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The Poison of Literature[1]
On the Social and Literary Construction of Baron Jacques d'Adelswärd-Fersen's 'Black Masses' Scandal

Alexandre Burin

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> Par quelle littérature malsaine, l'âme du jeune baron Jacques d'Adelswärd, a-t-elle été pervertie?
>
> [what poisonous literature corrupted young Baron Jacques d'Adelswärd's soul?][2]

In *Le Canard sauvage*, 1903, Alfred Jarry states that 'après tout, c'est la littérature qui prédestine les noms, même s'ils sont déjà historiques, et qui dicte ses conditions à la vie' [after all, it is literature that predestines names, even if they are already historic, and which imposes its conditions upon life].[3] This statement was made in the wake of the 'Black Masses' scandal that broke in the press during the summer of 1903. Two young men – Baron Jacques d'Adelswärd-Fersen and Count Hamelin de Warren – were arrested on the charge of being involved in a moral scandal that was rumoured to include underage boys at orgiastic 'ceremonies' inspired by Nero and Elagabalus, held twice a week in Adelswärd-Fersen's flat, in Paris' *beaux quartiers*.

Over the course of a month – and later during the trial in November-December 1903 – this case was relentlessly covered in the press through sensational articles that combined Satanist symbolism with the blurring of referential and fictional discourses. Along with sexual perversion, the role of modern literature was severely questioned in public debates: the literary production of decadent writers like Charles Baudelaire, J.-K. Huysmans and Jean Lorrain was accused of corrupting the youth, while in the same movement it also generated the transgressive representation of the scandal as 'Black Masses' in the press. In Belle Époque France, the 'littérarisation du journal' [the literarization of the newspaper] often emerged from a process of fictionalization of everyday life.[4] As a consequence, the frontiers between fiction and information

appeared more and more porous. For this reason, Adelswärd-Fersen's 'Black Masses' scandal stands as a case study of the issue of literature intoxicating the 'matrice médiatique' [media matrix] as much as the media space intoxicating the 'matrice littéraire' [literary matrix].[5]

In this article, I analyse the transgressive representation of the 1903 'Black Masses' scandal as both a social and literary construction that emerged in the intermediary space of the newspaper. I argue that the homosexual interpretation of black masses and the ever-generative influence of literature on the media fashioned this case at the time of profound anxieties in French society (in particular, secularism, anti-Semitism, and degeneration). Through the 'Black Masses' scandal and its self-reference in both the press and literature, I also intend to show emergent authorial strategies – literary postures,[6] social discourse, transfictionality and transmediality – in literary as well as media sociability in *fin-de-siècle* France.[7] As a result, the public image of Adelswärd-Fersen emerges from both literature and a social imaginary (the press and the public): it is structured from what Alain Viala calls a strategy of positioning in the literary – or cultural – field.[8] Thus Adelswärd-Fersen's posture is multiple and interactive. His position 'relève d'un processus *interactif*: elle est co-construite, à la fois dans le texte et hors de lui, par l'écrivain, les divers médiateurs qui la donnent à lire (journalistes, critiques, biographes, etc.) et les publics' [emerges from an *interactive* process: it is co-constructed, both in and out of the text, by the writer and the mediators who write about it (journalists, critics, biographers, etc.) but also the public].[9] Following the issue of transgressive representation relentlessly addressed in the 'Black Masses' scandal, the interest then also lies in the fact that the media and literary representations of Adelswärd-Fersen come out as real and textual, but also imaginary.

The 'Black Masses' Scandal

On 10 July 1903, a moral scandal broke in the French press. *Le Journal* and *Le Matin*, two of the most important press organs of Belle Époque France, published columns respectively entitled 'Un Scandale' [A Scandal] and 'Messes noires' [Black Masses] about the arrest of 'Baron d'A…'

on suspicion of re-enacting modern Saturnalias with young boys. They also revealed that the police were actively looking for 'Count de W…', the Baron's accomplice. In the following days, the case was covered daily in dozens of newspapers and magazines,[10] through sensational titles that borrow from Decadent literature and Symbolist Satanism, such as 'Les Noces de Satan' [Satan's Black Wedding], 'Les Messes noires de Paris' [Paris Black Masses] (*La Presse*, 11 July), 'En pleine bacchanale' [Into Bacchanalia] (*Le Matin*, 11 July), 'Le Roman d'un névrosé' [The Novel of a Neurotic Man] (*Le Matin*, 14 July), and 'Pourriture' [Putrefaction] (*L'Aurore*, 14 July). Even from the very early stages, the literary imaginary played an explanatory and referential role in the case. The names of the two young men were revealed in the press on 12 July. Articles published long descriptions of Adelswärd-Fersen, a twenty-three-year-old aristocrat and poet, admirer of eighteenth-century libertine writers and Satanists of the following century, and his friend Count Hamelin de Warren, twenty-two years of age, 'still missing'.[11] Adelswärd-Fersen was a very rich aristocrat of Swedish descent; on his paternal side, he was related to Count Axel von Fersen, who was known as the alleged lover of Marie Antoinette.[12] He was also a writer and a poet. In 1903, he had already published six volumes of rather mediocre and formulaic poetry – including *Ébauches et Débauches*,[13] *L'Hymnaire d'Adonis, À la façon de M. le Marquis de Sade*[14] – that often address gender ambiguity and homoeroticism. They had a low print run, and are now almost totally forgotten.

In *Le Journal* (12 July), journalist Arthur Dupin wrote a four-column article that gave its name to the whole case: the 'Black Masses' scandal. Over a period of several months, it was reported that both Adelswärd-Fersen and Warren would pick up young boys from the Lycée Carnot and other prestigious schools and take them to their Avenue de Friedland *garçonnière*, where they indulged in exhibitionist 'tableaux vivants' and *poses plastiques*, the recreation of pagan ceremonies, poetry reading, and most notably sex. It was also said that clergymen, members of the aristocracy, courtesans and *demi-mondaines* (Liane de Pougy supposedly posed as the Callipygian Venus in one of these sessions), musicians and writers attended such ceremonies.

From the day it was revealed, the 'Black Masses' scandal generated panic and anxiety in the media, but also the public space. While most of the journalists made sensationalist claims through the association of sexual perversion with Satanism, some seemed to be more rational. As early as 11 July – only one day after the arrest – the investigating magistrate in charge of the case, M. de Valles, was interviewed in *La Presse*. He reportedly said:

> Écoutez, cette affaire n'est pas aussi compliquée que vous pouvez le croire; il s'agit, simplement, pour nous, de protéger l'enfance… Voilà le fait, très simple et très net: des enfants ont été emmenés dans l'avenue de Friedland; c'est là un crime prévu et puni par la loi […].
>
> [Listen, this case is not as complicated as you think; it is simply, for us, about protecting the youth… It is a very simple and very clear fact; children were taken to the house on Avenue de Friedland; it is a crime that is punished by law].[15]

The issue of transgressive sexual behaviour was where the real scandal lay. The *fin de siècle* was a period of transition that created a large variety of fears. Many were associated with social mobility and sexual transgressions. Homosexuality in France was decriminalized by the Penal Code of 1791 after the Revolution. However, it was still widely seen as immoral. In 1860, the age of consent was fixed at 13 years (art. 331 of the Penal Code): the police could only arrest two people of the same sex on the charge of public indecency – a prospect that seemed very difficult – or if one of them was under 13 years of age. In 1903, the public still had in mind the trials of Oscar Wilde and Georges Eekhoud.[16] As a matter of fact, in an article published by *La Presse*, journalist Fernand Hauser called Adelswärd-Fersen a 'new Oscar Wilde'. A number of articles drew comparisons between the 'Black Masses' case and the 1889 Cleveland Street scandal that involved Lord Arthur Somerset and young male prostitutes, but also the trial of Oscar Wilde in 1895. In the light of revelations that arose from police investigations and young witnesses, as well as a widespread heteronormative discourse, the two young men would then risk a serious sentence.[17]

In *fin-de-siècle* French literature and culture, the association of sexual transgression with occult practices was highly suggestive. Satanism stood as 'a *floating signifier*, a loose semantic

cannon that can be filled with a variety of meaning and used accordingly in discursive battles.'[18] While Valles and the judicial body emphasized the immoral dimension of the case, the media constructed a decadent imaginary around it, whose sensational titles barely hid a commercial purpose. In fact, most newspapers never really ceased to use symbolist Satanism to cover Adelswärd-Fersen's case and trial. In 1903, a few weeks before the Avenue de Friedland scandal, occultism expert and 'collaborator and friend' Gabriel Legué had been tirelessly promoting his new book on black masses in the press.[19] Following his expertise and after the police found skulls and candelabra in the *garçonnière*, the journalists quickly created a link between Adelswärd-Fersen and Satanism. At the time, the Satanist rhetoric was largely used in the pathological denunciation of homosexuality, for both Satanism and homosexuality stood as 'abnormal' practices in the collective imagination. From 11 July onwards, the press largely denounced Adelswärd-Fersen's aristocratic and decadent lineage, and journalist J. Philip engaged in a diatribe against the degeneration of French nobility. But if articles focused on the issue of caste and class they also quickly suggested that the weekly reunions that took place in the Baron's flat were the theatre of homoerotic and pederastic activities.

