The Harlequin Poetics: Fragmentation, Performance, and Scandal in Jean Lorrain

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Abstract

In this dissertation, I examine the self-construction of Lorrain's myth. I investigate Lorrain's scandalous life and works through the notion of 'harlequin poetics', as emerging from the aesthetics of fragmentation, performance, and scandal, at a pivotal moment in literary and cultural Modernity, and the Belle Époque in a broader context.

The first chapter concentrates on Lorrain's 'Patchwork of Narratives' that constitutes his poetic practice. Informed by the amalgamation of the press, literature, and photography in the second half of the nineteenth century, the erratic use of fragments, discourses and snapshots of high and low society life in his prose creates a dynamic panorama of Belle Époque France.

The second chapter deals with Lorrain's constant blurring of the frontiers between fact and fiction. This provokes a form of metaleptic mystification that has two distinct effects: firstly, Lorrain's exploded *ethos* participates in the construction of his own myth, and secondly, it also impacts his text, which, in leaving apparent the seams of its structure, alludes to fin-de-siècle mystification and the Modernist aesthetics of fragmentation/self-reflexivity.

The third chapter, entitled 'Montage of Temporalities', examines the montage aspect of Lorrain's use of legendary, historical, and literary references. I show that, in Lorrain's literature, the body is in turn de-formed (fragmentation), un-formed (void), and re-formed (montage/multiplicity).

The fourth chapter focuses on Lorrain's performance at three levels: gender performativity (the invention of queerness), the poetics of excess, and finally the performance of the self through the visual representations of Lorrain in and out of the media space.

The last chapter, 'Poetics of Scandal', examines the self-construction of Lorrain's myth through (media, literary, moral) transgressions and scandal. This helps me to question the issue of ethics in relation to Lorrain's 'harlequin poetics' and, more generally, scandal as media strategy in the Belle Époque in relation to today.

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- TABLE OF CONTENTS -

'Look at the harlequins! […] everywhere. All around you. Trees are harlequins, words are harlequins. So are situations and sums. Put two things together – jokes, images – and you get a triple harlequin. Come on! Play! Invent the world! Invent reality!'

Vladimir Nabokov, *Look at the Harlequins!* (1974)

- LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS -

CDR: *Le Crime des riches* [1905] (2010)

FP: *Fards et poisons* (1903)

FPJ: *Une femme par jour* (1896)

HDM: *Histoires de masques* [1900] (2006)

LMP: *La Maison Philibert* (1904)

LN: *Les Noronsoff* [1902] (1926)

MB: *Madame Baringhel* (1899)

MDB: *Monsieur de Bougrelon* (1897)

MP: *Monsieur de Phocas* (1901)

SDD: *Le Sang des dieux* [1882] (2017)

UD: *Un démoniaque* (1895)

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This is for my mum. I miss you.

- INTRODUCTION -

The Harlequin Poetics

Why Lorrain Now?

In his novel *Soumission* (2015), Michel Houellebecq refers to Jean Lorrain (1855-1906) as 'ce pédé dégoûtant, qui se proclamait lui-même enphilanthrope'.[1] François, the main character of the novel, is a specialist of Joris-Karl Huysmans and a professor at Sorbonne University, where he teaches classes on Lorrain.[2] While Lorrain's self-addressed pun 'enphilantrope' – a contraction of 'misanthrope' and/or 'philanthrope' and the verb 'enfiler' ('to fuck') – certainly amused sardonic and scandal-prone Houellebecq, the reference directly hints at Lorrain's bad reputation and, by implication, his marginalised figure within the literary canon. In this regard, his name on the (fictional) curriculum might come as a surprise: it shows that Lorrain still arouses interest in the twenty-first century (or at least in the fiction of Houellebecq, who is arguably France's most prominent writer). But does the fictional account/representation of Lorrain in Houellebecq's fiction fit with his current academic status, or is there a disconnect between Lorrain's reputation and his oeuvre? If so, is that disconnect justified? Does Houellebecq only mention him incidentally, as a satirical 'effet de réel'[3] that adds to the fin-de-siècle atmosphere of his novel, or inversely does Lorrain constitute a more interesting literary case? In fact, the significance and originality of Lorrain precisely lies in the deliberate construction of this scandalous reputation, carefully integrating both fiction and reality, in and out of his text. In this regard, one can imagine that he would have been pleased to make it into an important work of twenty-first-century fiction – especially as Houellebecq, with his literary and extra-textual provocations, also always blurs boundaries.[4] This process leads to the self-construction of Lorrain's myth, which will be the key focus of this thesis.

Interestingly, Lorrain also appears in the work of another prominent contemporary writer, Julian Barnes. Barnes's latest book, *The Man in the Red Coat* (2019), is a biographical novel based on Samuel-Jean Pozzi, virtuoso gynaecologist, Belle Époque

[1] Michel Houellebecq, *Soumission* (Paris: Flammarion, 2015), p. 35.
[2] '[J]'avais prévu ce jour-là de parler de Jean Lorrain'. Ibid., p. 36.
[3] Roland Barthes, 'L'Effet de réel', in *Littérature et réalité* (Paris: Seuil, 1982), pp. 84-89. This article was originally published in *Communications*, 11 (1968).
[4] Russell Williams, 'Uncomfortable proximity. Literary technique, authorial provocations and dog whistles in Michel Houellebecq's fiction', in *Modern & Contemporary France*, 27.1 (2018), pp. 61-76.

socialite and notorious womaniser (and likely to be the main model of Marcel Proust's docteur Cottard in *À la recherche du temps perdu*).[5] Although it is presented as the life story of Pozzi, *The Man in the Red Coat* primarily reads like a useful map of the Belle Époque at large, with its heroes and villains (Barnes's narrative is replete with anecdotes about Count Robert de Montesquiou, Marcel Proust, Oscar Wilde, and the Goncourt brothers), its decadence and violence, and more importantly its scandals. On this point, Barnes writes: '[a]s many biographers have discovered, you can't, unfortunately, choose your principal subject's friends'.[6] By friends, he means Lorrain. For he simply could not have been missed – especially, as Barnes discovered to his astonishment, because he was one of Pozzi's closest friends, a friendship that spanned thirty years. Lorrain therefore takes up a lot of space in the book. As the above quotation shows, Barnes seems to justify the presence of Lorrain in his narrative with extreme care, if not reluctance. It seems that it is not a matter of choice; on the contrary, Barnes suggests that Lorrain's scandalous figure has imposed itself upon and within the narrative (although, it is clear that he provides appealing subplots). Consequently, Barnes dedicates many pages to Lorrain. He notes with mischief that he 'is someone you half want to keep out of your books, for fear he might take over too much of it. He was extravagant, fearless, contemptible, malicious, talented and envious, a friend who couldn't help betraying you, and an enemy who would never forget.'[7] In short, Lorrain's scandalous reputation produces narrative. Therefore, he has a strong fictional (and analytical) potential; he is, *de facto*, a powerful character, 'a man to be both endured and enjoyed'.[8] But that is not just that. Further into his portrait of Lorrain, Barnes identifies precisely what I think makes his oeuvre – that is, his life *and* his works – a matter of importance: 'Lorrain exemplified both the culture and the anarchy of the Belle Époque'.[9] Indeed, he stands as the essential, self-constructed *compendium* of that period, both the producer and the scandalous product of it.[10]

Born Paul Alexandre Martin Duval, Lorrain was a writer, columnist, critic and dramatist, whose life, according to biographer Thibaut d'Anthonay, is the reflection of Belle Époque France.[11] Considered to be the highest paid journalist and certainly one of

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[5] 'Proust was inspired by Pozzi to endow his fictitious character Dr Cottard with the same qualities and nickname [Dr God]'. In Emily Eells and Stephen Coon, 'Sargent and Proust: An Elusive Mouvance', in *Visual Culture in Britain*, 19.1 (2018), p. 51.
[6] Julian Barnes, *The Man in the Red Coat* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2019), p. 72.
[7] Ibid., p. 71.
[8] Ibid., p. 73.
[9] Ibid., p. 72.
[10] See the title given by Jean de Palacio and Éric Walbecq to their edited volume of essays on Lorrain: *Jean Lorrain, Produit d'extrême civilisation* (Mont-Saint-Aignan: Presses universitaires de Rouen et du Havre, 2006).
[11] Thibaut d'Anthonay, *Jean Lorrain, Miroir de la Belle Époque* (Paris: Fayard, 2005).

the most scandalous writers of *fin-de-siècle* Paris, Lorrain spent over thirty years carefully documenting high and low cultural life through writings as diverse as novels, chronicles, and gossip columns. He regularly contributed to myriad newspapers including *Le Zigzag*, *Le Chat Noir*, *La Vie moderne*, *Le Courrier français*, *La Décadence*, *La Presse*, *La Vogue*, *L'Événement*, *L'Écho de Paris* or *Le Journal*.[12] Lorrain also wrote poems, plays, tales, short stories, pantomimes, ballets and songs (especially for cabaret singer Yvette Guilbert). Recurring topics in his work and life include masks and disguises, hybridity, homosexuality, Satanism, high and low society, and popular culture. Lorrain's transgressive works indeed provide a repository in which both city space and collective activity are recorded, organised and celebrated, though from an angle that is critical, parodic, and Decadent.[13] As Hubert Juin remarks, 'he loved his epoch to the point of detestation'.[14] Alternately, it seems that his epoch also loved him to the point of

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[12] Philip Stephan wonders: 'was there a magazine to which he did *not* contribute?' In *Paul Verlaine and the Decadence, 1882-90* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1974), p. 144.

[13] While I engage with the concept of Decadence in relation to the politics of time and the philosophy of history in chapter III, I use the term 'decadence' throughout this thesis predominantly to refer to the late nineteenth century artistic and literary movement (Decadence), whose post-Romantic aesthetics centers on the ideology of excess and artificiality. It is regarded by many scholars as a dynamic transition between Romanticism and Modernism. In French literature, it originates in Charles Baudelaire's poetry and Théophile Gautier's use of the term in the preface to the 1868 edition of *Les Fleurs du mal*, representing their rejection of 'bourgeois' ideals of democracy, materialism, modernity and progress (the relationship between literary style and the state of society at large). Baudelaire's critical influence is well illustrated in Joris-Karl Huysmans's *À rebours* (1884), considered by many as 'le bréviaire de la décadence', where he pinpoints the new generation of (Decadent) poets: Paul Verlaine, Tristan Corbière, Stéphane Mallarmé, to which we can add the writers Rachilde, Jean Moréas, Maurice Barrès, Léon Bloy, Joséphin Péladan, Laurent Tailhade, Octave Mirbeau, Camille Mauclair, and Lorrain. To some critics, Decadence starts with *À rebours* and ends with Lorrain's *Monsieur de Phocas* (1901). Both Huysmans' and Lorrain's novels showcase the major tropes of Decadence – e.g. artifice, dandyism, decay, decline, degeneration, a depravity conscious of itself, dilettantism, ennui, the Eternal Feminine, Mysticism, neurosis, Orientalism, parody, a taste for the bizarre, the monstrous, and the unnatural – through the journey of respectively Jean des Esseintes and Jean de Fréneuse, both 'fin-de-siècle', 'fin-de-race', and 'fin-de-sexe' heroes. For further critical reflections on Decadence, see Jane Desmarais & David Weir (eds.), *Decadence and Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2019); Lisa Downing, *Desiring the Dead: Necrophilia and Nineteenth-Century French Literature* (Oxford: Legenda, 2003); Richard Gillman, *Decadence: The Strange Life of an Epithet* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1979); Kate Hext & Alex Murray (eds.), *Decadence in the Age of Modernism* (Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 2019); Alain Montandon (ed.), *Mythes de la Décadence* (Clermont-Ferrand: PUBP, 2001); Alex Murray (ed.), *Decadence: A Literary History* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2020); Jean de Palacio, *Les Perversions du merveilleux* (Paris: Séguier, 1993), *Figures et formes de la décadence* (Paris: Séguier, 1994), *Configurations décadentes* (Paris: Peeters, 2007), and *La Décadence, le mot et la chose* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2011); Jean Pierrot, *L'Imaginaire décadent* (1880-1900) (Paris: PUF, 1977); Mario Praz, *The Romantic Agony*, trans. A. Davidson (Cleveland: Meridien Books, 1955); Noël Richard, *Le Mouvement décadent* (Paris: Nizet, 1968); Vincent Sherry, *Modernism and the Reinvention of Decadence* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2014); Sylvie Thorel-Cailleteau, *La Tentation du livre sur rien. Naturalisme et Décadence* (Mont-de-Marsan: Éditions interuniversitaires, 1994); Michel Winock, *Décadence fin de siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 2017).

[14] Hubert Juin, quoted in Brian Stableford's *Glorious Perversity: The Decline and Fall of Literary Decadence* (Cabin John: Wildside Press, 2008), p. 68.

detestation;[15] to a greater extent, the dialectics of repulsion/fascination that Lorrain triggers is also found in more contemporary commentators.

Lorrain was a complex literary figure. There are many reasons why one should steer clear of him. Mario Praz describes him as 'a fumiste of quite deplorable taste' with a passion for 'faisandage and all kinds of combinations of lust and death'[16] – a combination of highly connoted terms that evoke sex and social discourse in the Belle Époque.[17] Rachilde calls him 'le fanfaron des vices',[18] while Philippe Jullian notes that 'Lorrain fut vraiment, à la fin de siècle, l'ambassadeur de Sodome à Paris.'[19] Spanning a whole century, the reports on Lorrain and his works all exclusively engage with buffoonery, sexuality, imperfection, scandal and controversy. The rare accounts of his talent as a writer are reserved; they usually address the inconsistency and fragmentation of his work, as Robert Desnos dismissively suggests: '[i]l y a de tout dans l'œuvre de Jean Lorrain... et le pire y abonde : mauvais vers, roman sans intérêt, etc. [...]. Mais *Monsieur de Bougrelon* est une charmante petite nouvelle, pittoresque, bien écrite, verveuse... un charmant bibelot qui n'a rien perdu de son éclat et de son intérêt'.[20] Pierre Kyria, finally, notes 'cette osmose difficile entre articles et chroniques publiés dans des journaux et livres définitifs',[21] concluding that 'sans le journalisme […], il n'y aurait peut-être pas de Lorrain'.[22] In his 2002 article 'Unspeakable Writing: Jean Lorrain's *Monsieur de Phocas*', Michael du Plessis writes that '[i]t is difficult, even today, to speak of Jean Lorrain without embarrassment. Those aspects of his life and works that appeared scandalous to his contemporaries, such as his openness about his homosexuality, his ostentation of any and all kinds of perversity, and his notorious bad taste, may seem to invite rather than repel current critical interest', adding that 'his clamorous antisemitism, his vociferousness as an anti-Dreyfusard, his insistent misogyny, his approval of colonialism, and his concomitant reveling in the worst forms of late nineteenth-century Orientalism are almost insurmountable obstacles in the way of a permanent reevaluation of Lorrain as a

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[15] 'Paris l'écartait, et, sans l'oublier, le négligeait. Implacable, il dédaigna, avec l'homme, l'écrivain, et ceci fut à Lorrain atrocement douloureux. Désormais, lorsque la foule évoqua Jean Lorrain, l'homme effaçait l'écrivain, et l'on ne savait parler de l'un sans que l'autre, aussitôt, s'imposât.' Marc Brésil, 'Jean Lorrain. L'homme et la légende', in *Mercure de France*, 364, t. XCVIII, (August 1912), p. 769.

[16] Praz, *The Romantic Agony*, op. cit., pp. 338-39.

[17] See Marc Angenot, *Le Cru et le faisandé: Sexe, discours social et littérature à la Belle Époque* (Bruxelles: Labor, 1986).

[18] Rachilde, 'Le Fanfaron des vices', in *Portraits d'hommes* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1930), pp. 77-92.

[19] Philippe Jullian, *Jean Lorrain ou le Satiricon 1900* (Paris: Fayard, 1974), p. 59-60.

[20] Robert Desnos, 'Monsieur de Bougrelon', in *Mines de rien*, Marie-Claire Dumas (ed.) (Paris: Le Temps qu'il fait, 1985), p. 32.

[21] Pierre Kyria, *Jean Lorrain* (Paris: Seghers, 1973), p. 23.

[22] Ibid., p. 105.

'good' writer.'[23] It is therefore a risky enterprise to write about Lorrain; no doubt that it is a serious challenge to dedicate a whole thesis to him. Alternatively, the above comments all show a man who deliberately outgrew his own oeuvre, to the point that he became his own character – even his own legend.[24] I argue that Lorrain is a fascinating case study precisely because he is a self-constructed, unsavoury, gossip-provoking character who understood early on the power of scandal in a growing media-centered society; the originality of such strategy lies in the fact that he deliberately positioned himself in a field that constantly blurs the frontiers between fiction and reality, in order to gain 'cultural capital'.[25] His literary reputation is the result of over thirty years spent constructing and controlling his own scandalous figure, which also helps us grasp better the fin-de-siècle cultural/media codes and Belle Époque more generally.

This is why I think it important to study Lorrain as a crucial figure in the field of literary and cultural studies of the fin-de-siècle. Although he was slowly forgotten in the long twentieth century, his famous novels – *Monsieur de Bougrelon* (1897), *Monsieur de Phocas* (1901), *Les Noronsoff* (1902) – have regularly reappeared on the market since the rediscovery of the French Decadents by Jean de Palacio in the 1960s,[26] along with the critical interest in Decadence in relation to gender theory in the 1980s and 1990s.[27] In parallel, ten biographies of Lorrain have been published since his death; only two works were written in the last thirty years, which perhaps shows a declining interest in Lorrain.[28] Closer to us though, there has been a recent surge of interest in re-establishing Lorrain's works as significant in the literary field of the Belle Époque: most of his works and

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[23] Michael du Plessis, 'Unspeakable Writing: Jean Lorrain's *Monsieur de Phocas*', in *French Forum*, 27.2 (2002), p. 65.

[24] 'Il ne s'est pas tant soucié de faire œuvre d'art que de parachever ce qu'il croyait de bonne foi son œuvre d'art : lui-même.' See Brésil, 'Jean Lorrain. L'homme et la légende', op. cit., p. 774.

[25] See Pierre Bourdieu, *Les Règles de l'art. Genèse et structure du champ littéraire* (Paris: Seuil, 1992) and Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *La Reproduction. Éléments pour une théorie du système d'enseignement* (Paris: Minuit, 1970).

[26] Palacio remarks that his own interest for fin-de-siècle literature was initially not received well by academia and the book industry in the 1960s: 'Les lettres de Jean Lorrain s'acquéraient à la grosse chez tel marchand de la rue de Seine. Et l'on avait, rue Bonaparte, pour deux cents francs, le manuscrit complet de son roman inachevé !' In *Figures et formes de la décadence*, op. cit., p. 10.

[27] Most particularly *Monsieur de Phocas*, trans. B. Stableford (Sawtry: Dedalus, 1994). On Lorrain and decadent sexuality, see Philip Winn's *Sexualités décadentes chez Jean Lorrain: le héros fin-de-sexe* (Amsterdam: Brill Rodopi, 1997).

[28] See Georges Normandy, *Jean Lorrain, son enfance, sa vie, son œuvre* (Paris: Bibliothèque Générale d'Édition, 1907), *Jean Lorrain* (Paris: Rasmussen, 1927), and *Jean Lorrain intime* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1928); Octave Uzanne, *Jean Lorrain, l'artiste, l'ami* (Abbeville: Paillart, 1913); Pierre-Léon Gauthier, *Jean Lorrain: la vie, l'œuvre, et l'art d'un pessimiste à la fin du XIXe siècle* (Paris: André Lesot, 1935); Paul Mourousy, *Évocations: Jean Lorrain* (Paris: Jacques Lanvin, 1937); Pierre Kyria, *Jean Lorrain* (Paris: Seghers, 1973); Philippe Jullian, *Jean Lorrain ou le Satiricon 1900* (Paris: Fayard, 1974); finally, Thibaut d'Anthonay, *Jean Lorrain, barbare et esthète* (Paris: Plon, 1991), and *Jean Lorrain, Miroir de la Belle Époque* (Paris: Fayard, 2005), which was awarded the 2005 'prix Goncourt de la biographie'.

letters have been republished particularly since the 2000s, with many texts recently reedited with critical notes, and translated into English, Spanish and Italian.[29] Furthermore, French independent artist Jahyra is currently working on an illustrated adaptation of the volume of tales *Princesses d'ivoire et d'ivresse* (1902).[30] Further to the Decadent aspect of his oeuvre, the growing interest in rehabilitating Lorrain as an important and prolific writer-journalist of Belle Époque comes from the aesthetics of fragmentation and performance that his works provides, as well as his role as commentator on the latest artistic and moral trends in Belle Époque France.[31] His friend Octave Uzanne wrote: '[c]e fut certes un surprenant instrument enregistreur d'ardentes et impétueuses sensations artistiques'.[32] Yet Lorrain's seminal oeuvre offers more than just a mnemonic and transgressive record of a particular moment. Indeed, his complex narrative style and numerous connexions with other media such as the visual arts, music and theatre paved the way for Modernism and avant-garde movements like Dada and Surrealism, as well as diverse modern writers, ranging from Raymond Roussel and Michel Leiris to Georges Bataille and Jean Genet. Lorrain's scandalous *persona* also resonates in today's 'society of spectacle',[33] where the poetics of scandal is strategically and provocatively performed in and out of the text for the purpose of self-promotion

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[29] See for instance Jean Lorrain, *Monsieur de Phocas* (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 2001), *Les Noronsoff* (Paris: Gallimard, 2002), *Princesses d'ivoire et d'ivresse* (Paris: Gallimard, 2002), *La Mandragore* (Frontigan: Le Chat rouge, 2005), *La Princesse sous verre* (Rouen: Alinéa, 2006), *Histoires de masques* (Paris: Ombres, 2006), *Poussières de Paris*, t. I & II (Paris : Klincksieck, 2006), *Princesses d'ivoire et d'ivresse* (Monaco: Éditions du Rocher, 2007), *Voyages* (Paris: Les Promeneurs solitaires, 2009), *Contes d'un buveur d'éther* (Frontigan: Le Chat rouge, 2010), *Le Crime des riches* (Frontigan: Le Chat rouge, 2014), *Monsieur de Bougrelon* (Frontigan: Le Chat rouge, 2014), *Poésie complète* (Saint-Loup-de-Naud: Éditions du sandre, 2015), *Âmes d'automne* (Frontigan: Le Chat rouge, 2014), *Souvenirs d'un buveur d'éther* (Paris: Gallimard, 2015), *L'École des vieilles femmes* (Rennes: La Part commune, 2018) and Pascal Noir's critical re-edition enterprise of Lorrain: *La Dame aux lèvres rouges* (2001), *Histoires de Batraciens* (2008), *Récits fantastiques* (with F. Bellamy, 2012), *Vingt femmes* (with F. Bellamy, 2014) *Les Masques*, suivi de *Récit d'un buveur d'éther* (with F. Bellamy, 2015), *Loreley* (2016), and *Le Sang des dieux* (with A. Burin, 2017), all published in the collection 'Les Introuvables' (Paris: L'Harmattan), which inspired the publication of Lorrain's *Œuvres complètes* in 11 tomes (Paris: Coda, 2007-16). Recent translations in English include: *Monsieur de Phocas*, trans. F. Amery (Leyburn, Tartarus Press, 2015), *Monsieur de Bougrelon*, trans. E. Richter (Sacramento: Spurl Editions, 2016), *Nightmares of an Ether-Drinker* (2016), *The Soul-Drinker and Other Decadent Fantaisies* (2016), *Masks in the Tapestry* (2017), *Errant Vice* (2018), *Fards et Poisons* (2019), *Monsieur de Bougrelon and Other Stories* (2020), trans. B. Stableford and published by Snuggly Books; and finally *Stories to read by Candlelight*, trans. P. Worth (Paraparaumu: Oddyssey Books, 2019). In Spanish and Italian, Gabriele Nero provided the following translations: *Cuentos de un bebedor de éter* and *Racconti de un eteromane*, both published in 2018 by independent published El Doctor Sax Beat & Books.

[30] See *Princesses d'Ivoire et d'Ivresse* (Népaonthès, 2018), *Princesses d'Ambre et d'Italie* (Népaonthès, 2019) and the forthcoming publication of *Princes de Nacre et de Caresse* (Népaonthès, 2021), all derived from Lorrain's volume of tales and short stories *Princesses d'ivoire et d'ivresse* (1902).

[31] See Lorrain's correspondences and non-fiction writings in the bibliography at the end of this thesis (p. 226).

[32] Octave Uzanne, *Jean Lorrain, l'artiste, l'ami*, in *Les Amis d'Edouard*, 14 (1913), p. 41.

[33] Guy Debord, *La Société du spectacle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1967).

and the construction of a distinct 'authorial ethos'[34] in the cultural field. In *Le Magazine littéraire*, Michel Delon justly notes that '[l]es excentricités de l'homme ont souvent caché l'œuvre. Jean Lorrain aimait trop les provocations et les jeux de mots qui font mal'.[35] This is still – if not, even more – relevant in our own society, where the use of 'postures',[36] social media, transfictionality and transmediality, constitute complex authorial strategies: I perceive direct and/or indirect lineage in other twenty-first century outrageous writers, columnists and media figures, such as Philippe Sollers, Michel Houellebecq, and Frédéric Beigbeder.[37] Incidentally, Beigbeder refers to Lorrain as one of his role models in his autobiographical novel *Un roman français* (2009).[38] Undeniably, these writers also, in some ways, construct an image of the self that stands as the raw mirror of their epoch.[39]

In this thesis, I want to explore how this multidimensional character, with his light and dark sides, informs and performs a time of transition towards a multifaceted cultural market that relies dramatically on mass consumption/distraction and the media. The aim for Lorrain was to stand out through the scandalous reputation that predominantly emerged from his ground-breaking non-binary gender practices – be they real, textual, or symbolic. This is why Lorrain's life and works, despite having arguably been marginalised over time, still resonate with a more modern audience. They must be studied together, for they are inseparable; in fact, they inform each other and illuminate the self-construction of Lorrain's myth. With the example of Lorrain, this study therefore seeks to contribute, alongside historical perspectives and theoretical/cultural approaches, to the mapping of the Belle Époque as a repository of new poetic practices based on fragmentation, performance, and scandal, which prepare the aesthetics of Modernism in twentieth-century France.

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[34] Ruth Amossy (ed.), *Images de soi dans le discours. La construction de l'ethos* (Genève: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1999)

[35] Michel Delon, 'Jean Lorrain, superbe décadent', in *Le Magazine littéraire*, 310 (May 1993), p. 130.

[36] Jérôme Meizoz, *Postures littéraires: Mises en scène modernes de l'auteur* (Genève : Slatkine Éditions, 2007).

[37] The parallel between fin-de-siècle and postmodern French writers is analysed by Sabine van Wesemael in 'L'esprit fin-de-siècle dans l'œuvre de Michel Houellebecq et de Frédéric Beigbeder', in *Territoires et terres d'histoires, perspectives, horizons, jardins secrets dans la littérature française d'aujourd'hui*, S. Houppermans, C. Bosman-Delzons, D. de Ruyter-Tognotti (eds.) (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005), pp. 13-38. I will concentrate on Lorrain's authorial strategies in the last chapter of this thesis.

[38] 'Il est certain que la Quête de Plaisir Fugace diminue l'espérance de vie chez l'écrivain. Vaché est mort à 23 ans d'une overdose d'opium, Jean de Tinan à 24 ans de rhumatismes aggravés par une consommation d'alcools frelatés […], Jean Lorrain à 50 ans d'une péritonite consécutive à l'abus d'éther […]. N'ayant pas le talent de mes maîtres, puis-je espérer, ô Seigneur, ne pas partager non plus leur brève durée de vie ?' In Frédéric Beigbeder, *Un roman français* (Paris: Grasset, 2009), pp. 205-06.

[39] See Solange Bied-Charreton, 'Michel Houellebecq, le miroir de notre époque', in *Le Figaro* (6 January 2015). The title directly parallels Anthonay's biography of Lorrain.

In 1885, Lorrain published his third volume of poetry entitled *Modernités*. While the gaudy colour scheme of the poems reflects the Chat Noir cabaret's 'esthétique de la disparate',[40] the eponymous poem is a celebration of the smutty and multi-coloured silhouettes of Montmartre's underworld parading in the city: the motley crew is composed of 'rousses perruques fantasques', 'clowns au long rictus de masques', 'lutteurs et femmes de joie', 'copailles', 'roses des trottoirs', and 'arlequines'.[41] The poem's urban fantasy, inherited not only from Charles Baudelaire, but also from Paul Verlaine's *Fêtes galantes* (1869) and Émile Goudeau's *Fleurs de bitume* (1885), alludes to the mix of corruption and vice; it presents a series of synthetic snapshots of the lower classes, prostitutes and same-sex relations – in short, modern Paris. Similar to Rodolphe Salis's 'cabaret-journal', Lorrain's volume of poetry *Modernités* sanctions the heterogeneous in poeticising/performing the modern disorder and popular culture in a form of catalogue of fragments.[42] Laurent Tailhade compares Lorrain's volume to 'kermesses', branding the poems as 'brocarts de bals masqués' with 'rimes de cotillons', in which emerge 'épigrammes enfarinées pareilles aux *confetti* du carême-prenant'.[43] For Tailhade, the volume resembles a large 'atellane de mardi gras', which unequivocally refers to the parodical, 'clownesque' and carnivalesque aspect of Lorrain's poetry. In fact, *Modernités* serves as a poetic laboratory that directly influenced Lorrain's journalistic and fiction prose as much as his lifestyle. In it, Lorrain blends various poetic, sexual, social, and cultural discourses, whose overall fragmented form evokes Harlequin's chequered costume. Contrary to Pierrot, who prefigures the spare and minimalist strand of Modernism, Harlequin therefore symbolises the playful, miscellaneous, and scandalous aspect of Lorrain's practice, as originally developed in his own *Modernités*. From then on, he applied this poetics not only to his text, but also to his life, through a mix of fragmentation and performance that leads to scandal, as explained in more detail in the second part of this introduction. I will refer to this practice as the 'harlequin poetics'.

The term 'harlequin poetics' primarily emerges from the aesthetics of fragmentation and performance that is at the core of Lorrain's life and works. Perhaps

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[40] Daniel Grojnoswki, 'Laforgue fumiste: l'esprit de cabaret', in *Romantisme*, 64 (1989), p. 11. Between 1882 and 1885, Lorrain published fifteen poems in Émile Goudeau's newspaper, standing as real poetic matrix for the aspiring poet.

[41] Jean Lorrain, *Modernités* (Paris: E. Giraud & Cie, 1885).

[42] 'J'ai voulu que le *Chat Noir* fût non un coin particulariste, mais un catalogue général'. Émile Goudeau, 'Bulletin politique', in *Le Chat Noir*, 100 (8 Decembre 1883), pp. 1-2.

[43] Laurent Tailhade, 'Modernités de Jean Lorrain', in *Le Chat Noir*, 164 (28 February 1885), p. 2.

fittingly, I therefore decided to use a fragmented theoretical framework informed by various critical approaches. The point is to shift from the textual approach and apply it through a more dialectic, multidimensional perspective, that is, overall, resolutely cultural. Accordingly, my work lies at the junction of literary theory, cultural history, gender studies and media studies. As I shall demonstrate, the harlequin framework offers, for the most part, a paradigm shift through which the exploded critical approach, patterned after the kaleidoscopic costume of the *Commedia dell'Arte* character, enables a better understanding of not just the complex figure that is Lorrain and his works, but also avant-garde experimentations in the Belle Époque.

I propose to define and examine the 'harlequin poetics' in Lorrain's life and work through an overall symbolic reading – or 'champ [poly]sémantique',[44] based on what the *Commedia dell'Arte* character metaphorically represents. I want to analyse the return and polysemy of images, symbols, forces and signs that complicate the meaning of his whole oeuvre. The body of Harlequin emerging as a polysemous space favours the use of various critical approaches that are all interwoven. This type of reading also consists in performing the structuration of a text – in releasing its 'structure signifiante'.[45] It then presupposes a kind of articulation, a play with forms and limits, that does not solely apply to a text, but also a character and their attitude in a given field or context. In this respect, the 'harlequin poetics' necessarily emerges from the accumulation and coexistence of seemingly contrasting motifs and meanings. In *Le Bruissement de la langue*, Barthes writes that 'en lisant, nous aussi nous imprimons une certaine posture au texte, et c'est pour cela qu'il est vivant; mais cette posture, qui est notre invention, elle n'est possible que parce qu'il y a entre les éléments du texte un rapport réglé, bref une *proportion*'.[46] I want to analyse that proportion in light of the discontinuous structure of Lorrain's production; in so doing, I intend to show the productive aspect of scandal in Lorrain's life and works through analysing the networks of meanings that constitute them. The aim of comparing Lorrain to Harlequin is to produce a 'harlequin poetics' as a theoretical tool to understand Lorrain in/and his cultural context. In this way, although the main focus undeniably is on Lorrain, this work strives to create a space of dialogue between Lorrain's 'harlequin poetics' and other proto-Modernist figures like the Goncourt brothers, Félicien Champsaur, Rachilde, André Gide, Marcel Proust and

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[44] Roland Barthes, *S/Z* (Paris: Seuil, 1970), p. 43.
[45] Roland Barthes, '*L'Express* va plus loin avec… Roland Barthes' [1970], in *Œuvres Complètes*, t. III (Paris: Seuil, 2002), p. 673.
[46] Roland Barthes, 'Écrire la lecture', in *Le Bruissement de la langue*: *Essais critiques*, t. IV (Paris: Seuil, 1984), p. 36.

Colette, amongst others. This enables a way of reading not just Lorrain's scandalous life and works through the idea of fin-de-siècle pantomime, but also the aesthetics of fragmentation, performance, and scandal, at a pivotal moment in literary and cultural Modernity, and the Belle Époque in a broader context.[47]

Fin-de-siècle Pantomime

The 'harlequin poetics' finds its origin in nineteenth-century pantomime. Pantomime is a form of dramatic expression that is still considered a minor genre; however, it has a fundamental place in aesthetic examinations of the long nineteenth century, with a particular emphasis on the fin-de-siècle (Arnaud Rykner considers it as a 'dispositif fin-

[47] It is important to distinguish between Modernity, modernization, and Modernism. While 'modernity' is a 'temporal/historical concept by which we refer to our understanding of the present in its unique historical presentness, that is, in what distinguishes it from the past, from the various relics or survivals of the past, and also in what it promises for the future' (Matei Calinescu, 'Modernity, Modernism, Modernization: Variations on Modern Themes', in *Symplokē*, 1.1 (1993), p. 1), it is also a period of time identified by a set of innovations (e.g. in the urban context of nineteenth-century Paris, particularly the second half of it, industrialisation, urbanisation, bureaucracy, capitalism, individualism). Yet Modernity is multiple: it is material, cultural, and aesthetic. There is the modernity of the social world issued from the industrial and scientific revolutions, from the triumph of capitalism in the West, and the aesthetic modernity whose origins went back to Baudelaire (*Modernité*). In 'Le Peintre de la vie moderne' (1863), Baudelaire develops the theme of the spectacle of metropolitan experience. Drawing on Constanting Guys' rapid sketches, he defines Modernity as the urban aesthetics that capture the momentary and dynamic character of urban phenomena, through a multiplicity of impressions. It is an aesthetic and conceptual response and representation of modernization: 'the transformation of the city of Paris as France's national capital into the capital of an international modernity […] such a transformation signaled a mutation of Paris as a fixed *lieu de mémoire* – a cohesive monument of centralized rule and technological order – to *lieu d'expérience* – a visceral encounter with fragmentation, dissonance, and change' (Lauren S. Weingarden, 'Modernizing History and Historicizing Modernity: Baudelaire and Baudelaierian Representations of Contemporaneity', in *Elective Affinities*, V. Plesch, C. MacLeod, C. Schoell-Glass (eds.) (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp. 187-203). The mythology of modernity then expands to Zola, Aragon, and Benjamin (*die Moderne* as phantasmagoria). I use the term 'Modernity' in this thesis to refer to Lorrain too. Modernism is a series of artistic innovative practices, forms and movements. It is a 'set of aesthetic qualities identified as a sub-text of the Modern, and situated, if we apply maximum stretch, in the period from 1870 to 1940' (Susan Harrow, *Zola, the Body Modern* (Oxford: Legenda, 2010), p. 42-50). For further critical reflections on Modernity and Modernism, see Walter Benjamin, *The Writer of Modern Life: Essays on Charles Baudelaire* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2006); *Modernité et romantisme*, I. Bour, É. Dayre, P. Née (eds.) (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2001); *Modernism: A Guide to European Literature (1890-1930)*, M. Bradbury & J. McFarlane (eds.) (London: Penguin, 1991); Peter Brooker (ed.), *Modernism/Postmodernism* (Harlow: Longman, 1992); Matei Calinescu, *Faces of Modernity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977) and *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism* (Durham: Duke UP, 1987); Yves Chevrel, 'Naturalisme et modernité', in *The Turn of the Century: Modernism and Modernity in Literature and the Arts*, C. Berg, F. Durieux, G. Lernout (eds.) (New York: de Gruyter, 1995), pp. 101–18; Astradur Eysteinsson, *The Concept of Modernism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990); Gérald Froideveau, 'Modernisme et modernité: Baudelaire face à son époque', in *Littérature*, 63 (1986), pp. 90-103; Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991); Pierre Jourde, *Littérature monstre: études sur la modernité littéraire* (Paris: Balland, col. 'L'Esprit des péninsules', 2008); Michael Levenson, *A Genealogy of Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Peter Nicholls, *Modernisms: A Literary Guide* (London: Macmillan, 1995); Marjorie Perloff, *21st-Century Modernism: The 'New' Poetics* (Malden: Blackwell, 2002); Gérard Peylet, *La Littérature fin de siècle de 1884 à 1898: entre décadentisme et modernité* (Paris: Vuibert, 1994); Dominique Rince, *Baudelaire et la modernité poétique*, Paris: PUF, 1984); Raymond Williams, *The Politics of Modernism* (London: Verso, 1989).

de-siècle').[48] From the mime Debureau in the 1820-1830s to the overdetermined figure of Pierrot at the turn of the century, pantomime was originally inspired by court ballet, 'fêtes galantes' and the *Commedia dell'Arte*,[49] whose characters – e.g. Pierrot, Harlequin, Columbine, Pantaloon, Pulcinella, Brighella, Clown – are all very codified in the literary and cultural imagination. They were re-popularised in the nineteenth century with the growing interest of writers for mimesis and artifice (e.g. Théophile Gautier, Baudelaire, Champfleury, Théodore de Banville, the Goncourt brothers, Champsaur, Jules Laforgue, Joris-Karl Huysmans), in places like the Chat Noir cabaret or the 'Cercle Funambulesque' (1888-1898; the amateur dramatic society produced plays in the manner of *Commedia dell'Arte*, farcical parades, comedies from the repertoire of the Théâtre Italien, and modern pantomimes).[50] There, the pantomime's spectacular practice stood as the representation of society and the crisis of the subject: Adele Levillain notes that '[t]he naïve buffoonery and fantasy of the earlier classic pantomimes of Deburau's day gave way to mimodramas and comedies of manners, the great number of which reflected the modern Realism, the Decadence, pessimism, scepticism and disillusionment of the epoch'.[51] Because it influenced creative activity and nourished new poetic conceptions of art in the French avant-garde, the aesthetics of pantomime, with all its key terms and figures ('arabesque', 'acrobat',[52] 'saltimbanque',[53] 'funambule',[54] 'clown', etc.) announced Modernism. In *Lulu, roman clownesque* (1901), Champsaur praises the patchwork aesthetics already at stake in Lorrain's *Modernités* through a new conception of the novel as 'modernist'.[55] He writes that 'le roman doit être multiforme, d'une originalité toujours renouvelée et de profonde vie, artiste, paré de toutes les richesses littéraires […]. La

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[48] Arnaud Rykner, 'La pantomime comme dispositif fin-de siècle', in *Discours, Image, Dispositif. Penser la représentation II*, P. Ortel (ed.) (Paris: L'Harmattan, coll. 'Champs visuels'), p. 161.

[49] See Jan Clarke, 'Du ballet de cour à la foire: les origines de la pantomime au XVIIe siècle', in *Pantomime et théâtre du corps, Transparence et opacité du hors texte*, Arnaud Rykner (ed.) (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2009), pp. 21-32.

[50] See Paul Hugounet, *Mimes et Pierrots: Notes et documents inédits pour servir à l'histoire de la pantomime* (Paris: Fischbacher, 1889), p. 23.

[51] Adele Dowling Levillain, *The Evolution of Pantomime in France*, diss. Boston College, 1943, p. 419.

[52] See Edmond de Goncourt, *Les Frères Zemgano* (1879).

[53] Jean Starobinski, *Portrait de l'artiste en saltimbanque* (Genève: Éditions d'Art Albert Skira, 1970).

[54] See Théodore de Banville, *Odes funambulesques* (1857).

[55] Champsaur first defined this new conception of the novel as 'modern'. Yet, from *Cœur* (1886) and *L'Amant des danseuses* (1888), both fragmented novels, he changed his conception of the novel from 'modern' to 'modernist', a term that runs through his 1901 novel *Lulu*. Lorrain and Champsaur were friends; they practised poetry together in the early 1880s, Champsaur correcting Lorrain's early verses. He wrote his first novel, *Dinah Samuel* (1882), while staying at Lorrain's in Normandy. Champsaur had a strong influence on Lorrain, pushing him to be more 'modernist'. About Lorrain's *Modernités*, he wrote: 'j'expliquai à mon provincial qu'il fallait qu'il laisse tranquille les dieux et les hamadryades, pour appliquer son vers à la poésie des modernités' (quoted in Normandy, *Jean Lorrain, son enfance, sa vie, son œuvre*, op. cit., p. 316).

littérature contient, résume et diffuse tous les arts : elle doit les mêler en ses artifices'.[56] Champsaur wrote two pantomimes, *Lulu* and *Les Éreintés de la vie* (1888); he incidentally inserted in his novel *Lulu* the pantomime of the same name (this practice of collage is also recurring in Lorrain's mottled oeuvre).

In fin-de-siècle pantomime, one traditional character stands out: Pierrot. Pierrot was undoubtedly the most revisited character in the 1880s, to the point that he became the symbol of fin-de-siècle pantomime, as the many works about Pierrot and critical studies show.[57] Over the years, Pierrot became a serialised and overdetermined figure which sums up, rewording Jean de Palacio in *Pierrot fin de siècle* (1990), the crisis of subject and representation in all the fin-de-siècle imagination: alienation, isolation, sadness, destruction, terror, pain, death, etc.[58] Lorrain, too, participated in the glorification and circulation of Pierrot as a poetic concept and the representation of the modern artist: he wrote a *fantaisie* in one act entitled *La Damnation de Pierrot* (1885), that was added to the volume of poetry *Les Griseries* (1887). More generally, he shares Huysmans's love for music-halls, the pantomime and circus, 'des coins de l'existence parisienne, des voltiges de ballet, des travaux de clowns, des pantomimes anglaises, des intérieurs d'hippodromes et de cirques.'[59] Yet Lorrain especially wrote about carnival. He rapidly identified with another, more carnivalesque, *Commedia dell'Arte* and 'Fêtes galantes' character: Harlequin.

While Pierrot encompasses the fin-de-siècle aesthetics, Harlequin comes to define the Modernist turn that came shortly after, namely the interwar period. In *The Harlequin Years*, Roger Nichols uses the harlequin metaphor defined by Jean Cocteau as 'the many-coloured splendour of foreign influences'[60] in *Le Coq et l'Arlequin* (1918) to refer to Paris as the hub of the artistic world – most particularly in the relationship between literature, music and the visual arts. Yet Lorrain recognised the poetic value of the *Commedia dell'Arte* fanciful and comical servant some thirty years before (and not precisely for the same reasons). Similar to the figures of Pierrot, the 'saltimbanque', the

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[56] Félicien Champsaur, *Lulu, roman clownesque* (Paris: Charpentier & Fasquelle, 1901), p. 421.
[57] This popularity is made visible, for instance, in Laforgue's *Les Complaintes* (1885) and *L'Imitation de Notre-Dame la Lune* (1886), as much as in the Chat Noir and Willette's tutelary fresco *Parce Domine* (1884). For critical works on Pierrot, see for instance Robert Storey, *Pierrots on the Stage of Desire: Nineteenth-Century French Literary Artists and the Comic Pantomime* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985); Jean de Palacio *Pierrot fin de siècle, ou les métamorphoses d'un masque* (Paris: Séguier, 1990); Gilles Bonnet (ed.), *Pantomimes fin de siècle* (Paris: Kimé, 2008); Arnaud Rykner (ed.), *Pantomimes et théâtre du corps* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2009).
[58] See Palacio, *Pierrot fin de siècle*, op. cit.
[59] Joris-Karl Huysmans, 'L'Art moderne' [1883], in *Œuvres complètes*, t. VI (Paris: Crès et Cie, 1928-1934), p. 14.
[60] Roger Nichols, *The Harlequin Years: Music in Paris 1917-1929* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), p. 9.

'funambule' or the 'acrobat', Harlequin is to Lorrain not just a metaphor of the condition of the modern artist, it is also a self-portrait as well as a subversive image used as a means to renew artistic practices. Harlequin is a syncretic figure that amalgamates many symbols. Originally, according to Nordic and Teutonic medieval mythology, Harlequin (Hellekin or Hellequin) was a demon with an animal face, that drove what is known as 'Chasse sauvage' – or *mesnie Hellequin*, namely, an army of the dead. Nowadays, Harlequin is a traditional stock character associated to carnival and parody more broadly, as Jean Starobinski remarks: 'au cours des siècles, la représentation théâtrale, la parodie conjureront [Harlequin's] maléfice : de ce démon qui a traversé les limites de l'enfer pour venir nous hanter, on fera une figure comique, dont le caractère essentiel de transgression se reportera sur les tabous de l'ordre social et de la discipline des mœurs'.[61] In sixteenth-century Italian comedy, Harlequin was a *zanni* (a jester, a clown) – that is, the typical character of the (immoral) manservant. This character still prevails today. Harlequin is a Rabelaisian character: he is joyful, gourmand, braggart; yet he can also be very cunning and savage.

Pierrot and Harlequin are both clowns who belong to the circus culture.[62] Like Pierrot, Harlequin is a figure whose existential/sexual identity is ambiguous. For instance, Starobinski notes that the clown is a 'révélateur qui porte la condition humaine à l'amère conscience d'elle-même';[63] he adds that there is an 'androgynie du clown acrobate').[64] As a metaphor of the artist/the acrobat, Harlequin is an 'être double', 'à la fois soi et un autre',[65] whose performative dimension participates in its 'clownesque' poetics.[66] Yet unlike Pierrot, Harlequin is less mystical and melancholic, while Pierrot is characteristically unlucky in love (hence, in part, his melancholy),[67] Harlequin is much more successful and promiscuous, which is very important to Lorrain's life and works. In fact, he stands as the opposite of Pierrot, even as his enemy, as depicted in James Ensor's 'Le Désespoir de Pierrot' (1910), where he is seen mocking Pierrot's distress in the background (this can imply, in substance, Lorrain's desire to construct himself in opposition to the more obvious figure of the fin-de-siècle). Besides, Harlequin is a humorous, parodical figure, a lowly trickster who identifies with the subordinate

[61] Starobinski, *Portrait de l'artiste en saltimbanque*, op. cit., pp. 128-29.
[62] See Sandra Pietrini's chapter 'The Circus and the Artist as Saltimbanco', in *Commedia dell'Arte in Context*, C. Balme, P. Vescovo, D. Vianello (eds.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 195-207.
[63] Starobinski, *Portrait de l'artiste en saltimbanque*, op. cit., p. 14.
[64] Ibid., p. 44.
[65] Charles Baudelaire, *Œuvres complètes*, Marcel Ruff (ed.) (Paris: Seuil, 1968), p. 378.
[66] Jennifer Forrest, 'Clownesque Poetics in Jules Laforgue's *Moralités légendaires*', in *Dix-Neuf*, 20.1 (2015), pp. 81-96.
[67] See Jules Laforgue, 'La Mélancolie de Pierrot', in *La Revue indépendante* (April 1888).

communities in society; his body represents a set of combinations, blending discourses, social classes, genders and sexes. Harlequin's fragmented body creates an indeterminate space where all identity configurations and aesthetic possibilities can thrive; it also provides a space of socio-cultural commentary that theorises the Belle Époque's general fragmentation. It develops on several levels: textual, metatextual, sexual, social, and cultural. Lorrain appropriated Harlequin's methods and the symbolic of his costume in order to develop a new aesthetics of fragments where various discourses – be they literary, cultural, media – are blended; he never stopped using this practice throughout his career. He is indeed infamously remembered for the montage-like appearance of his works, his plagiarism and self-plagiarism, although it seems that they too constitute a transgressive, yet intentional poetic move.[68] This practice is deliberately provocative; in both his life and works, Lorrain seeks to produce scandal. The comic servant's fragmented body is then used as a semantic space that represents not just Lorrain's poetic practice as a 'cultural space' of multiple references,[69] but, by extension, a 'metacultural discourse'[70] about the *disjecta membra* of Modernity in the Belle Époque.

In this sense, Harlequin's fragmented body is filled with ambiguities. It is a '*miroir* énergétique'[71] that represents the 'fin-de-siècle malaise' with its aesthetic and ontological issues, but also its sexual and social possible reconfigurations. Paired with Lorrain's life and works, it emerges as a symbolic construction that is interdependently conversing with the Belle Époque and its social *semiosis*. In this regard, it is a polysemous sign that informs and facilitates the poetic and socio-political aspect of Lorrain's life and works as representative of the fin-de-siècle. It constitutes a 'harlequin poetics', at the crossroads of fragmentation, performance, and scandal.

Fragmentation, Performance, and Scandal

Lorrain's poetic vision and experience of the Belle Époque is complex. It is an *imago mundi* that is fragmented (literary/media practices), similar to Harlequin's chequered

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[68] See for instance Hector Fleischmann, *Le Massacre d'une Amazone: Quelques plagiats de M. Jean Lorrain* (Paris: Genonceaux & Cie, 1904) and André Guyaux, 'Jean Lorrain et les Illuminations: la citation clandestine', in *Travaux de linguistique et de littérature*, 24.2 (1986), pp. 93-107.

[69] In the critical edition of *Moralités légendaires*, Daniel Grojnowski and Henri Scepi describe the network of interwoven references, sources, discourses, registers and vocabulary as an 'espace culturel' which, according to me, resembles more Harlequin's costume than Pierrot's existential identity. In Jules Laforgue, *Moralités légendaires* [1887], D. Grojnowski and H. Scepi (eds.) (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 2000), p. 12.

[70] Paul Bouissac, *Circus and Culture, A Semiotic Approach* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1976), p. 8.

[71] Gaston Bachelard, *La Terre et les rêveries de la volonté* (Paris: Corti, 1948), p. 23.

costume. In this sense, the fragmented body of Harlequin is a site of aesthetic and cultural meaning in the Belle Époque. It is also an object of discourses and questionings – if not anxieties – whose ensemble of fragments renders and possesses a discursive landscape. This parallels Lorrain's hero, Monsieur de Bougrelon, whose 'parole se donne comme un véritable morceau d'arlequin : elle est constituée d'une infinité de discours littéraires, qui souvent sont les contemporains immédiats du roman'.[72] Alongside Harlequin, the body of Lorrain's eponymous character emerges as a polysemous space that comes to define the discontinuous structure of his entire literary and journalistic production.[73] Yet Bougrelon is also a performative character who very much likes to stage himself/his transgressive sexuality in public, just like Lorrain. Further to the idea of fragmentation and montage, the 'harlequin poetics' therefore also alludes to the notion of performance, more particularly the performance of the self and gender performativity; implicitly, in the Belle Époque, it extends to the idea of literary and moral scandal.

The fragments highlight a modern consciousness of forms that rises with a rhapsodic conception of the text; in nineteenth-century poetry, for instance, it is illustrated in Stéphane Mallarmé's 'Idée du *Cousu*, *Apiécé*, *Patch-Work*' in the *Album*.[74] Lorrain's 'harlequin poetics' participates in the assemblage of this modern patchwork of textual fragments. However, it primarily derives from the fragmented space of the newspaper. In Lorrain, the press and literature playfully inform each other in order to create a (fragmented) panorama of Belle Époque France. This fragmented cosmogony reads like a modern pantomime, where the issue of representation is revaluated. This is characteristic of Lorrain's style. Reflecting new social claims of the *zanni*, it provides a deeper observation of the real world and contemporary reality with a historical and sociological vision that is both comic and tragic.[75] In Lorrain, the carnival provides a method to denounce the high and low social relationships and the grotesque aspect of the social comedy of his time. His patchwork of textual fragments creates a relationship between horizontal multiplicity (i.e. a collection of scattered elements from different

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[72] Anthologie, *Romans fins de siècle* (1890-1900), Guy Ducrey (ed.) (Paris: Robert Laffont, 'Bouquins', 1999), p. 103.

[73] In a way, this parallels the body of Gautier's *Mademoiselle de Maupin*, as a 'ramassis de morceaux hétérogènes'. In Théophile Gautier, *Mademoiselle de Maupin* [1835] (Paris: Charpentier, 1880), p. 269.

[74] Roland Barthes, *La Préparation au roman I et II. Notes de cours et séminaires au Collège de France, 1978-1979 et 1979-1980* (Paris: Seuil, 2003), p. 251.

[75] Similar to Pierrot, there is a metaphysical dimension to the character of Harlequin. In fact, this 'crise de théâtre' prepares for the Modernist theatre. For instance, it is transferred into society in Brecht's theatre, where masters and servants are interchangeable; the aim is to trigger a sense of awareness among the audience (the constraints imposed on the people by a society hierarchically structured). It is interesting to note that Goldoni's *Arlequin serviteur de deux maîtres* (1746) has become the favourite text of European directors of avant-garde and experimental theatre.

areas of society and of different genres/discourses, which are placed side by side without necessarily any sense of hierarchy between them) and vertical binary ('low'/'high'). Indeed, Lorrain's works as 'mosaic' (Marie-Ève Thérenty, Guillaume Pinson), 'constellation', 'montage' (Walter Benjamin), 'patchwork', or even 'montage-collision', and 'atlas' (Aby Warburg), often highlight the playful reversal of social hierarchies suggested by Bahktin's notion of carnivalesque.[76] The unhindered transversal between the two axes (horizontal/vertical) creates a productive tension similar to Harlequin's body as montage of fragments; besides establishing new aesthetics of fragmentation (and the re-piecing together of different textual materials), it also alludes to the conception of the Belle Époque as a 'media-grotesque' divine comedy. On the other hand, the idea of montage inherent to the harlequin poetics implies the organization and arrangement of pieces of various origins, like in a puzzle. The point is to show the 'succession inordonnée de fragments : facettes, touches, bulles, phylactères d'un dessin invisible',[77] like Jules Barbey d'Aurevilly's notion of 'tulle illusion'[78] or Henry James's famous carpet. This creates a space where the movement of artistic creation can fully emerge. In this regard, Lorrain's 'harlequin poetics' is highly modern. Its self-reflexivity and its metanarrative dimension – even its metatheatrical dimension – all lead to a form of fiction that recomposes the object (here, fragmentation usually directly calls for the idea of montage or *re*-montage). Through literary 'mystification' between fiction and reality (Jean-François Jeandillou)[79] and the *mise en abyme* of the writing process, Lorrain's text playfully both unveils the possibility of a mystery and the negation of its reality, thereby anticipating and performing the aesthetics of Modernism in the early twentieth century.

The 'harlequin poetics' does not just apply to textuality. It also deals with the notion of performance and performativity. Robert Ziegler sees in Lorrain a 'charlatan and showman, whose selves and writings were performances'.[80] The fragmented aspect of his oeuvre – his life *and* his works – indeed reflects an epistemological uncertainty

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[76] Marie-Ève Thérenty, *Mosaïque. Être écrivain entre presse et roman* (1829-1936) (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2003); Guillaume Pinson, *Fiction du monde. De la presse mondaine à Marcel Proust* (Montréal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 2008); Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. H. Eiland and K. McLaughlin (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard UP); Georges Didi-Huberman, *L'Image survivante* (Paris: Minuit, 2002); Mikhaïl Bakhtine, *L'Œuvre de François Rabelais et la culture populaire au Moyen Age et sous la Renaissance* [1968] (Paris: Gallimard, 1970).

[77] Roland Barthes, *Fragments d'un discours amoureux* (Paris: Seuil, 1977), p. 12.

[78] Referring to his diabolic tales, Barbey writes that '[o]n n'en a pas nommé les personnages : voilà tout ! On les a masqués et on a démarqué leur linge'. In Jules Barbey d'Aurevilly, Preface to *Les Diaboliques* [1874], p. 1291.

[79] Jean-François Jeandillou, *Esthétique de la mystification* (Paris: Minuit, 1994).

[80] Robert Ziegler, 'The Author of Public Opinion in Jean Lorrain's *Les Lépillier*', in *Dalhousie French Studies*, 26 ((Spring 1994), p. 46.

between fact and fiction that Lorrain plays with in order to create self-promoting marketing strategies based on mystification (that is, the confusion between art and life).[81] While Lorrain did write theatre and pantomimes, I want to use the 'harlequin poetics' as an analytical concept to investigate the issue of self-performance; firstly, in light of gender transgression (Judith Butler),[82] and secondly, through media and literary postures (Jérôme Meizoz, José-Luis Diaz)[83] with the purpose of constructing a media/cultural capital.[84] The performative regime of Lorrain's life and works indubitably lies in the relentless search for mystification and self-promotion in the fin-de-siècle. Yet it is also a tool to perform gender transgression. In her recent study *Before Trans* (2020), Rachel Mesch explores the invention of 'trans' in three nineteenth-century cultural and literary figures: Jane Dieulafoy, Rachilde and Marc de Montifaud. Through the account of these gender-variant biographies, she addresses cross-dressing, gender, sexuality and the performance of the self at a time of patriarchal bravado that proves seminal regarding gender and sexual transgressions. Further to those three significant figures, she notes that '[t]he examples of Lorrain and Lôti [*sic*] suggest further paths for exploring nineteenth-century resistance to the gender binary, beyond the scope of this study, in relation to men who identified with femininity'.[85] The actual performance of the self then parallels the demonstration of transgressive sexuality, gender and identity. In Parisian nights, Lorrain appears as a *décomplexé* version of Beau Brummel, Robert de Montesquiou and even Proust's Charlus, turning the Bal des Quat'z'Arts – remembered as a 'riotous Saturnalia'[86] in architect Jacques Guiton's memoirs – and many other celebrities' parties into a *gay* pride before its time.[87]

Lorrain's 'harlequin poetics' clearly stands as political resistance to gender assumptions in the Belle Époque; in the poem 'Coquine' (1883), he invents what he calls 'les sveltes arlequines'. [88] Here, Lorrain playfully cross-dresses *Commedia dell'Arte* characters in order to create a pre-Butlerian reading of gender trouble, overextending

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[81] See Yoan Vérilhac, 'Vie littéraire et mystification aux temps symbolistes', in 'L'Art de la mystification', *Romantisme*, 156 (2012), p. 76.
[82] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* [1990] (London: Routledge, 2006).
[83] Meizoz, *Postures littéraires*, op. cit.; José-Luis Diaz, *L'Écrivain imaginaire. Scénographies auctoriales à l'époque romantique* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2007).
[84] See Bourdieu, *Les Règles de l'art*, op.cit.
[85] Rachel Mesch, *Before Trans: Three Gender Stories from Nineteenth-Century France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2020), p. 299.
[86] Jacques Guiton, *A Life in Three Lands: Memoirs of an Architect* (Boston: Branden Publishing Company, 1991), p. 66.
[87] This is why Jean-Luc Cachia writes that Lorrain is the representation of 'la Belle Époque travestie'. In Jean-Luc Cachia, 'Jean Lorrain et la Belle Époque travestie', in *Europe*, 672 (April 1985).
[88] Lorrain, 'Coquines', *Modernités*, op. cit., p. 22.

their androgynous value. By the same token, the collapse of gender binary reflects the Belle Époque as a whole, as symbolically represented in Pablo Picasso's androgynous *Arlequins*. In 'Les Jeunes: Picasso, peintre', Guillaume Apollinaire proposes a poetic transcription of Picasso's *Famille de Saltimbanques* (1905), writing that '[d]es arlequins accompagnent la gloire des femmes, ils leurs ressemblent, ni mâles ni femelles… Des êtres hybrides […].'[89] For Lorrain, the 'arlequine' primarily is a lesbian woman. Yet she more generally represents gender transgression/trouble. Openly gay himself, Lorrain used many female pennames in the press like other 'chaussettes roses' of the time: Mimosa, Francine, Salterella, Stendhalette and, more importantly, Arlequine. They reveal a taste for self-performance and the transgression of gender binary through Lorrain's queer potential. In fact, Harlequin is to Lorrain a overdetermined figure that represents gender and sexual transgression. This is why, in 1886, Lorrain introduced himself as a feminised version of the *Commedia dell'Arte* comic servant in newspaper *L'Événement*:

> Deux Colombines, un Arlequin, Polichinelle au *Figaro*, […] Ah ! tous les batteurs d'estrade sont à la parade et je resterais dans la coulisse. Non point ! *L'Événement* m'entrebaîlle sa porte, clic, clac, me voici, moi-même Arlequine en personne. Colombine a ses dimanches, Arlequin a ses mardis, un peu d'espace, mes beaux amis, de grâce pressez-vous, et place aux mercredis d'Arlequine.[90]

With obvious satire, Lorrain inserts himself in a media field that is already pervaded by the cultural dominance of pantomime: there are already two Colombines (*L'Écho de Paris* and *Gil Blas*), one Arlequin (*Gil Blas*) and one Polichinelle (*Le Figaro*) writing columns in the fin-de-siècle French press. The article serves as a symbolic birth certificate – if not a passport in a competitive cultural community;[91] in it, Lorrain presents the provocative image of himself as Harlequin that he intends to circulate in his own text, but also in the media and the field of cultural production more generally. In fact, the polysemous space provided by the body of the *Commedia dell'Arte* character is also recuperated by various artists of Bohemian Montmartre. Picasso, for instance, also uses Harlequin as an alter ego. In 'Crépuscule', Apollinaire links the Cubist painter with Harlequin and Hermes (the final lines refer to Picasso as 'Arlequin trismégiste', 'a pun on the mystical Hermes Trismegisthus (Thrice Great)', as Caroline Potter remarks).[92] This establishes Picasso as

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[89] Guillaume Apollinaire, 'Les Jeunes: Picasso, peintre', in *La Plume* (15 May 1905).
[90] Arlequine [Jean Lorrain], 'Chronique de Paris. Arlequine', in *L'Événement* (6 December 1886).
[91] On the idea of literature as passport, see Susan Sontag's text entitled 'The World as India: The Saint Jerome Lecture on Literary Translation', in *At the Same Time: Essays and Speeches* (London: Penguin Books, 2008).
[92] Caroline Potter, *Erik Satie: Music, Art and Literature* (London: Routledge, 2013), p. 155.

both an inventor and a thief (the messenger of Olympus is also the protector of travellers and thieves) – a distinctive feature that very much applies to Lorrain too. Arlequine therefore stands as a satirical yet critical cross-dressed *alter ego* commentator of the fin-de-siècle; yet, further than Lorrain's histrionic dimension[93] and the significance of gender performance, Arlequine is also a media-savvy *persona* that signifies Lorrain's taste for all sorts of real, textual, and symbolic transgressions as producing *réclame* and self-promoting strategies.[94] This is what creates Lorrain's scandalous reputation.

Lorrain's taste for mystification and self-performance, with all the transgressions it implies, eventually leads to scandal. The word 'scandal' comes from the Greek *skándalon*, namely 'a trap laid for the enemy, a cause of moral stumbling'. It emerges from the transgression of norms and breaches of established moral conceptions. Yet, in the Belle Époque as is still the case nowadays, outrage – especially when it is purposefully relayed in the press – produces invaluable publicity. For Lorrain, Harlequin reads as a sexual and scandalous signifier. The fin-de-siècle provides a repository of moral and sex scandals in relation to literature; they were all largely covered in the press, much as the libel trials of Oscar Wilde and Georges Eekhoud[95] that triggered many debates on homosexuality as well as on the separation between fact and fiction in literature. Kali Israel argues 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.'[96]

The ethical dimension of Lorrain's performative regime is therefore another significant feature of the 'harlequin poetics'. Harlequin is not just an astute servant characterised by his chequered costume. The famous *Commedia dell'Arte* character is also commonly seen as a mischief-maker on stage; he is largely known for being an unscrupulous and promiscuous trickster, often changing his mind, creating or revealing

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[93] Gwenhaël Ponnau, 'Jean Lorrain, l'auteur-histrion: la fascination du vice et l'horreur du vide', in *Revue des Sciences Humaines*, 'Jean Lorrain: vices en écriture', Charles Grivel (ed.), 2 (1993), p. 111.

[94] Réclame: '[Se] dit, dans le Journalisme, d'un petit article inséré dans le corps d'un journal, et qui a pour objet d'attirer l'attention sur un livre, une marchandise, un médicament, etc., plus sûrement que par une annonce ostensiblement payée. […] Fig. et fam., *Faire de la réclame*, Faire des appels bruyants à la publicité, chercher par tous les moyens à attirer l'attention du public'. For an analysis of the wider cultural phenomenon of 'réclame' in nineteenth-century France, see 'La Réclame', P. Hamon (ed.), in *Romantisme*, 155.1 (2012).

[95] See Nancy Erber and George Robb's 'Introduction', in *Disorder in the Court, Trials and Sexual Conflicts at the Turn of the Century* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), p. 4.

[96] Kali Israel, 'French Vices and British Liberties: Gender, Class and Narrative Competition in a Late Victorian Sex Scandal', in *Social History*, 22 (1997), p. 1.

scandals out of self-interest.[97] Further than being himself an *object* of scandal, Lorrain also creates it: in his gossip column and his literature, for instance, he shamelessly discloses some celebrities' sexual orientation (e.g. Proust, Maupassant, Daudet, Pougy). Nowadays, the *Commedia dell'Arte* character still stands as a connoted marker of scandal, particularly due to his encouraging promiscuity; this characterises Lorrain's life and work as a mix of transgression, parody, performance and gender performativity. Famous for his chronicles of the mediacentric Belle Époque, Lorrain indisputably is a troublemaker – or as known amongst more modern readers: 'l'homme par qui le scandale arrive.'[98] According to Ziegler, he is 'socially unclassifiable, a self-inventing mythomaniac at one unknowable and notorious' as much as 'accomplished scandalmonger dazzling the capital with his flamboyant eccentricities'.[99] This seems to be part of the construction of his poetics – if not, his own myth. It is a 'machinerie sémiotique performante'[100] that is part of Lorrain's commercial process. Not content with provoking scandals, Lorrain also capitalises on them in a complex double strategy of self-promotion/destruction that eventually sees him bearing the direct consequences of it.

