Curious Objects and Victorian Collectors: Men, Markets, Museums

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I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has
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Abstract

This thesis examines the portrayal of gentleman collectors in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century literature, arguing that they often find themselves challenged and destabilised by their collections. The collecting depicted contrasts revealingly with the Enlightenment practices of classification, taxonomy, and commodification, associated with the growth of both the public museum and the market economy. The dominance of such practices was bound up with the way they promoted subject-object relations that defined and empowered masculine identity. In the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer note that "[i]n the most general sense of progressive thought, the Enlightenment has always aimed at liberating men from fear and establishing their sovereignty" (3). That being so, this study explores how the drive to classify and commodify the material world found oppositional, fictional form in gothicly inflected texts depicting a fascinating but frightening world of unknowable, alien objects and abject, emasculated subjects.

The study draws upon Fred Botting's contention that gothic extremes are a reaction to the "framework" of "reductive and normalising limits of bourgeois morality and modes of production" (89). Examining novels and short stories by Richard Marsh, M.R. James, Arthur Machen, Vernon Lee, George Gissing, Wilkie Collins, Bram Stoker, Mary Cholmondeley, and Mary Ward, the thesis shows how gothicised instances of unproductive-masochism, pathological collecting, thwarted professionals, and emasculated heirs broke down the "framework" within which men and material culture were understood to interact productively and safely. Individual chapters dealing respectively with acquisition, possession, dissemination and inheritance, respond to the recent "material turn" in the humanities, bringing together literary criticism and historically grounded scholarship to reveal the collector and the collection as the locus

for concerns with masculinity and materiality that preoccupied a turn-of-the-century

mindset.

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Introduction

On the twenty-first of March 1850, His Royal Highness the Prince Consort put forward his vision for the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations. In his Mansion House speech he described how the "products of all quarters of the globe," selected as "the best and the cheapest for our purposes," would be placed at the public's disposal ("Mansion House Speech" 61). Properly displayed within the space of the Exhibition, the exhibits would create "a living picture of the point of development at which the whole of mankind has arrived" (61). These items would allow "every educated person" to fulfil their "duty," namely to "watch and study the time in which he lives," and "add his humble mite of individual exertion to further the accomplishment of what he believes Providence to have ordained" (59-60). The characteristics that defined the nineteenth century as an era of "*competition and capital*," of "discovery" and "invention," "publicity" and improvement, would make the agglomeration of objects particularly productive. As a result, the Exhibition would mobilise and classify objects from all corners of the world in order to reinforce a dominant world view of a global market with Britain at its heart, mastering material culture.

Behind the idea of the Great Exhibition of 1851 lay the surety that material culture could be amassed, displayed, and deployed so as to reinforce British identity and advance an increasingly global economy. The idea of the Exhibition testified to a moment of confidence in a Victorian culture of collecting, and a productive interrelation of man and material culture. This moment would see the birth of the museum, to use Tony Bennett's phrase, and the rise of a commodity culture, as Thomas Richards describes. Yet, in its wake arose an interest in the successes and indeed failures of these nineteenth-century projects. Better known for his work as a logician and economist in publications through the 1860s to the 1880s, W. S. Jevons wrote between 1881 and 1882 on "The Use and Abuse of Museums." He argued that, despite the fact that "public

Museums [had] existed […] for more than a century and a quarter" in many forms, in the absence of a managerial and analytical approach, by the last decades of the nineteenth century it was sadly "possible to show on psychological or other scientific grounds that much which has been done in the formation of Museums [was] fundamentally mistaken," and that "favourable results" were achieved "more by good luck than good management" (53). Despite the central position of exhibition spaces and institutional collections in Victorian culture and society, the order and efficacy of these varying edifices was questionable. Subject-object relations were unstable, with the result that the volume and variety of objects might overwhelm viewers and baffle the efforts of exhibitors alike.

This thesis analyses literature that evidences a move away from the moment of cultural confidence at mid-century, as propounded in Prince Albert's plans for the Great Exhibition, and in the idea of the modern market and the museum. It considers Richard Marsh's "The Adventure of the Pipe" (1891) and "The Adventure of Lady Wishaw's Hand" (1895), M.R. James's "Canon Alberic's Scrapbook" (1895, 1904) and "The Diary of Mr. Poynter" (1919), Vernon Lee's "Amour Dure" (1887, 1890) and "Oke of Okehurst" (1886, 1890), Wilkie Collins's *The Law and the Lady* (1875), Arthur Machen's "Novel of the Iron Maid" (1890), "The Incident of the Private Bar" and "Novel of the Black Seal," both taken from *The Three Imposters* (1895), George Gissing's "Christopherson" (1902), Bram Stoker's *The Jewel of Seven Stars* (1903), Mary Cholmondeley's *Sir Charles Danvers* (1889), and Mary Ward's *The Mating of Lydia* (1913). These canonical and non-canonical novels and short stories testify to a late-Victorian and Edwardian literary imaginary haunted by curious objects and emasculated collectors that trouble relations to material things. In contrast to the confident object relations that the Exhibition, the museum and the market promoted, the literature that this study examines indicates a preoccupation with the instability of

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objects, and a concern with masculine identities founded on differing forms of material mastery.

In a number of texts not typically read as Gothic or for their objects, curious material things arise to challenge, confront, resist, and betray their possessors. Francis Bacon described objects in "The Praise of Knowledge" as providers of "knowledge itself, unadulterated and unmediated (515). If, after the manner of Baconian thought, enlightened modes of nineteenth century collecting privileged the object for this quality of faultless knowledge provision, then this study of curious objects and Victorian collecting indicates how the productive scopic experience could be betrayed by the Gothic tendencies of irreducible, irrational objects. This study therefore responds to museological, visual-cultural, and literary critical revisions of nineteenth-century material culture, and to the complex subject-object relations that the material turn in literary and cultural criticism has revealed. It sets up a tension between ideal modes of collection and exhibition, and the productive masculine identities that a culture of collecting fostered, and the complex realities and instabilities of collections and objects in Gothically inflected literature of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century.

The role of this introduction is to set up the theoretical and cultural historical background that informs and focuses the literary analysis in the four chapters that follow. It starts by establishing a Victorian confidence in museum and market mastery of material culture, and the ways in which it was assumed these classificatory and commodificatory forces could affirm Britain's position as a global power, and reinforce national and individual identity. It then sets up the mechanism by which a framework of certainties are broken down by reactions in the literature analysed, establishing the Gothic as a means of reading the curious objects of these collecting texts. It goes on to look more specifically at productive relations between gendered identities, objects, and knowledge economies, establishing museum and market as pervasive models shaping

object-relations, and providing materials for self-fashioning on a more individual basis. Finally it explores the object-based cultural and literary criticism that allows this study to suggest that the texts analysed anticipate the disruption of relations between subject and object that the critical turn responds to.

Victorian Confidence: Exhibition, Museum, Market

In a Victorian culture of collecting, objects, collectors, and institutional repositories were all intertwined in complex ways. As Lara Kriegel summarises, a long history of studies in visual culture and Victorian "epistemologies, institutions, and empires" has complicated the landscape of material cultural relations in the nineteenth century ("After the Exhibitionary Complex" 682). Museums, markets, and exhibitions should not, therefore, be elided, and this thesis does not look to simplify their complex and multivalent nature, or adhere to a strictly Foucauldian line of thinking. Classification, consumption, and collection are, however, processes that have emerged in discourses surrounding exhibitions, museums, and markets, testifying to their perceived power to master and order the world.

Prince Albert's plans for the Great Exhibition of 1851 testify to a Victorian confidence in classification and collection. The Prince Consort presented the Exhibition as an opportunity to unite fundamental principles of production, consumption, classification, and knowledge production, in a global enterprise with objects at its heart. "Science," he noted, would discover the "laws of power, motion, and transformation," "industry" would apply them "to the raw matter, which the Earth yields us in abundance, but which becomes valuable only by knowledge." While art would convey "the immutable laws of beauty and symmetry," to the benefit of "our production forms," which could be shaped "in accordance to them" (61). In its dedication to "power," "motion," "knowledge," "beauty," and "production," Prince Albert's proposed project communicated a nineteenth century agenda founded on commercial and classificatory

principles. Whatever the complex realities of the event itself, the rhetoric surrounding the Great Exhibition was suggestive of the organisation and control wielded by Britain as a successful global power over the material world.

This aspect of the Great Exhibition's intended goals was symptomatic of a broader Victorian response to material culture. The organised, institutional, or commercial arm of this response appeared in the Exhibition, the museum, and a "spectacularised" commodity market[1]. In different ways there arose around such sites the hope or the illusion of object-mastery. They quantified and classified the world, looking to establish a clear taxonomy, and offered the populace the possibility of a stake in the scientific, historical, imperial, or economic mission of Britain, as producers, consumers, agents, dealers, scholars, and collectors. Through the careful acquisition, clear presentation, and productive dissemination of objects, the mass of foreign items in circulation might be made sense of (Richards *Commodity Culture* 1). This great, if illusory, mission was dependent on the impression of mastery of material culture.

Objects both created the need for systematic organised efforts at control, and offered the means for a solution, through a public demonstration of their mastery. For Paul Young, the organisational imperatives of the Exhibition were symptomatic of a response to the increasing plenitude confronting the public in each and every shop window. The "ephemeral effect" of a multitude of objects and a proliferation of sites for their presentation in the nineteenth century urban space "prevented sustained consideration" of the vast quantity of material culture. The hope was that the Great Exhibition would offer the "solution to this metropolitan confusion" (3-4). This hope was founded on an Enlightenment rationale underpinning the classificatory and commodificatory imperatives of the Exhibition, and based on the understanding of

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[1]For more on the culture of the spectacle surrounding exhibitions, museums, and in relation to the market see Bennett's *The Birth of the Modern Museum*, Richards's *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England*, and subsequent museological and cultural analysis such as Carla Yanni's *Nature's Museums*, and Kate Hill's edited collection *Museums and Biographies*, for example.

objects as unmediated evidence of the true nature of things. In "The Praise of Knowledge," Francis Bacon asserted that objects might provide knowledge, free from the taint of contaminated language, and "more beautiful than any apparel of words that can be put upon it" (515). They would afford the means to "discern the riches of nature's warehouse as the benefit of her shop," and as the source of "infinite commodities" (513). Founded on "scientific enterprise," "praise of knowledge," and with the intention of bringing "rational observers to the same picture of the universe" (Young 40), the Exhibition and its objects were characteristic of an Enlightenment drive to actualise "an international order of things" through a "practical and totalizing endeavour that was to reduce humankind's economic life to proper order beyond the glass of the Palace's walls" through the mastery of material things (Young 3-4).

The "hallmarks" of the Exhibition, "economic progress, democracy and social civilization," connect it to the perceived ideologies of the museum and the market, invested as they were in "global solidarity" and "an increasingly shared marketplace" (Message and Johnston 27). As "monuments" to the Victorian age and its "projects of liberal reform, urban government, and imperial engagement," the structure of the modern museum, the framework of the market, and spectacle of the Exhibition demonstrated a masterful response to the chaos of modern object-relations (Kriegel "After the Exhibitionary Complex" 681). This response, Young argues, left a lasting impression on modern culture. An "abstracted and reductive" sense of "global order" remained as the legacy of the Exhibition (96), providing "confidence that the world was a finite and knowable entity" through the remarkable act of "gathering this material together" in order to realise a "definite order of things" (42). The Great Exhibition thereby, according to Young, represented "a decisive moment in the formation of a world picture that became durably embedded in Victorian society." A nineteenth-century imaginary can, then, as Bennett particularly suggests, be said to have been

preoccupied with a particular relation to the material world that, with its emphasis on mastery and reinforcing a global economy, was shaped by Enlightenment thinking (*Birth of the Museum*).

Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno begin the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* by noting that "[i]n the most general sense of progressive thought, the Enlightenment has always aimed at liberating men from fear and establishing their sovereignty" (3). Victorian discourse concerning the Exhibition, the museum, and the market responded to this need. They took as their starting point the potentially troubling plenitude of the modern world, and offered an opportunity for the presentation of the imperial centre's "sovereignty" and liberation from fear. Professionals and hobbyists, scholars and amateurs participated in different ways in a culture of collecting that fuelled this idea of material mastery. Objects, therefore, became integral to what John Dwyer terms "the Enlightenment project of economic progress," which aspired to "the spread and specialization of knowledge, humanity, tolerance, and mental cultivation" (662). Collection, exhibition, observation, and circulation were fundamental processes, undertaken with a view to making the material world productive by placing it in service to the ideological imperatives of a modern, imperial age.

No one "master narrative" may have ruled them, but the idea of the museum and the market as related but distinct state apparatus, dominant in the construction of productive models for object mastery and identity, continues to hold relevance. For Tony Bennett in *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*, the Museum Complex came about at a moment in which the collection shifted from a "means of stimulating the curiosity of the few" to a "means for instructing the many" (39). The modern museum, which had its "birth" in the nineteenth century, operated as cultural machinery by which the state could manage and improve the populace at large. The architecture and configuration of the space, the presentation and distribution of objects

in the displays, and the labels appended to the items themselves, all indicated the manner in which objects, and indeed subjects, within the museum and the Museum Complex were subject to the "representational" principles determined by their ideal public function (42).

Thomas Richards's Commodity Complex, as laid out in *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England: Advertising and Spectacle 1851-1914*, responds to the extreme volume of objects present in nineteenth century literature and culture, and also to the importance to society of these things that "teemed with signification" (2). The culture of "the spectacle" that Richards identifies was most fully embodied in evolving display techniques and relations to objects. In locations such as the Crystal Palace, the "spectacular" commodity was "elevated [...] above the mundane act of exchange" (3-4). What the Great Exhibition revealed was a new function for the commodity, which "excelled at making a symbolic virtue out of economic necessity" (4). In the latter half of the nineteenth century, Richards argues, commodities became the "coordinating frame within which very different forms of social life – economic, political, cultural, psychological, literary – were grouped" (14). The Commodity Complex assembled and "amalgamated" a multitude of objects in order to create "a coherent representational universe for commodities," an "equilibrium" out of "the apparent disorder of things," that swept up objects and subjects in a pervasive consumer culture (30).

These conceptualisations of the Great Exhibition, the museum, and the global market, testify to the pervasiveness of Enlightenment thinking, which can be seen to have infiltrated subject-object relations and shaped collecting-identities. Outward facing and publicly engaging, Exhibition, museum, and market addressed the material realities of modern life in an imperial and commercial age. They made the drive to classify and commodify the world a matter of national importance, affirming the place of Britain on a global stage. The market and the museum presented a normative

conceptualisation of productive object-relations, and through institutional collections offered up a site for reflection on these ideas, facilitating identity formation through the scopic experience of viewing, comparing, rationalising, and categorising. Objects, and therefore collectors, were placed in a key position to provide materials that revealed the totality of the world, its patterns and progress, and as such contributed to its mastery. It is these enlightenment assumptions, and the confident mastery of material things that they promoted, that this thesis responds to.

Mechanisms of Rendering Objects Gothically Curious

While recognising the subsequent work that has complicated totalising readings, this study sits in relation to the powerful and pervasive ideas of classification and object-mastery that characterised the Museum and the Commodity Complex. It acknowledges their assertions of the market and the museum as culturally pervasive forces, and symbols of enlightened modernity. It then takes in to account subsequent work on museums and exhibitions, collectors, collections, and material culture more generally, which have broadened our understanding of object-relations in the period, and the masculine identities formed in relation to them. If Bennett and Richards reveal in nineteenth century material relations a dream of museum and market as evidence of the march of progress and the successful mastery of material culture, this thesis identifies the nightmarish alternatives imagined in collecting literature of the period.

The texts analysed depict things that resist their acquisition, collections that corrupt their possessors, potent and inspiring artefacts that prevent their knowledge and market value from being disseminated, and family legacies that hinder inheritance. These portrayals of gentleman collectors, published in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, contrast revealingly with Enlightenment practices of acquisition, possession, dissemination, and legacy associated with museum and market, and with the identities they fostered. This thesis therefore explores how the drive to classify and

commodify the material world found oppositional fictional form in a world of fascinating but frightening curious objects and emasculated subjects, and looks to critically substantiate and elaborate this argument throughout.

The terms curious and curiosity are consciously used throughout this thesis, encompassing as they do the duality of virtuous searching for knowledge and "dangerous looking beyond," and being applied in a cultural historical sense to both objects and individuals in a "fluid exchange between agency and objectivity, curiosity and curiousness" (Benedict 1-2). Curiosity also remains associated with cabinets of curiosities and their extraordinary often chaotic accumulations of objects (Mauries). Curious objects have a long cultural history, and a significant and extensive literary presence. Early Gothic texts, notably Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* and Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, have at the heart of their mysteries curious objects. Most notably in the former is the giant helmet or casque that mysteriously appears to confront the master of Udolpho with immediate devastation, the end of his line, and the truth of his terrible rule. While in the latter, the memento mori, a wax sculpture of a worm infested corpse whose realism so terrifies Radcliffe's heroine, blurs the lines between the animate and the inanimate. Gothic literature might, therefore, be said to be interested in troubling and testing material things.

The Gothic, as a broad and plastic genre lends itself to a range of readings. In reviewing "The Rise of the Gothic" through seven critical works reappraising the genre, Rebecca E. Martin asserts that "the best work currently being done on the Gothic […] is less interested in defining and limiting the Gothic than in revealing its emergence from a rich stew of eighteenth-century political and cultural conditions," and extending the application of "important debates beyond the period and genre narrowly defined by *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) and *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820). Revealing "a different facet of the Gothic" and "new truths" about the complexities of "this genre-that-is-not-

a-genre," Martin applauds the work done to "extend, rather than limit, the purview of the Gothic" (100-101). This study looks to contribute to this extension of the Gothic, by introducing a new facet of the genre that might extend its purview to texts with a strong, gothically inflected material cultural focus.

As a product of the "confluence of social circumstances," Gothic literature expresses the "tensions" between "male/female, revolution/regression, individual/community, causality/determinism, rising/falling," that are particular to a given historical and cultural moment. Its "interpretive gaps," use of "the language of the visual," and emphasis on "a spectacle of suffering," lends it to a reading of a particularly visual-cultural moment, and of the literary genesis of pathological subject-object relations through Victorian and Edwardian conceptualisations of collectors and collections (103-105).

In writing on the "resurgence of historicized readings" of Gothic texts, Jonathan Dent analyses a number of "valuable" imaginative tools in *The Castle of Otranto*, in which Gothic objects are remarkably prominent. Although read by Dent with an emphasis on the events, as supernatural occasions that make the past "live," the "portrait of Manfred's grandfather" that "comes to life," the "giant 'helmet' that appears to 'fall from the moon'," the "gigantic sword" that falls and becomes "immovable," and the statue of Alfonso that inexplicably bleeds from the nose, indicate that the Gothic is concerned with objects, and with things that trouble, confront, and resist their comprehension and materiality (28).