In this respect, the relationship between aestheticism and sexuality was often blurred in journalistic articles. Lengthy descriptions of Adelswärd-Fersen's and Warren's flats appeared in the press following the day of the arrest. Along with the nature of the activities recorded in the *garçonnière*, the Satanic décor of the flats reads like a justification of the Count's sexual deviance. The journalists also evoked the vices of high society: decadent aristocracy and the modern dandy, heredity, neurosis, and hysteria are all themes that run throughout *fin-de-siècle* literature (such as the works of Baudelaire, Huysmans, Rachilde, Catulle Mendès, Lorrain, Remy de Gourmont). They published substantial descriptions of Adelswärd-Fersen's private income, accounts of his wardrobe, as well as the decoration of his flat. In *Le Matin* (11 July) the journalist drew a list of decadent objects found there: 'têtes de mort, cierges, étoles, peignoirs sombres, tuniques, corsets, photographies sadiques et lettres édifiantes échangées entre lui et son

complice, le marquis de Warren' [skulls, altar candles, clergy stoles, dark robes, tunics, corsets, sadistic photographs and edifying letters exchanged between him and his accomplice, Marquis de Warren].[20] He compared the *garçonnière* to the solitary retreat of the Duc des Esseintes, Huysmans's hero in *À rebours* (1884). As we can see, while the November trial of Adelswärd-Fersen and Count Hamelin de Warren directly dealt with sexual perversion, the press coverage of the 'Black Masses' scandal in July largely focused on the issue of transgressive representation borrowed from Decadent aesthetics. In this way, the imagination of the media constructed a literary trial that incriminated modern literature in the press.

Intoxications – The 'Poison of Literature'

At the end of the nineteenth century and throughout the Belle Époque, newspapers like *L'Écho de Paris* or *Le Journal*, which both sold more than 300,000 copies on a daily basis, still followed, to a certain extent, a narrative model inherited from literary fiction. Their front pages all presented short narratives, sketches, or minute narratives written by famous writers like Catulle Mendès, Théodore de Banville, Jean Richepin, or Jean Lorrain.[21] It is proof that there still was a form of continuity in the collusion between fiction and information. The combination of the 'matrice médiatique' [media matrix] and the 'matrice littéraire du journal' [literary matrix of the newspaper][22] then produced new journalistic genres that were all applied to the 'Black Masses' scandal: sections like 'faits divers', interviews, reportage, or mundane chronicles were particularly welcoming to the literary techniques of narration and fictionalization. As Guillaume Pinson demonstrates, the sociocritical hypothesis of a 'romanesque généralisé' [generalized fiction] in the social discourse of the nineteenth century proves that writer-journalists did not necessarily recognize a separation between information and invention in the space of the newspaper.[23] Unsurprisingly, it would seem that many descriptions of the Baron actually stemmed from literature: his own or others'. In *Gil Blas*, 12 July, Pierre Mortier used long quotations from Adelswärd-Fersen's latest novel *Notre-Dame des mers mortes* (1902) to give an account of the

Baron's personality before concluding that 'with the man we can judge the writer'.[24] Within this context, one could read Mortier's comment as 'with the character we can judge the writer, and the man'. The press also published rejection letters from authors that Adelswärd-Fersen approached in order to write a preface to his volumes of poetry (namely, François Coppée, Edmond Rostand, and Fernand Gregh), along with long excerpts of Adelswärd-Fersen's poetry. The letter sent by Coppée mentions that *Ébauches et débauches* is 'paré de la beauté du diable' [adorned with the Devil's beauty], to which journalist Fernand Hauser added: 'M. Coppée n'eut-il pas, en écrivant cette phrase, le pressentiment du satanisme de M. d'Adelswärd?' [didn't M. Coppée sense, when writing this sentence, M. d'Adelswärd's Satanism?]. Hauser finally referred to the same volume of poetry as displaying 'une pointe d'hellénisme inquiétante' [a touch of disturbing Hellenism]. This directly points towards homosexuality.[25] These clues were meant to give a literary portrait of the Baron and contextualize the case. In doing so, the journalists also interviewed anyone likely to give out sensational information about Adelswärd-Fersen, pederasty or the practice of black masses.[26]

In *fin-de-siècle* France, Satanism gave rise to authentic anxieties.[27] Alternative spirituality, together with processes of modernization, especially the issue of secularization (the law on the Separation of the State and the Church was voted in 1905), mobilized public opinion, which saw in the Satanic imagination a cultural signifier linked with countercultural conspiracy, and moral and religious transgression including radical socialism, anarchism, anticlericalism, and same-sex relations. In his study *Satanism, Magic and Mysticism in Fin-de-siècle France*, Robert Ziegler states that 'evil was manifested by the very multiplicity of one's adversaries: bankers, Protestants, Freemasons, Republicans, all conspiring with the Jews in their scheme to world conquest'.[28] However, it is interesting to note that the majority of the newspapers that covered Adelswärd-Fersen's scandal through a Satanist rhetoric were both republican and anticlerical (*Le Journal, Le Matin, Le Petit Parisien, La Presse*).[29] The interpretation of black masses as sexually transgressive was therefore the essential motivation of the press, alongside the perceived power of their

decadent aesthetics, be they textual or visual in (often satirical) magazines [see Fig. 1], for it quickly became clear that the 'Black Masses' scandal did not involve any actual black masses or further Satanic practices.

