

# A Deleuzian Encounter: The Descent of Süskind's "Das Parfum"

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## 1. Smell and the Enlightenment

The smell and taste of things remain poised a long time. Like souls, ready to remind us, waiting and hoping for their moment, amid the ruins of all the rest: and bear unfaltering, in the tiny and almost impalpable drop of their essence...<sup>1</sup>

Jean-Baptiste Grenouille is born into abject poverty in mud amidst the stench of dead fish. Growing up in 18th century Paris he displays uncanny abilities to differentiate and classify every known smell, even though he has no personal body odour. He becomes a serial killer, and in the process of robbing and killing forges an identity from being vapid and nondescript to chameleon-like, with an ability to adopt a wide variety of social roles and skills. His impoverished birth is prelude to a journey which adopts Deleuzian themes, including difference and the life-drive:

The cry that followed his birth, the cry with which he had brought himself to people's attention and his mother to the gallows, was not an instinctive cry for sympathy and love. The cry...was the newborn's decision against love and nevertheless for life.<sup>2</sup>

As an ambivalent figure, Grenouille wanders between nature and civilization, freedom and capture, expression of desire and its repression. Not a complete individual but not quite of the earth, Grenouille is a token locked in the nether world. Smell is not an incidental sense perception but crucial to this dual sense of existence, standing at the crossroads between dependence on the rational, and lines of flight into the irrational. Perpetually in the flow of a shifting, elusive identity the work allows us, the reader, to explore Deleuze's advocacy to pursue difference through art.

Grenouille is the barely formed creature emanating from earth, relating directly to the excesses of squalor and privilege in society. At first, he germinates from vegetative state remaining inconspicuous until by building the ability to create perfume as a work of art, he grows in personal stature: 'Ultimately, Grenouille's crimes are the transgressive acts of an artist and a sort of unwitting natural philosopher attempting to forge a subjectivity.'<sup>3</sup> As a force of nature, bent on survival above all else, this odourless being replaces his own inhuman lack of odour by creating an artificial replacement, extracting a scented surrogate from his virginal, murdered victims in an attempt to capture the essence of beauty.

The sense of smell is the work's dominating motif, socially, culturally, and philosophically. Smells waft through life, diversely attached to organisms, nature and materials, Grenouille even determines to capture the smell of inanimate objects: 'If he had ten thousand doorknobs and wrapped them in tallow...he could produce a tiny drop of brass-doorknob essence...He likewise succeeded with the porous chalky dust from a stone...'<sup>4</sup> Smell distinguishes itself as a primitive sensation claiming pride of place as the longing for immediate union with surrounding nature; to all intents the inescapable life-force that lingers and envelops:

For people could close their eyes to greatness, to horrors, to beauty, and their ears to melodies or deceiving worlds. But they could not escape scent. For scent was the brother of breath. Together with breath it entered human beings, who could not defend themselves against it, not if they wanted to live.<sup>5</sup>

Deleuze's critique of autonomous subjectivity contra the movement of desire swirls around the play of bodily destruction and preservation, correlated with Grenouille who destroys to create. His efforts are a token acknowledgment to the life-force, searching for essences to fend off the threat of dissolution. Smell is the force which supports the artistic use of percepts and affects, demarcating differentiation as it does so. Such awareness is especially part of art creation, a compound of sensation forever captured in a work, a reminder of Süskind's creative writing facility and Grenouille's own artistic endeavour. When Grenouille perceives wood the affect is the independence of 'woodiness' which recognises diversity; maple-wood, oak, pine, elm, pear, old, young, rotting, mossy, recognisable in trees, logs, chips, and splinters:<sup>6</sup>

Percepts are no longer perceptions; they are independent of a state of those who experience them. Affects are no longer feelings or affections; they go beyond the strength of those who undergo them. Sensations, percepts, and affects are beings whose validity lies in themselves...the work of art is a being of sensation and nothing else exists: it exists in itself.<sup>7</sup>

Distinct movements parallel structures which are not causal but coordinated. Grenouille's acts of collection, bottling human essences, are a violent destruction of souls scientifically processed to create new figures of desire. It is derelict to solely consider perfume in the abstract as a desirable balm with levels of refinement and sophistication built into its production. Instead, with a deeper contextual approach perfume is described as part of daily interaction in 18<sup>th</sup> century France. It serves as a means of survival to compensate for unbearable sanitary conditions, allowing those who can afford to combat the odoriferous onslaught considerable advantage over the working class who can barely pay their living costs. Indeed, smell as desire creates the multitude of affects all the characters experience, from Madame Gaillard who takes charge of Grenouille as a boy to the consul Antoine Richis, whose daughter he finally murders to complete his perfumed formula. As we experience his roller coaster change of fortune, the overall affect is one of both repulsion and attraction, active forces which clash throughout the text to reassemble perspectives founded in the social collective.

The social collective is the Age of Reason, 18<sup>th</sup> century France. For Deleuze, important art is political, and revolutionary in its critique. Connected to the social milieu, art has a privileged position, a semiotic force to capture the style of matter and real movement in its images of thought. In 'Das Parfum' affective sensations weave a pattern of interrelated images of perfume, squalor, beauty, man, beast, life, murder, science and becoming. Deleuze integrates,

a political dimension into the arts and thought...Art is no longer a matter of signification, but of function...The artist, like a doctor of civilization, is conferred a political role where the effect of art is determined within its two social dimensions, social production and revolutionary agency.<sup>8</sup>

As a work of art in process, perfume achieves much more than a trivial balm to hide putrefaction. Grenouille's sole escape from his insufferable life relies on perfume for his salvation, yet throughout his episodic journey his creations are related to the burgeoning capitalism of the time. They are the expression of a dawning era in which the role of art is deposed from its honorific throne in the name of commodification and profit, a move which encourages Deleuze to argue for the importance of experimental, anti-canonical, 'minor' literature.<sup>9</sup>

Grenouille's society is determined to camouflage what is disturbing and unacceptable. The idea of progress and elevation of humanism are meant to eradicate causes for anxiety and menace, circumventing the counter-reality of disease and contamination. But the dark side of the enlightenment comes to the fore explicating the innocence of perfume with the codes of a controlling society. For Deleuze, the empire of reason is a false escape from tutelage and, for Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, positivism and the scientific quest lack a meaningful moral compass and the need for mystery, 'the scientific object is petrified, whereas the rigid ritual of former times appears supple in its substitution of one thing for another. The world of magic still retained differences whose traces have vanished even in linguistic forms.'<sup>10</sup>

