde through the work of Myra's favourite film critic, Parker Tyler, whose interpretation of the 1945 film adaptation of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is alluded to in the novel and establishes a precedent for the construction of Myra's allegorical trans femininity.[27]

Tyler's *Magic and Myth of the Movies* (1947) is a hallmark of Myra's worldview, providing impetus for fervent statements like: '*between 1935 and 1945, no irrelevant film was made in the United States*'.[28] Tyler wrote the book when he was living in Greenwich Village, associating with the likes of decadent modernists such as Djuna Barnes, at a time that saw the 'queer commingling of decadence with modernism'.[29] Tyler examines a range of films in chapters whose titles reveal a fascination with psychoanalysis and sexual transformation, such as 'Finding Freudism Photogenic' and 'Magic-Lantern Metamorphoses I'. The latter examines the 1945 *Picture of Dorian Gray* against the original novel, criticizing the vulgarization of Wilde 'in the shambles of Hollywood' for eroding the carefully constructed homosexual subtext.[30] 'Wilde was the prince of an alien and socially aggressive aesthetic philosophy', Tyler argues. Dorian is the primary vector of this philosophy, a sort of invert who perverts the 'stuffiness' of British culture.[31] The character is 'more loved than loving', carrying 'within himself the seeds of the gross decay of the sexual […] that Wilde saw everywhere around him in the vulgar and stupid rather than imaginative and aesthetic pursuit of women by men'.[32] Seeking to supplant heterosexual desire for women in the name of art, Tyler's reading of Dorian reiterates what Sally Ledger calls the novel's 'aestheticisation of homoerotic desire'. Ledger highlights the nineteenth-century decadent tendency to cast femininity as an embellishment of aesthetic life in contrast to the debased and hopelessly corporeal counterpoint of the woman's body. She sees Dorian as more aesthetic than substantial, having 'little corporeal

reality', at least compared to Sibyl Vane, the woman he pursues and then jilts for her literal approach to their love affair.[33] But Tyler glosses this misogyny, at the same time emphasizing just what a threat Dorian's beautiful body and 'hermaphroditic[,] monstrous' personality, represents to society, to the point that his corporeality must be made to reflect the dangerous femininity of his interior.[34] And so his portrait rendering in the homophobic film is a sort of 'Frankenstein', crawling out 'of the American moral jungle'.[35]

Dorian's gender non-conformity is further clarified in Tyler's conclusion, where he praises two films dealing with 'the possession of a woman's body by a man's spirit'.[36] Both employ cinematic magic to make a different voice speak from an actor's body, allegorical devices which Tyler likens to the heart of falsity represented in Dorian. The effect of the films is paralleled

> in cases of highly false acting personalities such as Veronica Lake, created half by the beauty parlour and half by stupidity, […] devising a mannequin, a feminine symbol, a female Dorian, who is not a real woman but who imitates being one and, through beauty, maintains the illusion of reality.

Tyler's allegorized trans femininity thus extends to a general misogyny directed at cis women as well, as he characterizes Lake as 'outside of nature' in *I Married a Witch* (1942).[37] This misogyny is therefore not exclusively connected with an 'authentic' woman's body. *Magic and Myth of the Movies* is both a transmission and distortion of a nineteenth-century decadent sensibility, tellingly focusing on sexual variance, which Vidal's novel heightens in elaborating a trans feminine monster lurking in the post-1940s American psyche.

Decadent Myra and Trans Body Narratives

Myra's decadence picks up where Tyler's leaves off in her vision of a degraded social and cultural milieu of which she herself is nonetheless symptomatic. 'I exist entirely outside the usual human experience', she says, referring to her trans status, 'outside and yet wholly relevant for I am the New Woman whose astonishing history is a poignant amalgam of vulgar dreams and knife-sharp realities' (p. 4). Myra engages tropes of medicalized trans femininity and combines these with

references to second-wave feminist movements. 'I am Myra Breckinridge whom no man will ever possess', reads the first sentence of the novel, recognizing the threat she poses to the sexual social order (p. 3). Myra's ailing American empire is defined by its increasing expansion and proliferation of automobiles, televisions, and people: reproductive sex being the root of all social problems. In the opening pages of the novel she describes Sunset Boulevard, 'filled with noisy cars, barely moving through the air so dark with carbon monoxide that one can almost hear in the drivers' lungs the cancer cells as they gaily proliferate like spermatozoa in a healthy boy's testicles' (p. 7). Her views on population control are later explicated when she says that 'Malthus had been right', that global human population has to be decreased according to the availability of the food supply, in order for culture to flourish (p. 126).

The student body of her uncle's acting academy is emblematic of such problems, portrayed as a never-ending stream of youths, 'bland, inattentive, responsive only to the bold rhythms of commercials'. Their reading and writing ability tends to be stunted, being just 'able to write their name, or "autograph" as they are encouraged to call it' (pp. 25–26). This cultural decline finds locus for Myra in the fading of 1940s Hollywood:

> In the Forties, American boys created a world empire because they chose to be James Stewart, Clark Gable and William Eythe. By imitating godlike autonomous men, our boys were able to defeat Hitler, Mussolini and Tojo. Could we do it again? Are the private eyes and denatured cowboys potent enough to serve as imperial exemplars? No. (p. 35)

The degraded pantheon of cinematic gods causes Myra to affirm a belief that the only way to solve social problems is the renovation of sexual mores, the remaking of the sexes so that reproduction is curbed and 'the race' is preserved. In the sequel to the novel, *Myron* (1974), Myra's eugenic and racist views find more explicit expression as she, like Raoule, takes on the role of surgeon. She endeavours to castrate and forcibly transition straight cis men in order to create a 'race of sterile fun-loving Amazons', beginning with a Native American man she seduces (p. 342).[38]

Myra's darkly parodic engagement with trans surgeries extends to a generalized satire of medical discourse and medicalized trans autobiography. In many ways, the novel comes in the

wake of biographies and autobiographies of trans women such as Christine Jorgensen that began to appear in the twentieth century, holding literary as well as medical value in their recourse to a 'wrong body' narrative. This narrative was a development of nineteenth-century sexological frameworks that formulated trans feminine people as 'women trapped inside the bodies of men', thus possessing corporealities that needed to be rectified through medical intervention. In the twentieth century, the recitation of the 'wrong body' narrative would become imperative for trans people seeking social and institutional legibility, as well as access to the technologies of hormones and surgery. Jay Prosser has examined how nineteenth-century sexology continued to hold sway in the increasing 'biographizing' of trans patients: establishing an authentic narrative of trans inauthenticity became necessary because, 'for the sexologist, the body of the invert was by definition an unreliable text'.[39] Inverts professed a different gender from the one they were assigned at birth, and so their self-narrative became one that was symptomatic of their perceived pathology. Thus from Krafft-Ebing's case studies to the sexual revolution of the 1960s and 1970s, accounts of sexual and gender non-conformity continued to be highly sought-after because they reinstated normality through its obverse, the spectre of extreme perversion. Such accounts coincided with dramatic upheavals in the public understanding of sex and gender roles in general.

Myra Breckinridge capitalizes on fears of general social decline by exploiting the genre of trans feminine (auto)biography. The diary entries that comprise it, written by Myra's fictional hand, exist in a parodic relationship to sexological discourse, having been motivated by a 'Dr. Randolph Spenser Montag, my analyst friend and dentist, who has proposed that I write in this notebook as therapy' (p. 4). Dr. Montag is an eccentric whose combined professions exploit the rhyme between 'mental' and 'dental'. He earnestly reminds Myra, 'Good dental health means good mental health', emphasizing a relation between physical normality (a 'Hollywood smile') and being a reasonable, well-adjusted patient (p. 111). Myra is decidedly not well-adjusted, and we are told that Montag, though instrumental in her transition, was against it. 'In the great tradition of neo-Freudian analysis, Dr. Montag refuses to accept any evidence that does not entirely square with his

preconceptions', Myra says. Because of this, her gender transition was a 'traumatic experience for us all'. Now that Myra has begun to live as a woman, Montag's worldview has been shaken, and he 'almost believes those stories his younger patients tell him of parties where sexual roles change rapidly […] stories he used to reject as wish-fulfillments' (p. 91). The parody of psychoanalytical dismissal of sexual variance, including homosexuality, is clear, but Myra's status as a trans feminine allegory remains intact, where she is aligned with the new sexual counterculture.[40] She does, in fact, attend an orgy thrown by one of the students, mostly observing as she deflects snatches at her off-limits panties. Reflecting on the experience, she admits:

> [A]ccess to this sort of pleasure in my adolescence would have changed me entirely. Fortunately, as it turned out, I was frustrated. If I had not been, Myra Breckinridge would never have existed […] something we, none of us, can afford at this time. (p. 94)

Even in parody of psychoanalysis she remains an expression of the unconscious desires of the cis straight men at the orgy. At another party, she also parodies the nineteenth-century connection between hashish and inversion, invoked by both Krafft-Ebing and Rachilde. Myra smokes a joint and is soon immobilized in 'gaudy reveries' in a bathtub with two rings, 'one light, one dark, his and hers' (p. 49). She is depressed by the vision, continuing to plot the realignment of the sexes in her journal, an act which itself perverts the efficacy of the 'talking cure'.

Myra's parody of medical discourse is extended in the novel's most notorious scene, where she 'renovates' a hyper-masculine student called Rusty by anally raping him. The premise of the scene is a medical examination, with Myra playing teacher-nurse, ticking off items on a chart: she traces his spine, records height and weight, obtains a urine sample, and takes his temperature – through the rectum. The rhythm of the scene engages BDSM, with Myra threatening to 'punish' him for disobedience, clamping his nipples with tongs and spanking him (p. 138). After intensive cross-examination and a thorough inspection of Rusty's 'equipment', Myra takes out a strap-on dildo and completes her humiliation of him on the surgical table (p. 152). She congratulates herself on 'destroying totally […] a man's idea of himself in relation to the triumphant sex', calling herself 'the god Priapus personified' as well as 'one with Bacchae, with all the priestesses of the dark

bloody cults, with the great goddess herself for whom Attis unmanned himself […] the eternal feminine made flesh' (pp. 156–57). The scene is the culmination point of the various discourses operating in the novel, parodying the medical examination of trans people on the operating table and 'opening up' the immobilized alpha male for medical inspection. Myra's raptures also force a decadent alignment of the world of classical debauchery with the present moment, her reference to the self-castrating Greek deity Attis providing a possible echo of Wilde's 'The Sphinx' (1894): 'Atys with his blood-stained knife were better than the thing I am'.[41] Myra is the meeting point of these discourses held in allegory: though her actions parody the medicalization of gender variance, the scene is equally an examination of the depth of her perversion, centrally orientated around her castrated genitals, here reinstated by the stereotypical feminist weapon of a strap-on dildo. In the film, this scene was enacted with Welch in a stars-and-stripes leotard and cowboy hat, explicating the decadent social critique at play [fig. 4].

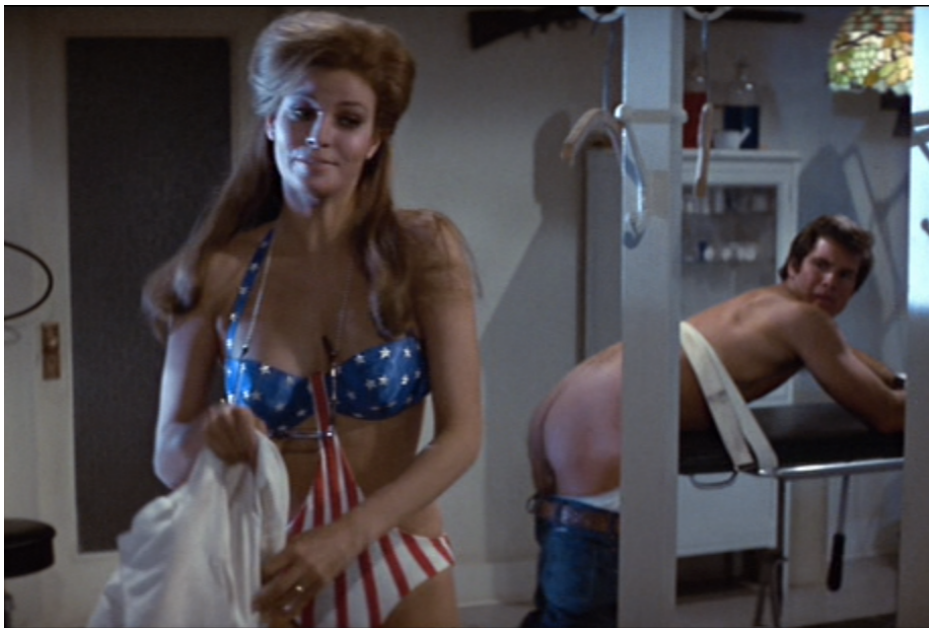

Fig. 4 (01:09:39): The notorious rape scene (detail).

Campy Postmodernism

The apparent fluidity with which Myra embodies competing discourses is rooted in the novel's postmodernist deconstruction of an authoritative narrator. As a sexologically 'unreliable text', she

repeatedly bemoans the 'treachery and inadequacy' of language, claiming 'that there are no words to describe for you *exactly* what my body is like'. Her trans status provides the occasion to draw on poststructuralism and 'the French New Novelists' in contesting the authority of her own voice (pp. 10, 117). Her voice is further subverted in her rapid switches from 'a careful low-pitched voice, modelled on that of the late Ann Sheridan', to a whisper 'like Phyllis Thaxter in *Thirty Seconds over Tokyo*', to several other vocal registers, anticipating the montage sequences of the film, moving rapidly between scene segments taken from Hollywood classics. When Myra is hired to take classes at the academy while working out the inheritance dispute with her uncle Buck, she teaches Empathy and Posture, suggestive of an untrustworthy trans performativity that is paradoxically valued at the Drama and Modelling Academy. Several of the students take on fake southern accents, embodying an 'anonymous blur', a 'fitful, mindless shuffling of roles' (p. 34). Buck's accent likewise 'switches from Cheyenne to Pomona […] one could go mad trying to define its provenance', and Myra's journal entries are interspersed with transcriptions of his personal voice memos, reading like telegrams or Joycean monologues in their lack of punctuation, often broken up with grocery lists and expressions of delight aimed at a hardworking masseuse (p. 41). These touches may be postmodern in their fragmentation of identity, but they also embody a sort of comedy that amounts to an aestheticization of perversity, embodied in Myra's steady description of herself as an agglomeration of screen starlets. In one such instance, she claims to resemble 'Fay Wray [in] left three-quarter profile if the key light is no more than five feet high during the close shot' (p. 3). As in the film, her newness is belied by the fact that she is more of a combination of existing cultural reference points, a sort of remix that is as confronting as it is compelling.

The off-colour humour that permeates the novel enacts a postmodern engagement with tropes of decadence that may also be productively examined through the lens of camp. The characters' exaggerated social posturings, the emphasis on artificiality and surface, Myra's easy embodiment of a range of feminine stereotypes, her 'camp nostalgia' for the films of the 1940s, and the Wilde connections, all position *Myra Breckinridge* as a kind of campy twentieth-century

transmutation of nineteenth-century decadence.[42] The dialogue with contemporaneous sexology is also maintained, and Karin Sellbeck has noted the resonances between 1960s sexologists such as John Money and the character of Dr. Montag. Money was a proponent of a socially-constructivist view of sex, arguing for the 'transpositioning' of subjects in culture, where trans bodies are seen as fields for the reception of various influences, revealing the malleability of sex and gender in general. Identity 'may fluctuate and the body thus becomes a territory contested by two oppositional sets of social/hormonal influences'.[43] This sexological discourse becomes ripe for a campy postmodern deconstruction of authenticity and voice, especially in light of the play on words that may exist between Montag, Money, and Sontag (Susan).[44] The influence of Tyler's criticism, what he refers to in his conclusion as a 'Comedy of Critical Hallucination', and the emphasis on gender-crossing voices and body swapping, further highlights the campy postmodernist operations that allegorize trans femininity into a multidirectional social critique, not a valid social position. Such considerations are consistent with David Scott Diffrient's effort to recuperate the film adaptation in an exercise in 'camp criticism' that highlights its 'transgressive pleasures'.[45]

Gregory W. Bredbeck's work casts an important light on the genesis of influence from Wilde via Tyler (and, as I suspect, from Rachilde also) in understanding the debt owed to Wilde in the development of camp as an aesthetic sensibility. Advocating a lack of sincerity in order to develop space both 'within and against the emerging languages of sexology', Wilde was able to assert a gay male identity through the language of camp, 'turning the gazer into the gazed, the subject into the object', so muddling 'an ability to know who is attracted to what'.[46] Bredbeck discusses how after his trial and death, Wilde's work was treated with the nineteenth-century sexological emphasis on narrative, confusing 'textual inversion and sexual inversion'.[47] Bredbeck's analysis is unfortunately limited by his perpetuation of the tendency to elide trans femininity and homosexuality, failing to account for the importance of the extreme trans feminine example in shaping respectability politics surrounding cis same-sex attraction.

Man Revealed

Myra Breckinridge also participates in the elision between trans femininity and same-sex attraction, mobilizing Myra's body as a weapon against the straight society that ridiculed her pre-transition self, the campy gay film buff Myron, as a 'fag'. When she eventually enacts the customary trans 'reveal' of the 'scar where cock and balls should be', Buck has a revelation that the 'awful low voice she sometimes uses […] now I recognize is a mans [*sic*] voice' (p. 190). Winning the inheritance dispute as a result of this reveal, and intimidating her uncle in the process, Myra presents the ultimate vessel with which the campy gay man can enact his revenge, slipping his voice inside of her body [fig. 5]. After her confrontation with Buck, Myra is hit by a car, placed in a full-body cast, and is forced to de-transition when hospital staff deny her access to hormones. Her breasts are non-consensually removed in surgery (chapter 41 contains only her horrible exclamation, 'Where are my breasts? *Where are my breasts?*') and she begins to sprout facial hair (p. 222). Echoing Money's sexological model, a transformation of her personality ensues and Myron is reborn, now heterosexual. He marries Rusty's ex-girlfriend Mary-Ann, has a phallus reconstruction, and begins writing TV screenplays. This re-inscription of traditional gender roles reverses the formula of the 'wrong body' narrative, replacing 'a woman trapped inside the body of a man' to position trans femininity as the reverse. It comes with Myron's final chilling assertation that 'happiness, like the proverbial bluebird, is to be found in your own backyard if you just know where to look', completing the satirical mobilization of Myra as a decadently scandalous dream visited upon the normatively sexed body (p. 225).

Contemporaneous critics were able to identify the allegorical functioning of Myra's trans femininity, reading her as a platform upon which social anxieties about the fate of American masculinity play out. Purvis E. Boyette's article 'Myra Breckinridge and Imitative Form' provides a key example:

> No pop psychology in the world can persuade us that allowing one's penis to be cut off is anything but desperate and hysterical insanity, however articulate. The transsexual Myra is […] the archetypal pervert[,] the image of a debased and debauched society.

Fig. 5 (01:26:25): The film rendering of Myra's genital reveal.

Her rape of Rusty is understood as 'a figurative rendering of the destructive power Hollywood has over the innate strength of […] American stock'. Boyette goes on to say that '[i]nverted sexuality' is an excellent symbolic vehicle for 'the cultural and spiritual distortions of contemporary American society [that] represents a metaphorical conflation of sexuality and society'. He adds that '[t]his symbolic equation is by no means new'.[48] Though Boyette draws attention to eighteenth-century satirists such as Pope and Swift – one thinks of William Blake's 'Mr. Femality', a probable caricature of the trans feminine spy and duellist Chevalier d'Eon, from *An Island in the Moon* (1784) – a line may also be drawn to include the decadent trans feminine. The rhetoric employed by Boyette seems to echo many nineteenth-century concerns about national decline, sexual degradation, and 'the race'. The article demonstrates how the apparent newness of the perversion represented by Myra's decadently transsexual body, with its justification in 'pop psychology' and exacerbation in the spectacle of Hollywood, is as fabricated as the allegorical trans feminine subject herself.

