

Queer Magic: Hypnotic Influence and Alchemical
Reproduction in W. Somerset Maugham's *The Magician*

by

Taylor Tomko

B.A., University of British Columbia, 2017

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

(English)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

(Vancouver)

April 2020

© Taylor Tomko, 2020

The following individuals certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for acceptance, the thesis entitled:

Queer Magic: Hypnotic Influence and Alchemical Reproduction in W. Somerset Maugham's *The Magician*

submitted by Taylor Tomko in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for

the degree of Master of Arts

in English

Examining Committee:

Gregory Mackie, Associate Professor, English, University of British Columbia

Supervisor

Sandra Tomc, Professor, English, University of British Columbia

Supervisory Committee Member

Abstract

While the scandal surrounding Oscar Wilde's incarceration continued to hover at the edges of late Victorian consciousness, a smaller press war erupted: occultist Aleister Crowley published a defamatory article accusing William Somerset Maugham of plagiarizing Crowley's persona for the antagonist of his new novel, *The Magician* (1908). Crowley's supposed doppelgänger, Oliver Haddo, mimics Crowley's esoteric practices by mesmerizing and marrying Margaret Dauncey, the intended wife of Doctor Arthur Burdon, for the purpose of using her virginal blood for alchemically generated life.

This thesis analyses the connections between the occultism depicted in *The Magician* and Wildean Decadence, to suggest that Maugham uses esotericism to depict transgressive sexual subjectivities in the wake of Oscar Wilde's trial for gross indecency (1895). This analysis takes place through a combination of historical works concerning Decadence, occultism, and the *fin-de-siècle* gothic; theoretical ideas surrounding sexual identity formation; and close reading of *The Magician* and Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

The first chapter of this thesis considers the rhetoric of influence surrounding Wilde's trial alongside the controversial use of medical hypnosis from the 1850s-1880s. By discussing these two topics in tandem, this chapter demonstrates the importance of homosociality and homosexuality in Wilde's trial, Dorian's identity formation in *Dorian Gray*, and Margaret's mesmerism in *The Magician*. This discussion solidifies the relationship between queer influence and mesmerism, demonstrating that Maugham uses hypnotism to hearken to the danger of homosocial influence for heteronormative sexual subjectivity. The second chapter considers Haddo's alchemical attempts to create life as a metaphor for male-centred reproduction. By comparing Haddo's relationship with his alchemical project to the tenets of aestheticism Wilde

offers in the “Preface” to *Dorian Gray*, this chapter situates Haddo’s alchemical work as an artistic project, before reading his artistic creation of the alchemically-generated *homunculi* as symbolic of queer reproductive capacity. In the conclusion, Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* and Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* are considered as literary antecedents for Maugham’s novel, and the end of *The Magician*, wherein Haddo and the site of his experiments are destroyed, is read as an attempt on Maugham’s part to cleanse himself of queer subjectivity.

Lay Summary

W. Somerset Maugham's novel *The Magician* (1908) depicts the diabolical plan of an occultist, Oliver Haddo, to hypnotize the lovely young Margaret Dauncey, in order to manipulate her into marrying him, so he can use her virginal blood as an ingredient in his alchemical attempt to create life. While Maugham would become one of the most celebrated novelists of the twentieth-century, he only chose to have *The Magician* reprinted once throughout his career, resulting in a lack of popular and critical attention to the novel. Here, I consider Oliver Haddo's acts of hypnotism and alchemy in light of the massive cultural changes resulting from the famous trials of the writer Oscar Wilde in 1895, after he was charged with gross indecency. By outlining the networks of literary influence contributing to *The Magician*, and the connections between occultism and the Decadence movement that Wilde himself was a figurehead for, I contend that the depiction of Decadence in Maugham's novel can be read as a guarded meditation on Maugham's own non-heteronormative queer subjectivity.

Preface

This thesis is the original and independent work of the author, Taylor Tomko.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	iii
Lay Summary.....	v
Preface.....	vi
Table of Contents.....	vii
Acknowledgements.....	viii
Introduction: Paratext and Pastiche.....	1
Chapter 1: Susceptibility and Seductions: Medical Hypnosis, Sexual Awakenings, and the Trials of Oscar Wilde.....	11
Chapter 2: Alchemy, Sexual Subjectivity, and the Birth of the <i>Homunculi</i>.....	28
Conclusions: The Pregnant Matrophobic and Literary Genealogy.....	42
Works Cited.....	51

Acknowledgements

At the risk of indulging the standard graduate student imposter syndrome, this thesis would not have been possible without the support of so many of the people close to me. The foremost of these are my supervisor, Dr Greg Mackie, and my partner, Alex. Greg: thank you for pushing me, keeping me sharp, and your hawk-eye for details, alongside all of the support, laughs, and reminders to have a glass of wine when I needed it. I couldn't imagine better a mentor. Alex: thank you for being my best friend in the world, making dinner while I fretted over this thesis, and being tolerant of how often I binge-watched *The Office* after writing days. You are a part of everything I do.

Thank you endlessly to my family: my parents, and my favourite aunt and uncle, for the endless support and love; to my kitten Gnocchi, for all of the snuggles; and to my grandma Maggie, the best person I have ever known. I miss you.

Thank you to my brilliant second reader, Dr Sandy Tomc, for your sage advice and support, and to Dr Suzy Anger, for your eternal kindness and for introducing me to *The Magician*. And thank you, endlessly, forever, to our Graduate Program Advisor Christie McLeod, for her calming presence, long chats, and friendship.

Finally, and so importantly, thank you to the friends and UBC colleagues who I have talked about this project with over beers. Thank you to my best friends, Scott and Katherine, who have been my fiercest supporters for over a decade, and thank you to my fellow UBC graduate students, for all of the advice, proofreading, and boardgames. In particular: Scott Russell, Roisin Boyle, Sarah-Nelle Jackson, Katrina Sellinger, Carley Meredith, Sydney Lines, Heidi Rennert, and Rebecca Sheppard. Thank you, sweet friends.

Introduction: Paratext and Pastiche

Shortly after William Somerset Maugham published his novel *The Magician* in 1908, he made headlines for a surprising reason. The “wickedest man in the world,”¹ occultist Aleister Crowley, whom Maugham had known when they both lived in Paris some years previously, had read Maugham’s book and discovered a surprising and extensive resemblance to himself in the novel’s villain, Oliver Haddo. Haddo, a sorcerer, deploys his knowledge of the black arts to hypnotize Margaret Dauncey, fiancée to the successful English surgeon Arthur Burdon, in order to use her virginal blood as an ingredient in his creation of *homunculi*, or alchemically generated life forms. Despite Crowley’s self-accreditation as the model for Haddo, Nick Freeman has since suggested that Crowley actually serves as a Decadent proxy for Oscar Wilde, allowing Maugham to “[pastiche] the decadent writing of the 1890s and [recoil] from it in fascinated horror” (Freeman 16). Given the scandal that still surrounded Wilde’s name by 1908, Freeman suggests that Maugham found other ways to reference Wildean Decadence in *The Magician*, such as the novel being set in Paris. For “sensation-seeking yet conservative English readers, Paris was the ideal theatre for dramas of transgression, since it was both morally lax enough [...] while being removed from English life and thus viewable at a safe distance” (22). It was in Paris that Wilde had written *Salomé*, and the unidentified, yet obvious references to both Wilde and his play at the moment of Margaret’s mesmerism constitute another key Decadent point of reference. Such readings of *fin-de-siècle* gothic texts as responses to the cultural shock of Wilde’s incarceration are not uncommon, such as Talia Schaffer or Barry McCrea’s readings of Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897) as a novel that writes heterosexuality from within the closet, or W.C. Harris and

¹ While dates are vague, this title was first given to Crowley by *John Bull* Magazine.

Dawn Vernooy's suggestion that the assumption of Paul Lessingham's sexual secret in Richard Marsh's *The Beetle* (1897) being homosexuality echoes changing attitudes towards queerness after Wilde's trials.

The involved reading of *The Magician* that Freeman performs seemingly contradicts Maugham's own commentary on the novel, which professes a deep apathy towards his subject matter. In "A Fragment of Autobiography," the addendum Maugham added to the 1956 reprint of the novel, Maugham is strangely amnesiac about the writing of *The Magician*. "As [he] [re]read *The Magician*," he does not remember "what success, if any, [his] novel had when it was published" or "how [he] came to think that Aleister Crowley might serve as the model for the character whom [he] called Oliver Haddo; nor, indeed, how [he] came to think of writing that particular novel at all" (5, 4). The timing of this reprint, and the addition of "A Fragment," is helpful in understanding Maugham's attitude towards his novel; this was the first reprint of *The Magician* since it had been published to mixed reviews in 1908, as Maugham had chosen to not include it in his collected works, *The Selected Novels of W. Somerset Maugham* (1953), or any prior collections of his work. Maugham would also die in 1965, less than a decade after the 1956 reprint, giving his return to *The Magician* a sense of putting his affairs in order (Freeman 16). However, unlike a confessional, "A Fragment" occludes, rather than reveals, the circumstances surrounding Maugham's novel.

Notably, Crowley would actually be the main proponent of exposing falsehood in *The Magician*, claiming that he "had never supposed that plagiarism could have been so varied, extensive, and shameless" (Calder xiv). Of course, a large part of the "plagiarism" that Crowley seeks to expose is that of his own life; he claimed that "'Maugham had taken some of the most private and personal instances of my life, my marriage, my explorations, my adventures with big

game, my magical opinions, ambitions and exploits and so on” (xiv). Crowley’s response to Maugham’s plagiarism would result in a dramatic battle of authority over Crowley’s personality; Crowley would later publish a review of *The Magician* in *Vanity Fair* (1908), which was signed ‘Oliver Haddo’ and titled “How to Write a Novel! After W. S. Maugham.” The article included side-by-side comparisons of popular occult textbooks and passages from *The Magician* to highlight Maugham’s plagiarism. There is irony in Crowley’s accusations of plagiarism against Maugham, given Crowley’s practice of appropriation from religions and magical orders; perhaps unintentionally on Crowley’s part, the recognition of Maugham’s writing a novel almost entirely of pastiche legitimizes it as a text invested in Western occultism. Maugham, however, felt no embarrassment for his recycling of popular culture. In “A Fragment,” Maugham offhandedly suggests that he “must have spent days and days reading in the library of the British Museum” for his occult material (5), yet Crowley claimed that after the *Vanity Fair* article was published, Crowley and Maugham “met by chance a few weeks later, and [Maugham] merely remarked that there were many thefts besides those which I had pointed out” (Crowley quoted in Calder xvi). Due to the culture of scandal at the time, Maugham had little fear of repercussion for his plagiarism; Alexis Easley writes that “press attention seemed to have a more positive effect on men’s literary careers because they were expected to construct public identities. The secrets and scandals associated with male authors’ lives most often served as an incitement to discourse rather than as a precursor to marginalization within the emerging canon” (12). It is possible that Maugham, who had quit his medical career to write after the success of his debut novel *Liza of Lambeth* (1897), was deliberately courting attention; an act that Wilde himself, who earned a celebrity status through self-promotion, would have appreciated.

Freeman's work provides an excellent outline of the relations between Maugham, Crowley, and Wilde; yet, like the purposefully vague "A Fragment," the link that he forges between Maugham and Wilde poses more questions than it answers, especially given the complexity of both Wilde's Decadent legacy and the resurgence of esotericism in the wake of the *fin-de-siècle*, a moment of cultural transition and uncertainty. This thesis aims to elucidate the links between the alternative (and horrifying) sexual subjectivity that Wilde represented to much of Victorian and Edwardian society and the occult phenomenon that Aleister Crowley embodies, to suggest that Haddo is not a figuration of either of these figures independently, but, pointedly, both. Through an analysis of the relationship between the two major occult activities that Haddo undertakes, the extended hypnotism of Margaret and the alchemical creation of the *homunculi*, I will argue that Crowley is not only used as a stand-in for Wilde, but that Haddo's esoteric acts can be aligned with the homosocial entanglements and sexual subjectivity formation associated with Decadence. The overarching goal of this thesis is to frame *The Magician* as an effort on Maugham's part to use Wilde and Crowley as a means of imagining forms of queer possibility, and to position it as what Gore Vidal labels a "crypto-fag" novel, or a novel containing secret male homosexual desire. This perspective on Maugham is not entirely new, but it is new in regards to *The Magician*; given the pressure for Maugham to keep his homosexuality hidden, it is unsurprising that critics have read his work through the lens of sexual repression, though these assessments have been infrequent. In *Sexually Speaking* (1999), Gore Vidal claimed that *The Narrow Corner* (1932) was Maugham's "one and only crypto-fag novel," though Selina Hastings argues that *Christmas Holiday* (1939) could also fit into this category (Vidal 174; Hastings 437). However, given that Freeman's work is the only piece of scholarly writing devoted in its entirety to *The Magician*, this novel offers the opportunity to consider the latent sexuality of Maugham's

work in the wake of the Wilde trials, and within the sphere of occultism and its associated sexual possibilities, which will be addressed in detail in my second chapter.