The discourse of perfume allows currents of romanticism and enlightenment to surface at different points in the text. Events are partly a reaction to the disorder, dirt and rampant disease of French cities, the cover-up of perfume and artifice. The possibility of disorder threatens profitable commerce of nascent capitalism and industrialisation while at the same time such disorder is absorbed by the system as a sign of its further growth and infallibility. Capitalism comes under Deleuze's scrutiny, criticised as a mechanism of endless flows which has no outside attainable limits. His preoccupation with creativity is frustrated by an economic, capitalist commitment to timely profit and surplus value:

If capitalism is the exterior limit of all societies, this is because capitalism for its part has no exterior limit, but only an interior limit that is capital itself and that it does not encounter, but reproduces by always displacing it... In general, the introductions of innovations always tends to be delayed beyond the time scientifically necessary, until the moment when the market forecasts justify their exploitation on a large scale.<sup>11</sup>

The objection is to cow-tail to prevailing discourse and bland acceptance of capitalist norms. The unit of capital is the one overriding template for evaluating society's health. In 'Das Parfum' emotions, notions of happiness, hopes, and relationships are filtered through perfume as feelings which can be artificially engendered in the same way as commercial products off a consumer belt. In his critique of bourgeois political economy and utilitarian philosophy, Deleuze pursues a similar trajectory of thought to George Bataille with arguments drawn from excess energy-flow and Bataille's anti-philosophy of eroticism, 'to dismantle the concept of a fixed and unitary self with the dynamic notions of becoming and jouissance.'<sup>12</sup>

Bataille's excrement-philosophy is brought out sharply in the Paris of pre-revolutionary times, with Süskind's scatological descriptions of filth and squalor depicting a city where life and death vie for street space. Bataille uses his surrealist affiliation to support imagery of rotting matter, dismemberment, putrefaction and violence.<sup>13</sup> Süskind's concern, like Bataille, is to avoid the passive synthesis of reason and idealism in favour of contradiction, uncanny ambivalence, and the juxtaposition of the abject with poetic, 'explosive affective ambivalence – intensified through a range of encounters that underscored the connections between violence, death, and excess...'<sup>14</sup> These observations correspond to Grenouille's journey through violence and identity fragmentation, exploring the limits of human experience through 'ecstasy' and 'the loss of self'.<sup>15</sup> The impossible quest in search for the essence of beauty foregrounds connected differences, or heterology between beauty and ugliness, the alluring and disgusting: 'The heterogeneous category includes not only the sacred elements, whether social or asocial, but also the arousing elements of erotic life, and generally speaking all objects of disgust.'<sup>16</sup>

Grenouille finds that living with the dead, surrounded by his flacons, is an open portal to free-flowing desire. At first there is joy before the fall. Grenouille's self-inflicted invitation to die by his own action envisions both Deleuze's and Bataille's joy before death; a joy that has no other object than immediate life, which rejects transcendence and immutable order, 'one can only laugh at a sacred drunkenness allied with a horror of debauchery... Only a shameless, indecent saintliness can lead to a sufficiently happy, loss of self. Joy before death means that life can be glorified from root to summit.'<sup>17</sup> However, when Grenouille finally fades, without will or drive to return to his body, a dark pulse awakens through the congregation. The culmination of cannibalism has naturalistic tones: 'All the products of the body and the body after life are a waste: the dead and new born are our excrement, and it is as such that the desire to eat them has subsisted across the civilized world.'<sup>18</sup>

Living for beauty is only attainable because of the completed artwork that is the final elixir for life transitioning to death. The object of desire is contained within perfume but circumscribed by the impossibility of genuine possession; his artwork is resilient and defiant. Desire is all that Grenouille has, his disdain for the people and their society is manifest at the very same moment he releases the fragrant disguise and captivates the crowds, 'in that moment his whole disgust for humankind rose up again within him and completely soured his triumph, so that he felt not only no joy, but not even

the least bit satisfaction.<sup>19</sup> Try as he will to intimate a sense of caring, he again becomes—animal, the tic, the frog, the predator, no longer restricted to the pursuit of love and beauty.

Grenouille discovers there is an acceptable way to behave, one which becomes his disguise if power is to be exercised. For Deleuze, questioning the rule of enlightenment reason takes us further to question the very centrality of subjectivity and the cogito, arguing that it is replaced by the pre-individual, transcendental field. Sensations received by all who experience the created mixture are not qualitative but vibratory, intensive reality, gradients and vectors, what Deleuze defines as ‘allo-tropic variations’.<sup>20</sup> Perfume is not the restriction or momentary capture of the organism but rather the underlying pulsation of vitalism, a wave that penetratingly flows to encounter intense forces acting on those bodies which come to experience it. Dual tendencies remain, presenting a messy admixture of warmth and coldness, cruelty and compassion, indifference and sympathy, all dependent on diverse intensities:

When sensation is linked to the body...it ceases to be representative and becomes real; and *cruelty* will be linked less and less to the representation of something horrible, and will become nothing other than the action of forces upon the body, or sensation (the opposite of the sensational).<sup>21</sup>

As a force-field of consciousness, scent is liberated from matter, etherealized yet still related to materiality. This reality is one without which Grenouille has no being, he needs to relate to smell’s consciousness to find meaning in life, at best to merge with it. Grenouille ‘drank in the aroma, he drowned in it, impregnating himself through his innermost pores, *until he became wood himself*.<sup>22</sup> The world is perceivable only by smell, the pervasive consciousness of life which attaches its affectivity to food, brocades, threads, wood, sweating horses, bursting rose-buds, the stillness of misty nights. On this, Süskind and Deleuze are in alignment.

The dead women are immanently present to Grenouille. In comparable fashion to the signs which Proust explores, perfume is a true sign, not the simplistic facticity of a worldly sign, which it also is, but more profoundly, a true sign of affectivity and joyous exaltation. When the perfume master, Baldini, tests Grenouille’s creations he is not only reminded of an associated memory but feels his whole career is summated, his life goals realised, his marriage takes on added satisfaction, the world becomes rich and abundant. This is not merely sensuous origin but an exploration and development that resonates from past to present through all social and personal levels of experience. Likewise, Grenouille’s acts are not based on the repetition for love of his mother, who has quickly vanished from the scene, but upon the fragrance of his first victim in the rue de Marais, which was extensively psychological, organic and life-giving: ‘A hundred thousand odours seemed worthless in the presence of this scent. This one scent was the higher principle, the pattern by which the others must be ordered. It was pure beauty.’<sup>23</sup> Deleuze acutely explores sensations in his analysis of Proust.<sup>24</sup> The past sense of smell is more than ways to relate to past events, it transmits lines of apprenticeship and personal development, likewise Grenouille’s frequent recourse to resurrecting past smells denotes his future goal, growing skills in applying ingredients and techniques to hone the ability to create perfection.