The article is also representative of the relatively warm reception that the novel enjoyed both critically and with the general public, becoming one of Vidal's bestselling works. The

discrepancy between the relative success of *Myra Breckinridge* the novel and the dismal failure of the film version – effectively ending the career of director Michael Sarne – is a point of interest that turns on the difference between what allowed the novel to be considered an effective parody of sexual mores and the film to be considered an unsightly disfigurement of cinematic form and a perversion of good taste. Where the film ends in Myron and Myra performing a cabaret-style number on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, the novel's perfect recantation of its trans content and much more stable plotline may have contributed to its palatability. The immobilization of the trans feminine body, like Jacques being made into a Venus or Dorian being made into a portrait, effectively contains the threat it represents to the established social order. Allegorization thus works in tandem with objectification, as trans feminine corporeality is spirited away via Myra-cum-Myron's full-body cast. There is certainly a Frankenstein element in both the novel and the film, as we see the ghost of Myron rising from the dead and Myra rising from the operating table. But instead of moving in a visible bricolage of reanimated body parts, the pair does so in snippets of Hollywood films.

The final image of Myron penning screenplays in the suburbs also contains another possible reading which is more subversive, given that he is now a participant in the media machinery that attended his former sexual inversion at every stage. The implication is that Myron's apparent normality only masks a form of sexual extremity that is now allowed to subliminally seep into screen culture, decaying it from the inside. In the film, this process is reflected in the casting of Reed, an actual film critic and author of *Do You Sleep in the Nude?* (1968), an anthology of celebrity interviews. There is potential for an unsettling realization that the formal challenge represented by Myra's disfiguring of sexual and cultural references is in fact indistinguishable from the Hollywood culture that produced her. As I have shown, there is a strong cultural precedent for the construction of the decadent trans feminine as a symptom, an allegorical playing-out of social anxieties. Her arrival as a new low, a new form of sexual extremity, is then a function of that

sense of decline. It is the same threat that arrives again and again, with an all-too-familiar face – in this case, that of Raquel Welch, not Candy Darling.

[1] Quoted in Bob Colacello, *Holy Terror: Andy Warhol Close Up* (New York: Harper Collins, 1990), p. 84.
[2] Andy Warhol and Pat Hackett, *POPism: The Warhol Sixties* (Orlando: Harcourt, 1980), p. 170. Footage of Candy reciting lines from *Picnic* are to be found in the documentary *Beautiful Darling: The Life and Times of Candy Darling, Andy Warhol Superstar*, dir. by James Rasin (Corinth Films, 2010).
[3] The practice of selecting cis actors over trans actors to play trans roles is depressingly consistent up to the present day, with Candy herself portrayed by Vince Gatton in a 2006 play, *Candy and Dorothy*. Television productions such as *Pose* and *Transparent* are notable exceptions that have initiated shifts in representation in recent years. I use the word 'trans' interchangeably where 'transgender' or 'transsexual' or 'transvestite' could be used. Because of the historical scope of my analysis there is slippage between these words, subject to many factors, so I prefer to use a curtailed version because it is flexible and current. Taking my cue from Heaney, I use 'trans feminine' to denote femininity that goes against birth assignment, a slightly more expanded version of such labels that is sensitive to historical anachronism.
[4] Emma Heaney, *The New Woman: Literary Modernism, Queer Theory, and the Trans Feminine Allegory* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2017).
[5] Judith Crist, 'Mal de Merde, or *Myra* in the Mire', *New York Magazine* (13 July 1970), 55–54 (p. 54).
[6] 'Some Sort of Nadir', *Time* (6 July 1970), 70–72 (p. 72).
[7] David Scott Diffrient, '"Hard to Handle": Camp Criticism, Trash-Film Reception, and the Transgressive Pleasures of *Myra Breckinridge*', *Cinema Journal*, 52 (2013), 46–70 (p. 54).
[8] David Weir, *Decadence and the Making of Modernism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995), p. 14.
[9] Vincent Sherry, *Modernism and the Reinvention of Decadence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 27.
[10] See also Kate Hext and Alex Murray, eds, *Decadence in the Age of Modernism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019), and Kristin Mahoney, *Literature and the Politics of Post-Victorian Decadence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
[11] Weir, *Decadence and the Making of Modernism*, pp. 175–76.
[12] Weir, *Decadent Culture in the United States* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008), p. 193.
[13] Gore Vidal, *Myra Breckinridge & Myron* (London: Abacus, 1993), p. 34. Further references are cited parenthetically in the text.
[14] Rachilde, *Monsieur Vénus*, trans. by Melanie Hawthorne (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2004), p. 208.
[15] See Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle* (London: Virago, 1992), pp. 127–43.
[16] Rachilde, *Monsieur Vénus,* p. 210.
[17] Melanie Hawthorne, *Rachilde and French Women's Authorship: From Decadence to Modernism* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), p. 187.
[18] Maxime Foerster, 'A New Catalogue of Perversions: Sexology and Decadence', in *States of Decadence: On the Aesthetics of Beauty, Decline and Transgression across Time and Space*, ed. by Guri Barstad and Karen P. Knutsen, 2 vols (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2006), I.
[19] Rachilde, *Monsieur Vénus*, p. 81. Original emphasis.
[20] Hawthorne, *Rachilde and French Women's Authorship*, p. 56.
[21] Joris-Karl Huysmans, *Against Nature* [*À rebours*], trans. by Brendan King (Sawtry, Cambs.: Dedalus, 2008).
[22] Richard von Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis*, trans. by F. J. Rebman (New York: Rebman Company, 1922), p. 418.
[23] Heaney draws attention to this tradition. For the coinage of homosexuality, see Susan Stryker, *Transgender History* (San Francisco: Seal, 2009), p. 37.
[24] Quoted in Frederick S. Roden, 'Medieval religion, Victorian homosexualities', *Prose Studies*, 23 (2000), 115–30 (p. 117).
[25] Petra Dierkes-Thrun, 'Decadent Sensuality in Rachilde and Wilde', in *Decadence and the Senses*, ed. by Jane Desmarais and Alice Condé (Cambridge: Legenda, 2017), pp. 51–65 (p. 55).
[26] Heaney also examines Roland Barthes' genital-focused analysis of this novella, *S/Z* (1970), but does not include the nineteenth-century novella in her broader argument about modernism. For the Mendès allusion, see Richard Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde* (New York: Knopf, 1987), p. 282.
[27] It is mentioned in Vidal on p. 31, and there are quotes and echoes of Tyler's language throughout.
[28] Parker Tyler, *Magic and Myth of the Movies*, British edn (London: Secker & Warburg, 1971), p. 13. Italics in original.
[29] Hext and Murray, *Decadence in the Age of Modernism*, p. 18.

[30] Tyler, *Magic and Myth of the Movies*, p. 77.
[31] Ibid., pp. 79, 77.
[32] Ibid., p. 85.
[33] Sally Ledger, *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the Fin de Siècle* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p. 109.
[34] Tyler, *Magic and Myth of the Movies*, pp. 225, 226.
[35] Ibid., p. 81.
[36] *The Dybbuk* (1937) and *Turnabout* (1940).
[37] Tyler, *Magic and Myth of the Movies*, p. 227.
[38] *Myron* sees the extension of Myra as an allegory into a more explicitly postmodern sci-fi involving body swapping and jumping inside TV screens.
[39] Jay Prosser, *Second Skins: The Body Narratives of Transsexuality* (New York: Colombia University Press, 1998), p. 142.
[40] In 1968 when the novel was published, homosexuality was still classified as a pathology by American Psychiatric Association in the Diagnostic and Statistic Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), a fact which was not overturned until the publication of the DSM-II in 1973. The diagnostic categories of Gender Dysphoria and Transvestic Disorder are extant in the current DSM-V. See, for example, Jack Drescher, 'Queer diagnoses revisited: The past and future of homosexuality and gender diagnoses in DSM and ICD', *International Review of Psychiatry*, 27 (2015), 386–95.
[41] Oscar Wilde, *Poems, with the Ballad of Reading Gaol*, ed. by Robert Ross, 12th edn (London: Methuen & Co., 1913), p. 276.
[42] Mahoney discusses Max Beerbohm's decadent 'camp nostalgia […] under the assault of the ugliness of the present', wartime England in the 1930s and 40s (pp. 26–27).
[43] Karin Sellberg, 'The subjective cut: sex reassignment surgery in 1960s and 1970s science fiction', *Medical Humanities*, 42 (2016), e20–e25 (p. e23).
[44] Kate Hext and Alex Murray identify Sontag's *Notes on Camp* (1964) as the first to position Wilde in the evolution from decadence to camp (*Decadence in the Age of Modernism*, pp. 19–20).
[45] See Diffrient's title.
[46] Gregory W. Bredbeck, 'Narcissus in the Wilde: Textual cathexis and the historical origins of queer Camp', in *The Politics and Poetics of Camp*, ed. by Moe Meyer (London: Routledge, 2005), pp. 44–64 (pp. 45, 47).
[47] Ibid., p. 47.
[48] Purvis E. Boyette, '*Myra Breckinridge* and Imitative Form', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 17 (1971), 229–38 (p. 236).

The Spirit and the Letter
Medico-Literary Uses of Translation (Lombroso and Nordau)

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Taking as a corpus two famous works of the late nineteenth century, Cesare Lombroso's *L'Uomo di genio* (1882)[1] and Max Nordau's *Entartung* (1892), I would like to focus on a particular type of translation which could be qualified as 'medico-literary'. This translation is based on a double phenomenon of adaptation and transposition which exemplifies what philosopher Isabelle Stengers calls a 'capture': an 'operation by which representatives of the so-called hard sciences' annex 'a notion or a problem culturally charged with meaning'.[2] The medico-literary translation indeed serves a clinical reading of literature, which supposes the passage of poetic or figurative language to be a symptomatic and often literal one.

This translation has, in itself, already been the subject of analyses, but they were essentially centred on the 'scientific ideologies' that the 'nomad concept' of degeneration has helped to constitute.[3] Translation was then only considered as an (unfaithful and biased) interpretation of the cited literature, regardless of any linguistic problem. My approach will be slightly different, as it will focus on a comparative study of the French and English translations of *L'Uomo di genio* and *Entartung*. I will not try to measure a degree of fidelity and its consequences on the reception of a theory, as it has been the case for *On the Origin of Species*, translated into French by Clémence Royer.[4] My ambition is more modest, but perhaps more revealing in the case of Nordau's and Lombroso's translations: by focusing on the status of literary quotations in these medical works, I would like to question the role played by translation in the rhetoric of these two texts written by theoreticians of degeneration.

Scientific spirit, letter of the text

A few reminders, to begin with, about the spirit that animated these two books on mental medicine. Since the work of the alienist Bénédict-Auguste Morel in 1857, degeneration had taken on the narrow meaning of 'sickly deviation from a primitive type' and quickly became part of the debates on the psychopathology of genius.[5] In *L'Uomo di genio*, the Turin forensic medicine professor Lombroso used the notion to support his theory of a direct correspondence between madness and genius, whereas his French predecessor, Jacques-Joseph Moreau de Tours, postulated a simple analogy in his *Psychologie morbide* (1859). Translated into French in 1889, then into English in 1891, *L'Uomo di genio* was responsible for a lasting controversy, making Lombroso the master of thought for those who conceived of literary creation as a source of inevitable physiological disorder. Despite the fact that Nordau dedicated *Entartung* to Lombroso, his own conception of genius was in fact opposed to that of the Italian scholar, since, for the Austro-Hungarian doctor, degeneration was not the stigma of genius, but the symptom of a more general deviance – a deviance expressed by the lifestyle and literature of his time, which commanded an unquestionable condemnation.[6] More in tune with the spirit of the times, Nordau's violent indictment against the fin de siècle spirit emanating from France (and in French in the original text), was translated very quickly: in 1894, in the supposed motherland of degeneration, and the following year in England.[7]

In *Entartung*, Nordau develops the technique of pathological portraiture (or 'pathography')[8] already used by Lombroso, but he inscribes it explicitly in a pamphleteering logic, to the point that his work can appear as a series of violently satirical 'characters', in the sense that La Bruyère uses this term. Quotations play a central role in these 'pathographies', insofar as they are treated as symptoms of the authors' mental state. In accordance with the 'principle' that 'writing is the living image of the mind',[9] the style, which fin-de-siècle medicine sees as a quasi-physiological expression, in fact tends to become the tangible document of a possible deviance. The medical portraits drawn by Lombroso and Nordau thus submit the metaphorical language of literature to the clinical reading they are supposed to validate. They constantly superimpose 'objective' symptoms (those

noted by doctors) and 'subjective' ones (those noted by writers, or which they constitute as such). For Nordau, for example, 'Zola's novels do not prove that things are badly managed in this world, but merely that Zola's nervous system is out of order'.[10] Even more significant is the portrait of the 'degenerate' Paul Verlaine, a portrait that stands out for its broad range: after disqualifying the poet by attacking his physical appearance in accordance with physiognomic theories, Nordau quotes Verlaine's work extensively to illustrate 'the loathsome condition of his mind'.[11] The poems 'Écrit en 1875' and 'Un conte' thus confirm, according to the doctor, that Verlaine's 'madly inordinate eroticism' is 'the special characteristic of his degeneration',[12] while the early poems of *Sagesse* demonstrate that 'religious fervour […] usually accompanies morbidly intensified eroticism'.[13]

This literal and biographical reading is also present in Lombroso's work, particularly in the portrait of Charles Baudelaire as 'the type of the lunatic possessed by the *Délire des grandeurs*'.[14] To support a semiology of degeneration, Lombroso converted poems such as 'Le Mauvais vitrier', from *Le Spleen de Paris* (1864), 'La Géante' and 'Une nuit que j'étais près d'une affreuse Juive…', from *Les Fleurs du mal* (1857), into clinical documents. For the Italian anthropologist, their plot constitutes a collection of symptoms that allows him to turn the lyrical subject into a pathological one, thus participating in what the philosopher Frédéric Gros calls a 'clinic of expressive writing':[15]

> In childhood he was subject to hallucinations; and from that period, as he himself confessed, he experienced opposing sentiments; the horror and the ecstasy of life; he was hyperæsthetic and at the same time apathetic; he felt the necessity of freeing himself from 'an oasis of horror in a desert of *ennui*.' Before falling into dementia he committed impulsive acts; for instance, he threw pots from his house against shop windows for the pleasure of hearing them break. […] He loved ugly and horrible women, negresses, dwarfs, giantesses; to a very beautiful woman he expressed a desire that he might see her suspended by the hands to the ceiling that he might kiss her feet; and kissing the naked foot appears in one of his poems as the equivalent of the sexual act.[16]

The quotation of a line from Baudelaire's 'Le Voyage' was, in the Italian text, reproduced in the French,[17] whereas Lombroso's choices are most often towards a translation that narrativizes, as it were, Baudelaire's poetic work to make it the document of his life. In the rest of the portrait, for example, Lombroso translates 'À une heure du matin' to present Baudelaire as '[p]roud,

misanthropic, and apathetic'.[18] The English translation follows this model, and even extends it to the quotation from 'Le Voyage', which retains only one term in French: *ennui*. The English translator here is in fact faithful to Lombroso's medical-psychological approach, which favours a literal approach to the texts cited, and makes the translation necessary for an argument that in the end leaves little room for form or style.

Clinical virtues of the source text

The case of *Entartung* is much more complex. The German text generally follows the logic of systematic translation of its Italian model but uses quotations from the source texts several times. In the long portrait of Verlaine, Nordau translates the excerpts from 'La Nuit du Walpurgis classique' and 'Ariettes oubliées VIII' into prose, but he quotes in French the first stanza from 'Chevaux de bois':

> Tournez, tournez, bons chevaux de bois,
> Tournez cent tours, tournez mille tours,
> Tournez souvent et tournez toujours,
> Tournez, tournez au son des hautbois.[19]

The excerpts mentioned, however, all have the same function: to illustrate the 'rabâchage' [rehashings] (in French in the text) of a degenerate poet.[20] This is just as evident in 'Chevaux de bois' as it is in the verses of 'La Nuit du Walpurgis Classique', which Nordau chose to translate:

> Ein rhythmischer Sabbat, rhythmisch, äußerst rhythmisch.[21]

> Un rythmique sabbat, rythmique, extrêmement
> Rythmique…[22]

Another passage from *Entartung*, however, helps to understand what Nordau's logic might have been. When he tackles René Ghil, he also reproduces a long excerpt from the poem 'Le Meilleur devenir':

> Ouïs! ouïs aux nues haut et nues où
> Tirent-ils d'aile immense qui vire…
>
> et quand vide
> et vers les grands pétales dans l'air plus aride —

(et en le lourd venir grandi lent stridule et
Titille qui n'alentisse d'air qui dure, et!
grandie erratile et multiple d'éveils, stride
mixte, plainte et splendeur! la plénitude aride)

et vers les grands pétales d'agitations
lors évanouissait un vol ardent qui stride…

(des saltigrades doux n'iront plus vers les mers…)[23]

Nordau then precedes this quotation with a *nota bene* justifying his choice:

> Und René Ghil […] entlodt seiner Leier diese Töne, die ich französich anführen muß, erstens weil ihr Klang in der Übersetzung verloren ginge, und dann weil ich nicht hoffen kann, daß der Leser bei einer ehrlichen Übertragung ins Deutsche noch an meinen Ernst glauben würde.[24]

Translating into German the 'sounds' that Ghil 'draws from his lyre' would mean that they would lose their characteristics but would also risk making the translator lose his 'seriousness' ('Ernst') and credibility. Beyond the difficulty linked to the neologisms (which Nordau sometimes bypasses), it is therefore the inanity of the remarks that leads him to maintain this quotation in its original form, as if he refused to *touch* it.

Such a refusal is indeed as much a matter of ethical stance as of linguistic renunciation. The medical literature on deviants is accustomed to these effects of distancing, as Jean-Paul Aron and Roger Kempf have shown with regard to the '*invertis*' or homosexual men: the use of Latin, 'a dead language that defuses and sublimates desire', made it possible to introduce the filter of a 'translation' perceived as 'a happy medium between account and occultation'.[25] Samuel Tissot, the author of a famous work on onanism first published in Latin, thus confided in the preface to the first edition in French that 'this work' had been 'much more painful' because of the absence of a linguistic filter, and he confessed his 'embarrassment to express images whose terms and expressions are declared indecent by usage'.[26] This linguistic censorship in the name of morality was still practiced by doctors at the end of the century, including Dr Laupts (pseudonym of George Saint-Paul) and Dr Tardieu, both specialists in sexual deviance. To use a foreign language and, in the case of Latin, a scholarly language, is therefore to maintain a distance between the clinical fact

and its narrative in order to preserve the reader, but also the writer whose 'pen', to use a formula from the *Dictionnaire médical*, has thus 'remained chaste'.[27]

René Ghil's quotation in French has, in *Entartung*, more or less the same ethical function, although it reverses the role played by translation. By presenting the source text as untouchable, Nordau the doctor makes it an irrefutable clinical proof, and Nordau the polemicist an unspeakable document that he rejects without compromise: the quotation, which has here the value of a condemnation, allows Nordau to pose as a censor of the delirious elucubrations that the man of science must reproduce, but that the man himself can only reprove.

The presence of this untranslated quotation also indicates the evolution of the indexical character of the literary 'document' from Lombroso to Nordau. The model of the Italian scholar was indeed essentially visual and governed by a rhetoric of the obvious. This is evidenced by the primary role played by the reproduction of Baudelaire's physical portrait, which extends the demonstrative logic already used in *L'Uomo delinquente* (first published in 1876, and constantly revised and enlarged).[28] For Lombroso, the text confirms what the image reveals; and the literary document merely illustrates, on another level, what body language can make meaningful.