This project consists of two main chapters. In addition to *The Magician*, these chapters will both include close readings of Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, contributing to the discussions about science, and then about aesthetics, that this thesis undertakes. The first chapter, "Susceptibility and Seductions: Medical Hypnosis, Sexual Awakenings, and the Trials of Oscar Wilde" compares the rhetorics of influence surrounding the brief period wherein medical hypnosis was considered a legitimate cure for moral, psychological, and physiological ailments (1880-1897), and the accusations of seduction levelled against Oscar Wilde by the prosecution in his trials (1895). After closely reading Margaret's hypnotism and sexual awakening through Wildean Decadence, this chapter explores the homosocial struggle implicit in the gendered contest between Haddo's occult powers and the medical authority of Arthur, Margaret's rightful husband, which highlights several modes of repression within the novel, relating both to sexual subjectivities and viewpoints outside of scientific rationalism.

The second and final main chapter, "Alchemy, Sexual Subjectivity, and the Birth of the *Homunculi*" continues my analysis of Haddo's creation of the *homunculi* by investigating the different modes of sexual subjectivity, especially male homosexuality, that were identified with occultism and alchemy, specifically. The generation of the *homunculi*, and then their destruction when Arthur burns down Skene Manor, will be read as an attempt on Maugham's part to imagine queer reproductive capacity and then eliminate these possibilities, much like his aforementioned ambivalence towards the subject matter of *The Magician*. By reading the *homunculi* as a figure for queer reproduction, this chapter also returns to Wilde by reading Haddo's creation of the

homunculi as an artistic project he is too invested in, breaking the tenets of disinterested aestheticism that Wilde advocates in the “Preface” to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

By way of conclusion, the final section of this thesis, “Conclusions: The Pregnant Matrophobic and Literary Genealogy” which reconnects the two chapters by discussing the role of pastiche and literary lineage in *The Magician*, especially as it applies to two of Maugham’s gothic predecessors: Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* and Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*. By focussing on the feminine reproductive, specifically matrophobic aspects of these novels, this concluding section reads Maugham’s process of tracing matrophobic gothic alongside Haddo’s following the path of the ancient alchemists in his attempt to create the *homunculi* through a male-centred reproductive process. This chapter finishes by considering how Maugham’s novel navigates the gendered nature and culture divide, and the implications of Maugham’s having *The Magician* reprinted in 1956 for a queer reading.

Before moving into the first chapter, we will return to the paratextual press war that took place between Maugham and Crowley, in order to provide further context to their attachments to Wilde and Decadence, and in order to situate Crowley as a compromise between Maugham and Wilde, hence the ideal model for Haddo. Maugham claimed that he wrote *The Magician* under the condition of racing to appeal to public interest out of financial necessity, and occultism was a prime subject choice for popular fiction. 1908 was well into what Holbrook Jackson labelled the “wave of transcendentalism” which swept England leading up to and into the *fin-de-siècle*, wherein social and cultural changes abounded with the end of the Victorian era, alongside the emergence of literary decadence, largely through the figure of Oscar Wilde, and a resurgence in spiritualism that would last through the First World War (Jackson quoted in Owen 2004 24). Alex Owen suggests this resurgence did not emerge from a vacuum, but constitutes a revival of

the mid-Victorian enthusiasm for occultism and mysticism. According to Owen, “by the time spiritualism reached its Victorian heyday in the 1870s there can hardly have been a household in the land that had not been touched in some way by the spiritualist fever, [which offered] the thrills and excitement of a theatrical entertainment in which suspense, pathos, and delight each played a part” (18-19). At the *fin-de-siècle*, the resurgence in interest in the occult was due to what Jackson called “a Transcendental View of Social Life,” which emerged from the many social and cultural transitions taking place (Jackson quoted in Owen 17). These activities encompassed a mixture of practices, including divination, sorcery, and black magic, then took a more serious turn in the revival of spiritualism during the *fin-de-siècle*, which saw the emergence of magic practicing societies such as the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, of which Crowley was a member for two years before developing the magical Order of the Silver Star, becoming a leader of the neo-Rosicrucian group Ordo Templi Orientis, and establishing the religion Thelema.

Despite the famous incident of Crowley “liberating” Jacob Epstein’s tomb for Oscar Wilde by stealing the bronze butterfly covering the figure’s genitals, which Crowley claimed to have done in order to “uphold the privileges of the artist,” Crowley was never as sympathetic to Wilde’s plight as one might expect from someone who rebelled so strongly against Victorian values (Crowley quoted in Sutin 218). Later in life, after Crowley’s experiments in channelling sexual energy through sodomy into magical will had become known, he would express contempt towards Wilde for embracing his status as a symbol. In his “Autohagiography” (1929) Crowley writes that Wilde was “determined to become the high priest of the cult which already conferred a kind of aristocracy upon the undergraduate, though it had not yet been organized and boosted [...] that was the result of his ‘martyrdom,’” and that Wilde had adopted the standards of the

English middle class, and thought to become distinguished by the simple process of outraging them” (Crowley 1929 343-344). For Crowley, “Wilde’s only perversity was that he was not true to himself” (343). However, Crowley’s ties to Decadence, and the male homosexuality associated with it, are more complex than his writing suggests. Crowley himself wrote that

the intense refinement of [Decadent] thought and the blazing brilliance of its technique helped me to key myself up to a pitch of artistry entirely beyond my original scope; but I never allowed myself to fall under its dominion. I was determined to triumph, to find my way out on the other side. To me it is a question of virility, [...] No matter to what depths I plumb, I always end with my wings beating steadily upwards towards the sun (Crowley quoted in Sutin 44).

Crowley’s recognition of Decadence as a “technique” that improves his “artistry” suggests that he views the aesthetic and social movement of Decadence as an adaptable component of his persona, which, as an “art,” is crafted, and over which he has agency. His view of Decadence as a part of an ever-changing whole also resembles the nature of several magical orders circulating at the turn-of-the twentieth-century, in that he selectively adopted cultural material into his image. According to biographer Marco Pasi, “[Crowley’s] cultural interests remained extremely wide and eclectic. He drew ideas and inspiration from many disparate sources, both Western and Eastern, and blended them into his own particular system” (Pasi 65-66). However, a younger Crowley’s attitude toward Wilde was governed by shame about his bisexuality, which “conflicted with his status as a manly gentleman coming of age” (Sutin 43). During his time at Cambridge he had met Herbert Charles Pollitt, his first male relationship, though otherwise he pursued heterosexual relationships throughout his university years (43). These include, remarkably, a marriage to Rose Kelly (1903-1909), sister of the painter Gerald Kelly, who at the

time was living with Maugham in Paris, and who had introduced him to Crowley. In a letter to Gerald Kelly on the day of his marriage to Rose, Crowley wrote: “I may have been a pig-fancier in my youth; but for that very reason I should not attempt to make a sow’s ear out of a silk purse [Rose]. [...] I have been trying since I joined the [Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn] in ‘98 steadily and well to repress my nature in all ways” (Crowley quoted in Sutin 112). This admission, Sutin suggests, describes Crowley’s “conquest of the ‘atrophied’ homosexual element in his ‘nature’ by means of the ultimate heterosexual ratification— marriage” (Sutin 112).

In Maugham biographer Selina Hastings’ phrase, Wilde’s influence on Maugham’s life and work was “largely unexpressed [but] considerable” (Hastings 131). Hastings confirms that during his time at medical school, Maugham read *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *Salome*, and saw *The Importance of Being Earnest* (131). This lack of expression is due to the dangers of associating oneself with Wilde throughout the early twentieth century, while the scandal surrounding his trial and arrest still lingered. For Maugham, “the exposure of Wilde’s homosexuality and its terrible consequences, the loss of family, of home, of reputation, had made a deep impression [and Maugham] could hardly avoid seeing a number of potential parallels in his own situation,” and so, much like Crowley, he kept his sexuality quiet (132). Accordingly, Maugham generally limited his liaisons to ‘safe houses,’ or parties specifically designated for queer men to make arrangements, and while the Wilde trials were happening in London Maugham was pursuing a homosexual liaison in Capri with Musician John Ellingham Brooks. While the relative freedom of Capri would induce Brooks to stay there, Maugham returned to London but with a greater sense of discretion and concealment (142, 49). Maugham, whose “ambidexterity was unsuspected” in society, married famous interior designer Syrie Wellcome in 1917, who had previously been married to pharmaceutical entrepreneur Henry Wellcome (142).

The marriage was turbulent and the couple officially divorced thirteen years later, though by 1926 he and his secretary Gerald Haxton were semi-publicly romantically involved (410). Hastings notes that, despite increasing tolerance in England towards male homosexuality, Maugham was “a product of his age” and desired to keep his homosexuality quiet (513). This secrecy, despite thirty years of being in exclusively homosexual relationships (after Haxton’s death in 1944, Maugham became involved with his new secretary, Alan Searle), is the backdrop against which Maugham reprinted *The Magician* with “A Fragment of Autobiography.”

By returning to *The Magician*, and adding a preface that focuses almost entirely on Crowley, however ambivalently, Maugham seems to invite a new look at a work that he had “completely forgotten” (Maugham 1908 5). Having outlined the similarities in circumstance that existed between Maugham and Crowley, given what is now known about their sexual identities and preferences, it becomes clear that some conflation between these two men contributes to the character of Oliver Haddo, a figuration for Oscar Wilde. Therefore, it seems fruitful to consider, as this thesis does, what magical acts Haddo chooses to undertake, and what sexual and creative possibilities they may represent.

Chapter 1: Susceptibility and Seductions: Medical Hypnosis, Sexual Awakenings, and the Trials of Oscar Wilde

Nick Freeman's aforementioned suggestion that *The Magician* sees Maugham "[pastiching] the decadent writing of the 1890s and [recoiling] from it in fascinated horror," is a strong starting point for reading this novel as non-heteronormative, while relying on an understanding of the social fear towards the Decadent movement at the *fin-de-siècle* and how Wilde was emblematic of these fears (Freeman 16). This chapter will use the extensive hypnosis plot as a through-line for reading Wilde's influence on Maugham, while also exploring the dynamics of influence in both *The Magician* and Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. While Freeman's work provides an excellent outline of the relations between Maugham, Crowley, and Wilde, this chapter aims to elucidate the connections between Haddo's act of awakening Margaret's sexuality through hypnosis, and the rhetoric of influence that pervaded the accusations of sodomy against Wilde.