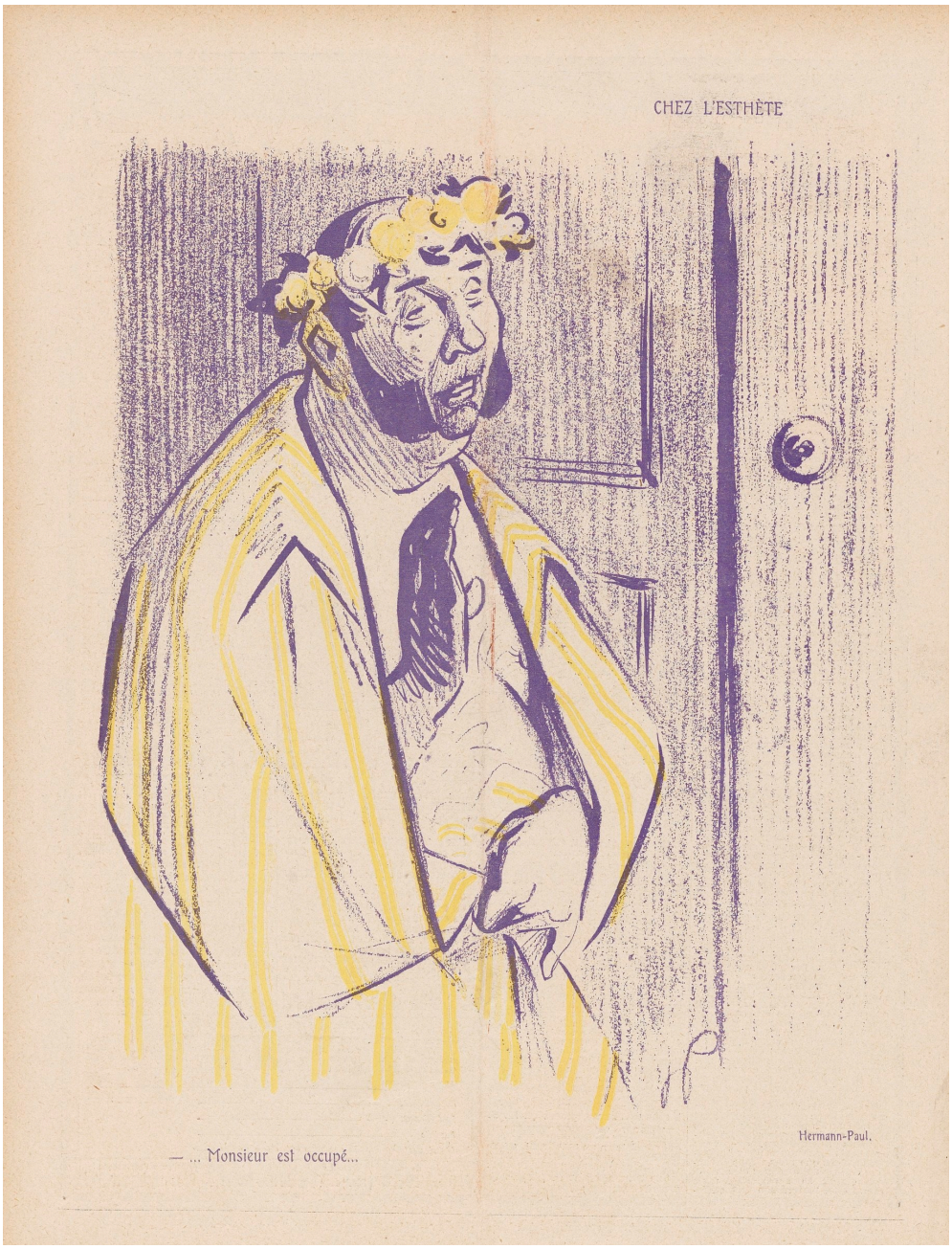

Figure 1. René Georges Hermann-Paul, 'Chez l'esthète', in *Le Canard Sauvage*, 19 (26 July-1 August 1903). The caption reads: 'Monsieur est occupé…' [Monsieur is busy…] Source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Investigating magistrate Valles stated *de facto* that '[i]l ne faudrait pas trop faire de littérature autour de ce fait divers; la Messe Noire, pour nos prévenus, n'était qu'un prétexte' [it would be better not to produce too much literature around this 'fait divers'; the Black Mass was nothing but a pretext used by the two accused men].[30] Consequently, I propose that the issue at stake in this case is an issue of representation. It appears that the referential discourse used to address the context and the descriptions of the two young men involved in the 'Black Masses' scandal was often merged with an imaginary that stemmed from modern Decadent literature. For instance, Huysmans's novel *Là-bas* (1891) shows the alliance of Satanism to sodomy, but also to the textual rather than the real.[31] The notion of a 'poison of literature' then stood as both the cause and the consequence of Adelswärd-Fersen's case. It was a crucial factor in the literary and mythical construction of the 'Black Masses' scandal in the press.

The Satanist symbolism used in the construction of the 'Black Masses' scandal was largely borrowed from social discourse on transgressive sexualities and modern Decadent literature. In that respect, parallels were drawn between Adelswärd-Fersen's 'ceremonies' and the literary production of writers such as Jules Michelet, Huysmans, and Jules Bois.[32] The latter authors' expertise about Satanism and the practice of black masses was addressed at an early stage in the press. The interview of Huysmans was the first published in *La Presse* (12 July).[33] The author of *Là-bas* appeared categorical:

> Des messes noires? Nous dit M. Huysmans. Mais, cher monsieur, il n'y a pas là trace de messes noires. Il fallait à ces sadiques un dieu. Cela faisait mieux d'avoir dans leur appartement des guirlandes de roses et des têtes de morts. Mais il ne faut aucun de ces objets pour célébrer la messe noire. Pour cette cérémonie infernale, il faut un prêtre pour officier, une femme nue et un enfant pour égorger. Je crois qu'aucun des personnages n'est passé par le rez-de-chaussée de l'avenue Friedland.
>
> [Black Masses? Huysmans tells us. Dear Sir, there's no trace of black masses there. These sadists needed a god. Their flats looked better with rose garlands and skulls. But you don't need such objects to celebrate a black mass. For this diabolical ceremony you need a priest to preside over it and a naked woman; you also need to cut a child's throat. I don't think any of these characters passed through the ground floor of the avenue de Friedland flat].[34]

The journalist reported that Huysmans then produced a small book that gave an exact account of a black mass, presided by Abbé Guibourg.[35] The cover of the book was red. This detail seemed to redirect the passage into fictional discourse, for the journalist wondered: 'est-ce le rouge de l'enfer?' [is it the colour of hell?]. Here the genre of the chronicle definitely shows that the space of the newspaper was pervaded by literature: besides the information drawn from Huysmans, the journalist carefully chose to craft an ironical sense of suspense. The next day, Jules Bois was interviewed in *La Presse*. The author of *Le Satanisme et la magie* (1895) confirmed Huysmans's comments on occult practices. They both converged in the necessary denial that black masses took place, as well as the demystification of their own direct influence. However, Bois drew the journalist's attention to the notion of imitation at the core of these 'simulacres de messes noires' [simulacra of black masses]:

> Des messes noires… Des messes noires… me dit M. Jules Bois, on a bientôt fait parler de messes noires; je crois bien que M. d' Adelswärd se livrait à des parodies de messes noires; car pour que la messe noire soit vraiment noire, il faut des hosties… Et on n'a pas parlé d'hosties, dans le cas du jeune d' Adelswärd…
>
> [Black masses… Black masses... Jules Bois tells me, the public opinion rushed a little bit; rather, I think that M. d'Adelswärd engaged in parodies of black masses; for, to make a black mass really black, one needs Hosts… And no one talked about Hosts when it came to the young Adelswärd's case.][36]

The subversive and ironical dimension introduced by Decadent writers interviewed in the press is crucial to this whole case. The notion of parody that Bois used to describe Adelswärd-Fersen's 'ceremonies' was reflected in the sensationalist style used by the journalists in charge of covering this moral 'fait divers'. This sensationalism led to a case of aesthetic *mise en abyme* of the matter in the press. Indeed, black masses could be described as parodies of the religious services of the Roman Catholic Church. Adelswärd-Fersen's 'ceremonies' would then be parodies of parodies, later *parodically* covered in the press and visual culture [see Fig. 2]. Bois' and Huysmans's answers to the journalists' questions annulled the Satanist hypothesis and the invention of a 'Black Masses' scandal. Yet, their participation in the debate paradoxically legitimized and supported the fabrication of an aesthetic dimension around the case. As I will show later, Adelswärd-Fersen

would use the same technique in his 1905 novel *Lord Lyllian, Messes noires*. Bois concluded his interview by saying that 'le rite de sang et de luxure […] est devenu une amusette de poètes dépravés' [the ritual of blood and lust […] has become the distraction of degenerate poets]. Max Nordau's concept of degeneration, employed by the press and social discourses at the time, applied to Decadent literature and the notion of 'distraction' served as a concrete argument for this pathological case.[37] According to Bois, the scandal was nothing more than a whole simulacrum of ancient black masses, perpetrated by imaginative young men intoxicated with the 'poison of literature'.