Scope and Structure

The remarkable multidimensionality of Lorrain's life and practice is illustrated through five different yet interconnected sections that delineate what the 'harlequin poetics' essentially is, and what it produces: fragmentation, mystification, montage, performance, and eventually scandal. The first chapter concentrates on Lorrain's 'Patchwork of Narratives' that constitutes his poetic practice, from fragmentation to montage. Informed by the amalgamation of the press, literature, and photography in the second half of the nineteenth century, the erratic use of fragments, discourses and snapshots of high and low society life in his prose creates a dynamic panorama of Belle Époque France, as Anthonay suggests: '[à] travers ces 'instantanés', Lorrain apparaît bien comme le miroir à facettes de la Belle Époque, le vivant kaléidoscope réfractant le spectacle multiforme qu'offre son temps'.[101] This process is transposed into Lorrain's longer fiction works, as I show in the study of the picaresque novel *La Maison Philibert* (1904),

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[97] See the entry 'Arlequin' in *Littré*.
[98] This was the title given to the special show about Lorrain in Mathieu Garrigou-Lagrange's famous radio programme 'Une vie, une œuvre' on France Culture (24 April 2011).
[99] Ziegler, 'The Author of Public Opinion in Jean Lorrain's *Les Lépillier*', op. cit., p. 39-40.
[100] Laurence Guellec, '*De la récalcitrance littéraire*. La position des écrivains face à la publicité', in *L'auteur & ses stratégies publicitaires au XIXe siècle*, Brigitte Diaz (ed.) (Caen: Presses universitaires de Caen, 2019), p. 23.
[101] Anthonay, *Jean Lorrain, Miroir de la Belle Époque*, op. cit., p. 706.

creating a dynamic movement that is symbolised by the figure of the *flâneur*. The second chapter deals with Lorrain's constant blurring of the frontiers between fact and fiction. This provokes a form of metaleptic mystification[102] that has two distinct effects. Firstly, Lorrain's exploded *ethos* (author, character, author as character) in the literary and media space actively participates in the construction of his own myth.[103] This technique is carefully thought through: in *Fards et poisons* (1903), he writes that '[i]l faut parfois faire mentir sa légende, l'exagérer aujourd'hui, la démolir demain, c'est ainsi qu'on tient l'opinion en haleine. C'est le système de la douche écossaise appliquée à la publicité. Or la publicité est tout pour les filles de théâtre comme pour les hommes de lettres.'[104] Secondly, it also impacts his text, which, in leaving apparent the seams of its structure, alludes to both fin-de-siècle mystification and Modernist aesthetics of fragmentation and self-reflexivity.[105] I define this text a 'texte-échafaudage'. The third chapter, entitled 'Montage of Temporalities', primarily examines the montage aspect of Lorrain's use of legendary, historical, and literary references. Marie-France David-de Palacio notes that 'la prose de Lorrain constitue le plus souvent une sorte d'arlequin de références antiques, composé des ingrédients les plus divers. Le pot-pourri s'accompagne d'ailleurs assez fréquemment d'un style chantourné procédant par accumulations, énumérations, culminant en périodes anaphoriques'.[106] The result lies in a Proustian-type of accumulation of fragments of time which, when gathered together, 'anachronise' it,[107] as I analyse in the collection of short stories *Histoires de masques* (1900). Similarly, Lorrain's harlequin of intertextual references opens to a form of 'anxiety of influence',[108] as symbolised by the haunting presence of Oscar Wilde in his works – chiefly in *Monsieur de Phocas* (1901). In this chapter, I show that, in Lorrain's literature, the body is in turn de-formed (fragmentation), un-formed (void), and re-formed (montage/multiplicity). The

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[102] Gérard Genette compares the term 'metalepsis' to a 'transgression, figurale ou fictionnelle, du seuil de la représentation'. He adds that it is 'une manipulation – au moins figurale, mais parfois fictionnelle […] – de cette relation causale particulière qui unit, dans un sens ou dans l'autre, l'auteur à son œuvre, ou plus largement le producteur d'une représentation à cette représentation elle-même.' In *Métalpese. De la figure à la fiction* (Paris: Seuil, 2004), p. 14.

[103] According to Jean-François Jeandillou, 'mystifier' originally means: 'faire de quelqu'un un myste' and 'initier quelqu'un à un mystère'. In *Esthétique de la mystification*, op. cit., pp. 16-20.

[104] Jean Lorrain, *Fards et poisons* (Paris: Ollendorff, 1903), p. 144.

[105] Catherine Dousteyssier-Khoze and Alain Vaillant, 'Le Siècle de la mystification', in 'L'Art de la mystification', C. Dousteyssier-Khoze and A. Vaillant (eds.), *Romantisme*, 156 (2012), p. 3.

[106] Marie-France David-de Palacio, 'Coins de Rome… et de Byzance: la référence à l'antique chez Jean Lorrain', in *Jean Lorrain, Produit d'extrême civilisation*, op. cit., p. 48.

[107] See Georges Didi-Huberman, *Atlas ou le gai savoir inquiet* (L'Œil de l'histoire, 3) (Paris: Minuit, 2011), p. 18. As with the montage, the atlas is by definition anachronistic because it is pervaded by heterogeneous times that all progress and produce new permutable possibilities all the time. It brings about dialectic knowledge of the (Western) culture.

[108] Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* [1973] (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

fourth chapter illustrates what the *Commedia dell'Arte* character – apart from the idea of multiplicity – is also famous for: performance. Although performing arts are a well-defined yet minor part of Lorrain's works – he wrote theatre, ballets, pantomimes, lyrical tales – I decided not to study this aspect as it is not particularly relevant to our enquiry: while it would be wrong to write that Lorrain's career as playwright was a complete failure, it is nonetheless important to remember the poor quality of his stage productions (apart, perhaps, from the late ballets and pantomimes drawn from his own texts). Instead, this chapter focuses on Lorrain's performance and performativity at three levels: gender performativity (the invention of queerness), the poetics of excess in the Decadent tale *Narkiss* (1898) and finally the performance of the self through the visual representations of Lorrain in and out of the media space. This last point directly informs the following and last chapter of this thesis that I have entitled 'The Poetics of Scandal'. Scandal is almost always what motivates Lorrain's 'harlequin poetics' and the Belle Époque in general, which Nancy Erbert and George Robb call the 'Age of the Trial'.[109] I examine Lorrain's construction of his legend through transgressions and its eventual impact on both the public and himself. However profitable (media, literary, moral) scandal is, it finally causes Lorrain's relative downfall. This is exemplified through three cases that took place in 1903, all directly or indirectly incriminating Lorrain: Jacquemin, Greuling, Adelswärd-Fersen. For Lorrain, this media blow paradoxically provides him with more *réclame* strategies on which he tries to capitalise. This helps me to question the issue of ethics in relation to Lorrain's 'harlequin poetics' and, more generally, scandal as media strategy in the Belle Époque in relation to today.

[109] Erber and Robb, 'Introduction', op. cit., p. 4.

- CHAPTER I -

Patchwork of Narratives

In *L'Assommoir* (1876), Émile Zola uses the term 'harlequin' to refer to a plate of mismatched leftovers. Describing the fall of Gervaise, he writes: 'Elle [Gervaise] tombait aux arlequins, dans les gargotes borgnes, où, pour un sou, elle avait des tas d'arêtes de poisson mêlées à des rognures de rôti gâté'.[1] In the nineteenth century, 'harlequin' is indeed used as slang to refer to dinner scraps cleared from the plates of the wealthy to sell to the poor. Although he does not address this directly in *Le Ventre de Paris* (1873), Zola uses the term 'harlequin' as a poetic description of the jumble of animation in *le carreau des Halles*. There, it refers to two kiosks that frame the long descriptive scene: 'deux colonnes d'affichage étaient comme vêtues d'un habit d'arlequin par les carrés verts, jaunes, rouges, bleus, des affiches de théâtre'.[2] From debris to a small structure that displays information (advertisement) – that is, a structure displaying *signs* in the 'ville-spectacle'[3] –, this quotation allows a transfer from food to text through the metaphor of the harlequin as juxtaposition, patchwork, collage and patterns. It provides a contrast between something debased and shameful (the leftovers), and something cheerful, bright, and meaningful (the kiosk). This metaphor applies to Lorrain's exploded oeuvre, whose textual fragments that are assembled together in a patchwork of narratives read like the chequered costume of the *Commedia dell'Arte* character.

In *L'Alcool du silence*, Pierre Jourde notes that in the fin-de-siècle novel, '[o]n n'écrit pas une œuvre, mais des morceaux de l'œuvre manquante. Le roman, chez Huysmans, chez Poictevin, devient un tissu de pièces plus ou moins bien jointes. Même Lorrain construit ses romans en raboutant des fragments publiés ici et là, ce dont évidemment leur structure se ressent.[4] Lorrain's oeuvre is characterised by its seemingly incoherent form. The aesthetics of fragmentation runs throughout the nineteenth century, from Baudelaire's Modernity (for instance, *Fusées* or *Mon coeur mis à nu*) to the Decadent text and its literary variations towards Modernism (see for instance the Goncourts' 'japonisante' aesthetics of 'l'écriture artiste'). Lorrain's practice is symptomatic of this heritage, which also borrows from the fragmented space of the newspaper. In Lorrain's

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[1] Émile Zola, *L'Assommoir* [1876] (Paris: Charpentier, 1877), p. 309.
[2] Émile Zola, *Le Ventre de Paris* [1873] (Paris: Folio, 2002), p. 353.
[3] See the entry 'Affiche/Enseigne' in *Dictionnaire thématique du roman de mœurs (1850-1914)*, P. Hamon and A. Viboud (eds.) (Paris: Presses Sorbonne nouvelle, 2003), p. 41.
[4] Pierre Jourde, *L'Alcool du silence. Sur la décadence* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1994), p. 30.

text there is a constant circulation between journalistic texts and fictional narrative; textual scraps often re-emerge into long-form textual productions. By drawing a comparison with Harlequin and the harlequin plate, this constitutes an interesting patchwork of narratives. In the first part of this chapter I shall focus on Lorrain's aesthetics of fragmentation through the experience of instantaneity; it is directly informed by his experience as a journalist as well as the emergence of photography in the nineteenth century. I shall then discuss Lorrain's patchwork of narratives as a panorama of Belle Époque France. His kaleidoscopic writing indeed documents both high and low social and cultural spheres of the time; the assemblage of fragments in Lorrain's works, comparable to the interwoven fabrics of Harlequin's costume, seeks an idea of grotesque totality. It is not just fragmentation (and montage); it is an attempt to synthesise fragments. In 'Marketing Leftovers in Nineteenth-Century Paris', Janet Beizer considers the harlequin as a metaphor of the heteroclitic and the carnivalesque: '[t]he visual and conceptual crown of the stunningly unstable carnivalesque is the plate of mismatched leftovers, *l'arlequin*.'[5] In the third part of this chapter, I shall question the notion of 'carnivalesque' in relation to the fragmentation of the social/textual body of Lorrain's oeuvre. I shall finally examine the idea of movement that emerges in Lorrain's aesthetics of fragmentation, with a particular focus on the *flâneur* and *Monsieur de Bougrelon* (1897). The overall point is to show how Lorrain distinctly seeks to reconcile those fragments in a patchwork that creates a relationship between horizontal multiplicity and vertical binary.

Fragments. The Experience of Instantaneity

The Press, Literature and Photography

The focus on the fragment is largely determined by the development of the press in the nineteenth century. As Marie-Ève Thérenty puts it, the newspaper is a 'montage, juxtaposition, syncope de fragments disjoints, et l'écriture de fiction par des mécanismes mimétiques tente de retrouver dans son énoncé la superposition de plusieurs énonciations.'[6] Thérenty locates the beginning of the relationship between journalism

[5] Janet Beizer, 'Marketing Leftovers in Nineteenth-Century Paris', in *Food and Markets*, Mark McWilliams (ed.) (London: Prospect Books, 2015), p. 31.
[6] Thérenty also adds that '[l]'écriture se veut géologique avec multiplication des espaces et des plans. Les textes romanesques se citent donc les uns les autres et réintroduisent par la pratique de la citation la multiplicité des énonciations du journal.' In Thérenty, *Mosaïque*, op. cit., p. 139.

and literature around the 1830s onwards, and most particularly in the works of Balzac.[7] The journalistic space encapsulates a wide range of genres, techniques and themes. It appears as almost totally fragmented. For Thérenty, works of fiction inspired by journalistic forms constitute what she calls a 'mosaic', or an ensemble of textual fragments. The sum of fragments composing Lorrain's novels is largely recycled from the journalistic press that constitutes, like many other writers at the time, his primary source of income.

At the end of the nineteenth century and throughout the Belle Époque, newspapers like *L'Écho de Paris* or *Le Journal*, which 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 Lorrain.[8] This shows that there was a form of continuity in the collusion between fiction and information, since at least the creation of *Le Figaro* in 1854, marking 'la naissance de la vie parisienne sous le Second Empire, le mouvement intellectuel de cette période, l'éclosion des talents en art, en littérature'.[9] In *La Littérature au quotidien*, Thérenty notes that:

> *Le Journal*, manifestement, assume l'héritage très littéraire du quotidien à la française en embauchant une rédaction d'élite. […] Dans un « Pall-Mall » nécrologique, Jean Lorrain reconnaît toute la dette du journalisme littéraire à l'égard d'un Fernand Xau, « à qui nous devons l'exceptionnelle situation faite à la plupart d'entre nous dans un journalisme avant lui hostile et fermé aux artistes de rêve et d'imagination ».[10]

The combination of the 'matrice médiatique' and the 'matrice littéraire du journal'[11] then produced new journalistic genres (sections like 'faits divers', interviews, reportage, or society columns where Lorrain excelled), which were particularly welcoming to the literary techniques of narration and fictionalization. As Guillaume Pinson demonstrates, the sociocritical hypothesis of a 'romanesque généralisé' in the social discourse of the

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[7] See for instance the aesthetics of the mosaic in the introduction of *Une fille d'Ève* (1838).
[8] Marie-Ève Thérenty, *La Littérature au quotidien* (Paris: Seuil, coll. 'Poétique', 2007), p. 149.
[9] Henri Avenel, *Histoire de la presse française de 1789 à nos jours* (Paris: Flammarion, 1900), p. 487. As political opinions were prohibited in the press, other domains – i.e. literary, society, 'fait divers' columns, series, etc. – were created in order to attract a bigger readership.
[10] Thérenty, *La Littérature au quotidien*, op. cit., p. 41-42. Their specialised and prestigious editorial boards tell a lot about their literary ambitions.
[11] Ibid., pp. 353-370.

nineteenth century proves that writer-journalists did not necessarily recognise a clear separation between information and invention in the space of the newspaper.[12]

The journalistic space therefore serves as a laboratory for writers. It not only provides them with a reservoir of fictive or real dialogues, dialects and sociolects,[13] which can consequently contribute to a kind of 'effet de réel'[14] in their works of fiction (that would have a poetic function more than a mimetic one), it can also give essence to the very form of the work of fiction. For Lorrain, series of vignettes like *Dans l'oratoire*, *Une femme par jour*, *La Petite classe*, *Vingt femmes*, *Quelques hommes*, or his infamous social columns 'Pall Mall Semaine' – influenced by British newspaper *Pall Mall Gazette*[15] – all compose a form of literary matrix for the works of fiction to come. These sums of fragments (usually portraits or scenes of everyday life) read like vignettes. They directly emerge from his journalistic practice – all the more so because the media space was pervaded by the growing influence of photography at the time. For Lorrain, the collections of textual portraits like *Une femme par jour* or *Quelques hommes* respond to the visual portraits that feature in the illustrated press and albums.

With the advances in photographic and printing technology as well as the availability of cheap paper, the development of the illustrated press was exceptionally swift in the long nineteenth century.[16] Even if the art of engraving and etching can be traced back to the fifteenth century, the role of illustration was rather marginal until the beginning of the nineteenth century, with for example the publication of London's *Penny Magazine* in 1832, whose illustrated formula was borrowed the following year by Édouard Charton, editor of the *Magasin Pittoresque*.[17] At the time there was a proliferation of various *revues*, amongst which the famous literary and highly cultural *Revue des deux mondes* where Musset, Vigny, George Sand and Sainte-Beuve all wrote columns. The process

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12 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*, D. Kalifa, P. Régnier, M.-E. Thérenty, and A. Vaillant (eds.) (Paris: Nouveau Monde éditions, 2012).

13 Thérenty, *La Littérature au quotidien*, op. cit., p. 182.

14 Barthes, 'L'Effet de réel', op. cit., p. 81.

15 The *Pall Mall Gazette* was created in London in 1865 by publisher George Murray Smith. It derives from the fictional newspaper that features in William Makepeace Thackeray's 1848-1850 novel *The History of Pendennis*. It is set in Victorian England, most particularly in Pall Mall, London, where many gentlemen's clubs are located. In the 1880s, Smith's *Pall Mall Gazette* was one of the most influential newspapers in London, with sensational articles written by great contributors like George Bernard Shaw and Oscar Wilde, amongst others.

16 See Philippe Hamon, *Imageries. Littérature et image au XIXe siècle* (Paris: José Corti, 2001), Philippe Ortel, *La Littérature à l'ère de la photographie. Enquête sur une révolution invisible* (Nîmes: Jacqueline Chambon, coll. 'Rayon photo', 2002), and Daniel Grojnoswki, *Usages de la photographie. Vérités et croyances* (Paris: José Corti, 2011).

17 See Jean-François Tétu, 'L'illustration de la presse au XIXe siècle', in *Semen*, 'Le discours de la presse au dix-neuvième siècle: pratiques socio-discursives émergentes', 25 (2008) [online]. https://doi.org/10.4000/semen.8227.

accelerated at the end of the 1830s with the invention of photography. By the end of the century, the illustrated press – whether the emphasis was put on engraving or photography – pervaded almost all newspapers. The aesthetic dimension of communicational phenomenon also gave birth to the albums, which were very popular at the time. In fin-de-siècle France, the Albums Mariani stood as a visual twin to the biographic practices of the century. Published between 1897 and 1925, the Albums Mariani constitute thirteen volumes of 75 to 80 vignettes of celebrities, each with biographic details and a short text in honour of Mariani wine, signed by the celebrity represented.[18] The notion of 'portraitomania'[19] then emerged at the junction of the development of a certain portrait market and particular commercial strategies; it also proceeded from the publicizing of contemporary faces – mostly politicians, writers like Lorrain, and actors – transposed from the media imaginary to the public space.

The space of the newspaper encapsulates a form of writing whose texture and impressions share many similarities with photographic immediacy; the illustrated press then appeared to visually signify the idea of the present, with textual and visual snapshots of isolated moments. Lorrain's texts emerge from this new poetics of representation as well as the culture of fragments, which come to represent a particular moment in time. In *Une femme par jour*, Lorrain's impressions not only resemble the photographic landscape of the newspaper (patchwork of fragments), they directly aim for the experience of instantaneity. The vignettes all record and fix a fleeting aspect of everyday life. Jacques Dubois compares this assemblage of discontinuous, fragmented texts, to the pictorial movement of Impressionism. In literature, he calls it 'instantanéïsme.'[20] This notion applies to Lorrain's *Une femme par jour*.

A Montage of Literary Snapshots: *Une femme par jour* (1896)

In 1890, after three and a half years spent collaborating on the French newspaper *L'Événement*, where he wrote 230 chronicles, Lorrain started a new position at *L'Écho de Paris*, a French newspaper with a higher print run at the time, owned by Valentin Simond. The success of *L'Écho de Paris* was largely due to the great variety of famous writers who wrote in its literary columns, amongst whom were Marcel Schwob, Alphonse Daudet, Edmond de Goncourt, Paul Bourget, Octave Mirbeau, Joris-Karl

[18] Lorrain appears in the first album (1897).
[19] Adeline Wrona, *Face au portrait: de Sainte-Beuve à Facebook* (Paris: Hermann, 2012), p. 99.
[20] Jacques Dubois, *Romanciers français de l'instantané au XIXème siècle* (Bruxelles: Palais des Académies, 1963).

Huysmans, and François Coppée.[21] There Lorrain created his 'Pall Mall Semaines', in which he successively incensed and criticised Parisian celebrities while writing short narratives and various reviews as Jean-Edern Hallier, Marc-Édouard Nabe, Philippe Sollers, or Michel Houellebecq would do in the pages of *L'Idiot international* almost a century later. This is also where he created an anthology of pen-portraits of women in fin-de-siècle France, that I see as a first attempt at producing/re-using textual fragments (scraps) into a larger ensemble. This patchwork of fragments constitutes the foundation of Lorrain's 'harlequin poetics'. Lorrain's position as both a writer of popular chronicles and fiction indeed gives him room for manoeuvre, particularly because his constant movements through high and low society offer him the opportunity to not only document but also to produce a panoramic and carnivalesque vision of fin-de-siècle Paris from various textual fragments.

At *L'Écho de Paris*, Lorrain starts with a series of chronicles ironically entitled *Une femme par jour*, with some later published in a volume by Librarie Borel, illustrated by Mittis, in 1896.[22] The misogynistic/'humorous' title would have certainly appealed to the readership of the time. Although Lorrain's whole collection of portraits comes close to 300, this particular series collected by Borel displays twenty literary snapshots of women from both high and low society which, when brought together, offer a vivid montage of the Belle Époque Parisienne. I choose to concentrate only on this selection published by Borel, mostly because they offer a good sample of all the portraits that Lorrain published in the press, but also because they highlight the writer's own editorial choice. On 1 July, *L'Écho de Paris* made the following announcement:

> À partir de demain 1er juillet, *L'Écho de Paris* insérera sous la rubrique : *Une femme par jour* un portrait de femme contemporaine signé Restif de la Bretonne. Les types choisis indifféremment dans la plus haute société comme dans la plus basse, dans le monde du théâtre comme dans celui de la galanterie, dans le monde des arts comme dans celui de la politique ou des lettres, femmes de boudoir, d'académie, de rue ou de temple, formeront un des plus curieux et des plus piquants tableaux de mœurs de notre époque.[23]

The reference to French writer, Restif de la Bretonne (1734-1806), is particularly interesting. Although Lorrain soon changed his pseudonym to 'Raitif de la Bretonne' (for obvious legal reasons), it is no surprise that he chose his new penname after the

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[21] See Thérenty, *La Littérature au quotidien*, op. cit., p. 42.
[22] Jean Lorrain, *Une femme par jour* (Paris: Librairie Borel, collection 'Lotus Alba', 1897).
[23] *L'Écho de Paris*, 1er juillet 1890. The date is wrong and the first portrait was published the next day under the title 'Une étoile' [*A Star*].

eighteenth-century libertine author who wrote *Le Paysan perverti* (1776), and more importantly *Les Nuits de Paris* (1786-1794) and *Les Parisiennes* (1787). The two latter volumes directly inform Lorrain's practice. Restif de la Bretonne's *Les Nuits de Paris* and *Les Parisiennes* present vignettes of everyday life, and mostly concentrate on either portraits of characters or situations, found in places of ill repute or theatres and palaces, etc. They influenced the imaginary of Baudelaire and Nerval all the way up to the Surrealists (e.g. Guillaume Apollinaire's *Le Flâneur des deux rives*, Louis Aragon's *Le Paysan de Paris*, Philippe Soupault's *Les Dernières nuits de Paris* or André Breton's *Nadja*).[24] Lorrain also has a lot in common with Restif de la Bretonne. This is particularly true of *Une femme par jour*, which stands as a clear nod to Restif de la Bretonne's *Les Parisiennes*, since in these series of portraits both writers choose to focus on female aristocrats as much as on 'femmes du peuple', with a particular emphasis on criminals, prostitutes, courtesans and femmes fatales. Through *Une femme par jour*, Lorrain then makes himself part of a long tradition of social and moral documentation that is reconsidered in short literary forms here. While it definitely fits within the overall and well-documented fin-de-siècle representation of women and *femmes fatales*,[25] I am more interested in focusing on the formal aspect of these written portraits as fragments. Taken together, they constitue a patchwork of narrative that creates a relationship between horizontal multiplicity and the vertical binary ('low'/'high'). The unhindered transversal between the two axes creates a productive tension (montage/critique) similar to Harlequin's fragmented body.

The twenty portraits all concentrate on one particular aspect of a woman that comes to define her whole personality. The titles given to each portrait are ironic and resolutely misogynistic. Lorrain's puns read like a label, or caption written beneath an image: 'La Femme du 28 jours', 'La Groseille à maquereaux', 'La Phallophore', 'Fleur de Fortifes', 'L'Évanouisseuse', 'La Truqueuse du Bois', 'La Cocotte', 'Monstrillon', 'Fleur-de-Luxe', 'La Moulue', 'Fleur-de-Chic', 'La Casinotière', etc. In 'La Casinotière', the illustration that precedes the text is a visual representation of the opening lines of the portrait: 'Le front obstinément collé aux vitres humides, elle regarde la mer, la mer remueuse et grise, striée d'écume au loin, foncer et s'assombrir sous le grain des ondées, la morne casinotière' (*La Casinotière*, *FPJ*, 177). Here, the sentence provides a close-up

[24] Breton's poetic narrative *Nadja* (1928) also borrows from the graphic world. Although they serve simple functions – they either document places, objects, events and people in the text, or corroborate Breton's 'anti-literary' attitude –, the photographs in the novel are crucial to its structure.

[25] See for instance Praz, *The Romantic Agony*, op. cit.; George R. Ridge, 'The *Femme Fatale* in French Decadence', in *The French Review*, 34.4 (February 1961), pp. 352-60 ; Bram Dijkstra, *Les Idoles de la perversité: Figures de la femme fatale dans la culture fin de siècle* (Paris: Seuil, 1992); Mireille Dottin-Orsini, *Cette femme qu'ils disent fatale: Textes et images de la misogynie fin-de-siècle* (Paris: Grasset, 1993).

that allows the reader to see the character (objectively) and what she sees (subjectively: the state of the sea parallels the mental state of the woman) in the same movement. With the close-up, the belated designation ('la morne casinotière') brings back the focalisation on the character in an abrupt way as if to signal the beginning of the narrative. Most portraits work the same way. Additionally, some portraits are also followed by illustrations of an important detail in the text, or a landscape, that allow the reader to experience the narrative further in an open perspective as if they were witnessing the scene in its entirety, together with Lorrain himself, but also through the subjective perceptions of the chosen model. The image is then both located in a precise place or environment and 'displaced'. In this respect, the visual aspect of the collection mirrors the textual enterprise undertaken by Lorrain, with a careful focus on time and movement.

Through his series *Une femme par jour*, Lorrain develops a narrative trend that consists in recording what Dubois calls 'la durée intime'[26] of things. It is conveyed in a close-up vision of objects, and the analysis of certain fragments of time that correspond to the French notion of 'instantané' – or snapshot. In doing so, the reader is transposed into a moving world and experiences the effect of an open perspective through the series of instant images:

> le lecteur se voit ainsi se réduire la distance qui le sépare de l'histoire qu'il aborde, il est transporté dans un monde en plein mouvement et il est surpris par le singulier de la situation ; c'est l'effet de « perspective ouverte ». Cet effet s'apparente à ceux qui produisent d'autres procédés analysés auparavant: petits fragments mobiles ou esquisses à tendance subjective. Ici toutefois, la proximité de vision se fait très concrète.[27]

With *Une femme par jour*, Lorrain splits the duration of time and reduces it to a succession of chosen fragments/moments that he usually juxtaposes; taken together, the narratives are assembled as a photo album, or a literary 'mosaic', to quote Thérenty. The tension between cohesion and fragmentation is crucial to Lorrain's 'harlequin poetics'; it seems that he never truly chooses between formal unity and confusion, creating a sort of aesthetics of 'coherent' fragmentation/montage. Such a method directly informs his literature: by constantly piling up micro-histories in an open text, as is the case in the volume *Une femme par jour*, he creates a fragmented narrative that is recomposed in a montage of portraits represented through a multitude of textual 'instantanés'.

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[26] Dubois, *Romanciers français de l'instantané*, op. cit. p. 209.
[27] Ibid., p. 88.

Time and Movement

Dubois qualifies Jean Lorrain, along with Francis Poictevin and Paul Adam, as 'romancier de l'instantanéité'. Instantaneity in the novel, but also in shorter forms as we can see here with *Une femme par jour*, always transcribes a 'tendance romanesque « de la durée intime » : vision rapprochée des objets, analyse de certaines parcelles de temps, perspective de l'univers volontairement subjective et mentale.'[28] Analysing the production of fragmented narratives that emerge after Realism and Symbolism, Dubois focuses on the creation of a new style which focuses on small and fleeting aspects of everyday life, with a sensibility that is orientated towards the subjective. These characteristics make Lorrain's, Poictevin's, and Adam's practices particularly innovative for the time; they are certainly drawn from the growing significance of photography and its influence on literary forms throughout the nineteenth century and beyond (e.g. Proust's photographic memory).[29] Yet here Lorrain's literary snapshots offer a double perspective: the instantaneity of the original image and the narrative digressions that it enables. The importance of time and movement is therefore carefully defined throughout *Une femme par jour*.

The technique of listing that we frequently find in Lorrain's collection is one of the key characteristics of instantaneity in literature, according to Dubois. He especially refers to post-Symbolist writers like Loti, Poictevin or Lorrain, but also the 'écriture artiste' of the Goncourt brothers, which prevailed in the literary production of this period. It is a raw writing, often left without any modification or alteration. Lorrain's portraits in *Une femme par jour* are finely altered (fragmentation), crafted and retouched (montage) before the final impression. Yet they always display a feeling of preliminary draft through a stenographic style, as I shall analyse in the next chapter. In that respect, one can find numerous lists left untouched in Lorrain's portraits, which illustrate the complexities of his 'harlequin poetics' as a productive tension between fragmentation and their re-assemblage into a more 'coherent' whole. Here are examples of his intentionally *harlequinised* style:

> Le bastion de la porte de Passy : des blouses, des cottes et des vestes, des tuniques de troupiers et de chasseurs d'Afrique, des cotillons rutilants de zouaves et des jaquettes de dandies, des valises nickelées, des sacs de nuit en tapisserie, des malles velues et des musettes de toile entassées […]. (*La Femme du Vingt-huit jours*, *FPJ*, 10-11)

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[28] Ibid., p. 209.
[29] See Áine Larkin, *Proust Writing Photography* (Oxford: Legenda, 2011).

> Boudoir de soie Louis XVI entêtant la verveine ; piles de coussins et clair-obscur savant ; tenue de galante défaite, peignoir enrubanné, dont la soie souple et molle est toute une éloquence […]. (*L'Évanouisseuse*, *FPJ*, 50)

> Jolie ? non, mais pire : une grande bouche, un grand nez, de la maigreur et je ne sais quelle gaucherie de cavale dégingandée, mais les yeux les plus touchants du monde, long fendus, long cillés […]. (*Fleur-de-Chic*, *FPJ*, 140)

These quotations all show a stylistic pattern; every fragment of information is gathered roughly in a textual patchwork. This process directly informs Lorrain's journalistic practice of notation (telegraphic style). Dubois states that writers like the Goncourt brothers, Lorrain and others, 'dès leur période de formation littéraire, ont montré des dispositions pour le fragment. À preuve de petites nouvelles, des « fantaisies » publiées dans les colonnes de journaux et reprises dans des recueils […].'[30] In the same movement, that is, leaving the list intact in his narrative, he unveils his literary methodology. It is an important process of *mise en abyme* that grew to become very popular at the time: '[s]ans transition, ils sautent du croquis rapide à l'analyse fine et serrée. Peut-être l'écart n'est pas si grand entre les deux manières, car certains textes longs, fouillés, multiples, parviennent encore à ressembler à des ébauches'.[31] In *The Mirror in the Text*,[32] Lucien Dällenbach derives his reflexion on the textual *mise en abyme* from André Gide.[33] For Dällenbach, a *mise en abyme* refers to '*any aspect enclosed within a work that shows a similarity with the work that contains it*.'[34] The virtual space of self-representation that the text represents is not only invaded by the figure of the writer, but it also displays, in various forms, the very characteristics of the creative process itself. It is important because it establishes a parallel between the structure of Lorrain's novels and the fragmented space of the newspaper (I will analyse Lorrain's reflexive irony and the notion of *mise en abyme* in greater detail in the next chapter). In 'La Femme du 14 juillet', the porous frontiers between literature and the media are made visible. It also directly highlights Lorrain's growing interest in promotion and self-promotion:

> Depuis six mois la maison avait pris un abonnement à un grand journal qui publiait tous les matins des portraits de femmes, en madrigaux ! […] trouver un homme

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[30] Dubois, *Romanciers français de l'instantané*, op. cit., p. 89.
[31] Ibid., p. 82.
[32] See Lucien Dällenbach, *The Mirror in the Text* [1977] (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).
[33] In his *Journal*, Gide writes that: 'ce que j'ai voulu dans mes *Cahiers*, dans mon *Narcisse* et dans *la Tentative*, c'est la comparaison avec ce procédé du blason qui consiste, dans le premier, à en mettre le second « en abyme »' (André Gide, quoted by Dällenbach in *The Mirror in the Text*, *ibid.*, p. 7).
[34] Ibid., p. 8.

> du métier qui, à défaut d'un quatrain, voudrait lui consacrer un écho de journal… (*La Femme du 14 juillet*, *FPJ*, 70-71)

Lorrain playfully and somewhat opportunistically breaks the frontiers between the journalistic and the literary genres;[35] he is 'l'homme de métier' who assembles the various columns in the press in greater narratives or volumes. The above quotation therefore highlights the self-reflexive nature of his poetic practice. The idea of 'fragmentisme', coupled with a broader reflexion on the 'écriture artiste' as developed by the Goncourt brothers (although they both condemned photography), brings about the poetic transcription of a *moment* – or, as Dubois calls it, an 'instantané'. The fragmented aspect of Lorrain's texts therefore reproduces a mimetic quality through both duration and movement (duration through its own movement).

Lorrain's collection, *Une femme par jour*, displays what Benjamin calls 'a witty, and somewhat malicious, "dancing" acceleration of time which, by way of contrast, makes one think of the hopelessness of a mimesis, as Breton evokes it in *Nadja*.'[36] While Benjamin refers to the diorama as a 'sportive precursor of fast-motion cinematography',[37] it seems that the literary space of Lorrain's series also presents the possibility for different layers of heterogeneous times to move rhythmically together (the adjective 'dancing', highlighting the 'accelaration of time', conveys a sense of modernity in relation to velocity) and merge in a sort of temporal panorama of the Belle Époque Parisienne. Yet, similar to the painter at the Vieux Port in Marseilles in Breton's *Nadja*, who constantly alters the light-relation in his picture, the accumulation of layers of times in *Une femme par jour* certainly displays a feeling of movement, but it cannot fully render the representation of time. On the other hand, the association of text and image as well as the collecting practice in Lorrain's volume just as in Breton's poetic narrative create a friction between the diegesis and the mimesis.

The age of mechanical reproduction[38] and the advances of the illustrated press convey a feeling of omnipresent present that comes to parallel the notion of instantaneity in the novel. Lorrain transfers the pictorial methodology that makes the fin-de-siècle press so popular into his own writing; it creates an assemblage of various fragments of

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[35] In the novel *La Maison Philibert*, Lorrain reproduces the same parallel in the narrative. The residents of Philibert's brothel, heroines of the story, are also indirectly the heroines of a series of 'fait divers' articles published in a newspaper that they read everyday. They even discover, along with the readers at the same time, the death of their procurer in one edition; through the news of the death, both journalistic and literary discourses merge in the text.

[36] Benjamin, *Arcades*, op. cit., p. 529.

[37] Ibid., p. 529.

[38] See Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* [1935] (London: Penguin, 2008).

(present) times. In fact, in *Une femme par jour*, every portrait is accompanied by an illustration by Mittis[39] that reinforces the feeling of 'visual instantaneity' provided by Lorrain's written portraits of women. In *Une femme par jour*, he usually focuses on an image of the present before slowly moving towards both past and future tenses. In every single portrait of the series then, one can notice a triple 'thickness of time' that allows the formation of a multimodal temporal panorama of the Parisienne:

> Fille entretenue hier, elle sera demain altesse, et alors, qui sait ? Nous la retrouverons peut-être un jour à Saint-Pétersbourg, amie de quelque grand duc barbare et raffiné […]. (*Fleur-de-luxe*, *FPJ*, 114-5)

> Elle fut une des plus charmantes *évanouisseuses* de cette fin de l'Empire […]. Aujourd'hui son joli visage de brune aux yeux bleus s'est empâté […]. (*L'Évanouisseuse*, *FPJ*, 43-6)

Yet, in 'Celle qu'on tue', Lorrain reverses the creative process: he starts by compiling the numerous forms that the female character had in the past before finally getting to the actual snapshot, which in turn makes him move towards the past. This fragmentation of time duration – later recomposed in a patchwork – is characteristic of Lorrain's 'harlequin poetics'. The analepsis – both analepsis and prolepsis are narrative devices that Lorrain resorts to extensively in *Une femme par jour* in particular, but also in his whole oeuvre in general – imposes the brutal return to the still image of the woman, as he actually describes a gruesomely savaged body:

> Dans la vie réelle, enfin, nous la retrouvons tuée, la chair trouée et saignante, dans la petite maison de Meyerling, abattue d'un coup de feu à côté du prince Rodolphe: assassinat ou suicide. (*Celle qu'on tue*, *FPJ*, 203)

This story is a reference to the 1889 Mayerling incident, whose various versions were covered abundantly in the press, and later dramatised in many artistic forms. This famous 'fait divers' about the mysterious murder-suicide of Rudolf, Crown Prince of Austria, and his lover Baroness Mary Vetsera, gives Lorrain the opportunity to dismantle and reconstruct the event as resurfacing in both the press and fiction. There is also a strong emphasis put on the notion of cycles and rituals in Lorrain's volume:

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[39] In collaboration with Czech painter and poster artist Luděk Márold he also illustrated Jean Lorrain's tale *Loreley* and his novella *Monsieur de Bougrelon*, published in the same 'Lotus Alba' collection by Librairie Borel in 1897. Both Mittis and Márold were known for their illustrations of scenes of daily life at the turn of the century, and their works in collaboration with writers like Alphonse Daudet and Barbey d'Aurevilly.

> Dès sept heures du matin on la croise à cheval dans les vallées des environs ; de dix à midi, à l'heure du bain, on la revoit sur les planches ; d'une heure à deux, elle est au café du Casino ; de deux à trois, aux petits chevaux ; de trois à quatre, à la musique, de quatre à sept, sur la terrasse, et le soir, selon le programme […]. (*L'Hurluberluée*, *FPJ*, 153)
>
> hier comme aujourd'hui, aujourd'hui comme tous les matins (*La Femme du 28 jours*, *FPJ*, 3)

This feeling of serial and cyclical construction in the collection is a deliberate stylistic move by Lorrain. His journalistic practice indeed always informs his fiction work. He most certainly understands the importance of montage and repetition in a particular collection, and how it opens up to a form of practical memory. Similar to Harlequin's patterned costume, Lorrain records artistic sensations and symptoms, as well as social and cultural transformations of his time.[40]

For Benjamin, the act of collecting (fragments) plays an essential role in the construction of memory. In 'The Arcades of Paris', he writes that in 'this historical and collective process of fixation', collecting is 'a form of practical memory, and all of the profane manifestations of the penetration of "what has been" (all of the profane manifestations of "nearness") it is the most binding'.[41] As we can see, the act of collecting features widely in the fin-de-siècle: it influences the Goncourts' aesthetics as much as Lorrain's textual fragments later assembled in volumes that read like a patchwork, or montage. In 'Eduard Fuch, Collector and Historian',[42] Benjamin's ideas give rise to a conception of historical intelligibility based on 'literary montage' as the method of construction of 'dialectical images'. For Benjamin, the experimental method of montage – in his *Arcades*, it consists in collecting fragments in a montage/critique as a new way of writing social history[43] – can generate the means of production of historical intelligibility. The oeuvre as a montage then provides the reader with the image of a specific time through different vignettes or literary snapshots; in a way, then, Lorrain's *Une femme par jour*, where the '*épaisseur temporelle et culturelle* des images « montées » les unes avec les autres',[44] resembles a (fragmented) panorama of Belle Époque Parisienne. While this

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[40] Uzanne, *Jean Lorrain, l'artiste, l'ami*, op. cit., p. 41.
[41] Benjamin, *Arcades*, op. cit., p. 883.
[42] Walter Benjamin, Knut Tarnowski, 'Eduard Fuch, Collector and Historian', in *New German Critique*, 5 (1975), pp. 27-58.
[43] George Dillon, 'Montage/Critique: Another Way of Writing Social History', in *Postmodern Culture*, 14.2 (2004) [online]. DOI: 10.1353/pmc.2004.0005.
[44] Didi-Huberman, *Devant le temps*, op. cit., p. 123.

suggests horizontal vision (multiplicity), Lorrain also incorporates the vertical exploration of different classes in his exploded oeuvre, as I shall show in the next two sections.

A Panorama of Belle Époque France

Lorrain's Panoramic Literature

Similar to his friend Edmond de Goncourt, Lorrain is an attentive and satirical observer of his time.[45] Both writers share a taste for the montage of literary fragments that focus on the social complexity of their time. In 'Jean Lorrain et les Goncourt', Stéphanie Champeau draws a parallel between the two writers and the art of collecting textual snapshots. She writes that '[a]ux Goncourt également, Lorrain emprunte la conception de l'art moderne comme un art du fragment, de l'esquisse, de l'instantané'.[46] Similar to the Goncourt brothers, Lorrain's concept of the novel lies in 'une suite de morceaux choisis dans une existence, des découpures de réalités, sans autre cohésion, sans autre lien que la persistance de la vie chez un même sujet.'[47] Unremittingly, he documents and records the sensations and symptoms of the Belle Époque through a collection of textual fragments that often re-emerge in longer prose works. *Monsieur de Bougrelon*, *Monsieur de Phocas*, *Les Noronsoff*, and *La Maison Philibert* all read like a montage of literary fragments: 'Lorrain conçoit même *Monsieur de Phocas* comme une suite de fragments datés qui parfois s'enchaînent aisément, mais parfois aussi trahissent des « trous », des discontinuités'.[48] Lorrain's vignettes of the social and cultural life at the turn of the century, because they concern various social types, are largely panoramic. In *The Arcades Project*, Benjamin states that:

> Contemporary with the panoramas is a panoramic literature. […] These books prepare the belletristic collaboration for which Girardin, in the 1830s, will create a home in the feuilleton. They consist of individual sketches, whose anecdotal form corresponds to the panorama's plastically arranged foreground, and whose informational base corresponds to their painted background. This literature is also socially panoramic. For the last time, the worker appears, isolated from his class, as part of the setting in an idyll.[49]

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[45] From 1883 – when Lorrain sends him a copy of his volume of poetry *La Forêt bleue* – until the death of Goncourt in 1896, both writers maintained a good relationship. Lorrain even moved to Auteuil to be closer to his friend and mentor.
[46] Stéphanie Champeau, 'Jean Lorrain et les Goncourt', in *Jean Lorrain. Produit d'extrême civilisation*, J. de Palacio and É. Walbecq (eds.) (Mont-Saint-Aignan: Presses universitaires de Rouen et du Havre, 2009), p. 173.
[47] Pierre Sabatier, *L'Esthétique des Goncourt* [1920] (Genève: Slatkine reprints, 1970), pp. 512-13.
[48] Dubois, *Romanciers français de l'instantané*, op. cit., p. 198.
[49] Benjamin, *Arcades*, op. cit., p. 5-6.

Pocket-size books and physiologies which juxtaposed descriptions of Parisian life with portraits or caricatures as well as street scenes were very popular in nineteenth-century Paris. It perfectly applies to Lorrain's *Une femme par jour*. It not only reads as a collection of fin-de-siècle France physiologies, but the size of the book is also very small: it is a long in-18 pocket-size book (14,5 x 8 cm). It can therefore be carried into the public space, where the reader can observe, and possibly experience the very scenes described in each narrative.[50] The advances in printing technology that started in the 1830s as well as serial publication participated in the formation of a certain form of panoramic literature that ran through the whole century. Balzac is certainly one of the greatest examples of panoramic literature. In *La Comédie humaine*, he uses physiological determinism in order to portray social types encountered in Paris and the provinces. Through the movement of panoramic literature under the July Monarchy (1830-1848), Balzac points towards a literary development in which the representation of high and low society altogether becomes pivotal for the formation of modern Realism.

Lorrain's technique seems to emerge from the same panoramic tradition. Just like Balzac, he both contributes to and criticises the ever-growing mass market characterised by the press, yet he also makes a point of embracing a form of social and cultural multiplicity, as far as he can. Both writers thus merge the frontiers between urban space, media space and literary space (Lorrain's heroes like Monsieur Jean in *Histoires du bord de l'eau* or Jacques Ménard in *La Maison Philibert* are writer-journalists who report on the urban space).[51] According to Benjamin, panoramic literature is a genre that can be described as a series of social sketches or 'moral dioramas – not only related to the others in their unscrupulous multiplicity, but technically constructed just like them.'[52] He makes it clear that panoramic literature seeks to represent the city in ways at once exhaustive in scope and meticulous, and dioramic in its detail of city types. This directly parallels Lorrain's entire production – be it journalistic or literary – that reads like a social and cultural representation, if not atlas, of Belle Époque France. For Lorrain records what he

[50] Librairie Borel published three other works by Lorrain: *Loreley* (1897), *Monsieur de Bougrelon* (1897) and *Princesses d'Italie* (1898). They represent Lorrain's most prolific literary productions: one tale, one short novel, and one collection of literary portraits.

[51] Given the chronology, it would also be interesting to draw a comparison between Lorrain and Zola; most particularly, how one does represent (working-class) life in the Second Empire and the other in the Belle Époque. Both writers are interested in new ways of representing social relations, and sexuality and the body. While Zola is a serious-minded pseudo-medical figure, Lorrain, through the harlequin poetics, seems to give a more playful, ironic account of his time; nevertheless, the two authors' writings definitely exhibit (in different ways) 'the practice of literary modernism'. See Harrow, *Zola, the Body Modern*, op. cit., p. 5.

[52] Benjamin, *Arcades*, op. cit., p. 531.

sees and experiences, in high and low social environment, with 'tous les sens [comme] des fenêtres ouvertes'.[53] In that respect, Goncourt notes that Lorrain is a 'peintre-poète'.[54] It is indeed no surprise that the vignettes in *Une femme par jour* are introduced as 'instantanés', for the panoramic literature directly derives from the emerging visual culture of the nineteenth century: Benjamin notes that 'to the plastically worked, more or less detailed foreground of the diorama corresponds the sharply profiled feuilletonistic venturing of the social study, which latter supplies an extended background analogous to the landscape in the diorama.'[55]

At the same time, the 'unscrupulous multiplicity' of panoramic literature and its relationship to other emerging print media establishes it as a hybrid genre. It indeed represents a form that is pictorial and written, literary and imaginative, with a particular focus on details and singularities as *hapax* or scories in the margin of discourse, just like a reportorial mode. Here, the question of representation is codified: panoramic literature in the nineteenth century goes beyond the scope of media or literature forum. It brings together newspapers, journals, prints, advertisements with literature, caricature, and visual arts, as is the case in Lorrain's montage-novel, *La Maison Philibert* (1904), which reads as a 'mapping' of a particular environment at a particular time (I will focus on *La Maison Philibert* in the following section). In this respect, the media imaginary certainly informs the evolution of nineteenth-century literature. Through *Une femme par jour*, for example, Lorrain appears to be a chronicler who seeks an idea of totality through the assemblage of fragments, 'a chronicler who recites events without distinguishing between major and minor ones acts in accordance with the following truth: nothing that has ever happened should be regarded as lost for history.'[56]

In *Une femme par jour*, Lorrain seeks to record such layers of time through the codified representation of social and cultural life in fin-de-siècle Paris. The assemblage of the various fragments that constitute each vignette or portrait is in fact part of a greater project. Lorrain opportunistically uses the media imaginary as a sort of literary laboratory. The point is to collect all those fragments in order to insert them in a bigger narrative

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[53] Edmond de Goncourt, '3 juillet 1876', in *Journal. Mémoire de la vie littéraire*, t. II (Paris: Robert Laffont, 'Bouquins', 1989) p. 705.
[54] Edmond de Goncourt, '5 avril 1893', in *Journal. Mémoire de la vie littéraire*, t. III (Paris: Robert Laffont, 'Bouquins', 1989) p. 809.
[55] Benjamin, *Arcades*, op. cit., p. 531. The numerous optical and photographic metaphors found in nineteenth-century prose poems (Guérin, Bertrand, Baudelaire) also account for the writers' needs to find new imaginaries that affect the modern society. See Philippe Ortel, 'Le poème en prose généré par l'image', in *La Licorne*, 35 (1995), pp. 63-75, and *La Littérature à l'ère de la photographie*, op. cit.
[56] Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', in *Illuminations* (New York: Schoken Books, 1969), p. 254.

that would give an account of his time: '[t]outes ces nouvelles, ces contes que j'écris à la douzaine, ce sont de simples *clichés* que je prends et que je garde pour l'avenir. J'utiliserai cela dans les romans dont je rêve […].'[57] Here, the double entendre of the word 'cliché' is interesting: Lorrain knowingly plays both with the idea of snapshot and commonplace representation of women in the fin-de-siècle. Ideologically, *Une femme par jour* does not bring anything new to the genre; yet there is a formal interest that greatly participates in Lorrain's 'harlequin poetics'.

The newspaper is the first place where the writer-journalist publishes his chronicles, tales and short stories, before they are reused in a volume or collection. Lorrain's own observations of high and low society provide textual fragments (chronicles) that, in turn, are almost always interwoven and transcribed into volumes – it is the case with *Une femme par jour*, *La Petite classe*, *Madame Baringhel*, etc. – or integrated into longer fiction narratives. Indeed, several studies show that the composition of *Monsieur de Phocas* is 'le produit d'une compilation de récits publiés séparément'.[58] This is also found in *La Maison Philibert*, where Lorrain's series entitled 'Petits plaisirs' (*L'Écho de Paris*, 1893)[59] about popular entertainment must have played an important role in the setting up of his fiction. As a key example of this type of intertextual practices, I shall focus on *La Maison Philibert*, arguing that Lorrain shows that the aesthetics of fragmentation operates on various levels: namely textual, metatextual, sexual, social and cultural.

The Experience of the Threshold: *La Maison Philibert* (1904)

Lorrain's *La Maison Philibert* stages an 'enquête' about Belle Époque prostitution milieu by journalist Jacques Ménard.[60] It focuses mostly on Philibert, a procurer who owns a brothel in the provinces. Just like Lorrain, Ménard's interest for the *apaches* (Parisian gangsters) milieu drives him from brothels to shabby bars and *bals populaires* (le Point du Jour, le bal des Vaches, etc.) and displays a series of anecdotes and details about the life of prostitutes in brothels, procurers, Parisian gangsters, but also their relationship with higher social spheres.

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[57] Lorrain quoted by Louis Bertrand, in *La Riviera que j'ai connue* (Paris: Fayard, 1933), p. 159-160. My emphasis.
[58] José André Santos, *Le Récit court comme genre décadent chez Jean Lorrain (1855-1906)*, PhD thesis (New York: University of New York, 1992), p. 61.
[59] The series 'Petits plaisirs' was published as one volume by Éditions La Bibliothèque in 2002, with a preface by Éric Walbecq. It stands as an important account of popular entertainment in the lower classes at the end of the nineteenth century.
[60] Jean Lorrain, *La Maison Philibert* (Paris: Librairie Universelle, 1904).

In 1900, the theme of prostitution in literature was somewhat a cliché. In the nineteenth century – especially in the second half –, writers largely addressed this theme which became fashionable and commonplace following Naturalism (e.g. Zola's *La Curée* (1871) and *Nana* (1880), Maupassant's *La Maison Tellier* (1881) and *Mademoiselle Fifi* (1882), Huysmans's *Marthe, histoire d'une fille* (1876) and *À vau-l'eau* (1882), Dubut de Laforest and Alfred Delvau's books about public houses and riverbanks). Yet it seems that they did not completely exhaust it. Of all these novels, Edmond de Goncourt's *La Fille Élisa* stands out in comparison to Lorrain's *La Maison Philibert*: indeed, it moves away from Zolian Naturalism while the 'écriture artiste' unveils the prospect of reaching a certain form of poetic texture through the collage of various documents. At the beginning of Lorrain's novel, Ménard exclaims: 'j'ai la faiblesse d'aimer follement mon métier, et je ferais des bassesses devant un document humain' (*LMP*, 10) – a very coded phrase that nods towards Naturalism as 'Les documents humains' is the title of one of the articles included in Zola's *Le Roman expérimental* (1880).[61] That could also very well apply to Lorrain himself, who closely associates Realism and experience; similar to Goncourt though, he transfers the subjective 'I' of the personal experience into a more modern, patchwork of fragments where documents (e.g. press article) are left intact in the narrative.

In *La Maison Philibert*, low society is confronted to the Parisian high society and the representation of their vices; they often interact through the description of prostitution – whether male or female. Indeed, Lorrain seems to be the first one to evoke male prostitution, well before Gide, or Jupien's brothel in Proust's *La recherche*, or even 'La Féria' in Genet's *Querelle de Brest* (in Lorrain, the brothel is 'la maison de Mme Adèle'). The question of male prostitution, along with the atomised structure of the narrative regime and its 'genre inclassable',[62] is truly what makes Lorrain's novel highly original. Lorrain's panoramic vision of fin-de-siècle Paris is therefore epitomised in the confrontation of sex and class: street procurer, Môme l'Affreux, and courtesan, Ludine de Neurflize,[63] constitute the nodal points of the novel, within which Ménard circulates through a montage of documents. Both textual and human documents produce

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[61] 'Nous préparerons les voies, nous fournirons des faits d'observation, des documents humains qui pourront devenir très utiles'. In *Le Roman expérimental* [1880] (Paris: Charpentier, 1902), p. 51.

[62] 'Un écrit de genre inclassable, à la fois conte et récit, chronique et portrait, pastiche et fantaisie […] comme fiction légendaire et comme récit réaliste'. Charles Grivel, 'Lorrain, l'air du faux', in *Jean Lorrain: vices en écriture*, special issue of *Revue des sciences humaines*, 230.2 (1993), p. 68.

[63] Ludine de Neurflize is the avatar of famous courtesan and friend of Lorrain Liane de Pougy. Lorrain often created avatars for her friend, like in *Le Poison de la Riviera* (Viviane de Nalie). I will focus more on the blurred frontiers between fiction and reality and the notion of mystification in the next chapter.

discourse that are interchangeable; the interwoven network of documents participates in the construction of the novel's harlequin form.

La Maison Philibert seems to emerge directly from a *maison close* and a newspaper; it reads like both the plurality inherent to the *maison close* and the multi-generic text that is the newspaper. The insertion of intertextual references and various textual forms – chansons, newspaper articles, letters, etc. – and also illustrations (the first edition was illustrated by George Bottini) transforms the novel into a finely crafted patchwork of narratives. It highlights a play on mimesis and diegesis, reminding us of Champsaur's novel *Lulu*, whose syncretic form brings together circus, dance, pantomime, posters and photography (for this reason Andrea Oberhuber calls it a 'roman palimpseste').[64] Further to the obvious parallel established between the journalist and the prostitute, with a focus, therefore, on Benjamin's notion of commodity and the social and cultural relations it implies,[65] Lorrain's novel therefore reads like an ode to the poetics of the document in all its forms as well as an open newspaper.

In the first edition of the novel, the front cover shows the vision of a prostitute caught in the gap between two French shutters as she opens them. She invites the reader into the novel; this could also very well signify the opening of a newspaper. In that respect, the 31 chapters of *La Maison Philibert* resemble a montage of chronicles that reveals Lorrain's own writing techniques. Indeed, the method used here parallels the exploded space of the media imaginary and the chapters can be read as a series of Faits divers, 'enquête', or a case covered in the press through sensational titles: e.g. 'Les Rancunes de Philibert', 'Un Métier qui se perd', 'Les Superstitions de Maître Isidore Ledru', 'Les Clients partis', 'Philibert a des ennuis', 'Le Marseillais', 'Une Exécution' (on this point, it is worth noting that it is Lorrain's only novel that was not pre-published in the press). If these titles remind us of popular literature of the time (e.g. Eugène Sue, Jules Mary, Hector Malot, etc.), they also reveal that Lorrain is used to this form of atomised structure made of fragments, inherited from the exploded space of the newspaper. Newspapers abound in the brothel; they are the only link that the residents have with the external world. They even discover the death of Philibert in an article published by *Le Journal*, collated in Lorrain's text.[66] In that respect, the titles of the articles found in the novel map out its own narrative as a *mise en abyme* (in a way, they reflect its

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[64] Andrea Oberhuber, 'Secrets de *Lulu*: Félicien Champsaur et la conception du roman « moderniste »', in *Les Lettres romanes*, 69.3 (2015), p. 376.
[65] See Benjamin, *Arcades*, op. cit., p. 335.
[66] At the time, Lorrain was still a collabor on Fernand Xau's newspaper.

own pattern/texture). Incidentally, they do not differ much from the titles of the chapters: 'Arrestation mouvementée', 'Capture d'un bandit', 'Un coup du môme', etc.

Lorrain studies the everyday life inside Philibert's brothel and its fastidious repetition through the experience of reading: the residents mirror our own experience as readers via their constant engagement with the reading of newspapers and novels (i.e. Marquis de Sade's *Justine*, Pierre Loüys's *Chansons de Bilitis*, Willy's *Claudine s'en va*, etc.). They play a significant role in the moral/immoral development of the characters: '[c]omme son ancienne patronne Adèle, Yolande était intoxiquée du poison de la littérature, elle était moyenâgeuse, élégiaque et pleine d'indulgence pour les pratiques défendues entre personnes d'un sexe non différent' (*LMP*, 267). Here, Lorrain encapsulates his narrative with a literary texture whose codes and references inform the Sapphic loves of Philibert's residents. Through the reading of the article entitled 'Exploit de souteneur', published in *Le Petit Parisien*, the reader even discovers the death of Philibert along with the residents:

> *« Un exploit de souteneur. – Ces messieurs ne désarment pas. Un drame sanglant vient de jeter l'épouvante dans le quartier de la Montagne-Sainte-Geneviève. Lundi soir, à la sortie d'un bal-musette situé près de la salle Octobre, un tenancier de province, qui avait passé la soirée à courir les divers établissements du quartier à la recherche sans doute de recrues, s'est trouvé environné par une bande de souteneurs demeuré inconnus et a été frappé de neuf coups de couteau. »*
> […]
> Toutes les pensionnaires s'étaient jetées sur le *Petit Parisien* comme une meute à la curée, mais presque aussitôt toutes les prunelles se dardaient arrondies, un même tremblement secouait toutes les tailles et, haletantes, les traits chavirés d'épouvante, toutes retenaient mal un même cri de stupeur : « Monsieur Philibert ! Monsieur Philibert ! le patron. Quel malheur ! » (*LMP*, 283-4)

Here, the italics perform the characters' reading of the article; they also parallel the chapters and narrative of Lorrain's novel, like a mirror image. The narrator Ménard also notes the differences between the titles given by *Le Journal* and *Gil Blas*; he questions the convenience of 'faits divers' and the way they should be told. One then notices the self-reflexive aspect of the novel deliberately constructed by Lorrain, who always uses his own chronicles as 'texte d'ancrage' ahead of the fiction to come – or the narrative network of the novel. The text then appears as metaphor of Lorrain's harlequin practice, whose adaptive fabric demonstrates Modernist, and even Postmodernist, strategies which were already at stake in Baudelaire, Goncourt, even Zola (indeed, Susan Harrow audaciously argues that the hybridity of Zola's style somewhat resists Naturalist tradition with 'enfolded writing, elision, transformation, and the metafictional "troubling" of

transparency' – all poetic tools also used by Lorrain).[67] The content of the articles becomes the matter of the novel, if not the novel itself: the characters become documents and the prostitutes become text. In 'Soliciting Readers for Jean Lorrain's *La Maison Philibert*', Ziegler establishes a parallel between Philibert's prostitutes and the writer-journalist:

> […] the whores who, like writers, display a mobility that breaks down the established structure. Promiscuity distinguishes carriers of the virus of social decay, as the germ of moral collapses is contagious like the newspaper gossip it foments. The objective of writing and whoring alike is to maximize circulation, to infiltrate the customers' space and then offer them sexual or textual services.[68]

Ziegler's comments on a form of 'mobility that breaks down the established structure' presents Lorrain's novel as multi-generic and picaresque; the idea of 'promiscuity', too, indirectly alludes to Harlequin's low morals. Incidentally, *La Maison Philibert*'s succession of vignettes simulates a modern *Decameron* (1353). Boccaccio's massive collection of novellas is actually mentioned to designate the female residents of the maison Philibert, for they all have their own personal stories and distinct identities: 'C'était le charme mélancolique et galant d'un *Décaméron* de Boccace dans un décor un peu bourgeois de vieux parc...' (*LMP*, 44). These small chapters underline the nature of Lorrain's harlequin text, which functions as a patchwork of narratives. It transforms the whole narrative into a kind of kaleidoscope. The main narrative is blurred into side narratives, to the point that the book becomes – one also considers the illustrations by Bottini –, utterly polyphonic, almost theatrical, a sort of 'espace spectaculaire'.[69]

In the exploded space of *La Maison Philibert*, Lorrain captures the city as a whole through the recording of sensations and symptoms in the Belle Époque's high and low social groups. It creates a form of 'textualisation du social'.[70] Through documenting the networks of prostitution in relation to bourgeoisie and aristocracy in *La Maison Philibert*, Lorrain seeks to debunk binary oppositions. It creates an impression of chaos, or reversed order. At the end of the novel, the trial sees the investigating magistrate imposing his authority on the text by restoring the initial order: 'a certain Candé, insists

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[67] Harrow, *Zola, the Body Modern*, op. cit., p. 140. I will concentrate on Lorrain's own 'metafictional "troubling" of transparency' in his writing in the next chapter.
[68] Robert Ziegler, 'Soliciting Readers for Jean Lorrain's *La Maison Philibert*', in *Nineteenth Century French Studies*, 2 (1994), p. 220.
[69] See *Presse, Nation et mondialisation au XIXème siècle*, M.-È. Thérenty & A. Vaillant (eds.) (Paris: Nouveau Monde, 2010).
[70] See Valérie Stiénon, *La Littérature des physiologies. Sociopoétique d'un genre panoramique (1830-1945)* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2012).

on arriving at narrative closure and restoring hierarchic divisions. Oppositional definitions of female and male, of high class and low class are blurred, whence the judge's desire to dispel the confusion that all prostitution induces.'[71]

Indeed, the dialectic couple that is the Same and the Other is also present in panoramic literature; individual differences are usually tackled in the same movement to reach a sense of universality. They read like a collection of juxtaposed singularities. In Lorrain's harlequin text as literary and socio-poetic laboratory, as is the case in *La Maison Philibert*'s reversed hierarchical positions, such practice creates a montage of carnivalesque ambivalences (high vs low, press vs literature, Paris vs provinces, centre vs periphery).

Carnivalesque Ambivalences

Reversing Binary Oppositions

Widely used in literary studies, the notion of carnivalesque was first coined by Mikhail Bakhtin in *L'Œuvre de François Rabelais et la culture populaire au Moyen Age et sous la Renaissance* (1968).[72] The carnivalesque ambivalence is a principle of inversion. Bakhtin uses the word carnivalesque to characterise any type of writing that illustrates the reversal of power structures. This particular reversal only happens temporarily. This is why it refers to the traditional forms of carnival where humour, satire, and grotesquery in all its forms (and most importantly the body and bodily functions) are used to debunk the binary oppositions represented by the ruling class and the subordinate class. In this sense, Harlequin is a highly carnivalesque character. The topologic model that Bakhtin identifies in the works of Rabelais works through the notion of 'grotesque realism' as 'system of images of popular culture':

> Le haut et le bas ont ici une signification absolument et rigoureusement *topographique*. Le haut, c'est le ciel ; le bas, c'est la terre […]. C'est avec ces significations absolues que fonctionne le réalisme grotesque. […] Le rabaissement creuse la tombe corporelle pour une *nouvelle* naissance. C'est la raison pour laquelle il n'a pas seulement une valeur destructive, négative, mais encore positive, régénératrice : il est ambivalent, il est à la fois négation et affirmation.[73]

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[71] Ziegler, 'Soliciting Readers', op. cit., p. 228.
[72] Bakhtine, *L'Œuvre de François Rabelais*, op. cit.
[73] Ibid., p. 30.

It lies on two principles: first, the absolute nature of the 'high' and the 'low', and then the ambivalence constituent of the dynamic principle that determines the relation between the two poles. In a way, it alludes to the principle of inversion, or reversal. The carnivalesque is very much present in Lorrain's 'harlequin poetics'. In the short story 'La femme à Wilhem', he depicts a group of aristocrats at a funfair. In the parade, high and low society progressively merge to the point of a complete reversal. He writes that the aristocrats are 'devenus eux-mêmes des objets de parade dans leur immobilité forcée au milieu de cette foule remuante' (*CDR*, 184). In that respect, the lowering of the 'high' would always correspond to an elevation of the 'low', as with the reversal of binary oppositions more generally.

In *1889. Un état du discours social*, Marc Angenot proposes a paradigm that emerges from the desire of a certain fin-de-siècle literary aesthetics to break away from other types of discourses inherent to the public sphere. In that respect, he erects a binary between any forms of communication with the press, political discourses, scientific utterances, etc.[74] He further elaborates a list of binary oppositions directly informed by such desire, that reads as follow:

> art ≠ journalisme, goûts vulgaires
> aristocratie ≠ démocratie, tendances égalitaires
> élite ≠ plèbe, foule, cohue
> idéal ≠ matérialisme
> religion de l'art ≠ positivisme, scepticisme[75]

In both his chronicles and fiction writing, though, Lorrain goes beyond those binary oppositions, often playing with them. Indeed, the periodical press in which Lorrain writes chronicles embodies a space where a certain representation of society life as both spectacle and social comedy comes to hatch. This directly informs his fiction. The nineteenth century is the era of 'sociabilité médiatique';[76] this is where the society practices become standardised and mass advertised. In *La Vie élégante ou la formation du Tout-Paris 1815-1848*, Anne-Marie Fugier notes that publicity substantially influences the image of society life in the Belle Époque. She writes that 'la presse, en accueillant dans le même rez-de-chaussée du feuilleton nouvelles du monde et nouvelles du spectacle, rapprochera duchesses et comédiennes, salons et Boulevard' while creating a movement

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[74] Marc Angenot, *1889. Un état du discours social* (Longueuil: Le Préambule, 1989), p. 788.
[75] Ibid., p. 790.
[76] See for instance Anne-Martin Fugier, *La Vie élégante ou la formation du Tout-Paris, 1815-1848* (Paris: Fayard-Seuil, coll. 'Points Histoire', 1990) and Guillaume Pinson, 'Imaginaires des sociabilités et culture médiatique au XIXe siècle', in *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France*, 110.3 (2010), pp. 619-32.

that constitutes society life as a spectacle given to a mass audience. Lorrain does not just engage with these social binary oppositions, he often reverses them. This adds a carnivalesque texture to his works.

Lorrain never hides his preference for the lower classes in opposition to the vices of the 'elegant and exotic world' that refers to the high society. For him, the society world represents the realm of hypocrisy, in comparison with the honesty of the lower classes. In the 'Introduction' to Lorrain's posthumously published volume of chronicles *Pelléastres* (1909), Georges Normandy writes: '*On se rendra compte par ces* Pelléastres *[…] que jamais la verve de l'auteur de* Maison pour Dames *ne fut plus étincelante et plus terriblement révélatrice du dégoût profond en lequel Jean Lorrain tenait Paris et la foule très vaguement définie qu'on appelle le monde.*'[77] He further quotes Lorrain in these terms: 'Comment vous, qui avez pourtant de la psychologie, n'avez-vous pas deviné que je hais et que j'ai en nausée ce monde élégant et exotique que je décris ?'[78] In opposition, Lorrain relentlessly claims his love of the lower classes. When, in 1903, Jean Galmot accuses Lorrain of despising the lower classes,[79] he replies: '[n]on seulement je n'ai pas horreur du peuple, mais j'adore le peuple et je le préfère de beaucoup à la médiocrité intellectuelle et morale de la bourgeoisie. Dans le peuple sont la force, la candeur et la violence de l'instinct, la nature et la passion […].'[80] In always opposing moral hypocrisy and the honesty of instincts, Lorrain romanticises the lower spheres – yet he does so genuinely. This is why Lorrain was often seen in 'peripheral' places throughout his life – from the Parisian suburbs to the Riviera markets.

In *The Cheese and the Worm* (1976), Carlo Ginzburg writes that '[b]y keeping this disparity [the culture of the dominant/subordinate classes] in mind, the work of Rabelais becomes comprehensible […]: cultural dichotomy, then – but also a circular, reciprocal influence between the cultures of the subordinate and ruling classes'.[81] As we have previously seen, this cultural dichotomy materialises in Lorrain's *La Maison Philibert*, where high and low classes interchange in Philibert's *maison close* (here the idea of reversed binary oppositions leads to a more grotesque form of multiplicity though; like in Maupassant's *Boule de Suif* (1880), Lorrain's prostitutes are the most appealing characters of the novel, contrary to the officers). The Rabelaisian universe works according to a

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[77] Georges Normandy, 'Introduction' to Jean Lorrain's *Pelléastres. Le Poison de la littérature* (Paris: Albert Méricant, 1909), p. 7.
[78] Ibid., p. 20.
[79] Jean Galmot, 'Les Aventures de Monsieur Jean Lorrain', in *Le Petit Niçois* (3 November 1904).
[80] Quoted by Éric Walbecq in the preface to Jean Lorrain, *Petits plaisirs* (Paris: La Bibliothèque, 2002).
[81] Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worm* [1976] (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), p. xvi-xvii.

system of binary opposition high/low; it escapes the traditional hierarchy that is orientated towards the sublime and fashions itself from the comic vision of 'grotesque realism'. This is reflected in Harlequin's grotesque body; as a figure of popular culture and emblem of abject in form of harlequin plates, he is the metaphor of Lorrain's poetics, with its grotesque multiplicity and non-hierarchical structure.