Oscar Wilde's legal woes began when he sued the Marquess of Queensberry for libel, after Lord Queensberry had called Wilde a "posing sodomite." As the trial continued, Lord Queensberry's counsel, Edward Carson, suggested that he had enough evidence of Wilde's "sodomitical" activities to bring him to trial (Ellman 414-417). Wilde dropped the charges against Queensberry, and was himself charged with gross indecency and sodomy in April 1895 (417). During the Wilde v. Queensberry trial, Carson extensively referenced Wilde's novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, suggesting the book was a portrait of Wilde's own impulses and actions towards younger men. Carson's line of questioning largely hinged on Wilde's dismissal of both the morality imbued within literary content, and the ability of a subject to be influenced by such content. To establish said ambivalence, Carson first asked Wilde about John Francis Bloxam's

anonymously published pederastic story “The Priest and the Acolyte,” which appeared in the first volume of *The Chameleon* literary magazine, which Wilde supported and contributed to. Over multiple pages of trial transcript, Carson cross-examined Wilde on Bloxam’s story, demonstrating that Wilde’s priorities are less ethical than they are aesthetic. Throughout Carson’s consistent questions as to whether Wilde finds the story blasphemous, and whether not to repudiate the story would suggest that Wilde may have been “posing as a sodomite,” Wilde steadfastly refutes ethical judgement of Bloxam’s text, but judges it to be poor literature, prompting Carson to argue that Wilde “knows of no distinction between a moral and an immoral book, and [...] cares for none” (Carson quoted in Holland 72, 255). *Dorian Gray* also appears in Carson’s closing statements, wherein he implicitly compares that novel to “The Priest and the Acolyte,” suggesting that Wilde’s novel outlines “the story of a man corrupted by another man and who by such corruption is brought to commit, or the book suggests he has committed, this sodomitic vice” (Carson quoted in Holland 261). The implication of “sodomy” in *Dorian Gray* is a key point in Carson’s case; describing applicable moments, such as Basil’s affection for Dorian and Dorian’s mysterious nocturnal adventures, Carson asked Wilde whether the novel’s ambivalence toward homoeroticism allows it to be read as “sodomitical” (Holland 81, 78). Wilde’s response, that “he who has found the sin has brought it,” or that Dorian’s sins are a reflection of the individual reader’s psyche, suggested a reversal in the dynamic of influence that Carson proposed (Wilde quoted in Holland 78). Whereas Carson sought to prove that Dorian’s hedonistic activities, especially the homoerotic ones, may sound tantalizing to the reader, Wilde counters that Dorian’s ambiguous activity created a negative space into which the reader could project their own fantasies. Wilde’s own ambivalence about the possibility of moral influence supports this divestment of responsibility; in the trial, Wilde claimed that “I think such an idea as

bad influence is rather a question for fiction than actual life” (Wilde quoted in Holland 102). In the broader context of the trial, Wilde’s attempted to distance himself from the accusations of “[soliciting]” and “[inciting]” of ‘sodomitical’ activities with young men, implying that if any “sodomitical” thought did exist for the young men he was accused of influencing, he acted only as inspiration for their desires and curiosities (Carson quoted in Holland 287).

This representation of Wilde as a locus for the projection of improper desires delineates a parallelism between the themes of suggestibility and immoral influence that Carson both accused Wilde of and claimed takes place in *Dorian Gray*, and the hypnotic influence present in *The Magician*. Thus, the rhetoric of influence present throughout Wilde’s trial recalls the scandal surrounding medical hypnosis, wherein a central debate concerned the method, and the limits, of susceptibility. Medical hypnosis gained traction in the 1850s, and was used as a therapeutic method for treating physical and psychical ailments into the 1890s. It was a relatively mainstream technique, and was even investigated by the British Medical Association; however, it was also surrounded by controversy, largely due to ethical questions relating to the amount of agency it granted medical professionals, and had faded from serious consideration by 1900. “What is Mesmerism?,” an article in the July 1851 edition of *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, provides a description of the two major schools of thought circulating around hypnosis: animal magnetism and subconscious susceptibility, and provides a particularly useful description of the latter. The article itself is an early exploration and endorsement of animal magnetism as an emerging science, followed by a postscript that refutes the opinion presented in the article and professes to have “no faith in animal magnetism, either in its lesser or in its larger pretensions” (*Blackwood’s*, July 1851, 83). The postscript to “What is Mesmerism?” instead focusses on those who lack will, suggesting that they are the most likely to believe in mesmerism, or to be

mesmerized: “it is only in the case of individuals who [...] are hovering on the verge of fatuity, that the magnetic phenomena and the mesmeric prostration can be admitted to be in any considerable degree real,” and these exemplary individuals often profess “imbecility of the nervous system, a ready abandonment of the will, and facility in relinquishing every endowment which makes man *human*” (84). This notion of lesser humanity is echoed by Alan Gauld in *A History of Hypnotism*, wherein he states that “people without much culture, not given to reflecting, and prone to a certain passive obedience, are better subjects than the more highly educated, who find it hard to restrain critical thoughts, or to put themselves into a state of passivity” (434). These descriptions of victims vulnerable to hypnosis resemble Carson’s depictions of the young men Wilde apparently exploited through his charm, fame, age, and social status, when the lawyer claimed they were in a “dangerous position in that [they] acquiesced in the domination of Mr. Wilde” (Carson quoted in Hyde 169). They are similar, too, to Carson’s reading of *Dorian Gray*, which highlights the fascination with influence that permeates the novel (Carson quoted in Holland 261).

Regardless of its implications for the trial, Carson’s suggestion that dynamics of influence are a prominent theme in *Dorian Gray* is frequently reiterated by more recent critics, including Christopher Craft, Burak Irmak, Kerry Powell, Peter Raby, and Simon Stern. Powell, discussing Wilde’s interest in mesmeric subject matter prior to penning *Dorian Gray*, suggests that Dorian is an “oddly somnambulistic” character, upon whom Henry Wotton operates like a Mephistopheles (Powell 10, 12). Craft, concerned with the mirror image and ideas of erotic speculation in Wilde’s novel, reads Dorian’s obsession with his portrait as a Narcissus-like tension between the lover’s attachment to himself, and the alienation of the object of desire (113). Reading Lord Henry through Butlerian theories of performativity, Irmak claims that the

student-teacher relationship between Lord Henry and Dorian is a practice, for Lord Henry, in escaping the performance required of the stereotypical married, heterosexual man (78). Raby, moving outside the sphere of character interactions, suggests that *Dorian Gray* is more French than English, and that the yellow book Henry gives Dorian opens up a cultural relationship with hedonism in which Dorian and Henry “[look] toward France for validation” (Raby 162).

Notably, Raby also claims that *Dorian Gray* itself takes on the role of the “yellow book,” changing Wilde’s life through its damage to his reputation and use as ammunition during the trial (166). Stern, placing Wilde’s novel within the late Victorian campaign against obscenity, indirectly suggests that Wilde depicts experiments in suggestibility, claiming that “[Wilde’s] emphasis is not on the cause of Dorian’s propensity for corruption but on the intensity of Dorian’s willing submission” (Stern 767-8). The irony of this meditation, Stern states, is in the fact that “anything might provoke an erotic reverie, including a discourse on the immorality of influence, if only it finds the right ear, and hence this reaction becomes the touchstone for identifying obscene works, while the subtler effects that Lord Henry prefers to contemplate can escape legal notice” (759). Stern’s claim for how Dorian submits to Lord Henry’s influence aligns Dorian with Wilde’s argument that the ambivalent text brings out repressed desires to which some readers may be predisposed, with Wilde and Lord Henry inspiring “erotic reveries” in similarly distanced fashions. Indeed, Lord Henry’s suggestion that he represents “all the sins [Dorian] never had the courage to commit” acts as a counterpart to Dorian’s acknowledgement that Henry’s views on hedonism “had touched some secret chord that had never been touched before, but that [Dorian] felt was now vibrating and throbbing to curious pulses,” of the “poisonous influences that came from his own temperament,” and his lack of desire to free himself from the influence of the yellow book (Wilde 1891 77, 21, 113, 120). Accordingly,

Dorian's willingness to become "an echo of someone else's music, an actor of a part that has not been written for him," as Lord Henry suggests, aligns him with the reading public that Carson fears has been immorally influenced by reading *Dorian Gray* (Wilde 1891 20; Carson quoted in Holland 81).

While Wilde's framing of influence between adults as impossible is an attempt to shift responsibility from himself onto the public, Carson argued during his cross-examination that Wilde's own ambivalence about the morality of literature is highly problematic, given Wilde's lack of faith in the ability of "Philistines and the illiterate" to decipher the ethics of what they are reading (Wilde quoted in Holland 81). By denying the ethical implications of *Dorian Gray* for a general readership, Wilde absolves himself of responsibility for their responses to his text. This is furthered by Wilde's claim that adults are not able to have influence over each other, and that whatever the reader thinks Dorian is doing in the darkness is likely a projection of their own fantasy (Holland 78). This notion of suppressed desire becoming manifest is, crucially, one of the final conclusions of medical hypnotic research, as debates surrounding the nature of susceptibility would end with the introduction of this concept. In 1898, Psychical Researcher Frederic W. H. Myers introduced his theory of the subliminal self, wherein an individual's susceptibility to hypnotism is linked to their "self-suggestion," which allows the hypnotist to release "some fountain of energy which was latent within the man's own being" (Myers 107). This 'fountain' recalls Wilde's self-positioning as an incentive for suppressed appetites; if Wilde is capable of wielding influence, it is the ability to draw out existing suppressed, and potentially subversive, desires.

From the perspective of psychical researchers, Wilde's supposed ability to 'hypnotize' by unlocking suggestion is dangerous, given concerns about both the audiences that watched

hypnotic performances or medical proceedings, and the credentials of those who performed them. The relationship between medical studies of hypnotism and the populace was complex, given medical hypnotism's origin in public performance, the most famous example being John Elliotson's 1838 lecture series at University College London, during which he performed hypnotic therapy on the 'hysterical' and epileptic sisters Jane and Elizabeth O'Key with mixed success. By the 1890s, medical bodies had begun to be concerned about the public's knowledge of hypnotism, as both an unscientific audience and one that was suggestible to the fictions presented by false authorities, such as charlatans and stage performers (Chettiar 345). A rationale for this concern was the conflation often made by medical authorities between hypnotism's ability to cure the physical and psychical ailments of the individual, and the moral health of the population at large (346). Accordingly, a report of the British Medical Association's 1891 meeting states that "the public exhibition before unscientific and miscellaneous audiences, and for the purposes of gain or amusement, of the phenomena of hypnotism [were] antagonistic to public morality," suggesting that hypnotism being practiced by non-sanctioned authorities could have a *morally* detrimental effect on the public (*British Medical Journal*, 7 February 1891, 321). Therefore, Carson's construal of Wilde's influence over young men as malignant and immoral can also be read as a public health crisis. While this quasi-medical perspective is only implicit in both the trial and *Dorian Gray*, it is abundant throughout *The Magician*, two of whose main characters are physicians, as was Maugham himself before abandoning his medical career to write. Given his involvement in the medical community from 1892-1897, it is unlikely that Maugham would have been unaware of the medical hypnotism and its associated anxieties. If in *The Magician*, as Freeman suggests, Haddo does ultimately represent Wilde and the danger associated with Decadence after 1895, then Haddo's presence in Maugham's novel, which is

populated with doctors, is also connected to Wilde through their role as unsanctioned hypnotists. Thus, *The Magician* can be read as a cautionary medical narrative regarding the risks of hypnotism practiced by, and around, those outside of the medical sphere. Haddo's mesmerism of Margaret and her resulting involuntary sexual awakening mimics the queering influence that Carson suggests Wilde had over young men, illustrating the moral and medical dangers of uncontrolled erotic influence.

In order to conceptualize the transition between sanctioned medical hypnosis and what might be perceived as malignant hypnotic influence, it is useful to recall Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's definition of queer as "the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, [and] lapses and excesses of meaning" (Sedgwick 1993 7). The esoteric, in its definition as that which is unknown, is "queer" in itself; Owen claims that "the new 'spiritual movement' was intimately bound up with leading social and cultural preoccupations and was regarded by many as the complement to social conscience and political engagement [which] consistently served in the interests of social as well as spiritual regeneration" (Owen 26-27, 28). The "open mesh of possibilities" Sedgwick describes also recalls the amalgamative nature of academic enquiry attached to mysticism, such as comparative religion, Egyptology, folklore, philosophy, and anthropology, and the aforementioned appropriative nature of magical philosophies. Relative to Arthur's medical utilitarianism, then, a comparison emerges early in the novel between Haddo's supernaturalism and Margaret's art. While Arthur believes that Haddo is either a lunatic or a charlatan, and "think[s] the aims of mystical persons [are] invariably gross or trivial," Haddo's generation of the homunculi is the most creative, limitless, or 'queer' act in the text, followed by Margaret's drawing (Maugham 1908 38, 73). Initially, they seem alike in their puerility; Arthur believes that Haddo is a fraud, and Margaret's career as an artist seems limited

to her stay in Paris before her marriage to Arthur. The framing of Haddo's activities, especially alchemy, and Margaret's art that Arthur puts forward echoes the Wildean sentiment of 'art for art's sake,' wherein creation lacks moralistic value and exists only in the realm of aesthetics. The moral implications here are problematic, given the limitless possibilities of artistic creation, and the exploration of occult knowledge, when ethically unchecked. Hence, the danger associated with Crowley's occultism and Decadent proclivities retroactively connects the scandal of malignant sexuality and influence surrounding Wilde.