Perfume emerges as floating consciousness which opens up insights and catalyses emergent events. This follows from Deleuze’s definition of consciousness which allows for nomadic exploration of agency as applied to the personal, the impersonal and the material. It allows for a force of consciousness which shifts within different systems and sites, at varying rates and speeds. Film consciousness communicates this most forcibly; a decentered consciousness that produces singularity, multiplicity and immanent difference: ‘The emergence of camera consciousness as an anonymous point of view is expressed independently of particularized subjectivities...there is no equivalent in natural perception.’<sup>25</sup>

As floating cores of consciousness, smell is the perceiver of perception, a registering of the environment through all evocative sense. Perception and consciousness merge transcending subject-object dichotomy,

it is a case of going beyond the subjective and the objective towards a pure Form which sets itself up as an autonomous vision of the content. We are no longer faced with subjective or objective images; we

are caught in a correlation between a perception-image and a camera-consciousness... a camera-consciousness which has become autonomous.<sup>26</sup>

The affects and images smell creates are neither subordinate nor superordinate to what is the focus of attention but in aggregate point to an acentred consciousness which constitutes Grenouille's peculiar mindset. Grenouille's panoramic insight which scours the environment is more than human, symptomatic of his other-worldly supremacy, 'he smelled it more precisely than many people could see it, for his perception was perception after the fact and thus of a higher order.'<sup>27</sup>

## 2. The Uncanny

Nihilism stands at the door: whence comes this uncanniest of all guests?<sup>28</sup>

The uncanny has a particular affinity with Freud's analysis of the unconscious, surrealism in art, and 'Das Parfum's depiction of a serial killer: 'Like the major Bretonian categories that issued from it (the marvellous, compulsive beauty, objective chance), surrealist automatism speaks of psychic mechanisms of compulsive repetition and death drive - speaks of them in the register of the uncanny.'<sup>29</sup> Perfume's journey takes a path through the death wish, a return to the barely relinquished primordial state back to the inorganic. There is clear destructive impetus where the social order contains elements to be controlled, mastered or destroyed. Pleasure begins with libidinal gratification linked to destruction, a compulsion to repeat through acts of murder: 'Since the death drive is tinged with eroticism, pleasure may be felt in destruction and desire aroused by death', a combination of the sexual and destructive 'intimated by the surrealists'.<sup>30</sup>

The intensity employed to achieve perfect beauty is the beyond of life, disjunctive adjacency to actual life, an acceptance of nihilism which leads into self-imploding vertigo, suspended in dystopian despair under the fascist banner of 'any means justifies the end'. Deleuze refers to vertigo as disorientation<sup>31</sup> as the purity of affect which intensifies desire: 'Pharmacodynamic experiences or physical experiences such as vertigo ... reveal to us... that difference in itself, that depth in itself or that intensity in itself, at the original moment at which it is neither qualified nor extended.'<sup>32</sup> The pharmacodynamic effect of 'Das Parfum' creates an extended body from the decomposition of multiple bodies - essentially a fusing of levels between the living and dead: 'In taking a drug, my body encounters another real, effective body. Therefore, it is not a matter of consciousness being 'altered' by a secondary attribute; rather, it is a relation between two bodies that undergoes an essential transformation that takes place below the level of consciousness.'<sup>33</sup>

Deleuze recognises surrealist motifs and uncanny experience of vertigo, dizziness and disembodiment may result in an increased ability to perceive the imperceptible, 'a perception of things, thoughts, desires in which desire, thought, and the thing have invaded all of perception: the imperceptible finally perceived.'<sup>34</sup> Süskind describes extraordinary perception as a reaction to Grenouille's drug: 'It was like a fit of weeping you cannot fight down, like tears that have been held back too long... nothing was left but an amorphous fluid, and all they could feel was their hearts floating and sloshing about... they perceived only his counterfeit aura...'<sup>35</sup>

In 'Das Parfum' the uncanny, which renders everyday objects surprisingly strange, portrays Grenouille as the *uncanny* guest who leaves and would never return.<sup>36</sup> Grenouille's disturbing influence never ceases to leave its destructive mark. We note that death is not limited to the serial killer's actions but uncannily accompanies Grenouille wherever he places himself; his mother is executed soon after she gives birth, Madame Grimal, who looks after him as an infant, reaches old age but 'was dead in her heart since childhood,'<sup>37</sup> Baldini, the master perfumer, falls asleep to awake no more when his house mysteriously collapses into the river, while the Marquis de la Taillarde-Espinasse, after supporting Grenouille, decides to climb the highest mountain in the Pyrenees and is never heard from again.

Apart from images of the monstrous, the unspeakable, and ambiguous, Deleuze also places uncanny power on a more mundane plateau, the defamiliarisation of the everyday in pursuit of



creativity. Viktor Shklovskij's original discussion on art and textuality considers artfulness to be effective when employing defamiliarising techniques to establish difference. This is where objects are shifted out of their typical associations and experienced for the first time as if new born. Aesthetic perception is considered more real than the real, more effectively bringing out the 'full and live presence of its object than real perception.'<sup>38</sup> Süskind's work illumines dislocation with endless permutations of herbs, spices and flora which escape the order of signification to uniquely realise the many facets of human passion. The uncanny creates fissures in the familiar and catalyses multi-dimensional possibilities for Grenouille's experimentation. The creative activity of 'making strange' is literally to foreground hitherto unnoticed and automatic reactions to make them focal points of attention.

Deleuze would look to apply inventive, artistic perspectives to disturb the power of regimes from superimposing their codes of conduct on freedom of expression. Defamiliarisation disturbs and is disturbing; it increases sensitivity and emotion, problematizes the taken-for-granted and thereby subverts ideological and bureaucratic structuring of social life. Every important work of art is political, in minor literature everything takes on a collective value: 'The political domain has contaminated every statement... literature finds itself positively charged with the role, and function of collective and even revolutionary, enunciation...'<sup>39</sup>

Enlightenment self-assurance and pursuit of self-determination are ripe pickings for defamiliarizing techniques to reveal an underbelly of limitation and bourgeois calculation which inhibits imagination and passion. In 'Das Parfum' smell begins as bourgeois contagion and by dint of uncanny experimentation finds an alluring palliative. This reveals another affective dimension catalysed by perfume; unbound sensations which initiate and disseminate extreme actions of seduction, ecstasy and violence as a force which produces the otherwise of thought.