'Grotesque Realism' And 'Romantic Grotesque'

Bakhtin makes a distinction between two forms of grotesque: the 'grotesque realism' and the 'romantic grotesque', which both emerge in Lorrain's works. On the one hand the 'grotesque realism' is a material and corporeal principle: 'Le trait marquant du réalisme grotesque est le rabaissement, c'est-à-dire le transfert de tout ce qui est élevé, spirituel, idéal et abstrait sur le plan matériel et corporel, celui de la terre et du corps dans leur indissoluble unité.'[82] It is the reverse side of the image of everyday life. This is why Bakhtin refers to the imagery of the carnival as a porous medium, and that he imagines a genre – the carnivalesque – in which heterogeneous elements all interact; this reinforces the significance of fin-de-siècle pantomime (Champsaur writes about Modernity 'où *funambulaient* tous les personnages papillotants, coquets, brillants, grotesques et falots, de la comédie italienne d'antan') [83] as much as the aesthetics of transgression (circus/carnival) in Lorrain's 'harlequin poetics'. The theoretical aspect of the *Commedia dell'Arte* character is indeed of significant importance for the study of Lorrain's patchwork of heterogeneous textual fragments.[84]

For Bakhtin, all the literature of the last centuries displays the debris of 'grotesque realism'. Lorrain's literary and journalistic production does not avoid this; on the contrary, the display of such debris reaches a status of poetics, as we have seen. On the other hand, the 'romantic grotesque' is a more subjective form of grotesque. In that respect one can trace it back to the late eighteenth century and through Sterne's *Life and Opinions of Tristam Shandy, Gentleman* (1759). Bakhtin claims that '[l]e monde du grotesque romantique est plus ou moins terrible et *étranger* à l'homme. […] *Son* monde se transforme soudain en un monde *extérieur*. Et le coutumier et rassurant révèle soudain

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[82] Bakhtine, *L'Œuvre de François Rabelais*, op. cit., p. 29.
[83] Champsaur, *Lulu*, op. cit., p. 11. My emphasis. He adds: 'toutes ces caricatures de la vie représentaient à Lulu des personnages vrais' (p. 13).
[84] For Bakhtin, this form of grotesque is linked with the notion of arabesque (a form applied to the ornamental motif).

son aspect terrible.'[85] In Sterne, the 'romantic grotesque' lies in the relationship between body and language; it questions and displaces epistemological uncertainty, as is also the case in Lorrain's Fantastic tales (this pattern will be analysed more closely in chapter III). Yet Lorrain's 'harlequin poetics' tends to encompass both types of grotesque in a systematic, playful debunking of generic frontiers. This distinctive feature of his practice is seen, for example, in his novel *La Maison Philibert*.

The principle of inversion characterised in the notion of 'grotesque realism' lies in a relation between the body, the image and meaning. The popular culture and the theme of the carnival (and the invalidated traditional and classical hierarchy high/low that it implies) run explicitly throughout Lorrain's oeuvre. In the dedication to Pierre Valdagne used as preface to *Le Crime des riches*, Lorrain vehemently denounces the vices caused by the modern capitalist society he lives in. For him, money can change a person radically, even to the point of complete reversal:

> À vous l'évocateur de la petite bourgeoise aux appétits de catin, du mari lâche et complaisant aux frasques lucratives de sa femme, et de l'amant moderne, associé de sa maîtresse et bon conseiller des faiblesses qui le font vivre et du crime qui l'enrichira, je dédie ce Crime des Riches qui pourrait être lui aussi le Crime d'être riche, car les caprices monstrueux, nés de la veulerie et de l'ennui des millions usurpés, entraînent physiquement et physiologiquement toutes les tares […].[86]

The emphasis put on the inevitable physical and physiological changes that money and boredom seem to create emerges from Naturalism's formal experimentations. As shown in the above quotation, Lorrain follows the same route. He often appears to reverse the representation of high and low society, to the point that aristocrats and *demi-mondaines* become animals. In 'Récits de l'étudiant', for instance, the rich adulterous Mme Prack is compared to a grasshopper.[87] These transformations often materialise in the junction of public and private space, as in the heterotopic space that is the theatre.[88] In *Monsieur de Phocas*, the chapter entitled 'Cloaca maxima' shows Lorrain's narrator comparing a typical Paris 'salle de première' to Ancient Rome's sewage system, which gathers the waste of the world: there, aristocratic women are no less than 'chevronnées du vice', 'petites femmes à têtes diminuées et fiévreuses', 'un charme obsédant et pervers', 'leur teint de

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[85] Ibid., p. 48.
[86] Jean Lorrain, *Le Crime des riches* [1905] (Paris: Le Chat Rouge, 2010), p. 11.
[87] '[A]vec sa face étroite, son menton pointu et son profil chevalin, elle ressemblait un peu à une sauterelle, elle en avait les mouvements à la fois saccadés et lents'. In Jean Lorrain, *Histoires de masques* [2006] (Paris: Ombres, 2006), p. 33.
[88] Michel Foucault, 'Des espaces autres' [1984], in *Dits et Écrits*, t. IV (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), pp. 752-62. According to Foucault, heterotopias are spaces that suspend, neutralise or reverse a given set of relations.

poisson bouilli', 'l'air de squelette d'oiseau' (*MP*, 196-97). There are no longer any distinctions between high/low classes, nor between man/animal. Here the focus made on the body points out Bakhtin's work on the notion of carnivalesque. It directly entails the corporal principle of the 'grotesque realism' while it also involves the idea of metamorphosis. In *Monsieur de Phocas*, the hallucinations of Fréneuse parallel 'le faisandage de la chair' (*CDR*, 112)[89] that corruption and hypocrisy create in *Le Crime des riches*:

> La femme au piano, qui chantait, à moitié nue, comme entraînée en avant par le poids de sa gorge, avait le profil d'une brebis bêlante ; le blond de ses cheveux avait jusqu'à l'aspect terne et laineux d'une toison. De Tramsel dégageait un museau de renard, Mireau, le romancier, une gueule de hyène ; dans le groupe des femmes assises, toutes les fleurs du Faubourg en corbeille pourtant, c'étaient de lourdes faces bovines, des prunelles aqueuses de vache ruminante à côté de fronts fuyants de carnassier et d'yeux ronds d'oiseau de proie. (*MP*, 96)

Similar to Flaubert's satirical episode of 'les comices agricoles' in *Madame Bovary* (1856), the strategies of subjugation are revealed through the animal metaphor: the cabaret singer who represents the lower class is pictured as the prey while the other characters – all from higher social spheres – represent carnivorous animals, predators full of vices. Lorrain reverses the codes again; it stages the 'crime of the rich' that he defines in the preface to his 1905 collection of short stories. The urban bestiary of the nineteenth century has always been seen as producing social classification through various mediums like illustration and caricature, fiction and journalism – most notably the satirical press (e.g. Grandville's illustrations of hybrid types in *La Caricature* in the 1830s). In line with Flaubert, Zola, but also Grandville and other caricaturists of the long nineteenth century, Lorrain's animal representation of social types can then be seen as 'continuous with a tradition of urban pictorial caricatures and literary physiognomies that became especially popular in Paris during the 1840s',[90] and later popularised through the writings of Zola and Maupassant, or the critical studies of Benjamin, as I have demonstrated.

Because it is the negation of logical forms, the grotesque also points to the Fantastique. This is what Bakhtin, as I mentioned, names the 'romantic grotesque' – for it pervades the Romantic period, all the way until fin-de-siècle Decadence and

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[89] In *Histoires de masques*, Lorrain writes: 'Il y a cependant pis que le faux visage colorié des costumiers et des coiffeurs, il y a le visage humain lui-même, le vôtre ou le mien, celui de votre ami ou de votre maîtresse, figés d'hypocrisie, masqués de dissimulation'. (*HDM*, 105).
[90] Irving Lewis Allen, *The City in Slang: New York Life and Popular Speech* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 190.

Symbolism.[91] Incidentally, in the preface to his Romantic drama *Cromwell* (1827), Victor Hugo establishes the Fantastique as an element of his theories of the grotesque. He draws a parallel between the popular traditions of the Middle Ages and the nineteenth century, where '[l]'imagination moderne sait faire rôder hideusement dans nos cimetières les vampires, les ogres, les aulnes, les psylles, les goules, les brucolaques, les aspioles, qu'elle peut donner à ses fées cette forme incorporelle […].'[92] The presence of these intermediary beings unequivocally forms a large part of Lorrain's Decadent literature. Spectres, monsters, vampires, masks, and *femmes fatales* are all Decadent *topoi*; they are omnipresent in Lorrain's literature (particularly in *Le Sang des Dieux*, *Princesses d'Ivoire et d'Ivresse*, and *Histoires de masques*, as I will demonstrate in chap. III). For him, these legendary characters predominantly hint at the dubious morality of the high society, as well as the feeling of terror that it inspires.

Lorrain then appears to be at the midpoint between 'grotesque realism' and 'romantic grotesque'. His popular and Decadent productions allude to an idea of grotesque whose filiation can be traced back to Pierre Alexis de Ponson du Terrail, Eugène Sue or Restif de la Bretonne (popular tropes) as much as Hugo, Théophile Gautier, E.T.A Hoffmann or Edgar Allan Poe (the Fantastique). This later opens to a more Modernist form of grotesque, which, according to Bakhtin, develops through the works of Alfred Jarry, the Surrealists and the Expressionists.[93] In Lorrain's works, which I see as patchworks of heterogeneous narratives, this notion of grotesque also opens to a montage of voices – or the polyphony of Lorrain's text.

Polyphonies: Voices of Lorrain's Text

When it comes to language and narrative, movements of singularities in the text apply to the idea of a dialogue – as Bakhtin puts it, dialogism. In *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics*, Bakhtin introduces important notions amongst which the most interesting for this study appears to be the concept of polyphony.[94] It refers to 'the "many-voicedness" of texts in which characters and narrators speak on equal terms';[95] it is consequently linked to the

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[91] The hybrid form of 'romantic grotesque' opens to Mario Praz's idea of decadence as a continuation of 'frenetic romanticism' initiated in the eighteenth century all the way to twentieth-century Modernism, with Antonin Artaud for instance. See Praz, *The Romantic Agony*, op. cit.

[92] Victor Hugo, preface to *Cromwell* [1827], in *Œuvres complètes. Théâtre: Cromwell, Hernani*, t. I (Paris: Librairie Ollendorff, 1912), p. 16.

[93] Ibid., p. 55.

[94] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics*, trans. C. Emerson (Manchester and Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

[95] Sue Vice, *Introducing Bakhtin* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p. 6.

idea of heteroglossia, or the coexistence of and conflict between different types of speech.

These different types of speech are incessantly recorded in Lorrain's works, who knew and manipulated *la langue verte* with ease. Used in a way of producing a form of 'effet de réel'[96] in the text, they constitute a system of languages whose textual rendition traces back to *roman populaire* and Naturalism; they are also linked to nineteenth-century physiognomies, as I demonstrated in the first part of this chapter. This is why in Lorrain's collections of vignettes like *Une femme par jour* or *Princesses d'Italie*, but also his fiction drawn from such primary observations, the characters are also represented through their distinctive language. The confrontation of these different types of languages forms a linguistic patchwork that participates in the realisation of a social and cultural atlas of Belle Époque France; it gives a linguistic texture to the panoramic image of Lorrain's society at a particular time. It is therefore striking to note that Bakhtin, when developing his theories of dialogism and the novel, referred to language as 'images of languages': 'the primary stylistic project of the novel as a genre is to create images of languages'.[97]

For Bakhtin, images would be replaced by languages (in his own term, 'voices'). The creation of an image of languages can be achieved through three main actions: hybridisations,[98] the dialogised interrelation of languages[99] and pure dialogues.[100] Bakhtin argued that the novel is dialogic because it is a form within which meaning is made through interaction between 'voices' that are essentially in dialogue. For Lorrain as a *flâneur*, whose journalistic practice always directly informs his fiction, such mélange of hybridity, different languages and dialogue is one of the main components of his literature. In *Femmes de 1900*, Lorrain astutely combines various types of languages through the portrait of *mondaines*, actresses, acrobats, etc. Bourgeois mannerism and street slangs are meticulously reported (and/or parodied). In the story 'Celle qui tue', for instance, the realism of dialogues transposed in the text is significant:

> Fauché, trois lingues, mon vieux copain, et toi ? – Oh ! moi, si t'allonges un rond, je verrais luire la thune. – À propos, c'est t'y vrai que la Zélie Marlot est remise

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96 Barthes, 'L'Effet de réel', op. cit., p. 81.
97 Mikhail Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel', in *The Dialogic Imagination*, trans. C. Emerson and M. Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), p. 366. He further writes: 'What *is* present in the novel is an artistic *system* of languages, or more accurately a system of *images* of languages' (p. 416).
98 Ibid., p. 2.
99 Ibid., p. 3.
100 Ibid., p. 358.

> avec le Gascon ?- Pas de bêche, les v'là ensemble qui entrent dans le bal. – Elle y paie un saladier, faut croire que c'est remis […].[101]

In fact, Lorrain always alternates between various layers of language – i.e. slang, poetic and journalistic discourse, etc. – to the point that it catalyses the atomisation of classes and participates in the elaboration of a panoramic picture of language practices in fin-de-siècle France. This picture does not just encompass all linguistic – and therefore social – binary oppositions, it blends them together. As Éric Walbecq rightly notes in the preface to Lorrain's *Petits plaisirs*, a collection of short texts about the leisure of the working class during the holidays, '[c]omme il la brasse, cette langue, en fait reluire le fer blanc, l'argotise, la déboutonne ! […] Accents de malfrats, crincrin petit-bourgeois, rengaine, jargon de métier, jurons, froufrou d'étoffes, emprunts de la Haute.'[102] Inevitably, this mix of languages creates a poetic collage, or patchwork of narratives, similar to Harlequin's costume.

In *La Maison Philibert*, Lorrain's avatar Jacques Ménard suggests that the figure of the journalist stands as a vocal link between the different social spheres. Indeed, because of their circulation in and out of the city, they are the ones who speak and understand slang as much as the codified speech of higher social spheres, just like Lorrain. This is why Ménard-Lorrain can freely infiltrate both central and peripheral spaces. In fact, both *milieux* need him – he is the one who can promote them in the press:

> Songez, c'est tous des criminels, des parigots dans l'âme ; y ont vu cent fois vot' binette dans les illustrés […]. Monsieur Jacques, j'vous présenterai tel que vous êtes et sous vot' vrai blaze ; croyez qu'y l'connaissent, y lisent tous le journal et tous cabots, assoiffés d'réclame. Pour s'voir imprimé vif dans une feuille, y s'assassineraient d'vant vous. (*LMP*, 134)

In *La Maison Philibert*, the narrative constantly alternates between Ménard-Lorrain's narrative voice and slang through the form of reported speech, as seen above (this also applies to Lorrain's other works which concentrate on the low society like, for instance, in *Petits plaisirs* or *Histoires du bord de l'eau*). Yet the 'many voicedness' of Lorrain's novel about prostitution also blurs the frontiers between classes in the narrative, for secondary characters also have the possibility of becoming leading narrators, as is the case in various chapters; this provokes a reversal of voices which can lead to the combination of

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[101] Jean Lorrain, 'Celle qui tue', in *Femmes de 1900* (Paris: Éditions de la Madeleine, 1932), p. 128.
[102] Éric Walbecq about Lorrain in the preface to *Petits plaisirs*, op. cit., p. 6-7.

both. The language of *souteneurs* also often contaminates the narrative voice and textually materialises through the use of italics.

In the polyphonic novel, the idea of dialogism allows the confrontation of contradictory discourses. For Bakhtin, the notion of dialogism comes partly from the 'ménippée' that uses the fusion between the philosophical research, the Fantastique, as well as a Naturalist approach on social groups, and the interaction between the elite and popular culture through a micro-historical approach. This is what is at stake in Lorrain's popular narratives like *Le Crime des riches* or *La Maison Philibert*, whose confrontation between the high and low societies bares a sense of 'grotesque realism'. In that respect, Bakhtin's analysis of Dostoyevsky's polyphonic novel also illustrates that of Lorrain as it is viewed as a montage of confrontational perspectives and voices. In Lorrain's novel though, the cultural background is more comparable to the representation of nineteenth-century Paris in Benjamin's *Arcades Project*: it reads as the montage of quotations related to social totality, for their 'critical counter-traditions are designed to unfold the cultural objects of the past in the first sense'[103] in order to make them collide with the culture of the present.

In that respect, Lorrain's patchwork of narratives is utterly dialogic. The confrontation of contradictory discourses is always staged through the interaction between high and low society. Yet literature and journalism also stand as matrix to the construction of the modern public space. Lorrain's literary text-montage consequently participates in the construction of the 'harlequin poetics'. Indeed, it provides a new representation of a panoramic space where the interaction between various voices (e.g. high/low) produces a form of polyphony. This tells about Lorrain's particularly carnivalesque vision and experience of Belle Époque culture. Dialogism as a montage of voices also connotes the notions of movement and circulation, embodied in Lorrain's *flâneur* narrators.

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[103] Tim Beasley-Murray, *Mikhail Bakhtin and Walter Benjamin, Experience and Form* (London: Palgrave, 2007), p. 47. Beasley-Murray further develops the idea of a montage of temporalities writing 'the dragging of the artwork from the cultic and ritual past into the present liberates from new purposes in the future' (p. 151). This is also the aim of Aby Warburg's *Mnemosyne Atlas*. I will concentrate on the idea of a montage of times in Lorrain's text in chapter III.

The *Flâneur*: 'A Kaleidoscope Gifted with Consciousness'

The *flâneur* is the emblem of nineteenth-century urban experience.[104] Through his movement, he develops a panoramic vision of the city that he records and collects into various materials – be they poetic or journalistic, for instance. But the *flâneur* is no antisocial loner. He is also someone who triggers conversations with the people he meets on the street, just like Lorrain, through his experience as a journalist. Indeed, Aimée Boutin remarks that:

> The flâneur may be a 'perspicacious' close reader, but he is also an avid conversationalist, eavesdropper and attentive listener. In Jouy's *Nouveaux Tableaux de Paris* and in *Le Figaro*, the flâneur is frequently said to engage people in conversation. […] Eavesdropper as well as observer, the flâneur has his ears to the ground, collecting news, stories, and gossip.[105]

As we have seen, the act of collecting (news, stories, languages, but also gossip, as I will analyse in the last chapter) is important to Lorrain. The driving force of Lorrain's description of both high and low cultural spheres lies, as we can see through the notion of the *flâneur*, in the notions of movement and circulation, as well as language. These notes on the outside world, always encompassed in a narrative, are made possible through imagination and style, but, in Lorrain's case, first and foremost through experience.

The kaleidoscope is an important metaphor of the panoramic literature. In 'On Some Motifs in Baudelaire', Benjamin evokes the motif of the kaleidoscope through the use of Baudelaire's translation of Poe's 'The Man of the Crowd' to investigate the *flâneur*'s experience of rapidly changing sensations in the city as camera movements and the rendering of it through a unified scene:

> Moving through this traffic involves the individual in a series of shocks and collisions. At dangerous intersections, nervous impulses flow through him in rapid succession, like the energy from a battery. Baudelaire speaks of a man who plunges

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[104] Further to the examples of Baudelaire and Benjamin on Baudelaire used in this part, see for instance *The Flâneur*, K. Tester (ed.) (London: Routledge, 1994), and *Urban Walking: The Flâneur as an Icon of Metropolitan Culture in Literature and Film*, O. Bock and I. Vila-Cabanes (eds.) (Wilmington: Vernon Press, 2020).
[105] Aimée Boutin, *City of Noise: Sound and Nineteenth-Century Paris* (Urbana, Chicago & Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2015), p. 16.

> into the crowd as into a reservoir of electric energy. Circumscribing the experience of the shock, he calls this man 'a *kaleidoscope* equipped with consciousness'.[106]

Benjamin also draws comparisons between the *flâneur* and the journalist: 'the skill and ease with which the *flâneur* moves among the crowd and which the journalist eagerly learns from him'[107] therefore put the emphasis on the prevalent mobile and aesthetic attitude of the journalist. Indeed, the aesthetic experience of the crowd in all its heterogeneity resembles the fragmented space of the newspaper. As it happens, Lorrain's reports on the urban space in its diversity parallel the various columns of the newspaper; Benjamin further states that '[h]aptic experiences of this kind were joined by optic ones, such as are supplied by the advertising pages of a newspaper or the traffic of a big city', which echoes Zola's quotation on harlequins at the start of this chapter.[108] As we have seen, this is poeticised in the exploded form of Lorrain's novel *La Maison Philibert*.

The kaleidoscope was an instrument invented in 1817 by David Brewster, a Scottish physicist. It quickly became an object of curiosity and entertainment in Europe in the 1820s and it has been often referred to through metaphorical meanings ever after, with the popularisation of scientific thought and the late nineteenth-century aesthetic exploitation of fragmentation. Catherine Nesci notes that the term 'kaleidoscope' denotes the shared restlessness, fragmentation, and variation of the modern metropolis and the *flâneur* who perceives it.[109] The instrument is therefore associated with the daguerreotype, the diorama, the panorama or the magic lantern, all of which are always used to connote the aesthetics of the *flâneur*, but also, as I just mentioned, that of the journalist.[110] In this respect, Lorrain's 'harlequin poetics', with its insistence on the dialectics of fragmentation/patchwork, also creates a sense of movement that is perceived, for instance, in the misogynistic/voyeuristic narratives of *Une femme par jour* – all assembled together in a montage.

Benjamin's heuristic model that is drawn from the spectacle of the panorama seems to capture Freud's notion of *Schaulust* – or 'scopic drive' (i.e. scopophilia).[111] The effects of specularity and reflexivity that panoramic literature brings about materialise in

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[106] Walter Benjamin, 'On Some Motifs in Baudelaire', in *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken Books, 2007), p. 175.
[107] Ibid., p. 167.
[108] Ibid., p. 175.
[109] See Catherine Nesci, *Le Flâneur et les flâneuses. Les Femmes et la ville à l'époque romantique* (Grenoble: UGA Éditions, 2007).
[110] The magic lantern – or 'lanterne de peur' – is an apparatus that can be compared to the kaleidoscope and creates a certain form of phantasmagoria through its panoramic power and its polychromatic effect.
[111] Scopophilia is the pleasure in looking. Here it facilitates the voyeuristic process of the objectification of Lorrain's female characters (male gaze).

the imaginary image of the other through this notion of scopic drive. Correspondingly, when Lacan invokes Freud to analyse the drive, he compares it to a montage: 'if there is anything resembling a drive it is a *montage* […] in the sense in which one speaks of *montage* in a surrealist collage'.[112] Lacan notes that Freud's text (he refers to Freud's *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, 1905) itself reads like such montage as it 'constantly jumps, without transition, between the most heterogeneous images'.[113] The way Lorrain assembles heterogeneous images and binary oppositions in his works definitely captures this idea of totalisation through a montage of fragments. Accordingly, Lorrain's text quite often takes the shape of a great *flâneur* narrative. The acute description of high and low social and cultural spheres, the multiplicity of themes directly or indirectly drawn from the city's urban Modernity and the constant montage of genres place most of Lorrain's works alongside classic texts of panoramic literature. Since Baudelaire, the street comes to signify the pivotal scene of modern life for the 'poetic' mind: one in which a sensitivity is intoxicated with visual signs and is moved by its scopic drive. In 'Baudelaire, or the Streets of Paris', Benjamin notes that:

> The *flâneur* still stands on the threshold – of the metropolis as of middle class. Neither has him in its power yet. In neither is he at home. He seeks refuge in the crowd. Early contributions to a physiognomics of the crowd are found in Engels and Poe. The crowd is a veil through which the familiar city beckons to the *flâneur* as phantasmagoria – now a landscape, now a room.[114]

The phantasmagoria that emerges from the interaction of various sorts of physiognomies in Lorrain's text produces a montage of fragments and opposite figures. Furthermore, Benjamin's idea of 'threshold' also applies to Lorrain's position as writer-journalist – one can see Lorrain's position as a *flâneur* moving between the media imaginary and the literary sphere, as made explicit in the volume of short stories *Histoires du bord de l'eau* or the novels *Maison pour dames* and *La Maison Philibert*.

Lorrain's panoramic literature that his journalistic practice enables also resurfaces in his long narratives. Individual differences can therefore be analysed through the prism of a universal approach that results in the construction of longer narratives. This reads like a more totalising kind of *tableau*. The experience of the media imaginary is crucial for such narratives. In *La Maison Philibert*, for instance, Lorrain focuses on two social classes

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[112] Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* [1973], trans. A. Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1998), p. 169.
[113] Ibid., p. 170.
[114] Benjamin, *Arcades*, op. cit., p. 10.

that not only interact but also merge at the end of the novel. In the novel, Ménard appears as a journalist as much as a *flâneur*. He circulates between binary oppositions: Paris and the provinces, high and low social/cultural spheres, the media space and the phantasmagoric experience of the crowd, fiction and reality, the centre and the periphery. In the novel, Ménard captures a panoramic vision of Belle Époque Paris through the experience of the threshold between two contrasting social spheres. This phantasmagoric experience of the crowd, blurring boundaries, echoes Lorrain's own practice, as I shall show with the example of *Monsieur de Bougrelon* at the end of this chapter.

Walking as a Catalyst for Narratives

The dynamic montage of textual fragments constitutes a characteristic element of Lorrain's literary style. The representation of a literary and cultural atlas of Belle Époque France is achieved through Lorrain's hybrid text as seeking a certain idea of totality; the driving force of such phenomena lies, as we can see, in the notions of movement and circulation. They are made possible through imagination and style.

In *L'Image survivante*, Didi-Huberman insists on the fact that Warburg, through the *Mnemosyne Atlas* project, clearly intends to question the problem of style, 'ce problème d'agencements et d'efficacités formels'.[115] For Warburg, style then emerges from a complex network of *Nachleben* (*survivals* – surviving forms) that all interact with each other. The idea is that of a sort of montage, a moving ornament. In Lorrain's works, the idea of movement in the textual space seems to emerge with the persistent use of two actions: walking and conversing. There is a certain form of *mise en abyme* of movement in the text through the ever-changing displacements of Lorrain's characters as *flâneurs*. His narrators are often depicted walking from one place to another, and in most cases other characters accompany them in their peregrination; the role of such interaction, through conversational walk, is to produce the foundations of new narratives in the text. Each place and encounter then constitutes an ever-generative matrix of narratives. This directly stems from Lorrain's own practice as both experiencing and documenting high and low society in Belle Époque Paris.

In *Coins de Byzance. Le Vice errant*, later published and commonly known as *Les Noronsoff* (1902), movement is key to Lorrain's narrative. The original volume is separated into four different parts entitled 'Propos d'opium', 'Maschere', 'Salade Russe' and finally

[115] Didi-Huberman, *L'Image survivante*, op. cit., p. 46.

the novel 'Coins de Byzance. Les Noronsoff'. While the first three parts can be read as a collection of short stories, they actually appear to pave the way for the main narrative that is *Les Noronsoff*. In 'Propos d'opium', Lorrain's narrator – who also appears to be Lorrain the author ('tous les lieux suspects sont ouverts d'emblée à l'auteur de *Monsieur de Phocas* et mon nom seul force les consignes les plus sévères', *LN* 8-9) – enters an opium den in Bastia, Corsica, where the conversations and tales respectively told by Germont, Tupier and Bienvenu directly serve the opening of Lorrain's main narrative (this parallels the space of the newspaper, with the presence of faits divers and small columns before longer narrative, e.g. serial novel). Here the narrator is subordinate to other relay narrators, which all participate in the construction of Lorrain's exploded narrative.

In 'Maschere', the narrator, now in Nice, goes to a pantomime. There he meets doctor Rabastens, the main interlocutor of Lorrain's narrator; he is also the character/relay narrator who tells the story of Wladimir Noronsoff (amongst other ones). From the moment the narrator meets Rabastens, the idea of narrative is closely linked to the notion of movement through *time* – 'dans le récit que vous prétiez l'autre jour à votre ami de Germont dans les *Propos d'opium* (car, mon Dieu ! oui, j'ai l'honneur, d'être un de vos lecteurs les plus assidus)' (*LN*, 43) – but also the notion of movement through *space* (and, in this particular novel, through outside space: 'Si nous allions faire un tour ? – J'allais vous le proposer, d'autant plus que le mistral a fait trêve. Voyez, les arbres ne bougent plus' (*LN*, 43)). This constitutes a pretext for the production of a new tale, namely 'Masques de Londres et d'ailleurs', that opens the series of short tales that Rabastens later provides both the narrator and the reader. In Lorrain's text, the coexistence of different layers of the past brings an idea of movement that comes to galvanise the narrative. It is symbolised here by the interaction of the two tales, working as a kind of 'texte d'ancrage' ('Propos d'opium') and 'texte de relais'[116] ('Masques de Londres et d'ailleurs') voiced by two distinct voices. It therefore creates both a sense of polysemy and polyphony, as we have seen in the previous parts. Yet it is mostly through walking with Rabastens that the narrator is embarked on a new narrative.

The two men, strolling in and out of Nice, stop at various villas; they represent a sort of textual checkpoint in the narrative. The villa called 'Maison du Bonheur' in Villefranche engenders the story of Monsieur and Madame Astra while the one in Nice called 'Maison des Chimères' directly produces the story of M. T…:

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[116] I borrow the notions of 'ancrage' and 'relais', primarily used to theorise the functions of images to Roland Barthes, 'Rhétorique de l'image', in *Communication*, 4.1 (1964), pp. 41-42.

> M. Rabastens, retombé dans le silence, tentait de rompre la trêve et, me désignant d'un geste vague l'invisible villa de ce jardin : « Après du tendre et du touchant, voulez-vous du tragique, du drame après de la mélancolie souriante et de l'épouvante après de l'attendrissement ? Je tiens tout cela à mon comptoir. Après l'histoire de la Maison du Bonheur, voulez-vous celle des Chimères ? C'est le nom de cette villa. […] » (*LN*, 82-83)

It is the same process that generates the story of *Les Noronsoff*. Lorrain, who lived in Nice at the end of his life, knew the area well; all the villas mentioned in the novel exist. The tension between fiction and reality is then addressed in a playful manner. However, the movement created by the two men walking is strictly associated with the movement of the narrative. The tale starts with the stroll and ends with the absence of action:

> […] donnez-moi votre journée… je vous ferai voir un autre coin de Byzance ; non plus les coulisses de l'Hippodrome, comme ce soir, mais un angle même de la loge impériale. Trouvez-vous au port, entre une heure et demie et deux heures. (*LN*, 110)

> Il me fallait l'autorisation du propriétaire pour vous faire visiter le domaine, je vous conduis dans un parc interdit. […] Nous pourrions prendre le tramway, mais nous nous arrêtons à mi-côte. Nous couperons par les traverses, entre les jardins des villas. (*LN*, 114)

> La nuit était venue et noyait d'ombres bleues les sentiers du jardin. Depuis combien d'heures étions-nous là ? À nos pieds les terrasses s'étageaient toutes blanches sous la lune qui venait de se lever au-dessus du Mont Chauve et des escarpements du Var […]. Nous nous levâmes sans mot dire. Le concierge avait fermé la grille et nous dûmes la faire ouvrir et nous ne reprîmes notre assurance qu'une fois sorti de ces allées pleines d'impalpables frôlements. FIN. (*LN*, 364)

Here, the walk through villas works as a catalyst for narratives. It is a method that Lorrain uses a lot in both his chronicles and fiction, particularly his writing about peripheral Paris and the Riviera (see 'L'Homme des berges' as a *flâneur*). The idea of movement through both time and space comes to objectify the process of *mise en abyme*, as I shall discuss in the next chapter. In Lorrain's works, this same creative process is highly repetitive, and it constantly returns in the narrative as an echo. It alludes to the metaphor of the Harlequin as productive of dynamic multiplicity: movement calls for movement and space is conceived only to produce other spaces and temporalities – other stories.[117]

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[117] In a way, such creative process already opens to the very dynamic writing of Nouveau Roman writer Claude Simon, and particularly in *Le Tramway* (2001), whose literary location Perpignan also mirrors Lorrain's depiction of the French Riviera.

As Lorrain's fiction is often influenced by his own experience of reality, it is not surprising to note that Rabastens the doctor and Lorrain the writer share many similarities. Just like Lorrain, 'M. Rabastens était très répandu de par le monde et la société de la Riviera' (*LN*, 93). Such a position allows both men to encounter many people and gather many different stories. Indeed, 'M. Rabastens était vaguement docteur… homéopathe, allopathe ou dosimétrique, je n'ai jamais pu tirer la chose au clair. Je le soupçonnais surtout d'amuser et d'intéresser ses malades' (*LN*, 93-94). Here, the narrator is not sure whether doctor Rabastens really is a doctor (see the comic effect of the adverb of indetermination, oxymoron-like 'vaguement'), but he suspects he is a great storyteller, a suspicion that proves correct throughout the text. Furthermore, Rabastens might be a 'dosimétrique' – or dosimeter –, an object related to dosimetry – namely the measurement, monitoring, calculation and assessment of a dose absorbed by an organism or an object. In short, he collects stories just like Lorrain. As Uzanne writes, Lorrain was 'un surprenant instrument enregistreur d'ardentes et impétueuses sensations artistiques' of his time.[118] In short, Rabastens replaces Lorrain the author-narrator in *Coins de Byzance. Le Vice errant*. The movement between all various narrative voices then participates in the fragmentation of the text, later recomposed into a whole volume, which is distinctive of Lorrain's literary style. It is essentially achieved here through walking; the same creative process is visible in Lorrain's novella *Monsieur de Bougrelon*.[119]

The Example of *Monsieur de Bougrelon* (1897)

Monsieur de Bougrelon traces the wandering of two French tourists in Amsterdam after meeting the strange Monsieur de Bougrelon, an old dandy exiled in Holland. Bougrelon stands as a spectral presence who haunts the city as much as he haunts – and produces – the narrative. Constructed as a series of mirrors and reflections, this novel is directly influenced by Barbey d'Aurevilly (the very character of Bougrelon has many characteristics in common with 'le Connétable des lettres': for instance, 'Sanglé à la taille dans une large redingote à tuyaux, les épaules larges et le buste mince, un énorme chapeau haut de forme incliné de côté, en casseur d'assiettes, c'[est], avec l'effrayant gourdin qu'il [tient] à la main, *une figure déjà vue ailleurs et d'autant plus inoubliable*', *MDB*, 18, my emphasis) and *Les Diaboliques*, but also Rodenbach's *Bruges-la-Morte* – notably its

[118] Uzanne, *Jean Lorrain, l'artiste, l'ami*, op. cit., p. 41.
[119] *Monsieur de Bougrelon* first appeared in serial publication in *Le Journal* through various episodes running from January to May 1897, but it was finally published as a whole by Librairie Borel in the 'Lotus Alba' collection and illustrated by Marold & Mittis in 1898.

narrow, Baudelairian universe. They embark on a tour of the city with him and through his memories, fantasies and visions, that all constitute a series of short narratives.

The treatment of signs, always circulating through analogy in a transversal way, opens the path to the Surrealist concepts of the fetishised object and the 'trouvaille'.[120] Incidentally, the Surrealist object seeks to objectify desire and recreate the beauty of the world in its very materiality; this is often linked to the idea of the stroll, which is also the *flâneur*'s favourite occupation. In 'La Promenade surréaliste', Olivier Margerit writes:

> La promenade aux puces – et d'une manière générale la promenade surréaliste – ne s'effectue jamais seul, mais possède la vocation sociale de l'expérience commune, avec un ami non désigné dans *Nadja*, avec Giacometti dans *L'Amour fou*. Cette intime solidarité étend le champ des résolutions analogiques que suscite la trouvaille et garantit le caractère objectif de la rencontre, qui ne peut être attribué à la fantaisie d'un seul.[121]

In *Monsieur de Bougrelon*, the narrative also emerges from two friends (or more) walking together. The chapter 'L'Espagnole tatouée' starts with Bougrelon taking the two friends to a Museum in Amsterdam. The visit reminds him of Uffizi in Florence, where he saw some paintings by Leonardo, which in turn remind him of a Salome by Bernardino Luini; this directly triggers the story of the Marquise Mercédès della Morozina Campéador Cantès – a tattooed Spanish woman whom Bougrelon fell in love with in the past.[122] Not only do the walk and the visit produce Bougrelon's tale enclosed in the overall narrative, but the notion of movement as emerging from both the stroll and the painting also works as a catalyst for narratives. The text is indeed layered from the work of art (the description runs through many pages); yet the *ekphrasis* is also entirely integrated to the fiction and works as a premonitory foundation.

As we see here with the description of the Marquess, the *ekphrasis* is both proleptic and analeptic. It creates dynamism and energy in the narrative; Luini's *Salome* works as a sort of 'dialectic at a standstill'.[123] Indeed, the image produces new narratives and engages with the work of fiction where signs circulate through analogy and

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[120] On the notion of 'trouvaille', see André Breton, 'Équation de l'objet trouvé', in *Documents 34*, 1 (June 1934), included in *L'Amour fou* [1937] (Paris: Folio Gallimard, 1976), pp. 16-24.
[121] Olivier Margerit, 'La Promenade surréaliste', in *Promenades et écriture*, A. Montandon (ed.) (Clermont-Ferrand: Presses universitaires Blaise Pascal, 2006), pp. 126-27.
[122] The references to Barbey d'Aurevilly's life and works in *Monsieur de Bougrelon* are numerous. Here, Lorrain's Spanish Marquise, with 'le portrait tatoué de son mari sur le sein gauche' (*MDB*, 36) echoes Barbey's Spanish 'duchesse d'Arcos de Sierra-Leone' who sleeps with men underneath the portrait of her jealous husband in *La Vengeance d'une femme*. In Barbey d'Aurevilly, *Les Diaboliques* [1874] (Paris: Le Livre de poche, 1985).
[123] Benjamin, *Arcades*, op. cit., p. 463.

succession, as if in a hall of mirrors. Its metadiegetic use is then part of a diachronic perspective, which means that the model of figuration participates in the articulation of Lorrain's work of fiction through precise narratologic systems. The *ekphrasis* may stem from achronies, but such marks in the text not only work as quotation, foundation, comparison or *mise en abyme* of the utterance, it also directly mirrors the characteristics of the Spanish woman. This series of vignettes – a style that directly emerges from Lorrain's journalistic methodology – is what creates movement; it therefore also produces narrative. The two friends first meet Bougrelon in a brothel after deploring the lack of entertainment provided by morose Amsterdam; similarly, their exile in Amsterdam is left uninteresting after Bougrelon's disappearance. Without Bougrelon, there is no longer the possibility of movement, and therefore no possibility of narrative.

Echoing Rodenbach's novel, the opening pages read: 'Amsterdam, c'est toujours de l'eau, […] de l'eau morte, de l'eau moirée et de l'eau grise, des allées d'eau qui n'en finissent plus […] c'est un peu monotone à la longue' (*MDB*, 3-4). Everything seems to be at a standstill; before the arrival of Bougrelon, the text only consists in passive descriptions of Amsterdam. There is no narrative; *he* creates narrative. This is why the absence of Bougrelon at the beginning of chapter IV ('L'Âme d'Atala') creates a pause in the narrative:

> ah ! nous l'avions aujourd'hui, incurablement déprimante, la morne sensation de l'exil… Notre truchement ordinaire nous manquait, Amsterdam n'était plus Amsterdam sans M. de Bougrelon […] et c'est à travers l'outrance de ses imaginations héroïques que nous avions aimé la monotonie de ses rues et la laideur vraiment hostile de ses habitants (*MDB*, 149-50)

The idea of 'truchement' is particularly interesting. A 'truchement' is a spokesperson, an intervention, a means of expression or an intermediary – even a translator – between two people who cannot speak each other's language. Just like Rabastens in *Les Noronsoff*, Bougrelon then appears as a sort of relay character that creates narratives. Bougrelon even produces other narrators. In *L'Alcool du silence*, Jourde remarks that Bougrelon takes responsibility for the narrative: he himself tells stories; however, these stories are not always his, 'mais celles d'un personnage auquel lui aussi s'associe en permanence, Mortimer, de sorte qu'au « nous » du narrateur-personnage secondaire répond le plus souvent un autre « nous », celui du personnage principal-narrateur qu'est Bougrelon.'[124] He is that stylistic tool that gives Lorrain's story a kick, just like Rabastens in *Les*

[124] Jourde, *L'Alcool du silence*, op. cit., p. 252.

Noronsoff. In short, Bougrelon can be seen as a metaphor of movement, and therefore, narrative (he is even refered to as a 'silhouette *épique*' (*MDB*, 17, my emphasis).

Unsurprisingly, he disappears as quickly as he appears, from one chapter to another. At the end of the story rewritten by Lorrain in 1898, Bougrelon is seen for the last time leaving the continent – and the narrative – in Marseille (Lorrain reproduces the same ending, focusing on the disappearance of the character-narrator, in *Monsieur de Phocas*). In *Romans fin-de-siècle (1890-1900)*, Guy Ducrey notes that:

> M. de Bougrelon ne cesse, du début à la fin, de disparaître, dans une série d'évanouissements que Lorrain s'attache à consigner : « Un grand coup de chapeau, un redressement subit de tout son buste, il avait disparu », peut-on lire à la fin du premier chapitre. […] M. de Bougrelon ne prend pas congé, il effectue des « sorties comme de spectre » et s'évanouit comme s'il « était tombé dans le canal »'.[125]

Here Bougrelon is described as a clown-like magician, whose comic potential ('grand coup de chapeau'/'tombé dans le canal') can refer to pantomime characters like Harlequin. At the end of Lorrain's story, the characters and the reader experience the final revelation that gives sense to the multi-layered narrative as self-reflexive: 'M. de Bougrelon avait donc impudemment menti. […] M. de Bougrelon était un musicien de bouge à matelots.' (*MDB*, 234) This is why Ducrey goes on writing that Lorrain's *Monsieur de Bougrelon* 'renvoie une image de la création littéraire, et, un an avant la mort de Mallarmé, apparaît, malgré son bric-à-brac d'objets et de fantasmes datés, comme l'un des plus modernes du XIXe finissant.'[126] His presence as movement in the text only serves the narrative purpose of Lorrain's story. It also constitutes a *mise en abyme* of his creative practice; at some point, the narrator even suggests that Bougrelon could be a mere fantasy made to entertain the two characters (like Lorrain himself with his readers): 'M. de Bougrelon était le produit de notre ennui, de cette atmosphère de brouillard et de quelques griseries de Schiedam; nous avions prêté un corps à nos songeries d'alcool' (*MDB*, 195).

In a sense, Bougrelon stands as Lorrain's own Harlequin (as I shall demonstrate, Bougrelon also *is* Lorrain). He is a dynamic metaphor that produces multiple discourses; like Harlequin, he is a body of textual fragments. He determines and embodies Lorrain's 'harlequin poetics' through a mix of fragmentation/patchwork of fragments, as well as performance and mystification. Yet Bougrelon is not the only vehicule of Lorrain's

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[125] Ducrey, Introduction to *Monsieur de Bougrelon*, op. cit., p. 97.
[126] Ibid., p. 106.

mystifications. On the contrary, I shall show how the relation between fragmention and mystification through the process of *mise en abyme* are essential elements of Lorrain's 'harlequin poetics' – in both his life and works – in the next chapter.

- CHAPTER II -

Between Fiction and Reality

'SALMIS DE CADAVRES À LA BAUDELAIRE. Découpez un cadavre faisandé et déjà en décomposition, en autant de parties que vous pourrez, bourrez de vers bien faits et d'originalité, saupoudrez de paradoxes, parez de *Fleurs du mal*, et servez raide – échauffant.'[1] In mocking Baudelaire's poetic formula, journalist and puppeteer Louis Lemercier de Neuville playfully puts the emphasis on two important features of Baudelaire's writing process: the aesthetics of fragmentation and the technique of 'mystification' integrated to the process of literary (or poetic) invention. According to Jean-François Jeandillou, 'mystifier' originally means: 'faire de quelqu'un un myste' and 'initier quelqu'un à un mystère'.[2] Mystification both unveils the possibility of a mystery and the negation of its reality. It is a reflexive joke; it is *puff*, *fumisme* – modern laughter.[3] Yet 'mystifier' is also the action of 'mettre en branle un processus qui relève, peu ou prou, de l'invention esthétique, et qu'on offre à la jouissance d'un public – du public que les nouvelles industries culturelles ne cessent de faire grossir'.[4] It is, in short, about uncertainty (the blurring of borders between fiction and reality). In the nineteenth century, with the expansion of the 'civilisation du journal',[5] the poetics of mystification rose in the press of the 1820s and reached their peaks in the Symbolist aesthetics, whose theoretical dimension presents the confusion between art and life,[6] as well as the 'fumiste' culture experienced in the Chat Noir cabaret;[7] at the turn of the century, it is a poetic device largely used by avant-garde authors (e.g. Henri Beauclair and Gabriel Vicaire, Pierre Louÿs, Charles Cros, André Gide) which Lorrain belongs to.

Like Baudelaire, Lorrain chooses to inscribe his authorial presence in his own text; this is what Alain Vaillant calls a 'poétique de la subjectivation'[8] – which is, in a way, the radical opposite of Flaubert's 'éloge de la dépersonnalisation' (although some recent critical works have proved that 'l'ermite de Croisset' also participated in the making of

[1] Lemercier de Neuville, quoted in *Baudelaire devant ses contemporains*, T. Bandy and C. Pichois (eds.) (Paris: Klincksieck, 1995), p. 145.
[2] Jean-François Jeandillou, *Esthétique de la mystification* (Paris: Minuit, 1994), pp. 16-20.
[3] See Daniel Grojnowski, *Au commencement du rire moderne: L'Esprit fumiste* (Paris: José Corti, 1997).
[4] Dousteyssier-Khoze and Vaillant, 'Le siècle de la mystification', op. cit., p. 3.
[5] See Vaillant, *La Civilisation du journal*, op. cit.
[6] See Vérilhac, 'Vie littéraire et mystification aux temps symbolistes', in 'L'Art de la mystification', op. cit., p. 76.
[7] See Catherine Dousteyssier-Khoze, 'Fumisme: le rire jaune du Chat Noir', in *(Ab)normalities*, C. Dousteyssier-Khoze and P. Scott (eds.) (Durham: Modern Languages Series, 2001), p. 151-161.
[8] On the 'poétique de la subjectivation', see Alain Vaillant, *L'Histoire littéraire* (Paris: Colin, 2010).

his own authorial authority).[9] In the first part of this chapter, I shall focus on the exploded aspect of Lorrain's *ethos*. In continuously creating confusion between fiction and reality, Lorrain uses a form of media mystification to circulate various images of the self in the media (author, character, author as character) in order to construct his own legend. This practice also runs throughout his literature. I shall then move on to analyse mystification in relation to the theoretical dimension of the *mise en abyme* in Lorrain. Through the notion of 'texte-échafaudage' ('Le Paris des échafaudages', 1903), Lorrain seems to theorise his own practice as both fragmented and reflexive. Indeed, the 'harlequin poetics' showcases the performance of the self and the performance of the text, as well as the idea of patchwork. Similar to Harlequin's body, the seams of Lorrain's text are always visible; this creates a highly reflexive dimension to his text, as I shall finally examine in *Madame Baringhel* (1899).

Exploded Ethos

On Authorial Image

In the 1897 poem entitled 'Crise de vers', Mallarmé wrote that 'l'œuvre pure implique la disparition élocutoire du poète, qui cède l'initiative aux mots.'[10] From then on, a whole new literary movement that implied the modern disappearance of the author emerged, all the way to Maurice Blanchot and *Le Livre à venir* (1959) or more famously Roland Barthes with *La Mort de l'auteur* (1968). In this small text, first published in English as 'The Death of the Author' in *Aspen Magazine*, n° 5/6, 1967, Barthes famously wrote that 'l'auteur n'est jamais rien de plus que celui qui écrit, tout comme je n'est autre que celui qui dit je'.[11] He further argues that '[l]'écriture, c'est ce neutre, ce composite, cet oblique où fuit notre sujet, le noir et blanc où vient se perdre toute identité, à commencer par celle-là même du corps qui écrit'.[12] The writer as a principle that both generates and explains a text must be replaced by a form of language that is impersonal and anonymous, such as the language used and produced by Modernist writers like Proust, Joyce, Woolf, Valéry, and Beckett. The author is therefore forced to evaporate; he/she is reduced to a mere

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[9] On Flaubert's impersonal style, see Philippe Dufour, 'Éloge de la dépersonnalisation', in *Poétique*, 156.4 (2008), pp. 387-401. On the processus of 'becoming-author' in Flaubert, see Thierry Poyet, *La 'Gens' Flaubert: la fabrique de l'écrivain entre postures, amitiés et théories littéraires* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2017).
[10] Stéphane Mallarmé, 'Crise de vers', in *Œuvres complètes* (Paris: Gallimard, 'Pléiade', 1979), p. 366.
[11] Barthes, Roland, 'La Mort de l'auteur' [1967], in *Le Bruissement de la langue* (Paris: Seuil, Point Essais, 1984), p. 63.
[12] Ibid., p. 61.

omission, something anecdotal, something exploded.[13] The oeuvre must then be completely pure and free of any forms of personal authority to seek perfection and reach the idea of sublime in the autonomy of language. This anti-authorialist approach, however, has shown its limitations.[14] In the Belle Époque, writers like Colette or Lorrain intentionally chose to blur the frontier between fiction and reality. They stand, in a way, as precursors to the development of more modern forms of fiction where the narrative is heavily influenced by the life experience of the author (e.g. autofiction).[15]

In Lorrain's literature, the image of the author is then treated radically differently. Through numerous forms, Lorrain's authorial identity is very present and persistent: it participates in the narrative almost as if the author was deliberately projected in the textual space through diverse methods that do not necessarily only include personal style. Indeed, Lorrain constantly disseminates his own authorial *persona* – or *personæ* – in his whole oeuvre. Lorrain's friend Rachilde describes him as follows: '[i]l était à la fois le peintre et le modèle de ses héros. Qui était vrai ? Qui était faux ?'[16] Throughout his career, Lorrain systematically decides the porosity of the frontier between fiction and reality in his life as well as his works. The intense self-reflexivity that characterises his work offers the opportunity to discover how Lorrain constructs a new subjectivity – or even an authorial *ethos*,[17] that is, the images of the author – at a time when the staging of the self and 'postures'[18] in the media space and literary mystification expand dramatically. The author as 'subject' is an invention of Modernity; Lorrain embodies it entirely. Here I am alluding to the idea that literature, in the first half of the nineteenth century, became a highly cultural value. Along with it came new responsibilities for the author.[19]

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[13] Michel Houellebecq ironically plays with such notions and almost literally performs the death of the author by killing and dispatching the members of the character of Michel Houellebecq everywhere in the room, in *La Carte et le territoire* (Paris: Flammarion, 2010).

[14] See Seán Burke, *The Death and Return of the Author* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992). Since approximately the 1980s, new forms of literature and particularly 'autofiction' have been challenging the modern disappearance of the writer (i.e. Michon, Bergounioux, Ernaux, Rouaud, Toussaint).

[15] Further than the Claudine series, see Danielle Deltel's fleeting argument for Colette's *La Naissance du jour* (1928) as an early autofiction: 'Colette: l'autobiographie prospective', in *Autofictions et cie*, S. Doubrovsky, J. Lecarme, and P. Lejeune (eds), Cahiers du RITM, 6 (Nanterre: Université Paris X-Nanterre, 1993), pp. 123–34.

[16] Rachilde, *Portraits d'hommes*, op. cit., p. 91.

[17] On the notion of 'authorial *ethos*', see Amossy (ed.), *Images de soi dans le discours*, op. cit.

[18] On the notion of 'posture', see Meizoz, *Postures littéraires*, op. cit.

[19] See Paul Bénichou, *Le Sacre de l'écrivain, 1750-1830* (Paris: José Corti, 1973).

However, the writer-journalist, as defined by Melmoux-Montaubin,[20] was not outdone: Guillaume Pinson writes that 'le siècle du « sacre de l'écrivain » était aussi celui, certes moins glorieux mais peut-être plus fondamental, de l'écrivain-journaliste, omniprésent à tous les niveaux de la culture'.[21] Examples of famous writers who wrote in the press every day in order to make a living are numerous; they include Gautier, Balzac, Musset, Zola, Maupassant, Baudelaire:

> Baudelaire est le parfait exemple – banal du point de vue de son parcours, mais exceptionnel par son génie – de l'écrivain-journaliste du milieu du XIXe siècle : plus exactement de ces professionnels de la petite presse culturelle qui, entre poésie, critique littéraire ou artistique, fiction et chronique, sont les polygraphes de la *modernité*.[22]

Lorrain is no exception. Yet Lorrain embodies the notion of author in a complex manner. Indeed, he is a 'mystificateur' in a field that is located in the interval that separates fiction and reality. [23] It is therefore important to study the textual representations of Lorrain on three levels: 'réel, textuel, et imaginaire'.[24]

José-Luis Diaz establishes that triple distinction about the notion of author in *L'Écrivain imaginaire*. In his study, Diaz perceives the real author (the man as recorded in biographies), the textual author and subject (the writer), and finally the imaginary author (that is, all the representations of the author).[25] Sylvie Ducas further explains that the authorial instance:

> Si elle renvoie au triple plan du réel (l'homme de lettres en tant qu'acteur social), du textuel (le sujet de l'énonciation) et de l'imaginaire (« l'écrivain comme fantasme », Bonnet 1985), elle est tributaire d'un certain nombre de médiations, qu'elles soient textuelles, discursives, symboliques, ou qu'elles renvoient plus largement aux différents acteurs du champ littéraire (pairs, éditeurs, médias, lecteurs...) grâce auxquels l'auteur affirme son identité et sa singularité.[26]

The authorial image therefore imposes three types of space: a space of circulation (objects, discourses, traditions), a space of 'sociabilité', and a space of representation that

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[20] Marie-Françoise Melmoux-Montaubin, *L'Écrivain-journaliste au XIXe siècle: un mutant des Lettres* (Saint-Étienne: Cahiers intempestifs, 'Lieux littéraires', 2003). Lorrain was not a *rentier*; he was also financially responsible for his mother.
[21] Guillaume Pinson, *L'Imaginaire médiatique. Histoire et fiction du journal au XIX^e siècle* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2012), p. 8.
[22] Alain Vaillant (ed.) *Baudelaire journaliste. Articles et chroniques* (Paris: Garnier Flammarion, 2011), p. 8.
[23] Adolphe Brisson, *Le Temps*, 26 June 1905.
[24] Diaz, *L'Écrivain imaginaire*, op. cit., pp. 17-20.
[25] Ibid., pp. 17-20.
[26] Sophie Ducas, '*Ethos* et fable auctoriale dans les autofictions contemporaines ou comment s'inventer écrivain', in *Argumentation et analyse du discours* [online], 3 (2009).

is both real and symbolic (or personal and collective; in such space, the author as writing subject can construct and structure his own authorial *ethos*). For Lorrain, the transfer from real to imaginary – and vice versa – then becomes a challenge that is both aesthetic and symbolic. It is defined, according to Genette, as a metaleptic enterprise of 'transgression, figurale ou fictionnelle, du seuil de la représentation'.[27] But it is also a media concern since Lorrain aims to persistently circulate his authorial image in the cultural and artistic field of the Belle Époque. In a discourse, the authoriality – be it literary or not – consists in thinking the various images of the author in that very discourse. It is a complex undertaking as the author can emerge from multiple aspects, as Éric Bordas states: 'l'auteur est […] bien une *construction*, historique, sociale, littéraire, en un mot, culturelle'.[28] Lorrain himself participates actively in the construction of his own image – or rather his own images: the author, the character, as well as the author as character. Indeed, this pursuit of multiplicity is central to the self-construction of Lorrain's myth.

Images of the Self in the Media Space

Lorrain's journalistic career takes over at the end of the 1880s, when he leaves *L'Événement* to join *L'Écho de Paris* where he is a literary and gossip columnist (this is where he creates his famous 'Pall Mall Semaines' series, in which he incenses and criticises Parisian celebrities). He reaches the peak of his celebrity shortly after joining *Le Journal* in 1895: it is at this time that Lorrain is considered the highest paid journalist in Paris. As a writer-journalist, Lorrain is an expert in the modern techniques of communication and promotion; he puts them into practice in his writing about/with other fellow writers and celebrities (e.g. Rachilde) as much as about himself (he indirectly participates and engages in the *theatrum mundi* that he fiercely denounces). The public knows him already – whether through novels or the columns and chronicles he writes under various pseudonyms – because of his daily exposure in the media as a writer-journalist and author.

In the press, Lorrain's *ethe* are already multiple. At the beginning of his career, he first signs with his medievalised name Jehan Lorrain (see for instance the signed copies of *Le Sang des dieux* that he sends to his parents, Symbolist painter Gustave Moreau, Parnassian poet François Coppée and writer Judith Gautier, daughter of

[27] Gérard Genette, *Métalepse. De la figure à la fiction* (Paris: Seuil, coll. 'Poétique', 2004), p. 14.
[28] Éric Bordas, *L'Analyse littéraire* (Paris: Nathan, 2002), p. 27.

Théophile). Yet he quickly rejects it; he prefers the name Jean Lorrain, which he makes definitive – when it came to the writing of fiction at least. Indeed, as a journalist, Lorrain has many different pennames. Between 1882 and his death in 1906, Lorrain collaborates with dozen of different newspapers – from poems published in avant-garde literary journals like *La Basoche*, *Le Zig-Zag*, *Le Chat Noir*, *La Vie Moderne*, *Le Décadent*, to all sorts of texts, reviews, chronicles and columns in *La Jeune France, L'Art et la Mode*, *La Suisse romande*, *Le Gil Blas*, *La Chroniques moderne, Le Courrier Français*. Finally, and more famously, Lorrain becomes a powerful journalist in *L'Événement*,[29] *L'Écho de Paris*[30] or *Le Journal*. Although they all represent the same medium in the literary or journalistic field, all these different newspapers offer Lorrain the opportunity to write under a multitude of masks. They, in turn, inform the various personalities of Lorrain.

In *Le Zig-Zag*, Lorrain uses the risqué pseudonym 'Jack Stick' to sign his first article entitled 'Le Troisième sexe'.[31] He never uses it again. However, this article is somewhat crucial: the name used, the title, but also the content of the article all show Lorrain's liking for fun, denunciation of hypocrisy, androgyny and scandals. The title of the article also informs the other female pseudonyms used by Lorrain around the same time in the 1880s: 'La Botte', 'Mimosa', 'Francine', 'Salterella', 'Stendhalette' and more importantly 'Raitif de la Bretonne', 'Bruscambille' and 'Arlequine'. Lorrain's engagement with gender performance – be it in his journalistic and literary production or in real life – constitutes a significant aspect of his career. This certainly originates from his Chat Noir years, where the cabaret stands both as a textual and theatrical space. There he was often seen dressed up (sometimes as a woman) and with make-up on: at the opening party of the cabaret, he indeed appeared dressed 'd'un maillot de soie rose, couronné de fleurs et portant aux hanches une ceinture de feuilles de vigne',[32] as I shall explore in greater depth in chapter IV.

The names 'Arlequine' and 'Bruscambille' are of significant importance; they

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[29] *L'Événement* was created in 1872 by Edmond Magnier and Auguste Dumont. In a letter to his friend Huysmans, Lorrain wrote: 'Je suis entré à *L'Événement* depuis le commencement du mois et vous y allez assister à une série, mais une série d'abattages… si vous avez quelques bonnes rancunes à satisfaire, je suis votre homme…' In a letter dated '19 janvier 1887' quoted by Thibaut d'Anthonay in *Jean Lorrain, Miroir de la Belle Époque* op. cit., p. 321. Most of his chronicles were then signed 'Bruscambille', and sometimes 'Francine'.

[30] His collaboration with *L'Écho de Paris* started in March 1888 when the newspaper pre-published *La Dame aux lèvres rouges*, a Decadent tale in which emerges the figure of the femme fatale, a recurring theme in Lorrain's fiction. In *L'Écho de Paris* he introduced his infamous 'Pall Mall Semaine' where he successively incensed and trashed Parisian celebrities ('série d'abattages' ['series of slaughters']). These chronicles established Lorrain's boulevard fame. There he signed his chronicles mostly with the pseudonym 'Raitif de la Bretonne'.

[31] Jack Stick (Jean Lorrain), 'Le Troisième sexe', in *Le Zig-Zag*, 146 (4 octobre 1885).

[32] Georges Normandy, *Jean Lorrain intime* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1928), p. 72

reveal the transgressive poetics of Lorrain as both individual and writer. Yet they also directly perform the main themes of his own text. Although Anthonay, in *Jean Lorrain. Miroir de la Belle Époque*, asserts that 'Bruscambille' is the name of a character popularised by the Italian-style Comedy, it is in fact the name used by French actor and member of the theatre troupe 'Confrérie de la Passion' Nicolas Deslauriers,[33] who became famous by interpreting popular farces. Additionally, 'Arlequine' is the feminised version of Arlequin – or Harlequin, as seen in the introduction. This idea of cross-gender acting applies to Lorrain's life and works in general, for it characterises both his writing and his postures through a mix of performance and staging of the self (unsurprisingly, the image of the self and the notion of scenography are key elements in the formation of the authorial instance). Finally, towards the end of his life and when he was severely ill, Lorrain would sometimes sign his chronicles 'Le Cadavre' or 'Le Défunt',[34] which constitutes one last satirical self-representation.

In fact, Lorrain's primary position as a journalist allows him to construct an authorial identity *a priori* in the press and public performances. This position can be defined as '*ethos* préalable de l'auteur': it is, according to Ruth Amossy, the reputation, 'l'image préexistante du locuteur'.[35] As he is an important public figure, Lorrain is always perceived as the representation of the spectacular author through different media – be they textual or visual. His literature incessantly blurs the separation between fiction and reality, particularly through a structure of the author as emerging from a relation between '*ethos* préliminaire' and '*ethos* présent' – that is, the images of the self as presented by the author.

Lorrain enjoys those porous frontiers: between reality and fiction, he actively participates in the construction of his own image(s) of the author. Under various forms, the authorial identity of Lorrain is omnipresent. Due to his position of writer-journalist, Lorrain continuously disseminates his own authorial *persona* in the entirety of his oeuvre. The authorial function is complex. According to Diaz, the real, textual and imaginary instances 'ne cessent de se recouper: il s'agit de trois strates *virtuelles* superposées, qui

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[33] The permanent company remained at the Hôtel de Bourgogne until 1673 and later merged with others that were later to form the Comédie-Française.

[34] It is difficult to be sure if the last one was definitely created by Lorrain himself. When *Le Poison de la Riviera* was pre-published in *Le Courrier Français* in 1911, Lorrain was already dead; Georges Normandy would have then signed the serial publication instead of Lorrain. However, I argue that the Decadent writer could have definitely been able to produce such a grim final point.

[35] Amossy, *Images de soi dans le discours*, op. cit., p. 155.

forment la réalité stéréoscopique de l'*espace-auteur*'.[36] Lorrain consequently controls his narrative on those three levels (real, textual and imaginary) that interact with each other.

Metalepsis and the Author as Character

Lorrain's literature offers numerous examples of exaggerated representations of the author. It has already been established that the heroes of his novels *Monsieur de Bougrelon*, *Monsieur de Phocas*, and *Les Noronsoff* all function as avatars of Lorrain at various periods of his life.[37] Ernest Gaubert writes that:

> [c]ertains critiques ont voulu, par conscience professionnelle, séparer l'homme de son œuvre. Pour M. Lorrain cette scission est inutile, maladroite, injuste. […] cet homme a frayé avec ses héros, il les a aimés ou combattus ; mais rien de ce qu'il a écrit n'est un jeu de son imagination ; qu'il les ait connus ou qu'il les ait rêvés, M. Jean Lorrain a *souffert pour* ou *par* ses personnages.[38]

Lorrain's heroes live with their author and vice versa. Thus, in a letter to Louis Vauxelles, he writes: 'M. de Phocas vous remercie, mais Jean Lorrain vous abomine pour la sensualité bestiale, bien que fine... toutefois dont vous voulez décorer son visage. Que d'hystériques et de détraqués vous allez déchaîner sur mon pauvre moi, avec votre littérature ! suis-je donc si tragique que cela ?'[39] Lorrain's heroes therefore represent a snapshot – or 'instantané', to quote Dubois – of the author as writing subject at a particular moment in his career; for Lorrain, 'l'exercice littéraire est un champ d'expériences fantasmatiques où l'écrivain affronte, par simulacres interposés, la question de son identité'.[40]

In this respect, the figure of the author in the text comes under the notion of metalepsis. First coined by Genette, this notion questions the presence of the author in a text, whose manifestations in metaleptic narrative mechanisms partake in the construction of an *ethos*, which is that of the real author. Genette compares the term metalepsis to 'une manipulation – au moins figurale, mais parfois fictionnelle […] – de cette relation causale particulière qui unit, dans un sens ou dans l'autre, l'auteur à son

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[36] Diaz, *L'Écrivain imaginaire*, op. cit., p. 17.
[37] See Winn, *Sexualités décadentes chez Jean Lorrain*, op. cit. In his study, Winn draws a parallel between Lorrain and his three novels: *Monsieur de Bougrelon* (although Bougrelon seems to be rather based on Barbey d'Aurevilly), *Monsieur de Phocas*, and *Les Noronsoff*. See also Sébastien Paré, 'Les avatars du Littéraire de Jean Lorrain', *Loxias*, 18 (2007).
[38] Ernest Gaubert, 'Jean Lorrain', *Le Mercure de France*, 185 (1 March 1905).
[39] Jean Lorrain, Letter to Louis Vauxelles (fragment), 16 avril 1904, in *Correspondances*, J. de Palacio (ed.) (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2006), p. 195.
[40] Diaz, *L'Écrivain imaginaire*, op. cit., p. 25.

œuvre, ou plus largement le producteur d'une représentation à cette représentation elle-même.'[41] Consequently, Bougrelon is often described as a 'cadavre peint, corseté, maquillé et cravaté' (*MDB*, 23) and Noronsoff as a 'cadavre vernissé, fardé et peint' (*LN*, 360). These descriptions directly echo the way he sees himself/he is depicted in the press (as well as his pennames 'Le Cadavre' and 'Le Défunt') – especially the caricatures of Sem, Cam, Félix Vallotton or Ferdinand Bac (see chap. IV and annexes). In Lorrain, the feeling of self-exaggeration is indeed comparable to the practice of caricature. It is explained in detail by Henry Bataille in *La Renaissance latine* (15 June 1902): 'Il [Lorrain] s'exagère. Il a aimé créer des fantômes à ses diverses images. Il a voulu s'incarner dans des types […].'[42]

Allain Mauriat and Mario Néras, both young poets and heroes of respectively *Très Russe* (1886) and *Le Tréteau* (1906), also appear to take on the fictive representation of Lorrain in the text. In the 'Avertissement' to *Villa Mauresque* (title for the second edition of *Très Russe*), Normandy refers to the character of Allain Mauriat as an 'autoportrait d'une fidélité absolue'.[43] The action is indeed set in and around Lorrain's hometown (Fécamp, Normandy); it depicts a young poet in love with an older *femme fatale*, Julia, transposition of Judith Gautier, then Judith Mendès, who Lorrain fell in love with during summer 1878 when he was still an aspiring poet, just like Goncourt recalls in his *Journal*: 'Tout gamin, il s'était pris d'une passionnette pour la fille de Gautier […]. Judith faisait lire du Victor Hugo et du Leconte de Lisle'.[44] Lorrain used the character of Mauriat again one year after the publication of *Très Russe* in the short story 'La Marquise Hérode', also set in the Normandy coast.[45]

Mario Néras is in *Le Tréteau* the avatar of a young Lorrain obsessed by the world of performing arts and actresses of both high and low standards. The plot, set mostly in the theatrical aesthetics of Paris boulevard theatre directly refers to the writer's own life as both reviewer of performances and playwright. Lorrain indeed wrote extensively about actresses; he also composed four plays for Sarah Bernhard – *Brocéliande*, *Yanthis*, *La Mandragore*, and *Ennoïa*, all published in the late volume *Théâtre*[46] –, although she always declined the offer. In Lorrain's *Le Tréteau*, Mario Néras, himself the author of a play entitled *Brocéliande*, becomes the lover of Linda Monti – alias Sarah Bernhard – but has to

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[41] Genette, *Métalepse*, op. cit., p. 14.
[42] Henri Bataille quoted in Ernest Gaubert, 'Jean Lorrain', op. cit., p. 58.
[43] Jean Lorrain, *Villa Mauresque* [*Très Russe*, 1886] (Paris: Éditions du Livre moderne illustré, 1942), p. 11.
[44] Goncourt, *Journal*, op. cit., p. 754.
[45] Jean Lorrain, 'La Marquise Hérode', in *Portraits de femmes* [1887], P. Noir (ed.) (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1995). *Très Russe* was also adapted for the theatre by Lorrain.
[46] Jean Lorrain, *Théâtre* (Paris: Ollendorf, 1906).

deal with the jealousy of Pétrarque Azuado, an avatar of Catulle Mendès according to Yann Mortelette.[47] In both the novels, the heroes both depict Lorrain at various stages of his life, but above all they show Lorrain establishing himself as a writing subject in the cultural field of the time.