It is clear that a competition for legitimacy between medical and occult knowledge defines Maugham's novel. Yet, while the most obvious namesake for the title *The Magician* is Oliver Haddo, it may also signal an inverse bildungsroman for Arthur. Throughout the novel, Arthur grows out of his self-imposed intellectual limitations and ultimately proves semi-victorious over Haddo, seemingly by embracing the spiritual potential imbued by spending his youth in Egypt, the historical backdrop for the Kabbalistic school of magical thought in which the novel is steeped. The destruction of the demarcations that Arthur insists upon between rationalism and esoteric thought dictates the course of the novel arguably more than Haddo's hypnotic and alchemical practices, which leave little lasting impact after Margaret's death and the burning of Skene Manor at the end of the novel. By finally becoming susceptible to the repressed esoteric influences of his youth, Arthur gains power and becomes the magician of the title.

Until Arthur begins his spiritual and intellectual development, this dichotomy between rationalism and occult science results in a spectrum of intellectual belief across the characters. As the only currently practicing member of the medical community, Arthur perceives himself as holding a rationalistic authority over the other characters; he is said to use a "scornful tone [...]"

when referring to those whose walk in life was not so practical as his own,” and professes to “not understand why Dr Porhoët occupied his leisure with studies so profitless” as esotericism (12, 12-13). While Haddo occupies the opposite end of this belief-spectrum from Arthur, Dr. Porhoët acts as a middle ground between them. Though Arthur initially shuns Porhoët’s more philosophical approach to knowledge, the novel ultimately tracks Arthur’s journey to this spiritually open perspective.

This delineation between the medically trained Arthur and the magically adept Haddo is not only a function of Arthur’s ego. While not obviously signalled, the theme of medical hypnotism introduces and drives the plot of Maugham’s novel. The first chapter, which establishes Arthur’s medical success, opposition to “letters and the arts,” and immanent marriage to Margaret, states that Arthur is in Paris at that particular moment to study French medical methods, which he determines to be full of “legerdemain” and “charlatanry” (9). Later, Dr. Porhoët states that “Arthur is a man of science, and he knows what the limits of hypnotism are,” a claim that situates hypnotism as a component of medicine, and very possibly the medical falsehood that Arthur came to Paris to study (118). However, education in these occult powers seems to be a requirement in this novel, as Haddo’s consistent victory over Arthur demonstrates; Arthur’s lack of willingness to acknowledge the validity of hypnotism causes him to label the events of the novel to be “a mystery that he could not unravel,” and this precludes him from diagnosing and treating Margaret (137). Although Arthur consistently uses medical terminology to interpret situations and other characters, these are often misdiagnosed, such as his explaining away Haddo’s behaviour with madness, and his consideration of Margaret as being “ill and overwrought,” “[in] shock,” and his “[having] an idea that women were often afflicted with what he described by the old-fashioned name of vapours, and [not being] disposed to pay much

attention to [Margaret's] vehement distress" (77, 135, 136, 96). While these assessments of Margaret's health (with the exception of hysteria) are not technically incorrect, Arthur is unable to understand her physiological state properly because he is unwilling to consider the possibility that mesmerism might be legitimate.

Despite the pains Arthur takes, professionally and intellectually, to distance himself from Haddo, Haddo refuses, as does the novel, to allow for this strict demarcation between masculine rationality and feminized art and esotericism. Arthur stakes the intellectual hierarchy he envisions on his reputation as a surgeon, which is emphasized repeatedly throughout the novel; he writes to fellow-doctor Frank Hurrell about Haddo, and receives an "[analysis of] Oliver Haddo's character [written] with the patience of a scientific man studying a new species in which he is passionately concerned;" and up until his dramatic shift in viewpoints, he claims: "if my eyes show me what all my training assures me is impossible, I can only conclude that my eyes deceive me" (59, 146). However, Haddo consistently answers Arthur's need for rationalism, drawing a comparison between Arthur's science and his own pseudoscience. The sequence at the fair, wherein Haddo allows himself to be bitten by a snake, stages this comparison; Arthur requests proof that the snake was poisonous, which Haddo provides by commanding the snake to kill a rabbit. Haddo then heals his own wound, telling Arthur "that surely is what a surgeon would call healing by first intention" (43). The irritation Arthur displays at Haddo's medical skill, and his use of jargon, reveals his anxious gatekeeping of medical knowledge against those without proper training or moral fibre. In this sense, Arthur has absorbed, just as he reproduces, the anxieties associated with medical hypnotism regarding the possibility of moral degeneration when hypnosis is performed by malevolent hands, or observed by an unscientific audience.

By bringing these anxieties to life, Haddo embodies Carson's concerns about the queering influence Wilde had over the men he associated with, and possibly the reading public. In 1908, when Wilde's subversions were still an inappropriate topic of conversation, Maugham uses the rhetoric of influence to once again arouse a dangerous sexuality, and makes this connection explicit by hearkening to Wilde as he does so. As Haddo hypnotizes Margaret with orientalist images and perfumes, she sees a parade of sexualized figures including Pan playing his pipes, a Paterian Mona Lisa, Bacchus, Jezebel, and Cleopatra. The most prominent of her visions is Salomé, referenced as the daughter of Herodias, who "[murmurs] the words of the poet," before praising Iokanaan's body, a famous passage from Wilde's play (Maugham 1908 87). Margaret's dangerous, and hitherto repressed, sexuality is thus unleashed at this cue from Wilde. Her morals immediately also begin to decline; she immediately begins lying to her friends about her affair with Haddo, which is never consummated. Although neither Arthur nor Margaret's companion Susie discover the truth until it is too late, they do notice changes in Margaret, who had previously been described as "[breathing] the spring odours of ineffable purity" (45). After her hypnotic encounter with Haddo, Susie finds that "there's a depth in [Margaret's] eyes that is quite new. It gives [...] an odd mysteriousness which is very attractive," and Arthur considers that "[her eyes] had acquired a burning passion which disturbed and enchanted him. It seemed that the lovely girl was changed already into a lovely woman" (107). She wears a scent that reminds Arthur of "the East", and when she kisses him "the rapture was intolerable. Her lips were like living fire" (107). Despite her technical chastity, as Margaret's association with Haddo intensifies, so does her sexuality; when Susie sees her at the Monte Carlo, Margaret is overdressed and associating with company of "notorious disreputability" (122). Later, at a dinner, she tells a vulgar story, which she claims was a result of Haddo's hold

over her (132, 137). To the outside observer, with no knowledge of Haddo's powers, Margaret appears as a woman of tarnished reputation.

Part of the problem, from a medical standpoint, is the public observation of Margaret's state, with no visible indication that Margaret is being malignantly influenced from the outside. The former issue is largely one of reputation: not just Margaret's, but Arthur's, as the character most associated with the English medical system, and therefore responsible for the moral health of those who are threatened by Haddo and other charlatans. Arthur's unwillingness to use hypnosis to treat Margaret's apparent moral impurity is contested by Haddo's use of the same method to achieve opposing results. Arthur's desire to restrict medical practices to medical practitioners emerges again here, and once more with the issue of Margaret's visibility, or lack thereof. Medical hypnotism was initially celebrated for the lack of conspicuous effects it left upon patients, being touted in an 1890 issue of *The Lancet* as causing patients to look "as little like patients as persons well could, giving neither by their manners or expression the slightest suggestion (except when external dressings were visible) that they had suffered or were suffering from, in some instances, extensive surgical interference" (*The Lancet*, April 5 1890, 772). In *The Magician*, however, Margaret's not looking "like a patient" becomes problematic, negating the ability of two medical professionals, Arthur and Dr Porhoët, to diagnose and treat Margaret's ailment. The notion that the same tools fostered to protect the physical and psychical purity of patients and populations could be invisibly put to malignant use suggests frightening possibilities, which echo those embodied by the layering of the increased discrimination against male homosexuality after Wilde's trial with what Sedgwick describes as the recuperative rhetoric of the "open secret" or "glass closet" (Sedgwick 1990 164). For Sedgwick, the "glass closet" references particularly a homosexual secret, and one surrounded by "the swirls of totalizing

knowledge-power that circulate so violently around any but the most openly acknowledged gay male identity” (164). Sedgwick suggests that while the *fin-de-siècle* anxiety around male homosexuality had reached a fever pitch, there was a simultaneous awareness of the pervasive nature of male homosexuality (164). This double rhetoric is visualized in terms of hypnotism in *The Magician*, wherein subversive sexuality is both marginalized and hidden in plain sight, by characters ostensibly of moral purity and good repute.

The intersection of the parallel lines of repressed desire that run through the Wilde trials and *The Magician*, and the aforementioned conclusion of medical debates surrounding hypnotism, is the question of susceptibility. Margaret is similar to Dorian, in that she has little independence and much vanity. Her time spent taking art classes in Paris is due to Arthur’s suggestion, and she makes it clear that she would be willing to forgo them at any time to marry him; after her hypnotism, Margaret even seeks to get married early, pleading: “oh, take care of me, Arthur. I’m so afraid that some dreadful thing will happen to me. I want all your strength. Promise me that you will never forsake me” (Maugham 1908 96). As Dorian is passed between the moral Basil and the amoral Lord Henry, and chooses to absorb Lord Henry’s teachings, Margaret is caught between Arthur and Haddo before being forced, by hypnotic influence, to bind herself to Haddo permanently. However, despite Arthur’s attempts to save Margaret, his protection of her and worship of her beauty may have increased her susceptibility to Haddo’s magic. The postscript to “What is Mesmerism?” suggests that “in persons of a superior type, [susceptibility to hypnosis] is mainly due to moral causes [...] these people have much vanity, much curiosity, and much credulity, together with a *weak* imagination” who “resign themselves passively, mind and body, into the hands of the manipulator” (*Blackwood’s*, July 1851, 85). Margaret’s vanity emerges in her empathy with the vulgarly sexual Phèdre while being

hypnotized by Haddo, wherein “she felt on a sudden all the torments that wrung the heart of that unhappy queen,” although she has also been shown to be both vain and curious previously, on her visit with Arthur to the Louvre (Maugham 1908 97). Considering Arthur’s passion for the *Diane de Gabies*, Margaret thinks: “secretly she was not displeased. She was aware that his passion for the figure was due, not to its intrinsic beauty, but to a likeness he has discovered in it to herself” (45). Further, Margaret’s artistic temperament contains curiosity: while looking at art she finds that “her heart was uplifted from the sordidness of earth, and she had a sensation of freedom which was as delightful as it was indescribable,” and after being hypnotized she finds that “it seemed to her that a comparison had been drawn for her attention between the narrow round which awaited her as Arthur’s wife and this full, fair existence [with Haddo]” (44, 99). Suggested by medical rhetoric as primers for susceptibility to hypnotism, the common flaws of vanity, curiosity, and lack of imagination echo through both *The Magician* and *Dorian Gray* as character traits of those easily influenced. Not far off are Carson’s accusations that Wilde “[solicited]” and “[incited]” sexual acts with other men, terms that smack of flattery, his concerns about the moral impact of reading *Dorian Gray* on the reading public, and Wilde’s own suggestion that men envisioned their own desires in Dorian’s nightly exploits (Carson quoted in Holland 287, 81; Wilde quoted in Holland 78).