People and things, be they castles, furniture, portraits or any number of other oddities, interact in the Gothic in complex and uneasy ways. As the statues and memento mori of *Otranto* and *Udolpho* in particular indicate, the Gothic is concerned with issues of the objectification of the body, as a thing to be put together and broken down, which challenges the fixity and stability of identity. Jules Law has observed that

for "some years now we have regarded the gothic as a particularly embodied genre" beginning "with the crudely stitched epidermis of Frankenstein's monster," and remaining preoccupied through the fin de siècle with "refiguring various social crises and identities in increasingly sexual terms" related to skin (975). This gave rise to "a dialectic of embodiment and dissolution" that Law argues made "violence the inevitable corollary of corporealization" (975). Analysis of the Gothic has thereby been concerned with the destabilising of divisions between abstraction and materiality, and with the "violence" involved in "dissolution" of the object and the self.

The "Thing" in its most abstract sense, has been analysed by Gary Farnell. In "The Gothic and the Thing" Farnell describes how in a recent theory, "'Gothic' is the name for the speaking subject's confrontation with intimations of the 'Thing'," that is, "the absolute otherness," "a phantasmic reference to an unnameable void at the centre of the Real, that amorphous, chaotic, meaningless physical level beyond all reference that both resists and provokes symbolisation" (113). For Farnell, as for Bill Brown also in "Thing Theory," the significance of the thing in literature arises in the subject-object relations that they illuminate, and which allow the transition from object that "works" for us, to semantically irreducible thing to be recounted (Brown "Thing Theory" 4). It is the experience of this unpredictability, this unexpected alterity of the object, which renders the item unnameable and injects an unsettling Gothicism in to material cultural practices. The presence of material objects in Gothically inflected fiction invites consideration of embodied Gothic objects that trouble the boundaries with the abstract otherness of the "thing" in a way that is important for this study. The Gothic also provides a model for the reactive extremes of the literature analysed.

Fred Botting has analysed the extremes of the genre in the context of the late-nineteenth-century, observing the "unhuman and inhuman" forces "embedded in the natural world and the human mind," the "ghostly returns," "incursions of barbarity,"

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and "irruptions" of the "primitive and archaic" that arose in particular ways at the end of the century. These terrible and horrible forces, he suggests, operated as a reaction to the "framework" of "reductive and normalising limits of bourgois morality and modes of production" (89). The texts analysed by this thesis build narratives around a series of masculine identities constructed in relation to the ideas and the practices of the museum and the market, before reacting to these normalising limits. Richard Marsh, M.R. James, Arthur Machen, Vernon Lee, George Gissing, Wilkie Collins, Bram Stoker, Mary Cholmondeley, and Mary Ward, describe unproductive-masochism, pathological collecting, thwarted professionals, and emasculated heirs, that break down the "framework" within which men and material culture were understood to interact productively and safely. The concerns with materiality, objectivity, identity, and fixity become key to the reactive troubling of collector-collection relationships.

Focusing on objects, collectors, and collections, rather than the melodramatic or sensational extremes of Gothic heroism and villainy, or prominent supernaturalism of the Gothic is not without precedent. Elaine Hartnell-Mottram advocates turning from the discussion of conventional aspects of the Gothic, the "dark machinery and motifs of plot and character" such as "the supernatural; taboo; villains; victims." In place of this she analyses what she terms "The Gothic of the Normal," drawing out "the significant presence, in the text, of the purely mundane" and "the very human anxiety about what it means to *be* 'normal'" (42). Within the gothic object narratives this thesis analyses, a "normal" or familiar culture of collecting is blended with an abnormal experience of surprising things. This troubling of boundaries between the normal and the abnormal might be taken as a characteristic of the Gothic as a genre. Suzanne Rintoul has drawn a parallel between the "problem of applying a system of identificatory rules to the genre" experienced by critics of the Gothic, and "the genre's thematic emphasis on the impossibility of securing limits" (701-2). This troubling of boundaries and testing of

limits, something that is very significant for this study, is carried through the various forms of the genre.

As well as being divided along temporal lines, the Gothic has also been subdivided in ways that reflect contemporary cultural anxieties and areas of instability, and shed light on the concerns occupying a nineteenth century literary imaginary. Patrick Brantlinger defines Imperial Gothic as being concerned with progress, science, and imperialism, in addition to "antithetical interest[s]" such as occultism, a culture of magic, psychical experimentation, and the "subversion of the rational, the modern, the democratic." Imperial Gothic expressed difficulties and worries, channelling or focussing the concerns with the British Empire, and asking questions of the claims to domination it made (243-247). Tamara S. Wagner writes on a "clinical Gothic of addiction," focussed on the juxtapositions of "consumption or production of sensational material" with "other dependencies that were shown to be much more dangerous," and blurring the lines between forms of consumption (30). For both Wyatt Bonikowski and Gina Wisker the Gothic involves a blurring of the boundaries between psychological states and of the line between realism and the supernatural. For Bonikowski "anxiety made Gothic," as the "psychological experience of insecurity" found "objective correlatives in haunted houses, spectral presences, and demonic visitation, which irrupted from "the unknown into the known, the unconscious into the consciousness" (66). This "ambiguous" mix of "the realistic and the imaginary" necessitates for Wisker a "step back from any straightforward historical realism" in order to interrogate "representation and interpretation, the symbolic, and the use of strategies of estrangement and engagement to explore and challenge cultural, social, psychological, and personal issues" (403-4).

In interesting ways, then, the Gothic can inform this reading of collecting texts and Victorian cultures of collecting. It is an expansive and plastic genre, concerned

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with testing limits, breaching boundaries, problematising definitions, and questioning mankind's mastery of the world. It is a genre that has long utilised and explored materiality, and made use of the extraordinary, the terrible, and the horrible as a reaction to a framework of culturally constructed contemporary norms. The Gothic provides the perfect mix of realist and non-realist tropes with which to interrogate subject-object relations and modes of collecting in literature, reflecting cultural anxieties, social concerns, and a fundamental insecurity regarding masculine identity formation. The particular ways in which objects and collecting have been understood to inform both national and individual identity formation will be discussed in the following section.

Enlightenment Object Mastery: Institutional Collections, Collecting, and Identity.

Objects assimilated into the recognisable form of the collection have pervaded human history, as though symptomatic of a natural impulse to acquire, and to self-fashion through things. Barbara Black has gone so far as to suggest that "[o]ne can construe humankind's existence as a sequence of collections," charting a trajectory from the "library of Alexandria," to the nineteenth century museum, via "medieval church collections, Renaissance curiosity cabinets," and "the eighteenth-century scholarly collections of Oxford" (*On Exhibit* 16-17). While the early modern concept of "musaeum" may have betrayed "encyclopaedic" tendencies, the modern museum as an institution, and a totalising, taxonomising influence, found true force in the nineteenth century (Findlen 59). The Victorians ushered in a very particular culture of collecting and a newly formalised and disciplined role for the collection in forming national and individual identities.

Recent revisions and critical complications of Bennett's Foucauldian reading of the museum in particular, have indicated the subtleties and complicated variations of exhibitions, museums and nineteenth-century relations to material culture. This is something that this thesis responds to in its analysis of texts that demonstrate the many

permutations of collection and display that captured a late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century imaginary. But, as established above, behind the realities and complexities of collecting in the period lay the idea of the museum and the market, and the unique moment in which it was believed that material culture might be mastered and disciplined to serve the needs of a modern populace. The nineteenth century marked the beginning of a new interest in objects and the manner in which they shaped and were shaped by their relation to individuals.

In a variety of ways, exemplary object-relations were presented as models for the safe and productive interrelation of man and material culture, and their utilisation in the formation of identity. The museum took on an official discursive function, selecting "certain cultural products" for "official safe-keeping" and display, and making decisions to "[recognize] and affirm some identities, and [omit] to recognize and affirm others," through these things (Macdonald 4). Material culture studies, which had its beginnings according to Dan Hicks in the object focused "museum-based studies of 'technology' and 'primitive art' during the nineteenth century," used material culture to establish geographical, historical, and cultural distance between peoples and societies (26). Through exposure to these representative objects and approved identities, a national, gendered, and modern sense of self could be reinforced.

The museum's use of historical and indeed ethnographic or ethnological items was premised on the ability of objects to convey meanings, and to be representative of distant times, places, and peoples. The particular meanings that were authorised and supported were, however, determined and directed by the museum. In the same way in which Brian Graham and Peter Howard observe heritage is constructed in a manner that is "present-centred," "created," "shaped" and "managed," meanings held within material culture were manipulated and shaped within the institutional space of the museum to serve present purposes (3). Writing on "Material Culture and Long-Term

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Change," Chris Gosden theorises that "past forms" of objects have been seen to "help shape and channel the choices made in the present." The museum, however, manipulated and reoriented these forms, constructing a narrative of development that made the things of the past, and the "categories of thought and notions of sensibility" that they give rise to, subservient to a narrative of progress (440). Museums showed visitors what they were not through alien objects and cultures, and provided aspirational models and lessons in what they should be through art and exemplary manufactures (Kriegel 1).

Through its objects, displays, and panoptical function, the "disciplinary museum" was able to shape the modern populace through its selection and presentation of things intended to affirm and empower national and gendered identity (Mason 24). In this way, objects were active within the walls of the museum in shaping identities. Yet, their influence extended beyond this space, and in to a global culture of collecting and consumption. The central significance of the idea of the museum to nineteenth century culture allowed a series of primarily masculine identities to be constructed in relation to its need for objects, some of which the chapters of this thesis will analyse. Social, individual, professional, casual, dedicated, and opportunistic collectors alike came in to being, providing models for productive and safe relations to material culture, and fashioning a sense of self as procurers of the building blocks of the museum and the market's national mission. For these men, opportunities for collecting were offered by the museum and the market's need for objects, and by a range of emerging disciplines that took material items as the basis for their studies.

The so-called "birth" of the modern museum saw the emergence of a series of "separate disciplines, including archaeology and ethnography," which shared "a similar focus on retrieving and collecting material culture." This allowed collectors to participate in the "development of classification systems" allied to the museum (Lucas

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230). "Archaeologists, and their antiquarian predecessors" combined "ethnographic data" with "archaeological remains" to aid their interpretations of other races and societies. The specialised sub-field of ethnoarchaeology specifically concerned itself with "the role of material culture and the built environment within living societies, and the processes which effect and affect their transformation to archaeological contexts" (Lane 402). Objects were integral to an understanding of history, social relations, and evolving cultures. They also aided in the construction of increasingly professionalised identities.

Objects were imagined as the catalyst to a range of responses from collectors concerned with the advancement of knowledge. "Ever since the Enlightenment," states Carla Yanni, "modern science has come to embody Western culture's most cherished values: the march of progress, the search for universal truth, and the existence of a reliable epistemology" ("Divine Display" 24-5). The museum, according to Yanni was central to the great enlightenment scientific project, providing the material that "cutting edge," "observational science" required. The institutional collection therefore played a significant part in the goal to "classify and diagnose," which drove various specialist fields "like geology, […] medicine, geography, chemistry, and analytical engineering" (Yanni *Nature's Museums* 11). This enlightenment project was embodied in the regulated spaces of the museum, in its selection and presentation of objects, and in their use as an active source of observable information for scientists, scholars and collectors alike. Yet, within the museum both collectors and things themselves were active in a sense that is significant for this study, breaching the barriers that sought to hold them firmly within cabinets, behind glass.

Yanni observes that scientists brought objects out of their displays, handling and measuring the items. This interactive facility of the museum influenced the design and construction of institutional spaces, which might include "private corridors" granting

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access to students, and for better or worse effectively making the scientists and naturalists "part of the display." In the British Museum, notes Yanni, "bystanders crowded around the scientists as they opened draws and handled specimens" ("Divine Display" 288). Designed around the productive function of objects, the museum "celebrated the act of looking," and championed the "ambition of a visible imperial archive" that was inclusive. In its national and global functions it placed collectors, curators, and other productive male identities within its displays, and within a picture of modern life that it presented to a receptive citizenry. Built on an expectation that "[s]ince the British Empire's national museum was the only institution in the world that could amass and present such a collection, it followed that it was the empire's duty to do so," the museum's project focused the efforts of a broad network of individuals placed to contribute to the national duty (278). An array of productive, predominantly masculine identities consequently developed out of this need for objects, and this duty to collect.

The flexibility in relations between collector, collectable, and museum is mirrored in the relation to the market. By the nineteenth century, "collecting practices most commonly remained embedded in commercial transactions and connected to the market," with the economic nexus in which such artefacts were entangled" signalling "a new discourse" that emerged around the practice of collecting. Objects now existed as both "commodities and objects of scientific interest" (Lucas 232). Collectors might, therefore, contribute to both commercial and knowledge economies. The economy that thrived on the objects of the culture of collecting made the market integral to Dwyer's "Enlightenment project of economic progress" (662). The manner in which market and museum were interrelated in the enlightened mastery of the material world was not, however, universally appreciated.

In analysing the discourse surrounding the nineteenth century museum Ruth Hoberman has noted the contemporary perception that the walls of the museum were unavoidably permeated by the market. Despite lofty associations with connoisseurship, the museum could not keep the market out (*Museum Trouble* 34-37). Giving anecdotal evidence, Hoberman notes that museum officials "preferred to identify with the 'aristocratic collector' rather than with the dealer," fearing the associations of dealers with the movement of art objects "out of their auratic position," and into the fluctuating marketplace. Such figures, in "underlining the instability of value," unavoidably highlighted "the inseparability of art and commodification" (36-7).

Observing the conjunction of market and museum, Anthony Alan Shelton observes that exhibitionary complexes "are both dependent on and supportive of markets" (480). World fairs and exhibitions in particular, according to Carol A. Breckenridge, are special cases in the "world of collecting" for the manner in which they "place objects in the service of commerce and in the service of the modern nation-state, with the inevitable imperial encounters that these two forces promotes" (195-6). Whilst looking to stimulate trade and production, the market and indeed the museum and exhibition were inevitably caught up in consumption. Consumption, however, and the large-scale and unceasing process of circulation that drove a consumer culture, was at odds with the serene stability of the well presented museum space Barbara Black describes as so soothing to the modern viewer (24-26).

Both viewer and object could, then, be challenged by economic circulation, making the market something that objects needed to be removed from in order to generate or restore meaning, value, or the individuality of objects. The collector in such a scenario, according to Russell Belk, might be viewed "as a heroic and selfless saviour of objects rather than as an acquisitive and selfish consumer," differentiated from the general mass by his exceptional relation to commodities ("Collectors and Collecting"

534). Negative responses to the market as something from which objects need to be rescued might have fuelled a desire for the theoretical or conceptual divide between market and museum, as Hoberman suggests. Economic realities of obtaining sites, building structures, acquiring objects, establishing funding, and maintaining museums, however, meant that market concerns continued to be of immediate relevance. Furthermore, whether as serious resources for scientists and scholars, or a popular exhibitionary site for the edification of the general public, the museum remained central to a knowledge economy that fuelled the developing sciences and promoted objects of artistic and aesthetic worth.

The Enlightenment association of economic progress with the general advancement of society made a virtue out of a consumer culture. Critical analysis of mass consumption, Daniel Miller argues, has often given "very little acknowledgement of the degree to which the rise of mass consumption could also be seen as synonymous with the abolition of poverty or of the desire for development" (341). The ideal framework of market relations is outlined by Lee Boldeman, who explains their overall significance to nineteenth century Britain. In *The Cult of the Market: Economic Fundamentalism and its Discontents*, he describes "the radically utopian attempt in mid-nineteenth century England to transform all of society into one giant market" (90). Inclusive, unifying, and productive, the market and acts of consumption acted, according to Frank Trentmann, as "a mirror of the human condition," with our "understanding of how people consume" reflecting "our views about how they ought to live" ("Introduction" 1).

Class and gender identity were closely bound up in a nineteenth-century literary imagination with the act of consumption. Ruth Hoberman has provided a reading of literary depictions of middle class consumption, which in "romanticizing the marketplace" linked "the possession of store-bought objects" to "status" and

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"autonomy." Citing the work of Don Slater, Hoberman notes that in the arena of the consumer paradises of the end of the century, "the middle class defined its own, 'respectable' consumption against that of both the aristocracy (regarded as decadent) and the working classes (regarded as vulgar)" (1). Beyond the messages conveyed by practices of consumption, the nineteenth century as an Imperial and scientific age provided opportunities for reinforcing gendered identity in supplying the market. A chain of "unpaid enthusiasts," "elite practitioners," "colonials" and "metropolitan men of science" affirmed their position in a system of knowledge production, authorised in their collecting by their position of Imperial authority (Endersby 2-3).

The Enlightenment aims of promoting an impression of mastery and dispelling fear lay behind the material culture based efforts of the nineteenth century market and museum. Through their ideologies, and the promotion of their imperatives, a modern and predominantly masculine populace was encouraged to contribute to the spread of economic progress and the advancement of knowledge. Material culture provided the means by which these objectives could be attained. Inclusive, and indeed global in scope, the established collection and the evolving market for collectables reflected back a range of masculine collecting identities.

Victorian discourses pertaining to the museum and the market related a range of roles for objects and individuals that fuelled these economic and knowledge producing processes. As the chapters of this thesis will go on to demonstrate, in this age of collecting, individuals might participate in the popular hobby, join collecting-based societies, make a living as agents, dealers, and scholars, or find themselves custodians of family collections and house museums. In different ways people were concerned with objects. British citizens might plan, or participate in, the construction of museum buildings (Bremner 51); they might lend their collections to exhibitions (Davis 49), work as curators (Yallop 51-124), or frequent such sites, thereby contributing their

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entrance fee or donations to an institution that symbolised a national Enlightenment project (Alberti 304). Museums and markets were not monolithic structures, but constructs, built on the efforts of a whole range of individuals. The collector negotiated a position in relation to them, seeking to project certain messages of mastery and modernity that had implications for national and gendered identity.

Objects, as the literature this thesis analyses suggests, might illuminate the nature of such relationships. A mixture of cultural, artistic and manufacturing interests, national ideals and personal interventions, invested things with a multitude of sometimes conflicting meanings, as they were turned to different purposes by a range of individuals. In the novels and short stories that this study will analyse, objects are central to, and even active in, the processes of acquisition, possession, dissemination, and inheritance of collections. But in challenging the productive potential of object and collection, they question the normative object relations that made remarkable things productive and subservient. The next section of this introduction will establish the cultural and literary theories that trouble the fixity and stability of things, in a manner that the literature this thesis analyses will be shown to anticipate.