On the other hand, Jean d'Arbos is a confirmed novelist in *Le Poison de la Riviera* while Jacques Ménard is a journalist-reporter, observer of low society in *La Maison Philibert*. The first one reproduces in the text what Lorrain used to do when he lived in Nice during the last years of his life: observing and writing about the vices and hypocrisy of the rich and the famous. The novel focuses on Viviane de Nalie's love escapades on the Riviera – in reality she is Lorrain's great friend Liane de Pougy – and is composed as a serialised novel for the press. It largely borrows from Lorrain's chronicle style. The media imaginary directly inspires the composition of this late novel and the poetics of documents that Lorrain incorporates here and there in the narrative forecast the methods of Modernist collages. In *La Maison Philibert*, Jacques Ménard the journalist investigates the networks of both female and male prostitution in the Belle Époque, a milieu that Lorrain knew very well (he documented it regularly – see the series of chronicles entitled *Âmes d'automne* published in *L'Écho de Paris* in 1892, whose advertising for the publication in volume, in 1898, reads: '[l]e Vice s'ébattant dans la pourriture, revue en vingt-et-un tableaux').[48] The character of Ménard is later used in the play *Sainte-Roulette*, along with the character of doctor Rabastens in *Les Noronsoff*. The two men, just like Lorrain towards the end of his life, observe the vices and habits of rich people and gamblers in the Riviera.

Those metaleptic occurrences run throughout Lorrain's oeuvre. As demonstrated, they oscillate between journalistic identity and authorial identity. Lorrain's authorial identity, both in and out of the press, reflects the fragmented space of the media. In this space, Lorrain relentlessly engages in self-promotion to construct his own legend between fiction and reality: often, the journalist praises the novelist and vice versa. His *Histoires du bord de l'eau*, for instance, directly evoke Lorrain's 'Pall Mall Semaine'; they display and develop the aesthetics of reportage, as Thérenty remarks: 'à travers les « Pall-

[47] Yann Mortelette, 'Jean Lorrain et la poésie parnassienne', in *Jean Lorrain. Produit d'extrême civilisation*, op. cit., p. 256.

[48] In such series Lorrain focuses on the movements and activities of the lower classes. The stories are directly drawn from the author's experiences and perspectives, which add to the reality of the descriptions. For instance: 'Sur l'horizon couleur de suie, le viaduc du Point-du-Jour, ses arcades blanchâtres s'étageant au-dessus du fleuve de plomb et, dans l'air gris, la fumée des usines de Javel et, déjà fumée elle-même, tant elle apparaît irréelle et brumeuse dans cette nature frissonnante, la lointaine ossature de la tour Eiffel'. In Jean Lorrain, 'Fleurs de berge – Billancourt (Coins de Seine)', *Âmes d'automne* [1898] (Malesherbes: Alteredit, 2006), pp. 51-52.

Mall », le lecteur suit au jour le jour Jean Lorrain dans ses pérégrinations mondaines et marginales à travers la ville.'[49] The short stories of *Histoires du bord de l'eau*, incorporated in the volume *Un démoniaque* – itself considered as a preliminary version of *Monsieur de Phocas* –, are all interconnected.

The first vignette, 'Chez Guilloury', introduces Lorrain as both narrator and main character of this fragmented story, where all the vignettes bring about a sense of instantaneity. He is explicitly named and described as Lorrain, journalist: 'Aussi je suis sacré pour eux [les apaches], comme vous l'êtes aussi, vous, Monsieur Jean, parce qu'on vous a vu chez moi et avec moi, qu'on vous sait un bon fieu et un ami, quoique un peu jaspineur par métier' (*UD*, 274). At some point the narrator even receives an anonymous letter that directly brings up the question of self-reflexivity as it establishes Monsieur Jean as Lorrain; this time, he is openly described as the writer of *Histoires du bord de l'eau*.[50] The vignette 'Une lettre' starts like this: 'Monsieur, dans un de vos derniers contes intitulés : *Histoires du bord de l'eau*, vous mentionnez la rencontre d'un fiacre stationnant la nuit sur les berges de la Seine et servant à transporter un cadavre de femmes'. He goes on: 'Vous avez eu soin de décrire les bandes de papier collées sur les numéros des lanternes et sur celui de la caisse du fiacre ; vous avez même raconté l'aventure en argot pour donner plus de réel à la chose, comme si c'était là un conte fantastique, presque incroyable, un fait tout à fait rare, convaincu sans doute d'avoir fait là une belle découverte' (*UD*, 295-6). Here, Lorrain invents an anonymous letter that reads like a reader complaint (a key poetic strategy in *Le Chat Noir*). In the same movement, though, it also establishes the upset reader/writer as a relay narrator, for it proceeds in telling another tale, also incorporated to *Histoires du bord de l'eau*. This gives Lorrain another possibility to blur the frontiers between fiction and reality in pure *fumiste* aesthetics; additionally, it allows a *mise en abyme* of the writing process in what resembles a series of tales interwoven in a hybrid universe – between the media imaginary, fiction and reality. There, Lorrain unveils his own creative practice;[51] he therefore imposes a form of authority to his literary production, as I shall show with the notion of *mise en abyme* in the next part. In the five texts that compose *Histoires du bord de l'eau*, the *ethos* of the narrator, the authorial *ethos* and

[49] Thérenty, *La littérature au quotidien*, op. cit., p. 193.
[50] This echoes Gide's *mise en abyme* in *Paludes*: 'j'écris Paludes'. In André Gide, *Paludes*, in *Romans* (Paris: Gallimard, 'La Pléiade', 1958), p. 92.
[51] Guilloury, 'cabaretier-brocanteur [qui] était un littéraire' (*UD*, 269) was the assistant of Baudelaire's famous publisher Poulet-Malassis. He constitutes the metaphor of Lorrain's writing process; indeed, if the notion of 'brocante' signifies the accumulation of second-hand objects, its association with the notion of 'cabaret' as a meeting place establishes Guilloury's house as a space of production of discourses. These discourses directly influence the writer-journalist: the assemblage of stories, gathered in such locations and reworked subsequently, resurfaces in Lorrain's oeuvre.

the images of the author are all interconnected. They converge towards the same figure: Jean Lorrain. With the construction of so many avatars and the permeability of frontiers between fiction and reality, it does not come as a surprise that Lorrain once said that 'les écrivains sont des hystériques littéraires.'[52] In a way, Lorrain prefigures postmodern aesthetics and practices (in particular metafiction) theorised, *inter alia*, by Linda Hutcheon through the notion of 'narcissistic narratives' or Patricia Waugh through the idea of 'self-conscious fiction'.[53]

If Lorrain's chronicles always informed his fiction – and vice versa, as I mentioned above –, he never lost an opportunity to promote his own name and works in his whole oeuvre. He participates in the invention of readership and his own 'fan base'. In *Le Vice errant*, for instance, a secondary character exclaims: 'dans le récit que vous prêtiez l'autre jour à votre ami de Germont dans les Propos d'opium (car, mon Dieu ! oui, j'ai l'honneur d'être un de vos lecteurs assidus) […]' (*LN*, 43).[54] 'Propos d'opium' is the title given to a series of short stories derived from the eponymous one; it is added to the first published volume of *Les Noronsoff*, then entitled *Coins de Byzance. Le Vice errant*. Readers would also directly refer to Lorrain through the title of the story, which brings about both notions of reported dialogues and peripheral activities. Besides, in the play *Hôtel de l'Ouest… Chambre 22…*, one character shouts: 'Mais c'est de la littérature ces rats d'hôtel ! ça n'existe que dans les chroniques de Jean Lorrain' while another one replies 'Pour la clientèle du *Journal…*'.[55] This constant circularity always allows Lorrain to develop a strategy of self-promotion that sees him controlling his narrative and image, making him omnipresent on the three levels previously mentioned: real, textual, and imaginary.

This authorial strategy of self-quotation is largely inherited from the press. It reinforces the porous frontier between journalistic and fiction writing as well as fiction and reality. Lorrain's self-referential and metaleptic writing always opens to the construction of a metadiscourse. The question of the presence of the author in the text then participates in the construction of Lorrain's authorial *ethe*. In Lorrain, this manipulation is all the more striking as he projects his *persona* in both the narrators and the various characters of his text. Michèle Bokobza Kahan explains that the author

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[52] Jean Lorrain, quoted by Palacio in the preface to *Correspondances*, *op.cit.*, p. 9.
[53] See for instance Linda Hutcheon, *Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox* (London: Methuen, 1984) and Patricia Waugh, *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction* (London: Methuen, 1984).
[54] The quote is extracted from the story 'Maschere' that directly follows 'Propos d'opium' in the first part of *Le Vice errant*.
[55] Jean Lorrain, Gustave Coquiot, *Hôtel de l'Ouest… Chambre 22…* (Paris: Ollendorff, 1905), p. 24.

'demeure malgré tout l'instance souveraine qui décide de cacher ou d'exhiber les coulisses de la fiction […]. Lui seul décide de la porosité ou au contraire de l'étanchéité des frontières qui séparent les mondes de la fiction et de la réalité'.[56] Here, the example taken from *Hôtel de l'ouest… Chambre 22…* illuminates Lorrain's technique of deconstructing such frontiers, for the purpose of coming out as one supreme authority – that is, his own myth.

The Self-Construction of Lorrain's Myth

In *L'Écrivain imaginaire*, Diaz formulates a special authorial identity that emerges from excentricity: 'le moi kaléidoscopique'. He writes: 'Au moi « blanc » du mélancolique, au « Sur-Moi » du grand écrivain, à l'identité dramatisée de l'artiste énergique, le scénario auctorial ironique oppose ainsi une tout autre topique du sujet : l'identité « kaléidoscopique »'. [57] Diaz refers to Balzac, for instance, as an 'écrivain kaléidoscopique'.[58] It is a fanciful, imaginative and fragmented identity that is also materialised in Gautier's *Mademoiselle de Maupin* (1835), whose eponymous character has the 'fonction de porter témoignage de son moi en éclats, « ramassis de morceaux hétérogènes »'.[59] This directly anticipates Lorrain's 'harlequin poetics'. It could be argued, though, that this category ('écrivain kaléidoscopique') emerges more vividly in the authors of the second half of the nineteenth century, as Lorrain and others turned away from the towering figures of Hugo and Zola for instance. Incidentally, Diaz adds that 'l'artiste kaléidoscopique doit se faire lui-même un *paradoxe* vivant'.[60] Indeed, this very much corresponds to Lorrain and the various authorial strategies that he develops and partakes in throughout his career. In his case, the metamorphosis of the self shapes a pluridimensional network that opens to the possibility of becoming a fictional character himself.[61]

In the end, Lorrain's career is characterised by his desire to construct his own legend. The variety of his authorial images – whether they are taken inside or outside of

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[56] Michèle Bokobza Kahan, 'Métalepse et image de soi de l'auteur dans le récit de fiction', in *Argumentation et analyse du discours*, op. cit.
[57] Diaz, *L'Écrivain imaginaire*, op. cit., p. 560.
[58] See José-Luis Diaz, *Devenir Balzac. L'Invention de l'écrivain par lui-même* (Paris: Christian Pirot, 2007).
[59] Diaz, *L'Écrivain imaginaire*, op. cit., p. 561.
[60] Ibid., p. 562.
[61] For instance, Lorrain becomes Jack Dalsace in his friend courtesan Liane de Pougy's *Idylle Saphique* (1901), Jacques Flamussin in Fernand Kolney's *Le Salon de Madame Truphot* (1904), or even Jean d'Alsace in Baron Jacques d'Adelswärd-Fersen's *Lord Lyllian. Messes noires* (1905). I will focus on the visual representations of the author as character in chapter IV of this thesis.

his oeuvre – does not emerge solely from a social imaginary; on the contrary it is structured from what Viala calls a strategy of positioning in the literary – or cultural – field.[62] Thus Lorrain'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.'[63] This is what makes him stand out: Lorrain represents *all* those instances. He consequently stands right at the junction of real, textual and imaginary representations of himself as author-subject – to the point that he can also become his own character. Lorrain's 'imaginary' figure then comes out from different kinds of metadiscourses that he himself creates in not only the text but also through all peripheral supports that evolve around the author's narrative – or journalistic – enterprise. As I demonstrated, his omnipresence as authorial figure is constant in his fiction and in the press. It also surfaces in the epitext (interviews, letters, and literary diary), where he never ceases to blur the frontier between fiction and reality, as well as in the peritext of his oeuvre, as I shall examine in chapter IV (most particularly through the visual representations of Lorrain).

The circulation of Lorrain's various images as author, as well as the structure and construction of his authorial *ethos* or *ethe*, materialises both inside and outside the textual space. Extra and intratextual images of the author are then interconnected and form a complex network of interdependences. There is therefore a sense of ubiquity: Lorrain *is* everywhere. Indeed, he always strives to construct his own legend, revealing in the same movement his own strategy of mystification: '[i]l faut parfois faire mentir sa légende, l'exagérer aujourd'hui, la démolir demain, c'est ainsi qu'on tient l'opinion en haleine' (*FP*, 144). Simultaneously, towards the end of his life, Lorrain toured the south of France with his play *Sainte-Roulette*. In a letter to Aurel (25 June 1906 – that is, seven months before his death), he writes:

> À Marseille où j'opérais hier soir, ils [le public] ont trépigné et, hier, le régisseur croyant à une annonce de mon absence, ils m'ont applaudi, interrompu, un peu insulté, applaudi encore, rappelé […], m'ont réclamé encore, ont exigé que je joue un rôle dans la pièce avec les acteurs ! Ils avaient compris que j'étais un des personnages.[64]

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[62] Alain Viala, 'Sociopoétique', in *Approches de la réception*, A. Viala and G. Molinié (eds.) (Paris: PUF, 1993).
[63] Jérôme Meizoz, 'Ce que l'on fait dire au silence: posture, *ethos*, image d'auteur', in *Argumentation et analyse du discours* [online], 3 (2009).
[64] Quoted in Georges Normandy, *Jean Lorrain, son enfance, sa vie, son œuvre* (Paris: Bibliothèque Générale d'Édition, 1907), pp. 262-63.

In constantly performing himself, it seems that Lorrain finally achieves the status of legend/myth. The audience can no longer distinguish between the author, the character and the author as character; this truly participates in the construction and realisation of Lorrain's own myth. Playfully, he even admits to Georges Casella that 'dans la plupart des villes ils m'ont pris pour un acteur et qu'à Nîmes, entre autres, ils m'ont réclamé sur scène, moi et Mlle de Pougy…, pour y danser la Matchiche ! Il n'y a pas que Napoléon qui ait sa légende.'[65] In continuously blurring the frontier between fiction and reality, Lorrain also directly engages with the aesthetics of mystification and *mise en abyme*. He appears as his own brand, transgressing the frontiers between sexes, private and public, fiction and reality: in short, a scandalous character.

Lorrain's 'texte-échafaudage'

'Le Paris des échafaudages' (1903)

In his 1932 article soberly entitled 'Jean Lorrain', Paul Morand elaborates a literary assessment of Lorrain's career. He writes that, unlike what Lorrain would have thought, what survives in his oeuvre,

> ce ne sont pas ses gemmes baroques, ces vitraux d'art, ni toute une poésie Loïe fulleresque à laquelle il déplorait tant de ne pouvoir consacrer sa vie, mais bien ses chroniques bâclées, ses propos du boulevard, ses mots portés comme des perles de cravate […], toute cette poussière de Paris à quoi les critiques de l'époque lui reprochaient de gaspiller son talent.[66]

According to Morand, Lorrain's genius is to be found chiefly in the careless and neglected appearance of his journalistic and literary production. In short, he refers to Lorrain's as an imperfect oeuvre. As we have already seen, Lorrain is a product of the media imagination and the fragmented space of the newspaper; he therefore constructs his novels and volumes in assembling fragments of prose previously published in the press – this is what Morand calls 'chronicles bâclées' – in a precarious structure. Yet this sometimes incoherent, unstitched and exploded aspect of his prose might not be the result of a 'rush job'. In fact, it participates in the elaboration of Lorrain's 'harlequin poetics', since he aims to leave the structure of his text apparent in his final work, in a playful manner.

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[65] Georges Casella, *Pèlerinages* (Paris: Payot, 1918), p. 100.
[66] Paul Morand, 'Jean Lorrain', in *Les Nouvelles littéraires* (23 April 1932).

In his 'Pall Mall Semaine' entitled 'Le Paris des échafaudages', Lorrain praises 'l'absolue beauté de l'échafaudage et de sa supériorité sur la chose bâtie'.[67] The scaffold is a temporary construction that is used in the process of constructing a building. It is, in the nineteenth century, a sign of the modern city. For post-Baudelairian writers though, scaffoldings can also be the metaphor that refers to a collection of objects (or fragments of reality) arranged in a montage. For Benjamin reading Baudelaire, this constitutes a new poetic order that is ruled by analogies and 'correspondances'.[68] The scaffold also refers to the draft of an artwork; it signifies, when left visible in a text, the relic of the writing process. Lorrain's quotation is therefore extremely important: he places himself as 'instance souveraine qui décide de cacher ou d'exhiber les coulisses de la fiction'[69] as well as its imperfection; for him, the scaffold becomes a formal material that is prioritised over the building – or the artwork.

I propose to study Lorrain's works as a monumental 'texte-échafaudage', whose open structure parallels the visible seams of Harlequin's chequered costume. The fractured and fragmented architecture of his text forms a reflexive aesthetics that emerges from both the architecture of the modern city and the media imaginary of the fin-de-siècle. Indeed, if literary Modernity reconfigures the paradigm of imperfection, the explosion of the literary field in the media space also participates, as is the case with Lorrain, in the elaboration of a shapeless, or 'imperfect' oeuvre.

As Philippe Hamon states in *Expositions, littérature et architecture au XIXe siècle*, 'la métaphore livre-ville est, au XIX^{e} siècle, inévitable'.[70] In the ever-changing modern city, the writers contemplate their works as a monument, like Zola, or Proust and his famous 'culte de la cathédrale'.[71] Only, nothing from the draft must remain in the final text: in *Le Rouet des brumes* (1901), Georges Rodenbach compares the oeuvre as 'une cathédrale bâtie pour les siècles dont les échafaudages tomberaient à la fois'.[72] However, many other

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[67] Raitif de la Bretonne (Jean Lorrain), 'Pall Mall Semaine. 11 juillet – Le Paris des échafaudages', in *Le Journal* (17 July 1899), p. 1. The text was later incorporated in the volume *Poussières de Paris* (Paris: Ollendorff, 1902), pp. 113-15.

[68] On this point, it is interesting to note that the method used by the epistemological figure of the 'chiffonier' is, contrary to the *flâneur*'s, more systematic. See Marc Berdet, 'Chiffonnier contre flâneur. Construction et position de la *Passagenarbeit* de Walter Benjamin', in *Archives de philosophie*, 3 (2012), pp. 425-47.

[69] Bokobza Kahan, 'Métalepse et image de soi de l'auteur dans le récit de fiction', op. cit.

[70] Philippe Hamon, *Expositions. Littérature et architecture au XIX^{e} siècle* (Paris: José Corti, 1989), p. 10.

[71] Jean-Yves Tadié, *Marcel Proust*, t. I (Paris: Gallimard, 1996), p. 599.

[72] Georges Rodenbach, *Le Rouet des brumes. Contes posthumes* (Paris: Ollendorff, 1901), p. 228.

writers perceive a certain poetics in the temporary and fragmented construction that is the scaffold. Baudelaire, of course, is one.[73]

In his 17 July 1899 'Pall Mall Semaine', Lorrain formulates a metaphor that seemingly defines his own practice, although he never really engaged with his methodology in his fiction, columns nor correspondence (perhaps it was so visible *within* the texts). He writes: 'Et nous en arrivons là, à préférer l'ébauche à l'œuvre, à glorifier l'échafaudage […] l'explication de l'absolue beauté de l'échafaudage et de sa supériorité sur la chose bâtie'. Lorrain's chronicle 'Le Paris des échafaudages' deals with the transformations undertaken in Paris ahead of the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1900. He quotes his friend Gustave Coquiot, who shares his opinions about the value of the scaffold: 'L'échafaudage est une épure, me dit-il, une équation ; il a la beauté parfaite d'un théorème […], d'où son caractère éternel dans sa fragilité !'[74] This paradoxical comment crowns the beauty of the modern city as an immense work in progress. It directly echoes Baudelaire's famous definition of Modernity in *Le Peintre de la vie moderne*: 'La modernité, c'est le transitoire, le fugitif, le contingent, la moitié de l'art, dont l'autre moitié est l'éternel et l'immuable.'[75] For Lorrain, it is also the metaphor of his own text, in which the structure of his writing is left visible.

Mystification & *Mise en Abyme*

In his 'Pall Mall Semaine', Lorrain implies that he considered the arrangement of his text through a method that is similar to montage. In his text, he indeed leaves the original structure intact. Surprisingly, Lorrain's above quotation offers a theorisation of his own practice. It is based on the valorisation of the fragmented architecture; in other words, Lorrain's objective is to highlight the draft within the work. In his article, however, Lorrain goes on to criticise the Eiffel tower:

> Si l'échafaudage a nécessairement la beauté, comment expliquer l'indéniable, la prodigieuse laideur de la tour Eiffel, qui est l'échafaudage type, l'échafaudage idéal avec ses montants, ses arcs-boutants et son armature de fer, la tour Eiffel, cette gigantesque charpente sans proportion et sans légèreté, plantée comme un chandelier de cuisine sur ce Paris, qu'elle déshonore ?[76]

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[73] 'J'ai rarement vu représentée avec plus de poésie la solennité naturelle d'une ville immense. […] les prodigieux échafaudages des monuments en réparation, appliquant sur le corps solide de l'architecture leur architecture à jour d'une beauté si paradoxale.' In Charles Baudelaire, *Salon de 1859*, in *Œuvres complètes*, t. II, Claude Pichois (ed.), (Paris: Gallimard, 'La Pléiade', 1976), pp. 666-67.
[74] Lorrain, op. cit., p. 1.
[75] Baudelaire, *Le Peintre de la vie moderne* [1863], in *Œuvres complètes*, op. cit., p. 695.
[76] Lorrain, op. cit., p. 1.

It is a fact: the reception of the Eiffel tower by its contemporaries was largely negative. The famous 'Protestation des artistes contre la tour de M. Eiffel', published in *Le Temps* (14 February 1887), was signed by numerous writers like Dumas, Leconte de Lisle, Coppée and Maupassant. After the 1889 Universal Exhibition, opinions did not particularly change. Lorrain's position against the modern tower is therefore conventional; however, the link he creates between the tower and the scaffolding is particularly interesting. It seems that he regrets the construction of the tower mainly because it is too real, total, absolute; Lorrain would have preferred it 'peinte en bleu-gris, couleur du ciel indécis des horizons parisiens', 'imprécise et fantomatique', covered in 'une irréalité qui en aurait corrigé la lourdeur.'[77] At the time, the Eiffel tower is painted in yellow ochre after being reddish-brown and brown ochre. It therefore is alien to the known landscape of Paris. Here, the vocabulary employed by Lorrain is connected to Baudelaire's idea of Modernity: beauty must emerge from the transitory, the unfinished, the imperfection and the unreal. Lorrain prefers the idea of the draft as superior to the artwork – especially when it shows within, or rather *over* the artwork.[78] The transitory, then, gives way to a draft that would continuously resurface in the artwork. Lorrain's quotation is therefore capital in the understanding of his practice. It establishes a parallel between the structure of his texts and the changing landscape/fragmented architecture of Paris at the turn of the century.

Furthermore, it appears that Lorrain prefers to keep the complex and fractured architecture of his text intact and visible in the final work in order to create a sense of mystification and self-reflexivity: this confuses the reader, who is granted access to the contours and reliefs of the oeuvre.[79] This is not dissimilar to what Proust, in *Le Côté de Guermantes*, calls 'le vernis des maîtres'.[80] This operation consists in relining intermittent and opposite fragments[81] into the same texture, whether it is literary or visual for instance. *In abstracto*, it reads as the metaphor of the creative process for the author of *La Recherche*. Indeed, just like the painter Elstir who profiles the sketches of an ever-changing

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[77] Ibid., p. 1.
[78] Lorrain would have certainly preferred *the Monument to the Third International* (1919-1920) – or Tatlin's Tower. This anti-monumental monument was planned to be erected right after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 but it was never built. See also Terragni's *Danteum*.
[79] This also reminds of Gustave Moreau's lapidary painting, where draft lines seem to resurface and stand out on the canvas as a table of signifiers (see for instance Moreau's *Salomé tatouée*, or *Le Triomphe d'Alexandre le Grand* (Musée Gustave Moreau, Paris). Lorrain dedicated many tales to Moreau, whom he knew well.
[80] Marcel Proust, *Le Côté de Guermantes, À la recherche du temps perdu*, t. II (Paris: Gallimard, 1921), p. 117.
[81] Proust writes 'rentoiler des fragments intermittents et composites'. In Proust, *À l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs*, *À la recherche du temps perdu*, t. III (Paris: Gallimard, 1919), p. 69.

reality on the surface of his paintings, the writer gathers scattered fragments of both a real and imaginary space on the page; it resembles a sort of work in progress of the literary production that is highly Modernist. According to Genette, that varnish is a thickness in which 'réside cette « essence cachée » qui dérobe à la perception, mais dont on doit sentir la présence enfouie dans la pâte transparente du texte'.[82] This is the same principle that prevails in Lorrain's practice in relation to the notion of scaffolding, although Lorrain, contrary to Proust, who is notoriously against the aesthetics of fragmentation,[83] insists on the necessity to represent them (the draft) in the final text.

For Lorrain, the literary production is maybe not linked to a 'cult of a cathedral',[84] but it definitely seeks to merge both reality and fiction through a visible creative process. The work of art then reads like a self-reflexive montage, in which the style of the writer – and the occasional direct mentions of the name 'Jean Lorrain', as I demonstrated – lies in the movement created by the interaction of different types of fragments. In *Proust et le monde sensible*, Jean-Pierre Richard argues that '[t]outes les parties d'*À la recherche du temps perdu* peuvent être traversées, comprises, lues simultanément dans toutes les directions, ou comme Rimbaud le voulait de ses poèmes, dans tous les sens.'[85] This statement is not so dissimilar to Lorrain's fragmented text, which reads like a Modernist patchwork – or a Harlequin-text.

As a matter of fact, Lorrain's chronicle begins with the affirmation that the scaffolds that cover the entirety of Paris give the impression of a 'ville dans la ville'. The draft then must be perceived by the reader (or the viewer) as much as the scaffolding by the onlooker. It is the main principle of a structural reading: the point is to comprehend the network of relations in a text. That is exactly what the Gidian principle of *mise en abyme* reveals. The French writer coined the expression for the first time in his journal in 1893: 'ce que j'ai voulu dans mes *Cahiers*, dans mon *Narcisse* et dans *la Tentative*, c'est la comparaison avec ce procédé du blason qui consiste, dans le premier, à en mettre le second « en abyme »'.[86] Gide later developed such process in his other works of fiction, most particularly in *Paludes* (1895) and the novel *Les Faux-monnayeurs* (1925). The structure of *Les Faux-monnayeurs* is interwoven between several different plots and

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[82] Gérard Genette, 'Proust palimpseste', in *Figures I* (Paris: Seuil, 1966), p. 43.
[83] Until he died, Proust was very anxious to make sure his work showed unity and coherence. See Christine M. Cano, *Proust's Deadline* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006).
[84] Tadié, *Marcel Proust*, op. cit., p. 599.
[85] Jean-Pierre Richard, *Proust et le monde sensible* (Paris: Seuil, 1974).
[86] André Gide, quoted by Dällenbach in *Le Récit spéculaire*, op. cit., p. 17.

portrays multiple points of view, which parallels Lorrain's *La Maison Philibert*, and later informs the aesthetic ontology of Dada as well as literary Modernism.

In Gide's kaleidoscopic novel, the character of Édouard, the alter ego of Gide, also intends to write a book entitled *Les Faux-monnayeurs* and several chapters feature pages of the journal that he keeps throughout the narrative. It constitutes a novel-within-a-novel – or as Gide stated himself early in his career, a *mise en abyme*. Although I used the term 'kaleidoscopic' in relation to panoramism in the previous chapter, it is important to stress that the mirror inside the kaleidoscope also brings to mind the device of *mise en abyme*, which is described by Andrea Goulet as functioning like a luminous source that is internal to fiction and that concentrates the rays and illuminates the patterns.[87] It is then not surprising to note that Gide published *Le Journal des Faux-monnayeurs* in 1927, two years after the novel it derives from. The *Journal* sheds light on the novel. It explores the creative process through retelling and remaking the story of its own composition. In a way, Gide makes available the journal of his novel about an alter ego who is writing a journal about a novel of the same title. In doing so, he extends the concept of *mise en abyme* to a point that I propose to refer to such literary process as a 'mise en abyme au carré', following Hamon's idea of literary mystification as 'une sorte de fiction au carré, de fiction dans la fiction'.[88]

For Lorrain, the virtual space of self-representation that the text figures is not only invaded by the figure of the author; it also exhibits, through various forms, the characteristics of his own creative process and literary techniques. The visible montage of fragments in his text stands at the heart of his reflexive aesthetics that directly emerges from the media imaginary he is part of. In fact, the idea of technical reproductions and serial publication at the core of the industrial revolution that Paris goes through in the long nineteenth century parallels the fragmented space of the newspaper, in which Lorrain developed his creative process for more than twenty years, between 1884 and 1906.

Fragmentation & the Media Imaginary

For Lorrain, the scaffold symbolises the montage of fragments perceived in the industrialisation of the modern city as much as the media imaginary in which he develops

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[87] See Andrea Goulet, *Optiques. The Science of the Eye and the Birth of Modern French Fiction* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).
[88] Philippe Hamon, 'Introduction', in 'Blague et supercherie', *Romantisme*, 116 (2002), p. 3.

his practice. In the wake of Baudelaire as 'polygraphe de la modernité',[89] Lorrain falls in the category of the writer-journalists whose journalistic practice and authorial postures directly inform their fiction. Unlike Baudelaire, though, Lorrain is greatly influenced by his society columns.

In the Belle Époque, society press is the space where the representation of society life comes up as both a spectacle and a social comedy. In this time of media sociability, society practices as seen in *La Rercherche* become both normalised and advertised. Accordingly, all the movements and attitudes of the socialites become a strategy of publicity and self-promotion. In *Fictions du monde*, Pinson explains 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'.[90] As we have seen in the previous chapter, Pinson's idea of 'romanesque généralisé' creates the formation of writer-journalists more responsive to intertextual and intermedial references in the journalistic space, which together help blur the frontiers between the journalists and their readers. In a way then, the writing of reality is injected by narrative techniques that first originate from the experimentations of Realist writers like Balzac,[91] that Lorrain appropriates.

This method produces dramatic effects on Lorrain's works of fiction. Goncourt even reproaches him for 'mettre toute sa cervelle dans le journalisme […] il avait abandonné toute entière sa petite fortune à sa mère, fortune grâce à laquelle elle pouvait vivre auprès de lui et qu'il fallait qu'il gagnât sa vie avec sa plume.'[92] However, Lorrain undoubtedly considers his journalistic writings as a textual matrix to the coming works of fiction. Incidentally, in *La Riviera que j'ai connue*, Louis Bertrand quotes Lorrain saying: 'Toutes ces nouvelles, ces contes que j'écris à la douzaine, ce sont de simples clichés que je prends et que je garde pour l'avenir. J'utiliserai cela dans les romans dont je rêve […].'[93] Lorrain's articles and chronicles in the press constitute a repository of fragments that he gathers for his literary production. Indeed, the newspaper is a '*lieu de production de discours*, avec ces « styles », ses poétiques et ses stéréotypes […] où se dégagent des identités

[89] In *Baudelaire journaliste. Articles et chroniques*, op. cit., p. 8.
[90] Pinson, *Fiction du monde*, op. cit., pp. 8-9.
[91] Ibid., p. 130. Pinson also states that 'la proximité entre littérature et journal était au fondement d'un extraordinaire système interactif de poétiques, d'imaginaires, de styles, s'élaborant et se reconstituant sans cesse au croisement des contraintes de l'actualité et des libertés de la fiction, tout cela affectant autant le journal que certains genres comme le poème en prose ou le roman réaliste.' In *L'Imaginaire médiatique*, op. cit., p. 9.
[92] Goncourt, *Journal*, op. cit., p. 571.
[93] Bertrand, *La Riviera que j'ai connue*, op. cit., pp. 159-60.

stylistiques, des manières d'écrire et tout un « faire » discursif qui appartiennent en propre à l'appareil médiatique';[94] it therefore creates a space for writers' experimentations with their style. As we have previously seen, Thérenty compares (and theorises) the work of fiction inspired by journalistic forms to a mosaic – or an ensemble of textual fragments. It is:

> une métaphore qui rend compte de l'éclatement du champ littéraire, de la division de la matière fictionnelle en petites pièces éparses dans les journaux, les keepsakes, les mélanges, de la structure même du journal (un tout composé de fragments) et surtout plus généralement d'une poétique qui se vit sous la forme du fragment, de l'éclat, du décousu[95].

The fragmented space of the newspaper is then visible through the literary production. Consequently, the notion of 'texte-échafaudage' as developed from Lorrain's quotation definitely applies to the journalistic writing as montage and juxtaposition. The multiplicity of productions in the fragmented space of the newspaper also offers the mirror image of the modern city ruled by scaffoldings.

As a consequence, the whole of Lorrain's oeuvre *in statu nascendi* seems like a monument under construction; it is caught through the bars of a scaffold as a table of signifiers. Lorrain's novels thus read like an immense scaffolded construction: *Monsieur de Phocas*, *Les Noronsoff*, and *La Maison Philibert* (as seen in the first chapter) all read like a collage of articles or other columns. Unsurprisingly, most of these texts are always pre-published in the press; the rest are reworked versions of older chronicles or short stories. Lorrain does not hide this process; as I demonstrated in the previous part, Lorrain also never misses an opportunity to inject his own name into his works of fiction. This authorial strategy of self-quotation is largely inherited from the newspaper. Uncompromisingly, it reinforces the porous frontiers between journalistic practice – that is, for Lorrain, the draft (the scaffold) – and fiction writing (the artwork). In Lorrain, the transfer from one to the other is not always fluid; the seams and stitching that laboriously link all the fragments of the text are consequently easily noticeable, just like on Harlequin's chequered costume. This creates a sort of imperfect writing. Yet it also produces a form of writing that is self-referential and metaleptic; Lorrain continuously plays with it. It then becomes a value that Lorrain claims and that invites the reader into the laboratory of his own text.

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[94] Pinson, *L'Imaginaire médiatique*, op. cit., p. 12.
[95] Thérenty, *Mosaïque*, op. cit., p. 13.

Montage of 'chroniques dialoguées': *Madame Baringhel* (1899)

Lorrain's unveiling of the writing process can be analysed through the examples of his chronicles incorporated into the volumes *La Petite classe* (1895), *Fards et poisons* (1903), *Le Crime des riches* (1905) and, most particularly, *Madame Baringhel* (1899). The latter constitutes a relevant case study because of its distinctive style: a montage of 'chroniques dialoguées'. This series was first published in *Le Journal* and turned into a volume in 1899 – the same year as Lorrain's article 'Le Paris des échafaudages', in which he praises 'l'absolue beauté de l'échafaudage et de sa supériorité sur la chose bâtie'. It stages Madame Baringhel, a famous Parisian socialite, and her friend d'Héloé, an art critic. All the sketches take place in a space of intimacy that is also a space of exhibition or exposure: salons, museums, etc. There is therefore a tension between the interior and the exterior that echoes Lorrain's process of *mise en abyme* and the see-through aspect of the scaffold. In the volume, the theatralisation of everyday life corrupts the so-called intimacy and social authenticity; it reveals a sense of mystification that is specific to Lorrain's reflexive irony. As there is an audience, there is always a performance at stake, as is the case, for example, in Madame Mardonnet's salon in the Goncourt brothers' novel *Charles Demailly* (1860) (Edmund Birch notes that 'the text oscillates between authenticity and theatricality […], between a space of private conversation and one of public performance'),[96] or Madame Verdurin's in Proust's *La Recherche*.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the multiplication of articles constructed as micro-performances emerges from what Thérenty calls the 'théâtralisation des écritures de presse'.[97] Indeed, the cross-contamination of the press and theatre finds its origin in the 1890s with the magazine *La Vie parisienne*; it creates a new form of chronicle that directly influences the writing of *Madame Baringhel*: the 'chronique dialoguée'.[98] The 'chronique dialoguée' is a series of dialogues – or fragments of dialogues – all assembled together and introduced in the text by stage directions. According to Georges Pélissier, '[a]ucune règle ne la [la chronique dialoguée] gêne. Chaque saynète, prise à part, n'est qu'une conversation ; et, quand nos dialoguistes en réunissent plusieurs sous le même titre, nous pouvons aussi bien commencer le volume

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[96] Edmund Birch, *Fictions of the Press in Nineteenth-Century France* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), p. 140.

[97] Olivier Bara, Marie-Ève Thérenthy, 'Presse et scène au XIXe siècle. Relais, reflets, échanges', in *Presse et scène au XIXe siècle*, Bara & Thérenty (eds.), *Médias19* (2012) [online]. www.medias19.org/index.php?id=3011, 20/06/2019.

[98] See Clara Sadoun-Édouard, '*La Vie parisienne* ou la mise en scène de la mondanité', in *Presse et scène au XIXe siècle*, Ibid.

par la dernière'.[99] This directly echoes Baudelaire's inscription to Arsène Houssaye that opens his *Petits poèmes en prose* (1869): 'Enlevez une vertèbre, et les deux morceaux de cette tortueuse fantaisie se rejoindront sans peine. Hachez-la en nombreux fragments, et vous verrez que chacun peut exister à part'.[100] The structure of this form of chronicle, with its constant lists of heterogeneous objects and polyphonic voices, resembles a vast scaffold. Here is an example taken from Lorrain's *Madame Baringhel* ('Comme elles voyagent. Le 15 février de Mme Baringhel'):

> – Ah Jésus Maria ! on arrête la diligence. – Mais non, on apporte les dépêches et le courrier ; voyez, on hisse les sacs. – Jamais nous n'arriverons vivants ; moi, mon cher, je n'ai plus une goutte de sang dans les veines. – Quelle imaginative vous faites ! *vous auriez été un romancier de génie, c'est une carrière manquée.* – Raillez, goguenardez, on pourrait trembler à moins : le décor est lugubre. – Mais nous sommes aux portes, attendez au moins que nous soyons en pleine campagne ; là, vous pourrez vous suggestionner […]. (*MB*, 128, my emphasis)

As we can see, the architectonic form of these chronicles, with its dialogues piled up into an open structure and linked together with dashes, is similar to the aggregates of metal that form the skeletal structure of the scaffoldings which cover the Parisian buildings in the nineteenth century. Lorrain's stenographic style brings about a feeling of draft – or preliminary text – that is almost systematic in his works (that is due, *inter alia*, to his obsession with lists). Lorrain also uses the technique of montage in his novels, as is the case in *Les Noronsoff* (see my previous section; *LN*, 3 and 68).

Benjamin states that in order to reach a form of 'readability' – that is, seeing, knowing, documenting –, we must 'carry over the principle of montage into history';[101] according to Benjamin, this principle brings about the thinking of the intervals created by a cluster of singularities[102] and how they relate to each other. For him, montage is to 'assemble large-scale constructions out of the smallest and most precisely cut components. Indeed, to discover in the analysis of the small individual moment the crystal of the total event'.[103] This technique of montage allows Lorrain to unveil his own practice, as he evokes in 'Un salon en danger' in the volume *Fards et poisons*: 'c'est une figuration de théâtre dans un décor *ad hoc*, et on attend toujours un peu le sifflet du

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[99] Georges Pélissier, 'La Littérature dialoguée en France', in *La Revue des revues* (1 January 1898), pp. 23-24.
[100] Charles Baudelaire, *Petits poèmes en prose* (Paris: Michel Levy frères, 1869), p. 1.
[101] Benjamin, *Arcades*, op. cit., p. 462-63.
[102] The importance of singularities in history as explained by Benjamin also calls to mind Carlo Ginzburg's works on cultural micro-history which give importance to details and singularities as *hapax* or scories in the margin of discourse.
[103] Benjamin, *Arcades*, op. cit., p. 461.

maître machiniste pour voir s'envoler aux frises les portants et la toile de fond.' (*FP*, 118). In *Madame Baringhel*, the 'maître machiniste' – or stagehand – is Baringhel herself ('vous auriez été un romancier de génie, c'est une carrière manquée'); it is then first and foremost Lorrain as writer and character, stage director and stagehand:

> D'HÉLOÉ. – Oui, je sais, vous aviez lu le *Pall Mall* d'hier. Encore un qui a une déplorable influence sur vous et dont je vous conseille de suivre les renseignements à la lettre ; il vous conduira loin si vous l'écoutez, votre M. Raitif.
> Mme BARINGHEL. – Mais, c'est très Raitif ici, ces vieilles rues de la Gaffe, des Galions. (*MB*, 196)

Indeed, beyond the similarities between *Madame Baringhel*'s 'chroniques dialoguées' and the fragmented space of the newspaper, it is important to note the resemblance between Lorrain (who already hides behind his pseudonym Raitif de la Bretonne) and his main character. Baringhel would then be a feminised version of Lorrain. In fact, the author and his character are both dilettantes (*MB*, xiv); they are also both extravagant and addicted to ether, they like frogs, and Baringhel's main characteristic is 'sa manie de parler à tort et à travers et de rapporter tout à trac ce qu'elle entend et ce qu'elle surprend' (*MB*, xii) – which is also Lorrain's infamous reputation in the Belle Époque press. She then becomes a sort of relay author in the narrative.

In other words, Baringhel represents the exposure of Lorrain's creative process: 'Mme Baringhel est la femme de toutes les expositions'; 'Elle raconte tout à trac les liaisons coupables et même inavouables du Paris mondain' (*MB*, vii), and eventually '[e]lle n'en suit pas moins fiévreusement tous les vernissages, toutes les conférences et tous les salons' (*MB*, xi). As we have seen in the previous part of this chapter, Lorrain's heroes are frequently avatars of himself. This also applies to Baringhel, through whom the author declares himself 'femme du monde' and writes about the cultural and society events of the time. After all, 'Madame Baringhel porte le travesti à ravir' (*MB*, 146); so does Lorrain (see chapter IV of this thesis). The assemblage of dialogues in *Madame Baringhel* always presents Lorrain with the opportunity to comment on his own practice. Thus, recorded details and dialogues are treated in regard to the practice of writing, as Mme de Panama mentions to Madame Baringhel: 'il y a tout un livre à écrire là-dessus. – Vous l'écrirez' (*MB*, 50).

Pinson declares that 'le système médiatique a bouleversé les pratiques d'écriture, le rythme de travail, la place de l'écrivain et sa place dans la société'.[104] For Lorrain, time

[104] Pinson, *L'Imaginaire médiatique*, op. cit., p. 18.

spent writing in the press is perceived as a waste. In a letter to Georges Casella, he admits that it ruined his overall literary efforts:

> Croyez que personne n'est plus étroitement de votre avis que moi, sur mon œuvre. Je sens et je déplore non moins amèrement ce que le journalisme m'a fait gâcher et dilapider de documents et de sensations qui auraient pu être mieux employés – et combien ! Mais, sans aucune fortune, il m'a fallu vivre, et la littérature ne nourrit pas son homme[105].

This letter perfectly echoes Morand's quotation that I used at the beginning of this part. In a rather self-pitying way, Lorrain is pictured as acutely aware of the imperfect nature of his literary work – primarily due to his position of writer-journalist. Yet it seems that at the same time Lorrain also claims responsibility for the impression of 'texte-échafaudage' that characterises his writing; as the apparent seams of Harlequin's costume, the structure of Lorrain's text keeps on resurfacing in his works as the *mise en abyme* of his creative process. This firmly modern technique directly opens to twentieth-century literature and other great 'mystificateurs' like Guillaume Apollinaire[106] – most particularly in *Le Flâneur des deux rives* (1918) in which he refers to Lorrain – and through a more thorough engagement with self-reflexivity and metapoetics; it also paves the way for postmodern aesthetics of fragmentation. In *Le Flâneur des deux rives*, the treatment of time is similar to a montage; in Lorrain, too, different levels of temporalities are assembled together as in a mythopoeic (myth-making) Harlequin's panoply. This is the subject of the next chapter.

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[105] Jean Lorrain, letter to Georges Casella, 5 April 1904, in *Correspondance*, op. cit., p. 205.

[106] Apollinaire had the reputation of being a 'mystificateur'; along with his personality, this trait also definitely applies to the playful writing of *Calligrammes* (1918). See Pierre-Marcel Adéma, *Guillaume Apollinaire, le mal-aimé* (Paris: Plon, 1952), p. 180.

- CHAPTER III -

Montage of Temporalities

For Benjamin, the act of collecting plays an essential role in the construction of memory: in 'The Arcades of Paris', he wrote that in 'this historical and collective process of fixation', collecting is 'a form of practical memory, and all of the profane manifestations of the penetration of "what has been" (all of the profane manifestations of "nearness") it is the most binding'.[1] In 'Eduard Fuch, Collector and Historian',[2] Benjamin's ideas give rise to a conception of historical intelligibility based on 'literary montage' as the method of construction of 'dialectical images' (in Warburgian terms, 'polarities').[3] Time is then seen as the temporal continuity of past, present and future, in which events occur and are understood as causally connected:

> It is not that what is past casts its light on what is present, or what is present its light on what is past; rather, an image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation. In other words: image is dialectics at a standstill. For while the relation of the present to the past is purely temporal, the relation of what-has-been to the now is dialectical: not temporal in nature but figural [*bildlich*]. Only dialectical images are genuinely historical […].[4]

For him, the experimental method of montage can generate the means of production of historical intelligibility. The point is to produce a form that processes together various extremes and sets of connexions in a heterogeneous yet productive space of (active) memory. This is what I see in the *harlequinised* fin-de-siècle and most particularly in Lorrain's 'harlequin poetics', where a multitude of temporal fabrics – history, myth, and memory – are all stitched together to form a montage of temporalities.

In Lorrain's works, it is important to focus on the literary integration of those different types of history, myth, and memory, all patched together. In the first part of this chapter I shall study his text as tapestry by focusing on his first volume of poetry *Le Sang des dieux* (1882) and his collection of short stories *Princesses d'ivoire et d'ivresse* (1902) –

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[1] Benjamin, *Arcades*, op. cit., p. 883. Incidentally, Didi-Huberman's reading of Warburg's 'montage-collision' is often paralleled with considerations on Benjamin's notion of constellation; in 'La Décadence', Vladimir Jankélévitch refers to decadence as a system of 'constellations verbales'. In Vladimir Jankélévitch, 'La Décadence', in *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, 55.4 (1950), p. 353.

[2] Benjamin, 'Eduard Fuch, Collector and Historian', op. cit., pp. 27-58.

[3] See Didi-Huberman: 'ce que Warburg avait appréhendé en termes de « polarités » (*Polarität*) repérables à toutes les échelles de l'analyse, Benjamin, lui, devait finir par l'appréhender en termes de « dialectique » et d'« image dialectique » (*Dialektik, dialektische Bild*)', in *Devant le temps*, op. cit., p. 91.

[4] Benjamin, *Arcades*, op. cit., p. 463.

particularly through the mythical character of Ennoïa. I shall argue that the mythopoeic creations of Lorrain participate in the transitory moment of Modernity as a literary montage of temporalities that liberates humankind from modernisation. I shall then move to discuss the notion of anachronism that lies at the centre of such montage. In Lorrain's *Histoires de masques* (1900), Decadent anamorphosis and anachronism participate in the elaboration of a text that represents a moment in time where the past and the present always merge; often, fragmented temporalities are reflected in fragmented bodies. In turn, Lorrain's text also functions as a fragmented body of literary influences. This is why the third part will be dedicated to the 'anxiety of influence'[5] through the ever-surviving presence of Oscar Wilde in his text. In opposition to the literary treatment that Gide makes of Wilde, Lorrain mythologises him; this operation makes him eternal.

A Note on Decadence and Time

In his 1950 article entitled 'La Décadence', French philosopher Vladimir Jankélévitch states that Decadence, instead of being a final moment, is a transitory period. It is a period which is 'ensemble commencement et fin, qui est limite de deux versants'.[6] Decadence is profoundly linked to the politics of time – therefore it is a term that is most usually applied to the philosophy of history. In Decadent literature, the experience of time through subjective consciousness provides a transition towards Modernism.

In the preface to the collected volume of works *Decadence and the 1890s*, Ian Fletcher and Malcolm Bradbury write that '[t]ransitions, then, mattered profoundly in the 1890s: evanescence, instability, failure, the enterprise of internalizing history and manifesting it as style, an historical and personal sense of decline and fall, are, of course, primary motifs.'[7] In France, when the Second Empire collapsed after the trauma caused by the Franco-Prussian war (1870-71) and the Paris Commune (1871), the last thirty years of the nineteenth century constituted a period of relative 'peace', despite occasional troubles and turmoil (colonialism, political unstability, the financial crisis of 1884, the civil unrest linked with Boulangism or the Panama scandal, and of course the Dreyfus affair at the turn of the century). Indeed, according to Palacio, fin-de-siècle Decadence

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[5] Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*, op. cit.
[6] Jankélévitch, 'La Décadence', op. cit., p. 337.
[7] Malcolm Bradbury, Ian Fletcher, 'Preface', in *Decadence and the 1890s*, Ian Fletcher (ed.) (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1980) p. 8.

emerged from various types of declines: 'Elle est, en effet, contemporaine de deux faits majeurs : le déclin de l'aristocratie de sang et la naissance de l'esprit républicain, d'une part; la fin de la dynastie des Bourbons (1883) et le déclin du monarchisme, de l'autre.'[8] Because it internalises history, Decadence is a transitory period during which time is fragmented; this is why the emphasis is put on the notion of instantaneity, as I demonstrated in the first chapter. As a matter of fact, Jankélévitch claims that:

> Non seulement la micromanie décadente pulvérise l'univers en colifichets, mais elle aboutit, dans la durée, à l'instant : non au fiat décisoire du courage, qui est position de nouveau et création de valeur, mais à l'instant empirique, qui est intervalle débité en tranches, et segment de durée, qui est la plus brève continuation possible.[9]

As a consequence, writers and artists of the second half of the nineteenth century choose to isolate and immobilise the instantaneity into series of aesthetic impressions, like, for instance, the Goncourt brothers and Lorrain.

As previously discussed, Lorrain, who always seems to devise his writings between a journalistic and a literary method, proposes a form of fragmented literature whose narrative is divided into series of instants. This is why the Decadent oeuvre, Jankélévitch further argues, '[p]lutôt mosaïque que fresque, et plutôt somme statique que synthèse, elle classe, répertorie, inventorie les membres disjoints d'un savoir déjà constitué, au lieu de créer elle-même et du dedans ce savoir.'[10] In this transitory space, the creator proceeds in the doctrinal and geological compilation of things and words, as is the case, for instance, in Baudelaire's *Le Peintre de la vie moderne* (1863), Huysmans's *À Rebours* (1884) but also the Goncourts' *Journal* or Lorrain's own works. It constitutes a modern amalgam of heterogeneous objects. The result lies in the aesthetic formation of a collection, or an atlas of memories. This can be put into perspective through both the notion of anachronism and *survivance* as developed in Didi-Huberman's reading of Aby Warburg, and the notion of montage according to Walter Benjamin. Lorrain's text as a compilation of textual fragments is also a compilation of temporal fragments; it can therefore also be defined as a form of literary montage of temporalities, which constitutes a great cultural and aesthetic atlas of fin-de-siècle France.

In the 1880s, avant-garde literary groups like Les Hirsutes, Les Hydropathes, Les Zutistes and Les Jemenfoutistes all engage in new poetic and literary experimentations

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[8] Palacio, *La Décadence. Le Mot et la chose*, op. cit., p. 8.
[9] Jankélévitch, 'La Décadence', op. cit., p. 347-8.
[10] Ibid., p. 349.

with a playful, artistic nature. Lorrain participates in these explorations (he was particularly involved with Les Hydropathes and the Chat Noir cabaret). Indeed, the period of 'petites revues' resembles an aesthetic laboratory whose main concern lies in the problem of form and mystification. Anatole Baju's manifesto, published in 1886, reads:

> Nous ne nous occuperons de ce mouvement qu'au point de vue de la littérature. La décadence politique nous laisse frigides. Elle marche d'ailleurs son train, mené par cette symptomaque de politiciens dont l'apparition était inévitable à ces heures défaillantes. Nous nous abstiendrons de politique comme d'une chose idéalement infecte et abjectement méprisable. L'art n'a pas de parti ; il est le seul point de ralliement de toutes les opinions.[11]

Baju is only partially right. Numerous 'petites revues' were politically engaged – mostly with anarchist movements. Nonetheless, Decadence truly is a movement that aims to produce new aesthetics; in reaction against scientific Positivism and industrialisation, writers resorted to myth and the historical/imaginary.

The presence of mythology can be located in Naturalism before Decadence and Symbolism. In a review of Zola's *La Curée* (1871), Paul Alexis distinguishes two types of History: one 'histoire événementielle', and one exaggerated, truer and deeper, that draws comparisons with ancient figures and myths.[12] Palacio notes that Zola's novel reads like 'une combinaison du mythe et de l'histoire (ou du réel).' In *Le Vice suprême* (1884), Joséphin Péladan writes: '[l]a vie rétrospective, cette habitude des intelligences décadentes, ce paradis artificiel qui consiste à se créer une entité dans le temps défunt et à vivre des heures de rêve dans les civilisations mortes pour échapper au nauséeux présent […].'[13] This historical consciousness is characterised by what Reinhart Koselleck calls a 'space of experience', in which many layers of the past are present. It contrasts with the 'horizon of expectations'[14] that the progress and development of the late nineteenth century represent. This explains Modernity as defined by Benjamin in 'Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth Century' where he states that 'the modern, *la modernité*, is always citing primal history.'[15] In this respect, myth stands as a reaction to the process of modernisation and industrialisation: 'Only a thoughtless observer can deny that

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11 Anatole Baju, quoted in Mitchell Bonner, *Les Manifestes littéraires de la Belle Époque* (Paris: Seghers, 1966), p. 10.
12 Paul Alexis, 'La Curée', in *La Cloche* (24 October 1872).
13 Joséphin Péladan, *Le Vice suprême* [1884] (Paris: Éditions du Monde Moderne, 1926), p. 86.
14 Reinhart Koselleck, '"Space of Experience" and "Horizon of Expectations": Two Historical Categories', in *Future Pasts: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985), p. 267-88.
15 Benjamin, *Arcades*, op. cit., p. 10.

correspondences come into play between the world of modern technology and the archaic symbol-world of mythology'.[16] These correspondences – Benjamin finds them in Baudelaire – create aesthetic and imaginative patterns of continuation between the past and the present.

Lorrain's 'harlequin poetics' partly derives from the same exploration. The 'mythopoeic imagination' of volumes such as *Le Sang des dieux* or *Princesses d'ivoire et d'ivresse* parallels Warburg's Mnemosyne atlas project, which, according to Joseph Mali in *Mythistory: The Making of a Modern Historiography* (2003), 'imposes *cultural creations* and *natural reactions*'.[17] For Lorrain, the use of symbolic forms (images, words, myths or theories) that mediate between impression and expression leads to the liberation of men from their propensity to instinctual reaction. This ability to retain a symbolic connection to the mythological tradition is at the core of Modernity and Decadence towards Modernism.

Times in a Tapestry

In the edited volume entitled *Myths and Fictions*, Biderman and Scharfstein state that myth is formed by 'contradictory narratives, which become involved in one another like threads of a tapestry, too intertwined to summarise adequately, and endless.'[18] As seen in the previous chapters, the notion of contradictory narratives intertwined and woven in a tapestry of texts relates to Lorrain's 'harlequin poetics' that emerges from the aesthetic of fragmentation and hybrid textual enterprise. In his works, the tensions between fiction, press and reality always lead to a form of exploded narrative, something that I referred to as patchwork of narratives.

In Decadence, myth works as a symbolic agency that delivers the author's message. It is seen as a referential recourse that creates a superposition of various mythical figures and legends, myths and heroes. It is therefore similar to a semiologic system of communication,[19] or the expression of 'man's understanding of himself in the world in which he lives'[20] – if not, the expression of man's understanding of the world in which he lives in just as well. The boundaries between history and memory are often

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[16] Ibid., p. 461.
[17] Joseph Mali, *Mythistory: The Making of a Modern Historiography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), p. 134.
[18] Shlomo Biderman, Ben-Ami Scharfstein (eds.), *Myths and Fictions* (New York, Köln: Brill, 1993).
[19] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, in *Œuvres complètes* (Paris: Seuil, 2002), p. 683.
[20] Rudloph Bultman, 'New Testament Mythology', cited by Eliot Deutsch in 'Truth and Mythology', in Biderman and Scharfstein, *Myths and Fictions*, op. cit.

blurred and fluid in fiction. In the fin-de-siècle, the conception of history is often represented through mythology – a methodological operation elaborated in reaction to the process of modernisation. It is similar to what Mali calls 'mythistory'.[21] In *Mythistory*, Mali argues that our life and history are largely determined by tradition and ancient myths. They explain the present in which we live; they serve to 'reveal that the world, man, and life have a supernatural origin and history, and that this history is significant, precious and exemplary.'[22] At the end of the nineteenth century, the experience of urbanity as expressed by Baudelaire can be compared – but also contrasted – to that of primitive antiquity (see 'J'aime le souvenir de ces époques nues' and 'Spleen' – 'j'ai plus de souvenirs que si j'avais mille ans', in *Les Fleurs du mal*);[23] unsurprisingly, Mali identifies the mythopoeic shift in history in the second part of the nineteenth century with thinkers like Jacob Burckhardt and Friedrich Nietzsche, who influenced Warburg and Benjamin.

Although Lorrain never wrote a seminal piece like Joyce's, his works quite often stem from the rewriting of myths and memory; this is particularly true in his first volume of poetry *Le Sang des dieux* and his collection of short stories *Princesses d'ivoire et d'ivresse*. The two volumes read like a montage of ancient myths and personal history; they introduce the author's obsessions through a montage of legendary pasts and memories that creates a tapestry of interwoven heterogeneous times. In *Princesses d'ivoire et d'ivresse*, Lorrain uses the figures of Mélusine, Oriane, Mandosiane, Tiphaine, Neighilde, Vuilfride, Neigefleur, etc., to convey an idea of modern melancholy through interwoven knots of mythologies. In the short story 'Les Contes', dedicated to painter Antonio de La Gandara, he writes: '[q]ui n'a pas cru enfant ne rêvera pas jeune homme ; il faut songer, au seuil même de la vie, à ourdir de belles tapisseries de songes pour orner notre gîte aux approches de l'hiver : et les beaux rêves même fanés font les somptueuses tapisseries de décembre.'[24] Here, Lorrain's terminology ('tapestry') applies to his own 'harlequin poetics'. The aesthetics of fragmentation also present fragments of time. The text as a sum of heterogeneous motifs is therefore also a text seen as a sum of heterogeneous layers of time.

Lorrain's first volume of poetry, *Le Sang des dieux*, constitutes his first ever-published work outside of the press. The volume is divided into three parts: 'Légendes dorées', 'Parfums anciens' and finally 'Le Sang des dieux'. Although it is largely

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[21] Mali, *Mythistory*, op. cit.
[22] Ibid., p. 4.
[23] Charles Baudelaire, *Les Fleurs du mal* [1857] (Paris: Le Livre de poche, 1972).
[24] Jean Lorrain, 'Les Contes', in *Souvenirs d'un buveur d'éther* (Paris: Mercure de France, 2015), p. 149.

influenced by Parnassian poetry, it also presents a literary texture that borrows from Symbolism and Decadence; this would take the lead in Lorrain's following volumes of poetry *La Forêt bleue* (1883), and more importantly in *Modernités* (1885), *Les Griseries* (1887) and *L'Ombre ardente* (1897). In that respect, the reading of *Le Sang des dieux* operates through a network of signifiers with multiple references that spans from Antiquity to medieval and Arthurian legends;[25] it therefore develops a kind of mythology with exploded geographies/temporalities that derives from Parnassian and Symbolist poetry (Leconte de Lisle being one of the key forebears of this eclectism). Yet this mythology is often paired with Lorrain's own memories (Norman coast/childhood). For example, the section 'Légendes dorées' displays poems that use Scandinavian but also Anglo-Saxon legends together with classical antiquity, whereas the section 'Parfums anciens' mixes childhood memories and mythological figures. The poetics of *disjecta membra* that links Lorrain's Decadent text to the figure of Harlequin are thus also reflected in the literary or aesthetic treatment of time. In a review of *Le Sang des dieux* published in the bibliographic newspaper *Le Livre*, Uzanne notes that:

> Grande variété de rythmes et d'inspirations, abondance de rimes luxueuses, d'images picturales, de mots sonores, d'inversions mélodieuses, M. Jean Lorrain a tout à souhait, et il se hâte, comme font les poètes à leur début, d'essayer les couleurs de sa palette sur tous les murs de l'histoire. Antiquité, moyen âge, temps modernes, viennent tour à tour se réfléchir en ses vers comme en un miroir de Venise aux facettes multiples ; son volume est un véritable panorama d'où l'on sort les yeux las et battus d'un monotone éblouissement.[26]

Here Uzanne justly comments on Lorrain's multi-coloured style, which brings about the collision of heterogeneous temporalities in a textual tapestry. Lorrain never forgot that myths, legends, fairy tales and tales that his mother read him when he was a child stand as the poetic matrix to his own literary production, as he recalls in the preface to *Princesses d'ivoire et d'ivresse*: '[d]e tous les contes entendus, lus et feuilletés dans mon enfance sont nées ces princesses d'ivoire et d'ivresse : elles sont faites d'extase, de songe et de souvenirs.' For Benjamin – it is also the case for Nietzsche –, the matriarch seems to

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[25] At the beginning of his career, Lorrain himself medievalised his name into Jehan Lorrain (see articles published in *Le Chat Noir*, *L'Artiste* ou *La Jeune France*). He sent copies of *Le Sang des dieux* to his father but also to Judith Gautier, Gustave Moreau and François Coppée with the same medievalised name. This blurred the frontiers between myth, history and memory even more as Jehan is the name of the protagonist whose adventures are told in the first poem of the section 'Légendes dorées'.

[26] Octave Uzanne (signed P.), '*Le Sang des dieux*. Par Jean Lorrain', in *Le Livre* (10 August 1882). Uzanne is identified by Thibaut d'Anthonay in his biography of Lorrain, op. cit., p. 127.

derive from 'the most ancient sources of tradition – the proverb, the legend, the fairy tale, ultimately the myth.'[27] Their wisdom is 'counsel woven into the fabric of real life'.[28]

Lorrain is also aware of the dimension of repetition and interlacing in his stories. This is why he also uses the metaphor of a tapestry to refer to the juxtaposition of myths (in fact, one section of *Princesses d'ivoire et d'ivresse* is entitled 'Masques dans la tapisserie'). At the end of the preface to *Princesses d'ivoire et d'ivresse*, Lorrain warns the reader that myths and legends circulate and resurface through different times:

> qu'il [the reader] ne voie dans ces coïncidences que les reflets d'un même rêve à travers des atmosphères différentes, les échos d'un même thème musical interprété par des instruments de divers pays. La fable est la même, les conteurs ont brodé ! la diversité des textes ne prouve qu'une fois de plus la beauté du symbole.[29]

The idea of multiple reflections in Lorrain's text is highly relevant; the reference to embroidery directly evokes the method of his 'harlequin poetics', through quotations and rewriting, plagiarism and self-plagiarism, but also the montage of temporalities. Numerous mythical or legendary figures often run through the same narratives or reappear from one text to the other. This echoes Lorrain's above quotation, where the idea of perennialism raises another conceptualisation of multiplicity: i.e. a single essence, source, or foundation that have multiple manifestations. This is why his mythical or legendary figures usually metamorphose into one another, as is the case with the character of Ennoia.

Ennoïa (1882): A Montage of Temporalities

Ennoia, Elaine, or Helen in the Greek mythology, is the adulterous woman par excellence.[30] Similarly, Ennoia is one of Lorrain's many representations of the *femme fatale*. Her legendary beauty that was equal to the beauty of goddesses caused many tragedies – the first of which being of significant importance since, right after his judgment, Paris chose her as his wife although she was already married to Menelaus; this provoked the Trojan war. In the Gnostic tradition, Ennoia is a demigoddess considered to have fallen from grace; in doing so she lies at the origin of the creation of the world. According to one representation she suffers all manner of insult from the angels and archangels; she is

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[27] Mali, *Mythistory*, op. cit., p. 258.
[28] Benjamin, 'The Storyteller', in *Illuminations*, op. cit., pp. 86-87.
[29] Jean Lorrain, preface to *Princesses d'ivoire et d'ivresse* [1902] (Monaco: Éditions du Rocher, 2007), pp. 11-12.
[30] See Ruby Blondell, *Helen of Troy: Beauty, Myth, Devastation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

then bound and forced again and again into fresh earthly bodies, compelled for centuries to wander in ever-new corporeal forms. Indeed, Ennoia can be called Wisdom (Sophia), Ruler, Holy Spirit, Prunikos, Barbelo. In the Gnostic mythology, Prunikos can be a virgin who suffered from haemorrhage that lasted twelve years. She is a supreme divinity (*eon*) whose symbolism lies in the knowledge of sexuality. Epiphanius seems to extract the name from the word *prounikeuõ*, which literally means to take somebody's virginity. She then appears to be a sinner. Barbelo is one of the main figures in Gnostic mythology; she represents a supreme woman. Her androgynous appearance also gives her the name 'Mother-Father'.[31] This is an important feature as androgyny and hermaphrodism are important motifs in Lorrain's text.

In Lorrain's works, Ennoia always represents the *femme fatale* through whom the fall comes in every period of history. In *Le Sang des dieux*, two poems concentrate on her: 'Εννοια', and 'Ennoïa'. Yet she circulates in the whole volume through multiple appearances (similar to Lulu in Champsaur's novel, Ennoïa represents 'la diversté de la même femme. Toutes en une seule').[32] This is made clear in 'Ennoïa', taken from the third section of the volume, also entitled 'Le Sang des dieux': 'Tour à tour adultère, innocente et victime,/Elle fut Ennoïa, Barbelo, Prounikos./Elle est de tous les temps ; l'ancien dieu grec Éros,/L'Astarté de Sidon parfois l'étreint encore' (*SDD*, 142). As we can see here, Ennoia can take on many different forms through different layers of temporalities: 'Ennoïa, Barbelo, Prounikos', 'Hélène', 'Lucrèce', 'Dalila'; 'Elle est de tous les temps'. Ennoia then appears to be a montage herself; she is a collection of different bodies. She successively wanders through Greek and Roman mythology, the Ancient Testament, but also, through other forms, into Arthurian, Merovingian, Anglo-Saxon or Scandinavian legends. Of course, Ennoia can also be paralleled to the figure of Salome, which runs through the whole Decadent movement, as many critics identified (see Flaubert, Huysmans, Moreau – Lorrain also extensively wrote about Salome).

In Decadent literature, the female body is usually constructed from a misogynistic perspective. In that respect, Lorrain's representation of women does not differ from the fin-de-siècle literary tradition. In his volume of poetry, the female body – a space of metamorphosis *par excellence* – is conveyed poetically in a fragmented way: the

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[31] See Jean Lorrain, *Le Sang des dieux* [1882], with a preface and critical notes by A. Burin and P. Noir (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2017), p. 142.

