

**MONASH UNIVERSITY**

***Literary hoax as transgressive subtextual criticism:  
Paratext and the epitextual milieu in the Floupette, Spectra and Ern Malley controversies***

**research thesis undertaken by**

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**in contribution to fulfil requirements for completion of a**

**Master of Arts degree**

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**June 2015**

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The core theme of the thesis is literary hoax as transgressive subtextual criticism. The ideas, development and writing up of this thesis was the principal responsibility of myself, the candidate, working within the School of English, Communications and Performance Studies under the supervision of Dr J. Hawke.

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### Referencing Notes

As per standard practice, prose items not published as separate works are provided without the primary reference (the latter is detailed in the bibliography) e.g.:

G. van Roosbroeck, 'The Tragic Story of Adoré Floupette, or How One Becomes a Decadent', pp. 37, 51.

A similar format is used for items from websources:

A. Russek, '“So Many Useful Women”: The Pseudonymous Poetry of Marjorie Allen Seiffert', p. 78

C. Daly, 'Marjorie Allen Seiffert and the *Spectra* Hoax', un-numbered pages, webservice.

Although the footnote referencing method is applied, in relation to authors with more than one work quoted/cited, individual items are identified by the 'in-text' procedure of consecutive number allocation in parentheses.

To avoid clutter in the bibliography, poems quoted/cited are referenced in parentheses following their source:

S. Mallarmé, *Collected Poems*, p. 93 ('*Le Démon de l'Analogie*').

*Poetry*, 7. 2, p. 83 (W. Stevens, 'Sunday Morning').

The 'poems format' is also adopted for items of a prefatory nature:

A. Floupette (2), *Les Déliquescentes: Poèmes décadents*, pp. 5-20, 50-85, 86-87 (N. Richard, 'Introduction', 'Notes', '*Le Parnassiculet et Déliquescentes*').

Given the considerable number of items regarding *Angry Penguins*, all are referenced according to the 'poems format'.

Referencing of journal editions is effected with volume and number; date is also provided if contextually significant. (Volume details and date are included in the bibliography.)

In relation to separate authors with identical surnames, initials are provided with each reference.

## Section One

### FRAMEWORK

#### 1.1 Scholarship of 'Fake' Literature, related Criticism and Literary Theory

Literary parody uses subtexts to engage in criticism of its targets. Customised paratext, incorporating fabricated personas, is the feature of transgressively-authored satire that distinguishes it from conventional (non-transgressive) satire, 'transgressive' being defined in this context as attributional modes which subvert conventional notions of authorship.<sup>1</sup> The literary criticism hoax is one form of transgressively-authored satire, the other principal type being those with socio-political purposes.

The field of scholarship which focuses on texts that come under the rubric of 'fakery' does not appear to have an established designation. The spectrum of texts included in these studies is broad: those readily thought of as fabrications (Macpherson's 'ancient' fragments, Chatterton's 'medieval' manuscripts, Ireland's 'Shakespeare' manuscripts); transgressive anonymous/pseudonymous socio-political satire (Swift's attack on British landlord exploitation of the Irish poor);<sup>2</sup> impostures based on texts (Demidenko/Darville's 'Ukrainian' novel);<sup>3</sup> texts designed to subvert and criticise editorial/awards bias (Gwen Harwood's 'acrostic hoax' of the *Bulletin*);<sup>4</sup> and hoaxes with the purpose of literary criticism, such as the three case studies considered herein.<sup>5</sup> The concept has also been applied to *Robinson Crusoe*, *Gulliver's Travels*, Shakespearian authorship, alleged plagiarism in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the erroneous myth that Eskimos have hundreds of words for 'snow', Fernando Pessoa's heteronyms, and pseudonymous writing generally.<sup>6</sup> A plethora of colloquial expressions are used to describe these fakeries (most of which have been applied to the case studies): false, forgery, fraud, fake, hoax, scam, jape, gibe, ruse, farce, imposture, counterfeit, swindle, phoney, bogus, sham, pratfall, humbug, hugger mugger, gag, joke, stunt, to 'guy', and the American expressions pisstake and gulled. As Ken Ruthven observes, there are therefore 'problems posed by semantic instabilities in the lexicon'; and 'culture-specific contingencies of varying historical practices' exclude attempts to taxonomise any term as a master-key.<sup>7</sup> However, Ruthven generally uses the term 'fake literature', and it is proposed that Scholarship of Fake Literature (SFL) is a workable designation for these studies.

A regular theme in these works is that 'literary' and 'fake' texts are integrated aspects of literature. Ian Haywood summarises his study of Macpherson and Chatterton with the assertion that they were 'makers, not falsifiers', and in his volume on general fakery he observes that 'most forgeries are not copies' but

... 'creative' forgeries: 'new' works either by famous artists or by imaginary creators. These paradoxical 'original' forgeries are the most interesting and the most subversive. The way they create authority is not a simple case of stealth or theft'.<sup>8</sup>

Nick Groom explores 'literary forgeries' as 'delicious fictions' which are 'part of the ever-changing stories that societies tell about themselves – stories about authors and inspiration, theories of imagination and fables of creation, cultural myths and canons of aesthetic value'.<sup>9</sup> Criticism is part of this mix, in Anthony Grafton's view, since it and literary forgeries are 'two complex, central, tightly intertwined strands in the Western tradition'.<sup>10</sup> Ruthven contends, 'when we imagine the relationship between literature and literary forgeries, we should not be thinking of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde but rather of Tweedledum and

<sup>1</sup> Since pseudonyms are generally accepted within literature, 'pseudonymous', in its putative sense, is not included within this concept of 'transgressive'.

<sup>2</sup> J. Swift, *A Modest Proposal*. The original 1729 edition was released anonymously in England whilst in Ireland it was attributed to 'Dr. Swift'.

<sup>3</sup> H. Demidenko (H. Darville), *The Hand that Signed the Paper*.

<sup>4</sup> C. Atherton, ' 'Fuck All Editors': The Ern Malley Affair and Gwen Harwood's *Bulletin* Scandal', p. 151.

<sup>5</sup> Case studies are detailed on page seven.

<sup>6</sup> G. K. Pullum, *The Great Eskimo Vocabulary Hoax and Other Irreverent Essays on the Study of Language*, pp. 159-71.

<sup>7</sup> K. K. Ruthven, *Faking Literature*, pp. 36-38.

<sup>8</sup> I. Haywood: (1) *The Making of History: A Study of the Literary Forgeries of James Macpherson and Thomas Chatterton*, p. 12; (2) *Faking It: Art and the Politics of Forgery*, p. 10.

<sup>9</sup> N. Groom, *The Forger's Shadow: How Forgery Changed the Course of Literature*, pp. 3, 293.

<sup>10</sup> A. Grafton, *Forgers and Critics: Creativity and Duplicity in Western Scholarship*, p. 7.

Tweedledee'.<sup>11</sup> These studies focus on eras prior to the twentieth century, often preoccupied with eighteenth-century Britain as 'an age of forgery'.<sup>12</sup> Susan Stewart provides variations on the theme with greater consideration of the modern era: her view is that textual forgeries/impostures are aesthetic 'inversions or negations of cultural codes' which operate in a 'transgressive space'.<sup>13</sup> Maggie Nolan and Carrie Dawson, although focused on a number of hoaxes and similar controversies in the Australian context, explore 'complexities of particular cases' and the 'differences *between*' them in relation to 'acts of identification, acts of appropriation, acts of creation and acts of affiliation', which effectively reiterates the theme regarding the integration of fakes within literary practice, and is informative of fakes generally. They observe that the basis of these issues is our 'longing for authenticity as stable ground from which to know what we believe': these subversions thus 'call the certainty of all our identities into question'.<sup>14</sup> Other features common to these studies are that references to criticism-style hoaxes are relatively brief, and also — unlike 'formalist' approaches to literary criticism — paratextual considerations are substantively embraced.

Paratext's place has been largely overlooked in recent history of the 'mainstream' half of Ruthven's equation — the study of literature — since, for a good proportion of the past century, New Critical and Structuralist theory came to dominate criticism. Despite numerous phases and manifestations with different emphases, these approaches maintained one dictum: author-generated paratext should not be considered. Nevertheless, matters extrinsic but connected to particular texts remained unavoidable for criticism of author *œuvres* and literary biography. Whilst creative works (fiction, poetry, drama) are not usually written with the intention that they should be read in tandem with paratext, many readers of literature, including numerous critics and academic teachers, continued a predisposition to consider authorial intentions and lives. 'We cannot be wilfully incurious', observes Nicholas Birns.<sup>15</sup> The approach of New Criticism was not without merit: by highlighting the essentially hitherto ignored speculative nature of considerations regarding authorial intention, and potential links between authors' works and their lives, attendant risks were underlined. However, its response to the problem was to effectively introduce a problem — a refusal to acknowledge that, whatever the deficiencies of reference to paratext, it is inextricably involved in some forms of criticism and, for many readers, it is invariably part of literary studies. These issues are particularly relevant to criticism hoaxes since perpetrators intend their subtext to be understood at some stage (though methods to convey this vary); disinterest regarding relevant paratext significantly limits comprehension of these texts. Leading theorists in the Structuralist and Post-structuralist fields themselves rarely consider hoaxes. An attempt by Barthes to evaluate one 'perpetrated' by Poe suffers, as Lynda Walsh demonstrates, from his ideologically-driven omission of paratextual considerations; he therefore fails to realise the story ('The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar') was written without hoax intentions and only acquired that 'significance' when some readers thought it was — Poe, believing it encouraged the idea that he was particularly clever, embraced the suggestion.<sup>16</sup> Umberto Eco has discussed problems associated with physical fakes (visual artwork, manuscripts) and the phenomenon whereby the culturally 'inauthentic' becomes over time 'authentic' ('hyperreality': for example, tourist park recreations which become more important than the themed original), but he does not appear to have considered criticism hoaxes.<sup>17</sup>

Although dissolution of the pre-1990s Structuralist dominance of criticism has deemed paratextual considerations 'acceptable', the subsequent focus has generally swung to the opposite whereby socio-economic-cultural frameworks have become the primary means through which texts are interpreted. Aesthetic qualities — the core of literature and literary satire — are either not considered or only to the extent they inform predetermined approaches. Exceptions include Anti-Theory or 'Theory is Dead' arguments and 'New Aestheticism', the latter's focus being substantive considerations of texts in both

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<sup>11</sup> Ruthven, *ibid.*, p. 200.

<sup>12</sup> P. Baines, *The House of Forgery in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, p. 7. Other works often have sections/chapters focused on this 'geotimeslot'.

<sup>13</sup> S. Stewart, *Crimes of Writing: Problems in the Containment of Representation*, p. 3. In addition to forgeries and impostures Stewart's cases include pornography and graffiti.

<sup>14</sup> M. Nolan & C. Dawson, 'Who's Who: Mapping Hoaxes and Imposture in Australian Literary History', pp. vii, xiii, xvii. Original emphasis.

<sup>15</sup> N. Birns, *Theory After Theory: An Intellectual History of Literary Theory from 1950 to the Early Twenty-First Century*, p. 14.

<sup>16</sup> E. A. Poe (1), 'The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar'; R. Barthes, 'Textual Analysis of a Tale by Poe'; L. Walsh, *Sins Against Science: The Scientific Media Hoaxes of Poe, Twain, and Others*, p. 67.

<sup>17</sup> U. Eco: (1) *The Limits of Interpretation*, pp. 174-202; (2) *Faith In Fakes: Essays*, pp. 3-58; (3) *Serendipities: Language and Lunacy*, pp. 1-21; (4) 'Forgeries, Originals and Identity'.

societal and aesthetic terms; however, neither satire nor paratext are attended to in these studies.<sup>18</sup> Variations of the societal-aesthetic approach include: Michael Davidson's focus on modern literature as 'written within two materialities – one aesthetic, one socioeconomic – that cannot be easily separated', in which he allows for paratextual considerations; Jerome McGann's acknowledgement (in an echo of McLuhan) that there is an 'inseparability of the medium and the message', with textual aesthetics and paratext being integral to a 'laced network of linguistic and bibliographic codes'; and Ann Vickery's considerations of feminist genealogy in which she argues that 'poetic discourse is engendered through a range of texts, which, in addition to the poem "itself", includes paratexts such as journals, reviews, interviews, and correspondence'.<sup>19</sup> However, these initiatives do not engage in consideration of satire or hoaxes.

The core argument of this thesis is illustrated by means of three case-study groups of texts (one of which involves multiple works) usually referred to as hoaxes: *Les Délivrescences: Poèmes décadents* by Adoré Floupette (Henri Beauclair and Gabriel Vicaire), France 1885; *Spectra: A Book of Poetic Experiments* by Anne Knish (Arthur Davison Ficke) and Emanuel Morgan (Witter Bynner), and subsequent 'Spectric' publications by Knish, Morgan and Elijah Hay (Marjorie Allen Seiffert) released in periodicals/anthologies, America 1916–18; *The Darkening Ecliptic* by Ern Malley (James McAuley and Harold Stewart), Australia 1944.<sup>20</sup> Selection criteria for these texts were: (1) each has a purpose of literary criticism; (2) all occurred in the Symbolist-Modernist era; (3) ostensible similarities may reveal information pertinent to this study.

The case study deliberations demonstrate an integration of the 'fake' and the 'literary' at the compositional level. More generally, a significant intersection between the study of fakery and criticism is indicated, which complements Ruthven's recognition that 'literary forgery is criticism by other means'.<sup>21</sup> This argument highlights the fact that there are hoaxes with critical purposes which form a distinct grouping within the range of 'literary fakes', and a number of the outcomes have relevance to both SFL and the discipline of criticism. A methodology of close reading (Section 1.2.2) illustrates the creative results of the hoax authors' dual roles as imaginative writers and literary critics: this is significantly enhanced by the release from their regularly imposed conventional methods of composition enabled by the adoption of hoax transgressive personas. The considerations regarding literary fashion may, given that vogues often drive various textual fakes and forgeries, have also produced pointers with broader relevance. The outcomes of this research are potentially useful new directions regarding tensions traditionally encountered in literature — between authorship and authenticity, text and author, text and paratext, text and reader — particularly those encountered with the advent of Symbolism/Modernism: issues of representational form (mimesis) and non-representational form, interpretive standards and ideoculture, craft and spontaneous writing.

## **1.2 Methodology Applied both Generally and to the Case Studies**

### **1.2.1 Paratext and the Epitextual Milieu**

Non-transgressive parodies are not dependent on external material (other than their targets). Transgressive parodies and hoaxes rely on paratext customised to complement their purpose. In this context, 'paratext' refers to, as defined by Gérard Genette, material not considered part of a particular text but associated with it, regarding which he identifies two primary groupings: (1) peritext, which is the items materially appended to a published text such as book covers, promotional blurbs, title pages, author biographical information, forewords, afterwords, book dedications, epigraphs (most of which also apply to e-texts); (2) epitext, which refers to a text's contact with society that 'it' initiates, this being any form of promotion originating from the text's 'stable' — publisher, author, agents both direct and indirect. Genette also has intra-categories based on

<sup>18</sup> I. Armstrong, *The Radical Aesthetic*; J. Joughin & S. Malpas, eds., *The new aestheticism*; M. P. Clark, ed., *Revenge of the Aesthetic: The Place of Literature in Theory Today*.

<sup>19</sup> M. Davidson, *Ghostlier Demarcations: Modern Poetry and the Material Word*, p. 226; J. J. McGann, *The Textual Condition*, pp. 11, 13; A. Vickery, *Leaving Lines of Gender: A Feminist Genealogy of Language Writing*, p. 16.

<sup>20</sup> A. Floupette (1) (H. Beauclair & G. Vicaire), *Les Délivrescences: Poèmes décadents d'Adoré Floupette* (website reproduction of the second French edition) — a 'biography' of Floupette was added to the second edition and this is the basis of all post-1885 releases; A. Knish (A. D. Ficke) & E. Morgan (W. Bynner), *Spectra: A Book of Poetic Experiments* (website reproduction of the original edition) and subsequent writings by Knish, Morgan & E. Hay (M. A. Seiffert) published 1916-18 — italics are not used where reference is to the Spectra Hoax in general, they are applied to the Spectra volume; E. Malley (1) (J. McAuley & H. Stewart), 'The Darkening Ecliptic', *Angry Penguins*, (effectively # 6), Autumn 1944, pp. 7-33 — first book edition: E. Malley (2), *The Darkening Ecliptic*, Reed & Harris, 1944.

<sup>21</sup> Ruthven, p. 171.



authorship (additional commentary by publishers, guest contributors or the authors themselves), whether it is public (promotional material) or private (diaries), as well as timing (promotion before publication is ‘prior epitext’) and other lesser forms.<sup>22</sup>

Criticism hoaxers target fashions and their practitioners. An extension of the epitext concept developed for this thesis is the ‘epitextual milieu’, which refers to the writers, publishers and readers who form an identifiable grouping that engages in a particular literary fashion during a defined period — a vogue which binds the participants and effectively stimulates their own ‘zeitgeist’. The epitextual milieu has considerable influence on the satiric work and there is interaction between the (preliminary-stage secretive) hoaxers and their targets via the former’s undercover promotional initiatives. In another beneficial adaption of Genette’s categories, peritext is divided into ‘packaging peritext’ — the ‘outwardly facing’ items such as author and publisher names, place of publication — and ‘prefatory peritext’, which includes dedications, prefaces/forewords and introductions. The text of the Floupette case study targeted the coterie of poets in mid-1880s Paris known as the Decadents and the literary fashion associated with them, the epitextual milieu being those targets and the writer–publisher–reader coterie surrounding and interacting with them. The Floupette epitextual milieu does not extend to secondary groupings, albeit the Decadent vogue reflected the degenerative tenor of the *Fin de siècle*. Spectra targeted Imagists in particular, and emerging Modernist writers generally, the epitextual milieu being the writers, publishers and readers participating in the U.S.-centred 1914–18 American–British Imagist vogue, with secondary groupings in international Modernism. The Ern Malley text also targeted Modernism but the scope was greater since, with Freudian psychoanalysis and ‘Far Left’ ideologies as targets, it was not restricted to literature. Within the literary field its range was likewise broad: Symbolism, Imagism, Surrealism and its ‘New Apocalypse’ offshoot (Apocalypsts) — effectively Modernism in its entirety — as well as the Romantic sources of these movements. Fashions do not embrace such a wide compass. However, in Australia the primary focus of the 1940s experimental writing coterie was the periodical *Angry Penguins* (also an advocate for Modernist visual art); this was the targeted vehicle intended to convey the hoaxers’ broader criticisms — the journal’s editors, contributors and readers being the effective epitextual milieu.

### 1.2.2 Close Reading Principles and Method

As Wolfgang Iser observes, ‘literary criticism has very little to go on in the way of guidelines’.<sup>23</sup> However, a customary practice, established by the early twentieth-century Cambridge School, is ‘close reading’, whereby texts are examined with detailed analysis; it is especially pertinent to aesthetic and Deconstructive approaches. This practice, combined with identification of recognised literary and aesthetic elements (figurative language, allusions, tropes, rhythm, aural effects, characterisation and flashbacks, streams of consciousness, structure and emplotment), all of which are non-programmatic, provides a received methodology for this qualitative research. René Wellek and Austin Warren distinguish two fundamental aspects of literary evaluation which are particularly useful in applied criticism:

There is a judgement of sensibility, and there is a reasoned, a ratiocinative, judgement. They exist in no necessary contradiction: a sensibility can scarcely attain much critical force without being susceptible of considerable generalized, theoretical statement; and a reasoned judgement, in matters of literature, cannot be formulated save on the basis of some sensibility, immediate or derivative.<sup>24</sup>

To complement this approach and provide systemised guidance the following tasks/questions were identified for close reading of literary qualities: (1) ratiocinative evaluation; (2) sensibility evaluation; (3) relevant paratext; (4) the epitextual milieu; (5) broader socio/cultural contexts; (6) the dual role of hoax authors as both critics and creative writers. This method was applied to the case studies and other sources as appropriate.

<sup>22</sup> G. Genette (1), *Paratexts: thresholds of interpretation*, esp. pp. 1, 4-5, 16, 29, 178-79, 263, 284-91, 344-45. There are subtleties incorporated within Genette’s categories; e.g. a favourable but ostensibly independent review which was indirectly initiated by the publisher/author is considered epitext: pp. 348-52. Commentary by authors on their text within the text itself (metadiscourse), as in Sterne’s *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, is usually considered as part of the work rather than paratext.

<sup>23</sup> W. Iser, ‘Interaction Between Text and Reader’, p. 107.

<sup>24</sup> R. Wellek & A. Warren, *Theory of Literature*, pp. 250-51.

### 1.2.3 Definitional Distinctions of ‘Literary Hoax’ and ‘Criticism Hoax’

Coming to terms with the subject matter of ‘fakery’ involves, as Ruthven observes, ‘thinking about the overlapping descriptors that constitute our understanding of it’ whilst there are problems with ‘prescriptivism’.<sup>25</sup> However, to ensure clarity of the research terms applied, in addition to those effectively defined in Sections 1.1–1.2.2, workable definitions of ‘literary hoax’ and ‘criticism hoax’ were developed. Since the research is focused on the modern era, so is this definitional framework. A significant contextual aspect is the usage of ‘hoax’ in mass-media society. Alex Boese observes that the expression does not include everyday falsehoods or criminal deceit such as counterfeiting currency; for a deception to become a hoax there needs to be something

... outrageous, ingenious, dramatic, or sensational. Most of all, it must command the attention of the public. A hoax, then, is a deliberately deceptive act that has succeeded in capturing the attention (and, ideally, the imagination) of the public.<sup>26</sup>

Although ‘everyday usage is promiscuous’, the above description is apposite in relation to the putative sense of hoax and is therefore the basis of the following considerations.<sup>27</sup> Whilst complexities regarding authorial intention and the functions hoaxes perform are inherent difficulties with prescriptive approaches and attendant labelling, formulating a workable definition is facilitated by comparison with similar types. The term ‘literary hoax’ has a broad compass; cases with an arguable connection to literature since the 1880s beginnings of Modernism (and the concurrent accelerated growth of mass print media), appear to be accommodated by the following groupings: (1) textual fabrication/forgery (‘Hitler Diaries’); (2) non-critical impostures based on texts in which the author adopts a persona (Demidenko/Darville) or fabricates personal involvement (Khouri) to gain an ‘authenticity’ which enables exploitation of an ethnicity/genre which otherwise they would not have;<sup>28</sup> (3) transgressive texts/personas designed for socio-political purposes;<sup>29</sup> (4) transgressive personas, their ‘imposture’ embedded in text, designed to subvert and criticise editorial/awards bias (Yasusada Hoax);<sup>30</sup> (5) transgressive texts/personas designed to target critical practices, effectively metacriticism (physicist Alan Sokal’s 1996 exposure of fashionably regular but substantially inaccurate use of scientific terms in cultural studies periodicals); (6) creative writing infused with a critical subtext and accompanied by transgressive personas. The latter grouping applies to the case studies.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Ruthven, p. 34.

<sup>26</sup> A. Boese, *The Museum of Hoaxes*, p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> Ruthven, p. 36.

<sup>28</sup> Demidenko, *ibid.*; N. Khouri, *Forbidden Love: a harrowing true story of love and revenge in Jordan*. Impostures of this sort may, without critical intent, exploit weaknesses which are the subject of grouping (4). For example, it is likely that Darville was exploiting an ‘ethnicity’ bias of Australia’s ‘literary gatekeepers’; however, there is little to suggest her purpose was criticism of the bias. (At an ‘objective’ non-intentional level, criticism is implied and this may contribute to the hoax’s aftermath function in the community.)

<sup>29</sup> In recent times the dominant mode of literary-based socio-political criticism has been non-transgressively authored fiction and memoirs/biography. However, controversial works in this regard are sometimes labelled ‘hoaxes’, such as the memoir of Nobel Peace Prize Winner Rigoberta Menchú which related details of the repression experienced by her indigenous people in the Guatemalan Civil War; substantive challenges were made regarding the veracity of her account: M. Soltan, ‘Hoax Poetry in America’, pp. 44-46; A. Arias, ed., *The Rigoberta Menchú Controversy*.

<sup>30</sup> Anon., ‘The Yasusada Affair - Ethics or Aesthetics? ... the Kent Johnson / Akitoshi Nagahata letters’, *Jacket Magazine*, # 2; Anon., ‘Araki Yasusada’, *Jacket Magazine*, 9.

<sup>31</sup> The Ern Malley Hoax is an example of overlap since it had secondary political targets.

## Section Two

### REVIEW OF CASE STUDY CRITICAL LITERATURE <sup>32</sup>

#### 2.1 The Floupette Hoax

Gustave van Roosbroeck, in his discussion of the 1885 *Les Délivescences: Poèmes décadents* by Adoré Floupette (Henri Beauclair and Gabriel Vicaire), argues that to enjoy lampoons of Decadent poets was an established French pastime. The attitudes and mannerisms of these ‘early Symbolists’, their ‘white swans, mauve souls and dusky gardens’ were ‘excellent targets for waggish satirists’. Although these writers were socially unacceptable, the ‘gentle public in the Market Place longed for an obviously “decadent” book of verse’ with which ‘to pass the merry hour’.<sup>33</sup> Enid Starkie’s view is that many contemporaries believed the collection was ‘an original work composed in all good faith’, and that ‘the taste of the time was so strange ... praise or blame was showered on it in the same proportion as on any new and daring work of art’.<sup>34</sup> Louis Marquèze-Pouey takes this further:

The majority of critics reacted in such a way as to create an astonishing confusion: one could wonder, when reading their articles, who was the enemy of whom... Forgetting that the *Délivescences* were a parody of *decadentism*, so an [sic] attack directed against it, they included Floupette himself in their brutal attacks, his “work” [sic], but also the authors of the collection, all considered to be elements of the whole that was the decadent movement.<sup>35</sup>

These confusions are encapsulated in Ruthven’s comment that *Délivescences* is ‘both an homage to and a parody of French Symbolist poetry’. A distinctive response to the poems is Kenneth Cornell’s observation of

... the psychological state which is represented in them. The mingling of the sensuous and the religious, the search for odd words, the theme of lassitude, the correspondence between colours, sounds, and ideas, exaltation, and intoxication in dreams ...

He also argues that *Délivescences* generated a ‘closer definition of the word decadent’ since it ‘offered an example of a decadent writer’. This ostensibly contrasts with Ruthven’s view that the collection typifies ‘the indeterminacy of the avant-garde’, and also with Robert Mitchell’s contention that the ‘targets are so voluminous and diverse that we are not quite sure’ whom is being parodied, and further, there is no ‘clear determination’ of the Decadent style since it ‘presents its own problems of elusiveness’. However, Cornell is focused on contemporary conservative critics for whom Floupette’s persona was ‘a target because of his eccentricities of style’, whereas Ruthven’s perspective is historical; and Mitchell appears to contradict himself when he also argues that *Délivescences* has ‘misrepresentations’ of ‘decadence’ as though the image was clear enough to be misrepresented.<sup>36</sup>

Guy Michaud’s summary emphasises that the poems ‘*lancent*’ *définitivement le mot de “décadent”, et avec lui l’idée de délivescence* (‘“throw” definitively the word “decadent” and with him the idea of decline’).<sup>37</sup> Noël Richard is the principal historian of the hoax, with four works which have significant commentary, including contributions to his edited 1984 release of *Délivescences: an Introduction*, brief notes to each poem which concentrate on selected allusions, and commentary relating it to a previous satire of the Parnassians.<sup>38</sup> He argues that the satirical Floupette biography is of equal importance to the poetry and that the combined cleverness, attuned to the ‘triple meaning possible in every symbolist poem’, endorses *Les*

<sup>32</sup> Works falling within the relatively small field of SFL are reviewed with contextual relevance in Section One. Critical works discussed in this section are essentially those which do not consider the ‘place’ of the hoax text within its respective literature. Critical works which address, directly or implicitly, respective places in national literatures are considered in Sections 3.4, 4.6 and 5.5; there is some overlap in the deliberations of works considered in this section and the others.

<sup>33</sup> G. van Roosbroeck, ‘The Tragic Story of Adoré Floupette, or How One Becomes a Decadent’, pp. 37, 51.

<sup>34</sup> E. Starkie, *Baudelaire*, pp. 232-33.

<sup>35</sup> L. Marquèze-Pouey, *Le mouvement décadent en France*, p. 150. Original emphasis.

<sup>36</sup> Ruthven, p. 48; K. Cornell, *The Symbolist Movement*, pp. 36, 38; R. L. Mitchell, ‘The Delivescences [sic] of Decadence: Floupette’s Eclectic Target’, pp. 250-53.

<sup>37</sup> G. Michaud, *La révolution poétique*, p. 261.

<sup>38</sup> N. Richard: (1) *A l’aube du symbolisme: hydropathes, fumistes et décadents*; (2) *Le mouvement décadent: Dandys, Esthètes et Quintessent*; (3) *Profils symbolistes*; A. Floupette (2), *Les Délivescences: Poèmes décadents*, pp. 5-20, 50-85, 86-87 (N. Richard, ‘Introduction’, ‘Notes’, ‘Le Parnassiculet et Délivescences’).

*Déliquescences* as ‘a small masterpiece’.<sup>39</sup> Jacques Lètheve also places considerable emphasis on the biography with a 200-word extract from it reproduced in his three-page ‘*Adoré Floupette*’ section, the significance being that it is ‘*inspiré visiblement*’ (‘inspired visibly’) by Rimbaud’s ‘*Voyelles*’. The remainder of Lètheve’s discussion is taken up with reproductions of newspaper/periodical extracts regarding the collection without any reference to the poems, presumably because his focus is on press responses to Impressionism/Symbolism.<sup>40</sup> The references to ‘S/symbolist’ invoke the generally accepted view that the Decadents were the precursors of Symbolism, and it is a consistent theme in Floupette criticism that *Déliquescences* was the liminal connection between them. G. Delatremblais is particularly expansive in this regard with his claims that the influence of the collection: ‘*encore sur le succès du mouvement symboliste est indéniable*’ (‘was undeniably successful on the Symbolist movement’); ‘*surtout éveillèrent la curiosité du public*’ (‘aroused the public’s curiosity’); and ‘*l’obligèrent à distinguer l’art subtil et merveilleux de certains écrivains à travers l’incohérence des autres*’ (‘obliged the public to identify the writers of subtle and wonderful art through the inconsistency of others’).<sup>41</sup> Symbolism’s ‘Floupette heritage’ is discussed in Section 3.5.

Genette argues that *Déliquescences* contains good imitations of Verlaine and Laforgue (in separate passages he also identifies allusions to Mallarmé, Corbière and Rimbaud, effectively according them less significance), and that, other than some details which indicate their intent, ‘*tous ces poèmes pourraient être l’œuvre sérieuse*’ (‘all these poems could be serious work’), ‘*fruit d’une imitation inconsciente et involontaire*’ (‘the result of an unconscious and involuntary imitation’), ‘*d’un épigone appliqué*’ (‘of an applied imitator’), ‘*et certes un peu plus que moyennement doué*’ (‘and certainly a little more than moderately gifted’). He also believes the poems have ‘*savoureuse ambiguïté*’ (‘tasty ambiguity’).<sup>42</sup> The reference to Laforgue is curious since only three of his poems were published prior to *Déliquescences* (during the preceding two months).<sup>43</sup> (Whilst Genette refers to ‘imitations’, it can be argued that any similarities between Floupette and Laforgue are a resemblance of style rather than allusions.) With reference to Floupette, Pierre Jourde presents an intriguing argument: whilst parody gives the text ‘*de sens*’ (‘its sense’), ‘*une fermeté qu’il n’a pas*’ (‘firmness it otherwise does not have’), and ‘*l’assume dans son identité*’ (‘therefore its identity’), a ‘*vrai texte littéraire comporte un degré d’incertitude, d’interrogation sur lui-même*’ (‘true literary text includes a degree of uncertainty, questioning of itself’).<sup>44</sup> Jourde appears to be suggesting that parody creates a new work in its own right, of which its imitations are one (albeit primary) contributor. David Brooks undertakes close readings of three *Déliquescences* poems, their selection based on allusions to several pieces by Mallarmé whom he argues is the parodists’ ‘principal target’, and becomes engaged with these to the extent that they receive considerably more attention than those of Floupette. Regarding the latter’s ‘*Sonnet Libertin*’, Brooks argues that much of the poem is a ‘bold announcement of the intention of homo-erotic love’ and is

... actually well-fashioned, and one can imagine, if a reader were to come across it as part of a fortuitous selection from the collection, then that reader might, for the time being, take this poet seriously, or at least take him for a poet with serious, if misguided intentions.

With reference to Floupette’s ‘*Idylle Symbolique*’ Brooks states that it is a ‘well-crafted, and fairly intelligent sceptical response to a very difficult poem’ (Mallarmé’s ‘*Prose: pour des Esseintes*’).<sup>45</sup> Regarding his 2011 *Sons of Clovis: Ern Malley, Adoré Floupette and a secret history of Australian poetry*, Brooks indicates that his ‘principal aim’ is to show that the Floupette Hoax was the model for the Malley Hoax. Since this is, in effect, an argument regarding the legacy of Floupette with an ‘international’ component, it is discussed in Section Six.<sup>46</sup> His Floupette chapter in *Sons of Clovis* concentrates on events of the hoax and the reception of *Déliquescences* in contemporary Paris, which is a useful resource.

<sup>39</sup> Floupette (2), p. 20 (Richard, ‘Introduction’).

<sup>40</sup> J. Lètheve, *Impressionnistes et Symbolistes: devant la presse*, pp. 176-79.

<sup>41</sup> G. Delatremblais, ‘*Un chef-d’œuvre du pastiche: Les Déliquescences d’Adoré Floupette*’, un-numbered pages, websource.

<sup>42</sup> G. Genette (2), *Palimpsestes: La littérature au second degré*, p. 177-79.

<sup>43</sup> Cornell, *ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>44</sup> P. Jourde, ‘*Les Déliquescences D’adore Floupette ou l’imitation cree le modele*’, p. 19.

<sup>45</sup> D. Brooks (1), ‘Le Panier Fleuri: The Text and Texture of *Les Déliquescences* of Adoré Floupette’, un-numbered pages, websource.

<sup>46</sup> Brooks expresses this aim as ‘to establish that Ern Malley had a cousin ... a parody of the *Symboliste* poets (Mallarmé, Rimbaud, Verlaine, and others) written by Henri Beauclair and Gabriel Vicaire and published in 1885 under

## 2.2 The Spectra Hoax

*Spectra: A Book of Poetic Experiments* by Anne Knish (Arthur Davison Ficke) and Emanuel Morgan (Witter Bynner) was published in 1916. In contrast to the single-volume Floupette and Malley texts, *Spectra* involved several publications. Subsequent to *Spectra*'s release the perpetrators, in collaboration with a third poet-conspirator Elijah Hay (Marjorie Allen Seiffert), maintained the ruse for eighteen months by continuing to publish new 'Spectric' poems/articles in periodicals/anthologies, including a special edition of the journal *Others* devoted to Spectrism. Peter Schmidt describes *Spectra* as 'a quintessentially Dadaist literary hoax' and Curtis MacDougall argues:

Critics generally were so dumfounded [sic] that all a majority of them could do was to announce a new school of poetry, quote from the preface and cite an opus or two by way of illustration. The verse-reading public, however, was enthusiastic, and amateurs hastened to join the new school ...

MacDougall refers to this enthusiasm as 'the asinine vogue of hodgepodge masquerading as poetry', whilst Oscar Cargill seems less hostile when he declares that Imagism precipitated a 'rage for poetic novelty' which was 'happily burlesqued by the "Spectrist" movement ... "Spectra" were widely lauded before the critics discovered they had been gulled'.<sup>47</sup> Bob Perelman argues that the hoax was 'very elaborate', and that the poetry has 'powerful clarity and monosyllabic pressure', though his failure to explain the latter indicates a lack of clarity on his own part.<sup>48</sup> A positive recollection of *Spectra* was invoked in Australia when Malley became news three decades later. Clifford Gessler, reproducing (he states 'by memory') lines from the collection (inaccurately), contended: 'the hoaxers, in the effort to satirize experimenters, got themselves out of a rut and produced something new and interesting and valid'.<sup>49</sup> William Smith, the principal historian of the hoax, believes *Spectra* appeals as a 'period piece', the poems having a libertine sensibility:

... intimations of free love, and drunkenness, its suggestions of French heels, bobbed hair, the noise of trolley cars, and the dance of Isadora Duncan, its use of words like "cocktail," "cigarette" ...

His summary of the poems and movement is essentially one-dimensional: *Spectra* 'communicates a sense of fun' and the hoax is 'a tonic reminder that it is always both helpful and healthful to laugh'.<sup>50</sup> Karen Leick argues that *Spectra* was readily accepted since there was a keen market for new poetry:

This public interest in new poetry—including *Poetry* magazine, Imagism, *Tender Buttons* and the new "Spectrist" poets that Ficke and Bynner invented—shows how eager American readers were to learn about exciting literary developments, and how gullible.<sup>51</sup>

Audrey Russek suggests that *Spectra* is an example of 'pseudonymous performance—a seemingly artificial medium—to write authentic poetry' which has 'substantial merit if we consider the theoretical work of Gilles Deleuze on repetition and the virtual'.<sup>52</sup> Suzanne Churchill's Spectric appraisal, which arises from recent American critical interest regarding the role of 'little magazines' in Modernism's development, also refers to Deleuze and takes the argument further by contending that 'identity emerges through the kinds of dialogues and performances that little magazines enabled'. She discerns a pattern of sexual innuendo, passages which are 'comically erotic and sexually ambiguous', these being examples of 'literary transvesticism'. Rather than embracing the commonly-held view that the 'masks' of the hoaxers allowed them to 'express their true, their illicit, selves', Churchill argues the identities they created were 'modern selves to be made—and fabricated through the performative venues of little magazines'.<sup>53</sup> By extending the concept in this way Churchill

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the name of their own non-existent poet, Adoré Floupette': D. Brooks (2), *The Sons of Clovis: Ern Malley, Adoré Floupette and a secret history of Australian poetry*, pp. xiv-xv.

<sup>47</sup> P. Schmidt, *William Carlos Williams, The Arts, and Literary Tradition*, p. 180; C. MacDougall, *Hoaxes*, pp. 271-73; O. Cargill, *Intellectual America: Ideas on the March*, p. 254.

<sup>48</sup> B. Perelman (1), 'Bob Perelman Discusses the Spectra Hoax', un-numbered pages, websource.

<sup>49</sup> C. Gessler, 'U. S. Hoax', p. 58.

<sup>50</sup> W. J. Smith, *The Spectra Hoax*, pp. 63-70.

<sup>51</sup> K. Leick, *Gertrude Stein and the Making of an American Celebrity*, p. 112. *Tender Buttons*, an innovative prose-poem collection of Stein's published in 1914, was radical to the extent that *Others* editor Alfred Kreymborg labelled it a 'hoax' and some other contemporary critics described it as a 'stunt': *ibid.*, pp. 110, 106.

<sup>52</sup> A. Russek, ' "So Many Useful Women": The Pseudonymous Poetry of Marjorie Allen Seiffert', p. 78; G. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, pp. 3-5, 206-10.

<sup>53</sup> S. W. Churchill (1), 'The Lying Game: *Others* and the Great Spectra Hoax of 1917', pp. 24, 28, 37-39. 'Little

appears to be divorcing these ‘modern selves’ completely from the individuals as people and therefore gives her argument itself a sense of artifice. Her concept has merit if the newly-created modern self is expressed as a modified extension of the repressed inner person. As Deleuze argues, ‘the virtual must be redefined as strictly a part of the real object’.<sup>54</sup>

Christanne Miller contends that New York’s immigrant and Jewish communities were major initiators of ‘the new poetry’ and that *Others* was the representative organ for writers of this geo-ethnic grouping. Little magazines and Jewish writers were seen as a threat by conservative poets; the Spectrists, by having their poetry published in *Others*, were targeting that publication and its constituency. She argues the hoaxers were anti-Semitic on the basis that: Anne Knish had a biographical profile which, although there is no mention of her being Jewish, was in every other respect typical of the ‘new Jewish woman’ and identical to that of experimental New York Jewish poet Mina Loy; Ficke indicated he adopted ‘Knish’ from the name of a Jewish pastry; the strength of Loy’s association with *Others* meant she was for a time virtually synonymous with the magazine; Loy was ‘beautiful’ as Knish was ‘reputed’ to be; and the last poem in the Spectric *Others* refers to Jerusalem in derogatory terms.<sup>55</sup> Two of these contentions lack credibility. Firstly, the argument that Loy was strongly identified with *Others* is based on her having poems in the magazine’s first issue and also that the only edition to be devoted to the work of one writer was a Special focused on Loy. However, the Mina Loy Special appeared in April 1917, three months after the Spectric Special (five months after *Spectra*’s release) and the first issue of *Others*, containing three Loy poems, was eighteen months prior to publication of Spectrics (with no Loy *Others* contributions in between).<sup>56</sup> Secondly, Knish’s ‘beauty’ was not contained in her profile but a product of rumours, for which there does not appear to be information suggesting the Spectrists were responsible; however, there are records of *Others* editor Alfred Kreymborg initiating public and private statements to this effect.<sup>57</sup> Whilst collectively Miller’s other points are suggestive, her charge remains tenuous without further examples associated with *Spectra* or the lives of the Spectrists. Jeremy Braddock, whose key argument is that Modernism was fostered by a growth in anthologies, contends that conservative poets such as the Spectrists were focused on individual works and perceived ‘collecting’ (anthologies) as a threat. He also endorses Miller’s position and extends it on the basis of two points both connected to Ficke’s *Spectra* cover illustration, the latter’s description of it being:<sup>58</sup>

... I dared to depict, twice over, the ‘Loves of the Triangles’, in all their unashamed nakedness’.<sup>59</sup>

This refers to ‘The Loves of the Triangles’, a poem which plays on ‘erotic’ aspects of geometry published in the 1797-98 London *Anti-Jacobin* periodical as a satire of *The Loves of the Plants* by Erasmus Darwin.<sup>60</sup> The drawing depicts two triangles, one superimposed on the other. Since Ficke commented it was fortunate for the Spectrists that the ‘guardians of morality’ had not understood the drawing’s true implication, Braddock insists that it is a ‘pastiche of the Star of David’ (and therefore reveals anti-Semitism) — despite there being little similarity, in terms of shape and configuration, between the right-angled triangles of Ficke and the equilateral ones incorporated in the Star. Also, since one of the former’s triangles is black, Braddock contends it reflects racism directed at Afro-Americans. Braddock’s defence of his extrapolation from Ficke’s statement is:

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magazine’ is an approximate American equivalent of ‘literary journal’.

<sup>54</sup> Deleuze, *ibid.*, p. 209.

<sup>55</sup> C. Miller, ‘Tongues “loosened in the melting pot”’: The poets of *Others* [sic] and the Lower East Side’, pp. 467-69. Sources for: ‘Knish’: W. J. Smith, p. 17; the ‘Jerusalem’ lines: *Others*, 3.5 (Jan. 1917), p. 19 (A. Knish, E. Hay & E. Morgan, ‘Prism: On the Present State of Poetry’). If the cover photo-graphic of a recently-published work regarding Loy is a guide, she appears to conform to orthodox notions of female beauty: R. Potter & S. Hobson, eds., *The Salt Companion to Mina Loy*.

<sup>56</sup> *Others*, 1.1, July 1915, pp. 5-8 (M. Loy, ‘Love Poems’); *Others*, 3.6, April 1917, pp. 3-20 (M. Loy, ‘Songs to Johannes’).

<sup>57</sup> W. J. Smith, p. 15; W. Bynner (1), *Prose Pieces*, p. 317.

<sup>58</sup> J. Braddock, *Collecting as Modernist Practice*, pp. 65-68. The drawing can be viewed at: M. Simkin, ‘Spectric School of Poetry’, un-numbered pages, websource.

<sup>59</sup> Quotation: W. J. Smith, p. 19. ‘Twice over’ refers to the graphic being located on both the front and back covers.

<sup>60</sup> E.g.: ‘HYPERBOLA:—with subtlest art / The blue-eyed wanton plays her changeful part; / Quick as her *conjugated axes* move’: *Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin* (‘The Loves of the Triangles’), un-numbered pages, websource. Original emphasis.

Working from this admission, it is impossible to avoid the implication that's Ficke's superimposition of a black triangle over a white triangle was an abstract depiction not only of the figure of Judaism, but of interracial sex.<sup>61</sup>

Braddock provides no further examples to support this charge. Regarding the Spectrists' attitude toward anthologies, Braddock also supports his claim with one example — since their numbers were limited to three, describing themselves as a school 'represented a *reductio ad absurdum* of the notion of group formation'.<sup>62</sup> Whilst he may believe it is 'impossible' not to arrive at his 'racist' charge, given Braddock's presentation of two major arguments, each on the basis of one (questionable) example, it seems the Latinism could apply to his own approach.

### 2.3 The Ern Malley Hoax

*The Darkening Ecliptic* by Ern Malley (James McAuley and Harold Stewart) was first published (1944) in *Angry Penguins* (*AP*). The body of criticism focused on Malley is considerably greater than for either Floupette or Spectra. Another difference is that its topos is marked by partisan perspectives, although that aspect is today less extensive and intense than it was in the first decades after the hoax. There are also works essentially free of partisanship, an example being Michael Heyward's *The Ern Malley Affair*, the primary history of the hoax which, given its general readership purpose, discusses issues of a literary/critical nature in relatively brief terms.<sup>63</sup> Regarding the 'partisans', there are those (less numerous in the current climate) who, in support of the hoaxers' claims, argue that the collection's poetry is worthless, and that it was justifiable to transgressively publish *Darkening Ecliptic* to highlight the 'deficient' writings of Modernism. Those from the opposite 'camp' contend with any combination of 'anti-perpetrator' issues: the hoax was an inappropriate method of criticism and the use of tabloid media for its exposé subjected Modernist poetry to predictable ridicule sans measured discussion; it was not, as claimed by Malley's authors, a 'serious literary experiment';<sup>64</sup> hostility to *AP* editor Max Harris was a significant motivation; *The Darkening Ecliptic* is good poetry; and the hoax inhibited Australian Modernist literary development. Another issue for which the hoaxers were not responsible, but comes within the ambit of the pro-Modernist grouping, is that the conviction of Harris for distributing 'indecent' material (some Malley poems plus other pieces published in the journal) was a violation of civil liberties. Philip Mead suggests the hoax needs to be understood in this historical context of 'poetry wars' which were focused on conflicting aesthetic values:

... resilient disposition towards polar positions about surrealism, and poetic practice ... what the hoax did was to dramatise publicly the internal psychomachia of the participants. We can read the Ern Malley affair in terms of a pathology of culture suggested by Lacan, where the *unconscious is outside* ... the conflicts within and between these writers are articulated in the actual externalising ...

Since the contemporary dramas associated with the hoax included egoistical strutting on both sides of 'the fence', Mead's suggestion that these matters could be approached within a framework of 'external psychomachia' has potential.<sup>65</sup> Whilst he is critical of 'polar position' conflict, Mead nonetheless, in his examination of material regarding Harris's prosecution, argues as his central theme a muted partisan perspective which conveniently equates Modernist poetry with all verse: 'what was on trial ... was poetry'.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Braddock, *ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65. At least one Spectrist was not anti-black racist since there are numerous records of Bynner's friendships with, and support of, Afro-Americans, including his anti-racist poem 'Defeat' which was 'circulated among blacks' and 'reprinted in *The New Masses*': W. Bynner (2), *Selected Poems* (Farrar edn.), p. xxiv (J. Kraft, 'Biographical Introduction'). 'Defeat' reproduced: *ibid.*, p. 185. As demonstrated in Section Four, both Ficke and Bynner actively supported Asian cultures.

<sup>63</sup> M. Heyward (1), *The Ern Malley Affair*.

<sup>64</sup> J. McAuley & H. Stewart, 'Joint Statement and Explanation', p. 4.

<sup>65</sup> P. Mead (1), 'Cultural Pathology: What Ern Malley Means', pp. 84, 86. Original emphasis. Lacan appears to apply his 'unconscious is outside' concept only to clinical situations: J. Lacan: (1) *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, p. 131; (2) *Ecrits: a selection*, p. 183.

<sup>66</sup> P. Mead (2), *Networked Language: Culture & History in Australian Poetry*, p. 110 ff. Mead presents this 'poetry was on trial' argument within a theoretical framework, the basis of which is that new forms of poetry have always been, in terms of contemporary dominant culture, threatening to authorities and consequently triggered attempts to repress them or were at least viewed with considerable hostility. As his foundation for this Mead argues poetry has an essential ambiguity (as reflected in figurative language and similar techniques) of which authorities are necessarily suspicious. However, this argument is questionable. Whilst the historical perspective is valid regarding the 'arrival' of some innovative forms, there are numerous instances where distinctly new styles, with embedded poetic/ambiguous effects,

Two critics who approach the Malley Hoax from an essentially conservative position are Carl Harrison-Ford and Therese-Marie Meyer. Since the last line of Malley's text, 'I have split the infinitive', appeared in *AP* as 'I have split the infinite', Harrison-Ford contends that Harris, apparently realising that the original formulation was a 'devastating dig at the entire collection's pretensions', made this 'cosmic alteration'. However, since earlier in his article Harrison-Ford endorses the widely-held view that Harris's 'headlong enthusiasm seems at no stage to have been tempered by suspicion or caution', and also that the change could have been a typographical error — a regular occurrence in *AP* including the Malley edition — this argument is tenuous. Perhaps Harrison-Ford's inconsistencies explain why he finds Malley criticism ultimately too difficult: '*The Darkening Ecliptic* appears to have found its angle of repose as a *livre compose* by default' and the 'process by which the hoax became part of our folklore, "embedded in the national psyche", remains elusive'.<sup>67</sup> Meyer, whose focus is various transgressive personas adopted by authors in what she terms 'literary scandals', has a preliminary chapter on Ern Malley as a contrasting example of a literary hoax. Her analysis of 'Malley's fictional identity as reflected in his poems' (four *Darkening Ecliptic* poems plus the 'unfinished' fragment are considered) includes some refinements to the generally acknowledged interpretations of the hoax as both lure (poetry likely to entice editor Harris to publish it) and criticism (the hoax satire): 'Malley the Hoax being so intrusive, Malley the Poet had to be equally strong'. Meyer's conclusion is an (acknowledged) extrapolation from Harrison-Ford's assertion regarding Harris's supposed alteration; without further examples she extends this assumption to Harris making 'corrections and embellishments' which demonstrates that 'Malley's full personal identity is not the product of two co-authors, but of two authors and a creative editor'.<sup>68</sup>

Brian Lloyd's pro-Modernist thesis has as its starting point the indisputable but essentially unrecognised fact that *Darkening Ecliptic* has been 'the dominant analysis of *Angry Penguins* criticism'. He identifies generally unappreciated details of Modernist and Surrealist styles published in *AP* and the extent of serious contemporary criticism sympathetic to its endeavours. Lloyd's implied position that the journal should be accorded more significance in Australian literary history is an arguable case, although the degree of 'correction' he appears to suggest is questionable. He perceives an incongruity between *AP* being the hoaxers' primary target and the numerous allusions which are focused on 'Ezra Pound, Wallace Stevens, Marcel Duchamp, Cubism', and associated movements contemporary to the early twentieth century. These 'misreadings' therefore meant *AP* was

... made accountable for fifty years and more of artistic innovation, and affirm that the deductions drawn from the hoax about its relation to — and thus its criticisms of — *Angry Penguins* material relied on a relative ignorance of the terrain of twentieth century art.<sup>69</sup>

Ironically, it is Lloyd who has engaged in a misreading. *AP* was not the primary hoax target; it was the vehicle for a broad assault which, as previously indicated, encompassed Modernism in its entirety, and elements of Romanticism, Far Left ideologies and Freudian psychoanalysis. A moderate familiarity with the lives and works of James McAuley and Harold Stewart illustrates their substantive knowledge of twentieth-century literature and art. These matters are further considered in Section Five.

Standing apart from partisan debates is an essay by David Musgrave and Peter Kirkpatrick which considers 'a textual and contextual analysis of Malley's oeuvre'. They draw upon the 'minor literature' concept of Deleuze and Guattari which they refer to as performing a function that transgresses 'canonical or Major literature by refusing to play the rules'. This is a means to explore those spontaneous runs of writing which

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became established without noticeable impediments. It also lacks credibility to imply that 'mainstream' poetry was on trial (Banjo Paterson?).