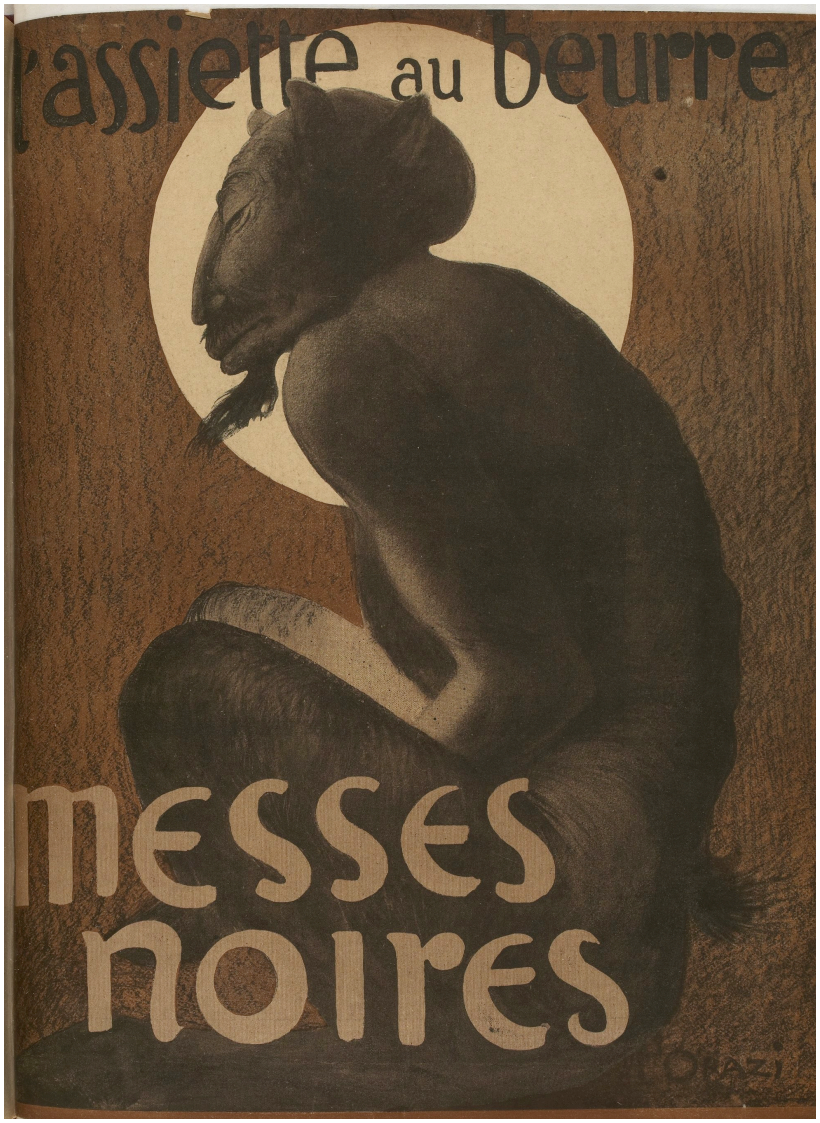

Figure 2. Manuel Orazi, *L'Assiette au beurre* (front cover), 141 (12 December 1903). (Source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France).

Fin-de-siècle Echoes: Adelswärd-Fersen and Jean Lorrain

At the turn of the century, the society press created a space where a certain representation of society life as both spectacle and social comedy was blooming. Indeed, the nineteenth century was the era of 'media sociability' in which society practices became standardized and mass-advertised. In that respect, every movement and attitude became a strategy of self-promotion. Pinson states that

> La presse incarne le règne de l'apparence mondaine, publicisée à outrance, éclatée, étalée. Contre cette réalité de surface, morcelée, la 'réalité' du roman, ce n'est peut-être pas tant l'au-delà que l'en-dessous de la représentation médiatique.
>
> [The press embodies the influence of social appearance, which is excessively publicized, exploded and spread out. Against that crumbled, apparent reality, the 'reality' of the novel lies below, rather than beyond, the media representation.][38]

Jean Lorrain was very much aware of this sense of illusion provided by the constant representation of social life as a form of spectacle. He wrote extensively to denounce the hypocrisy of the higher classes in 'Pall Mall Semaines', his series of chronicles for *L'Écho de Paris*. Although at first indirect, Lorrain's role in the 'Black Masses' case in the press is vital for a better comprehension of the strategies of positioning in the literary and cultural field.

Proclaimed 'fanfaron des vices' [braggart of vices] by fellow writer Rachilde, Jean Lorrain was certainly one of the most scandalous writers of *fin-de-siècle* France.[39] His novels *Monsieur de Phocas* (1901) and *Les Noronsoff* (1902) both portray the symptoms of hereditary degeneracy through the stories of the perverted and blasé dandy Jean de Fréneuse – 'Monsieur de Phocas' – and debauched sadist Prince Wladimir Noronsoff, last representative of a dying race cursed by a Bohemian some centuries ago.[40] Adelswärd-Fersen was all too familiar with Lorrain's work, and the two writers even met in Venice in 1901. Journalists quickly made connections between the Baron's 'pagan orgies' and Lorrain's literature. Indeed, several newspapers revealed that Adelswärd-Fersen's excessive over-identification led him to sign some of his poems 'Monsieur de Phocas' and *Sonyeuse* – the title of Lorrain's 1891 famous decadent tale. It was even reported

by *Le Journal* collaborator Arthur Dupin that during his military service Adelswärd-Fersen attempted to re-enact a scene of Satanic nude debauchery from Lorrain's *Les Noronsoff*. Entitled 'Le souper de Trimalcion', as a reference to Petronius' *Satyricon*, at a dinner party the hero unveils the naked bodies of three men placed on the dining table [see Fig. 3].

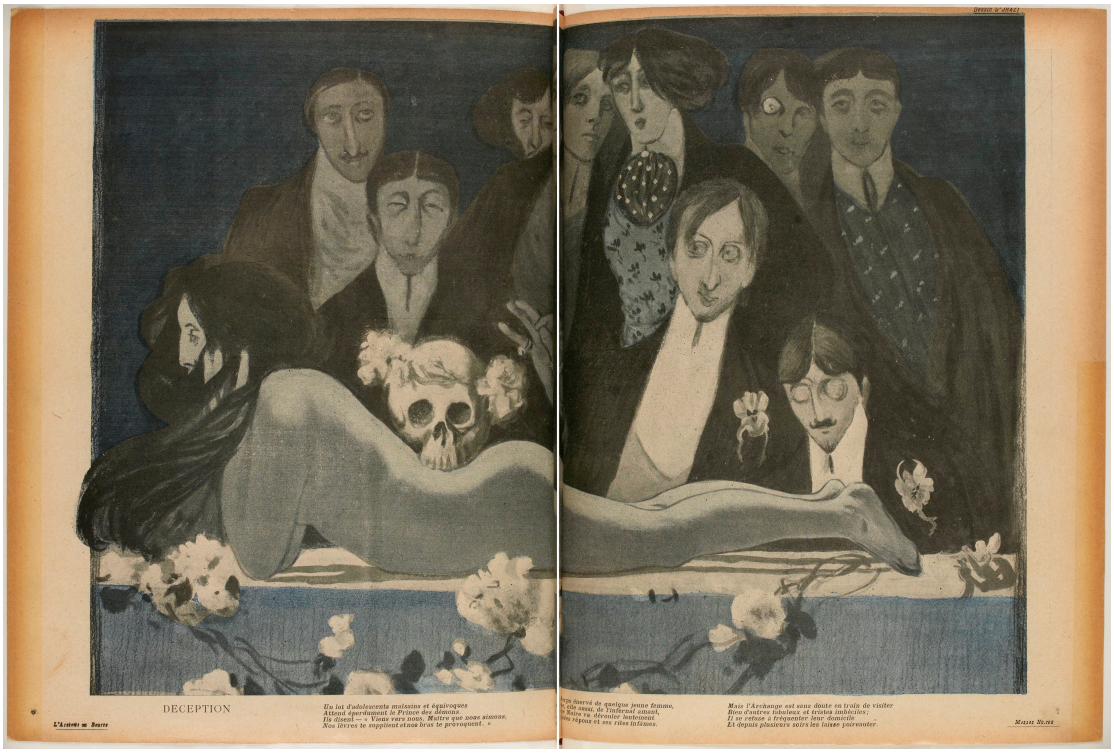

Figure 3. Manuel Orazi, 'Messes noires', in *L'Assiette au beurre*, 141 (12 December 1903). Source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Dupin strongly alluded to the connection with Lorrain: 'une fête dont les *préparatifs* étaient empruntés visiblement à l'œuvre d'un de nos meilleurs écrivains modernes' [a party whose *preparations* were evidently borrowed from the works of one of our best modern writers].[41] Mortier, in *Gil Blas*, was more direct:

> Il lit M. de Phocas: toute la perversité des héros de Jean Lorrain l'exalte, il l'imitera, le copiera même, il s'exercera à penser comme lui, à penser et à sentir comme lui. Monsieur

> de Phocas avait un compagnon de débauche: d'Esthal [*sic*], Jacques d'Adelswärd s'acoquine avec M. de Warren […].
>
> [He reads M. de Phocas: all the perversity of Jean Lorrain's heroes thrills him; he will imitate him, he will even copy him, he will practise to think like him – to think and feel like him. Monsieur de Phocas had a partner in his debauchery: d'Esthal [*sic*], Jacques d'Adelswärd runs with M. de Warren].[42]

Lorrain was not just one of the leading models of Decadent literature; he was also a journalist and ruthless chronicler of Belle Époque France. When the 'Black Masses' scandal broke in the press in 1903, Lorrain was travelling in Southern France and Corsica but he still remained a regular collaborator on *Le Journal* and he had access to the continental press. He was therefore aware of the case.[43] Coincidentally, *Le Journal* published Lorrain's short story 'L'Horreur du Simple' [The Terror of the Simple] on the very day of the scandal. The story deals with hysteria, occultism, and most importantly it denounces the imitation of fiction: the final lines mention 'la manie du romanesque et le poison de la littérature' [the obsession of fiction and the poison of literature]. This indirectly prefigured the spectacular treatment of Adelswärd-Fersen's case in the press and a public debate about the disappearing dichotomy between fiction and reality in both literature and the press.