Deleuze is always concerned with the hidden. He emphasises the positive side of the uncanny as it intensifies acts of deterritorialisation which are key to the creativity needed to think otherwise and disrupt the world of cliché. 'Das Parfum', however, complicates the matter by paradoxically hiding what it reveals because its source lies with the transformation of material substance, the intangible which creates an aura of impossible consummation by befuddling exposed senses into a trance-like daydream. In order to grasp this, Deleuze reminds us that the force of intensity, our very life-force, is imperceptible, revealed in times of instability, at those sublime, uncanny moments where limits have to be exceeded and the clutches of homogenised systems overcome:

Intensity ... is that which can only be sensed... because it gives to be sensed, thereby awakening memory and forcing thought. The point of *sensory distortion* is often to grasp intensity independently of extensity or prior to the qualities in which it is developed.<sup>40</sup>

It is this raw, tumultuous energy which flows through enchanted scent to culminate in an unbridled orgy of lust and cannibalism, a sign there is eventual need for limit and re-territorialisation to humanly cope. Indeed, the uncanny, as the familiar suddenly made strange, is used as an example throughout Deleuze's work, 'Deleuze's privileged examples of the birth of thought can all be characterised as in some sense uncanny... It might be said that, for Deleuze, the uncanny is in some sense the *paradigm* of that from which we learn, at all.'<sup>41</sup>

Grenouille's acts transgress the boundaries between the human and non-human, suffusing the natural body odour of sweat with the artificially created mixture of fragrance. Smell is the insistent marker of emotions and events in what becomes Grenouille's castle of the mind which houses his innermost double who excavates his life's journey. In his mental castle he keeps an olfactory diary which is regularly surveyed during his self-imposed, seven year exile in the cave at Auvergne. For Freud, the root for doubling manifests in early stages of ego development when it has not yet differentiated itself from its environment, a state which Grenouille is only too familiar with as primeval entity of the earth. Grenouille's efforts to create a double from his condition may originally have been a way to insure against the destruction of his frail ego but soon becomes the 'uncanny harbinger of death.'<sup>42</sup>

As the scented double of his crude, repulsive, original self, Grenouille's identity forks within perfume, at one time direct elixir, profoundly moving those in contact, at other times an effective camouflage of authentic conditions, adept at covertly creating a smoke screen of acceptance. Emerging from a recluse and looking awful, his metamorphosis intensifies, appearing to be a mixture of man and beast, 'some kind of forest creature.'<sup>43</sup> The double emerges as both mass murderer and messianic saviour, the role of destroyer as well as creator of worlds to be controlled,

this was his Empire! The incomparable Empire of Grenouille, created and ruled over by him', Grenouille the Great becomes the complete megalomaniac, a split identity, 'he stared vacantly...sank into a numbed sleep. At the same time *the other Grenouille* fell asleep on his horse blanket. And his sleep was just as fathomless as that of the *innermost Grenouille*...<sup>44</sup>

For Deleuze, doubling exerts a powerful influence in art, in crystalline images which alternate between light and dark, hidden virtuality, visible actuality, limpid exposure and opaque darkness. This is an indiscernible coupling of immense power, never insuring which side will surface, or at which moments the monstrous will be released.<sup>45</sup> Grenouille is a counter-being, a figure betwixt and between virtuality and actualised facticity. This is the circuitry of virtual images which alternate and actualise at different moments, reinforcing the objective status of the double, indiscernibly caught between past and present, light and darkness, fantasy and reality. While Grenouille vacillates between limpid and opaque, perfume is a charge of energy, asserting itself as powerful, spiritualized essence which dictates the style of the work. Süskind explores myriad forms of natural herbs and spices to produce this unprecedented creation of distilled essence. As its force flits from one transformative ingredient to another, it changes the life of recipients, an essence which also individualizes: 'Essence is not only particular, not only individual, but is individualizing. Essence individualizes and determines the substance in which it is incarnated...essence is in itself difference.'<sup>46</sup>

By creating an aura previously lacking, perfume allows Grenouille to traverse the gap between marginalised outsider, with no social position, to being an influential, even desirable figure of note. As a doubled, ambiguous figure, Grenouille is at one moment an abominable criminal who should die in the most cruel way imaginable on the scaffold and, at another, 'innocence personified', a 'little, innocent man'<sup>47</sup> who finally becomes an object of adoration and love. With its uncanny moments of contrasts, 'Das Parfum' still manages to bring together opposing series, a function of Deleuze's dark precursor. The dark precursor is mediator between different series, serving as a bridge or passage between disparate spheres which bring about emergence, even as it negates itself. The nature of perfume is liquidity and flow, a force which effectuates material change, interaction between invisible flux and material expression. Rather than Grenouille instigating change between perfume's effects and his actions, many extraneous natural, cultural and social forces are at work to make his artwork possible, in spite of his monstrous actions. Deleuze describes the dark precursor as a disguised force of communication, a mediator between diverse series. In 'Das Parfum' there is constant reverberation between the series of love and beauty and the series of lethal power: 'These series are liable to resonate under the influence of...a dark precursor which stands for this totality in which all the levels co-exist: each series is repeated in the other...'<sup>48</sup>

### 3. Assemblages and Becoming-other

Grenouille mitigates his social disadvantages by creating a series of disparate planes which correspond to Deleuze's assemblages. As these planes become actualised, so they release transforming identities which break down constructed boundaries in gender, subject-object correlation, self and other. For Deleuze, material systems reach thresholds that restrict movement, constricting the flow of desiring-production and call for the 'schizo' mindset which seeks to open creative, dynamic systems. The importance of perfume as a major signifier in society and all connected lifestyles of class and gender comprise one such assemblage.

Grenouille is a confluence of many influences and processes, a cluster of forces manifesting in his environment as part of social nexus. As a rhizomatic figure, defined by Deleuze as someone or something which assumes different connecting forms and chains of multiplicity,<sup>49</sup> we can follow the exploration of forces of individuation as they are expressed through the flow of desire. Grenouille's immersion in his scented artwork goes beyond being human to the point of 'creating zones of indetermination which become the launching pads for inhuman becomings.'<sup>50</sup> His utilisation of perfume traces the metamorphosis of identity, a fragrant avatar of compulsive desire. In masterly fashion, Süskind explicates assemblage to show that it is only through the olfactory experience that Grenouille recognises the notion of the beloved, a 'soul' conveying a possible world previously unknown, a world approachable through smells which Grenouille strives to decipher. It also points the nature of this particular assemblage and demands an understanding of the extent to which perfume remains perfume. Its various 'treatments' beg the question of whether it remains a pleasant, simple smell to one's body or reaches its limit point by becoming a poison, psychotic drug, or weaponized philtre.