[32] Champsaur, *Lulu*, op. cit., p. 240. He also writes: 'Est-ce une clownesse ou une Diane ? Mythologie ou Modernité ?' (p. 237). At the end of the novel, Champsaur describes Lulu as real, mythical and legendary *at the same time* (p. 243), reflecting Lorrain's own conception of the modernist oeuvre as a patchwork of fragmented temporalities, as expressed through the character of Ennoïa.

emphasis is usually made on one particular attribute, which echoes the 'blason' form that was so popular in the fifteenth and sixteenth century (e.g. François Villon). As a consequence, the Lorrainian *femmes fatales* are often reduced to a pair of eyes (like Astarté in *Monsieur de Phocas*, for instance), the mouth, or the hair. This process turns them into a montage of different features. Thus, the *femmes fatales* participate in the text as an assemblage of fragments – whether of time or body –, which is a distinguishing mark of Lorrain's 'harlequin poetics'.

In *Le Sang des dieux*, the eyes of female figures are often blue (that also applies to Lorrain's works in general). They represent a liminal space halfway between the material and the immaterial world: Mélusine is a legendary fairy who has '[des] yeux couleur d'aigue-marine' (*SDD*, 46) and falls in love with a mortal being. Besides, the eyes always convey the Freudian concept of *Das Unheimliche* – or the uncanny, the repressed desire; in the poem 'Κασσανδρα', the first verse precises that 'Kressida la Troyenne a le regard pervers' (*SDD*, 47), reflecting the fin-de-siècle's crisis of masculinity and the overall anxieties surrounding women's 'sexual proclivities'.[33]

The mouth, when visually or textually described as closed, is associated with mystery. In Decadence, however, it is substituted by a devouring mouth that expresses sexual appetites. Baudelaire writes: 'La femme a faim et elle veut manger. Soif, et elle veut boire./Elle est en rut et elle veut être foutue./Le beau mérite !'[34] The diabolic dimension of such attribute therefore participates in the representation of the woman as a symbol of lust, like it is located in the Satanic and perverse character of Lilith, in Rémy de Gourmont's eponymous novel, published in 1892. In Huysmans's *Là-bas* (1891), the mouth of Madame de Chantelouve appears to be 'spoliatrice, terrible',[35] which turns the character into an anthropophagic woman. In short, when it comes to Decadence, the mouth represents desire, sex, and death.[36] In *Un démoniaque* and *Monsieur de Phocas*, the statue of Astarte displays: 'deux émeraudes incrustées luisaient sous ses paupières ; mais, entre ses cuisses fuselées, au bas renflé du ventre, à la place du sexe, ricanante, menaçante, une petite tête de mort' (*MP*, 273), while in *Le Sang des dieux*, the red mouth and the teeth evoke the figure of the ghoul and, by association, its vampiric avatar that wanders through times. In 'Ennoïa', Lorrain thus writes: 'Depuis elle a dansé le proche

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[33] Gretchen Schultz, *Sapphic Fathers: Discourses of Same-Sex Desire From Nineteenth-Century France* (London: University of Toronto Press, 2015), p. xiii and xv.
[34] Charles Baudelaire, *Mon Coeur mis à nu*, in *Œuvres,* t. I, Claude Pichois (ed.) (Paris: La Pléiade, 1975), p. 677.
[35] Joris-Karl Huysmans, *Là-bas* [1891] (Paris: Tresse & Stock, 1895), p. 301.
[36] See for instance Jean de Palacio, 'Mélusine décadente, ou la figure du sang', in *Romantisme*, 31 (1981), pp. 209-28; Palacio, *Figures et formes de la décadence*, op. cit.

des bouges/Toute nue et tendant sa bouche aux lèvres rouges/Des porte-faix de Rome et des athlètes roux' (*SDD*, 65). This shows the ever-generative aspect of Lorrain's mythical figure, who continuously circulates in his text as montage of temporalities through various forms, signifying the repetition of male anxieties.

Finally, the hair reveals a certain form of totality of the being. However, this poetic *topos* that indicates the rhetoric of love also figures an axiological sign. Often in Lorrain as well as Nerval, Baudelaire or Banville, the *femme fatale* is the representation of overflowing sexuality and death is red-haired. In *Le Sang des dieux*, women's hair is often associated with the adjective 'fauve' – an orange-ochre colour, fire or reddish – but also, it is most important here, it conveys an idea of power, violence and cruelty. The wicked fairy Viviane has 'des cheveux d'or fauve' (*SDD*, 42) and symbolises lust. Mélusine has '[des] cheveux roux' (*SDD*, 46), just like Lorrain's Loreley.

As I previously mentioned, Lorrain draws his imagination from tales, past legends and myths in correlation to memory. The tradition is very often linked to the conception of matriarchy. For Lorrain, the *femme fatale* as embodied through various historical and mythical figures also stands as the representation of a woman that he idealised at some point. Indeed, one can see in the reference to Judith as a metamorphosis of Ennoïa a desire to imprint a personal memory into the poetic text. The mention of the biblical figure of Judith – which figures the idea of genesis – can also refer to Judith Gautier, who Lorrain met during the summer of 1873.[37] Gautier played an essential role in Lorrain's life, since she appeared both as an impossible love and as a muse, but also as a cultural, aesthetic guide: she introduced Lorrain to numerous poets and encouraged him to pursue his poetic quest.[38] In *Le Sang des dieux*, Lorrain dedicates two sonnets to Gautier – 'La Coupe d'Or' and 'C'était un Songe' – that open the section 'Parfums anciens'. They combine marine nature and hopeless love. The section 'Parfums anciens' provides numerous sonnets on the theme of melancholy. They all evoke a place that is remembered – real or imagined (the Normandy coast, Florence, ancient Greece) –, hence the metamorphosis of Ennoïa into Judith.

However, Ennoia also shares a lot in common with Genèvre and Loreley. All three figures are given a large importance in Lorrain's volume of poetry. They all seem

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[37] Daughter of Théophile Gautier, she was the first woman to enter the prestigious Goncourt academy in 1910. Her work is largely dedicated to Asia and Japonism. See Judith Gautier, *Le Livre de Jade* (Paris: Alphonse Lemerre, 1867).

[38] In his *Journal*, Goncourt notes: 'Tout gamin, il s'était pris d'une passionnette pour la fille de Gautier […]. Judith faisait lire du Victor Hugo et du Leconte de Lisle.' At the time, Judith Gautier was in fact Judith Mendès, wife of French poet and writer Catulle Mendès. Lorrain later quarrelled with him (he even wrote a scathing article entitled 'Les Pères Saphistes' about him in *L'Événement*, 14 April 1886).

interchangeable. In fact, they are: in Lorrain's play *Ennoïa*, they all represent the same sort of *femme fatale*. Published in 1906, Lorrain's *Théâtre* comprises four plays – *Brocéliande*, *Yanthis*, *La Mandragore*, *Ennoïa* – all written for Sarah Bernhardt in the 1880s, as Lorrain recalls in the preface:

> Ce théâtre féérique, lyrique, épique et légendaire, écrit il y a vingt ans et plus, sous la visible inspiration de Leconte de Lisle, du poète lauréat anglais sir Alfred Tennyson, sous l'obsession aussi des Mantegna, des Carpaccio, de Gustave Moreau surtout et peut-être de Bœklin (car la peinture est bien plus près que on ne le croit de la mise en scène, et la beauté du théâtre grec réside peut-être tout entière dans la parfaite harmonie des acteurs et du décor), ce théâtre de mes vingt ans et de mes trente ans aussi, évidemment puisé à tant de sources différentes, fut surtout rêvé, composé, et voulu pour une interprète unique, une géniale, ingénieuse et rythmique artiste […]. Je n'ai pas besoin de la nommer.[39]

Lorrain's four plays all participate in the elaboration of a lyrical theatre inspired by a legendary past, the Romantic tradition and the Parnassian movement. It also borrows from Nervalian motifs like the recomposition of memories through mythology. In the previous quotation, Lorrain insists on the heterogeneity of his sources ('évidemment puisé à tant de sources différentes'). It is also true of the heterogeneity of its temporalities: for him, Bernhardt is the only one who could potentially perform the ultimate *femme fatale* as montage of Ennoïa, Genèvre and Loreley, but also as montage of history, myth and memory.

The last play of the volume, *Ennoïa*, forms a triptych. It is divided into three acts, each of which focuses on Ennoïa (Merovingian times), Genèvre (Arthurian legends), and finally Loreley (German legend), three figures that already circulate through Lorrain's poetry with authority. Lorrain largely borrowed from *Le Sang des dieux* to write this play – to the point that we can unequivocally call this self-plagiarism –, which also comes to demonstrate that his writings are themselves interrelated, as I argued in the first chapter. Consequently, Bernhardt as performing a montage of mythical figures would have participated in the mythopoetic montage of times that defines Lorrain's 'harlequin poetics'. In the end, the mythistorical perception of human reality that is Lorrain's constitutes a symbolic connection that lies at the core of Symbolism and Decadence; Palacio calls this a form of 'merveilleux perverti'.[40] As Mali states in his chapter on Warburg:

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[39] Lorrain, preface to *Théâtre*, op. cit., p. i-iii.
[40] Jean de Palacio, 'Présentation', in Lorrain's *Princesses d'ivoire et d'ivresse* [1902] (Paris: Séguier, 1993), p. 7.

> the employment of symbolic forms such as images, words, myths, or theories that mediate between impression and expression enables human beings to overcome their propensity to instinctual reaction, to construe that inner *Denkraum der Besonnenheit* wherein they can exercise contemplation before – and for – any reasonable action in the world.[41]

For Warburg, the age of myth that follows the 'age of magic' corresponds to a symbolic phase that is not dissimilar to what the Decadent and Symbolist movements strive to re-enact through the rewriting of myths and that is completed in the decorative-symbolic painting – on that note Warburg refers to Manet and 'Decadent' and 'frivolous' French Impressionism – of the late nineteenth century.

Lorrain's quotation about Bernhardt in the preface to his *Theatre* seems to convey the same idea. The pervasiveness of myths in Lorrain's works reflects the second half of the nineteenth century where art often aims to negotiate a space between magic and everyday life. In *Mythistory*, Mali uses Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) and *Finnegans Wake* (1939) with the characters of Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom, and Joyce's fascination for Vico's cyclical theory of history, to put into practice his mythistorical theories drawn from Burckhardt, Warburg, Kantorowicz and Benjamin. The psychologisation of myths is indeed omnipresent in Modernism: '[l]ike Nietzsche, Warburg partakes in the growing psychologisation of the theorising about myth in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a tendency that could culminate in the works of Freud and his followers.'[42] I argue that this process of montage of temporalities is already at stake in Lorrain's treatment of mythology (in his poetry, but also his literature). In *Le Sang des dieux* or *Princesses d'ivoire et d'ivresse*, myth, history and memory are all assembled into a literary montage to create a sense of liberation from modern society. As seen with Ennoia, the indistinction of temporalities that runs through Lorrain's literature is also exemplified through the de-composition and re-composition of bodies. More generally, it generates anachronism and metamorphosis.

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41 Mali, *Mythistory*, op. cit., p. 142.
42 Sven Lütticken, "Keep your distance': Aby Warburg on Myth and Modern Art', in *Oxford Art Journal*, 28.1 (2005), p. 54.

Lorrain and Masks

Lorrain's interest in metamorphosis is often conveyed through the use of masks and disguises in his life and works. He wrote extensively about the poetics of carnival, which is directly drawn from the importance of mystification and caricature in his 'harlequin poetics'. Like Baudelaire and the Goncourt brothers, who respectively wrote about Daumier and Gavarni, Lorrain took the art of caricature very seriously. He was a great admirer of Rowlandson, Hogarth, Goya and Daumier, all great caricaturists that Lorrain's character Claudius Ethal, in *Monsieur de Phocas*, calls 'les grands déformateurs' (*MP*, 90). It is not surprising to find this quotation in the chapter entitled 'Les guérisseurs', where Lorrain's alter ego dandy Jean de Fréneuse evokes a visit to painter Claudius Ethal's atelier. There he explores the large collection of masks that the painter owns. Incidentally, this chapter directly follows another one entitled 'L'effroi des masques'. Lorrain was also friends with contemporary caricaturists like Sem – he actually discovered him in Marseille before securing him a position in *Le Journal* in 1900 –, but also Ferdinand Bac, Félix Valloton, Cam and others, who widely represented Lorrain and his various *personæ* – which can be compared to masks – in the press (I will focus more closely on this in the next chapter).

In the wake of Barbey d'Aurévilly, Baudelaire, Poe but also the Goncourt brothers, Lorrain seeks to produce a form of urban fantasy – or 'fantastique du quotidien' – that already runs through, for instance, Goncourt's *La Faustin* (1882). Yet, for Lorrain, this type of Fantastique alludes to a more spiritual or metaphysical idea of horror (existence, nothingness, fear, oblivion, revenge, etc.). In the short story, 'Le Possédé', he aims to reproduce 'l'innommable de l'âme humaine remonté soudain à fleur de peau'.[43] This is another motor of the grotesque ('romantic grotesque'), as seen in the first chapter: according to Bakhtin, 'le monde du grotesque romantique est plus ou moins terrible et étranger à l'homme' and, although there is a comical quality to it, 'ses images sont parfois l'expression de la peur qu'inspire le monde'. In Lorrain's literature, the mask always seems to prevail over the face and the personality of the person who wears it. Just like his characters, he is obsessed with it. Because it is anonymous, as we have seen, the mask represents a certain idea of hypocrisy; yet it also conveys the image of a body that is mutilated, exploded, atomised (multiplicity vs void). It also nullifies the frontiers between

[43] Jean Lorrain, 'Le Possédé', in *Contes d'un buveur d'éther*, J. Solal (ed.) (Paris: Mille et une nuits, 2002), p. 79.

the past and the present; in doing so, it anachronises the notion of time. The mask therefore stands as an instrument of montage (e.g. selves, times); it enables Lorrain to elaborate his text like a literary montage that accumulates layers of memory. This is why it is worth comparing his oeuvre to the figure of Harlequin. The artistic process of montage is highly modern; it would later be used as a poetic device by other avant-garde movements such as Dada or the Surrealists. The irrational juxtaposition of Joseph Cornell's montages, for instance, evokes the nostalgia of a long-gone time (in Cornell, that nostalgia is drawn from both childhood and dreams, as well as nineteenth-century French literature).[44] The proliferation of masks in relation to the issue of temporality plays a crucial role in Lorrain's literature.

Just like his fellow caricaturists, Lorrain was also a 'grand déformateur' of reality. Published by Ollendorff in 1900, the collection of short stories entitled *Histoires de masques* probably constitutes one of his masterpieces, as well as one of the major volumes of Fantastic literature of the Belle Époque. In the preface to the collection, Gustave Coquiot compares Lorrain with painter James Ensor, who Lorrain often praised in press articles and art chronicles – this led to a wider recognition of the Belgian artist in France. Indeed, the two men share similar interests. The imagination of the mask, carnival, the multiple, hallucination and the diffuse, the uncanny are all themes at stake in their works (see Ensor's 'Les Masques singuliers', 1892). It is therefore not surprising to note that in *Monsieur de Phocas*, Lorrain chooses to insert Ensor's series of etchings, and particularly a 'Luxure' that Jean de Fréneuse purchases. The presence of this artwork exacerbates the obsession with the colour green – '[l]ueur de gemme ou regard, je suis amoureux, pis : envoûté, possédé d'une certaine transparence glauque' (*MP*, 11) – that Lorrain's hero suffers from throughout the narrative. This obsession translates Fréneuse's taste for abjection; this also applies to other characters in Lorrain's literature. In the incipit of the opening story 'L'un d'eux', compiled in *Histoires de masques*, Lorrain writes:

> [l]e mystère attirant et répulsif du masque, qui pourra jamais en donner la technique, en expliquer les motifs et démontrer logiquement l'impérieux besoin auquel cèdent, à des jours déterminés, certains êtres, de se grimer, de se déguiser, de changer leur identité, de cesser d'être ce qu'ils sont ; en un mot, de s'évader d'eux mêmes ? (*HDM*, 15)

The answer is obviously: himself. This is what he intends to do in the collection *Histoires de masques*, where the Decadent motif of the mask always appears to be linked with

[44] See *Joseph Cornell's Dreams*, C. Corman (ed.) (Cambridge: Exact Change, 2007) and Charles Simic, *Dime-Store Alchemy, The Art of Joseph Cornell* (New York: New York Review Books Classic, 2011).

material and temporal issues.

Decadent Anamorphosis and Time Anachronised

Masks, puppets, ghosts and succubi all live together in this Decadent volume; they are a multitude of mutilated, exploded, atomised bodies that – through their 'survivance' – all contribute to install a sense of uncertainty in the narrative while anachronising time. In Lorrain's *Histoires de masques*, the metamorphosis of the mask can be analysed as a consideration on the materiality and the temporality of the exploded body.

Anamorphosis is what alters and dissipates the natural order of things: it is 'une force de dislocation qui ébranle l'ordre naturel, projette les formes hors d'elles-mêmes et les disjoint'.[45] Through a return to the power of imagination – and also sometimes, as is the case in Lorrain, hallucination – it creates a distortion of reality, and therefore an illusion. For Lacan, anamorphosis is a process that shifts perspective; it is 'constructed around a void and points to something beyond'[46] – namely another world, stemming directly from the imagination of its reader/viewer. In his four seminars on the gaze[47] – included in the published version of his *Séminaire XI* –, originally delivered in 1964, Lacan compares the practice of anamorphosis with the metaphor of the text as labyrinth, which, Maria Scott notes, is related to the metaphor of the text as tapestry: '[t]he possibility that anamorphosis is at work in the text is strongly suggested by the fact that Lacan describes the production of pictorial anamorphosis in terms that recall the making of a tapestry'.[48] The idea of a network of threads is particularly important for Lorrain's text to be read as the multi-layered panoply of Harlequin, as we have seen previously. The association of a text-tapestry and the phenomenon of anamorphosis found in his literature reflects the aesthetics of the fin-de-siècle as a whole; it also informs the techniques of a certain form of literature marked by textual fragmentation.

The term 'decadent anamorphosis' stems from Richard Stamelman's article entitled 'L'anamorphose baudelairienne: l'allégorie du 'masque'', in which he focuses on

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[45] See the introduction in Isabelle Krzywkowski, Sylvie Thorel-Cailleteau, *Anamorphoses décadentes, L'Art de la défiguration 1880-1914* (Paris: PUPS, 2002), p. 15.

[46] Nancy Frelick, 'Lacan, Courtly Love and Anamorphosis', in *The Court Reconvenes: Courtly Literature Across the Disciplines*, Barbara K. Altmann & Carleton W. Carroll (eds.) (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2003), p. 112.

[47] See Lacan, *The Seminar Book XI*, op. cit.

[48] Maria Scott, 'Lacan's "Of the Gaze as Objet Petit a" as Anamorphic Discourse', in *Paragraph*, 31.3 (2008), p. 330. In this article, Scott argues that Lacan's seminars on vision are structured as a mise-en-abyme of the anamorphic process discussed in them. This idea of self-referentiality linked to a network of threads is obviously very important to consider in light of Lorrain's literature, as I already explained in the previous chapter.

Baudelaire's poem 'Le Masque'.[49] This poem indeed stands as emblematic of the poet's allegorical process, and the subtitle reads: 'STATUE ALLÉGORIQUE DANS LE GOÛT DE LA RENAISSANCE'.[50] In this article, Stamelman compares the disruption of interpretation that Hans Holbein's painting *The Ambassadors* (1533) creates in the viewer with Baudelaire's description of Ernest Christophe's statue after which the poem is named. The apparition of the skull in the painting-mask of Holbein marks the emergence of mortality and temporality within the artistic image. According to Benjamin, the skull enables the reunion of the presence and the absence of expression, as symbolised by the grin of the set of teeth and the darkness of the eye sockets. He writes: '[la] langue incomparable de la tête de mort […] unit l'absence totale d'expression (le noir des orbites) à l'expression la plus sauvage (la grimace de la denture)'.[51] The natural and the supernatural then grow into two inversely proportional opposites; nature becomes the *analogon* of a historical element. In Baudelaire's 'Le Masque', the poem and the statue are equally reduced to the plenitude of nothingness through the breaking of a devastating form of otherness ('Mais non ! ce n'est qu'un masque, un décor suborneur,/Ce visage éclairé d'une exquise grimace').[52] In Lorrain's *Histoires de masques*, the ubiquity of Decadent anamorphosis functions in the same way. It alludes to the presence of the Other, but also the emergence of the nothingness (e.g. 'ipseity disturbance': that is, a psychological phenomenon of disruption of a person's sense of basic self). However, it is important to focus primarily on the multitude of masks that runs through Lorrain's collection of short stories. For Lorrain, masks are 'la face trouble et troublante de l'inconnu […] les masques sont aussi bien de coupe-gorge que de cimetière : il y a en eux du tire-laine, de la fille de joie et du revenant' (*HDM*, 16-7). Namely: crime, lust, and the supernatural. One can also add cross-dressing and androgyny to this non-exhaustive list – a key feature of Lorrain's life and works. In the short story, 'Chez l'une d'elles', a *garçon d'hôtel* who looks like a young woman slowly becomes an 'étrange créature' (*HDM*, 28), while in 'L'Homme au bracelet', a man lures other men into his flat by waving a female mannequin arm at his window before robbing and mugging them (this echoes the fragmentation of the female body as seen in the previous part). All these stories are set in the urban periphery, where the experience of the margin always opens to the production

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[49] Richard Stamelman, 'L'anamorphose baudelairienne: l'allégorie du "masque"', in *Cahiers de l'Association internationale des études françaises*, 41.1 (1989), p. 251-67.
[50] Charles Baudelaire, 'Le Masque', in *Œuvres complètes*, t. II (Paris: Gallimard, 1970), p. 403.
[51] See Walter Benjamin 'Article de fantaisies', in *Sens unique*, trans. J. Lacoste (Paris: Maurice Nadeau, 1988), p. 178.
[52] Baudelaire, 'Le Masque', op. cit., p. 406.

of multiplicity and transgression (I will focus on this in more detail in the next chapter).

Accordingly, Lorrain's studies of the human spirit are often drawn from the visual approach of bestiaries, just like the drawings of Grandville that he particularly liked. Thereby in 'Récit de l'étudiant', the character of Madame Prack – a rich lady who intermittently lives in the same hotel as the narrator and in which she brings both men and women for sex – is compared to a grasshopper: 'avec sa face étroite, son menton pointu et son profil chevalin, elle ressemblait un peu à une sauterelle, elle en avait les mouvements à la fois saccadés et lents' (*HDM*, 33). In 'Le Masque', the narrator – once again an avatar of Lorrain – carefully listens to the story being told by a young conversation partner (or a disciple). He recounts a childhood memory about the sudden entrance of a 'femme […] avec un visage d'oiseau de proie' through his window, during a carnival (*HDM*, 42). Often in *Histoires de masques*, the mask directly announces the troubling upsurge of the supernatural into the real. Indeed, in 'Trio de masques', Lorrain openly refers to E.T.A. Hoffmann – clearly his master in terms of Fantastique as literary genre – and the 'Legend of Kleinzach' when he writes: 'l'autruche a ouvert la porte du surnaturel' (*HDM*, 80). This is a reference to Hoffmann's 'La Légende de Kleinzach', in which 'un oiseau de la taille d'une autruche, aux plumes d'or, s'annonça comme le portier de l'habitation'.[53] This also echoes Lorrain's series of vignettes *Histoires du bord de l'eau*. In 'Nuit de janvier', he also evokes Hoffmann's tale to imprint a sense of fantasy onto his writing:

> Ah ! ce *Docteur Cinabre*, quel chef-d'œuvre ! quel imprévu dans le fantastique ! Cet Hoffmann est le vrai maître du cauchemar. Un mot, un détail dans l'histoire la plus simple, la plus naturelle et, boum ! c'est comme le coup de gong de la folie ; on perd pied et on tombe dans le surnaturel. Ainsi cette autruche du *Docteur Cinabre* venant ouvrir la porte et introduisant froidement chez son maître l'ahurissement des visiteurs, moi je trouve cela tout bêtement merveilleux. (*UD*, 327-28)

Additionally, Lorrain draws comparisons between masked bodies and mechanical puppets (for instance in 'L'Impossible alibi': 'le mannequin gisant, maintenant, les membres jetés de-ci de-là, ridicule et tordu', *HDM*, 115). This Decadent topos allows the writer to insist on the idea of fragmentation as a poetic device; it also gives him the opportunity to locate his fiction in a relatively well-known literary imagination in the fin-de-siècle. The presence of mechanical puppets indeed evokes Rachilde's *Monsieur Vénus*

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[53] E.T.A. Hoffmann, 'Klein-Zach', in *Contes fantastiques*, trans. M. P. Christian (Paris: Lavigne, Libraire-Éditeur, 1844), p. 511-12.

(1884) as much as the 'andréide' that Lord Ewald creates in Villiers de l'Isle-Adam's *L'Ève future* (1886).

The reader also comes across various episodes in which the human face itself is seen and read like a mask, just like in Poe's story 'The Masque of the Red Death'.[54] In 'Le Masque' for example, the young protagonist carries on recounting other memories of horror through a story about a masked ball in which he mistook a real face for a *domino* – a veil. It alludes to what Lorrain calls 'le faisandage de la chair' in *Le Crime des riches* (*CDR*, 54): the human face – whether it is ugly, old, mutilated or bearing the marks of a disease like in the story 'La Vengeance du masque' (*CDR*, 145) – as a mask of horrors. What's more, in the short story 'Janine', he explains that '[i]l y a cependant pis que le faux visage colorié des costumiers et des coiffeurs, il y a le visage humain lui-même, le vôtre ou le mien, celui de votre ami ou de votre maîtresse, figés d'hypocrisie, masqués de dissimulation' (*HDM*, 105). For Lorrain, rotten and damaged faces often bear the mark of hypocrisy and vice. Finally, incubi, succubi and vampires are scattered through *Histoires de masques*. For instance, the story 'La Pompe funèbre' focuses on a woman who only attends circus and fairs in the hope of seeing an acrobat falling dead on the floor – perhaps a metaphor for Lorrain's fear of his own death: 'sa face mauvaise de monstre vorace, qui reviendra vampire et galvaudera la nuit' (*HDM*, 141); 'elle soutire la vie, la force et la jeunesse, voue, envoûte, ensorcelle, comme en plein moyen âge, porte guigne et malheur […] elle pompe la Mort' (*HDM*, 143). As results of anamorphosis (that is, distorted image), these supernatural characters also always enact the fragmentation of time. Similar to Baudelaire's 'Le Masque', the anamorphosis in Lorrain's collection of short stories must be understood as a process that splinters through a double operation of representation/explosion of representation. This process directly opens to the idea of fragmentation and polysemy – as Baudelaire writes, it is a process that exhibits 'le secret de l'allégorie, la morale de la fable'.[55] This is why the previously quoted adjective 'trouble' – immediately declined in its other adjectival form 'troublante' to mark the idea of metamorphosis – brings forth the notion of abjection,[56] a notion that is omnipresent in Lorrain's oeuvre. We might relate this to the harlequin plate, both as something

[54] Edgar Allan Poe, 'The Masque of the Red Death' [1842], in *The Works of the late Edgar Allan Poe*, I, R.W. Griswold (ed.) (New York: J. S. Redfield, 1850), p. 339-45.

[55] Charles Baudelaire, 'Le Salon de 1859', in *Œuvres complètes*, op. cit., p. 678. About the notion of allegory, Benjamin also writes: 'Dans le champ de l'intuition allégorique, l'image est fragment, ruine […]. Le faux-semblant de la totalité se dissipe', in Walter Benjamin, *Origine du drame baroque allemand* (Paris: Flammarion, 1985), p. 189.

[56] 'Ce n'est donc pas l'absence de propreté ou de santé qui rend abject, mais ce qui perturbe une identité. Un système, un ordre. Ce qui ne respecte pas les limites, les places, les règles. L'entre-deux, l'ambigu, le mixte'. In Julia Kristeva, *Pouvoirs de l'horreur: essais sur l'abjection* (Paris: Seuil, 1980), p. 12.

inherently disgusting and as something that breaches the border between food and waste (and between classes, as well as multiplicity vs void).

'Lanterne magique' / 'Les Trous du masque' in *Histoires de masques* (1900)

I argue that two short stories stand out in Lorrain's *Histoires de masques*: 'Lanterne magique' and 'Les Trous du masque'. They are indeed of special importance to the examination of Decadent anamorphosis in relation to the fragmentation of time and the notion of anachronism. They also both translate the fin-de-siècle cultural debates about the crisis of the subject in a period of intense doubts about scientific Positivism. The discontinuity of discourses and the dislocation of the self through anamorphosis in *Histoires de masques* parallel what Valérie Michelet Jacquot's explains in *Le Roman symboliste: un 'art de l'extrême conscience'*:

> Le récit disloqué, démultiplié et dont l'enchaînement est brisé se mettrait ainsi au service du Moi fin-de-siècle lui-même vacillant, dès lors que la science, la nation et Dieu ont été mis en doute. La crise d'un Moi moderne, crise amorcée avec la Révolution et qui s'impose au moment du démantèlement positiviste, se présente comme le thème principal de la littérature dysphorique de la décadence.[57]

'Lanterne magique' constitutes a repository of all the anamorphoses present in the collection.[58] It is a sum of all recurring Fantastic motifs in the writing of Lorrain. In Decadence, the naked face – that is, a face without make-up on it – can suggest a naked canvas, or an empty location. The interest of it lies in what happens when one applies make-up, or a mask, to it. Unsurprisingly, Lorrain himself always wore outrageous make-up and costume, something that we can see in the multiple caricatures of him in the press, along with the portrait that Antonio La Gandara made of him (see the visual representations of Lorrain in the next chapter). Just like all his female characters, he is similar to Jezebel – a Phoenician princess and *femme fatale* who embodies the idea of decomposition and who is emblematic of the art of make-up and what it hides.[59]

'Lanterne magique' is a story of two men: the narrator and his friend André Forlster, an electrician. During the interval of Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust* at the opera, they discuss the concept of Modernity and how it prevents the Fantastique

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[57] Valérie Michelet Jacquot, *Le Roman symboliste: un 'art de l'extrême conscience'* (Genève: Droz, 2008), p. 463.
[58] This short story was first published on 14 December 1891 in *L'Écho de Paris*. It was then dedicated to Oscar Wilde, as I will discuss in the following part on the haunting presences of Wilde in the works of Lorrain.
[59] See Palacio, 'Du maquillage considéré comme un des beaux arts ou le mythe de Jézabel', in *Figures et formes de la Décadence*, op. cit.

emerging. The narrator tells his friend: 'Vous avez tué le Fantastique, Monsieur'. Yet Forlster replies: 'jamais le Fantastique n'a fleuri, sinistre et terrifiant, comme dans la vie moderne !' (*HDM*, 48) The conversation is about the artificial light of the opera house. According to Forlster, this artificial light rather refers to an instrument of revelation or projection that highlights a secret in all its multiplicity; it is similar to the metaphorical aspect of the magic lantern that gives its title to the story. Here, Todorov would probably say that the Fantastique was replaced by psychoanalysis: 'On n'a pas besoin aujourd'hui d'avoir recours au diable pour parler d'un désir sexuel excessif, ni aux vampires pour désigner l'attirance exercée par les cadavres : la psychanalyse, et la littérature qui, directement ou indirectement, s'en inspire, en traitent en termes non déguisés'.[60] Indeed, the presence of artifice gives way to the materialization of the spectral presence: science creates automata.

In this sense, Lorrain's choice to name his short story 'Lanterne magique' is telling. It directly refers to the magic lantern – also named 'lanterne de peur'. Beyond its connotation as a Faustian object[61] (this echoes the opera that the two characters are attending), it is a device that is not dissimilar to the kaleidoscope: it creates a sense of phantasmagoria through its panoramic power and polychrome effect. This device can also operate on time itself – or at least, the perception of time. Thereby it is interesting to note that the magic lantern, more famously, is also a 'metaphorical toy' used by Proust in *La Recherche*.[62] Although 'the magic lantern episode', as Johnson Jr. notices, 'in the first pages of the novel illustrates Proust's multi-level compositional technique',[63] it is also a metaphorical device that the reader encounters again in *Le Temps retrouvé* when the narrator understands and experiences the different layers of time at the Guermantes reception. Just as in Lorrain's 'Lanterne magique', Proust's narrator as spectator sees all around him:

> Un guignol de poupées baignant dans les couleurs immatérielles des années, des poupées extériorisant le Temps, le Temps qui d'habitude n'est pas visible, pour le devenir cherche des corps et, partout où il les rencontre, s'en empare pour montrer sur eux sa lanterne magique. Aussi immatériel que jadis Golo sur le bouton de porte de ma chambre à Combray, ainsi le nouveau et si méconnaissable Argencourt

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[60] Tzvetan Todorov, *Introduction à la littérature fantastique* (Paris: Seuil, 1970), p. 169.
[61] According to the legend of Faust, a magic lantern is present in the professor's class. It projects Trojan heroes and monsters from the mythology – especially Polyphemus, one of the Cyclops described in Homer's *Odyssey* – that attempt to devour some frightened students, before finally disappearing.
[62] See J. Theodore Johnson Jr.'s '"La Lanterne magique": Proust's metaphorical toy', in *L'Esprit créateur*, 11.1, *Marcel Proust* (Anniversary Issue) (Spring 1971), pp. 17-31.
[63] Ibid., p. 17.

était là comme la révélation du Temps, qu'il rendait partiellement visible.[64]

Here, Proust's narrator perceives time in its exploded nature, with all merged layers suddenly becoming apparent all at once through the vision of M. d'Argencourt. Correspondingly, the 'perspective déformante du Temps'[65] projected upon d'Argencourt makes him look like a surreal montage of his various selves, a frightening puppet, a caricature. This constitutes an artistic anamorphosis, for the narrator's gaze finally changes: 'l'identité apparente de l'espace, l'aspect tout *nouveau* d'un être comme M. d'Argencourt'.[66] Drawing on the previously seen similarities between the magic lantern and the kaleidoscope, it is indeed important to note that, as Didi-Huberman puts it: 'dans les configurations visuelles toujours « saccadées » du kaléidoscope, se retrouvent une fois de plus le double régime de l'image, la polyrythmie du temps, la fécondité dialectique'.[67] As a consequence, the vision of the opera room lit by artificial light that the characters experience in Lorrain's story presents a vast panorama of different layers of time – just as in Proust. During the interval, Forlster the electrician embarks on an inventory – in Benjaminian terms, this is similar to the production of a montage – of all the spectral presences sitting in the room. Significantly, he proceeds to do so with the use of another medium: opera glasses. He argues:

> Je connais, moi, deux égrégores et je pourrais ici, dans cette salle du Châtelet, vous désigner et vous nommer plus de quinze personnes absolument défuntes, dont les cadavres ont l'aspect très vivant […] nous sommes ici en pleine assemblée de sabbat sabbatant, et je mets en fait que, tous les soirs, chaque salle de spectacle parisienne, celle de l'Opéra et des Français en tête, est un rendez-vous des mages nécromants. (*HDM*, 50)

Here, Lorrain uses the combination of Decadent anamorphosis made possible through the montage of different layers of times to focus on the hypocrisy of the high society. In addition, the polyptoton 'sabbat sabbatant' represents his system of writing as montage very well. The inflected variations of one and only word convey the idea of movement: the moving aspect of time, and that of language.

What follows next in Lorrain's narrative reads like a long misogynistic review of all the spectral presences present in the room. They first look like surviving witches: 'médicamentées, anémiées, androgynes, hystériques et poitrinaires ; ce sont les possédées

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[64] Marcel Proust, *Le Temps retrouvé*, t. II (Paris: Gallimard, 1927), pp. 88-89.
[65] Ibid., p. 90.
[66] Ibid., p. 91. My emphasis.
[67] Didi-Huberman, *Devant le temps*, op. cit., p. 134.

de la nouvelle et jeune aristocratie' (*HDM*, 52). One of them is clearly identified as an ever-surviving figure who can freely come back to life whenever she likes: 'une très jolie brune, que je ne vous désignerai pas, car elle est mon amie, que la Sainte Inquisition, en 15 et 1600, eût bel et bien rouée vive et brûlée… En l'an de grâce 1891, elle va et vient, opère en pleine liberté' (*HDM*, 53) – this parallels the treatment of Ennoia in Lorrain's *Le Sang des dieux*. There is also a 'mannequin de parade' that seems to be only working 'grâce à des corsages à ressorts articulés' (*HDM*, 52). All this can be echoed in Proust when, in *Contre Sainte-Beuve*, the narrator who seeks to enter the Guermantes milieu feels like he is surrounded by 'des êtres de légendes, de lanterne magique, de vitrail et de tapisserie'.[68] He also writes: 'Une jeune femme que j'avais connue autrefois, maintenant blanche et tassée en petite vieille maléfique'.[69] Once more, Proust's vocabulary confirms the metaphorical use of the magic lantern which, in turn, can lead to anamorphosis. Time is anachronised; it is unwrapped before the narrator's eyes in a multiplicity of fragments of time – just as in Lorrain's narrative. Indeed, in 'Lanterne magique', the stage-level boxes of the opera room are filled with greedy women whose crazed and cracked red lipstick is also an indication of time. That is why the narrator notes: 'celles des halles à plaisir où les visages des femmes émaillés et fardés arrivent à ressembler à des masques' (*HDM*, 78) or even '[n]e sont-ce pas de véritables goules, de damnables cadavres échappés du cimetière et vomis par la tombe à travers les vivants, fleurs de charnier jaillies pour séduire, envoûter et perdre les jeunes hommes ?' (*HDM*, 51) Lorrain's women appear to be a sum of *revenances* that altogether contribute to anachronising time and rendering it through a cluster of heterogeneous temporalities. Consequently, the mask truly stands as a monstrous repository of temporalities.

Yet, as Didi-Huberman argues, anachronism is dialectic: these heterogeneous times mix up and form a moment that is almost outside of time itself – or at least in the interval of it, in the fold of it.[70] This is why the temporality of 'Lanterne magique' is the interval at the opera – the figures that are being observed through opera glasses appear like fetishised images in what seems to be a form of 'dialectic at a standstill'.[71] In the opera room then, the two characters (but this also applies to the reader) witness the dismantling of memory before a structural recomposition of a density. This density is

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[68] Quoted in Johnson Jr.'s "'La Lanterne magique": Proust's metaphorical toy", op. cit., p. 22.
[69] Ibid., p. 91.
[70] I borrow this term from poet Bernard Noël's expression. See Noël, *Sur un pli du temps* (Pau: Les Cahiers des Brisants, 1988).
[71] According to Benjamin, the dialectic image is considered through a process in which 'le passé [se voit] télescopé par le présent', in Benjamin, *Paris, capitale du XIXème siècle. Le Livre des passages*, trans. J. Lacoste (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1989), p. 488.

both temporal and cultural. As figuring the possibility of multiplication, the female spectres of 'Lanterne magique' then become an allegory, or what Stamelman sees as a 'trope de la fragmentation infinie et de la temporalité débordante, figure de la figuration […] l'allégorie signifie la non-existence, l'altérité, et l'absence fondamentale de ce qu'elle rend présent'.[72]

As a consequence, the signifier trapped in the surviving aspect of anamorphosis is put in danger. It looms towards a sense of monstrosity of signification; that is, an exceptional signification made possible through its multiple, overflowing, distorting aspect. Through the narrator's opera glasses then emerges what Benjamin calls a 'Majesté de l'intention allégorique : destruction de l'organique et du vivant – dissipation de l'illusion'[73] that inevitably creates, in the vision of the spectacle unfolding in the stage-level boxes, an increase of polysemy.

The Temporality of the Exploded Body

There is a kind of temporality of the exploded body in *Histoires de masques*. One can even see in Lorrain's short story the revelation of bodies made of exploded temporalities. Yet the dispersion generated by the multiplicity of masks can also lead to the discovery of a void, a vacuum – a certain form of hollow identity devoid of religious, historical or cultural content.

In 'Les trous du masque' – here again the filiation with Poe but also Baudelaire is made clear through a verse of 'Danse macabre' inserted in the epigraph of the short story – the narrator accompanies a friend to a masked ball during a Mardi Gras night. Elements that signify distress are present even before entering the ballroom since it is said that the owner at the entrance is also 'masqué, mais d'un grossier cartonnage burlesquement enluminé, imitant un visage humain' (*HDM*, 91). Then, in front of *L'Entrée du bal*, the two friends realise that a city guard is nothing more than a 'simple mannequin' (*HDM*, 92). On the threshold, the narrator understands that he is slowly entering in *Das Unheimliche* – the uncanny. In the unknown and silent crowd, he notes that 'il n'y plus ni dominos, ni blouses de soie bleue, ni Colombines, ni Pierrots, ni déguisements grotesques mais tous ces masques étaient semblables' (*HDM*, 93). Here, the mask is then recognised as a catalyst for the Fantastique; it is an instrument that problematises the issues of identity and identification. It produces a sense of hesitation

[72] Stamelman, 'L'anamorphose baudelairienne', op. cit., p. 258.
[73] Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire*, op. cit., p. 214.

between reality and illusion – or rather, between the rational explanation and the supernatural explanation when a strange event occurs[74] (this echoes Hoffmann's ostrich on the threshold of reality/fiction evoked earlier in this chapter).

The narrator then appears to be engulfed in a supernatural environment. At some point, he decides to remove the hood of one of them. Yet he exclaims: 'horreur! il n'y avait rien, rien.' Here the repetition of the word 'rien' constitutes an epizeuxis whose function is twofold: first it manifests the anxious stammer of the narrator; it then directly refers to the notion of duplication – or even split personality. The multiplication of the same subject leads to a sense of nothingness that, in turn, is invariably duplicated. The narrator remarks: '[t]ous étaient des faces d'ombre, tous étaient du néant' (*HDM*, 94). When he decides to see if he is also the sole representation of the void under his mask, he realises in front of the mirror that his reflection projects nothing else than the void: 'sous mon masque, il n'y avait rien, rien que du néant!' (*HDM*, 94) The emphasis is equally put on the idea of nothingness: the epizeuxis 'rien'/'rien' reveals the impossibility of exit – the nothingness trapped in a vicious circle. The accomplishment of individual consciousness is therefore broken: if the Other is nothing more than another nothingness, then the Subject, through its external image reflected in the mirror, can only be a 'sorte de singulier *vide*' that stands out because of 'son caractère *fantomatique*' and 'sa solitude quelque peu *sinistre*'.[75]

The distorted and distorting body then only produces a feeling of nothingness. It originates in loss and waste. The dissemination of the subject is indeed a productive fantasy in Decadent literature. It very well reflects the incipit of 'L'un d'eux' – which rightly opens *Histoires de masques* – in which Lorrain crafts a theory that reads like the purpose of masks, especially when he writes: 's'évader de [soi-même]' (*HDM*, 15). It then reverses the Lacanian theory of the mirror stage. Here, Lorrain's subject fails to achieve a sense of mastery and identification by seeing himself in the mirror, since the gaze reflects nothing but the void. The specular image is indeed deceptive. This 'tête-à-tête sombre et limpide du sujet avec lui-même'[76] as void rather alludes to the crisis of the subject – its instability, its incoherence – that is omnipresent in Decadent productions of the fin-de-siècle. It also signifies the fragmentation of culture and language – towards what Jourde recognises as silence.[77]

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[74] On this point see Todorov, *Introduction à la littérature fantastique*, op. cit., p. 29.
[75] Tzvetan Todorov, *Mikhaïl Bakhtine, le principe dialogique* (Paris: Seuil, 1981), p. 146.
[76] Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire*, op. cit., p. 214.
[77] See Jourde, *L'Alcool du silence*, op. cit.

Yet this sense of illusion can also reveal the issue of split personality. In *Histoires de masques*, Lorrain's characters all seem to experience the dispersion of their bodies, the visual fragmentation of their corporal images, and that of others. As a consequence, it is difficult for them to distinguish themselves from the others and therefore reach a sense of unity through self-identification. Rather, Lorrain's characters display a body that is woven from a multiplicity of fragments, just like his own text. Indeed, it is often pervaded and haunted by multiple presences – whether real or fictive. One, in particular, that Lorrain seems to everlastingly re-construct in his narrative: Oscar Wilde.

The Haunting Presences of Oscar Wilde in Lorrain

Wilde-Judas/Wilde-Lazarus

The influence of Wilde on his contemporaries was considerable. Jacques de Langlade notes that 'Gide, Proust, Cocteau ou Jean Genet n'auraient pas transmis le même message'.[78] In 'Oscar Wilde, écrivain français', Jacques de Ricaumont declares that Lorrain also figured amongst the main successors of Wilde. He writes that Lorrain 's'inspira pour le Filde du *Vice errant* comme pour lord Ethal de *Monsieur de Phocas*, esthète pervers et aristocrate dévoyé qui tire sa jouissance de la dépravation des autres et doit quitter l'Angleterre à la suite d'un procès infamant'.[79] Indeed, besides sharing many literary references with Wilde, Lorrain regularly chooses to incorporate fictionalised versions of the Irish writer in his narrative. This is a process that fulfils two major functions: in doing so, Lorrain first celebrates and immortalises the memory of Wilde as a 'gay martyr', while it also allows him to position himself in a literary and cultural, if not social, field. In this section I would like to address the ever-surviving presence of Wilde in Lorrain's production. The point is to analyse what the appropriation and fictionalisation of this important figure bring to the works of Lorrain, in opposition to other writers who also challenged the literary representations of homosexuality in literature (André Gide in particular).

Of course, the influence of Wilde on Gide is significant. As Victoria Reid demonstrates in her article 'André Gide's "Hommage à Oscar Wilde" or "The Tale of Judas"', 'Wilde inspired aesthetic ideas and characters in Gide's fictional oeuvre, namely *Le Traité de Narcisse* (1891), *Les Nourritures terrestres* (1897), *El Hadj ou le traité du faux*

[78] See Jacques de Langlade, *Oscar Wilde, écrivain français* (Paris: Stock/Monde ouvert, 1975).
[79] Jacques de Ricaumont, 'Oscar Wilde, écrivain français', in *La Revue des deux mondes* (October 1975), pp. 56-57.

prophète (1899), *L'Immoraliste* (1902) [the evil character of Ménalque who corrupts the hero Michel indeed shares many traits with Wilde], *La Porte étroite* (1909), *Les Caves du Vatican* (1914)'[80] but also in Gide's autobiography *Si le grain ne meurt* (1924). It is safe to argue that Gide was to Wilde a sort of disciple. Here, I would like to draw a comparison between Lorrain's treatment of Wilde in his literature with Gide's two 'homage' texts to the Wilde – namely 'Oscar Wilde' and 'Le *De Profundis* de Wilde', respectively published in *L'Ermitage* in 1902 and 1905 and later collected in a small volume simply entitled *Oscar Wilde*, published by *Le Mercure de France* in 1910. In both writers, the use of Wilde reveals two distinct strategies.

While these two short texts are presented as a tribute to Wilde, critics such as Reid or Pierre Masson have observed that in fact they can be interpreted as a strategy of appropriation of a literary and aesthetic capital.[81] Masson writes: 'Gide récupère son cas et l'investit d'un rôle à usage personnel: derrière les déclarations de Wilde, provocantes ou édifiantes, il faut savoir lire « autre chose »'[82] while Reid declares that 'Gide is in fact engaged in a game of artistic one-upmanship.'[83] In short, Gide digs a symbolic grave for Wilde. The point, for him, is to 'kill the father' and to become, beyond Proust, the number one representative of gay literature through the use of the pronoun 'I' (although the personal implication manifested through the use of the pronoun 'I' comes rather late in Gide's oeuvre).[84] In opposition, Lorrain celebrates the dead writer as a tutelary figure. In fact, while the Wilde-Gide relationship resembles more a Christ-Judas relationship,[85] I suggest that Lorrain sees in Wilde a sort of Lazarus figure that always resurfaces in his narratives.

Gide met Wilde through Pierre Louÿs in November 1891. Following the success of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Wilde came to Paris in a promotional tour during

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[80] Victoria Reid, 'André Gide's "Hommage à Oscar Wilde" or "The Tale of Judas"', in *The Reception of Oscar Wilde in Europe*, S. Evangelista (ed.) (London: Bloomsbury, 2010), p. 96.

[81] Pascale Casanova, 'Consécration et accumulation de capital littéraire', in *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, 144 (2002), pp. 7-20. In this article, Casanova uses the term 'literary capital' in relation to translation. I choose to use it here more in light of her own interpretation of 'literary and/or cultural capital' in Casanova, *La République mondiale des lettres* (Paris: Seuil, 1999).

[82] Pierre Masson, 'Pour une relecture de *l'Oscar Wilde* d'André Gide', in *Littérature*, 19 (1998), p. 118.

[83] Reid, 'André Gide's 'Hommage à Oscar Wilde', op. cit., p. 102.

[84] When Gide told Proust about his project to publish his memoirs in the early 1920s, Proust famously enjoined the young writer to never use the pronoun 'I': 'Vous pouvez tout raconter, mais à condition de ne dire jamais : *Je*' (in André Gide, '14 mai 1921', *Journal* (Paris: Gallimard, 1948)). Some years before, Wilde already warned Gide about the danger of using such pronoun that, at the time, signified the taboo of homosexuality as much as the representational ideal of 'l'art pour l'art' aesthetic movement. He said: 'En art, voyez-vous, il n'y a pas de première personne.' (see Gide, *Oscar Wilde*, op. cit.). On the writing of same-sex sexual identities, see Michael Lucey, *Never Say I, Sexuality and the First Person in Colette, Gide and Proust* (Durham: Duke UP, 2006).

[85] Reid, 'André Gide', op. cit., p. 102.

which all the Parisian 'gens de lettres' expressed the desire to meet the dandy and hear his apologues. In his 'homage' to Wilde, Gide writes: 'cette année et l'année suivante, je le vis souvent et partout'.[86] Although it is slightly exaggerated, they met again in Biskra in 1895 – where Wilde infamously initiated Gide to young boys – and during Wilde's exile in Berneval in 1897; they met finally in 1900, some months before Wilde died in Paris. In the critical notes to Gide's 'Oscar Wilde', Pierre Masson remarks that:

> L'idéal esthétique et le libertinage homosexuel de l'Anglais [*sic*] avaient tout pour séduire le jeune Gide en quête d'une doctrine et d'un mode de vie. Mais comme pour Nietzche, il fallait que Gide fît sienne cette doctrine, quitte à désavouer partiellement son initiateur, et l'évolution de Wilde à l'issue de sa condamnation lui en donna le moyen. En revendiquant sa nature, Wilde aurait pu, aux travaux forcés, devenir le martyr de l'homosexualité, tel que Gide le rêvera un peu de l'être à l'époque de *Corydon*.[87]

Gide's memories about the dead writer are indeed very harsh. Unlike Lorrain, he does not fictionalise Wilde. In fact, the crude reality of his memories destroys the *mythologisation* of Wilde as a 'grand écrivain' and gay martyr that was at stake at the time. He starts by evoking 'la lamentable fin d'Oscar Wilde' and that 'il faut bien le reconnaître: Wilde n'est pas un grand écrivain'.[88] The rest of the text reads like a succession of tales told by Wilde to Gide that Gide reinterprets and appropriates in what he calls a 'mission représentative'. The repetitive motif of 'the voice' and the fact that Gide's role is to speak and explain Wilde's words and philosophy – and eventually exceed them – depicts Wilde as a ventriloquist defeated by his own dummy. In the last part, Gide emphasizes the decline and degeneration of Wilde: he writes that '[s]es dents sont atrocement abîmées' and that 'Wilde était encore bien mis ; mais son chapeau n'était plus si brillant ; son faux-col avait même forme, mais il n'étais plus aussi propre ; les manches de sa redingote étaient légèrement fangées'.[89] The well-known café scene sees Gide reluctantly sitting at Wilde's table – Gide writes that, in 'un élan d'absurde honte', he tries to sit with his back turned towards the street so no one can recognise him in the company of 'une vieille loque'[90] – before giving him money. This act of charity – retextualised in Gide's 'homage' – is highly representative of Gide's new dominant position; he makes a point to affirm that he is no longer the disciple of Wilde, but the sole representative of gay literature.

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[86] Gide, 'Oscar Wilde' [*L'Ermitage*, 1902], in *Essais critiques* (Paris: Gallimard 'La Pléiade', 2008), p. 839.
[87] Pierre Masson in André Gide, *Essais critiques* (Paris: Gallimard, 'La Pléiade', 1999), p. 1215.
[88] Gide, 'Oscar Wilde', op. cit., p. 836-37.
[89] Ibid., pp. 848-54.
[90] Ibidem., p. 854.

The haunting presences of Wilde in the works of Lorrain, because he fictionalises him, function in a radically different manner. He stands, in Foucauldian terms, as a sort of *dispositif*.[91] Giorgio Agamben explains Foucault's concept as 'tout ce qui a, d'une manière ou une autre, la capacité de capturer, d'orienter, de déterminer, d'intercepter, de modeler, de contrôler et d'assurer les gestes, les conduites, les opinions et les discours des êtres vivants'.[92] The fictionalised *persona* of Wilde encompasses a wide range of intellectual and artistic discourses that not only signify homosexuality and possibilities of transgression, but that also allow the French writer to position his writings in a particular literary field while drawing comparisons between Wilde's personality and his own. In Lorrain's literature, Wilde is then used as a 'dispositif' that represent homosexuality, if not scandal.

Wildean Motifs in Lorrain

In October 1891, shortly before Gide met Wilde, Lorrain hosted a literary dinner attended by Wilde, as well as Henry Bauër, Anatole France, Henri de Régnier, Maurice Barrès, Enrique Gómez Carillo and Marcel Schwob. It is reported by Guatemalan poet Enrique Gómez Carillo that Lorrain hung the effigy of a saint's decapitated head on the wall before the dinner; this surprised Wilde and pushed him to discuss abundantly the figure of Salome, before eventually expressing the urge to write about her, as we know it (the play *Salomé* was published the following year, in 1892).[93] Interestingly, Gómez Carillo notes: 'Abandonnant alors sa langue natale, ce fut en français qu'il essaya sa Salomé'.[94]

We know that Wilde wrote *Salomé* very quickly, perhaps over the course of a month, between late October and the end of November/early December 1891. There has been much speculation as to when, where and in what language Salomé was originally written,[95] but what we know in no way seems to contradict Gómez Carillo's comment. Such information could then lead us to believe that Wilde, after thinking about Salome as literary topic for quite some time, eventually saw the form – a play, written in French – that his writing had to take right after Lorrain's dinner. This dinner then possibly triggered his *Salomé*. We cannot, however, be certain that Wilde indeed

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[91] Michel Foucault theorises the notion of *dispositif* in two books in particular: *L'Ordre du discours* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971) and *Surveiller et punir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975).
[92] Giorgio Agamben, *Qu'est-ce qu'un dispositif?* (Paris: Rivages, 2014).
[93] See Anthonay, *Jean Lorrain, Miroir de la Belle époque*, op. cit., pp. 443-444.
[94] Enrique Gómez Carillo, *Quelques petites âmes d'ici et d'ailleurs* (Paris: Sansot, 1904), pp. 153-55.
[95] See Emily Eells's article 'Naturalizing Oscar Wilde as an *homme de lettres*: the French Reception of *Dorian Gray* and *Salomé* (1895-1922)', in *The Reception of Oscar Wilde in Europe*, op. cit., pp. 80-95.

started a story entitled 'La Double décollation'.[96] Yet the significance of this document shows us that an aesthetic *nexus* between Wilde and Lorrain was created through the figure of the daughter of Herodias. Indeed, a few years later, Lorrain wrote: 'Cette Salomé […] a été, comment dirai-je, l'entremetteuse qui nous mit en présence, M. Oscar Wilde et moi.'[97]

From 1891 onwards, the references to both Wilde and masks/decapitation in Lorrain's literary production emerge as a kind of literary symptom. On 14 December of the same year, Lorrain published a short story entitled 'Lanterne magique' in *L'Écho de Paris*, later incorporated in his volume *Histoires de masques*. It is dedicated to Wilde. Beyond the allusion to the dinner and the tribute paid to Wilde, the interest lies, as mentioned in the previous part of this chapter, in the fact that it displays Lorrain's conception of modern Fantastique[98] – a conception that resonates with Wilde's own theories, particularly in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891). Another short story, entitled 'Réclamation posthume' – published in *Contes d'un buveur d'éther* (1895) – was also dedicated to Wilde. This particular one is significant in the sense that it alludes to the 1891 dinner where Lorrain displayed the saint's decapitated head. In the story, the narrator shows his friend, de Romer, a plaster cast identical to Donatello's *Femme inconnue* (in Le Louvre since 1892) that he painted over that the head becomes a Fantastic domestic object, a decapitated head in an advanced state of decomposition. De Romer tells his friend that such doing is a crime against a piece of art that really existed; he warns him about potential manifestations of surrealistic effects in return. In fact, the story ends with the half-conscious narrator lying in his cabinet witnessing the presence of a headless body, coming to retrieve its missing part. This image constantly re-emerges in Lorrain's literary production and echoes his obsession with Moreau's paintings of Salome and the myth of 'décollation' (most particularly, 'L'Apparition', which also features in Huysmans's *À Rebours*, 1884). Beyond the nod to the Fantastic dimension of Dorian Gray's portrait, it is interesting to consider this *revenance* in relation to the haunting presence of Wilde in the works of Lorrain.

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[96] Incidentally, Wilde does not even mention Lorrain's dinner party in any of his writings or letters.

[97] Jean Lorrain, 'Salomé et ses poètes', in *Le Journal* (11 February 1896). He goes on writing that 'Un conte que j'avais publié sur Salomé piqua la curiosité d'Oscar Wilde, déjà préoccupé, il faut croire, de la figure de la fille d'Hérodias, le poète anglais [*sic*] désira me connaître, et un peu flatté de sa curiosité, je priai Marcel Schwob de me l'amener à déjeuner, et Marcel Schwob me l'amena'.

[98] See the previous section of this chapter.

In *Le Journal*, 17 January 1901 – that is, less than two months after Wilde's death –, Lorrain published an article entitled 'Lui!' that recounts an episode where he met Wilde's doppelgänger in a hotel, in Corsica. He writes:

> Tout à coup la porte vitrée de la table d'hôte s'ouvrit tout grande… et, géant, avec sa forte carrure, son estomac bombé et sa face lourde, aux bajoues tombantes, Il apparut, car c'était Lui, à ne pouvoir s'y méprendre […] c'était Lui, mais rajeuni de vingt ans. […] Sosie n'était pas plus Sosie ; une jeune femme accompagnait le faux Oscar […].[99]

The appearance is so uncanny that Lorrain's two characters evoke an apologue about Wilde, the Christ and Lazarus.[100] The words uttered by Christ ('Lazarus, come forth!'/'Loose him and let him go', John 11:43) that bring Lazarus back to life convey a sense of absolution and redemption – the remission of his sins. In Lorrain's literature, this parallel with Lazarus seems to be drawn from Wilde's 1895 trial that precipitated his downfall until his death in November 1900. Contrary to Gide, Lorrain compares Wilde to Lazarus; it therefore offers him the possibility of 'rescuing' Wilde in his own textual space. This raising from the dead takes place in the fictionalisation of Wilde into Lorrain's literary production – it eternalises his *persona* through retextualisation. It then constitutes a form of miracle that only literature, so it seems, can create.

Naturally, Lorrain is not the only one who wrote about Wilde's possible *survivance*. In 1913, in the third issue of his ephemeral literary magazine *Maintenant*, Arthur Cravan, poet, boxer (but first and foremost nephew of Wilde) wrote an article entitled 'Oscar Wilde est vivant!'[101] The narrative recounts the encounter with Wilde one evening at Cravan's flat in Paris, in March 1913. Cravan resurrects his uncle through the name 'Sebastien Melmoth', the pseudonym Wilde adopted when in exile in France between 1897 and 1900 (it is a reference to Charles Robert Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820), regarded as one of the first Gothic novels, published in 1820; Maturin was Wilde's great uncle). The revived poet confesses that he was identified numerous times after his bringing back to life, especially in Italy. Cravan uses this mystifying narrative to attack Gide's 'homage' to Wilde: 'Je repris : « Avez-vous lu la brochure qu'André Gide – quel

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[99] Jean Lorrain, 'Lui!', in *Le Journal* (17 January 1901). It was republished in Lorrain, *Heures de Corse* (Paris: Sansot, 1905), pp. 19-31.
[100] Ibid., 'Cette histoire du Christ et de Lazare de ce pauvre Wilde'.
[101] Arthur Cravan, 'Oscar Wilde est vivant!', in *Maintenant*, 3 [1913] (Paris: Petite Bibliothèque Ombres, 2010), pp. 41-57.

abruti – a publié sur vous ? Il n'a pas compris que vous vous moquiez de lui dans la parabole qui doit se terminer ainsi : « Et ceci s'appelle le disciple. » Le pauvre, il ne l'a pas pris pour lui ! […]'.[102] While Cravan violently engages with Gide as an ungrateful disciple of Wilde, Lorrain always depicts him as a gay martyr, with references to hard labour and exile – in full possession of his faculties, though. Yet Lorrain did not only refer to Wilde in a symbolic way (or as literary influence, just like Gide) in his literature. In fact, he particularly engaged with Wilde as a literary *persona* right after his death, most notably in *Madame de Baringhel*, *Monsieur de Phocas*, and *Les Noronsoff*, where Wilde becomes a fictionalised character (and a signifier) that imprints a homosexual, scandalous texture upon the narrative.

Lorrain's *Madame Baringhel* is where the fictionalised version of Wilde first occurs. In the second volume, Baringhel has settled down; she is 'plus expérimentée et plus atténuée de gestes et de nuances', but she is still 'fantaisiste' (*MB*, xiv). Lorrain proposes to the reader a series of 'chroniques dialoguées' in which, he writes, 'l'attitude de Mme Baringhel durant les deux terribles années de l'Affaire pourrait intéresser ses lecteurs' (*MB*, xiv). This collection of chronicles is indeed very crucial to get a sense of Parisian cultural life at the time of 'l'Affaire'. Later in the preface, it is said that '[e]lle est de tous les dîners mauves des grandes duchesses et des petits soupers esthétiques où Algernon-fild, esthète et grand poète, fait réciter des vers à rimes titillantes par son pédicure ou masseur' (*MB*, vii). In the first chronicle entitled 'Estampes japonaises', a conversational dialogue between Baringhel and d'Héloé reassesses the status of Wilde, this time naming him openly. It is suggested that Baringhel had an affair – whether sexual or intellectual – with Wilde, whom her friend the art critic d'Héloé calls a 'martyr' (*MB*, 2). As we can see, the mention of Wilde brings a sense of cultural legitimisation and sexual scandal in the narrative; yet Lorrain addresses it through the angle of martyrdom. Besides, the name 'Algernon-fild' is heavily symbolic on many levels. Lorrain uses it again in his novel *Les Noronsoff*.

In *Les Noronsoff*, the reference to Oscar Wilde is even more direct. If Lorrain once again brings about the idea of martyrdom, he also uses Wilde as both a sexual and cultural signifier: 'des matelots costumés et dressés par Filde avaient mimé à miracle toute une suite des tableaux d'Hogarth, des scènes comiques choisies à souhait parmi sa fameuse série du *Mariage à la mode*, des *Buveurs de punch*, et de la *Partie d'Hombre*. […]' (*LN*, 267); '[d]es jeunes filles et des jeunes femmes, choisies parmi les professionnelles beautés

[102] Ibid., pp. 52-53.

de la saison, figurèrent les légendaires courtisanes de la scène de l'*Apparition*. Le *Masque de la Reine Bethsabée* fut un triomphe'. (*LN*, 269) Barely concealed, the references to Wilde circulate in this short quotation through the titles of Filde's works: the 'fameuse série' is indeed a reference to Wilde's comic plays *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1892), *A Woman of No Importance* (1893), *An Ideal Husband* (1895) and *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895) while the mention '*Buveurs de punch*' can also refer to the recurring caricatures of Wilde in the British magazine Punch. Finally, Filde's play *Le Masque de la Reine Bethsabée* is obviously a nod to Wilde's *Salome*. In *Les Noronsoff*, Algernon Filde is a poet in exile (*LN*, 265). He steps into the narrative in the chapter 'L'Envie'. He seems to be used as a textual ornament/culture and sexual signifier that conveys a sense of legendary past enacted both by the haunting presence of the poet and the theme of his plays. Yet Lorrain also emphasizes his scandalous aura:

> Que lui reprochait-on, en somme ? Des peccadilles, des accès de tendresse un peu répétés pour des petites mineures […] Sans cette aventure avec une fille de pasteur la police ne serait jamais intervenue. Le caractère sacré du père de la victime avait tout gâté. C'est la religion outragée et la religion d'Etat que l'on avait vengée en poursuivant Filde ; cette fois son cœur trop tendre l'avait égaré et il avait mal choisi. La respectability du clergyman avait décidé des poursuites; à cette algarade près, la conduite de l'écrivain était la conduite courante des autres hommes. (*LN*, 266)

The description of the causes of Filde's exile is rather transparent. It is a rewriting of Wilde's 1895 trial against the Marquess of Queensberry. Here, Lorrain only substitutes titles and playfully transgresses gender identities: clergyman for Marquess, girls for boys. It is interesting, however, to note that he makes a point of explaining that Filde stands as a martyr in the sense that his behaviour was very common at the time: 'à cette algarade près, la conduite de l'écrivain était la conduite courante des autres hommes.'

Monsieur de Phocas (1901): Rescuing Wilde

Dorian Gray/Phocas

Monsieur de Phocas is a roman à clef, published in 1901. It portrays the story of perverted and blasé dandy Jean de Fréneuse – alias Monsieur de Phocas – who entrusted his journal to the narrator in which are collected his neurosis and aversion to fin-de-siècle society. He is haunted by the figure of Astarte (most particularly, her eyes); his obsession is also materialised in gems, portraits, statues, and the eyes of other characters. As has

been well documented, Lorrain's novel draws from both Huysmans's *À rebours* and Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*; it therefore closes what can be seen as a Decadent triptych shared between the three writers.[103] Wilde's novel itself is heavily influenced by Huysmans's, whose novel features in the narrative as a small yellow book given to Dorian by lord Henry; it corrupts the young hero and precipitates his fate. While some critics refer to Jean de Fréneuse as the direct descendant of Jean des Esseintes, I argue that in fact *Monsieur de Phocas* can be read as a rewriting of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.[104]

While Dorian endures the influence of Basil Hallward and Henry Wotton – Fréneuse suffers the influence of an English painter named Claudius Ethal. Under the pretext of curing him, he slowly corrupts Fréneuse until he finally escapes from his spell by killing Ethal at the end of the novel. This late realization is not fortuitous: it is made possible by the introduction of a third character named Thomas Welcôme, Irish dandy and old friends with Ethal. This is a clear avatar of Wilde. More than offering mere echoes with *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, it seems to me that Lorrain's novel reads like its sequel transferred on the other side of the Channel. Just like Wilde's novel, Lorrain's was pre-published in the press in 1900 before being published as hard copy by Ollendorff in 1901. It follows *The Picture of Dorian Gray*'s pattern: the latter was indeed pre-published in the press in 1890 before being published in 1891 – namely ten years before *Monsieur de Phocas*. Fréneuse's journal starts in April 1891, that is, the very month Wilde's novel was published.

What if Dorian was not dead? What if he had escaped? The depiction of Fréneuse in the incipit of *Monsieur de Phocas* resembles a damaged picture – just like the hidden picture of Dorian Gray: 'M. de Phocas était un frêle et long jeune homme de vingt-huit ans à peine, à la face exsangue et extraordinairement vieille, sous des cheveux bruns crespelés et courts […] l'arabesque tourmentée de cette ligne et de cette élégance, j'avais déjà vu tout cela quelque part'. (*MP*, 49) The last sentence is particularly interesting. It conveys a form of filiation that exceeds Lorrain's actual narrative and betrays the network of literary influences at stake in *Monsieur de Phocas*. Fréneuse's age, too, would correspond to Dorian: 'c'est un monsieur plutôt bizarre, c'est comme son âge ! – Vous savez qu'il a au moins quarante ans. – Lui, il en paraît vingt-huit. – Allons donc, vous ne l'avez donc jamais regardé ? La face est horriblement vieille […].' (*MP*, 57) The description of Fréneuse as a late Dorian goes on:

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[103] See for instance Rachilde, '*Monsieur de Phocas*, par Jean Lorrain', in *Le Mercure de France* (October 1901), p. 198.
[104] Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* [1891], J. Bristow (ed.) (Oxford: OUP, 2008).