Although Nordau also mentions the irregularity of Verlaine's skull (quoting his 'master' Lombroso in the same breath),[29] he is nevertheless much more sensitive to the effects of language and integrates recent work on language pathologies into his semiology of degeneration. In an article published in 1885, Georges Gilles de la Tourette had indeed distinguished the 'disease of convulsive tics' from chorea, and placed verbal tics, which had until then been considered an epiphenomenon, at the centre of his nosography.[30] These works are cited in *Entartung*, notably in the portrait of a Zola suffering from coprolalia 'to a very high degree',[31] and Nordau repeatedly uses the symptoms of echolalia and glossolalia to disqualify fin de siècle literary productions. So, for Nordau, '[t]wo points are noticeable in Verlaine's mode of expression': 'the frequent recurrence of the same word, of the same turn of phrase' (what Nordau calls 'rabâchage'[32]); and 'the combination of completely disconnected nouns and adjectives, which suggest each other'.[33] Jean

Moréas, who practices in *Le Pèlerin passionné* (1891) 'the insertion of words which have no connection with the subject', shares the same pathology, as does Gustave Kahn, whose poem 'Nuit sur la lande' is for Nordau 'pure echolalia'.[34] In *Entartung*, therefore, textual symptoms are no longer simply redundant, as in Lombroso: they can also be discriminating. The untranslated quotation takes on a hyperbolic clinical value in these conditions by illustrating, to the letter, the incomprehension of which the doctor wants to make a symptom.

Quoting is betrayal: paradoxes of fidelity

Auguste Dietrich, *Entartung*'s French translator, perhaps understood only too well the central role that Nordau gives to the literary text. Dietrich, a professor of German language and literature and scientific editor of *Le Page disgracié*, chose systematically to insert excerpts from the poems commented on by Nordau, even if this meant considerably lengthening the book and somewhat distorting the doctor's rhetoric.

The presence of exact quotations is thus trivialized, and the weight of literary discourse paradoxically reinforced by the addition of long autonomous excerpts. Where Nordau was translating to incorporate the literary document into his argument, the poetic extract detaches itself from the medical discourse that frames it and imposes its own rhythm. Where the quotation in the original language provoked a phenomenon of strangeness in the service of a superlative condemnation, the French edition smooths out the difference. Auguste Dietrich thus eliminates the *nota bene* that introduced, in the German edition, the reproduction of René Ghil's poem and gave it its full meaning: the refusal to translate is replaced by a banal introductory comment: 'René Ghil […] tire de sa lyre les propos que voici'.[35]

The translator's choices, which do not detract from the pamphleteering tone of the whole, can certainly be easily explained by the fact that most of the works commented on by Nordau were in French, and that it was therefore easier for Auguste Dietrich to quote the source text. The English version of *Entartung* nevertheless allows us to measure the consequences of such a choice.

Although *Degeneration* presents itself as 'Translated from the Second Edition of the German Work', it is presumably an adaptation of the French version of *Entartung*, whose long quotations in French are reproduced in the English edition. The passage on René Ghil nevertheless reintroduces the precision formulated in the German edition, but finally renders it incomprehensible, since it does not actually break with what is practiced in the rest of the work:

> René Ghil […] draws from his lyre these tones, which I also quote in French; in the first place because they would lose their ring in a translation, and, secondly, because if I were to translate them literally, it is hopeless to suppose that the reader would think I was serious.[36]

The multiplication of foreign-language quotations in *Degeneration* is thus a further step in the transformation of the original clinical rhetoric, which clearly distinguished between two cases. This massive presence of untranslated literary excerpts also raises the question of the readership of the English edition. Although the book acquired the status of a 'popular edition' in 1898, it is legitimate to ask which public is targeted by a text that was now doubly hybrid, by virtue of its subject (medical-literary) but also its linguistic choices. Given Nordau's rapidly acquired notoriety, a first hypothesis would be that the English translator considered that the potential linguistic opacity of the reproduced document was not a real obstacle to the clinical relevance of the whole, among a public that had been persuaded in advance by the medical authority. If, however, one considers this choice as an extension of the dynamic initiated by Auguste Dietrich, the interpretation can be singularly different. The French edition had indeed given literary texts their full place as texts, and not as mere documents. By choosing systematically to maintain quotations that had become allophone, the English edition would reinforce this particular status of the literary text, which a clinical translation does not seem able fully to absorb. The quotation appears, in this case, as what resists clinical discourse, detaches itself from it, and participates in an obscure seduction of the deviance it formally embodies. By quoting literally, and respecting the letter of the text, the French and English editions of *Entartung* make it possible to reintroduce a (guilty?) pleasure of the text,

absent in Nordau's work, even if it means making this clinical pamphlet the possible support of a morose pleasure.

This comparative study of the original and translated editions of *L'Uomo di genio* and *Entartung* therefore brings to light the strategic role of quotation in the rhetoric of these two doctors and in the development of their scientific ideology. Quoting, in this perspective, is not only an act of commenting: it is also an act of translation into another language that transforms the literary text into a pathological document. The problems raised by the strictly linguistic translation nevertheless make it possible to nuance, at least in Nordau's case, the effectiveness of this initial conversion by revealing a form of resistance in the source text. The French and English translators of *Entartung* seem to be men of language who cannot help but respect the literary text, reproducing it as it is, without mediation. In their case, betrayal does not consist in committing 'belles infidèles',[37] but on the contrary in erasing themselves, even though the clinical work they are responsible for translating assumes a total hold on the literary notes.

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[1] Lombroso published *Genio e follia* in 1864. It was not until the fourth edition, in 1882, that the work took on the title that made it famous, and which served as a reference for translations.

[2] Isabelle Stengers, *D'une science à l'autre. Des concepts nomades* (Paris: Seuil, 1987), p. 23. All translations in this article are my own unless otherwise indicated.

[3] See, respectively, Georges Canguilhem, *Idéologie et rationalité dans les sciences de la vie* (Paris: Vrin, 1977), p. 44, and Stengers, *D'une science à l'autre*.

[4] See, for example, Michel Prum, 'Traductrice et traducteurs français de Charles Darwin au XIX^{e} siècle: un chemin difficile, de la Suisse à la France', and Pascal Duris, 'Flourens lecteur de Darwin (ou de Clémence Royer?): à propos de son *Examen du livre de M. Darwin sur l'origine des espèces* (1864)', in *Littérature française et savoirs biologiques au XIX^{e} siècle. Traduction, transmission, transposition,* ed. by Thomas Klinkert and Gisèle Séginger (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2019), pp. 51–60 and 61–77, respectively.

[5] Bénédict-Auguste Morel, *Traité des dégénérescences physiques, intellectuelles et morales de l'espèce humaine* (Paris: Baillière, 1857), p. 5.

In French, the term *dégénérescence* first appears at the end of the eighteenth century and is synonymous with *dégénération*. It then it replaces the term *dégénération*. in the mid-nineteenth century. It is the work of Bénédict-Auguste Morel that gives it its negative meaning: *dégénérescence* designated the change that an organized body undergoes under the influence of the environment, without this change being connoted.

[6] See, for example, Max Nordau, *Psycho-physiologie du génie et du talent* (1897). The genius artist is, for Nordau, the one who is understood by his contemporaries.

[7] The symptomatic portraits that aim to support his point of view are certainly not all devoted to French writers (Oscar Wilde, Henrik Ibsen, and Friedrich Nietzsche are not spared), but the latter nonetheless takes the lion's share.

[8] At the turn of the nineteenth century, 'pathography' became a veritable 'sub-genre' of the medical thesis, particularly in Lyon, under the impetus of Alexandre Lacassagne (1843–1924), a professor at the Faculty of Medicine and one of the founders of the French school of criminal anthropology. Many medical students devoted their thesis to the 'medico-psychological studies' of men of letters. This is the case of Raoul Odinot on Alfred de Musset, while others chose Fyodor Dostoyevsky (Pierre-Gaston Loygue, 1903), Edgar Allan Poe (Georges Petit,

1906), Gérard de Nerval (Gaston Barbier, 1907), Thomas de Quincey (Paul Guerrier, 1907), and E. T. A. Hoffmann (Marcel Demerliac, 1908).
[9] Louis-Victor Marcé, 'De la valeur des écrits des aliénés au point de vue de la sémiologie et de la médecine légale', *Annales d'hygiène publique* (1864), pp. 379–408, (p. 379).
[10] Max Nordau, *Degeneration* [1895]*,* translated from the Second Edition of the German Work (London: Heinemann, 1898), p. 499.
[11] Ibid., p. 120.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.*,* p. 121.
[14] Cesare Lombroso, *The Man of Genius* (London: Scott, 1891), p. 70.
[15] Frédéric Gros, *Création et folie. Une histoire du jugement psychiatrique* (Paris: PUF, 1997)*,* p. 43.
[16] Lombroso, *The Man of Genius*, pp. 70–71.
[17] '[E]ra soggetto ad allucinazioni fin da bimbo, e provava, come confessò fin d'allora, due sentimenti opposti: l'orrore e l'estasi della vita; era iperestetico, e apatico: sentiva il bisogno per iscotersi di *Une oasis d'horreur dans un désert d'ennui*: e già prima della demenza commetteva atti impulsivi, come di gettare dalla sua casa dei vasi contro le invetriate delle botteghe, solo per sentirle rompersi.' Cesare Lombroso, *L'Uomo di genio in rapporto alla psichiatria, alla storia ed all'estetica*, 6th edn (Torino: Fratelli Bocca, 1894)*,* pp. 99–100.
[18] Lombroso, *The Man of Genius*, p. 71.
[19] Max Nordau, *Entartung* (Berlin: Duncker, 1896), p. 225.
[20] Ibid., p. 224.
[21] Ibid., p. 225.
[22] See Max Nordau, *Dégénérescence* (Paris: Alcan, 1894), p. 222.
[23] René Ghil, *Œuvre* (Paris: Figuière, 1889), p. 42; in Nordau, *Entartung*, p. 242.
[24] Nordau, *Entartung*, pp. 241–42.
[25] Jean-Paul Aron and Roger Kempf, *La Bourgeoisie, le sexe et l'honneur* (Brussels: Éditions complexe, 1984), p. 57. First published as *Le Pénis et la démoralisation de l'Occident* (Paris: Grasset, 1978).
[26] Samuel Tissot, *L'Onanisme. Dissertation sur les maladies produites par la masturbation* (Lausanne: Marc Chapuis, 1769), pp. iv-v.
[27] Dr Fournier-Pescay, 'Sodomie'*,* in *Dictionnaire des sciences médicales* (Paris: Panckoucke, 1819), p. 447; cited in Aron and Kempf, p. 82.
[28] Lombroso adds an 'atlas' to the French version of his *L'Uomo delinquente*. This 'atlas' is composed of a series of illustrations that he presents as the 'most important' part of his work, since it allows 'the reader […] to grasp and control, by himself, the truth of [his] assertions'. Cesare Lombroso, *L'Homme criminel: atlas* (Paris: Alcan, 1887), p. 5 (my translation). On this rhetoric of the obvious, see Bertrand Marquer, 'Lombroso et l'École de la Salpêtrière: du bon usage du cliché', in *Cesare Lombroso et la vérité des Corps*, ed. by Ida Merello and Bertrand Marquer, *Publif@rum*, 1 (2005), http://www.farum.it/ publifarumv/n/01/pdf/Marquer.pdf. In *The Man of Genius,* Lombroso also begins his analysis of Baudelaire from 'the portrait placed at the beginning of his posthumous works', in order to evidence the 'type' he identifies in the poet. Lombroso, *The Man of Genius*, p. 70.
[29] 'If we look at the portrait of the poet, by Eugène Carrière, of which a photograph serves as frontispiece in the *Select Poems* of Verlaine, and still more at that by M. Aman-Jean, exhibited in the Champs de Mars Salon in 1892, we instantly remark the great asymmetry of the head, which Lombroso has pointed out among degenerates'. Nordau, *Degeneration*, pp. 119–20.
[30] Doctor Gilles de la Tourette defined the disease in 1885, in an article that appeared in the *Archives de Neurologie*, a journal founded by Jean-Martin Charcot, known to the general public for his work on hysteria carried out at the Salpêtrière, where Gilles de la Tourette had been head of the clinic since 1884. See Georges Gilles de la Tourette, 'Étude sur une affection nerveuse caractérisée par de l'incoordination motrice accompagnée d'écholalie et de copralalie', *Archives de Neurologie*, 9 (1885), 19–42 and 158–200.
[31] 'M. Zola is affected by coprolalia to a very high degree. It is a necessity for him to employ foul expressions, and his consciousness is continually pursued by representations referring to ordure, abdominal functions, and everything connected with them.' Nordau, *Degeneration*, p. 499.
[32] Ibid., p. 124.
[33] Ibid., p. 126.
[34] Ibid., pp. 133, 134.
[35] Nordau, *Dégénérescence*, p. 239.
[36] Nordau, *Degeneration*, p. 135.
[37] 'Belles infidèles' are translations which are revised and corrected versions by translators who think they can improve the original text, or want to please and conform to the taste and decency of the time.

Decadent Historicism on Stage: Trans History and Alexander Sacharoff's Renaissance Dances

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In June 1910, Alexander Sacharoff made his debut performance at the Odeon in Munich. It was a small but well-attended event, mainly populated by the city's artists and creatives, some of whom had already seen versions of the performance at private gatherings. The dancer, who had first trained as an artist at the prestigious Académie Julien in Paris, stepped forward onto the stage, draped in a long piece of silk. Accompanied by the sounds of Palestrina and Orlando di Lasso, Sacharoff dropped the fabric and performed a series of dance studies in ecclesiastical robes inspired by the 'Meistern der italienischen Frührenaissance' [Masters of the Italian early Renaissance].[1] The performances caused uproar. Some observers were wildly enthusiastic about the show, standing up to clap and cheer.[2] Others were disgusted, describing the dancer as a 'leidenden Hermaphroditen' [ailing hermaphrodite].[3] For these latter spectators, Sacharoff epitomized a move towards degeneracy and decadence that signalled the slow decline of traditional, masculine values. A male dancer performing alone on stage was a rare sight. A male dancer in make-up using languid motions and dressed in highly ornamental costume raised problematic questions about the fixity of gender and racial order.

This article is interested in the uses of the Renaissance in Sacharoff's performances. Borrowing the phrase 'decadent historicism' from Joseph Bristow, I examine the role historical and art historical references played in the reception of Sacharoff's work.[4] Bristow describes decadent historicism as a concern with historical authority and an interest in 'perverse personas from the past', offering gender non-conforming writers the possibility of articulating queer and trans selfhoods.[5] This article looks at the Renaissance as a site of historical authority for one trans figure from the past, following the precedent of Dominic Janes' *Prefiguring Oscar Wilde* (2016) in

reasserting the significance of visual production in the fashioning of queer and trans identities, whilst moving beyond Janes' study in asserting their plurality of expression.[6] The article asks how and why the Italian Renaissance served as a historical 'locale' for the expression of genders outside of the binary paradigm.[7] If this has been partially established for decadent and aesthetic texts, most notably for Walter Pater's seminal work *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873), the afterlife of this decadent reinvention of the Renaissance remains unclear.[8] I am interested in how the idea of a decadent Renaissance offered both critics and proponents of Sacharoff's performance a structuring framework around which to express their discontent and pleasure with the dancer, in ways that testify to the tacit acknowledgement of trans life in the period. In this, the article follows the work of Yvonne Ivory's monograph *The Homosexual Revival of Renaissance Style* (2009), Patricia Pulham's work on the use of artwork analogies to articulate non-conforming sexualities, and Will Fisher's article on the sexual politics of Renaissance historiography.[9] As Fisher explains in relation to constructions of queer identity in nineteenth-century Britain, 'allusions' to historic male homoeroticism provided a crucial means for the expression of non-normative sexualities. This article reconsiders Fisher's work on the making of the queer Renaissance through two re-adjustments: it shifts focus from sexuality to gender, and it places emphasis on the performing body as its own form of textual practice.

In 1913, three years after his debut, Sacharoff met the dancer Clotilde von Derp, a German-born aristocrat who had been favourably received into Munich's cultural circles a few years previously.[10] The pair began performing together and eventually married in 1919, probably to assuage the doubts of the conservative press in the United States, where they were due to start touring. From a critical perspective, the partnership was a success, since with the introduction of von Derp's dances – including a number of Renaissance-inspired performances such as *Frühlingspoem* [*Spring Poem*] (1917), *Danse Sainte* [*Holy Dance*] (1921), and *Danse de la Joie d'un Mystère du XVe siècle* [*Dance of Joy from a Fifteenth-Century Mystery*] (1936) – the hostility faced by Sacharoff in the pre-war years abated.[11] Most importantly here, the shock of Sacharoff's performances seems

to have diminished following his partnership with von Derp. Even if his performances still incited claims about gender transgression, these were largely limited to issues of style on stage, with little to say about the state of gender relations more broadly. Indeed, gender ambiguity even became an enjoyable conceit for many spectators, and the luxury of Sacharoff's performances appeared as merely eccentric, rather than threatening, in comparison with the minimal productions of leading practitioners like Mary Wigman and Rudolf Laban or the bombastic experiments of Weimar cabaret culture.[12]

This article builds on the work of performance scholars such as Patrizia Veroli, Claudia Jeschke, Rainer Stamm and Frank-Manuel Peter who have re-established the significance of Sacharoff and von Derp for the history of modern dance.[13] Despite their popularity in Germany and France, particularly in the interwar years during which they were championed by leading critics such as Émile Vuillermoz, with appearances in high fashion magazines such as *Vogue*, Sacharoff and von Derp quickly faded from view.[14] Lucia Ruprecht has pointed to the 'untimeliness of their aesthetic', using this anachronism to resituate Sacharoff's 'gestural drag' as a key part of his queer performance.[15] Ruprecht focuses on Sacharoff's Baroque performances while I direct attention to his understudied Renaissance works, though like Ruprecht I am similarly interested in uses of the past that troubled the gender order and created affective performances in which it appeared as if the past was embodied in the dancer. I am particularly interested in the forms of historical knowledge engendered by this embodiment, and how this might productively help us to think through questions of 'trans*historicities' that have preoccupied trans studies.[16] The first half of the article is concerned with locating a Renaissance in criticism, suggesting that this Renaissance, a product of decadent thought from the end of the nineteenth century, offered a historical locale of non-conformity. The second half of the article moves to the murkier territory of historical experience, considering the trans-human possibilities generated by Sacharoff's historicism. I suggest that Sacharoff's work not only speaks to the archival body theorized by performance studies, but also offers an alternative paradigm for a more expansive understanding of historical

genders, that centres performance as an important site for negotiating gender. Ultimately, I argue, this underlines the centrality of material pasts and historical styles for transgendered embodiment in Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century.[17]

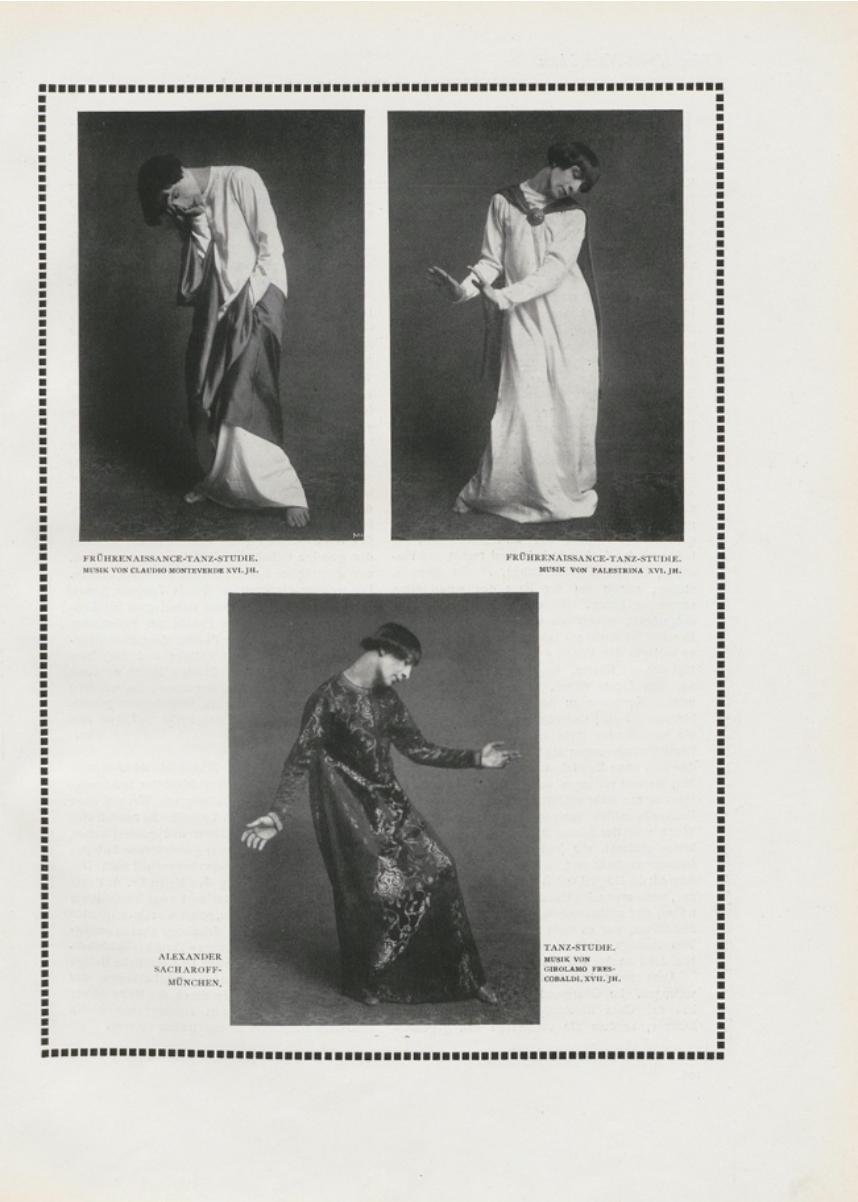

Fig. 1: Hans Hoffmann, *Frührenaissance-Tanz-Studie* [*Early Renaissance Dance Study*], photograph, 1912.
From Gerhard Amunsen, 'Alexander Sacharoff und sein Tanz', *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration: illustr. Monatshefte für modern Malerei, Plastik, Architektur, Wohnungskultur u. künstlerisches Frauen-Arbeiten*, 30 (1912), 204–05 (p. 205).
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Fig. 2: Gilbert René, *Alexandre Sakharoff dans Visione del Quattrocento* [*Alexander Sacharoff in 'Vision of the Fifteenth Century'*], photograph, from *Clotilde & Alexandre Sakharoff* (Brunoff: Paris, 1922).