<sup>67</sup> C. Harrison-Ford, 'The Well-Wrought Ern', pp. 90, 86, 98, 99. Original emphasis.

<sup>68</sup> T-M. Meyer, *Where Fiction Ends: Four Scandals of Literary Identity Construction*, pp. 5, 61, 62, 71, 65. Though lacking clarity, 'embellishments' apparently refers to Harris's promotions of Malley and his poetry; however, other than the editor's influence in the contemporary epitextual milieu, it is questionable that his pro-Malley commentary has contributed significantly to the ongoing Malley persona/legend. The three 'literary scandals' Meyer considers are: the Demidenko imposture; the mix of American-Vietnam-Veteran and Australian-Indigenous personas adopted by Serbian born Sreten Božić in his publication of several novels/'memoirs'; and Frederick Gove who had a long career as an acclaimed native-born Canadian novelist, posthumously exposed as having the real name of Felix Greve and being born in Germany.

<sup>69</sup> B. Lloyd (1), '*Angry Penguins*, 'Ern Malley' and Surrealism', pp. 1, 136. Lloyd does not provide examples for his unusual suggestion that Wallace Stevens is parodied in *Darkening Ecliptic*.



most authors at times experience but which become accentuated with transgressive modes. Deleuze and Guattari describe this phenomenon as ‘desire’ and conceptually equate the associated writing process with machine-like automation; they also theorise that transgression is essentially ‘feminine’. Musgrave and Kirkpatrick apply these concepts to an examination of several Malley poems and argue that the collaborative compositional process undertaken by McAuley and Stewart was a form of homoeroticism. They also make the compelling observation, previously unacknowledged in criticism, that there are misogynistic passages in Malley.<sup>70</sup> Another notion invoked is Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe’s concept of ‘passive mimesis’ whereby authors are infused with a ‘possession’ of their subject to a point that their mimesis is not active but effectively ‘absent from itself’ (subconscious) and therefore ‘uncontrolled and unmanageable’.<sup>71</sup> Musgrave and Kirkpatrick suggest that if *Darkening Ecliptic* is approached in this manner, it may be freed from the previous binaries of ‘good poetry/bad poetry, modernism versus conservative reaction, and authentic art versus hoax’. Another challenging view they argue (vis-à-vis the present-day critical paradigm) is that there was a ‘productive nature’ to the hoax’s exposure in the mass media since without it ‘Ern Malley would have been a storm in a Major Literature teacup’.<sup>72</sup>

Bill Ashcroft focuses on Peter Carey’s ‘brilliant reading of the Malley hoax’ in which the novelist explores the nature of transgressive texts and associated personas; both Carey’s and Ashcroft’s explorations are effectively concerned with the relationship between literature and ‘fakery’. Ashcroft considers the Malley hoax in regard to the ‘elusive interaction of truth and lying’ which is underpinned by the ‘question that impels’ his essay:

How do we come to know about a life? Is the historical record, or the memory, for that matter, of James McAuley’s life any less textual, in the end, than that of Ern Malley?

Essentially, just as chunks of memory get ‘lost’ or transformed over time, likewise do aspects of history. This leads Ashcroft to consider the sub-plot regarding Carey’s narrator who had, when she was a child, blotted out her mother’s suicide — due to memory distortion, that ‘hoaxer extraordinaire’. Ashcroft generally endorses Musgrave and Kirkpatrick’s approach since, in contrast to criticism’s preoccupation with the hoax events, they offer a concerted ‘analysis of Malley’s œuvre’; however, he argues this focus on the ‘psychological states of the authors’ ignores the role of the publisher in ‘producing a life’ through the ‘palpable and circulating text’. Ashcroft develops this by arguing that Malley’s textual life, the ‘fierce and nasal’ transgressive antipodean voice, takes dominance over English/European canonical literature and this represents a reversal of the authors’ cultural cringe; however, this is something from which ‘Australian culture is still ... trying to extricate itself’.<sup>73</sup>

Brooks undertakes substantive engagement with numerous Malley poems/passages which is spread over seven separately-themed chapters: these deliberations are not a readily effective close reading of the collection and some poems receive little attention.<sup>74</sup> Since his principal contention, that the Floupette Hoax is the model for the Malley Hoax, is effectively an argument regarding a legacy of the former, it is discussed in Section Six. In contrast to other Malley critics Cameron Lowe engages in consideration of paratext as a conceptual framework. He observes that ‘the hoax becomes a testing ground for conflicting notions of textual reception’. Since many have found the poems to be different to what the authors claim, this would seem to support Barthes’s argument that ‘the author’s intention is fundamentally irrelevant as far as the unity of meaning within a text is concerned’. Lowe argues that McAuley and Stewart were seeking a metaphysical unity not dissimilar to the ‘transcendental signifier’ which Derrida contended is unattainable because language constantly diffuses and progressively changes meaning in ways which authors cannot control. Examining some *Darkening Ecliptic* passages Lowe supports the view that Malley’s collection presents consistent themes. In the context of considering Genette’s approach, Lowe argues that ‘the poems have taken on a life of their own’ — energised by the personas of Ern Malley and his equally fictional sister Ethel —

<sup>70</sup> D. Musgrave & P. Kirkpatrick, ‘Friction as a Social Process: Reading Ern Malley’, pp. 131-34, 140-42; G. Deleuze & F. Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, pp. 23-27.

<sup>71</sup> P. Lacoue-Labarthe, *Typography: Mimesis, Philosophy, Politics*, p. 264. Lacoue-Labarthe’s concept is itself based on an eighteenth-century text, *Paradoxe sur le comédien*, the authorship of which has been questioned but usually attributed to Diderot.

<sup>72</sup> Musgrave & Kirkpatrick, *ibid.*, pp. 143, 136-37.

<sup>73</sup> P. Carey, *My Life as a Fake*; B. Ashcroft, ‘Reading Carey Reading Malley’, pp. 36, 28, 32, 36-37, 30-33, 35, 38-39, 29.

<sup>74</sup> Brooks (2), pp. 52-173.

which he defines as ‘paratext’. In ‘this sense the role of the author is far more significant than Barthes’s interpretation allowed’; regarding Malley, it is a fictional author ‘who’ provides this significance. Lowe’s essential argument is apposite. However, his conclusion presents a substantial extension: ‘One of Malley’s legacies may well be his enduring role as a paratext’.<sup>75</sup> Whilst there would be no value in a gratuitous commitment to Genette’s schema, the case-study examinations which follow illustrate that it has considerable utility; rather than ‘paratext’ being engulfed by the ‘extra life’ phenomenon to which Lowe refers, it is more efficacious to consider the energised personas as major elements of the Malley mythology.

## **2.4 Summary of Case Study Criticism**

The most significant theme of case-study criticism is that author personas constructed for the respective hoaxes provided ‘masks’ whereby the perpetrators, in contrast to their usual writing identities, expressed themselves in creatively different ways. A number of critics consider this phenomenon in terms of the psychological perspectives developed by Deleuze or collectively by Deleuze and Guattari. Whilst these approaches can enrich textual appreciation (illustrated by Musgrave and Kirkpatrick with their identification of Malley’s misogyny) they are, on their own, as Ashcroft observes, removed from major developments in the socio-cultural context. With the exception of Ruthven, case study critics do not cast their frameworks within terms of ‘fake literatures’ and references to scholars and scholarship in the field are few. The varieties of approach generally do not adopt close readings; a few critics engage in scrutiny of several poems from the hoax text on which they are focused but do not apply the method to the text as a whole; with regard to *The Darkening Ecliptic*, Brooks considers a substantial proportion of the text but his dispersed approach through 120 pages focused on his theme to establish that the Floupette Hoax was the model for the Malley Hoax, does not readily effect a close reading of the collection. Another aspect is terminological inconsistencies: with respect to Floupette, most critics refer to it as a ‘hoax’, whilst Brooks states it is ‘a parody, rather than a hoax’, and Philip Stephan declares it is ‘not a parody but a joke’; regarding the case studies generally there are other variations.<sup>76</sup> This underlines the need for the definitional distinction of ‘criticism hoax’ developed in Section 1.2.3.

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<sup>75</sup> C. Lowe, ‘Text and Paratext: Ern Malley and the Function of the ‘Author’’, un-numbered pages, webservice.

<sup>76</sup> D. Brooks (3), ‘Ern Malley and *Les Délivrescences D’adoré Floupette*’, p. 78; P. Stephan, *Paul Verlaine and the decadence 1882-90*, p. 94.

## Section Three

### FLOUPETTE CASE STUDY

#### **3.1 Preliminary: the French *Fin de siècle***

The socio-cultural context which shaped the *Fin de siècle*, and also *Les Déliquescences: Poèmes decadents*, is the dislocation caused by rapid changes such as technological advances, industrio-urbanisation and the destabilisation of Christianity by Darwinian concepts of evolution. The French defeat in the 1870–71 Franco-Prussian War continued to weigh heavily on the community and, for many intellectuals and creative writers, even more so the repression of the 1871 Paris Commune in which considerable numbers had participated. A significant proportion of writers felt devalued by the new emphasis on material pursuits, accentuated by censorship charges laid against Baudelaire, Flaubert and the Goncourt Brothers. Artistic freedom was sought by turning away from Hugo’s popular social romanticism and from society in general, encapsulated in Flaubert’s comment that he ‘tried to live in an ivory tower’.<sup>77</sup> Features that were to become hallmarks of Modernism emerged: breaking with writing conventions of unity and hierarchy (including the rigorous prosodic rules of the also popular Parnassians); disregard for religious, moral and mimetic expectations; macabre subject matter; and above all, under the inspiration of Baudelaire’s transcendentalist aesthetics, the pursuit of art for its own sake. The pessimistic philosophy of Schopenhauer gained increasing currency and there was an inclination to perceive parallels with the Roman Empire decline, leading to a fashion of Decadence adopted by numerous poets in the 1880s. Following the 1884 success of both *Les poètes maudits* (Verlaine’s portraits of Mallarmé, Rimbaud and Corbière published by Léon Vanier) and Huysmans’s *À Rebours* (in which protagonist des Esseintes praises the poetry of Mallarmé, Verlaine and Corbière), a vogue for Decadent poetry was preeminent in avant garde circles, and a significant proportion of the material in the by now numerous periodicals open to experimental writing was of a Decadent sensibility.<sup>78</sup> These reactions engendered their own reaction in the form of Floupette’s satirical collection.

#### **3.2 Peritext, Epitext and the Epitextual Milieu: First and Second Editions**

including Community Responses to the First Edition

##### Packaging Peritext

*Déliquescences* was attributed to Adoré Floupette (Henri Beauclair and Gabriel Vicaire). Its first and second editions were published respectively on 2 May and 20 June 1885. Common to both were place of publication (Byzance), publisher Lion Vanné, a *Liminaire* (foreword) and the poems; significant differences were that ten copies of the first edition’s 110 printrun bore the actual authors’ names, whilst the second edition included a Floupette biography.<sup>79</sup> Byzance (Byzantium) is a sendup of the Decadents’ late-Roman preoccupations, whilst Lion Vanné has numerous implications. It extends the parody since its primary French meaning is ‘exhausted lion’ (toothless tiger). ‘Vanné’ informally describes making fun of someone, whilst its formal meanings as a feminine noun include sluice, a reminder of the collection’s *déliquescence* (liquefaction) title. Further layers are: a weak lion considered as feminine which links to the feminine sluice; connection of these to the general satire, since effeminacy was often portrayed as part of the Decadents’ image; and links to the view emphasised by des Esseintes (himself a dandy) that the Roman decline was a form of *déliquescence*. Lion Vanné also appears to be an allusion to Léon Vanier who was publisher of the second edition (the first being released by the publishers of the journal *Lutèce*).<sup>80</sup> The effete associations are

<sup>77</sup> G. Flaubert, *The Letters of Gustave Flaubert 1857-1880*, vol. 2, p. 200.

<sup>78</sup> P. Verlaine (1), ed., *Les poètes maudits: Tristan Corbière, Arthur Rimbaud, Stéphane Mallarmé* (first edition, did not include additional portraits of the better-known 1988 edition); J-K. Huysmans (1), *À Rebours*. Poets considered Decadent in the contemporary context included Verlaine, Rimbaud, Mallarmé, Jean Moréas, Laurent Tailhade, Charles Vignier and the by then deceased Corbière. They are now generally considered Symbolist. Decadent traits were evident in other significant poets and there were numerous low profile practitioners.

<sup>79</sup> Richard (3), p. 191.

<sup>80</sup> An undated letter by Vicaire to Beauclair (written in the latter half of May 1885) states the first edition was published by *Lutèce* and a second is planned, to be produced by Léon Vanier; extract reproduced: Floupette (2), pp. 5-7 (Richard, ‘Introduction’). It is also indicated, within the first edition, that it was printed for Adoré Floupette on *Lutèce* presses by Léon Epinette (co-editor Léo Trézenik): Richard (1), p. 174. Critics generally believe Lion Vanné to be an allusion to Vanier and assume therefore both editions were published by him. Vanier participated in the *Lutèce* hub of the ‘jokey’ epitextual milieu so it is possible that, although not the first edition publisher, the pun on his name was one of many

amplified by ‘Adoré Floupette’ which loosely translates as ‘Lovey-Dove Fluffyfart’.<sup>81</sup> The acceptance by both Floupette publishers of the various ‘transgressive’ markers — the poet’s pseudonym and persona (the second edition biography), publication place and ‘official’ publisher name — indicates they were party to the conspiracy. An advertisement by Vanier on *Déliquescences*’s rear cover included books by the satirised (Verlaine, Moréas, Corbière) as well as those by the satirists (Vicaire, Beauclair). This seems to endorse Cornell’s view that it is unlikely the parody was maliciously intended — if one wished to seriously attack presumably one would not be party to promotion of the targeted authors — and this is reinforced by suggestions that there are lines in Floupette’s ‘*Les Enervés de Jumièges*’ which allude to Vicaire’s 1884 *Emaux bressans* (published by Vanier).<sup>82</sup> This mingling of the parodists and the parodied illustrates the intimacy of the collection’s epitextual milieu.

### Prior Epitext

The unfolding epitext identifies significant items which contribute to the nature and publication of *Déliquescences* and also provide further indications of the fluid boundaries between participants with different literary outlooks. Following Genette’s definition, ‘prior epitext’ refers to a manuscript’s contact/promotion with society before its publication. In this period would-be transgressive satirists interact with their forthcoming publication’s epitextual milieu, the intention being to maximise the impact of their ruse, albeit hoaxes are not necessarily one plan carried through without change. Before Floupette’s book was released, the 1 February *Lutèce* included two *Déliquescences* poems attributed not to Floupette but Étienne Arsenal, an ironic allusion to Mallarmé (whose first name was Étienne, the better-known Stéphane being a pseudonym) since with a good arsenal one is never *mal armé* (poorly armed).<sup>83</sup> Vicaire, in a May 1885 letter to Beauclair (subsequent to the first edition’s release), indicates they intended to satirise Mallarmé, Verlaine, Corbière, Laurent Tailhade and Charles Vignier, the hoaxers being familiar with the work of the latter two (essentially unpublished) through performances in cafés frequented by poets. A manuscript of Beauclair’s indicates another target was Moréas.<sup>84</sup> Vicaire also provides details of Decadent traits which *Déliquescences* was targeting:

We must point out, in Floupette’s work, the affected irritation, the pretension to Satanism, even sadism, the search for the exquisite in the dirty, the mistrust of good moral and literary health, the bawdy mysticism, the pathos, the love of the neologism, etc. ...<sup>85</sup>

‘Point out’ means through satire rather than directly. Perhaps at the time of the 1 February *Lutèce* the hoaxers’ intention was magazine sendups of Mallarmé and other Decadents. The Floupette name developed during the following two months. *Lutèce* published in this period three more of the poems under the heading ‘*Déliquescences*’ attributed to ‘J. M. J. Floupette’, the date of this publication being unclear: Richard indicates these poems were in the 19 April edition whereas Stephan states it was the 19 February issue (also adopted by other critics); however, since it seems unlikely that these substantive changes would have developed within the short timeframe of eighteen days, 19 April seems apposite and is therefore applied in this case study.<sup>86</sup> Both Stephan and Cornell believe the ruse began as a *Lutèce* office joke which is supported by Beauclair having worked there as a journalist and the fact that both he and Vicaire were contributors to the journal.<sup>87</sup> Vanier, although a separate publisher, engaged the journal’s facilities to print his books and, in addition to his previously mentioned release of individual collections by the satirised and the satirists, had recently published one by *Lutèce* co-editor Léo Trézenik.<sup>88</sup> Prior to Vanier publishing the *poètes maudits*

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reasons for choosing Lion Vanné.

<sup>81</sup> Mitchell, *ibid.*, p. 251.

<sup>82</sup> Cornell, p. 38; Floupette (2), p. 51 (Richard, ‘Notes’).

<sup>83</sup> Richard (3), p. 192. The two poems in the 1 Feb. *Lutèce* both had as a subtitle (*épigraphe*) ‘*Pour les Symboliques*’. Their *Déliquescences* versions omitted this and the title of one was also changed. *Lutèce* is another indicator of the fashion for antiquity since it is the French variation of ‘Lutetia parisorium’, the Roman town that became Paris.

<sup>84</sup> Floupette (2), p. 73 (Richard, ‘Notes’). At this stage a few Tailhade poems had appeared in journals whilst Vignier was yet to be published.

<sup>85</sup> Reproduction of a different extract from the above letter (n. 80): Richard (1), p. 229. On a different occasion Vicaire made the brief assertion that *Déliquescences* was ‘just a hoax, but I believe it to be entertaining’: Floupette (2), p. 17 (Richard, ‘Introduction’).

<sup>86</sup> Richard (1), p. 180; Stephan, *ibid.*, p. 88.

<sup>87</sup> Stephan, p. 89; Cornell, p. 35; Richard (1), p. 176.

<sup>88</sup> Stephan, pp. 85, 35.

profiles as a book they were released via *Lutèce* instalments during 1883–84.<sup>89</sup> Another indicator of parody being integral to this coterie is that during 1885 the *Lutèce* editors published in the journal a series of profiles making fun of their own contributors.<sup>90</sup> *Lutèce* was therefore the hub of the epitextual milieu, other focal points being Vanier's bookshop, where he sold his own publications and remaining stock of previous books by poets (published elsewhere) such as Verlaine, and left-bank café *François 1<sup>st</sup>* where many of these poets congregated (*Le Panier Fleuri* in the second edition Floupette biography).<sup>91</sup> *Déliquescences* evolved within this mingling of repartee and parody, the friends for whom ten copies bore Vicaire's and Beauclair's names being insiders of this milieu.

### First Edition Prefatory Peritext

The *Liminaire* has as an epigraph Verlaine's 'Et tout le reste est littérature' ('And all the rest is literature') taken from his poem 'Art Poétique' which attacks eloquence and argues that rhyme should be restrained in favour of uneven rhythm and a formal incorrectness of expression. 'Et tout le reste est littérature' is a dismissive (last line) satire aimed at the conventional poetry of which Verlaine disapproves.<sup>92</sup> Since *Déliquescences* parodies Verlaine, ostensibly this epigraph could be seen as metaparody (parody of parody), in which case attendant questions are raised.<sup>93</sup> How is the reader to decide if the authors are endorsing Verlaine's satire or satirising it? If the former, why would they risk confusing their criticism of a target by sometimes approving of it? If they wish to satirise the satire how is that done without it seeming another example of the primary parody? These questions are based, however, on the notion of there being a distinct boundary between a text which is the target of satire and the text satirising it. Whilst that is often the case there are exceptions (for example, homage-style parodies), and it does not apply to *Déliquescences* since the epitextual milieu's fluid boundaries between the parodied and the parodists are reflected in the text. In an environment infused with the energy of repartee there were times when the jousting was more important in itself than differences of viewpoint. Solipsism is a feature of the Decadents' image (which many of them appear to have encouraged for reasons of self-parody and also for confronting dominant social values) and is a key target of the *Liminaire*:

#### **website French edition<sup>94</sup>**

En une mer, tendrement folle, alliciante et berceuse combien ! de menues exquisités s'irradie et s'irise la fantaisie du present Aède. Libre à la plèbe littéraire, adoratrice du banal *déjà vu*, de nazilloter à loisir son grossier ron-ron.

#### **Halligan translation<sup>95</sup>**

Upon a sea so sweetly deranged, and oh, so caressing and rocking, the dreams of this present bard are illuminated and rainbowed with dainty exquisiteness! It's all very well for the literary public, idolaters of the already seen, to nazalise at leisure their gross purr.

It also contains *gouffre* (*abîme*/abyss), a conscious theme in Baudelaire's poetry which makes appearances in Verlaine, and alludes to Edgar Allan Poe's 'tintinnabulation' and thereby the Decadent grouping's reverence for him.<sup>96</sup> The targeted poets' penchant for exotic fragrances is the focus of the *Liminaire*'s last lines and continues as a trope in Floupette's poetry:

Et maintenant, angoissé lecteur, voici s'ouvrir la maison de miséricorde, le refuge dernier, la basilique parfumée d'ylang-ylang et d'opoponax, le mauvais lieu saturé d'encens.

And now, troubled reader, here opens the house of mercy, the last refuge, the basilica perfumed with ylang-ylang and apoponax [sic], the evil, incense-saturated place.

Avance, frère ; fais tes dévotions.

Advance, brother: pay your respects.

<sup>89</sup> Verlaine (1), frontispiece (R. Pierrot, 'Présentation').

<sup>90</sup> Cornell, p. 37. A number of these articles are listed in Richard (1), pp. 319-20.

<sup>91</sup> Stephan, p. 58; Richard (1), pp. 206, 270.

<sup>92</sup> P. Verlaine (2), *Œuvres Poétiques Complètes*, p. 207 ('Art Poétique'). The *Liminaire* reflects numerous aspects of Vicaire's writings and life: Floupette (2), pp. 9-10 (Richard, 'Introduction').

<sup>93</sup> In recent decades metaparody has become a recognised term: G. S. Morson, 'Parody, History and Metaparody', pp. 63-86; B. T. Holl, 'Gogol's Captain Kopeikin and Cervantes' Captive Captain: A Case of Metaparody', pp. 681-691.

<sup>94</sup> Floupette (1). First column quotations are from this website edition. Emphases are original.

<sup>95</sup> A. Floupette (3), *Les Déliquescences of Adoré Floupette*, trans. G. Halligan, reproduced in Brooks (2), pp. 263-301. Second column quotations are from this. Emphases are original.

<sup>96</sup> E. A. Poe (2), *Great Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe*, p. 389 ('The Bells'). 'Decadent grouping' refers to the Decadents and precursor Baudelaire.

*Déliquescentes*'s satire is not limited to the Decadent grouping; given des Esseintes's predilection for opopanax and other unconventional perfumes it is likely he is one of the targets of the above passage and there are similar instances subsequently discussed.<sup>97</sup> Théodore Hannon's popular 1879 *Rimes de Joie* could also be enveloped in the satire since it includes poems titled 'Opopanax', 'Parfums aimés' and has a preface by Huysmans in which he argues the collection has Baudelairean influences.<sup>98</sup>

### Evolving Epitext: From the First Edition to the Second Edition

*Déliquescentes*'s first edition triggered, according to Brooks, a 'minor flurry in the French world of letters', whilst Stephan proclaims it caused a furore and 'attracted the attention of the general public and of the *grande presse*'. Van Roosbroeck declares 'the newspapers were jubilant'; Richard believes it provoked much laughter; whilst Joseph Chiari asserts it 'roused violent criticism'. It was particularly successful for a small poetry publication of the time and sold out in a few days.<sup>99</sup> This attention revealed a market potential greater than the authors anticipated, stimulating plans for a second edition. The customised pseudonym was particularly effective. Irrespective of comprehension levels regarding the multi-layered spoof contained in *Déliquescentes*'s combined peritextual items, an author's name which had literal (and figural) meanings of 'lovey' and 'fart' stimulated intrigue for readers and reviewers, compounded by Beauclair's and Vicaire's names being on ten copies and thereby facilitating rumours that Floupette was not one but two poets. To maintain momentum whilst retaining an element of intrigue, the perpetrators' next foray occurred in June via an anonymous notice in *Revue moderniste* in which they quoted from two Floupette poems and added, 'Two excellent poets mingling their Bressan and Norman ironies have engendered the young and exquisite Adoré Floupette'.<sup>100</sup>

The hoaxers initially envisaged their market to be the intimate Decadent/*Lutèce* coterie. There is little available regarding contemporary interpretations of *Déliquescentes*'s first edition by those in the epitextual milieu. However, the purpose of satirising the Decadents was generally understood, this being reflected in the rapid sell-out prior to the first appearance of reviews (two weeks after publication); it was those 'in the know' who had both the incentive, facilitated by the actual authors' names on ten copies, and regular access centres (*Lutèce* office and Vanier's bookshop), to acquire copies before most others knew about it. Richard records ten *Déliquescentes* reviews/articles published between the two editions, a significant number for a seven week period regarding a booklet by an unknown author with a 110 copy circulation.<sup>101</sup> The intrigue sparked by reviews was compounded by a scarcity of copies which energised sales of the second edition, further reviews and flow-on debates in the press over several months. A sufficient proportion of mainstream readerships had developed curiosity regarding Floupette's identity and the Decadent fashion, and were keen to acquire a copy of this volume that many were talking about but few had been able to obtain. A review by Mermeix (Gabriel d'Encre) seems to consider the collection non-satirically by claiming Floupette is a poet working for a left-bank magazine who produces 'the incomprehensible and the absurd' and is representative of the '*pétardiens*' ('literary hotheads') whom he describes with considerable sarcasm, reflecting the pride the French generally take in their language:

... writers who have taken pity upon the poverty of the French language. To bring an end to this misery, these compassionate souls have undertaken to introduce to the dictionary and the syntax new words and un-heard-of combinations.

Mermeix acknowledges Floupette's name is absurd but considers this to be intentional, since for that presumed benefit poets were often prepared to look ridiculous. Although there was no Lion Vanné publisher

<sup>97</sup> Numerous critics consider *À Rebours* is itself a satire of Decadence. Conversely, a few contend, including author Huysmans himself, it is a sympathetic portrait of protagonist des Esseintes: J-K. Huysmans (2), *Against the Grain*, pp. v-xxxii, xxxiii-xlix (H. Ellis, 'Introduction', J-K. Huysmans, 'Preface: Written Twenty Years After the Novel'). If it is considered a parody then Floupette's satire of the novel is technically metaparody; however, rather than metaparody being intended, it is likely that allusions to Huysmans reflect the less-than-discriminate satirical repartee of the epitextual milieu.

<sup>98</sup> T. Hannon, *Rimes de Joie*, pp. 47, 81, v ('Opopanax', 'Parfums aimés', J-K. Huysmans, 'Préface'). 'Opopanax' and 'opopanax' appear to be recognised spellings whilst there does not seem to be other records of Halligan's 'apopanax'.

<sup>99</sup> Brooks (3), *ibid.*, p. 78; Stephan, p. 88; van Roosbroeck, *ibid.*, p. 39; Richard (3), p. 190; J. Chiari, *Symbolisme from Poe to Mallarmé: The Growth of a Myth*, p. 60.

<sup>100</sup> Quotation: Brooks (2), p. 186. Vicaire was a Bressan, Beauclair a Norman.

<sup>101</sup> Richard (1), pp. 319-20.

he conjectures this is the poet's ironic reference to himself as an exhausted lion. It seems that for Mermeix the collection, rather than being a Decadent sendup, represented a threat to established literary and linguistic values. However, despite this emphasis, Mermeix speculates that perhaps 'the joker doubles as a parodist, and the *Déliquescences* are for the impressionists what the *Parnassiculet* was for the parnassians?' [sic] The latter is what these poems represent for concurrent reviewer Paul Arène, an experienced satirist as co-editor of *Le Parnassiculet contemporain*, who pronounces them to be parody and hints he has inside information regarding Floupette's identity as he mischievously asks: 'What is this Adoré Floupette? We want to know his origins, his birth, the figure he cuts ... Unfortunately the two anonymous editors have neglected to write his biography'.<sup>102</sup>

### Second Edition Prefatory Peritext

Encouraged by the early success the second print run was increased to 1,550 and all of these were sold within two weeks.<sup>103</sup> Inclusion of 'The Life of Adoré Floupette' (attributed to Marius Tabora, appended 'Apothecary second class') obligingly met Arène's request, and this is another matter explained in the above-quoted letter.<sup>104</sup> Vicairé suggests to Beauclair that he use his connection with Arène to request the latter write a Floupette biography for the new edition.<sup>105</sup> The 'Life' expands Floupette's pseudonym to a persona and, being longer than the total poetry, its excess is immediately evident. After some palpably insincere modesty declaiming his worthiness, Tabora asserts that Floupette despises the public profoundly. Self-styled fashionable poets are often dilettantes prone to fads, and we learn that Floupette's poetic progress is a string of crazes. Racine had been an early favourite to whom Floupette and his small coterie of café poets looked for their heritage. But when Tabora invokes this master Floupette declares Racine is a rascal and admonishes Tabora for not being aware that the true tradition is '*Lamartine ... Victor Hugo et Musset et de Vigny et Brizeux*'. Hence, relates Tabora, they devoted themselves to studying the Romantics. He also provides a sample of Floupette's poetry:

Je voudrais être un gaga  
Et que mon coeur naviguât  
Sur la fleur du seringá.

I would love to be a gaga  
With my heart adrift  
On the syringa flower.

When a colleague questions his doggerel, Floupette replies that Bleucoton would not hesitate to write similarly and Tabora agrees the latter is an indisputable authority. Verlaine's name in French means green (*vert*) wool (*laine*), and *bleucoton* is thus a satirical allusion. The Romantics were then dismissed, and Floupette embarked on a pilgrimage to the countryside where he raised to his lips rural pipes and wore peasants' straw-filled *sabots* (clogs). Further fads include a nod to Parnassianism, Zola's Naturalism, and a grand plan to set in triolets the entire philosophy of Schopenhauer — the latter facilitates humour since, rather than being focused on an attribute typical of dilettantes (and thereby, despite the satire, invoking a sensibility of having heard it before), it is inventive fun ('deep and meaningful pronouncements' in a string of poetic snippets) relating to a specific obsession of the targets. Some critics may be correct in their view that the following targets Greek-born Moréas (I. A. Papadiamantopoulos), albeit he was apparently 'slight of build':<sup>106</sup>

<sup>102</sup> Quotations: Brooks (2), pp. 183-85. Richard indicates there are also allusions to *Le Parnassiculet contemporain*, published in two editions 1866 and 1872, which satirised the first and second editions of the Parnassians anthology *Le Parnasse contemporain*, 1866 and 1871: Floupette (2), p. 86-87 (Richard, 'Le Parnassiculet et Déliquescences'); he makes no references to poems in this brief essay. (A third edition of *Le Parnasse contemporain* was released in 1876).

<sup>103</sup> Stephan, p. 89. There were 1,500 standard copies and 50 printed on luxury paper at a higher price: Richard (1), p. 188.

<sup>104</sup> Floupette (1), (M. Tabora, 'The Life of Adoré Floupette'). Tabora quotations and paraphrasings are from this website edition. This same biography was published six days earlier in *Lutèce*: Stephan, p. 89. The first release of the 'Life' was therefore prior to its inclusion in *Déliquescences*.

<sup>105</sup> Whatever happened regarding the proposal that Arène write the biography, Vicairé stated soon after in a letter to poet/novelist François Coppée that he himself had written it (he refers to it as 'the preface', this description being regularly printed in *Déliquescences* in conjunction with 'The Life of Adoré Floupette'): Richard (3), p. 200. In a letter to *Lutèce* Beauclair also stated that Vicairé wrote the 'Life'; Richard believes this biography contains allusions to both Arène's introductory satire of the Parnassians in *Parnassiculet contemporain* and his novel *Jean-des-Figues*, and also to novelist Joseph Caraguel ('Caraboul'): Floupette (2), pp. 10-16 (N. Richard, 'Introduction'); Richard (3), p.192.

<sup>106</sup> J. D. Butler, *Jean Moréas: A Critique of his Poetry and Philosophy*, p. 21.

“Pourtant, s'écria Carapatidès, un grand gaillard taillé en hercule, avec des épaules trapues, il faut rendre à la décadence romaine cette justice qu'elle a bien compris l'amour. A force d'inventions perverses et d'imaginations sataniques, elle est arrivée à le rendre tout à fait piquant.”<sup>107</sup>

‘On the other hand,’ cried out Carapatidès, a strapping fellow with the figure of Hercules and a head fixed low between vast shoulders, ‘You have to do this much justice to Roman decadence, they really did understand love. With their perverted inventions and satanic imaginations, they managed to make it quite titillating.’

It is not surprising that Baudelaire’s *Les Fleurs du mal* is targeted: ‘*L’amour est une fleur de maléfice qui croît sur les tombes, une fleur lourde, aux parfums troublants*’ (‘Love is a flower with an evil spell which grows on tombs, a heavy flower, in disturbing perfumes’). In addition to the evil flowers and perfume gibes, this is a likely reference to the frequency of tombs in Baudelaire’s work — and they are not uncommon in Mallarmé. Overwhelmed by all the changes, Tabora finally asks if there is anything left, and Floupette declares: ‘*Il reste le Symbole*’, a sendup of Baudelaire’s symbolism and manifestations of it in the Decadents. The satirists pursue the connection in this targeting of Mallarmé and Verlaine:

... grands initiateurs de la poésie de l'avenir, MM. Étienne Arsenal et Bleucoton. Comme on allait se mettre à table, on l'invita à partager la côtelette symbolique, ce à quoi il accéda de la meilleure grâce du monde, et, au dessert, il voulut bien nous réciter une pièce diantrement impressionnante, la *Mort de la Pénultième*. Elle était morte, bien morte, absolument morte, la désespérée Pénultième.

... the two great originators of the poetry of the future, MM. Étienne Arsenal and Bleucoton. As we were about to sit down to lunch, we invited him [a visitor] to share the symbolic cutlet, to which he acquiesced with the greatest good grace; and at dessert he agreed to recite us a devilishly impressive piece entitled ‘The Death of the Penultimate’. She was dead, good and dead, absolutely dead, the hopeless Penultimate.

It is likely that readers informed of Mallarmé’s work will have a good chuckle at his ‘penultimate’ being declared absolutely dead (an allusion to the line ‘*La Pénultième est morte*’ in his notoriously opaque ‘*Le Démon de l’Analogie*’, the interpretation of which has generated extensive deliberations by numerous scholars).<sup>108</sup>

### 3.3 *Les Délivrescences*: Close Reading and Associated Matters

With reference to *Délivrescences* Mitchell has recognised a need for close examination of the text.<sup>109</sup> The collection consists of 15 poems, one of which is divided into four parts. The first poem’s title ‘*Les Enervés de Jumièges*’ invokes the question as to what *enervés* means in the context of Jumièges, a town in northern France known for its medieval abbey.<sup>110</sup> The issue is confused by Stanley Chapman’s translation adopting ‘enervated’, the ‘drained energy’ of this English word contrasting with the ‘overstimulated’ (including sexual or irritated) primary sense of the French *enervés* and also with less common usages such as ‘fret’, ‘peeve’ and ‘vile’.<sup>111</sup> This is compounded by Graeme Halligan translating the title as ‘The Sons of Clovis’ which bears no relation to the textual French.<sup>112</sup> However, the latter is reproduced in Brooks’s *Sons of Clovis* which, combined with web searches, reveals an obscure legend regarding heirs to the medieval French throne, the sons of Clovis II, whose hamstrings were severed (or leg veins or Achilles tendons, versions vary) as punishment for rebellious attitudes. They were set adrift on the Seine aboard a rudderless craft without provisions but survived to become monks at Jumièges Abbey. Five years before *Délivrescences*’s release a Paris exhibition included an Evariste Luminais painting *Les enervés de Jumièges* depicting two young men lying with bandaged legs on a raft, this attracting considerable attention from critics and the public; Floupette’s nine-stanza poem is an ekphrastic response.<sup>113</sup> Despite different emphases, the several meanings

<sup>107</sup> This passage has no internal quotation marks.

<sup>108</sup> S. Mallarmé, *Collected Poems*, p. 93 (‘*Le Démon de l’Analogie*’).

<sup>109</sup> Mitchell, p. 252.

<sup>110</sup> Diacritical marks for ‘enervés’ generally vary from one French text to another, *énervés* and *énerves* also occur.

<sup>111</sup> A. Floupette (4), *The Delivrescences* [sic] of Adoré Floupette, trans. S. Chapman, p. 45. (Title page indicates it was published in ‘Londinium’.)

<sup>112</sup> Floupette (2), p. 282.

<sup>113</sup> Brooks (2), pp. 4-7. Chapman’s ‘enervated’ makes sense as representing the emaciated physical condition of the brothers. This removes the satiric potential for which *enervés* was likely to have been chosen. Both translators have avoided the *enervés* incongruity by the questionable introduction of words, quite different to the French, which make it easier for English readers to understand whilst maintaining a connection of some relevance; Halligan’s seems aimed to bolster Brooks’s argument – reinforced by the fact that Brooks’s investigations reveal a ‘copy’ (by Luminais) of the painting held by the Art Gallery of New South Wales is the original (retitled, apparently by the gallery, ‘Sons of Clovis



of *enervés* are collectively convincing as a sendup regarding the ill-health/sloth aspect of the Decadent persona. The second stanza lines

L'Horizon s'envole,  
Rose, Orange et Vert,

The Horizon takes flight,  
Pink, Orange and Green,

suggest Verlaine's '*La fuite est verdâtre et rose*' (Blent in greenish-rosy flight).<sup>114</sup> The focus from the fourth stanza is a water craft and its occupants:

Et, lente, très lente  
En sa pâmoison,  
La frêle prison  
Va sur l'eau dolente.

And slow, very slow  
In its swoon  
The frail prison  
Drifts on the doleful water.

As the poem progresses apparent sympathy for these unfortunates is quickly undermined by hyperbolic flourish and incongruous envy of their wretched position, which satirises the Decadent disregard for traditional notions of compassion. Richard suggests that the third-last stanza's 'flou' refers to Floupette whilst the sound of 'vannées' is a likely 'rhyming' allusion to Vanier.<sup>115</sup>

Vous avez le flou  
Des choses fanées,  
Ames très vannées,  
Allant Dieu sait où !

You have the vagueness  
Of faded things,  
Exhausted spirits,  
Going God knows where!

Comme sur la grève,  
Le vent des remords,  
Passe, en vos yeux morts,  
Une fleur de rêve !

As if over sand  
The breath of remorse  
Passes, in your dead eyes,  
A dreamy flower!

Et, toujours hanté  
D'un ancien Corrège,  
Je dis : Quand aurai-je  
Votre exquisité ?

And, always haunted  
By an old Correggio,  
I say: When will I have  
Your Exquisiteness?

The third-last line implies there is a link between Correggio's work and Luminais's canvas but comparisons do not support this. The above appearance of 'remorse' invokes its regular use by Baudelaire and Verlaine, accentuated as the title of a subsequent *Déliquescences* poem.

The collection's second piece is a sonnet with a seemingly strong reverence for women:

Platonisme

La chair de la Femme, argile extatique,  
Nos doigts polluants la vont-ils toucher ?  
Non, non, le Désir n'ose effaroucher  
La Vierge Dormante au fond du Triptyque.  
...

O sommeil de la Belle au Bois Dormant,  
Je veux t'adorer dans la Paix des roses,  
Mon angelot d'or, angéliquement.

Platonism

Shall our profaning fingers touch  
The flesh of Woman, this enraptured clay?  
No, no, Desire dare not shock  
The Sleeping Virgin at the Triptych's heart.  
...

O torpor of the Sleeping Beauty,  
To adore you in the Peace of roses,  
My gold angelot, angelically.

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II'), and the 'original' in the Musée des Beaux-Arts (Rouen) is the copy: Brooks (2), pp. 5-9. The painting can be viewed at: [www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au](http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au).

<sup>114</sup> Verlaine (2), p. 128 ('*Bruxelles: Simples Fresques*'). This poem was originally in his 1874 *Romances sans paroles* which, being privately published, only had a small distribution. However, from 1883 interest in Verlaine's poetry developed considerably and by 1884 Vanier was regularly advertising and selling stock of the poet's previous collections including *Romances sans paroles*: Stephan, p. 58. Allusions identified in these close readings relate to poetry/texts published prior to the first *Déliquescences* poems being released in February 1885.

<sup>115</sup> Floupette (2), p. 51 (Richard, 'Notes').

The title is a likely allusion to the Decadents' immersion in Schopenhauer's philosophy which, whether or not it could be described as Neo-Platonism, was akin to a 'renovated theory of Platonic Ideas'.<sup>116</sup> Combined with the title the veneration of women may indicate the speaker (assuming a heterosexual male) has decided the saintliness of women is so removed from his (all men's) 'base' nature that he (they) needs to accept a Platonic existence. However, the excess of the pedestal combined with the incongruity of flesh being the measure for saintliness, suggests a spoof of Verlaine's predilection for worshipping both the Virgin Mary (one non-satirical poem declares she is his only true love) and female beauty, the latter illustrated by his poem '*Beauté des femmes, leur faiblesse, et ces mains pâles*' which also resembles the first lines of '*Platonisme*'.<sup>117</sup> Commencement of words with capitals which would normally start with lower case (*Désir*, *Dormante*) is a common practice of the Decadent grouping (usually applied to abstract nouns) and a regular feature of *Déliquescences*'s sendups. The first of the next poem's two stanzas appears to be subtle tantalisation of a sexual nature and contains feminine rhymes which are a trademark of Decadent sonorities:

Pour être conspué

Devinés au coin des brocatelles,  
J'ai perçu tes contours subtils, presque ;  
Je songeais alors à quelque fresque,  
Remembrée avec des blancheurs d'ailes !

C'est pourtant le Tourment d'un ascète.  
Pourquoi pas ? Je le sais, moi, nul autre,  
— L'Oiseau bleu dans le Chrême se vautre. —  
Qui comprend, je le tiens pour mazette !

To Be Shouted Down

Suggested in the coarse brocades  
I caught, almost, her subtle line,  
Dreaming of some fresco  
Brought back with the first pale light of wings.

The Torment of an anchorite,  
Why not? I know it, I, no other,  
— The blue Bird wallows in the Chrism —  
Whoever understands, I take him for an ass!

The conversational style of '*Pourquoi pas? Je le sais, moi, nul autre*' alludes to that Decadent prosodic innovation. The second verse implies that an obsession with prayer (anchorite) avoids the temptations intimated in the opening lines. The final assertion appears to be the satirists' critical commentary regarding the blue bird/Chrism incongruity, which is not atypical of Decadent juxtapositions, and may also hint at the hoax; likewise, the title suggests *Déliquescences*'s targets should be jeered at (*conspué*). Non-allusory hints ('allusions' indicating the collection's false provenance) may have credible non-satiric interpretations, such as this example from Malley's *Darkening Ecliptic*:

It is necessary to understand  
That a poet may not exist, that his writings  
Are the complete circle and straight drop  
Of a question mark<sup>118</sup>

Since it has been a common complaint of poets over the æons that few pay attention to them, it is possible to interpret Malley's lines as a metaphor in that vein. However, several subsequent instances in *Déliquescences* indicate a pattern of non-allusory hints. A number of factors emerge from the next poem of three stanzas:

Suavitas

L'Adorable espoir de la Renoncule  
A nimbé mon coeur d'une Hermine d'or.  
Pour le Rossignol qui sommeille encor,  
La candeur du Lys est un crépuscule.  
...

N'odorez-vous pas la tiédeur des mains ?

O Pleurs de la Nuit ! Étoiles moroses !  
Votre aile mystique effleure nos fronts,  
La vie agonise et nous expirons,  
Dans la mort suave et pâle des Roses !

Suavitas

The adorable hope of the Renuncula  
Has aureoled my heart with golden ermine.  
For the nightingale still slumbering  
The whiteness of the lily is like twilight.  
...

Do you not scent the warmth of hands?

O Tears of Night! Gloomy stars!  
Your mystic wing brushes our brows,  
Life is in its death-throes and we expire  
In the pale, gentle death of Roses!

<sup>116</sup> A. G. Lehmann, *The Symbolist Aesthetic in France 1885-1895*, p. 56.

<sup>117</sup> Verlaine (2), pp. 170, 151 ('*Je ne veux plus aimer que ma mère Marie*', '*Beauté des femmes, leur faiblesse, et ces mains pâles*').

<sup>118</sup> Malley (2), p. 21 ('*Sybilline*').

The clumsy figurative attempt of ‘*A nimbé mon coeur d’une Hermine d’or*’ and a nightingale ‘still’ slumbering (implying it should not be sleeping at a time of day Nightingales normally commence sleep) contrast with the sensually evocative ‘*N’odorez—vous pas la tiédeur des mains?*’;<sup>119</sup> the latter is a non-satiric creative moment of the parodists. Whilst the delicate sensibility of ‘*Votre aile mystique effleure nos fronts*’ is similar, there is disregard for effective association when these mystical wings are placed with gloomy stars; this also has stylistic similarity with Mallarmé’s ‘*Ô nuits!*’ and regular references to stars. Although poets have traditionally used imagery of lilies, *lys* suggests an allusion to its frequency in Moréas and Mallarmé, especially given its appearances throughout *Déliquescences*. *Suavitas*, Latin for sweetness/charm, is a gibe at the Decadent predilection for Latinisms and perfumery and, as irony, the depravity aspect of their image.

The collection’s next (four verse) piece opens as though it is a love poem:

Avant d’entrer

Je sens un goût de sirop  
Au Paradis de ta bouche,  
La tête branle et l’oeil louche,  
Huit et cinq, total zéro.

Qu’elle est moite en son fourreau  
L’âme tendre qui se couche,  
Libellule qu’effarouche  
La grosseur du numéro !

Et nous allons sans rien faire,  
Après tout la grande affaire,  
Sirius te la dira,

Et ma chanson rose et grise,  
De ton petit Opéra  
Frise et défrise la frise.

Before Entering

I catch the taste of syrup  
In the Paradise of your mouth.  
The head is trembling; the eye narrows.  
Eight and five come to zero.

Flow moist the tender soul  
Sleeping in its sheath.  
The dragonfly startled  
By the thickness of number!

And we go on without a thing to do  
After the whole grand affair.  
Sirius will tell you that.

And my song, pink and gray [sic],  
Ruffles and unruffles the curtain  
Of your tiny Opera.

Notionally the fourth line could refer to thirteen being considered unlucky and therefore a suggestion that love has gone wrong; more readily it alludes to the Decadent trait of disconnected images such as those in Rimbaud’s ‘*Bateau ivre*’, or Baudelaire’s penchant for bizarre juxtapositions.<sup>120</sup> Dragonfly is a likely reference to Rimbaud’s lines in which these insects have their penises aroused by barbs of wheat, satire of his predilection for this type of challenging image.<sup>121</sup> The third stanza may refer to the threat of the madness-inducing ‘dog days’ the ancient Greeks associated with Sirius, the implication being that this is what happens to those indulging in lassitude (Decadents).

*Déliquescences*’s sixth poem has an epigraph which, contrary to accepted practice of an aphoristic line or two, reproduces two complete (four-line) stanzas of Mallarmé’s ‘*Prose: pour des Esseintes*’ (despite its title, a rhyming poem) and this excess is accentuated by ‘*Idylle symbolique*’ consisting of only four stanzas of the same length.<sup>122</sup>

Idylle symbolique

*L’enfant abdique son extase.  
Et, docte déjà par chemins,  
Elle dit le mot : Anastase !  
Né pour d’Éternels parchemins.*

Symbolic Idyl

*The child abdicates her ecstasy  
And, schooled already by the ways,  
Utters the word: Anastase!  
Born for eternal manuscripts,*

<sup>119</sup> As with the Decadents, Floupette has a penchant for archaisms of which *odorez* is one.

<sup>120</sup> Verlaine (1), pp. 30-34 (A. Rimbaud, ‘*Bateau ivre*’). The bulk of Rimbaud’s poems were unpublished in 1885 whilst Corbière’s one collection (*Les Amours Jaunes* 1873) and few journal publications were not well known. However, both poets received considerable attention via their inclusion in *Les poètes maudits*. For this reason the latter is used for references to their poems in this section. Subsequent references to Rimbaud’s works published post-1885 are from: A. Rimbaud, *Complete Works, Selected Letters: A Bilingual Edition*.

<sup>121</sup> Verlaine (1), p. 24 (Rimbaud, ‘*Les Assis*’).

<sup>122</sup> Mallarmé, *ibid.*, pp. 46-48 (‘*Prose: pour des Esseintes*’). Richard suggests, without further explanation, that what Mallarmé means by ‘prose’ is most likely a ‘Latin sequence, versified but not subjected to prosodic quantity’: Floupette (2), p. 60 (Richard, ‘Notes’).

Avant qu'un Sépulcre ne rie  
 Sous aucun climat, son aïeul,  
 De porter ce nom : Pulchérie  
 Caché par le trop grand Glaïeul.  
 Stéphane Mallarmé.

Before a sepulchre, not to laugh,  
 In any climate, her grandsire,  
 To carry this name: Pulcheria  
 Hidden by the too great Gladiolus.  
 Stéphane Mallarme [sic]

Amoureuses Hypnotisées  
 Par l'Indolence des Espoirs,  
 Éphèbes doux, aux reflets noirs,  
 Avec des impudeurs rosées,

Amourous [sic] girls, hypnotised  
 By Indolent Hopes,  
 Soft ephebes, of black reflections,  
 With roseate immodesties,

Par le murmure d'un Ave,  
 Disparus ! O miracle Étrange !  
 Le démon suppléé par l'Ange,  
 Le vil Hyperbole sauvé !

By the murmur of an Ave  
 Banished! O strange miracle!  
 The demon supplanted by the Angel,  
 The vile Hyperbole saved!

Ils parlent, avec des nuances,  
 Comme, au coeur vert des boulingrins,  
 Les Bengalais et les serins,  
 Et ceux qui portent des créances.

They talk, with nuances,  
 As, at the green heart of the bowling-lawns,  
 Bengalais and canaries  
 And those who carry credences.

Mais ils disent le mot : Chouchou,  
 — Né pour du papier de Hollande, —  
 Et les voilà seuls, dans la lande,  
 Sous le trop petit caoutchouc !

But they say the word: Chouchou,  
 — Born for Holland paper, —  
 And there they are alone, on the moors,  
 Under the too tiny raincoat.

Mallarmé's titular dedication to des Esseintes is not surprising since four pages of the novel sing the poet's praises.<sup>123</sup> The reference to a *grand* (over-sized?) *glaiëul* (gladiolus) is suggestive of Rimbaud's description of urinating high into the air (over-sized piss) in the presence of *grands* (over-sized) héliotropes, particularly if considered together with his (separate) image of dragonflies being aroused by wheat: in the line previous to that there is '*fil des glaiëuls le vol des libellules*' ('the flight of dragonflies along the gladiolus') which is again a gibe at imagery of this type.<sup>124</sup> The epigraph's Pulcheria was a fifth century woman with a number of distinctions: child prodigy, unusually well-educated, emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire and canonised by the church. Her achievements could explain the first stanza, but who is Anastase? History has a number of prominent figures with this name (mostly Greek males) but the context does not suggest any of these. Consideration of Mallarmé's complete poem does not lessen the obscurity; however, it commences with '*Hyperbole!*' and whatever Mallarmé intends in that regard it is satirically alluded to by the above '*vil Hyperbole sauvé!*'.<sup>125</sup> The epigraph was chosen as a sendup of Mallarmé's opacity and this is also the purpose of '*Idylle symbolique*': his attempts to be profound are reduced to 'strange miracles' banishing 'hail' (*ave*) in an ambience of 'roseate immodesties' and 'darling' (*chouchou*) nuances.

The next poem's title, '*Symphonie en Vert Mineur*', suggests an allusion to Gautier's '*Symphonie en blanc majeur*' (which contains many iterations of *blanc*) and his renowned motto of 'Art for art's sake', also embraced by Baudelaire, the Decadents and des Esseintes. Floupette's poem has four numbered sections which equate to particular symphonic features/movements and a subtitle '*Variations sur un thème vert pomme*' ('Variations on a theme of green apples'), this being a sendup of both Verlaine's name and des Esseintes's liking of *Chartreux* (*Chartreuse*) liqueur, the colour of which is usually described as apple green. The latter was probably in the minds of the satirists since it was in 1884 that the liqueur was first promoted as being that colour.<sup>126</sup>

<sup>123</sup> Huysmans (1), pp. 219-22.