1903 was a tumultuous year for Lorrain. He was accused of libel by the Decadent artist Jeanne Jacquemin after she recognized herself in a report that he published in *Le Journal* (11 January).[44] On 6 May, he was fined 2000 francs and sentenced to two months in prison. He was also ordered to pay 25,000 francs for damages to Jacquemin – a considerable sum of money for the time. Thibaut d'Anthonay states that in fact it is more likely that Judge Puget sentenced Lorrain 'afin de lui faire payer le prix de la provocation et du scandale qu'il a, jusque là, pratiqués en (presque) totale impunité' [in order to make him pay the price of the provocation and the scandal that he has, until now, been practising (almost) freely].[45] In the summer of 1903, Lorrain was preparing himself for the result of the appeal when the news broke that police had arrested Adelswärd-Fersen and Warren.[46] Clearly, Lorrain did not want the 'Black Masses' scandal and the veiled allegations against him in the press to contribute towards further moral and financial

concerns as this would compromise his status and impede his literary projects.[47] However, as I will show, Lorrain also anticipated the profit of instant publicity.

On 2 and 3 August, he published a two-part article entitled 'Le baron d'Adelswärd à Venise' [Baron d'Adelswärd in Venice]. The piece focused on a meeting with the Baron in Venice in 1901. Like most journalists, Lorrain described Adelswärd-Fersen as a literary pathological case: 'deux toxiques infectaient également ce jeune homme: le poison de la littérature et le poison de Paris' [two poisons equally corrupted that young man: the poison of literature and the poison of Paris].[48] In the article, Lorrain emphasized Adelswärd-Fersen's reckless ability to mix reality and fiction while in Venice, in comparison to his questionable literary skills. The last sentence reads: 'Sans le vouloir, inconsciemment peut-être, il avait fait de la littérature, de la mauvaise littérature' [Without wanting it, perhaps, unconsciously, he had made literature, bad literature].[49] This charge could also apply to the Avenue de Friedland ceremonies: Adelswärd-Fersen stood, according to Lorrain, as 'a victim of the poison of literature' eager for publicity and recognition, who often adopted a variety of postures in private and public spaces. Incidentally, in *L'Aurore* (13 July), the journalist published an extract of a letter sent by a friend of Adelswärd-Fersen, who wrote: 'c'est l'école des jeunes poètes qui veulent faire de leur personne une réclame pour leurs œuvres' [it is the school of young poets who want to create publicity for their works out of their personae].[50] Lorrain's argument did not differ from Huysmans's and Bois'. He emphasized the issue of debauchery: 'si M. d'Adelswärd parodia jamais quelque chose, il parodia surtout la folie de Néron, – d'un tout petit Néron du faubourg Saint-Honoré' [if M. d'Adelswärd ever parodied something, he parodied Nero's madness – a very minor Nero from the Faubourg Saint-Honoré].[51] From a journalist's perspective, he insisted on how literature seemed to affect and corrupt the new generation. Drawing a parallel with both Adelswärd-Fersen and the 'Black Masses' scandal, he concentrated on how the transgressive features of Huysmans's Mme de Chantelouve influenced many women in *fin-de-siècle* France. He stated that many recognized themselves in her. Parodying Gustave Flaubert's purported

quotation about Emma Bovary, Lorrain wrote that many women would exclaim: 'Son héroïne [Huysmans's Chantelouve], c'est moi!'[52] Consequently, Huysmans, prior to the intervention of the press, should be guilty: 'La presse y a mis beaucoup du sien […] croyez que la littérature de M. Joris-Karl Huysmans l'avait fortement préparée' [The press contributed to it greatly […] be sure that M. Joris-Karl Huysmans's literature had prepared it intensely].[53] Yet Lorrain seemed to forget that by accusing modern literature of corruption, he was also accusing the transgressive representation of his own literary production (his heroes are indeed often pathological cases themselves). Yet his sensationalist claim could also constitute a strategy of mystification and self-promotion. After all, if young men like Adelswärd-Fersen were 'intoxicated with the poison of literature', there is no doubt that modern readers were also well intoxicated with the poison of the press and the polysemiotic invasion of publicity in both literature and the media. Lorrain knew that well.

It is safe to argue that Lorrain was anxious about the outcome of Adelswärd-Fersen's case. Yet he, as a writer-journalist, was by definition a 'communicant' [a communicator] – or, to use a term more appropriate for the time, a *mystificateur*.[54] He was an expert in the modern techniques of communication and promotion. Consequently, and paradoxically, he also perceived what great opportunity this scandal could turn out to be for him. In a letter to Gustave Coquiot, Lorrain wrote:

> Quelles colères et quelles injures ne vont pas déchaîner mes deux papiers sur Adelswärd… et quelle réclame! […] les piquantes révélations qu'annonce l'accouplement de ces deux noms: J. d'Adelswärd et Jean Lorrain!!! Et quelle déception! rien que de la littérature.
>
> [What rage and offense my two papers on Adelswärd are going to unleash… and what publicity! […] the juicy revelations announced in the coupling of these two names: J. d'Adelswärd and Jean Lorrain!!! And what disappointment! Nothing but literature.][55]

Lorrain proved to be very insistent on this matter. In another letter he sent to journalist and writer Pierre Valdagne, Lorrain unapologetically elaborated a strategy whose sole aim was the fast sale of his works in the wake of the 'Black Masses' scandal. It was shameless opportunism. He wrote:

> ce serait peut-être le moment de relancer, sinon par la presse, mais chez les librairies […], le Vice errant et Mr de Phocas. À l'heure où toute la presse m'accuse d'avoir corrompu Mr d'Adelswards [*sic*] et d'avoir inspiré les orgies de l'avenue Friedland, ces volumes deviennent de vente. Ne l'oubliez pas.
>
> [it would perhaps be time to throw le Vice errant and Mr de Phocas again, if not in the press, in bookshops […]. At the time when all the press accuses me of corrupting Mr d'Adelswards [*sic*] and inspiring the avenue de Friedland orgies, these volumes should be for sale. Don't forget this.][56]

The relation between Lorrain's literature and Adelswärd-Fersen's life therefore proves to be of significant importance, as it reveals the intricate interplay between fiction and reality: Lorrain writes a book; Adelswärd-Fersen performs it; Lorrain retextualizes Adelswärd-Fersen's performance. And they both condemn it outwardly and reap the benefits.[57] In a way, then, to parody Wilde, it seems that 'Life imitates Art that imitates Life', and so on. In Belle Époque France, the value of 'l'écho mondain' [the society column] was essential to the selling of newspapers. Yet it also constituted a real 'literary matrix' to numerous Parisian novels. Unsurprisingly, Adelswärd-Fersen also parodied the transgressive representation of the 'Black Masses' scandal in his 1905 novel, *Lord Lyllian, Messes noires*.