The Material Turn in Cultural and Literary Criticism: Subject-Object Relations.

The chapters of this thesis respond to concerns with imperilled masculine identities, which the literature analysed suggests continued to trouble a popular consciousness. Collectors have a potent and loaded relation with their objects. They invest material things with added personal significance as they assimilate them in to the collection, and invest them with aspects of their identity. The male collectors depicted are threatened by the negative possibilities that lay behind a framework of positive object relations and productive modes of consumption. This study, therefore, draws on the nexus of relationships surrounding Victorian collecting, deploying recent work on subject-object relations in order to analyse narratives with challenging collector-

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collection relationships at their heart. Properly mastered, objects appeared as the medium through which an impression of duty and a sense of self might be communicated. But, as work conducted under the broad umbrella of material culture studies has indicated, and in a manner that is useful for this study, meaning, value, and subject-object relations are fluid and often contested.

Christopher Tilley has stated emphatically that "[t]he object world" is "absolutely central to an understanding of the identities of individual persons and societies." His perception that "without the things – material culture – we could neither be ourselves nor know ourselves" has been central to a wave of recent readings of responses to material culture in literature and actuality (61). As discussed above, objects were fundamental to the modern museum, the exhibition, and the market, and to the processes of self-formation they facilitated. As material culture studies have demonstrated, objects at a given moment tell us something about the past, other peoples and cultures of the present, and through comparisons with these spatial and temporal others, something of the self in modern society, making their selection and presentation an important measure of modernity and identity. What such object-focussed work has revealed, however, is the complex range of responses to material culture, and the anxieties that necessitated their utilisation as a means to shore-up the self.

Behind the message of success and mastery asserted by the modern museum and commodity culture, enlightened projects responded to an increasingly unstable modern moment. If both sociology and the modern museum, as Gordon Fyfe describes them, "are quintessentially modern institutions," then they emerged as "Enlightenment projects […] committed to reason and rationality" in the wake of the "uncertainties that attended the decline of patrimonial power, bourgeois empowerment, and modernization's disruption of traditional models of control" (34). They reflected, in their mission to empower masculine identity, the crisis facing the modern man. The

object-based identities of dealers, agents, archaeologists, ethnologists, historians, consumers, and participants in heritage projects, were symptomatic of a positive response to these anxieties, which made productive use of a wealth of objects, and a need for things.

As Donald Preziosi states, "citizen-subjects" required "'object-lessons' of aesthetic, ethical, political, and historical worth," which might be obtained by individuals, and casual and academic visitors to institutional repositories through exposure to "*exemplary* objects" (50). Shortcomings of production, Lara Kriegel suggests, were addressed by design reform and the arts and crafts movement, which brought market, museum, designer, producer, consumer, and reformer in to relation in order to mould a generation, and train them up in the productive use of objects (1). The institutional repository became symptomatic of a larger need to understand and master the multitude of meetings between individuals and materials. This need was addressed by expanding the museum's objectifying methods outside of its walls.

As Barbara Black has outlined, the Victorian museum functioned as a means of quantifying, qualifying, and marshalling the unfamiliar objects and experiences that threatened to overwhelm those living in an age of expansion and innovation. The success of its perceived "epistemological triumph over the immensity of the world," achieved by "making all the world a map, a collection of museum labels or exotica familiarized," necessitated management to maintain the museum's "well-ordered, beautiful, quiet" space." The institutional repository might thereby combat "the alienation and isolation that characterized modern urban existence" (*On Exhibit* 24-6).

Kate Hill's analysis of "the 19th-century canonical museum" indicates its part in a widespread material cultural response to irrationality, obscurity, and defiance. "[C]oncerned to develop an objective, systematic representation of the world as knowable by the Western subject," both the museum and biographies of great men,

were "premised on an understanding of the subject as a rational individual, exerting his will on the world; and simultaneously on an understanding of the world as knowable, separate from the knowing subject, and less likely to be composed of rational individuals" (1). Despite the separation of the objectifiable world and the individual that was necessary for the museum's mission, however, as Lucie Carreau states, the very process of collection might leave the particular objects and the impressions they generate open to subjective influence.

"Collections are always 'contaminated' […] by the people who make them," she suggests, an idea that this thesis will return to and develop at length. The "contaminant" they demonstrate, that is their level of objectivity, will be variable, and determine "the appropriateness and suitability of a collection to fit a particular museum discourse" (Carreau 203). Even if material items essentially remain the same, as fixed physical objects, in a period of increasing institutionalisation of collections and professionalization of disciplines, "the professional biographies of those who formed collections were determinant in assessing the quality and potential of those collections to contribute to scientific and museum discourses" (202). The very identities that were founded on objects, collections, disciplines, and museums might see their objectivity and disciplinary function compromised by the acts of collection that made them available.

Collecting, ordering, and presenting objects reflected the "knowledge and position" of the collector "within a large network of individuals and institutions" (Carreau 203). Analysing the private collection of Harry Geoffrey Beasley that was transformed in to a private museum and then the Cranmore Ethnographical Museum," Carreau notes the threefold increase in acquisitions that was at least partly due to "the developing market in ethnographic material." This market that comprised dealers, sales rooms, junk shops, curio shops, and yielded objects and publications, was utilised and

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contributed to by "private collectors and dealers interested in ethnographic material" as well as "curators from the British Museum, Pitt Rivers Museum and Cambridge Museums of Archaeology and Anthropology, all eager to acquire objects to complement their existing collections" (Carreau 204). Felicity Bodenstein, in "A Show of Generosity: Donations and the Intimacy of Display in the 'Cabinet des médailles et antiques' in Paris from 1830 to 1930," refers to "an economy of giving," to the "different motivations that attracted certain collectors," and the materialisation of this economy "in the displays dedicated to presenting" gifts to museums (14). A thriving museum culture and an "economy of giving" combined to turn the private act of collecting to the public good, filtering objects in to the institutional repository.

The collecting landscape of the period was by no means straightforward, something that is reflected in the chapters of this thesis, which analyse various pathological masculine collecting identities and objects that refuse containment and comprehension. Sam Alberti has divided collections in to four loose "types: personal, society, municipal and university," none of which adhere to "simplistic public/private dichotomies," or to one side of the "crude education-versus-entertainment debate" (292). Writing on ethnological collectors in the nineteenth century, Gavin Lucas observes that "many of these individuals collected not just for themselves but for museums" (233). The professional non-professional divide was similarly indistinct. "Museums sent out their staff to collect artefacts, but at the same time purchased material from amateurs," and "at least until the late nineteenth century," Lucas notes, "antiquarians, ethnologists, and museums had no qualms about dealing with and purchasing material from other amateur collectors, so long as they could be trusted" (235). Things, and collections were integral to a variety of disciplines, and bound up in a thriving market for collectables, but the manner in which they were acquired and put to use varied. The different paths by which objects might be brought to serve museum

and market ideologies, coupled with the "contamination" Carreau describes, illuminates a flexibility in objects and collections that made room for the creation and presentation of a range of identities that both adhered to and subtly departed from established norms.

A great number of heroic or increasingly professionalised masculine roles emerged to channel the efforts of male collectors. In the last thirty years of the nineteenth century, what was "generally considered to be the 'heroic age' of archaeology" saw the development of "an antiquarian pursuit into a professional discipline" (Gange 1083). "Ethnographic travel accounts and the collecting of objects – whether body parts or cultural products" were cemented in an epistemological role "as a means of 'knowing' other peoples and places to a degree not previously possible" (Franey 219). "For individual colonial officials," the personal gratification that might be obtained from acts of collecting included "an illusion of cognitive control over the experience" of "disturbingly chaotic" imperial regions (Breckenridge 211). But behind these productive relations, born of a thriving market for collectables, and based on the ideologies and values of the museum, the threat of quirks of individual identities impinging on representative functions of objects remained to haunt the culture of collecting. Objects might conceivably betray their collectors, to the detriment of the collection and their identity as collectors.

Material things were involved in allowing the individual to be himself and know himself. Objects provided lessons in taste, selfhood, production, and consumption for citizens, and served a national need, in an unstable modern moment, in which uncertainties, declining patrimonial power and bourgeois empowerment threatened traditional models of control. The immensity of the world, the influx of the exotic, unfamiliar and disordered, necessitated a response to the alienation and isolation produced. Objects, through the museum and the market, offered a means of addressing the irrationality, obscurity, defiance and contamination, the sense of the unknowable

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and the unregulated, facing modern man. However, both the things themselves and the act of collection were capable of compromising the stability of the subject-object relations arising out of a complex and varied culture of collecting.

The narratives that this thesis will analyse have at their heart challenging collector-collection relationships brought about by the complex desires of emasculated collectors, and the agency of collected objects. With greater emphasis being paid to the interaction of object and subject, the recent critical analysis of various transactions shows how the nineteenth century fiction analysed was also concerned with the agency of objects, and their relation to individuals, in the acts of acquisition, possession, dissemination, and legacy. Different disciplinary readings have indicated that by shifting our perspective and focussing on ideas of the mechanisms lying behind transactions, the role of object and subject might be more fully understood.

Economists have observed and analysed the "utility of objects" within given systems, focusing on "exchange as the result of decisions by individuals to increase their utilities." Social anthropologists in contrast, as James G. Carrier observes, perceive the "transaction of things" as "related to the nature of the relationship between people and social groups." "[L]ess willing to see individuals as autonomous in the first place," their focus is typically on "meaning" and "collective perceptions" rather than "utility" (Carrier 373). Gift theory has looked to examine the intricacies of exchange in given societies through particular customs and objects, as Mark Osteen relates in the course of "The Question of the Gift." Whether a symptom of individual acts to maximise utility, or an indication of cultural valuations and meaning making processes, in the act of exchange things have been assumed to illuminate humanity and the nature of individuals.

Most recently attention has been paid to objects, and the particular role of things in interactions with material culture, as a means of accessing the full and complex

realities of acts of collection. Christopher Tilley's description of "objectification" suggests the need to analyse the multiple "objectifications" that occur in the "life cycles" of things, "in moments of exchange, appropriation and consumption" (60-1). Material culture studies have responded to the evolution of objects in order to take in, not only their "purchase, acquisition, and shopping," but also "material use" and "the essence of things, choice and practice, and material politics" (Trentmann "Materiality in the Future of History" 286). The "anthropomorphic object-alien prism" that Frank Trentmann notes was "left behind by the Enlightenment", and was particularly analysed by Bruno Latour, presaged an increasing appreciation of the role of the material within "domains," how sets of "ties" operated "in the assembly of networks composed of nature, things, tools, technologies, and humans" (Trentmann "Materiality in the Future of History" 290). If the idea of Enlightenment object-relations was defined by easy mastery of material culture, recent work on objects has begun to suggest a multitude of ways in which this assumption can be questioned by the apparent agency of objects and the flexibility of subject-object relations. Agency and flexibility, qualities key to this study, emerge in the interactions of collectors and collectables, and as this next section will illustrate, have formed the focus of various disciplinary approaches to material culture.

The Activity of things? Instability and interpretation

What Christopher Tilley terms "[c]ontemporary material culture studies" has taken to shifting its perspective, alternating the "principal concern, and starting point for analysis" in a manner that grants equal weight to object and subject. Studies might begin with the "particular properties of objects or things," or alternatively "the human subject or the social." The principal concern has been, however, to increasingly assess "the manner in which people think through themselves, and their lives and identities through the medium of different kinds of things" (Tilley 3-4). Subject and object have

increasingly become elided, embroiled in a dialogue that has implications for identity formation, and for the submissive position typically assigned to material things.

The reassessment of objects that has taken place in material culture studies has, according to Frank Trentmann, been taken furthest in "the more controversial claim that things have 'agency'" ("Materiality" 306). Ideas of the agency of objects have to a greater or lesser extent been pursued by Thing Theory, beginning with Bill Brown and developing as it has been taken up and pursued through different media or literary modes. Brown draws attention to a confrontational quality in "things", which arises when "objects stop working for us," implying a failure in language and a flexibility in materiality that at least appears to grant objects agency as they challenge their possessors ("Thing Theory" 4). The "more easily acceptable proposition that things and humans are inseparably interwoven in mutually constitutive relationships" has, however, been more widely accepted (Trentmann "Materiality" 306-7). Material culture has a part to play in the construction or reinforcement of individuals, genders, social groupings, and national identities, as this introduction so far has established. But, as Thing Theory has begun to suggest, and this thesis elaborates and develops, it may equally be complicit in their complication and breakdown.

Once we take objects as imbued with agency, and as Thing Theory has done read their confrontational quality, both their state as static material items and their meaning become negotiable. When objects and individuals are accepted as "mutually constitutive," for instance, we introduce an individual element to the assignment of value that is particularly important for collectors (Trentmann "Materiality" 307). As Robert Layton writes, the structuralist and semiotic approach to material culture reveals the need to interrogate cultural typologies and processes of meaning making. Layton describes how practitioners "examine the way meaning is constructed and used in cultural traditions." In doing so they emphasise the need for attention to details of

context, and the importance of raising "questions concerning the extent to which cultural understandings are stable and shared, or changeable and ambiguous" (29). These questions indicate the importance of individual experience and cultural moment, and of imagined relations to physical things, pertinent issues to a period in which objects moved between cultures and in and out of the collections of individuals and institutions. While the extent to which true individuality is acknowledged as a possibility varies between approaches, generally both body and object are increasingly treated, not as "artefacts" but rather as "active subjects in a web of relationships between persons and things," all connected in their performance of identity (Mitchell 391).

This "web of relationships" has been particularly pronounced in recent work on representations of nineteenth century collections. Writing on items from Edward Bulwer Lytton's collection and their relation to his fiction, Simon Goldhill observes that the manner in which "objects become conceptualized within particular regimes of knowledge and perception at different cultural moments," and how this "has become a particular concern of literary critics and cultural historians" of late (94). Beyond the scientific or anthropological interest in foreign cultures, what our things have said of us, and what we have employed them to say of ourselves has been recognised as complex and compelling. Through things we've told stories, and through stories we've explored the possibilities of things.

Representations of the museum and the market have been central to a variety of literary and cultural studies of the collection. Barbara Black's *On Exhibit: Victorians and Their Museums* blends a cultural history of the museum with an analysis of its influence "within the private and public spheres," arguing for the pervasiveness of the idea of the institutional repository in the nineteenth century (43). Elaine Freedgood has described a "thing culture" that emerged in the mid-nineteenth century and captivated a

Victorian imaginary. Characterised by "a more extravagant form of object relations than ours," Freedgood encourages a "strong metonymic reading" that follows "novelistic things out of novels" through the "connections" that remain detectable to us, in order to reveal its full extent (8, 21).

Ruth Hoberman has responded particularly to representations of the Edwardian museum and the circulation of objects, reading a variety of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century texts, both fiction and non-fiction, for what they have to say about the museum space and its haunted things, liable as they are to be experienced in "complex and unpredictable ways" (*Museum Trouble* 3). With a specifically gendered approach, Kirby-Jane Hallum has analysed bourgeois and aristocratic, feminised and masculine consumption in Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White*, drawing attention to the role of the collector in breaching these models ("Collecting Men: Masculinity and Cultural Capital in *The Woman in White*). While Tanya Pikula reads *Dracula'*s monsters as expressions of "anxieties about *fin-de-siècle* practices of excessive material production, consumption, and expanding middle-class pursuit of leisure" (284). These examples of culturally embedded literary analysis indicate responses to particular norms of object-relations, established in relation to class, gender, personal and professional identity, cultures of collecting, and contemporary practices of circulating and presenting objects.

Such readings, of objects and spaces, identities and actions, have located texts in a material-cultural moment, defined by particular relations and idealised modes of collecting. The material turn has identified the powerful pervasiveness of the museum's ideology, reflected in its presence in literature, its imitation in house museums, and its presentation as an ideal in guides that suggested the domestic interior should be modelled on the museum's spaces (Black *On Exhibit* 2). Those working under its principles have explored taste, and accepted ideas of "aesthetic competency" that came with the correct education, as it was expressed in cultural capital (Hallum 28). And

they have taken specific objects, like "textiles and tobacco" and furniture in mid-nineteenth-century literature, for what they reveal about representations of the relation of consumers to the far reaches of the British Empire (Freedgood 5, 17). Such object centred literary analysis has revealed how museums, markets, objects, and collections told stories, affirming or effacing gendered identities in accordance with contemporary priorities. It has established the various norms of object-relations, and the male collecting identities that the chapters of this thesis will respond to. It is to this wave of culturally informed literary analysis, therefore, that this study looks to add.

In appraising this critical turn towards material culture, Alison Booth comments on the "recognition of narrative in material form," and of the "life histories or biographies" of museums and objects, which have resulted in the "widespread adoption of a narrative approach in many disciplines." She notes, however, that "too often the approach is narrowly applied within one discipline," urging literary studies to "attend more to non-fiction, spatial practices and material culture," and to the "specific form and rhetoric of the narratives inscribed in the institutions and practices under study" ("Houses and Things" 234). This study responds to such a call. It establishes the assumptions and rhetoric surrounding the museum and the market, tracing through the literature examined the manner in which they infiltrated a late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century imaginary, before exploring the particular departures constructed in relation to them.

Furthermore, it draws particularly on Booth's reading of the "haunting materiality" of the objects and spaces of nineteenth century house museums of literary figures. "[A]kin not only to biography but also to traditions of the Gothic," literary house museums prioritise the domestic space in a manner that Booth relates particularly to the significance of the house in Gothic literature "from Atreus to Usher" (234-5). Booth analyses the process of fixing the domestic space in a static state by converting it

in to a museum, turning to material items as a means of conveying narratives of particular identities. Booth's focus, however, remains primarily on the outbreaks of narrative and the gothic haunting that arises in the act of reclaiming, renovating, and recreating a specific life. This thesis, although related, is concerned, not with the experience of a particular museum space and its mausoleum-like function, but rather with curious objects, in active collections within functioning domestic spaces, which react against museum and market relations in reactive and boundary troubling ways that make them Gothic. It looks progressively at specific objects, curious accumulations, and active experimental collections, before analysing texts with a wider focus on the transmission and inheritance of the collection.