<sup>124</sup> Verlaine (1), pp. 21, 24 (Rimbaud, '*Oraison du soir*', '*Les Assis*').

<sup>125</sup> Mallarmé, p. 46 ('*Prose: pour des Esseintes*'). Richard indicates that 'hyperbole', in the manner in which it is used by the parodists, effectively 'becomes masculine'; further, he argues that 'Anastase' is the '*Elan créateur*' (creative impetus) and that Pulcheria stands for *Beauté*. These 'clarifications' are without additional explanation: Floupette (2), p. 60 (Richard, 'Introduction').

<sup>126</sup> 'Chartreuse', *Oxford English Dictionary*.

Symphonie en Vert Mineur:<sup>127</sup>I. Andante

L'alme fragilité des nonchaloirs impies  
 A reflété les souvenirs glauques d'Éros ;  
 La ligne a trop de feu des marbres de Paros,  
 Trop d'ombre l'axe des sorcières accroupies.

Le symbole est venu. Très hilares, d'abord,  
 ...

(final stanza in part)

Nous avons révisé pourtant : l'azur est rose ;  
 Depuis qu'il n'est plus bleu, nous voulons qu'il soit vert.

...

Symphony in Green Minor:I. Andante

Alme, fragility of blasphemous indifferences  
 Reflects the sea-green memories of Love;  
 The line has too much of the Parian Marble's fire,  
 The axis of the squatting witches too much shade.

The symbol has come. Hilarious at first  
 ...

But we have reconsidered: the azure is pink;  
 Since it is no longer blue, we want it green.

...

'At first' implies Baudelairean symbolism is just another fad. The last stanza's parody of the Decadents' regular use of synæsthesia, with its assertion that 'azure is now pink ... we want it green', is another likely example of humorous appeal to an informed reader.<sup>128</sup> *Azur* extends the satire since it frequents the poetry of the Decadent grouping which becomes amplified as a *Déliquescences* trope. It is also likely that pink is a gibe at the Decadents' effete image whilst green is another Verlaine reminder. Also 'alme' and 'nonchaloirs' are neologisms satirising the Decadents' proclivity for innovation of that sort.<sup>129</sup> The subtitle 'Andante' refers to a slow tempo and seems contextually unimportant. However, the second subtitle 'Scherzo' is a term for the third (not second) movement of a symphony and, combined with the non-musical Italian meaning of the word, 'joke', it is a likely hint of the hoax. There follows a lampoon in poor taste (according to present-day values) of Verlaine's lament for Rimbaud ('*O triste, triste était mon âme*' becomes '*Ah! Verte, verte, combine verte, / Était mon âme*') and the spoof of the 'green' name (and possibly Gautier's many *blancs*) has become excessive: numerous things in 'Scherzo's' twenty lines are described with that colour and subsequent poems also have instances of 'green' incommensurate with their contexts.<sup>130</sup> The macabre also appears with reference to a dead infant kept in green water at the morgue: '*Un petit enfant conserve / Dans de l'eau très verte, à la Morgue*'. Readers informed of Verlaine's life are likely to know he had a (self-acknowledged) addiction to absinthe which is highlighted by the second stanza:

C'était, - on eût dit, - une absinthe,  
 Prise, - il semblait, - en un café,  
 Par un Mage très échauffé,  
 En l'Honneur de la Vierge sainte.

It was – it's said – an absinthe,  
 Drunk – it seems – at a café,  
 By an over-ardent Magus  
 In honour of the Virgin.

Section three of '*Symphonie en Vert Mineur*' has an unusual layout, as indicated by the first two of its four (identically visual) stanzas:

III. Pizzicati

Les Taenias  
 Que tu nias,  
 Traîtreusement s'en sont allés.

Dans la pénombre,  
 Ma clameur sombre  
 A fait fleurir des azalées.

III. Pizzicati

The Tapeworms  
 Which you denied  
 Have treacherously departed.

In the half-light  
 My sombre howl  
 Has made azaleas bloom.

<sup>127</sup> The three poems/sections published in the 19 April *Lutèce* under '*Déliquescences*' were sections of this '*Symphonie*'.

<sup>128</sup> Technically this is not synæsthesia since a mixing of colours is not a mixing of senses (it could be described as 'quasi-synæsthesia'). However, it is a likely allusion to iconic examples of the technique – such as Baudelaire's '*Correspondences*', Rimbaud's '*Voyelles*' (which also is not synæsthesia but a 'discussion', rather than application, of its metaphoric potential) – and the general Decadent practice of mixing both colours and senses.

<sup>129</sup> Genette (2), p. 178.

<sup>130</sup> Verlaine (2), p. 125 ('*O triste, triste était mon âme*').

...

...

This structure of having all lines indented except the last in each stanza was used by Corbière in his ‘*Heures*’ and also in some stanzas of Verlaine’s ‘*Je ne sais pourquoi*’; likewise, the unusual layout of ‘*Symphonie*’s’ following section (‘*Finale*’) is suggestive of the latter’s frequent experimentation with visual prosody.<sup>131</sup> Whilst *pizzicato* refers to the technique of plucking a stringed instrument, its alternative Italian meaning of ‘pinched’ suggests Floupette’s targets have been ‘caught out’, indicating another possible hint of the hoax. *Ennuis* points to Baudelaire’s preoccupation with boredom’s deadening effect in the supposedly degenerate era, this being reflected generally in the Decadents, and instances also occur in *Rimes de Joie*. Richard draws attention to the similarity of sonorous and prosodic qualities in ‘*Pizzicati*’ and Laurent Tailhade’s poem ‘*Fleurs blêmes*’ which was apparently one of the few he had published before *Déliquescences*.<sup>132</sup> Of ‘*Finale*’s’ three stanzas, the first two read:

IV. Finale

Dans les roseaux  
Du bord des eaux,  
Dans les sentiers  
Verts d’Églantiers,  
Nous nous laisserons mourir,  
Puisque tout va reflleurir !

Pour calmer les ruts bavards,  
Oh ! cueillons les nénéfars !  
Endormons-nous !  
Les blancs genoux  
Nous les laissons  
Aux polissons !

...

IV. Finale

In the reeds  
Beside the waters,  
In the paths  
Green with Eglantine,  
We’ll let ourselves expire,  
Since everything will bloom again.

To calm the chattering copulations,  
Oh! Let’s gather waterlilies!  
Let’s fall asleep!  
We’ll leave  
The whitened knees  
To the licentious!

...

Eglantine implies the satirists are prickling their targets: since this is the fourth instance of an apparent hoax hint that purpose seems confirmed.

*Déliquescences*’s eighth poem is titled with the madrigal song/poetic form (used by a number of contemporary avant garde French poets including Verlaine), the first two of its six couplets being:

Madrigal

Mon coeur tarabiscoté  
A pris un point de côté.

Tes effluves le font battre  
Comme trois. Que dis-je ? Quatre.

...

Madrigal

My elaborate heart  
Has pulled up with a stitch.

Your vapours make it beat  
Like three. What am I saying? Four.

...

There is comic appeal (mildly scatological but hardly crass) in the hyperbole of ‘Your vapours (unpleasant/farts) make it (the heart) beat like three. What am I saying? Four’. Whilst the collection’s next poem has obvious sendups of both des Esseintes and Verlaine, the several instances of linking their penchant for liqueur — and, in regard to the latter, female beauty — with the Catholic Church, suggests (notwithstanding the church’s historical association with both *Chartreux* and *Bénédictine*) an additional allusion to Baudelaire’s irreverent and sensuous ‘catholicism’, the first seven of its twelve lines being:

Rythme claudicant

Je me suis grisé d’angélique,  
Douce relique ;  
La bénite eau des Chartreux  
M’a fait bien heureux !

Lurching Rhythm

I got drunk on angelica,  
Sweet relic;  
The water of La Grand Chartreuse  
Made me very happy!

<sup>131</sup> Verlaine (1), pp. 11-12 (T. Corbière, ‘*Heures*’); Verlaine (2), pp. 184-85 (‘*Je ne sais pourquoi*’).

<sup>132</sup> Floupette (2), pp. 65, 78 (Richard, ‘Notes’).

(second stanza, two lines)

Toutes les femmes sont saintes !  
Oh ! les rendre enceintes !

All women are saints!  
Oh! to unsaint them!

L'onctueuse bénédictine [sic],  
...

The unctuous benedictine,  
...

The tone of '*les rendre enceintes!*' (literally 'make them pregnant', which is Chapman's translation) suggests a (conscious or subconscious) excuse to indulge in ribaldry.<sup>133</sup>

The next poem targets yet another Decadent characteristic, *Chlorose* being a reference to their (regularly alleged) illicit drug-taking:

Pour avoir péché

first two of three stanzas

Mon cœur est un Corylopsis du Japon, rose  
Et pailleté d'or fauve, - à l'instar des serpents.  
Sa rancœur détergeant un relent de Chlorose,  
Fait, dans l'Éther baveux, bramer les OEgyptans. [sic]

Mon âme Vespérale erre et tintinnabule,  
Par delà le cuivré des grands envoûtements ;  
Comme un crotale, pris aux lacs du Vestibule,  
Ses ululements fous poignent les Nécromans.

...

To Have Sinned

My heart is a Corylopsis of Japan. Rose-pink  
And spangled with wild gold – in the manner of serpents,  
Its rancour, cleansing a stench of green sickness,  
Makes, in the dribbling æther, Ægyptans bleat.

My vesperal soul wanders and tintinnabulates  
Beyond the brass of Hoodoo chants;  
Like a rattlesnake caught at the lakes of the Vestibule,  
Its mad ululations sting the necromance.

...

Beauclair is likely to have obtained the words '*Pour avoir péché*' from a manuscript version of a poem with that expression as the title sent to him (as *Déliquescences* was being composed) by Stanislas de Guaita, and subsequently published in the latter's collection *Rosa mystica* close to the release of *Déliquescences* (the two poems were published with the same title, but different texts).<sup>134</sup> As with *Déliquescences*'s multi-layered packaging peritext, Floupette's poem has an array of allusions, in this instance focused on occult-inclined writers: the Decadent grouping generally; Guaita, since *Rosa mystica* is a celebration of the occult and one of his titles has been 'hijacked'; and a compound concentration regarding Poe — it is one of his favoured topics, tintinnabule and Ægyptans (from 'The Fall of the House of Usher') both refer to him, and the latter has occult associations (it also readily fits with the Decadents' penchant for esoteric words).<sup>135</sup> The theme is further reinforced with the inclusion of other sorcery-associated words (*nécromans*, *envoûtements*, *crotale*). The hoaxers' publication of a title provided to them privately by the original author, as a satire of that writer as he concurrently publishes it, reflects the less than discriminate repartee of *Déliquescences*'s epitextual milieu. This incident is also another illustration of developmental mutations, since '*Pour avoir péché*' was one of the *Déliquescences* poems published in *Lutèce* (then titled '*Le pétunia sauveur*') with the Étienne Arsenal attribution, yet an early draft by Beauclair dedicated it to Moréas.<sup>136</sup> The parodists also appear to be having a stab at fashions generally, since the Japanese corylopsis attracted particular attention at the 1878 Paris Exposition Universelle, *Japonisme* being very much in vogue. Floupette's next poem has as an epigraph Rimbaud's by now overly-alluded to line regarding giant héliotropes, the connection in this instance suggesting the homosexual relationship between Verlaine and Rimbaud is libertine. The title also has a pun since contemporary purists apparently referred to any sonnet which did not conform to the conventions of sonnet composition, of which the following is an example, as *libertin*.<sup>137</sup>

Sonnet libertin

Avec l'assentiment des grands héliotropes.  
Arthur Rimbaud

Quand nous aurons, avec de bleus recueils,

Licentious Sonnet

With the assent of the great sunflowers  
Arthur Rimbaud

When, with azure contemplations, we have

<sup>133</sup> Floupette (4), p. 57.

<sup>134</sup> Floupette (2), pp. 73-74 (Richard, 'Notes').

<sup>135</sup> Poe (2), p. 92. As if to further weave the 'allusive web', the preceding sentence has reference to a volume of 'phantasm', *Vervet et Chartreuse* by Jean Gresset.

<sup>136</sup> Floupette (2), p. 73, (Richard, 'Notes').

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., p. 76.

Pleuré de ce qui chante et ri de ce qui souffre,  
...

Je mettrai dans l'or de tes prunelles blémies  
L'Inassouvissement des philtres de Cypris.  
- Les roses de ton sein, qu'elles vont m'être amies !

Et comme au temps où triomphait le grand Vestris,  
Très dolents, nous ferons d'exquises infamies,  
- Avec l'assentiment de ton Callybistris. -

Wept for what sings and laughed for what suffers,  
...

I will place in the gold of your pale eyes  
The insateity of Cyprian philtres  
- The roses of your breast, what lovers of mine! -

And as in the times when triumphed the great Vestris,  
So plaintive, we will commit exquisite indiscretions,  
- With the assent of your Pubis. -

Whilst 'blue contemplations' could be a non-satiric figuration, the juxtapositions (weeping-for-what-sings and laughing-at-what-weepers) are stylistic parodies. Bawdy returns when *philtres* (love potions) stimulate an insatiable desire for areolas/nipples (roses); also, *philtre* appears regularly in Baudelaire and not infrequently in Moréas. Use of dashes as above and in several other Floupette poems (not all instances reproduced) occurs often in the poetry of Verlaine and Moréas.

Anaphora, a favoured technique of Baudelaire and Verlaine, is a feature of the next (three-stanza) poem:

Cantique Avant de se coucher

La Vie atroce a pris mon coeur dans son étai,  
La Vie aigre sonne un tocsin dans mon oreille,  
La Vie infâme a mis ses poux dans mon manteau.

Je suis comme un raisin plâtré sous une treille,  
Comme un quine égaré par l'affre du Loto.  
Comme un Pape très blanc et très doux qui sommeille.

Désespérance morne au seuil du Lys Hymen !  
- Nimbé d'Encens impur j'agonise et je fume. -  
O l'Induration lente du Cyclamen !  
O les Morsures dans l'Alcôve qui s'allume !  
O les Ostensoirs dans la Basilique ! Amen !

Canticle Before Going to Bed

Atrocious Life has taken my heart in its vice,  
Sour Life sounds a tocsin in my ear,  
Squalid Life has put its lice in my cloak.

I am like a grape blanched beneath the trellis,  
Like the five winning numbers, lost in the throes of the Lottery,  
Like a very white, very gentle, slumbering Pope.

Bleak hopelessness at the lip of the Hymen Lily!  
- Nimbused by tainted incense I am at death's door and I  
smoke. -  
O slow Induration of the Cyclamen!  
O Bitings in the Alcove catching fire!  
O Monstrances in the Basilica! Amen!

The rhythm and sonority that comes with the above atypical rhyme has a Decadent sensibility. In addition to the obvious Baudelaire/Verlaine *remords* allusion, the 'spectral church' of the next poem has further suggestions of the occult.

Remords

stanzas one and three of four

L'Église Spectrale était en Gala.  
Dans un froufrou, les femmes passaient vite.  
Blanc sur blanc, en son étroite lévite,  
L'enfant de choeur, doux, tintinnabula,  
...

C'est vrai pourtant, je suis un mécréant,  
J'ai fait bien souvent des cochonneries,  
Mais, ô Reine des Étoiles fleuries,  
Chaste lys ! prends en pitié mon Néant !  
...

Remorse

The spectral church was in festival.  
In a flutter, the women passed quickly by.  
White on white, in his narrow vesture,  
Tingling, softly, the altarboy.  
...

Yet it's true, I am a miscreant.  
I've been a swine so often,  
But, O Queen of the Flowering Stars,  
Chaste lily! have pity on my Nothingness!  
...

Floupette's lines regarding stars and lilies have some resemblance to the final ones in Mallarmé's 'Apparition', and *Neant* (nothingness) alludes to his application of this term as a conceptual theme.<sup>138</sup> The last line of 'Remords', 'Mais je t'aime tant, Canaille de Vierge!' ('But I love you so, Riff-Raff of the Virgin!'), is a bawdy-style stab at Verlaine's Mary fixation. *Déliquescences*'s penultimate poem, a string of

<sup>138</sup> Mallarmé, p. 7 ('Apparition').



22 rhyming couplets, has a Corbière epigraphical quotation, the fifth and sixth verses being a bawdy of breasts:

Bal décadent

Vais m'en aller !  
Tristan Corbière.

...

Mais les girandoles  
Étaient presque folles.

Les lustres flambaient  
Et les seins tombaient.

Decadent Dance

I'm out of here!  
Tristan Corbière

...

But the girandoles  
Were almost mad.

The chandeliers were blazing  
And bosoms tumbling.

Further on we encounter juxtapositional excess when a dancer, simultaneously an etching and dead, plays perverse games under a lustful moon which triggers memories of anthrax:

En ses airs de morte,  
Une vraie Eau-forte.

Ange mal bâti,  
Gamin perversi,

Lune blêmeissante  
Et concupiscente,

Fleur d'opoponax,  
Souvenir d'Anthrax,

In her morbidity  
A true acidity.

Mis-made angel,  
Perverse gamin,

Paling, con-  
Cupiscent moon,

Flower of apoponax, [sic]  
Memory of anthrax,

The above is also a likely allusion to Verlaine's effusive chorus '*Dansons la gigue!*' ('Let's dance a gig!').<sup>139</sup> Although tenuous, it is possible the opening stanza of the final poem (another sonnet) alludes to the Franco-Prussian War and expresses sympathy for the youths who fought in the defeat, or live in its shadow, their disillusion turning them to decadence (a view widely held in the community):

Décadents

Nos pères étaient forts, et leurs rêves ardents  
S'envolaient d'un coup d'aile au pays de Lumière.  
Nous dont la fleur dolente est la Rose Trémière,  
Nous n'avons plus de coeur, nous n'avons plus de dents !

Decadents

Our fathers were strong, and their passionate dreams  
Flew with a wing-beat to the country of light.  
We, for whom the plaintive flower is the hollyhock,  
We no longer have heart, we no longer have teeth!

More likely, however, it is satire of the Decadents' 'opting out' — suggested by the corny pun on (Deca)dents/teeth and the increasing flippancy of the following stanzas, including the smutty chamber-pot reference:

Pauvres pantins avec un peu de son dedans,  
Nous regardons, sans voir, la ferme et la fermière.  
Nous renâclons devant la tâche coutumière,  
Charlots trop amusés, ultimes Décadents.

Poor puppets with a little sound within,  
We watch, without seeing, the farmhouse and the farmer's wife.  
We hang back before the customary task,  
Charlies, too amused, ultimate decadents.

Mais, ô Mort du Désir ! Inappétence exquise !  
Nous gardons le fumet d'une antique Marquise  
Dont un Vase de Nuit parfume les Dessous !

But, o Death of Desire! Exquisite inappetence!  
We keep the scent of an old Marchioness  
Whose Chamber-pot perfumes her underwear!

...

...

Van Roosbroeck argues '*Charlots trop amusés*' alludes to Paul Bonnetain's 1884 novel *Charlot s'amuse*, 'which was condemned by the courts for immorality and suppressed', and this is likely given the phrase is linked with '*ultimes Décadents*'.<sup>140</sup>

<sup>139</sup> Verlaine (2), p. 136 ('*Dansons la gigue*').

<sup>140</sup> van Roosbroeck, p. 38.

### Les Déliquescences Close Reading: Key Outcomes

*Les Déliquescences*'s satirical focus on Decadent experimentation encapsulates pre-Modernist writing techniques (some of which are particular to the French context): disconnected syntax, expressions, images; prosodic innovations (irregular rhyme, particular emphasis on feminine rhymes, conversational interludes, loosening the rules of established forms such as sonnets); absence of lessons to be learned (celebration of the immoral/amoral, macabre subject matter, excessive self-focus); lack of unity, sequential development, mimesis (truculent incongruity, bizarre juxtapositions and imagery); lack of confidence in French culture (pessimism, 'alien' imports — Schopenhauer, Roman decadence, Latinisms). The dominance of Baudelaire's influence in the Decadent's work is evident and illustrates both characteristics of his poetry generally embraced and also particular features adopted by individual disciples. Floupette also parodies writers within the broader Decadent 'church' including Huysmans, Poe, Gautier, Hannon, Guaita and Bonnetain and there are apparently some allusions to the non-Decadent Parnassians (including Arène's satire of them). Other names with more tenuous links to the text have surfaced in criticism, such as stylistically similar poets Jean Lorrain and Jules Laforgue, and the occasionally similar Charles Cros.<sup>141</sup> Floupette's persona is underdeveloped; initially a pseudonym without a biography, its transgressive aspect was limited to one (distinctive) component of a figurative peritextual package which includes the mildly subversive publisher name and place of publication. By the time of the second edition 'Life', the transgressive element had been mostly dissolved by release of the authors' names. (In effect, the Floupette Hoax is close to non-transgressive satire). Also, since the verse is written in third-person narration, particularly limiting for character development in poetry, the persona is, in contrast to Spectra and Malley, almost entirely dependent on the biography; further, it is one-dimensional since its focus is a dilettante poet written specifically for the biography's satirical allegory. The numerous *Déliquescences* passages which overemphasise, or seem out of keeping with, its satiric purpose — ever-present sendups of the Decadent penchant for exotic fragrances, unrelenting reminders of Verlaine, regular bawdy — reflect an over-energised 'satiric mindset' accentuated by the collaborative dynamic of two writers, in the words of Malley critic Heyward, 'spurring each other on', especially if they are 'buoyed by the wickedness of what they're up to'.<sup>142</sup>

### **3.4 Community Responses to the Second Edition**

The 'Life of Adore Floupette' facilitated broader appreciation of the collection as satire and most reviewers were now likely to be aware that Floupette was a pseudonym for two contemporary poets. Arguing that the identity issue is unimportant, Gérome (subsequent Nobel Prize laureate Anatole France) effectively reveals a view that the texts of both the satirists and the Decadents represent unacceptable values: 'If M. Adoré Floupette doesn't exist as an individual, he exists as a species. He breeds in the Latin Quarter.' Likewise Paul Bourde refers to *Déliquescences* as a 'conducting wire' to focus on the Decadents, 'this curious group which embodies the most eccentric tendencies in French poetry'.<sup>143</sup> He attacks them for having an arrogant outlook and projecting negative views of health:

... an open aversion to the crowd considered as supremely stupid and low at bottom. ... Health being essentially vulgar and good for rustics, he [a Decadent] has to be at least neurotic.<sup>144</sup>

Bourde also accuses the Decadents of being obsessed with originality in their search for the 'undreamed dream' and the 'unexperienced sensation'. After a conciliatory acknowledgement that these poets had engaged in 'interesting innovations in language and versification' he concludes their writing dispensed with

<sup>141</sup> Richard argues that there are lines in the 'Andante' section of '*Symphonie en Vert Mineur*' which resemble aspects of works by Parnassians Theodore de Banville and Leconte de Lisle but acknowledges these are also reminders of Verlaine: Floupette (2), p. 62 (Richard, 'Notes'). One newspaper critic included Charles Morice amongst Floupette's targets: Stephan, p. 93; however, his poetry appears dissimilar to *Déliquescences* and this was probably influenced by Morice being a *Lutèce* co-editor and close friend of Verlaine.

<sup>142</sup> Heyward (1), p. 89. Poetry of the Decadents with sexual content generally has a sensibility of confronting society with aspects of sexuality which were usually ignored or glossed over (sometimes with commensurate humour) — a different tone to Floupette's corny fulfilments of stereotypical male fantasies and the 'perfume' of a lady's chamber-pot. Vicaire was well-known for his own bawdy verse and therefore appears to be the primary source for Floupette's similar penchant: Richard (1), p. 176.

<sup>143</sup> Quotations from Brooks (2): re Gérome, p. 187; re Bourde, p. 192. The Gérome review included the first public declaration that Vicaire & Beauclair are *Déliquescences*'s true authors.

<sup>144</sup> Quotation is from a different section of the same review: van Roosbroeck, p. 40.

‘great inspirations’ and ‘annihilated thought’.<sup>145</sup> The *Bibliothèque Universelle et Revue Suisse* similarly uses a reference to *Déliquescences* to argue that Mallarmé is the ultimate in obscurity.<sup>146</sup> From a position opposite to that of condemning the parodists and the parodied, expitextual milieu participant Maurice Barrès supports Floupette’s sendup regarding Decadent excesses and also the value of Decadent experimentation because

... we are tired, like everyone, of the anecdote told in 100 pages, tired of the contrived novel, of identical adventures, ... we admire the fine works of yesterday, but we don’t want to repeat them; ... we have glimpsed a new form of art ... equal of the highest poets, the great metaphysicians ...

With reference to Floupette, Barrès adds: ‘he says: there remains the symbol, the symbolic art’.<sup>147</sup> A similar argument came from the milieu’s ‘nerve centre’: *Lutèce* co-editor Trézenik states that *Déliquescences* was not a parody but a joke, accuses the press for having fallen for it, and that the collection is also a ‘bold, sincere and rapid literary work’.<sup>148</sup>

Two critics had concerns regarding the apparent damage Floupette inflicted on the Decadents, including Eduard Rod:

... with little spirit, little taste and little intelligence ... the little book becomes an event. The term ‘decadents’ is decisively adopted and, in declaring that neither M. Verlaine, nor M. Mallarmé, nor any of the ‘youths’ who follow them are worth attention ...<sup>149</sup>

This view was also expressed with reversed emphasis whereby the primary concern was for the Decadents’ less-known followers.<sup>150</sup> Within this latter grouping, mostly on the periphery of the epitextual milieu, confusion continued for many since Decadent-style writing was ‘taken quite seriously by young authors of the time’ and they therefore could have ‘in good faith’ produced passages like Floupette’s verse.<sup>151</sup> Apparent confusion also continued after the second edition for some mainstream reviewers. Philippe Gille speculates that if the author of *Déliquescences* becomes embarrassed by his stylistic self-indulgence he ‘may well say he wanted to send up in their own language the intransigents of poetry; he will not be believed by everyone and that will be his punishment’. Sutter-Laumann claims that despite their attack the perpetrators created at times good verse in both traditional and Decadent styles:

These malcontents want to make a mockery of decadent verse. But if they have succeeded here and there, at other times their villainous reactionary writing habits have betrayed them. ... not knowing the decadent words and manner, the combinations of these words have sometimes given these phrases a sense almost as precise as the old way, and sometimes produced results that would make the decadents faint with joy, with the effect that no-one is absolutely satisfied.<sup>152</sup>

The above first line suggests support for the Decadents. However, it appears the initial purpose was to attack Floupette’s creators by whatever means, since Sutter-Laumann continues by also criticising the Decadents who, he claims, do not understand one another, and it is easy to become one since all that is needed is to draw

... at random, some sonorous words from a dictionary. By counting, then, on one’s fingers the number of syllables necessary to make a verse-line, one has great chances of attaining perfection in this kind of writing.<sup>153</sup>

Despite their surface gymnastics the primary position of both Gille and Sutter-Laumann is effectively that *Déliquescences* represents, as with the Decadents, a menace to society’s values, which they accentuate with excessively punitive terms. Critical responses which disregard Floupette’s satire typify mainstream reviews. Whilst that is at least commensurate with Rod’s support of the Decadents, it is surprising from those with the opposite view; the latter indicates the perceived Decadent threat was so serious that either it subliminally

<sup>145</sup> Quotations are van Roosbroeck’s paraphrasings of Bourde: *ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>146</sup> Stephan, p. 90.

<sup>147</sup> Quotations: Brooks (2), pp. 193-94.

<sup>148</sup> Quotations and information: Richard (1), p. 273; Stephan, p. 94; Marquèze-Pouey, *ibid.*, p. 150

<sup>149</sup> Cornell, p. 44; quotation: Brooks (2), p. 197.

<sup>150</sup> Stephan, p. 90.

<sup>151</sup> A. E. Carter, *The Idea of Decadence in French Literature 1830-1900*, pp. 109, 136.

<sup>152</sup> Quotations: Brooks (2), pp. 185-88.

<sup>153</sup> Quotation is from a different section of the same review: van Roosbroeck, p. 40.

precluded recognition of the satire or, more likely (given the by now widespread knowledge of the collection's provenance), there was no room for levity.

Two further contributions to these debates are of particular interest. Bourde's attack precipitated Moréas's '*Les Décadents*', the initial focus of which is a sarcastic rejoinder to scare-mongering with an assurance that the Decadents have not

... nibbled at bloody foetuses; they prefer to drink from a glass than the skull of their grandmother; and they prefer to work during the dark nights of winter and not make acquaintance with the devil ...

The beginning of Symbolism is often identified as this statement from the same article:

The alleged decadents search above all in their art for the pure Concept and the eternal Symbol;

This led to Moréas's 1886 '*Le Symbolisme*' which is further discussed in Section 3.5. The other contribution of particular significance was from Floupette, his one public appearance separate to *Déliquescences*, published with his 'own' name (ironically, there are instances where he refers to 'himself' in third-person). It responds to Rod's attack and is effectively the parodists' 'hoax declaration':

... the extravagant success, I admit, of the booklet. Yes, if you want, I'll cry with you from the rooftops that the success in no way corresponds to the merit of the work. It's no more than an unpretentious lark, a sketch thrown off after drinking and a day of good humour the sole merit of which is that it is merry enough, without a shadow of spitefulness. ... While maintaining a deep respect for the true artists who *search*, without always finding, Floupette has believed it possible, to tease, lightly, in camaradie, those who in their own way have seemed to him a tiny bit ridiculous.<sup>154</sup>

Whilst this has an element of public gloss which effectively dilutes the stronger comments in Vicaire's previously discussed letter, there are factors that indicate the overall hoax motivation was not particularly trenchant: the low key open-secret initiatives, Vicaire's previously discussed comment that *Déliquescences* was just an entertaining hoax, and the general criticism—without—hostility tone of Floupette's text (albeit the satire of Mallarmé has a cutting tenor absent with regard to the other targets). The above claim that *Les Déliquesences* was drafted after a day of drinking is one of (apparently) two only records regarding the collection's composition. The other, an account from Barrès written two years later, 'confirms' the above by claiming he was present. Since a number of Floupette's poems were released over multiple editions of *Lutèce*, Richard is sceptical of the manuscript being drafted in such a short time frame; however, he acknowledges that does not conceptually exclude that they were written in one session and gradually released. In the absence of further information Richard's favoured position seems apposite.<sup>155</sup>

### **3.5 The Place of the Floupette Hoax in its French Literary Context**

In 1923 Delatremlais declared that both *Déliquesences*'s literary merit and influence on the Symbolists '*suffirait à leur assurer la place considérable qu'elles occupent dans notre histoire littéraire et justifierait une réédition à tous égards, digne de l'œuvre*' ('would be sufficient to ensure the considerable place it occupies in our literary history and justify a reprint in all respects, worthy of the artwork').<sup>156</sup> However, little of the criticism relating to *Les Déliquesences* appears to discuss its place in French literary history. This is reflected in Henri Peyre's 1974 one-sentence reference in which he comments that *Déliquesences* is '*à peu près oubliés aujourd'hui*' ('almost forgotten today'). A 1967 *Literary History of France* also limits commentary to one sentence with reference to the 'pastiche' of Adoré Floupette.<sup>157</sup> Mitchell argues that this 'critical neglect' is due to an over-emphasis on Floupette's satirical levity so that the collection is referred to for its 'bizarre artefacts' but not '*examined*'.<sup>158</sup>

<sup>154</sup> Quotations and information: Brooks (2), pp. 195-96, 198-99.

<sup>155</sup> Richard (1), pp. 178-79; 'entertaining hoax': Floupette (2), p. 17 (Richard, 'Introduction'). The account by Barrès appeared in *Un poète absent, Le Voltaire*, 19 July 1887: Richard (1), *ibid*. The likelihood that the collection was written over more than one session is reinforced by the previously discussed Beauclair Mss. regarding his early draft of '*Pour avoir péché*'.

<sup>156</sup> Delatremlais, *ibid*.

<sup>157</sup> H. Peyre, *Qu'est-ce que le symbolisme?*, p. 161; P. E. Charvet, *The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries 1870-1940*, p. 82 (vol. v, P. E. Charvet, ed., *A Literary History of France*).

<sup>158</sup> Mitchell, p. 252. Original emphasis.

Some recent criticism addresses influences of *Déliquescences*, albeit those discussed are not necessarily of an enduring nature. Richard's answer to his question, 'What were the consequences of this hoax?', is focused in the contemporary context regarding the 'weight of ridicule' directed at the Decadents from 'the pack of critics' and 'the mocking eye of the Impassibles' (impassive mainstream society). He is impressed that despite this negative environment these 'adept poets' proved their 'fighting spirit by founding numerous reviews and by publishing collections with new enthusiasm'. He also argues that *Déliquescences* is an important historical document since it is 'an array of information on the poetic cabarets and the inner circles of the pre-symbolist era'.<sup>159</sup> Another short-term conflict, precipitated by Floupette's declaration that 'The Symbol' had arrived, was the 1886 emergence of three factions of avant garde poets, the Symbolists and two claiming to be Decadents, in association with newly-formed revues *Le Décadent*, *Le Symboliste* and *La Décadence*, in which respective editors 'Anatole Baju, Jean Moréas, and René Ghil propound questions of theory, insult one another, and establish poetic groupings'.<sup>160</sup> The Floupette Hoax also had some influence on the 1889 *faux Rimbaud* ('Rimbaud Forgeries'), these being poems published in a number of journals with the attribution 'Mitrophone Crapoussin' (which was a common pseudonym applied individually by Ernest Raynard, Maurice du Plessys and Laurent Tailhade), that parodied the Decadents in 'almost all the ideas of the movement – male prostitution ("Au café"), decadent mysticism ("Renoncement"), neurosis ("Quatorzain pour aller à Bicêtre")'.<sup>161</sup>

Floupette's poems are not infrequently considered as 'prototypical, accepted models of the Decadent style', regarding which Enid Peschel uncharacteristically (vis-à-vis most critics) describes as 'symptomatic of the poor quality of much decadent verse'. Attempts by Floupette critics to define Decadent writing range from Mitchell's exasperation 'that Decadence as a literary style is so elusive that it ultimately ... deliquesces [sic]' to Stephan's listing of Decadent stylistic traits.<sup>162</sup> However, the case-study examination of *Déliquescences* suggests that what constituted a Decadent in the contemporary context was not primarily the poetic style which contributed to the name and image, but an association with the 'label' itself. With Verlaine at the epicentre, a sequence of events over the 1882–85 period imprinted the word Decadent in the minds of the avant garde and broader literary public, accompanied by vague and varied notions of its meaning, which for most individuals in these groupings was without, or prior to, becoming meaningfully informed of the poetry.<sup>163</sup>

The previously discussed contribution of *Déliquescences* to broadening attention given to the Decadent poets, and Floupette's epiphanous provision of the ('S') Symbolist name to the corresponding movement (via Moréas's '*Les Decadents*' and '*Le Symbolisme*') appear to be its (not overly substantial) legacies within the context of French literature and, by virtue of Symbolism's effective initiation of Modernism, contribution to Western literature.<sup>164</sup>

<sup>159</sup> Richard (3), p. 201; Floupette (2), p. 20 (Richard, 'Introduction').

<sup>160</sup> Cornell, p. 45. See also: Stephan, pp. 143-45.

<sup>161</sup> Carter, *ibid.*, pp. 140-41. Considerable details are provided in: Richard (2), pp. 201-13. An interesting corollary is that from these *faux Rimbaud* there evolved over several decades a string of various 'fakeries' which, in the period of 'prelettristic *jemenfoutisme* and literary hugger-mugger', were incorrectly attributed to him, culminating in the major 1948 *La Chasse spirituelle* controversy: B. Morrissette, *The Great Rimbaud Forgery: The Affair of 'La Chasse spirituelle'*, pp. 4, 152-96. 'Lettrism' was a 1940s avant garde French extension of Dadaism/Surrealism.

<sup>162</sup> Mitchell, p. 251; E. R. Peschel, Untitled Review (of P. Stephan, *Paul Verlaine and the decadence 1882-90*), p. 165; Mitchell, *ibid.*; Stephan, p. 106. Primary examples in Stephan's list (paraphrased): (1) placement of modifiers, especially those of colour, before the noun; (2) linkage of nouns in asyndeton and also series of noun phrases; (3) replacement of verbs by nouns; (4) disruption of normal sentence structure by separating grammatically paired words such as subject and verb, verb and object, preposition and object; (5) omission of verbs to create verbless sentences or reducing them to 'weak' forms like '*c'est*'.<sup>163</sup>

<sup>163</sup> These developments are detailed in Appendix A.

<sup>164</sup> J. Moréas (I. A. Papadiamantopoulos): '*Les Decadents*'; '*Le Symbolisme*'.

## Section Four

### SPECTRA CASE STUDY

#### 4.1 Preliminary: International Modernism

International Modernism of the immediate pre-WWI period, the outcome of Symbolism's influential spread, was also a (broader scale) disparate mix of styles and innovation. Whilst the 'art for its own sake' creed continued, its Decadent 'opting out' emphasis — which invoked a contrasting 'relationship' with society as its determining factor — had shifted to a mainspring which did not substantially involve societal considerations; if the temporal world was to manifest in literary works — an underlying Baudelairean transcendentalist inheritance encouraged, for numerous experimenters, writing infused with ethereal or idiosyncratic pursuits (dreams, inner thoughts) with little effort to present them mimetically — it was on the terms of the individual writer and therefore may, or may not, be accessible to the reading public. A parallel development, the appearance in literary works of modern life-styles, inventions and other impacts of the accelerating technological change, was not necessarily a contradiction to artistic freedom as perceived by the Decadents: modern society was engaged with modern freedom, so that the features of the former could be expressed in individualistic terms. However, the dislocations of these rapid changes, whatever their nature, were likely to engender a Nietzschean return of reactive satire: this came in the form of Spectrism.<sup>165</sup>

#### 4.2 Peritext, Epitext and the Epitextual Milieu

##### Packaging Peritext

Unlike *Déliquescences*'s multi-layered packaging peritext, that of *Spectra: A Book of Poetic Experiments* is limited to three indications of its satirical purpose: the title's somewhat esoteric Imagist suggestion (via light-spectrum 'imagery'), its more oblique hint of 'spectres', and the Imagist allusion of the cover graphic triangles. It was released in November 1916 by established New York publisher Mitchell Kennerley (aware of its transgressive nature) with authorship attributed to Anne Knish (Arthur Davison Ficke) and Emanuel Morgan (Witter Bynner).<sup>166</sup> Whilst author biographies were not included in the book, they accompanied an article (and a poem each) attributed to Knish and Morgan, in the June edition of *The Forum*, as suggested by Kennerley since he was also publisher of that journal.<sup>167</sup>

##### Prior Epitext

The incident which triggered the Spectra name was a harbinger for the hoaxers' deft orchestrations within the epitextual milieu. In February 1916 Bynner attended with friends a performance of the ballet *Le Spectre de la Rose*. During intermission he voiced distaste for the 'pretensions' of the many new poetic schools. One friend suggested he be less disparaging since 'it was something to have founded a school'; whereupon Bynner, as his eyes fell on *Le Spectre* program, scoffed, 'I can found a school of poetry myself. And what's more, I will, and I'll call it Spectrism'.<sup>168</sup> After completing the *Spectra* manuscript in early March 1916, the would-be hoaxers despatched it to potential publishers and undertook numerous promotional forays. Bynner wrote to Ficke on 25 March indicating that he would be reading some Spectric poems to the 'Poetry Society next Tuesday'; he added that he finds 'people very interested', implying he had commenced publicity. He also included a proposed satirical addition to the draft *Spectra* preface which named high profile Imagist Amy Lowell as a 'Spectrist' (not included when the collection was published).<sup>169</sup> The same month Ficke wrote to Lowell seeking her comments on an article he had drafted, 'Modern Tendencies in Poetry', which listed numerous schools including Spectrism. Soon after Bynner presented a guest poetry lecture to Chicago's Fortnightly Club during which he referred to a school called the Spectrists that he claimed

<sup>165</sup> There were many Modernist-inspired parodies during the twentieth century's earlier decades: L. Diepeveen, ed., *Mock Modernism: An Anthology of Parodies, Travesties, Frauds, 1910-1935*; P. Jones, *Imagist Poetry*, pp. 150-52. Due to its publicity in periodicals/newspapers with wide circulations, *Spectra* attracted more attention than others and, whilst there is a paucity of considerations regarding hoaxes in American literary history, the few there are usually refer to *Spectra* without mention of others.

<sup>166</sup> W. J. Smith, p. 23.

<sup>167</sup> Bynner (1), pp. 305-07 (A. Knish & E. Morgan, 'The Spectric School of Poetry').

<sup>168</sup> W. Bynner (3), *Selected Poems* (Knopf edn.), p. xiii (R. Hunt, 'Editor's Foreword').

<sup>169</sup> W. Bynner (4), *Selected Letters*, p. 48. Includes reproduction of the proposed addition.

produced material of better quality than typical new ‘schismatic poetry’. After quoting some lines from Morgan’s poem, ‘Opus 62’, Bynner stated it was not ‘quite as hopeless’ as some of the others and that ‘a few may see intelligence in it’. According to the Chicago *Tribune* he also ‘walked unblushingly in on Miss Lowell’s ‘Bath’ and criticised that lady for using the dictionary as a Saturday night tub’, a reference to Lowell’s poem in which the speaker muses on water reflections whilst taking a bath.<sup>170</sup> This poem’s implication of nudity caused considerable controversy, including tasteless humour focused on Lowell’s large physique and innuendos regarding its sexual ‘suggestions’.<sup>171</sup> Comments by a high profile conservative engaging in an essentially personal attack on a leading Imagist, whilst simultaneously endorsing another radical poetic school, precipitated considerable attention. Three instances of the Spectrists having a Lowell focus within a brief period indicates that she was of special concern to them.

*The Forum* article commences with an unusually belligerent attack on another school by asserting that the Vorticists were ‘actuated by a wrong theory of poetic expression’, which ‘underestimated the amount of clarity which even the most daring poetic sketches must have’, so that ‘their works hardly resembled human speech’. Spectrism, on the other hand, avoided this pitfall ‘even in its most novel efforts at advancing the frontier of the known world of poetry’ (an invocation of the ‘scientific frontier’ jargon commonly used in contemporary poetry school ‘manifestoes’) by retaining ‘a measurable degree of communication with the world of everyday speech’. There follows a rhetorical tract of pseudo-science and decorative assertions regarding sensory and mental physiology, such as:

The senses, and the mind behind them, act to a certain extent as a prism in relation to the emanations of the physical world. Vibrations of sound, color, or heat impact upon the sensory nerves, are conveyed in the form of a totally different kind of vibration to the brain, and there become once more transformed into some variety of emotion or motor impulse.

The satirists conclude with a patronising gibe at their principal ‘competitor’:

The Imagists, suicidally advertised by a concerted reciprocal chorus of poet-reviewers, might once have been capable of employing this very theory in a tentative way. The time is past, however, when Spectrists can hope for cooperation in this quarter; and the latest of the modern movements in poetry must be content to go its own way after the fashion of “the spear that knows no brother.”<sup>172</sup>

‘Poet-reviewers’ does not address the primary *Spectra* target; rather, it suggests envy and alludes to the dominance of reviews and poetry by leading Imagists, and their ‘incestuous’ praise of each other, in the newly established pro-Modernist journals. A noteworthy example is the May 1915 edition of *The Egoist* in which there are reviews by Richard Aldington regarding the poetry of Pound and F. S. Flint, a review of Lowell’s poetry by John Gould Fletcher, and a review of Fletcher’s poetry (albeit not by a leading Imagist); most of the poems included are by Aldington, H. D., Fletcher, Flint and Lowell. Whilst that particular instance of Imagist presence is greater than average, most issues of *Poetry*, *The Little Review* and *The Egoist* contained a substantial number of writings by Pound and this ‘gang of five’, including frequent instances of one reviewing another in positive terms. Poetry of the Imagists began appearing regularly in periodicals with commencement of *Poetry* and *The New Freewoman* (became *The Egoist* in 1914 with Aldington as one of two co-editors) in 1912 and *The Little Review* in 1914. The latter year also witnessed release of the high profile (due to Pound’s editorship) *Des Imagistes* anthology (half of the contributions were from the ‘gang’). This stimulated the group to produce their own three annually consecutive (1915-17) *Some Imagist Poets*

<sup>170</sup> Quotations and information: W. J. Smith, pp. 38, 15, 39. Apparently Lowell responded to Ficke stating she had never heard of Spectrism: *ibid.*, p. 38. Karen Leick observes: ‘Literary lectures significantly contributed to the popular awareness of literary trends in early twentieth century America, attracting audiences who wished not only to be educated but also entertained by lively personalities’: Leick, *ibid.*, pp. 108-09.

<sup>171</sup> A. Lowell (1), *The Complete Poetical Works of Amy Lowell*, p. 145 (‘Spring Day-Bath’). The poem’s words cannot be credibly described as sexual; the closest it comes to that is a suggestion of indulgence with ‘there is a smell of tulips and narcissus [sic] in the air’. Lowell’s reading of the poem at a Poetry Society of America meeting caused titillation and snickers regarding her physical size: C. Rollyson, *Amy Lowell Anew: A Biography*, p. 67.

<sup>172</sup> Bynner (1), pp. 305-07 (Knish & Morgan, ‘The Spectric School of Poetry’). Although Bynner reproduces the article in this volume, it does not include the Knish/Morgan biographies which apparently appeared in *The Forum* as a separate item. No sources I have been able to access completely reproduce the biographies despite their apparent brevity; Churchill appears to reproduce more than others. The *New Republic* review (see following paragraph) included a few biographical details, albeit some of those which Churchill and Smith indicate were in *The Forum* are not in the *New Republic*. Bynner reproduces the latter (‘The Spectric School’) in *ibid.* pp. 310-13.

anthologies (one additional contributor was ‘fellow-traveller’ D. H. Lawrence — relations between Pound and the group were by this time fraught) for which there was high-profile publicity apparently resourced by Lowell’s considerable wealth. *Poetry* and *Little Review* were not limited to Modernist styles; they published submissions from scribes of all persuasions and quickly captured a major portion of the general poetry market. The more experimentally-focused *Others* commenced publication in July 1915. From 1907 to 1913 both *Spectra* authors had a number of poetry volumes published (Ficke five, Bynner two) attracting generally positive reception and reviews. Both were also involved with the influential and conservative (vis-à-vis the ‘new poetry’) Poetry Society of America, Bynner serving as President for a number of years during this period. Reviews of their collections published 1914–15 (Ficke two, Bynner one) did not appear in the four journals and, compared to the Imagists, there was considerably less frequent publication of Ficke’s and Bynner’s poetry in them; this suggests they were eclipsed by their ‘competitors’.<sup>173</sup>

The article’s concluding sentence indicates, with the combination of ‘go its own way’ and the warrior ‘spear’ dictum of former U.S. president Theodore Roosevelt, that the Spectrists will expose the Imagists, whilst ‘the latest of modern movements’ is a general parody of contemporary poetic schools: if Spectrism is merely ‘the latest’ (rather than the ‘absolute answer’ claimed or implied in associated manifestoes) then it is ephemeral and so are the others. Biographies of the Spectrists were brief but exotic. Knish described ‘herself’ as ‘a native of Buda-Pesth’ [sic] who wrote about geometry and light refraction. She was also the author of many critical reviews in European magazines and a collection of poetry in Russian. Morgan was an American whose early inclinations for visual art led to a life of twenty years in Paris. Whilst there he met acclaimed Symbolist Remy de Gourmont who influenced him to focus on writing poetry, which he did upon returning to the U.S.<sup>174</sup> The parodists had correctly judged that their exotic profiles, combined with the article’s fashionable ‘scientific’ expression, would attract attention. Soon after, two editors of the broad circulation *New Republic* were visiting Bynner and spotted the *Spectra* manuscript. Bynner quickly ‘explained’ that Kennerly had sent him this collection to review, whereupon they requested the article for their magazine. Bynner obliged, and therefore his review (favourable but cleverly circumspect) of his/Ficke’s hoax poems appeared in November, accompanied by a poem from each Spectrist. Bynner’s quick-witted exploitation of this serendipity encouraged him to embark on a concerted effort to manipulate situations, and, according to Marjorie Seiffert, he would ‘introduce *Spectra* into the most unlikely conversations’. The hoaxers’ publicity initiated fan mail (‘Dear Mr. Morgan, please tell me—am I a Spectrist?’ asked one with sample poems attached) and publisher Lloyd Morris requested they contribute to *The Young Idea*, an anthology of essays regarding the spirit and aims of contemporary American literature.<sup>175</sup> Morgan established a ‘bridgehead’ with *Others* when it published a pre-*Spectra* poem by him in July 1916. The following months witnessed three developments regarding Seiffert: she was recruited as a Spectrist to cope with increasing demands; under her own name she had a poem titled ‘Spectrum’ in the *Others* September women’s edition; and using her *Spectra* persona Elijah Hay (his brief biography: ‘Briefless barrister’) she again submitted poems to *Others*.<sup>176</sup> The

<sup>173</sup> Ficke and Bynner volumes: Library of Congress Catalog [sic]. During the thirteen-month period Jan. 1915 to Jan. 1916, *Poetry*, *The Little Review*, *The Egoist* and *Others*, collectively published: six articles/reviews focused on Lowell’s poetry/books whilst there were none for Ficke’s or Bynner’s volumes released 1914-15; seventeen Lowell poems, whereas for Bynner and Ficke the number is seven each; and reviews/articles by Lowell numbered five whilst the pending Spectrists had two each: *Poetry*, 5.4-6, 6.1-6, 7.1-4; *The Little Review*, 1.10-11, 2.1-10; *The Egoist*, 2.1-12, 3.1; *Others*, 1.1-6, 2.1. The other ‘gang’ members appeared regularly (not to the same extent as Lowell) and overall their works were in the ‘limelight’ whereas those of the hoaxers were not.

<sup>174</sup> Knish and Morgan biographies: S. W. Churchill (2), *The Little Magazine ‘Others’ and the Renovation of Modern American Poetry*, p. 89.

<sup>175</sup> Quotations and information: W. J. Smith, pp. 21-22, 12-13. Ficke and Bynner also received invitations (under their own names) to contribute to *The Young Idea*.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 26-27; B. H. Wright, ‘Fourteen Unpublished Letters by William Carlos Williams’, p. 24. Three poems from the Spectrists which were not included in *Spectra* appeared in the four months prior to its release: ‘Opus 45’ by Morgan in *The Forum*, reproduced in Bynner (1), pp. 308-09; ‘Opus 11’ by Morgan (which included the pseudonym of the soon to be recruited third Spectrist: ‘This is a true / Spectrum / of Elijah Hay’), *Others*, 3.1, July 1916, p. 19; as if that was a cue, Seiffert had a poem (published under her own name) titled ‘Spectrum’, *Others*, 3.3, ‘A Woman’s Number’, Sept. 1916, p. 69. (Her first public appearance as ‘Elijah Hay’ was in the *Others* Spectric edition, Jan. 1917). Regarding *Others* 3.3, after ‘Spectrum’ was accepted, Seiffert appears to have been anxious regarding its implied Spectric connection, since she wrote to guest editor Helen Hoyt requesting the poem be withdrawn and replaced with another (‘December Night’), the reason being that since the former had been titled ‘after reading about the Spectric School, and having been in correspondence with Emanuel Morgan—It has no logical form, but is rather just a fragmentary reaction from an experience’: Churchill (2), p. 96. Whatever Hoyt thought of the request, ‘Spectrum’ appeared in ‘A Woman’s Number’ and ‘December Night’ did not.



latter triggered a cryptic response from assistant editor William Carlos Williams:

Oct. 12 – 1916 / Dear Sir / We have to announce the sad demise of “Others” anaemia of the liver. May we keep your MSS. *Spectra* 1, 2 etc? / Yours, / W. Williams

In another letter to Hay (undated but confirmed to be from this period) Williams stated ‘it will cost 25 to bring the rotten thing out’.<sup>177</sup> Churchill indicates that Hay offered Williams a financial contribution of ten dollars to ‘revitalize the corpse’.<sup>178</sup> This is confirmed by Williams:

Dec. 15 - 1916 / Dear Hay:- / Alfred has the MSS and the check is in the bank. You’re a brick. The issue comes out In January - goes to the printer at once. ... / Yours / Williams<sup>179</sup>

The *Others* Special is often given as an example of Spectrism’s growing influence; whilst there are several substantive indicators of the latter, since Seiffert partially financed the edition at a time when the journal was about to collapse, it is questionable in that regard.