Adelswärd-Fersen's *Lord Lyllian, Messes noires* (1905)

The trial of Adelswärd-Fersen and Hamelin de Warren finally took place in Paris, in November-December 1903. Due to the resumption of the Dreyfus affair[58] and the case of the female swindler Thérèse Humbert during the same period, it did not make the front pages for long. Ironically, the trial, and the hypocrisy of criminal justice more generally, were also dubbed 'Black Masses' in the press. In *Le Matin*, Gaston Leroux wrote: 'il fallait être en peignoir rose pour assister aux messes de M. d'Adelswärd; il est nécessaire d'être en robe noire pour les messes noires du Palais' [people had to wear pink robes to attend M. d'Adelswärd's masses; they are required to wear black robes for the Court's black masses].[59] In essence, Leroux considered the trial to be persecution. Maître Grandgousier covered it in *Le Matin*.[60] He also dismissed the allegations of Satanic ritual abuse, insisting that the 'ignominious acts' performed by the two

young men had 'nothing to do with literature', and refocused the debate over transgressive sexuality. However, it is interesting to note that Grandgousier's comment on the defendant's moral principles emphasizes shifts in societal norms. He refers to them as 'poor young men' or persons in need, echoing the notions of pathology and degeneration, while modern society would most likely call them paedophiles: 'ils n'ont rien de diabolique et de surhumain, les deux malheureux auxquels la société demande compte du double délit d'outrages publics à la pudeur et d'excitation de mineurs à la débauche' [there's nothing diabolical or inhuman about these two poor men, whom society accuses of offences to decency and incitation of minors to debauchery].[61] Indeed, on 3 December, the two protagonists were found guilty of offences to decency and incitation of minors to debauchery and corruption. For this, they were sentenced to six months in jail. Warren served the whole time while Adelswärd-Fersen, having been incarcerated since late July, was released in early 1904. He went immediately into exile on the island of Capri. There he continued to write relentlessly. In 1905, he published a novel entitled *Lord Lyllian, Messes noires*, which stands as both a justification and a response to the media and public opinion.[62] As we shall see, Adelswärd-Fersen's novel is a *roman à clef*. It is also a satire of and directly drawn from both the 'Black Masses' scandal and the trial as they were represented in the press.

In *La Littérature au quotidien* (2007), Marie-Ève Thérenty defines the relationship between literary and journalistic forms as circular. Studying the press in the nineteenth century, she observes a consistent phenomenon of 'contamination' between literature and print media, 'le journal empruntant à la littérature ses modes poétiques, la Littérature récupérant […] tous les procédés de mise en voix et de validation de l'information' [the newspaper borrows poetic modes from literature, and literature recovers all the methods of approving and voicing information].[63] In a way then, the coverage of real-life events in the press was infused with narrative techniques that first originated from the experimentations of realist writers like Balzac.[64] In return, literature was transformed by the structure of the newspaper and the

emergence of 'l'écho mondain'. Internally, this new media system created the formation of an editorial board more responsive to intertextual and intermedial references, which together helped move beyond fiction and fact through the incorporation of a self-reflexive awareness amongst journalists and their readers. Writers then often used the journalistic space – and reality – as a 'literary matrix' to their own works of fiction. As I have demonstrated, Lorrain was very familiar with this technique due to his experience as a scandalous journalist. He often adopted different postures in both his fiction and the press, and he guided his readers into the whole of his œuvre through the literary representation of society. It seems that Adelswärd-Fersen used the same method in his transfictional novel *Lord Lyllian, Messes noires*.

Lord Lyllian is largely autobiographical. In her review published in *Le Mercure de France*, 15 April 1905, Rachilde wrote: 'Lord Lyllian est une sorte de biographie. Qui ne reconnaîtra l'éphèbe poète que nous avons tous con-nu, dans les lettres ou dans le monde?' [Lord Lyllian is a sort of biography. Who wouldn't recognize the young poet that we have all en-*cunt*-ered, through literature or out in the world?].[65] Here the use of the hyphen marks a separation between 'con' [cunt, or idiot] and 'nu' [naked]; it allows Rachilde to engage ironically with the Baron's transgressive nature. The main protagonist of *Lord Lyllian* is indeed a fictional version of Adelswärd-Fersen, although he also shares many similarities with Lord Alfred Douglas, while the informed reader would easily recognize contemporary celebrities who were all mentioned in the 'Black Masses' scandal: Harold Skilde (Oscar Wilde), Supp (Friedrich Alfred Krupp), Sar Baladin (Joséphin Péladan), Montautrou (Count Robert de Montesquiou), police agent Pioux (Inspector Roux), Jean d'Alsace (Jean Lorrain), etc. The novel does not display any serious interest in Satanism but towards the end the character Chignon, a famous painter, epitomizes the connection between Devil worship and the transgressive sexual orientation of most characters:

> Satan, c'est l'homme en face de Dieu. Satan c'est notre nature, Satan, c'est notre volupté, Satan, c'est notre instinct. C'est pour ça que Satan n'est pas si méchant, à tout prendre! La preuve en est, mon cher Lord, qu'il suffit de faire – à la lettre – ce qu'il nous plaît, pour devenir le plus grand criminel du monde, au dire de l'Évangile.

> [Satan is man facing God. Satan is our nature, Satan is our sensual pleasure, Satan is our instinct. That is why, after all, Satan is not so wicked! The proof is, my dear Lord, that all it takes to become the greatest criminal in the world is do precisely whatever we like, according to the Gospel].[66]

In this respect, in *Satanic Feminism* (2017), Per Faxneld calls *Lord Lyllian* 'noteworthy for fitting well with contemporary ideas about Satan as a saviour from Christian oppression of all things carnal'.[67] Yet the whole story can also be read as the parodical superposition of both the Wilde-Bosie homosexual relationship and the 'Black Masses' scandal. It constitutes a *disjecta membra* narrative that applies to the overlapping of myths, references, fiction and reality. Jean de Palacio calls it a 'curieux mélange de veine antiquisante et de modernités' [bizarre mix of antique and modern touches] that is rightly confusing.[68] The character of Harold Skilde is a transparent representation of the Irish dandy Wilde. In a letter he writes in prison, he expresses that:

> Les juges ne me font pas peur. Ils m'accusent d'avoir corrompu la jeunesse, d'avoir souillé l'enfant, par mes exemples et mes écrits. Je sais toute la bêtise, toute la cruauté et toute la vindicte qui animent leur accusation…
>
> [I am not afraid of judges. They accuse me of corrupting the youth, of perverting the child, through my examples and my writings. I know all the stupidity, all the cruelty and all the rancour that animate their accusation…].[69]

While this passage echoes Wilde's *De Profundis* (1905), it also seems to give Adelswärd-Fersen the opportunity to attain a certain form of redemption while openly and directly criticizing the judges who sentenced him to prison in the wake of the 'Black Masses' scandal. In a way then, Adelswärd-Fersen was aware of a case that bore resonance with Wilde's and Eekhoud's, and that led to both a literary trial and sexual conflicts. This is probably why in *Lord Lyllian* he seems to also parody the semantics used in the press when the 'Black Masses' scandal broke in 1903:

> D'ailleurs vous êtes fixés par eux, n'est-ce pas? Vous venez me voir, m'examiner ainsi qu'un acteur à scandale, ou comme un cas pathologique. C'est presque un cinquième acte. Je connais ma réputation actuelle, mon cher […].
>
> [By the way, you are sent by them, aren't you? You come to see me, to examine me like a scandalous actor, or like a pathological case. It's almost like a fifth act. I know my present reputation, my dear].[70]
>
> Scandale, scandale? mais tous vous êtes passionnés de ce scandale!…

> [Scandal, scandal? you are all obsessed with this scandal!…].[71]

The reference to classical tragedy and the dénouement through death ('cinquième acte') reinforces the idea that the 'Black Masses' case was a social and literary construction, which almost read like a modern play. Furthermore, Adelswärd-Fersen draws parallels with Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), which was discussed in detail during the 1895 trial, while using the same argumentation that Alfred Jarry, Gaston Leroux, and others actively developed during the 'Black Masses' trial to emphasize the metadimensional value of the accusations. Through literature, then, Adelswärd-Fersen denounces the hypocrisy of the judges who sentenced him:

> Je suis un vieillard dans un corps d'enfant […]. L'on m'accuse enfin d'avoir des vices: je n'ai que les vices de mes accusateurs!
>
> [I am an old man trapped in the body of a child […]. I am accused of having vices: I only have the vices of the ones who accuse me!].[72]

References to black masses can be found at the very end of the novel. In an unveiled biographical manner, Adelswärd-Fersen's writing clearly reads as a response to his detractors. In the final chapter, Lord Lyllian discusses the idea that black masses are nothing but a symbol – be it aesthetic, decadent, homosexual – before giving an account of the scandal. There, Adelswärd-Fersen parodies the ways in which the real case was treated in the press by constructing a series of sensationalist rumours all stemming from random people. He establishes a list of positions pulled in a decrescendo of value ('concierges', 'valets', 'larbins', 'cochers', 'femmes de chambre', 'untel') which echoes the way journalists gathered information about the avenue de Friedland 'ceremonies' from a wide range of 'witnesses', whether they were credible or not. The novel ends with the death of Lord Lyllian, shot by one of the young boys out of jealousy. When the doctors tell the inspector that there is no way he could question the dying man, the inspector replies: 'Pas possible?… Songez donc… Un scandale urgent! Il nous le faut, coûte que coûte.' [Not possible?… Think a bit… An urgent scandal! We need it, at all costs.][73] The spectacular dimension of the scandal appears to be more important than what it is actually about. These are

the last words of the text. They clearly summarize the commercial cause of the media treatment of the 'Black Masses' scandal in Belle Époque France. After all, according to Hamon, 'la réclame' [publicity] integrated in the media and literary field is also a form of intoxication.[74]