Aside from her personality, much of Margaret’s susceptibility is gendered. As is evidenced by the O’Key incident, women, alongside the mentally disabled or those of the lower classes, were a popular subject for hypnotic experiments due to the assumption that they had diminished intellectual capacity and subjectivity relative to middle-class men (Winter 2000 61); these gendered assumptions also impact Arthur’s misdiagnosis of Margaret’s hypnosis as hysteria. However, as will be discussed more thoroughly in the next chapter, Margaret is not the

only victim of gendered assumptions. Arthur's complete denial of Haddo's occult prowess is also gendered, as spiritual praxis has historically had feminine associations. One reason for this is that the spiritualist movement, through the popularity of mediums and sitters, offered unmatched professional opportunities for women (Gomel 199). Yet, a larger reason for the feminine connotations surrounding spiritualism, Elana Gomel suggests, is an extreme case of the Victorian idea of the gendered spheres of public and private life: "men belonged in this world, women in the next" (199). This exclusion from public life is a boon to women involved in the spiritualist movement; as Gomel writes, "women have a privileged access to the invisible world by virtue of being disenfranchised in the visible one" (200). Gomel further claims that this crossover for women into a position of power imbues them with masculinity, transgressing gender boundaries, as "spiritual[ist] women acquired unprecedented power by taking their passive feminine role to the extreme. But power is masculine. Thus, the totally passive spiritualist woman becomes as gender-ambiguous as her rebellious sister, the new woman. The scandal of the supernatural meshes with the scandal of androgyny" (201). However, this transgression does not only apply to women, but also in reverse to men involved in spiritualism. Gomel writes: "many male mediums [...] were accused of being 'effeminate' - the loaded euphemism for homosexual. Thus, both men and women who dabbled in the occult were seen as gender transgressors, and the supernatural itself became tainted by association with sexual perversion" (201). These connotations of effeminacy and sexual perversion surrounding spiritualism are especially relevant for understanding Arthur's underestimation of Haddo, which is based not only on his belief in scientific rationalism, but also a sense of superior masculinity. As a microcosm for Maugham's treatment of Decadence in *The Magician*, the novel is ambivalent regarding Haddo's sexuality. In order to preserve Margaret's integrity as an alchemical ingredient, he does not take her

virginity, yet Margaret claims that “[Haddo] used to smoke opium in foetid dens—oh, you have no conception of his passion to degrade himself—and at last he would come back, dirty, with torn clothes, begrimed, sodden still with his long debauch; and his mouth was hot with the kisses of the vile women of the docks” a pastiche of Dorian’s visit to the opium den that implies Haddo is having sexual contact with prostitutes (Maugham 1908 139). However, the real markers of Haddo’s ambiguous sexuality are not in his relationships, but in his independent reproductive abilities, which are the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter 2: Alchemy, Sexual Subjectivity, and the Birth of the *Homunculi*

What do you think would be man's sensations when he had solved the great mystery of existence, when he saw living before him the substance which was dead? [...] with our modern appliances, with our greater skill, what might it not be possible to do now if we had the courage? [...] It might be very strange and very wonderful. Sometimes my mind is verily haunted by the desire to see a lifeless substance move under my spells, by the desire to be as God (Maugham 1908 76).

So Haddo tells Arthur, Margaret, Susie, and Dr Porhoët, immediately before deciding that they would be the victims of his alchemical experiment. While the “modern appliances and greater skill” he refers to at this moment ostensibly indicate scientific or technological advancement, I suspect that he is also referring to more “modern” ideas about what can constitute life, and what human subjectivity, specifically sexual subjectivity, could mean. After outlining *The Magician*’s particular brand of alchemical reproduction, this section will discuss the role of occult practice in the formation of transgressive sexual subjectivities at the *fin-de-siècle*, by reading Haddo’s generation of the *homunculi* as a vision of queer reproduction. To conclude, I will circle back to Wilde by reading *The Picture of Dorian Gray* through the version of non-heteronormative reproduction via art and occultism that Maugham imagines in *The Magician*.

While unconventional, there is a clear genetic genealogy for the *homunculi*, and it is one that negates the traditional female-centred reproductive process. What involvement Margaret does have is purely through Haddo’s objectification of her, and she professes no agency or knowledge of the procedure: she is only able to recognize the horror in store for her as a “horrible experiment,” and begins to define her value to him by her usefulness to his project (137). A more clear maternal resemblance than Margaret to the *homunculi* comes from Haddo’s

mother, through both her resemblance to her own son and the misshapen life forms he creates. Upon meeting Haddo's mother at the asylum, Margaret describes

a slight movement [...] as they entered, and she perceived that it was a human being. It was a woman, dressed in shapeless brown flannel; a woman of great stature and of a revolting, excessive corpulence. She turned upon them a huge, impassive face; and its unwrinkled smoothness gave it an appearance of aborted childishness. The hair was dishevelled, grey, and scanty. But what most terrified Margaret was that she saw in this creature an appalling likeness to Oliver (139).

This passage is recalled by the description of one of Haddo's more successful *homunculi*:

a strange mass of flesh, almost as large as a new-born child, but there was in it the beginnings of something ghastly human. It was shaped vaguely like an infant, but the legs were joined together so that it looked like a mummy rolled up in its coverings. [...] There was something that resembled a human head, covered with long golden hair, but it was horrible; it was an uncouth mass, without eyes or nose or mouth (191).

While the descriptions of shapelessness and partial formation are shared by Haddo's mother and the *homunculi*, Margaret also notes similarities between Haddo's mother, Haddo, and the *homunculi*; throughout the novel, Haddo is described as excessively corpulent, and Susie describes the "shiny whiteness of his naked crown" as "contrast[ing] oddly with the redness of his face," like a *homunculus* (131). Therefore, while Margaret has seemingly provided the life-blood for the creatures, their appearance seems to stem exclusively from Haddo.

This emphasis on a resemblance to Haddo in the *homunculi*'s parentage is also suggested by Margaret and Haddo's bodies while Haddo undertakes his alchemical project. As Margaret's virginal status is imperative for the experiment, she never undergoes the process of growing a

being inside of her. Instead, her energy is drained; the first time Arthur sees Margaret after her marriage to Haddo she is ill, and her face is “drawn” and “pinched,” and as the experiment approaches “her colour [was] gone, and her face [has] the greyness of the dead” (134, 154). The sense that Margaret’s vitality is being drained, alongside her virginal blood being an essential element in Haddo’s experiment, suggests a form of vampiric life draining, which would have been clear to Maugham’s readers given the success of Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897). In *Dracula*, the implication of Count Dracula’s bite is the loss of sexual purity, demonstrated by the three young women that Jonathan Harker encounters within Count Dracula’s castle, who exude a “thrilling and repulsive” sexuality, and more extensively through the transition of Lucy Westenra after being bitten several times by the Count (Stoker 33). Dr Seward writes: “we recognized the features of Lucy Westenra. Lucy Westenra, but yet how changed. The sweetness was turned to adamant, heartless cruelty, and the purity to voluptuous wantonness [...] then her eyes ranged over us. Lucy’s eyes in form and colour; but Lucy’s eyes unclear and full of hell-fire, instead of the pure, gentle orbs we knew” (175). A similar process occurs in *The Magician*, wherein Margaret’s purity gives way to Haddo’s influence; however, crucially, the actual drainage of Margaret’s blood is never seen. Haddo declares to his neighbours that she has died of a heart problem, and her body is removed before Arthur, Susie, and Dr Porhoët enter Haddo’s attic. What is hidden from the readers is not the slow sexualization of a chaste woman, but a far more frightening, and biologically impossible, process of queer male reproduction.

While Margaret wastes away, Haddo does the opposite. In addition to growing to resemble the *homunculi* over time, he also mimics pregnancy by growing larger and larger as the birth of his ‘children’ approaches, and his weight gain is remarked upon at every encounter with the other characters. Haddo, therefore, is not only responsible for the apparently hereditary traits

of the *homunculi*, but for the majority of their metaphorical conception and birth. This seemingly impossible reproductive process resembles the scientific concept of parthenogenesis.

Parthenogenesis, which is now understood as the biological phenomenon during which asexual reproduction takes place through the development of the embryo without fertilization, was first observed in aphids by Swiss Naturalist Charles Bonnet in 1740. The concept grew in popularity in the mid-nineteenth century, with mentions in *The Lancet* and *Blackwood's*, and the publication of Richard Owen's lectures "On Parthenogenesis, or the Successive Production of Procreating Individuals from a Single Ovum" in 1849.

In addition to the parthenogenic birth and elements of maternal horror represented by the *homunculi*, the link between them and a vision of non-heteronormative reproductive capacity is supported by the historical associations between Victorian occultism and transgressive sexual subjectivity, for which Aleister Crowley is an ideal example. As *The Magician* is so concerned with the exchange between occultism and sexual transgression, the shadow of Crowley is fitting given his negotiation of bisexuality with Hermetic magical practice. Alex Owen makes the argument that Crowley's experiences, particularly his 1909 journey to Algiers with Victor Neuburg, where he supposedly encountered Pan through his early experimentations with sex magic, wherein sexual energy is harnessed for spiritual pursuits, situates magical practice as a "self-conscious exploration of subjectivity" (Owen 2012 15). Owen aligns the use of magic, for both Crowley and the greater magical community, as a means of spiritual refinement through the formulation of the idea of the self, particularly in terms of sexual identity (18). Particular moments in Crowley's experience in Algiers that Owen points to, such as his description of the scrying, or Aethyr travel, process as resembling "the subtle trembling of a maiden before the bridegroom" and his "complete annihilation of the self in Pan" at a moment of being sodomized

by Neuburg, point to the particularly sexual nature of this subjectivity (Crowley, quoted in Owen 21).

Aside from Crowley, Owen claims that the emergence of *fin-de-siècle* occultism was a product of the changing political, social, and cultural standards that came with the new era, suggesting not only a wider range of belief systems, but also sexual identities (Owen 2004 85). This exploration of non-normative sexual subjectivity was partially indebted to the more open sexual economy signalled by the emergence of the new woman and the Wilde trials.² Therefore, the presence of Wilde, or “the Poet,” at the moment of Margaret’s mesmerism and sexual awakening ties her corruption by Haddo not only to the concerns about the purity of the social body that were reflected by medical hypnotism, as discussed in the previous chapter, but also the changing meanings and possibilities of sexual subjectivity.

These links between occultism and sexual subjectivity are not unique to a reading of Crowley. As Joy Dixon points out, the assumption that “scientific knowledge of sex [...] is the paradigmatic form of modern sexual knowledge” can be extended to the occult ‘sciences’ as well (Dixon 411). One example Dixon cites is Edward Carpenter’s claim in *Intermediate Types among Primitive Folk: A Study in Social Evolution* (1914) that “there is an organic connection between the homosexual temperament and unusual psychic or divinatorial powers” (Carpenter 49 quoted in Dixon 413). Havelock Ellis agrees with Carpenter’s assessment, and in his 1897 study *Sexual Inversion* notes that “among religious and moral leaders, and other persons with strong ethical instincts, there is a tendency towards the more elevated forms of homosexual feeling,” which Carpenter explains by suggesting that these types often exhibited a “blending of the masculine and feminine temperaments [that] would in some of these cases produce persons

² Wilde, notably, was not completely separate from the magical community: he attended the Theosophical society’s events, as did several members of his family, including his wife and mother (Owen 108).

whose perceptions would be so subtle and complex and rapid as to come under the head of genius, persons of intuitive mind who would perceive things without knowing how [these people were] diviners and prophets in a very real sense” (Ellis 14, quoted in Dixon 412; Carpenter 62 quoted in Dixon 413). Furthermore, Carpenter concluded that this link between homosexuality and psychic and moral superiority controversially positions homosexuality not as a form of degeneration, but as an evolutionary step forward, a “higher order of consciousness, very imperfectly realised, but indicated” (Carpenter 63, quoted in Dixon 413). It follows, then, that the process of creating queer beings in *The Magician* is alchemical, as alchemy is, in essence, a process of refinement, and one that has linkages to moral and religious improvement; indeed, Martin Luther once referred to alchemy as “the philosophy of the ancients” and wrote: “I like [alchemy] for the sake of the allegory and secret signification [...] For, as in a furnace the fire extracts and separates from a substance the other portions, and carries upward the spirit, the life, the sap, the strength, while the unclean matter, the dregs, remain at the bottom, like a dead and worthless carcass” (Luther 36). If the alchemy in *The Magician* is read as queer, this implies the creation of an improved subjectivity; however, Haddo’s repugnance suggests that such moral refinement is unlikely to be his goal. Haddo seems to be more interested in his capacity to create the *homunculi*, or his “desire to be as god,” than the moral implications of his actions (Maugham 1908 76). The emphasis on prowess, rather than ethical content, echoes the tenet of Wilde’s aesthetic philosophy that “no artist has ethical sympathies. An ethical sympathy in an artist is an unpardonable mannerism of style” (Wilde 1891 4). The foregrounding of an aesthetic and creative rationale for Haddo’s actions suggests that his alchemical project could be read as not only pseudoscientific, but also as a version of Wildean Decadence, and the artistic improvement of what human sexual subjectivity could be.

The ideas of refinement that surround alchemy can transcend the ethical realm into artistic creation and aesthetics, which suggests a link between alchemical and Decadent practices. Theodore Ziolkowski claims that a combination of Victorian poetic adaptations of alchemy and increasing interest in alchemical pseudoscience brought new awareness to the subject, while situating the figure of the alchemist as “an image for the artist of the spirit, as manifest first in the poet” (Ziolkowski 128). Ziolkowski claims that this shift demonstrates a “historical move from earlier uses of the alchemist as a spiritual searcher to the appropriation of the figure to exemplify the poet, who transmutes reality into the higher form of art” (131). This refinement of reality into art aligns with the latent goal of alchemy: to turn common materials into gold, or at least increase their value. Here, a transcendence of traditional ideas of moral superiority, occultism, and *fin-de-siècle* ideas of artistic praxis meet, creating a nexus for the creation and development of transgressive sexual subjectivity. Again, Crowley is an ideal example for this intersection; moments such as his sodomitic “annihilation of the self” demonstrate Crowley’s continued refinement of the self through alternative sexual subjectivity, and its relationship to his magical practice (Crowley, quoted in Owen 2012 21).