Under his ‘independent’ guise Bynner continued to use his regular poetry lectures in numerous U.S. cities to promote Spectrism, and Ficke’s ‘Modern Tendencies in Poetry’ was published in the September *North American Review*.<sup>180</sup> Measures Ficke and Bynner put in place for receipt of correspondence, intended to protect their personas, unexpectedly compounded the intrigue their ruse had stimulated. Whilst industrial Pittsburgh in western Pennsylvania was not either’s place of residence, they enlisted (separate) friends each had in that city to forward mail: it was thought this would lessen the chances of their secret being exposed since Pittsburgh was off the ‘literary circuit’. Seiffert adopted a similar arrangement although her contact/address was not in Pittsburgh. For some time the ‘influence of the “Spectric School” increased, but strangely enough the authors themselves became more and more mysterious’.<sup>181</sup> Reporters appeared at their Pittsburgh ‘residences’ wanting to interview them, which left their contact-friends to explain how the respective poet had just departed to a ‘faraway’ place; on one occasion Bynner’s conspirator (who handwrote ‘his’ replies signing Emanuel Morgan) remarked how Morgan had studied at the École Normale in Paris, precipitating rumours that this was his prestigious and exotic destination. This complication led to the elaborate measure of enlisting friends in the ‘faraway’ places (New York, other U.S. cities) to post responses regarding mail written and forwarded by the Pittsburgh conspirators.<sup>182</sup>

### Prefatory Peritext

The hoaxers’ strident anti-Imagist comments in *The Forum* signalled there would be an attack on that school in their forthcoming *Spectra*; however, that was not understood in the contemporary context. There are two items of *Spectra* prefatory peritext. A dedication to de Gourmont by Morgan refers to the Symbolist’s death in September 1915, a not-out-of-place reflection since a number of American journals published tributes.<sup>183</sup> Nevertheless this reference, coupled with de Gourmont’s mention in Morgan’s biography, alludes to the promotion of his work by Pound and (a particularly enthusiastic) Lowell. The second item is a preface by Knish which is essentially *The Forum* article embellished with the cosmological pretensions typical of contemporary avant garde manifestoes. ‘Our feeling’, declares Knish, is that the ‘theme of a poem is to be regarded as a prism’ so that ‘the colorless white light of infinite existence falls and is broken up into glowing, beautiful, and intelligible hues’. Spectrism also ‘connotes the overtones, adumbrations, or spectres which for the poet haunt all objects both of the seen and unseen world’, prism and spectres being convenient

<sup>177</sup> Letter reproductions: B. H. Wright, *ibid.*, p. 27. Original emphasis. In relation to *Others*, Williams made a public statement regarding financial struggles and announced ‘At last the movement is dead’: W. C. Williams (1), ‘The Great Opportunity’, *The Egoist*, 3.9, Sept. 1916, p. 137. Confirmation re undated letter: P. Mariani, *William Carlos Williams: A New World Naked*, p. 789, n. 65.

<sup>178</sup> Quotation: Churchill (1), p. 35.

<sup>179</sup> Reproduced: B. H. Wright, p. 28.

<sup>180</sup> W. J. Smith, p. 38.

<sup>181</sup> B. H. Wright, p. 24.

<sup>182</sup> MacDougall, p. 272; W. J. Smith, pp. 20-21, 27; B. H. Wright, *ibid.* Bynner’s forwarding contacts included two separate New York locations where reporters also sought Morgan; it is unclear how these additions to the ‘go-between chain’ handled in-person enquiries. The elaborate mail arrangements did not work perfectly, numerous letters were returned “Addressee Unknown”.

<sup>183</sup> The dedication: ‘To Remy de Gourmont / Poet, a wreath! — / No matter how we had combined our flowers, / You would have worn them—being ours ... / On you, on them, the showers— / O roots beneath!’ Original ellipsis.

metaphors/puns for Spectrics. Knish mixes hyperbole with classical reference by describing the technique as ‘like the magic that would inevitably encircle a mirror from the hand of Helen of Troy’, and extends hints of the subtextual agenda by stating that Spectric experiments often involve ‘a tinge of humour’. In addition she satirises the Imagists’ penchant for Oriental culture, and their solipsistic tendencies, by way of Chinese painting which is ‘liberating in our poets and painters a happy sense of the disproportion of man to his assumed place in the universe, a sense of the tortuous grotesque vanity of the individual’. This also has a more substantive dimension since Ficke had developed a specialised interest in Japanese painting and by this time had become an accepted U.S. authority. He and Bynner (who was developing similar interests which manifested in two Asian tours and his published translations of Chinese poetry) believed Imagists did not genuinely understand these cultures and therefore misrepresented them; they wished to expose what they saw as the school’s Orientalist pretensions.<sup>184</sup> Further hints of Spectrism being not what it claims are provided with Knish’s comment that it is ‘yet in its infancy’ and her praise for Morgan, the ‘Spectric theory originator’, as a ‘genius’. References to the East and spectres continue as tropes in *Spectra*’s poetry.

### 4.3 *Spectra*: Close Reading and Associated Matters<sup>185</sup>

Unlike the other case studies the *Spectra* poems were not written collaboratively; twenty-four were composed by Morgan, twenty-two by Knish. Each poem’s title is the grand expression ‘Opus’, non-sequential numbers being the only differentiation. The first offering is Knish’s four-stanza ‘Opus 50’:

The piano lives in a dusk  
Where rich amber lights  
Quiver obscurely.

It exists only at twilight;  
And somewhere afar  
In the depths of a tropic forest  
The sun is now setting, and the phoenix looks  
Mysteriously toward the gold.

I think I must have been born in such a forest,  
Or in the tangle of a Chinese screen.

There is indigo in this music;  
This dusk is filled with amber lights;  
Through the tangled evening of heavy flower-scents  
Come footfalls  
That surely I can almost remember.

The opening lines function as an ‘atmospheric’ for ethereal thoughts trickling through a mind listening to a piano and their crisp visuals have a haiku sensibility. ‘Quiver’ is suggestive of both Lowell and Fletcher who liberally sprinkle their works with that word, and since much of what follows is abstruse, ‘obscurely’ possibly hints at what is to come. The setting sun is an effective figuration for the ashes from which the phoenix rises, and gold works as a metaphor of both the sun and an item of value; however, to look mysteriously at something worthy invokes an expectation of favourable outcomes, yet nothing positive eventuates. Indigo in the music is synaesthetically suggestive of the coming night but ‘tangled’ is a poor descriptor regarding fusion of the senses. *Spectra*’s second poem is Morgan’s six-stanza ‘Opus 41’ which opens with possible allusions to Christ:

Spectres came dancing up the wind,  
Trailing down the long grass,  
Shooting high, undisciplined,

<sup>184</sup> W. Bynner (5), *The Chinese Translations*.

<sup>185</sup> Knish & Morgan (1). *Spectra* quotations are from this website edition. All emphases and ellipses are original. Poems are generally discussed according to the collection’s sequence though not all forty-six are considered. (By comparison, *Déliquescentes* has fifteen poems, *Darkening Ecliptic* sixteen.) Allusions identified generally relate to poems/texts published prior to March 1916 by which date *Spectra* had apparently been composed. It is possible that subsequent amendments/additions were made prior to publication in Nov. 1916; one potential allusion (subsequently discussed) relates to a poem by H. D. which was first published mid-1916.

To join the sun and see you pass . . .  
The colors of the pointed glass.

Under a willow-maze you went  
Unsaddened . . . But a violet beam  
Fell on the white face, backward bent,  
Of a body in a stream.

Into the sun you came again,  
With sun-red light your feet were shod . . .  
And round you stood a ring of feathered men  
With naked arms acknowledging a god.

Indigo-birds and squirrels on a tree  
And orioles flashed in and out . . .  
The yellow outline of Eurydice  
Waited for Orpheus in a black redoubt

...

The first three stanzas have a hosanna feel about them, 'you' being Christ and 'colours of the pointed glass' suggesting church windows. The body in the stream, coupled with 'sun-red light your feet were shod' (reflecting the Catholic tradition of depicting Christ's wounds with 'haloes' around the feet/hands) and men acknowledging a god, have suggestions of baptism and angels. However, Eurydice's appearance is inconsistent and her 'yellow outline' is puzzling since garments of that colour do not figure in the associated mythology. Issues have been raised regarding the third stanza, one of which is its resemblance to a passage in Wallace Stevens's 'Sunday Morning', published in the November 1915 *Poetry* just prior to *Spectra* composition:

Supple and turbulent, a ring of men  
Shall chant an orgy on a summer morn  
Their boisterous devotion to the sun—  
Not as a god, but as a god might be,  
Naked among them, like a savage source.<sup>186</sup>

Ficke wrote to *Poetry*'s editor soon after the poem appeared declaring that 'Sunday Morning' tantalized him 'with the sense that perhaps it's the most beautiful poem ever written'.<sup>187</sup> A likely explanation as to how Stevens's lines made an 'appearance' in 'Opus 41' is that Bynner was also impressed with the quality of 'Sunday Morning' and he consciously or subconsciously wrote a modified version. Since his lines do not have suggestions of plagiarism or satire, this is an activation of Bynner's non-satiric writing and (setting aside questions of whose passage is better) they are effective poetry; at such points the hoaxers are not parodists using verse for critical purposes but otherwise-focused creative writers.<sup>188</sup> The opening passage of the next (three-stanza) poem, Knish's 'Opus 76', expresses a live-life-for-the-moment (Modernist) outlook whilst its last three lines are disconnected assertions, although 'Gothic' links with the cathedral which is the focus of the succeeding and final verses:

Years are nothing;  
Days alone count;  
These, and the nights.  
I have seen the gray [sic] stars marching,<sup>189</sup>  
And the green bubbles in wine,  
And there are Gothic vaults of sleep.

<sup>186</sup> *Poetry*, 7. 2, p. 83 (W. Stevens, 'Sunday Morning').

<sup>187</sup> Quotation: W. J. Smith, p. 67.

<sup>188</sup> Churchill argues that both Morgan's and Stevens's passages are homoerotic: Churchill (2), pp. 94-95. Whilst that is an in-isolation psychological reading of those particular 'Sunday Morning' lines, which may reflect some form of latent homosexuality in heterosexual Stevens, when considered in context of the complete poem they are an invocation of tribal religions sans sexual orientation. Since Bynner was homosexual it is possible Stevens's lines had that appeal for him, albeit in Morgan's passage that aspect is toned down and the tribal enhanced (only arms are naked, feathers added).

<sup>189</sup> Since *Spectra* has American orthography further quotations which include distinctive examples of that spelling are generally not highlighted with 'sic'.

My cathedral  
Has one great spire  
Tawny in the sunlight.

...

Its mighty roof  
Is copper rivering [sic] with rain.

Tomorrow lightning swords will come  
And thunder of the cannon.  
They will unrivet this roof

...

I shall have to follow my roof into the war.

Since *Spectra* was written in the shadow of a world war, 'Opus 76' may express concern for the increasingly global conflict.<sup>190</sup> With war in mind, 'gray stars marching' could refer to military uniforms which have star insignias attached to them, albeit that line is too distant from the war references to be effective. A roof damaged by cannon may figuratively go to war in retaliation, or alternatively, war has come directly to the home of the poem's speaker. However, this poem resembles Lowell's 'The Bombardment'.<sup>191</sup> In keeping with a negative aspect of her public image (deserved or otherwise) the poem has a distinctly self-focused tone and the satire is reinforced by Morgan's subsequent 'Opus 55' which contains 'thin cathedral—mine!', the 'mine' mocking 'my cathedral' and 'thin' suggesting it is insignificant. Incongruities such as the opening stanza's disconnected lines continue in the collection as stylistic parody of similar traits in Imagism/Modernism generally. Morgan's two-stanza 'Opus 15' has a developing frivolity, and whilst it may be intended to parody what the Spectrists see as typical Imagism, it has a quirky suggestion of 'life as it is' which is not dissimilar to Knish's live-life-for-the-moment:

Despair comes when all comedy  
Is tame  
And there is left no tragedy  
In any name,  
When the round and wounded breathing  
Of love upon the breast  
Is not so glad a sheathing  
As an old brown vest.

Asparagus is feathery and tall,  
And the hose lies rotting by the garden-wall.

In the next (three-verse) poem Knish presents a speaker who pronounces she/he is disinclined to pursue conventional notions of cleanliness and forthrightly acknowledges that taking a bath can be indulgence:

#### Opus 118

If bathing were a virtue, not a lust,  
I would be dirtiest.

To some, housecleaning is a holy rite.  
For myself, houses would be empty  
But for the golden motes dancing in sunbeams.

Tax-assessors frequently overlook valuables.  
Today they noted my jade.  
But my memory of you escaped them.

<sup>190</sup> The U.S. had not entered the war (that occurred in April 1917) at the time *Spectra* was published but, as with most non-combatant countries, the conflict was having a significant effect on people's daily consciousness.

<sup>191</sup> Lowell (1), p. 126 ('The Bombardment'). Lowell has numerous poems with cathedral references.

'Houses would be empty' but for 'golden motes dancing in sunbeams' is attractive hyperbole, whilst the character portrayal is subversively engaging, as is the parodic contrast of 'unfeeling' officialdom to an item of significant personal sentiment (jade). Nonetheless, with the combination of 'bathing' and 'lust' Knish exploits Lowell's bath poem, and subsequent allusions to that piece also occur. This poem doubles as parody of both Lowell and conventional society (officialdom and notions of cleanliness). The next contribution is Morgan's five-verse 'Opus 7' which has vague suggestions of divinity presented in contrived rhyme and one noteworthy stanza:

*Sheba, Sheba, Proserpina, Salome,  
See, I am come!—king, god, saint!—  
With the stone of a volcano O show that you know me,  
Pound till the true blood pricks through the paint!*<sup>192</sup>

'Pound' combined with 'true blood' invokes Ezra Pound and his self-promotion as an authoritative voice of literary heritage, reinforced by the italicisation (not applied to the other stanzas) and 'I am come!—king, god, saint!'. Morgan's two-stanza 'Opus 2' is a playful mix of workable metaphors (hope/over, fear/wounded), a hint that Imagism (the 'mastodon') is about to disappear and a sarcastic ending which may suggest *Spectra* is satire:

Hope  
Is the antelope  
Over the hills;  
Fear  
Is the wounded deer  
Bleeding in rills;  
Care  
Is the heavy bear  
Tearing at meat;  
Fun  
Is the mastodon  
Vanished complete ...

And I am the stag with the golden horn  
Waiting till my day is born.

The next offering from Knish also has a mischievous spirit:

#### Opus 151

Candle, candle,  
Flicker and flow—  
I knew you once—  
But it was not long ago,  
it was

Last night.  
And you spoiled my otherwise bright  
evening.

The first two lines appear to set up a romantic scene which was spoiled for the poem's speaker by the lover 'you' proving to be unsatisfactory. It is unlikely to be accidental that this poem's visual prosody has a close resemblance to three contemporary poems by Pound.<sup>193</sup> In the closing verses of Morgan's five-stanza 'Opus 62', the speaker achieves freedom of identity:

Fell to a pattern on the rug  
As flat as they could be—

<sup>192</sup> The italicisation does not appear in the website edition and is copied from Smith's reproduction: W. J. Smith, p. 86. Smith has no other stanzas italicised and it seems unlikely he would italicise just one if the original did not present it in that form. The website non-italicisation is probably an accidental result of software-triggered text standardisation.

<sup>193</sup> E. Pound (1), *Poems and Translations*, pp. 65, 159 ('Thoughts moving', 'I have felt the lithe wind', 'Aria').

And died there comfortable and snug,  
Faith, Hope and Charity.

That shape, it was my shining soul  
Bludgeoning every sham . . .  
O little ape, be glad that I  
Can be the thing I am!

Given an apparent absence of targeting directed at Imagism or its high-profile practitioners, the victory is a likely parody of restrictions attributed to the conventional notions of faith, hope and charity, their capitalisation presumably intended as emphasis; but since the upper case letters also imply human names, there is a double meaning which, in this context of no connection to actual people, seems to be purposeless ambiguity. However, this may be explained by these lines' sensibility of fun, partly expressed in a 'loose' crafting of playful rhyme, but also with a sense of not thinking too much about what is being written which has suggestions of spontaneity.

A number of issues are raised by Knish's three-verse 'Opus 131':

I am weary of salmon dawns  
And of cinnamon sunsets;  
Silver-grey and iron-grey  
Of winter dusk and morn  
Torture me; and in the amethystine shadows  
Of snow, and in the mauve of curving clouds  
Some poison has dwelling.

Ivory on a fan of Venice,  
Black-pearl of a bowl of Japan,  
Prismatic lustres of Phoenician glass,  
Fawn-tinged embroideries form looms of Bagdad, [sic]  
The green of ancient bronze, cinereous tinge  
Of iron gods,—  
These, and the saffron of old cerements,  
Violet wine,  
Zebra-striped onyx,  
Are to me like the narrow walls of home  
To the land-locked sailor.

I must have fire-brands!  
I must have leaves!  
I must have sea-deeps!

The sensibility of the opening lines bears similarity to a passage in H. D.'s 'Sheltered Garden' in which she's 'had enough' of 'border-pinks, clove-pinks, wax-lilies, herbs, sweet-cress', although there are factors mitigating against this resemblance being, as suggested by some critics, an intended allusion: the similarity does not extend to items of the same nature; H. D.'s satire, being set within a personal poem which is a likely reflection of her recent marriage break-up, has a more serious (arguably bitter) tone than Knish's carefree pizzazz; and since 'Sheltered Garden' was first published some months after the apparent completion of the *Spectra* manuscript it may have appeared too late to be an influence.<sup>194</sup> Also, would Knish attempt to satirise satire? None of these factors, singly or collectively, establish that there was no intended allusion (with regard to the 'timing' issue, since the Spectrists and their publisher were generally adaptive, the manuscript may have been added to during the period between *Spectra*'s May acceptance and November publication); however, they are indicators of the tenuous nature of this particular suggestion, and also the general complexities of allusion identification. There are other allusory possibilities: Churchill's suggestion that the exotica of the second stanza burlesque the Imagists' 'multicultural catalog' [sic] seems apposite; and, arguably, the final stanza bears resemblance to a passage in Fletcher's 'London Excursion'.<sup>195</sup>

<sup>194</sup> H. D. (Hilda Doolittle), *Collected Poems 1912-1944*, p. 19 ('Sheltered Garden'). The first publication of 'Sheltered Garden' was in H. D.'s collection *Sea Garden*, which was released in either late May or June 1916: J. S. Robinson, *H.D.: The Life and Work of an American Poet*, p. 121.

<sup>195</sup> Churchill (1), p. 26; *Some Imagist Poets 1915-1917: An Anthology*, p. 45 (J. G. Fletcher, 'London Excursion', from

The third and fourth stanzas of Knish's five-verse 'Opus 134' read:

This was the state  
Of my young heritage.  
Scarlet as the voice of trumpets  
Was the pageant of my days.  
Can I accept now  
The twilight?  
And soon the dark, where all colors  
Die?

Before I die, I will hold one last revel!  
I will have golden cups and poppy curtains!—  
And yet—

This poem's *faux* mourning for lost youth recalls (serious) passages in F. S. Flint's 'Regret'.<sup>196</sup> Likening scarlet (bright) to trumpets (loud) is effective synaesthesia. Nonetheless, Lowell's self-indulgence is again targeted: in addition to 'revel', 'golden' and 'poppy' are significant since, whilst these are common words, Lowell regularly sprinkles her poetry with them and 'poppy' was included in her recent book title. Also, Flint's 30-page chapbook contains many 'goldens', including one poem in which the speaker consecutively addresses (in a non-parodic context/tone) his 'golden ... haired ... golden ... hearted' love on a 'golden ... afternoon'.<sup>197</sup> Whilst the sendup is effective, just as dilettante Floupette's typical faddishness lacked humour (allowing for some innovative exceptions which dissolved 'the typical'), so does this targeting of (particularly) clichéd material, a not uncommon aspect of *Spectra*'s parody. Morgan's 'Opus 63', with 53 lines, is the longest in *Spectra* and is structured around the figure seven:

The seven deathly spears of memory  
Setting behind a god, a golden glorious  
Halo of land and sea  
Even for you and me,  
Even for us . . .

This seemingly positive setting is at odds with the negative deathly spears. The poem proceeds by allocating these 'spears' to seven colours and seven global regions, including:

The spear of Egypt,  
Orange,  
Through the sleeping lid,  
With all the power of the bulk of a pyramid.

The spear of Chile,  
Yellow,  
Through the thrilling cheek,  
With all the push of an upturned Andean peak.

'Spears' repeats the Roosevelt allusion to imply the 'warlike' stance of each country. Since there are no ostensible reasons as to why Egypt's weapon should be orange, Chile's yellow, etc., these metaphors appear to be artifice and the poem continues in this manner. Nonetheless, this linking of colour with the much emphasised seven suggests the light spectrum's seven basic hues — and therefore images/Imagism and a pun on 'spectrum'. The first two lines of each stanza in Knish's 'Opus 40' contain the strongest hints of the hoax:

I have not written, reader,  
That you may read. ...  
...

I have written, reader,  
For abstruse reasons.  
Gold in the mine ...

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the included 1915 edition).

<sup>196</sup> F. S. Flint, *Cadences*, pp. 21-22 ('Regret').

<sup>197</sup> A. Lowell (2), *Sword Blades and Poppy Seed*; Flint, *ibid.*, pp. 29-30 ('The Star').

Black water seeping into tunnels ...  
 A plank breaks, and the roof falls ...  
 Three men suffocated.  
 The wife of one now works in a laundry;  
 The wife of another has married a fat man;  
 I forget about the third.<sup>198</sup>

Any serious construction ascribed to the description of a mining disaster is dissolved by the ‘tragic’ outcomes of wives working in laundries and marrying fat men. The conversational last lines suggest parody of this Modernist technique (of which *Spectra* has other instances). Although tenuous, these lines have stylistic similarities with some poems of Orrick Johns, and this applies to other *Spectra* verse.<sup>199</sup> Knish’s three-stanza ‘Opus 150’ is essentially a non-satirical and evocative description of a nocturnal setting with a focus on aural images, the second stanza being:

This summer night  
 There are crickets shrilling  
 Beyond the deep bassoon of frogs.  
 They cease for a moment  
 As the rattling clangor  
 Of the trolley  
 Bumps by.  
 I hear footsteps  
 Hollow on the pavement  
 Now deserted  
 And blank of sound.  
 They die.  
 The crickets now are sleeping;  
 Even the leaves  
 Grow still.

These lines seem to bear little relation to *Spectra*’s purpose. Given the emphasis on sound, it is possible that Ficke had in mind to satirise the ‘polyphonic prose’ which Lowell often attributed to her poetry; however, there is little similarity between ‘Opus 150’ and Lowell’s works.<sup>200</sup> Knish’s ‘Opus 122’ opens with a feminist anti–drunken–husband theme; from ‘dead’ onwards there are several lines which double as metaphors of the husband and the ‘Lybian tombs’ theme with which the poem concludes:

Upstairs there lies a sodden thing  
 Sleeping.  
 Soon it will come down  
 And drink coffee.  
 I shall have to smile at it across the table.  
 How can I?  
 For I know that at this moment  
 It sleeps without a sign of life; it is as good as dead.  
 I will not consort with reformed corpses,  
 I the life-lover, I the abundant.  
 I have known living only;  
 I will not acknowledge kinship with death.  
 White graves or black, linen or porphyry,  
 Are all one to me.  
 And yet, on the Lybian plains  
 Where dust is blown,  
 A king once  
 Built of baked clay and bulls of bronze  
 A tomb that makes me waver.

<sup>198</sup> Ellipses in this poem’s text are original. Since not all of the first stanza is reproduced, an ‘ellipsis break’ is inserted between the verses.

<sup>199</sup> E.g. O. Johns: *Others*, 1.1, pp. 9-12 (‘Olives’); *Poetry*, 5.5, pp. 224-25 (‘The Rain’, ‘The Battle of Men and God’).

<sup>200</sup> A. Lowell (3), *Men, Women and Ghosts*, pp. ix-x.



The opening passage of Knish's twenty-two line 'Opus 1' expresses macabre 'humour' and is not dissimilar to the following four-line poem (atypical) of Richard Aldington, although the latter's is a witty play on words which is absent from Knish's passage:

The seconds bob by,  
 So many, so many,  
 Each ugly in its own way  
 As raw meats are all ugly.  
 Why do we feed on the dead?  
 Or would at least it were with cries and lust  
 Of slaying human food  
 Beneath a cannibal sun!

Christine

I know a woman who is natural  
 As any simple cannibal;  
 This is a great misfortune, for her lot  
 Is to reside with people who are not.<sup>201</sup>

This appears to be *Spectra's* one identifiable allusion to Aldington, albeit a post-*Spectra* poem discussed in Section 4.4 has relevance in this regard. At times both Morgan and Knish take the macabre a notch further with what appears to be a relish for violence (there are examples additional to these):

Between the shoulder and the head  
 The guillotine must play  
 And cleave with clash unmerited  
 The generating day . . .<sup>202</sup>  
 Till the separated parts, not dead,  
 Rise and walk away.

Morgan, 'Opus 16'

Or I will spring upon you  
 And with steel-hook fingers  
 Tear you limb from limb.

Knish, 'Opus 181'

Since violence is not readily associated with Imagism, if these images are intended as stylistic parody (or as suggestions of what the Spectrists would metaphorically like to do to their targets), those abstract possibilities are not conveyed in the poetry. They are also atypical of Ficke's and Bynner's own verse and are likely to be 'unleashed' by the freedom their personas allowed and may reflect inner repressions. The sarcasm of Knish's seven-line 'Opus 200' is a punchy observation of stereotypical male complacency juxtaposed with stereotypical female passion, another example of creative parody which has taken over from the critic of Imagism:

If I should enter to his chamber  
 And suddenly touch him,  
 Would he fade to a thin mist,  
 Or glow into a fire-ball,  
 Or burst like a punctured light-globe?  
 It is impossible that he would merely yawn and rub  
 And say—"What is it?"

'What is it?', a parody of the same line in Eliot's 'Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock', is the one readily identifiable *Spectra* allusion to a leading (non-Imagist) Modernist. Morgan's six-stanza 'Opus 1', focused on Isadora Duncan, has a different sensibility, the opening verses being:

They enter with long trailing of shadowy cloth,  
 And each with one hand praying in the air,  
 And the softness of their garments is the grayness of a moth—

<sup>201</sup> *The Little Review*, 2.4, pp. 4-5 (R. Aldington, 'Christine').

<sup>202</sup> Smith reproduces this line as: 'The generating clay ...': W. J. Smith, p. 95.

The lost and broken night-moth of despair.

And they keep a wounded distance  
 With following bare feet,  
 A distance Isadoran—  
 And the dark moons beat  
 Their drums.

More desolate than they are Isadora stands,  
 The blaze of the sun on her grief;  
 The stars of a willow are in both her hands,  
 And her heart is the shape of a leaf.

‘Grief’, ‘despair’ and ‘grayness’ allude to the 1913 drowning of Duncan’s two children when the car in which they were sitting rolled into a river due to the driver leaving the vehicle without engaging the handbrake (Duncan was not present). The poem concludes:

...

Till light comes leaping  
 On little children’s feet,  
 Comes leaping Isadoran—  
 And the white stars beat  
 Their drums.

The development from ‘dark moons’ to a closure of ‘white stars’ combined with light leaping on children represents a journey of healing. This compassion indicates satire is not intended.<sup>203</sup> Since ‘dance’ verses of the Choric School were published in the October 1915 *Others*, it could be expected that this piece alludes to those poets but there is little resemblance.<sup>204</sup> With serious poet Ficke dominant, Knish’s three-stanza ‘Opus 187’ is an allusion to war which is also psychologically perceptive:

I do not know very much,  
 But I know this—  
 That the storms of contempt that sweep over us,  
 Ready to blast any edifice before them  
 Rise from the fathomless maelstrom  
 Of contempt for ourselves.  
 If there be a god,  
 May he preserve me  
 From striking with these lightnings  
 Those whom I love.

Saying which,  
 Zarathustra strolled on  
 Down Fifth Avenue.

The last three lines  
 Are symptomatic.

This is Nietzsche’s Zarathustra who, having reversed the moral precepts of the similarly named ancient Mesopotamian, advocated in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* what is often considered to be an argument in favour of amorality, a controversial talking-point for many in the context of WWI. Whilst the two final stanzas can be seen as flippant, an alternative interpretation is that Zarathustra accepts no responsibility, his nonchalant stroll reflecting that the war is also amoral.

Knish’s eight-line ‘Opus 182’ seems too removed from anything written by the Imagists to be a satirical distortion of their style:

<sup>203</sup> Also, Bynner knew Duncan and wrote a score for one of her performances: Bynner (2), p. xlv (Kraft, ‘Biographical Introduction’).

<sup>204</sup> *Others*, 1.4, pp. 55-64 (‘The Choric School’). Aldington had a ‘dance’ poem published in this period but there little resemblance: *Poetry*, 5.5, Feb. 1915, pp. 221-22 (R. Aldington, ‘Dancers’).

“He’s the remnant of a suit that has been drowned;  
That’s what decided me,” said Clarice.  
“And so I married him.  
I really wanted a merman;  
And this slimy quality in him  
Won me.  
No one forbade the banns.  
Ergo—will you love me?”

The ‘anything goes’ sensibility is suggestive of unedited spontaneity. The possibility of this being an element of Spectrism is emphasised in Bynner’s *Spectra* commentary, in which he indicates that the aim was to ‘have fun’ with ‘extremists’ (he refers to Imagists and Vorticists), since he and Ficke believed that a lack of craft in their poetry could easily be replicated without application of conscious skill. He expands on this by stating:

The method of composition was simple. Sometimes we would start with an idea, sometimes with only a phrase, but the procedure was to let all reins go, to give the idea or the phrase complete head, to take whatever road or field or fence it chose. In other words it was a sort of runaway poetry, the poet seated in the wagon but the reins flung aside.<sup>205</sup>

Although Imagists discarded many traditional aspects of prosody (with some the shift was not dramatic) their works have structure and crafting. If the Spectrists’ method was generally as free as Bynner suggests it would not resemble Imagist writing. However, this claim is undermined by his additional comment that many poems drafted were considered ‘a bit too wild for inclusion’. The quantity of poems discarded is significant. Each ‘missing figure’ of the sequential gaps between the numbered ‘Opus’ apparently represents a rejected draft poem. Morgan’s highest opus number published is 104, suggesting he composed at least that many; on that basis Knish drafted at least 200. From a total of no less than 304 poems only 46 were considered of a sufficient standard to be included in the collection.<sup>206</sup> Also, in the period subsequent to *Spectra* composition when the hoaxers were looking for recruits, ‘we conscientiously had to exclude from the Spectric School five or six of America’s better known poets who, under oath of secrecy, experimented for participation in the hoax’;<sup>207</sup> only those of Seiffert were considered suitable. These factors indicate that the Spectrists had in mind a style of crafting they considered would be effective for their purpose. On the other hand, Knish’s ‘Opus 182’ has indications of spontaneity, as though the ‘reins’ were let go. At least one other *Spectra* poem, and possibly more (such as the previously observed ‘spontaneous’ aspect to Morgan’s Faith/Hope/Charity frolic), was similarly composed. Ficke relates an incident when they were at lunch (at the hotel where they were temporarily lodged) and Bynner, as a ‘shock joke’, purposefully fell off his chair in front of a waitress who abruptly launched into ‘violent hysterics’. After order had been restored, the hostess declared: ‘How terrible to entertain a lunatic!’ — whereupon, ‘with a shriek’, Bynner immediately dashed to the study and wrote his seven-line ‘Opus 104’. The tenor of Ficke’s account is that once Bynner got to his desk composition was rapid and the poem has that sensibility.<sup>208</sup> It also adopts a playful style that many readers (then and now) are likely to find engaging and possibly humorous:

How terrible to entertain a lunatic!  
To keep his earnestness from coming close!

A Madagascar land-crab once  
Lifted blue claws at me  
And rattled long black eyes  
That would have got me  
Had I not been gay.<sup>209</sup>

The closing verse of the final poem, Morgan’s four-stanza ‘Opus 79’, suggests the *Spectra* reader has been experiencing parody throughout:

<sup>205</sup> Quotations: Bynner (1), pp. 314-17

<sup>206</sup> Quotation and information: W. J. Smith, p. 18.

<sup>207</sup> Bynner (1), p. 129.

<sup>208</sup> Quotations and information: W. J. Smith, pp. 17-19, 25-27.

<sup>209</sup> Based on a study by George Chauncey, Churchill suggests that ‘gay’ was already being used by homosexual men at this time as a ‘code’ to refer to their sexual orientation and argues Bynner is using it that way: Churchill (1), p. 32. That interpretation is commensurate with the sensibility of the last three lines.

Smell me, a dead fish ...  
 Taste me, a rotten tree. ...  
 Someday touch me, all you wish,  
 In the wide sea.

### Spectra Close Reading: Key Outcomes

*Spectra* is primarily a satire of Imagism and whilst there do not appear to be identifiable allusions to other contemporary vogues such as Vorticism (except in *The Forum* article and Bynner's post-hoax commentary), Futurism or the Chorists (a small group and apparently short-lived), it maintains a stylistic tenor of exaggerated Modernism. The Imagist satire is focussed on Lowell and Pound — there appears to be few allusions to H. D., Fletcher, Flint, Aldington — which indicates that the hoaxers were drawn particularly to the highest profile practitioners. There is one allusion to Eliot and minor influences of other avant garde poets such as Orrick Johns may be present. Smith's more tenuous 'recognition' of references to other contemporaries A. E. Housman, novelist Ronald Firbank and singer Julia Moore, appear to be the only other suggested allusory sources.<sup>210</sup> The Spectrists' satire leads them into dimensions beyond the collection's intended purpose. There are sendups of societal orthodoxy, a Morgan verse which appears to be a resigned laugh at life's minutiae, and instances of commensurate sensibility in poems by Knish that are focused on modern (rather than orthodox) aspects of society, as if to say they are 'not so bad'. Some bizarre and playfully silly passages are likely outcomes of spontaneous writing for which even the parodic mindset was apparently unprepared. The Spectrists' creative skills also produce quality non-parodic verse. Although there are numerous instances of *Spectra*'s satiric purpose, poems otherwise focused (of whatever quality) make up a surprisingly substantial proportion of the collection, perhaps as much as fifty percent. A corollary of these digressive creations is that in their subsequent writing careers both poets experienced similar influences.<sup>211</sup> *The Forum* assault on 'poet-reviewers' and the personal attacks on Lowell indicate envy was a contributory motivation.<sup>212</sup> Regarding the latter, there is often a nasty 'edge' which, in combination with sendups of clichéd writing, reduces the potential for humour — in contrast to the other case studies, comedy is not a distinctive feature of *Spectra*'s primary satire; its limited presence mostly occurs in Knish's non-targeted material. Both Spectrists display attempts to make fun of graphic violence, which is unlikely to result from their satiric modes and possibly reflects inner repressions. The respective styles of the poets are substantially different. Knish presents a distinctive hybrid persona, a stereotyped tempestuous/exotic female fused with modern suffragette-style assertion; not infrequently, the details of her images are perversely obscure. Setting aside moments of the macabre, Morgan has a tone of insouciance, his more suggestive writing easier to 'read things into' — albeit with an attendant range of interpretative possibilities — and therefore often too vague to be effective; for this reason, there is no defined 'in-text' Morgan.<sup>213</sup> Distinctions between the two Spectrists illustrate the varying manner and 'degrees' of release individual writers experience when they adopt compositional personas different to their 'usual self'.

### **4.4 Subsequent Spectric Publications**

January 1917 witnessed two direct outcomes of the hoaxers' prior epitextual orchestrations: publication of *The Young Idea* anthology of essays regarding contemporary trends in American literature and the *Others* special edition.<sup>214</sup> Spectric contributions to the former illustrate an expanding tease. Knish, after 'acknowledging' that her native Russian tongue may not give her the right to speak, disparages Modernism's

<sup>210</sup> W. J. Smith, pp. 65-67. Smith suggests there are similarities between a particular line in Morgan's 'Opus 41' ('With a beaded fern you waved away a gnat', not reproduced in connection with the above considerations regarding the poem) and Firbank's *Inclinations*; this possibly is reduced by that novel being published some time in 1916, the same year *Spectra*'s Mss. was apparently completed by 3 March. However, there is resemblance of sensibility in relation to Morgan's poem and passages in Firbank's 1915 *Vainglory*: R. Firbank, *Three Novels: Vainglory, Inclinations, Caprice*.

<sup>211</sup> Churchill (2), p. 89; Bynner (1), pp. 272-73; W. Bynner (6), *Light Verse and Satires*, pp. xxviii, xxxiv (W. J. Smith, 'Introduction'); J. Gould (1), *Amy: The World of Amy Lowell and the Imagist Movement*, p. 236.

<sup>212</sup> This appears to be reinforced by the widely-held belief that Bynner was the originator of an epithet circulating in the community referring to Lowell as a 'hippopoetess': Gould (1), p. 231.

<sup>213</sup> These fluctuations may reflect internal uncertainties Bynner was experiencing at this time, including the process he underwent coming to terms with his homosexuality: Bynner (2), pp. xlvi-l (Kraft, 'Biographical Introduction').

<sup>214</sup> Although apparently not accompanied by reference to Spectrism, Morgan also had a poem 'Portrait of a Poet' which appeared in the September 1917 edition of the widely-circulated *Vanity Fair* combined with an unattributed illustration by Ficke. Both the poem and the drawing (subtly) use a masturbatory metaphor sending-up an implied solipsism indulged by poets generally which suggests Morgan is included. Poem and drawing reproduced: W. J. Smith, p. 102.

revered Symbolist forebears by declaring that the new American poetry is ‘too closely derived from a French movement that is already ancient history to Continental Europe’, and adds a flourish of exotic superiority with the admonition that ‘so little is basically grounded on a theory of Tsthetic [sic] that is of new import’. Morgan enlarges the hint that Spectrism may not be what it seems — humour is now regarded as an ‘essential quality’.<sup>215</sup>

The *Others* Special contained 21 poems (Knish six, Hay eight, Morgan six, one jointly by all three) presenting, as with *Spectra*, mixed qualities. Knish opens with an ‘un-Spectric’ level of comprehensibility:

OPUS 344<sup>216</sup>

The rain-patterns were weaving  
When I awoke to the muffled shriek of dawn—  
Weaving in the grayness  
Of a thunder-smouldering  
Under-world that was more shadowy  
Than the sibilant sleep-world behind me.

The emergence of the spars and planks  
Of a wrecked ship  
From beneath the receding tide  
Was a more heartening annunciation  
Than this slow thrusting forth into being  
Of the chairs and tables, books and pictures,  
That last night sank into the deep dark.

Leaning my forehead against the cold and pungent  
pane,  
I let my sprit life its coda,— [sic]  
Out from the wrecks and vestiges of yesterday’s mis-  
fortune  
To lose itself in the studied patterns,  
Fathomless and untraceable,  
Of rain.

Whilst a muffled shriek is a tenuous metaphor regarding dawn, the ‘atmospheric’, with its implication that nothing is tangible, is an experience one often has in the eerie calm-before-the-storm suggested here, a nightmarish shipwreck contextually evocative. Nonetheless, the ‘old’ *Spectra* style is evident in gratuitous juxtapositions: flotsam is a ‘heartening annunciation’; the awkward ‘I let my spirit life its coda’; and the pane which is oddly pungent. The heavy rain is imaged vividly with ‘fathomless and untraceable’. There is some resemblance between this ‘omnipresence’ of rain and Aldington’s poem ‘Childhood’; whilst it is insensitive to satirise a poem focused on a lonely childhood, Knish’s previous personal assaults demonstrate she is ‘capable’ in that regard.<sup>217</sup> With her next contribution Knish returns to tempestuous perversity:

OPUS 380

I had the moon for a reason.  
Was it not enough?  
You were unreasonable—  
You wanted love.  
But oh the moon was my reason!—  
Sigh like a dove  
And you shall never do better ...  
I had the moon.

<sup>215</sup> Quotations: Simkin, *ibid.* Another possible parody of the Imagists’ reverence for Symbolism is a *Spectra* Morgan poem, not considered in the close reading, which is partially focused on the stereotyped French penchant for eating frogs’ legs: Knish & Morgan (1), (E. Morgan, ‘Opus 9’).

<sup>216</sup> In this *Others* collection, titles are printed in uppercase and they are not restricted to the ‘Opus’ regimen of *Spectra*.

<sup>217</sup> *Some Imagist Poets 1915-1917: An Anthology*, pp. 3-9 (R. Aldington, ‘Childhood’, 1915 edition).

The first stanza of Knish's subsequent 'Opus 344' produces another Lowell attack:<sup>218</sup>

My lust of roundness will betray me  
To the arms of God, some day.

All of Elijah Hay's eight contributions target conventional society and its 'inhabitants'. The first (of nine stanzas) is not effective as a complete poem; its opening addresses a mysterious woman:

TO A.

Madam, you intrigue me!

I have come this far  
Cautiously sneezing  
Along the dusty high road of convention,  
But now it leads no farther toward you.

Today I have reached the cross-roads—  
A weather-beaten sign-board  
Blazons indecipherable wisdom  
Of which the arrow-heads, even,  
Have been effaced.

After a stanza and a half of dreary living a change occurs:

...  
I see a vision of two plunging feet,  
Discreetly shod, yet struggling in vain—  
Slime  
Creeps ankle-high, knee-high, thigh-high,  
Till all is swallowed save a brave silk hat  
Floating alone, a symbol of the creed  
I perished shedding.  
...

Whilst 'two plunging feet, / discreetly shod' with its implication of death typifies Spectric perversity, in the context of the poem's general sensibility it could be interpreted as a suggestion that the tragic outcome is preferable to the everyday. The intriguing madam appears to be a Spectric tease: expectations are raised that something significant about her will be revealed but this does not occur. Hay's remaining seven poems are all portraits of women, the first of these being a nightmare plagued by a habitual belligerent (parrot), a suppressed flirt (pigeon), a purveyor of clichéd jokes (stork) and an avaricious opportunist (crow), each with a stanza devoted to them; the 'introductory', 'parrot' and 'pigeon' verses are:

#### NIGHTMARE AFTER TALKING WITH WOMANLY WOMEN

On the four posts of my bed  
At the foot and at the head,  
Phantom birds in silence deep,  
Grimly watch my troubled sleep.

Parrot sits on one head post  
Like a controversial ghost  
Giving insult and offence  
Challenging to eloquence.

Pigeon, on the other side,  
Preens the coo she is denied,  
Sticky coils of saccharine  
Snare my rage that might have been.

...

<sup>218</sup> In this edition of *Others* Knish has two poems titled 'Opus 344': pp. 3, 7.

Another of Hay's portraits indicates suffragette sympathies delivered with a 'put-down' of the 'little' husband:<sup>219</sup>

OF MRS. Z.

I might have loved your black  
Wings of hair,  
Your peasant—Madonna features,  
Your twisted smile,—  
But having married a little brewer  
You unforgivably  
Turned Anti-Suffragist!

In the following, night represents both society and a husband who was once a lion but is now regularly drunk ('sodden', an echo of Knish's *Spectra*: 'upstairs there lies a sodden thing') and middle-age, which reflects the real gender of the poem's author and her exasperation with the restrictions of life in the home.<sup>220</sup>

NIGHT

I opened the door  
And night stared at me like a fool,  
Heavy dull night, clouded and safe—  
I turned again toward the uncertainties  
Of life within doors.

Once night was a lion,  
No, years ago night was a python  
Weaving designs against space  
With undulations of his being—  
Night was a siren once.

Oh sodden middle-aged night,  
I hate you!

Another portrait also refers to the domestic prison and appears to be a (non-humorous) self-satire, the last line a flippant 'cover-up' to retrieve the parody she is 'supposed' to be writing:

OF MRS. & SO FORTH

Old ladies, bless their hearts,  
Are contented as house-flies  
Dozing against the wall—  
But you,  
Imprisoned in the forties,  
Delirious, frenzied, helpless,  
Are a fly drowning in a cocktail!

'Lolita', Hay's final poem, expresses sympathy for a prostitute who, by implication of the subtitle, is presented in contrast to the 'society women' previously lampooned (including Seiffert in terms of her self-parody). Men who treat women as objects to rent are satirised in an ironic switch whereby the male speaker demands that Lolita state what she wants. There are also effective metaphors relating to 'ledger' and 'living prey'.

LOLITA

*A Respectable Woman*

How curious to find in you, Lolita,  
The Geisha

<sup>219</sup> 'In 1917 the women's movement was very much in the air and in the news, with women—and men—demonstrating for women's suffrage': Mariani, *ibid.*, p. 141.

<sup>220</sup> Russek, pp. 79-81; W. Drake, *The First Wave: Women Poets in America 1915-1945*, p. 40.

Who sits and strums in the immortal  
 Attitude of submission.  
 There is a ledger in place of her soul!

Your shoulders sang for admiration;  
 Your hair wept for kisses;  
 Your voice curved softly, a caress—  
 You came among us as a suppliant:  
 What had we you desired?

Bringing to market stolen goods,  
 Holding to view used charms,  
 Behold a hawker's spirit!

Eagles perch proudly in isolation,  
 They swoop to seize  
 A living prey—  
 Crows hover to feed,  
 Waiting with patience till the soul  
 Is fled  
 Leaving a helpless body—carrion—  
 (Vile thoughts obsess me!)

What did you want, Lolita?

Four of Hay's eight poems have feminist themes ('Of Mrs. Z.', 'Night', 'Of Mrs. & So Forth', 'Lolita'), which are also implied in the others that target conventional women, since, instead of living their banal and subservient lives, they should be confronting patriarchy.

These extracts from Morgan's seven-stanza 'Opus 88' are engaging metaphors of a drunk's burdensome sentimentality, expansive enthusiasm for just about anything, and down-to-earth psychology of the bottle being the beloved:

The drunken heart  
 Weaves among glassfuls of yellow and sings as they  
     empty,  
 Finding epics on the breast-bone of a chicken  
 And lyrics under the lettuce.  
 ...

The drunken heart  
 Sings a song of sixpence,  
 You are the emptying bottle of rye, beloved,  
 You are also the next bottle.  
 ...

The last line of this Morgan vignette illustrates how the representation of romance in poetry can be innovative:

#### OPUS 115

I had drunk too much  
 And I heard music—  
 My windows were all open  
 And the scent of June blew through.

My door  
 Was your hand, leading me to green leaves.

Morgan applies a similar image (though not romantic) in 'Opus 97', whilst his additional contributions to this Spectric Special are not distinctive. The final *Others* poem is an eleven-stanza Oulipian-style dialogue between the three Spectrists, synergistically presented through a 'prism':



PRISM  
ON THE PRESENT STATE OF POETRY

M.—

Though the ashes are gone and there is no bed left,  
We birchen virgins  
If we but touch each other and guard the draught  
Become a deep-bosomed fire.

The deep-bosomed fire and the corny rhyme of birchen virgins suggest the ‘old’ Spectrism. There is subtle radicalism in the second stanza’s irreverent depiction of God as an absent-minded housemaid:

H.—

The last log tossed here lightly  
By an absent-minded housemaid,—or was it God?—  
Mournfully eager to burn, hisses joy.

K.—

Out of a cradling has there come a sunset?  
Oh for the fellowship when once in Alexandria  
The world of learning burned!

M.—

Laughter, dear friends, will do for kindling;  
And we shall wear ridiculous beads of flame  
To tinkle toward the corners of the world,  
Slapping with light the faces of old fools.

The third stanza’s perversity is typical Spectrism whilst the following reference to laughter and kindling appears to hint at the hoax. A significant influence of the above third and fourth stanzas on William Carlos Williams is discussed in Section 4.7. The seventh verse includes the witty metaphor, ‘no fig-leaf for the mind’. In the ninth stanza, ‘art’ satirises its supposed ‘desecration’ by the Imagists, whilst the ambiguous ‘unrepentant thief’ refers either to the Imagist ‘pretenders’ who have not acknowledged the damage they have done, or the Spectrists’ unapologetic Imagist sendup (or both):

...

M.—

Without a pang  
Art hangs beside us on this leaf,  
An unrepentant thief.

...

A VOICE—

*There shall be ashes.*

The last line suggests that the ‘poetry’ of *Spectra*’s targets will be destroyed, as will Spectrism itself, both being no loss.

Whilst some of the *Others* Spectric poems continue the parody of Imagists/Modernists, as with *Spectra*, a substantive proportion are readily comprehensible in non-satiric terms, a significant number of these being qualitatively effective. This is particularly true of Hay’s contributions, of which ‘To A.’ is the only poem that is close to Spectrism’s purpose, the remainder of his having varying degrees of feminist themes reflecting Seiffert’s outlook. Bynner subsequently claimed the *Others* poems ‘were even more extreme than those in the volume, were in fact somewhat calculated to give the secret away to the knowing’.<sup>221</sup> However, this is limited to commentary on the at times obvious hints of the hoax. Although he may have also meant these poems are more ridiculous than *Spectra*’s, a measured reading suggests otherwise. Soon after the hoax exposure Seiffert indicated her compositional experience of ‘Spectrics’ was similar to that of her colleagues: ‘it loosened up our styles, injected a lively sense of irony into our poetry, and did us all a lot of good’.<sup>222</sup>

<sup>221</sup> Bynner (1), p. 316.

<sup>222</sup> Quotation: W. J. Smith, pp. 43-44.

#### 4.5 Community Responses Prior to Exposure

As the Spectrists' style became known, numerous American Modernist periodicals began publishing poems by imitators and sales of *Spectra* were successful to the extent that MacDougall claims it came 'as close to being a best seller as poetry ever reaches'.<sup>223</sup> Most contemporary responses refer to or imply *Spectra* with few mentions of *Others*. In Russek's view, 'the volume and its projected vision received an enthusiastic welcome by the greater literary community, even while some critics noted the absurdity of it'.<sup>224</sup> Responses from within the epitextual milieu include an associate editor of *Poetry* (Eunice Tietjens) exclaiming in a letter to Morgan that Spectrism is 'a real delight!' Acclaimed poet Edgar Lee Masters also wrote to Morgan stating that Spectrism is 'an idea capable of great development along creative lines', and continued:

... poetry which only gets the image and separates that from all other images loses much of the spirit and meaning.  
... Spectrism if you must name it is at the core of things and imagism [sic] at the surface.

However, Masters's qualification that Spectrism has potential indicates his comments were not a substantial endorsement. A contrast with Imagism is also provided by Morris in his Introduction to *The Young Idea*; he explained the reason for grouping Imagism and Spectrism in his 'Romanticists' section (the one other section was designated 'Empiricists') is that the poetry of each, 'judging by its reception, produced an emotional reaction of romantic quality in its readers'. After discussing their new techniques, he concludes that Spectrists seem 'to be chiefly interested in blurring and encircling with a haze of symbols [an echo of Baudelaire's '*Correspondences*'?] the image which the Imagists, in their poems, are anxious to convey with photographic precision'.<sup>225</sup> A comparison of the Imagist and Spectric 'philosophies' supports this view. However, there are significant gaps between Imagist theory and the styles of some practitioners; for example, Lowell and Flint, contrary to the principle that there should be minimal use of adjectives, apply them liberally.<sup>226</sup> *The Little Review*'s response to *Spectra* was curious; in July 1917 it published Morgan's 'Opus 96', and simultaneously from editor Margaret Anderson, as if she was aware of the hoax, but without further comment, a poetic 'Note': 'Banish / Anne Knish, / Set the dog on / Emanuel Morgan'.<sup>227</sup> Otherwise, no responses from within the epitextual milieu were at this time negative or aware of the sendup.

Reactions from the major press were varied. The St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*, despite being particularly critical, concluded as though avoiding offence:

It is mostly a conglomeration of stuff thrown together so that stars and cheese, and female limbs and green shadows and similar combinations are catalogued in one bit called opus number so and so. Well, for those who like this sort of thing this is the sort of thing they like.