A series of assemblages constitute his journey. Before any assemblage functions the properties of perfume must be in place and much of the work shows diverse ingredients as an assemblage of the creative process. Constituted properties become immanent to different assemblages, concerned with images of fashion, or appropriate differences of class. Grenouille's particular assemblage is the use of perfume to solidify his identity, increase self-belief, mask his real presence and partake in the Marquis de la Taillade-Espinasse's experiment to showcase his theories of the danger from earthly gas, what he calls, 'fluidum letale'.<sup>51</sup>

'Das Parfum' depicts a quirky assemblage, a conflation of scientifically collected fragrance together with the diverse aura of tragic identities with their own life-stories and emotions in place. The spectrums within assemblage are noteworthy in that they are not to be considered as dialectic oppositions between forces, events and action. Deleuze's makes this point forcefully in differentiating masochism from sadism, refusing to consider them as connected poles of the same spectrum.<sup>52</sup> Instead, components and actants of the perfume assemblage are diverse juxtapositions, each with their own character and image-thoughts which lead protagonists, such as Baldini and Marquis de la Taillade-Espinasse on to joyful experiences. What is important to realise is that in all manner of assemblages, especially the aesthetic, in-between silences and discontinuities proliferate through their interactive associations, disparities and disjunctions. In particular, incorporated within perfume is the not-yet-actualised residue (what might exert a field of influence on others) with the once-having-been (protean, sweet-smelling, scent of innocence).

In this respect, Süskind comprehensively probes the discourse of perfume. Collecting a wide array of fragrances to comprise fresh aromatic combinations, the discourse includes flowers and spices, woods and hops, 'floral oils, tinctures, extracts, secretions, balms resins and other drugs in dry, liquid or waxy form-through diverse pomades, pastes, powders, soaps, creams sachets, bandolines, brilliantines...and countless genuine perfumes.'<sup>53</sup> Activities within this assemblage comprise social and commercial institutions, owners of perfumeries, mixers, assistants, all of whom through their active knowledge exert varying degrees of power and influence with their specialised prowess.

The intricate relations comprising the perfume industry, its marketing and consumption, methods of classification, and various categories of spices and herbs, perpetuate the dissemination of knowledge and with it power struggles and domination. This extended reach encompasses a whole world of scents which flows through the assemblage; a world of flux reflected in changing living conditions from pauper to respected businessman, from non-entity to respected innovator, from asexual to sexual predator. Assemblages territorialize connections but are never closed, always retaining a constantly fluctuating complexion, from Baldini's business 'the richest citizen in Paris and Europe's great perfumer'<sup>54</sup> to Grenouille the nomad, an outsider to himself, bereft even of self-knowledge, itinerant journeyman who assimilates assemblage affects of fauna, countryside, disgust-



ing smell of horsemen, threat of humanity, the steamy, putrid sweat of those he is forced to live with, the intoxicating honey-sweet scent of his victims.

Deleuze explains this wide-ranging process of unpacking capability derived from the body-without-organs as the driving force of assemblage, to learn how the body functions and reacts, just as Grenouille tests himself throughout the narrative by showing how affects impact each other, body and thoughts destroying or enhancing, whatever the circumstance brings forth. Grenouille is not the initiator of forces instigated by perfume but a collector and composer of forces which have been put in motion at his disposal. These relate to the matter that becomes the connections of perfume's strata, as prelude to deterritorialisation:

It is through a meticulous relation with the strata that one succeeds in freeing lines of flight...*descend* from the strata to the deeper assemblage within which we are held: gently tip the assemblage... It is only there that the body-without-organs reveals itself for what it is: connection of desires, conjunction of flows, continuum of intensities.<sup>55</sup>

Perfume stakes its territory, it allows for an examination of structure and organization which holds the assemblage together but within the context of change, contingency and uncertainty. The lengthy listing of ingredients and techniques for creating a multitude of fragrances is a tour de force feeding off myriad affordances in society, the role of war 'where a million have died' and class attitudes 'the bourgeoisie', all of which descriptively and analytically reflect the unpredictable metamorphoses that comprise the entity we know as Grenouille. Above all, Süskind describes how the perfume assemblage functions, how it works its techniques and ingredients to create a world of light and dark, material and abstract, beautiful and ugly, in sum, different forms of thinking the event.<sup>56</sup>

The human body is an assemblage of powers and related interconnections, but in terms of becoming rather than being it is not a fixed, unchanging entity but open to life's desire. At various points Süskind seems to draw directly from Deleuze.<sup>57</sup> He describes the tick as it relates to the assemblage with the ability to be flexible and versatile; Grenouille is the tick in the tree,

life has nothing better to offer than perpetual isolation... The lonely tick which, wrapped up in itself, huddles in its tree, blind, deaf and dumb, and simply sniffs, sniffs all year long, for miles around for the blood of some passing animal... and waits... for the most improbable of chances that will bring blood, in animal form, directly beneath its tree. And only then does it abandon caution and drop and scratch and bore and bite into that alien flesh. The young Grenouille *was such a tick*.<sup>58</sup>

Similarly, for Deleuze the tick is an opportunist, one who is,

attracted by light, hoists itself up to the tip of a branch; it is sensitive to the *smell* of mammals, and lets itself fall when one passes beneath the branches; it digs into its skin, at the least hairy place it can find... the rest of the time the tick sleeps, sometimes for years on end, indifferent to all that goes on in the immense forest.<sup>59</sup>

Grenouille becomes the tick, becomes-animal and ultimately, perversely, becomes-woman. In following through Deleuze's exploration of becoming-animal we recognise a liberating exercise in creativity, for Grenouille an understandable escape from the insufferable pain of being human, subverted to social norms which constantly alienate him. Similar to Kafka's description of lines of escape from the inhumanity of diabolical power, 'there is the answer of a becoming-animal: to become a beetle, to become a dog, to become an ape' rather than 'lowering one's head' to be judged.<sup>60</sup>

Deleuze begins discussion on becoming-animal as a form of infection or contagion which causes transformations of identity, a move away from heredity: 'Propagation by epidemic, by contagion, has nothing to do with filiation by heredity, even if the two themes intermingle and require each other... contagion epidemic involves terms that are entirely heterogeneous: for example, a human being, an animal, and a bacterium, a virus, a molecule, a micro-organism.'<sup>61</sup> The narrative climax shows the boundary between Grenouille and his female victims to be unclear, indeed they become-imperceptible as identities relate to transformational thresholds, examples of Deleuze's becoming:

To find out about thresholds, we must experiment, which means always, necessarily, relationally or in encounters with others. We need new cognitive and sensorial mappings of the thresholds of sustainability for bodies-in-processes-of-transformation . . . Violence, pain and a touch of cruelty are part of this process.<sup>62</sup>