As already established above, the Gothic provides a means of focusing the series of fascinating but frightening subject-object encounters depicted in the literature this thesis analyses, and exploring their engagements with contemporary discourses. Various aspects of the Gothic, defined as it is in a variety of ways, are useful for this study for the manner in which it has been held to explore melodramatic oppositions to rational norms. In reference to the Gothic and postcolonialism, Andrew Smith and William Hughes "indicate the presence of a shared interest in challenging post-enlightenment notions of rationality" in both Gothic literature and Romanticism more generally. This challenge, it is suggested, "developed through an exploration of the feelings, desires and passions which compromised the Enlightenment project of rationally calibrating all forms of knowledge and behaviours" (1). Its "seeming celebration of the irrational, the outlawed and the socially and culturally dispossessed" engenders "ambivalences" by which the Gothic might be said to be "employed in the service of supporting" Enlightenment norms by othering monstrous aberrations. Defined by "contradictions," "ambiguities," "ambivalences," and evasion of any "formal aesthetic criteria," the genre facilitates negotiation rather than a firm affirmation

or challenge to established norms (3-4). It embraces aberrations and oddities, but in their extremity renders them abject, thereby affirming established norms.

This thesis will analyse a selection of canonical and non-canonical British literature from the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century. The periodisation of the study is a product of the literature it analyses, rather than any natural break typically perceived in relation to the museum or the market. The selected texts explore the role of objects in the construction of flawed male identity, through representations of emasculated collectors and active collections. From such well-studied writers as Wilkie Collins and Bram Stoker, to relatively overlooked figures such as Richard Marsh and Mary Cholmondeley, the selected narratives indicate that the dominance of the museum and the market generated an interest in things and modes of collecting that defied or complicated the productive way in which the museum and market were held to work. It is by no means an exhaustive survey, given the remarkable prevalence of things in the literature of the so-called age of objects such an undertaking would be beyond the scope of this study. Rather, the selected texts should be seen as a sample, selected for the manner in which they prioritise curious objects and communicate with particular male collecting identities and concerns with masculinity.

Each of the narratives has at its heart objects that are active in a very particular manner. Far from the moralising personal items that characterised "It" or talking object narratives of the eighteenth century (Trentmann "Materiality" 292), these late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century things are eloquent in their oppositional relation to their possessors without ever being granted actual voice. They express something ambiguous, uncertain, or threatening in the key processes of acquisition, possession, dissemination, and inheritance, without lecturing, lamenting, or actively narrating their tale. The troubled collectors are male, reflecting the gendered weighting of the practice, and are concerned with collection as a social practice, a pathological passion, a life's

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work, or a familial obligation to the extent that they are defined by their relation to things.

Frank Trentmann's analysis of "It" narratives suggests that possessions were often the focus of this eighteenth century genre, listing such examples as "teapots, a guinea, a dog, […] a black coat" (Trentmann "Materiality" 292). Unlike these single and often largely unremarkable items, as collectables the things of these late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century-texts are lent added significance in the human dramas. They imply complex thought processes, discerning selection, and mastery of objects, as qualities inherent in the practice of collecting. They are indicators of the depicted gentlemen's participation in broader cultural modes and fashionable pursuits, and as such reveal something of late Victorian and early Edwardian relations to material culture. Each chapter of this thesis identifies the societies, institutions, markets, and models that the narratives suggest shaped and defined collecting in the period. They then draw out the reactive and decidedly negative object-relations in the selected texts.

The Gothic provides a means of focusing these fearful contested qualities, and of exploring their engagements with contemporary gendered, psychological, material, and scientific discourses. Each chapter draws on a recognisably gothic theme or trope to some extent, be it atavistic or anachronistic experiences of history, geographical and anthropological distance, taxonomic instabilities, or ancestral portraiture and ideas of "physiological lore" (Mighall 157). Each masculine collecting identity is determined by the particular assurances, assumptions, and dominant imperatives of a given time, place, gender, and class. Each chapter, therefore, explores a different set of discourses and object-relations surrounding particular modes of collecting and sets of individuals.

The successive chapters of this thesis analyses literature that engages with related but distinct facets of gentlemanly collecting in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century. Chapter One takes as its focus particular objects and acts of

acquisition, in order to analyse collectors who have been productively affiliated with social collecting bodies. Dilettante, antiquarians, and historians, the collectors of Richard Marsh's "The Adventure of the Pipe" (1891) and "The Adventure of Lady Wishaw's Hand" (1895), M.R. James's "Canon Alberic's Scrapbook" (1895, 1904) and "The Diary of Mr. Poynter" (1919), and Vernon Lee's "Amour Dure" (1887, 1890) have each been productively employed in the acquisition of objects, and engaged in social relations with fellow collectors, clubs, and institutions. The analysis focuses on bachelor collectors who find themselves distanced from productive social bodies by the pursuit of objects and aims that alienate them from market and museum ideals. Divorced from social identities the collectors seek to construct their male identities in relation to individualistic models of masculinity predicated on masculine, masochistic sacrifice – suffering in the pursuit of collectables for both their personal satisfaction and the benefit of the nation. The instability of the objects encountered, however, distances these men from productive models of masculinity in favour of an unproductively masochistic mode of collecting.

Chapter Two focuses on objects within collections, and collectors defined by their problems with possession. Depictions of mad collectors related to pathological identities and extremes of collecting behaviours connect Wilkie Collins's *The Law and the Lady* (1875), Arthur Machen's "Novel of the Iron Maid" (1890), and George Gissing's "Christopherson" (1902) to collecting mania, fetishism, and bibliomania. Max Nordau laid out in *Degeneration* (1895) his perception of the "present rage for collecting" as Oniomania, a weakness for collection that was a symptom Degeneration (27). Imagined in relation to more normative collecting that informed late Victorian culture, the pathological, degenerate collectors depicted in the selected texts reveal fin-de-siècle concerns with the sadistic and transmissible potential of material culture, the portable quality of which leaves them free to tempt fellow collectors.

Chapter Three analyses active collections and objects in motion. Professional and scholarly collectors in Bram Stoker's *The Jewel of Seven Stars* (1903), and Arthur Machen's "The Incident of the Private Bar" and "Novel of the Black Seal," both taken from *The Three Imposters* (1895) are haunted by their objects. Unlike Chapters One and Two, the narratives of Chapter Three feature great objects and good men, who have long been dedicated to productive professional and scholarly collecting. Agents, dealers, Egyptologists, and Ethnologists, they have made their living or made their name through their masterful dissemination of the value and knowledge held in things. This chapter takes collectors closely associated with the market and the museum, before analysing the manner in which the circulation of the market and the stability of the museum are shown to compromise or limit the collectors and their objects. Both professionals and scholars attempt to distance themselves from the respective institutional imperatives, but find themselves challenged by the problematic mobility, fluidity, and agency of the items with which they concern themselves.

Chapter Four takes a wider view, emphasising the importance of the house as a Gothic site framing collector and collection. It analyses history, heritage, legacy, and the role of collections in a selection of texts in which the inheritance of country houses plays a significant part. Vernon Lee's "Oke of Okehurst" (1886, 1890) imagines a pristine legacy without an heir to inherit; Mary Cholmondeley's *Sir Charles Danvers* (1889) represents the remnants of an inheritance as it is broken up; Mary Ward's *The Mating of Lydia* (1913) focuses on the moment in which a recently formed collection is first inherited. By highlighting developments in house museums, contemporary societies, and charitable trusts, this chapter asks questions of the founding principles of this movement, and the heritage market they promoted, by analysing narratives in which mastering history, restoring and preserving heritage, and promoting a desirable legacy proves problematic. The chapter analyses largely unaddressed object-centred and

masculine themes in relatively under-researched texts in order to consider how these writers respond to the championing of history and heritage in material culture, as exemplified by the National Trust at its official formation and registration in 1845.

A multitude of ambiguous objects arise in the texts analysed in this thesis, and insist on being noticed as actors in the events that unfold. Pipes that poison and atomise, torture devices that turn on their possessor, Egyptian lamps that disappear and reappear inexplicably, family collections haunted by a spirit from the past. These things are linked by their relation to collectors and a late-Victorian and Edwardian culture of collecting, and to the key processes of acquisition, possession, dissemination, and inheritance that the practice encompasses. Drawing its focus out from the individual object to the country house and its collections, in successive chapters analysing progressively more dysfunctional and damaging collectors, the study reads these terrible tales as indicative of particular culturally and historically specific preoccupations. Anxieties related to the instability of male identity and the limits of Enlightenment rationality and control, are expressed through collecting and collections.

This thesis thereby identifies the nexus of interrelated discourses that inform negative depictions of collectors and collecting. It ascertains the popular modes and models of collecting, the fashionable objects, and assumptions about things on which the narratives are built, and the manner in which they are used to explore negative alternatives. Fred Botting has suggested that the Gothic provided a "framework to articulate disaffections with the reductive and normalising limits of bourgeois morality and modes of production" (89). This thesis uses this oppositional model to present a material-culture-based reading of texts concerned with collections. It identifies the "framework" offered up by the museum and the market, against which these narratives imaginatively reacted. In this way, this thesis will provide a new way of thinking about material culture, museums, and the market for collectables in the period.

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CHAPTER ONE

Collection and Self-Destruction: Acquisition, Unsatisfying Masochism, and Unproductive Gentlemanly Collecting

Introduction

A pipe that poisons, a severed hand that strangles, a haunted scrapbook and diary, and a series of animate items associated with an historic femme fatale, are all curious things that come to play a central role in the short stories this chapter analyses. In each of the texts masculinity is undermined at the point of acquisition by the emasculating effects of these objects, and the remarkable agency they possess. Published in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, these narratives focus on protagonists who break with social bodies and institutions associated with collecting, in order to pursue items that ultimately refuse the collector's efforts at mastery. The often pleasurably curious, but eventually terribly confounding collectables turn the fundamental act of acquiring objects in to a masochistic ordeal. Necessitating a pleasurable sacrifice and the isolation of the collector, the curios acquired at terrible cost then render this masochistic sacrifice unproductive.

Nineteenth-century narratives of imperial masochism describe the pleasurable sacrifice of individual men, against a backdrop of a largely prosperous and productive Empire. They indicated that suffering and even failure of the individual might be revelled in if manfully undergone as part of a collective national effort. Despite these productive possibilities, however, the male collectors depicted in the literature analysed find that their suffering in the pursuit of art, historic artefacts, and the acquisition of knowledge, is endured to no avail. With an emphasis on productive social collecting, suffering and sacrifice, this chapter draws on and synthesises two particular aspects of male selfhood: imperial masochism and the primarily male practice of social collecting.

Throughout Richard Marsh's *Curios: Some Strange Adventures of Two Bachelors* a community of single gentlemen appears, uneasily connected by the mutual desire to collect, and professedly one-time members of "the society of the Dilettanti" ("The Adventure of the Great Auk's Egg" 133). In a selection of short stories by M.R. James, his collectors proclaim an interest in Antiquarianism, and demonstrate links to communities of similarly interested individuals, agents and salerooms. While in Vernon Lee's "Amour Dure," her protagonist, Spiridion Trepka, is a young scholar, associated with a network of fellow academics and an institutional system, who looks to collect a particular series of historical objects.

Each text establishes the collector's membership of highly gendered identity-affirming societies and communities of collectors. These bodies each negotiated a different position in relation to the market and the museum by contributing to public repositories and economies of knowledge (publishing their findings or developing new methods of investigation, for instance). Yet, the collectors in the selected narratives appear uneasy with these associations, driven to isolate themselves by their obsessive and masochistic devotion to acquire unstable objects. Consequently, this chapter explores how productive social models of collecting, typically influenced by the market and the museum, are threatened with breakdown, and the consequences for the masculine identities of men who define themselves by their masterful acquisition of objects and knowledge.

Richard Marsh's "The Adventure of the Pipe" (1891) and "The Adventure of Lady Wishaw's Hand" (1895), M.R. James's "Canon Alberic's Scrapbook" (1895, 1904) and "The Diary of Mr. Poynter" (1919), and Vernon Lee's "Amour Dure" (1887, 1890), each describe collectors uneasily associated with social bodies, and isolated by their obsession with troublesome, haunted things. Leaving behind their dysfunctional connections with communities of collectors, fixating on curios that spark the desire to

acquire but defy classification and containment, these texts describe collectors who are subject to the increasing instability of their things.

A pipe, a severed and preserved hand, a fabric sample within a diary, an image in a collection of rare etchings and illuminations, and a series of artefacts associated with a historic figure, each challenge the collector's ability to collect by taking on a life of their own. Demanding a masochistic sacrifice of their would-be collectors, the extraordinary curiosities of these texts question the stability of objects, and the possibility of acquisition, and consequently the assumption that collecting may be turned to productive ends. In generating ambiguity around objects, which do not adhere to a system of value or to a static state, the narratives create room to explore a relation to things that is distanced from the market and the museum.

By drawing attention to the hybrid nature of these unclassifiable items it will be the contention of this chapter that, as these collectors find themselves increasingly isolated, and challenged by objects that problematise acquisition, they seek to construct their identity in reference to individualistic models of masculinity, predicated on masochistic sacrifice, rather than the sociability of their collecting. John Kucich describes an amplification of "the masochistic overtones of imperial suffering" in the late nineteenth century (*Imperial Masochism* 8). He analyses a middle-class imperial masochism that "mandated displays of one's indifference to suffering." In a reading of Kipling's fiction, Kucich suggests that in the context of empire male submission to pain could be turned to productive ends, for groups and for a nation ("Sadomasochism and the Magical Group 41).

Yet, in each of the narratives analysed in this chapter, the voluntary suffering endured by the collectors in the pursuit of their objects offers up no chance for the sort of rebirth or redemption Kucich describes (*Imperial Masochism* 5). The gentlemen of these texts contribute nothing through their sacrifice. Instead, the dissolution of these

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curios obfuscates their potential, and thwarts any productive aspirations of the collectors, making their masochistic sacrifice unproductive. Responding to the positive models of social collecting offered by Dilettanti, Antiquarian, and Historical societies and communities, it illuminates the ways in which Marsh, James, and Lee imagine departures from these modes of collecting through the acquisition of curiously active, unrewarding things.

The positive association of social collecting with the market and the museum

Each of the selected texts that this chapter analyses begins with a social vision of collecting. Richard Marsh's collection of short stories, *Curios*, begins with the presentation of a gift from one collector to another, introducing through this transaction Mr. Pugh and Mr. Tress, men whose association principally arises from their mutual passion for collecting. The first key event of "The Diary of Mr. Poynter" is Denton's entry into a familiar sale room, filled with similarly interested individuals and associates, and the deputising of his agent, tasked with bidding on the titular item. While "Canon Alberic's Scrapbook" and "Amour Dure" both narrate the exploits of collectors in the field: Dennistoun, a "Cambridge man" who precedes his antiquarian associates to a distant church "on the spurs of the Pyrenees" (1), and Spiridion Trepka, an historian who proceeds with the support and sponsorship of an academic body to the historic Urbania. These social scenarios indicate the participation of Pugh, Tress, Dennistoun, Denton, and Trepka in communal collecting practices – from informal friendly associations, and collecting societies and clubs, to the dealings and affiliations of the saleroom.

These bachelor gentlemen are introduced in a manner that suggests they have sought out the company of fellow collectors, and made use of networks arising around the practice, taking full advantage of a flourishing culture of collecting that spawned multiple clubs and societies from the eighteenth century onwards. The Dilettante,

Antiquarian societies, and academic institutions combined the personal collecting activities of their members with a degree of sociality, and a proposed public aim. Yet, these narratives of acquisition quickly depart from the associations, drawing the collectors into an isolated relation with the objects they desire. What, then, is the positive model of collecting these writers draw upon in order to accentuate the negatives in their narratives?

Collecting as a singular and deeply personal activity has been analysed at length from a psychological perspective by Jean Baudrillard and Sigmund Freud (himself a collector) amongst many others, for the private purposes of control and ego protection it offers (Baudrillard "The System of Collecting" 7; Freud "Civilization and its Discontents" 79-82). Yet, throughout its complex and varied history, collecting has appeared as both a solitary pursuit and common ground on the basis of which clubs, societies, networks, and communities could be formed. A gentleman with the means, and a passion for collecting, could unite personal interest with a desire for social contribution, through membership to a society or academic community. In the convivial company of fellow gentlemen, knowledge could be pooled, objects displayed or exchanged, tips shared, and collaborations mooted. The affirmation of membership alone carried an appeal (Black "The Pleasure of Your Company" throughout).

The products of these endeavours by individual members of a collective could be left to museums and public collections, or sold to fellow collectors to yield a fitting financial reward. Images of the productive practice of collecting can be found in both studies of collecting as well as contemporary texts. Frank Davis, recounting the collecting activities of a selection of *Victorian Patrons of the Arts*, describes Sir Richard Wallace (1818-90), who loaned "a great part of the pictures and furniture" from the Hertford House collections to Bethnal Green Museum, for an exhibition that "proved to be universally popular" drawing in an estimated "five million people" (49). John Elsner

has elucidated the transition of the collections of Sir John Soane from private repository to house museum, maintaining the "very specific manner and context of display" thought to best show off the objects, as dictated in his Last Will and Testament ("A Collector's Model of Desire" 157).

In a reading of "provincial" nineteenth century natural history collections, Samuel J.M.M. Alberti observes that rural museums typically "had their roots in personal collections, which were then purchased by a learned society," and were subsequently "broken up, added to, moved, rearranged and rebuilt" (292). Selby Whittingham analyses the details of such transitions, surveying a series of nineteenth century bequests: the "Vernon Gift, 1847 […] built up a collection of British paintings to which the public had some access at his house in Pall Mall" (260); the two "Turner Bequests," of "1851-6," were made "to the National Gallery" (262); while the "Wynn Ellis Bequest, 1875," as dictated by his will, "directed that his modern pictures should be sold but that his old masters should be offered to the National Gallery" ("Breach of Trust Over Gifts of Collections" 267). Such bequests indicate that gentlemen collectors remained concerned with the productive function of their collectors. Their success in the practice would serve a greater purpose.

Both the museum and the market stood to gain from the thriving culture of collecting. Popular periodicals concerned with collecting aimed to guide their readers through interactions with the market. They prepared novice collectors against the pitfalls of purchasing collectables, and encouraged non-collectors to take up the popular pastime, perpetuating a thriving economy. *The Connoisseur* magazine, for example, looked to simply and easily connect collectors with their desired objects, whilst providing diverting anecdotal accounts, adverts and notices, and mail order opportunities. *The ABC About Collecting* (1908) was the result of an accumulation of articles published "in *London Opinion*" by the author, J. H. Yoxall, and of feedback

from "members of the London Opinion Curio Club," as the Preface proclaims. It sought to educate and advise beginners in a step-by-step manner, to maximise their efficacy and capitalise on their potential productivity as adept collectors.