The New York *Herald* referred to Spectrism as 'daughter of Futurist poetry, a granddaughter of *verse libre*, and no relation at all to real poetry', whilst the Los Angeles *Graphic* asserted that it was 'Gibberish, written for one purpose only — to attract attention'. Detroit's *Tribune* cryptically asked: 'Are we justified in saying that the poetic and the very spectric likeness of a hand to a beer has never before been revealed to the public?'<sup>228</sup> The Philadelphia *Public Ledger* could not resist an opportunity to indulge in time-honoured intra-state scapegoating of Pennsylvania's embarrassingly 'dirty' Pittsburgh, conveniently the Knish–Morgan home city, by declaring the Spectrists would not 'disturb the world of verse in America or set any river on fire, unless it be the Monongahela [a Pittsburgh river] when it is covered with oil scum'. Referring to this quotation, Barbara Wright states 'such negative reviews were not common'.<sup>229</sup> Smith presents as friendly this headlined question from Don Marquis of New York's *Evening Sun*: 'Are you hep to the Spectric Group? Have you a little Spectrist in Your Home?' However, Karen Leick indicates that Marquis posed the question

<sup>223</sup> MacDougall, pp. 271-72.

<sup>224</sup> Russek, p. 81.

<sup>225</sup> Quotations from Masters: W. J. Smith, p. 6, Simkin, *ibid.* (Smith and Simkin quote from different sections of the same letter); from Morris: Simkin. Contributions from Ficke and Bynner, in response to the invitations they received under their own names, were included in the 'Empiricists' section. Neither Simkin nor other researchers reproduce or quote from these and there are no apparent means of accessing them.

<sup>226</sup> E. Pound (2), 'A Retrospect', pp. 11-13. Originally published via two 1913 essays in *Poetry*, 'A Retrospect' is generally accepted as constituting completely or in part the 'Imagist Manifesto'.

<sup>227</sup> 'X' (Margaret C. Anderson), 'Note', p. 29.

<sup>228</sup> Quotations: W. J. Smith, pp. 9-10.

<sup>229</sup> B. H. Wright, p. 23.

in the context of his own sarcastic anti-Modernist verse (some of which she reproduces); his column was apparently used for this purpose on a regular basis.<sup>230</sup> Whilst Chicago's *Evening Post* considered *Spectra*'s preface had been concocted to pull one's leg and that Knish's 'Opus 40' was something to 'out-Carroll Lewis Carroll', it remarked that Knish had added a number of colour words to modern poetic diction such as 'amber' and 'indigo', and that the poet successfully presented the 'illusion of that tangled sense imagery which goes to make up consciousness'. The Richmond *Journal* engaged in a perceptive observation of the general reluctance to speak-up regarding fashionable obscurities in art, combined with a more subtle form of *Post-Dispatch* fence-sitting:

Five years ago we would have called this bizarre. Today we read it with the feelings of the unsophisticated wanderer in art galleries and studios, who says, safely enough, when he can think of nothing else, 'How interesting! Such a soul ... hand ... face ... such a leg!'<sup>231</sup>

'Five years' points to differences between the *grand presse* responses to the Floupette and *Spectra* Hoaxes. The rapidity of change in America's second decade of the twentieth-century initiated acclimatisation to Modernism, which contrasts with the relatively slower pace of the French *Fin de siècle*. This American 'cohabitation' of the traditional and the new partly explains why Modernism/Imagism and *Spectra* were not perceived as the sinister threat to established values as were the Decadents and *Déliquescentes*. The other factor contributing to the difference is the unusual pride, relative to most nationalities, that the French have regarding their language and the consequent hostility to the 'perverters' of that much valued institution.

Another significant development at this time related to a group called the Ultra-Violet School of Poetry who wrote parodies of Spectrism, a number of which were published in *Wisconsin Literary Magazine*. The texts of the poems present as more Spectrism rather than sendups:

#### MANUAL ORGAN

##### *Blossom 34*

I wished for her smiling lips.  
She wanted my golden curls.  
I was a banker's son.  
But she was just "one of those girls."

Oh, I wish I were a gnat's tail!

#### NANNE PISH

##### *Blossom 56*

For me, one day, the earth bloomed bright,  
And flowers spread their perfume,  
I had job.

And for a day  
I bore the brimming growlers  
And speared the juicy Frankforts;  
And then—  
I quit.

Why has cheese a rind? <sup>232</sup>

These poets claim that at the time they composed the 'Ultra-Violets' they were unaware that *Spectra* was meant to be satirical; assuming this is correct (there is no reason to believe otherwise) they therefore did not intend metaparody.<sup>233</sup> However, parody is signalled by the conversion of *Spectra* to 'Ultra-Violet', the puns

<sup>230</sup> Quotation: W. J. Smith, p. 6; Leick, pp. 120-21.

<sup>231</sup> Quotations (including some paraphrasings by Smith): W. J. Smith, p. 10.

<sup>232</sup> Reproduced: W. J. Smith, p. 33. Capitalisation of poets' names, title italics and indentations as per these reproductions.

<sup>233</sup> E. L. Meyer, 'An Introduction to Ultra-Violet Poetry', p. 232.

on Morgan's and Knish's names and Opus becoming 'Blossom'; the sensibility is 'friendly fire' — homage-style parody. This sendup in the 'ancillaries' illustrates that if metaparody was intended, to avoid the risk of it seeming to be another example of the original, it is effectively conveyed in material associated with the text but not of the text, i.e. paratext.<sup>234</sup>

#### 4.6 Hoax Exposure and Community Responses

In February 1918 Ficke mentioned privately to some associates that he and Bynner were the real *Spectra* poets and this began to circulate. Seiffert also disclosed Spectric 'secrets' to Kreymborg and there were other channels through which leaks could have occurred.<sup>235</sup> In April during a 'question and answer session' following one of Bynner's lectures, he was asked if he and Ficke were the true authors of *Spectra*, to which he replied 'Yes', and then related in detail the hoax's story.<sup>236</sup> Soon after that exposure a Morgan letter to *Poetry* acknowledged his Bynner identity and defended the hoax in general terms:

Our intent in publishing the book was not to question the use of free verse and not 'to bait the public,' but to satirize fussy pretence; and if we have in any degree focussed [sic] laughter on pomp and circumstance among poets we shall have had enough satisfaction in our fun.

Whilst Morgan/Bynner does not explain the essentially meaningless 'fussy pretence' and 'pomp and circumstance' he continues:

... I who came to scoff remained to play. Having given vent to Witter Bynner's irritation at smug and pedantic pretenses, Emanuel Morgan soon found himself a liberated identity glad to be agog with a sort of laughing or crying abandon, of which, on other poets, the New England soul of Witter Bynner had been too conscientiously suspicious.<sup>237</sup>

It seems Bynner is coy so as to avoid possibly offending individuals with whom he now wishes to 'play'. A more convincing statement of motivations is provided by Ficke:

We had great fun doing it—but back of [sic] the fun was an intensity of malice which Bynner does not explain. We who devoted our whole lives to poetry were angry and indignant on seeing apes and mountebanks prancing in the Temple. We had learned quite well that poetry is not as easy as that.<sup>238</sup>

Ficke's reference to apes and mountebanks and (unusual) frank acknowledgement of malice has a sense of verisimilitude that Bynner's comment does not and it is reinforced by Pulitzer Prize-winner Paul Horgan:

*Spectra* had him [Bynner] forking his tail at the tea-room renaissance, and playing his wit, his sardonic, boisterous malice at a style of poetic image.<sup>239</sup>

The primary purpose of *Spectra* is clear; however, as the hoax events proceeded there were fluctuations and ambiguities. The Spectrists experienced considerable fun in the process of composition which, they acknowledged post-hoax, had also been anticipated at the outset.<sup>240</sup> In addition, Morgan's reference to fun effectively includes his 'double agent' promotion of Spectrism as a supposedly disinterested reviewer and similar manipulations; he enjoyed the 'sport' of his clever deceptions. However, their original intentions were compounded by an unexpected outcome. Upon completion of the manuscript, the conspirators developed an anxiety regarding the possibility that their Spectric poetry might have greater quality than it was supposed to. This stimulated a cover-up claim that the 'whole performance had been done as a joke' and they apparently signed a declaration to that effect. Ficke also comments that it was only Bynner's departure on 3 March that prevented them from 'becoming seriously interested in further and genuine experiments'.<sup>241</sup>

<sup>234</sup> Genette's precise definition of paratext includes titles and author names – only the body of a text is not paratext.

<sup>235</sup> Gould (1), p. 228; W. J. Smith, pp. 29-32.

<sup>236</sup> Leick, p. 100.

<sup>237</sup> Bynner (1), pp. 272-73.

<sup>238</sup> W. J. Smith, p. 46.

<sup>239</sup> Bynner (3), p. xli (P. Horgan, 'Preface').

<sup>240</sup> Bynner (1), pp. 314, 272; W. J. Smith, *ibid*.

<sup>241</sup> Quotations and information: W. J. Smith, pp. 18-19. Smith implies the 'declaration' is not extant.

Within the epitextual milieu, a number of those previously supportive now made no mention of the poetry's worth but expressed considerable anger at having been deceived. The assistant editor of *Little Review*, Jane Heap, referred to the editor's (M. C. A.) cryptic note of eleven months before. Noting the journal's inclusion of Morgan's poem she continues:

Poor M. C. A. was so taken by the storm that she "published with éclat" in the same issue an ecstatic eulogy of the "new school" ...

The sarcasm indicates that, rather than Anderson being aware of the hoax, she had not been impressed with Spectrism but published Morgan's poem since she felt pressured to keep up with what was in vogue. It would seem *Little Review's* editor was one of those hopping on the bandwagon. Heap also quoted lines dismissive of *Spectra* from an unpublished Ezra Pound letter and announced that other Spectric submissions were returned. According to Smith, however, the latter conveniently omits that the returned poems had actually been accepted for publication prior to knowledge of the hoax and there had been a request for more. A further argument advanced by Heap is noteworthy:

If a man changes his name and writes better stuff, why does that make the public so ridiculous? ... a frog by any other name can hop as far and no further.<sup>242</sup>

The Poetry Society observed that the reviewers who had attempted to make sense out of *Spectra's* preface would have the hardest score to wipe out. *Poetry's* assistant editor Alice Corbin Henderson also focused on the gullibility of *Spectra's* positive reviewers with an incisive statement:

... critics are an unselective lot, particularly in the presence of the 'new poetry,' or 'new art,' about which there is a fair amount of uncertainty and which it is better to praise slightly rather than damn utterly—for one might find oneself running after the bandwagon. But would the result have been any different if one had put forth a book, say, of *Prisms and Prunes*—very charmed rhyming jingles, the words making apparent sense, syntax observed, but with nothing underneath? Certainly not. For this happens every day.<sup>243</sup>

*Young Idea* publisher Morris stated in a letter to Bynner that *Spectra* 'pleased me greatly' and asked why, after the text's spurious nature was exposed, 'should I have treated it any differently?' Despite this apparent enjoyment of the poems, Morris curiously added that they 'baffled' him. *Reedy's Mirror* presented a variation of this argument: 'The disclosure would be a good joke on the public were it not for the fact that the burlesque poetry is more successful than the authors' serious work.' Kreymborg expressed a similar view and the same argument was publicly supported by *Poetry's* editor, Harriet Monroe, despite having privately returned poems by Morgan and Hay which she had, as with *Little Review*, previously accepted and also requested more.<sup>244</sup> Another perspective in this vein came from a letter published in *Reedy's Mirror* which argued that the personas the hoaxers adopted exposed the 'real Bynner' and the 'real Ficke' because they had not, in Freudian terms, allowed the 'conscious censor' to intervene. They were therefore revealed as 'more human, more natural' than their

... serious verse indicated them to be; and by conventional standards their serious verse is good—good but *conscious*, while their burlesques are the gleeful outpourings of their unrestrained, boyish selves. Their burlesques are their own while their serious verse is largely *literature*,—traditional.

These arguments — that as Spectrists the real poets wrote better than they claimed — appear to have emerged only from the epitextual milieu; they are partially endorsed by subsequent statements from each of the three authors. Whilst many of those who changed their view of Spectric poetry after the hoax exposure did not provide explanations for the switch, the above-mentioned editors effectively demonstrated they were focused on what the text now represented: something which had been used to trick them, that being paramount over whatever view they may have regarding the textual content (positive/negative, changed/unchanged). The now publicly asserted authorial intention had changed — if not their views of the text, then certainly their behaviour (statements) toward it.

<sup>242</sup> J. H. (Jane Heap), 'The Hoax of the "Spectrics"', pp. 53-54; W. J. Smith, p. 37.

<sup>243</sup> A. C. H. (Alice Corbin Henderson), 'Baiting the Public', pp. 169-171.

<sup>244</sup> W. J. Smith, pp. 35, 11. In her memoirs, the editor acknowledged acceptance and return of these poems, although not the request for more: H. Monroe, *A Poet's Life: Seventy Years in a Changing World*, pp. 407-08.

Regarding newspaper responses, those who had not been deceived declared how right they had been. Those who had been taken in attempted to unobtrusively ease out of the situation. The *Post-Dispatch* now declared that Spectrism

... was not unlike the gibberish of a maniac, who had been given to strong drink. It was a huge joke on the part of the two poets, and as they had highly anticipated, a number of literary critics hailed the new volume with delight. Here was something new—the authentic voice of genius!

Considered in the light of the pre-exposure review in the same publication, it appears that initially the paper was another of those anxious to be on the bandwagon. The *New York Times* was critical of Spectrism but an informative glimpse is provided of quasi-independence being asserted by editors of the various organs within its 'stable': the Literary Section announced with pride that it had not reviewed the book in the first place; the *New York Times Review of Books* staunchly supported Bynner's and Ficke's conservatism as poets; whilst the *New York Times Magazine* bestowed an unorthodox form of praise by anointing Spectra as one of the 'great literary hoaxes of all time', though Bynner was also quoted indicating he could not now eliminate Morgan from his writing.

Another ramification of the exposure was, in effect, a transgressive extension of the Ultra-Violet parodies. In June 1918 Bynner received a laudatory letter regarding his work which included: 'I did not think they were writing such good poetry today'. It was from a farm boy in rural New York named Earl Roppel who indicated he 'always hoped someday I would get to the city for the schooling I need' and that he had recently been drafted into the military for which he had 'to leave next week' and continued:

This seems to cut off all that my life has been. Before I go I would like to have the opinion of someone I feel knows what poetry is on my poems which enclosed please find.

A sample of which included:

Last night when I was in our surrey,  
Driving home with my best girl,  
I saw the moon run down the fence-row  
Like a fat squirrel.

A professor of music, a colleague of Bynner's, was sufficiently inspired by a patriotic song-poem of Roppel's that he wrote a corresponding score which was publicly performed by a chorus of three thousand. A woman wrote to the San Francisco *Bulletin*:

Ever since I read the story and some of the work of Witter Bynner's lost poet, I've been wondering what has become of the lad ... from the narrow confines of a little New York hamlet ... I'm wondering if the war took that fresh fine almost-girlish sweetness out of him and made him bitter as it has so many of our youths ...

Bynner, in agreement with his colleagues that the poems displayed freshness and sincerity, responded to Roppel but his letters were returned marked 'No such person'. In 1920 an article appeared in the *New York Evening Post*, signed by a Malcolm Cowley who had departed for war service soon after the date of the letter Bynner received from Roppel, which revealed the latter's poems had been written by himself and friend S. Foster Damon. They wanted to test whether they could 'hoax' the hoaxer, and also intended to ridicule common poetic abuses such as 'false simplicity, easy quatrains and rhymes like "girl" and "squirrel"'.<sup>245</sup>

Louis Untermeyer, an active poet at this time who became a recognised critic, published in 1919 a volume regarding the new poetry; it is effectively a 'contemporary retrospective'. Noteworthy is his unusual view that Knish's preface was influential: this 'sober and scientific-sounding prolog [sic] did what the poems alone might never have been able to accomplish'.<sup>246</sup>

<sup>245</sup> Quotations and information: W. J. Smith, pp. 36, 42, 58, 33-35, 47-51.

<sup>246</sup> L. Untermeyer, *The New Era in American Poetry*, p. 321.

#### 4.7 The Place of the Spectra Hoax in its American Literary Context

Spectra is rarely referred to in works focused on American literary/poetic history. *A History of American Poetry 1900-1940*, despite its focus period and 500-page length, makes no mention of it.<sup>247</sup> Leick comments that Spectra ‘has been largely forgotten’ whilst Russek indicates its story is ‘most frequently told in footnotes and anthologies’.<sup>248</sup> Ruthven observes:

... “Spectrism” – is relatively unknown, and is either omitted from literary histories or mentioned only *en passant*. ... After the appearance of Louis Untermeyer’s obituary note on this episode in *The New Era in American Poetry* (1919), ‘Spectrism’ was forgotten until William Jay Smith exhumed it in *The Spectra Hoax* (1961).<sup>249</sup>

The ‘obituary note’ not only expressed the above unconventional view regarding *Spectra*’s preface but also offered a positive view of Spectra’s place: ‘windy explanations that followed Bynner’s disclosure of his audacious joke have not obscured the brightness of this sprightly chapter in our literary renaissance’.<sup>250</sup> The ‘exhumation’ did not generate a marked increase in Spectra attentions and American scholars interested in literary ‘fakes’ appear to find the Ern Malley Hoax more attractive. In 1983 David Lehman wrote a 27-page essay devoted to Malley in which he included one page on Spectra (descriptive only).<sup>251</sup> A recent debate regarding literary hoaxes in the U.S., an exchange of three articles, has no reference to Spectra; although the focus is hoaxing in the last two decades, Malley is discussed and Demidenko is mentioned.<sup>252</sup> Whilst Professor Perelman has a You-tube video regarding Spectra, his recent journal article ‘The Poetry Hoax’ is focused on Malley and Sokal (which did not have substantial connections to poetry), with a half-sentence reference to Spectra.<sup>253</sup> Bernard Duffey’s history of American poetry, in a section devoted to describing Bynner’s publications (no sections for Ficke, Seiffert or Spectra), provides this comment:

In the third, *Spectra*, he collaborated with Arthur Davison Ficke and Marjorie Allen Seiffert in an extended and successful hoax against Imagism and free verse under the pseudonym of Emmanuel [sic] Morgan; but, after some critics praised his mock poems, he thought well enough of their style to publish a serious volume of experimental verse in 1919.<sup>254</sup>

A 1929 history of American poetry by Kreymborg provides a limited comment which effectively disowns his *Others* publication of Spectrism:

I have a notion that when Bynner and Ficke, along with Marjorie Allen Seiffert, conceived their hoax on free verse and brought out the laughable volume called “Spectra”, Bynner, playing the role of Emanuel Morgan, wrote his most original things.<sup>255</sup>

A commentary of some substance is that of William Drake in which he draws attention to the feminist aspects of Hay’s Spectrics:

... as “Elijah Hay”, Marjorie Seiffert produced a body of poems caricaturing the tendency of the new poetry to juxtapose discordant, “unpoetic” elements. The opportunity for an underlying, serious irony was not to be missed, however, and many of her pieces expressed the frustration of a woman rebelling against domestic life and longing to fly free before it was too late.<sup>256</sup>

Catherine Daly, writing in 2002, argued that ‘Seiffert’s contribution to the hoax has until now been reduced’ by Smith in his Spectra history, since he focuses on the men as indicated by his inclusion of all Bynner’s and Ficke’s post-*Spectra* poems but only one of Seiffert’s; likewise his inclusion of two Spectra-audition poems

<sup>247</sup> H. Gregory & M. Zaturenska, *A History of American Poetry 1900-1940*.

<sup>248</sup> Leick, pp. 106-07; Russek, p. 75.

<sup>249</sup> Ruthven, pp. 195-96.

<sup>250</sup> Untermeyer, *ibid.*, p. 323.

<sup>251</sup> D. Lehman, ‘The Ern Malley Hoax: Australia’s “National Poet”’, pp. 47-73. The ‘Spectric’ one-page is spread over pp. 72-73.

<sup>252</sup> Soltan, *ibid.*, pp. 44, 47; B. Freind, ‘Just Hoaxing: A reply to Margaret Soltan’s [sic] “hoax poetry in america”’, p. 210; M. Soltan, ‘The Bicameral Mind: Response to Bill Freund’s [sic] “just hoaxing”’, p. 223.

<sup>253</sup> Perelman (1); B. Perelman (2), ‘The Poetry Hoax’, p. 13.

<sup>254</sup> B. Duffey, *Poetry in America: Expression and Its Values in the Times of Bryant, Whitman, and Pound*, pp. 167-68.

<sup>255</sup> A. Kreymborg, *A History of American Poetry: Our Singing Strength*, p. 419.

<sup>256</sup> Drake, *ibid.*, p. 40.

by George Sterling which were deemed unacceptable by Ficke and Bynner. Daly also refers to similar discriminations in Kreymborg's history.<sup>257</sup> With reference to Seiffert, Russek observes 'under the guise of a male voice, she could poke [sic] at the way men wrote about women'.<sup>258</sup>

The comments by Duffey and Kreymborg that the hoax was directed at free verse is a commonly expressed view amongst both current-day critics and participants of the contemporary epitextual milieu.<sup>259</sup> However, regarding Morgan's twenty-four poems in *Spectra*, twenty-two of these rhyme. The collection's preface draws attention to this:

Emanuel Morgan ... has found the best expression of his genius in regular metrical forms and rhyme. Anne Knish, on the other hand, has used only free verse. We wish to make it clear that the Spectric manner does not necessitate the employment of either of these metrical systems to the exclusion of the other.<sup>260</sup>

Also, free-verse poems by both Bynner and Ficke had appeared in journals prior to *Spectra*.<sup>261</sup> Harriet Monroe and Alice Corbin Henderson indirectly provide a clue as to why many inaccurately consider *Spectra*'s satire was focused on free verse:

When the Imagists were fighting their free-verse campaign, Mr. Ficke, in 1915-16 joined with Witter Bynner and Marjorie Seiffert in a satiric hoax labelled *Spectra* ...<sup>262</sup>

Since it was generally perceived in the community that the Imagists were associated with free-verse, and *Spectra* targeted Imagism, evidence that the satire was not directed at free verse was overlooked.<sup>263</sup>

Peter Schmidt, a Williams biographer, draws attention to this passage in the Spectric *Others*:

K.—  
Out of a cradling has there come a sunset?  
Oh for the fellowship when once in Alexandria  
The world of learning burned!

M.—  
Laughter, dear friends, will do for kindling;  
And we shall wear ridiculous beads of flame  
To tinkle toward the corners of the world,  
Slapping with light the faces of old fools.

He argues this extract 'is the single most important source for Williams' library-burning episode' in *Paterson*. Schmidt's view is supported by: similarities between the Spectric passage and *Paterson*'s Book 3 theme, and also some groupings of lines; Williams's editorial role at the time of the Spectric edition; and that Williams and Seiffert, meeting several times, established a communication which manifested in a life-long correspondence.<sup>264</sup> The enduring nature of this particular influence, a contrast to the others discussed, suggests it is the most significant *Spectra* legacy.

<sup>257</sup> Quotations and information: C. Daly, 'Marjorie Allen Seiffert and the *Spectra* Hoax', un-numbered pages, webservice. See also: Kreymborg, *ibid.*, p. 455.

<sup>258</sup> Russek, p. 81.

<sup>259</sup> Other examples: Leick, p. 107; J. Gould (2), *American Women Poets: Pioneers of Modern Poetry*, p. 52; F. Butcher, *Many Lives – One Love*, p. 97.

<sup>260</sup> Knish & Morgan (1), (A. Knish, 'Preface').

<sup>261</sup> Bynner: *Others*, 3.1, July 1916, p. 25 ('Highest Bidder'); Ficke: *Others*, 2.3, March 1916, pp. 178-180 ('The Dancer').

<sup>262</sup> H. Monroe & A. C. Henderson, eds., *The New Poetry: An Anthology of Twentieth-Century Verse in English*, p. 711. Another indicator is the Spectrists' admiration for Stevens's non-rhyming 'Sunday Morning', albeit that information was private until Smith published it in 1961.

<sup>263</sup> Whilst a number of the Imagists wrote at times in rhyme, their 'promotions' emphasised free verse.

<sup>264</sup> Schmidt, *ibid.*, p. 180; W. C. Williams (2), *Paterson* (Book Three), pp. 117-73, esp. pp. 142-43, 146-49.



## Section Five

### ERN MALLEY CASE STUDY

#### 5.1 Preliminary: the Broad Scope of the Ern Malley Hoax

The Decadents were in vogue when Floupette took aim at them in 1885; likewise, Imagism was the prevalent poetic fashion when the Spectrists launched their satire. The next significant hoax with purposes of criticism, *The Darkening Ecliptic*, was precipitated by hostility to mid-Twentieth-Century Modernism, but the scope was much greater than its French and American forebears, since, with Freudian psychoanalysis and Far Left political ideologies as targets, it was not restricted to literature. Within the literary field its range was likewise broad: Symbolism, Imagism, Surrealism and its New Apocalypse offshoot — effectively Modernism in its entirety — as well as the Romantic sources of these movements. In the early 1940s, war-time preoccupations restricted opportunities for the public exposure which gives life to vogues; consequently there were no major literary fashions in this period.<sup>265</sup> In Australia the primary focus of avant garde writing was *Angry Penguins* (also a key advocate for experimental art), which promoted numerous Modernist styles along with a mix of Far Left political perspectives and Freudian psychology; this was the targeted vehicle through which the hoaxers intended to convey their broader criticisms.

#### Political Background

Although *AP* went through three identifiable phases with regard to production and funding, its effectual policy approaches were relatively the same throughout.<sup>266</sup> Formally, the journal's first phase had 'no political plank nor artistic creed'; similarly, for the second and third phases (both under the same management) the 'policy of the magazine is to stand for no brand or branch of culture'.<sup>267</sup> In practice, editorials and contributions by individual editors and 'in-house' contributors ('Penguins') promoted a mix of radical literary/artistic and political views. To the extent that its political causes were separate from its artistic perspectives (there was considerable mixing of both), these can be described as Far Left which embraced a general homage to Marxism, albeit not formally ideological in the sense of Communist/Stalinist manifestations.<sup>268</sup> Another philosophical approach of the Penguins was their promotion of Herbert Read's particular advocacy regarding Surrealism and the New Apocalypse. Their support for Read on these matters may suggest they also endorsed his views on anarchism and whilst that term does not appear to be used in the journal, their artistic philosophies were essentially anarchic.<sup>269</sup>

The perpetrators' disclosure of the hoax on 25 June 1944 included a 1,000 word statement presenting their arguments for having conducted what they termed 'a serious literary experiment'. The same document also

<sup>265</sup> In the U.K. during WWII Dylan Thomas's poetry was popular with a substantial proportion of the literary community and, within narrower confines, likewise that of the New Apocalypse (the title of this grouping's first anthology, *New Apocalypse*, is often used as their name). However, to describe these as fashions is likely to be an overstatement.

<sup>266</sup> *AP* production phases: (1) 1941-42 (# 1-3), privately funded small-scale journal (first issue may have been funded by Adelaide University Arts Students Association – conflicting sources), # 1 co-edited by D. B. Kerr and Max Harris, 2-3 ed. solely by Harris; (2) 1943 – June 1944 (4-6), larger and more lavishly produced (graphics, photos, occasional colour), based at Adelaide University but mostly funded by Melbourne contemporary-art patrons John and Sunday Reed, with an editorial committee consisting of Harris, the Reeds and Sidney Nolan, Harris being (effectively) managing editor; (3) Dec. 1944 – July 1946 (7-9), with similar arrangements to phase (2) except that it was essentially produced from Melbourne. Sources: M. M. Finiss, *The Lower Level: A Discursive History of The Adelaide University Union*, pp. 173-74, 185-86; 'Angry Penguins' (page), *Ern Malley: The Official Website*; *AP*, 2, p. 5 ('Acknowledgements'); *AP*, 3, pp. 3-4 (M. Harris, 'Angry Penguins'); B. Snowden, *Max Harris: with reason, without rhyme*, p. 483; *AP*, 4, p. 1 (M. Harris & J. Reed, 'Angry Penguins — 4: Transition Number'); B. Lloyd (2), 'Reed & Harris: Publishers of the Avant-Garde', p. 36. It is claimed on *Ern Malley: The Official Website* ('Angry Penguins') that the first edition was released in 1940; however, that (undated) issue contains a poem dated 'Jan. 13, 1941', p. 29.

<sup>267</sup> *AP*, 3, p. 4 (Harris, 'Angry Penguins 3'); *AP*, 4, p. 1 (Harris & Reed, 'Angry Penguins — 4: Transition Number').

<sup>268</sup> Support for Marx, Lenin and (implied) English Marxist writer Edward Upward: *AP*: 3, pp. 46, 56; 4, pp. 49, 50, 53. In 1946, Harris wrote to the Secretary of the South Australian Branch of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) indicating that Reed & Harris wished to publish Marx's *Anti-Duhring*: Lloyd (2), p. 39. Harris was a (non-Stalinist) member of the CPA for several years during the 1940s: Heyward (1), p. 20.

<sup>269</sup> *AP*: 1, p. 22 (Harris, 'The Pelvic Rose'); 4, p. 54 (A. Tucker, 'Art, Myth and Society'). In 1939 Harris wrote that he was 'artistically an Anarchist': M. Harris (1), 'I Am An Anarchist – So What?', *Bohemia*, 4, p. 12.

included the basis of their political criticism, this being a passage which traces the development of Dadaism, Surrealism and the New Apocalypse, whose

... Australian counterparts are the *Angry Penguins* — this cultism resembles, on a small scale, the progress of certain European political parties.

An efficient publicity apparatus is switched on to beat the big drum and drown opposition. Doubters are shamed to silence by the fear of appearing stupid or (worse crime!) *reactionary*. If anyone raises his voice in protest, he is mobbed with shrill invective.<sup>270</sup>

‘European political parties’ is code for, given imperatives to publicly maintain support for our war-time ally, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and European offshoots. The leap from experimental writing to the political dimension is nominally explained by the *AP* mix of the two. However, the intensity of the ‘mobbed’ accusation stems from a source deeper than the journal’s amateurish bombast. This passage was McAuley’s initiative and reflects his encounters with stand-over Australian Communist Party ideologues during the 1930/40s at Sydney University, this association being regularly kindled by the growing membership and presence the Party enjoyed as ‘the representative’ of our military partner, enhanced by the latter’s success in reversing Nazi expansion, viewed by many as endorsement of communism for humanity’s ‘way forward’.<sup>271</sup> Although the *Penguins*’ amorphous mix of ‘Marxism’, ‘anarchic-aesthetics’ and fluid radical concepts of numerous varieties was ‘soft’ in comparison to ideological and didactic Stalinism, the Marxian associations, coupled with the journal’s forthright opinions/presentations, was sufficient to stimulate McAuley’s insertion of this passage in the *Disclosure*. The manifestations of these political criticisms in *The Darkening Ecliptic* are discussed below in relation to the final poem ‘Petit Testament’.

## 5.2 Peritext, Epitext and the Epitextual Milieu

### Packaging Peritext

Whereas *Les Déliquescences* and *Spectra* were published as books, the 32-page *Darkening Ecliptic* initially appeared in the 1944 ‘Autumn Number’ of Adelaide-based *AP* with authorship attributed to Ern Malley (James McAuley and Harold Stewart).<sup>272</sup> The front-cover displayed a painting by Sidney Nolan titled ‘Sole Arabian Tree’, a line from a Malley poem. Unlike *Déliquescences*’s Floupette, *Darkening Ecliptic*’s appended author name is not satirical. However, in a letter the journal received from the also fictional sister, Ethel Malley (Harold Stewart), the poet’s full name is given as Ernest Lalor Malley and editor Max Harris provided that information in his Introduction to Malley’s collection.<sup>273</sup> Whilst choice of the fabricated poet’s name was not addressed in public statements regarding the hoax subsequently made by the perpetrators, it is likely ‘Ernest’ implied that Malley was not earnest (in echo of Wilde’s iconic pun), this being enhanced when considered together with a similar connection regarding the poem ‘Baroque Exterior’ (discussed below). The objective of *AP* was to establish Australian forms of the Modernist styles it promoted, and the hoaxers appended ‘Ern’ to the manuscript since they apparently believed it had connotations of the ‘Aussie little battler’, and Malley was chosen for its suggestion of the Australian Mallee scrub. The source of Lalor, a radical Australian pedigree with its allusion to Eureka Stockade leader Peter Lalor, was apparently based on

<sup>270</sup> McAuley & Stewart, *ibid.*, p. 4. All *Disclosure* quotations are from this source and all emphases are original.

<sup>271</sup> D. Horne, *The Education of Young Donald*, pp. 322-23; Ackland (1), p. 31. Other factors contributing to McAuley’s vehemence: his disillusion with actions of both right and left ideologues during the Spanish Civil War; his move from a socialistic outlook to a libertarian form of anarchism (he had acquired a large collection of anarchist books/pamphlets); and a personal temperament inclined to doctrinaire positioning which led to his subsequent public profile as a right-wing warrior of the Cold War (accompanied by a then rigidly Augustan view of literature): Ackland (1), p. 64. At the time *AP* published Malley, Stewart was residing in Sydney whereas McAuley was in Melbourne. The hoax statement, published by *FACT Supplement* of Sydney’s *Sunday Sun*, was cobbled together (with some modification) by editor Colin Simpson from separate drafts forwarded by each hoaxer. Stewart’s draft has no political content; the wording from ‘progress’ to ‘invective’ comes from McAuley’s: J. McAuley, letter addressed to T. van Sommers (Assistant to Simpson) and H. Stewart, 19 June 1944, Colin Simpson Papers. It is not suggested Stewart was unsupportive of these criticisms; his – by this time – general conservatism, combined with *AP* linkage of Modernism (which he actively opposed) to Marxism (regarding which he was also hostile), meant he endorsed the statement’s position.

<sup>272</sup> Circulation of this issue commenced first week of June. The numbering and dating of *AP* editions is inconsistent; some are numbered without dates/years, some are dated without numbers, some have both numbers and dates, whilst the Malley edition is designated ‘Autumn Number 1944’ sans number (effectively # 6).

<sup>273</sup> *AP*, Autumn Number 1944, pp. 2-3 (Harris, ‘Introduction’).

the claim of McAuley's father that he was a descendent of the hero.<sup>274</sup> It is likely the hoaxers would have been aware that 'Malley' synergistically implies Mallarmé, who is parodied in the collection, and also Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du mal*. Unlike 'Spectra', 'Darkening Ecliptic' is not a pun hinting at the satire, its suggestions of the Apocalypsts and Surrealist-style juxtaposition designed to appeal to *AP* editorial predilections. Biographical information was provided via three letters the journal received from Ethel, two of which accompanied the manuscript submission (in two instalments); this correspondence is effectively the Malley Hoax prior epitext.<sup>275</sup>

### Prior Epitext

The pre-publication advocacy for Malley's poems was limited to Ethel's three letters together with three enclosed documents (additional to the manuscript): a 'Preface and Statement', a postcard and an unfinished poem.<sup>276</sup> The fact that there were no other orchestrations to 'seed' success of the planned hoax reflects the different nature, in contrast to Floupette and Spectra, of Malley's epitextual milieu. With regard to the former hoaxes the perpetrators were, whilst not adherents of the targeted fashion, participants within its community. *AP* was effectively a 'fashion' for its contributors/readers and this coterie performed the function of an epitextual milieu for *Darkening Ecliptic*. Due to their philosophical opposition to the journal, the hoaxers were not participants of this grouping and therefore not in a position to cultivate or take advantage of 'insider' opportunities. However, the prior-epitextual items formed an elaborate plan to achieve publication of Malley's poetry. The first letter Harris received in October 1943 explained that Ern had recently died and Ethel subsequently discovered *The Darkening Ecliptic* manuscript amongst his belongings; she enclosed some of the poems 'for an opinion', one of these being the twelve-line 'Durer: Innsbruck, 1495'.<sup>277</sup> Matters regarding this poem warrant its inclusion within epitextual considerations:

I had often, cowered in the slumberous heavy air,  
Closed my inanimate lids to find it real,  
As I knew it would be, the colourful spires  
And painted roofs, the high snows glimpsed at the back,  
All reversed in the quiet reflecting waters –  
Not knowing then that Durer perceived it too.  
Now I find that once more I have shrunk  
To an interloper, robber of dead men's dream,  
I had read in books that art is not easy  
But no one warned that the mind repeats  
In its ignorance the vision of others. I am still  
The black swan of trespass on alien waters.<sup>278</sup>

In post-hoax commentaries, both conspirators explained two things regarding this poem: firstly, it was of greater quality than other Malley poems and was therefore included in the initial sample as a lure to lessen the possibility of the submission being rejected; secondly, it was McAuley's own poem written prior to the hoax. McAuley subsequently modified the latter by claiming he wrote it intentionally for the hoax as a 'come-on', whereby the 'effect of the reasonably pleasant and accurate description of Dürer's picture was to lull the reader into acquiescence'.<sup>279</sup> The interloper theme of this piece is evocative of the Australian 'cultural

<sup>274</sup> Objective: *AP* 4, p. 1 (Harris & Reed, 'Angry Penguins – 4: Transition Number'); Malley's name: A. Young, 'Ern Malley's Origins', p. 5; Heyward (1), pp. 28, 89.

<sup>275</sup> Heyward (1), p. 59. Like the Spectrists, the Malley conspirators needed a channel for communications; this was fulfilled by Ethel's Sydney address being that of Stewart's sister who acted as forwarding-agent.

<sup>276</sup> Heyward (1), pp. 55, 60-63, 65, 69, 75-76. Release of details in this volume (1993) regarding Ethel's third letter, the postcard and the fragment, was the first time the existence of these documents was made known to the public: M. Heyward (2), 'Malley and Me — Beyond is Anything', p. B13.

<sup>277</sup> Quotations and information: Heyward (1), p. 55. Malley references to Dürer do not apply the traditional umlaut.

<sup>278</sup> Since there is one difference between the texts of *Darkening Ecliptic*'s original publication in *AP* and all subsequent book editions (of some importance, further discussed in the latter part of this section), the first book edition (1944) is used for quotations: Malley (2). All identified allusions and influences were published prior to the apparent completion of the Mss. in Oct. 1943.

<sup>279</sup> Source for it being written prior: Heyward (1), p. 89; source for it being intentionally written for the hoax: J. McAuley (1), 'Albrecht Dürer: Self and the World', p. 9. Vivian Smith, McAuley editorial colleague at the conservative *Quadrant* and life-long supporter, expressed in 2007 his view that 'Durer: Innsbruck, 1495' is the best of all McAuley's poems: V. Smith (1), 'Poet Unsimplified', p. 53. All statements by the Malley perpetrators were made in their 25 June 1944 hoax Disclosure or subsequent to that.

cringe' and is also symbolic of Malley's transgressive intrusion into the pages of *AP*, the latter suggesting it was written for *Darkening Ecliptic*. Whichever composition-timing is correct, the poem is arrestingly imaginative. Another likely reason for its inclusion is that Harris was impressed with Dürer's art (as was McAuley).<sup>280</sup> The opening of 'Durer: Innsbruck, 1495' resembles lines in 'Nuremberg', a poem about Dürer by Kenneth Slessor:

Those gabled roofs with smoking cowls, and those  
Encrusted spires of stone, those golden vanes<sup>281</sup>

Both poems also contain a challenging 'transposition of time' concept. These similarities, coupled with the fact that McAuley, in a passage focused on Slessor, wrote he 'paid particular attention to the poem "Nuremberg" which I have always liked', indicate Slessor was an inspiration for Malley's Dürer.<sup>282</sup> Two further Dürer references illustrate his thematic presence in Malley: the postcard Ethel forwarded depicted Dürer's *View of Trent*, and several lines in the subsequent *Darkening Ecliptic* 'Documentary Film' describe his *Samson killing the Lion*, which, given it is one of the artist's *Apocalypse* series, has a veiled connection to the Apocalypsts. Whilst there appear to be no Floupette or Spectra lines which have become much-quoted, the above 'black swan of trespass on alien waters' is one of Malley's which has attained enduring significance.

Additional items of Malley's biography which Ethel provided include: he died of Graves' Disease in 1943 at the age of 25; he was cremated at Sydney's Rookwood Cemetery; his poetry had not been previously published; the family home was in Sydney, although by the time Ern was 15 both parents had died; he left school at this time and worked as a motor mechanic, insurance salesman and watch repairer; and he lived for a few years in Melbourne where 'he had been fond of a girl' but 'had some sort of difference with her'.<sup>283</sup> On the reverse of the Dürer/Trent postcard there was the handwritten message: 'Ern — "The plot is sprung the Queen is took, One night enjoyed the next forsook". Remember? — Lois'.<sup>284</sup> This augments Malley's biography with its suggestion that Lois is the Melbourne girl, its limited detail providing an 'everyday' credibility, whilst 'plot' hints at the hoax. With melodramatic flourish Harris appreciated the biographical connection but not the hint:

For the sake of the unity of death and poetry, Malley sacrificed his relationships [sic] with the woman he loved, left her, and returned to Sydney.<sup>285</sup>

To give the manuscript an authentic look the conspirators: included expressions which were 'mistyped and erased'; the paper was rolled in dust; dripping tea-cups were stood on it leaving ringed stains; and the ink was 'aged' in the sun.<sup>286</sup> Malley's death, a significant difference between this and the Floupette/Spectra hoaxes, had two purposes. Firstly, the satirists judged correctly that permeating *Angry Penguin's* espousals of various contemporary styles were Romantic notions which, when coupled with its Marxist sympathies, suggested Harris would be attracted to the story of a relatively uneducated (working class) poet tragically dying, before his creations could be recognised, at the Keatsian age of 25. Secondly, the deceased Malley was conveniently unavailable for editorial-suggestions/interviews and this would reduce the chances of the ruse being exposed prior to the point at which the conspirators wished to reveal it. Graves' Disease is a medically recognised condition which the hoaxers used since, according to Stewart, both the pun on 'grave' and the 'fact' that 'nobody dies of the disease' (not accurate — whilst uncommon, deaths from it do occur) were intended as hints of the hoax. Soon after receipt of *Darkening Ecliptic* Harris and his colleagues

<sup>280</sup> M. Harris (2), 'Surrealism in Harold Herbert', *Bohemia*, 5, p. 9.

<sup>281</sup> K. Slessor, *Selected Poems*, p. 3 ('Nuremberg').

<sup>282</sup> McAuley (1), p. 8.

<sup>283</sup> Quotations and information: Heyward (1), pp. 61-62. Ethel also indicated she and Ern were born in the U.K. and emigrated as children with their parents to Australia.

<sup>284</sup> Facsimile in Heyward (1): Plate 18, b/n pp. 132 & 133. Both hoaxers later explained that the supposed quotation is a pastiche of passages from a Nahum Tate libretto: Heyward (1), pp. 108-09. Ethel indicated the only other possession of Ern's was a copy of *The Theory of the Leisure Class* by Thorstein Veblen; according to Stewart this was at the time fashionable within left-wing circles: Heyward (1), p. 105.

<sup>285</sup> *AP*, Autumn Number 1944, p. 4 (Harris, 'Introduction').

<sup>286</sup> H. Stewart, 'The Truth About Ern Malley', Mss., undated, p. 3, Colin Simpson Papers.

considered the possibility of it being a hoax and although some enquiries were made, neither Rookwood cremation records, nor at that time, Ethel's address, were checked.<sup>287</sup>

### Prefatory Peritext and Associated Matters

One of the distinctive features of *AP* was the bumptious posturing by Harris and several other Penguins, as typified in the following:

Like it or not, such work as this [*AP* contributions] IS the valid and valuable art of here and now. There is no rival to it. It is.<sup>288</sup>

This solipsism is soon revealed as one of the satirists' key targets. Malley commenced his collection with an epigraph: ' "Do not speak of secret matters in a field full of little hills." Old Proverb.' This reworking of the 'walls have ears' adage, muddled by a field perversely full of hills, has a Modernist flippancy rather than the sense of a time-honoured aphorism. Harris's response to the epigraph illustrates how a predisposed mindset will read into a text something which otherwise is not credible: 'This I take to be an explanation of his complete silence on the subject of poetry during his lifetime.'<sup>289</sup> Malley's 'Preface and Statement' commences:

These poems are complete. There are no scoriae or unfulfilled intentions. Every note and revision has been destroyed. There is no biographical data.

These poems are complete in themselves. They have a domestic economy of their own and if they face outwards to the reader that is because they have first faced inwards to themselves. Every poem should be an autarchy.

By drawing attention to the absence of biographical material Malley is seeking praise (boasting that he is not boasting). Although subtle, this is the first instance of satire regarding the Penguins' egotism and, by extension, of the self-focused Romantic hero. All pre-publication advocacy for *Déliquescentes* and *Spectra* was undertaken through epitextual initiatives and prefatory peritext was provided with the manuscript (albeit *Déliquescentes*'s first edition had no author biography). In Malley's case it was only with the second instalment that the above prefatory peritext was supplied. This afforded the hoaxers opportunity to use this peritext as an extension of the lures for publication acceptance provided in previous material. 'Autarchy' (self-governing) alludes to the argument by Herbert Read that particular cultures acquire distinct identities when they become 'autarkic'.<sup>290</sup> Autarchy also joins with 'scoriae' (mining waste) to parody regular use of arcane words in the journal and this forms a *Darkening Ecliptic* trope. 'Face outwards'/'inwards', and the attribution of autonomy/personification to the poems, typify Surrealist expressions and are appeals to *AP* commensurate inclinations. The remainder of the preface continues the 'velvet glove/iron fist' approach: jargon intended to appeal to the Penguins' combined with satirical criticism. It concludes:

All one can do in one's span of time is to uncover a set of objective allegiances. The rest is not one's concern.

This parodies Eliot's 'objective correlative', the change to 'allegiances' implying the Penguins are subservient to him. Another example of Harris's unquestioning passion is his description of the preface as 'seven aphoristic paragraphs' which 'give such a remarkable and moving insight into the poetic motives of Ern Malley'.<sup>291</sup> Whilst the hoaxers' various seductions were effective in achieving publication of Malley's collection, one item not included in *AP* was the unfinished poem Ethel forwarded, its smudgy ink supposedly

<sup>287</sup> Quotation and information: Heyward (1), pp. 107, 58-59, 122-23. Death from Graves' Disease (also known as exophthalmic goitre) is not unknown and this is often indicated in medical dictionaries. Stewart claimed he and McAuley obtained their information from a medical dictionary but since it is unclear as to which one, it is not possible to determine whether or not Stewart's statement is a misrepresentation. During the approx. four week period between publication of *Darkening Ecliptic* and the hoaxers' Disclosure, Harris hired a private detective to investigate who resided at Ethel's address. By this time *FACT*, assisted by the perpetrators, had confirmed Malley's biographical details were false.

<sup>288</sup> *AP*, 2, p. 7 (Harris, 'The Second 'Angry Penguins' '). Original emphasis. Non-Harris examples of this belligerence saturate a six-page article: 2, pp. 14-19 (J. M. Keon, 'Call Down To-day').

<sup>289</sup> *AP*, Autumn Number 1944, p. 3 (Harris, 'Introduction').

<sup>290</sup> H. Read (1), 'To Hell with Culture', pp. 10-13; H. Read (2), 'Art and Autarky', pp. 114-15. Although the essay collections from which these references were selected appeared after composition of Malley's Mss., the essays were first published earlier. Also, *AP*: 1, p. 22 (Harris, 'The Pelvic Rose'); 4, p. 54 (A. Tucker, 'Art, Myth and Society').

<sup>291</sup> *AP*, Autumn Number 1944, p. 3 (Harris, 'Introduction').

scrawled by the poet on his deathbed with a title ‘So Long’ scratched out (but legible) and in the same hand ‘No’ beside it.<sup>292</sup> Whatever Harris’s reasons for excluding it — poor quality, unfinished, respecting an assumption Malley would not want it published — its melodrama indubitably appealed to his Romanticism.

### 5.3 *The Darkening Ecliptic: Close Reading and Associated Hoax Controversies*

Although numerous critics have recognised a need for *The Darkening Ecliptic* and associated Malley (para)texts to be closely examined, to date there have been no close readings of the *in toto* textual Malley.<sup>293</sup> Available author commentary on Malley texts is more extensive than with Floupette or Spectra; apposite biographical records are also more prevalent. The hoaxers’ Disclosure made the following claims regarding their compositional methods:

We produced the whole of Ern Malley’s tragic life-work in one afternoon, with the aid of a chance collection of books which happened to be on our desk: the Concise Oxford Dictionary, a Collected Shakespeare, Dictionary of Quotations &c.

We opened books at random, choosing a word or phrase haphazardly. We made lists of these and wove them into nonsensical sentences. We misquoted and made false allusions We deliberately perpetrated bad verse, and selected awkward rhymes from a Ripman’s Rhyming Dictionary. ...

1. — There must be no coherent theme, at most, only confused and inconsistent hints at a meaning held out as a bait to the reader.
2. — No care was taken with verse technique, except occasionally to accentuate its general sloppiness by deliberate crudities.
3. — In style, the poems were to imitate, not Mr. Harris in particular, but the whole literary fashion as we knew it from the works of Dylan Thomas, Henry Treece and others.<sup>294</sup>

*Darkening Ecliptic* contains 16 poems and commences with the previously discussed Dürer piece.<sup>295</sup> That is followed by the two-part ‘Sonnets for the Novachord’, this being a prototype keyboard synthesizer (produced 1939–42). The first sonnet’s opening six lines could be a serious attempt to invoke images of falconry:

Rise from the wrist, o kestrel  
Mind, to a clear expanse.  
Perform your high dance  
On the clouds of ancestral  
Duty. Hawk at the wraith  
Of remembered emotions.  
Vindicate our high notions  
Of a new and pitiless faith.  
It is not without risk!  
In a lofty attempt  
The fool makes a brisk  
Tumble. Rightly contempt  
Rewards the cloud-foot unwary  
Who falls to the prairie.

The ‘medieval nobility’ suggestions provide some continuity for the first part. Likewise, the following eight lines collectively sermonise a lesson for those foolish enough to be committed to an unnamed faith, a pun on

<sup>292</sup> Reproduced: Heyward (1), p. 69. (Facsimile, Plate 14, b/n pp. 132 & 133.) The poem reads: ‘The wind masters the waves / As the waves the sea / And all of it entire / And none of it to me / I had thought it was / finished / And now it is useless / Like the writing on graves / Empty of future / (gap) Renew / (gap) the sign / At the moment of’ (nothing more)

<sup>293</sup> E.g.: P. Anderson, ‘Ern Malley: “The Greatest Australian Poet that (N)Ever Lived”’, p. 129; P. Kane, *Australian Poetry: Romanticism and Negativity*, p. 147; Musgrave & Kirkpatrick, *ibid.*, p. 131.

<sup>294</sup> As the following close reading indicates, the ‘&c’ is significant; it is likely they had more sources on hand than those mentioned above, including the previously mentioned medical dictionary. The credibility of composing Malley’s collection in one afternoon is discussed at the end of this section.

<sup>295</sup> There is a valid argument that it has 17 poems if it is regarded, as a number of critics do, that two sonnets grouped under the one title, ‘Sonnets for the Novachord’, are separate poems. However, the hoaxers’ commentaries regarding the compositional methods for the two sonnets effectively amount to their creation being a continuous exercise and they are therefore considered here as two parts of one poem.

'high' (intentional or otherwise) facilitating the switch from the kestrel's flight to the elevated notions, this figuration returning with the last line's fall. There is a doggerel tinge (o kestrel), a corny pun (hawk), and the first four lines resemble the Neo-Romanticism of the Apocalypsts. With one exception, author commentaries on the Floupette and Spectra texts contain no observations regarding particular poems; however, the Malley hoaxers have provided these, and although a number of their general assertions are questionable (discussed below), many of the particularised comments synergistically fit their respective contexts, enhancing appreciation of the work.<sup>296</sup> Regarding the above 'not without risk' and the reference to a fool who tumbles, Stewart indicated that these were intended as hints of the hoax. Non-allusory hoax clues are prevalent in Malley, a contrast to their occasional appearance in Floupette and Spectra. The second sonnet reads:

Poetry: the loaves and fishes,  
Or no less miracle;  
For in this deft pentacle  
We imprison our wishes.

Though stilled to alabaster  
This Ichthys shall swim  
From the mind's disaster  
On the volatile hymn.

If this be the norm  
Of our serious frolic  
There's no remorse:

Our magical force  
Cleaves the ignorant storm  
On the hyperbolic.

The first two lines make an extravagant claim regarding the power of poetry to which the following two lines bear no relation, and another abrupt change of direction occurs with commencement of the second verse (there is a tenuous link from 'imprison' to 'stilled'). The following post-Disclosure commentaries regarding method respectively from McAuley and Stewart are informative:

To a large extent I was holding the pen ... I'd call on Harold to cut in on the train of imagery that I'd started to develop...