The point is to think otherwise, to think away from the phenomenological subject-object correlation and live with the singularity of experience, just as Grenouille and the crowd are immersed in the moment of exaltation, together with the lost souls who have made it possible. Deleuze emphasises becoming as acts of construction and composition with becoming-woman the prime becoming: 'Although all becomings are already molecular, including becoming-woman, it must be said that all becomings begin with and pass through becoming-woman.'<sup>63</sup> There is a sense of liberation in breaking away from the molar domination of the masculine to elevate feminine minoritarianism. In the process, it is the essence of women through fragrant saturation by which Grenouille dominates and drives the passion of the crowd. Becoming-woman is the insistent urge to break the binary idealism of representational thought, and unified subjectivity. In the process, both woman and man become otherwise, 'woman as a molar entity *has to become-woman* in order that man also becomes – or can become – woman.'<sup>64</sup>

Grenouille's final incarnation partakes in the monstrous expansion of consciousness as s/he merges with the essence of victims to become-woman. It may well be in death Grenouille finally comes to actualise transition to the sweet smelling potion of perfume but it has become an essence of abomination. His movement from animal of the mud to expert collector of odours creates a superordinate regime of universal appeal but sidelines morality. Admirable success to move from zero to infinity is besmirched by destroying the body, liquefying victims in calculating, grotesque, self-indulgent premeditation. Sensuous pleasure sets in as a drug, a social and psychological balm extracted by means of moral corruption. In the same way as distasteful body odour subsists beneath its perfumed canopy, so the distasteful subject matter of horror serves as an artful, esoteric meditation on sensation and identity. 'The creation of art transcends the horror of its subject matter.'<sup>65</sup>

Contrary to Deleuze's insistence that we are now plugged into the creative evolution of *élan vital*, we are also compelled to deal with sexual delirium, cannibalism and the death force. Deleuze explains the attraction of the monstrous as the appeal of difference, a move beyond normativity to conjure new images of thought, applicable to Grenouille who becomes-monstrous. Like the uncanny, the monstrous reveals hidden undercurrents of repression; personal and social fears of transgressions which stretch to the politics and morals of whole societies.<sup>66</sup> As a serial killer, Grenouille is an isolated individual, frequently excluded from the social but nonetheless always having to work within it to achieve his goals. When detected as the killer, he is immediately reviled but soon becomes revered for his great powers to bring pleasure to others; the criminal becomes the hero, pardoned of all evil. This methodical practitioner is held to be rational rather than demented, questioning the standing of aesthetics and its transgression of the moral order. Grenouille's artistic impulse disturbingly questions the moral norm of what means are used to achieve a desirable end:

Murder as an aesthetic experience, could be understood as an appearance of the sublime in the moral world of everyday life. . . . The murderer experiences an aesthetic suspension [which] is achieved by a decisive break with the ethical world. This aesthetic suspension is the experience of the sublime.<sup>68</sup>

#### 4. Conclusion

A monster is a species for which we do not yet have a name, which does not mean that the species is abnormal, namely, the composition or hybridization of already known species. Simply, it shows itself—that is what the word monster means—it shows itself in something that is not yet shown and that therefore looks like a hallucination, it strikes the eye, it frightens precisely because no anticipation had prepared one to identify this figure.<sup>69</sup>

For Deleuze, literature is no appealing distraction but an exploration of concepts and detailed cartography of sensation, an exploration in the becoming of thought. 'Das Parfum' explores the bizarre,

the novel and monstrous. In this connection, two opposing features surface; the parasite embodied by Grenouille as a barely human, fearful entity, and the incorporeal plane of consistency, the abstract machine with the potential to realize a cosmic force of love and beauty. Grenouille's artistic work of beauty is both creation and destruction, clinical murder without conscience in an attempt to reach perfection.<sup>70</sup> The pursuit of beauty is vilified after being idolised, broken in the mire after being admired from a distance. Beauty has been pursued and welcomed as the object of desire yet feared because of its potential threat to masculine dominance. The bodily essence extracted from corpses is the trace of impossibility; a still yearned for maternal body that once offered union and oneness as return to the oceanic state.

In this connection, sexuality is a striking component in Grenouille's mutations from being-animal to being-monstrous to being-woman. His transitions are partly masochistic, partly sadistic in keeping with the oppositional forces which course through 'Das Parfum'. As Deleuze explains, it is a mistake to regard the pleasure-pain complex as denoting transformation from sadism to masochism as complementary elements of one illness. They should be considered distinct from each other.<sup>71</sup> The masochist's open flow of pain nurtures anticipation and fantasy, whereas the sadist expresses aggression by concretely destroying the fetish. Grenouille's masochism is best described as a state of waiting, preferring postponement in pursuit of ritual and routines. Pain and discomfort are the accepted prelude to pleasure but the expected pleasure of fantasy never materialises for him, desire is never fulfilled, and this leaves a gaping hole for sadism to set in. Fantasy now becomes aggressive power in the real world together with sadistic destruction.

'Das Parfum' is an aesthetic exploration of this destruction and subject dissolution. Its concept of sensation illumines Deleuze's own journey to express the meaning of virtuality and intensity through the proliferation of sites, surfaces, and perceptions. Grenouille has appointed himself the taker of life and creator of false appearance, his God-like faculties culminating in the awe he engenders and control over others. This is the Nietzschean overman, an attempt to make the fusion of perfume and Grenouille into the promise of a novel, transcendent being. Nietzsche's overman 'differs in nature from man, from the ego...he is a different subject...something other than the human type.'<sup>72</sup>

The overman deconstructs in order to reconstruct. Deleuze is clear that Nietzsche's task lies in absolutely breaking down codification and extant norms to express something that cannot be codified, to invent a new body. But Grenouille never approximates this ideal, even as an aspiring corpse. His body is too porous, unrestrained seepage reflected in blood-letting rampages. His lack of language is expressed corporeally; limited, stammering expression and the grimace, the stoop that gradually straightens itself suggesting growing self-belief. Destroying the body flesh, dis-locating space, living in a temporal bubble, Grenouille denies interactive growth, negates social and cultural inscription, and removes the pride women take in their singularity. There is little or no containment from one phase to the other in the liquid flow connected by feelers of aromatic substance. As substitute for sexual relations Grenouille chooses absolute possession, transferring body into essence, killing those he lusts after thereby denying others any potential relationship which would threaten his own quest for ownership. The more perfume is the sexual surrogate the more it expands into universal ownership of the patriarchal, gender-dominating, masculine world view that Deleuze denounces with his notions of difference and minority literature. Deleuze takes pains to emphasise the need to recognise the undercurrent of actuality and the way in which literature, amongst other things, can capture the creative force of unconscious irrationality:

Every society is at once rational and irrational...Reason is always a region carved out of the irrational – not sheltered from the irrational at all, but traversed by it and only defined by a particular kind of relationship among irrational factors. Underneath all reason lies delirium and drift...the rational is always the rationality of an irrational.<sup>73</sup>