With an interest in collecting established, a working knowledge of the practice could gain a gentleman access to a club or society, affirming his status and offering him an opportunity to exercise his abilities for the public good. Objects that the individual obtained could then be filtered through these associations to institutional repositories and museums. The social side to the practice of collecting, then, encouraged participation for the dual purposes of self-gratification and public contribution, contribution to the museum or the market and more fundamentally, to the perceived masculine mastery of things.

From Antiquarian and Dilettanti societies, to an increasingly academic and institutionalised body of historians, a remarkable number of societies proliferated, particularly from the eighteenth century onwards, each with a different focus, but finding common ground in the practice of collecting and the possibility of social contribution. They also each, to a greater or lesser extent, maintained possible connections to the museum and other repositories offering varying levels of public access to their collections. Dilettanti, Antiquarian, and historical societies utilised a variety of objects and artefacts, donated bodily, circulated in meetings, or documented and illustrated. They melded the individual collector with a collective, facilitating the affirmation of taste and ability, fostering a socially productive identity, and gratifying the collector's desires in a primarily homosocial environment.

Dilettante, Antiquarian, and Historical Bodies

Counting among its early members infamous profligates (9), great collectors (20), and men of rank and power, at its peak, Lionel Cust notes, the Dilettanti responded to a historical moment in which the spoils of "the soil of Italy," the products of efforts

to discover and collect, "had revolutionised the arts and the taste of Europe" (59).

These men of power and privilege sought to promote "the regular search for such

antiquities," and one of the first endeavours of the society was, according to Cust, the

construction of "a set of casts from antique sculpture for the use of the public" (59).

From the first, such aims were concerned with collecting, and the hope of disseminating

objects of merit.

Jason M. Kelly, in "Riots, Revelries, and Rumor: Libertinism and Masculine

Association in Enlightenment London," notes the Dilettanti's attempts to "establish

cultural and scientific credentials in the Enlightenment public sphere." By the 1760s, he

notes, the society "became a specifically Enlightenment form of gentlemanly

association that valued knowledge – both classical and modern," and privileged

"leisured study, collecting, and the patronage of scientific and artistisc endeavours such

as archaeological expeditions, the formation of the British Museum's collections, and

the foundation of the Royal Academy" (794). A campaign to reinvent itself, and

distance the society from the image Cust describes, meant that "by the 1770s, the

Dilettanti had reinvented themselves and established themselves as the premier British

institution for the scholarly study and publication of classical Greek antiquities (794).

Casts of ancient sculptures made available to the public, and scholarly

publications of antiquities were amongst the achievements of the Dilettanti, as a product

of object-based practices and productive aims. The Dilettanti, of course, were not alone

in making such contributions to nineteenth century culture. Elizabeth Lewis describes

the Society of Antiquaries' collections of "over 3,500 drawings of portable antiquities,"

as "probably the most important source of its kind nationally." Composed mostly of

"objects exhibited at the Society's meetings, or those made for publication in *Vetusta*

Monumenta or *Archaeologia*," in the early decades of the nineteenth century, Lewis

notes, the impulse to assess and organise the collections led the Society to "consider

whether the arrangements may not be made for the purpose of rendering them generally useful to the Fellows" (Lewis 365). Forming a catalogue, revising this over time, the Society's organisers and members clearly demonstrated a desire to collect, order, and present objects in a manner that maximised their availability to interested parties, and that championed a considered methodology and a classificatory aim.

This interest in marshalling and mastering items was symptomatic of a wider response to historical objects, arising around the increasingly academic practice of history as a discipline. "Longing for the past," Carolyn Steedman suggests, "was expressed in many ways in the first half of the nineteenth century," taking shape around things: "records and documents were preserved and catalogued; the Archive was born; museums, collections, historical pageants and antiquarian societies came into being; the disciplines of anthropology, archaeology, mythology and History itself, all developed as means of inquiry into the past" (91). The "deeply *uncomfortable* quest for original sources" that characterised the "new practice of 'scientific' history" emerged "in the middle of the nineteenth century," and remains, Steedman suggests "the dominant idea of practice among modern, professional Western historians" (Steedman *Dust* 9-10).

As Richard Hingley has noted, the "increasing institutionalization of historical research that occurred in the second half of the century" was reflected in the "growing interest in antiquarian studies," pursued in an increasingly disciplined manner. Out of this historical and antiquarian interest came "the British Archaeological Association (BAA)" in "1843, […] which held its first meeting in 1844," and broadened the social spectrum of participants pursuing their researches individually and collectively, by searching for knowledge and objects (173). Material items were brought in to line with an increasingly formalised pursuit of a sometimes somewhat proscribed spectrum of historical interests, pursued by a network of largely academic individuals, who fed into larger societies and an economy fuelled by collectors and collectables.

Collectors, Market and Museum

       The interests of the individual collector were increasingly served by membership to a social body, and supplied by a flourishing market, which in turn fed the museum. Frank Herrmann describes an interaction between the market and the ethos of the exhibitionary site in "Peel and Solly: Two Twentieth-Century Art Collectors and their Sources of Supply." Here he indicates the extent to which the desires of a range of collectors and connoisseurs were catered for by the spoils of the "sale-rooms in London," noting the proliferation of such sites in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Christie's, Sotheby's, Edward Millington, Cock's Auction Room, Langford, Greenwood, H. Phillips, Peter Coxe, Puttick and Simpson, George Stanley, each mobilised collectable items, often presenting their wares in catalogues that betrayed particular specialisms. But whilst feeding an art market with objects to sell and capital to dispose of, Herrmann similarly remarks on the interaction between individual collectors and public exhibitionary sites. Organizations such as the "exceptionally well-endowed" British Institution, "founded in 1805" and run "by and for enthusiastic collectors," placed the items of private individuals on public display in what he describes as their "important annual loan exhibitions of pictures owned by its members" (89). The sociality of the Institution brought the spoils of the art market in to the reverential museum-like space, and facilitated a public contribution through objet d'art.

       The cultural and imaginative impact of models of the museum and the market on individual gentlemanly collecting has drawn critical attention. Barbara Black has analysed Alfred Tennyson's "The Palace of Art" as a reflection of "a wider transformation central to the political and cultural milieu of post-Napoleonic Europe," which culminated in the "birth of the nineteenth-century museum." Representative of a democratised relation to objects, she identifies the image of "the aristocrat's mansion unlocked," and transformed in to "the people's exhibition hall" ("The Works on the

Wall" 2), as an embodiment of an outward facing and socially minded model of object relations, that turned the private or domestic collection to the public good. Beyond the realms of the wealthy individual with his house museum (something that will be developed in Chapter 4), Dilettante societies, Antiquarian societies, and a wave of historians, have been shown to contribute knowledge and objects to the public store, whilst indulging the passions of their members for collecting in a social setting. These organisations focused on different objects for collection, professed to have different aims, but each emphasised at some level a communal, social, mutually beneficial alliance through the homosocial environment of the society.

These principally male societies were typically populated by a specific demographic. Giving the example of John Robert Mortimer as an *atypical* antiquarian, remarkable for "a background of hedgers, carriers, carpenters and small shopkeepers," Melanie Giles throws into relief a society typically populated by the well-to-do and educated (279-280). In addition to an affirmation of status and taste, the society and the club could offer a sociality otherwise denied to "the preponderance of young, reluctant-to-marry middle- and upper-class men, luxuriating in perfunctory homosociality and, as John Tosh would have it, fleeing (or at least resisting) domesticity," as Rob Boddice describes (323). In bolstering their identities, and satisfying the collector's urge, the affluent single gentlemen were also able to combine their efforts in order to acquire and master objects for a higher purpose than mere self-gratification. The histories of each of these communities balanced desired aims against actual practice, testing the limits of sociality and productive collecting. But in each case, these endeavours, and the societies themselves, were formulated on the premise that objects of a collectable and desirable nature could be acquired and deployed by those with the knowledge and the will, and that the desires they sparked could unite like-minded individuals.

Such a positive model of homosocial relations and productive collecting, feeding from the personal collecting desire to the public benefit, provides the basis for the textual analysis that follows. The unadulterated masculinity of the club, the society, and the academic institution, promoted a relation to material culture that emphasised mastery, that rewarded productivity and public contribution, and that affirmed the male collector's social position and acculturation. Marsh, James, and Lee take these models of male community and masculine mastery and subvert them through the depiction of a range of remarkable things that isolate and destabilise. The Dilettante, absorbed by his desire for dangerous curios; the antiquarians, distracted by rare and uncontainable finds; the historian, diverted from his research to collect traces of a great femme fatale. In each narrative, the association of the collectors with a social body is established. Yet, within the narratives, the identity affirming associations are broken down, the things depicted serve no productive purpose, and the suffering of these men in the pursuit of these items takes on an unrewarding and unproductive masochistic quality.

Richard Marsh's *Curios* and the Dilettanti.

Richard Marsh's *Curios: Some Strange Adventures of Two Bachelors* was published as a collection of short stories in 1898, bringing together and building on the object-centred exploits of his two recurrent collectors, Mr. Pugh and Mr. Tress[2]. The "Adventures" detail the moment of collection of a strange assortment of curious objects by the two gentlemen, whose bachelor existences appear dominated by their mutual passion for exceptional curios. A pipe, a phonograph cylinder, a cabinet, an ikon, a puzzle, a severed hand, and the egg of an extinct bird all warrant a narrative of their

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[2] Marsh published extensively in the popular periodical press. Mr. Pugh and Mr. Tress appeared in several short stories prior to the publication of *Curios*, and would appear subsequently also. For an extensive exploration of Marsh's publications see Minna Vuohelainen's *Victorian Fiction Research Guide 35* (http://www.victoriansecrets.co.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/35-Richard-Marsh.pdf).

own, dramatising the curious events surrounding their acquisition. Marsh's narratives hinge on the potential of exceptional objects to incite chaos through their ambiguity; in these "Adventures," this chaos strikes at the stability of material things, and the social bonds that the love of collecting can breed.

Mr. Pugh and Mr. Tress, by the time that we encounter them in *Curios*, have been collecting for many years, accumulating various objects that are hinted at, but are so familiar and so firmly a part of the scenery of the collector's life that they rarely find focus in the narratives themselves. It is in the moments when a new acquisition presents itself to the collectors that their objects flash into life. The Boule Armoire of "The Adventure of the Cabinet" warrants extensive description and considerable competing efforts from both collectors, yet we never follow it to its permanent position within the collection, nor does it reappear in subsequent narratives. The perils of collecting emerge in "The Adventure of the Great Auk's Egg," in which the acquisition of a fake splinters a group of collectors, and leaves them all empty handed. The desire for objects, and the rivalries and pitfalls that arise in their acquisition, dominate the lives of the collectors and their narratives. For these men it is acquisition, rather than possession that they appear most dedicated to, and it is in these moments, when the collectors look to collect, that their mastery of objects, and the supposed sociality of collecting is challenged.

The experience of Mr. Pugh and Mr. Tress, their abilities as collectors, and their refined taste, inform each of the narratives of acquisition in which they play a part. It is their experience and discernment that leads them to the curios described (utterly singular objects, each and every one of them), and that gains them entry to a community of collectors that appears intermittently throughout *Curios* as a whole. This network of men, from the recurrent figure of Mr. Brasher, to the one off appearances of a whole host of other bachelors, is linked by their membership to homosocial environments

central to the maintenance of their gendered identity. As it is revealed in "The Adventure of the Great Auk's Egg," Pugh and Tress are members of, not only what Barbara Black has termed "Clubland" ("The Pleasure of your Company in Late-Victorian Clubland" 282), but also of "the Society of Dilettanti" ("Great Auk's Egg" 133).

Club culture has been recognised as playing an important part in the construction of male identity. Black's "club culture" had long "helped to define an elite of ruling-class males, consolidating power among men and, thus, ensuring male entitlement" (282). In the "tense and exhilarating decades of the 1880s and '90s," she notes, clubland provided a location in literature that "enabled immersions and submersions in desire," in the "charged world of secrets," "self-fashioning," and "identity-construction," and in the absence of "obligation and duties" (282-33). The masculine space, Black argues, including domestic interiors such as "Dorian Gray's outrageous house of collections," offered "a room of one's own," apart from the "universe" of "middle class consensus," in which to experiment with self-formation and representation (283). Histories of societies similarly indicate that such collecting communities offered an arena in which to explore and reinforce masculine identity, but in a potentially far more socially engaged manner.

The traditional image of the Dilettante Society remains a product of what Gagan Sood has termed "educated speculation," thanks to its relaxed attitude to record keeping and consequently patchy history (4). Writing on the Clare College Dilettante Society, Sood remarks that it is not even clear whether a connection can be made between this reappearance of the society and the earlier eighteenth century incarnation, "the portraits of whose members adorn one whole room at Brooke's, the London Club" (4). Yet, despite a lamentable lack of early records, Lionel Cust claims in his 1914 *History of the Society of the Dilettante* that a Society of that name can be assumed to have existed

since an initial meeting in late 1732 (4); and to have "maintained its existence with an unbroken record" in to the early decades of the twentieth century (2).

Formed "simply, in the first instance, for the purposes of social and convivial intercourse," Cust's history of the society draws attention to the prestige of its members, and the revelry typically engaged in at its meetings (particularly in the early days). Beyond this vision of aristocratic debauchery, in the course of the Dilettanti's varied history, its members demonstrated a fascination with objects that provided a point of shared interest along with the sociality stemming from class affiliations. This interest popularly found expression in the practice of collecting historical and artistic objects.

An image of the Dilettante persists that connects wealthy gentlemen through objects, and that describes a publicly beneficial quality to a society that from its earliest days emphasised its pleasurable social qualities. Membership to the Dilettante, as to the gentleman's club or to a "fraternity" such as the society of Free and Accepted Masons (Harland-Jacobs 449), was an affirmation of class, taste, and masculine identity, providing a pleasurable diversion for men with means. This image then, of a society that prioritised class, wealth, pleasure, and a love of objects of antiquity, presents to the popular imagination a model against which to compare Marsh's textual incarnation of a so-called Dilettanti society.

The society as it appears in *Curios* is, however, a contrastingly competitive, conflicting, and hostile body. Rather than appreciating his membership as an affirmation of his gendered identity, in describing his experiences Mr. Tress dismisses it as the "one error in the course of his life" that a man may be permitted to make ("Great Auk" 133). This error is not, as might be expected, his succumbing to the pleasures and excesses of the Dilettante. Rather, it is a mistaken association with a collection of men utterly unable to interact productively. Any idea of collaboration is quickly dismissed by Marsh, despite the long intimacy of the two bachelor gentlemen who are the

principle characters of *Curios*. In "The Adventure of the Pipe" Mr. Pugh describes his relationship to Mr. Tress as that of "rival collectors," who draw from one another "envious passions," more than capable of overriding "the nobler nature" of each. Membership to the society grants none of the pleasurable positives for which the Dilettante was founded, nor does it facilitate a productive or communal practice.

A faded nod to the sociable Dilettante, Marsh's society is composed of "less than a dozen" members, including both Pugh and Tress. By the time of Mr. Tress's recounting it is, in fact, "now extinct," a disastrous outcome that he notes, "[t]he affair of the Great Auk's egg may have had something to do with" (133). As this particular observation implies, in a series of Marsh's narratives the depicted object acts as a catalyst, first sparking the desires of the collector, and then bringing disaster. Objects, which should create social bonds within a society populated by collectors, in fact, dissolve them, exerting themselves as active agents that highlight failures in the masculine characters depicted.

Tress suggests that it was an object that broke the social bonds of the society. The objects Pugh and Tress encounter may also be said to demonstrate a break with the professed aims of the Dilettanti, refusing to serve the simple needs of the collector, let alone wider ambitions held by the society's members. Unstable, even undesirable at first glance, Marsh's curios prove to be as disruptive for the collectors' identities as the collectors are indicated to have been for the society. The particularly ambiguous possibilities of active objects is most clearly demonstrated in "The Adventure of the Pipe" and "The Adventure of Lady Wishaw's Hand," two narratives which begin when collectors acquire truly questionable gifts, items that have social implications as well as consequences for the surety of the collectors mastery of things.

In the first narrative of *Curios*, "The Adventure of the Pipe," Marsh's collecting pair, Mr. Pugh and Mr. Tress, each appear more concerned with denigrating the

collections of the other than bolstering their fellow Society members. They refer to the "Brummagem relic," and the "nice trumpery" possessed by their associates, casting aspersions on the quality of their curios and consequently on their collections as a whole ("Pipe" 8-9). Marsh emphasises the competitive rather than collaborative spirit that characterises its members, epitomising their petty and directionless behaviour in the figure of one Andrew Fletcher, a man who "if he thought that you possessed one of Queen Elizabeth's great toes, would never rest easy in his bed until he himself owned the great toes of all her family" ("Great Auk" 138).

These discordant relations are revealed through things. The items are obscured as they become symptoms of strained relations, rather than objects of merit themselves. A meeting of the society is more likely to bring about a long-running feud than a productive, or even enjoyable, association. Collectors in Marsh's vision of the Dilettante are divided by their desire for collectables, rather than united in their mutual interest. And when brought together, the conflicting collectors catalyse a reaction in the objects that reflects this destructive disharmony by devaluing the curios in question.

Both the peculiar pipe and the severed and preserved hand that form the focus of "The Adventure of the Pipe" and "The Adventure of Lady Wishaw's Hand" enter the collections by unusual means that illuminate the relations of the collectors. The pipe is unexpectedly presented as a gift from Pugh to Tress, having passed through unsavoury channels, darkly alluded to by the reticent Tress. The hand of Lady Wishaw arrives by the innocuous route of the parcels post, sent to a recognised collector (Pugh once again) by a reluctant heir to this morbid object. "Gifts," Mark Osteen suggests, are "concrete representations of social relations," the act of giving creating meaning, as "givers and receivers […] imbue objects with the personality of the original giver" (4). By breaking the subject-object relations out of typical market and museum models for exchange, the socially determined meaning of the items appears more pronounced. As embodiments

of the individuals, and their relations to one another, the objects become actors in an

ongoing dialogue between collectors and collectables. However, the objects appear to

exceed the limits of their representational function in such a conception. The objects

depicted are as complex and unpredictable as the identities and relations they are

presumed to illuminate and embody, infiltrating the interactions with their own will.

Tress's gift is presented to Pugh in order to test a theory that the curious pipe is

both poisoned and haunted. Without explanation, or indeed the warning that should be

attached to it, it is presented to the unwary collector in the hope that its terrible effects

will be felt. When put to use (an act that Pugh acknowledges as unusual in itself for a

collector), its true character manifests in the physicality of the object itself. Contained

in a box elaborately carved with "some remarkable specimens," this container and the

object it houses are described as "a fine specimen of artistic workmanship." Combined,

they appear both "remarkable" and monstrous, the case covered in "some of the ugliest

figures I remember to have seen," and the pipe adorned with a creature that resembles

"an octopus," but is in actuality some "almost unique member of the lizard tribe."