The Renaissance as historical locale

A cross-examination of programmes held at the Deutsches Tanzarchiv Köln [German Dance Archive Cologne], studio photographs, and contemporary descriptions, suggests that Sacharoff's Renaissance dances preceding his partnership with von Derp can be roughly split into two groups: *Tanzstudien nach den Meistern der italienischen Frührenaissance* [*Dance Studies after the Masters of the Early Italian Renaissance*], with music by Palestrina, Orlando di Lasso and Claudio Monteverdi, and *Tanz im Stile 'Renaissance'* [*Dance in the 'Renaissance' Style*] with music by Girolamo Frescobaldi (fig. 1).[18]

Both made use of heavy, highly brocaded costume, a feature that would be brought into sharper focus with the introduction of *Visione del Quattrocento* (fig. 2), which predominated in programmes from 1921.[19] As Jeschke has shown, however, in the case of these Renaissance dances, it is difficult to precisely map the photographs against specific titles and musical scores, with the net result that Sacharoff's Renaissance works will be considered together as a group.[20]

Fig. 3: Isadora Duncan in 'Primavera' ['Spring'], Paris, 1900, photographic negative. Jerome Robbins, Dance Collection, New York Public Library.

Sacharoff was not the only dancer to make use of Renaissance artworks in the early decades of the twentieth century. As Gabriele Brandstetter has shown, pre-eminent performers such as Isadora Duncan and Vaslav Nijinsky looked to the Florentine cantorias of Luca della Robbia, whilst Duncan also centred Botticelli's *Primavera* in a number of dances such as *Florentine Spring*

(1900) (fig. 3), and in writings including *Der Tanz der Zukunft* (1903), translated and popularized as *The Dance of the Future*.[21] Ann Daly has argued that Duncan relied on strategies of cultural and intellectual exclusion, such as the comparison with antiquity and the Renaissance, in order to distinguish her work from dancehall culture.[22] *The Dance* places the Italian Renaissance within a gestural genealogy that begins with the ancient Greeks, ending with the provocative claim that the dancer of the future would surpass all ancient dancers, 'more beautiful than the Egyptian, than the Greek, than the early Italian'.[23] The Italian Renaissance, in other words, was suggested to be another antiquity, using Donatello's *Cupid* as an example of the perfect interconnection between form and movement. Likewise, in Duncan's dance school in Grünewald, Berlin, copies of Donatello and Luca della Robbia were placed alongside antique ones in the teaching rooms.[24] Sacharoff's presentation of the Renaissance was evidently a far cry from Duncan's, which had been carefully legitimated through a series of publications that allied the forms of the Renaissance with the emergent culture of *Lebensreform* [life reform]. Duncan placed stress on the natural and healthy body, using depictions of children and women to imagine a reproductive future of dance. This fertile Renaissance of cherubs and nymphs was nowhere to be found in Sacharoff's dance, which instead raised questions of ornamentality and artifice for almost all spectators. Hans Brandenburg, one of Munich's pre-eminent cultural critics, still remembered the shock of Sacharoff's debut many decades later,

> der Tänzer schritt langsam und feierlich in Gewändern der Frührenaissance, sogar in dem eines Mönches, der betend die Hände zusammen, einen Lilienstrauß im Arme […] ich nur ein narzißhaftes Ephebentum und einen widerwärtigen Feminismus zu sehen meinte
>
> [the dancer stepped forward slowly and majestically in fine clothing from the early Renaissance, and even in a monk's habit with his hands folded together in prayer and a bouquet of lilies in his arms […] I felt I was only witnessing the cavorting of a narcissistic ephebe and a disgusting show of femininity].[25]

Brandenburg's commentary points to an interconnected anxiety between forms of the Renaissance and a feminization of the male body. This had been raised from the outset of Sacharoff's career through Brandenburg's important publication *Der moderne Tanz* [*Modern Dance*]

(1913), which ran into several editions. Comparing the ostensibly similar referential framework of Sacharoff and Duncan – by then established as the pioneer of modern dance – Brandenburg suggested that whilst Duncan's reworking of antiquity and the Renaissance was nothing more than harmless intellectual dilettantism, Sacharoff's dance was, revoltingly, a 'Schauspieler für die Decadenz-Witterer!' [spectacle for those sniffing out decadence!][26] Although Sacharoff's antique-inspired dances, such as that depicted on the cover of the Folkwang Museum programme, suggested an increasingly familiar athletic and muscular rhetoric, even the Greek works were tempered by the unexpected application of white powder across the arms, legs, and face.[27] The Renaissance dances took this ornamentation of the body one step further, obstructing the body underneath so entirely that, as one commentator observed, Sacharoff appeared to be 'emprisonné' [imprisoned] under the weight of the fabric.[28] Through his highly elaborate costuming, Sacharoff called attention to the surface of the body, thus inviting the troubling thought that the male body might be decorative, a status typically reserved for feminized and colonized subjects.[29] A number of commentators explained this through anti-Semitic reference to Sacharoff's Jewish heritage, confusingly pointing to the presence of Roman Catholic ecclesiastical robes as proof of Jewish effeminacy and archaism, whilst also repeating a by-then common trope of decadent Catholicism.[30] Several observers turned to a longer tradition of decadent revisionism to articulate their discomfort, in particular through reference to the work of British artist Aubrey Beardsley. Alfred Lichtwark complained about '[Sacharoff], der mich lebhaft an die kranke Kunst Aubrey Beardsleys erinnerte' [Sacharoff, who reminded me of an incantation of Aubrey Beardsley's sick art], whilst the critic Rudolf von Delius suggested his dances were like 'Rokoko-Illustrationen Beardsleys' [Rococo illustrations by Beardsley].[31] The allusion to Beardsley is suggestive of the entanglement between decadence and the Renaissance by this period in Germany. Sacharoff's page-boy haircut, predating the fashionable *Bubikopf* style of the 1920s, was more like a reincarnation of the Renaissance of Beardsley in images such as *Sandro Botticelli* (1893).[32] It was precisely this decadent iteration of the Renaissance that German theorists of cultural decline fixated on. In *Entartung*

[*Degeneration*] (1892), for instance, Max Nordau counted amongst the symptoms of degeneration women who wore their hair 'nach der Mode des fünfzehnten Jahrhunderts, wie man sie bei Gentile Bellini, bei Botticelli, bei Mantegna an den Köpfen von Pagen und jungen Rittern dargestellt sieht' [after the fashion of the fifteenth century, such as one sees depicted on the pages and young knights of Gentile Bellini, Botticelli and Mantegna].[33] In a similar manner documented in contemporary Russia by Sasha Dovzhyk, the reference to Beardsley at once formed a model of decadent masculinity at the same time as it rejected it.[34]

In 1922, Sacharoff wrote that he had learnt from two masters: The Louvre and Sarah Bernhardt.[35] The turn to the museum was a common feature of many accounts of modern dance.[36] The reference to Bernhardt, however, offers a new route through which to place Sacharoff's gender variance, and one that highlights the centrality of material historicism in the fashioning of queer and trans selfhoods. Bernhardt, an icon of late nineteenth-century theatre, had achieved notoriety for her *en travesti* performances.[37] While this was already an established practice well before Bernhardt, it became something of a signature look for the actor not only through her celebrated appearances as Hamlet among others, but also as a sculptor in trousers posing in her studio. A number of Bernhardt's *en travesti* performances took place within a Renaissance framework, such as the Pre-Raphaelite *Pélleas and Mélisande* (1905) or the sixteenth-century Florentine setting of *Lorenzaccio* (1896), in which Bernhardt appeared in brocaded doublets and, in the case of *Le Passant* (1869) and *Jeanne d'Arc* (1890), page-boy outfits. Bernhardt set the stage for a wave of cross-dressing through Renaissance pageantry, from Olive Custance in Britain through to Natalie Barney in France. In Germany, likewise, the page-boy was a popular *en travesti* role by the first decade of the twentieth century: Rita Sacchetto, for instance, with whom Sacharoff toured with after his debut in Munich, adopted Renaissance costume and page-boy outfits for her infamous *Tanzbilder*.[38] Critics, Brandenburg reported, found an inversion played out in their double dance, as 'der weibliche Part männlich und der männliche weiblich wirken' [the feminine part seemed masculine and the masculine feminine].[39]

Despite evidence that Renaissance cross-dressing imagined a new gender order on stage, Sacharoff's attraction to Bernhardt has been limply justified through his homosexuality. This error relies on a misreading of queer theory, documented by a number of trans scholars, which positions gender non-conformity as a simple descriptor of sexuality.[40] Consider, for instance, the claim by Veroli, whose pioneering work has otherwise uncovered much of the Sacharoff archive, that the dancer was drawn to Bernhardt 'for her introduction of a masculine, albeit effeminate, character […] to which the homosexual Sacharoff felt a strong psychical and psychological attraction'.[41] Recent work has uncovered a more complex picture for the intricately entangled histories of gender and sexuality at the beginning of the twentieth century.[42] The German 'invention of homosexuality', for instance, is now understood to be bound up with attempts to articulate a more expansive gender order, with a clutch of related terms that enfolded both sexuality and gender identity such as *Dritte Geschlecht* [third sex] and *sexuelle Zwischenstufen* [intermediate sexual types].[43] Little attention, however, has been paid to performance's capacity to embody such types, beyond a queer (cis-normative) modernist paradigm.[44]

Sacharoff, in fact, had outlined his own theory of the sexes in dance in a commentary accompanying his second public performance:

> Es scheint mir nämlich, dass für den Tanz als reine und eigene Kunst weder der reife Mann noch das Weib vorzüglich geeignet sind, sondern der Jüngling als ein Wesen, das noch zwischen den beiden steht und noch gleichsam die Möglichkeiten der beiden Geschlechter in sich vereinigt.
>
> [It appears to me, namely, that for the dance to be a pure and individual art neither the mature man nor the woman is especially suited, but rather the adolescent as a being that still stands between both and combines in himself the possibility of both sexes].[45]

Sacharoff's description of dual sexuality nominally refers to antiquity in order to justify and historicize its claim, a move familiar both to sexual reform campaigners and dancers in the period.[46] Critics added their own terms to describe Sacharoff's gendered identity, such as 'Zweigeschlechtikeit' [roughly 'bisexuality', or what we would now call intersexuality] or 'Doppelgeschlechtsgefühle' [roughly 'feeling of double sex'].[47] In German-speaking nations,

bisexuality was a live topic, stemming from the twin discoveries in the nineteenth century of belated sexual determination in foetal development, and the prevalence of neuter sexes in a number of species.[48] Theories of the mind were likewise increasingly turning towards an acceptance of bisexuality in infantile development.[49] Otto Weininger famously promoted a theory of bisexuality in his widely read text *Geschlecht und Charakter* [*Sex and Character*] (1903), reworking previous sexological theories of the three sexes (male, female, intermediate) by suggesting that sex was a spectrum.[50] This was in turn echoed by Magnus Hirschfeld, who introduced the term 'Transvestite' in 1910 and published a text the same year on the subject.[51] Whilst I am not uncomplicatedly placing Sacharoff within a history of self-identified 'transvestites' in Wilhelmine Germany, I would like to enlarge discussion on the third sex and androgyne raised by Sacharoff's texts and performances to include a consideration of trans embodiment, that is a gendered self at odds with its biopolitical setting, undoing the experiential and visible markers of normative sex.[52]

Sacharoff importantly formed his early dances as part of the *Neue Künstlervereinigung München* [New Artist's Association, Munich], an avant-garde group consisting of artists including Wassily Kandinsky, Marianne Werefkin, and Alexej von Jawlensky. Sacharoff was used as a model for several portraits, which show the dancer with the whitened face and elongated features that many critics noted to be a particularly disconcerting aspect of the dancer's appearance. Jawlensky's portrait ambiguously genders Sacharoff's body, curving at the breast, in a dress with contemporary ruching and neckline, whitened face and kohl rimmed eyes (fig. 4). Sacharoff, who Veroli reports as having 'cross-dressed' for parties in Schwabing, wore women's dresses and posed as a woman in a number of Werefkin's paintings, such as *Sacharoff in Frauenkleiden* [*Sacharoff in Women's Clothes*] (1909) and *The Dancer Alexander Sacharoff* (1909) (fig. 5).[53] Ivory has shown how gender non-conformity was a lived reality for many artists and creatives in Munich at the time, and a number of publications explored the theme of the *Dritte Geschlecht* or the androgyne, such as Stanisław Przybyszweski's *Androgyne* (1906) or Aimée Duc's *Sind es Frauen? Roman Über das Dritte Geschlecht* [*Are they Women? A Novel Concerning the Third Sex*] (1901).[54] Sacharoff's circle was generally interested

in the double-soul (a variation on bisexuality) and discussed contemporary ideas on the androgyne, a figure that has been often been relegated as a cipher for queer sexuality.[55] Werefkin, for instance, explained that 'I am neither man nor woman – I am I.'[56] Sketches from this time suggest how closely Sacharoff matched Werefkin's ideal type of the androgyne, as his face appears multiple times to stand in for *the* image of the androgyne.[57] Sacharoff's performances embodied such alternate gender orders on stage. Stepping through a series of slow poses, sometimes holding flowers such as lilies, Sacharoff's dance brought to life the dream of the androgyne painted by Werefkin.

Fig. 4: Alexej Jawlensky, *Portrait of the Dancer Alexander Sacharoff,* 1909. Oil on paper Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus und Kunstbau, Munich.

Fig. 5: Marianne von Werefkin, *The Dancer Alexander Sacharoff,* c. 1909. Tempera on board. Fondazione Werefkin, Museo Comunale d'Arte Moderna, Ascona, Switzerland.

The city was, however, politically and culturally dominated by conservative Roman Catholic factions in the grip of what John Fout has called 'the male gender crisis'.[58] Edward Ross Dickinson has aptly shown the ramifications of this for performers.[59] Critics were certainly quick to link Sacharoff's performances to a broader culture of gender upheaval. In 1910 the national newspaper *Münchener Neuste Nachrichten* melodramatically cried for its readers to 'Furcht für uns' [fear for us] as it decried Sacharoff's dance – including its costuming 'im Gewander der Frührenaissance' [in garments of the early Renaissance] – to be symptomatic of a decaying culture and 'Weltschmerz' [world weariness] that threatened to undermine and even overthrow masculinity.[60] One writer wondered whether this 'Dualismus' [dualism] was 'wie Mißtrauen gegen

das andere Geschlecht, ist es wie Furcht vor sich selber' [like a mistrust towards the other sex, is it like a fear towards oneself], whilst the *Münchener Neuste Nachrichten* grumbled again two years later that Sacharoff's performances provoked 'das Verlangen nach einer Kultur des männlichen Tanzes' [the longing for a culture of masculine dance].[61] The report even included the apparently authoritative observation of a female spectator that 'er tanzt hübsch wie eine Dame' [he dances prettily like a woman].[62] Sacharoff evidently provoked considerable anxiety in critics.[63] In many ways, their anxiety replays the crisis set out by Weininger in *Geschlecht und Charakter,* by pitting male against the female, and, in a number of instances, pure German culture against Jewish dissolution.[64] The agency afforded these pre-war performances is striking. Friedrich Huebner, in an especially overwrought text, worried in 1914 that Sacharoff 'öffnet die Schleusentore des Anarchischen' [opens the flood gates of anarchism] since he seemed to destroy the boundaries between the sexes in his dance, a move which implicated the viewer just as much as the performer.[65] For Huebner, performance was a confrontation: with oneself, with gender and all of its 'Maskierungen' [disguises].[66] As we shall see, this notion of confrontation would be revised through the artwork analogy, as Sacharoff's dances were seen to elicit an uncomfortable form of historical experience. Writing in the *Neue Hamburger Zeitung* in 1912, Anton Linder described that watching Sacharoff was like seeing the contents of the Musée Gustave Moreau come to life, a museum which contained an important collection of early Italian art in addition to works of symbolist artists.[67] Linder's comment, furthermore, points to the transhuman possibilities raised by Sacharoff's performances.