> Mieux, le personnage, l'homme même avait une légende qu'il avait créée inconsciemment d'abord et qu'il s'était pris à aimer et à entretenir. […] (*MP*, 51)
>
> Encore une légende ! […] Mais Fréneuse a cent mille ans malgré son corps souple et sa face imberbe. Cet homme-là a déjà vécu dans des temps antérieurs, et sous Héliogabale et sous Alexandre VI et sous les derniers Valois… Que dis-je ? c'est Henri III lui-même. (*MP*, 58-9)
>
> Mon aspect est répulsif ; à première vue, j'effare et j'inquiète. Et puis, il y a mes légendes… (*MP*, 170)

What are these legends? What is this 'profond mystère', which prevails over Lorrain's hero? There lie unequivocal resonances with Wilde's mysterious hero who does not seem to age. Incidentally, the final digression that emphasizes the ever-surviving aspect of Phocas ('Cet homme-là a déjà vécu dans des temps antérieurs') recomposes the characters mentioned in the seminal chapter XI of Wilde's novel: Henri III directly alludes to Dorian dressed up as Anne de Joyeuse while the reference to Alexandre VI connotes Borgia's orgies; finally Heliogabalus stands as a signifier of vice and homosexuality in both novels.[105] Through physical depiction, the two heroes seem to blend into one. Lorrain's insistence on his Fréneuse's faded face – and most particularly his mouth: 'mais la figure est ravagée, le teint bis d'une lassitude abominable, et la bouche ! la crispation de ce sourire. Cette bouche contractée a une expérience de cent ans' (*MP*, 57) – parallels Dorian's 'curved wrinkle of the hypocrite'[106] to a point that one can perceive in Lorrain's part a definite sense of purpose. The only difference is that the mouth of Phocas displays strong marks of ageing. They, of course, cannot be staunched by the picture.

At the end of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Dorian stabs his own portrait and dies at thirty-eight years of age yet looking like he is eighteen – that is to say, more or less the unconfessed age of Fréneuse at the start of his journal, as I mentioned. We can then wonder what would have happened if Dorian had actually survived his own suicide? It is rather easy to imagine Wilde's hero going into exile in France like Wilde himself did after his period of hard labour. The narrative even remarks that Dorian has previously owned a house in Normandy and that he knows Paris perfectly well. Only it seems difficult for Dorian to fully recover his soul – it is trapped in the picture – and to own it totally, to accept it as it is.

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[105] Wilde, *Dorian Gray*, op. cit., pp. 115-16; the Roman emperor is also brought up in Huysmans's *À rebours*.
[106] Ibid., p. 188.

In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Dorian's obsession is exacerbated by the influence of Basil Hallward (the portrait) and Lord Henry Wotton (aesthetics and morals). It is interesting to note that the characters that Wilde imagines in his text resurface in Lorrain's novel through the split personality of Claudius Ethal: '[q]uel homme est-ce que cet Ethal ? Un sincère, un prodigieux artiste ou mystificateur ?' (*MP*, 101) It is then crucial to focus on these two extremes that generate the neurosis of Wilde's and Lorrain's heroes. In both novels, Lord Henry and Claudius Ethal stand as the basis of Dorian and Fréneuse's hysteresis; their words, which awaken new senses through the use of paradoxes, work as a 'caisse de résonance sémantique' upon the subject.[107] They fascinate their targeted listener; they suggest and reveal something new. In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Dorian 'was dimly conscious that entirely fresh influences were at work within him'[108] – namely Basil's. Similarly, in *Monsieur de Phocas*, 'Claudius Ethal, penché à mon oreille, continuait sa nomenclature de monstres [...]. Le cauchemar prit fin lorsque l'Anglais se tut.' (*MP*, 97) Fréneuse goes on writing: 'Quel merveilleux improvisateur, quel éveilleur d'idées neuves, étranges et qui, néanmoins, semblent vraies. Ce Claudius Ethal m'a ensorcelé [...].' (*MP*, 101) Lord Henry and Claudius Ethal's rhetoric transforms into a spell cast on the two heroes. It proposes the foundation of their fall. Just like Clara in Octave Mirbeau's novel *Le Jardin des supplices* (1899),[109] they bear the role of Decadent ventriloquists who precipitate the degradation of their preys; they accompany their case study until the end of both novels.

In *Monsieur de Phocas*, Lorrain calls these characters: 'exili psychologiques' (*MP*, 173). Fréneuse refers to the painter Claudius Ethal as a 'liseur d'âme' (*MP*, 133). He ends up killing Ethal, just like Dorian kills Basil, in front of his work of art. The two characters never cease to reflect each other. In Lorrain's narrative, it is as if Dorian's painter had the opportunity to take his train to Paris. He would then escape the murder committed by Wilde's hero only to resurface in Lorrain's narrative:[110] '[c]e Claudius Ethal est, paraît-il, un terrible mystificateur. A Londres, il a pratiqué le fun avec de tels raffinements d'à propos et de malice qu'il a dû s'expatrier en France ; sa situation, là-bas, n'était plus

[107] See Laure Becdelièvre, *Nietzsche et Mallarmé. Rémunérer le 'mal d'être deux'* (Chatou: La Transparence, 2008), p. 99.
[108] Wilde, *Dorian Gray*, op. cit., p. 97.
[109] Octave Mirbeau, *Le Jardin des supplices* [1899], with twenty original compositions by Auguste Rodin (Paris: Ambroise Vollard, 1902).
[110] In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Basil is meant to leave London for Paris, where he would exhibit his paintings at the gallery Georges Petit, rue de Sèze. Yet Dorian murders him during the night before his departure, and makes his body disappear. This trip is used by Dorian as a reason to claim his innocence.

tenable'. (*MP*, 102) Besides, both painters often visit Georges Petit gallery, rue de Sèze: in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Basil is supposed to exhibit his works there while in *Monsieur de Phocas*, Fréneuse remembers a 'Poupée des Valois' named *L'Infante* that is a reflection of one of Ethal's numerous wax works, while sauntering in the gallery. In both novels, art corrupts the soul. Indeed, Ethal's pictorial works corrupt Fréneuse and force him to passively observe the spectacle of his own depravation through numerous visions: in his journal, he writes: 'sa présence me déprave, son geste crée d'innombrables visions' (*MP*, 137), or '[c]omme à toute une génération d'artistes malades aujourd'hui d'au-delà, il m'a donné le dangereux amour des mortes et de leurs longs regards figés et vides, ressuscitées par lui dans le miroir du temps' (*MP*, 251). Just as in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Ethal's art not only functions as a mirror that reflects the passing of time, but it also corrupts the soul.

Lorrain's main character mentions that Ethal painted four portaits: one of the Duchess of Searley, one of a young boy who suffers from tuberculosis named d'Angelotto, and one pastel of the Marquessa of Beacoscome; finally, he also painted a portrait of Eddy, Thomas Welcôme's sister. Each one of these models is the victim of an enchantment by the 'liseur d'âme': 'la duchesse de Searley, la pauvre petite pairesse qui mourut si malheureusement quelques jours après l'achèvement de son portrait' (*MP*, 63); '*pauvro* [*sic*] *Angelotto* ! Il m'avait encore posé, la veille, de midi à quatre heures ; je n'aurais jamais cru qu'il filerait si vite' (*MP*, 129); 'la duchesse est vraiment morte. Croyez que je n'y suis pour rien. Je cultive seulement une légende, à Londres et à Paris aussi : c'est la seule condition à laquelle on vous reconnaisse du génie'. (*MP*, 266) Claudius Ethal only paints intoxicated, neurotic, diseased people; he paints the exhaustion of the soul. The anxiety of Wilde's influences then also materialises in the idea that art is a reflection of the soul – it is therefore superior to reality. In *The Critic as Artist* (1891), Wilde writes that the artist, through looking within the self, creates 'a mirror that mirrors the soul'.[111] For the critic, it constitutes a subtle way of discovering their own narrative of a myriad of impressions. This is why, in Lorrain's novel, Fréneuse exclaims: 'on devrait crever les yeux des portraits' (*MP*, 74).

Unlike Dorian in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Fréneuse understands in time that Ethal is appropriating him in order to create his masterpiece: a living, moving picture of abjection. He then outmanoeuvres Ethal's enterprise by killing him at the end of the novel. As expected, the spell instantly stops: 'j'ai sauvé peut-être cette douce marquise

[111] Oscar Wilde, 'The Critic as Artist' [1891], in *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde* (London: Collins, 1986), p. 1040.

Eddy, dont il volait l'âme et tyrannisait l'agonie ; j'ai peut-être rompu le charme affreux qu'il avait jeté sur la marquise de Beacoscome' (*MP*, 266) This final expiation clearly hints at the epilogue of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Only here a transfer is needed: more than the work of art itself, it is the artist that reflects the soul of the subject. As previously mentioned, Fréneuse does not understand this on his own. Unlike Dorian, Lorrain's hero is saved by a character that, I argue, corresponds to Wilde. It is Irish character Thomas Welcôme, 'la contestation absolue de la Décadence'.[112] Indeed, the irruption of Wilde into the narrative of *Monsieur de Phocas* reads like the possibility of survival.

Welcoming Wilde in the Narrative

The character of Thomas Welcôme only turns up at the end of the seminal chapter, in which Fréneuse – just like Dorian in chapter XI of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* – suffers from all kinds of visions in Ethal's flat, transformed into an opium den. In the flat, the reader can recognise other figures of the Decadent era (e.g. the comte de Muzarett, author of a volume of poetry entitled *Les Rats ailés* in Lorrain's novel, is a clear avatar of comte de Montesquiou, author of *Les Chauves souris*, published in 1892) but also Wildean characters (the English second class actress Maud White, who only performs in Shakespearean theatre and is rumoured to have an incestuous relationship with her brother strongly echoes Wilde's Sibyl Vane in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*). Lorrain's *Monsieur de Phocas* is indeed a roman à clef.

Thomas Welcôme only interrupts the narrative through various ellipses that are used to warn Fréneuse against the evil powers of Claudius Ethal. Formerly friends with Ethal, Welcôme is also a character into exile: 'Sir Thomas Welcôme a eu jadis, à Londres, une assez fâcheuse histoire' (*MP*, 187); later, the text reveals that he was sentenced to hard labour in 1895 – that is the year when Wilde entered Pentonville prison, following the trial against Queensberry. The causes of detention are not clear. Yet they implicitly evoke homosexuality: 'M. de Burdhes avait été trouvé assassiné dans une petite maison des environs de Londres où Welcôme avait l'habitude de se rendre et où tous deux et d'autres encore se retrouvaient, soi-disant pour célébrer les rites d'un culte inconnu rapporté de l'Extrême Orient par M. de Burdhes. (*MP*, 203) Here, the epithet 'soi-disant' provokes doubts about the nature of this 'religion nouvelle'. The reader who recognised Wilde cannot be fooled, all the more since it was practised in a temple where numerous

[112] See Hélène Zinck's notes in *Monsieur de Phocas*, op. cit., p. 25.

beds were arranged: 'on couchait donc dans ce temple ?' (*MP*, 206), and where de Burdhes's dead body was found at the foot of the statue of Astarte, completely naked: '[d]eux émeraudes incrustées luisaient sous ses paupières ; mais, entre ses cuisses fuselées, au bas renflé du ventre, à la place du sexe, ricanante, menaçante, une petite tête de mort.' (*MP*, 207)[113] Astarte is a female goddess or demon, associated with the sea, maternity and lust; it is in her eyes that Fréneuse seeks gazes of pleasure and agony. Additionally, it is also said that Welcôme himself suffered from visions and abject desires in the past. They translate into nightmares of decapitated heads: 'Comme vous, j'ai eu l'obsession de la mort et de l'horrible; les masques qui vous hallucinent se précisaient en moi dans une tête coupée, cela m'était devenu une maladie, une déséquilibrante obsession : oh ! j'ai souffert!' (*MP*, 178) This of course parallels the dinner Lorrain organised in 1891, as I previously mentioned.

Altogether, the fictionalisation of Wilde plays in Lorrain the role of a *dispositif* – or a cultural, social and sexual signifier. It adds to the narrative texture of Lorrain's works like a suggestive pattern – or an over-coded ornament. Yet, as one can see in *Monsieur de Phocas*, the use of Wilde can also work as a rescue model that fills the gap between Decadence and Modernism. Welcôme not only 'saves' Fréneuse, it also liberates the narrative from its own isolation. Contemporary playwright, David Hare, also uses Wilde as a character. In *The Judas Kiss* (1998), which focuses on Wilde's scandalous relationship with Lord Alfred Douglas, it is interesting to note that the character of Wilde claims:

> I am cast in a role. My story has already been written. How I choose to play it is a mere matter of taste. The performance of the actor will not determine the action. […] I am trapped in the narrative. The narrative now has a life of its own. It travels inexorably towards my disgrace. Toward my final expulsion. […] Yes, in fact, for me, borne along by this story, there is even an odd kind of freedom. I may wear whatever mask I choose.[114]

Similar to Lorrain in Barnes's *The Man in the Red Coat*, Wilde may seem to be 'trapped in the narrative'; but he circulates in it freely. Lorrain sets him free through fictionalisation; Wilde in turn gives Lorrain cultural credit. The first version of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, pre-published in the *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine* (20 June 1890) received violent critiques. The journalists considered the tale 'unclean', a 'poisonous book', 'spawned

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[113] This quote features in Lorrain's *Un démoniaque* (1895), which can be read as fictional matrix to *Monsieur de Phocas*. Passages are recycled in *Monsieur de Phocas* as old narrative fabrics, which gives the ensemble an harlequin-like aspect. In this short novel, de Burdhes also keeps a diary of his downfall and his inevitable death at the foot of a statue of Astarte.

[114] David Hare, *The Judas Kiss* [1998] (London: Faber and Faber, 2012), p. 37.

from the leprous literature of the French *Décadents*' and with 'odours of moral and spiritual putrefaction'. Wilde reacted in those terms: '[m]y story is an essay about decorative arts. It reacts against the crude brutality of plain realism'.[115] I argue that Gide's demythologising 'homage' reads like a tale that stems from that 'crude brutality of plain realism'. Yet, for Gide, it is highly symbolic. It gives him power over his mentor and gives him space to constitute his own myth, as François Mauriac recalls: 'Je crois qu'à certains moments Gide s'est voulu martyr. Un soir, il y a bien des années, il m'a parlé avec nostalgie de la prison où Gustave Hervé expiait ses opinions antimilitaristes.'[116] Gide never forgave Wilde for his use of masks. In his *Journal*, he writes: '[n]e pas se soucier de paraître. *Être*, seul, est important'.[117] On the contrary, Lorrain very much appreciated the idea of performance that Wilde so much embodied. He too liked to use masks and perform various *personæ*, a practice that stands at the core of his 'harlequin poetics', as we have seen. His treatment of Wilde as an ever-surviving Lazarus-like figure in his narrative then creates a *dispositif* that produces not just a decorative, but also transgressive, and symbolic texture on his text. In doing so, Lorrain remythologises the figure of Wilde. Indirectly, it also participates in Lorrain's own process of self-performance, as I shall demonstrate in the next chapter.

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[115] Merlin Holland, Rupert Hart-David (eds.), *The Complete Letters of Oscar Wilde* (London: Fourth Estate, 2000), p. 432.
[116] In *La Victoire de Spartacus*. It is quoted by Monique Nemer, in *Corydon Citoyen* (Paris: Gallimard 2006). p. 266.
[117] André Gide, *Journal (1889-1939)* (Paris: Gallimard, 'La Pléiade', 1977), p. 18.

- CHAPTER IV -

Performance and Gender Performativity

The figure of androgyny permeates the whole of nineteenth-century literature, including British Romantics and Baudelaire alike, and all the way up to the Decadents.[1] In fin-de-siècle literature, the images of androgyny and hermaphrodite co-exist to denote new performative gender and sexual identity (be it male or female) through ambivalence and ambiguity.[2] This is particularly true in the literature of Wilde (Dorian Gray is often described as an androgynous figure) or Péladan, but it is also the case in Lorrain. Lorrain's aesthetics of carnival performance in his oeuvre always opens to the notions of androgyny as a way of criticising gender roles and conceptualising new transgressive gender identities more generally. It often emerges from the costumes that his characters wear during carnivals, balls or on other occasions. Performance, cross-dressing and transvestism support the reversibility of sexes; it therefore creates confusion about gender identity.[3] Lorrain calls it 'le sexe ambigu des déguisements' (*HDM*, 16). In that respect, the character of Harlequin has interchangeable sexual and gender identities; it is an androgynous figure whose poetic and sexual signifier defines his entire production, as seen in the paintings of Paul Cézanne, Edgar Degas and Pablo Picasso, but also Jean Lurçat's *Homosexual Harlequin* in the illustrated book *Toupies* (1925). In the poem 'Coquines' (1883), Lorrain creates the category of 'les sveltes arlequines',[4] which alludes to female homosexuality – also referred to as 'le troisième sexe'.[5] As we have seen, Lorrain also uses 'Arlequine' as a pseudonym in the press; he therefore identifies with the third sex. In his oeuvre, Lorrain playfully perverts the characters of *Commedia dell'Arte* – particularly Harlequin, whose bodily fragmentation stands as a political and social metaphor for the fragmentation of the self, in order to produce a subversive 'gender

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[1] On the myth of the hermaphrodite, see for instance Théophile Gautier, *Mademoiselle de Maupin* (1835); Honoré de Balzac, *Séraphina* (1835) and *La Fille aux yeux d'or* (1835); Charles Baudelaire's poetry; Joséphin Peladan, *L'Androgyne* (1891).

[2] This is drawn from Plato's *Symposium* (c. 385-370 BC), where androgyny and homosexuality are seen in a mythical narrative told by Aristophanes.

[3] In Lorrain's short story 'L'un d'eux', one character is described wearing female stockings on one leg and man's socks on the other one. This creates the feeling of an indeterminate, somewhat 'bizarre', identity: 'chose *bizarre*, tandis que sa jambe droite était haut gantée d'un bas de femme, un bas de soie vert glauque, serré au-dessus du genou d'une jarretière de moire, l'autre pied avait une chaussette d'homme' (*HDM*, 20; my emphasis).

[4] Lorrain, 'Coquines', in *Modernités*, op. cit., p. 22.

[5] The last stanza reveals that 'Une fois seules, les coquines/S'entre-baisent en colombines/Les seins nus devant leur miroir'. Ibid., p. 23. On the notion of 'third sex', see Jack Stick (Jean Lorrain), 'Le Troisième sexe', in *Le Zig-Zag*, 146 (4 October 1885), p. 2.

performativity'.[6] This form of gender parody, which Butler identifies for instance through drag performers,[7] is a subversive political act. Lorrain playfully works on the theatricality of gender differences; yet he also produces a complex definition of gender in general based on precisely the confusion – the fusion – of such differences, in order to create what he calls, one century before Butler, 'le trouble équivoque d'un sexe incertain' (*HDM*, 21). For Lorrain, this triple uncertainty ('trouble', 'équivoque', 'incertain') gives way to the emergence of new gender and sexual identities that he represents himself, as a queer person, almost a 'trans before trans' individual in Belle Époque France.[8] In this chapter, I concentrate on the idea of performance and gender performativity as lying in a chiasmus between 'linguistic interpretation' and 'theatrical performance'[9] – a concept that goes way further than John L. Austin[10] and that emerges directly from Butler's seminal works *Gender Trouble* (1990) and *Bodies that Matter* (1993). For Butler, gender as performative does not designate beings through what they are, but through what they do; it seems to be strongly linked to theatrical performance.

The notions of performance and gender performance are crucial to Lorrain's 'harlequin poetics'; this is particularly true in the social and cultural space, where a subject can construct and perform the self. The question of gender identity – as well as its configurations and reconfigurations – already stands at the core of Decadence, particularly in the works of Rachilde, Péladan and Lorrain.[11] In this chapter, I shall analyse the issue of gender identity in Lorrain through the invention of queerness, as firstly seen in his heroes: Monsieur de Bougrelon, Monsieur de Phocas and Prince Noronsoff are all queer dandies who pursue a form of gender *trouble*;[12] this form of social and sexual reconfiguration is made possible through the experience of the urban and suburban space in the Belle Époque – or 'queer heterotopias'. I shall then move on to explore the visual representations of Lorrain in and out of the media space with regards to performativity and the performance of the self. Performativity is a process that draws

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[6] 'That gender reality is created through sustained social performances means that the very notions of an essential sex, a true or abiding masculinity or femininity, are also constituted as part of the strategy by which the performative aspect of gender is concealed'. In Judith Butler, 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory', in *Theatre Journal*, 40.4 (1988), p. 528.

[7] 'In imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself – as well as its contingency'. In Judith Butler, *Gender trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 137.

[8] Mesch, *Before Trans*, op. cit., p. 8.

[9] See Anne Emmanuelle Berger, *Le Grand théâtre du genre. Identités, sexualités et féminisme en 'Amérique'* (Paris: Belin, 2013).

[10] John L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1962).

[11] See Palacio, *Figures et formes de la décadence*, op. cit.

[12] See Butler, *Gender trouble*, op. cit.

from excess, which, in Decadence, is opposed to Positivism and moral conventions. The dandy's body is, according to Thomas Carlyle, a '(stuffed) parchment-skin on whereon he [the dandy] writes';[13] beyond the issue of gender, it symbolises material and formal preoccupations. I shall finally concentrate on the poetics of excess at stake in Lorrain's Decadent tale *Narkiss* (1898), which is a transposition of the myth of Narcissus into Egypt. The tale, republished as a separate illustrated deluxe edition by the Éditions du Monument two years after Lorrain's death (1908), reads like what Sophie Pelletier calls a 'texte-joyau';[14] drawing on the profusion of gemstones and elaborate words that flood the textual/paratextual space of *Narkiss*, it performs its very own excessive aesthetics. It also reads like Lorrain's metaphor of himself.

The Invention of Queerness

'Fin de siècle, fin de sexe': Lorrain's Dandies

Nowadays, queer theory examines the socially constructed nature of sexual acts – especially non-heteronormative sexualities – and gender identity.[15] In the nineteenth century, the word 'queer' had a connotation of sexual deviance. It was used to refer to both men and women thought to engage in same-sex relationships. The question of gender identity stands at the core of Decadence.[16] Huysmans, Rachilde, Péladan, Villiers, and Lorrain all engage with the reversibility of sexes in their literature (and sometimes also in their lives). In Lorrain's novel *Maison pour dames*, published posthumously in 1908, one character declares that 'en littérature, ils ont le sexe changeant'[17] – a quotation about 'bas-bleus' that also signifies the permeability of gender identity within fiction and writers themselves.[18] The issue of gender performativity in Lorrain's works is primarily visible in the body of his male heroes. Indeed, the theatrical dandies Bougrelon, Phocas and Noronsoff are models of subversion who break away from the heteronormative premise popularised in the late nineteenth century. This is made visible in Lorrain's famous

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[13] Thomas Carlyle, 'The Dandiacal Body', in *The Works of Thomas Carlyle* [1896], vol. I: *Sartor Resartus*, H. Duff Traill (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 217.
[14] See Sophie Pelletier, *Le Roman du bijou fin-de-siècle* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2016), p. 17.
[15] Butler, 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution', op. cit., pp. 519-31.
[16] George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 78; Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin-de-Siècle* (London: Bloomsbury, 1991), p. 10.
[17] Jean Lorrain, *Maison pour dames* [1908] (Paris: Albin Michel, 1990), p. 151.
[18] 'Il y avait Sodome, il y avait Lesbos, nous avons les Bas-Bleus, le troisième sexe ; ni hommes, ni femmes, Bas-Bleus'. (Lorrain, 'Le Troisième sexe', op. cit., p. 2). The expression 'bas-bleu' is derogatory: in the nineteenth century, it designates a grotesque, pedant female writer, who nevertheless constitutes a threat to the established social order (e.g. Delphine de Girardin, Olympe Audouard, Rachilde).

epigram 'fin de siècle, fin de sexe':[19] in this period of transition, he addresses the symbolic relation between gender confusion and historical exhaustion. The androgynous characters of Bougrelon, Phocas, and Noronsoff create this sense of subversion through dandyism and gender performance that opens to the concept of queerness.

Regarded as the primary source for all the literature on dandyism that followed, Barbey d'Aurevilly's *Du Dandysme et de Georges Brummell* (1845) is a biographical essay on British dandy George 'Beau' Brummell. While it reads like a hybrid narrative that is infused with (personal) anecdotes, social history, philosophy and biography, Barbey's *Du dandysme* establishes the key features of the dandy. I am interested in three in particular, which all apply to Lorrain's life and works: the synthesis between life and fiction ('il plaisait avec sa personne, comme d'autres plaisent avec leurs œuvre'),[20] the role of performance,[21] and finally the notion of 'gender trouble'.[22] The dandy *is* what he produces – and what he produces is a form of self-representation that is ambiguous (Barbey notes that 'le dandy est femme par certains côtés').[23] In the second half of the nineteenth century, dandyism is perceived as a reaction against the emerging Modernity and the expression of an identity crisis, as James Eli Adams notes: 'the dandy always comes into focus as a textual mark, one might say, of masculine identity under stress or revision. […] in a precise reversal of earlier valuations, the gentleman exemplifies what has since been called the performing self'.[24] Lorrain's heroes all illustrate the crisis of masculinity that, at the turn of the century, finds its roots in modern economy, social identity, France's humiliation in the 1870 War, the demographic crisis, and the invasion of the public sphere by women (the process of cultural feminisation – and misogyny – that shifts gender roles and sex roles in society); responding to the codes established by Jean-Pierre Bertrand, Michel Biron, Jacques Dubois and Jeannine Paque in *Le Roman célibataire*[25] – in *Monsieur de Phocas*, Welcôme exclaims: 'Nous avons contre nous notre éducation et notre milieu, que dis-je ? notre famille, et j'oublie à dessein les préjugés du

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[19] Cited in Will L. McLendon, 'Rachilde: *Fin-de-Siècle* Perspectives on Perversity,' in *Modernity and Revolution in Late Nineteenth-Century France*, B. T. Cooper and M. Donaldson-Evans (eds.) (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1992), pp. 52–61.

[20] Jules Barbey d'Aurevilly, *Du Dandysme et de George Brummell*, in *Œuvres romanesques complètes*, t. II (Paris: Bibliothèque de La Pléiade/Gallimard, 1966), p. 693.

[21] In *La Fanfarlo* (1847), Baudelaire draws connections between the dandy and the performing woman. The two characters share the same interest for theatrical self-construction. As we have previously seen, Lorrain also has a fascination for female stage performers – particularly lower class artists of the music hall.

[22] Butler, *Gender trouble*, op. cit.

[23] Barbey d'Aurevilly, *Du dandysme*, op. cit., p. 710.

[24] James Eli Adams, *Dandies and Desert Saints: Styles of Victorian Masculinity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 55.

[25] Jean-Pierre Bertrand, Michel Biron, Jacques Dubois and Jeannine Paque, *Le Roman célibataire, d'*À rebours *à* Paludes (Paris: José Corti, 1996).

monde et la législation des hommes.' (*MP*, 211) – Lorrain's Bougrelon, Phocas and Noronsoff all participate in the complexification of gender and sexual identity in Decadence.

Lorrain's male characters are all single, independent aesthetes who live off private income. Following Huysmans' duc des Esseintes, they share a taste for collection. In *Monographie du rentier* (1841), Balzac defines the collector as 'ce personnage à mine pointue, bizarre, fantasque, désagréable, qui se complaît dans la poussière et les vieilleries […] Un homme travaillé de ce mal contagieux nommé *porcelanae morbus*, ou choléra de la terre cuite, nous paraît confiner à la folie.'[26] For the dandy, collection constitutes a sort of material and textual mapping of the 'bizarre' and 'fantasque' self; it is extremely narcissistic. The profusion of objects replaces the specularity of the mirror. Often in Lorrain, the fragmented aspect of *bric-à-brac* interiors symbolises the fragmented bodies of his heroes as they are (re)constructing and (re)performing themselves: '[l]es romans de Lorrain proposent l'histoire d'un texte en train de se composer, constitué de mots-visions et de mots-impressions de sujets qui, au fond, se cherchent et se créent tout à la fois.'[27] Similar to a mirror, the objects always speak with and for the corrupted soul of the dandy, as Baudelaire notes in *Mon Cœur mis à nu* (1887): 'le Dandy doit aspirer à être sublime dans son interruption; il doit vivre et dormir devant un miroir'.[28] The art of collecting creates self-awareness; it parallels the relentless construction and performance of the self – it is a mirror (*aristeia* of appearance) that reflects and realises the metaphysics of the dandy.[29] In this sense, the dandy's self-performance foreshadows the social media practices of modern society, where users and influencers stage their own lives and accumulate a collection of visual capital and specular memories (no doubt that Lorrain would have participated in this game). Lorrain's dandies are all in quest for a lost mirror: objects, jewels, statues, green eyes, old clothes, are all specular objects – in a theatrical sense, they are props with a symbolic power. The dandies are therefore in quest for a lost identity – or rather, an indeterminate, complex gender identity that is transgressive and needs to be performed, as Gougelmann notes: 'le sujet, chez Lorrain, rompant avec le sclérosant théâtre bourgeois du genre, qui fige les identités et contraint les sexualités, se

[26] Honoré de Balzac, *Monographie du rentier* (1841), quoted in Bernard Vouilloux, 'Le collectionnisme vu du XIXe siècle', in *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France*, 109.2 (2009), p. 407.
[27] Pelletier, op. cit., p. 251. See also Robert Ziegler, 'The Spectacle of the Self: Decadent Aesthetics in Jean Lorrain', in *Nineteenth-Century French Studies*, 14.4 (Spring-Summer 1986), pp. 312-23.
[28] Charles Baudelaire, *Mon cœur mis à nu*, in *Œuvres complètes* (Paris: Seuil, 1968), p. 630.
[29] See also the Goncourts' *Maison d'un artiste* (1881).

confronte à la difficulté, voire au danger d'être complètement soi.'[30]

Bougrelon is exiled in Amsterdam. There, he relentlessly seeks to rediscover 'cette effervescence de rut cérébral égarant, égarant l'instinct et franchissant l'au-delà de l'espèce et du sexe' (*MDB*, 124). Bougrelon's story is intimately linked to his late friend Mortimer. Amsterdam is the place where they both transgressed moral conventions – Bougrelon stays in Holland to continuously revive the memories and 'hypothétiques luxures' (*MDB*, 87) that he once experienced with Mortimer. There, the two friends lived together, in a '*souffroir*, à deux pas même de l'hôtel de l'amiral Ruyter, dans la brume et le vent du quai du prince Henri' (*MDB*, 38). Although Bougrelon and Mortimer are no more than friends, it rapidly appears that Bougrelon is always looking for the company of men – most precisely sailors, just like Lorrain himself does.[31] The places of ill repute in Amsterdam or Toulon are for him spaces of experience where he can perform and reconfigure his social and sexual identities, as I will analyse next through the notion of 'queer heterotopia'. Modelled on Barbey d'Aurevilly,[32] Lorrain's hero has all the characteristics of the dandy (the painted face, jewellery, clothes and theatrical gestures); he is both the 'héros prestigieux de ce conte' and a 'cadavre peint, corseté, maquillé et cravaté' (*MDB*, 23); the narrator even calls him 'un monstre' (*MDB*, 51).[33] In short, Bougrelon is a queer performer. Even more so, he is perhaps, ahead of his time, inventing a new transgender identity – as a departure from gender more generally.[34]

In *Sexualités décadentes chez Jean Lorrain: le héros fin de sexe*, Phillip Winn classifies the various symptoms of homosexual neurosis in the character of Monsieur de Phocas. Most notably, Phocas, like Bougrelon, is a dandy with queer tastes: make-up, jewellery, clothes and flowers. Throughout the novel, he is haunted by the look of a statue that signifies desire and sexual transgression. Early in the novel, Phocas writes a list of heterosexual experiences in his diary: 'j'ai eu dans ma vie des ballerines impubères, des duchesses émaciées, douloureuses et toujours lasses, des mélomanes et des morphinées' (*MP*, 26).

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[30] Stéphane Gougelmann, '« En littérature ils ont le sexe changeant ». Jean Lorrain et l'émancipation des catégories de genre', in *Romantisme*, 179.1 (2018), p. 72. In his article, Gougelmann also addresses the notion of queer in relation to Lorrain. He writes that 'Jean Lorrain, si fin de siècle dans son goût du bizarre et des psychés tortues, peut être considéré comme un écrivain *queer* avant la lettre' (pp. 74-5).

[31] This directly foreshadows Jean Genet's own sexual cosmogony – most particularly in his novel *Querelle de Brest* (1947).

[32] Winn, *Sexualités décadentes*, op. cit., p. 119.

[33] Bougrelon also very much prefigures the caricatures of Lorrain in the Belle Époque press, that I will examine in the next section of this chapter.

[34] Transgender, according to Stryker, is defined as 'people who move away from the gender they were assigned at birth, people who cross over (trans-) the boundaries constructed by their culture to define and contain that gender.' In Susan Stryker, *Transgender History: The Roots of Today's Revolution* (New York: Routledge, 2017), p. 36.

Yet the list shifts from relationships with young girls and women to the experience of another type of body that creates trouble in gender identities: 'j'ai même eu des insexuées des tables d'hôte de Montmartre et même jusqu'à de fâcheuses androgynes' (*MP*, 27). Finally, Lorrain hints at homosexuality and pederasty through Phocas's sexual desire for young sailors (*MP*, 47-8). The transgressive desires and obsessions that haunt Lorrain's hero throughout the narrative all participate in the search for the construction and performance of a new gender and sexual identity that his male characters more generally cannot fully realise.

In *Les Noronsoff*, Prince Noronsoff is an extension of Bougrelon and Phocas. They share the same interests. Last heir of a Russian family, Noronsoff represents 'l'agonie d'une race' (*LN*, 118) that materialises in dandyism, identity crisis and the relation to Decadent time – that is, the end of civilisation or historical exhaustion. His multiple personality is echoed by the suggestions that he circulates through non-heteronormative regimes. He feels that his soul is the soul of a girl; he also feels that this is the soul of a monster (*LN*, 346). Namely, Noronsoff's homosexual desires are a source of guilt. Interestingly though, this feeling participates in the formation of early considerations on transgender as they allude to the feeling of having the wrong type of body (girl/monster). Like Phocas, Noronsoff also has a taste for young sailors.[35] Before Lorrain's hero even appears in the narrative, it is proposed that his sexuality is transgressive: 'il arriva à Sacha de se prendre d'un sentiment très vif, d'une sorte d'amitié tendre et mélancolique pour un matelot d'Aigues-Mortes' (*LN*, 184). It is therefore unsurprising to see Noronsoff surrounding himself with men, particularly two young sailors/adventurers called Rabassol and Pierre Etchegarry. The Prince likes to hear their tales; yet he seems to enjoy their presence for different reasons: 'Marius Rabassol venait d'entrer. […] « Il me plaît, déclarait Noronsoff en se renversant dans ses coussins. Quelle carrure ! Mes compliments, comtesse, vous vous connaissez en hommes ! » Et sur cette impatience il disait au marin d'avancer.' (*LN*, 188). Just as in *Le Sang des dieux* and *Monsieur de Phocas*, the theme of ephebism is also directly addressed in *Les Noronsoff*. It reveals the transgressive sexual identity of the Prince – for, further than homosexuality, it is alluded that Noronsoff indulges in pederastic relationships (that is, a man who is engaged in an erotic relationship with an adolescent boy). Noronsoff only spends time

[35] Analysing a letter written by Lorrain in 1885, Palacio remarks that Lorrain possibly constructed a personal myth of homosexuality based on the encounter with a 'matelot blond', therefore prefiguring Genet's own homosexual cosmogony. In Jean de Palacio, 'Vices épistolaires', in *Revue des Sciences Humaines* (April-June 1993), p. 97.

idly with young men. He is subsequently attracted to two young boys – brought to the Prince by their mother Schoboleska. This creates a particularly transgressive scene, suggesting that the two boys are being prostituted by their own mother, 'une Polonaise ruinée, plus jeune, mais encore jolie, bas-bleu et théosophe, dont les doctrines subversives et la complète amoralité enthousiasmait l'extravagance de Wladimir' (*LN*, 155); 'Tout en buvant, Noronsoff jouait avec les cheveux de l'aîné des Schoboleski, Nicolas, assis près de lui sur le divan ; sa main s'attardait dans les boucles blondes et serrées de l'enfant' (*LN*, 171). In *Les Noronsoff*, young men and children ('l'enfant'!) become 'hommes de joie' – or sexual objects. This scandalous novel that liberally engages with pedophilia would eventually incriminate Lorrain. *Les Noronsoff* – and by extension, Lorrain's own *persona* – stood as a justification of transgressive behaviour after Baron Jacques d'Adelswärn-Fersen re-performed some of its most unsavoury passages in real life, with underage boys in Paris' *beaux quartiers* (as we shall see in more detail in the next chapter).

According to Barbey, dandyism resists definition. Breaking the moral, gender, and sexual conventions, the dandy nonetheless has a subversive status that Bougrelon, Phocas and Noronsoff all embody. They blur the boundaries, especially between sexual and gender categories. As we have seen, it is primarily in the social margins that the transgressive fantasies of Lorrain's heroes come to life. Yet it is also in peripheral spaces that the experience of transgression – be it social or sexual (how social, gender and sexual identities are performed and reconfigured in such spaces) – takes place; we shall refer to these spaces as 'queer heterotopias'.

'Queer Heterotopias'

Since the 1980s, it has been commonly accepted that gender is socially constructed.[36] It is historically bounded and it is determined, as I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, by what one does more than by what one essentially is. Space can also be socially constructed. According to Henri Lefebvre, it is produced by the ones who use it every day;[37] being both historical and dialectical, it is productive and performative. Space therefore reflects social norms and embodies gender relations. This is particularly true in Lorrain's works, where the question of gender is thought in relation to space, most

[36] See for instance Candace West & Don Zimmerman, 'Doing Gender', in *Gender and Society*, 1.2 (1987), pp. 125-51.
[37] Henri Lefebvre, 'La Production de l'espace', in *L'Homme et la société*, 31-32 (1974), pp. 15-32.

particularly suburban space, in Belle Époque Paris. At that time, the figure of the homosexual is not only conceived by the doxic discourse as being against nature,[38] but it is also considered a symptom of the toxic underside of industrial, urban, and increasingly cosmopolitan Modernity. Urban Modernity in nineteenth-century Paris – particularly in the second half of it, with the realisation of Baron Haussmann's colossal urbanisation project – emerged from dramatic changes to the construction of the city and social life. The experience of gender and sexual transgression is also redefined through the appropriation of peripheral spaces of urban Modernity; there, space and gender are de-constructed,[39] as seen in Lorrain's works – primarily in *Un démoniaque*, *Monsieur de Phocas* and *La Maison Philibert*.

The experience of the margin – more precisely, space and sex as *trans*formation – through the writing of liminal and peripheral places in Lorrain's literature offers a case study for such remarks. Drawing on Foucault's concept of 'heterotopia',[40] these spaces can be defined as 'queer heterotopias'.[41] The term 'queer heterotopia' can be understood as space for the 'other' to be transgressive, located in real, urban spaces. 'Queer heterotopias' are non-normative places where individuals can challenge the heteronormative regime and are 'free' to perform their gender and sexuality without fear of being labelled, marginalised or punished. In 'Des espaces autres' (1967), Foucault notes that 'il y a des lieux privilégiés, ou sacrés, ou interdits, réservés aux individus qui se trouvent, par rapport à la société, et au milieu humain à l'intérieur duquel ils vivent, en état de crise.'[42] These places are defined more specifically as 'hétérotopies de crise', or 'hétérotopies de déviation'. In everyday life, escaping repression requires the creation of 'hétérotopies de déviation': Foucault identifies them as sanatoriums, mental hospitals or prisons, but I argue that in the nineteenth century, the cultural topography of liminal places like 'guinguettes', travelling carnivals and circus, balls (e.g. 'bal des Chiffonniers', 'bal des Vaches'), 'lupanars', and freak shows can also be called heterotopias of crisis; they are also places where one finds harlequin figures, 'des individus dont le

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[38] Incidentally, *Against nature* is the title given to the English translation of Huysmans's *À rebours*. In *L'Imaginaire décadent*, Pierrot reminds us that fin-de-siècle writers refuse any determinism and try to escape nature, to deny as far as possible the biological species concept. In Pierrot, *L'Imaginaire décadent*, op. cit., p. 19.

[39] Magali Peyrefitte, Erin Sanders-McDonagh, 'Space, power and sexuality: transgressive and transformative possibilities at the interstices of spatial boundaries', in *Gender, Place and Culture*, 25.3 (2018), pp. 325-33.

[40] Michel Foucault, 'Des espaces autres' [1984], in *Dits et Écrits*, t. IV (Paris: Gallimard, coll. 'Quarto', 2001), pp. 1571-581. According to Foucault, heterotopias are spaces that suspend, neutralise or reverse a given set of relations.

[41] I borrow this term from Angela Jones, 'Queer Heterotopias: Homonormativity and the Future of Queerness', in *InterAlia: A Journal of Queer Studies*, 4 (2009), pp. 1-20.

[42] Foucault, 'Des espaces autres', op. cit., p. 1575-576.

comportement est déviant par rapport à la moyenne ou à la norme exigée'.[43] In Lorrain, the sites around/beyond the Paris fortifications are often a place where the characters seeking to refashion their identity can engage in politics of subversion. As Hamon has identified in his *Dictionnaire thématique du roman de mœurs* (2003), this is where they can dislocate the normative configurations of sex, gender but also social identities ('mélanges plus ou moins incongrus ou homogènes d'âges, de sexes, de classes').[44] In the peripheral, liminal space of the suburbs, through sexual practice – homosexuality – or aesthetically transforming one's body, Lorrain's characters defy the conventional sex/gender system.

According to Rachilde, Lorrain proclaimed himself 'fanfaron des vices'.[45] He was openly gay at a time when the administrative police still kept records of homosexuals in Paris.[46] His oeuvre provides a repository in which both city space and collective activity are recorded, organised and celebrated; peripheral spaces in his works – especially short stories and novels – often stand as the theatre of gender and sexual transgressions. I argue that liminal places, as mentioned above, often stand as the theatre of multiple reversals that comprise sexual inversions in Lorrain's literature. Sexual inversion is a term that was mostly used by sexologists (i.e. Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, Havelock Ellis, Sigmund Freud) to refer to homosexuality in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.[47] It defines a theory according to which homosexuals were 'invertis', that is to say they were people who appeared physically male or female on the outside, but felt internally that they were of the opposite anatomical sex. There is therefore a tension between the inside and the outside. In Lorrain's life and works, this tension is both lived and textualised through *flâneur* practices and the experience of transgression in the urban periphery.

Lorrain lived in 45, rue d'Auteuil, in the western part of Paris.[48] In the second half of the nineteenth century, Auteuil was a bourgeois yet peripheral neighbourhood in Paris. It is still the case today. At the time, the French capital was separated from the suburbs by an enclosure. The Thiers Wall – or 'fortifications' –, last of the defensive walls of Paris, was built under Louis-Philippe in the early 1840s and was only demolished in stages between 1919 and 1929. It is now replaced by the *boulevard périphérique*. The sloping area outside the wall marked the beginning of the periphery (*banlieue*). It was

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[43] Ibid., p. 1576.
[44] See the entry 'Bal' in *Dictionnaire thématique du roman de mœurs*, op. cit., p. 117.
[45] Rachilde, *Portraits d'hommes*, op. cit., pp. 77-92.
[46] See Régis Revenin, *Homosexualité et prostitution masculines à Paris (1870-1918)* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2005).
[47] In *Sexual Inversion* (1897), Havelock Ellis defines congenital sexual inversion as 'sexual instinct turned by inborn constitutional abnormality towards persons of the same sex'. Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, vol. I, *Sexual Inversion* (Forest Grove: Pacific University Press, 2001), p. 5.
[48] Anthonay, *Jean Lorrain, Miroir de la Belle Époque*, op. cit., p. 420.

almost always recorded as a dangerous place: 'ce territoire formant ceinture autour de Paris est dépourvu, à la différence de Paris, de réglementations urbanistiques. C'est la zone des barrières d'octroi, des fortifications […] un lieu dangereux (les « apaches » fin-de-siècle)'.[49] In fact, danger was also found directly inside the wall. Indeed, due to its late urbanisation in the second half of the nineteenth century, Auteuil was itself perceived as a semi-liminal space: *hôtels particuliers*, courtesans' mansions and writers' apartments (Lorrain precisely moved to Auteuil to be closer to Edmond de Goncourt) were directly linked to commercial premises and factories. Lorrain wrote extensively about such space and what lies beyond. Industrial towns, which were part of the suburban 'little belt' like Malakoff, Montrouge, Vanves, Issy, Billancourt, Boulogne, and also Neuilly, Levallois-Perret, Clichy or Asnières, all feature rather regularly in Lorrain's narratives. Interestingly, they are all located around Lorrain's home in Auteuil.

In the collection of short stories *Histoires du bord de l'eau*, the narrator Monsieur Jean remembers tales of the suburbs with his friend Guilloury, who is an innkeeper in a cabaret located near the Point-du-Jour viaduct. The Point-du-Jour viaduct is an important location as it is part of the fortification; it also designates a liminal space. The two characters evoke a troubled space where the experience of transgression and ambiguity always happens in a liminal time: 'L'Homme des berges' always appears 'entre chien et loup'. The spatial expansion is confronted to multiple temporalities (following the notion of heterotopia, Foucault defines them as 'heterochronies'): 'heterotopic urban places construct a perpetual time accumulation and become timeless'.[50] There, like many other characters that evolve in Lorrain's disenchanted Modernity – ruffians, robbers, murderers, pimps and gangsters, prostitutes and homosexuals –, he hangs around aimlessly, as Baudelaire does in *Tableaux parisiens* (1861): '[l]'air presque d'un flâneur sans la bizarre mobilité de ses yeux, il rôde et muse au bord de l'eau du Point-du-Jour à Billancourt, de Billancourt à Boulogne, s'attardant aux gymnastiques en plein vent et aux guinguettes' (*UD*, 350). These peripheral places all contain the cabarets and other drinking establishments located in the outskirts of Paris, on the edges of the river Seine and Marne; by staying out of the defined urban space, owners did not have to pay the excise duty for the wine that they sold to their (mostly working-class) customers. Off the boulevard and central Paris, Lorrain's moves in peripheral places entail a reflexion on social status, gender and sexuality. In this sense, the suburbs as heterotopias, with their

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[49] *Dictionnaire thématique du roman de mœurs en France*, op. cit., p. 188.
[50] Ilgy Toprack, 'A diachronic approach on heterotopic urban space', in *A/Z ITU: Journal of Faculty of Architecture*, 12.3 (2015), p. 160.

infinite set of social practices, come to redefine the structures of order. Hybridisation produces the multiplication and amplification of differences and (social, but also gender and sexual) identities, as we have seen through the *mundus inversus* of 'La Femme à Wilhem' or *La Maison Philibert* in the first chapter.

In *La Maison Philibert*, the narrator recalls an episode that shows a duke coming to Philibert's brothel with other men; they go up to the rooms with girls, but the girls come back down shortly claiming: 'Patron, pour ce qui se passe là-haut on n'a pas besoin de nous' (*LMP*, 148). This, of course, implies that the men indulge in homosexual practices. Later, in a rough ball organised in le Point-du-Jour ('la brutalité de ce bal de banlieue'; *LMP*, 241), Ludine de Neurflize – avatar of famous lesbian courtesan Liane de Pougy – and her friend Henri Mareuil, as well as the duc de M… and princess Vasciani, together wander around looking for same-sex sexual relationships. In parallel, the focalisation shifts to concentrate on male prostitution. On the island of Point-du-Jour, all social and sexual possibilities are reconfigured: 'Une odeur de sueur et de jeunesse, de misère et de luxure, une atmosphère d'audace et de force aussi et une sensation de dangers s'émanent de cette foule instinctive' (*LMP*, 242). If gendered relations at the turn of the century are very scripted in the middle and upper classes, it is interesting to note that they are far more flexible in the 'instinctive' lower classes that Lorrain likes – where misery and audacity, as the above quotation shows, trigger danger and lust: in *Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality since 1800*, Jeffrey Weeks writes that '[t]he moving across the class barrier […] was an important theme in the homosexual world'.[51] Lorrain's places on the other side of the fortifications are sites of subversion. The periphery in urban space then seems to provide a place for social as well as gender and sexual hybridity.

For Lorrain, the heterotopia that the periphery represents is also a form of 'queer heterotopia'. It is in the peripheral space that the experience of peripheral sexuality – as non-normative sexual manifestation – is made possible. In the novella *Un démoniaque*, the hero roams around in the periphery ('ces routes sinistres qui longent les fortifications […] au bord des terrains vagues et des guinguettes à l'abandon', *UD*, 38) looking for new vices. Like his double Monsieur de Phocas, *Un démoniaque*'s hero de Burdhe has an obsession with decapitated heads; he finds similar visions in heterotopias: 'je sais où et comment faire naître la déséquilibrante et cruelle vision […]. Que l'endroit soit la route de la Révolte, la plaine de Malakoff ou les carrières de glaise de Montrouge, Astarté rit

[51] Jeffrey Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality since 1800* [1981] (London: Routledge, 2017), p. 113.

partout, dans les solitudes de Gennevilliers comme sur les bords empuantis de la Bièvre' (*UD*, 38). This quotation shows that transgression takes place in and beyond the liminal space of the Fortification; the sought-after experience of transgression grows more and more evident as de Burdhe sinks into dirty, empty suburban spaces that connote a sense of danger (at the turn of the century, all the abovementioned marginal places where social and symbolic order is reversed were commonly known as the territory of 'apaches', 'souteneurs', 'en-dehors' and other violent gangs).[52] This passage is almost identically reproduced in *Monsieur de Phocas*. In the novel, Lorrain further adds 'ces paysages lépreux et pauvres, la suggestion du crime, la floraison du mal' (*MP*, 119), emphasising the idea of the suburban space's fertility ('floraison') as negatively associated with 'wrong' behaviours.

Yet the anticipation of moral transgression also produces gender transgressions. Astarte is the Hellenized form of the Middle Eastern goddess Astoreth. She was connected with fertility, sexuality and war. Though she is remembered in feminine form, she does have mixed gender incarnations, sometimes depicted as a hermaphrodite. Astarte – just like Antinous in Rachilde's novel, *Monsieur Vénus* (1884) – provides a celebration of indistinction that *de facto* questions the concepts of norm and nature. In Lorrain's text, the presence of Astarte clearly signifies homosexuality. As is often the case in nineteenth-century literature, Lorrain draws on Greek literature to talk about 'inversion' and different sexual orientations. For instance, the figure of the hermaphrodite is used to describe male dandies or courtesans – all characters that convey the idea of non-binary in Lorrain, as 'a range of gender experiences, subjectivity and presentations that fall across, between or beyond stable categories of 'man' and 'woman".[53]

In *Monsieur de Phocas*, the hero is also attracted by the figure of Astarte. The emerald eyes of a statuette of Astarte obsess him. He projects them onto various characters like the androgynous and sexually equivocal actress Wille Stephenson and dancer Izé Kranile. Yet he does so also with sailors, a young Kabylian male dancer, and a boatman on the river Seine; they are all encountered in a peripheral space. Towards the end of the novel, the hero finally recalls that the eyes that first triggered, and now symbolise, desire and vice, are those of Jean Destreux. Destreux is a male labourer on his family estate, that Phocas loved as a young boy: '[c]e sont les yeux de pureté de mes

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[52] See Anne Steiner, *Les En-dehors* (Paris: L'Échappée, 2019).
[53] Sally Hines, 'Introduction', in *Transgender Identities: Towards a Social Analysis of Gender Diversity*, S. Hines and T. Sanger (eds.) (London: Routledge, 2010), p. 1.

années d'ignorance, et ce n'est qu'après m'être *dépravé* et *corrompu* au contact des hommes, que j'ai convoité follement les yeux verts' (*MP*, 316-17, my emphasis). The construction of the sexuality of the eponymous dandy does not differ from the previous quotation. Through his quest for 'queer heterotopias', Phocas embraces gender and sexual 'corruption'/transgression: he becomes 'un homme à *ça*, à cette fille, un sadique, un assoiffé de sensations, violentes et complexes, ce qu'ils appellent un raffiné, un homme à goûts *bizarres*…' (*MP*, 83; my emphasis). Lorrain's 'it' ('*ça*', highlighted by the italics) – not dissimilar to Freud's *id* (or unconscious psychic energy; it works towards the satisfaction of basic urges and desires) – calls for a pulse that knows no gender and sexual norms, nor spatial or temporal order. Those violent and complex sensations, those bizarre tastes that Phocas evokes are to be found and performed in 'queer heterotopias'.

In his life and works, Lorrain often blurs the boundaries between gender/sex, public/private and space/place. I address these boundaries through the prism of urban space, a focal point to distinguish between the central city and the peripheral suburbs. The heterotopia is a 'space of alternate ordering',[54] a place of otherness. Yet the non-binary can also be extended to the non-separation between fiction and reality. The notion of 'queer heterotopia' construes a space where narratives of identity can be performed: this is exactly what Lorrain does at the intersection of fiction and reality. If Lorrain did not invent the concept of queerness in his literature *per se*, perhaps he did invent the idea of living queerness in the interaction between fiction and reality. The Belle Époque as the era of self-making and performing originates from dandies and the construction of the self. In *Rising Star*, Rhonda K. Garelick writes that '[t]he crucial and irresolvable complexity at the root of dandyism is that dandies are both real historical people and literary heroes'.[55] Namely, dandies exist in an interval between reality and fiction; this is where Lorrain positions himself in order to construct his own legend. While Garelick declares that Wilde's play *Salomé* (1892) 'announces definitely the arrival of the camp personality' and 'narrates the end of the Decadent dandy and his metamorphosis into a much more public, overtly gay, still deeply connected to female performance', I argue that Lorrain is the perfect representation of the theatrical construction of the self as queer through performing gender as 'dandy de la fange' and 'ambassadeur de Sodome à Paris'[56] in the media space. This is what I would like to examine in the visual

[54] Kevin Hetherington, *The Badlands of Modernity: Heterotopias and Social Ordering* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 9.
[55] Garelick, *Rising Star*, op. cit., p. 7.
[56] Jullian, *Jean Lorrain ou le Satiricon 1900*, op. cit., p. 60.

representations of Lorrain.

Visual Representations of Lorrain

Staging the Self

Lorrain's strategies of self-performance and self-promotion provide the modern reader with a sense of the paradigm shift that occurred in the Belle Époque cultural field (that is, the change from being autonomous to becoming media-bound), but they also directly inform the society of spectacle in which we now live. In this respect, Lorrain participates in the fetishisation of the author and its visible commodification. He consequently prepares new authorial strategies – 'postures', social media, transfictionality and transmediality – in order to build modern forms of cultural capital in new media regimes, as we still know them today. Indeed, he understands the growing significance of publicity, and 'visibility'[57] as a form of capital.[58] According to Arnould Frémy, self-advertisement started to pervade the literary field in the first half of the nineteenth century, most particularly with the Romantic school and the poetics of scandal.[59] In *Les Mœurs de notre temps*, Frémy writes that '[i]l fut convenu qu'on pouvait poursuivre la popularité par toutes sortes de scandales, de coups de trompette ; souvent par les signes extérieurs les plus ridicules. Alors fut inventée la réclame […].'[60] Balzac, Flaubert, Colette, Guitry, Morand, Cocteau and many more all participate in the construction of themselves as 'personnage spectaculaire'[61] through various strategies of 'visibility'. The emphasis put on the author's character and life, following Sainte-Beuve's well-known biographical approach, tends to reveal that the author slowly becomes both an agent and object of promotion throughout the nineteenth century:

> Tant l'auteur tend à prendre le pas sur l'œuvre qu'on investit à titre publicitaire ses divers atours biographiques : corpulence, habits, habitations, attributs totémiques (la canne de M. de Balzac, les cigares de Musset), boissons, voyages, maîtresses, et

[57] Nathalie Heinich sees the notion of visibility as a social attribute characterised by the reproduction and circulation of one person's images and name in the media and cultural field. She writes that 'ce n'est pas la vedette qui est à l'origine de la multiplication de ses images (car à l'origine, il n'y a qu'une personne dotée de certains talents), mais ce sont ses images qui en font une vedette', further adding that '[c]ette propriété structurelle [visibility] prime sur les propriétés substantielles – talent, héritage, beauté, charisme, etc. – qui justifient l'accès au rang de personnalité'. In Nathalie Heinich, *De la visibilité. Excellence et singularité en régime médiatique* (Paris, Gallimard, 2012), pp. 21 and 39.
[58] Ibid., p. 201.
[59] Although it is not recorded, Lorrain could have come across the texts of master of advertising and self-promotion P.T. Barnum.
[60] Arnould Frémy, *Les Mœurs de notre temps* (Paris: Librairie nouvelle, Bourdilliat et Cie, 1861), p. 130.
[61] See Odette Pannetier, 'Personnages publicitaires', in *Miroir du monde*, 136 (21 March 1936), p. 23-25.

> toutes sortes d'« inventions romanesques » par lesquelles il donne un style à sa vie, car elles finissent par constituer sa « marque » auctoriale.[62]

Lorrain, too, constructed his own authorial brand. Negotiating between fiction and reality, he eventually became his own biographical fiction. This histrionic attitude is represented in the press using the same totemic features: rings, rouge, clothes (they are also the totemic features of his dandy characters). Throughout his career, the representational portraits of Lorrain seem to highlight particular biographical and/or literary defining features of the author, which always convey a notion of multiplicity. As seen in chapter II, Lorrain constantly associates with his characters, pushing Rachilde to declare: '[I]l était à la fois le peintre et le modèle de ses héros. Qui était vrai ? Qui était faux ? Le savait-il lui-même ?'[63] As a writer and public figure, Lorrain constantly disseminates his own *personæ* in his literary works in order to develop strategies of self-promotion that aim to construct a modern subjectivity; this therefore culminates in his authorial *ethos* becoming multi-layered.

Yet Lorrain does not only concentrate on the literary aspect of such construction. He is remembered for always staging himself in public spaces, an attitude that became increasingly easy to record with the expansion of the press along with the rise of photography and technical reproduction; he then positions himself in a cultural field that gives way to pictorial representations of celebrities – authors included – for the 'siècle de la réclame' is also the 'siècle du portrait'.[64] Consequently, the visual representations of Lorrain circulate in the field of cultural production,[65] and most notably in the media space, almost as much as in his literary and journalistic pieces. This is why I propose to study the visual representations of Lorrain and the 'scénographies auctoriales'[66] that emerge from them as a model of performance and construction of the self in the Belle Époque. If Lorrain can be seen as an 'écrivain en publicitaire',[67] he is also nevertheless the product of his time: 'l'auteur est [...] bien une *construction*, historique, sociale, littéraire, en un mot, *culturelle*'.[68] The visual representations of Lorrain's multiple *personæ* in the press therefore shifts from real to imaginary – even mythical, since they also participate in the

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[62] José-Luis Diaz, 'Et la littérature tomba dans la réclame…', in *Portraits de l'écrivain en publicitaire*, M. Boucharenc & L. Guellec (eds.), *La Licorne*, 128 (2018), p. 31.
[63] Rachilde, *Portraits d'hommes*, op. cit., p. 91.
[64] See Hélène Dufour, *Portraits, en phrases. Les recueils de portraits littéraires au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, coll. 'Écritures', 1997).
[65] See Bourdieu, *Les Règles de l'art*, op. cit.
[66] See Diaz, *L'Écrivain imaginaire*, op. cit.
[67] See *Portraits de l'écrivain en publicitaire*, op. cit.
[68] Bordas, *L'Analyse littéraire*, op. cit., p. 27.

construction of the author as his own myth, and in fact, as his own brand. As Barthes notes in his *Mythologies*, 'les techniques du journalisme contemporain s'emploient de plus en plus à donner de l'écrivain un spectacle prosaïque. Mais on aurait tort de prendre cela pour un effort de démystification. C'est tout le contraire. […] le solde de l'opération c'est que l'écrivain devienne encore un peu plus vedette'.[69] Yet this process of mythification and starification begins far earlier; Lorrain's taste for mystification and performance dates back to his Chat Noir years, where he started this process of self-staging.

The idea of performance and self-performance is heavily encouraged in Salis's entertainment establishment. Normandy recalls that 'c'est dans ce milieu [cabarets, but also Charles Buet and Rachilde's salons] qu'il commença à se poser en fanfaron du vice, à se composer cette attitude, à construire cette façade à la conservation desquelles il s'acharna si longtemps'.[70] Montmartre is not just a space of poetic matrix for Lorrain and many others; it also constitutes a place where one can construct an 'attitude' – it is therefore a space of identity matrix. This 'attitude' that Normandy addresses is what would later define Lorrain as a model of self-performance. In the Chat Noir cabaret, Lorrain finds a space of sociability and poetic freedom that inevitably influences his entire career. Like other Decadent artists of that time, Lorrain loved wearing fancy dresses and other costumes for various events including balls and masked balls, carnival, etc. Some unpublished pictures later found in private collections[71] confirm Lorrain's taste for cross-dressing and fancy dresses, as is the case with pictures of him imitating the agony of a dying warrior or gladiator, taken at Sarah Bernhardt's house [annexe 1], dressed in a traditional costume in Algiers [annexe 2], or even posing in a Renaissance minstrel costume for the front cover of his volume of society and literary portraits, *Du temps que les bêtes parlaient* (published posthumously in 1908 and 1911 [annexe 3]). He was a regular of the famous 'bal du Courrier Français' organised by Jules Roques between 1887 and 1895, and later the 'bal des Quat'z'Arts'.[72] There, Normandy explains that once Lorrain appeared dressed in 'un maillot de soie rose, couronné de fleurs et portant aux hanches une ceinture de feuilles de vigne',[73] that belonged to his friend and possible lover, the wrestler Marseille. Yet he also frequented less mainstream balls in peripheral spaces, like the 'bals des chiffonniers' or 'Bal des Vaches', where he would find

[69] Roland Barthes, 'L'Écrivain en vacances', in *Mythologies* (Paris: Seuil, 1957), p. 32.
[70] Normandy, *Jean Lorrain intime*, op. cit., p. 66.
[71] Thibaut d'Anthonay's well-detailed biography of Lorrain includes a large selection of previously unseen pictures.
[72] Robert Ziegler, *Beauty Raises the Dead: Literature and Loss in the Fin de Siècle* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2002), p. 73
[73] Ibid., p. 72

inspiration for his literature – most notably in *La Maison Philibert*, as we have previously seen. This taste for costumes definitely brought him lots of success amongst the *chatnoiristes*.[74]

The experience of cross-dressing – along with repeatedly addressing the 'third sex' in his early poetry – participates in Lorrain's exploration of gender limits at a real, textual, and symbolic level, as the variety of female pennames he used in the press shows: La Botte, Mimosa, Francine, Salterella, Stendhalette and, most interestingly, Arlequine, which defines the organisation of his own poetics based on gender indetermination.[75] Lorrain's performative attitude in public spaces definitely helps him construct a character at the crossroads of biographical, fiction, and gender: the fact that he loved fancy dresses and cross-dressing was an easy target for caricaturists in the media (both 'petite' and 'grande presse').

Caricatures of Lorrain in the Press

The various caricatures of Lorrain outrageously dressed up always converge towards the aesthetic representation of his own camp attitude; they also suggest homosexuality. The writer is often represented bending down, with a fleshy bottom and chest protruding, as Proust describes bourgeois and snob Monsieur Legrandin caught in front of Combray's church by the narrator of *La Recherche*:

> Ce redressement rapide fit refluer en une sorte d'onde fougueuse et musclée la croupe de Legrandin que je ne supposais pas si charnue ; et je ne sais pourquoi cette ondulation de pure matière, ce flot tout charnel, sans expression de spiritualité et qu'un empressement plein de bassesse fouettait en tempête, éveillèrent tout d'un coup dans mon esprit la possibilité d'un Legrandin tout différent de celui que nous connaissions.[76]

Here the insistence put on the 'croupe charnue' of the character echoes the two well-known representations of Lorrain by Sem [annexes 4, 5]. The highly connoted notion of 'croupe charnue' in Proust's written representation of Legrandin reads like the textualisation of the representation of Lorrain by Sem. The idea of body language and posture is indeed important to convey a sense of inversion in Proust. George Duncan Painter argues that Proust's homosexual character Charlus was probably modeled on

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[74] Anthonay, *Jean Lorrain, Miroir de la Belle Époque*, op. cit., p. 107.
[75] See Butler, *Gender Trouble*, op. cit.
[76] Marcel Proust, *Du côté de chez Swann* [1913] (Paris: Gallimard, 1946), p. 171.

Lorrain, Wilde and Montesquiou;[77] in *Le Temps retrouvé*, he, too, is described with a 'croupe charnue' that alludes to 'pure matière' – or moral abjection.[78] Infamously, Proust and Lorrain fought a duel in 1897, following an article that Lorrain wrote about the suggested homosexuality of Proust's friend Lucien Daudet.

Sem's caricature of Lorrain also reflects the position of the body in Portuguese painter Cam's caricature that was published on the front cover of *L'Assiette au beurre*, 7 March 1903 [annexe 6]. This particular issue focuses on 'Les Académisables' – that is, the expected members of the Académie, prior to the first round of votes for the newly created Académie Goncourt. As a friend and confident of Edmond de Goncourt – some later wrote that he probably was his sole literary disciple[79] –, Lorrain was collectively thought to be one of the Académie's first members.[80] Yet his mischief and sexual orientation – as conveyed in Cam's representational portrait where Lorrain is showed with long eyelashes and shiny rings – probably caused him social and cultural disapprobation; indeed, he never joined the academy.

As we can see, the representations of Lorrain in the press are very much codified. He understands that the materiality of the body is fundamental to queer thoughts and politics: the use of it through gender and sexual performance is at the core of the political order, as used as a marker of status and power. According to Butler, the body is 'a surface whose permeability is politically regulated, a signifying practice within a cultural field of gender hierarchy and compulsory heterosexuality'.[81] It produces a form of knowledge that implies sexual difference. Lorrain's taste for cross-dressing – and the way it is represented in the press – alludes to the more contemporary notion of queerness, as we have previously seen. As a consequence, the representational portraits of Lorrain that circulate in the press cannot deceive the reader-viewer: Lorrain represents himself and is also represented as a queer celebrity. For that matter he never denies the indirect aesthetic and political value that lies in such caricatures – for, in the end, they barely exaggerate the very (already excessive) construction of the author. What's more, he is always represented wearing multiple rings, like his own heroes Fréneuse and Noronsoff: 'les doigts surchargés de bagues (car ce Noronsoff avait les plus beaux écrins)' (*LN*, 139).

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[77] George Duncan Painter, *Marcel Proust: A Biography*, vol. II (London: Chatto & Windus, 1989), p. 270.
[78] Marcel Proust, *Le Temps retrouvé*, t. I (Paris: Gallimard, 1927), p. 197.
[79] See for instance Jean de Palacio, 'Edmond de Goncourt et ses disciples', in *Les Goncourt dans leur siècle: un siècle de Goncourt*, J.-L. Cabanès, P.-J. Dufief, R. Kropp, J.-Y. Mollier (eds.) (Lille: Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 2005), pp. 105-14.
[80] This is why he makes the front cover, where the caption reads 'Qualif artifex' – 'what an artist'. In Suetonius's *De Vita Caesarum*, Nero's last words before stabbing himself are: 'Qualif artifex pereo' – 'what an artist dies in me' or 'what an artist the world is losing'.
[81] Butler, *Gender trouble*, op. cit., p. 177.