Kali Israel has argued that 'throughout the late nineteenth-century a series of highly mediated but spectacularly detailed scandals, *causes célèbres*, and exposés permitted diverse constituencies to engage in struggles over the construction of meaningful stories about sexual danger and sexual truths.'[75] In this respect, the 'Black Masses' scandal is symptomatic of *fin-de-siècle* interpretations of gender roles, sexual transgression and deviance. It elucidates the role of the media and modern literature, and the implication of the criminal justice system regarding gender, 'thus providing a snapshot of critical moments of social contestation during the era that witnessed the emergence of the New Woman, the New Man, and the Third Sex as social constructs.'[76] Yet it also shows that, in an age of ephebophilia[77] Adelswärd-Fersen's case constitutes a modern mythography whose destiny was socially and literary constructed in the intermediary space of the newspaper.

As I have shown with reference to the media and literary construction of the 'Black Masses' scandal in the social *semiosis* of Belle Époque France, Adelswärd-Fersen stood at the juncture of real, textual, and imaginary representations of himself as author-subject.[78] Parodying the extraordinary claims made about the 'Black Masses' scandal in the metalepsis narrative *Lord Lyllian, Messes noires*, he challenges the epistemic oppositions between reality and fiction to form a modern mystification.[79] Yet his novel also constitutes a space of observation and explanation. Indeed, Adelswärd-Fersen also used Satanism and the black masses as parodical semantics to address both homosexuality and hypocrisy in the *fin de siècle*.[80] In one sense then, two years after the 'Black Masses' scandal, Adelswärd-Fersen not only adopted the transgressive representation of the case as 'media matrix' for his transfictional novel, but he also used it to reconstruct himself as an innocent young man, and a modern writer.

[1] The title of my article is taken from Jean Lorrain's 'Le baron d'Adelswärd à Venise. Le Poison de la Littérature', *Le Journal*, 3 August 1903. All translations are mine.
[2] Fernand Hauser, 'Un nouvel Oscar Wilde', *La Presse*, 12 July 1903. Hauser clearly draws a parallel between Adelswärd-Fersen and Dorian Gray – himself corrupted by Huysmans's poisonous novel *A rebours* in Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891). Occasionally, Adelswärd-Fersen is referred to as Adelswärd. In the letters and articles in which this occurs I have retained the original spelling.
[3] Alfred Jarry, 'L'Âme ouverte à l'Art antique', in 'Messes noires', *Le Canard sauvage*, 19, 26 July - 1 August 1903, p. 6.
[4] Marie-Ève Thérenty, *La Littérature au quotidien. Poétiques journalistiques au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Seuil, 2007), p. 22.
[5] Ibid., p. 44.
[6] See for instance the works of José-Luis Diaz, *L'Écrivain imaginaire. Scénographies auctoriales à l'époque romantique* (Paris: Champion, 2007) and Jérôme Meizoz, *Postures littéraires. Mises en scène modernes de l'auteur* (Geneva: Slatkine Érudition, 2007).
[7] See Guillaume Pinson, 'Imaginaires des sociabilités et culture médiatique au XIXe siècle', *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France*, 110 (2010), 610-32 (p. 626). See also Pascale Casanova, *La République mondiale des lettres* (Paris: Seuil, 1999).
[8] Alain Viala, 'Sociopoétique', in *Approches de la réception*, ed. by A. Viala and G. Molinié (Paris: PUF, 1993).
[9] Jérôme Meizoz, 'Ce que l'on fait dire au silence: posture, ethos, image d'auteur', *Argumentation et analyse du discours*, 3 (2009) <http://dx.doi.org/10.4000/aad.667>.
[10] Coincidentally, the press also covered the disease of Pope Leo XIII at the same time. He died on 20 July 1903.
[11] Count Albert Hamelin de Warren left for America two weeks before the scandal broke in the press. Because of this absence, the journalists did not pay much attention to him, and when they did Warren was used as a way to balance and contrast Adelswärd-Fersen's actions and attitude, especially at the trial. There is no record of de Warren's life after his release in 1904.
[12] For a detailed study of Fersen's background and the 'Black Masses' trial, see Nancy Erber, 'Queer Follies: Effeminacy and Aestheticism in *Fin-de-siècle* France, the Case of Baron d'Adelswärd-Fersen and Count de Warren', in *Disorder in the Court, Trials and Sexual Conflicts at the Turn of the Century*, ed. by N. Erber and G. Robb (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), p. 195.
[13] Jacques d'Adelswärd-Fersen, *Ébauches et débauches* (Paris: Léon Vanier, 1901).
[14] Jacques d'Adelswärd-Fersen, *L'Hymnaire d'Adonis, À la manière du marquis de Sade* (Paris: Léon Vanier, 1902).
[15] 'Les Noces de Satan', *La Presse*, 11 July 1903, p. 3.
[16] See Erber and Robb's 'Introduction', in *Disorder in the Court*, p. 4.
[17] In fact, all the young boys who attended the ceremonies were over 13 years old. See Régis Revenin, *Homosexualité et prostitution masculines à Paris, 1870-1918* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2005), p. 72.
[18] Jesper Aagaard Petersen, 'Introduction: Embracing Satan', in *Contemporary Religious Satanism: A Critical Anthology* (London: Routledge, 2009), p. 11. Italics in original.
[19] Published in 1903 by E. Fasquelle, *La Messe noire* is a rather sensationalist and anti-Semitic work.
[20] 'Messes noires', *Le Matin*, 11 July 1903, p. 2.
[21] Thérenty, *La Littérature au quotidien*, p. 149.
[22] Ibid., pp. 353-70.
[23] Guillaume Pinson, *Fiction du monde. De la presse mondaine à Marcel Proust* (Montréal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 2008), pp. 8-9. On the relation between literature and the press, see also *La Civilisation du journal, Histoire culturelle et littéraire de la presse française au XIXe siècle*, ed. by D. Kalifa, P. Régnier, M.-E. Thérenty, and A. Vaillant (Paris: Nouveau Monde éditions, 2012).
[24] Jacques d'Adelswärd-Fersen, *Notre-Dame des mers mortes (Venise)* (Paris: P. Sevin et E. Rey, 1902).
[25] Fernand Hauser, 'Un nouvel Oscar Wilde', *La Presse*, 12 July 1903, p. 1.
[26] 'Les Messes noires. Graves révélations', *Le Journal*, 12 July 1903, p. 1-2.
[27] For instance, see the Taxil hoax and the Palladian Order in the 1890s.
[28] Robert Ziegler, *Satanism, Magic and Mysticism in Fin-de-siècle France* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 202.
[29] Only *Le Figaro* (conservative, aristocratic and clerical) seemed to be more discreet with the case. The journalists were first not inclined to name the two protagonists of the scandal and consequently 'overburden two honourable families' [11 July, p. 3], but they finally aligned with the other newspapers and revealed the name of 'miserable young man' Baron Jacques d'Adelswärd-Fersen.
[30] In 'Les Noces de Satan', *La Presse*, p. 3.
[31] See the chapter 'Huysmans Mystérique', in Ellis Hanson, *Decadence and Catholicism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), pp. 108-68.
[32] See Jules Michelet, *La Sorcière* (1862); Joris-Karl Huysmans, *Là-bas* (1891); Jules Bois, *Le Satanisme et la magie* (1895).
[33] The same day, however, Jules Bois wrote a long article about black masses in *Gil Blas*, following the article 'Le Scandale de l'avenue de Friedland' by Pierre Mortier.
[34] 'À propos de Messes Noires', *La Presse*, 12 July 1903, p. 3.