As a thing, it is a mix of the remarkable and the recognisable, of exotic creature

and "meerschaum" fused to "amber" (7-8). Pipes were readily obtainable and highly

collectable objects, advertised in suitably gendered examples of the periodical press.

The "Mainly For Men" feature in the *Penny Illustrated Paper*, for example, advertised

the "additional advantage or pleasure" to be gained from a fine specimen, with tips for

the discerning gentleman to make use of on the occasion of his next purchase (156,

Issue 2645, 1912). Yet, Marsh's object and the manner in which his collectors engage

with it, suggests an imaginative relation to this recognisable commodity that places it at

a distance from the market.

The remarkable nature of the presentation of this recognisably collectable item is

best illustrated by contrasting it with a short story that deliberately evokes market

relations. In his contemporary critique of an empty, trivial, and materialistic modern

society, Arthur Machen also presents a significant encounter with a pipe. In "A

Fragment of Life" Machen describes how the unwary "buyer of expensive fancy

goods," Darnell, is "dazzled" by the "air of mystery" generated by a salesman around an

object that then "haunted him for six weeks." The "meerschaum pipe," adorned with

"the likeness of a female figure, showing the head and *torso*," with a mouthpiece of "the

very best amber," melds the typical with what is presented as the remarkable.

Constructed of regular materials, it's somewhat risqué subject matter grants the

transaction a degree of under-the-counter "delicacy." Once presented with it, and

subjected to the "crafty tradesman['s]" pitch, Darnell is drawn into a relation with the

pipe that has little to do with the material object itself.

The customer is seduced by the mystique created by the salesman, and the

imposed sense of desirability that sparks a need for acquisition. This desire has little to

do with connoisseurship or discernment, it is simple: he is shown the object, "resisted it

for a time […] and at last he bought it" (110). Darnell, the tempted and haunted

consumer, is drawn into an act of purchase that is tied to ideas of luxury, fantasy,

resistance, and seduction. The purveyor of this particular under-the-counter treasure

generates a mystique that the tawdry object might be lacking in and of itself. This

instance has nothing to do with taste, nothing to do with a discerning palate (as regards

the tobacco) or eye (as regards the pipe). Rather, the transaction relies on the

identification of the prospective purchaser as a credible victim of the "crafty"

salesman's patter. Any sense of individuality or value that the object possesses emerges

out of this moment in which the salesman sells, rather than out of the object itself.

Marsh's text would appear at face value to present a similar "haunting" by, or

fixation on, a given object. The opening of the first narrative of *Curios* details an

apparently similar object, a pipe, described at some length. Yet, the tone, the

perspective, the intimacy or independence of the reckoning of the object, sets such an interaction apart from the critique of commodity consumption demonstrated in Machen's text. Mr Pugh requires no advertising, no falsified sense of mystique or individuality. His appraisal is systematic, his discerning gaze being directed first towards the box that holds it, and then in due course to the object itself. And where Darnell is drawn in to an artificial sense of desirability, Marsh's specimen carries a genuinely inexplicable, exotic, and even mythical quality, that attracts the collector, and yet makes it resistant to the process of acquisition. Rather than the simplistic haunting power of the commodity Machen describes, Marsh's narrative has at its heart an apparently haunted but innately troubling object that makes a highly desirable and yet dangerous gift.

Marsh's pipe demonstrates a duality that extends beyond its status as a gift and a poisoned, haunted object of experimental interest. The pipe, by Pugh's reckoning, is "artistic" but not "beautiful," the box is covered in either "devils" or "deities," and although the pipe itself is "quite plain," it is adorned with "some kind of lizard" or "octopus." This creature is a mass of "legs, or feelers, or tentacula, or whatever the things are called," and while Pugh assumes that it has "been carved in amber" in to which "some colouring matter must have been introduced," its eyes "gleam" with "positively human intelligence" (7-9). The object that troubles Marsh's narrative of acquisition needs no salesman to grant it originality.

On inspection, Pugh claims, "[t]he pipe fascinated me" as "my amazement grew." When lit for the first time it inspires "a small sensation of excitement." Yet, its "actual uncanniness" as it breaks out of its static state, "vibrating," "moving," until it "exercised some singular fascination" shatters the positive associations and the collector's delight at acquiring such a singular curio (8-9). The apparent malevolence of the haunted item unites and yet divides the two collectors through the act of gift giving.

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More fundamentally, this classificatory flexibility prevents the collector from finding satisfaction in the object's mastery.

As a hybrid object Marsh's pipe can be understood in relation to Lorraine Daston's description of "chimeras." In writing on what she terms "Thing-making," she suggests that the construction of "chimeras" is "not bricolage" alone. These items, however "disparate, fragmentary, and even contradictory their parts may appear," are "not mere composites." They possess a distinct "physiognomy," uniting "new constellations of experience that break old molds." Made "[t]alkative" by the "novel, previously unthinkable combinations" that they generate, such items make the viewer complicit in the "trick" of "connect[ing] the dots into a plausible whole, a thing" (Daston 24). As a specimen, Marsh's pipe is a familiar collectable made strange by the ornamentation that is at once fascinating and grotesque. As a gift, it is loaded with a dangerous hybridity arising from the object itself, and from the ambiguity of the relation between the collectors.

The novelty of the pipe as a whole, and the new meanings and responses that it generates, make it a problematic chimera, readymade and active without the "trick" of actively uniting the parts. It has found form and a haunting sense of perilous agency as a whole, as a poisoned and haunted pipe that punishes avid collectors. Yet, it remains uneasy in its unification, as the lizard that ornaments it continually makes efforts to escape. Dysfunctional, harmful, unstable, this object, then, is distanced from the market and indicative of a fraught social relation between collectors, exposing and extending a rift between Pugh and Tress. Its fundamental flexibility distances it from the museum also.

As an object the pipe appeals to neither the Dilettanti society's typical interests, nor to its inspiring or improving aims. Although the Dilettante's history privileged socialising above social contribution, it was nevertheless concerned with the assumption

that objects could and should prove beneficial. Readings of its activities suggest that, in

its pursuit of knowledge and objects, the society looked to distance itself from the

market, and roughly parallel the museum in some of its ambitions. With a reputation for

"dissolute behaviour and veritable antipathy to corporate ambition," the society

nevertheless generated "sponsorship of more elevated (if still lavish) antiquarian

projects" from the latter half of the eighteenth century (MacGregor *Curiosity and*

Enlightenment 54), as well as "surveys of classical remains," an activity with which the

British Museum was also associated (Smiles 139). These noble aims were decidedly

communal, and devoted to the survey, collection, and contribution of historical and

artistic objects. They necessitated a certain type of object, subservient to the collector's

sovereignty.

　　　The nature of Marsh's pipe makes it an unsociable item, revealing the fault lines

in the collectors' relationship, and with its perilous toxicity divorcing it from social

possibilities, with the result that its role and its relations are entirely bound up with the

individual collector. Pugh and Tress are clearly identifiable as curio collectors. In

defining their identities through the study and collection of particular artefacts, these

men acknowledge the role of things in identity formation. The biography of an object

(Kopytoff 66), its narrative potential (Bal 99), and the perception of collectables as a

"mental realm" over which the collector may "hold sway" (Baudrillard 10), have led

those theorising the relationship of collector to collection to perceive objects as

subservient to the control and dictation of the collector. Baudrillard recognises in the

collection its potential to offer solace from the "ordinary relationships," which are "such

a continual source of anxiety," "the realm of objects" presenting a contrasting "realm of

successive and homologous terms" and thereby "security" (10).   While these collectors

appear to shun social relations in favour of devotion to the material realm, the particular

nature of the objects and their fanatical devotion complicates the simplistic and malleable potential of items Baudrillard suggests.

   This strange thing betrays even the most basic role of a collectable, challenging rather than reinforcing the collector and his identity through his ability to collect. Rendering its user unconscious, the "drugged" or "poisoned," and possibly "haunted" pipe is a spectacular but unstable piece. Its composition is unknown, and each supposition on the subject proves as tenuous and unproven as the last. As an item, it is made unclassifiable when it breaks the bounds of its material stability, quite literally transgressing beyond the limits of its status as an object. When lit, the lizard with which the pipe is adorned breaks out of its static state, beginning to "writhe and twist," and then to "lift itself bodily from the meerschaum" (9). The extremity of its individuality makes it desirable to the collectors, who have never seen its like, and yet troubles and undermines the collectors who crave it but cannot rationalise, use, or even contain it.

   Once again, this flexibility relates to the capacity of chimeras that Lorraine Daston notes may "threaten to overflow their outlines." Such items, she suggests, ask the question, how are we "to draw a line around chimeras that refuse so obstinately to fit into the prepared classificatory pigeonholes?" Questioning and testing the Enlightenment rationale of male sovereignty over the material world, this chimerical item cannot be conceived of in positive terms. While for Daston, the process of "thing-making," is a mutual negotiation, involving "fashioning new pigeonholes, both literally and figuratively" (23), Marsh's object divides and dissolves, leaving nothing but uncertainty.

   Marsh offers his reader a degree of narrative resolution. The apparent artificial construction placed upon the pipe is in fact a live specimen, coated in an amber-like preparation, making the object a true hybrid, blending the artificial with the natural, the

animate with the inanimate. This solution to the mystery remains unsatisfactory, however. Unidentifiable, unclassifiable, evocative of a sense of wonder and awe, rather than a straightforward sense of artistry or quality of construction, it is an object that would appear more at home in a cabinet of curiosities than a museum or department store. Yet, despite its association with not one but two well established collectors, this truly singular specimen will not submit to be possessed. By the end of the narrative it has resolved itself into its component parts, leaving the astonished collector with a squashed lizard and an unadorned pipe.

The titular object of "The Adventure of Lady Wishaw's Hand" similarly tests those who come into contact with it, and the ability of the collector to collect. This narrative is a tale of a truly haunted object, possessed by a particular individual identity, and tied to a family across the ages. Specifically targeting the male line of the Wishaw family "since 1382" (116), the object exists to haunt and punish those males who fail to live up to the glorified and violent image of the vengeful masculinity of the past. Collecting is discussed by Stephen Greenblatt and Neil Brodie, amongst others, as a removal of objects from their context and from their original narratives ("Resonance and Wonder" 44; "Smoke and Mirrors" 1). The basis of Marsh's short story is an exploration of the consequences of this removal, through an object that insists on its biographical imperative, and defies its status as an object.

When the titular kleptomaniac had her hand forcibly removed, the curse of Lady Wishaw's Hand commenced. The hand would murder any Wishaw who did not look to exterminate the offending Macfie's line. When the hand claims the life of his brother, David Wishaw looks to break the curse. The attempts of the last remaining Wishaw to dislocate the object from its ongoing narrative proves, however, to be ultimately unfruitful. Much as the pipe defied its physical barriers, the unstoppable quality of the

hand arises with its apparent disregard for the temporal and spatial laws that should bind it:

> He put the hand in a coffin and buried it, coffin and all. Lady Wishaw's hand returned to him from the grave. [...] He took it with him across the Atlantic. In mid-ocean he dropped it into the sea. When he reached his hotel in New York he found it at his bedside in the morning. He cast it into a smelter's furnace. It was waiting for him when he got home. I am credibly assured that he cooked it and ate it, only to find it on his pillow when he went to bed (122).

As a last resort, and presented ostensibly as a gift, the object is acquired by the collector, Mr. Pugh, on the basis of his assumed capacity to contain and thereby neutralise objects. Arriving by the "singularly matter-of-fact route" of the "parcels post," it is said to have been directed to Mr. Pugh as an object that would be valued by a man known as "a great collector of curiosities" (116). Knowing its disruptive and dangerous capacity, Wishaw sends this questionable gift to the collector, whose acquisitive powers are known to the beleaguered heir. Pugh's abilities are, however, no match for the haunted item. Refusing to deviate from its destiny, this inexplicable and apparently uncontainable object defies his collecting attempts, undermining with its strangeness and its dangerous nature, both his desire and his ability to collect. Emerging from where it is placed, haunting him and exerting a strange and powerful influence over him as he endeavours to go about his daily business, affecting those that he comes into contact with, it even goes so far as committing intermittent acts of violence against the characters in this decidedly male-dominated narrative.

The violence implicit in the object itself as a severed hand, as well as in its actions, makes it a problematic object for the collector to desire. As a "collector of curiosities, a virtuoso, or a bric-a-brac hunter," he can see no place for such an object within his collection. As a specimen, he suggests, it would be fitting in the hands of

"the curator of an anatomical museum." It would appeal to a particularly morbid breed of collector, such as an acquaintance of Pugh's, "who collected ropes with which criminals had been hung," in short, "a virtuoso of a kind that I was not" (117). But with the object unexpectedly coming into his possession, the discerning collector fluctuates between horror at the morbid spectacle, and appreciation of its rarity, its remarkable preparation, and its peculiar adornment – a ring "of plain gold," a "curio" itself, of "the fourteenth century" (116). Desiring the object requires Pugh to compromise his principles. But his collector's desire overrides his scruples, leaving him open to the ill effects of the problematic object.

It is not, then, Pugh's particular penchant or specialism that sees the object sent to him. The object is arguably sent to the collector on the basis of his inability to resist a curio, and his ability to contain and master things. A collector, Wishaw assumes, will be able to impose his sovereignty over this item, to force it to submit to its fundamental materiality, and shrug off its terrible history and the persona that animates it. Yet, the object's agency prevents this. Pinching, slapping, scratching, and abusing not only the collector, but also those who come into contact with him, in his home and at his club, it escapes the collector's grasp, moving at will, materialising and dematerialising inexplicably. Antique and utterly singular, characteristics of rarity that Susan Stewart suggests grant objects value ("Objects of Desire" 133), it is both desirable and repellent. It drives Pugh from his routines and his associations; it tarnishes relations with his old but "shadowy" acquaintance, David Wishaw, when Pugh's identity as a collector is turned against him; and most terribly, it undermines the collector's ability to neutralise and contain objects. When faced with such an inexplicable thing there is no negotiation, no "thing-making" (Daston 24), just the overwhelming force of Lady Wishaw's hand, and the malevolence that extends from beyond the grave, channelled through the object.

The malevolence expressed by the objects in each of the narratives is felt by the collectors in different ways. While a mutual fascination with the pipe draws Pugh and Tress together, the implications of presenting a fellow collector with a hazardous and even uncollectable object are divisive. Although the pipe may be drugged or poisoned, the effects are mitigated by the passage of time and the dilution of usage, luckily for Tress, Pugh, and also Bob, the unfortunate serving man on whom the pipe is tested. While the potency of Lady Wishaw's hand is not diluted, its malice is directed at the collector only in so far as he delays its pursuit of the last of the Wishaw line. To enjoy the moment of acquisition and discover the full eccentricity of the singular objects, the collectors must endure their terrible potential, suffering through their ambiguity, but all to no avail. Although subjected to a rationalising gaze, and in the case of the pipe the probing of a hastily produced penknife, the objects nevertheless escape the grasp of the collector. The pipe resolves into its component parts, while the hand vanishes without trace, leaving the collector traumatised and empty-handed in each instance. By harbouring a hidden agency these items threaten collectors, left open to the effects by their desire for collectable things.

In actuality, the object-based ambitions of the Dilettanti may not have yielded the results desired. Inefficiency, and a failure to actually bring to fruition its schemes for the improvement of society through objects, appears to have marked the history of the Dilettante. But this did not prevent its members from most famously distinguishing themselves in the "special field of classical excavation and research" (Cust 2). Nor did it detract from the desire for collection, and the rewards gained from social interaction. The Dilettanti looked to maximise these rewards, obtained through collecting and association with desirable things, by making the practice social, pooling knowledge and resources, and making objects serve individual and public purposes.

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"As their name suggested (or as it has come to suggest)," Arthur MacGregor notes, the Dilettante "was an altogether more self-indulgent body – at least in the early years," than comparable contemporary societies, of which MacGregor notes there were many ("Forming An Identity" 54). And certainly, Marsh's collectors appear to collect for their personal satisfaction alone. Yet, in pursuing a limited number of utterly individual things, which spark desire and yet thwart collection, Marsh's collectors make the society a hostile environment. They display an active dislike of the fellow members of their circle. They express disdain for their fellow collectors, and their collections. They engage in an active and sometimes destructive rivalry, endangering one another, double dealing, cheating, lying, and even stealing, in the pursuit of the curios that entice them. It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that the remaining links between the men of these texts appear tenuous, their relations fractious.

By breaking with the traditionally collaborative and high-spirited image of the society, Marsh highlights the effect of destructive objects and individualistic drives on male identity for bachelor collectors. These things are not the sort of objects typically associated with the Dilettanti, nor are they the typical fodder for collectors. Marsh's vision of the Dilettante swiftly departs from the traditional image of companionable collectors, presenting its members as ill suited and fractious, its activities as primarily fruitless, and the relationship between the gentlemen as competitive. The objects that warrant their attention necessitate their suffering, but rebel against the idea of collecting as a means to assure self-identity. These things resolve themselves in to their effectively valueless component parts, or betray their essential materiality, leaving the collectors with nothing. They are curios, things that refuse to lend their overabundance of significance to productive purposes, instead turning their agency to destructive ends. In a narrative concerned with the perils of acquisition, the objects oppose the masculine affirmation collecting, and more particularly social collecting was presumed to offer.

They insist on their own identity in a way that prevents them being subsumed beneath the identity and the intentions of the collector, who would draw out and make public their exotic, aesthetic, or historic qualities.

M.R. James and Antiquarian Societies

If Marsh's collectors were associated loosely and somewhat uneasily with the Dilettanti society, M.R. James's collectors betray an affiliation, to a greater or lesser extent, with Antiquarianism. M.R. James himself has been acknowledged as a man with antiquarian interests, and his short story collections are certainly littered with remarkable objects. The titular object of "The Mezzotint" moves of its own accord to show the events of a mysterious child abduction. The strange and troubling item of "The Haunted Dolls' House," apparently comes to life, replaying scenes of terror and death. The "eight folio Prayer-Books" in "The Uncommon Prayer-Book" open themselves to the same page whenever they are closed (95). In addition to these short stories, a whole series of items, such as "the collar stud, the inkstand, the fire, the razor," make themselves problematic in "The Malice of Inanimate Objects" (201). Any number of these items would warrant attention. Particularly of note, however, are two narratives that demonstrate very specifically how active objects hinder the processes of acquisition and assimilation of objects, for collectors who are increasingly isolated from their fellow antiquarians by the things that they pursue.