In *Les Noronsoff*, Lorrain mentions the name of René Lalique. The famous Art Nouveau glass designer and jeweler was the dedicatee of Lorrain's tale *Narkiss*, where the treatment of jewels and ornament directly inform both Lorrain himself and his creative process;[82] Lalique also designed several rings for him. Thibaut d'Anthonay notes:

> À la suite de leur rencontre, chez Sarah Bernhardt, le chroniqueur lance les créations de l'orfèvre avant de consacrer l'homme, et de leurs relations naît une complicité esthétique célèbre. Lorrain lui commandera d'ailleurs certaines des bagues fameuses dont il décorait ses mains, sphinx, serpents, aigles ou grenouilles.[83]

The emphasis on the rings is also shared with Wilde's Dorian Gray; this mark is heavily sexually connoted, as is the case in Cam's caricature of Lorrain, or Paul Iribe's caricature of Robert de Montesquiou in presence of a seemingly upset woman holding a copy of 'Pierlo To, Mon frère IV' – a direct nod to Pierre Loti's homoerotic novel *Mon frère Yves* [annexe 7] which is mentioned in Lorrain's *Les Noronsoff*.[84] Lorrain also often appears with outrageous make-up – including rouge and red lipstick – and painted nails, as in Bac's 1897 caricature of Lorrain [annexe 8]. If this certainly alludes to cross-dressing and a taste for transvestite identity, Bac's representation of the author also emphasizes the idea that Lorrain can never really be understood without encompassing the multitude of masks that he has been constantly wearing, whether fictionally or in real life. Finally, the caption on the top-left angle of the caricature reads 'Jean Lorrain dit au crieur de *L'Écho de Paris* : « Je vais te donner la clef de ma chambre »', which complete Bacs's motives to suggest queerness and homosexuality in quite a transparent manner.

The caricatures and paintings of Lorrain extend the link between the author and his characters, a link that Lorrain eagerly maintains. Lorrain's hero Monsieur de Bougrelon is described as a 'cadavre peint, corseté, maquillé et cravaté' (*MDB*, 23) while Prince Noronsoff is seen as a 'cadavre vernissé, fardé et peint' (*LN*, 360). These descriptions echo the caricatures of Lorrain that regularly emerged in the press, most particularly Sem's. We know that Lorrain took the art of caricature very seriously. They extensively represented Lorrain and his various *personæ* in the press – the writer becoming a 'grand déformé' in turn. Drawing a parallel with the constant blurring of the frontier between fiction and reality operated in Lorrain's oeuvre, they often decide to represent him as one of his characters. In the text, Jean de Fréneuse (Phocas) is described as

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[82] I will examine Lorrain's take *Narkiss* in relation to the notion of 'texte-joyau' in the last part of this chapter.
[83] Thibaut d'Anthonay, *Jean Lorrain* (Paris: Plon, 1991), p. 155.
[84] Pierre Loti, *Mon frère Yves* [1883] (Paris: Folio Classique Gallimard, 2018).

'étroitement moulé dans un complet de drap vert myrte' (*MP*, 2). This directly parallels Angelo Garino's portrait of Lorrain as much as the original front cover of *Monsieur de Phocas*, made by Géo Dupuis [annexes 9, 10]. The exaggeration of the self that runs throughout Lorrain's life and works conforms to the art and practice of caricature. In *La Renaissance latine* (1902), Henry Bataille explains that Lorrain 's'exagère. Il a aimé créer des fantômes à ses diverses images. Il a voulu s'incarner dans des types […].'[85] Lorrain actively participates in the construction of himself as a transgressive and extreme (therefore, fascinating) character.

Photographs of Lorrain: Performance and Performativity

Although Lorrain is often targeted and represented by the caricaturists, the various photographic representations of the writer-journalist also circulate regularly in the press. In a context of 'portraitomanie généralisée',[86] such representations bear value of identification. This can be seen in Album Mariani for example, where Lorrain becomes what Adeline Wrona calls an 'enjeu d'une transaction, à l'intersection de la réclame et de la biographie'.[87]

Published between 1897 and 1925, the Mariani albums constitute thirteen volumes which each present 75 to 80 leading figures of the Parisian cultural landscape in the form of vignettes. Every single vignette systematically displays a biographical note, an etched portrait and several autobiographical lines specially written in praise of Mariani wine and signed by the celebrity represented. In turn, the celebrities benefit from free promotion in Mariani's large print run. Indeed, the artists and celebrities also strive to engage in public self-exhibition in the media, in order to find an audience. The large variety of the signatories (e.g. Louise Michel, Pierre Loti, Léon XIII, Jane and Marcel Delafoy, Léon Xanrof, Félicien Champsaur) demonstrates the importance of the figuration of individuals and biographical practices in the nineteenth century. This reflects the commercial strategies established by a growing market for representational portraits following the invention of photography and their reproductions in the press, which directly participates in the logic of democratisation of one celebrity's own public image. Mariani understood this well. In his albums, he operated a diversion of biographical practices in quest of purely commercial ends. However, it is interesting to

[85] Ernest Gaubert, 'Jean Lorrain', in *Le Mercure de France*, 185 (1 March 1905), p. 58.
[86] Adeline Wrona, *Face au portrait: de Sainte-Beuve à Facebook* (Paris: Hermann, 2012), p. 99.
[87] Adeline Wrona, 'Des panthéons à vendre: le portrait d'homme de lettres, entre réclame et biographie', in *Romantisme*, 155 (2012), p. 40.

note that such platform also creates a new space of representation that is tridimensional – that is, the written portrait and the photographic portrait, but also the facsimile of the autograph that all converge in the figuration of the personality of the author while promoting Mariani's wine. Therefore, the creativity of the guests is almost always called in.

In Mariani's laboratory of both commercial and artistic production, composers share scores or sheet music, painters make drawings, poets write verses, etc. This is the case with Lorrain. In the 1897 album, his portrait is accompanied by a verse that Lorrain wrote especially for Mariani: 'Le vin Mariani/Effroi de la neurasthéni/e, au poète rajeuni/Fournit la rime à l'infini' [annexe 11].[88] We can then remark that, in Mariani's albums, the creative hybridity of both the signifier and the signified always echoes the semiotic hybridity of the portrait. In Lorrain's particular case, it also represents the semiotic hybridity of his own *harlequinised* character. This kind of promotional album then gives the artists the possibility of participating in their own representation in a space of production that both enables the circulation of biography and promotion. Such strategy is not too different from what is at stake in the fragmented space of the newspaper that Lorrain is well familiar with. He understands quickly the symbolic value of these representations as early as 1882 when he integrates the Parisian *bohème* and starts publishing in *Le Chat Noir*, and later in higher print run newspapers like *Le Courrier français*, and more importantly in *L'Écho de Paris* and *Le Journal*. Lorrain knew the photographers well. As we have previously seen, he often had his photo taken (at Benque in Paris or Courtellemont in Algiers), sometimes dressed as a troubadour or in a costume, as a dandy, etc.

As Paul Edwards notes, Lorrain consequently starts to collaborate with publishing houses like Nilsson/Per Lamm known for their illustrated editions, as early as 1898. For him, the technical reproduction of representational portraits in the press is also a tool to blur the frontiers between fiction and reality in order to construct his own legend. The example provided in Lorrain's *La Dame turque* is particularly interesting. Published by Nilsson/Per Lamm in 1898, this illustrated exotic fiction inspired by Judith Gautier and Pierre Loti's works tells the story of a romance between a woman and a chauffeur named Jean. The frontispiece of *La Dame turque* shows a photograph of Lorrain posing as a chauffeur [annexe 12]. There are striking similarities between Lorrain

[88] Jean Lorrain, in *Album Mariani* (Paris: Librairie Henry Floury, 1897).

and the photographs of the main character disseminated in the text [annexe 13].[89] This takes place several years before the couple Willy and Colette starts to also blur the frontiers between fiction and reality – for instance, Willy posing as a main character in *En bombe*, also published by Nilsson/Per Lamm, in 1904, and Colette with the whole series of *Claudine*.

In his posthumous novel *Maison pour dames* (1908), Lorrain criticises the media treatment of writers in the female press – most particularly *Femina* and *La Vie heureuse*, which both published some of Lorrain's texts – and the construction of their *ethoi* through the publication of their representational portraits in the press. Edwards compares this mode of production with the role of the courtesan. He declares that photography and the courtesan are made similar through 'le « mensonge », la « réclame », la « pose »'.[90] The prostitution of his own image as promotional and commercial strategy then links the courtesan to Lorrain himself, as is the case in *La Dame turque* or even *Madame Baringhel*, as I already mentioned. Furthermore, Lorrain seems to use the representational illustration of himself as an author (and not just an individual) as a means of identification. The text 'Une Aventure', later compiled in *Pelléastres* (1910), focuses on a trip Lorrain and his mother took in Italy at a time of anarchistic rebellions. At some point, Lorrain finds himself trapped in an ambush and is caught by the police – his only identity document is said to be: 'une carte postale sur laquelle est mon portrait avec la nomenclature de mes œuvres et mon nom, et je dis qui je suis'.[91] It directly refers to the promotional postcards his publisher Ollendorff made in the early 1900s [annexe 14]. Lorrain's authorial identity then defines himself as an individual; it provides him with a passport.[92]

Lorrain Performing Dorian Gray

The most striking example of Lorrain's ambition to constantly represent himself as a blurred, mythical instance – both as author and character, as well as author surrogate (author as character) – probably lies in Antonio de La Gandara representational portraits

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[89] These similarities have already been noted in several articles. See Paul Edwards, 'Roman 1900 et photographie (les éditions Nilsson/Per Lamm et Offertstadt Frères)' (Edwards, 1999) and 'Lorrain et l'illustration par la photographie' (Edwards, 2009), Jean-Pierre Montier, 'L'Illustration photographique 'd'après nature': degré d'art de plus ou de moins?' (Montier, 2000) and finally Hélène Védrine, 'Portraits de masques et de fantômes. Le Portrait photographique dans le livre (1860-1930)' (Védrine, 2014).

[90] Paul Edwards, 'Lorrain et l'illustration par la photographie', in *Jean Lorrain. Produit d'extrême civilisation*, op. cit., p. 98.

[91] Lorrain, *Pelléastres*, op. cit., p. 284.

[92] See Sontag, op. cit.

of Lorrain, particularly the one now exhibited in the Musée d'Orsay [annexe 15]. Normandy recounts that, replying to an outsider criticising his exaggerated outfit as he sat for his portrait, Lorrain said: 'Monsieur, JE JOUE MON PERSONNAGE' – namely, he is his own *dramatis persona.*[93] The description of Lorrain corresponds to all the representations seen in the press: 'Un jeu de bagues complexes aux mains. Si vous ajoutez à ces détails que le maître était fardé, pommadé, frisé, la bouche trop rouge en cœur, vous comprenez peut-être ce que je veux dire en déclarant qu'il produisait, à la lumière de l'atelier, l'impression d'un gros scarabée'.[94] This shows that Lorrain provides the painter an already exaggerated, almost fictional (or artificial: the description can also evoke Huysmans' des Esseintes) image of himself. La Gandara[95] painted at least four portraits of Lorrain: one 'croqueton' – this is Lorrain's expression – that represents a face, in 1894; a portrait bust now held in Musée Carnavalet [annexe 16]; and finally two half-leg portraits (one entered the Musée d'Orsay in 1990 and the other one disappeared, despite photographic reproductions [annexe 17]).[96]

La Gandara's approach is not dissimilar to the practice of caricature. As a matter of fact, he was very close to Sem and other caricaturists; André Rouveyre even made a caricature of Lorrain and La Gandara in the painter's studio, as a *mise en abyme* of the representational process that is not dissimilar to Lorrain's own techniques of *mise en abyme* and mystification, as I previously examined [annexe 18]. In the portraits he made of Lorrain, La Gandara seems to deliberately exaggerate the scandalous writer's lines and features. This is not surprising: the grotesque representation of Lorrain combines features from both Phocas and Wilde's Dorian Gray. In the version of the portrait showed at Carnavalet, one can see Lorrain immortalised as if he was going through a process of metamorphosis that leaves his face entirely damaged. It directly reflects Wilde's famous character whose marks of vices spread on the face of the portrait. Moreover, the Carnavalet portrait represents Lorrain wearing multiple rings – a feature that both Lorrain and Dorian Gray are famous for. Lorrain was surprised that critics did not comment much on this aspect of the portrait. In a letter to Louis Vauxcelles, he writes:

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[93] Normandy, *Jean Lorrain intime*, op. cit., p. 124.
[94] Ibid., pp. 124-25.
[95] Partly model of painter Claudius Ethal in Lorrain's *Monsieur de Phocas*, La Gandara is now mostly remembered for his society portraits, amongst which the paintings of Montesquiou, Lorrain, but also famous gynaecologist Samuel Pozzi, whose portrait triggered Julian Barnes's writing of *The Man in the Red Coat*.
[96] On Lorrain and La Gandara's portrait, see Thalie Rapetti's very well documented article entitled 'Le portrait de Lorrain en Dorian Gray', in *Jean Lorrain. Produit d'extrême civilisation*, op. cit., p. 121-146.

> M. de Phocas vous remercie, mais Jean Lorrain vous abomine pour la sensualité bestiale, bien que fine… toutefois, dont vous voulez décorer son visage. Que d'hystériques et de détraqués vous allez déchaîner sur mon pauvre moi avec votre littérature ! Suis-je donc si tragique que cela ?... […] une chose m'étonne, c'est que mes chers confrères n'aient pas encore évoqué le portrait de Dorian Gray à propos de La Gandara.[97]

Here, Lorrain emphasizes the plural aspect of his identity, blurred between fiction and reality – almost mythical. According to Baudelaire, portraits are mere simulacra – a 'biographie dramatisée'.[98] In the letter, Lorrain reveals the real story of his portrait to the art critic – in the likely hope that Vauxcelles will thereafter transmit the news in the press. The example of La Gandara's portrait of Lorrain confirms the writer's desire to fictionalise his life and to live as an almost legendary figure in the public eye.

In 'Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?', Foucault explains the notion of 'fabrique de soi' by writing that 'il serait tout aussi faux de chercher l'auteur du côté de l'écrivain réel que du côté [du] locuteur fictif [réduit à des marques d'énonciations] ; la fonction-auteur s'effectue dans la scission même, – dans le partage et cette distance'.[99] The same applies to the pictorial representation of the said author and/or character. Through the various representations of Lorrain and his fictionalised masks, it seems that he belongs to a category of writers that Diaz names 'kaléidoscopiques': 'l'artiste kaléidoscopique doit se faire lui-même un *paradoxe* vivant'.[100] This applies directly to Lorrain and the 'harlequin poetics' and visuals. Lorrain as a kaleidoscopic author then embodies this idea of paradox through his constant desire to embrace mystification and performance.

In Lorrain's case, the representational metamorphosis of the self constitutes an isotopic network that also contributes to the real possibility of becoming-character in other texts. This process that can be defined as 'textamorphosis' (e.g. writing, re-writing, quoting, re-quoting, self-quoting). It is a crucial process that is at the core of Lorrain's 'harlequin poetics'.[101] For instance, he is Jack Dalsace in Pougy's *Idylle saphique*.[102] Pougy's description of Jack Dalsace definitely reflects Sem's caricatures of Lorrain in the press:

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[97] Lorrain, *Correspondances*, op. cit., p. 195.
[98] Charles Baudelaire, *Écrits sur l'art* (Paris: Librairie générale française, 1992), p. 294.
[99] Michel Foucault, 'Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?' [1969], *Dits et écrits* (Paris: Gallimard, coll. 'Quarto', 1994), p. 831.
[100] Diaz, *L'Écrivain imaginaire*, op. cit., p. 562.
[101] See Patrica A. Struebig, 'The Mytho-Fantastic Function of Naming', in *Literary Onomastics Studies*, 16 (1989), p. 67.
[102] Liane de Pougy, *Idylle saphique* [1901] (Paris: Éditions des femmes, 1987).

> C'était Jack Dalsace, qui passait, beau comme un demi-dieu dans un costume de soie bleu paon. Une biche se cambrait, orfévrée d'or et incrustée de perles, sur une des manches longues et pendantes, tandis qu'à l'autre une grenouille énorme, effrayante, constellée d'aigues-marines, d'émeraudes et de béryls, semblait vivante et prête à s'élancer dans la foule. Des animaux de légendes se montraient tout autour de ce costume fantastique.[103]

Further than the obvious name pun, Pougy's focus on the profusion of rings and gems leaves no room for doubt; additionally, the emphatic repetition of the word 'costume' establishes Lorrain as a self-performer. The posture of the hind ('Une biche se cambrait') can hint at Lorrain's gender performance that is perceived as outrageous as Legrandin's 'croupe charnue'. Pougy concludes: [c]'est Jack Dalsace, […] l'écrivain morbide et sarcastique, mon ami […]. Ses longues mains étaient chargées de lourdes et étranges bagues, d'anneaux bizarres où se mouraient des chatoiements de perles opaques […].[104] In *Idylle saphique*, Lorrain as an author-character is literally re-performed; this participates in the formation and circulation of his own mythography.

As we have seen, Lorrain truly embraces the growing market of 'starification' in Belle Époque France. Conversely, he actively contributes to it; he, too, 'entretient et modèle des songes, c'est-à-dire des identifications imaginaires'.[105] Lorrain's histrionic personality pushes him to participate in the construction and performance of himself as public figure in the media, a phenomenon started in the first half of the nineteenth century; he indeed constantly stages himself in public space with the use of various postures. In that respect, he almost becomes an extension of Barbey d'Aurevilly – Uzanne writes that he was a 'vieux comédien extravagant, sanglé dans le justaucorps et enfoui sous la dentelle, sur lesquels s'est acharnée la malveillance de médiocres chroniqueurs'[106] –, whom he so greatly admired. In turn, the media system authorises the multiplication of public figures, to the point that it creates a type that generates fascination amongst the public. In negotiating between literary and media mystification as well as the visual representation of himself, Lorrain then appears as both an agent and subject of the representation of the social carnival that is the Belle Époque. Through the various visual representations of Lorrain in and out of the press, as well as in surviving as a character in other texts, in becoming text himself or the 'immersion of text within

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[103] Ibid., p. 132.
[104] Ibid., p. 133.
[105] Edgar Morin, *Les Stars* (Paris: Seuil, 1972), p. 122.
[106] Octave Uzanne, *Barbey d'Aurevilly* (Paris: À la Cité des Livres, 1927), p. 47.

text'[107] (we could say, in becoming image himself, or the immersion of image within image), Lorrain exceeds himself, therefore performing and reaching the status of a myth.

The Poetics of Excess in Narkiss *(1898)*

Transgressing the Sexual Order

Narcissus symbolises the crisis in the modern foundation of selfhood as well as counter-culture at the turn of the century.[108] Its symbolic polysemy fascinated the Decadent movement, whose 'jeunes hommes fin de siècle' identified with him: Paul Bourget, Édouard Rod, Camille Mauclair, Maupassant, and young Proust; Gide famously wrote *Traité du Narcisse* (1891), where he creates his own concept of art.[109] In *Narkiss* (1898), Lorrain transposes the myth of Narcissus into Egypt. In his tale, the young prince, who is known for his supernatural beauty, is venerated like a new Isis. The priests establish that it is better for him to grow in a sanctuary devoted to the mythical queen. There he lives in harmony with nature and wild beasts; admiring nomadic women and gods come and visit from time to time. In typical Decadent fashion, Lorrain suggests transgressive sexualities, as the priests try to rape Narkiss in his sleep. Narkiss eventually dies whilst visiting the forbidden 'third temple', where he discovers his own reflection in the fatal waters of the Nile.

Lorrain's story is a quest of identity that is corrupted by the power of abjection (putrefaction, corruption, possibly rape). In the tale, the effeminate Narkiss is always depicted wearing vast, oppressive quantities of gemstones; he transgresses moral, sexual and aesthetic rules before dying of asphyxiation in a swamp. The myth of the artist as an outcast who goes over moral, sexual and aesthetic rules is a cultural construction that finds its *apex* in Romanticism. Yet it is also very much present in fin-de-siècle literature,[110] where writers seek to transgress the Positivistic notion of the 'measurability' of all things, human and non-human, and the consequent project of containing and repressing the potentially subversive 'excesses' of the non-rational. This is why I propose to examine

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[107] Struebig, 'The Mytho-Fantastic Function of Naming', op. cit., p. 67.
[108] See Niclas Johansson, *The Narcissus Theme from 'Fin de siècle' to Psychoanalysis: Crisis of the Modern Self* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2017).
[109] Juliette Frølich, 'Face à son cœur, Narcisse fin de siècle', in *Isis, Narcisse, Psyché, entre Lumières et Romantisme: mythe et écritures, écritures du mythe*, P. Auraix-Jonchière (ed.) (Clermont-Ferrand: Presses Universitaires Blaise-Pascal, 2000), pp. 287-88.
[110] See for instance Gide, *Traité du Narcisse*, in *Romans*, op. cit., pp. 1-12.

the poetics of excess in Lorrain's *Narkiss* – I will particularly focus on the deluxe edition published by Éditions du Monument in 1908, two years after Lorrain's death.[111]

Lorrain wrote numerous poems, tales and short stories all infused with melancholic yet perverted descriptions of a legendary past. There, nature and solitude are sometimes re-enacted in the modern city, which plays a central role in facilitating all kinds of moral vices (see *Le Sang des dieux*, *Modernités*, *Princesses d'ivoire et d'ivresse* – in which *Narkiss* is compiled, etc.). In the late nineteenth century, both writers and artists converge on a treatment of myths through aesthetic evocation, which tends to *Gesamtkunstwerk* – or the synthesis of the arts. It is the case with Lorrain's *Narkiss*, but also, for example, Henri de Régnier's *Hertulie* (1894).[112] In both tales, the writers paint or craft their texts like jewelers. Indeed, their prose is built upon a certain dynamic of contrasts between decorative profusion and silences (as well as multiplicity vs void, as we have seen in the previous chapter); this reminds us of Moreau's textured and hypnotic painting[113] (in *Monsieur de Phocas*, Lorrain's narrator qualifies Moreau's art as 'peinture de *poète* et d'*émailleur*', *MP*, 256). *Hertulie*'s décor is entirely made of precious materials where reflections materialise in the narrative. In *Narkiss*, both the body and vegetation are ornamented with gemstones so the atmosphere of solitude and profound melancholy softens. Yet it also creates a feeling of excess and suffocation.

As we have seen, the problematic of androgyny is central to the whole Decadent movement. Lorrain's *Narkiss* addresses the same issue. In the tale, the young prince has a 'charme androgyne'. He is always depicted as an effeminate, naked figure whose beauty can be compared to female idols: 'Narkiss vivait là, sauvagement nu dans sa beauté resplendissante et pareil aux idoles […] elles lui ressemblaient […] dans leur immobilité lapidaire et fleurie de scarabées de turquoise incrustés dans le granit de leurs seins'. Lorrain also writes that 'Narkiss était toujours scintillant de joyaux et fardé comme une femme',[114] which may suggest that Lorrain also identifies with him. Lorrain purposely injects a form of indetermination in the gender and sexual identity of his character to suggest homosexuality. Furthermore, his body stands as a work of art. It resembles a naked canvas ornamented with large quantities of jewels and gemstones:

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[111] Jean Lorrain, *Narkiss* [1898, 1908] (Montpellier: Bibliothèque GayKitschCamp, 2016), 76 pp.

[112] This tale was republished in the volume *Le Trèfle noir* (Mercure de France, 1895). In the copy sent to French writer André Gide, Régnier wrote: 'À André Gide, d'Hertulie à Urien, son ami'. This can be aimed at the homosexual motifs present in Gide's Symbolist tale *Voyages d'Urien* (1893).

[113] See for instance Moreau's 'L'Apparition' (1874-1876), 'Salomé tatouée' (1874-1876) or 'Le Triomphe d'Alexandre le Grand' (1875-1890).

[114] All the quotes are drawn from the 2016 Bibliothèque GayKitschCamp reprint of the deluxe edition published by Éditions du Monument in 1908. There are no page numbers in this edition.

'dans sa nudité cuirassé de pierreries, toute sa chair frissonnante au contact des gemmes froides, Narkiss s'alanguissait aux heures chaudes du jour dans le clair-obscur des hautes salles ruinées'. Here, nature and culture (or artifice) blend together, as in *À Rebours*; the tension emerging from the clash of binary opposition (hot/cold; day/night; light/dark) also adds to the idea of transgression. Like Bougrelon, the abundance of jewellery participates in the shifting identity of the young prince ('Narkiss aimait le parfum des fleurs, l'odeur des fards et des essences, l'éclat des gemmes rutilantes'). Indeed, in Lorrain, the metaphors of transvestism and cross-dressing almost necessarily allude to gender performance.

The erotic tension runs throughout the whole text with a homosexual undertone. The third temple in which Narkiss dies can symbolise the notion of third sex and inversion. It is written that 'Narkiss mourut au bord du Nil, dans les ruines du troisième temple, au milieu des lotus et des lys aux tiges gonflées de sang'. In that respect, the phallic aspect of the flowers pictured in *Narkiss* brings up Lorrain's desire to write about same-sex love; they trigger the narrative of transgression ('c'est un vieux conte d'orient, une antique histoire d'Égypte qu'impose à mon souvenir la fastueuse et pâle apothéose des longs iris de jade […] les monstrueux nymphéas de la légende de Narkiss'). Indeed, the flowers – and particularly irises – are 'violentes, triomphantes et cruelles ; elles renaissent d'elles-mêmes et se nourrissent de sang […] ; toutes ont la forme d'un sexe […], l'obscénité phallique adorée des peuples d'orient'. The iris is a turgescent flower. Swollen with blood, it comes to symbolise the male organ, particularly in Lorrain's works, as is the case in the section 'Les Éphèbes', in *Le Sang des dieux*. There, Lorrain elaborates poems about mythical figures such as Ganymede, Narcissus, Iacchus or Antinous which all convey an idea of homosexual desire. In the last stanza of the poem 'Narcisse', he writes: 'Sa chair vibre… et le front sous les larges calices/Des iris d'eau, l'œil vague, épuisé de délices,/L'éphèbe inassouvi meurt au pied des roseaux' (*SDD*, 128); this definitely echoes the end of the 1898 tale, if we consider the emphasis put on the idea of exhaustion. Incidentally, it is without surprise that, in *Narkiss*, irises are also considered as transgressive 'fleurs-vampires'. Nature is indeed heavily corrupted throughout the narrative. The vegetation is said to be untamed ('sauvage') and participates in an environment where exacerbation and intensification provide the possibility for all kinds of transgressions:

> Dans un jaillissement éperdu de tiges, de feuilles et d'ombelles, c'étaient le rut, la fièvre de sève, le grouillement de vie, la fermentation de germe et la menace

> épanouie d'une végétation *exaspérée*, *surchauffée*, *triomphante*, *gigantesque* et *hostile*… Des fleurs *plus grosses* que des régimes de dattes, des plantes *plus hautes* que des palmiers […]. (my emphasis)

Here, the semantics at stake in this short passage converges on a deliberate attempt at describing a feeling of excess. The propositions are accumulated as in a list, in a paratactical construction that symbolises the atmosphere of suffocation, already connoted in the adjectives used by Lorrain, like 'exaspérée' or 'surchauffée' – whose prefix *sur-* also participates in the overflowing of the text (Lorrain also writes that Narkiss has 'une beauté *sur*humaine', my emphasis). The value of comparisons ('plus grosses que' and 'plus hautes que') completes the description of a hostile and transgressive environment. Everywhere the corrupt vegetation seems to outgrow all other natural elements with the aim to smother it slowly. The gemstones that cover the body of Narkiss seem to act in the same way. The young prince is not only kept as prisoner in the temples, he is also trapped under an armour made of jewels and gemstones ('sa nudité cuirassé de pierreries' – *une cuirasse*, in French, is the part of an armour that covers the chest) that exhausts him. It echoes des Esseintes's Oriental carpet in Huysmans's *À Rebours*, and even more his infamous tortoise, whose carapace is encrusted with various gems and precious stones: 'il pensa que ce gigantesque bijou n'était qu'ébauché, qu'il ne serait vraiment complet qu'après qu'il aurait été incrusté de pierres rares'. Des Esseintes then proceeds: 'il fit savoir, au lapidaire stupéfié que les feuilles, que les pétales de chacune de ces fleurs, seraient exécutés en pierreries et montés dans l'écaille même de la bête'.[115] The creature is turned into a genuine work of art; famously, it dies under the weight of its cultural ornaments. Lorrain also uses the verb 'incruster' to refer to his hero's jewellery – interestingly, Narkiss and the tortoise share the same stones: diamond, emerald, ruby, topaz, amethyst, sapphire, etc. The poetics of excess then operates in the corruption, the transgression and the exhaustion of nature. It is visually performed in the 1908 deluxe edition.

Performativity of *Narkiss*

This feeling of excess is also conveyed through the overflow of elaborate words in the text. Drawing on the Decadent aesthetics of Huysmans or 'l'écriture artiste' of the Goncourt brothers, Lorrain's *Narkiss* is crafted in a Symbolist style. Here, the role of

[115] Joris-Karl Huysmans, *À rebours* [1884] (Paris: Crès, 1922), p. 55.

words comes to parallel the sensual hyperaesthesia at stake in the tale and symbolised by the use of gemstones throughout the narrative. In Lorrain's *Narkiss*, the treatment of jewels and ornament then directly informs Lorrain's harlequin creative process: the profusion of literary elements invades the discursive landscape and suffocates the narrative. They asphyxiate it in the same fashion that gemstones eventually kill Narkiss. In the text, words become a material or fabric ('un mot-joyau') which itself absorbs diverse images in order to refract them in multiple directions. Here the text turns into a 'texte-joyau' that produces a network of signifiers.[116]

Jewellery is definitely a Decadent object. It is also filled with ambiguity: it represents the fin-de-siècle unease. Yet that energetic mirror[117] also encompasses aesthetic, sexual, social, economic and political concerns. In *Le Roman du bijou fin-de-siècle*, Sophie Pelletier states that 'le bijou se manifeste comme une construction littéraire en interdépendance et en discussion avec l'époque fin-de-siècle et sa *semiosis* sociale'.[118] In this respect, fin-de-siècle literature produces a vast quantity of texts about jewellery as much as numerous jewel-texts – it is the case with Lorrain's *Narkiss*, which also echoes other Lorrainian characters like Phocas (Pelletier even writes that 'Phocas est un bijou')[119] or Bougrelon. In Lorrain's literature, jewellery appears as a sign of the relation between a 'Decadent self' and existence, disappearance, and death. Just like young Narkiss, Bougrelon's jewel-body represents, according to Pelletier, 'l'image de l'« épave » [qui] traduit parfaitement toute la complexité du symbole qu'est le bijou du dandy fin-de-siècle, entre fixité et désagrégation, entre mémoire du passé et marche du temps'.[120] In *Narkiss*, the young prince belongs to a sort of out-of-place and out-of-time world; his gems participate in his fall and death.

However, jewellery, like Harlequin's costume, also plays a metacritical role in the text. In Lorrain's tale, Narkiss is a character-bibelot that stands for the metaphor of a creative process that gives access to another gender/genre. The polysemy embedded in the figure of Narcissus is transposed in Lorrain's multi-layered, textural text. In that respect Narkiss resembles the figure of Moreau's *Salomé tatouée*: in the tension between the body and the ornament, between the text and its Symbolist texture, the artist invites the reader to experience a double reading of the work of art through a network of

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116 Pelletier, op. cit., p. 17.
117 Or 'miroir énergétique'. In Gaston Bachelard, *La Terre et les rêveries de la volonté* (Paris: José Corti, 1943), p. 28.
118 Pelletier, op. cit., p. 18-19.
119 Ibid., p. 29.
120 Ibid., p. 47.

signifiers that always appears to be in constant movement (in Narkiss, the Nile is both compared to a 'mosaïque' and a 'mouvante tapisserie'). In this sense, jewellery in the text creates self-reflexivity: Pelletier writes that 'le bijou nourrit la réflexion métaromanesque et détient le pouvoir de donner corps aux rêves'.[121] We can then argue that Lorrain's tale is constructed like his other self-reflexive narratives, as seen in the second chapter of this thesis: it is a *mise en abyme* of the creative process. Indeed, Lorrain's *Narkiss* seems to display the same self-referential particularities that he theorises in 'Le Paris des échafaudages'. In the text, flowers, gemstones and elaborate words become work of arts and their profusion in the text illuminates the creative process of the Symbolist tale.

In that respect, the opening lines of *Narkiss* are particularly interesting:

> Sur ma table, de la gueule ouverte d'un lourd poisson de grès, des tiges et des calices s'élancent, des iris anglais comme touchés d'une lueur, des iris blancs d'un blanc pur d'azalée, transparents comme de la nacre […], des fleurs qui semblent de la chair et de la soie […]. Ce ne sont plus des fleurs, mais des objets d'arts, des objets d'art animés et doués d'une singulière puissance occulte. […] Elles sont surnaturelles dans le silence du cabinet de travail.

Here, words, flowers, and gemstones are crucial to the writing of *Narkiss*. They get embedded in the text; they tattoo and dress the narrative as if they participated in the making of a veil. They create an *hyphos*[122] – that is, an ornamental and impressionistic material that changes the experience of reading into multidimensional perspectives, just like the 'harlequin poetics'. In the deluxe edition of *Narkiss*, the typographic aspect of the text definitely plays with that idea of texture. In this sense, the body of the young prince reflects the body of the text. Such notion of an aesthetic set of jewels is also symbolised in chapter XI of Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (the chapter itself giving vivid example of Symbolist digressions): 'On one occasion he [Dorian] took up the study of jewels, and appeared at a costume ball as Anne de Joyeuse, Admiral of France, in a dress covered with five hundred and sixty pearls'.[123] Here Dorian, just like Narkiss in Lorrain's text, appears like the personification of the Decadent or Symbolist text, with the profusion of words and gemstones.

It is therefore no surprise to note that Lorrain's *Narkiss* is dedicated to René Lalique. It gives a sense of materiality and fin-de-siècle imaginary to the mystery of the

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[121] Ibid., p. 228.
[122] From the Greek *tiphao*, to weave: *hyphe*, *hyphos*, fabric (Curtius). See also what Barthes writes about 'hyphos': 'la théorie du texte comme une hyphologie (*hyphos*, c'est le tissu et la toile d'araignée)'. In Roland Barthes, *Le Plaisir du texte* (Paris: Seuil, 1973), p. 101.
[123] Wilde, *Dorian Gray*, op. cit., p. 115.

myth and establishes the tale as a narrative about the arts.[124] The 1908 reprint, in the form of a separate deluxe edition by the Éditions du Monument, comes to materialise such process. Indeed, the book itself becomes a work of art. It is illustrated with fourteen compositions etched by Lesueur after designs made by Octave Denis Victor Guillonnet; every page is composed as a classic funerary stele, topped with a winged sun [annexe 19]. It directly participates in the encapsulation of the text through the excess of material. The pages have no numbers; instead, they are ornamented with an Egyptian attribute (e.g. amphora, cobra snake, beetle, Ânkh sign, etc.). Furthermore, the use of capital letters – used to give more impact to the page organised as a funerary stele – destroys the common experience of reading (it is sometimes difficult to make out the punctuation, particularly the difference between commas and full stops). In the end, it sometimes feels like *Narkiss* is nothing but just one excessive, exasperated, overrunning long sentence. It therefore reads as a synthetic tale that encapsulates the aesthetic features of the Decadent movement while praising the craftsman's work over industrialisation in the age of mechanical reproduction.

Lorrain's tale is flooded with a lexical field that is borrowed from goldsmithery. Similar to Harlequin, it evokes the desire to build an aesthetic of artifice and sophistication where the frontiers between gender, nature and culture, real and artificial, mysticism and eroticism are constantly blurred. According to Dominique Pety, 'cette langue qui se fait adéquate aux choses, devient peu à peu des choses elle-même'.[125] The diverse references and associations to gemstones almost literally submerge the character of Narkiss; the subject then becomes an object, as the deluxe edition of the tale: '[d]ans ces « romans de la vie cérébrale », les pierres et métaux rares génèrent une esthétique au sein de laquelle l'espace et un sujet, également ornementés, se révèlent l'un à l'autre, mutuellement et réciproquement.'[126] This also applies to Lorrain himself as we have seen in the previous part of this chapter. Indeed, as a champion of self-promotion and Decadent public figure, Lorrain is often caricatured in the press and visually appeared as an *object* of scandal. Similar to his own character, he objectifies the subjective[127] – in short, Narkiss *is* Lorrain. Through excess (that applies to his life and works), Lorrain embodies a real poetics of scandal.

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[124] On the materiality of the book, see for instance Evanghelia Stead, *La Chair du livre. Matérialité, imaginaire et poétique du livre fin-de-siècle* (Paris: PUPS, coll. 'Histoire de l'imprimé', 2012).
[125] Dominique Péty, *Poétique de la collection au XIXème siècle* (Nanterre: Presses universitaires de Paris Ouest, 2010), p. 316-17.
[126] Pelletier, op. cit., p. 255.
[127] In the preface to the tale, Jérôme Doucet writes: 'Narkiss! où Lorrain a tant mis de soi.'

- CHAPTER V -

Poetics of Scandal

As Benjamin F. Martin notes in *The Hypocrisy of Justice in the Belle Époque*, '[t]he first half of the Third Republic was a time par excellence of conspiracies and scandals.'[1] While Martin undoubtedly writes about major political corruption and scandals of the Belle Époque (i.e. the Panama Canal scandals, the Dreyfus Affair, the Steinheil case), he also emphasizes the large number of public scandals ranging from *succès de scandale* to literary, moral, and sex scandals. Effectively, scandal emerges from excess: the transgression of norms and breaches of morality. It therefore directly challenges ethical and moral questions; it shows whether they are obsolete or, on the contrary, fundamental, generating structure (scandals usually provoke social reactions of outrage and strong moral disapproval). Consequently, scandal is a dynamic tool that questions the traditions of a society. In *Histoire du scandale*, Jean-Claude Bologne asserts that '[s]candales et affaires n'ont jamais été aussi nombreux que depuis l'instauration d'un politiquement correct qui, au nom bien légitime du respect d'autrui, aboutit à une asepsie du discours et des représentations'.[2] The function of scandal is therefore to be transgressive – as a way to restore critical distance within public opinion: '[p]our qu'il y ait véritablement scandale, il faut que *l'opinion publique*, le *vox populi,* s'en empare, par le biais d'une instance officielle (tribunal) ou d'un moyen de communication de masse'[3] like the press – as a character in Lorrain's *L'École des vieilles femmes* (1905) exclaims: '*Vox populi, vox Dei*'.[4] Yet it is also strategic. The scandals that are deliberately created (as opposed to the ones who emerge organically, e.g. political scandals) are necessarily linked to their own promotional value, as is precisely the case with Lorrain.[5] In fact, I argue that he turns scandal into a poetics. Not content with provoking scandals through his general attitude, gossip columns and romans à clef (Harlequin, too, 'was an intriguer or promoter of other's intrigues. In this

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[1] Benjamin F. Martin, *The Hypocrisy of Justice in the Belle Époque* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984), p. 72.
[2] Jean-Claude Bologne, *Histoire du scandale* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2018), p. 148.
[3] Ibid., p. 140.
[4] Jean Lorrain, *L'École des vieilles femmes* (Paris: Ollendorff, 1905), p. 103.
[5] 'Le scandale ne se résume pas au fait scandaleux: il suppose sa publicité et une réaction du public qui l'intègrent dans un processus dynamique où chaque concept trouve sa place.' In Bologne, *Histoire du scandale*, op. cit., p. 223.

he was amoral, ambiguous in motive, or sometimes maliciously mischievous'),[6] Lorrain also capitalises on them in a complex strategy of self-promotion/destruction that eventually sees him bearing the direct consequences of it. Extraordinarily, though, he also capitalises on those consequences.

The fin-de-siècle provides a repository of moral and sex scandals in relation to literature; they were all largely covered in the press, where debates on homosexuality and on the issue of representation between fact and fiction in literature/the media guaranteed the fast sale of newspapers. In this final chapter, I propose to examine Lorrain's poetics of scandal as a strategy of self-promotion, which raises ethical and moral questions. In the early twentieth century, Lorrain was prosecuted for the myth that he carefully shaped and circulated in the media over twenty years – the very scandalous myth that made him so famous, and the reason why he is still known as a scandalous character today. In 1903, he was incriminated in one libel trial (the Jacquemin case) and two moral scandals that were largely covered in the media: Adelswärd-Fersen's, and Greuling's. I shall first concentrate on literature and ethics in relation to Lorrain's poetics of scandal, which he develops through moral transgression, excessive gossip, and the idea of 'conditional fictionality'.[7] With the example of the Jacquemin case, I shall concentrate on the paradox of Lorrain's moral responsibility as a public writer-journalist at a time when authors expressed a claim for aesthetic autonomy against the economic, political, and religious powers of Belle Époque France. I shall subsequently look at the Adelswärd-Fersen's moral scandal that deals with the issue of representation between fact and fiction in literature and the media. Symptomatic of fin-de-siècle interpretations of gender roles, sexual transgression and deviance, this case indirectly incriminated Lorrain. He saw in it yet another great potential for developing self-promoting marketing strategies.

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[6] Helen, P. Trimpi, 'Harlequin-Confidence-Man: The Satirical Tradition of Commedia Dell'Arte and Pantomime in Melville's *The Confidence-Man*', in *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 16.1 (Spring 1974), pp. 147-93.

[7] Gérard Genette, *Fiction and Diction* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 24.

Literature & Ethics

In his *Salon* de 1767, Diderot declares that there is 'une morale propre aux artistes ou à l'art, et que cette morale pourrait bien être au rebours de la morale usuelle'.[8] Until then, art was chiefly comprehended through the Horatian tradition of moral authority – that is, art was judged upon its ethical value. It also bore a moralising purpose.[9] Drawing a difference between the morality of the artist and that of other people, Diderot suggests that there is a distinction between the artist and their artistic productions. The 1767 quotation therefore constitutes a breaking point: art becomes autotelic; that is, it has an end or purpose in itself. In the nineteenth century, Gautier formulates 'l'art pour art' slogan in his preface to *Mademoiselle de Maupin* (1835) as art essentially bereft of moral function, writing: '[i]l n'y a de vraiment beau que ce qui ne peut servir à rien ; tout ce qui est utile est laid. [...] Je préfère à certain vase qui me sert un vase chinois, semé de dragons et de mandarins, qui ne me sert pas du tout.'[10]

The idea of the uselessness of art would run throughout the century, from Benjamin Constant and Edgar Allan Poe to John Ruskin and Walter Pater in the Aesthetic movement of late Victorian Britain; in *L'Art romantique*, Baudelaire distinguishes between 'la morale positive et pratique' and 'la morale de l'art',[11] while in his preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Wilde famously writes: '[n]o artist has ethical sympathies. […] There is no such thing as a moral or immoral book. Books are well written, or badly written. That is all. […] All art is quite useless.'[12] Writing to the *St James's Gazette* on 25 June 1890 in response to a bad review of his novel, Wilde said that he was 'quite incapable of understanding how any work of art can be criticised from a moral standpoint', further claiming that '[t]he sphere of art and the sphere of ethics are

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[8] Denis Diderot, *Salon de 1767*, in *Œuvres complètes de Diderot*, J. Assézat and M. Tourneux, t. XI (Paris: Garnier, 1875), p. 138. This consideration was made one year after Lessing proclaimed the 'autotélie' [self-referential; self-distancing] of art in his *Laocoon*.

[9] In *Ars poetica*, Horace defines the notion of utile dulci as 'tous les suffrages reviennent à celui qui a mêlé l'utile à l'agréable, en donnant au lecteur du plaisir et de l'instruction'. In Horace, 'Épître aux Pisons', in *Épîtres*, F. Villeneuve (ed.) (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1955), pp. 334-40.

[10] Gautier, *Mademoiselle de Maupin*, op. cit., p. 22.

[11] 'Je dis que si le poète a poursuivi un but moral, il a diminué sa force poétique ; et il n'est pas imprudent de penser que l'œuvre sera mauvaise. La poésie ne peut pas, sous peine de mort ou de déchéance, s'assimiler à la science ou à la morale ; elle n'a pas la vérité pour objet, elle n'a qu'Elle-même.' In Charles Baudelaire, *L'Art romantique* [1869], in *Œuvres complètes de Charles Baudelaire*, t. III (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1885), p. 166.

[12] Wilde, preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray* [1890], op. cit., pp. 5-6.

absolutely distinct and separate'.[13] To express his point of view, Wilde drew a parallel with the critical treatment of literature in France:

> Were I a French author, and my book brought out in Paris, there is not a single literary critic in France, on any paper of high standing, who would think for a moment of criticising it from an ethical standpoint. If he did so, he would stultify himself, not merely in the eyes of all men of letters, but in the eyes of the majority of the public.[14]

Wilde probably implicitly refers to the Flaubert and Baudelaire's trials (1857). Oddly, though, he was not entirely right. In the *Madame Bovary* trial (1857), Flaubert owes his acquittal to his defence lawyer Me Senard, who proposes that *Madame Bovary* is a 'roman à thèse' whose didactic approach shows the negative effects of bad reading on a young woman. This victory, though, is relative. In the fin-de-siècle, a new discourse emerges from the development of criminology and the theories of heredity, that sees in Decadent writers and artists – most particularly, the ones who advocate the aesthetic doctrine of 'l'art pour l'art' like Wilde – not just a factor of degeneration but above all a real danger for society. Their aestheticism is indeed considered as counter-moral; it is, in itself, a symptom of pathology (as I will show in the next part of this chapter, it is also largely connected to the issue of transgressive sexuality). Back in Paris after his own trial, Wilde's self-myth was seriously damaged; he was seen and almost treated as a pariah. Former friends like Gide turned away from him, for fear of being accused of sharing the same vices.[15] He notoriously died in poverty on 30 November 1900.

Three years later, Lorrain also stood at the centre of debates between literature and ethics; he experienced collective backlash from both the media and justice. Although it is not reported that Lorrain ever engaged in sexual relationships with underage boys, his ostensibly scandalous character, as well as his literature, was always bound to compromise his literary legitimacy. This is why his fate, as opposed to that of Wilde, reflects the issue of the confusion between literature and ethics. It also shows that almost fifty years after Flaubert and Baudelaire's respective trials, the separation between literature and morals was not entirely clear.

Like Wilde, Lorrain does not particularly believe in reading fiction as an ethical pursuit – that is, how reading fiction can make one a better or worse person. For him,

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[13] Oscar Wilde, 'To the Editor of the *St James's Gazette*' (25 June 1890), in *The Complete Letters of Oscar Wilde*, M. Holland and R. Hart-Davis (eds.) (London: Fourth Estate, 2000), p. 428.
[14] Ibid., p. 432.
[15] See Gide, 'Oscar Wilde', *Essais critiques*, op. cit., p. 836.

the moralising tendencies of the press and some literary critics are wrong; there is no point in evaluating literature on moral or ethical grounds. As critic Helen Vendler puts it: 'treating fiction as moral pep-pills or moral emetics is repugnant to anyone who realises the complex psychological and moral motives of a work of art'[16] while Benedetto Croce, in his *Guide to Aesthetics*, declares that '[t]he artist is always unblamable morally and uncensorable philosophically, even though his art may have for subject matter an inferior morality or philosophy.'[17] In 'Against Ethical Criticism', Richard A. Posner isolates three theses that also argue in favour of the aesthetic tradition in the 'law and literature' movement: '[f]irst, immersion in literature does not make us better citizens or better people […]. Second, we should not be put off by morally offensive views encountered in literature even when the author appears to share them', finally concluding by saying '[t]hird, authors' moral qualities or opinion should not affect our valuations of their works.'[18]

Contrary to Hugo or Zola as *écrivains engagés*, the figure of the artist invented in the nineteenth-century can also be linked to the assertion of an 'éthique du désinteressement' (e.g. Flaubert). Gisèle Sapiro writes that '[c]ontre les pratiques 'mercenaires' et les impositions de la loi du marché, le champ littéraire a […], dès le milieu du XIXe siècle, fondé son autonomie sur une éthique du désintéressement et sur une économie des biens symboliques qui dissocie la valeur esthétique de l'œuvre de sa valeur marchande, comme l'a montré Pierre Bourdieu'.[19]

Expectedly, Lorrain turns away from disinterested judgement. He is not cleared of social constraint and obligation; *à rebours* of the modern Romantic mythology of the author, he certainly does not envisage his writing as a *gratis pro deo* activity. Lorrain's scandalous practices – the poetics of scandal – are seemingly solely motivated by self-interest: they are guided by a logic of competition for symbolic power in a cultural field that is, in the Belle Époque as it is still now, largely swamped by publicity.

Poetics of Scandal and the Limits of Aesthetic Autonomy

The word 'scandal' comes from the Greek *skándalon*, namely 'a trap laid for the enemy, a cause of moral stumbling'. It emerges from the transgression of norms and breaches of

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16 Helen Vendler, 'The Booby Trap', in *New Republic* (7 October 1997), pp. 34-37.
17 Benedetto Croce, *Guide to Aesthetics* (Riverside: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), pp. 57-58.
18 Richard A. Posner, 'Against Ethical Criticism', in *Philosophy and Literature*, 21 (1997), p. 2.
19 Gisèle Sapiro, 'De l'écrivain d'état à l'intellectuel', in *Penser l'art et la culture avec les sciences sociales. En l'honneur de Pierre Bourdieu* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2002), p. 143.

established moral conceptions. Yet, in the Belle Époque as is still the case nowadays, outrage – especially when it is purposefully relayed in the press – produces invaluable publicity.

In *The Art of Scandal*, Sean Latham examines the intricate relationship between literature, celebrity, and the law.[20] He argues that Modernist writers such as Wilde, Proust, James Joyce or D.H. Lawrence all deliberately used the codes and habits of gossip columns and the roman à clef as a cultural practice that eventually gave their works a form of agency that both tended to publicity and constraint. He writes that '[r]eviewers, gossip columnists, and enterprising cultural producers of all types used these mechanisms to reap considerable profits by rendering all kinds of fiction intensely realistic, yet suddenly conditional'.[21] In his gossip columns and arguably all his novels, Lorrain also develops 'new and often legally fraught strategies for marketing private lives to a public audience' in a system that unveils the intricate interdependency of mass media and celebrity culture, as well as literature and libel law; as Latham suggests, though, '[t]hese experiments, furthermore, often unexpectedly exceeded the control of their creators, as the roman à clef pursued its own strange social life amidst complex new networks of circulation and reception'.[22] For Lorrain, the 'conditional fictionality' of the gossip columns and the roman à clef – that is, according to Genette, the narrative can be true for some readers and pure fiction for others[23] – and the outrage that it can (should) spark is a literary strategy that he appropriates; this substantially participates in the elaboration of his poetics of scandal. In short, he creates or denounces scandals that exist in the space between fiction/reality and private/public, in which he may also participate; the consequence of it forms another scandal – this time on a more personal level, on which he can, in turn, capitalise.

In his recent study *Word of Mouth*, Chad Bennett defines gossip primarily as 'talk about one or more absent figures. In addition to requiring the absence of a discussed third party, researchers sometime stipulate an evaluative component of gossip that serves its various social functions'.[24] It can only be understood by people familiar with its 'social context, its private histories and discursive repertoire'.[25] Yet gossip involves details that

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[20] Sean Latham, *The Art of Scandal: Modernism, Libel Law, and the Roman à Clef* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).
[21] Ibid., p. 43.
[22] Ibidem.
[23] Genette, *Fiction and Diction*, op. cit., p. 24.
[24] Chad Bennett, *Word of Mouth: Gossip and American Poetry* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Univerity Press, 2018), p. 10.
[25] Ibid., p. 10.

make the information shocking and/or personal. In parallel, the roman à clef is historically perceived as a subgenre. Breaking down the separation between fact and fiction, it is traditionally denigrated and referred to as entertaining gossip – at best it is seen as an 'autonomous object of critical contemplation'.[26] In the opening pages of *The English Novel*, Terry Eagleton writes that '[i]t is not fiction which leads to madness, but forgetting the fictionality of fiction […]. A fiction which knows itself to be a fiction is perfectly sane.'[27] The roman à clef's 'conditional fictionality' therefore appears as an amateurish, vulgar, scandalous condition. It is an impure, monster genre[28] that is, according to Latham, scandalous. Yet Latham argues that because it emerges from a mixture of fact and fiction, the roman à clef challenges the novel's epistemological and aesthetic autonomy; it also presents critical, moral and ethical challenges. In the rapidly emerging mass-mediated celebrity culture of the nineteenth century, along with new journalism and the emergence of gossip press, the roman à clef became very popular in France and elsewhere (e.g. Colette's *Claudine* series, Proust's *La recherche*, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*). Responding to readers' demand and the collapse of the public sphere, it is highly disruptive; the public has an appetite for gossip and scandal. So has Lorrain.

As we have already seen, Lorrain constantly engages in the fusion of reality and fiction through a subjective perspective. This is true of his novels, from *Très Russe* to *Le Tréteau*, which, for the large part, are romans à clef (see chapters I and II). Commenting on Lorrain's *Les Lépillier*, Ziegler notes that 'the lesson of the novel is that gossip need not victimise the person that it targets, but as a commercial medium foregrounding the one who learns to manage it, can permit him to cash in on the very outrage he foments'. As a well-known reviewer and gossip columnist, Lorrain transfers the journalistic methodology that he applies to his 'Pall Mall Semaines' into his novels in order to (re-)create and circulate scandal – and in so doing, to promote his works (and therefore to promote himself).

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[26] Ibid., p. 5.
[27] Terry Eagleton, *The English Novel: An Introduction* (London: Blackwell, 2005), p. 1.
[28] In 'The Law of Genre', Derrida argues that 'as soon as genre announces itself, one must respect a norm, one must not cross a line of demarcation, one must not risk impurity, anomaly, or monstrosity.' In Jacques Derrida, 'The Law of Genre', in *Glyph*, 7 (1980), p. 224.

(Queer) Art of Gossip

The nineteenth century press had a huge impact on cultural life. Throughout the century, it influenced behaviours and shaped social identities and activities.[29] In the 1880s, the newspaper became 'objet de consommation courante'.[30] Zola perceives the noxious aspect of the new press in his article 'Le Journalisme' (*Le Figaro* in 1888). For him, it is due to the race for information: '[m]on inquiétude unique, devant le journalisme actuel, c'est l'état de surexcitation nerveuse dans lequel il tient la nation. Et ici je sors un instant du domaine littéraire, il s'agit d'un *fait social*. Aujourd'hui, remarquez quelle importance démesurée prend le moindre fait […]'. He further adds that '[q]uand une affaire est finie, une autre commence, car les journaux ne cessent de vivre sans cette existence casse-cou. Si des sujets d'émotions manquent, ils en inventent.'[31] This race for information is reflected in the growing mass readership of the fin-de-siècle, privileging the sensationalist treatment of information, 'fait divers' and gossip that Lorrain's work embodies.

In the nineteenth-century, many significant changes and innovations in the British press led to the development of what Matthew Arnold dubbed 'New Journalism'[32] in reaction to the altered nature of journalism perceived and experienced in the penny press and yellow press, such as Thomas Power O'Connor's *The Star* and Alfred Harmsworth's *The Daily Mail*, as well as, most notably, Henry Labouchère's *Truth* and William Thomas Stead's *Pall Mall Gazette*.[33] In France, the industrial age of mass readership grew at the same time, with the proliferation of field investigation and sensationalism; this was particularly used in newspapers such as *L'Écho de Paris* or *Le Journal*, whose director and publicist Fernand Xau[34] helped launch Lorrain and his 'Pall Mall Semaines' on the Parisian scene. In his series, Lorrain relentlessly circulates gossip about important figures of the society world (Proust, Montesquiou, Pougy, Otero,

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[29] See Marie-Ève Thérenty, 'La civilisation du journal entre histoire et littérature: Perspectives et prospectives', in *French Politics, Culture and Society*, 32.2 (2014), p. 50.
[30] Pierre Van den Dungen, 'Écrivains du quotidien: journalistes et journalisme en France au XIXe siècle', in *Semen*, 25 (2008) [online]. http://journals.openedition.org/semen/8108.
[31] Émile Zola, 'Le Journalisme', in *Le Figaro* (24 November 1888), p. 1.
[32] Mark Hampton, *Visions of the Press in Britain, 1850-1950* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2004), pp. 35-37.
[33] Gary Weber, 'Henry Labouchère, *Truth* and the New Journalism of Late Victorian Britain', in *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 26.1 (Spring 1993), pp. 36-43. The same applies to the American press, with Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World* and, to a certain extent, Barnum.
[34] Fernand Xau was the impresario of Buffalo Bill on his French tour. See Christian Delporte, 'Presse et culture de masse en France (1880-1914)', in *Revue historique*, t. 299 (January/March 1998), p. 98.

Madame Bob Walter, etc.) in which he also participates. Normandy compiled them in a volume entitled *La Ville empoisonnée* (1936).[35]

This new form of society journalism is characterised by the inclusion of society gossip and discussion as well as the introduction of personal tone through the use of the first person singular in the narrative. Weber remarks that:

> It [society journalism] provided a sense of informality and cordiality which the authoritative 'we' of the daily press did not. Society journalism was also referred to as personal journalism because of its discussion of personalities […]. Society journals assumed that their readers wanted to be brought into the 'circle', and given details about people as well as policies.[36]

It is likely that Xau imported such techniques from the British and American press into France. As a consequence, the Third Republic press underwent the same innovations. In *Le Journalisme* (1892), Eugène Dubief ironically insists on the 'importation étrangère' character of the interviewer, 'habillé à la dernière mode', while referring to the *littérarité* form of the reportage.[37] It is somewhat logical that Lorrain's *coup* in the press is marked by the creation of his 'Pall Mall Semaine' column, which, as we have seen previously, was directly influenced by Stead's new society journalism. In his column (written under the penname Raitif de la Bretonne), Lorrain established the art of gossip narrated in the first person and the notion of scandal as a general poetic rule. Social journalism is definitely Lorrain's stock in trade: in a letter to Willy, he explains that '[c]hroniqueur, je suis obligé de peindre les mœurs, je suis Lorrain de la Bretonne'.[38] This contributed to his authorial agency and cultural omnipotence in the society press during the 1880s-1900s.

Above all though, Lorrain's 'Pall Mall Semaine' provides a real model of media self-performance and the construction of subjectivity through the media exposure of private matters. Gossip, among other functions, is what characterises Lorrain in the press. It is a mode of aesthetic, cultural and media self-making; it gives Lorrain a media and poetic identity that is scandalous. In his 'Pall Mall Semaines', but also in the epitext/margins of his oeuvre, such as, for example, other writers' diaries and the Goncourts' *Journal*, the public performance of privacy gives him a (scandalous) subjectivity and authorial agency. The circulation of gossip in the press and his literature

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[35] Jean Lorrain, *La Ville empoisonnée: Pall-Mall Paris*, G. Normandy (ed.) (Paris: Crès, 1936).
[36] Weber, 'Henry Labouchère', op. cit., p. 38. The term 'New Journalism' later became a genre in the 1960s, with American writers using the reportage form in a personal perspective and emphasizing truth over fact, such as Truman Capote, Hunter S. Thompson or Norman Mailer.
[37] Eugène Dufief, *Le Journalisme* (Paris: Hachette, 1892), p. 95.
[38] Quoted by François Cadarec in *Willy, 'le père des Claudines'* (Paris: Fayard, 2004), p. 167.

therefore bears a poetic and media function that gives him instant recognition. That is also true about the gossip that he tells in more private circles. In fact, Goncourt's *Journal* provides an essential catalogue of anecdotes that contribute powerfully to the construction of Lorrain as a scandalous character in the collective imagination.

Throughout his life, Lorrain maintained close relations with Edmond de Goncourt. Goncourt praised his 'prodigieuse conversation'[39] and regularly sat with him in Auteuil. However, he dismissively notes the clear elements of calculation and careerism in Lorrain's behaviour. In his *Journal*, several passages show that Goncourt truly dislikes Lorrain's ill-will and media strategies that usually centre on gossip, transgression and self-interested complicity: 'Lorrain est toujours abondant en méchancetés et ne s'épargne pas lui-même'; '[d]e tous les côtés, je perçois des souterrains en lui. Sourdement, il se pousse à tout, noue ses relations, fait un réseau de bonnes connaissances, tout en faisant le dégoûté, le paresseux, le solitaire'; 'ce n'était pas le monsieur tout *spontané* que quelques-uns veulent voir en lui et […] il y avait souvent dans sa conduite du calcul de Normand'.[40] Besides, Goncourt wonders: 'Qu'est-ce qui domine chez Lorrain ? Est-ce la méchanceté ou l'absence absolue de tact ?'[41]

Paradoxically, excess is also precisely what Goncourt seeks in Lorrain. The gossip that he regularly gathers from the one that he then calls 'potinier à la mauvaise langue'[42] all feed into the writing of his *Journal*. In turn, Lorrain is also perfectly aware that all things said in the Grenier would survive, as Henri de Régnier recounts: 'Lorrain savait très bien que rien de ce que l'on disait devant Goncourt n'était perdu et ne doutez pas que le fin Normand qu'il était n'ait su jouer de la manie de « rapportage » du vieux maître que, d'ailleurs, il aimait et respectait infiniment'.[43] From a strategic point of view, then, Lorrain's attitude benefits both men; they both capitalise on it. He surely was very much aware of this, since the Goncourt brothers sporadically published extracts of their journal from 1886 onwards. Consequently, the mentions of Lorrain's malice – both heard and read in the press – run throughout Goncourt's *Journal* as early as 1882, a period that coincides with Lorrain's breakthrough in journalism and the literary world alike. The circulation of gossip as well as scandalous complicity in the press constitutes a media strategy that many young writers (e.g. Rachilde, Méténier) followed at the time. Yet

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[39] Georges Normandy, preface to Lorrain's *Correspondance* (Paris: Éditions Baudinière, 1929), p. 16.
[40] Goncourt, *Journal*, op. cit., t. III, p. 912 (30 January 1894); t. I, p. 889 (23 November 1882); and t. III, p. 252 (27 March 1889).
[41] Ibid, t. III, p. 1114 (5 April 1895).
[42] Ibid., t. III, p. 663 (9 February 1892).
[43] Henri de Régnier, *Proses datées* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1925), p. 71.

Lorrain seems to go further, turning the art of gossip and transgressions of all types into a real poetics of scandal that also incriminates him.

Very often, these secrets and scandals are sexual revelations. It appears that Lorrain likes to 'out' society people and artists, sometimes in a virulent manner (i.e. Proust, Maupassant, and more importantly Jacquemin as I will examine in the next part). Bennett identifies a connection between queerness and gossip, that he dubs 'the queer art of gossip'[44] – and its poetic function: 'gossip, unlike conversation, connotes a potential queerness, a pleasurable, world-making investment in the non-normative'.[45] In his 'Pall Mall Semaines' and his romans à clef, Lorrain epitomises this so-called 'queer art of gossip'. There, he elaborates a social and literary genealogy of gossip that reads like the inevitable (sexual) *who's who* of Belle Époque France (the copies of *Monsieur de Phocas* sent to the press in July 1901 came with a notice that states that the novel reads like the 'Bottin des grands vices parisiens et des femmes damnées').[46] The form of his weekly column ranges from literary criticism and fiction to ritualised information and gossip where private matters are transformed into public commodities. Lorrain's 'Pall Mall Semaines' therefore provides a media space of private matters where both high and low society are represented and criticised. Interestingly, the panoramic aspect of Lorrain's œuvre as seen in the first chapter also applies to the poetics of gossip: in *Les Métamorphoses*, Ovid explains the notion of gossip through the House of Fame – goddess of gossip and rumour that eternally archives 'every voice and word'.[47] This idea of recording traces of stories – and history – is precisely what Lorrain does in *L'Écho de Paris*, *L'Événement* and *Le Journal*, revealing secrets and scandals to the public, from what happens in premieres to sexual orientations of celebrities (this is why I compared Lorrain to Beigbeder, and even Jean-Edern Hallier, Marc-Édouard Nabe or Philippe Sollers, all public jesters whose critical/satirical comments often constitute a breach of private information).

There is no doubt that Lorrain understood the power of exposure early on in his career. Yet it seems that new journalism and gossip also bear a literary and cultural significance for him, as it participates in the creation of his own myth. Recurrent cultural

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[44] Chad Bennett, 'The Queer Afterlife of Gossip: James Merrill's 'Celestial Salon'', in *Twentieth-Century Literature*, 64.4 (2018), pp. 387-412.
[45] Ibid., p. 389-90.
[46] That is, Lorrain's novel contains substantial biographical information on existing famous people of the Parisian high society. The comparison to a sort of Decadent *Who's Who* is confirmed by Lorrain. In a previously unpublished letter he writes: 'je vous donnerai peut-être toutes les clefs du vénéneux volume'. See B.H. Gausseron, 'Monsieur de Phocas', in *La Revue universelle* (14 September 1901).
[47] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. A.D. Melville (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 275.

figures of the time are maliciously attacked: as in the salon of *Madame Baringhel*, Lorrain's conversational mode permits a nexus of gossip, sex, scandal, and self-publicity. Sometimes however, his excess leads to public and legal consequences; this is the case with Decadent artist Jeanne Jacquemin.

Lorrain/Jacquemin

Lorrain was amongst the first to discover Jacquemin's art during the second Symbolist and Impressionist exhibition that took place at gallery Le Barc de Bouteville, in 1892. He subsequently wrote a laudatory article entitled 'Narcissa' in *L'Écho de Paris* (30 May 1892), which launched her on the Parisian scene. From then on Lorrain and the Lauzet-Jacquemin couple became close friends, collaborating and even holidaying together.[48] Yet tensions emerged after Jacquemin allegedly created rumours around Lorrain and his mother (Lorrain's very own practice!);[49] the friendship naturally degraded. Lorrain's revenge by means of a short – yet highly defamatory – article about Jacquemin in the press brought about new perspectives on literature and ethics as well as aesthetic autonomy. It had also dramatic consequences for him.

In *The Man in the Red Coat*, Barnes notes: '[y]ou are Jean Lorrain. Jeanne Jacquemin has been stalking you and trying to feed off your substance; you have been close to nervous collapse, and have taken a restorative African break; you are back in Paris lunching with her and your mutual surgeon.' He then ironically comments: '[w]hat do you *not* do next, immediately, and for much of the following decade? You do not start and continue mocking her in print, presenting her under the most permeable of disguises. Except that you are Jean Lorrain, and therefore this is exactly what you do.'[50] In 'Femmes – Victime' (*Le Journal*, 11 January 1903),[51] Lorrain portrays a mythomaniac and nymphomaniac female artist who shares many similitudes with Jacquemin. He calls his scandalous character 'Narcissa' – the name he also gave Jacquemin in the 1892 groundbreaking article about her art.[52] She took libel action against Lorrain shortly after

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[48] In 1894, Jacquemin provided illustrations to Lorrain's 'Conte de Noël' (in *Le Courrier français*, 30 December).

[49] Lorrain writes: 'elle a dans une haine inexplicable ou très explicable, hélas (la haine inée de l'ingratitude), englobé dans d'ignobles racontars des êtres qui me sont chers, et sali hystériquement toutes les personnes auxquelles je l'avais recommandée'. In Jean Lorrain, Unpublished letter to Montesquiou, 'Nice ce 22 mars' [1902], BNF [Ms. NAF 15124, fol. 58-59].

[50] Barnes, *The Man in the Red Coat*, op. cit., p. 189.

[51] Jean Lorrain, 'Femmes – Victime', in *Le Journal* (11 January 1903). In a letter addressed to Lorrain [11 May 1903], Rachilde recognised in Jacquemin's attitude a certain 'love for publicity' (Arsenal, fonds Lambert).

[52] Jean Lorrain, 'Narcissa', in *Le Journal* (30 May 1892).

the publication of the article. On May, 6, Lorrain appeared before the judge: he was fined 2000 francs and sentenced to two months in prison. He was also sentenced to pay a 50,000 francs allowance for damages, together with *Le Journal*, to Jacquemin – a considerable sum of money for the time.

While the issue of 'conditional fictionality' is definitely raised, Anthonay states that in fact it is more likely that the presiding judge, Me Puget, sentenced Lorrain for the ensemble of his scandalous oeuvre 'afin de lui faire payer le prix de la provocation et du scandale qu'il a, jusque là, pratiqués en (presque) totale impunité'.[53] This time, Lorrain's scandalous prose, which refuses to make a clear distinction between fact and fiction, went too far. The method of defamation that so much constitutes the poetics of his gossip columns was finally attacked. In parallel, the trial also corresponds to two important changes. Firstly, as I mentioned previously, the Belle Époque is a period of time when Decadent aestheticism was considered as counter-moral; there was a resurgence of Puritanism in public opinion and criminal justice, as symbolised by PJ Puget, whom Tailhade calls a 'huguenot protégé d'un cardinal'[54] (the very same year, Puget also judged Willy's novel *La Maîtresse du prince Jean* as moral outrage).[55] This, therefore, refers to the limit of aesthetic autonomy (this is why, as mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, Martin refers to justice in the Belle Époque as being 'hypocritical').[56] Secondly, Lorrain was no longer protected by influential figures, such as Huysmans (with the help of whom Willy was only condemned to pay 1000 francs, as opposed to the outcome of Lorrain's trial).