We'd think of a line or two each, or we'd play with this bit and we'd put a bit in here and take a bit out there. They were all joint efforts, in different proportions, of course. One would have a bright idea and we'd say, "Oh yes, let's adopt that." Or sometimes Jim would get a line and I'd say, "Oh it'd be much better if we could get that word in there..."

However, the implication in both authors' comments that sudden changes of direction are a regular occurrence does not apply to this poem, the second sonnet having only two identifiable examples, whilst the first has the shift from falconry to the pitiless faith, partially 'saved' by the 'high' pun. (The 'lesser' incongruity of a 'stilled' Ichthys — Jesus fish symbol — which swims, is not directional change.) Interventions referred to in the above commentaries suggest greater intentional crafting than allowed in the Disclosure ('hints at a meaning held out as a bait', 'accentuate its general sloppiness by deliberate crudities'). Stewart also comments that the above rhymes were mostly selected in advance from their rhyming dictionary, the sonnets being constructed around them.<sup>297</sup> This is similar to 'contrived rhyme' whereby the choice of rhyming words/pattern dominates to the extent that meaning is substantially compromised; in this context it contributes to a general lack of clarity, albeit the 'continuities' discussed above are commensurate

<sup>296</sup> The exception is the previously discussed comment of Ficke's regarding Morgan's 'lunatic' poem. An example of a questionable particularised comment is that of Stewart's regarding the Dürer poem. He claims that since Malley is Australian, the line referring to a black swan as a trespasser on alien waters, is a contradiction 'everyone' should have understood since they are not trespassers in Australia. However, the setting of the poem is Innsbruck where black swans are trespassers; Stewart's implication that readers should assume that because the author is Australian the setting is likewise, is not credible. If that was author McAuley's intention — his previously discussed comments state otherwise — he has not conveyed it. However, the context of Stewart's comment — in response to Herbert Read's interpretation of an Innsbruck setting — has the stamp of not wanting to admit an opponent is correct: Heyward (1), p. 157.

<sup>297</sup> Quotations and information: J. Thompson, 'The Ern Malley Story', pp. 181, 177; Heyward (1), pp. 93, 97-98.

with a particular Modernist-style appreciation of poetry as an ‘association of ideas’. Nonetheless, the hoaxers’ creative skills emerge in the distinctive lines ‘clouds of ancestral Duty’ and ‘magical force / Cleaves the ignorant storm’.

The next poem, the two-stanza ‘Sweet William’, commences:

I have avoided your wide English eyes:  
But now I am whirled in their vortex.  
My blood becomes a Damaged Man  
Most like your Albion;

‘Vortex’ satirises Vorticism whilst the archaic Albion, Blake’s favourite term for England, indicates that the poem is addressed to him, ‘wide eyes’ apparently referring to a portrait which arguably depicts his eyes as ‘wide’.<sup>298</sup> In his 1940 MA thesis McAuley argues the case for Blake’s pre-emption of Freud, whilst ‘the Freudian attitude’, which in his view reduces mysticism to insanity, is dismissed as ‘simply not true’. He also suggests ‘Surrealism might be termed mysticism decapitated’. At this time McAuley is supportive of mysticism generally, including Blake’s overall transcendentalist aesthetics. His negativity towards psycho-analytic concepts was the basis for, by the time of the hoax, a distinct hostility to Freudian psychology, especially regarding its application in Surrealist literature and art. McAuley was also developing an aversion to egocentric artistic pursuits, which culminated in his 1950/60s belief that they should be undertaken in the service of Catholicism, and this focused his thoughts on those aspects of Romanticism and Modernism. These antipathies were probably invoked by Harris’s 1943 novel *The Vegetative Eye*, the title deriving from the closing lines of Blake’s *A Vision of the Last Judgement*, albeit in his thesis McAuley is sympathetic to that particular line.<sup>299</sup> These reminders of Romantic/Surrealist solipsism were compounded by *AP*’s extravagant promotion of the novel, including assertions that Harris was ‘already known in Australia and America as a poet of outstanding powers’ and it would ‘produce a profound effect on the literary world of both countries’.<sup>300</sup> Although Stewart’s intellectual development had its particularities his views on these matters were similar to McAuley’s. Blake was in effect a secondary Romantic/Surrealist target of the hoax primed by the *AP* association. The stanza concludes:

And I must go with stone feet  
Down the staircase of flesh  
To where in a shuddering embrace  
My toppling opposites commit  
The obscene, the unforgivable rape.

Whilst ‘unforgivable rape’ is satire of the Romantic and Surrealist contradictory notions of self-love and self-destruction it also implies rape can be excusable. The staircase of flesh is a Dali-esque presentation of body parts which becomes an ongoing feature of the collection. Although Harris credibly interpreted the staircase descent as an allusion to *Don Giovanni*, according to Stewart its source was a mix of Picasso’s Fontainebleau paintings regarding ‘the lady by the stream with those enormous ferro-concrete feet’ and Duchamp’s *Nude Descending a Staircase*. Assuming Stewart’s account is accurate (there is no reason to believe otherwise) this parody of Surrealist art (promoted by *AP*) also illustrates how an image for which there is a plausible interpretation can have an unpredictable genesis, and how one image can be a hybrid of multiple origins. The source of ‘toppling opposites’ was the Tao yin and yang and that triggered a reworking of the first poem’s black swan in the last lines of ‘Sweet William’:<sup>301</sup>

My white swan of quietness lies  
Sanctified on my black swan’s breast.

The fourth piece, the three-stanza ‘Boult to Marina’, refers to characters in Shakespeare’s *Pericles*. It contains the line ‘What would you have me do? Go to the wars?’, which is taken directly from the play, this

<sup>298</sup> The portrait is by Thomas Phillips: Heyward (1), p. 110; National Portrait Gallery (U.K.), [www.npg.org.uk](http://www.npg.org.uk).

<sup>299</sup> J. McAuley (2), ‘Symbolism: An Essay in Poetics’: Part 1, pp. 2-3, 9-10, 35; Part 2, p. 43 (pagination recommences at # 1 for each Part of the thesis). Also, M. Harris (3), *The Vegetative Eye* (title attributed to Blake).

<sup>300</sup> *AP*, 5, inside back cover (‘Spring Publishing List’).

<sup>301</sup> Re Harris/Don Giovanni: J. Tranter, ed., ‘Court Transcript of the Trial of Max Harris’, p. 15. Other information and quotations: Heyward (1), p. 100. Full title of Duchamp’s painting is *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2*.



sentiment reflecting the fact that, at the time they wrote *Darkening Ecliptic*, both McAuley and Stewart were WWII Australian Army conscripts.<sup>302</sup> Lines such as ‘Four frowning bedposts’, an allusion to the play’s brothel setting, and a pun ‘Part of me remains, wench, Boulton-upright’, are banal bawdy (as with Floupette, this is a Malley trope). A solipsistic line, ‘I assert my original glory in the dark eclipse,’ indicates an immediate source for the collection’s title. An Eliot idiosyncrasy, reflected in his poem ‘Marina’, was his advocacy for this (generally accepted) ‘runt’ of Shakespeare’s works. Malley’s *Pericles* allusions are satirical, suggestions that both Eliot and *AP* lacked literary judgement. This is reinforced by the play being accorded particular significance — another Malley poem, the five-stanza ‘Young Prince of Tyre’, is also focused on it. The latter has an acknowledged quotation from *Pericles* as an epigraph: ‘Thy ear is liable, th [sic] food is such / As hath been belch’d on by infected lungs’ (satire of the targets).<sup>303</sup> Since Henry Treece’s works were identified by the hoaxers as typifying the writing modes they were criticising, it is odd there are no apparent Malley passages alluding to him (rather than Apocalypsts generally); there is little resemblance between the one extract from Treece’s poetry reprinted in *AP* and any *Darkening Ecliptic* passages. However, the first stanza in ‘Young Prince of Tyre’ closes:

Built you a gibbet in the vile morass  
Which now you must dangle on, alas.

Although tenuous, it is possible that both the above and the opening to ‘Sonnets for the Novachord’ were influenced by Treece’s:

Where gibbet’s minions in the midnight swing,  
Wrapped in my wolf’s warm wool I dream my dream.  
For I am more than mankind; my hungry eye  
Equals, swears yokel, falcon’s screaming fate, ...<sup>304</sup>

Whilst particularly negative images of women occur in Surrealism, and arguably in Harris’s writings, Malley’s depiction of *Pericles* character Thaisa, who comes close to death giving birth and then becomes a priestess, appears to be an excuse to indulge in tasteless ribaldry with misogynistic overtones:

Poor Thaisa has a red wound in the groin  
That ill advises our concupiscence to foin.  
Yet there is one that stands i’ the gaps to teach us  
The stages of our story.

...

That at nightfall the woman who scarcely would  
Now opens her cunning thighs to reveal the herb  
Of content.

The subsequent ‘Culture as Exhibit’ has the similar ‘Milady Lucy’s sinister breast’. ‘Concupiscence’ is an example of the exotic words trope and in this instance is also a likely allusion to Harris’s use of it.<sup>305</sup> Word choice which fulfills a parodic function undermines the hoaxers’ claims of arbitrary selection, although that may be a disingenuous ‘truth’ in the sense that sources were ‘randomly’ flicked through until words/lines were found which suited their purpose. Indubitably there were also expressions selected subconsciously to which their satirical mindsets were predisposed. The phrases ‘i’ the gaps to teach’ and ‘the stages of our story’ are taken directly from *Pericles*. With regard to *Darkening Ecliptic* sources, there are occasional ‘submerged’ hints of the hoax awaiting readers who consult these origins; the following lines appear in the same *Pericles* Act from which the above are taken:

Boulton, take her away; use her at thy  
pleasure: crack the glass of her virginity, and make

<sup>302</sup> *Pericles*, IV, sc. VI, 172. It is likely this line also ‘struck a chord’ with *AP* co-editor Sidney Nolan who was likewise an Army conscript, his hostility to which is indicated by his desertion in 1944.

<sup>303</sup> *Pericles*, IV, sc. VI, 170-71. Other than this instance, Malley does not attribute quotations. A subsequent ‘quotation’ attributed to Lenin was fabricated by the hoaxers.

<sup>304</sup> *AP*, 5, p. 22 (H. Treece, ‘The Never Ending Rosary – A Sequence’). Quotation: J. F. Hendry & H. Treece, eds., *the white horseman: prose and verse of the new apocalypse*, p. 35 (H. Treece, ‘the ballad of the prince’).

<sup>305</sup> *AP*, 4, p. 6 (Harris, ‘The Word’).

the rest malleable.<sup>306</sup>

Returning to the sequential reading of *Darkening Ecliptic*, the poem following ‘Boult to Marina’ is the three-stanza ‘Sybilline’ and since Sibyls (Sybils), as Brooks draws attention to, talk in riddles, the title is possibly another hoax hint.<sup>307</sup> The second stanza includes the ‘a poet may not exist’ clue previously discussed (in the Floupette Section).<sup>308</sup> The first stanza:

That rabbit’s foot I carried in my left pocket  
 Has worn a haemorrhage in the lining  
 The bunch of keys I carry with it  
 Jingles like fate in my omphagic ear  
 And when I stepped clear of the solid basalt  
 The introverted obelisk of night  
 I seized upon this Traumdeutung as a sword  
 To hew a passage to my love.

‘Omphagic’ is not found in dictionaries and whilst Floupette was inclined to neologisms there are no other possible instances in Malley and therefore it seems unlikely to be of that ilk. Conceptually it could derive from the medical term ‘omphalo(s)’ (relates to the navel or centrality) or it is possibly a typing error of ‘omophagic’ which refers to eating raw food/flesh. Neither of those options provide credible contextual meaning which reflects the collection’s general style; however, either contribute to the satirical use of arcane expressions. ‘Traumdeutung’, a psycho-analytic term which refers to interpretation of dreams, has the dual function of parodying both esoteric words and Freudian/Surrealist notions, whilst ‘hew a passage to my love’ lampoons Harris’s ‘I will fight my way / to your love’.<sup>309</sup> The numerous allusions to writings in *AP* indicate the hoaxers almost certainly had copies of the journal on hand, unacknowledged in their listed sources. Stewart explains the origin of the rabbit’s foot was his observation that numerous American soldiers carried one in their pockets — an instance of random selection from memory rather than a text.<sup>310</sup> Lines in the third and last stanza include:

... The evening  
 Settles down like a brooding bird  
 Over streets that divide our life like a trauma  
 Would it be strange now to meet  
 The figure that strode hell swinging  
 His head by the hair ...

‘Evening settles down’ refers to the opening of Eliot’s ‘Preludes’, and the image of streets dividing life probably alludes to those well-known ‘Prufrock’ lines regarding insidious argumentative streets.<sup>311</sup> The figure swinging his head by the hair involves three references: it satirises a passage in Pound’s ‘Near Perigord’; his lines translate a section from Dante describing a decapitated poet in hell; and Harris has a similar image in *AP*.<sup>312</sup> (Given the anti-Modernist purpose, Dante was not a target.)

By 1943 Stewart had developed a keen interest in Oriental culture including Japanese haiku. It is not therefore surprising that Basho’s

Old pond,  
 leap-splash –  
 a frog.<sup>313</sup>

is probably the inspiration for both Malley’s next poem and a subsequent equal-length ‘Alternate Version’:

<sup>306</sup> *Pericles*: IV, sc. IV, 59, 60; IV, sc. VI, 144-46.

<sup>307</sup> Brooks (2), p. 97.

<sup>308</sup> Stewart indicates this was intended as a hint: Thompson, *ibid.*, p. 181.

<sup>309</sup> *AP*, 1, p. 26 (Harris, ‘The Pelvic Rose’).

<sup>310</sup> Heyward (1), p. 96. The pocket being ‘left’ reflects, consciously or subconsciously, the hoaxers’ criticism of left-wing politics.

<sup>311</sup> T. S. Eliot, *Collected Poems 1909 – 1962*, pp. 23, 13 (‘Preludes’, ‘The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock’).

<sup>312</sup> Pound (1), p. 307 (‘Near Perigord’); *AP*, 3, p. 16 (Harris, ‘Elegy of Sut’).

<sup>313</sup> Basho, *On Love and Barley: Haiku of Basho*, p. 58 (haiku ‘153’).

Night Piece

The swung torch scatters seeds  
 In the umbelliferous dark  
 And a frog makes guttural comment  
 On the naked and trespassing  
 Nymph of the lake.

The symbols were evident,  
 Though on park-gates  
 The iron birds looked disapproval  
 With rusty invidious beaks.

Among the water-lilies  
 A splash – white foam in the dark!  
 And you lay sobbing then  
 Upon my trembling intuitive arm.

Together with the Dürer theme this illustrates how the hoaxers' sources extended to artistic styles which inspired them personally. According to McAuley, manifestations of these influences do not necessarily point to the co-author with whom they were usually associated: 'I can remember starting with some of Harold's Chinese imagery and then getting Harold to fill up something which was probably aping my field of imagery'.<sup>314</sup> 'Night Piece' has a number of Malley's ongoing tropes: 'symbols' for Symbolism (trivialised to 'goings on' in the park); 'intuitive arm' invoking the Surrealist predilection for representing the inner-self as body-parts; and suggestions of bawdy with the 'goings on' and a naked nymph. In addition to the effective distilled images, the hoaxers' creative writing talents are apparent with the 'swung torch' and implied onomatopoeia of 'a frog makes guttural comment'. The swung torch in 'Night-Piece (Alternate Version)' becomes the poetic 'intemperate' torch and the frog's modified comment, 'green descant', is innovative synaesthesia.<sup>315</sup> The poem following the first 'Night Piece' is a one-stanza montage (of forty-two lines):

Documentary Film

Innumerable the images  
 The register of birth and dying  
 Under the carved rococo porch  
 The Tigris – Venice – Melbourne – the Ch'en Plain –  
 And the sound track like a trail of saliva.

Whilst 'Ch'en Plain' is not apparent in Pound's writings it lampoons his Chinese phase and the 'saliva' sound track contributes to the spoof. The next four lines are a vivid and generally accurate depiction of Dürer's *Samson killing the Lion* (located in London's British Museum), whilst those that follow include references to other biblical Samson stories (fire, wasps):

Durer: "Samson killing the Lion" 1498  
 Thumbs twisting the great snarl of the beast's mouth  
 Tail thrashing the air of disturbed swallows  
 That fly to the castle on the abraded hill  
 London:  
 Samson that great city, his anatomy on fire  
 Grasping with gnarled hands at the mad wasps  
 Yet while his bearded rage survives contriving  
 An entelechy of clouds and trumpets.

As with the first poem, McAuley's respect for Dürer ensured the quality of these ekphrastic lines. Since trumpets figure strongly in Apocalypst poetry, and the above passage has a reference to saliva, there is a tenuous link with Norman McCaig's:

<sup>314</sup> Quotation: Thompson, pp. 180-81.

<sup>315</sup> The first 'Night Piece' title is not hyphenated, the alternate version is ('Night-Piece').

Now heaven fall in a massive trumpet sound  
and scuttle your crab head under its angelic saliva.<sup>316</sup>

‘Documentary Film’ also negatively depicts Melbourne’s working-class suburb Footscray, which contributes to the hoaxers’ political criticism (discussed further in relation to the final poem):

Footscray:  
The slant sun now descending  
Upon the montage of the desecrate womb  
Opened like a drain.

...

Thoughts of Mallarmé, in particular his poems ‘*Don du poème*’ and ‘*Tristesse d’été*’, are invoked by the following extract with its ‘angels’, ‘music’, ‘Palms!’ and characteristic ‘o’ (Ô, ô):<sup>317</sup>

The solemn symphony of angels lighting  
My steps with music, o consolations!  
Palms!

The next title is a term which means a retraction of a previously declared viewpoint, the first of three stanzas being:

#### Palinode

There are ribald interventions  
Like spurious seals upon  
A Chinese landscape-roll  
Or tangents to the rainbow.  
We have known these declensions,  
Have winked when Hyperion  
Was transmuted to a troll.  
We dubbed it a sideshow.

...

Whilst the perpetrators’ claim of composing with constant interruptions is less apparent than would be expected, it manifests in the above opening lines: ribald interventions, spurious seals and a Chinese landscape-roll are seemingly unconnected. ‘We have known these declensions’ which are dubbed ‘a sideshow’ suggests, in conjunction with palinode, that the hoaxers are engaging in self-criticism of the Symbolist/Modernist explorations each pursued before rejecting them, this effectively being advice for the targets to embrace before they too risk being trapped in decline (declensions).<sup>318</sup> Since Dylan Thomas was promoted in *AP* and is one of two writers (with Treece) identified by the hoaxers as typifying the Modernist/Surrealist writing they opposed, ‘declensions’ may have been prompted by his use of it.<sup>319</sup> Stewart’s Eastern interests make another appearance with ‘Chinese landscape-roll’, indicating his early interest in Buddhist-inspired imagery which led to his later epic ‘Autumn Landscape Roll’.<sup>320</sup> In addition to Hyperion contributing here to the collage parody, it also alludes to Keats’s work focused on the myth which is significant in *Darkening Ecliptic*’s penultimate poem, ‘Colloquy with John Keats’. The tenth piece, the two-stanza ‘Baroque Exterior’, commences with a warning of the Modernist ‘threat’:

<sup>316</sup> Hendry & Treece, *ibid.*, p. 79 (N. McCaig, ‘nine poems’).

<sup>317</sup> Mallarmé, pp. 24, 18.

<sup>318</sup> It has been argued ‘ribald interventions’ is a switch back to the hoaxers’ participation in student circles of satirical repartee: Ackland (1), p. 79. Whilst that could readily be a subconscious contributor, Ackland does not consider the title; it is unlikely either McAuley or Stewart, both terminological purists even in their experimental days, would use ‘palinode’ without application of its technical meaning, whether or not the purpose is satirical. Although the focus of ‘Palinode’ is the messages (satirical or otherwise) which Malley’s authors have for their Penguins targets, there is some possibility that the combination of ‘troll’ with ‘sideshow’ reflects a subconscious invocation of Rimbaud’s ‘*parade sauvage*’: Rimbaud, *ibid.*, p. 316 (‘*Parade*’).

<sup>319</sup> D. Thomas, *Collected Poems 1934-1953*, p. 22 (‘From love’s first fever’).

<sup>320</sup> Ackland (1), p. 257.

When the hysterical vision strikes  
 The façade of an era it manifests  
 Its insidious relations.  
 The windowed eyes gleam with terror  
 The twin balconies are breasts  
 Momentarily we awake –  
 Even as lately through wide eyes I saw  
 The promise of a new architecture  
 Of more sensitive pride, and I cursed  
 For the first time my own obliteration.  
 What Inigo had built I perceived  
 In a dream of recognition,  
 And for nights afterwards struggled  
 Helpless against the choking  
 Sands of time in my throat.

Stewart indicates that the twin balconies allude to Dali's *Les deux balcons*, whilst 'wide eyes' revives the 'Sweet William' Blakean/Surrealist perspectives.<sup>321</sup> 'Obliteration' is all that Malley's poetry is worthy of and whilst the dream of recognition does not directly include an 'originary' claim to another's vision as occurs in the Dürer poem, it is suggestive of it; and that concept readily applies to the hoped-for role of Malley as an imposter in *AP* and may therefore be an intentional trope. The identity who 'built' (whatever) is seventeenth-century English architect Inigo Jones. The concluding 'sands of time' is taken from Longfellow and whilst it could be a random choice from the hoaxers' dictionary of quotations, it may not be coincidental that the source poem contains:

For the soul is dead that slumbers,  
 And things are not what they  
 seem.

Life is real! Life is earnest!  
 And the grave is not its goal;<sup>322</sup>

Together with the passage's other implications 'earnest' enhances the Ernest pun. Next is the four-stanza 'Perspective Lovesong', the first two lines having a Mallarméan sensibility: 'It was a night when the planets / Were wreathed in dying garlands.' The third stanza and commencing lines of the fourth read:

I have remembered the chiaroscuro  
 Of your naked breasts and loins.  
 For you were wholly an admonition  
 That said: "From bright to dark  
 Is a brief longing. To hasten is now  
 To delay." But I could not obey.

Princess, you lived in Princess St.,  
 Where the urchins pick their nose in the sun  
 With the left hand.

...

Stewart's comment regarding 'left hand' indicates both an elaborate rationale and the targeting of psychoanalysis without an apparent Surrealist focus:

... wonderful bait for the psycho-analysts and that they would pick on it deliberately as the sinister effect of the left hand.<sup>323</sup>

The two-verse twelfth poem, titled with the Imagist spoof 'Culture as Exhibit', has an eclectically sourced first stanza.

<sup>321</sup> Heyward (1), p. 110.

<sup>322</sup> H. W. Longfellow, *The Poetical Works of Longfellow Including Recent Poems*, p. 9 ('A Psalm of Life').

<sup>323</sup> Thompson, p. 180. 'Left' may also be another satirical criticism, conscious or subconscious, of 'left-wing'. Paul Pfeiffer's phrase 'where the left hand knew' may have been another influence: *AP*, 2, p. 20 (P. Pfeiffer, 'Poem').

“Swamps, marshes, borrow-pits and other  
 Areas of stagnant water serve  
 As breeding-grounds ...” Now  
 Have I found you, my Anopheles!  
 (There is a meaning for the circumspect)  
 Come, we will dance sedate quadrilles,  
 A pallid polka or a yelping shimmy  
 Over these sunken sodden breeding-grounds!  
 We will be wraiths and wreaths of tissue-paper  
 To clog the Town Council in their plans.  
 Culture forsooth! Albert, get my gun.

The three opening lines were, Malley’s authors declared, ‘lifted, as a quotation, from an American report on the drainage of breeding-grounds of mosquitoes’ and they therefore argued these could not be poetic. *AP* contributor Elisabeth Lambert presented an alternative view:

... borrow-pits. What a beautiful word. I’m doubtful just what a borrow-pit is, but it makes a lovely noise.<sup>324</sup>

The particular combination of phonemes ‘or’, where the ‘o’ is pronounced ‘ɒ’ (OED symbols), and ‘row’, where the ‘o’ is pronounced ‘əʊ’, is mellifluous. However, sonorous qualities are less effective if the word is commonly used; the reason borrow-pit has melodious appeal is the combination of a particular phonetic blend and its exotic character. Lambert’s observation is mostly dependent on one word, albeit the first line’s ‘list’ has an ‘anaphoric’ sensibility. The borrow-pit sound may not have appealed to the hoaxers but the drainage report stimulated them to think of, according to Stewart, the ‘sodden’ in the opening lines of Eliot’s ‘Little Gidding’, hence Malley’s ‘sodden breeding-grounds’. This is another example of an unpredictable source; since mosquito breeding-grounds are readily thought of as sodden, the reader is unlikely to think of Eliot’s lines. Stewart’s comment is an illumination of thought processing minutiae which occur not only in creativity but in all human pursuits. It is likely Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus* (‘Having now, my good Mephistophilis’) triggered ‘Now / Have I found you, my Anopheles!’<sup>325</sup> Stewart also states the second stanza lines focused on reading rooms and calf-bound volumes, reflect the desk-bound work in which he and McAuley were engaged, something that readers would have no way of knowing, which means this ‘allusion’ was a private matter (joke?) for the authors.<sup>326</sup> After more ribaldry the second stanza concludes with two (slightly modified) lines from *The Merchant of Venice* and an exhortation to the Anopheles that it attack the Modernists:

See how the floor of Heav’n is thick  
 Inlaid with patines of etcetera . . .<sup>327</sup>  
 Sting them, sting them, my Anopheles.

The title and some lines in the following piece, the two-stanza ‘Egyptian Register’, allude to Harris’s excursion into Egyptian mythology. Its first two lines are another parody of Mallarmé’s style, whilst the classical Tartarean may have been prompted by Harris’s use of it.<sup>328</sup> The opening nine lines read:

The hand burns resinous in the evening sky  
 Which is a lake of roses, perfumes, idylls  
 Breathed from the wastes of the Tartarean heart.  
 The skull gathers darkness, like an inept mountain  
 That broods on its aeons of self-injury.

<sup>324</sup> E. Lambert, letter to J. Reed, 11 July 1944, J. & S. Reed, *The Papers of John and Sunday Reed* (subsequently referenced as Reed Papers). These papers, stored at the State Library of Victoria, are disorganised: box/folder/file details listed in the catalogue are generally different to what is marked on the actual boxes/folders/files (in some instances, folders/files inside the actual boxes are marked as per catalogue). Access to the boxes should be achieved by requesting MS-13186 which appears to be the replacement for the former PA-1168 (listed in the catalogue). Borrow-pit is a civil engineering term which refers to holes that have been excavated to obtain soil, gravel or sand.

<sup>325</sup> Heyward (1), p. 94; Eliot, *ibid.*, p. 214; C. Marlowe, *Marlowe’s Plays and Poems*, p. 140 (‘The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus’).

<sup>326</sup> Heyward (1), p. 95. Although both McAuley and Stewart were Sydney ‘natives’, their Army work located them in Melbourne.

<sup>327</sup> *The Merchant of Venice*, V, sc. I, 58-59: ‘Look how the floor of heaven / Is thick inlaid with patens of bright gold’.

<sup>328</sup> *AP*, 3, pp. 15-18 (Harris, ‘Elegy of Sut’); *AP*, 2, p. 29 (Harris, ‘Two Spring Songs’).

The spine, barbed and venomous, pierces  
 The one unmodulated cumulus of cloud  
 And brings the gush of evanescent waters.  
 The lungs are Ra's divine aquaria

...

The second stanza commences with a spoof of Harris's *Vegetative Eye*:

Magic in the vegetable universe  
 Marks us at birth upon the forehead  
 With the ancient ankh. Nature  
 Has her own green centuries which move

'Green centuries' probably alludes to Thomas's 'green age' whilst the final lines return to Egypt and 'fructifying' may reflect its appearance in an *AP* essay by Michael Keon:<sup>329</sup>

...

The long-shanked ibises that on the Nile  
 Told one hushed peasant of rebirth  
 Move in a calm immortal frieze  
 On the mausoleum of my incestuous  
 And self-fructifying death.

With regard to the next poem, Paul Pfeiffer's use of 'colloquy' may have contributed to the title.<sup>330</sup>

#### Colloquy with John Keats

"And the Lord destroyeth the imagination of all them  
 that had not the truth with them." (Odes of Solomon 24.8.)

I have been bitter with you, my brother,  
 Remembering that saying of Lenin when the shadow  
 Was already on his face: "The emotions are not skilled workers."  
 Yet we are as the double almond concealed in one shell.  
 I have mistrusted your apodictic strength  
 Saying always: Yet why did you not finish Hyperion?

...

Since there are no 'Odes of Solomon' the epigraph is a hoax clue and it illustrates the success of the hoaxers' ploy that the credible content of what 'the Lord' might do to those who do not have 'the truth with them' subliminally encourages 'Odes' to be read as 'Song'. The opening line echoes Pound's 'I make a pact with you, Walt Whitman'.<sup>331</sup> The Lenin quotation, fabricated by the hoaxers, is in part a sendup of Harris's Surrealist/emotive writing. However, the perpetrators' Disclosure description of the quotation as 'quite phoney' has two connotations — the line is without merit and it was a hint which should have been detected — and these do not withstand scrutiny. Firstly, it is a credible 'Leninistic aphorism' since it readily fits with what he said/wrote. More significantly, it is an astute observation poetically expressed (arguably Malley's most acclaimed line). Also, in the unlikely event there was a reader who was sceptical regarding the quotation's authenticity, that person would have had no means of effectively investigating it. Lenin's complete works amount to 50 volumes; of those which had been translated into English at this time, many were not available in Australia. The appearance of Lenin also reflects the hoaxers' political criticism discussed in conjunction with the next poem. 'Colloquy' (three stanzas plus 'Coda') has a sophisticated theme (albeit not every passage contributes to it): the double almond in one shell is a subtextual claim by Malley that he is Keats's twin brother, reinforced by the 'fact' that they both died at the precise age of, as Heyward's analysis reveals, twenty-five years and four months, and also by the reference to 'ectoplasm' in the 'Coda':

<sup>329</sup> Thomas, *ibid.*, p. 13 ('The force that through the green fuse'); *AP*, 2, p. 16 (Keon, 'Call Down To-day').

<sup>330</sup> *AP*, 2, p. 20 (Pfeiffer, 'Poem').

<sup>331</sup> Pound (1), p. 269 ('A Pact').

We have lived as ectoplasm  
 The hand that would clutch  
 Our substance finds that his rude touch  
 Runs through him a frightful spasm  
 And hurls him back against the opposite wall.

Heyward's further probing also revealed that, although the respective years are different, Malley's birthday is the same as Einstein's; possibly coincidence, but given the other complexities the hoaxers have built in, a likelihood of it being intended is credible — perhaps reflected by Stewart's quip, in a letter to McAuley soon after *Darkening Ecliptic* was published, 'only Ern Malley could write like a genius all of the time!'<sup>332</sup> The double almond in one shell is also readily seen as a metaphorical reference to the hoaxers. Numerous critics discuss these Keats's-twin/Einstein allusions as though they were clues for pre-Disclosure readers. However, since prior to Disclosure the reader is necessarily unaware that Malley comprises two authors, this appears to be a joke for the hoaxers' private enjoyment. (Given the potential for the reader to make the Einstein connection is remote, that allusion is of the same ilk). 'Hyperion' was a less camouflaged clue for readers knowledgeable of Keats's works and life (which could be expected of Harris given his penchant for Romantic heroes) since the poet did not finish *Fall of Hyperion* due to his death, and abandoned the earlier *Hyperion* because of his concern it was 'Miltonic'; Malley's 'Hyperion' was a likely mischievous test.<sup>333</sup> These numerous 'hitchings' of Malley to Keats is the core of *Darkening Ecliptic*'s Romantic satire, the associated egotism also being the target of a second stanza line in which Malley declares he has become 'He that discovers meanings'. The third stanza contains a hoax hint which, since 'enteric' means 'intestinal', is bawdy with wit:

And not till then did my voice build crenellated towers  
 Of an enteric substance in the air.

As with Blake, Keats is primarily a target by association.

The first two stanzas of the collection's final four-verse poem contain numerous allusions:

#### Petit Testament

In the twenty-fifth year of my age  
 I find myself to be a dromedary  
 That has run short of water between  
 One oasis and the next mirage  
 And having despaired of ever  
 Making my obsessions intelligible  
 I am content at last to be  
 The sole clerk of my metamorphoses.  
 Begin here:

In the year 1943  
 I resigned to the living all collateral images  
 Reserving to myself a man's  
 Inalienable right to be sad  
 At his own funeral.  
 (Here the peacock blinks the eyes  
 of his multipennate tail.)  
 In the same year  
 I said to my love (who is living)  
 Dear we shall never be that verb  
 Perched on the sole Arabian Tree  
 Not having learnt in our green age to forget  
 The sins that flow between the hands and feet  
 (Here the Tree weeps gum tears  
 Which are also real: I tell you  
 These things are real)

<sup>332</sup> Heyward (1), pp. 106-07; quotation: Ackland (1), p. 82.

<sup>333</sup> R. Gittings, *John Keats*, p. 350; A. Tate, *Collected Essays*, p. 168.



So I forced a parting  
 Scrubbing my few dingy words to brightness.

The title, considered together with its first line, appears to be sourced from Villon whose ‘*Le Testament*’ commences ‘In my thirtieth year of age’.<sup>334</sup> ‘*Metamorphoses*’ doubles as parody of Kafka and Harris’s promotion of him. The ‘sole Arabian Tree’ is from Shakespeare’s *The Phoenix and Turtle*, this being another source with a clue since its line ‘Truth may seem, but cannot be’ is closely followed by ‘To this urn let those repair’.<sup>335</sup> Thomas’s ‘green age’ is again alluded to whilst Malley’s despair of ever making his ‘obsessions intelligible’, along with his poetry being a ‘few dingy words’, are the parodists’ commentary on ‘his’ work. The third stanza reads:

Where I have lived  
 The bed-bug sleeps in the seam, the cockroach  
 Inhabits the crack and the careful spider  
 Spins his aphorisms in the comer.  
 I have heard them shout in the streets  
 The chiliasms of the Socialist Reich  
 And in the magazines I have read  
 The Popular Front-to-Back.  
 But where I have lived  
 Spain weeps in the gutters of Footscray  
 Guernica is the ticking of the clock  
 The nightmare has become real, not as belief  
 But in the scrub-typhus of Mubo.

A number of the above lines are focused on the hoaxers’ political criticism: (1) Socialist Reich equates socialism with Nazism; (2) Popular Front-to-Back attacks the Communist about-face whereby participation in anti-fascist Popular Fronts was abandoned due to the 1939 Soviet–Nazi Pact; (3) Picasso’s *Guernica*, a Surrealist (not particularly Cubist) and left-wing icon of the Spanish Civil War, is disparagingly depicted as being in ‘gutters’. Footscray, for many decades (including the 1940s) the ‘paradigmatic’ centre of Melbourne’s working class west, is caught up in this assault on the Far Left. It is the only suburb (of any city) referred to in *Darkening Ecliptic* and this occurs twice, in both instances with negative imagery. Whilst for most people Footscray’s ‘worker pedigree’ would not readily associate it with the Communist Party, the latter’s constant and didactic exultations of the working class were a likely connection in McAuley’s mind, released in the compositional ‘free-for-all’.

Returning to ‘Petit Testament’, ‘scrub-typhus of Mubo’ refers to a bacterial disease transmitted to humans by forest mites/ticks found in the Asia/Pacific region which the hoaxers learned of through their Army Directorate work.<sup>336</sup> The final stanza reads as follows:

It is something to be at last speaking  
 Though in this No-Man’s-language appropriate  
 Only to No-Man’s-Land.  
 Set this down too:  
 I have pursued rhyme, image, and metre,  
 Known all the clefts in which the foot may stick,  
 Stumbled often, stammered,

<sup>334</sup> F. Villon (1), *Complete Poems of François Villon* (‘Le Testament’), pp. 14-15. Villon’s ‘Le Lais’ is ‘commonly known’ as ‘Petit Testament’: F. Villon (2), *The Testaments of François Villon*, p. 3.

<sup>335</sup> AP, 3, pp. 45-49 (Harris, ‘Kafka’); Shakespeare, *The Phoenix and Turtle*, lines 2, 62, 65.

<sup>336</sup> Scrub-typhus is a bacterial infection (carried by scrub mites which acquire it in their larval stage from rodents) that was first scientifically identified in the decade prior to WWII. Troops from both sides in the Asia/Pacific region were the first major groups to be diagnosed with it and there were extensive casualties; at this time knowledge and treatment methods were limited. See: D. J. Kelly, P. A. Fuerst, W. Ching & A. L. Richards, ‘Scrub Typhus: The Geographic Distribution of Phenotypic and Genotypic Variants of *Orientia tsutsugamushi*’, pp. S203-S230; ‘Scrub typhus’, World Health Organisation, un-numbered pages, websource. The military of allied nations were developing measures to reduce scrub-typhus and McAuley and Stewart were involved in the Australian effort: Heyward (1), pp. 95-96. Mubo, a strategic village between the Kokoda Trail and New Guinea’s north coast, was taken from the Japanese by Australian troops in July 1943 shortly before *Darkening Ecliptic*’s composition: D. S. A. Dexter, *The New Guinea Offensive*, p. 136.

But in time the fading voice grows wise  
 And seizing the co-ordinates of all existence  
 Traces the inevitable graph  
 And in conclusion:  
 There is a moment when the pelvis  
 Explodes like a grenade. I  
 Who have lived in the shadow that each act  
 Casts on the next act now emerge  
 As loyal as the thistle that in session  
 Puffs its full seed upon the indicative air.  
 I have split the infinitive. Beyond is anything.

The switches from the grenade to the shadow to the thistle to the split infinitive, are examples of the (at times) disjointed compositional method. ‘Pelvis’ alludes to Harris’s ‘The Pelvic Rose’ and ‘explodes’ is the satirists’ suggestion as to what will happen to him when the hoax is revealed. The shadow which each act casts on the next is a reworking of lines in Eliot’s ‘The Hollow Men’ (that title doubles as satire of the Penguins), whilst, according to Stewart, the source for the thistle/seed was Keats.<sup>337</sup> Since the latter is not a well-known line, or from a well-known poem, it could not have been sourced from a quotations dictionary and therefore it is likely they had on hand a ‘Keatsian’ source (which would have also been used to obtain both the precise duration of Keats’s life and the ‘Hyperion’ references). This likelihood of sources at hand not identified in the hoaxers’ list applies to other lines in *Darkening Ecliptic* (not discussed). Malley’s often-quoted ‘split the infinitive’ was, together with ‘clefts’ earlier in this stanza and ‘cockroach’ from the previous one, another derivation from *AP*:

... like a cultured cockroach, lives  
 Deep in the cleft of split infinitives ...<sup>338</sup>

The satirists drew attention to ‘split the infinitive’ in their Disclosure.<sup>339</sup>

The last line in the last poem (printed in *Angry Penguins* as: *I have split the infinite... &c.*) read in the manuscript:  
*I have split the infinitive. Beyond is anything.*

If Malley’s poems were, as claimed in the same statement, ‘utterly devoid of literary merit’, why was it important to correct a one-word ‘error’, and to do this not only in a very public context, but one focused on the ‘weighty’ purposes of the hoax, this in turn being compromised by the importance placed on the correction? This corrective does not appear in either of the draft statements each hoaxer posted to *FACT* editor Simpson, which suggests it was added when he merged the drafts. However, not being privy to *Darkening Ecliptic*’s manuscript, he is likely to have obtained the relevant information during telephone discussions between the three of them prior to the statement’s publication in *FACT*.<sup>340</sup> Conceivable explanations for the emendation are tenuous but one possibility is noteworthy. The implied perfectionism is suggestive of pride and that may have furnished the correction’s appearance (by whatever means) in the Disclosure. Despite the satirists’ assertions that what they produced for the hoax had no value, there are substantive indications of them having pride in their Malley creation. A passage in Stewart’s draft Disclosure, omitted from the published statement, reads:

And not only did we create the richly paradoxical character of Ern Malley the motor mechanic without formal education who could beat Max Harris at his own game, but there was also Ethel, that apotheosis of the lower middle-class female, (who always writes in letterese), snooty, tight-lipped & righteously indignant about her brother having “lived” and written “poetry” and yet morally obliged to see to its publication though always with an eye to making some money out of it.<sup>341</sup>

<sup>337</sup> *AP*, 1, pp. 22-27 (Harris, ‘The Pelvic Rose’); Eliot, pp. 91-92 (‘The Hollow Men’); Stewart’s comment: Heyward (1), p. 95; J. Keats, *The Poetical Works of John Keats*, p. 352 (‘Spenserian Stanzas on Charles Armitage Brown’).

<sup>338</sup> *AP*, 5, p. 9 (A. Kershaw, ‘The Denunciad’).

<sup>339</sup> Subsequent to publication in *AP*, all editions of *The Darkening Ecliptic* include ‘infinitive’ in the last line.

<sup>340</sup> Heyward (1), pp. 124-25.

<sup>341</sup> H. Stewart, *ibid.*, p. 3. In the Disclosure it was stated that the elaboration of Malley’s life ‘took more time than the composition of his *Works*’. Stewart’s comment that Ethel wanted to make money out of Ern’s Mss. is an example of difference between himself and McAuley. The latter insisted they should not accept payment and therefore Ethel wrote in her second letter to Harris ‘I don’t want any money from them myself because I don’t feel that they belong to me’: Heyward (1), p. 61.

Underlying the triumphant point-scoring there is pride regarding Ern's creation and especially that of Ethel, the latter being the work of Stewart in his capacity as sole composer of her letters.<sup>342</sup> Regarding Malley's persona, Paul Kane's characterisation leaves little room for other attempts:

He is witty, learned and urbane: he suffers from pretension, but is willing to take risks with language for the sake of passion and resonance. He is at times self-reflective and self-effacing, though more often self-involved. There is dismay and suffering in his poetry, a sense of loss and failure, and there is a disturbing violence. He is an *isolato*, but seeks erotic companionship and fulfilment.<sup>343</sup>

In subsequent commentary Stewart also indicated that composition of Ethel's letters took 'several weeks' since they needed to portray how 'he would have appeared to her'; they involved 'delicate dislocations of grammar and spelling' and, in contrast to Ern's poetry, required 'much more literary skill'. The demanding task of developing a 'new backhand handwriting to write her letters' was another challenge he successfully undertook.<sup>344</sup> Numerous features to which Stewart refers are evident in this extract from Ethel's first letter to Harris:

... I feel that I ought to do something about them. Ern kept himself very much to himself and lived on his own of late years and he never said anything about writing poetry. He was very ill in the months before his death last July and it may have affected his outlook.

I enclose a 2½d stamp for reply, and oblige,  
Yours sincerely,

Ethel Malley<sup>345</sup>

Her feeling of moral obligation is followed by the letterese 'of late' and indignation regarding Ern keeping to himself and being secretive about his poetry. She is tight-lipped about the nature of Ern's illness. (In the 'by instalments' character development, we learn of his Grave's Disease in the second letter.) Aspirant middle-class values are revealed in 'may have affected his outlook' — more letterese, a socially acceptable cover for her embarrassment regarding the 'untoward' sexual/violent passages in Ern's poetry and/or an implication that he became deranged. (Both these options create an embarrassment and then an acceptable cover for that creation.) A delicate dislocation of grammar is realised with Ethel's idiosyncratic sign-off. Stewart achieves a convincing picture of how Ern appears to his sister; vivid Ethel contributes to vivid Ern and each of Ethel's letters tightly interweaves these characteristics. Stewart's pride in their literary merit is endorsed by McAuley's colleague Vivian Smith, who refers to the 'inspired quality of the Ethel Malley letters which seem as good to me as anything similar in White, Porter or Humphries'; by Don Riddell, who declares that the 'creation of Ethel was little short genius' since she 'was Edna Everage before her time'; and by hoax victim Harris who expressed his enthusiasm for that 'finely conceived Jane Austen character' Ethel.<sup>346</sup> There are also indications McAuley took pride in his hoax creations. Two months after Disclosure McAuley attended a Melbourne University public meeting regarding Malley issues. Whilst there he informed Colin Badger that the Dürer poem was 'a serious one', which suggests he was proud of it, this being reinforced by the previously discussed Dürer and Slessor influences.<sup>347</sup> Decades later McAuley acknowledged that he

<sup>342</sup> Heyward (1), p. 102.

<sup>343</sup> Kane, *ibid.*, p. 152. Original emphasis.

<sup>344</sup> Thompson, p. 182. A facsimile of the last letter, in which the handwriting is very different to that of Stewart's in his draft Disclosure, is reproduced: Heyward (1), Plate 17, between pp. 132 & 133.

<sup>345</sup> Reproduced: Heyward (1), p. 55.

<sup>346</sup> V. Smith (2), 'Poetry', p. 371; D. Riddell, 'Still Angry', p. 6; Harris letter to J. Reed, undated, Reed Papers. Heyward observes how Ethel craftily disguises her paucity of information with constant disapprovals of the way Ern lived his life — yet another strength of the letters: Heyward (1), pp. 105-06. A further indication of Stewart's pride in Malley creations is his elaborate construction of Ern's eleven surrealist photo-montages which were to be the hoax's 'second phase' whereby Harris would be tempted by this late 'discovery' of Ethel's. The second phase did not occur due to *FACT* being unexpectedly alerted to the impending hoax; the perpetrators were effectively forced to release the Disclosure earlier than planned. Montages: Heyward (1): pp. 109-13; Plates 26-36 between pp. 132 & 133.

<sup>347</sup> Letter, J. Reed to M. Harris, 16 Aug. 1944, Reed Papers. Badger being informed of this is reflected in his subsequent Malley article: '... Durer, Innsbruck, 1495, despite an occasional lapse which criticism might cavil at, is a very fine poem which would do credit to any anthology and to most poets': C. Badger, 'The Strange Case of Ern Malley', *The Age*, 4 Nov. 1944 (no page #), Reed Papers.

‘confesses to a certain admiration for that shy humorist [sic] Ern Malley’ and that he ‘cannot pretend that the tension between the modern and the traditional have ceased within myself’.<sup>348</sup>

### Close Reading: Key Outcomes

*The Darkening Ecliptic* is satiric subtextual criticism accompanied by a transgressive author persona, another fabricated persona and further customised paratext. Its focus is Modernism from its early Symbolist phase to the 1940s, including contemporary Australian advocate of Modernist styles AP. In addition it criticises Romantic notions of the tragic hero poet, with the solipsistic extravagances of the Penguins, and Harris in particular, being primary targets. Keats and Blake are therefore frequently invoked and the general antipathy the authors had by this time to Romanticism implies that these two icons were ‘secondary level’ targets. The attack also has a political dimension, backgrounded by concerns regarding Marxism’s totalitarian tendencies, with a primary focus on the standover tactics of the Stalinist Australian Communist Party, its contemporary war-time growth fuelling concern. There is also criticism of Freudian psychology, particularly as it manifests in Surrealism/Cubism and attempts by the Penguins to become immersed in it. Stylistic allusions include: disjointed syntax and imagery; Modernist collage; gratuitous contrast, juxtaposition, enjambment; abrupt directional change; arcane expressions; body-parts (Surrealism); poetry by association of ideas. Additional satirised writers and artists include Eliot (and by association Modernism), Pound (Imagism, Vorticism), Mallarmé (Symbolism), Thomas (Apocalypsts, since he was a ‘fellow-traveller’), Kafka, Read, Picasso, Dali, Duchamp, possibly Rimbaud and Apocalypsts Henry Treece and Norman McCaig. Penguins Alister Kershaw, J. Michael Keon, Paul Pfeiffer and others may have been ‘caught up’ in selection of particular terms from the journal without intention to satirise them directly.<sup>349</sup> Names with more tenuous links to the text have surfaced in criticism: Yeats, Lawrence, George Barker, Robert Penn Warren, Poe, Christopher Brennan and ancients Catullus and Ovid.<sup>350</sup>

Examples of elaborate crafting and demonstrably purposeful selection of material (some examples unwittingly provided in author commentaries) indicate, in contradiction to the Disclosure’s composition principles, there was little restriction on methods and particular sources were conveniently arranged to be on hand at the time of composition. To the extent that arbitrary selection occurred, unlike Surrealist attempts to write automatically from within psychic immersions, conscious selection was facilitated so that ‘random’ choices complemented satiric purposes, or were outcomes of subliminal selection guided by the intentional satiric mindset. Appearances of Shakespeare, Dante, Basho, Longfellow, Marlowe, Villon and Dürer are primarily intended to contribute to the stylistic parody of Modernist collage, as are other non-target passages such as those regarding Inigo Jones, the rabbit’s foot and engagement of haiku style. Numerous instances of the hoaxers’ non-satiric creative talents emerge unintentionally. It is possible passages from the above iconic writers/artists were also chosen as a sprinkling of qualitative lures and, in effect, perform a ‘carrot and stick’ (allure and satire) function, as discussed regarding the preface. The hoaxers’ satiric mindset permeates *The Darkening Ecliptic* to the extent that it is reflected in a high proportion of its expressions, and in an infused playfulness. ‘Sonnets for the Novachord’ contains fifteen words/phrases which readily lend themselves to generalised satire of the targets (i.e. not focussed on particular passages or attributes) or clues to the hoax. ‘Baroque Exterior’ is similarly saturated, whilst the frequency of hoax hints in ‘Palinode’ is particularly excessive. These examples of parody in overdrive are, as discussed in relation to Floupette, the result of an over-energised mindset which is accentuated by the dynamic of transgressively satirical collaboration.

The hoaxers’ detailed textual commentaries, in addition to inadvertently providing information which contributes to undermining their declared aims and exposing their associated disingenuous presentation, generally assist with appreciation of the text, and are at times valuable insights into idiosyncratic moments of creative composition. The close reading also illustrates a number of other features: numerous ‘resonant and

<sup>348</sup> J. McAuley (3), ‘Culture and Counter-culture: a personal view’, pp. 16, 19.

<sup>349</sup> It is possible Kershaw was an intentional target since, in addition to Malley’s use of his ‘split the infinitive’, *Darkening Ecliptic*’s occasional ‘wrist’ could reflect the Penguin’s extensive use of the word in his 1943 poetry collection, promoted in AP, and there are sporadic instances of similar sensibility between the two: A. Kershaw (1), *The Lonely Verge*.

<sup>350</sup> Yeats: Brooks (2), pp. 110, 152; Barker: L. Kramer, *James McAuley: Poetry, essays and personal commentary*, pp. xiii-xiv; Warren: Brooks (2), p. 143; Catullus: Heyward (1), pp. 161-62; Ovid: D. Brooks (4), ‘Petit Testament’: A Reading’, un-numbered pages, websource. In the context of influences on Malley, Brooks at times refers to other writers in a manner which leaves unclear whether he is suggesting they are in some way an influence, examples being Lawrence, Poe and Brennan: Brooks (2), pp. 138, 74.

quotable quotes’;<sup>351</sup> the subtle thematic complexity of ‘Colloquy with John Keats’; a sub-theme relating to Dürer, which, whilst not satirical of him, is used for parodic and non-parodic purposes; three sources of *Darkening Ecliptic* passages which themselves appear to contain synergistic clues to the hoax; a passage the hoaxers believed was meritless prose which displays a poetic blend of phonetics and the exotic. The importance given by the hoaxers to a textual correction, which according to their *raison d’être* is meaningless, possibly reflects the authors’ generally perfectionist attitudes to the complete ‘Malley œuvre’.