What is instructive here is the phenomenological aspect of the discourse of art in the framework of the discourse of being. Completing an artwork parallels the struggle to complete a life; but comple-

tion is never reached, always subject to interpretation, reframing, and existentially open before death. The artwork latches onto our perceivable world, through concepts, as a new way of thought, percepts as fresh ways of seeing and hearing, and affects as a new ways of feeling.<sup>74</sup> Perfume's fragrance is housed in a peripatetic avatar whose descent is the nomadic core of both the film and book, creating an expansive human sensorium, interrelating sight with smell and touch to become swarming, corporeal sensitivity: 'Aesthetics is born as a discourse of the body...to the whole region of human perception and sensation...how the world strikes the body on its sensory surfaces...'<sup>75</sup> The recording of these sensory surfaces does not rest solely with the aura of material production, derived from the cornucopia of herbs and spices. The artwork has retained its aura; Grenouille cannot shake off its homoplastic hold as it heaps revenge on its executioner. The carefully preserved ghosts of former lives now grip him from the beyond, erasing traces of the past to erupt in the moment of presence:

The scent is the inaccessible refuge of the *memoire involontaire*. It is unlikely it will associate itself with a visual image, of all sensual impressions it will ally itself only with the same scent. If the recognition of a scent is more privileged to provide consolation than any other recollection, this may be so because it deeply drugs the sense of time. A scent may drown years in the odour it recalls.<sup>76</sup>

Ultimately, Grenouille acknowledges the pain of existence and disdain for life, choosing renunciation of all forms of becoming in favour of possession and total absorption. Perfume is the ultimate victor because, in actuating its virtuality, Grenouille-the-assembler, has only limited power to manipulate or achieve planned intention. The fragrance of perfume outlives him, surviving in the air, enveloping the crowd who destroy him, seductive witness to his misdeeds. Grenouille's pursuit of a beautiful artifact by dint of serial killing is achieved only by destruction, and his circle of desire finally returns him to his birthplace where his demise completes his descent. Perfume has transcended, reinforced as an overdetermined marker between the animate and inanimate; indomitable source for historical evidence and social evocation of signifying practices.

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Proust (1922). p. 65.

<sup>2</sup> Süskind (1985). p. 22. The sense of smell has long been overshadowed by the primacy of vision especially associated with the 'Age of Enlightenment', the time of 'Das Parfum'. Ocularcentric discourse pervades thought from classical times, simultaneously embracing a multitude of diverse experience. The prime notion of seeing retains distance. The substantiality of being and objective reality give precedence to the present as it is visually experienced and fixes the fleeting moment 'against the fleeting succession of nonvisual sensation'. Jay (1994), p. 24.

<sup>3</sup> Cokal (2010). P. 180.

<sup>4</sup> Süskind (1985). p. 191. The sense of smell is recognised as a way of manipulating consumer behaviour, providing a non-visual, immersive experience, smell works 'on a subconscious level, reflecting the fact that smell is received and processed in the limbic part of the brain, which has strong connections with automatic affect and cognition.' Henshaw, Medway, Warnaby, Perkins (2016), pp. 154, 155.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p. 161. The relationship of perfume to this stench alters through history, as we find aromas are culturally and historically determined. "Smell is not simply a biological and psychological phenomenon, though. Smell is cultural, hence a social and historical phenomenon. Odours are invested with cultural values and employed

- by societies as a means of and model for defining and interacting with the world." Classen, Howes, and Synnott (1994), p. 3.
- <sup>6</sup>Ibid. p. 26.
- <sup>7</sup>Deleuze and Guattari (1994), p. 164.
- <sup>8</sup>Sauvagnargues (2005/2013), p. 16.
- <sup>9</sup>Deleuze and Guattari (1975/1986).
- <sup>10</sup>Horkheimer & Adorno (1947/2002), p. 7.
- <sup>11</sup>Deleuze and Guattari (1972/2011). pp. 251, 254.
- <sup>12</sup>Messier (2009), p. 25.
- <sup>13</sup>While still supporting the surrealist drive to release repressed desires of the unconscious. Bataille's philosophy is more concerned with an appeal to the political rather than a revolt of the spirit. This is further reflected in Bataille's early criticism of surrealism's leading spokesman, Andre Breton, who he admonished for supporting surrealism as a form of idealism. Adamowicz (2005) Subsequently, Bataille argues that surrealism came to recognise 'the legitimacy of the organizational endeavours and even the principles of Marxist communism', though it still expressed a preference for 'values *above* the world of facts...' Bataille (1985), p. 33.
- <sup>14</sup>Biles and Brintnall (2015), p. 2.
- <sup>15</sup>Ibid. p. 4.
- <sup>16</sup>Bataille (2018), p. 31. Like Deleuze, Bataille argues for expenditure, the release of violent passions, the erotic, and elation of society to the primeval.
- <sup>17</sup>Bataille (1985). p. 237.
- <sup>18</sup>Bataille (2018). P. 35.
- <sup>19</sup>Süskind (1985). p. 249.
- <sup>20</sup>Deleuze (1981/2002), p. 32.
- <sup>21</sup>Ibid. p. 33.
- <sup>22</sup>Süskind (1985). p. 25 (my emphasis)
- <sup>23</sup>Ibid. p. 44.
- <sup>24</sup>Deleuze (1964/2000).
- <sup>25</sup>Shaw (2008), p. 165.
- <sup>26</sup>Deleuze (1983/1986), p. 74.
- <sup>27</sup>Süskind (1985). p. 36.
- <sup>28</sup>Nietzsche (1901/1968), p. 7. Nietzsche speaks of the uncanny's disruptive reach in terms of the advent of European nihilism, a metaphor for what is intolerable in the modern condition.
- <sup>29</sup>Foster (1993), p. 7.
- <sup>30</sup>Ibid. p. 13.
- <sup>31</sup>Popularised in Hitchcock's 'Vertigo'(1958) and referred to by Deleuze (1983/1986), pp. 21., 204.
- <sup>32</sup>Deleuze (1968/1994), p. 237.
- <sup>33</sup>Lambert (2011), p. 22
- <sup>34</sup>Deleuze and Guattari (1980/2011), p. 283.
- <sup>35</sup>Süskind (1985). pp. 245, 249.
- <sup>36</sup>Ibid. p. 114.(my emphasis)
- <sup>37</sup>Ibid. p. 30.
- <sup>38</sup>Crawford (1984), p. 218.
- <sup>39</sup>Deleuze and Guattari (1975/1986), p. 17.
- <sup>40</sup>Deleuze and Guattari (1968/1994), p. 237.(my emphasis)
- <sup>41</sup>Ramey (2013), p. 181. Thought is only thought if it participates in the uncanny. Rather than analyse Hitchcock's masterpiece, 'Vertigo' Ramey chooses 'The Birds'(1962) to show that the uncanny should be recognised as referring to a fascination with the real rather than the fantasy of imagination. The potency of the uncanny focuses on 'intermediary zones, regions *between* psychic and non-psychic, cultural and natural, human and animal spheres.' Ibid. p. 186.
- <sup>42</sup>Freud (1917), p. 235.
- <sup>43</sup>Süskind (1985). p. 143.
- <sup>44</sup>Ibid. pp. 130, 135.(my emphasis).
- <sup>45</sup>Deleuze (1985/1989), pp. 71 – 73.
- <sup>46</sup>Deleuze, (1964/2000), p. 48.
- <sup>47</sup>Süskind (1985). Pp. 244, 245.