[35] This book was in fact the *Archives de la Bastille*, ed. by Frantz Funck-Brentano (Paris: Plon, 1892), t. IX of the *Catalogue des Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal*. It contains the 'exact account of a black mass' celebrated by Abbé Guibourg. Huysmans evokes Abbé Guibourg in chapter five of his novel *Là-bas* (Paris: Tresse & Stock, 1895).
[36] 'Les Messes Noires', *La Presse*, 18 July 1903, p. 1.
[37] See Max Nordau, *Degeneration* (1892; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993).
[38] Pinson, *Fiction du monde*, p. 197.
[39] This is the title of Rachilde's chapter on Lorrain in *Portraits d'hommes* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1930), pp. 77-92.
[40] Jean Lorrain, *Monsieur de Phocas* (Paris: Ollendorff, 1901) and *Le Vice errant. Coins de Byzance* (Paris: Ollendorff, 1902).
[41] Arthur Dupin, 'Un Scandale. Les Messes noires', *Le Journal*, 11 July 1903, p. 2.
[42] Pierre Mortier, 'Le Scandale de l'avenue de Friedland', *Gil Blas*, 12 July 1903. Occultist illustrator Manuel Orazi later pictured this in literary and satirical magazine *L'Assiette au beurre* ('Messes noires', in *L'Assiette au beurre*, 141, 12 December 1903. See Fig. 3.)
[43] In a letter to Gustave Coquiot [21 July 1903], he wrote: 'Et cette affaire Adelswärd, qu'en dit-on? J'ai connu et vu ce jeune snob […]. De la triple essence de vanité littéraire et mondaine, de pose et d'hypotypose, mais inintelligent' [And what is said of that Adelswärd case? I met and saw this young snob […]. His essence is a combination of literary and social vanity, pose and hypotyposis, but he is unintelligent]. In Jean Lorrain, *Lettres à Gustave Coquiot*, ed. by Éric Walbecq (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2007), p. 104.
[44] Jean Lorrain, 'Femmes – Victime', in *Le Journal*, 11 January 1903. Initially, Lorrain had a good relationship with the couple Jacquemin-Lauzet, but their relationship slowly degraded over time. In this article, Lorrain portrays a mythomaniac and nymphomaniac female artist who shares many similitudes with Jacquemin. He calls his character 'Narcissa' – a name he also gave to Jacquemin in a groundbreaking article that brought her success in Paris (*Le Journal*, 30 May 1892). In a letter addressed to Lorrain [11 May 1903], Rachilde recognized in Jacquemin's attitude a certain 'love for publicity'. Quoted in Éric Walbecq's article entitled 'Le procès de Jeanne Jacquemin contre Jean Lorrain en mai 1903', in *Jean Lorrain. Produit d'extrême civilisation*, ed. by J. de Palacio and É. Walbecq, Rouen: PURH, 2005, p. 198.
[45] Thibaut d'Anthonay, *Jean Lorrain, Miroir de la Belle Époque* (Paris: Fayard, 2005), p. 829.
[46] Against all odds, Jacquemin withdrew her complaint on 24 October, the day of the appeal. Lorrain was not sent to jail; he was nevertheless obliged to pay a large sum of money to Jacquemin.
[47] In fact, Lorrain was investigated once more in 1904, as part of the 'Greuling case'. In October 1903, Swiss explorer Frédéric Greuling murdered his lover Élisa Popesco, an actress at the National Theatre of Bucharest, in the Hôtel Régina, Paris. Just like Adelswärd-Fersen, the young man met Lorrain in Nice in 1902 and he sometimes impersonated him by wearing multiple rings on both hands. In *Le Journal*, 29 March 1904, Marréaux Delavigne wrote: 'il aurait particulièrement goûté les œuvres de Jean Lorrain et de Maurice Barrès dont il jette sans cesse les noms dans le débat pour essayer de se faire du talent de ces écrivains une sorte de réclame littéraire et une justification de ses déchéances morales' [he supposedly enjoyed the œuvres of Jean Lorrain and Maurice Barrès, whom he mentions relentlessly in the debates to try and get a sort of literary publicity and moral justification from their talent] (p. 3). Literature was being incriminated again. Lorrain had to appeal to his most well-known literary friends for help by means of letters that would clear his role in the Greuling case.
[48] Jean Lorrain, 'Le baron d'Adelswärd à Venise. Un intoxiqué', *Le Journal*, 2 August 1903, p. 3.
[49] Lorrain, 'Le baron d'Adelswärd à Venise. Le Poison de la Littérature', *Le Journal*, 3 August 1903, p. 3.
[50] Jean Lorrain, 'Grave affaire de mœurs', *L'Aurore*, 13 July 1903, p. 3.
[51] Jean Lorrain, *Pelléastres* (Paris: Albert Méricant, 1910), p. 134.
[52] Ibid., p. 125.
[53] Ibid., pp. 124-25.
[54] Alain Vaillant, 'Communication littéraire, culture médiatique et publicité au XIXe siècle', in *Littérature et publicité, de Balzac à Beigbeder*, ed. by L. Guellec and F. Hache-Bissette (Marseille: Éditions Gaussen, 2012), p. 79.
[55] Lorrain, *Lettres à Gustave Coquiot*, p. 108.
[56] Letter to Pierre Valdagne [16 July 1903], in *Jean Lorrain, Correspondances*, ed. by Jean de Palacio (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2006), pp. 185-86.
[57] On this note, it would be interesting to study such media and literary strategies in the light of the 'ethical turn' in literature and literary criticism.
[58] It is interesting to note that Maître Demange – Dreyfus' lawyer during the 1894 and 1899 trials – was hired by Adelswärd-Fersen's family to defend their son in court. This hints at the power of the family and importance of the case.
[59] Gaston Leroux, 'À propos de Messes noires', *Le Matin*, 17 July 1903, p. 1.
[60] Grandgousier is a pseudonym drawn from François Rabelais's second novel *Gargantua* (1534). Grandgousier ('Big Throat') is the father of Gargantua. He is a very Rabelaisian character in the sense that he appreciates all of life's pleasures. This echoes the journalist's sympathetic comments.
[61] Maître Grandgousier, 'Un procès à huis clos. Les Messes noires', *Le Matin*, 29 November 1903, p. 1.

[62] Jacques d'Adelswärd-Fersen, *Lord Lyllian, Messes noires* (1905; Montpellier: Éditions QuestionDeGenre/GKC, 2011).
[63] Thérenty, *La Littérature au quotidien*, p. 19.
[64] Guillaume Pinson, *L'Imaginaire médiatique* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2013), p. 130.
[65] Rachilde, 'Lord Lyllian', in *Le Mercure de France*, 15 April 1905, pp. 575-76. This parallels what she later said about Lorrain: '[Il] était à la fois le peintre et le modèle de ses héros. Qui était vrai? Qui était faux? Le savait-il lui-même?' [he was both the painter and the model of his heroes. Who was real? Who was fake? Did he know himself?]. Rachilde, *Portraits d'hommes*, p. 91.
[66] Ibid., p. 107.
[67] Per Faxneld, *Satanic Feminism: Lucifer as the Liberator of Women in Nineteenth-Century Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).
[68] Jean de Palacio, 'Preface', in Adelswärd-Fersen's *Lord Lyllian*, p. 7.
[69] Ibid., p. 63.
[70] Ibid., p. 80.
[71] Ibid., p. 81.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid., p. 143.
[74] See Philippe Hamon, 'Introduction. Littérature et réclame: le cru et le cri', *Romantisme*, 155 (2012), 5-10 (p. 8).
[75] Kali Israel, 'French Vices and British Liberties: Gender, Class and Narrative Competition in a Late Victorian Sex Scandal', *Social History*, 22.1 (1997), 1-26 (p. 1).
[76] Erber and Robb, 'Introduction', in *Disorder in the Court*, p. 1.
[77] See Revenin, *Homosexualité et prostitution masculines*, p. 72. See also Gide's formation of a homosexual pedagogy in his autobiography *Si le grain ne meurt* [1920/1926] (Paris: Gallimard, 1972).
[78] On the notion of 'social semiosis', see Pierre Popovic, 'De la semiosis sociale au texte: la sociocritique', *Signata*, 5 (2014) <http://dx.doi.org/10.4000:signata.483>.
[79] Gérard Genette, *Métalepse. De la figure à la fiction* (Paris: Seuil, 2004).
[80] More than fifty years later, Roger Peyrefitte addressed the same issues in his transfictional novel about the Baron, *L'Éxilé de Capri* (Paris: Flammarion, 1959).