Historical experience

The turn to the Renaissance was, in other words, instrumental in shaping a form of historical experience that many spectators experienced as an uncanny blurring of the human-artwork boundary. Rather than just posing as copies of Renaissance works, Sacharoff appeared to bring these artworks to life. Karl Wirth remembered a performance in 1911:

> It was captivating to watch his appearance on stage, dressed in a long, flowing brocaded Renaissance costume, just standing here for a while in spellbound immobile repose, until his body, as if slowly awakening, would begin to move, to stir and turn, and his arms would lift and unfold in gestures of dance-like trance. It was like a conjuring magic spell that evoked sensations as if a statue of icon-like image of immaterial beauty had been awakened to life.[68]

Building on the work of Marion Thain, who has highlighted the significance of embodied cognition in decadent poetics, this section of the article maps the ways in which critics read Sacharoff's dancing body as a site of embodied history.[69] For the performances, costume was key to the transhistorical experience of the observer, as Sacharoff explained that 'ainsi le spectateur se trouve être immédiatement transporté dans l'atmosphère de chaque danse' [thus the spectator finds themselves to be immediately transported into the atmosphere of each dance].[70] In the same way, documented by Timothy Campbell, costuming offered historical engagement in the form of 'remnancy', a material hotline to the past that bypassed issues of authenticity and authority.[71] Even a hostile critic such as Brandenburg recognized this significance of costume, 'ein schweres barockes Brokatgewand ist ihm eine Welt für sich' [a heavy baroque brocaded robe is a world in itself].[72] This necessarily placed primacy on sensory feeling, as Sacharoff explained in the unpublished article, 'How I arrange my dances':

> Now, I should like to say a few words concerning style and period. Learn all about the periods, see all the pictures you can and then – forget them and try and imagine you are living in one of these periods. If it be desired to depict a dance of a certain period, one should strive to create the right atmosphere of that epoch – the main object is not which steps you do, but that in the mind of your audience, you conjure up a living person of a particular age, with all its details, its mannerisms and even its thoughts.[73]

Sacharoff's performance practice, therefore, although informed by sustained periods of research, was on the surface less concerned with accurate historical reconstruction than with crafting the elusive impression of a period, in which the dancer acted as a kind of magician 'conjur[ing]' up a living version of the past. While critics struggled to place the precise monument or artwork evoked by Sacharoff's dance, sketchbooks and photographic reproductions of artworks held at the DTK and Lenbachhaus museum in Munich testify to his close engagement with individual works of

art.[74] Sacharoff's process instead ran close to aestheticist approaches to history in which, as Carolyn Williams has shown, the past could become legible through historicist intervention.[75]

This had important precedent in the kinaesthetic experiments conducted by Sacharoff during his early years in Munich, in which Kandinsky would paint a watercolour, the composer Thomas Hartmann (who composed several works for Sacharoff's dances) would translate the artwork into music, whilst Sacharoff finally converted the composition into a performance piece.[76] This transformation of substance suggests a model of appreciation akin to the form of embodied cognition described by Thain, which 'argues not only that mind is materially brain-based, but its functions take place across the whole body'.[77] Sacharoff expanded on this process of translation in an article late in his career, 'Réflexions sur la danse et la musique' [Reflections on dance and music], in which he pointed to two singular moments of historical experience that defined his subsequent practice.[78] The first moment was in front of Botticelli's *Primavera,* in which he lost control of his formal capacities and heard sound: 'Jusqu'à ce moment, je n'avais pas la moindre conscience que ce qui provoquait mon extase était de la peinture. Quelle étrange mélodie m'avait transpercé le cœur…?' [Until that moment, I didn't have the least idea that that which had caused my ecstasy was painting. What strange melody had transported my heart…?][79] The second was on travelling to Rome and entering the Forum, when he had the experience of venturing into the ancient world: 'J'éprouvai une émotion qui ressemblait à un vertige […]. Tout le parfum, tout le sens du monde ancien avaient pénétré dans mon cœur en un clin d'œil et comme un dard aiguisé' [I experienced an emotion which was like vertigo […]. All the perfume, all the meaning of the ancient world had penetrated my heart in the blink of an eye, like a sharpened sting].[80] Sacharoff's encounter with artworks and monuments of the past took place at an affective level, reliant on the communication of non-verbal knowledge through sensorial means.[81] This primacy placed on the individual and their capacity for determining the form and significance of this knowledge has clear affinities to the work of trans scholarship.[82] Nevertheless, it also disturbingly relied on the presumption that non-white subjects were unconsciously more generative of historical knowledge

than their white counterparts, a point clearly demonstrated in Sacharoff's description of 'the ways of women in the East […] simple steps and movements which however reveal the culture of thousands of years'.[83] Harnessed correctly by the dancer, individual movements could distil a historical period into single poses, as the dancer slowly moved in the 'dance-like trance' as suggested by Wirth.[84]

Not all spectators were enthusiastic, however. Linder, for instance, after listing all the artworks evoked by Sacharoff's performances – 'Giotto, Cimabue, Taddeo, Gaddi, Piero della Francesca, Perugino, Francia, Bianchi […] Jan van Eyck, Roger van der Weyden, Hugo van der Goes' – concluded that his dance was 'nur wie Museumskunst […] Sie […] läßt kalt' [mere museum art […] it leaves one cold].[85] Nevertheless, his description of Sacharoff's performance in the *Curiohause* made such extensive use of the artwork analogy it is hard to take his claim at face value:

> Man sah einen terrakotabraunen Orpheus […] einen pompejanisch-roten Dionysos-priester […]. Ein bleichgeschminktes Gesichtsoval […] ließ an die Jünglingsköpfe aus Athen (Akropolis) oder aus Herculaneum denken. Im ersten Augenblick fiel mir der Hermaphrodit des Louvremuseums ein. Diese Impression hielt als Gesamt-Eindruck an.
>
> [One saw a terracotta Orpheus […] a Pompeian-red priest of Dionysus […]. A pale made up oval face […] makes one think of the young boys' heads from Athens or from Herculaneum. In the first moment I thought of the Hermaphrodite of the Louvre Museum. This impression remained the total impression].[86]

As mistrustful as Linder is of this 'mageren Jünglinge' [emaciated young man], the analogies suggest an appreciation, even if a furtive one, of the dancer.[87] The same year Thomas Mann published *Der Tod in Venedig* [*Death in Venice*] (1912) in which the illicit beauty of the youthful Tadzio is likewise referenced in terms between nature and art, as he 'erinnerte an griechische Bildwerke aus edelster Zeit' [reminded one of Greek artworks from the most noble time].[88] A similar logic is apparent in Karl Osthaus' praise of Sacharoff the year previously, when 'sein schönes Profil von scharf orientalischem Schnitt, gleich dem eines praxitelischen Epheben' [his beautiful profile of sharply oriental features, seems like that of an Ephebe of Praxiteles].[89] As Rainer Stamm has shown, Osthaus revered Sacharoff as if a living artwork, or, as Karl Wirth described it, 'lebendige Plastik' [living sculpture].[90] As founder of the Museum Folkwang in Hagen,

Osthaus' perception of Sacharoff in particular highlights the found affinities between artworks and dancers in the period.

Antiquity, like the Renaissance, could also be invoked to code gender non-conformity, here through the reference to the 'Hermaphrodite' in Lindner's description and the 'Ephebe of Praxiteles' by Osthaus.[91] Following Sacharoff's partnership with von Derp, many felt that this hermaphroditism, or bisexuality, had found embodied reality, summed up in the suggestion that 'these dancers combine the beauty of the male body with inconspicuous and simple female characteristics'.[92] Despite programmes consisting largely of separate dances, critics increasingly presented the dancers as an indissoluble union following their marriage in 1919; French newspapers in particular stressed the poetics of this, with claims such as 'ces deux êtres s'incorporent alors en un seul' [these two beings then blend into one], turning Sacharoff's theory of embodiment into an aesthetic problem ('phénomène d'hermaphrodisme esthétique' [phenomenon of aesthetic hermaphroditism]).[93] Many additionally felt that von Derp suffered from the partnership, describing in racialized terms how her natural grace had been 'contaminé' [contaminated] by the 'préciosité' [preciousness] of Sacharoff.[94] Whilst von Derp's cross-dressing was understood to be part of her artistic conceit, merely an 'élégant travesti' [elegant travesty] in the words of Vuillermoz, Sacharoff's cross-dressing was not just performative masquerade for these critics, since he 'n'est jamais homme tout à fait' [is never entirely a man].[95] Such comments, despite their pejorative intentions, signal an implicit recognition of transgendered embodiment on and beyond the stage.

Ruprecht has shown how accusations of effeminacy and preciousness again came to the fore with the introduction of Sacharoff's Baroque dances, *Pavane Royale* (also known as *Au Temps du Grand Siècle*) in 1919 (fig. 6).[96] She points to the sense of untimeliness raised by a number of critics, or more particularly their discomfort at seeing the past rendered material in the historicizing performance: 'he came to Berlin to show us that for being fully up-to-date, we are far too little decadent and hermaphrodite'.[97] Critics such as Rudolf von Delius and Brandenburg stressed

Sacharoff's subjective interpretation of the period, the former claiming a dandy-like irony, the latter that the Baroque was 'niemals Historie' [never history] for the performer, but something experienced or lived.[98] These descriptions run close to the discussions of *Stimmung* (loosely translated as atmosphere) popular in Munich's phenomenological circles at the time.[99] More particularly, they suggest a form of historical intervention based on an empathetic engagement with the past; or, as Ruprecht describes it, a re-enactment rather than reconstruction of the Baroque.

Fig. 6: Alexander Sacharoff, 'Pavane Royale/Au Temps du Grand Siècle', photograph, n.d., from the music scrapbook of Sophie Braslau.
Jerome Robbins, Dance Collection, New York Public Library.

German and French critics certainly suggested that watching Sacharoff on stage was like witnessing the recovery of a past age. In 1924 Edmond Locard explained this in relation to both *Visione del Quattrocento* and *Au Temps du Grand Roi*, 'il tend à exprimer par des attitudes le sens général d'une époque ou d'une psychologie' [by these poses, he seeks to express the general sense of an epoch or of a psychology].[100] Sacharoff appeared to be able to evoke the spirit of the past with tangible reality, as in *Les Visions de la Renaissance* 'où le grand style de Bach est rendu presque visible par ces marches' [where the grand style of Bach is made almost visible by these steps].[101] Another critic, accompanying an image of Sacharoff in ecclesiastical costuming, likewise characterized the dance as 'ein lebensvolle Bild der Renaissance' [an animated image of the Renaissance].[102] In a pamphlet dating from 1926, one author wrote that the appearance of historical veracity was so convincing that the couple even appeared to break the boundary between human and artwork:

> Ils ressemblent ainsi à des figures accomplies, détachées d'un tableau, d'une fresque […]. Voici passer un bel ange, une Madone, des jeunes filles enlacées sur un fond d'église gothique, de palais florentins ou de bois d'oranges; voici la Niké de Délos, le page du XVme siècle.
>
> [They thus resemble finished works, detached from a tableau, from a fresco, from a bas-relief […]. Here passes a beautiful angel, a Madonna, entwined girls from the back of a gothic church, Florentine palaces or a wood of orange trees; here is the Nike of Delos, the page from the fifteenth century].[103]

Sacharoff, it seemed, not only troubled the boundaries between sexes, but overstepped the human-object boundary, and even questioned the status of singular personhood through his partnership with von Derp. Such critics engaged with Sacharoff's performances on an affective level, as if they could feel slippages in time and selfhood as they watched Sacharoff on stage. The artwork comparison offered a stable ground on which to articulate this sensation, whether it be a troubling transgression of established gender norms or a pleasurable surpassing of the boundaries of the human. Historicity, in this sense, was conceived as experiential and corporeal. Decadent historicism as conceived by Sacharoff and his critics opened up a capacity of the body to be an archive, drawing the viewer into a frequently disconcerting confrontation with the living past.

This archival body not only helps us to address the strange histories of embodied knowledge present in performance practice at the beginning of the twentieth century but offers a route through which to situate trans histories in relation to historical style. The example of Sacharoff helps us to recognize the historical contingency of trans expression, allowing us to historicize the forms of its expression at the same time as pointing to its existence beyond a legal, medical or psychiatric framework. Sacharoff did not turn to these latter institutions for self-identity; he found instead personal and social recognition through the cultural imaginary of the Renaissance, a locale heavy with the cultural accretion of previous decades. This decadent Renaissance offered both Sacharoff and his critics a route through which to articulate an embodied and situated knowledge of gender beyond the binary. By paying attention to the forms of self-knowledge engendered in performance, we can conceptualize a form of historical personhood centred around an individual's capacity to self-determine, whilst remaining aware of its necessary conjunction with historically situated forms of cultural legibility. Sacharoff therefore offers a starting point through which to uncover trans histories of the decadent Renaissance.

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[1] F.[riedrich] M.[öhl], 'Tanzabend Alexander Sacharoff', *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, 4 June 1910, p. 2, Deutsches Tanzarchiv (DTK)-TIS-83; N. N.; 'Tanzabend der Sacharoff', *Münchener Zeitung,* 6 June 1910, p. 4, DTK-TIS-83. See also account by Hans Brandenburg, *Der Moderne Tanz* (Munich: Georg Muller, 1921), p. 124. In addition to the Renaissance dances, Sacharoff danced a set of antique works to the compositions of Thomas von Hartmann. My thanks to the archivists at the DTK, the Lenbachhaus, the New York Public Library, and the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF) for their assistance in navigating the collections. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.

[2] For instance, in a diary entry on 21 June 1910: 'Abends fahren wir zum Tanzabend von Alexander Sacharoff […] Das ist ja die Personifikation von Kunst!' [In the evening we went to the dance recital of Alexander Sacharoff […] Truly the personification of art!]. Grete Gulbransson, *Der grüne Vogel des Äthers. Tagebücher,* vol. 1, ed. by Ulrike Lang, (Frankfurt am Main: Stroemfeld, 1998), p. 307. See also the reactions in Hans Brandenburg, *München leuchtete: Jugenderinnerungen* (Munich: Herbert Neuner, 1953), p. 433.

[3] F. M., 'Tanzabend', p. 2.

[4] Joseph Bristow, 'Decadent Historicism', *Volupté: Interdisciplinary Journal of Decadence Studies*, 3.1 (2020), 1–27.

[5] Bristow, p. 4.

[6] Dominic Janes, *Prefiguring Oscar Wilde: Queer Fashioning and British Caricature, 1750-1900* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016). See also Dustin Friedman, *Before Queer Theory: Victorian Aestheticism and the Self* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2019), esp. p. 6.

[7] For use of 'locale' see Janes, p. 93, p. 208, and pp. 223–24.

[8] For the German-specific notion of 'Renaissancismus' see Gerd Uekermann, *Renaissancismus und Fin-de-Siècle* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1985), especially pp. 3–41 and pp. 127–73. On Pater see Hilary Fraser, 'British Decadence and Renaissance Italy', in *Decadence: A Literary History,* ed. by Alex Murray (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp. 47–64. For an example on the afterlife of decadence see Kristin Mahoney, *Literature and the Politics of Post-Victorian Decadence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

[9] Yvonne Ivory, *The Homosexual Revival of Renaissance Style, 1850-1930* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Patricia Pulham, *The Sculptural Body in Victorian Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020); and Will Fisher, 'The Sexual Politics of Victorian Historiographical Writing about the "Renaissance"', *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 14.1 (2008), 41–67.
[10] For an overview of their career together, see Nina Hümpfel, 'Die Sacharoffs', in *Ausdruckstanz: Eine mitteleuropäische Bewegung der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. by Gunhild Oberzaucher-Schüller (Wilhelmshaven: Florian Noetzel Verlag, 1992), pp. 377–82.
[11] An unpublished manuscript makes it clear that Sacharoff's choreography for von Derp's spring dance was based on Botticelli's treatment of the same subject: as in 'Alexander Sacharoff: Clotilde', in *Die Sacharoffs: Zwei Tänzer aus dem Umkreis des Blauen Reiters,* ed. by Frank-Manuel Peter and Rainer Stamm (Cologne: Wienand, 2002)*,* pp. 153–55 (p. 153).
[12] For an overview of development of *Ausdruckstanz,* see *Jeder Mensch ist ein Tänzer: Ausdruckstanz in Deutschland zwischen 1900 und 1945,* ed. by Hedwig Müller and Patricia Stöckmann (Giessen: Anabas, 1993). On Weimar dance culture see Kate Elswit, *Watching Weimar Dance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), and Yvonne Hardt, *Politische Körper: Ausdruckstanz, Choreographien des Protests und die Arbeiterkulturbewegung in der Weimarer Republik* (Münster: Lit, 2004).
[13] See Patrizia Veroli, *Clotilde e Alexandre Sakharoff, un mito della danza fra teatro e avanguardie artistiche* (Bologna: Bora, 1991); Claudia Jeschke, 'Anverwandlungen und Übergänge – Die Sacharoffs', in *Kaleidoskope des Tanzes. Tanz & Archiv: Forschungsreisen* (Munich: epodium, 2017), pp. 58–75; and *Die Sacharoffs*, ed. by Peter and Stamm.
[14] For instance, Émile Vuillermoz, *Clothilde et Alexandre Sakharoff* (Lausanne: Éditions Centrales, 1933), and J. L., 'Clotilde et Alexandre Sakharoff viennent de donner à Paris avec succès', *Vogue*, 1 March 1928, p. 27.
[15] Lucia Ruprecht, 'Gestural Drag', in *Gestural Imaginaries: Dance and Cultural Theory in the Early Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), pp. 169–92. See also the concept of temporal drag in Elisabeth Freeman, *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), esp. pp. 61–65.
[16] See the special issue of *Transgender Studies Quarterly* on this subject*,* which uses the asterix to hinge 'trans' and 'historicity' together at the same time as opening a space for its interrogation: in particular Leah DeVun and Zeb Tortici, 'Trans, Time and History' and M. W. Bychowski et al., 'Trans*historicities: A Roundtable Discussion', *Transgender Studies Quarterly*, 5 (2018), 518–39 and 658–85.
[17] See especially Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003) and Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Re-enactment* (London: Routledge, 2011).
[18] On 24 March 1911, Sacharoff performed 'Zwei Tanzstudien nach den Meistern der italienischen Frührenaissance. Musik von Palestrina u. Orlando di Lasso' and 'Tanzstudie nach den Meistern der italienischen Frührenaissance. Musik von Cl. Monteverdi' at Museum Folkwang, Haagen. The next year, on 26 March 1912, he performed 'Drei Tanzstudien nach dem Meistern der Italienischen Frührenaissance. Palestrina, Orlando di Lasso, Cl. Monteverdi' and 'Tanz im Stile "Renaissance". Frescobaldi' at the same location. Deutsches Tanzarchiv DTK-TIS-83.
[19] This had appeared in various forms from the outset of Sacharoff's career. A 1913 photograph by the Gilbert René studio depicts Sacharoff in 'Vision aus dem 15. Jahrhundert': see Stamm, 'Alexander Sacharoff - Bildende Kunst und Tanz', in *Die Sacharoffs,* ed. by Peter and Stamm, pp. 11–45 (pp. 42–43). Stamm, 'Alexander Sacharoff - Bildende Kunst und Tanz', pp. 42–43. In 1917, 'Vision de Renaissance' appears on a programme for a performance in Basel, then as 'Vision von der Renaissance' in 1919 for another performance in Basel, then in Paris in 1921 finally as 'Visione del Quattrocento', appearing in this form regularly until the 1930s.
[20] Jeschke and Rainer Krenstetter, 'Intermedialitäten. Alexander Sacharoff in Bild und Bewegung', in *Tanzfotografie: Historiografische Reflexionen der Moderne,* ed. by Tessa Jahn, Eike Wittrock and Isa Wortelkamp (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2016), pp. 124–25. This is reflected in the Sacharoffs' writings, for instance Clotilde's grouping of the sacred dances: 'il y a ainsi des danse saintes […] *La Mort de Saint Sébastien,* dans *Visione del Quattrocento*': Clotilde von Derp, 'Ce que la danse est pour nous' in *Conferencia,* 33.16 (1938), 220. Deutsches Tanzarchiv DTK-TIS-83.
[21] Isadora Duncan, *Der Tanz der Zukunft* (Leipzig: Eugen Diederichs, 1903), and Gabriele Brandstetter, 'Dance in the Museum', in *Poetics of Dance: Body, Image, and Space in the Historical Avant-Garde,* trans. by Elena Polzer (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 32–65. On Botticelli in Duncan, see Ann Daly, *Done into Dance: Isadora Duncan in America* (Wesleyan ed. Middletown Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 2003), pp. 92–96.
[22] Daly, 'Isadora Duncan and the Distinction of Dance', *American Studies*, 35.1 (1994), 5–23; and Daly, 'Isadora Duncan's Dance Theory', *Dance Research Journal*, 26.2 (1994), 24–31.
[23] Isadora Duncan, *The Dance* [1903] (Berkeley: University of California, 1989), p. 21.
[24] Duncan, *My Life* [1927] (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2013), pp. 150–51. See also *Isadora & Elizabeth Duncan in Deutschland,* ed. by Frank-Manuel Peter (Cologne: Wienand, 2000).
[25] Brandenburg, *München leuchtete*, p. 433; as cited and translated in Stamm, 'Alexander Sacharoff - Bildende Kunst und Tanz', p. 28.
[26] Brandenburg, *Der moderne Tanz* (Munich, 1913),<https://www.sk-kultur.de/tanz/sacharoff/seiten/text_3.html> [accessed 14 December 2021]. This is repeated in later revised editions, such as Brandenburg, *Der moderne Tanz* (Munich: Georg Müller, 1921), p. 150.
[27] Brandenburg, *Der moderne Tanz*, p. 150.