In *The Magician*, the alignment between alchemy and art is much more evident than the role of sexuality, which is, I think deliberately, latent. Haddo consistently refers to his magical practice as an “art,” and, as discussed in the previous chapter, Arthur aligns Haddo’s magic with Margaret’s painting as non-utilitarian activities. By thinking about alchemy as a form of art, it is possible to map Haddo’s alchemical art onto the artistic plot of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, which I have argued is the primary ur-text for *The Magician*. The most straightforward link here is between the *homunculi* and Dorian Gray; Dorian, effectively parentless between the early death of his mother and the cruelty of his uncle, Lord Kelso, is formed by the influence of Basil

Hallward and Lord Henry Wotton. Like Crowley's encounter with Pan, Dorian finds his subjectivity completely reborn as Lord Henry exposes him to hedonistic, Decadent philosophy. Prior to this meeting, he is a blank slate, of infantile purity: "all the candour of youth was [in Dorian], as well as all youth's passionate purity. One felt that he had kept himself unspotted from the world" (Wilde 1891 18). That the personality Dorian develops throughout Wilde's novel is facilitated by the influence of Lord Henry, and the lack of accountability that his charmed portrait offers, suggests that his figurative parentage is as non-heteronormative as that of *The Magician's homunculi*. Just as the *homunculi* are related to their 'parents' through alchemical artistry, Dorian's formative relationships are largely based on aesthetic precedents, including Basil, Lord Henry, and those with his own family. Dorian "loved to stroll through the gaunt cold picture-gallery of his country house and look at the various portraits of those whose blood flowed in his veins," and he considers that this familial record, along with all of the characters of literature and history, had contributed to his remarkable, sin-filled existence: "he felt that he had known them all, those strange terrible figures that had passed across the stage of the world and made sin so marvellous and evil so full of subtlety. It seemed to him that in some mysterious way their lives had been his own" (137). The pastiche of art and ideology that Dorian becomes by the time of his death destroys any vestige of purity that he possessed at the beginning of the text, and renders him repulsive like the *homunculi*, "withered, wrinkled, and loathsome of visage" (210).

The requirement of bodily ugliness for both the *homunculi* and Dorian's true self is dictated by the guide we are given for understanding Wildean aesthetics in the famous "Preface" to *Dorian Gray*. One of Wilde's many warnings in the "Preface"—which seems to have been written in order to be broken at great cost by the characters in *Dorian Gray*—is that "all art is at

once surface and symbol. Those who go beneath the surface do so at their peril. Those who read the symbol do so at their peril” (4). Dorian’s portrait tracks his sins, becoming a symbol for pure evil and negating the capacity for his flesh-and-blood self to manifest his awful actions. Dorian’s destruction of “the conscience” (notably, not “his conscience”) that his portrait has become forces him to acknowledge the presence of “the symbol,” and therefore become incompatible with the artistic surface he had previously inhabited (209). Because the symbol has meaning, Dorian cannot inhabit both the symbol and the realm of art, which Wilde insists must be “useless” (4).

Like Dorian, the *homunculi* are symbolic, but for the terrifying possibility of queer reproduction. The incompatibility of this symbol with superficial art is suggested by the aforementioned degradation of Margaret, the ostensible mother of the *homunculi*, who also represents art in *The Magician*. This association is made clear through her physical beauty, identification with the *Diane de Gabies*, and her hobby interest in painting. However, it is evident that her investment in painting is superficial, as Susie expects that “Margaret’s passion for the arts was a not unamiable pose which would disappear when she was happily married” (Maugham 1908 16). This becomes untenable once Haddo hypnotizes her, the first step in the creation of the *homunculi*. Soon after being hypnotized, “[Margaret] felt a heartrending pang to think that thenceforward the consummate things of art would have no meaning for her,” signifying her divorce from artistic capability, and when Arthur visits her after she is married to Haddo, he finds her “neither read[ing] nor work[ing],” suggesting that she has not only lost her ability to create art, but any discernible utility altogether (104, 133). At these moments, Margaret occupies a liminal space wherein she is destined to be essential in the creation of the *homunculi*, yet she cannot create herself; she is both defiled and pure; and she is both mother and a virgin.

She is a gothic Madonna; she participates in a virgin birth, but the corruption of her soul draws her closer to the malignant, sexualized figures she sees while she is hypnotized (87). She is in a transition period between being the beautiful and pure surface of art, as she is at the beginning of the novel, and becoming symbolic of the sexual and reproductive transgression that the *homunculi* represent.

Dorian exists in a similarly liminal state for the bulk of Wilde's novel: he exists in both his physical, spotless body on the surface, and his rapidly degrading portrait, symbolic of his sins. The difference between Dorian and Margaret's states in this period, with Dorian thriving while Margaret wastes away, resides in their respective positions as artistic product (Dorian) versus artistic creator (Margaret). Before Margaret's hypnosis, both she and Dorian are the "useless" but "admired" things that, as Wilde suggests, comprise the essence of art (Wilde 1891 4). However, in "conceiving" the *homunculi*, Margaret assumes a creative role similar to that of Basil Hallward. The Wildean rule that Basil breaks is the necessity of disinterestedness for the artist, as "to reveal art and conceal the artist is art's aim" (3). Basil admits that he "put too much of [himself]" in the painting, which prevents him from being able to sell it, and he also maintains his investment in Dorian's morality (6). Just as Margaret must give up art in the face of her hypnotic obsession with Haddo, Basil admits to Lord Henry that Dorian is "all [his] art to [him] now" (13). However, Basil's most critical mistake is his interest in Dorian's reputation, and the state of his soul, especially as Basil's portrait has facilitated Dorian's movement into the sphere of pure art. By confronting Dorian about his sins, Basil threatens the separation between surface and symbol, and Dorian must kill him rather than have this border be violated. If Basil is read as one of Dorian's parental figures, he occupies a similarly diminished role as Margaret does in the birth of the *homunculi*; yet, despite this lack of agency, both of them are required to sacrifice

their lives in order for their “children” to move from surface to symbol. However, these sacrifices are invaluable, as they imbue the symbols they contribute to with meaning. Basil’s murder causes Dorian’s portrait to reflect the blood on his hands and leads him toward the destruction of the portrait, and both the sexual awakening Margaret undergoes during Haddo’s hypnosis and the manner in which she is discarded during the pregnancy point to the queer reproduction the *homunculi* represent, and the alternative sexuality required for their creation.

The symbol that results from these artistic projects becomes more complicated in relation to the other side of their parentage, Haddo and Lord Henry. As was discussed extensively in the previous chapter, Haddo’s hypnosis of Margaret resembles the influence of Lord Henry over Dorian, which was brought into the Wilde trials as evidence for the prosecution. However, as “parents” and creators, Lord Henry and Haddo differ in their disinterestedness; in *Dorian Gray*, this is also the critical difference between Lord Henry and Basil that allows the former to thrive by not investing too much of himself into art. For Lord Henry, the influence he has over Dorian and Dorian’s resulting changes resembles a scientific experiment: “[Lord Henry] had been always enthralled by the methods of natural science, but the ordinary subject-matter of that science had seemed to him trivial and of no import. And so he had begun by vivisectioning himself, as he had ended by vivisectioning others. Human life—that appeared to him the one thing worth investigating,” and it soon becomes clear that he is referring specifically to human psychology (56). In contrast, however much he compares his occult methods to science, Haddo is unable to maintain the objective view of science, instead labelling his quest to generate life the “lust for great secrets which consumes [him] to the bottom of [his] soul” (Maugham 1908 36). Like Basil, and Margaret, Haddo has too much investment in his alchemical art, and therefore must sacrifice himself before the end of the novel.

However, Haddo's sacrifice here is not for the generation of the *homunculi*, but instead for the survival of the aforementioned homosocial/sexual bond that was imperative to the creation of the *homunculi*, and the plot of the novel as a whole: that between himself and Arthur. In *Between Men*, Sedgwick outlines the role of women in male homosocial desire, or the male desire for primarily male company that may, but need not, have a sexual component. Sedgwick suggests that in the homosocial male bond, women are "exchangeable, perhaps symbolic, property for the primary purpose of cementing the bonds of men with men" (Sedgwick 1985 25-26). In *The Magician*, crucially, this bond is based on emasculation. The moment that Arthur hits Haddo at the beginning of the novel prompts a revenge plot that, Susie believes, hinges on the possession of Margaret: she tells Arthur that Haddo "must have known that you wanted nothing in the world more than to make Margaret your wife, and he has not only prevented that, but he has married her himself" (117). As Margaret has already been killed and the *homunculi* created by the time Haddo appears for his death-struggle with Arthur, this final fight seems to be defined by this homosocial relationship. Interestingly, Arthur's final defeat of Haddo pushes him toward emasculation by solidifying his increasing relationship with the occult. His recognition that he, as a child, participated in an occult ritual with Porhoët prompts him to evoke Margaret's spirit. Immediately afterwards Haddo appears, and Arthur is able to defeat him, despite his magical powers (170; 179; 183). Arthur's new capabilities both beg the question of whether he, not Haddo, is the true magician of the title, and they open him up to the queer sexual subjectivity associated with occultism. Therefore, in order to defend his heterosexuality, it seems that Arthur has to lean towards his more effeminate side, suggesting a continuum between the "normal" and transgressive sexual subjectivities. The duality of these two parts is something that Maugham also recognized within himself; later in his life, he said: "I tried to persuade myself that I was

three-quarters normal and that only a quarter of me was queer—whereas really it was the other way round” (Maugham quoted in Hastings 39). Even Maugham’s understanding of heterosexuality, it seems, included a “queer” aspect, suggesting a duality within the male self, wherein both parts exist in relation to the other.

Arthur, however, is not so critical about the emergence of his occult potential, and harnesses his new subjectivity in order to destroy homosociality and queerness as it appears in the novel: his ascendancy to the role of magician allows Arthur to resolve the erotic triangle, confront the *homunculi*, and destroy the queer possibilities they symbolize. The heteronormative structure that Arthur restores to the novel grants him the moral authority, in opposition to Havelock Ellis and Edward Carpenter’s association of queer occult knowledge to moral status. This negation of moral purity for Haddo, and the *homunculi*, is essential for Maugham to maintain his ambivalence towards queer futurities. The filth associated with Haddo and the *homunculi* stands in stark contrast to Margaret’s pure beauty; upon seeing the *homunculi*, Arthur asks “was it for these vile monstrosities that Margaret was sacrificed in all her loveliness?” (192). The *homunculi*— and Haddo, especially during his “pregnancy”— can both be identified with Julia Kristeva’s concept of the abject; just as Dorian’s portrait reveals the horror within, these figures “collapse the border between inside and outside” (Kristeva 1941 53). In manifesting his figurative pregnancy, Haddo’s increasing obesity exposes the growth of a pregnant body, while the “strange mass[es] of flesh” that are the *homunculi* not only resemble fetal humans, but are also manifestations of queer reproductive desire (191). Further, the *homunculi* resemble Kelly Hurley’s notion of the “abhuman,” a subjectivity that she suggests arises from the instability of the *fin-de-siècle* gothic (Hurley 3). Hurley defines the abhumanas “a not-quite-human subject, characterized by its morphic variability, continually in danger of becoming not-

itself, becoming other” (3-4). While these changes are associated with Victorian degeneration, the contrasting birth that we see with the *homunculi* also fit with the conceptual meaning of the abhuman. “The prefix ‘ab-’” Hurley writes, “signals a movement away from a site or condition, and thus a loss. But a movement away from is also a movement towards— towards a site or a condition as yet unspecified— and thus entails both a threat and a promise” (3-4). The *homunculi* are exactly both this threat and promise, in being the creations of social, sexual, and biological transgressions, while signalling endless creative possibilities. In order to destroy any optimism that Maugham would seem to have for this promise, the site of these creations must be burned, a symbolic cleansing of the transgressions that *The Magician* has staged, and destructive enough to suggest that these notions of queer reproductions will never return.