Perhaps it is simply Lorrain's excessiveness that was being incriminated. The same year, he found himself linked to two other cases: Greuling's and Adelswärd-Fersen's. In court, his name and literature were used to justify moral and sexual transgression. In October 1903, Swiss explorer Frédéric Greuling murdered his lover Élisa Popesco, an actress at the National Theatre of Bucharest, in Hôtel Régina (Paris). The case became instantly popular: the press largely covered it until the trial in 1904, during which Lorrain was investigated again. Greuling met Lorrain in Nice in 1902; it is said that Greuling sometimes impersonated him by wearing multiple rings on both

[53] Anthonay, *Jean Lorrain, Miroir de la Belle Époque*, op. cit., p. 829. Against all odds, Jacquemin withdrew her complaint on October 24, day of the appeal. Lorrain was not sent to jail; he was nevertheless obliged to pay a large sum of money to Jacquemin.
[54] Laurent Tailhade, 'Monsieur le Président, in *L'Action* (11 May 1903).
[55] The trial was largely covered in the press. As a result, Albin Michel decided to add Me Paul-Boncour's defence speech as a preface to the published censored version of the novel. By way of an advertising strip, the editor printed 'Plaidoirie de Me Paul-Boncour' on the cover; this proved a great 'réclame' for Willy's novel.
[56] Martin, *The Hypocrisy of Justice in the Belle Époque*, op. cit.

hands. Reporting on the scandal during the first day of the hearing in *Le Journal*, 29 March 1904, Marréaux Delavigne wrote: 'il [Greuling] 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'.[57] This proves that literature was being incriminated again – at least, it was used as a justification of transgressive behaviours by the incriminated people (and also the press).

In *Le Canard sauvage*, 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.'[58] This statement was made in the wake of the Adelswärd-Fersen's case – also called the 'Black Masses' scandal – that broke in the press during the summer of 1903 – that is, a few months before Greuling, while Lorrain was preparing for the result of the appeal in the Jacquemin libel trial. While justice inevitably pursued ethical motives, the press, driven by media and marketing strategies, considered literature as influencing and generating vice, crime, and sexual transgression. Lorrain's was directly targeted, for his Decadent literature seemed to be a textual transposition of his own life. However, as I shall demonstrate, he perceived in it another self-promoting marketing strategy: literary scandal generates moral scandal, in turn generating further literary scandal (and they are all, in some way, profitable).

The Poison of Literature (1903)

The 'Black Masses' Scandal

The confluence of the judicial system and literature is not an invention of the nineteenth century. As Bronislaw Geremek shows, biographies of criminals, *facta* and 'causes célèbres' constitute a long tradition that developed in Europe since the end of the medieval period.[59] Yet, as Kalifa remarks, the nineteenth century constitutes a preferred period of time for its profusion; it gave a 'double et décisive inflexion'[60] to this production. This provoked a form of codification that Modernity transposed into investigation narratives – with, for instance, criminal investigators like Gaston Leroux's

[57] Marréaux Delavigne, 'Greuling en cour d'assise', in *Le Journal* (29 March 1904).
[58] Alfred Jarry, 'L'Âme ouverte à l'Art antique', in 'Messes noires', *Le Canard Sauvage*, 19 (26 July-1 August 1903).
[59] See Bronislaw Geremek, *Les Fils de Caïn. L'Image des pauvres et des vagabonds dans la littérature du XVe au XVII siècle* [1980] (Paris: Flammarion, 1991).
[60] Dominique Kalifa, 'Enquête judiciaire, littérature et imaginaire social au XIXe siècle', in *Cuadernos de Historia Contemporánea*, 33 (2011), p. 37.

fictional character Rouletabille at the fin-de-siècle and, to a lesser extent, Lorrain's fictitious avatars, as we have already seen in the first chapter (in *Pelléastres*, Lorrain remarks that '[a]ujourd'hui, grâce à la presse quotidienne, nous avons le fait-divers, le fait-divers dont les quelques lignes ont une bien autre éloquence que les plus brillantes fantaisies du plus fantaisiste chroniqueur').[61] In parallel, writers and journalists like Lorrain or Rachilde adopted self-promoting marketing strategies that tended towards moral, gender and sexual ambiguity/transgression, a process involving the diffusion of gossip and scandal sometimes encouraged by editors.[62]

Emerging at the junction of the press and industrial literature that depends on the role of the media, this traditional fascination for crime creates and nurtures an imaginary whose effects are cultural, social and political. Effectively, the coverage of libel trials in the media gives the opportunity to a growing mass readership to be aware of scandals and their treatment in the judicial system. To a certain extent, the confluence of the judicial system and literature in the press only makes it possible to place the issue of representation into the fictional discourse; it participates in what Foucault calls 'l'appropriation de la criminalité sous des formes recevables'.[63] Consequently, the value of information slowly loses its significance. It is replaced by the sole dimension of spectacle, as I will show through the representation of the 'Black Masses' moral scandal in the press.

On July 10, 1903, a 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' and 'Messes noires' 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. The names of the two young men were revealed in the press the next day, on July 12. Articles published long descriptions of Baron Jacques d'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'.[64] Adelswärd-Fersen was a very rich aristocrat of Swedish descent; on his

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[61] Lorrain, *Pelléastres*, op. cit., p. 200.

[62] Léon d'Orfer thus writes: '[C]es furieux [the readers] me demandent de l'actualité, des racontars, des cancans de boulevards et de coulisses, toute sorte de piment pour désa adir [*sic*] cette pauvre littérature trop saine pour leurs estomacs blasés.' In 'Chronique Parisienne. Projets', in *Le Zig-Zag*, 131 (21 June 1885).

[63] Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir. Naissance de la prison* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975), pp. 68-72.

[64] 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

paternal side, he was related to Count Axel von Fersen, who was known as the alleged lover of Marie Antoinette.[65] He was also a writer and a poet. In 1903, he had already published six volumes of rather mediocre and formulaic poetry – amongst which *Ébauches et Débauches* (1901) and *L'Hymnaire d'Adonis, À la façon de M. le Marquis de Sade* (1902) – that often address gender ambiguity and homoeroticism, even pederasty. They had a low print run, and they are now almost totally forgotten.

Over a period of several months, it was reported that Adelswärd-Fersen and Warren would pick up young boys from 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, *demi-mondaines* (Liane de Pougy supposedly posed as the Callipygian Venus in one of these sessions), musicians and writers attended such ceremonies. Eventually, the trial of Adelswärd-Fersen and Hamelin de Warren took place in Paris, in November-December 1903. Due to the resumption of the Dreyfus affair[66] 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'.[67] Yet, on 3 December, the two protagonists were justly found guilty of offences to decency, 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. 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. Adelswärd-Fersen's novel is a roman à clef: the main protagonist of *Lord Lyllian* is indeed a fictional version of himself, although he also shares many similarities with Lord Alfred Douglas, while the

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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.

[65] For a well-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*, op. cit., p. 195.

[66] 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.

[67] Gaston Leroux, 'À propos de Messes noires', in *Le Matin* (17 July 1903), p. 1.

informed reader would easily recognise contemporary celebrities who were all mentioned in the 'Black Masses' scandal. It is also a satire of and directly drawn from both the moral scandal and the trial as they were represented in the press. In pure Lorrainian style, *Lord Lyllian* also reads like a scandalous marketing strategy, precisely *about* scandal. The novel ends with the death of Lord Lyllian, shot out of jealousy by one of the young boys. 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.'[68] The spectacular and profitable dimension of the scandal appears to be more important than what it is actually about. These are the last words of the text.

As the abovementioned titles suggest, the 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 Baudelaire, Huysmans and 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. The homosexual interpretation of black masses and the ever-generative influence of literature on the media imaginary fashioned this case at a time of profound anxieties in French society (in particular, secularism, anti-Semitism, and degeneration).

This scandal is reflective of two distinct things: the growing significance of the media – most particularly, the value of scandal in the press in relation to the emerging mass readership – and the changes of ethical codes, as they are inscribed within the wider cultural moment that is the Belle Époque.[69] Both can be explained hermeneutically through Hans Robert Jauss's notion of *Erwartungshorizont*, or 'horizon of expectations'[70] – that is, the structure by which a person assimilates and figures out a text based on

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[68] Jacques d'Adelswärd-Fersen, *Lord Lyllian. Messes noires* [1905] (Montpellier: Éditions QuestionDeGenre/ GKC, 2011), p. 143.

[69] Indeed, the Adelswärd-Fersen case brings to light the issue of (moral) responsibility and impunity. The laxity around sexual ethics was challenged by Adelswärd-Fersen's status as both a Decadent aristocrat and Decadent writer. Nowadays it would be challenged with the notion of consent. This case can be paralleled to the 'Affaire de Versailles' (1977). Post-May 1968 France arguably stands as a freedom-loving nation. Its imaginary representation involves practices that suggest that individuals always fight against arbitrary measures taken by the state – this is why there are elections, free press, and a judiciary system that regulates the executive. Ideologically, though, the phrase 'freedom-loving' also refers to a nation whose people always campaign in favour of individual freedom. In light of such ideology, for instance, many intellectuals took position in the fight for gender equality and the decriminalisation of homosexuality in the 1970s until early the 1980s; this, however, also led to further debates about the decriminalisation of paedophilia.

[70] Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. T. Bahti (Brighton: Harvester, 1982), p. 44.

cultural codes and conventions of one particular historical time. As the Belle Époque is a time of fundamental changes and scandals, the media and cultural treatment of the 'Black Masses' scandal sheds light on the relation between Decadent literature and sexual transgression, and how it poses a major threat to the social and political order. It thus provides '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'.[71] Yet, through the example of Lorrain, it also shows both the capacity and function of scandal, but also its own limits, as a media and self-promotion strategy.

The Issue of Representation

Indubitably, the issue of transgressive moral and sexual behaviour was where the real scandal lay. The fin-de-siècle was a period of transition that created a large variety of fears associated with social mobility and sexual transgressions. Homosexuality in France was decriminalised 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. Yet, in 1903, the public still had in mind the trials of Wilde and Eekhoud.[72] Moreover, in an article published by *La Presse*, Fernand Hauser called Adelswärd-Fersen a 'new Oscar Wilde'. A large number of articles drew comparisons between this case and the 1889 Cleveland Street scandal that involved Lord Arthur Somerset and young male prostitutes, but also the trial of Wilde in 1895. Nowadays this case can be paralleled to the 'Affaire de Versailles' that resurfaced with debates around the Matzneff scandal. The 'Affaire de Versailles' is a French criminal case that took place in 1977. It involved three men accused of having sex with 13 and 14 year old boys and girls. On the eve of the trial, an open letter was published in *Le Monde*, stating that the detention of two of the accused men since 1973 was scandalous; the signatories demanded that the three men were discharged. It mobilised a large number of French intellectuals – including Louis Aragon, Michel Foucault, Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Jacques Derrida, Roland Barthes, Françoise Dolto, Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Rancière, Philippe Sollers, Michel Leiris, Alain Robbe-Grillet, Guy Hocquenghem, Jack Lang, who all signed a petition calling for the abrogation of several articles of the age of consent law as well as the decriminalisation of

[71] Erber and Robb, 'Introduction', in *Disorder in the Court*, op. cit., p. 1.
[72] Ibid., p. 4.

all consensual adult-child sexual relationships below the age of fifteen.[73] The open letter is a great example of post-May 1968 France as an era of moral freedom, where avant-garde intellectuals advocated free will and moral responsibility; in parallel, they also argued that children were able to give consent to sexual relations, as Foucault notes in a radio interview (1978). In the interview, Foucault explains 'that a child is incapable of explaining what happened and was incapable of giving his consent are two abuses that are intolerable, quite unacceptable'.[74] A name stands out amongst the signatories of the petition: writer Gabriel Matzneff, described by Mitterrand as a 'séducteur impénitent […] mélange de Dorian Gray et de Dracula',[75] who is currently being investigated following the publishing of Vanessa Springora's bombshell memoir *Le Consentement* (2020). The descriptions of Matzneff correspond to the representation of Adelswärd-Fersen in the press. Yet, in 1903, while the judicial body emphasized the immoral dimension of the Adelswärd's case, the media constructed a Decadent imaginary around it, whose sensational titles barely hid a commercial purpose. The issue of representation then became crucial to the case. In fact, most newspapers never really ceased to engage in 'conditional fictionality' and used Symbolist Satanism to address the issue of sexual transgression in Adelswärd-Fersen's case and trial.

In fin-de-siècle France, Satanism gave rise to authentic anxieties.[76] Alternative spirituality, together with processes of modernisation – especially the issue of secularisation (the law on the Separation of the State and the Church was voted in 1905) – mobilised public opinion, which saw in Satanist imaginary a cultural signifier linked with countercultural conspiracy, as well as moral and religious transgression: radical socialism, anarchism, anticlericalism, same-sex relations, etc. In his study *Satanism, Magic and Mysticism in Fin-de-siècle France*, 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'.[77] The association of sexual transgression with occult practices was highly suggestive too. Satanism stood as 'a *floating signifier*, a loose semantic cannon that can be filled with a variety of meaning and used

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[73] This petition is known as 'French petition against age of consent laws'.
[74] Quoted in Marie Doezema, 'France, Where Age of Consent Is Up for Debate', in *The Atlantic* (10 March 2018).
[75] François Mitterrand, *La Feuille littéraire*, 5 (January 1989). Mitterrand adds that 'À la vie et à son œuvre, il porte la même attention.'
[76] For instance, see the Taxil hoax and the Palladian Order in the 1890s.
[77] Robert Ziegler, *Satanism, Magic and Mysticism in Fin-de-siècle France* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 202.

accordingly in discursive battles.'[78] The Satanist rhetoric was largely used in the denunciation of homosexuality as pathology, for both Satanism and homosexuality stood as 'abnormal' practices in the collective imagination. Unsurprisingly, the Adelswärd-Fersen's case was covered daily in dozens of newspapers and magazines,[79] through sensational titles that borrow from Decadent literature and Symbolist Satanism, such as 'Les Noces de Satan', 'Les Messes noires de Paris' (*La Presse*, July 11), 'En pleine bacchanale' (*Le Matin*, July 11) 'Le Roman d'un névrosé' (*Le Matin*, July 14), 'Pourriture' (*L'Aurore*, July 14). Throughout the duration of the scandal, it is clear that the literary imaginary played an explanatory and referential role in the case. This is, as I will demonstrate, where Lorrain entered the stage once again.

The interpretation and representation of black masses as transgressive sexuality and the power of their Decadent aesthetics – be they textual or visual in (often satirical) magazines – were therefore the essential motivation of the press, for it quickly became clear that the Adelswärd-Fersen's case did not involve any actual black masses or further satanic practices. In fact, ivestigating magistrate Valles stated 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'.[80] Literature, however, was relentlessly used to represent the case; it was also being made in the columns of many newspapers. As we have previously seen with Pinson, the sociocritical hypothesis of a 'romanesque généralisé' in the social discourse of the nineteenth century proves that writer-journalists did not necessarily recognise a separation between information and invention in the space of the newspaper.[81] Unsurprisingly, we can notice that many descriptions of the Baron actually stemmed from literature – his own or others. In *Gil Blas*, July 12, 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'.[82] Within this context, one could read Mortier's comment as 'with the character we can judge the writer, and the man', a statement that indirectly connects Adelswärd-Fersen to Lorrain.

Both journalists and writers participate in the fictionalisation of the moral scandal. In that respect, parallels were drawn between Baron d'Adelswärd-Fersen's 'ceremonies'

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[78] Jesper Aagaard Petersen, 'Introduction: Embracing Satan', in *Contemporary Religious Satanism: A Critical Anthology* (London: Routledge, 2009), p. 11.
[79] Coincidentally, the press also covered the disease of Pope Leo XIII at the same time. He died on 20 July 1903.
[80] In 'Les Noces de Satan', in *Le Journal* (11 July 1903). See also 'Les Dégénérés', in *Le Journal* (13 July 1903).
[81] Pinson, *Fiction du monde*, op. cit., pp. 8-9.
[82] Jacques d'Adelswärd-Fersen, *Notre-Dame des mers mortes (Venise)* (Paris: P. Sevin et E. Rey, 1902).

and the literary production of writers such as Jules Michelet, Joris-Karl Huysmans and Jules Bois.[83] The latter two's 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 one published in *La Presse*, July 12.[84] The author of *Là-bas* (1891) categorically denied the occult dimension of the case: '[d]es 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'.[85] 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': [d]es messes noires… me dit M. Jules Bois, on a bientôt fait parler de messes noires ; je crois bien que M. d'Adelsward 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'Adelsward…'[86] 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'. It then led the way to a strong case of aesthetic *mise en abyme* of the matter in the press. Indeed, black masses could be described as parodies of the religious service of the Roman Catholic Church themselves. Adelswärd-Fersen's 'ceremonies' would then be a parody of a parody, later *parodically* covered in the press and visual culture. Of the issue of paedophilia though, no words were said.

Bois' and Huysmans' answers to the questions of the journalists justly annulled the Satanist hypothesis and the invention of a 'Black Masses' scandal. Yet their participation in the debate paradoxically legitimised and supported the production of an aesthetic dimension around the case. Bois concluded his interview by saying that 'le rite de sang et de luxure […] est devenu une amusette de poètes dépravés'. Applied to Decadent literature and the notion of 'distraction', Max Nordau's concept of degeneration – largely

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[83] See Jules Michelet, *La Sorcière* (1862); Joris-Karl Huysmans, *Là-bas* (1891); Jules Bois, *Le Satanisme et la magie* (1895).
[84] 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.
[85] 'À propos de Messes Noires', in *La Presse* (12 July 1903).
[86] 'Les Messes Noires', in *La Presse* (18 July 1903).

used in the press and social discourses at the time – served as a concrete argument for this pathological case.[87] 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'.

In this respect, the relationship between aestheticism and sexuality was often blurred in the press 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 read 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, hysteria – all themes that run throughout fin-de-siècle literature (e.g. Huysmans, Rachilde, Mendès, Lorrain, 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*, July 11, 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'[88] and 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 Baron d'Adelswärd-Fersen and Count Hamelin de Warren directly dealt with sexual perversion, the press coverage of the scandal in July largely focused on the issue of transgressive representation borrowed from Decadent aesthetics. In this way, the media imaginary constructed a literary trial that incriminated modern literature in the press. The representational dimension of the scandal seems indeed more important than the scandal itself.

While it is undoubtedly a moral case that was logically moved to court to face criminal justice, it is however interesting to note that the media treated it through an aesthetic angle that indirectly poses the question of the ethical value of literature in the public sphere. In the press, Lorrain's literature was linked to the Adelswärd-Fersen's moral scandal; it was therefore accused of corrupting young people. Further than his literature, though, it is right to wonder: was his scandalous, self-fictionalising personality incriminated too?

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[87] See Max Nordau, *Degeneration* [1892] (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993).
[88] 'Messes noires', in *Le Matin* (11 July 1903).

Marketing Value of 'Le Poison de la Littérature'

In August 1903, one month after the scandal broke in the press, Lorrain published a two-part response to the Adelswärd-Fersen's case in *Le Journal*, later integrated to his volume *Pelléastres* (1904). In this long article, Lorrain addresses what he calls 'the poison of literature', and how young people are easily intoxicated by the literature of modern writers. The media seems to perform moral indignation (adopting the popular inclination towards moral but also aesthetic indecency) calculated to selling more newspapers. Instead of defending a position against ethical criticism of literature – and by extension, dissociating himself from the case – Lorrain condemns the poisonous aspect of literature while heavily participating in it. This, of course, is altogether hypocritical: it proves a paradox that is only motivated by the quest for self-promoting marketing and the lure of instant profit through moral scandal.

Adelswärd-Fersen read Lorrain's literature extensively. The two writers even met in Venice in 1901. Journalists quickly made connexions between the Baron's 'pagan orgies' and Lorrain's literature: indeed, several newspapers revealed that Adelswärd-Fersen's excess in overidentification 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 Adelswärd-Fersen, during his military service, 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's *Satyricon* – where, at a dinner party, the hero unveils the naked bodies of three men placed on the dining table. Occultist illustrator Manuel Orazi later pictured this scene under the title 'Messes noires' in literary and satirical magazine *L'Assiette au beurre* [annexe 20]. Dupin hardly concealed the connexion with Lorrain: 'une fête dont les *préparatifs* étaient empruntés visiblement à l'œuvre d'un de nos meilleurs écrivains modernes' (July 11). Mortier, in *Gil Blas*, was more direct: '[i]l 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'Adelsward s'acoquine avec M. de Warren […].'[89] When the scandal broke in the press in 1903, Lorrain was travelling in Southern France and Corsica but he still remained a regular collaborator to *Le Journal* and he had access to the

[89] 'Le Scandale de l'avenue de Friedland', in *Gil Blas* (12 July 1903).

continental press. He was therefore well aware of the case.[90] Coincidentally, *Le Journal* published Lorrain's short story 'L'Horreur du Simple' the very day of the scandal. The story is about a 'hysterical' woman. It 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'. 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.

On August 2 and 3, Lorrain published a two-part article entitled 'Le baron d'Adelsward à Venise'. The subtitles read 'Un intoxiqué' and 'Le Poison de la Littérature'. 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'.[91] In the article, Lorrain emphasized Adelswärd-Fersen's reckless ability to mix fact 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.'[92] 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 staged himself in both private and public spaces. In *L'Aurore*, July 13, 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'.[93]

Lorrain's argument of scandalous parody did not differ from Huysmans' and Bois'. He emphasized the issue of debauchery: 'si M. d'Adelsward parodia jamais quelque chose, il parodia surtout la folie de Néron, – d'un tout petit Néron du faubourg Saint-Honoré'.[94] Only, 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' Mme de Chantelouve influenced many women in fin-de-siècle France. He stated that many recognized themselves in her – parodying Flaubert's purported

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[90] In a letter to Gustave Coquiot [21 July 1903], he writes: 'Et cette affaire Adelsward, 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'. In Jean Lorrain, *Lettres à Gustave Coquiot*, É. Walbecq (ed.) (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2007), p. 104.
[91] Jean Lorrain, 'Le baron d'Adelswärd à Venise. Un intoxiqué', in *Le Journal* (2 August 1903).
[92] Lorrain, 'Le Poison de la Littérature', p. 1.
[93] 'Grave affaire de mœurs', in *L'Aurore* (13 July 1903).
[94] Lorrain, *Pelléastres*, op. cit., p. 134.

quotation about Emma Bovary, he wrote: 'Son héroïne [Huysmans' Chantelouve], c'est moi!'[95] Consequently, Huysmans should be guilty, according to Lorrain (perhaps even more than the press): 'La presse y a mis beaucoup du sien […] croyez que la littérature de M. Joris-Karl Huysmans l'avait fortement préparée'.[96] 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 often pathological cases themselves indeed). In denouncing the new generation's hypocrisy and morals as well as their unashamed pursuit of self-promotion in relentlessly staging their own lives (most of the time, the self-staging is based on a fiction work), Lorrain nevertheless criticises the poetics of scandal that he created in the first place. Indirectly, the criticism he engages in also reads like the theorisation of his own practice. Did he really forget, though? It is more likely that his sensationalist claim could also constitute another, more excessive strategy of mystification and self-promotion; as we have seen, Lorrain greatly participates in what he publicly denounces. 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, as well as the value of gossip and scandal in both literature and the media. Lorrain knew that well.

It is safe to argue that Lorrain was anxious about the outcome of this case, especially as it broke a few months before his own trial with Jacquemin. Yet he as a writer-journalist was by definition a 'communicant' – or, to use a term more appropriate for him, a *mystificateur*.[97] He was an expert in the modern techniques of communication and promotion. Consequently (and that is a paradox) he also perceived what great media opportunity this scandal could turn out to be for him. In a letter sent to Gustave Coquiot, Lorrain wrote: 'Quelles colères et quelles injures ne vont pas déchaîner mes deux papiers sur Adelsward… et quelle réclame ! […] les piquantes révélations qu'annonce l'accouplement de ces deux noms : J. d'Adelsward et Jean Lorrain !!! Et quelle déception ! rien que de la littérature.'[98] 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 books sale in the wake of the scandal. It was shameless opportunism: 'ce serait peut-être le moment de relancer,

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[95] Ibid., p. 125.
[96] Ibid., pp. 124-25.
[97] Alain Vaillant, 'Communication littéraire, culture médiatique et publicité au XIXe siècle', in *Littérature et publicité, de Balzac à Beigbeder*, L. Guellec and F. Hache-Bissette (eds.) (Marseille: Éditions Gaussen, 2012), p. 79.
[98] Lorrain, *Lettres à Gustave Coquiot*, op. cit., p. 108.

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'.[99] 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 in a context of moral and sexual transgression: Lorrain writes a book; Adelswärd-Fersen performs it; Lorrain retextualises Adelswärd-Fersen's performance. And they both condemn it outwardly and reap the benefits, ostensibly leaving the moral question aside. More importantly, it shows that Lorrain's poetics of scandal circulates in a wider field and influences other people; it directly announces the era of spectacle that would emerge in the twentieth century, where scandal became a means integrated to the production of the self in the media space.[100]

In that respect, Lorrain's pretended outrage in the press in no way represents the emphatic tone of the letters that he sent to Coquiot. In them, he seems like a laughing Harlequin, capitalising on immoral practices that he both generates and denounces; more importantly, he seems excited to see that the scandalous legend as well as the poetics of scandal that he so strongly constructed over the years finally got to produce a hard-earned scandalous *réclame* in the press – whether bad or good, morally questionable or not, as long as it is profitable. As Ziegler puts it, 'Lorrain's public *persona* […] seems authentic only as a publicity vehicle used for promoting texts which themselves are mystifications. Expert in capitalizing on the public reproof elicited by his writings, Lorrain harnessed the hostile reception accorded to one work and then used it as a marketing tool to increase fast book sales for the one forthcoming'.[101] This quotation, emerging from an article about Lorrain's first metanarrative novel *Les Lépillier* (1885) – it is also about gossip in a Normandy society, where the 'bureau des nouvelles' turns the 'événements du jour' into 'le scandale d'hier'[102] – shows that he truly crafted and developed his poetics of scandal in and out of the press at a very early stage in his career. The 'Black Masses' scandal, some twenty years later, shows how Lorrain perfected it; over the years it became his trademark, the reason why he is still known today. Because he participated in its structural changes, Lorrain understood the harsh realities of the cultural field of the Belle Époque transitioning towards a market, some hundred years

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[99] Lorrain, Letter to Pierre Valdagne [16 July 1903], in *Correspondances*, op. cit., pp. 185-86.
[100] See Debord's notion of 'spectaculaire intégré' in the postmodern cultural society. In Guy Debord, *Commentaires sur la société du spectacle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1988), p. 42.
[101] Ziegler, 'The Author of Public Opinion in Jean Lorrain's *Les Lépillier*', op. cit., p. 40.
[102] Jean Lorrain, *Les Lépillier* (Paris: Giraud, 1885), p. 73.

before the generation of Houellebecq and Beigbeder. The poetics of scandal stands as one of Lorrain's many methods of self-promoting marketing strategies. In this sense, he emerges as a harbinger of today's society of spectacle.

- CONCLUSION -

The harlequin is a productive metaphor, whose emphasis on fragmentation and performance offers a new way of representing the poetic, sexual, social, and cultural practices of the Belle Époque. With its 'clownesque' and carnivalesque origins, it defines the 'esprit nouveau' of the period, which celebrates the subversive dimension drawn from parody, derision and mystification. What I refer to as the 'harlequin poetics' sanctions the 'esthétique de la disparate'[1] (the integration of various genres as well as popular culture, notably the culture of 'café-concert', where chanson, theatre, dance, acrobatics, etc., all mixed together) in poeticising/performing the modern disorder and popular culture of the Belle Époque in a form of catalogue of fragments. Indeed, it functions as a metaphor for the diversity and synthesis of the arts as expressed in the fin-de-siècle and early twentieth-century avant-garde (*Gesamtkunstwerk*), as is the case, for instance, in Cocteau's ballet *Parade* (1917).[2] The *Commedia dell'Arte* character therefore stands as an aesthetic, but also cultural and 'metacultural discourse'[3] about the *disjecta membra* of Modernity in the 1900s. Yet as I showed with the example of Lorrain, Harlequin is also a signifier of transformative and transgressive practices – be they real, textual, and symbolic; and also sexual, moral, social, and cultural. He therefore conveys a sense of mystification and self-performance, even gender performance, for his existential/sexual identity is purposely ambiguous. Indeed, the 'harlequin poetics' clearly stands as political resistance to gender assumptions in the Belle Époque. This inevitably leads to outrage and scandal.

As we have seen, Lorrain identified with Harlequin at a very early stage in his career. With its transgressive value, the harlequin metaphor stands at the core of Lorrain's aesthetics of fragmentation, performance, and scandal. More importantly, Harlequin's fragmented body constitutes an indeterminate space where all identity configurations – most particularly, social, sexual and gender identities – and aesthetic possibilities can thrive, as Lorrain recklessly developed throughout his life and works.

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[1] Grojnowski, 'Laforgue fumiste: l'esprit de cabaret', op. cit., p. 11.

[2] In 1917, Cocteau and Picasso travelled together to Italy to study the history of circus and *Commedia dell'Arte* in anticipation of *Parade*. The theme of *Parade* is a publicity parade (this reminds us of 'le ballet de la publicité' in Champsaur's *Lulu*, p. 35) in which three groups of circus artists try to attract an audience to an indoor performance. It was composed for Sergei Diaghilev's *Ballets Russes* in 1916-17. While Cocteau wrote the one-act scenario, Erik Satie composed the music, Picasso designed the costumes and sets, and finally Diaghilev's wife Léonide Massine created the choreography, thereby making *Parade* a multi-media artistic collaboration.

[3] Bouissac, *Circus and Culture*, op. cit., p. 8.

Indeed, Lorrain's pursuit of transgression (i.e. the epistemological uncertainty between fact and fiction, and sexual/gender transgression) in his oeuvre anticipates and performs the emergence of new gender and sexual identities in the fin-de-siècle. He embodied them himself, as a queer person, almost a 'trans before trans' individual in Belle Époque France.[4] The scandal that these transgressions created was yet another self-promoting marketing strategy to accumulate cultural capital, even if it would 'compromise' his legacy.

Towards the end of his life, in a letter to Aurel, Lorrain complained (perhaps insincerely) that the general public could no longer make the difference between his life and his works: '[c]es imbéciles [the readership] ont mal lu *Le Vice errant*. Il y a un an, ils me prenaient pour *Monsieur de Phocas*, maintenant, ils me prennent pour Worousof [*sic*] et me prêtent ses aventures !!'[5] This is where the scandal lies. The enterprise of mystification between fiction and reality that he put in place early in his career successfully transformed him into a perennial myth: Lorrain, then, and to some extent, even now (although probably for different reasons), appears as transgressive and scandalous as his own characters. Yet this is precisely what he looked for, as Sebastien Paré notes: 'il peut aisément entretenir sa propre légende, mettre en scène une représentation de soi, probablement mystifiée, mais rigoureusement mythifiée'.[6] Lorrain goes on writing that '[h]eureusement que je republie, fin courant, *Monsieur de Bougrelon*. Ce nouvel avatar va encore les [the readership] égarer. Que faire contre la Bêtise, la Bêtise énorme au front de taureau? L'envelopper de la *Capa* rouge, bleue, verte et multicolore de la mystification et de la fantaisie, et la dérouter pour la laisser foncer dans le vide'.[7] The recourse to the metaphor of bullfighting, with the emphasis on the scandalous manipulation of the bull/the audience, is telling of Lorrain's practice. The point is to spread confusion ('égarer') between fact and fiction, a method that participates in Lorrain's overall obsessive self-mythologising. The multi-coloured cover ('*Capa* rouge, bleue, verte et multicolore') that associates both mystification and fantasy hints at the productive aspect of the harlequin metaphor, as I used it to define the notion of 'harlequin poetics' in relation to Lorrain's practice in this thesis.

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[4] Mesch, *Before Trans*, op. cit., p. 8.
[5] Lorrain, Letter to Mme Aurel, quoted in Normandy, *Jean Lorrain, son enfance, sa vie, son œuvre*, op. cit., p. 244.
[6] Paré, 'Les avatars du Littéraire de Jean Lorrain', op. cit.
[7] Lorrain, Letter to Mme Aurel, op. cit., p. 244.

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Lorrain died of peritonitis on 30 June 1906, at the age of 51. He was buried in Fécamp, his hometown in Normandy. In 1986, the Fécamp local authorities agreed to plans to build a supermarket on the site of the historical cemetery, rue Charles Leborgne. The local authority relocated the last in-perpetuity graves to the newly built Val-aux-Clercs cemetery. During the process, Lorrain's grave was opened before a small crowd of officials and *curieux*. They discovered with amazement what is perhaps Lorrain's last mystification: his henna dyed hair and face with *rouge* were intact, and his body still smelled of ether.[8]

What did they really see, though? In fact, it might just as well have been a fantastical vision of Lorrain's own characters, Bougrelon, Phocas, or Noronsoff – namely, a 'cadavre peint, corseté, maquillé et cravaté' (*MDB*, 23), a 'cadavre vernissé, fardé et peint' (*LN*, 360). Whether this is true or not is not the point.[9] The interest lies somewhere else. It questions the status and scandalous reputation of a writer (and the legacy it inevitably creates). Unsurprisingly, this spectacular unearthing provided a serendipitous anecdote for publishers; it is still widely used today. On the back cover of the 2016 translation of *Monsieur de Bougrelon*, the last paragraph reads: '[h]is health declined due to syphilis and his abuse of drugs, and he died on June 30, 1906, of peritonitis, at the age of fifty. It was rumoured that when Lorrain's grave was opened in 1986, the body of "Sodom's ambassador to Paris," as biographer Philippe Jullian called him, still smelled of ether.'[10] People now perpetuate Lorrain's self-constructed myth, half-way between fiction and reality; in turn, he continues to reap the benefits and capitalise on this mystification/mythification posthumously.

It is now over a century since Lorrain's death, and it seems that the general public mostly remembers the man more than his works, that his self-created scandalous legend outperformed his works.[11] However, I argue that Lorrain's life should not be separated

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[8] See Thibault d'Antonay and Thierry Rodange, *Promenades littéraires à Fécamp et dans ses environs en compagnie de J. Lorrain* (Paris: Libris, 1998) and 'Promenades chez Jean Lorrain', in *Cahiers Edmond et Jules de Goncourt*, 6 (1998), p. 333.

[9] Although, it was confirmed to me while I was doing research in Fécamp: this really happened, local representatives had seen *it* with their own eyes – that said, they were hardly innocent bystanders; they too now participate in the ever-generative construction of Lorrain's mythography.

[10] Jean Lorrain, *Monsieur de Bougrelon* [1897], trans. by E. Richter (Sacramento: Spurl Editions, 2016).

[11] In *Perspectives et personnages*, Edmond Jaloux proposes a defence of contested authors of late nineteenth/early twentieth century. He dedicates a whole chapter to Lorrain, discussing his incomplete achievement as an artist. He explains this half-failure insisting on the superiority of his life over his works: 'Jean Lorrain était supérieur à son œuvre. Il ne s'est qu'à demi-réalisé. […] un Gérard de Nerval, un Rimbaud, un Jean Lorrain n'ont livré qu'une faible partie de ce qui était en eux; l'un s'est perdu dans ses

from his works; in fact, the interest of Lorrain is that he playfully (although deliberately) manipulates and appropriates – even transgresses – both fictional and autobiographical references in order to emerge as his own scandalous myth. Lorrain's life and works are then integrated in a mix of transgression, parody, performance and gender performativity, which inevitably creates scandal. The construction of a scandalous media and literary *persona* comes with potential risks; it can lead to mockery and reductive analysis of one's own life and works (or one's works through the prism of one's own life) – even, as we have seen with Lorrain, moral/public backlash and judicial investigation. Throughout his career, Lorrain was aware of the limitations of such mediatized performances based on transgression. Yet he also perceived in it the condition of the artist – and modern popular culture in general – as becoming increasingly marketized. In fact, Lorrain really is representative of these modern cultural trends. Not only does Lorrain's oeuvre provide the modern reader with a sense of the paradigm shift that occurred in the Belle Époque cultural field (that is, the change from being autonomous to becoming media-bound), but also the sense of inevitability that Lorrain's process of mythmaking entails directly informs what Houellebecq calls the 'spectacle généralisé' of modern society.[12] To survive in the cultural field, as Lorrain puts it in *Pelléastres*, 'la mise en scène et la réclame [must be] miraculeusement organisées'.[13] Publicity-hungry Lorrain sees the *réclame* as largely coming from scandal; it lies in the combination of fictional/referential discourse and polemical posturing – i.e. fragmentation, mystification, montage and performance, as elaborated through the 'harlequin poetics' – that participates in the creation of a scandalous reputation that paves the way for the construction of his own myth. This is his trademark, the condition of his life and his art; the condition, also, of his 'visibility'[14] – and therefore his cultural legacy. In the end, Lorrain illustrates the 1900s as a period of paradoxes;[15] he is as the *compendium* of the Belle Époque, both the producer and the scandalous product of it, where popular and media culture is defined as a mix of fragmentation, performance, and scandal. This is Lorrain's distinct contribution to literary history.

Yet I argue that the 'harlequin poetics' constitutes not simply a theoretical tool that allows to understand Lorrain in/and his cultural context, but also one that can also

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rêveries mystiques ; l'autre a préféré agir ; le troisième, *jouer*' (my emphasis). In Edmond Jaloux, *L'Esprit des livres: Perspectives et personnages*, vol. III (Paris: Plon, 1931), pp. 129-30.

12 Michel Houellebecq, *Interventions* (Paris, Flammarion, 1998), p. 68.

13 Lorrain, *Pelléastres*, op. cit., p. 83.

14 Heinich, *De la visibilité*, op. cit., p. 21.

15 'Lorrain exemplified both the culture and the anarchy of the Belle Époque'. In Barnes, *The Man in the Red Coat*, op. cit., p. 72.

be applied to the next generation of artists and *mystificateurs* (e.g. Apollinaire, Cocteau, Aragon, Breton)[16] that perpetuated the tradition of bohemian Montmartre, between 'esprit fumiste'[17] and Surrealism. Apollinaire, in particular, seems to perpetuate the aesthetics of fragmentation and mystification that is characteristic of Lorrain's 'harlequin poetics'.[18] Indeed, his groundbreaking volume of poetry *Alcools* (1913), 'with its folktales and magic, its wandering children and gypsies and clowns, is heir to the diffuse primitivism of the nineteenth century'[19] as well as with his 'arlequines'[20] can read like a modern extension of Lorrain's *Modernités*. Indeed, Apollinaire especially liked the Modernist techniques of fragmentation/montage and mystification used by the writer-journalist, that he transposed for instance in his poem 'Zone'.[21] In that respect, Michel Décaudin explains that Apollinaire's style and his modern technique of reduction, découpage, collage, and parceling in poetry shares many similarities with Lorrain's own practice.[22] Linked to the harlequin metaphor, it makes him what Philippe Vahl calls 'un passeur entre deux siècles, mais aussi entre deux âges de la poésie'.[23] This comment very

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[16] Incidentally, Apollinaire, Cocteau and Breton all mentioned Lorrain as a seminal figure at an early stage in the development of their poetics. Cocteau primarily counted Lorrain as one of his role models. In 'Les Muses de ma bibliothèque' (1909), he gravely bids farewell to the muses of his adolescence, amongst which Baudelaire ('âpre muse'), Verlaine ('tendre ribaude'), Rodenbach ('muse aux yeux gris'), Rollinat ('muse névrosée'), Samain ('pâle muse'), and finally Lorrain ('étrange muse') before slowly proceeding to develop a self-mythography that is not dissimilar from Lorrain's. The adjective 'étrange' probably refers to Lorrain's corrupted tales and fairy tales, a distinctive genre to which Cocteau strongly committed, as expressed through *Le Potomak* (1919). In Jean Cocteau, 'Les Muses de ma bibliothèque', *La Lampe d'Aladin* [1909], in *Œuvres poétiques complètes* (Paris: Gallimard 'La Pléiade', 1999), pp. 1279-280.

[17] See Grojnowski, *Au commencement du rire moderne*, op. cit.

[18] Lorrain ostensibly figures in Apollinaire's early practice. In his poem 'La Loreley', first composed in 1902 and published in *Alcools*, Apollinaire negotiates with the notion of lost love through an ode to the banned witch Loreley that Lorrain already used in an eponymous poem. Lorrain's poem undoubtedly influenced Apollinaire's. Laurence Campa even traces a genealogy between the two poetic works and writes that 'Apollinaire, qui avait probablement lu à Nice la 'Loreley' de Jean Lorrain, l'avait sans doute commencé après avoir lu Heine et Brentano à Bonn six mois auparavant ; il est possible qu'il l'ait écrit ou achevé à son retour à Honnef, après le 18 ou le 19 mai 1902.' In Laurence Campa, *Guillaume Apollinaire* (Paris: Gallimard, 2013), p. 152.

[19] Rosemary Eberiel, 'Clowns: Apollinaire's Writings on Picasso', in *Anthropology and Aesthetics*, 14 (Autumn, 1987), p. 144.

[20] Guillaume Apollinaire, 'Crépuscule', in *Alcools* [1913] (Paris: NRF, 1920), p. 40.

[21] See Laurence M. Porter, 'The Fragmented Selves of Apollinaire's "Zone"', in *L'Esprit Créateur*, 10.4 (Winter 1970), pp. 285-95. Ange Toussaint-Luca remembers that Apollinaire 's'habituait parfaitement à me communiquer chaque matin les journaux. Rien ne nous paraissait en vérité plus instructif que le *Pall Mall Semaine* de Jean Lorrain qui tenait cette chronique dans le Journal sous le pseudonyme de Restif de la Bretonne.' In Ange Toussaint-Luca, *Guillaume Apollinaire, Souvenirs d'un ami* (Paris: Édition de la Phalange, 1920), p. 15. Unlike Lorrain, the technique of mystification only appears in Apollinaire's works. He never really engaged in self-performance outside textual narratives. In this sense, Cocteau's use of mystification is closer to Lorrain's.

[22] See the 'Dossier', in Michel Décaudin, *Alcools de Guillaume Apollinaire* (Paris: Folio Gallimard, 1993).

[23] Philippe Wahl, 'Apollinaire, la rime et le rire', in *Études françaises*, 'La corde bouffonne. De Banville à Apollinaire', 51.3 (2015), p. 117.

much applies to Lorrain himself.[24] However, he is much more than just a 'passeur'; his poetics extends to performance. The integrated performance and self-performance to his aesthetics makes him a literary and cultural product – even a brand – that is truly unique.

[24] Apollinaire refers to Lorrain in *Le Flâneur des deux rives*, commenting on urban changes in Western Paris: 'Les berges aux bouges crapuleux qu'aimait Jean Lorrain ont disparu'. In Apollinaire, *Le Flâneur des deux rives*, op. cit., p. 22.

- ANNEXES -

1. Jean Lorrain imitating the agony of a dying warrior, photograph taken at Sarah Bernhardt's, in Thibaut d'Anthonay's *Jean Lorrain, Miroir de la Belle Époque* (Paris: Fayard, 2005).

2. Jean Lorrain in a traditional costume in Algiers, in Thibaut d'Anthonay's *Jean Lorrain, Miroir de la Belle Époque* (Paris: Fayard, 2005).

3. Jean Lorrain posing in a Renaissance minstrel costume, front cover of Jean Lorrain's *Du temps que les bêtes parlaient* (Paris: Éditions du Courrier français, 1911).

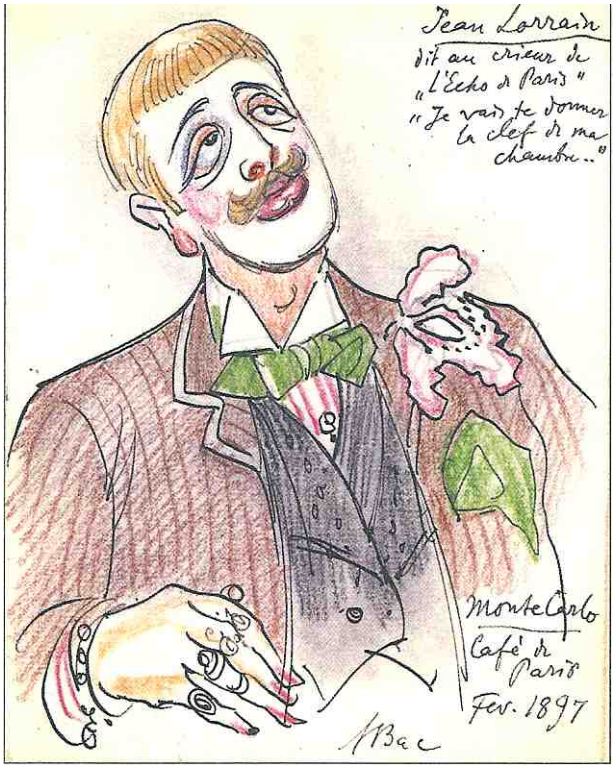
4. Sem (Georges Goursat), Jean Lorrain, col. part.

5. Sem (Georges Goursat), Jean Lorrain, col. part.

6. Camara (Tomás Júlio Leal da Câmara), *Jean Lorrain*, front cover of *L'Assiette au beurre*, 'Les Académisables', 101, 7 March 1903 (Bibliothèque Nationale de France).

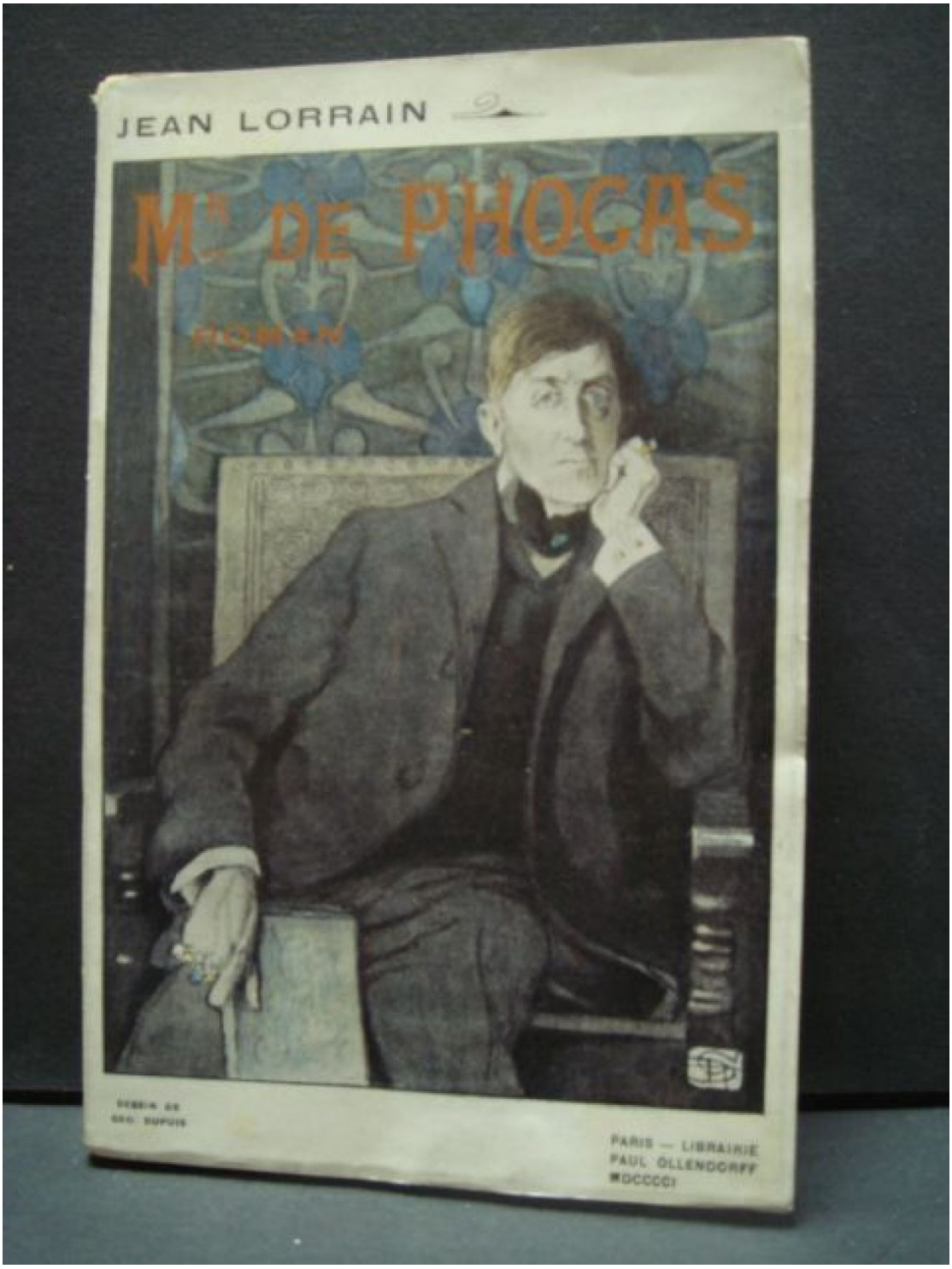
Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

7. Paul Iribe, caricature of Robert de Montesquiou, in *L'Assiette au beurre*, "Les Paons", 108, 25 April 1903. The caption reads: 'Allons donc, mon cher !... Vous n'avez même pas l'excuse d'être dans la marine !' (Bibliothèque Nationale de France).



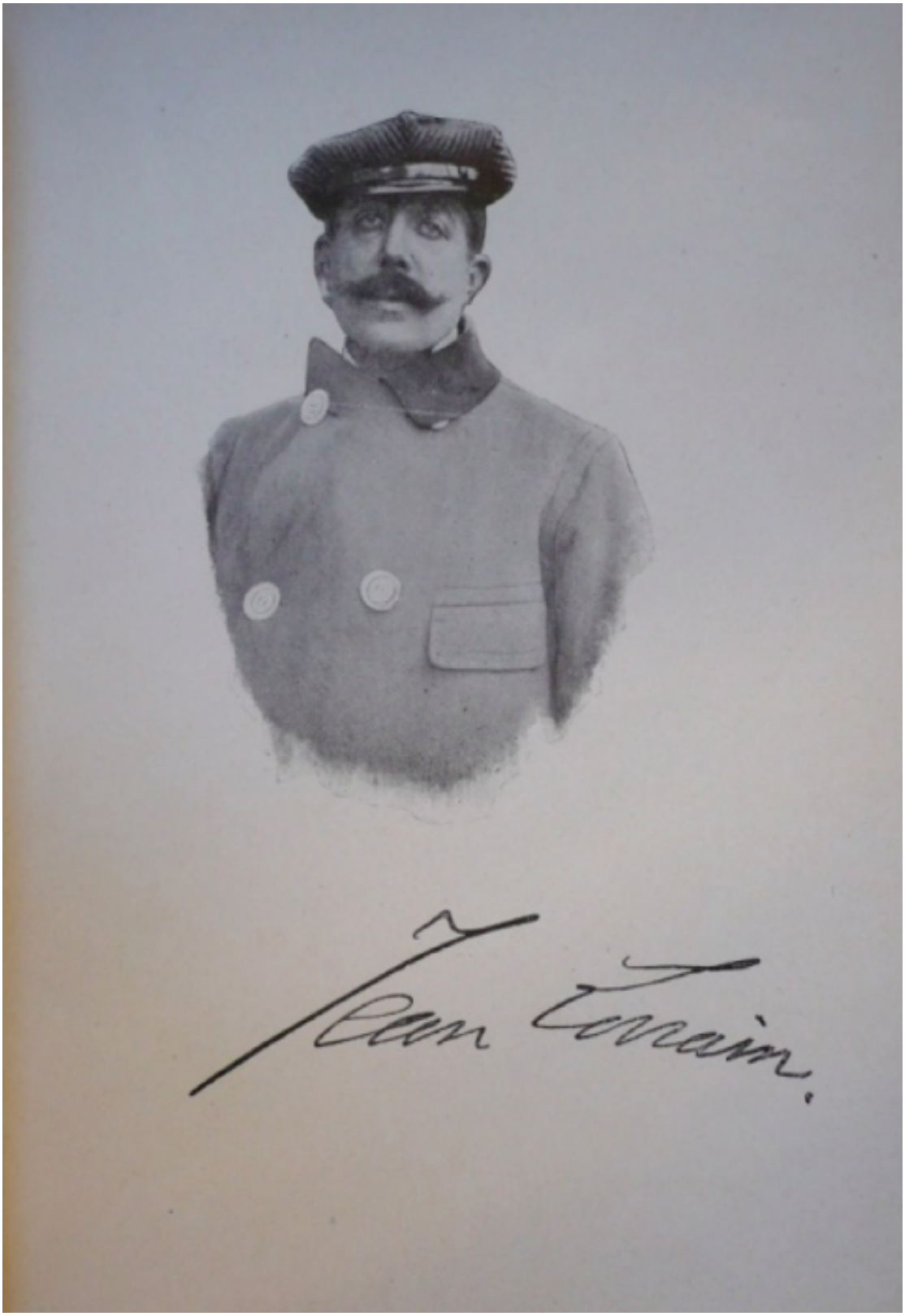
8. Ferdinand Bac, Jean Lorrain, 1897. The caricature is reproduced in Jean Lorrain, *Lettres à Marcel Schwob et autres textes*, Éric Walbecq (ed.) (Tusson: Du Lérot, 2006). The caption reads: 'Jean Lorrain dit au crieur de L'Écho de Paris: « Je vais te donner la clef de ma chambre »' (col. part. E.W.).

9. Angelo Garino, portrait of Jean Lorrain, oil on canvas, 95,2x50,4 cm, 1901. Musées de Fécamp, legacy of Pauline Duval (Lorrain's mother), 1927, inventory FEC. 152 © cliché Imagery.



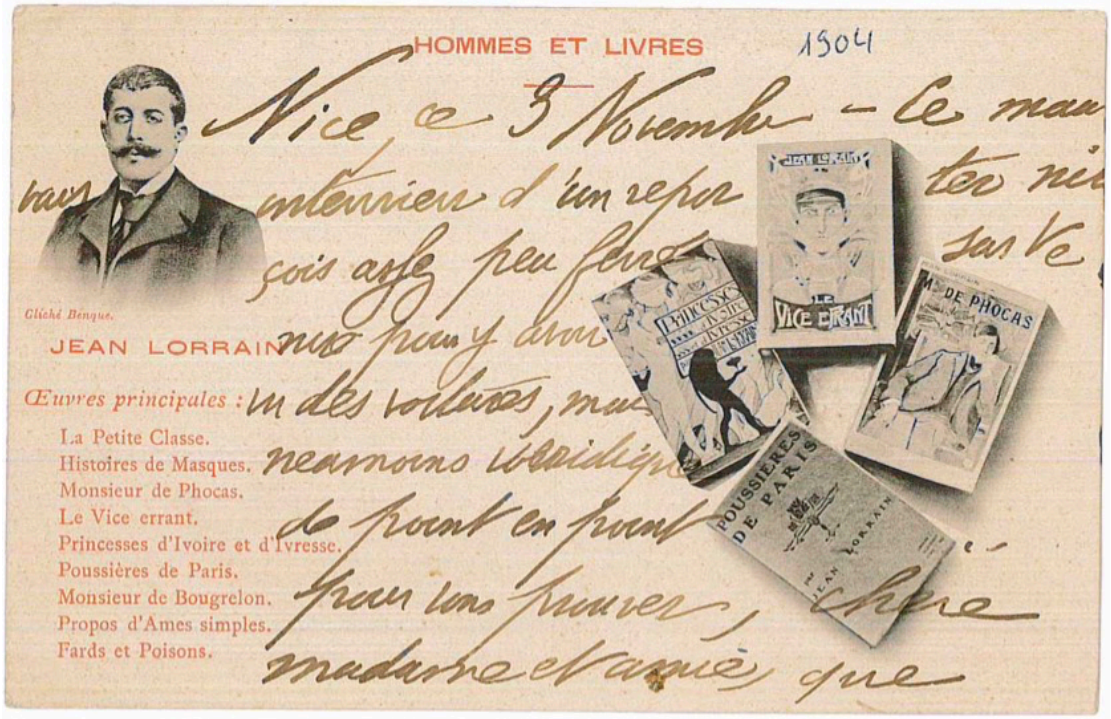
10. Géo Dupuis, front cover of Jean Lorrain's *Monsieur de Phocas* (Paris: Ollendorff, 1901).

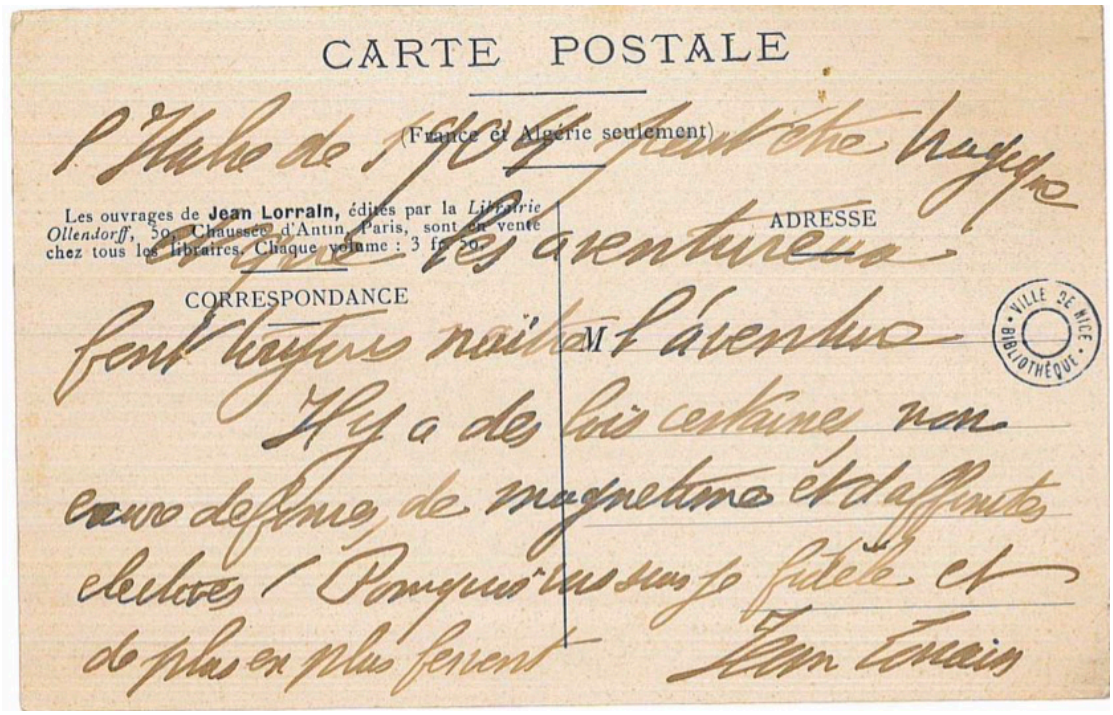
11. Portrait of Jean Lorrain, in *Album Mariani* (Paris: Librairie Henry Floury, 1897), col. part.



12. Medallion of Jean Lorrain posing as a chauffeur, frontispiece of Jean Lorrain's *La Dame Turque* (Paris: Nilsson/Per Lamm, 1898).

13. Photograph of Jean the chauffeur, in Jean Lorrain, *La Dame Turque* (Paris, Nilsson/Per Lamm, 1898).

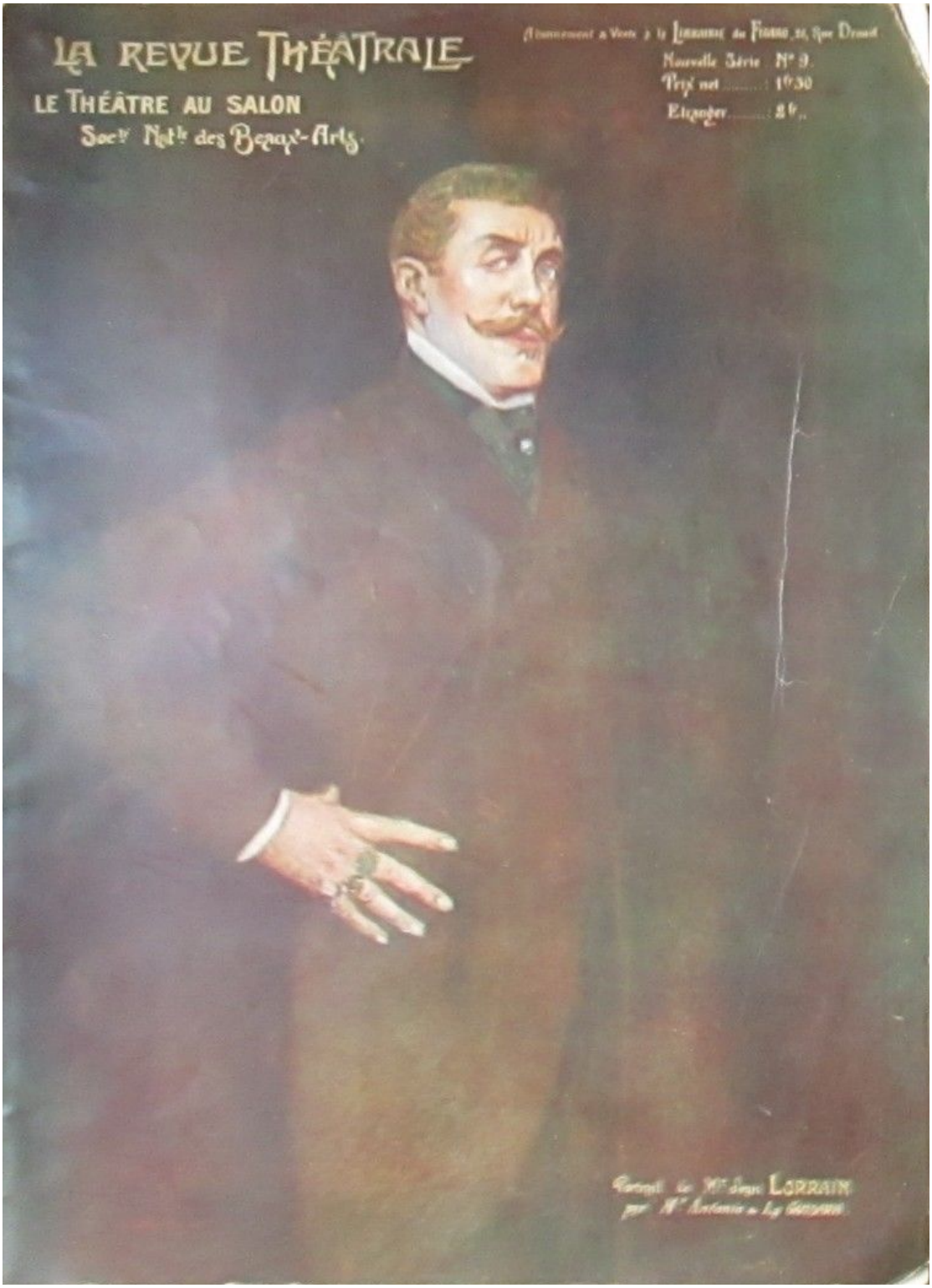




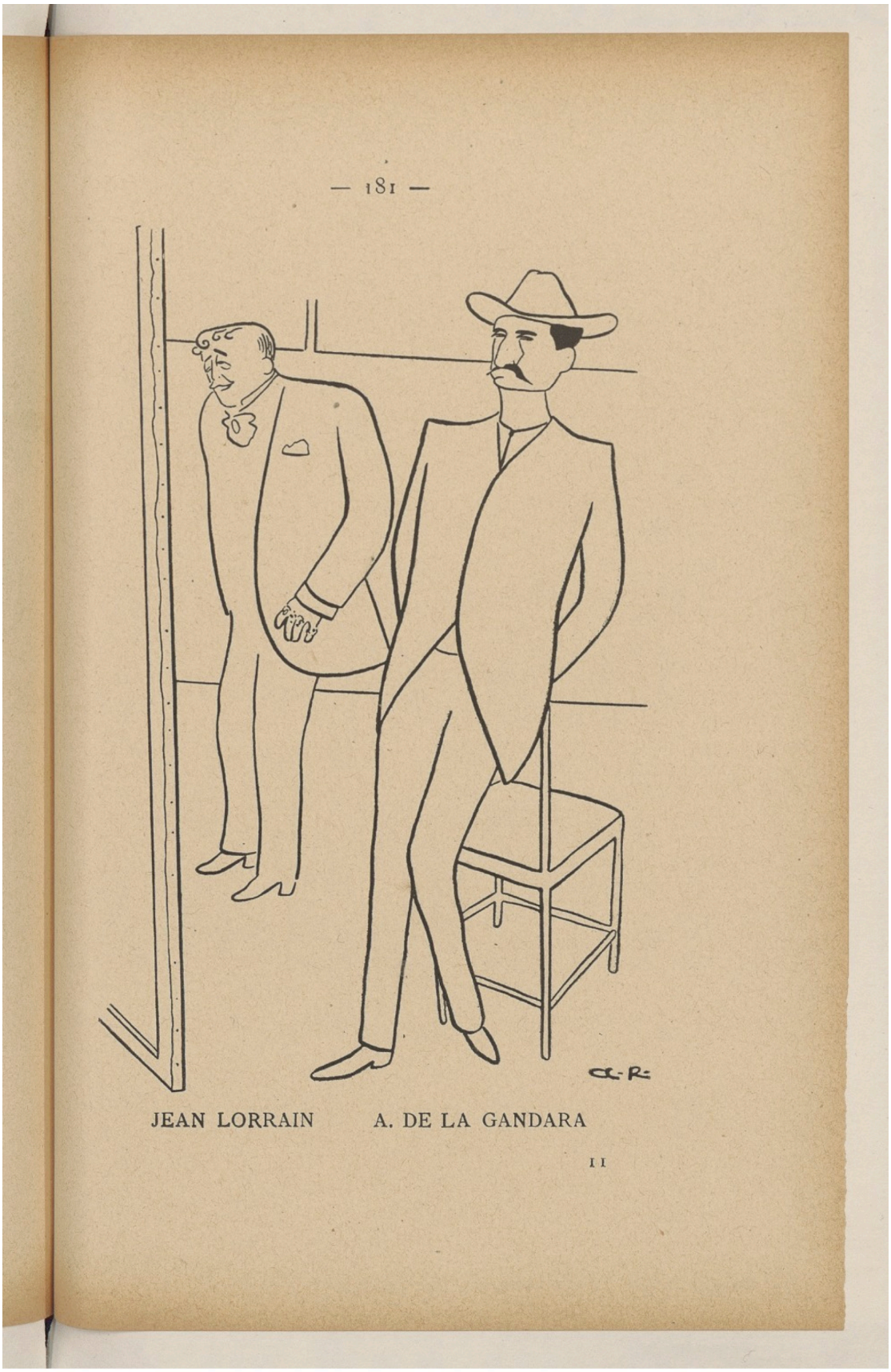
14. Promotional postcard of Jean Lorrain, Librairie Ollendorff, 1904. BMVR Nice, Bibliothèque Romain Gary, MS. 449.

15. Antonio de La Gandara, *Jean Lorrain*, oil on canvas, 154,6x96,4 cm, Paris, Musée d'Orsay, RF 190.3.

16. Antonio de La Gandara, *Jean Lorrain*, oil on canvas, 53,8x43,7 cm, Paris, Musée Carnavalet, P1818.



17. Antonio de La Gandara, *Jean Lorrain*, front cover of *La Revue théâtrale*, 9, May 1904. This is a reproduction of the painting that disappeared. (Bibliothèque Nationale de France).



18. André Rouveyre, *Jean Lorrain, A. de La Gandara*, in *150 caricatures théâtrales*, chronicles by Nozière, preface by Catulle Mendès and Ernest Lajeunesse (Paris: Albin Michel, 1904), p. 181. (Bibliothèque Nationale de France)

19. Jean Lorrain, Narkiss [1898], illustrations by O.D.V. Guillonnet/X. Lesueur (Paris: Le Monument, 1908). Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Nationale bibliotheek van Nederland. Mahé II-703; in liefde verzameld-99.

20. Manuel Orazi, 'Messes noires', in *L'Assiette au beure*, 141 (12 December 1903). The first lines of the text below the picture reads: 'Un lot d'adolescents malsains et équivoques/Attend éperdument le Prince des démons.'

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