"Canon Alberic's Scrapbook" (1895) and "The Diary of Mr. Poynter" (1919) describe the activities of two antiquarians who find themselves in possession of terrifyingly active objects. Written, according to S.T. Joshi, between Spring 1892 and October 1893, originally titled "A Curious Book," and first published as "The Scrap-book of Canon Alberic" in *National Review* in 1895, "Canon Alberic's Scrapbook" was subsequently collected in Ghost Stories of an Antiquary (1904) – a volume of short

stories that would be followed up with *More Ghost Stories of an Antiquary* in 1911 ("Explanatory Notes" 258). Joshi describes it as an "unusually autobiographical" narrative, reflecting a trip taken by James and two friends, and James's own antiquarian interests. These same interests, professedly archaeological and self-evidently antiquarian, lead the protagonist, Dennistoun, to acquire an extraordinary, unpredictable, and devastatingly haunted object, which threatens those who acquire it.

This interest in haunted and terribly active things is revisited in "The Diary of Mr. Poynter." Originally published in *A Thin Ghost* (1919), this narrative also explores the unexpected consequences of the act of collecting, taking an apparently innocuous object, and problematising the process of conveying it from its acquisition to a permanent possession. Linking the two narratives, Patrick J. Murphy and Fred Porcheddu describe "The Diary of Mr. Poynter" as "another Jamesian story," in addition to "Canon Alberic's Scrapbook," "involving a collector of manuscripts," and presenting "a variation of this familiar theme," even mirroring the former protagonist's name: Dennistoun and Denton ("The Antiquarian Diaries" 399-340). But, while the antiquarian and object focus of these texts has been observed, and for Murphy and Porcheddu reveals illicit expressions of male sexuality (346), this chapter will suggest that it demonstrates an engagement with a popular image of social collecting, exploring the role of remarkable objects in masochistic masculine identity formation.

In both of these narratives, the existing collections of former collectors, held within the pages of a scrapbook and a diary, are acquired by men with antiquarian interests, and act to evade and isolate these practised individuals, distancing them from the productive activities of Antiquarian societies. Much like Marsh's short stories discussed above, both "Canon Alberic's Scrapbook" and "The Diary of Mr. Poynter begin by evoking a sense of the social quality of antiquarianism, linking the collectors

to scholarly communities of antiquarians and a network of dealers, salesrooms, and fellow enthusiasts.

In the case of "Canon Alberic's Scrapbook," Dennistoun is described as a man who shares his antiquarian interests with scholarly associates, also from Cambridge. When James revisited Dennistoun's character briefly in "The Mezzotint" (1904), he drew further attention to this sociability, indicating his link to a network of antiquarians, allied to various academic institutions, and in communication as regards their collecting efforts. Dennistoun, who James claims in this revisiting was engaged in the "pursuit of objects of art for the museum at Cambridge," is one of a number of such men (25); men concerned with collecting various historically relevant items purportedly for the benefit of academic museums.

James's short story evokes a sense of the "body of enthusiastic and committed devotees" Philippa Levine describes in writing on the "English historical, antiquarian and archaeological communities" of the late nineteenth century (9). He gives a sense of a community of men united by their shared interest, and principally constituted of the sort of "highly motivated self-taught elite on familiar and friendly terms with one another and sharing a common body of knowledge" that Levine identifies (7). James's introduction of Denton, on the other hand, has no such immediately academic or institutional feel. Rather, Denton's antiquarian collecting is indicated to have maintained associations with a market that is fed by, and that feeds, a culture of collecting. The narrative commences in the "sale-room of an old and famous firm of book auctioneers in London," a location known as "a great meeting-place for collectors, librarians, and dealers" (25). This common ground for the meeting of like-minded individuals is filled with figures who are "familiar to him" (26), and the transaction that sparks the narrative's events is undertaken on Denton's behalf by his "usual agent," who is left with a "commission of five and twenty pounds" for the titular item (27).

Denton's collecting, it is indicated, has taken place in the highly social surroundings of the auction house, a social spot and the home of an industry driven by collecting. The introductions of Dennistoun and Denton suggest the influence of the museum and the market, as one collector seeks out objects in the name of the museum while the other is an active member of a community of collectors frequenting sale rooms and undertaking research into local history. They also indicate the significance of social bonds born of an interest in objects to these collectors through their links to other scholars and academic institutions, or fellow collectors, dealers, and agents.

Antiquarian societies and Antiquarianism itself took varying forms, and followed different objects of interest. These distinct, but converging interests were popularly pursued by a collection of individuals under the arc of various societies, making the sociality of their endeavours significant, and as with the Dilettanti, offering the possibility of public contribution through things. Discussing the Society of Antiquaries of London, Susan Pearce, in "Visions of Antiquity," notes the friction and inspiration that the social and occasionally competitive environment of the Society could breed. At once, the society endured the "wayward and individualistic" practice of its members, in order to benefit from what came to be "welcomed as many-stranded and diverse" approaches to study (1). Operating as a collective and sharing information could, according to Pearce, bring benefits and perils. She describes a society subject to the "disruptive strength and venom" of quarrels, that blended an undistinguished mix of "turbulent surface and the strong, steady, progressive current below" (4). The long existence of the society, and its "ongoing efforts," relied on the "determination of its Fellows, and the strength they drew from the feelings of solidarity which their association brought" (4).

In comparison to the dominant sociality of the Dilettante, Antiquarian societies arguably placed less emphasis on revelry at their formation, and yet utilised their social

links in the production of much good work. The desire for the acquisition and display of things connected "modest private gentlemen," presenting them with an opportunity for social interaction in addition to intellectual stimulation, and the advancement of cultural or historical knowledge (Pearce "Visions of Antiquity: Introduction" 3). Anna Catalani and Susan Pearce have noted the characteristic "coffee-house culture, so crucial to establishing the clubbyness and the free discussion central to English intellectual development" ("'Particular Thanks and Obligations'" 256). Arthur MacGregor too refers to the "cement" of "conviviality" that held together a social and publicly amicable body.   Meeting "commonly" in "taverns and coffee-houses," the (primarily) homosocial environment of the society increased the efficacy of the collective, through the pleasurable bonds of social relations ("Forming An Identity" 46). As Philippa Levine has indicated, "[i]n an age that valued individual possession and endeavour so highly, the antiquarians displayed a remarkable faith in the importance of collective work," a fact further testified to in that "most antiquarians expressed a desire to work towards those aims together," despite the "major divisions and discords" that arose (20-1).

The result of the social efforts of the Society, in addition to the affirmation of membership, was a significant contribution to "the shifting visions that have created successive ways of discovering and understanding the past." Antiquarian societies accumulated extensive collections and records of "finds, monuments and documents," the legacy of an increasingly meticulous methodology (Pearce "Visions of Antiquity" 1-3). Unity and collaboration, the pooling of experience, technique, and objects, advanced the nation's knowledge of history and its store of objects. It is against this image of sometimes fractious, but ultimately productive social collecting that James's antiquarian collectors emerge. Both Dennistoun and Denton appear to have fostered

social bonds at some point. Yet, these associations are tested within the short stories, by objects that distance themselves from market and museum associations.

Literary criticism has identified negative stereotypes in engagements with Antiquarianism. Daniel Woolf, in "Images of the Antiquary in Seventeenth-Century England," describes Sir Walter Scott's Jonathan Oldbuck, a "cantankerous, mercurial" figure in *The Antiquary*, as "both unwavering and undiscerning in his devotion to the past" (12), while George Eliot's antiquarian-esque Edward Casaubon in *Middlemarch* is a "fixated but unsuccessful cleric" (11). Neither of James's antiquaries fit with these early or mid-century images of the undiscerning, dull, or fixated antiquarian. By dramatising unexpected elements of acquisition, James's collectors enact an active challenge to masculine identity that is directly related to objects. Each gentleman prioritises collecting in a manner that threatens to overtake his antiquarian interests, and a symptom of this is the swift departure from an early degree of sociability.

James's antiquaries demonstrate a considered interest in the practice of collecting. Dennistoun's journey to "St Bertrand de Comminges – on the spurs of the Pyrenees" demonstrates a dedication that divides him from his companions, and that distinguishes him, and his enthusiastically pursued fieldwork, from the image of the solitary antiquarian immersed in dry study. Of course, the dull and dusty Cassaubons were not entirely representative of the Antiquarian. Unlike this literary figure, Susan Pearce describes how "Antiquaries tended to be enthusiastic travellers and correspondents, maintaining contact and keeping each other well informed" (Pearce "Antiquaries and the Interpretation" 149).

Dennistoun, as he is referred to retrospectively in "The Mezotint," could be said to communicate with such an image, collecting for an institution and reporting back on his experiences to his associates and colleagues. Yet, in "Canon Alberic's Scrapbook" he remains distanced from his companions, for whom "half an hour" in even such a

magnificent location would "amply serve," and consequently from the impression that sociality aids the antiquarian's study (1). Far from obtaining aid from his fellow antiquarians, in order to make good progress he sets out alone.

Dennistoun's enthusiastically pursued objective, of "describing and photographing every corner of the wonderful church," evokes the image of the "happy and excited" antiquarian Susan Pearce describes, approaching the study of the past "accurately, honestly and generously" ("Antiquaries and the Interpretation" 150). His aim connects with the established interests of the Society of Antiquaries, whose "zealous pursuit of buried objects" and "study of hard-to-reach inscriptions in remote church belfries" communicated in turn with the interests of the Antiquarian's "ecclesiastical predecessors a century or so earlier" (Pearce "Visions of Antiquity" 12).

At the outset, then, Dennistoun appears as the ideal antiquarian, happy in his work, to which he dedicates his own leisure time, and following a recognisably antiquarian interest. Yet, the collector's desire for extraordinary objects draws him away from this endeavour, as an opportunity to acquire a highly collectable object distracts him from his studies. His purchase of the titular item, Canon Alberic's Scrapbook, is made in an instant, as a by-product of his principal investigations, as a means of satisfying the collector's thirst for acquisition. In a moment his collector's desire becomes the focus of the narrative, as his principal aim is obscured.

Similarly, in "The Diary of Mr. Poynter" Denton betrays a considered interest in an antiquarian pursuit, accessed through objects and documentation. The Diary of Mr. Poynter is purchased in the hope that it may shed light on aspects of local history. Denton's experience and his discerning eye allow him to select the diary from amidst the scores of objects in the auctioneer's catalogue. His associations facilitate the transaction with the aid of an agent. And while Denton is distanced from the act of acquisition as a result of this, his is not an "undiscerning" devotion to the past Woolf

describes. The object lends itself to the antiquarian's methodology. The tactile quality, and potential for comparison, of things such as Denton's volumes, made them valuable in the Antiquarian's quest for knowledge and the subjection of things.

The diary particularly, with its mix of objects and knowledge, would fit with the communal methodology of passing round, comparing, and exploring history through things. As Susan Pearce has observed, "[a] typology of objects […] is eminently suited to demonstration, whether by handing round examples at a meeting, bringing them together on the engraved page or displaying them in a museum case" ("Antiquaries and the Interpretation" 161). The diary's chronological ordering, the presentation of the items within it, and its annotations, make it a useful intellectual tool, readymade as an existing collection bound and mastered within the volumes.

Mr. James Denton would, then, initially appear devoted to an antiquarian approach, and to bear out the profession that "[b]ehind every collector there must be an army of advisers, dealers and auctioneers" (Herrmann 89). He is connected to a network of individuals sustained by a relation to the market. He is familiar with the sale room, with the clientele, and with the specimens found therein. Yet, within the narrative he only briefly engages with fellow enthusiasts, and his "usual agent" (27) in a hasty visit, before making the fateful purchase.

Despite an initial introduction that suggests his participation in this social scene, the associations do not proceed beyond the initial stages of the narrative. The interaction with the diary of Mr. Poynter appears to mark a departure from this social norm. Both Dennistoun and Denton, then, quickly depart from the social interactions and the networks of collectors that are indicated in both narratives. Unlike Pugh and Tress, this break occurs without apparent cause, competition, or an active slight. But like Marsh's collectors, the objects that these men acquire play a significant part in the increasing isolation and undermining of these male collectors.

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Denton's acquisition of the diary exposes a fluctuation in the nature of the object, and consequently in the nature of the collector's relation to it. The public and popular sale room from which the diary of Mr. Poynter is acquired, and the somewhat spur-of-the-moment nature of the transaction that secures it, along with the manner in which Denton himself does not witness the purchase and almost forgets the diary, gives the impression that it is an unexceptional commodity. Its historical potential as an object of local interest alone differentiates it from the masses of manuscripts presented for sale in the eyes of the antiquarian.

Composed of "four largish volumes," it had been the property of "Mr. William Poynter, Squire of Acrington (about four miles from his [Denton's] own parish)," a "member of the circle of Oxford antiquaries," and is concerned with "the years about 1710." As an item it is a collection, in itself containing not only the musings and recordings of the gentleman, but "a good many insertions in it of various kinds," objects contained within its pages (27). It appears as a whole, despite its presentation in four volumes, unified by the identity attached to it. At the point of acquisition it is conceived of as an object with an aspect of local interest. It gives details of local history, and infamous events. Yet, once free of the sale room and in the possession of the collector, the antiquarian aspect of the object is overlooked in favour of interest in a particular, very peculiar item discovered within the whole. Emphasis on this single item distracts the collector from his historical interest, and fractures the whole by extricating a formerly embedded object from its related narrative and supplementary information.

The curious nature of the item discovered within the diary changes Denton's focus from the antiquarian to the aesthetic and even the domestic. The object in question is a "piece of patterned stuff about the size of the quarto page," in an unknown fabric with "a design printed upon it." It is described as fascinating and delightful, attractive and repellent, and reminds those who view it "very much" of hair, knotted

with ribbon (29). When appraised, it is classified as a specimen of "lovely medieval stuff," of the sort that is increasingly scarce, and therefore highly desirable to a collector. But rather than remaining as a static item within the diary, it is exploited for its desirability to homeowners and manufacturers alike. Taken up, replicated, and turned into curtains for use within the collector's home, it is approached, not as a collectable, but as an item of some domestic utility. Once removed from the diary and domesticated, however, it begins to make its true character known. Both the man commissioned to copy it, who "scented something almost Hevil in the design" (32), and the collector himself, find something repulsive in it. As an object and as a substance it soon manifests its resistance to possession or utilisation, the terrible consequences of its acquisition.

When the small sample is taken out and extended, its troubling characteristics are amplified, and its status as a material object is defied. Generating "an effect as if someone kept peeping out between the curtains in one place or another, where there was no edge," the object breaks out of its static state (33). From it emerges a creature in the shape of "a human figure," but with "no feature discernible" upon its face, "only hair." This thing, "in the attitude of one that had crept along the floor on its belly," has "about it so horrible an air of menace that as he bounded from his chair and rushed from the room he heard himself moaning with fear" (33-4). The being is a literal manifestation of history, and the haunting sensation felt in the presence of the object. Blending initial fascination with horror, the object carries a point of local historical interest that is superseded by its transgressive qualities. The sample, added to the diary and written up in an entry in 1707, and obtained from Mr. Casbury of Acrington, is supposed to be part of a "memorial" to the much loved hair of the corrupt and dissolute Sir Everard Charlett. Far from a mere memory, however, this memorial reveals itself to be possessed by an identity that prevents the object from being used.

The infamous Charlett is known to have been found dead in "1692 or 3," in "the town ditch, the hair as was said pluck'd clean off his head." The accidental opening of his coffin two years later finds it "quite full of hair," and it is presumably this hair covered vengeful being that emerges from the fabric memorialising Charlett's most prized feature (35). An item of such anecdotal significance, related to such an infamous identity was not the desired aim of the antiquarian. Denton's more generalised historical interests sought an item with a broader scope. Yet, his collector's urge for acquisition, and his eye for the extraordinary are satisfied by the item.

The satisfaction obtained is, however, temporary. In the hands of the collector, and drawn out of the containment of the existing collection, this curio is embraced for its domestic rather than its antiquarian qualities, claimed and copied for use as curtains by the collector's overbearing female relative. Yet, the historical significance and the individual character that are woven into the fabric of the sample reassert a fugitive historical significance and a specific identity, which breaks the temporal and material containment. Such is the activity of this object that the diary fades into the background, as the curious item once held within it challenges and terrorises the collector, necessitating its removal and destruction.

In "The Diary of Mr. Poynter," a desirable object exercises a degree of fascination, power and control over the collector who would seek to possess and master it. Defying all attempts at rationalisation, such an item problematises the collector's desire for such things. Roy Ellen suggests in regard to fetishism, that the relationship between material item and fetishist is proportional, as "[t]he desire to control increases with the intrinsic powers attributed to objects." The collectors' desire to master things, and their anticipation of gratification, is matched by the will held in the things. This power dynamic, he notes, finds expression through the material instability of certain things.

"Objects from widely separated cultures," Ellen observes, "are frequently represented as if they were human," being "involved in processes which are recognisably human," and being "treated in ways that humans are treated" (224). Such a suggestion removes the distinction between material object and active being, suggesting a manner of transgression or slippage between the two states. It presents an image of a relation to material culture that elevates objects out of the realms of the inanimate, and invests things with a higher function and a greater significance. An instability between controlled objects and embodied power relations is arguably imagined in the emergent humanoid form that breaks out of Denton's object.

Dennistoun's unexpectedly acquired object, again hidden within a collection, again held within the covers of a volume of related items, similarly demonstrates just such a transgressive quality, which is again physically manifested in a haunting humanoid figure. Once again an initially highly collectable and even productive item is acquired only to trouble the collector. This item, "a large book, wrapped in a white cloth, on which cloth a cross was rudely embroidered in red thread," is instantly remarkable to the knowledgeable collector for its "size and shape" (5-6). In a moment he perceives that it is "something better than good," warranting further investigation (6).

As an object, it is firmly stamped with the identity of its former possessor. Within "a large folio, bound, perhaps late seventeenth century," that is marked "with the arms of Canon Alberic de Mauléon stamped in gold on the sides," are "a hundred and fifty leaves of paper." The book is a collection, and on "almost every one" of the pages is "fastened a leaf from an illuminated manuscript." "Such a collection," he marvels, he "had hardly dreamed of in his wildest moments" (6). As a collection it is remarkable for the age of the images, for the quality of the examples, and for the rarity of its specimens. Yet, its very existence is somewhat transgressive in itself, in that, to

produce it, Canon Alberic had "doubtless plundered the Chapter library of St. Bertrand to form this priceless scrap book" (6-7).