Conclusions: The Pregnant Matrophobic and Literary Genealogy

Throughout this discussion of *The Magician*, I have emphasized both the gothic, Decadent, and occult influences that come through in Maugham's novel, and the modes of transgressive sexual subjectivity that these genres can facilitate. Both literary influence and alternative subjectivity come together in two literary antecedents to *The Magician* that have not yet been discussed: Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847). To conclude, this thesis will discuss the matrophobic and transgressive aspects of Shelley and Brontë's novels and their influence on *The Magician*, and through this connection with female authorship, consider what writing a novel about nonheteronormative reproduction means for Maugham as a queer man.

While the *homunculi* are figuratively descended from Haddo, the creative and intellectual genealogy for Haddo's work is passed down from the ancient alchemists, such as Solomon Trismosinus and Paracelsus. Likewise, there is a literary genealogy that precedes the ideas of male-exclusive reproduction that play out in *The Magician*. As *The Magician* follows these literary antecedents in their investment in reproduction, this genealogy specifically envisions non-heteronormative ways to create life. Much like Haddo is inspired by Early Modern alchemists to create his *homunculi*, Maugham looks to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* for methods with which to imagine female-independent forms of reproduction that envision, then destroy, this sexual subjectivity. The important fact that these are both female authors further displaces both ideas of the male-dominated literary tradition, and, as we will see in Shelley and Brontë's writing, depicts non-binary subjectivities.

Shelley's novel is a touchstone for several of the entangled ideas that drive Haddo's alchemical plot in *The Magician* forward: devotion to (pseudo)science, misogynistic asexuality,

and, most importantly, parthenogenesis. Parthenogenesis' phases of popularity came before, and then after, the publication of *Frankenstein*, and Shelley evidently was not aware of this specific line of scientific development (Stephanson 483). Yet, Victor Frankenstein's creation of his monster mirrors parthenogenesis: the reproduction is asexual, and through his creative-reproduction capacity, and the fact that the Monster is technically made of the same fleshy material as a human, Victor effectively grants life to the creature. However, this birth is pointedly in opposition to the marriage plot of the novel. Chris Baldick suggests that a social reading of the text would see that the Monster's isolation, and Victor's desire to keep him alone, mirror Victor's own asexuality; indeed, Victor's devotion to his scientific pursuit isolates him from society, including his cousin, adopted sister, and would-be bride Elizabeth (Baldick 51). Baldick further suggests that the creation of the Monster is an "attempt to create life without encountering female sexuality;" indeed, at the moment that Victor's marriage to Elizabeth should be consummated, she is murdered by the Monster, implying a conflation between the sexual encounter and violent death (49).

Victor's conflicted feelings towards Elizabeth are not merely indicative of asexuality or homosexuality, but of matrophobia. Stephanie Kiceluk links *The Magician* to *Frankenstein* through their shared forms of solely masculine reproduction, both of which revolve around the death of the mother figure. In *Frankenstein*, this fantasy occurs in a dream of maternal horror immediately after Victor animates his creation: "I thought I saw Elizabeth, in the bloom of health [...] Delighted and surprised, I embraced her, but as I imprinted the first kiss on her lips, they became livid with the hue of death; [...] I thought that I held the corpse of my dead mother in my arms; a shroud enveloped her form, and I saw the grave-worms crawling in the folds of the flannel" (Shelley 34). Kiceluk claims that Victor's nightmare replicates Shelley's own nightmare

of her mother, writer Mary Wollstonecraft, dying in childbirth with Mary Shelley, whereas Elizabeth Moers reads the maternal horror as a vision of Shelley's experience as mother, having lost multiple children just after their birth when she was between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one (Kiceluk 112; Moers 92). This meta-layering of maternity and creation forms an intricate system of doubles, in which Victor is at once God, the Monster, the mother, and the author, Mary Shelley; Shelley's own colloquial reference to the novel as her "hideous progeny" suggests anxieties about both maternity, and the possibility of maternally creating violence, or a monster. Accordingly, Victor displays horror at his maternal capacity, claiming that the monster is "filthy" or impure, from repulsion at being the monster's creator; but the Monster is also a figuration for Mary Shelley's novel and Mary Shelley, who was the cause of her mother's death (Kiceluk 112).

Pointing to the critically established influence of John Milton's epic account of the fall of man, *Paradise Lost*, on Shelley's novel (Baldick, Kiceluk, Moers, Gilbert and Gubar), Baldick suggests that the failure of both God's creations in *Paradise Lost* and Victor's creation in *Frankenstein* to adhere to divine and humane standards, respectively, enacts a bringing together myths of creation and myths of transgression (Baldick 40). However, like his creator's maternal trauma, it is the Monster's femininity that makes him terrifying; though identified by masculine pronouns, Kiceluk argues that the Monster embodies "Shelley's horrified recognition and projection of woman as she is culturally and socially constructed by man" (Kiceluk 113). This assessment aligns with that of Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's in their groundbreaking work on female authorship, *The Madwoman in the Attic*. By tracing the image of woman that *Frankenstein* depicts back to *Paradise Lost*, Gilbert and Gubar suggest that "[*Frankenstein's*] literary structure prepares us to confront Milton's patriarchal epic, both as a sort of research problem and as the framework for a complex system of allusions" (Gilbert and Gubar 225). In

her dissection of Milton's version of original sin, Shelley updates Eve by having the Monster represent the latent content of the social conception of women. As both the Monster's creator and his greatest point of social interaction throughout the story, Victor doubles as the Monster's mother and his social judge. Victor therefore feels repulsion both toward the feminine associations of his own reproductive capabilities, and what they have created, a creature that is simultaneously a "being like [himself]" and the "new species" he imagines creating (Shelley 31).

Through the generation of the *homunculi*, *The Magician* replicates Shelley's process of using literary genealogy to examine and deploy figurations of social and cultural constructs. As outlined in the previous chapter, Wilde's writings, particularly *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, serves as the site of origin for the Decadent associations that imbue Haddo's hypnotic practices and his alchemical experiments. Wilde's controversial afterlife and associations with homosexuality and Decadence, which his famous trial assured would last into the early twentieth century, were as influential for Maugham as his literary works. Hence, while *Frankenstein* uses allusion to dissect Miltonic patriarchy, *The Magician* alludes to the infamous personalities of Crowley and Wilde to materialize the ghost of Wilde's legacy, which was still associated with perversion. Therefore, the like-human-and-not creatures that Frankenstein and Haddo create in their capacity as God figures are embodiments of different flawed creations: femininity and queerness. These transgressions, too, have different imagined futures: while Frankenstein's Monster vanishes into the snow, but potentially survives, Arthur (and Maugham) ensure the destruction of the *homunculi* by setting Skene Manor on fire.

The burning of Skene Manor brings us to the final literary parent of *The Magician*, as it recalls the burning of Thornfield Hall in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. As Gilbert and Gubar suggest, the attic of Thornfield, where the mad Bertha is kept, represents Jane's psyche both

physiologically and psychologically. If “[Thornfield] is the house of Jane’s life, its floors and walls the architecture of her experience,” the attic, and Bertha, represent Jane’s internal rage, her “secret self” (Gilbert and Gubar 347, 348). The moment of Jane’s confrontation with Bertha is, Gilbert and Gubar claim, “an encounter [...] not with her own sexuality but with her own imprisoned ‘hunger, rebellion, rage,’ a secret dialogue of self and soul” (339). By starting the fire at Thornfield that destroys the house, kills her, and disables Rochester, Bertha manifests Jane’s hunger, rebellion, and rage, resulting in the equalization between Jane and Rochester that allows her to marry him. The loss of Rochester’s estate and physical prowess, alongside Jane’s inheritance from her estranged uncle, reconciles her needs with the marriage plot, allowing the story to conclude with the resolution of the status quo, albeit one that emphasizes equality.

As Jane Eyre’s desire for rebellion is a reflection of Brontë’s own, the contents in Skene Manor’s attic represent Maugham’s complex desire for, and fear of, the possibility of queer reproduction (Gilbert and Gubar 337). As the participants in this trial of fantasy, Haddo, Margaret, and Arthur occupy differing sexual perspectives: Haddo, a clear stand-in for the famously Decadent and bisexual Crowley, if not the gay icon Wilde, represents the possibility of alternative sexualities in the present, and, through his non-heteronormative creation of the *homunculi*, in the future. Margaret, rendered impure by Haddo’s hypnotic powers, contributes her own repressed sexuality to the creatures. Finally, Arthur’s journey from rationalist nonbeliever to magical adept flirts with the aforementioned alternative subjectivities that are offered by occult practices, before, like in *Jane Eyre*, setting fire to this potential. Like the restorative conclusion to Brontë’s novel, the final moments of *The Magician* see the survivors (Arthur, Susie, and Dr. Porhoët) watching the sunrise, a symbolic new beginning; a relationship between Arthur and Susie is suggested, and the heteronormative marriage plot is restored. The

possibility of any queer alternatives seem to be destroyed with the burning Skene Manor, which they have left behind.

However, the importance of *Jane Eyre* and *Frankenstein* for Maugham's novel suggests another reading of the fire. Mary-Antoinette Smith reads the fire imagery in *Jane Eyre* as “paradoxically reflected as purifying and defiling, cathartic and annihilating, constructive and destructive, warmly possessive and catastrophically ruinous, a phoenix-like herald of rebirth and an usher of death” (Smith 238). The fire that burns Thornfield Hall and kills Bertha also burns Jane's rebellious secret self, which, like the phoenix, is reborn as a sustainable version of that same rebellion, giving her the power to be equal to Rochester. Rochester undergoes an inversion of this process in the same fire, though he is reborn as less physiologically and economically dominant, allowing him and Jane to be counterparts.

In *The Magician*, the internalized, secret self is the attic lab at Skene Manor, which contains Haddo's corpse and his *homunculi*. Even before Arthur burns the house down, Dr Porhoët, Susie, and himself find the room surprisingly warm: it is “like an oven. [...] They could not understand why so intense a heat was necessary. [...] Dr Porhoët caught sight of a thermometer and was astounded at the temperature it indicated” (Maugham 1908 188). Given the reproductive experiment taking place, the heat of the attic seems to represent the life-giving warmth of the womb. This spatial symbolism aligns with the psychological reading of the house in *Jane Eyre* that Gilbert and Gubar present, as Maugham's subconscious contains the womb that generated both *The Magician*, and the queer reproduction it depicts. However, this same subconscious is also the site of the destruction of this fantasy, as Arthur lights the fire that will destroy Skene Manor from within the attic (194). By destroying the *homunculi*, the womb-like

space wherein they were created, and Haddo's corpse, Arthur, and Maugham, cleanse the future of any of the queer possibility that has taken place over the course of the novel.

The fact that Maugham has envisioned these queer acts as a male writer suggests that he, like the writer-work relationships we have seen with *Frankenstein* and *Jane Eyre*, is exercising a non-binary subjectivity. These subjectivities particularly transgress those of natural and cultural production. Anita Levy, writing about the Malthusian understanding of this labour divide, suggests that "because the labor of cultural reproduction is severed from that of social reproduction, moreover, it is labour denied women [...] with the intellectual labor of cultural reproduction categorized as a different order of activity from the maternal labor of social and biological reproduction" (Levy 19-20). Therefore, by writing about matrophobic reproduction, and even writing at all, Mary Shelley is crossing the boundary that suggests the female labour is purely biological. Similarly, by imagining the possibility of parthenogenetic creation, Maugham is depicting a transgression wherein males are capable of not only cultural, but also biological labour. Andrew Dowling suggests that the kind of maneuver Maugham undertakes here might actually serve to situate himself as normal relative to the transgression that he writes. Dowling claims that "the male novelist defines himself against multiple images of unmanliness. These authors illustrate the importance of the male 'other,' those sources of difference that are constantly produced and then crushed from *within* the gender divide," which, in the case of *The Magician*, would suggest that Maugham writes Haddo, and destroys him, in order to distance himself from the occult Decadence that Haddo represents (Dowling 3). This is a move that Dowling identifies as "the male self against a demonised male other [which is] one strategy amongst many by which individual men attempt to orientate themselves to a notion of male

power” (3). However, for Dowling, these tactics are compensation against internalized chaos, as Matthew Arnold suggests in his seminal work *Culture and Anarchy* (1869). Dowling writes:

self-discipline, earnestness, control, and restraint were thus the key terms in Victorian moral discourse; terms that were constantly defined in relation to images of excess, dissipation, chaos, and ungoverned desires. For the Victorians, this chaotic, uncontrolled energy was the ‘natural’ element of men. Victorian women might ‘fall,’ but Victorian men had already fallen, and in order to achieve even the semblance of civilisation, they had to rigidly repress the ‘natural’ perversity (22).