- <sup>48</sup> Deleuze (1968/1994), p. 291.
- <sup>49</sup> Deleuze and Guattari (1980/2011), p. 7.
- <sup>50</sup> Sholtz (2015), p. 166.
- <sup>51</sup> Süskind (1985), p. 145. A condescending, ironic nod to Bergson's *élan vital*, an evolutionary notion based on internal difference and the core unity of matter and spirit. Bergson (1907/1998).
- <sup>52</sup> Deleuze, (1967/1991).
- <sup>53</sup> Süskind (1985), p. 48.
- <sup>54</sup> Süskind (1985), p. 111.
- <sup>55</sup> Deleuze and Guattari (1980/2011), p. 161 (my emphasis). The move towards the force of desire and away from individual subjectivity, which replaces subjective phenomenology of the lifeworld, also 'serves a heuristic function, amounting... to a veritable hermeneutic system... the territoriality of an assemblage... reads exactly like a hermeneutic programme.' Buchanan (2000), p. 126. This encourages us to broaden the interpretive range of figurative functions in the artwork.
- <sup>56</sup> For Deleuze the event is virtual, not materially graspable but recognised through impassive results or effects. To all intents, perfume carries the event, the virtuality for what becomes in its spatio-temporal realization a state of affairs. The essence of perfume floats through the air potentially affecting the state of affairs in different ways; harbinger of destruction and doom, or sublime avenue to romantic fulfilment, dependent on the nature of the composed strata and intentional correlate of modes of perception. This is beautifully caught by Süskind in his juxtaposition of Grenouille's hallucinatory, joyful ramblings which parallel his material deprivation.
- <sup>57</sup> Deleuze's 'A Thousand Plateaus' was first published in French in 1980, Süskind's book was published in 1986.
- <sup>58</sup> Süskind (1985), p. 23. (my emphasis)
- <sup>59</sup> Deleuze and Guattari (1980/2011), p. 257. (my emphasis)
- <sup>60</sup> Deleuze and Guattari (1975/1986), p. 12.
- <sup>61</sup> Deleuze and Guattari (1980/2011), pp.241-242.
- <sup>62</sup> Braidotti (2006), p. 137. The imperceptible displaces boundaries, breaking out of subjective skin to become other, an effacement of subjectivity which offers Grenouille, the persona juggler, the only possibility to find love. The drive to becoming is shown in the imperceptible, gaseous-image of perfume, a force of dematerialisation entering the ether. For Deleuze and Guattari: 'To become imperceptible oneself, to have dismantled love in order to become capable of loving. To have dismantled one's self in order finally to be alone and meet the true double at the other end of the line.' Deleuze and Guattari (1980/2011), p. 218.
- <sup>63</sup> Deleuze and Guattari (1980/2011), p. 277. 'The monster is not just abhorrent, it is also enticing, a figure that calls to us, that invites recognition. Simultaneously threat and promise, the monster, as with the feminine, comes to embody those things which an ordered and limited life must try, and finally fail, to abject.' Shildrick (2002), p. 14.
- <sup>64</sup> Ibid. pp. 275-276.
- <sup>65</sup> Gross (2010), p. 211. The idea of the monstrous indicates the present cultural fascination with otherness and difference, comprising as it does both dark and light aspects, at the very least an anxiety in contemporary culture. Braidotti posits the need for the affirmation of desire and creativity, to ask 'what we want to become, how to represent mutations, changes and transformations, rather than Being in its classical modes', to render 'a decentred and multi-layered vision of the subject as a dynamic and changing entity.' Braidotti (2002), p. 2.
- <sup>66</sup> Shildrick (2018), p. 166. Yet the cover-up of perfume changes nothing, rather than a celebration of difference the monstrous may well be complicit with the normative order. 'I wonder if every recovery of the strange is also a form of cover-up.' (Ibid. p. 164).
- <sup>67</sup> Stratton (1996), p. 84.
- <sup>68</sup> Ibid. pp. 95, 96. Stratton quotes from De Quincey's 'Murder considered as one of the Fine Arts'(1827), 'Everything in this world has two handles. Murder, for instance, may be laid hold of by its moral handle... and that, I confess, is its weak side; it may also be treated *aesthetically*, as the Germans call it – this is, in relation to good taste.' Ibid. p. 94.
- <sup>69</sup> Derrida (1992/1995), p. 386.
- <sup>70</sup> Charles Baudelaire, part of the decadent movement, writes: 'All that is beautiful and noble is the result of reason and calculation. Crime, the taste for which the human animal draws from the womb of his mother, is natural in its origins. Virtue, on the contrary, is artificial... Evil is done effortlessly, naturally by fatality, the good is always the product of some art.' Baudelaire (1863/2010).

- <sup>71</sup> Deleuze (1967/1991). Grenouille's sexual aggression excludes rape. As Williams notes in her analysis of late 18<sup>th</sup> century Gothic framing, it is more in keeping with rape in the latin sense of 'rapere', to steal; Williams (1995), p. 229. Grenouille steals the soul and essence of his victims.
- <sup>72</sup> Deleuze (1963/1982), p. 163.
- <sup>73</sup> Deleuze (2002/2004), p. 262.
- <sup>74</sup> Deleuze (1990/1995), p. 165. 'Das Parfum' is an intricate, lavish network of parody and irony, with literary allusions ranging from Euripedes to Goethe, from Novalis to Baudelaire, Rilke and Hofmannsthal. Even more, Grenouille's life history is the history of the art movement itself: "From his early definition as an illegitimate nobody from the eighteenth century underclass he passes through a phase of Romantic dualism, then a phase of aesthetic dissolution, and finally he emerges as a postmodern cannibalized self." Ryan (1990), p. 401.
- <sup>75</sup> Eagleton (1990), p. 13.
- <sup>76</sup> Benjamin (1955/1992), p. 180. For Benjamin aura carries with it the history of its production.

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