[28] '[E]mprisonné dans sa robe trop lourde' [imprisoned in his overly heavily robe]. Vuillermoz, *Clothilde et Alexandre Sakharoff*, p. 60.
[29] See especially Sander Gilman, 'Black Bodies, White Bodies: Toward an Iconography of Female Sexuality in Nineteenth Century Art, Medicine, and Literature', *Critical Inquiry*, 12.1 (1985), 204–42, and Robin Mitchell, *Vénus Noire: Black Women and Colonial Fantasies in Nineteenth-Century France* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 2020).
[30] On anti-Semitism in reception of Sacharoff, particularly prevalent in the criticism of Brandenburg, see Ross Dickinson, 'Blood and Make-Believe: Race, Identity and Performance', *Dancing in the Blood: Modern Dance and European Culture on the Eve of the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108164573> [accessed 14 December 2021]. On the idea of Jewish decadence see Jonathan Freedman, *The Jewish Decadence: Jews and the Aesthetics of Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021). On the idea of Catholic decadence see Martin Lockerd, *Decadent Catholicism and the Making of Modernism* (London: Bloomsbury, 2021).
[31] Alfred Lichtwark, letter dated 24 May 1913, as cited in Stamm, 'Alexander Sacharoff - Bildende Kunst und Tanz', p. 35; Rudolf von Delius, 'Alexander Sacharoff (1913)', in *Mary Wigman* (Dresden: Reissner, 1925), p. 16.
[32] On this see Jeremy Melius, 'Art History and the Invention of Botticelli' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of California, 2010), pp. 143–46.
[33] Max Nordau, *Entartung* [1892] (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013), p. 19. See Hans-Peter Söder, 'Disease and Health as Contexts of Modernity: Max Nordau as a Critic of fin-de-siècle Modernism', *German Studies Review*, 14.3 (1991), 473–87, and Florian Krobb, 'Die Kunst der Väter tödtet das Leben der Enkel': Decadence and Crisis in Fin-de-Siècle German and Austrian Discourse', *New Literary History*, 35.4 (2004), 547–62.
[34] Sasha Dovzhyk, 'Beardsley Men in Early Twentieth-Century Russia: Modernising Decadent Masculinity', *Modernist Cultures*, 16.2 (2021), 191–215.
[35] 'Sarah Bernhardt et le Musée Louvre ont été mes premier maîtres'. Alexander Sacharoff, 'Mes Maîtres', in *Clotilde et Alexandre Sakharoff* (Paris: Brunoff, 1922), n.p.
[36] This was an important feature of Duncan's career from the outset: 'To dance as I dance […] you must have studied the art galleries of the Old World': as quoted in 'Philosophy in the Dance', *New York Times,* 17 April 1898, p. 14. For a discussion of the significance of museal dance see Brandstetter, *Poetics of Dance,* pp. 32–87.
[37] Lenard R. Berlanstein, 'Breeches and Breaches: Cross-Dress Theater and the Culture of Gender Ambiguity in Modern France', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 38.2 (1996), 338–68, and Carol Ockman, 'Was She Magnificent?', in *Sarah Bernhardt: The Art of High Drama,* ed. by Ockman and Kenneth E. Silver (London: Yale University Press, 2005), pp. 23–74 (pp. 39–51).
[38] 'Rita Sacchetto und Alexander Sacharoff', *Allgemeine Zeitung,* 27 June 1912, p. 553. On Sacchetto see Mary Simonson, 'Dancing Pictures: Rita Sacchetto's *TanzBilder'* in *Body Knowledge: Performance, Intermediality, and American Entertainment at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 106–33.
[39] Brandenburg, *Der moderne Tanz,* pp. 147–48.
[40] On this, see Susan Stryker, 'Transgender Studies: Queer Theory's Evil Twin', *GLQ*, 10.2 (2004), 212–15 and Caél M. Keegan, 'Against Queer Theory', *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, 7.3 (2020), 349–43.
[41] Patrizia Veroli, 'Alexander Sacharoff as Symbolist Dancer', *Experiment*, 2.1 (1996), 48–49.
[42] Heike Bauer, for instance, has charted the 'making of a gendered sexual theory'. Heike Bauer, 'Theorizing Female Inversion: Sexology, Discipline and Gender at the Fin de Siècle', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 18.1 (2009), 84–102 (p. 85). See also Emily Rutherford's summary of this turn in 'Review of Female Husbands: A Trans History, by Jen Manion', *The English Historical Review* (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1093/ehr/ceab221> [accessed 14 December 2021].
[43] See Robert Beachy, 'The German Invention of Homosexuality', *The Journal of Modern History*, 82.4 (2010), 801–38; Gert Hekma, 'A Female Soul in a Male Body: Sexual Inversion as Gender Inversion in Nineteenth-Century Sexology', in *Third Sex, Third Gender: Beyond Sexual Dimorphism in Culture and History* (New York: Zone Books, 2005), pp. 213–40; and Katie Sutton, *The Masculine Woman in Weimar Germany* (New York: Berghan Books, 2011).
[44] On the latter, see especially Penny Farfan, *Performing Queer Modernism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).
[45] Alexander Sacharoff, 'Bemerkungen über den Tanz', Concert Programme, Munich, 21 June 1910, <https://www.sk-kultur.de/tanz/sacharoff/seiten/text_1.html> [accessed 14 December 2021].
[46] On sexual reformers turning to antiquity see for instance Havelock Ellis and J. A. Symonds, *Conträre Geschlechtsgefühl* (Leipzig: Georg H. Wigand Verlag, 1896). On antiquity and dance see *The Ancient Dancer in the Modern World: Responses to Greek and Roman Dance*, ed. by Fiona Macintosh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), and Samuel Dorf, *Performing Antiquity: Ancient Greek Music and Dance from Paris to Delphi* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).
[47] Hans Brandenburg, 'Alexander Sacharoff (1913)', <https://www.sk-kultur.de/tanz/sacharoff/seiten/text_3.html> [accessed 14 December 2021] and Francis Markus Huebner, 'Alexander Sacharoff', *Phoebus: Monatsschrift für Ästhetik und Kritik des Theaters,* 1.3 (1914), 101–04, <https://www.sk-kultur.de/tanz/sacharoff/seiten/text_4.html> [accessed 14 December 2021]. See Jules Gill-Peterson's discussion of the 'slippery diagnostic matrix that attempted to manage the relations that linked homosexuality, sexual inversion,

hermaphroditism, and transvestism'. Jules Gill-Peterson, *Histories of the Transgender Child* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), p. 60.
[48] See Ross Brooks, 'Transforming Sexuality: The Medical Sources of Karl Heinrich Ulrichs (1825-95) and the Origins of the Theory of Bisexuality', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 67.2 (2012), 176–216.
[49] Most famously Sigmund Freud's description of primary bisexuality in *Three Essays on Sexuality* (1905): see Esther Rapoport, 'Bisexuality in Psychoanalytic Theory: Interpreting the Resistance', *Journal of Bisexuality*, 9.3-4 (2009), 279–95. Sutton has shown that the 'transvestite case' emerged as a central site for the competing scientific legitimation of psychoanalysis and sexology in this period. Katie Sutton, 'The Case of the Transvestite', *Sex Between Body and Mind: Psychoanalysis and Sexology in the German-speaking World, 1890s-1930s* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2019), pp. 173-201.
[50] Joanne Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), pp. 22–26.
[51] Magnus Hirschfeld, *Die Transvestiten: eine Untersuchung über den erotischen Verkleidungstrieb mit umfangreichem casuistischen und historischen Material* (1910). See also Hirschfeld's anonymously published text *Was Soll das Volk vom dritten Geschlecht wissen?* (1901) as well as his *Berlins Dritte Geschlecht* (1904). On the early history of trans legal and social recognition in Germany see Sutton, '"We too deserve a place in the sun": The Politics of Transvestite Identity in Weimar Germany', *German Studies Review*, 35.2 (2012), 335–54.
[52] The term 'embodiment' holds a central place in trans studies. See especially Gayle Salamon, *Assuming a Body: Transgender and Rhetorics of Materiality* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010); Hil Malatino, 'Nomad Science', *Transgender Studies Quarterly*, 1.1-2 (2014), 138–40; and Eliza Steinbock, *Shimmering Images: Trans Cinema, Embodiment, and the Aesthetics of Change* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019).
[53] Veroli, 'Mirror and the Hieroglyph', in *Die Sacharoffs,* ed. by Peter and Stamm, pp. 169–217 (p. 190); 'als Modell saß ihm oft der Tänzer Sacharoff, den er zu diesem Zweck als Frau und Spanierin mit Fächer und Mantilla verkleidete' [the dancer Sacharoff sat often for him as a model, dressed for this purpose as a woman and as a Spanish girl with fans and mantilla]. Elisabeth Erdmann-Macke, *Erinnerungen an August Macke* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1987), pp. 140–41.
[54] Yvonne Ivory, 'Gertrud Eysoldt and the Persistence of Decadence on the German Avant-Garde Stage', *Volupté: Interdisciplinary Journal of Decadence Studies,* 2.1 (2019), 16–38. On the latter text's reworking of German sexological categories, see Claudia Breger, 'Feminine Masculinities: Scientific and Literary Representations of "Female Inversion" at the Turn of the Twentieth Century', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 14.1-2 (2005), 76–106.
[55] See Marina Dmitrieva, 'Transcending Gender: Cross-Dressing as a Performative Practice of Women Artists of the Avant-Garde', in *Marianne Werefkin and the Women Artists in Her Circle*, ed. by Tanja Malycheva and Isabel Wünsche (Boston: Brill, 2016), pp. 123–36; and Natalia Budanova, 'Utopian Sex: the metamorphosis of androgynous imagery in Russian art of the pre- and post-revolutionary period', in *Utopian Reality*: *Reconstructing Culture in Revolutionary Russia and Beyond*, ed. by Christina Lodder, Maria Kokkri and Maria Mileeva (Brill: Leiden, 2013), pp. 25–41.
[56] As in Shulamith Behr, 'Performing the Wom/Man: The "Interplay" between Marianne Werefkin and Else Lasker-Schüler', in *Marianne Werefkin and the Women Artists in Her Circle*, ed. by Malycheva and Wünsche, pp. 92–105 (p. 99). See also Behr, 'The Dynamics of Gendered and Artistic Identity and Creativity', in *German Expressionism: Der Blaue Reiter and its Legacies*, ed. by Dorothy Price (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021), pp. 34–50 (pp. 39–40).
[57] See reproduction of sketches in Behr, 'Veiling Venus: Gender and Painterly Abstraction in Early German Modernism', in *Manifestations of Venus: Art and Sexuality,* ed. by Caroline Arscott and Katie Scott (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 126–42 (pp. 138–41).
[58] John C. Fout, 'Sexual Politics in Wilhelmine Germany: The Male Gender Crisis, Moral Purity, and Homophobia', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 2.3 (1992), 388–421. See also Peter Jalevich, 'Munich as Cultural Center: Politics and the Arts', in *Kandinsky in Munich, 1896-1944* (New York: Solomon Guggenheim Foundation, 1982), pp. 17–26.
[59] Edward Ross Dickinson, '"Must we dance naked?": Art, Beauty, and Law in Munich and Paris, 1911–1913', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 20.1 (2011), 95–131.
[60] A. M., 'Tanzabend Alexander Sacharoff', *Münchener Neuste Nachrichten,* 4 June 2010, p. 2.
[61] Huebner, 'Alexander Sacharoff', <https://www.sk-kultur.de/tanz/sacharoff/seiten/text_4.html> [accessed 14 December 2021]; *Münchener Neuste Nachrichten,* 2 July 1912. Deutsches Tanzarchiv DTK-TIS-83.
[62] Huebner, 'Alexander Sacharoff'.
[63] Many had never even seen a male solo dancer before: see Ramsay Burt, *The Male Dancer: Bodies, Spectacle and Sexuality* (London: Routledge, 1995), esp. pp. 11–15.
[64] On this see Christine Achinger, 'Allegories of Destruction: "Woman" and "the Jew" in Otto Weininger's *Sex and Character*', *The Germanic Review: Literature, Culture, Theory*, 88.2 (2013), 121–49.
[65] Huebner, 'Alexander Sacharoff'.
[66] 'Tanzaufritte besuchen heißt, sich dem Geschlecht gegenüberzustellen' [Attending dance performances means confronting gender]. Huebner, 'Alexander Sacharoff'.
[67] Anton Linder, 'Der tanzende Russe', *Neue Hamburger Zeitung,* 1 April 1912, p. 1.
[68] Karl Wirth, *Autobiography of Ideas,* ed. by Roland Jaeger (Berlin, 1997), pp. 48–49, as cited and translated in Stamm, p. 32.

[69] Marion Thain, 'Arthur Symons's Impressionist Epistemology: Decadence and Embodied Cognition', *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920*, 63.1 (2020), 48–72.
[70] Sacharoff, 'Quelques mots sur le costume', Concert Programme, Lausanne, 1926, p. 1. Deutsches Tanzarchiv DTK-TIS-83.
[71] Timothy Campbell, *Historical Style: Fashion and the New Mode of History 1740-1830* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), p. 281.
[72] Brandenburg, *Der Moderne Tanz*, pp. 151–52.
[73] Sacharoff, 'How I arrange my dances', undated manuscript, after 1920s, p. 4. Deutsches Tanzarchiv DTK-TIS.83.
[74] See, for instance, reproductions of sketchbooks with notations transposing Renaissance artworks into dance in Stamm, 'Alexander Sacharoff – Bildende Kunst und Tanz', pp. 14–15.
[75] Carolyn Williams, *Transfigured World: Walter Pater's Aesthetic Historicism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), esp. pp. 68–72. This is evocative of Raphael Samuel's claim that 'aesthetes rather than historians are responsible for constituting our notions of "period"'. Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture* (London: Verso, 2012), p. 41.
[76] *Arnold Schoenberg, Wassily Kandinsky: Letters, Pictures and Documents,* ed. by Jelena Hahl-Koch, trans. by John C. Crawford (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), p. 149. Kandinsky uses Sacharoff as his exemplar for the modern dancer: Wassily Kandinsky, *Punkt und Linie zu Fläche: Ein Beitrag zur Analyse der malerischen Elemente* (Munich: Bauhaus Bücher, 1928), p. 94.
[77] Thain, p. 56.
[78] Sacharoff, *Réflexions sur la Danse et la Musique* (Buenos Aires, 1943). Deutsches Tanzarchiv DTK-TIS-83.
[79] Sacharoff, *Réflexions*, p. 40.
[80] Sacharoff, *Réflexions*, p. 41.
[81] This is typically decadent. See Catherine Maxwell, *Scents and Sensibility: Perfume in Victorian Literary Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), and Jane Desmarais and Alice Condé, 'Introduction', in *Decadence and the Senses,* ed. by Jane Desmarais and Alice Condé (Cambridge: Legenda, 2017), p. 1.
[82] For conceptualization of trans agency as distinct to other theorizations of agency, see Troy Kilgannon, 'Arts of Survival: Alternative Historiographies of Trans Agency' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Sussex, 2021), esp. pp. 16–18.
[83] Sacharoff, 'How I arrange my dances', p. 3. For development of this notion of 'racial capital' see Kyla Schuller, *The Biopolitics of Feeling: Race, Sex and Science in the Nineteenth Century* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018), esp. p. 12.
[84] On Sacharoff's choreography and extant notation, see Rose Breuss, Julia Mach, and Ursula Brandstätter, 'Auf den Spuren der Pavane Royale von Alexander Sacharoff', in *Klänge in Bewgung: Spurensuchen in Choreografie und Performance,* ed. by Sabine Karoß and Stephanie Schroedter (Bielefeld: transcript-Verlag, 2017), pp. 45–64. See also reconstructions of individual dances by Jeschke in Stella Tinsberg's documentary film *Poeten des Tanzes – Die Sacharoffs* (2012), <https://tanzfonds.de/en/project/documentation-2012/sacharoff-research-project/> [accessed 14 December 2021]. Veroli describes *Visione del Quattrocento* as 'a slow walk, or rather slide, around the stage, a series of poses': Veroli, 'The Mirror and the Hieroglyph' p. 186.
[85] Anton Linder, 'Der tanzende Russe', *Neue Hamburger Zeitung,* 1 April 1912, pp. 1–2 (p. 2).
[86] Linder, 'Der tanzende Russe', p. 2.
[87] It therefore repeats a key decadent trope of the 'erotic experience in and with artifice'. Kostas Boyiopoulos, *The Decadent Image: The Poetry of Wilde, Symons, and Dowson* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), p. 4; see also Sara Ahmed's twinning of disgust and desire in Sara Ahmed, 'The Performativity of Disgust', in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), pp. 81–100.
[88] Thomas Mann, *Der Tod in Venedig* (Berlin: Fischer, 1922), p. 58.
[89] Karl Ernst Osthaus, *Hagener Zeitung,* 22 March 1911, cited in Osthaus, *Reden und Schriften,* ed. by Rainer Stamm (Cologne: König, 2002), p. 153. On the contemporary concern with race, nation and ethnicity in criticism see Ross Dickinson, 'Race and Aesthetics', in *Dancing in the Blood,* pp. 117–59.
[90] As cited in Stamm, p. 34. This idea of the dancer as 'lebende' [living] artwork had wider resonances: see Claudia Rieger, '"Lebende Bilder" und "Bewegte Plastik": Rita Sacchetto', in *Ausdruckstanz,* pp. 367–76.
[91] On antiquity and the androgyne see Catriona MacLeod, *Embodying Ambiguity: Androgyny and Aesthetics from Winckelmann to Keller* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998).
[92] As cited and translated in Horst Koegler, 'A Single Being and a Single Soul with Two Bodies; Alexander and Clotilde Sacharoff and the Pre-World War I Munich Avant-Garde', *Dance Chronicle,* 26.2 (2003), 253–59 (p. 257).
[93] Legrand-Chabrier, 'Pour un Music-Hall d'Art', *Choses de théâtre: Cahiers mensuels de notes, d'études et de recherches théâtrales,* 10 (1921), 627–30 (p. 629).
[94] André Levinson, 'Théâtre des Champs-Elysées: Les Galas Sakharoff', *Comoedia,* 26 April 1924, p. 1.
[95] Vuillermoz, p. 34; Levinson, p. 1.
[96] Lucia Ruprecht, 'Gestural Drag', in *Gestural Imaginaries: Dance and Cultural Theory in the Early Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).
[97] Hans Erasmus Fischer, 'Tänze um Mitternacht, Gloria Palast Berlin' (unknown), October 1928, as cited and trans. in *Gestural Imaginaries*, p. 173. This derisive formulation has strangely persisted: Karl Toepfer, for instance, describes 'Golliwog's Cakewalk' (1916) as 'virtually a transvestite performance' with little further explanation. Karl Toepfer,

Empire of Ecstasy: Nudity and Movement in German Body Culture 1910-1935 (London: University of California Press, 1997), p. 222.
[98] Brandenburg, 'Alexander Sacharoff (1913)'.
[99] Gerhard Thonhauser, 'Beyond Mood and Atmosphere: a Conceptual History of the Term *Stimmung', Philosophia*, 49 (2021), 1247–65.
[100] Edmond Locard, 'Echo d'une Soirée Sakharoff à Lyon', *Unique Soirée de Danse Donnée par Clotilde et Alexandre Sakharoff*, Concert Programme, Opéra Royal Flamand*,* 1924. Deutsches Tanzarchiv DTK-TIS-83.
[101] Concert Programme*,* Grand Théatre de Lausanne*,* 1923. Deutsches Tanzarchiv DTK-TIS-83. Others saw this as a return to the true origins of dance, a popular theme at the time: 'la rénovation de l'art de la danse, en remontant à ses véritable sources, l'antiquité grecque, la Renaissance italienne, le Quattrocento' [the renovation of the art of dance, going back to its true sources: Greek antiquity, the Italian Renaissance, the fifteenth century]: 'Les Sakharoff, danseurs russes', 1922, newspaper clipping in Recueil factice de programmes de représentations données par Alexandre et Clotilde Sakharoff, 1921-1936. BnF, 8-RO-12755.
[102] E. Hirschfeld, 'Die Sacharovs Clotilde und Alexander', n.d. Deutsches Tanzarchiv DTK-TIS-83.
[103] L. Florentin, *Clotilde et Alexandre Sakharoff* (Lausanne, 1926), n.p. Deutsches Tanzarchiv DTK-TIS-83.