Dowling, and Arnold, are describing a duality not only between the queer and the heteronormative, but also violence and restraint, excess and control. The notion of this split self, including in sexual subjectivity, is a common theme in gothic literature, most famously depicted in Robert Louis Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886).

This duality is also echoed in Arthur’s development throughout *The Magician*, and, crucially, Maugham’s aforementioned claim about his own queerness: “I tried to persuade myself that I was three-quarters normal and that only a quarter of me was queer—whereas really it was the other way round” (Maugham quoted in Hastings 39). That Maugham recognized these two parts of himself, and his determination to repress the queer part for much of his life, casts a new light upon the strange print history of *The Magician*, especially the 1956 reprint and the addition of “A Fragment of Autobiography.” That Maugham chose to reprint a novel that he seemingly disliked (he referred to the novel as “dull and stupid” when submitting his manuscript), and that he included a foreward which almost exclusively discusses his relationship with Crowley, is particularly telling (Calder 2007 vii). Although Crowley had died in 1947, his queer subjectivity had become more public by 1914, when he developed a sodomitic rite for the

occult order Ordo Templi Orientis (Sutin 228). The references to Crowley that Maugham made in the initial publication of *The Magician* in 1908 would have occult and Decadent connotations, but re-associating himself, and his text, with Crowley in “A Fragment” suggests a new set of queer correlations. Through the reprint and the addendum, Maugham slyly re-situates his novel within a queer context, though not overly enough to thwart the sense of repression that he maintained throughout his life.

Maugham explained his choice not to include *The Magician* in his Collected Works by stating that the novel “was all moonshine. I did not believe a word of it. It was a game I was playing. A book written under these conditions can have no life in it” (Maugham quoted in Calder vii). However, as Freeman has suggested, Maugham’s distancing himself from *The Magician* at the time of its publication, and his return to it late in his life, may be due to its aspects of experimentation. Before becoming more comfortable with his sexuality and writing “A Fragment of Autobiography,” Maugham may have written *The Magician* to test his own closeness with Wilde’s Decadent legacy, as a quietly queer young man. Through pastiche and literary genealogy, Maugham re-envisioned his own pull towards Decadence through the lens of occultism, which offered a more queer, creative, and open nexus of possibilities than Wilde’s *fin-de-siècle*. Perhaps, *The Magician* had some life in it after all.

Works Cited

- Baker, Houston A., Jr. "A Tragedy of the Artist: *The Picture of Dorian Gray*." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, vol. 24, no. 3, 1969, pp. 349-355.
- Baldick, Chris. *In Frankenstein's Shadow: Myth, Monstrosity, and Nineteenth-Century Writing*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1987.
- Bogdan, Henrik and Martin P. Starr. *Aleister Crowley and Western Esotericism*. Oxford Scholarship Online, 2013.
- Brontë, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. Edited by Richard Nemesvari. Broadview Press, 1999.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge, 2006.
- Calder, Robert. "Introduction". *The Magician* pp. vii-xxx. Penguin, 2007.
- Willie: The Life of Somerset Maugham*. William Heinemann Ltd., 1989.
- Carter, Richard. "Medicine and W. Somerset Maugham." *American Journal of Surgery*, vol. 113, no. 5, 1967, pp. 713-716.
- Chettiar, Teri. "'Looking as Little Like Patients as Persons Well Could': Hypnotism, Medicine, and the Problem of the Suggestible Subject in Late Nineteenth-Century Britain." *Medical History* vol. 56, no. 3, 2012, pp. 335-354.
- Chilcoat, Laura. "Forgiving Salomé: Oscar Wilde's Tragic Heroine." *The Victorian*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2013, pp. 1-9.
- Cohen, Ed. *Talk on the Wilde Side: Toward a Genealogy of a Discourse on Male Sexualities*. Routledge, 1993.
- Craft, Christopher. "Come See About Me: Enchantment of the Double in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*." *Representations*, vol. 91, no. 1, 2005, pp. 109-136.
- Crowell, Ellen. "Oscar Wilde's Tomb: *Silence* and the Aesthetics of Queer Memorial." *BRANCH: Britain, Representation and Nineteenth-Century History*.
- Crowley, Aleister. "How to Write a Novel! After W. S. Maugham." *W. Somerset Maugham*, edited by Anthony Curtis, and John Whitehead. Routledge, 1997.
- The Confessions of Aleister Crowley*. Edited by John Symonds and Kenneth Grant. Penguin Arkana Books, 1989.
- Cucullu, Lois. "Adolescent Dorian Gray: Oscar Wilde's Proto-Picture of Modernist Celebrity." *Modernist Star Maps: Celebrity, Modernity, Culture*. Edited by Aaron Jaffe. Ashgate, 2010, pp. 19-36.
- "Demonstration of Hypnotism as an Anaesthetic during the Performance of Dental and Surgical Operations." *The Lancet* vol. 135, is. 3475, 5 April 1890, pp. 771-772.
- Denisoff, Dennis. "Decadence and Aestheticism." *The Cambridge Companion to the Fin de Siècle*. Edited by Gail Marshall. Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 31-52.
- Dixon, Joy. *Divine Feminine: Theosophy and Feminism in England*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.
- "Sexology and the Occult: Sexuality and Subjectivity in Theosophy's New Age." *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, vol. 7, no. 3, 1997, pp. 409-433.

- Dowling, Andrew. *Manliness and the Male Novelist in Victorian Literature*. Routledge, 2001.
- Easley, Alexis. *Literary Celebrity, Gender, and Victorian Authorship, 1850-1914*. University of Delaware Press, 2011.
- Ellman, Richard. *Oscar Wilde*. Penguin, 1987.
- Evans, Dylan. *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*. Routledge, 1996. ****
- Freeman, Nick. "Wilde's Edwardian Afterlife: Somerset Maugham, Aleister Crowley, and The Magician." *Literature & History* vol. 16, no. 2, 2007, pp. 16-29.
- Gauld, Alan. *A History of Hypnotism*. Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Gilbert, Sandra M. and Gubar, Susan. *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*. Yale University Press, 1979.
- Gomel, Elana. "'Spirits in the Material World': Spiritualism and Identity in the *Fin de Siècle*." *Victorian Literature and Culture*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2007, pp. 189-213.
- Greenzlade, William. *Degeneration, Culture, and the Novel, 1880-1940*. Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Hanson, Ellis. *Decadence and Catholicism*. Harvard University Press, 1997, Cambridge.
- Harris, W.C. and Dawn Vernooy. "'Orgies of Nameless Horrors': Gender, Orientalism, and the Queering of Violence in Richard Marsh's *The Beetle*." *Papers on Language & Literature*, vol. 48, no. 4, 2012, p. 339+.
- Hastings, Selina. *The Secret Lives of Somerset Maugham*. John Murray, 2009.
- Hill, Tracey. *Decadence and Danger: Writing, History and the Fin de Siècle*. Sulis Press, 1997.
- Holland, Merlin. *The Real Trial of Oscar Wilde: With an Introduction and Commentary*. Perennial, 2004.
- Hurley, Kelly. *The Gothic Body: Sexuality, Materialism, and Degeneration at the Fin-de-Siècle*. Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Hyde, H. Montgomery. *The Trials of Oscar Wilde*. With a foreward by the Right Honourable Sir Traver Humphreys. William Hodge and Company, 1948.
- Irmak, Burak. "Acting Out Gender: Performativity and Becoming Lord Henry Wotton in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*." *British and American Studies (Online)* is. 21, 2015, pp. 77-82.
- Kiceluk, Stephanie. "Made in His Image: Frankenstein's Daughters." *Michigan Quarterly Review*, vol. 30, no. 1, 1991, pp. 110-126.
- Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Translated by Leon S. Roudiez. Columbia University Press, 1982.
- Levy, Anita. *Reproductive Urges: Popular Novel-Reading, Sexuality, and the English Nation*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999.
- Luther, Martin, and William Hazlitt. *The Table-Talk of Martin Luther*. Generic NL Freebook Publisher.
- Marsh, Richard. *The Beetle*. Edited by Julian Wolfreys. Broadview Editions, 2004.
- Maugham, Robin. *Conversations with Willie: Recollections of W. Somerset Maugham*. W.H. Allen, 1978.

- Maugham, W. Somerset. *The Magician*. Introduction and notes by Robert Calder. Penguin, 2007.
—*The Summing Up*. Penguin Books, 1938.
- McCrea, Barry. "Heterosexual Horror: *Dracula*, the Closet, and the Marriage-Plot." *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*, vol. 42, no. 2, 2010, pp. 251-270.
- Moers, Ellen. *Literary Women*. Doubleday, 1976.
- Myers, F. W. H. "The British Medical Association and Hypnotism: The Psychology of Hypnotism." *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, is.14, 1898, pp. 100-108.
- "New Sea-Side Studies." *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, vol. 82, is. 502, 1857, pp. 222-240.
- Owen, Alex. *The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern*. Chicago Scholarship Online, 2013.
- "The Sorcerer and His Apprentice." *Aleister Crowley and Western Esotericism* pp. 15-42. Edited by Henrik Bogden and Martin P. Starr. Oxford Scholarship Online, 2013.
- Owen, Richard. "On Parthenogenesis, or the Successive Production of Procreating Individuals from a Single Ovum. A Discourse Introductory to the Hunterian Lectures on Generation and Development, for the Year 1849, Delivered at the Royal College of Surgeons of England." *The British and foreign medico-chirurgical review* vol. 4, no. 8, 1849, pp. 409-449.
- Pasi, Marco. "Varieties of Magical Experience: Aleister Crowley's Views on Occult Practice." *Aleister Crowley and Western Esotericism* pp. 53-76. Edited by Henrik Bogden and Martin P. Starr. Oxford Scholarship Online, 2013.
- Powell, Kerry. "Oscar Wilde 'Acting': The Medium as Message in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*." *Dalhousie Review* is. 58, 1978, pp.104-115.
- "The Mesmerizing of Dorian Gray." *The Victorian Newsletter*, is. 65, 1984, pp. 10-15.
- Raby, Peter. *The Cambridge Companion to Oscar Wilde*. Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- "Poisoned by a Book: The Lethal Aura of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*." *Oscar Wilde in Context*, 2014, pp. 159-167.
- Schaffer, Talia. "'A Wilde Desire Took Me': The Homoerotic History of *Dracula*." *ELH*, vol. 61, no. 2, 1994, pp. 381-425.
- Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*. Foreword by Wayne Koestenbaum. Columbia University Press, 2016.
- *Epistemology of the Closet*. University of California Press, 2008.
- *Tendencies*. Routledge, 1994.
- Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein*. Edited by Joseph Pearce. Ignatius Press, 2008.
- Showalter, Elaine. *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle*. Viking, 1990.
- Smith, Mary-Antoinette. "Brontë's Inferno: An Inferfactual Structural Analysis of Rochester's Redemptive Fire Baptism in *Jane Eyre*." *Victorians: A Journal of Culture and Literature*, vol. 130, pp. 232-248.
- Stern, Simon. "Wilde's Obscenity Effect: Influence and Immorality in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*." *The Review of English Studies*, vol. 68, no. 286, 2017, pp. 756-772.

- Stevenson, Robert Louis. *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and Other Tales*. Edited and with an introduction and notes by Roger Luckhurst. Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. Introduction and notes by David Rogers. Wordsworth editions, 2000.
- Sutin, Lawrence. *Do What Thou Wilt: A Life of Aleister Crowley*. St. Martin's Press, 2000.
- Vidal, Gore. *Sexually Speaking, Collected Sex Writings*. Edited by Donald Weise. Cleis, 1999.
- Wilde, Oscar. *The Picture of Dorian Gray and Other Writings*. Edited and with an introduction by Richard Ellmann. Bantam Classics, 2005.
- *Salomé. The Picture of Dorian Gray and Other Writings*. pp. 291-332. Translated by Richard Ellman. Bantam Classics, 2005.
- Winter, Alison. "Mesmerism and Popular Culture in Early Victorian England." *History of Science* Vol. 32, Is. 97, pp. 317-343.
- *Mesmerized: Powers of Mind in Victorian Britain*. University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- "What is Mesmerism?" *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, vol. 70, is. 429, 1851, pp. 70-85.
- Ziolkowski, Theodore. *The Alchemist in Literature: From Dante to the Present*. Oxford Scholarship Online, 2015.