### Further Controversies Regarding *The Darkening Ecliptic*

Some of the numerous literary-focused controversies regarding *Darkening Ecliptic* have been discussed above. There are others for which either a consensual position has evolved or argument has provided, in critical terms, adequate ‘resolution’. One matter, which contributes significantly to the Malley mythology (discussed below), that was an issue in the broad contemporary context but has enjoyed an (almost) consensual position within the literary community, is that release of the Disclosure in the anti-Modernist press meant experimental literary initiatives were criticised for the wrong reasons. In the words of then contemporary Adelaide Professor John Stewart, the hoax had a tenor of ‘*trahison des clercs*’.<sup>352</sup> Whilst there is no consensus with regard to a commonly perceived outcome of the ‘press assault’ — that it triggered a major setback to the development of Australian literary Modernism — there are a number of considered perspectives which indicate this reaction is likely to have happened regardless of the hoax.<sup>353</sup> A generally held belief, controversial for some, is that a motivation of the hoaxers, additional to their stated aims, was an intention to attack Harris personally.<sup>354</sup> Whilst ‘hatred’, Philip Mead’s description of their attitude to the leading Penguin, seems excessive, Michael Ackland details a ‘savage, unpitying streak’ in both McAuley and Stewart, which surfaced at other times in their lives, and he reveals their plan (in collusion with passive co-conspirator A. D. Hope) to ‘get Maxie’. Also, one of the photo-montages Stewart prepared for the (aborted) second phase of the hoax is titled ‘Malice in Underland’; whilst the double-pun was presumably the primary motivation for that title, it possibly reflects an ‘inner truth’. Reasons for this hostility to Harris appear to be a mix of: wanting to bring down an excessive grandstander; payback for Harris’s criticism of their work (at least regarding Hope, who acknowledged this subsequently); and envy of the 23 year-old’s position as editor of a lavishly produced and substantially financed journal, together with publication of his work in three volumes (two of poetry plus *Vegetative Eye*).<sup>355</sup> A relevant but hitherto unreferenced item which warrants attention is an unpublished passage in Stewart’s draft Disclosure whereby he complains that the hoax’s targeted writers have

... made it pay! — witness firms like Faber and Faber who have taken these fledgling pterodactyls under their patronizing wing and published their works — if such writing requires any work!<sup>356</sup>

Regarding McAuley, Ackland’s view is augmented by Michael Cook’s observation, in his rarely cited thesis on the poet, that ‘McAuley had been attempting to find a publisher for a volume of poems since at least

<sup>351</sup> Ashcroft, *ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>352</sup> J. I. M. Stewart, *Myself and Michael Innes*, p. 108. Whilst the hoaxers asserted in the Disclosure that there was never ‘any intention of having the matter publicised in the Press’ there is reason to doubt this: Heyward (1), p. 118.

<sup>353</sup> E.g.: Ashcroft, p. 30; Brooks (2), p. 65; Heyward (1), p. 229; J. McDonald, ‘The Eternal Ern’, p. 64 (reporting, with apparent endorsement, the view of leading Postmodernist Malley visual artist Garry Shead). A broad-ranging and substantive consideration of many complexities in this regard concludes that, in the final analysis, the set-back to Modernism argument ‘remains dubious’: Kane, pp. 141-44.

<sup>354</sup> This seems implied at the outset since another passage of the Disclosure declared there was no malice directed against Harris. If there was no malice, why draw attention to the ‘matter’? Perhaps a case of ‘they protesteth too much’?

<sup>355</sup> Mead (1), p. 85; Mead (2), p. 149; Ackland (1), pp. 40-41, 68, 74-76. See also: Heyward (1), p. 118, 111-14, Plate 30 b/n pp. 132-33. A forthcoming (third) poetry collection by Harris, *Amos, Amas, Amat*, had also been recently promoted in *AP 4* (inside back cover); although that was never published, the conspirators were not in a position to know this. Hope’s role was passive in that he did not produce items for the hoax. He contributed separately to the ‘get Maxie project’ by publishing a ‘review’ of *The Vegetative Eye* in which reference to the book is negligible; it was a pretext for a personal attack full of rhetorical invective of a standard equal to Harris’s bumptious self-promotion. Hope subsequently admitted he had written ‘this piece of tomfoolery’ as payback for Harris’s criticism of his work: A. D. Hope (1), *Native Companions: Essays and Comments on Australian Literature 1936-1966*, pp. 48-49. Hope had commenced drafting poems for his own intended anti-Harris hoax which he did not pursue, at the request of McAuley and Stewart, when they informed him of their parallel plan: Heyward (1), pp. 114-15.

<sup>356</sup> H. Stewart, *ibid.* Original emphasis.

1942'.<sup>357</sup> Another controversy which is mostly settled relates to the hoaxers' assertion they conducted a 'serious literary experiment'. One factor alone demonstrates this is spurious: rather than having drawn up their 'rules' prior to the exercise, imperative for any genuine experiment, they were cobbled together *post hoc*. An associated matter is a concern expressed by the satirists in the Disclosure that their pre-hoax view of the targeted works may have

... failed to penetrate to the inward substance of these productions. The only way of settling the matter was by experiment. It was, after all, fair enough. If Mr. Harris proved to have sufficient discrimination to reject the poems, then the tables would have been turned.

Brian Matthews addresses half of this argument's flaw: if Harris had rejected Malley's manuscript 'the hoaxers, veiled in anonymity, would have been under no pressure whatsoever to concede the failure of their hypothesis'.<sup>358</sup> However, there is an aspect which has not been addressed. In the circumstance of Harris rejecting Malley's manuscript, it would not prove, as suggested by the hoaxers (and those who opposed them but nevertheless accepted the hoaxers' contextual definition of failure), that Harris was discerning. *AP* received many more submissions than it published.<sup>359</sup> If *Darkening Ecliptic* had been returned, it may have been considered by Harris a good work, but less so than other submissions.

A controversy which appears unresolved is focused on the perpetrators' assertion, in support of their claim that Malley's poetry was meritless, that they 'produced the whole of Ern Malley's tragic life-work in one afternoon'.<sup>360</sup> From a critical standpoint this should be of little consequence since, other than studies which examine textual meaning in terms of an author's life, compositional timeframes are a form of paratext considered unimportant. The matter became significant because the hoaxers declared it was, and criticism uncritically accepted their peripheral playing field. Since the issue persists comment is warranted. Whilst the dominant argument is that it would be impossible to compose *The Darkening Ecliptic* in a half-day period, conceptually the affirmative has considerable merit. Humans have capacity to achieve a great deal, in both quantity and quality, within short timeframes, especially if participants experience a 'thief's rush of adrenalin' or 'hilarious excitement' which produce 'flashes of really exciting prosody'.<sup>361</sup> 'Thief' represents not only the 'edge' experienced by a burglar or an energised writer, but also spirited undertakings in sport, stage performance, military engagement, perhaps at times in all our endeavours. As previously discussed in the Floupette section, this potential is enhanced by the dynamic of collaborative writing. Ackland argues that both hoaxers' earlier Symbolist writing, coupled with their experience of joint-writing exercises between them spread over a ten-year period, gave them the capacity to produce 'verse of this complexity' within a few hours which they would not have been able to do otherwise.<sup>362</sup> However, although something may be possible, it is not necessarily achieved in a particular situation. Peter Ryan, a colleague of the satirists in the Directorate where Malley's poems were written, indicates:

Those insidious verses were written at their 'L' Block desks, about three metres from my own. I used to wonder what all their subdued merriment was about.<sup>363</sup>

An essential and substantive element of collaborative writing, which does not appear to have been given critical consideration, is the actual discussion between the collaborators; it is clear that was happening during these sessions of mirth.<sup>364</sup> It is also likely that they were jotting down ideas/lines, allusions, the 'chance'

<sup>357</sup> M. Cook, 'James McAuley's Encounter with Modernism', p. 156. Cook does not discuss unsavoury aspects of McAuley's character but considers envy contributed to hoax motivations. John Hawke implies envy was not a motivation: J. Hawke, *Australian Literature and the Symbolist Movement*, p. 142.

<sup>358</sup> B. Matthews, 'Literature and Conflict', p. 313.

<sup>359</sup> *AP*, 3, p. 3 (Harris, 'Angry Penguins 3'). Over-supply is implied in some further editorials. In addition, *AP* claimed it published material of questionable standard to assist writers who show 'potentialities' (context implies these selections were given preference to material of greater quality): M. Harris & J. Reed, 'The Cultural Stream', *AP*, (6), frontispiece pages. See also: Anon., 'Editorial', *AP*, 9, p. 1.

<sup>360</sup> As previously discussed, Stewart's commentary indicates the complete Malley material was not produced in that short timeframe since Ethel's letters were written over several weeks. Also, McAuley drafted separately the 'Preface and Statement': Heyward (1), p. 108. However, debate has focused on *Darkening Ecliptic*'s poetry.

<sup>361</sup> Heyward (1), p. 228; J. Wright, *Preoccupations in Australian Poetry*, p. 235.

<sup>362</sup> Ackland (1), p. 79.

<sup>363</sup> P. Ryan, *Brief Lives: Biographical Glimpses of Ben Chifley, Paul Hasluck, A. D. Hope and others*, p. 37.

<sup>364</sup> Kane, with reference to an associated item – McAuley's comment that the idea of the hoax 'had been floating around' for some time prior to the drafting – makes the brief but apposite observation that this has 'implications of the

books to be on hand for the appointed day. It makes sense that the conspirators would, as claimed, take advantage of putting the plan into effect on a Saturday when others were not present, this having the potential to achieve the bulk of the task in that session. Whilst it is probable that the hoaxers put to paper in one session fifteen of sixteen poems, it is also likely that is considerably short of the whole truth.<sup>365</sup>

#### **5.4 Community Responses Before and After Disclosure**

The distribution of *AP* Malley edition commenced in the first week of June 1944. The hoaxers' Disclosure was released by *FACT* on 25 June, although a mix of accurate/inaccurate details regarding *Darkening Ecliptic*'s provenance emerged during the preceding week. Public awareness of Malley's purpose commenced on 16 June when Adelaide University Union journal *On Dit* announced it was probable that this collection was a hoax. There are three instances of public responses to Malley's text in the initial two-week period, all from the epitextual milieu, two of them especially partisan since they were from Harris: his commentary on Malley in *AP* (Introduction plus two poem/tributes) and likewise in the U.S. journal *Voices*, the Summer 1944 edition of which was a special focused on Australian Poetry (including three Malley poems) and released about the same time as *Darkening Ecliptic* was here. Although details of these items differ from the previously discussed Harris responses to the epigraph and preface, they are essentially the same.<sup>366</sup> The third response in this period was from Brian Elliott, a university lecturer to whom Harris delivered a copy of the 'Autumn Number'. Upon reading Malley, Elliott suspected a hoax and believed Harris himself was the author: an extension of the journal's satirical 'hi-jinks' whereby the editor was 'hoaxing' himself.<sup>367</sup> Although Harris denied this, Elliott wrote a piece asserting his view and this was included in the *On Dit* 'announcement'.<sup>368</sup> Meanwhile publication of Malley triggered the hoaxers' contact with Simpson who published details of the Malley fabrication in two stages. Prior to the 25 June Disclosure, in an article on 18 June it was declared: Malley's biographical details had been checked and proven incorrect; *FACT* knows who the real authors are, the names of whom it will release the following Sunday; *The Darkening Ecliptic* had been written as 'obscurantist nonsense' intended to test Harris's 'critical judgment'. Simpson alerted Harris of the allegations (sans hoaxers' details) and included in the 18 June edition a response co-written by him and Reed which asserted in part:

Whoever wrote the Ern Malley poems was a fine poet. When we received them we felt there were modes of expression and words reminiscent of other poets (for example, of T. S. Eliot), but it is not surprising when the idioms of contemporary poets overlap. We were satisfied with the intrinsic merits of the verse.<sup>369</sup>

Harris issued a statement suggesting, on the basis that Malley's poetry was good quality, the hoaxers had hoaxed themselves and, in response to their claims regarding their arbitrary style of Malley composition, drew upon the argument (not original though he implied it was) that if millions of monkeys tapped on typewriters for millions of years one of them would produce a Shakespeare sonnet; he added that 'the myth is sometimes greater than its creator'.<sup>370</sup> Sydney's *Mirror* ran an early report of Harris's defence, 'Hoaxed

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hoax's premeditated aspect': Kane, p. 146. McAuley's comment: Thompson, p. 177.

<sup>365</sup> Given the subsequent acknowledgement that the Dürer poem was written by McAuley only, it is unlikely that was part of the dual composition session, especially since its sensibility is different to the constant 'winks' of the other poems and also McAuley's description of the afternoon as 'high spirited': Thompson, *ibid*.

<sup>366</sup> *AP*, Autumn Number 1944, pp. 2-6, 34-35 (Harris, 'Ern Malley Section: Introduction', 'Elegiac for Ern Malley', 'Biography'); M. Harris, 'Commentary on Australian Poetry', pp. 44-48; E. Malley, 'Three Poems' ('Documentary Film', 'Perspective Lovesong', 'Night-Piece [Alternate Version]'), pp. 41-44.

<sup>367</sup> As with Floupette, an 'in-group' of the *AP* epitextual milieu had a culture of satirical repartee, though it was less pervasive than its French counterpart. (*AP* was focussed on its 'mission' for change, which for the Decadents, despite their linguistic innovations, was essentially antithetical.) Kershaw's 'The Denunciad' is an example of this 'slanging' – he amateurishly criticises leading Penguins by actual name – many gybes appearing to be gratuitous criticisms which, sans caricature, are not satire. Concerning Albert Tucker, 'deep in the cleft of split infinitives', Kershaw subsequently acknowledged, reflecting *AP* general naïveté regarding satirical caricature, he was not aware of Tucker ever having split an infinitive; he fabricated the 'charge' as a supposed joke: A. Kershaw (2), *Hey Days: memories and glimpses of Melbourne's Bohemia 1937-1947*, pp. 49-50.

<sup>368</sup> 'Local Lecturer Cries "Hoax!"', *On Dit*, 16 June 1944, pp. 1, 8.

<sup>369</sup> 'Ern Malley, the great poet, or the greatest hoax?', *FACT*, 18 June 1944, pp. 1, 4, *Jacket Magazine*, 17.

<sup>370</sup> *The Mail* (Adelaide), 24 June 1944, National Library of Australia Trove database (NLA). Whilst this statement preceded the hoaxers' Disclosure by one day, it was in response to the latter since *FACT* provided it to Harris on 23 June.

Poet Claims Hoaxers are Hoaxed'.<sup>371</sup> Whilst Harris made similar statements to the press during the immediately following weeks, the only other response from Malley's epitextual milieu seems to be that of Harry Roskolenko, American poet and soldier on service in Australia, who was an *AP* contributor and co-editor of the *Voices* edition which published Malley poems. He repeated the hoaxers-have-hoaxed themselves argument but appeared ambivalent, since eleven Malley poems submitted to him for *Voices* seemed to have been written 'with the tongue in the cheek' and that 'I did not understand some of the words ... and was of the opinion that some had been selected from a scientific dictionary'.<sup>372</sup> The Penguins' U.K. 'mentor' Herbert Read endorsed Harris's position and added the often held view that parody, given its need to partially imitate before it can distort for its own purposes, necessarily runs the risk of becoming imitative to the point that the parody is lost:

... if, as in the present case [Malley], the type of art parodied is itself unconventional, experimental, then the parodist has exceptional freedom, and because of this freedom, *can end by deceiving himself*.<sup>373</sup>

With regard to the mainstream press, there are considerably more accessible sources for Malley than for Floupette or Spectra. According to Heyward, 'Harris took a pasting in almost every newspaper in Australia'.<sup>374</sup> Headlines included: 'Poets Use Nonsense "Verse" for Great Literary Leg-Pull', ' "Nonsense" Writings Won High Praise', 'Feathers Fly'. The *Bulletin* described the hoaxers as 'debunkers of Bosh and Blah and Blather', and Adelaide's *Advertiser* was particularly cutting with its description of Malley's poetry as the 'most arrant gibberish' which the Penguins had taken

... to their bosoms, swearing that he was a genius after their own hearts, and implying, in the usual way, that all who ventured to pronounce him childish and incomprehensible, would but betray their own pathetic lack of aesthetic taste and spiritual perception.

Some reports provided potted histories of previous hoaxes especially with regard to the visual arts. Communists attacked Harris's egotism ('Found Genius In His Own Image') as did Catholics, accusing him of 'gaseous self-adulation'. Just as Philadelphia's *Public Ledger* exploited the Spectra controversy to level sarcasm at its rival city Pittsburgh, so did a number of Australian periodicals similarly use Malley. *Communist Review* took the opportunity to promote its anti-fascism by claiming it had heard the false Lenin quotation was 'taken from a speech by Goebbels'. The Catholic *Advocate* linked Harris and his colleagues with contraception:

A civilization that has outlawed large families, and pities or insults maternity ... even when it clearly means national suicide, deserves only literature like *Angry Penguins*.

As if to ensure they were not seen in the same company as Communists, the Catholic *Freedom* exploited *AP* Marxist sympathies with an editorial proclaiming 'Ern Malley Shows Up Red 'Culture' '. Parody engenders parody: it was the 'life-blood' of Floupette's epitextual milieu whilst Spectra prompted the Ultra-Violet School and Earl Roppel. In response to the Malley Hoax the Sydney University Oxometrical Society (its neologistic 'oxometry', derived from the society's bull emblem, defined as 'very pretentious talk') awarded the hoaxers its 'Degree of Oxometry' for showing a 'commendable, impartial attitude in conducting an investigation into the oxometric structure of some contemporary poetry'.<sup>375</sup> Ernest O'Malley supplied *The Argus* with 'a modern poem, for publication in The Passing Show':

*Wither, whither,  
Dither, dither.  
Penicillin, aruwillin?*

<sup>371</sup> *Mirror* (Sydney) 26 June 1944 (no page #), Reed Papers.

<sup>372</sup> *The Mail*, 1 July 1944, p. 3, NLA.

<sup>373</sup> H. Read (3), 'A Cable and Letter', *AP*, 7, Dec. 1944, p. 5. Original emphasis. These statements by Read were released to the press by *AP* soon after the Disclosure.

<sup>374</sup> Heyward (1), p. 156.

<sup>375</sup> *The Herald* (Melbourne), 1 July 1944, p. 3, Reed Papers; *The Argus* (Melbourne), 3 July 1944, p. 3, Reed Papers; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 July 1944 (no page #), *Jacket Magazine*, 17; *Bulletin*, 5 July 1944 (no page #), Heyward, p. 153; *The Advertiser* (Adelaide), 4 July 1944, p. 4, NLA; *Tribune*, 29 June 1944 (no page #), Heyward (1), p. 155; *Advocate*, 5 July 1944, p. 9, Heyward (1), *ibid*; *Communist Review*, August 1944 (no page #), Heyward (1), *ibid*; *Advocate*, 5 July 1944, p. 9, Heyward (1), *ibid*; *Freedom*, 26 July 1944 (no page #), Reed Papers; 'oxometry': *The West Australian*, 3 July 1944, p. 4, NLA.



*Catacomb or cataclysm,  
Catalysis, howsthemissis?  
Airy fairy, learybeery,  
Pickem in a dictionary ...*

‘Spinoff fun’ (caricature apparently absent) came in the form of a letter the Melbourne *Herald* received, sender address ‘Baker St’, which revealed Sherlock Holmes had solved the Malley mystery by noting the ‘urn’ in Shakespeare’s *The Phoenix and Turtle*. Within the mainstream hype there were occasional items of substance. Perth’s *Daily News*, after ventilating ‘Modernism! What absurdities are committed in its name’, followed with a perceptive observation which applies to poseurs

... who because a production appears meaningless believe that there must be some meaning hidden from all but the elect minority.

The *Herald* quoted acclaimed poet Bernard O’Dowd who, after characterising modern poetry as ‘obscurity, cacophony and flatulence’, continues with the arguably accurate observation, missed by the hoaxers, that this Modernist trailblazer had moved into the ‘stream of traditional literature years ago’.<sup>376</sup> A novel perspective on the nature of Malley’s text was advanced by Badger who, in addition to his previously discussed comment on the Dürer poem, also speculates (though he acknowledges ‘the mind boggles at this suggestion’) that the hoaxers may have believed Malley’s poetry to be good, perpetrating a ‘double agent’ test:

Even when you are told that good verse is a hoax, told in the most authoritative way that it is “bad,” can you still recognise it for what it is?<sup>377</sup>

On 11 July the Darwin-based *Army News* declared Malley was ‘the now world famous literary hoax’. A *New York Times* report was, other than a gibe regarding ‘Drainage Report Gems Culled in Hoax Called ‘Tremendous’’, essentially factual. The following day the paper’s editorial suggested that perhaps *AP* editors

... aren’t much to be blamed, though. The Orphic or Cryptic school of poetry is now full of pupils. Some puzzled readers have even suspected these enigmatists of deliberately spoofing the public.

*New Yorker* commented that if Malley-type poetry is taken seriously it ‘spoils anyone for modern poetry for the rest of his life’. These New York items indicate a qualified acceptance of Modernism, essentially absent from the Australian press, reflecting its longer and broader American presence. Nonetheless, *Time* indulged national stereotypes by declaring the hoax was ‘as fantastic as a duck-billed platypus’ and *Newsweek* scoffed at *AP* with ‘Such Power! Such Feeling!’ Although there were typical responses from the U.K., such as the reader who declared she was filled with ‘unholy glee’ and regretted ‘it did not take place in England’, there were several supportive of Modernist poetry, one offering an unusual twist:

Sorry, but I like this Ern Malley stuff. It is just as much fun stringing chunks of different-shaped and different-coloured words together as if playing with toy bricks and making trains and buildings from them — far more fun than crossword puzzles.

*John O’London’s Weekly*, after claiming that verse written as ‘comic imposture’ is never ‘good’, provided the perceptive advice to never ‘pretend to enjoy balderdash merely because other people have solemnly praised it’.<sup>378</sup>

Distinctive contributions from Australia’s literary community appeared in *Meanjin* quarterly and in an *AP* December 1944 response to the hoax. A *Meanjin* editorial note was concerned that the hoax tag detracted from the satirists’ valid claim that they had conducted a serious experiment and proceeds:

<sup>376</sup> *The Argus*, 8 July 1944, seven of twelve line poem (no page #), original italics, Reed Papers; *The Herald*, 4 July 1944 (no page #), *Jacket Magazine*, 17; *The Daily News* (Perth), 8 July 1944, p. 15, NLA; *The Herald*, 4 July 1944, p. 3, *Jacket Magazine*, 17.

<sup>377</sup> Badger, *ibid.*

<sup>378</sup> *Army News* (Darwin), 11 July 1944, p. 2, NLA; *The New York Times*: 3 July 1944 (no page #) and 4 July 1944 (no page #), *NYT* website; *New Yorker*, Heyward (1), p. 163; *Time*, 17 July 1944 (no page #), Heyward (1), p. 162; *Newsweek*, c. 17 July 1944 (no page #), Heyward (1), pp. 162-63; *FACT* London Bureau, 9 July 1944, (no page #), *Jacket Magazine*, 17; *John O’London’s Weekly*, 14 July 1944 (no page #), Heyward (1), p. 163.

Creative art is in its very nature exploratory, a perpetual reaching out into new realms of experience. Deprived of any base-line ... against which the validity of the adventurously new may be tested, there is no means of knowing whether the impulse to advance is really creative or merely a blind circling of the man lost in the bush.

The hoaxer's experiment is therefore 'a means by which we can take a test-bearing in the midst of our uncertainties'. A rationale for their 'experiment' the hoaxers presented in the Disclosure was:

What we wished to find out was: Can those who write, and those who praise so lavishly, this kind of writing tell the real product from consciously and deliberately concocted nonsense?

In his *Meanjin* contribution, hoax exposé Elliott argued that there is a flaw in this argument, since it proposes a rational method to investigate the necessarily irrational 'inward substance' of *AP* writing. He also believed the 'Night Piece' poems display competent writing of 'good taste' and the fact that there are two 'night pieces' can hardly be random and is therefore 'an extremely careful and much considered irrationality'. Visiting American poet Robert Peel contributed with an observation that the 'unregenerate Philistines ... rightly judge' *AP* to be 'dilettantism, faddism, and wilful obscurantism'. With general reference to the journal he adds: 'The superficial effect of the poems is that they were written by one person, a person suffering from acute verbal hysteria'. However, he also believed 'there is no denying the honesty of their search (in some instances) and the value of their discoveries (occasionally)'.<sup>379</sup> The *AP* December debate ('Ern Malley Section') consisted of sixteen contributions by writers of varying viewpoints including conventional critic H. M. Green arguing that *Darkening Ecliptic* had no value, pro-Symbolist A. R. Chisholm essentially contending the reverse, and a considered statement by Penguin Albert Tucker acknowledging that contemporary experimentalism

... contains many strange blooms; narcissism, exhibitionism and prestige chasing are a few, and some on them can be found in *Angry Penguins*. If McAuley and Stewart wanted to aim their attack in that direction, I don't mind ... But they did not bother to discriminate, instead they let the philistines take over and use it against the entire contemporary movement ...<sup>380</sup>

An insightful article in *The Argus Literary Supplement* by 'a Staff Critic' presages the 1960–90 Structuralist/Post-Structuralist debates regarding authorial intention and, in relation to reader responses, arguably surpasses fundamental positions advanced by many theorists in that era:

... we can never be sure that our interpretation agrees with the writer's intention. This, however, is a difficulty which quite often attends the attempt to understand other people's meanings. ... The question of how far a writer should go in developing the private and "irrational" modes of language is dependent on how far we are willing to go in a sincere effort to understand him.<sup>381</sup>

## 5.5 Arraignment of *The Darkening Ecliptic* Publisher

Community responses to literary criticism do not usually involve the 'officialdom' components of the 'societal organism'. However, this was a ramification of the Malley Hoax when Harris was prosecuted and convicted before the South Australian judiciary (August–October 1944) for publishing 'indecent' material allegedly contained in a number of Malley poems and some other *AP* items.<sup>382</sup> Whilst nominally the indictment of Harris is not a matter of literary criticism, records of the proceedings reveal this as a key motivation of the prosecution which took the form of an attack on Modernist poetry. The charge brought against Harris alleged that he, as South Australian representative of publishers Reed & Harris, was responsible for distribution in that state of 'indecent advertisements' contained in *AP* Autumn Number 1944. The charges were brought under the archaic provisions of Section 108(2)(f) of the South Australian Police Act 1936–38. 'Indecent advertisements' referred to expressions or passages which were: (1) deemed to be 'immoral'; (2) likely to 'corrupt or deprave', these being deemed 'obscene'; (3) likely to 'offend common proprieties', which were deemed the lesser offence of 'indecent'.<sup>383</sup> Case-law had apparently established that

<sup>379</sup> *Meanjin*, 3.2: Anon., 'Affaire Malley', pp. 121–22; B. Elliott, 'A Summing Up: Brian Elliott gives Ern Malley a decent burial', pp. 116–20; R. Peel, 'Penguin Pot-Pourri', pp. 113–15. Original parentheses.

<sup>380</sup> *AP*, 7, Dec. 1944, pp. 16, 8–9, 13 (H. M. Green, 'Anopheles', A. R. Chisholm, 'The Case of Ern Malley', A. Tucker, 'Clear the Air').

<sup>381</sup> 'By a Staff Critic', 'Literary Hoaxes and James Joyce', *The Argus Literary Supplement*, 14 Oct. 1944, p. 6, NLA.

<sup>382</sup> There is nothing to connect the hoaxers with these proceedings and therefore no suggestion they were involved.

<sup>383</sup> Reed Papers; P. Coleman, *Obscenity, Blasphemy, Sedition: 100 Years of Censorship in Australia*, p. 33; Heyward

expressions which came within the scope of immoral/obscene/indecent included average profanities (bugger) and ‘proper’ terms such as breast, if it was determined their contextual use was likely to abet these offences. However, allowing for contextual considerations, less than 50% of time expended in cross-examination by prosecution counsel D. C. Williams was related to the charges. In addition to his consistently inappropriate questioning of Harris, Williams, in his cross-examination of co-editor Reed (who was not charged with any offences but appeared as an expert witness for Harris) engaged in persistent questions focused on whether Malley’s poetry was ‘great’. This activated the one instance when Magistrate Clarke challenged Williams in relation to this spurious line of questioning, albeit rather than ruling it disallowed he raised the matter with a ‘soft’ question: ‘Does it matter whether the Ern Malley poems are great or not?’ Williams’s response was to refrain from this pursuit for a brief period and then resume it, for which he received no further challenge.<sup>384</sup> In his Judgement, Clarke determined that none of the identified passages were immoral or obscene, but found seven of the eleven poems ‘charged’ (four by Malley, three by Harris) contained indecent passages, likewise one story (by Peter Cowan). A number of critics have disputed the court’s findings on the basis of Malley’s non-existence. However, authorship is not relevant since the Act provided that publishers of alleged indecent material were liable to prosecution and that was the basis of Harris’s indictment.<sup>385</sup> Another regular criticism is focused on the contradiction in the prosecution’s argument that Malley’s poetry was indecent whilst also contending it was incomprehensible. Nonetheless, in his judgement Clarke effectively notes the prosecution’s contradictory presentation and the Reasons for Decision do not include such arguments.<sup>386</sup> The contentions regarding authorship and the prosecution’s contradictory case are, in effect, manifestations of our current-day artistic values; the real legal problem in the Malley context was the restrictive Act.<sup>387</sup>

The prosecution’s attack on Modernist poetry exposes the charges as a pretext for its literary agenda which is reinforced by other actions of legal authorities. Harris’s indictment was initiated by Crown Solicitor A. J. Hannan who, both in his official position and as a citizen, had a public record (letters to editors, etc.) of ultra-conservatism on various matters. Charles Abbott, a practicing King’s Counsel and both Attorney-General and Minister for Education in the conservative state government, had a similar public record to Hannan’s and they were close friends. A month before commencement of the *AP* case Abbott represented actress Patricia Hackett in a successful libel case against Harris for his description of her, in a theatre review, as a ‘demi-monde’ (French for the milieu of prostitution), in the process quoting Malley’s ‘I have split the infinitive’. There are substantive reasons to believe that there was an Abbott–Hannan conspiracy to initiate the Harris charges.<sup>388</sup> Other actions of legal authorities cause concern. Clarke’s failure to effectively intervene as Williams expended 25–30% of the hearings with a line of questioning at odds with the charges, appears to be dereliction of duty for which — in the absence of other explanations and in a context of other untoward collusions — a less than savoury motivation is more than a theoretical possibility. During the proceedings, the prosecution’s one witness Detective Vogelesang exhibited surprising ignorance:

I don’t know what “incestuous” means. I think there is a suggestion of indecency about it.

This is of especial concern since incest perpetrated on a child is a major criminal offence which was relevant to Vogelesang’s purview. Notwithstanding archaic legislation, the detective’s ‘evidence’ presented an idiosyncratic and naïve conservatism, typically:

“Genitals” refer to the private parts of a man or a woman. I think it is immoral, the use of the word “genitals”.<sup>389</sup>

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(1), p. 207. Explanations and documentation are unclear as to what constituted ‘immoral’; however, the Judgement convicting Harris did not determine any of the ‘charged’ items to be immoral.

<sup>384</sup> Details of the questioning: Tranter, *ibid.*, pp. 26, 28, 31, 48, 58-59.

<sup>385</sup> A provision for publishers (and authors) to be prosecuted under legislation restricting publication for whatever purposes – libel, security matters, child pornography, etc. – is common in Australian (federal, state) and worldwide ‘Westminster’ legal systems.

<sup>386</sup> Regarding Malley’s ‘Sweet William’, Clarke states it is ‘impossible to give any satisfactory interpretation of the poem as a whole’ but considers the ‘unforgivable rape’ line and its immediate context have meaning sufficient to understand it is about ‘the act of sexual rape’ and determines this is indecent within provisions of the Act: L. C. Clarke, Judgement: Reasons for Decision, Reed Papers.

<sup>387</sup> The South Australian legislation, successively replaced in 1953 and 1974, now includes the right of adults to view and read whatever they wish. Re 1953 Act: Coleman, *ibid.*, p. 34. Re 1974 Act: Heyward (1), p. 211.

<sup>388</sup> Heyward (1), pp. 167-72, 183-84. Heyward refers to ‘demi-monde’ as a variant of ‘demi-mondaine’, the latter being a polite expression in society circles for a ‘kept woman’.

<sup>389</sup> Vogelesang quotations: Tranter, p. 11.

Despite this questionable competence the South Australian Police Commissioner announced on 29 November 1944 he had awarded Detective Vogelesang with a ‘Special Mention’ for ‘zealousness and competency in securing evidence for the prosecution of an indecent publication’.<sup>390</sup> Prior to the trial’s commencement, Professor Stewart, one of Harris’s university teachers, was summoned to the Registrar’s office where a Supreme Court judge advised him ‘most strongly’ that in ‘no circumstances’ should he willingly give evidence in Harris’s favour. Stewart implies this was prior to his receipt of a defence solicitors’ letter requesting he testify. (The letter’s likely genesis was a previous informal acceptance.) Whether or not this legally constitutes intimidation of a witness, a serious offence, that is its essence.<sup>391</sup> When undertaking research (1999-2000) regarding Harris’s trial, Mead was informed by three separate bodies within South Australia’s governance — Adelaide Criminal Registry, South Australian Police Records Unit, State Records of South Australia — that there were no records pertaining to the trial and for which there were apparently no explanations.<sup>392</sup> Considered together these untoward practices and disappearances suggest there was one/various collusion(s) which amounts to serious abuse of responsibility by a number of senior state officers, all connected to a trial regarding which the charges were a pretext for illicit purposes including a significant literary agenda.<sup>393</sup>

Compared to the hoax, there is less hype in press responses to Harris’s trial, reflecting the matter was in court. Articles include references to Clarke reprimanding the public gallery where there were ‘several bursts of laughter, while Mr. Millhouse was cross-examining Detective Vogelesang’. Atypical was an article ‘Literary Censorship’ in which it was argued that whilst the Malley poems are not suitable for ‘a 12–years–old girl’, it was unlikely there would be ‘harm resulting to the community from their publication in an obscure review circulating among sophisticated people with literary interests’.<sup>394</sup>

## **5.6 The Place of the Ern Malley Hoax in its Australian Cultural Context**

Initially Malley acquired a minor place in Australian literature with brief discussions in a few contemporary 1940/1950s literary-historical surveys, albeit as early as 1945 one reviewer referred to the ‘mythical Malley’.<sup>395</sup> The hoax now appears in most works with a literary focus that cover the post-1940 era and references in general Australian histories are not infrequent. Whilst Malley’s influence is unlikely to have initiated (Post)Modernist poetry in Australia ‘he’ has become symbolic for that development.<sup>396</sup> Malley-inspired visual artworks were present from the outset; additional to Nolan’s ‘Arabian tree’, three 1944 artists produced between them 13 paintings and drawings focused on Malley themes. Impetus came with Nolan’s 1974 Adelaide Exhibition which displayed numerous works and poems by the artist focused on *Darkening Ecliptic*. Malley manifestations are now a continuing presence in Australian visual art, a significant example being Garry Shead’s nationally touring exhibition of numerous paintings, drawings and sculptures.<sup>397</sup> There are also three plays (the most recent was enthusiastically received in New York), a ‘chamber-style musical’, and Malley has ‘reappeared’ performing his poetry in two films, one of which is a fifteen minute American production of his ‘life story’.<sup>398</sup> There are two novels including Carey’s internationally acclaimed *My Life as a Fake*, numerous poems (many tributes, Ethel included) and two editions of *Cordite Poetry Review* are

<sup>390</sup> Quotation: Heyward (1), p. 203.

<sup>391</sup> J. I. M. Stewart, *ibid.*, pp. 108-09. Despite this untoward pressure Stewart did testify.

<sup>392</sup> Mead (2), pp. 481-82.

<sup>393</sup> Court transcripts indicate that the prosecution had a secondary purpose of attacking Harris in personal terms which was calculated to undermine his reputation.

<sup>394</sup> *The News* (Adelaide), 5 Sept. 1944, p. 3, *Ern Malley: The Official Website*; *Sun* (Melbourne?), 24 Oct. 1944, (no page #), Reed Papers.

<sup>395</sup> D. Auchterlonie, ‘Review of *Voices*’, p. 147.

<sup>396</sup> There are numerous debates regarding the commencement of Australian Modernism and Postmodernism, and in relation to distinctions between the two in the Australian context; the view that there is little distinction and that the ‘combined’ modernisms commenced in the late 1960s seems apposite and is represented here with ‘(Post)Modernist’.

<sup>397</sup> D. Rainey, *Ern Malley: The Hoax and Beyond* (book based on the exhibition of the same name), pp. 72-74; S. Nolan, *Nolan on Nolan: Sidney Nolan in his own words*, pp. 6-7 (N. Underhill, ‘Introduction’); S. Grishin, *Garry Shead: The Apotheosis of Ern Malley*.

<sup>398</sup> Rainey, *ibid.*, p. 10; enthusiastic New York response (re play: L. Katz & C. Kohn, *Black Swan of Trespass*): R. Usher, ‘Ern Malley rides, yet again’, p. 3; B. Hallett, ‘‘Hoax’ musical should take more liberties’, p. 12; W. J. Hampton & R. L. Chapman, prod., *The Well-wrought Ern* (film), screened at the exhibition curated by K. Morgan & D. Rainey – see below; D. Perry, prod., *Refracting Glasses* (film), VCR viewed at La Trobe Univ. Library.

devoted to Malley-inspired poetry.<sup>399</sup> A 2009 Melbourne exhibition of five months' duration displayed Malley-related art and memorabilia whilst New York's Bard College has a course which includes Malley poetry.<sup>400</sup> Other items include 'a rock band, musical settings, a jazz suite, a recitation by Orson Welles, websites, and radio and television documentaries'.<sup>401</sup> *Darkening Ecliptic's* commercial success precipitated the Harris Estate being taken to court in 2003 by the McAuley and Stewart Estates seeking, on the basis of claimed copyright ownership, to prohibit further 'unauthorised' publication.<sup>402</sup>

The increasing gamut of works influenced by Malley are productions of, in Vivian Smith's words, 'a growth industry', whilst Harris biographer Betty Snowden believes they represent 'a twenty-first-century cult'.<sup>403</sup> This 'weapon' launched against Modernist fashion has (loosely) become one itself; as did Spectra, although the latter's was brief. Considerable as they are, the attention given to these Malley outputs emerges from groupings of (essentially) Postmodernist inclined patrons and artists/readers, including 'boutique media' reports of 'Malley happenings'. (Wider audiences were reached by Carey's novel and Heyward's story of the hoax.)<sup>404</sup> This belies numerous expansive claims regarding Malley's status such as:

Malley has become a legendary figure in Australia, one of a handful of names – like Phar Lap, the tragic racehorse, or Ned Kelly, the noble bushranger – embedded in the national psyche.<sup>405</sup>

Although it is questionable that Malley is embedded in Australia's 'national psyche', the enthusiasm expressed in these claims is a mythological phenomenon within its Australian Postmodernist ambit which extends to a significant pocket in New York and smaller ones elsewhere. Despite this there do not appear to be any studies focused on the development of Malley mythology. The legend is the principal legacy of *The Darkening Ecliptic* and it generally subsumes others. The international dimension of Malley's 'place' in literature facilitates further discussion via case-study comparisons in the following section.

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<sup>399</sup> I. K. Williams, *Malarky Dry*; Carey, *ibid.*; *Jacket Magazine*, 17 (J. Ashberry, J. Tranter & J. Kinsella, 'Nine Ern Malley Poems'); *Quadrant*, vol. L, # 7-8, July-Aug. 2006, p. 41 (E. Galloway, 'Ern Malley's Sister'); *Cordite Poetry Review*: 23 ('Children of Malley I'), 34 ('Children of Malley II'), un-numbered pages, webservice.

<sup>400</sup> K. Morgan & D. Rainey, curators, *Ern Malley: The Hoax and Beyond*, (exhibition), 22 July–15 Nov., 2009; J. Steger, 'What's truth got to do with it?', p. 2.

<sup>401</sup> Rainey, *ibid.*

<sup>402</sup> S. Wyndham, 'Malley hoax is now a copyright mystery', p. 9.

<sup>403</sup> V. Smith (1), p. 53; Snowden, *ibid.*, p. 151.

<sup>404</sup> 'Heyward's book is directed towards a non-specialist audience, an indication of the fact that such cases bring literature out of the bookshelves and onto front pages': Nolan & Dawson, *ibid.*, p. x.

<sup>405</sup> Heyward (1), pp. 234-35. Satire from Harold Stewart, 1992: 'First, as our National Hero, we adore / Godfather Kelly, Ned who fought the law. / Next, to our Equine Saviour we give thanks: / His Godson, Phar Lap (murdered by the Yanks). / Last, as our culture's Bard of Kitsch, we boast / Of Ern L. Malley, our Unholy Ghost', reproduced: M. Ackland (2), 'Poetry from the 1890s to 1970', p. 101.

## Section Six

### CONCLUSION

#### General Case Study Comparisons

Comparisons between the three case studies illustrate similarities and distinctive features within the essential groupings considered: close readings of the respective texts; packaging peritext and prefatory peritext; epitext and prior epitext; each epitextual milieu; community responses to the respective texts and hoax ‘exposures’; and respective places within their national literatures. The epitextual milieu of *Les Délivrescences* was an environment infused with a topos of satirical repartee which shaped the text and its release. Floupette’s pseudonymous authorship was transgressive only to the extent that it was a component of mildly subversive packaging peritext; this was effectively a nominal transgression illustrating the authors’ plan and commensurate actions to ‘flag’ their names and purpose to the anticipated intimate market. The multi-layered metaphors in the outwardly-facing peritext, another contrasting feature, also reflected this milieu since they were designed for the informed participants. Floupette’s second edition biography, portraying a dilettante poet, was written specifically for the satire of that prose allegory, for which there was little augmentation from the previously written and in essence characterless third-person narrated poetry. This contrasts with the poetic verve of the resolute Anne Knish, and the combined poetic and biographical Malley’s passions and misgivings — though first-person narration was not particularly enriching for the underdeveloped Morgan. Standout features of *Spectra* include the elaborate orchestrations within the epitextual milieu to promote the ‘new’ poetic form; and, in contrast to the other hoax texts, the satire is discontinuous, with the authors regularly digressing into otherwise-focused excursions, reflecting their ambivalence towards their Imagism/Modernism target. The extended second phase, distinct in itself, also highlights the fact that it is the one case study with a woman conspirator. Malley’s death provided a tragic element to his story, augmented by the well-crafted and distinctive Ethel, and was also convenient for conspirators who were particularly concerned to ‘manage’ the hoax process. *The Darkening Ecliptic* was complemented by a didactic statement of principles delivered via what Brian McHale describes as a ‘gotcha!’ strategy (which, unlike Floupette or *Spectra*, precipitated an ongoing partisan divide within the literary community), an interesting contrast with the ‘gotcha!’ exposure of the Spectrists.<sup>406</sup> Release of the Disclosure was also by means of a medium which would invariably abuse the literary criticism. Malley’s elaborate initiatives were via intricately crafted prefatory peritext delivered in planned stages, perhaps in part reflecting the military environment in which the manuscript was written. The prefatory peritext of *Délivrescences* and *Spectra* was detailed satire but did not form part of a two-staged plan targeting a particular individual, and therefore intricate manipulations were not a consideration. Malley’s biographical information was also elaborately designed, whilst that of the Spectrists was apposite but brief, and Floupette’s was unplanned, precipitated by unexpected developments. In contrast to *Spectra*, the satire of both Floupette and Malley is consistent and likewise the associated humour. Compared to the others, Malley has a greater range of sources and consequent allusions combined with more vivid images. In relation to Floupette and Malley on the one hand, and *Spectra* on the other, a factor of particular significance is that the latter was not collaboratively written: this is likely to have contributed to the substantial proportion of *Spectra*’s oeuvre which is not focused on the targets and, without the input of the energised collaborative dynamic, its generally less humorous qualities.

#### The ‘Lives’ of the Case Study Hoaxes and their Influence on Other Works

Floupette as an active hoax continued for approximately eight months during 1885; *Spectra*’s equivalent is the two years mid-1916 to mid-1918. The Malley Hoax has had two lives, of which the first occupied the six months June-December 1944. The second commenced around 1960 and continues today in its mythological form. *Spectra* has never been reprinted in its own right (included in Smith’s account of the hoax), whereas *Délivrescences*, according to Paul Edwards, ‘has never gone out of print’ and a hardcopy English translation appeared in 2007.<sup>407</sup> Whilst there has been little ongoing interest in *Spectra* poems, it appears there is a

<sup>406</sup> B. McHale, ‘“A Poet May Not Exist”: Mock-Hoaxes and the Construction of National Identity’, p. 237.

<sup>407</sup> Floupette (4), p. 69 (P. Edwards, ‘Afterword’). Never ‘out of print’ is questionable since other sources imply the 1911 Crès edition appeared after a considerable period of unavailability. Perhaps it has been in continuous print since then. Edwards’s context suggests ongoing sales are focused in the left-bank bohemia, a small but not insignificant market. Another English translation is included in the 2011 Brooks (2) which is the primary translated source for the

relatively small continuing French market for Floupette's verse with some extension to English-speaking countries. Interest in *Darkening Ecliptic* waned with the post-war contraction to hegemonic conservatism.<sup>408</sup> A turnaround was stimulated by interviews with key hoax participants from both sides which were broadcast on Australian national radio in 1959, transcripts of these being published in 1963.<sup>409</sup> That initiative and the 1960s introduction of (Post)Modernist poetry (mostly generated by connections with the New York School, which included Malley aficionados/acclaimed-poets John Ashbery and Kenneth Koch) were stimuli for several Australian *Darkening Ecliptic* reprints. Subsequent editions appeared in several international locations; likewise the poems in a number of overseas-based journals.<sup>410</sup>

Spectra's influence on other literary/artistic works manifested in a number of short-lived forms (publication of numerous contemporary imitations, the handful of Ultra-Violet parodies, Earl Roppel's transgressive ruse) and an enduring presence in a major work of William Carlos Williams. Malley's impact on other literary and artistic works is extensive, as detailed in the preceding section. *Les Délivrescences* 'influence' on Symbolism is confined to provision of the capital 'S' manifestation of its name and, in the long term, the equally tenuous attention it activated (in tandem with *Les poètes maudits* and *À Rebours*) for leading Decadents. A likely, albeit minor, influence of the Floupette Hoax on particular works is a 'contribution' to the soon-after *faux Rimbaud*. As previously noted, Brooks argues Floupette was the model for the Malley Hoax and he presents a credible argument that the perpetrators of the latter were aware of the former. The other foundation of his claim rests on the general similarities of the two works: poetry collections known as hoaxes composed by fictitious authors with purposes of literary criticism directed at the contemporary avant garde. He also draws attention to perhaps the most persuasive single item — both collections commence with ekphrastic poems. His broader argument is constructed on an elaborate allusive chain linking *Darkening Ecliptic* to *Les Délivrescences*. Whilst allusions are the primary weapon of literary satirists and a focus of associated criticism, it is salutary to consider commentary regarding *Ulysses* by Joyce scholar Hugh Kenner emphasising the speculative nature of this pursuit:

Were the book untitled, had we only the assurance that it is organised round a system of allusions to a classic, we should most likely guess *Hamlet* and not guess wrong.<sup>411</sup>

Although *Darkening Ecliptic* is infused with many readily-identifiable allusions, including those forming elaborately constructed themes, Brooks's approximate 120 pages of chain-linked allusions (many of which he acknowledges are tenuous), is a tenuous argument. In effect Brooks confirms this in his concluding paragraph — an attempt to produce something out of a sum of 'nothings' (coincidences which, in both definitional and putative terms, are not allusory) that collapses into an appeal to invoke the 'authority' of Mallarmé's Nothing:

When coincidence is added to coincidence that has been added to coincidence, it may be that there forms, eventually, as there quite obviously has for this reader, a kind of spectral presence — a giant Nothing ... Yes, it is true: Ern Malley out of Albion and Hibernia and the bush, is also out of Lons and Graz. 'It's not what you read', it continues, 'but what you do with it'.<sup>412</sup>

It is possible that McAuley and Stewart were influenced by Floupette; however, connections are too tenuous to consider the Malley Hoax as a legacy of the Floupette Hoax.

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Section Three close reading.

<sup>408</sup> *AP* folded in 1946, one edition (# 9) appeared that year. Also during 1946, ten editions of a parallel *Angry Penguins Broadsheet*, co-edited by Harris, Nolan & James McGuire, were released, averaging ten pages per issue (# 1, Jan; # 10 Dec.). A 'revival blip' occurred when defiant John Reed encouraged reluctant Harris to join him and Barret Reid to produce *Ern Malley's Journal*, which struggled for a presence over six editions 1952-55.

<sup>409</sup> Thompson, *ibid.*

<sup>410</sup> Rainey, p. 10.

<sup>411</sup> H. Kenner, *Ulysses*, p. 155.

<sup>412</sup> Brooks (2), pp. 261-62. That final suggestion appears relevant to items on which Brooks has placed considerable emphasis. In 1991 he argued: 'the eighteen of *Les Délivrescences* are in fact fifteen, one of which is in four sections, and, if one is prepared to take two versions of "Night Piece" as the one poem, there are also fifteen in *The Darkening Ecliptic*': Brooks (3), pp. 79-80. After Heyward's 1993 revelation of Malley's incomplete poem ('So Long'), Brooks argued that Malley's collection has eighteen poems since, in relation to the two 'Sonnets for the Novachord', Harris 'placed the "Sonnets" on separate pages' and ' "So Long", does, after all exist ... if you count separately each part of "Symphony in Green Minor", a sequence of four poems, you have eighteen poems in *Les Délivrescences*': Brooks (2), p. 235.

### Case Study Comparisons with regard to Potential Mythological Development

Myths are likely to be driven by drama and tragedy. *Les Délivrescences*, a sensation for a number of mainstream critics which precipitated a short-lived sales rush and associated print-media debates, was essentially a low-key event. The text has numerous instances of entertaining parody, with a handful of lines funny enough to be memorable. The striking qualities of its one standout image, the abandoned Sons of Clovis, are stimulated more from the painting on which it is based than the poem itself, and there appear to be few otherwise-focused 'excursions' beyond the satirical purpose. Floupette is essentially one-dimensional, his role limited to burlesque embellishments of the criticism and his transgression is 'soft'. The distinctive multi-layered packaging peritext is particularly amusing, but stories with ongoing impact are not built on an intricate web of metaphorical puns submerged in book covers and title pages. Debates continued for a few months, with 'drama' limited to fleeting 'outrages' regarding imagined threats to society and the revered French language. After Floupette's brief appearance in the press, a second de facto 'disclosure' which essentially stated what was already known, the hoaxers ceased their forays. The story is informative and enjoyable, but does not have the ingredients of mythology.

*Spectra* also generated impressive short-term sales and stimulated numerous imitations and parodies. Its experimental initiatives create more than one dimension; however, memorable lines are few, its purposeful satire is intermittent, and ambiguity is not conducive to longevity. Distinctive in the *Spectra* 'œuvre' are: several 'leading-edge' feminist poems by Hay, a number of engaging Knish vignettes, and two arguably significant non-satiric poems (Morgan's Isadora Duncan portrait and Knish's 'nocturnal neighbourhood'). 'Dramas' were limited to: Bynner, in his then unbeknown Spectric role, engaging in a malicious public attack on Lowell; once-off 'outrages' from two 'cheated' editors within the epitextual milieu; and the public ambush that exposed Bynner and Spectrism which, given his equanimous confession (a wearied reversal of 'Bynner the Belligerent'), was anticlimactic. A legend draws considerable strength from a singular-focused hero, and whilst those of more than one are not unheard of, they are less likely to develop. The brief exotica of the biographical personas were not legendary 'potentials'. Morgan's poetic character lacks a clear identity, and whilst the Elijah Hay of his poetry is a surprisingly 'feminist male' who expresses salient observations in that regard, politically-focused poetry is unlikely to form the basis of a legend. The Anne Knish who emerges from her poetry is striking and at times engaging; however, such characters abound in culture and there are no elements of tragedy. Knish and Hay retired to Ficke and Seiffert, whilst Bynner attempted a parallel career for his Spectric Morgan who managed a low-key publishing presence for several years.

The Malley Hoax has distinctive features, a number of which involved considerable drama in its first phase: successful and very public entrapment; a didactic yet flawed declaration of principles; exploitation of prejudices harboured by the 'enemy press'; extraordinary and punitive state intervention; two stories, one evocative of tragedy (Malley), the other, a spotlighted real life fall of an (apparently) incurably-flawed Harris facing powerful forces against which he was defenceless, accentuated by the adversaries' scoffing laughter. In addition *Darkening Ecliptic* has two groups of standout features. Firstly, an elaborate text which, derived from whatever degree of random composition, blends a range of literary and other allusions with a consistent and playfully satiric subtext infused with striking images/lines, generally effective as (Post)Modernist 'poetry by association of ideas'. Secondly, elaborate paratext that creates two transgressive personas, both with a vibrancy which remains undiluted in their post-Disclosure 'lives'. From the outset Malley was a rallying point (hero) regarding an assumed outcome of 'treachery', the retardation of Australian literary Modernist development.