Lesya Ukrainka's 'Your Letters Always Smell of Withered Roses' (1947): A New Translation

Stephen Komarnyckyj

Lesya Ukrainka (1871-1913) was a Ukrainian poet, dramatist, and political activist, who transformed Ukrainian literature by expanding its range to include a whole array of characters from classical mythology, scripture, and world literature. 'Your Letters Always Smell of Withered Roses' is one of several pieces, unpublished during her lifetime, written after she met and fell in love with Serhiy Merzhynsky in 1897 while both were receiving treatment for tuberculosis. It is likely to have been composed in November 1900. Ukrainka was a staunch believer in her country's freedom and worked with her brother to promote Ukrainian literature and translation of foreign classics into Ukrainian. Her strong female characters toppled the patriarchal model of the literature of the time, yet she remains one of the most under-translated authors of her day.

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'Your Letters Always Smell of Withered Roses'

Lesya Ukrainka

Your letters always smell of withered roses, my poor faded flower. Your light and delicate fragrances are like the memory of some lovely, past dream. And nothing so affects my heart now like these fragrances, which subtly, delicately, but irrevocably, irresistibly remind me of what my heart foretells, and what I do not want to, and cannot believe. My friend, my beloved friend, you who were created for me, how can I live alone now that I know another life? Oh, I knew yet another life full of some sharp, piercing sorrow and anguished happiness that burned and tormented me and compelled me to break my hands battering, battering against the ground in a wild desire to die and disappear from this world, where happiness and sorrow are so madly interwoven... and then both happiness and sorrow were suddenly broken off, like the weeping of a child, and I saw you. I had seen you before, but never so transparently, and now I came to you with all my soul, like a child weeping goes into the arms of one who pities her. It's nothing that you never embraced me, it's nothing that between us there is no memory of kisses, oh I will

come to you from the closest embraces, from the sweetest kisses! Only with you am I not alone, only with you am I not on foreign ground. Only you can save me from myself. I know that you will lift everything that wearies me, everything that torments me, with your slender, trembling hand... it trembles like a string... you will drive away everything that darkens my soul with the rays of your gleaming eyes... oh, there are no such eyes among those hardened to life... these are eyes from another land...

My friend, my friend, why do your letters smell so of withered roses?

My friend, my friend, why can't I, when it is so, pour over those hands of yours, hands of yours, that tremble like strings, my hot tears?

My friend, my friend, will I die alone? Oh, take me with you and let the white roses wither over us!

Perhaps you have some other dream, without me? Oh, my darling! I will create a world for you, a new world fashioned of a new dream. I began a new dream of life for you, I died and resurrected for you. Take me with you. I am so afraid to live! I do not want to live for the price of new youth. Take, take me with you, we will go quietly amidst a whole forest of dreams and, little by little, we will both be lost in the distance. In the place where we have lived, let the roses wither, wither and smell like your beloved letters my friend...

I stretch my hand through the darkness and into the space towards you: take, take me with you, that will be my salvation. Oh, save me, beloved!

And let the white, and pink and blue roses wither.

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«Твої листи завжди пахнуть зов'ялими трояндами…»

Твої листи завжди пахнуть зов'ялими трояндами, ти, мій бідний, зів'ялий квіте! Легкі, тонкі пахощі, мов спогад про якусь любу, минулу мрію. І ніщо так не вражає тепер мого серця, як сії пахощі, тонко, легко, але невідмінно, невідборонно нагадують вони мені про те, що моє серце віщує і чому я вірити не хочу, не можу. Мій друже, любий мій друже, створений для мене, як можна, щоб я жила сама, тепер, коли я знаю інше життя? О, я знала ще інше життя, повне якогось різкого, пройнятого жалем і тугою щастя, що палило мене, і мучило, і заставляло заламувати руки і битись, битись об землю, в дикому бажанні згинути, зникнути з сього світу, де щастя і горе так божевільно сплелись… А потім і щастя, і горе обірвались так раптом, як дитяче ридання, і я побачила тебе. Я бачила тебе і раніше, але не

так прозоро, а тепер я пішла до тебе всею душею, як сплакана дитина іде в обійми того, хто її жалує. Се нічого, що ти не обіймав мене ніколи, се нічого, що між нами не було і спогаду про поцілунки, о, я піду до тебе з найщільніших обіймів, від найсолодших поцілунків! Тільки з тобою я не сама, тільки з тобою я не на чужині. Тільки ти вмієш рятувати мене від самої себе. Все, що мене томить, все, що мене мучить, я знаю, ти здіймеш своєю тонкою тремтячою рукою, – вона тремтить, як струна, – все, що тьмарить мені душу, ти проженеш променем твоїх блискучих очей, – ох, у тривких до життя людей таких очей не буває! Се очі з іншої країни…

Мій друже, мій друже, нащо твої листи так пахнуть, як зів'ялі троянди?

Мій друже, мій друже, чому ж я не можу, коли так, облити рук твоїх, рук твоїх, що, мов струни, тремтять, своїми гарячими слізьми?

Мій друже, мій друже, невже я одинока згину? О, візьми мене з собою, і нехай над нами в'януть білі троянди!

Візьми мене з собою.

Ти, може, маєш яку іншу мрію, де мене немає? О дорогий мій! Я створю тобі світ, новий світ нової мрії. Я ж для тебе почала нову мрію життя, я для тебе вмерла і воскресла. Візьми мене з собою. Я так боюся жити! Ціною нових молодощів і то я не хочу життя. Візьми, візьми мене з собою, ми підемо тихо посеред цілого лісу мрій і згубимось обоє помалу, вдалині. А на тім місці, де ми були в житті, нехай троянди в'януть, в'януть і пахнуть, як твої любі листи, мій друже…

Крізь темряву у простір я простягаю руки до тебе: візьми, візьми мене з собою, се буде мій рятунок. О, рятуй мене, любий!

І нехай в'януть білі й рожеві, червоні й блакитні троянди.

Davíð Stefánsson's 'Delirium' (1919): A New Translation with Introduction

Karólína Rós Ólafsdóttir

Davíð Stefánsson was an Icelandic poet born in 1895 in Fagriskógur, a farm in the North of Iceland.[1] He was an ambitious and esteemed poet, whose work occupied a central place in the Icelandic literary canon and borrowed from many traditions including folklore, Romanticism, Symbolism, the Gothic, and, in the poem translated into English here, decadence. Given that Davíð was writing from a remote island in the North Atlantic Ocean, a place with more sheep than people, it is not obvious how or why he started exploring decadent themes, which traditionally tend to reflect preoccupations with plenitude, artifice, and urban cityscapes. It is the pervasive nature of decadence itself, however, and its parasitic relationship with other major movements and tendencies like Romanticism, Realism, and Symbolism, that ensured that decadent aesthetics found their way into the work of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century writers like Davíð.

Davíð published his first collection, *Svartar Fjaðrir* [*Black Feathers*] in 1919 when he was twenty-four years old. He had previously published several poems in magazines, but *Svartar Fjaðrir* was specifically praised for its exciting and original style. Themes of death and violence within beauty and sexual fantasy, best described as masochistic, and mixed up with religion and descriptions of women that resemble the decadent *femme fatale*, were new attributes in Icelandic lyric poetry. While written in a traditional lyrical style and borrowing from traditional myths and folk style, Davíð's collection brought new perspectives to the general Icelandic reader. Some poems created controversy, but the collection as a whole received great praise and was, within a few weeks, nationally renowned.[2]

'Óráð' ['Delirium'] was one of the most controversial poems. It presents a lustful scene, the mystical and dangerous world of a masochistic and violent relationship wherein the speaker forces the woman to descend with him into physical pleasure and inebriety (drinking 'the poison wine'). The poem's self-conscious title makes the reader immediately aware of the speaker's altered

state of mind. The delirium, or dream, is manifested in rich erotic and repetitive imagery. The repetition of the word 'then' in the poem creates a momentum; the speaker cannot help but take pleasure in the way he indulges himself with the woman's body. As the listing goes on, the reader is trapped within the speaker's own delirium, unable to look away because another 'then' indicates that there is more to see. The subject in 'Óráð' is a woman without autonomy, who submits to the speaker's complete power over her body, which he both mistreats and elevates in the ritual-like proceedings of his dream. The last two lines of the poem describe their descent into hell, where the speaker becomes Lucifer and the woman is forced to become his Lilith.

The mixing of symbols of violence and religion in this poem recalls the striking and sacrilegious juxtapositions found in the work of continental European decadent writers. They were fascinated by provocative contrasts, particularly the alliance of pain and pleasure. Davíð's contrary images of the maltreated body, a beautiful fabric and a crown of ice, and shoes of fire, remind us of the paradoxical imagery decadent writers found in Catholic ritual: thorns and ornamental garments, saints in simultaneous agony and ecstasy, references to devotion, punishment, and sexual pleasure.

[1] We have chosen to follow Icelandic convention in referring to the author by his first name, Davíð.
[2] Friðrik G. Olgeirsson, *Snert hörpu mína: Ævisaga Davíðs Stefánssonar frá Fagraskógi* (Reykjavík: JPV útgáfa, 2007), p. 107.

From *Svartar Fjaðrir* [*Black Feathers*] (1919)

Davíð Stefánsson

Delirium

Since it is so deathly quiet
now I fall asleep,
and meet, O in a dream
tonight, the queen.

I give her a crown
I have fashioned from ice,
and she will soon dance
as a queen should.

I give her a midnight veil
to shroud her body,
so no one will witness
how I've dishonoured it.

Then I give her red shoes
stolen from the flames,
and bind her pale neck
with a crown of pink thorns.

Then I smear her breast
with a cross of my blood
and kiss her cheek like Jesus –
no, like Judas.

Then we spin and spin
and drink poison wine
… I become the king of demons
and take my queen.

Óráð

Ha, ha - nú sofna ég,
fyrst svona er dauðahljótt;
svo hitti ég í draumi
drottninguna í nótt.

Þá gef ég henni kórónu
úr klaka á höfði sér.
Hún skal fá að dansa
eins og drottningu ber.

Svo gef ég henni svarta slæðu
að sveipa um líkamann,
svo enginn geti séð,
að ég svívirti hann.

Svo gef ég henni helskó,
hitaða á rist,
og bind um hvíta hálsinn
bleikan þyrnikvist.

Svo rjóðra ég á brjóst hennar
úr blóði mínu kross
og kyssi hana í Jesú nafni
Júdasarkoss.

Svo dönsum við og dönsum
og drekkum eitrað vín.
… Ég verð konungur djöflanna,
hún drottningin mín.

Hubert Crackanthorpe: Selected Writings,
ed. by William Greenslade and Emanuela Ettorre (Cambridge: MHRA, 2020),
414 pp. IBSN 9781781889664

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Hubert Crackanthorpe is often found in the footnotes of books on the 1890s, which reference his short life and death by suicide at the age of twenty-six as one of the defining tragedies of the era. This collection is a timely reminder of why he was so well regarded by his supporters – and reviled by his detractors.

Crackanthorpe and his wife Leila, née Macdonald, were the golden couple of the English decadence: attractive, literary, well connected, and rich. They came to grief in what Henry James, quoted in William Greenslade's introduction, called a 'somewhat small sordid drama of crude, incompatible youthful matrimony' (p. 1). That is certainly one way of putting it. They married in 1893 but by 1896 were both with lovers: Crackanthorpe with Richard Le Gallienne's sister Sissie Welch; and Leila with a French artist called the Comte d'Artaux. They lived together in a rather improbable ménage à quatre in Paris, in an apartment off the Champs-Élysées. The Crackanthorpes' relationship broke down, and Leila summoned her solicitor from London to initiate divorce proceedings. I learned from William Greenslade's introduction that John Waller Hills, the solicitor and man of letters Leila Crackanthorpe consulted in this fateful period, was her cousin, which makes the whole business even more of a family affair than it already was. What is more, Hills married Stella Duckworth, who was half-sister to Vanessa and Virginia Stephen (later Vanessa Bell and Virginia Woolf) so there is another connection to modernism for the *Yellow Book* set.

The intended divorce would be devastating even in excess of the usual distasteful divorce proceedings, because the grounds Leila invoked was 'legal cruelty': that her husband had infected her with a venereal disease. The cruelty was 'legal' because a wife was unable to refuse to consent

to sex (a situation which was not changed in law until 1994). Crackanthorpe sent Sissie back to London and argued with Leila. He then disappeared, not to be seen again for seven weeks, when his body was fished out of the Seine and identified in the morgue by his cufflinks and other personal items.

Crackanthorpe's youthful death produced a mythology of mourning for the great lost leader of literary realism. His friends declared that English letters had lost a rival to Maupassant and Chekhov. Critics of his work sneered that his miserable end was no more or less than such a decadent deserved.

The editors have done a service in collecting the best of Crackanthorpe from his four books: *Wreckage: Seven Studies* (1893), *Sentimental Studies and a Set of Village Tales* (1895), *Vignettes: A Miniature Journal of Whim and Sentiment* (1896), and *Last Studies* (1897). The last, posthumous volume was published with a dedication by his mother Blanche Crackanthorpe to Hubert's friends 'who saw in the unfolding flower of his manhood a renewal of the bright promise of his early youth'; and an 'Appreciation' by Henry James. The editors have also published here three hitherto uncollected stories, one of which had not previously been published at all. Three pieces of Crackanthorpe's non-fiction are also featured, including his interview with Émile Zola and an essay on 'Reticence in Literature' from the *Yellow Book*.

The editors have done some great bibliographical sleuthing in tracking down the original references for Crackanthorpe's work as well as its later publication in such editions as Guido Bruno's chap books of 1915, produced from his 'Garret on Washington Square'. It was not until the 1960s that scholars such as Wendell Harris and William Peden offered literary criticism which presented Crackanthorpe as a pioneering author of the under-studied period of literary transition from 1880-1920. An increasing volume of criticism and life writing followed in the twenty-first century, culminating in this annotated reprinting of selected prose with scholarly annotations.

The stories are set in Crackanthorpe's world: the two locations of London literary life and scenes from the Lake District. Two persistent themes are that marriage is a big disappointment

and infidelity not much better. In literary terms Crackanthorpe sits in the context of the contemporary French scene with which he was familiar; in the milieu of the prosecution of Vizetelly for publishing Zola; and under the dread hand of the circulating libraries with their suppressive effect on artistic innovation. Crackanthorpe's writing was met with the criticism that it was 'Zola-esque', 'morbid' and 'loathsome'. In his turn, he argued for the need for an unfettered English realism in letters. Crackanthorpe moved with a literary cohort; *Wreckage* was one of a number of naturalist short story collections published in 1893. George Egerton's *Keynotes* and Henry Harland's *Mademoiselle Miss* were also published this year; two years later came Ella D'Arcy's *Monochromes* which are in the same vein, as are the stories later collected in Ella Hepworth Dixon's *One Doubtful Hour* of 1904.

Emanuela Ettorre remarks in her essay on Crackanthorpe's works that his first collection, *Wreckage*, was 'peopled by characters who build their lives upon the illusions of a love that is doomed to die, or which degenerates into abject forms of manipulation, seduction, deceit and abandonment, not to mention prostitution' (p. 35). The wreckage of the title is the wreckage of damaged relationships such as that recounted in 'Profiles' about a bookmaker's daughter and a lieutenant. She lives with her aunt whom she hates; and he must get permission from his parents to marry. She strikes her aunt and runs off and they consummate their relationship. When he leaves her alone, she becomes infatuated with a friend of his who seduces her. She becomes a prostitute and even when the lieutenant entreats her, she refuses to leave the profession for him as she does not love him. Her decline is described not as a moral but a physical withering: 'She grew careless of her dress and her person, and at last callous to all around her' (p. 96). The short story contains all the material for a Victorian three-decker condensed into fifty-three pages.

A more specifically 1890s theme is presented in 'A Conflict of Egoisms' which is set in the world of print. Crackanthorpe dwells on the impossibility of establishing harmonious relationships in an urban society characterized by solitary lives. A successful writer, Oswald Nowell, exudes 'the tolerance of indifference' (p. 102). He encounters Letty Moore, the daughter of a sub-editor on a

halfpenny evening daily paper. She works her way up, 'in and out of the narrow, grimy building in Fleet Street, doing all manner of odd jobs, carrying messages, copying and answering letters, after a while working up paragraphs and even writing leaderettes' (p. 103). She is made a sub-editor on a ladies' weekly and when two years later the editor dies, she gets the job. Nowell proposes only to discover that in marriage they cannot communicate, and he tries to drown himself by putting stones in his pockets but, a weak man, he dies from the exertion of the attempt.

These stories encompass much of Crackanthorpe's world: the woman in 'Profiles' unable to maintain either of the relationships she has been involved in; the man in 'A Conflict of Egoisms' following an unsuccessful marriage with suicide. As Ettorre notes, the contemplation of suicide or failed suicide is a common theme in Crackanthorpe's stories.

Crackanthorpe's female characters range from career women to frivolous opportunists, and prostitutes with no shame for their work. Sometimes their nature is revealed too late: in 'A Dead Woman' a landlord finds out only after her death how his beloved wife had betrayed him. The men show no greater conventional morality. In 'Dissolving View' a rich man is about to marry when he receives a letter to say a chorus girl is about to give birth to his child. He goes to see her and is delighted to find she has died in childbirth, along with the child – Crackanthorpe's version of a happy ending.

The lack of morality and conventional gender roles are taken further in Crackanthorpe's next volume, *Sentimental Studies*, which is an attack on Victorian sentimentality – the unpretentious and loving are crushed by the more ambitious, or merely the more selfish. In a characteristic story, 'In Cumberland', a country vicar loves a woman who marries a squire. Years later she visits the vicar when he is ill with a fever, and he becomes convinced she is in love with him. He gets better, throws in his living, and begs her to go away with him, which she refuses to do.

The naturalistic short story in English had a very short period of glory, soon to be totally outstripped by the detective stories of Arthur Conan Doyle, the science fiction of H. G. Wells, and the fantasies of Kenneth Grahame. The 'psychological insights' praised by Henry Harland in

the work of Crackanthorpe did not long survive the century in short story form. Whether Crackanthorpe would have gone on to write novels, and profit from the future success of that form, is open to question. Rudyard Kipling took that path with very limited success and returned to the short story. Egerton never reached the success of her short stories with her novels or plays. Crackanthorpe remains forever an 1890s writer, his development cut short by his death at an age when most writers would be coming into their own. Whether he might have fulfilled his promise as the titan of English naturalism, or whether that notion was a romantic fiction nurtured by his bereaved friends is a question whose only answer can lie in this excellent collection of his work.

This is an informative, comprehensive, and detailed introduction to Crackanthorpe for those who know little about him. It is an illuminating companion edition for those already familiar with his dark vision of life in the 1890s, which his own life trajectory so much resembled.

A. S. G. Edwards, Peter Mendes, and John Stokes,
Ian Fletcher, Poet and Scholar: A List of His Publications
(Nottingham: Shoestring Press, 2019),
64 pp. IBSN 9781912524280

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It must have been the autumn of 1973 that I first met Ian Fletcher. Evening was coming on and we were both giving papers at a Pater or Beardsley conference in Brasenose College, Oxford. As we crossed one of the inner quadrangles on our way to the lecture theatre this tall, gaunt man bent over me, said: 'I won't be a minute', and disappeared into the door which led to the college chapel. I waited a few moments and he emerged murmuring to me, 'That should be all right then.' It was clear that he had been consulting the ghost of Pater about his forthcoming piece and had received a blessing from the other side. He hardly needed it for as soon as he began to speak my jaw dropped in wonder at such eloquence. Beardsley, he told his audience,

> decomposed the materials of the objective world and recomposed them into an ideal geography of his own devisal. And all this was accomplished with an icy fire of consciousness, a cold intensity that appears at first antithetical to the sensational, even melodramatic features of much of his art, and to the frenetic quest for all that can be clutched and held and possessed by one who was continuously in a state of physical dissolution.

Is this the man, I asked myself, who had been plucked from a children's library by the Renaissance scholar, Donald Gordon, and installed with almost no qualifications into the academic ranks of a university? I had just arrived in Oxford as a junior research fellow and knew very little about this remarkable man, but the acquaintance was to grow when I joined the English Department in Reading several years later.