Thompson's 1959 broadcast resonated because it was informed by Malley's distinct text/subtext/paratext and the stories these encourage, a multi-faceted and arresting core which sustained the revival. For participants in the 1960s emergence of (Post)Modernist poetry, Malley's experimentalism was a natural attraction, enriched by the attendant package. Although less intense, the first phase dramas carried over, contributing to a multi-dimensional 'cause celebre'. The easing of mainstream ridicule and personal tensions primed more engagement with *Darkening Ecliptic*'s humour, as those attracted to the poetry appreciated its 'totality' without feeling threatened by less serious aspects. There are also spinoffs such as Vogelesang's 'evidence', regarding which French Professor Jacques Lecerle observes, voicing the view of many, 'makes hilarious reading', and also numerous quirky anecdotes.<sup>413</sup> There are those who take delight in the irony that Malley

<sup>413</sup> J-J. Lecerle, *Interprétation as Pragmatics*, p. 143. Whilst there do not appear to be any quirky 'side stories' or epiphanies connected to the Floupette Hoax, there are a number associated with both *Spectra* and Malley. There seems



gnarners continuing attention whilst his creators are largely ignored, typified by Peter Carey's comment: 'No one is teaching McCauley [sic] or Stewart at Bard College, and that's sort of lovely.'<sup>414</sup>

Mythological development is not limited to dramatic stories and rallying points arising from past grievances. Just as tension drives a story, irony energises both mythologies and humour, Malley being an effective example of both. Malley's death, integral to the hoax, contributes substantively to the inspiration of associated literary and artistic works and second phase humour, and these factors have compounding effects. Legends are often enhanced by figures who can exist 'encumbrance-free' in their non-existence. Anne Knish, the most striking, in persona and poetry, of Malley's predecessors, did not exist but she is inextricably tethered to Arthur Ficke and his conventional lifestyle which inhibits 'Knish imaginings'. Although much could be written at an abstract level regarding this phenomenon, the most effective demonstration of the irony and consequent humour generated by Malley's 'dead-existence' would be numerous examples of its contributing dynamic. That is impractical in this context, but one instance is informative:

In conjunction with the 2009 Melbourne exhibition of Malley-related art/memorabilia, there was an evening of presentations scheduled to close at 8.30pm which, due to security arrangements of the art-gallery venue, the fifty or so assembled persons were informed, would be observed. As the final 8.25pm 'slot' approached several security guards assembled and 'Ern' arrived, in the guise of a local poet, to perform one poem, 'Petit Testament'. His delivery precipitated calls for an encore. Ern replied he understood there was no time for further performance. "But Ern", came an interjection, "we've waited 65 years for this!" (Security Chief relented and Ern performed another poem.)<sup>415</sup>

Considerations of these community processes are in effect 'close readings' of mythological development and illustrate the potential to critically explore this phenomenon on a substantive basis. 'Malley complete' is an arresting mix. For those interested, but not inclined to be present-day partisans, they share with the aficionados 'the thrill of unbuttoned curiosity and passionate speculation' regarding a story which remains 'just as rich and funny and clever and sad and strange as it ever was'.<sup>416</sup> In contrast to the other case studies, the Malley Hoax legacy is a symbolic place in the Postmodernist aspect of its national literature which expanded into an active mythology with some reach beyond its home territory.

#### Outcomes with regard to Scholarship of Fake Literature and Literary Criticism

Criticism in the form of non-transgressive satire has a long tradition, as have hoaxes involving manuscript forgeries and similar impostures. It is four centuries since Swift established textually-based transgressive political satire. The acceptance of the latter within literature's mainstream, and of Chatterton's works, are among the more obvious manifestations of 'fakery's' contribution to 'the literary', and this integration influences subsequent works. These cases have customarily attracted SFL; as new instances of significant spuriousity generate criticism, coupled with the recent increase of scholarship focused on associated general

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to be an indeterminate point whereby distinctive quirks relating to a legend become integral to it. Without a mythological base, Spectra has not 'scaled' that threshold, whereas the following Malley examples, minor in themselves, compound the mythology: 'Conlon's Circus', the Army Directorate where Malley was composed in the middle of a war, established through the orchestrations of the mysteriously 'well-connected' career university student Alf Conlon, who reported to Armed Services Commander in Chief General Blamey and was an undefined advisor to Prime Minister Curtin, provoking a member of Parliament to declare the 'Directorate has inquired into everything in heaven and on earth': Heyward (1), pp. 81-86; Harris's 'cloak and dagger' investigator who initially thought he was on 'another divorce job' and for twenty-four hours 'cased' the wrong residence: Heyward (1), pp. 122-23, 126-27; the 'unveiling' of early twentieth-century Austrian Professor Ernst Mally who propounded a theory regarding the 'existence' of non-existent objects: 'The "being and not-being" of the "A which is and is not" subsists': E. Mally, *Zur Gegenstandstheorie des Messens*, p. 133 (trans. B. Russell); an apparently no-longer existing object, the Ethel-despatched original Malley manuscript, last known to be in the 1944 care of meticulous record-keeper John Reed who bequeathed to posterity several boxes of Malley-related material (sans Mss.): Heyward (1), pp. 238-39; Heyward's U.K. copy-editor who believed the story is so 'outlandish' that she was apparently convinced his book itself is a hoax: Heyward (2), p. B13.

<sup>414</sup> Quotation: Steger, *ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>415</sup> 'Ern Malley: From The Ear To The Eye', pres. by K. Morgan, D. Rainey & E. Bix, 26 Aug. 2009, 6.30-8.30pm: Morgan & Rainey, *ibid.*, Heide Museum of Modern Art. Ezra Bix performed 'Ern'. Recounted by attendee Philton.

<sup>416</sup> M. Heyward (3), 'The Living Ern Malley', p. 5; Heyward (2), *ibid.*

issues, it is likely this field will become a recognised discipline.<sup>417</sup> Ruthven's compact *Faking Literature* is, in terms of scope, the most comprehensive work to date; there is potential for complementary expansions.

Non-satiric passages which occur in conventional satire are not usually distinctive, whereas the transgressive personas of the case-study authors energised numerous digressive creations. These blends of purposeful satire and their digressions underline an integration of the fake and the literary at the compositional level. The Close Reading Principles and Method facilitate informative outcomes: enriched detail, identification of less obvious yet significant subtextual factors, and an essentially comprehensive appreciation of the case-study texts. These readings indicate that each of the hoax transgressive personas (Floupette, Knish, Morgan, Hay and Malley) engage in different styles and frequently switch between them, effectively 'multiple creative modes': (1) relatively 'conventional' satire in keeping with the purpose of the hoax; (2) radical/experimental writing that the real authors do not produce which has a conscious focus on the hoax purpose; (3) conventional satire which seems to be focused on a target different to the hoax purpose; (4) experimental writing which seems to have a satirical focus on something different to the hoax purpose; (5) experimental moments or 'runs' with a sensibility of having been drafted spontaneously and for which there may be no readily discernible meaning; (6) passages or complete poems which are non-satirical writing.

Between passages of satire, there are those of quality writing which are otherwise focused, such as Malley's depiction of *Samson killing the Lion* and Morgan's feathered men acknowledging a god. There are non-satiric lines which synergistically blend with the satire: Floupette's evocative 'Do you not scent the warmth of hands?'; Knish's arresting 'houses would be empty / But for the golden motes dancing in sunbeams'; and Malley's metaphoric 'intemperate torch' and innovative synæsthesia ('green descant of frogs'). These texts also include complete poems which are quality writing essentially free of satire: Morgan's Isadora Duncan poem; the evocative aural imagery of Knish's 'nocturnal neighbourhood'; and Malley's 'Durer: Innsbruck, 1495'. Otherwise-focused Spectric creations include engaging parodies of orthodox institutions/society and Modernist-style vignettes of everyday life.

Close reading is usually restricted to the primary text; however, its application to paratext and other material proves beneficial in these cases. Whilst paratext is generally considered in SFL, the use and adaption of Genette's categories facilitates a systematic approach which also contributes to efficacious outcomes. The extension of epitext to the epitextual milieu illustrates the 'parody free-for-all' environment that prompted and shaped *Déliquescences* and this also enables synergistic explanations of incongruities such as the nominal metaparody regarding the quotation of Verlaine's satire. Another illumination is the elaborate initiatives that transgressive satirists are inclined to engage in. Similarly, the mix of hoaxter-initiated orchestrations and concurrent developments which resulted in a scarcity of *Déliquescences*'s first edition and, with regard to *Spectra*, the elusive unavailable-for-interview authors — both illustrating dynamics which intensify intrigue, community interest and commensurate sales of the hoax texts. Creation of the sub-categories 'Packaging Peritext' and 'Prefatory Peritext' facilitated identification of features regarding particular case studies which were informative in the context of associated comparisons.

Numerous details of author-generated paratext were informative. Beauclair's manuscript revealed the hoaxers' use of a title from Guaita's manuscript, an 'inside' glimpse of intertextuality. Although the similarity of passages by Morgan and Stevens has attracted critical attention, Ficke's letter to *Poetry*'s editor has been essentially ignored; however, scrutiny of this document furnishes an apposite explanation. Ficke's account regarding composition of Morgan's 'lunatic' poem is illuminating with regard to instances of spontaneous writing/poïesis. In relation to the general Spectric method of composition, combined consideration of several items contained in Bynner's commentary exposes weaknesses in his claims. Critical examination of the rarely-considered political clause of the Malley hoaxers, cross-referenced with other material, indicates the previously unacknowledged political dimension to the hoax. The hitherto unattended significance of Malley Disclosure 'correction' to the *AP* text of *Darkening Ecliptic*: in principle, it undermines the hoaxers' declared principles. Some details of Stewart's commentaries are informative regarding poïesis (instantaneous or otherwise) by either facilitating synergistic interpretation or illuminating idiosyncratic thoughts/sources.

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<sup>417</sup> Additional to Section One examples: M. Jones, ed., *Why Fakes Matter: Essays on Problems of Authenticity* (includes 'literary'); J. Whitehead, *This Solemn Mockery: The Art of Literary Forgery*; J. Rosenblum, *Practice to Deceive: The Amazing Stories of Literary Forgery's Most Notorious Practitioners* (a professor with an eye on the populist market).

The systematised approach also encouraged broad investigations which resulted in consultation of overlooked sources such as Ryan's memoirs, this source containing an item for an arguably effective resolution to the intensely-debated 'live' controversy regarding the speed of *Darkening Ecliptic's* composition. Close examination of community responses highlighted the rarely discussed distinction between the meaning of the words in a text and what the work represents: mainstream critical responses to *Déliquescences* which either failed to recognise, or refused to acknowledge, the satire and humour, due to a perception that its radical poetic techniques threatened the national language and even society as a whole; editors initially enthusiastic regarding the 'quality' of Spectric verse, for whom the hoax exposure 'changed the meaning' of the text to what it represents, something which had 'cheated' them.

Generally, there were numerous and various 'discoveries' covering a range of 'significances'. Additional ones which to date appear to be critically unattended include: Floupette's hoax hints connected to musical puns based on the section titles of *'Symphonie en Vert Mineur'* and also his dragonflies being an allusion to Rimbaud's image of those insects; the significance of 'poet-reviewers' in the Spectric *Forum* declaration; Malley's 'Night Piece' allusion to Basho; and many others. The close reading of Spectra indicated that the extent of feminist themes in Hay/Seiffert's contributions is considerably greater than previous brief observations. A number of identified intersections of parody and (potential) metaparody suggest two features which may contribute to further explorations: that the potential to confuse the satire-of-the-satire with the primary parody is lessened if the 'new' satire is contained in paratext and that metaparody may generally be an unintended effect.

Cultural and literary fashions were not uncommon in Antiquity and, after an apparent reduction during the era of medieval theocracy, they have increased and appear to be endemic to modern society. The case studies have underlined the significance of fashion with regard to criticism hoaxes and Ruthven notes their importance in relation to a variety of textual fakeries. There does not seem to be any substantial studies focused on literary fashion as a subject in its own right (rather than studies focused on particular vogues).<sup>418</sup> These fashions are significant for both SFL and literary criticism and the potential to examine the phenomenon could be taken up in either field. For criticism/theory in particular, there are the issues arising from the now broadly acknowledged fashion dimension which has developed with Literary and Cultural Theory in the post-Structuralist era, the Sokal Hoax highlighting one aspect.<sup>419</sup>

This thesis emphasises that there are modern literary hoaxes which are driven by criticism. Whilst conceptually this form could have been used before the Modernist era there appears to be no instances of it.<sup>420</sup> Modern Criticism developed in conjunction with Modernism, which may reflect concerns regarding obscurity perceived by many in Baudelairean and Decadent innovations. Just as Modernism established a new form of writing, the Floupette/Spectra/Malley reactions to it established this new literary form of the criticism hoax. Within the context of emphasising that the Floupette and Malley hoaxes are the principal subjects of his *Sons of Clovis*, Brooks makes brief reference to the Spectra Hoax and, with regard to all three, considers:

It is tempting to see them, if not as a type of their own, then as an opportunity, in their coincidence, to move a little deeper into the analysis of the poetics of the literary hoax.<sup>421</sup>

This touches on an element which has proved to be significant: these hoaxes form a distinct grouping of which to date they appear to be the only cases. Despite this small number, collectively (and individually) they have attracted considerable critical attention. Two differently-focused 'criticism' hoaxes have also

<sup>418</sup> A personal account of an early twentieth-century English publisher discusses 'microcosmic' annual changes in literary fashions during 1901-1917, including some discussion of Modernism's impact, presented through 'mini-biographies' of the writers he published: F. Swinnerton, *Background with Chorus: A Footnote to Changes in English Literary Fashion Between 1901 and 1917*.

<sup>419</sup> Theory's fashion has been parodied: M. Bradbury, *My Strange Quest for Mensonge: Structuralism's Hidden Hero*.

<sup>420</sup> As noted in Section 1.2.3, textually-based transgressive political criticism is often considered to come within the scope of literary hoaxes, but its targets are not literary. There is a lack of substance to suggestions that criticism of a literary nature was the principal driver of Macpherson's 'ancient fragments' and Chatterton's 'medieval' creations: Haywood (2) pp. 48-62. Likewise, regarding Psalmanazar's 1704 'Formosan' fabrication: S. Stewart, *ibid.*, pp. 41-55. Other literary hoaxes which emerge in studies of fakery prior to the late nineteenth century are those of textual forgery/impostures with no apparent cases of criticism.

<sup>421</sup> Brooks (2), p. 27.

developed, the Section One definitional groupings of criticism regarding editorial/awards bias and textual criticism of critical practices (metacriticism). Since the focus of SFL is the much larger fakery grouping that is based on various kinds of forgery (manuscript/physical), studies such as this thesis, focused on qualitatively different hoaxes, appear to form a ‘self-contained pocket’ within the field. However, as Ruthven observes:

As the repressed text of literary studies, literary forgery constitutes an indispensable critique of those cultural practices that foster the so-called genuine article ...

Whilst he devotes an overview chapter to ‘Fake literature as critique’ there is potential for contributions from studies with that focus, including the outcomes of this thesis.<sup>422</sup>

The examination of transgressive criticism hoaxes undertaken herein, facilitated by a methodology which in critical terms is largely unattended, illustrates the artistic and associated complexities of these ‘literary fakes’, including the integration of fakery and literature at the compositional level, and therefore their significance to the fakery and criticism fields of scholarship.

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<sup>422</sup> Ruthven, pp. 171, 171-94.

## Appendices: Case Study Chronologies

### A. FLOUPETTE HOAX AND ITS AFTERMATH

Date	Item	Source
1879–1885	A number of artistically progressive periodicals commence publication: <i>Gil Blas</i> , <i>Paris moderne</i> , <i>La Nouvelle Rive Gauche</i> (subsequently <i>Lutèce</i> ), <i>Le Chat noir</i> , <i>Les Taches d'Encre</i> . Others which at times publish innovative literature and related articles include (not exhaustive): <i>Revue moderniste</i> , <i>La minerve</i> , <i>Le XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle</i> , <i>La Vie moderne</i> , <i>Mercur de France</i> , <i>La Revue Indépendante</i> and <i>Revue Contemporaine</i> .	various
1879	<i>Rimes de Joie</i> by Théodore Hannon is published with a <i>Préface</i> by Huysmans in which he argues this collection has Baudelairean influences.	Hannon, <i>ibid.</i> , p. v.
1880	Paris Salon exhibits <i>Les enervés de Jumièges</i> by Évariste Luminais to considerable acclaim.	Art Gallery of New South Wales, <i>ibid.</i>
1882–1885	Poetry by a good number of the Decadents is published in journals ( <i>revues</i> ).	Richard (1), pp. 127-28.
1882	<i>Paris moderne</i> is established by Vanier; includes Verlaine's first periodical publication in ten years.	Stephan, pp. 51, 58; Cornell, p. 26.
Dec.	1 <i>La Nouvelle Rive Gauche</i> publishes article by Karl Mohr (Charles Morice) critical of Verlaine's poem 'Art poétique'.	Stephan, pp. 51-53.
	15 <i>La Nouvelle Rive Gauche</i> publishes Verlaine's reply to Mohr. Stephan argues this was a watershed in Verlaine's fortunes since co-editor Morice began to develop a positive response to Verlaine's arguments and poetry, the two becoming friends.	<i>Ibid.</i> , pp. 53-55, 78.
1883–1885	Verlaine's poetry appears eighteen times in <i>Lutèce</i> (incorporating <i>La Nouvelle Rive Gauche</i> ), and also in a number of other periodicals, Jan. 1883 – May 1885	<i>Ibid.</i> , pp. 50-80.
1883	Feb. 9 Article by Jean Mario in <i>La Nouvelle Rive Gauche</i> highly favourable to Verlaine's poetry.	<i>Ibid.</i> , pp. 55-56.
	Mar. 30 <i>La Nouvelle Rive Gauche</i> changes its name to <i>Lutèce</i> .	<i>Ibid.</i> , p. 10.
	May 26 Publication in <i>Le Chat noir</i> of Verlaine's 'Langueur' in which he refers to himself as a 'Decadent'.	Cornell, p. 35.
	Aug. 24 Commencement in <i>Lutèce</i> of Verlaine's 'Les poètes maudits' series which run over several editions, final instalment 5 Jan. 1884.	Verlaine (1), (Pierrot, 'Présentation').
1884	Vanier's bookshop stocks previously published books by a number of poets including those of Verlaine.	Stephan, p. 58.
	<i>Charlot s'amuse</i> by Paul Bonnetain is published.	www.archive.org (Paul Bonnetain).
	Feb. 25 First book edition of Verlaine's <i>Les poètes maudits</i> is published by Vanier with a subtitle indicating the three poet profiles (including poetry) it contains: <i>Tristan Corbière</i> , <i>Arthur Rimbaud</i> , <i>Stéphane Mallarmé</i> .	Stephan, p. 58.

May	J-K. Huysmans's <i>À Rebours</i> is published.	Stephan, p. 63.
July	<i>La Revue Indépendante</i> publishes a review of <i>À Rebours</i> by Emile Hennequin in which he asserts that Verlaine is an example of a Decadent.	Cornell, p. 35.
Dec.	Vanier publishes a new Verlaine poetry collection <i>Jadis et naguère</i> , and also one by Moréas (his first) <i>Les Syrtes</i> .	Stephan, p. 85.
1885	<i>Lutèce</i> editors Léo Trézniak (Léon Epinette) and Georges Rall 'seem to have adopted during 1885 a jocose if not satiric attitude towards their collaborators'. With the pseudonym 'L.-G. Mostrailles' they publish approx. twenty mocking sketches of the journal's contributors.	Cornell, p. 37.
Jan.	<i>La Revue Indépendante</i> publishes Mallarmé's 'Prose: pour des Esseintes'.	Brooks (2), p. 191.
	25 Laurent Tailhade reviews <i>Les Syrtes</i> in <i>La Minerve</i> , placing it in a Baudelaire lineage influenced by (Cornell's paraphrase): 'Verlainian vagueness, Mallarmean [sic] intensity, and Schopenhauerian pessimism'.	Cornell, p. 36.
Feb.	1 Two poems subsequently included in <i>Déliquescences</i> appear in <i>Lutèce</i> attributed to Étienne Arsenal: ' <i>Le Petunia sauveur</i> ', ' <i>Cantique avant de se coucher</i> '; both have the subtitle ' <i>Pour les Symboliques</i> '.	Richard (3), p. 200.
	25 Stanislas de Guaita focuses on decadence in a <i>La Minerve</i> review of Joséphin Péladan's 1884 novel <i>Le Vice suprême</i> .	Cornell, p. 36.
April	19 Grouped under ' <i>Déliquescences</i> ', <i>Lutèce</i> publishes ' <i>Fragments d'une symphonie en vert mineur</i> ': ' <i>Andante</i> ', ' <i>Scherzo</i> ', ' <i>Pizzicati</i> ', attributed to J. M. J. Floupette. Richard provides this date as 19 April, whereas Stephan and most critics state it was 19 February (less likely).	Richard (1), p. 180; Stephan, p. 88.
May	<i>Rosa mystica</i> by Stanislas de Guaita is published; includes his ' <i>Pour avoir péché</i> '.	Floupette (2), pp. 73-74 (Richard, 'Notes').
	2 First edition of <i>Les Déliquescentes: Poèmes décadents</i> by Adoré Floupette. Published by <i>Lutèce</i> . Prinrun 110 copies, ten with Vicaire's and Beauclair's names on the cover. ' <i>Le Petunia sauveur</i> ' is renamed ' <i>Pour avoir péché</i> ', this latter title having been copied from a Mss. by de Guaita although text of the associated poem is different.	Richard (1), p. 174.
May–Sept.	Numerous reviews, articles, columns and letters addressed to editors, discuss <i>Les Déliquescentes</i> over the next four months including those in (not exhaustive): <i>L'Echo de Paris</i> , <i>Le Monde illustré</i> , <i>Le Chat Noir</i> , <i>Le Monde poétique</i> , <i>Revue moderniste</i> , <i>Le Soir</i> , <i>La Ruche</i> , <i>Le Zig Zag</i> , <i>Le Voltaire</i> , and <i>L'Art moderne</i> .	Ibid., pp. 319-20; Cornell, pp. 43-44.
	3 <i>Lutèce</i> publishes four more <i>Déliquescentes</i> poems attributed to Adoré Floupette: ' <i>Platonisme</i> ', ' <i>Pour être conpue</i> ', ' <i>Madrigal</i> ', ' <i>Rythme claudicant</i> '.	Stephan, p. 88.
'second half of May'	Letter by Vicaire to Beauclair asking that he approach Paul Arène to write a Floupette biography for their planned second edition of <i>Déliquescentes</i> .	Richard (1), pp. 271-72.
late May	Vicaire indicates he wrote Floupette's 'Life' in a letter to François Coppée.	Richard (3), p. 200.
	17 Review of <i>Déliquescentes</i> by Mermeix in <i>Le XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle</i> .	Richard (1), p. 319.

- 17 'Les Decadents', review of *Déliquescences* in *Gil Blas* by Arène; he states Adoré Floupette is a pseudonym for two (unnamed) 'editors' and suggests they should write Floupette's biography. Reminds readers of *Le Parnassiculet contemporain* satire of the Parnassians. Richard (1), p. 319.
- 22 Death of Victor Hugo. Cornell: 'after Hugo's death, there was almost immediate evidence of novel poetic expression and the appearance of new names.' Brooks argues this generally boosted attention to poetry and resulted in a spinoff for *Déliquescences*. Cornell, p. 34; Brooks (2), p. 191.
- 31 Mostrailles's 'Henri Beauclair' parody in *Lutèce*. Richard (1), p. 320.
- June Anonymous notice in *Revue moderniste* quotes lines from Floupette's 'Les Énergés de Jumièges' and 'Cantique avant de se coucher'; adds 'Two excellent poets mingling their Bressan and Norman ironies have engendered the young and exquisite Adoré Floupette'. Brooks (2), p. 186.
- 14 *Lutèce* publishes 'Vie d'Adoré Floupette' by Marius Tabora. Stephan, p. 89.
- 20 *Déliquescences*'s second edition published by Vanier. Includes Tabora's 'Vie d'Adoré Floupette'. 1,500 copies plus 50 copies on luxury Holland paper with a higher price. Richard (1), p. 188.
- 23 In *Le Temps* Jules Claretie affirms Floupette is 'not an imaginary Decadent, but an existing esthete'. Richard (1), p. 319; van Roosbroeck, p. 39.
- 24 Phillippe Gille's review of *Déliquescences* in *Le Figaro*. Brooks (2), pp. 185-86.
- 25 'Les Poètes impressionnistes et Adoré Floupette' in *Bibliothèque Universelle et Revue Suisse* in which it is argued that Mallarmé is the ultimate in obscurity. Stephan, pp. 90, 97.
- 25 Barrès asserts, in a review of Guaita's *Rosa mystica*, that (Cornell's paraphrase): 'the younger generation is divided in admiration between Renan and Baudelaire'. Cornell, p. 36.
- July 11 'Adoré Floupette, poète décadent' in *L'Univers Illustré* in which Gérome (Anatole France) asserts that Vicaire and Beauclair are *Déliquescences*'s authors. Richard (1), p. 319; Brooks (2), pp. 186-87.
- 19 Sutter-Laumann's 'Les Déliquescences' in *La Justice*. Richard (1), p. 320.
- Aug. 6 Paul Bourde's 'Les poètes décadents' in *Le Temps*. Ibid., p. 319.
- 8 'Barrès's *Déliquescences* review in *La Vie moderne*. Also names Vicaire and Beauclair as the authors. Brooks (2), pp. 193-94.
- 11 Moréas's 'Les Décadents' in *Le XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle*. Cornell, p. 41.
- 16 'Bourde's bourdes' in *Lutèce* by Mostrailles. Richard (1), p. 320.
- 16 Trézenik asserts in *Lutèce* that Beauclair is an 'excellent parodist'. He also states *Déliquescences* was not a parody but a joke; accuses the press for having fallen for it; and that it is a 'bold, sincere and rapid literary work'. Ibid., p. 273; Stephan, p. 94; Marquèze-Pouey, p. 150.

- 23 'Lettre à Léo Trézenik' by Beauclair in *Lutèce* in which he states Vicaire is the author of Floupette's 'Life', effectively acknowledging that he and Vicaire are the authors of *Déliquescences*. Richard (1), p. 319.
- 29 Eduard Rod's 'La question des Décadents' in *La Vie moderne*. Ibid., p. 320.
- Sept. 6 Floupette's 'La question des Décadents' in *La Vie moderne*. Ibid.
- Oct. 3 'Poètes décadenticulets' by Félicien Champasaur in *Le Figaro* aligned the younger generation with pessimism of the romantic school. Cornell, p. 42.
- 1886 Emergence of three factions of avant garde poets, the Symbolists and two claiming to be Decadents, grouped around the newly-formed revues *Le Décadent*, *Le Symboliste* and *La Décadence*. Ibid., p. 45; Stephan, pp. 143-45.
- Sept. 18 Moréas's 'Le Symbolisme' in *Le Figaro Supplément littéraire*. Brooks (2), p. 200.
- 1887 July 19 The claim by Barrès that he was present during composition of *Déliquescences* appears in *Un poète absent*, *Le Voltaire*. Richard (1), pp. 178-79.
- 1888 *Les poètes maudits*, second edition, sans original subtitle, is released with additional profiles of Marceline Desbordes-Valmore, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam and Pauvre Lelian (Verlaine pseud.) Verlaine (1), (Pierrot, 'Présentation').
- 1889 In his *Œuvres en prose* Verlaine refers to Floupette as having behaved 'like a gentleman-wolf and refrained from eating anybody'. Floupette (4), p. 72 (Edwards, 'Afterword').
- Feb.–Mar. *Faux Rimbaud* poems published in journals signed 'Mitrophane Crapoussin' (pseud. for compositions by Ernest Raynard, Maurice du Plessys and Laurent Tailhade). Carter, pp. 140-41; Morrissette, *ibid.*, p. 4.
- 1894 May Verlaine reviews with praise Vicaire's *Au bois joli* in *La Revue blanche* and states the author is a close friend and amongst his favourite writers. Cornell, p. 38; Richard (2), pp. 195-96.
- 1904 Jan. Charles-Théophile Féret in *Étude sur Henri Beauclair* argues Beauclair was the (Edwards's paraphrase): 'presiding genius' of *Déliquescences* and that Barrès was the critic who 'best understood Floupette's hygienic purgative'. Floupette (4), p. 73 (Edwards, 'Afterword').



**B. SPECTRA HOAX AND ITS AFTERMATH**

1912	<i>Poetry</i> and <i>New Freewoman</i> commence publication.	R. Scholes & S. Latham, eds., <i>Modernist Journals Project</i> .
1914	Release of Lowell's <i>Sword Blades and Poppy Seed</i> .	Lowell (2).
	<i>New Freewoman</i> changes its name to <i>The Egoist</i> with an attendant broader scope.	Scholes & Latham, <i>ibid</i> .
Feb.	<i>Des Imagistes</i> ed. by Ezra Pound.	E. Pound, ed., <i>Des Imagistes</i> .
Mar.	<i>The Little Review</i> commences publication.	Scholes & Latham.
1915	<i>Some Imagist Poets</i> , first edition.	<i>Some Imagist Poets 1915-1917: An Anthology</i> .
July	<i>Others</i> first edition. Includes three poems by Mina Loy.	Scholes & Latham.
Oct.	<i>Others</i> edition with focus on the Choric School.	<i>Others</i> , 1.4, pp. 55-74.
Nov.	<i>Poetry</i> publishes 'Sunday Morning' by Wallace Stevens.	<i>Poetry</i> , 7. 2, p. 83.
	Ficke letter to Harriet Monroe praising Stevens's 'Sunday Morning'.	W. J. Smith, p. 67.
1916	Release of Lowell's <i>Men, Women and Ghosts</i> .	Lowell (3).
	<i>Some Imagist Poets</i> , second edition.	<i>Some Imagist Poets 1915-1917: An Anthology</i> .
Feb.	Bynner attends performance of <i>Le Spectre de la Rose</i> in Chicago.	W. J. Smith, pp. 16-17.
	Bynner and Ficke commence a ten-day period of drafting 'Spectric' poems.	<i>Ibid</i> .
Mar.	3 <i>Spectra</i> Mss. completed.	<i>Ibid.</i> , p. 19.
	Ficke writes to Amy Lowell providing her with a copy of his draft article 'Modern Tendencies in Poetry' which includes reference to the 'Spectric School'.	<i>Ibid.</i> , p. 38.
	25 Bynner writes to Ficke and states he finds 'people very interested' in <i>Spectra</i> poems and also includes a suggested addition to <i>Spectra</i> Preface which is particularly anti-Lowell (not included in published version).	Bynner (4), p. 48.
May	<i>Spectra</i> Mss. accepted for publication by Mitchell Kennerley. Bynner and Ficke inform Kennerley of their hoax intentions and he remains committed to publishing the collection without acknowledging its transgressive nature.	W. J. Smith, pp. 3, 19, 23.
	4 Bynner's guest poetry lecture, Fortnightly Club, Chicago.	<i>Ibid.</i> , p. 15.

	5	'Rebel Poet Turns Cold Water on Miss Amy Lowell's Bath' reports <i>Chicago Daily Tribune</i> with reference to Bynner's lecture.	W. J. Smith, p. 39.
May–June		H. D.'s <i>Sea Garden</i> released. Includes 'Sheltered Garden'.	Robinson, <i>ibid.</i> , p. 121.
June		<i>The Forum</i> article by Knish & Morgan which attacks Imagism and 'Poet-reviewers'; biographical details for both Spectrists also included.	Bynner (1), pp. 305-07
		<i>New Republic</i> editors spot <i>Spectra</i> Mss. at Bynner's New Hampshire home and request a review of it for their publication.	MacDougall, p. 271.
		Lowell sends a copy of 'The Spectric School of Poetry' to Fletcher who replies it is all rubbish.	E. S. de Chasca, <i>John Gould Fletcher and Imagism</i> , p. 118.
		Lloyd Morris invites (separately) Knish, Morgan, Ficke and Bynner to contribute to <i>The Young Idea</i> .	W. J. Smith, p. 13.
July		Morgan's 'Opus 11' in <i>Others</i> . Includes references to 'Spectrum' and 'Elijah Hay'.	<i>Others</i> , 3.1, p. 19.
July approx.		Fan mail to Morgan and Knish commences.	W. J. Smith, p. 12.
		Recruited by Ficke and Bynner, Seiffert becomes a Spectrist with the intention to use pseudonym 'Elijah Hay' for that purpose.	<i>Ibid.</i> , pp. 26-27.
Aug.	4	In a letter to Helen Hoyt, guest editor assigned to the forthcoming <i>Others</i> special 'A Woman's Number', Seiffert seeks to swap her poem 'Spectrum' for another.	Churchill (2), p. 96.
Sept.		Ficke's 'Modern Tendencies in Poetry' published in <i>North American Review</i> .	Gould (1), p. 212.
		<i>Others</i> special 'A Woman's Number'; includes Seiffert's 'Spectrum' but no other poems by her.	<i>Others</i> , 3.3.
		As announced by Assistant Editor W. C. Williams, <i>Others</i> is in severe financial difficulties and will cease publication.	Williams (1), p. 137.
Oct.–Dec.		Correspondence between Elijah Hay and W. C. Williams in which Hay offers financial contribution to <i>Others</i> to assist the journal in publishing poems by the three Spectrists.	B. H. Wright, pp. 27-28; Churchill (1), p. 35.
Nov.		<i>Spectra</i> published by Kennerley.	W. J. Smith, p. 3.
	18	<i>New Republic</i> announces Spectric School of poetry which promotes a 'new theory to comprehend, a new manner to notice, a new humour to enjoy'. Includes Bynner's <i>Spectra</i> review 'The Spectric Poets', accompanied by Knish's Lowell bath satire 'Opus 188' and Morgan's 'lunatic' 'Opus 104'.	<i>Ibid.</i> , pp. 5, 38; Bynner, (1), pp. 310-13.
Dec. 1916–Oct. 1918.		Reviews/articles with discussion of <i>Spectra</i> , before and after exposure of the hoax, appear in numerous newspapers and periodicals including (not exhaustive): <i>New York Times</i> , <i>New York Times Review of Books</i> , <i>Detroit News</i> , <i>Chicago Evening Post</i> , <i>Los Angeles Graphic</i> , <i>Richmond Journal</i> , and also <i>Christian Register</i> .	various

- 1916 Dec. 1 Edgar Lee Masters writes to Morgan that Spectrism is ‘an idea capable of great development along creative lines’ and that it is ‘at the core of things and imagism [sic] at the surface’. W. J. Smith, p. 6; Simkin, *ibid.*
- 14 A review by Bynner regarding a collection of war poetry is published in *The Dial*. In passing he refers to having written a review of *Spectra* and that he is ‘struck’ by the latter’s ‘strange phosphorescent crest of impressionism’. Bynner (1), p. 171.
- 15 W. C. Williams writes to Hay confirming *Others* Spectric edition will proceed. B. H. Wright, p. 28.
- 26 Don Marquis asks in the New York *Evening Sun*: ‘Are you hep to the Spectric Group? Have you a little Spectrist in Your Home?’ W. J. Smith, p. 6; Leick, p. 100.
- 29 New York *Herald* declares Spectrism to be: ‘daughter of Futurist poetry, a granddaughter of *vers libre*, and no relation at all to real poetry’. However, it also reproduces Morgan’s ‘Opus 40’. W. J. Smith, p. 9.
- 1917 *Some Imagist Poets*, third edition. *Some Imagist Poets 1915-1917: An Anthology*.
- Jan. Spectric special in *Others* is published with an abbreviated ‘manifesto’. *Others*, 3.5.
- Ultra-Violet parodies of *Spectra* published in *Wisconsin Literary Magazine*. W. J. Smith, pp. 32-33.
- The Young Idea* anthology is released. Includes contributions by Knish, Morgan, Ficke and Bynner; also includes Morris’s editorial praise of Spectrism. Simkin, *ibid.*
- 2 Bynner letter to Ficke in which he mentions that the Mayor of Newark read poems from *Spectra* at his Inauguration party on 1 Jan. Bynner (4), p. 51.
- 4 *Poetry* editor Harriet Monroe praises Spectrism in letter to Morgan. W. J. Smith, p. 11.
- Mar. 24 Philadelphia *Public Ledger* review of *Spectra*. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
- April U.S. enters WWI.
- Hay’s ‘Night’ published in *Current Opinion*. (Previously appeared in *Others* Spectric edition). *Ibid.*, p. 148.
- Others* special focused on Mina Loy. *Others*, 3.6, pp. 3-20.
- 7 St Louis *Post-Dispatch* critical yet ‘on the bandwagon’ review of *Spectra*. W. J. Smith, p. 9.
- May 9 *Poetry* associate editor Eunice Tietjens writes to Morgan that *Spectra* ‘is a real delight!’ *Ibid.*, p. 6.
- July *The Little Review* publishes in the one issue both editor Margaret Anderson’s declaration ‘Banish / Anne Knish, / Set the dog on / Emanuel Morgan’ and Morgan’s ‘Opus 96’. *The Little Review*, 4.3, pp. 29, 25.
- Aug. 10 Ezra Pound writes letter to *Little Review* editor scathing of Spectrism stating that it was based on ‘some twaddle about ultra-violets’ and that ‘Morgan is only another Imagist imitator with a different preface from Amy’s’ — not published at this time but quoted in *Little Review* June 1918. Quotations: W. J. Smith, p. 37.

Sept.		<i>Vanity Fair</i> publishes Morgan's 'Portrait of a Poet' and Ficke's associated illustration.	W. J. Smith, p. 145.
Oct.	2	Seiffert writes to Bynner that <i>Poetry's</i> Alice Henderson seems to be aware of hoax. There were a number of channels through which leaks could have occurred, including the possibility of this happening earlier in 1917.	Ibid., pp. 29-32.
1918	Feb.	Ficke mentions privately to some associates that he and Bynner were the real <i>Spectra</i> poets and this begins to circulate. Seiffert discloses to Bynner that she had apprised Kreymborg of her involvement as a Spectrist without having mentioned the identities of Knish or Morgan.	Gould (1), p. 228; W. J. Smith, p. 29.
	Feb.-Mar.	Ficke, now a U.S. Army Captain, departs for war in Europe.	Gould (1), <i>ibid.</i>
	Mar. approx.	On duty in Paris, Ficke breakfasts with a U.S. General whom he had known slightly before the war and who had an interest in poetry. Without any suggestion that he suspected Ficke's <i>Spectra</i> involvement, the General 'confides' that he himself is Anne Knish! Probing 'General Knish' for more information, Ficke experienced one of 'the most deliriously happy hours I have ever spent'. (The General was circumspect on details.)	W. J. Smith, pp. 28-29.
	April	26 Whilst presenting a lecture at Detroit's Twentieth Century Club Bynner is 'ambushed' by probing question which precipitates his hoax 'confession'.	W. J. Smith, p. 15.
		30 Private letter by Bynner to Harriet Monroe confirming the hoax.	Bynner (4), pp. 65-66.
	May approx.	St Louis <i>Post-dispatch</i> now declares that Spectrism was 'not unlike the gibberish of a maniac, who had been given to strong drink' and sends-up the fashion which promoted it as 'the authentic voice of genius'.	W. J. Smith, pp. 34-35.
	May	Lloyd Morris writes to Bynner: 'I don't deny that <i>Spectra</i> baffled me entirely and pleased me greatly. ... why should I have treated it differently after knowing who wrote it than I did before?'	Ibid., p. 34.
		24 <i>Reedy's Mirror</i> argues Bynner and Ficke wrote better as Spectrists than they had previously in their own names.	Ibid., p. 42.
	June	<i>Little Review</i> Assistant Editor Jane Heap effectively explains the apparent contradiction whereby, in the July 1917 edition, editor Margaret Anderson published disparaging comments regarding Spectrists whilst simultaneously publishing a Morgan poem: although the editor was unimpressed by Spectrics, she published a sample so as to keep up with the fashion.	J. H., <i>ibid.</i> , pp. 53-54; W. J. Smith, p. 37.
		'Earl Roppel' hoaxes Bynner and also sends his poems to some other prominent poets.	Ibid., pp. 47-53.
		<i>Reedy's Mirror</i> publishes Morgan's <i>Songs of the Unknown Lover</i> .	Bynner (6), p. xxviii (Smith, 'Introduction').
		2 <i>New York Times Magazine</i> declares that the Spectrists will (Smith's paraphrase) 'take their places beside the great literary hoaxers of all time'. Bynner is also quoted as saying he 'can't get rid of Emanuel Morgan'.	W. J. Smith, p. 34; Churchill (2), p. 89.
		5 Lowell writes Bynner a sarcastic letter.	W. J. Smith, p. 39.

	11	According to a Lowell biographer, Bynner replies without rancour.	Gould (1), p. 229.
July	8	Established poet Conrad Aiken is taken in by Roppel and sends him a gift.	W. J. Smith, p. 52.
Aug.		Letter from Morgan/Bynner defending the hoax published in <i>Poetry</i> . Editor Monroe includes a condescending reply.	Bynner (1), pp. 272-73.
Oct.	16	<i>The Chicago News</i> publishes an article by Bynner in which he acknowledges that, in their Spectric disguises, he and Ficke may have exposed a Freudian 'self-revelation'. No reference to Seiffert.	Ibid., p. 154.
Dec.		<i>Others</i> publishes more poems by Hay and Morgan.	W. J. Smith, p. 57.
1919		<i>The New Era in American Poetry</i> by Louis Untermeyer.	Untermeyer, <i>ibid.</i>
		Morgan's <i>Songs of the Unknown Lover</i> republished as <i>The Beloved Stranger</i> under Bynner's own name.	Bynner (6), p. xxviii (Smith, 'Introduction').
1920		Article in New York <i>Evening Post</i> by Malcolm Cowley reveals that he and S. Foster Damon wrote the Earl Roppel poems.	W. J. Smith, p. 51.

### C. ERN MALLEY HOAX AND ITS AFTERMATH

1937		Picasso's <i>Guernica</i> .	
1939		Soviet-Nazi Pact.	
1941		<i>Angry Penguins</i> commences publication. Harris, initially co-editor with Donald Kerr, becomes sole editor after Kerr enlists in the airforce and dies in action late 1942.	AP: 1, p. 1; 2, pp. 7-8; J. Miles, <i>Lost Angry Penguins</i> , p. 277.
1943		Melbourne-based Modernist art and literary patrons John and Sunday Reed commence financial support of AP. A publishing house, Reed & Harris, is formed with Harris and John Reed as company directors.	Snowden, p. 483; AP, 4, p. 1.
	Feb.	2 German forces surrender to Soviet forces at Stalingrad; effectively the 'turning point' of WWII.	
	Oct.	McAuley and Stewart compose Malley's <i>The Darkening Ecliptic</i> , Victoria Barracks, Melbourne.	Heyward (1), pp. 55-118.
		28 A few sample <i>Darkening Ecliptic</i> poems are posted to AP with a covering letter by Ethel Malley (Stewart).	Ibid., pp. 55-56.
	Nov.	2 Harris writes to Ethel requesting all the poems.	Ibid., pp. 57-58.
		8-9 Harris consults editorial colleagues; all agree Malley's poetry 'too good' to be a hoax.	Ibid., pp. 58-60.
		Ethel responds with remainder of Mss. and long (undated) letter which contains some details of Ern's life. Harris writes back (date not provided) requesting photo of Ern and more biographical information.	Ibid., pp. 60-63, 73-74.
1944	Jan.	14 Ethel responds sans photo (no acknowledgement of that request). Additional 'information' includes the Dürer/Lois postcard and the unfinished poem fragment ('So Long').	Ibid., pp. 74-75
	May	last week Likely timing regarding release in the U.S. of <i>Voices</i> 's Australian poetry special edition which includes three Malley poems and a commentary by Harris.	Ibid., p. 76; <i>Voices: A Quarterly of Poetry</i> , # 118, pp. 41-48.
	June	Hope's review of Harris's <i>The Vegetative Eye</i> is published.	A. D. Hope (2), 'Confessions of a Zombi', pp. 44-48.
	first week	Release of AP 'Autumn Number' containing <i>The Darkening Ecliptic</i> , one of its poems illustrated on the front cover by Nolan colour painting <i>The Sole Arabian Tree</i> .	Heyward (1), p. 119; AP Autumn Number (# 6).
		16 Brian Elliott is published in <i>On Dit</i> claiming he believes <i>The Darkening Ecliptic</i> is Harris ingeniously hoaxing himself. Harris privately denies this.	<i>On Dit</i> , 12.11, pp. 1, 8; Heyward (1), pp. 119-22.
		17 2am South Austr. time. <i>FACT</i> editor Simpson awakens Harris by phone advising him of McAuley and Stewart's Disclosure (quoting some of its passages) and indicates he will be publishing a statement to this effect in the 18 June edition. Simpson provides	Ibid., pp. 125-26.

- Harris with opportunity for a 'right of reply' to be published with the statement.
- 17–22 Australian dailies pick up the story and encourage readers to guess Malley's true identity. Some printed speculations include: Adelaide Univ. Professor J. Stewart who denies the suggestion; acclaimed poet and editor of *The Bulletin* Douglas Stewart who makes the same denial; and towards the end of the week, Harold Stewart, who, when interviewed in Sydney's Concord Hospital by a *Daily Telegraph* reporter, does not deny having written the poems. (Stewart was afflicted with a serious abscess believed to be a symptom of suspected meningitis.) Adelaide Univ. students run a betting 'book' regarding Malley's identity. Heyward (1), pp. 119-36;
- Malley in the 'headlines' precipitates big jump in *AP* sales, entire Autumn Number of 900 copies selling out within days. Numerous outlets request more. Ibid., pp. 77, 132-33.
- Harris engages Sydney private detective to check identity of resident at Ethel's address. On the first day he 'cases' the wrong house. On the second day he correctly focuses his surveillance and reports on people movements in/out of the residence. Early the following morning he knocks and speaks to a woman (probably Stewart's sister Marion) who states: 'If you want to know about Ern Malley the only person who can tell you is in hospital'. Ibid., pp. 122-23, 126-27. Snowden, p. 137.
- 18 *FACT* claims they know who real Malley is and will reveal this the following week. It also declares Ethel's 'biographical facts' have been checked and proved incorrect, and that *Darkening Ecliptic* was written as a test of Harris's critical judgement. Includes statement from *AP* co-editors Harris and Reed. 'Ern Malley, the great poet, or the greatest hoax?', *FACT*, 18 June, 1944, pp. 1, 4.
- 21 Adelaide's *The News* indicates 'we strongly believe' Harold Stewart is the author of Malley. Heyward (1), p. 130.
- 23 *On Dit* claims it has been advised by Sydney Univ. Students' Union that the Sydney address Ethel provided has been checked and no Ethel Malley lives there, but poet Harold Stewart does; it is therefore likely he is the author of the Malley poems. Ibid., p. 136.
- 25 *FACT* publishes Disclosure Statement by McAuley and Stewart claiming they deliberately wrote *The Darkening Ecliptic* as rubbish and submitted it to *AP* as a 'Serious Literary Experiment'. McAuley & Stewart, p. 4.
- 30 Harris's article in *On Dit* which precipitated the threat from Patricia Hackett to sue for libel. Heyward (1), pp. 167-71.
- June–Aug. Mainstream press generally ridicules Malley poems as 'evidence' that all Modernist literature and art is nonsense. Item is also picked up by several international papers and magazines that all spin a similar line, though muted in some instances (e.g. New York press). various
- Harris & Reed issue statements in the press claiming that despite the intentions of McAuley and Stewart, *The Darkening Ecliptic* is good poetry and therefore authors deceived themselves. A statement from Herbert Read supports this view. A few essays in *Meanjin* and some newspaper literary sections engage in serious debate regarding the 'worth' of Malley's poetry; views in this limited milieu are mixed. various
- Possibly at his time (date and other details uncertain) Elisabeth Lambert forwards some Malley poems to U.K. journal *New Writing* which are apparently published. Anon., 'Love lasted longer than the bottle' (Lambert

			obituary), <i>The Telegraph</i> (London), Dec. 2003.
Aug.	1	Police visit Harris and interview him with regard to alleged indecent material published in <i>AP</i> Autumn Number.	Snowden, p. 159.
	25	By Instruction of the South Australian Crown Solicitor, A. J. Hannan, a close friend of the Attorney General, police charge Harris, under provisions of the state's Police Act, with publishing 'Indecent Advertisements' citing eleven items published in <i>AP</i> Autumn Number as evidence, including six Malley poems.	Ibid.; Heyward (1), pp. 183-84.
Sept.		Professor Stewart summoned to Adelaide University Registrar's Office and pressured by Supreme Court Judge not to testify on Harris's behalf.	J. I. M. Stewart, ibid., pp. 108-09.
Sept.–Oct.		The trial of Harris occupies four days spread over three weeks before a Magistrate in the Adelaide Police Court (equivalent to Magistrates courts in other states). Harris is found guilty of publishing 'indecent material', fined £5 and ordered to pay prosecution costs of £21.	Heyward (1), pp. 167-214.
Nov.		Fellowship of Australian Writers organises a petition arguing Harris's prosecution was an infringement of free speech and therefore should be quashed: signed by numerous literary and community organisations and several hundred individuals, including then, and/or future, established writers Henrietta Drake-Brockman, Nettie Palmer, Vance Palmer, Clem Christesen, Russell Ward (historian) and Alan Marshall. Although McAuley and Stewart are approached, they do not sign. The petition is published in the then Melbourne daily, <i>The Argus</i> , but has no effect.	Reed Papers.
Dec.		<i>AP</i> publishes a mix of articles defending, criticising or otherwise responding to, the quality of <i>Darkening Ecliptic</i> .	'Ern Malley Section', <i>AP</i> , 7, Dec. 1944, pp. 5-21.
1947	Dec.	A group of U.S. university students produces a fifteen minute film <i>The Well-wrought Ern</i> ; the actor playing Malley recites a number of <i>Darkening Ecliptic</i> poems. The film tours numerous American campuses and screenings are apparently well attended.	Morgan & Rainey, ibid; Michael Heyward Papers.
1949		Geoffrey Dutton, former 'in-house' participant of <i>AP</i> milieu, submits a number of Malley poems to Cambridge Univ. journal <i>Mandrake</i> without acknowledging their provenance. Unaware of the hoax, the editors publish six Malley poems.	V. Blain, ' "Our Serious Frolic": Ern Malley's Postwar Trip to London', pp. 157-70.
1959		ABC Radio producer John Thompson records (separate) interviews with 'participants' of the Malley Hoax, including (not exhaustive): McAuley, Stewart, Harris, John Reed, Nolan, Herbert Read and Simpson which are broadcast nationally as 'The Ern Malley Story'.	Thompson, pp. 160-83.
1963		Angus & Robertson publish Thompson's 'The Ern Malley Story'.	<i>For the Uncanny Man</i> , ed. C. Semmler.
1960s onwards		Thompson's interviews revive considerable interest in Malley. Reed & Harris and several other Australian and overseas publishers release a number of <i>The Darkening Ecliptic</i> book editions.	various



	Emerging (Post)Modernist poets ('Generation of '68') take an inspired interest in Malley's work.	various
1974	Nolan exhibition, 'Ern Malley and Paradise Garden', of numerous drawings and (Nolan) poetry, based on particular Malley poems, plus a 'Portrait' of Malley and is well attended.	Nolan, <i>ibid.</i> , pp. 6-7.
1975	McAuley delivers a public lecture at the University of Tasmania; he 'confesses to a certain admiration for that shy humorist [sic] Ern Malley'.	McAuley (3), pp. 16-19.
1976	Publication of McAuley's 'Albrecht Dürer: Self and the World' in which he now states 'Durer: Innsbruck, 1495' was written specifically for <i>The Darkening Ecliptic</i> .	McAuley (1), pp. 8-16.
1999–2000	Philip Mead, undertaking research regarding Harris's trial, is informed by relevant South Australian authorities that there are no existing records of Harris's trial.	Mead (2), pp. 481-82
2001	Peter Carey's <i>My Life as a Fake</i> .	Carey, <i>ibid.</i>
2003	The Harris Estate is taken to court by the McAuley and Stewart Estates seeking, on the basis of claimed copyright ownership, to prohibit further 'unauthorised' publication of <i>The Darkening Ecliptic</i> .	Wyndham, <i>ibid.</i> , p. 9.
2007–2008	Visual artist Garry Shead's exhibition <i>The Apotheosis of Ern Malley</i> tours Australian galleries.	Grishin, <i>ibid.</i>
2009	July–Nov. <i>Ern Malley: The Hoax and Beyond</i> , exhibition of Malley artworks and memorabilia at Melbourne (Bulleen) Heide Museum of Modern Art.	Morgan & Rainey, <i>ibid.</i>

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