At Reading Ian Fletcher was a force of nature. His booming voice resonated down the corridors striking a mixture of fear and awe into the growing cohort of feminist lecturers that the department was beginning to employ, for Ian was a man of the old school with few feminist sympathies. But as the Doyen of the Decadence his reputation was international. Our interests

overlapped: Pater, Ruskin, and Rossetti. We jointly taught on a Master's degree which he had founded some years previously dealing with literature and the visual arts in the long nineteenth century. But Ian did not tolerate fools, and with a capacious mind, a vast reference field in the classics, and a startling knowledge of the intimate details of life in the late nineteenth century, it was not difficult to feel both foolish and ignorant in his presence. Seminar teaching with him was not always easy. Once on a roll his attention was hard to secure or deflect, but I found a key to insert not just a word but sometimes a whole paragraph into his perorations: 'No, I think you are wrong there Ian', brought the billions of neurons firing in his brain to a sudden and startled standstill.

A little before I arrived in Reading, Ian together with Donald Gordon had achieved a considerable coup in the critical world of W. B. Yeats. The 1960s and 1970s were golden ones in work on Yeats. Richard Ellmann, Giorgio Melchiori, Jon Stallworthy, Curtis Bradford, and others had unfolded many of the mysteries of Yeats's poetry, prose, and drama, but in principally literary terms. In 1957 and again in 1961 Gordon and Fletcher turned their attention to Yeats's image-making propensity and to the numerous sources of visual imagery that influenced his work. This interdisciplinary approach was extremely novel at the time, and those who worked in both word and image tended to be dismissed as dilettantes. But they were joined in their endeavour by Frank Kermode who had worked for some time at Reading University before leaving for University College London. By this time Fletcher's reputation as a critic of the Decadence had already been established by an edition of the poems of Lionel Johnson in 1953 and this was extended into a gathering of a number of essays entitled *W. B. Yeats and His Contemporaries* which emerged in its final form in 1987. Eleven brilliant essays over three decades on John Gray, Lionel Johnson, Arthur Symons, Bedford Park, and above all the presiding genius of W. B. Yeats. This was Fletcher's characteristic mode. Short, sharp, and insightful. He published few monographs. A small study of Walter Pater in 1959 and another on Swinburne in 1973. He wrote a more substantial book on Aubrey Beardsley in 1987 and another on Herbert Horne in 1990. But this was not where

his strength lay. His mind worked in flashes of genius and his list of publications reveals the breadth, energy, and imaginative curiosity of this man with whom I worked for several years. His remarkable command of the language was evident over lunch in the Senior Common Room, his scholarship dazzled (perhaps even blinded) some of his undergraduates, but few of his colleagues were aware of the sheer range of his learning, his passion for the abstruse ways of scholarship, and the sharpness of his focus on the minutiae not only of the culture of the late nineteenth century but of the broader movements in the classical world throughout Europe. Probably seventy-five per cent of his publications consisted of reviews, though his passion for poetry runs like a golden thread through everything he touched. His spirit resembled that of Pope, Addison, Steel, and Hazlitt but this mode was swept to one side by the bulldozer of the Research Assessment Exercise. He came to writing with the scalpel and the rapier; the RAE prioritized the spade and a new generation of academic executives carrying the only currency that mattered – the monograph – in their briefcases.

Though the publication and the criticism of poetry runs through the entire length of Fletcher's career in the 1950s his interest was focused on the work of the seventeenth century as a kind of prelude to the fin de siècle. Rochester rubbed shoulders with Dowson via a shared fascination with sex and death. But in the 1960s the reviews show that Fletcher was becoming more and more fascinated with the recovery of the lost souls of the Decadence. Beginning with Pater and Wilde, Symons, Beardsley, and Johnson soon followed. But Yeats is the éminence grise behind them all with a magnificent and ground-breaking essay from Ian on 'Leda and the Swan' which takes as its starting point Yeats's decision to open his edition of the *Oxford Book of Modern Verse* with a passage from Pater's essay on Leonardo da Vinci.

The items that go to make up this bibliography are astonishing in their variety: 'The Mutations of Eros' (1955); 'Leda and St Anne' (1957); 'Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae*' (1963); a translation of Battista Guarini (1949); a translation of Alfonso de Ledesma (1950); 'The Protestant Cemetery, Tripoli' (1945). Fletcher existed in a rarefied atmosphere, an intellectual empyrean of

extraordinary and unusual ideas and insights. This bibliography with its generous and informative introduction by John Stokes is an act of homage, its enormous affection for Ian providing a small but permanent record of an achievement that might otherwise have been scattered to the winds. Those who knew or who worked with him felt privileged to share, however briefly, something of his remarkable mind, and it is this sense of privilege and affection that has undoubtedly led to the compilation of this bibliography.

Baudelaire, 'La modernité mélancolique' (Bibliothèque nationale de France, 3 November 2021 – 13 February 2022), Galerie 1, Site François-Mitterrand

Baudelaire, la modernité mélancolique, sous la direction de Jean-Marc Chatelain, BnF Éditions, 2021. ISBN 9782717728620

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The title of the latest exhibition devoted to Charles Baudelaire at the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF) may leave one unsatisfied – the emphasis on melancholy has more of a tinge of our conflict-ridden contemporary times than of the bustling and somewhat optimistic nineteenth century. Title aside, however, this is a well-conceived, richly illustrated exhibition, replete with material such as manuscripts, newspapers, and magazines where Baudelaire's poems first appeared, various editions of his works, and visual material such as paintings, lithographs, engravings, drawings, photographs, and daguerreotypes.

Like a tragic play, the exhibition consists of five acts: a prologue, three parts ('L'exil et l'errance', 'Les fantômes de la vie antérieure', and 'La déchirure mélancolique du moi'), and an epilogue centring around photographic portraits of Baudelaire by distinguished photographers of the mid-nineteenth century. Arguably the misunderstanding about melancholy, if any such misunderstanding exists, arises from the first room where the visitor is greeted by Eugène Delacroix's *Hamlet: treize sujets dessinés par Eugène Delacroix* (1843), a series of lithographs which Baudelaire owned and displayed in one of his rooms on the Île Saint-Louis. 'Cette ombre d'Hamlet', as the exhibition's prologue is titled, also displays *Portrait de Charles Baudelaire* (1844) by his friend Émile Deroy. In the painting, Baudelaire looks ironically at the viewer. At the time of composition Baudelaire was living at the Hôtel Pimodan, squandering his father's legacy by spending lavishly on art, friends, and beautiful lodgings. Soon the young spendthrift was sent abroad by his stepfather General Aupick in the hope that he might embrace a more sober lifestyle. The rest, as they say, is history, and the exhibition is attentive to Baudelaire's personal history

which it proposes to read as the story of his feelings of exile and separation. In the first part of the exhibition, exile and separation are envisaged as the foundational themes of his poetic destiny, well before Baudelaire was sent overseas. Exile appears initially as a sense of separation from his beloved mother, before turning into an exile from politics after the defeat of the Second Republic in 1848, which left him bitterly disappointed with the unjust, absurd world depicted in his essay 'Morale du joujou'. Published in *Le Monde littéraire* on 17 April 1853, the original displayed here along with the manuscript of 'L'Ivresse du chiffonnier' (1852) later published as the more explicit 'Le Vin des chiffonniers' in *Les Fleurs du mal* (1857).

Baudelaire is one of those *Bohémiens en voyage*; an embodiment of Alphonse Legros' *Le Mendiant*, (1861), which he owned and bequeathed to his publisher Poulet-Malassis. Exhibited here, Legros' unsentimental artwork complements Odilon Redon's eerie series of engravings for the 1890 edition of *Les Fleurs du mal*, published in Brussels by E. Deman. Baudelaire's love of both real and imaginary travels is further illustrated by Thomas de Quincey's 1853 edition of *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* next to Baudelaire's *Autoportrait sous l'influence du haschisch* (c. 1842-1845) and the handwritten table of contents for *Les Paradis artificiels* (1860).

In this especially rich exhibition, the *pièce de résistance* is of course *Les Fleurs du mal*. The genesis of the 1857 volume is carefully displayed with the first appearance in print of *Les Limbes* (Baudelaire's initial title from 1848 to 1852) in *Le Messager de l'Assemblée* on 9 April 1851, including eleven of the future *Fleurs du mal* pieces. Since the manuscript has not been traced and only four of the first proofs have survived, Baudelaire's corrected proofs are the only remaining documents of the near-final state of his most famous volume. These final proofs display Baudelaire's corrections, queries, and remarks to the publisher and printer, emphasizing his meticulous attention to detail as well as the exasperation of Poulet-Malassis, who nevertheless printed over 1,000 copies of the fateful book. 'Ceci et cela, IV', Gustave Bourdin's philippic in *Le Figaro* on 5 July 1857, labels Baudelaire's poetry infamous and putrid. On 11 July, Baudelaire wrote to Poulet-Malassis, imploring him to hide all copies ('Vite, cachez, mais *cachez bien* toute l'édition') as he

feared the book would be seized after a report from the Ministry of Interior excoriated it as an actionable challenge to both religion and morality. 'Voilà ce que c'est que d'envoyer *des exemplaires* au *Figaro*!!!!', Baudelaire wrote reproachingly to his unfortunate publisher. Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* had escaped censorship in February of the same year, but Baudelaire was heavily fined and seven poems were censored.

Illustrating the *Fleurs*, with its pervasive sense of death, proved another trial. Engraver Félix Bracquemond designed a frontispiece for the 1861 second edition, and the proofs of the second and third states are displayed. Baudelaire scathingly commented on the artist's errors:

> Voici l'horreur de Bracquemond. Je lui ai dit que c'était bien. Je ne savais que dire, tant j'étais étonné. Ce squelette *marche* et il est appuyé sur un *éventail* de rameaux qui *partent des côtes* au lieu de *partir des bras*. À quoi a servi le dessin décalqué d'après Langlois?

The second edition was eventually deprived of a frontispiece but featured an engraved portrait of Baudelaire after a photograph by Nadar.

Entitled 'Les fantômes de la vie antérieure', the second part of the exhibition illustrates Baudelaire's sense of exile and his experience of separation. The poet travelled abroad (though not as far as he later pretended he had), but he also traversed Paris, and the numerous lodgings he occupied are displayed on a large map of the city. Baudelaire was a staunch Parisian at a time when Baron Haussmann's transformation left the city in a defamiliarized state. Impressive prints by Charles Meryon from *Eaux-fortes sur Paris* (1854), such as *La Morgue*, testify to the experience and resonance of urban living in the early days of the Second Empire. Meryon's and Baudelaire's joint book project never saw the light of day as Meryon refused to continue with the work, but his nineteen engravings seem to echo Baudelaire's infamous 'Le Cygne' in lamenting the transformation of the capital. Changing as it was, the city still echoed revolutionary times as graphically described by Louis-Sébastien Mercier in *Le Nouveau Paris* (1797), which provided Baudelaire with the visual term 'tableau' as the title of a section in the second edition of *Les Fleurs du mal*.

In contrast to his depiction of the city, Baudelaire's exoticism is partly imaginary, and partly predicated on genuine travels to places as far afield as the Mascarene Islands. The walls in this part of the exhibition are decorated with lavish illustrations from Jacques-Gérard Milbert's *Voyage pittoresque à l'Île-de-France, au cap de Bonne-Espérance et à l'Île de Ténériffe: atlas* (1812). Most famously, Baudelaire's exoticism is embodied by his mistress, the beautiful Jeanne Duval. However, his first tribute to a woman of colour was 'À une créole', celebrating the beauty of Emmelina Autard de Bragard and commissioned by her husband. Published in *L'Artiste* on 25 May 1845, the sonnet was signed with Baudelaire's name for the first time: 'Baudelaire Dufays'. It was later published as 'À une dame créole' in *Les Fleurs du mal*.

In the third part of the exhibition, 'La déchirure mélancolique du moi', Baudelaire's melancholy is shown to arise from an intimate experience of paradox – his attraction to both God and Satan, the spiritual and the animalistic. Such duality translates as 'spleen', an inner rift that neither love, poetry, opium, nor Satan himself, can heal, and that exerts a tyranny upon man as shown for instance in 'L'Horloge' (1860), a poem inspired by Théophile Gautier which later became the conclusion to the *Spleen et Idéal* section of *Les Fleurs du mal*. Baudelaire found another source of melancholy in the work of his beloved writers such as Honoré de Balzac, Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve, Pétrus Borel, Victor Hugo, and François-René de Chateaubriand, the founding figure of what Baudelaire called 'la grande école de la mélancolie'. Baudelaire's attraction to death is also illustrated by Rodolphe Bresdin's dramatic engraving *La Comédie de la Mort* (1854), which was later described by Des Esseintes in J.-K. Huysmans's *À rebours* (1884), and by his translations of Poe which he divided into *Histoires extraordinaires, Nouvelles Histoires extraordinaires*, and *Histoires grotesques et sérieuses*. The first short story, 'Révélation magnétique', appeared in *La Liberté de penser: revue philosophique et littéraire* on 15 January 1848, a few weeks before the 1848 Revolution. Poe would occupy a special place for Baudelaire from 1851 onwards: out of the American's sixty seven short stories, he translated forty three. Contemplating a new edition of *Histoires extraordinaires* and *Nouvelles Histoires extraordinaires*, Poulet-Malassis commissioned

Alphonse Legros to create engravings. The project was never completed but Legros, whom Baudelaire praised as a painter and as an engraver, produced six uncanny engravings highlighting the eeriness of *Le Scarabée d'or*, *La Vérité sur le cas de M. Valdemar*, *Le Chat noir*, *Bérénice*, *Le Puits et le Pendule*, and *Ombre*.

How Baudelaire's dandyism and heroization of modern life qualify as melancholic remains questionable; however, it is always interesting to see the 1845 copy of Jules Barbey d'Aurevilly's *Du dandysme et de G. Brummell* which Baudelaire requested from its author, along with some 1838 prints of 'Costumes parisiens' from the *Journal des dames et des modes* featuring lean, masculine silhouettes. Baudelaire commented upon dandies in the third part of *Le Peintre de la vie moderne* (another journalistic contribution to *Le Figaro*, on 3 December 1863). This seminal text for art criticism was the result of his admiration for Constantin Guys, the reporter, artist, flâneur, and watercolourist, whose *Promenade aux Champs-Élysées, voitures et promeneurs* (1852-1860) illustrates the variety of modern life. Baudelaire's attempt to capture urban evanescence suggests the problematic nature of identity and a fixation on the self, preoccupations that inaugurate his volume of prose poems *Le Spleen de Paris*. This is exemplified on a more intimate level through the display of an autographed manuscript of *Mon cœur mis à nu* (1859-1866), Baudelaire's famous diary recording his hatred of the century but also betraying his ambivalence, a sentiment echoed in an 1863 letter to his mother about the composition of *Mon cœur mis à nu*. This work remained unfinished and exists only as a series of fragmentary notes, the order of which was devised by Poulet-Malassis, their final recipient.

The final part of the exhibition, 'Baudelaire en son miroir', is devoted to the poet's portraits and self-portraits. Baudelaire consistently sketched his own portrait and was repeatedly photographed by the most creative photographers of the times such as Nadar and Étienne Carjat. Their photographs underline how the artist took an active part in the construction of his image. Nadar photographed him on three occasions in his studio in 1855, 1860, and 1862. These photographs share a striking feature: the jet-black eyes of the poet which challenge the viewer.

Two were made in 1855; in 1860, three more were added including a blurred photograph of the poet (the current hypothesis is that he intentionally moved to obtain that effect). Quite different are the last two portraits showing how Baudelaire perfectly adapted to the early art of photography and how Nadar helped him to adopt a more natural attitude sharply contrasting with the constrained unnatural pose of the 1860s bourgeoisie. Carjat's small daguerreotype reminds viewers that the technique produces small works of uncanny precision. The last portrait is perhaps the most moving as it demonstrates that an ailing Baudelaire still maintained his desire for self-representation. This epilogue is perhaps the most melancholy part of the exhibition. Viewers leave the large comfortable rooms of the BnF with a finer understanding of Baudelaire's life: the manuscripts, images, printed materials, and delicate objects succeed in delineating the life of the poet, art critic, and translator, and all lead to that last, terribly melancholic portrait in which Baudelaire's eyes convey an expression of jadedness, misery, despair, but also of final and ineradicable irony.

Notes on Contributors

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Bénédicte Coste teaches Victorian literature and culture at the Université de Bourgogne, France. She mainly works on British decadent writers (Ernest Dowson, Arthur Symons) and their reception and presence in French letters. She has translated Pater's *The Renaissance* and other essays into French, along with other writings by Arthur Symons, Vernon Lee, John and Addington Symonds. With Dr Caroline Crépiat, she is preparing the 'Décabase' – a database of translations of Decadent poets in a selection of French periodicals between 1880 and 1914 (decabase.u-bourgogne.fr).

Frankie Dytor is an AHRC-funded PhD candidate in the History of Art department at the University of Cambridge. Their work has appeared in the *Journal of Victorian Culture,* with essays appearing in the edited collections *Charlotte Mew: Poetics, Ecologies, Bodies* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2022) and *Couples in Art History* (Sorbonne, 2022). In 2020-2021 Frankie was a guest researcher at the University of Hamburg, as a Hanseatic Scholar of the Alfred Toepfer Foundation.

Stephen Komarnyckyj is a poet and translator whose work has appeared in *Index on Censorship*, *Modern Poetry in Translation*, and many other journals. He spends most of his life looking after four rescue dogs from Bosnia while persuading himself that adopting a fifth would be sheer folly.

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fantastique clinique (Hermann, 2014), and directed, within the HC19 ANR project, the collective anthology *Savants et écrivains: portraits croisés dans la France du XIXe siècle* (APU, 2014). This latest research focuses on the imagination of nutrition, in line with nineteenth-century scientific theories. In this context, he has published an essay, 'L'Autre siècle de Messer Gaster? Physiologies de l'estomac dans la littérature du XIXe siècle' (Hermann, 2017), co-ordinated the issue of *Romantisme* devoted to 'La Gourmandise' and published two collective works at the Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg – *Allégories de l'estomac au XIXe siècle: Littérature, art, philosophie* and *Dis-moi ce tu manges, je te dirai ce que tu es: Fictions identitaires, fictions alimentaires* (2020).

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EDITORIAL

Jane Desmarais (Editor-in-Chief) is Professor of English and Director of the Decadence Research Centre in the Department of English and Creative Writing at Goldsmiths, University of London. She has written numerous essays on the theme of decadence and has co-edited several works, including *Decadence: An Annotated Anthology* (with Chris Baldick, Manchester University Press, 2012), *Arthur Symons: Selected Early Poems* (with Chris Baldick, MHRA, 2017), and *Decadence and the Senses* (with Alice Condé, Legenda, 2017). She is co-editor with David Weir of *Decadence and Literature* (2019), a volume in the Cambridge Critical Concepts series, and *The Oxford Handbook of Decadence* (2021), and is currently working on a critical edition of *Decadent Plays, 1890-1930* with Adam Alston (forthcoming with Bloomsbury in 2023). Her monograph, *Monsters Under Glass: A Cultural History of Hothouse Flowers, 1850 to the Present*, was published by Reaktion in 2018.

Alice Condé (Deputy Editor) is Lecturer in the Department of English and Creative Writing at Goldsmiths, University of London. She is co-editor of *Decadence and the Senses* (with Jane Desmarais, Legenda, 2017) and *In Cynara's Shadow: Collected Essays on Ernest Dowson* (with Jessica Gossling, Peter Lang, 2019). Her essay on 'Decadence and Popular Culture' appears in Jane Desmarais and David Weir's *Decadence and Literature* (2019), and 'Contemporary Contexts: Decadence Today and Tomorrow' appears in Desmarais and Weir's *Oxford Handbook of Decadence* (2021).

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Robert Pruett-Vergara (Reviews Editor) is currently preparing a monograph of his thesis, *Remy de Gourmont and the Crisis of Erotic Idealism*, and his work investigates the interplay of erotic and philosophical discourses at the transition from Symbolism to modernism. Alongside the Cercle des Amateurs de Remy de Gourmont (CARGO), he co-organized the *Fin de Siècle Symposium* at Balliol College, Oxford, in 2016. In 2018, he co-organized *Decadence, Magic(k), and the Occult* at Goldsmiths College, University of London. His chapter on 'Dowson, France, and the Catholic Image' appears in *In Cynara's Shadow: Collected Essays on Ernest Dowson* (ed. by Alice Condé and Jessica Gossling).