This object, in much the same way as Denton's diary, hides a troubling and haunted item within the collection of images, capable of shattering the barriers between animate and inanimate states. Secreted at the back is an illustration so terrifying that, as the narrator informs us in his retrospective account, it was destroyed after the recounted events. While in photographic form, the only form in which it is allowed to exist, it is rendered inert, the original drawing is full of frightening potential. Produced in the late seventeenth century, it depicts a terrible biblical scene, at the heart of which lies a disturbingly life-like demonic figure. Eliciting a "sentiment of horror" from the guards and the King depicted is this crouching figure, a "mass of coarse, matted black hair," of "fearful thinness, almost a skeleton, but with the muscles standing out like wires."

This being is a frightful hybrid, comparable to "the awful bird-catching spiders of South America," but "translated into human form, and endowed with intelligence just less than human." Its flexibility extends beyond this, however, as it escapes the image, emerging to terrorise the collector even as he celebrates this great acquisition (8). The "demon" manifests as the collector inspects the prize item, bringing with it a sense of "exulting hate and thirst to destroy," and inducing in the unsuspecting Dennistoun, first a "growing feeling of discomfort," and then profound terror (10-11). This haunted collection, and particularly this specific image depicting the creature, are revealed to have haunted the sacristan, and potentially Canon Alberic before him.

The single, exceptional image obscures the brilliance of the rest of the collection, as the depicted creature forces itself on the collector's consciousness. While the "book is in the Wentworth Collection at Cambridge" at the end of the narrative, according to the narrator, the drawing itself "was photographed and then burnt by Dennistoun" (13). As though the photographic medium can neutralise what is latent in

the object itself, the reproduction is kept as a record. But the thing, containing so much terrible potential, cannot be contained and therefore cannot be allowed to survive. Within our relationships to particular objects, Ellen argues, exist "power relations," the embodiment of concepts in physical form, which (in an echo of Baudrillard on collecting) offer a degree of influence that renders even the abstract easy to "manipulate and control" (228). But within the imagery of fetishised relations to things lies a warning that as these "powers" held in things increase, "so they may counter the power which people have over them" (229). What the collectors Dennistoun and Denton ultimately desire, or seek to claim, control, or organise, comes to offer the ultimate threat of destruction.

Particularly in "Canon Alberic's Scrapbook," M.R. James paints a picture of a world ravaged by collectors, eager to snap up and contain every last extraordinary and desirable collectable. "Dennistoun's cherished dream," the great dream of an antiquarian collector, "of finding priceless manuscripts in untrodden corners of France," flashes before him when the scrapbook is first described. Yet, he is quick to extinguish this momentary flash of excitement, wryly calming himself with the reality: "[w]here was the likelihood that a place so near Toulouse would not have been ransacked long ago by collectors?" (2). Patrick Brantlinger has noted a feature of what he terms "Imperial Gothic" texts, namely a frequent "anxiety about the waning of opportunities for heroic adventure" (239). James imagines such a Gothicised moment, in which the adventurous, well-travelled collector finds that the highly collectable objects of this world have been penned up and contained. For these thwarted men, James suggests, opportunities for publicly beneficial acts of collection have been almost totally removed, along with the exciting possibility of discovery and acquisition.

In a sense, Dennistoun suggests the success of the Enlightenment project to know, record, and contain in order to assert man's sovereignty over the material world.

Yet, despite the perceived scarcity of such singular and desirable objects, and the assumption of the antiquarian, and more generally the collector's ability to stabilise things, James's collectors are thrilled by unexpected discoveries, before being forced to suffer at the hands of the items they collect. Even at the heart of these established collections, James suggests, terrible items and uncontrollable forces may remain unmastered.

In such cases, the containable materiality and collectability of the item is contradicted by its haunted nature. Bill Brown has described the thingification of objects, a subjective shift in the perception of items, occurring when "an object stops working for us," confronting the subject with his materiality as a thing among things ("Thing Theory" 4). Both Dennistoun and Denton are quite literally confronted by their things, as the items are imbued with an almost human intelligence. Like Lady Wishaw's Hand, a particular, identifiable force rises from them, rendering an otherwise intriguing and potentially productive item repellent. The confrontation of the collector by these objects is not only problematic for their identities as collectors, but also for their masculine identities. Undermined by the items through which they would assert their mastery and control, both Dennistoun and Denton find themselves increasingly emasculated, their intended aims or duties disrupted.

Moving between collectors these existing collections might foster a sense of community. Yet, like Marsh's gifts, they hold horrible secrets, surprising the collectors with hidden horrors that lead to suffering that undermines the collector's pleasure in acquisition. The emphasis on material items in these narratives of antiquarian collecting could indicate an acknowledgement of the increasingly object-focused bent of antiquarian societies. Objects facilitated an engagement with the past, acting "as a kind of talisman to restore to […] inner sight or imagination the original world of which the object was a rare survivor." Yet, this evocative potential is mocked in these items.

Rather than "nostalgically recalling the human collective past," they carry echoes of trauma, and demonic fury which only waits to escape (Woolf 19)

Haunted, repelled, even attacked by the entities carried in these objects, for all their suffering, and their celebration at the initial joy of acquisition, the actions of these collectors yield nothing. They are forced to reject the things that they have acquired, things that betray their collectors and therefore challenge the associations of the antiquarian with objects.   A weight of public expectation on Antiquarian societies to produce "new discoveries and improvements in matters relating to British history and antiquities," called on the individual collector to contribute his knowledge, objects, and expertise. The social body was expected to yield compelling and productive material, as "private gentlemen were exhorted to place their collections in public repositories, rather than keeping them in personal custody where they could benefit none but the owner" (Sweet 79). These items in public repositories became more important as an evidence-based methodology developed.

In such accessible collections objects were available to satisfy the "paramount requirement to argue from specific sources rather than conjecture," providing "concreteness of time and space," and "thickness of detail" through the use of "demonstrable evidence" (Pearce "Antiquaries and the Interpretation" 157). In the tangibility of objects, the past could be perceived and handled, and the efforts of the collector rewarded with knowledge and a sense of contribution. Yet, the items within the selected short stories of M.R. James will never serve such purposes, or allow the collectors to meet the expectations placed on Antiquarianism and Antiquaries.

While Susan Pearce argues for the illumination of "material culture" by fitting it "on to the narrative scheme," rather than treating it "as a form of information in its own right" ("Antiquaries and the Interpretation" 157), M.R. James's objects are overwhelmed by the force of their biographical narrative. Their continuation within the

narrative of an individual identity, as relics connected to certain persons and events, prevents their assimilation or utilisation by the collector. They will never serve as "portable antiquities," brought "by Fellows to meetings and shown around the table for discussion" (376). As those maintaining the society's collections found, behind the order of the collection lurked the threat of chaos. Behind the controlled presentation of the collections of "prints and photographs" held by the society lay the chaos of "miscellaneous" items "tipped in, regardless of system of order" (367). And always the danger remained that curious objects might find their way into the collection.

"Canon Alberic's Scrapbook" and "The Diary of Mr. Poynter" each begin with the acquisition of an established collection. Yet, within them lie things that assert themselves, extending beyond the limits of their material physicality, hindering the collector's ability to collect, by preventing their subjugation and their assimilation into the collection, let alone their utilisation for beneficial ends. The narratives recount acts of acquisition by isolated collectors who suffer at the hands of the objects they desire, before being left empty handed. The practices of the antiquarian find oppositional fictional form in the unpredictable objects that imperil collectors and the fundamental processes of acquisition.

Vernon Lee and Historians

While Richard Marsh's collectors demonstrate a link to Dilettante societies, and M. R. James's collectors are associated with Antiquarianism, Vernon Lee's "Amore Dure" (1887) follows an historian, a young academic and member of an intellectual community. As with the aforementioned narratives, Lee's text introduces a social form of collecting with an academically beneficial aim, before indicating the mounting isolation and obsession of the protagonist, as his uneasy relation to extraordinary collectables becomes dominant. Lee's historian betrays his academic commitments to

pursue a personal quest. Fuelled by an increasingly impossible series of historically relevant objects that spark his desires, he establishes a masochistic relation to the terrible identity of Medea da Carpi held in these haunted things. Much as those imagined by Marsh and James, these objects are transgressive in a number of ways, testing the methods, the abilities, and the logic of the historian and collector, Spiridion Trepka.

The short stories that make up Lee's *Hauntings and Other Fantastic Tales* are littered with objects that play a significant part in the narratives. A statue in "Dionea"; portraits and family heirlooms in "Oke of Okehurst; Or, The Phantom Lover" (discussed further in Chapter Four); a tapestry in "Prince Alberic and the Snake Lady"; a beautifully decorated panel of the titular item in "A Wedding Chest"; a richly ornamented church and the effigy of the titular character in "The Virgin of the Seven Daggers." The significance of a particular variety of these objects to Lee's fiction, and to Lee herself, has been established. Patricia Pulham applies Donald Winnicott's theory of the transitional object to Vernon Lee's work in *Art and the Transitional Object in Vernon Lee's Supernatural Tales*. Reading the psychological relevance of the art objects of Lee's fantastic fiction, she suggests that in Lee's haunting and mythic narratives, Lee explores through aesthetic objects and mythical and historic settings, issues of identity that reflect aspects of her own psychology.

In such narratives, Pulham suggests, "Lee explores her sexual and social personae in a 'safe' space" that is "removed from the concerns and constraints of contemporary expectations" (xix). Reading Medea, the great femme fatale, in "Amour Dure" as the dangerous and dominant mother, for example, and the presence of the past in Lee's work as "not only a historical past, but also a psychic past that is grounded in childhood," Pulham perceives Lee's work as an exploration of identity, and her use of objects as a symptom of "a mind that is itself haunted by art" (Pulham xvi). Yet, the

emphasis on the relation between collector and collection in the text presents the possibility of a contextually engaged reading of "Amour Dure," which offers up haunted objects, a thwarted historian, and his imperilled masculinity, rather than simply presenting something of Lee herself.

Spiridion Trepka's introduction in "Amour Dure" reveals his connection to a network of historians. Lee's protagonist is a published author, whose work has been rewarded by this scholarly community with a "travelling scholarship," granted on the condition that he produces another such work on Italian history. The body with which the young historian is associated is organised, funded, and able to commission, vet, and disseminate such work with some authority. Early references to the community suggest that they are an academic, institutional body, who demonstrate a distinct purpose and an aim to advance knowledge through the work of their members. The sociality and productivity of historical communities has been analysed by Philippa Levine. In *The Amateur and the Professional* she notes that, despite the fact that "Historians in nineteenth-century England formed a separate and distinct group, less socially cohesive perhaps than the antiquarian camp," they were "almost all university educated, and many held university posts," connecting them through their institutions and publications (23). This increasingly cohesive grouping participated in the pursuit and promotion of "the idea of a unified 'national history'" (Pearce "Visions of Antiquity" 1), devoting themselves to the study of "history proper," the "more glamorous and popular cousin" of antiquarianism (Woolf 13).

Levine, Pearce, and Woolf evoke a sense of an increasingly streamlined, organised, and communal practice, which channelled popularised individual endeavours into institutional efforts. Concerned with flaws and ambiguities in historical accounts thus far, in the course of the nineteenth century collectors of new historical data pooled their efforts under the umbrella of institutional bodies in order to reappraise human

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history and reinforce modern identity. On the surface Trepka may be said to have participated in such an endeavour, contributing to the transmission of knowledge. He can also be said to have profited from the alliance, benefitting from the market for such materials. Certainly, his membership is financially beneficial, and on the surface facilitates his research interests, allowing him to make a more far-reaching contribution through the collection of historically relevant information and artefacts. Yet his methods of pursuing his particular interests, and his obsessive desire to collect, indicate his departure, in more than one respect, from the expectations placed on him as a model scholar and academic historian.

Rather than share the sentiments and the approach promoted by his scholarly associates, Trepka disparages the publication that has won him the scholarship as a piece "like all those other atrocious books of erudition and art-criticism," and himself as a "product of modern northern civilisation" and a perpetrator of "scientific vandalism" (41). The limitation and offences of such an institutionalised and narrow focus implied by Trepka, do not conjure up an image of a popular or particularly productive pursuit. The influence of such an association, and the strictures and teachings imposed on his researches shape and stifle him, moulding him "into the semblance of a German pedant, doctor of philosophy, professor even," much to his disgust (42). The accoutrements of this role, the "ministerial letters and proof sheets," the "black professorial" coat, are signs of the shackles that bind him to a particular practice, and threaten to divorce him from pursuing the genuine and stimulating "presence of the Past" as it manifests in the physical remains of historic locations (42).

The increasingly institutionalised practice of historical research and writing that both Anna Catalani, Susan Pearce, and Philippa Levine describe necessitated a somewhat formulaic and constrained approach. History was the recourse of an "almost all male" and "elite" community, a "high proportion" being "graduates of the

universities of Oxford and Cambridge" (Levine 9). While it was not unusual, according to Levine, for those with a historical or antiquarian interest to attend multiple meetings of a variety of societies regularly (14), enjoying thereby the flexibility of multiple memberships, certain constraints appear in the emergent traditions and traits surrounding historical research. A methodology largely based in documentary study, and a focus principally targeting "masculine concerns of political and military narratives" (Catalani 272) does not facilitate the sort of interest that Spiridion Trepka pursues. It is against these constraints that Trepka reacts. His focus is on things that reveal a hidden history, and on objects that have been neglected, and this interest quickly extends to obsession, dominating his consciousness to the complete neglect of his commissioned work.

Trepka quickly proclaims his intention to pursue a personal passion. He will uncover the truth behind the myth of Medea da Carpi, through the objects and documents she has left behind. By focusing on history and collecting Trepka could be expected to attain a productive outcome, despite his departure from a proscribed aim. Lee's use of objects, however, indicates that this will not be the case. Patricia Pulham has usefully drawn attention to the "mythic, metamorphic beings, embodied in 'objects d'art'" (xix), and the "metamorphic sculptures, strange, uncanny dolls," and "portraits that come to life," all of which are found within Lee's texts (xvi). The prevalence of collecting in "Amour Dure" suggests that its particular artefacts can be related to a gendered interaction with material culture that is culturally embedded.

As already established, collecting was considered to offer a legitimate means of participating in an improving social mission for conscientious gentlemen. An aim of self-improvement would benefit from participation in the practice of collecting. A drive to contribute to the public good could be satisfied through the donation of these materials, the "utility" of which was "greatly multiplied with regard to the multitude of

persons who may inspect it," as W.S. Jevons observes in "The Use and Abuse of Museums" (60-1). As Jacqueline Yallop has noted, the contribution of individual male collectors to public museums and exhibitions was a recognised practice and facilitating key events such as the "Special Exhibition of Works of Art of the Medieval, Renaissance, and More Recent Periods, on loan at the South Kensington Museum" held in 1862 (10). Lee's historian, however, sets his sights on research that is unlikely to yield the sort of portable antiquities or objet d'art that such aims requires.

Spiridion Trepka's historical acumen appears to have unearthed a hidden depth to the character of Medea, sparking his rejection of the proscribed aims, and stimulating his pursuit of a promising historical secret. Yet, both the relation of Trepka to a body of historians, and to the particular objects that he seeks out, indicate that Lee imagines a less productive and more isolating practice of collecting historical artefacts and biographical facts. It is his aesthetic appreciation and his desire to collect that draws him to the images out of which Medea's true character and the force of her identity initially emerge. Writing on what she terms the "ethical consumption" of Lee's "heroes," Kristin Mary Mahoney describes the abilities of these men to consume objects with due appreciation of "the historical otherness of the cultural relic." Appreciating and consuming such objects in an "ethical" manner allows an item to "exceed its utility as an indicator of taste," offering what she refers to as "an alternative to aggressive modes of consumption that threaten to absorb and assimilate difference." Possessed of "sanctity," "otherness," "separateness," Lee's characters, Mahoney suggests, enact "historicized consumption," maximising the potential of historically relevant and resonant things (39-40). Spiridion Trepka's very successful "historicized consumption" is, however, doubly doomed in the case of "Amour Dure." The "otherness" and "separateness" of the items he selects exceeds the collector's control.

Giving the research an increasingly illicit quality, the objects not only feed his obsession but draw him in to the ongoing narrative, commenced centuries ago, making him the latest victim of Medea's charms. The appreciation he feels for the things of the narrative, and his "ethical" attempts at consumption, are demonstrated by drawing omitted details of Medea's history held in related objects, and unleashing their full potential. The "otherness" and "separateness" of Lee's depictions, Mahoney suggests, demonstrate her "sensitivity to what Bill Brown refers to as the 'thingness' of objects, to the manner in which objects can exceed the needs and desires of the perceiving subject," thereby opening up "the possibility for ethical interactions that are not based in domination" (41). Yet, the object-relations within "Amour Dure" extend beyond an "alternative to aggressive modes of consumption" (40). Instead, the act of domination is reversed.

The collector's devotion appears to be consumed by the things themselves, in an aggressive reassertion of agency and identity that ensures his subjugation to the dominance of the objects. Writing on Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, Carol A. Senf observes the "mysterious powers associated with past periods" that was amongst the primary "mysterious Gothic powers" haunting Stoker's novel (73). This powerful historical presence that also features in *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, a text analysed in Chapter Three, is a dominant force in Lee's narrative. Here, it is personified in the figure of Medea, who arises to challenge the historian and his powers of analysis and mastery. In breaking with the models and associations of his discipline he leaves himself open to the full potential of things. Yet his submission is voluntary and aided by his activities as a collector.

By actively pursuing his researches through a range of sites in Umbria, Spiridion Trepka distances himself from his fellow historians and their works. He seeks a topic of real interest to pursue, and deviates from the typical pursuit of "written sources, […]

primarily concerned with political history, and overwhelmingly with the history of England" (Levine 23). In focusing on the collection of artefacts concerned with a particular female figure of local legend, he abandons the commissioned project and the historian's methodology. Lee early on establishes a complex dynamic of contrasts related to Trepka's discipline: between past and present; true intellectual pursuits as the product of passion, and unsatisfactory necessary work; between art and nature; and between the exquisite and the banal. Just as the approach to history is imagined, in Lee's text, in two contrasting forms – a sanctioned and publicly approved approach, and a more immersive and passionate discovery – the objects encountered similarly reveal a dynamic between the historically inert and the evocative and active artefact.

Lodging with the venerable Sor Asdrubale, a "dealer in antiquities," Trepka is surrounded by a plethora of objects. The "old carved chairs, sofas of the Empire, embossed and gilded wedding-chests, and the cupboards which contain bits of old damask and embroidered altar-cloths," each might carry a fascinating history of their own. Yet they remain as elements of the background, unworthy of attention. They are divided from the items that Trepka collects with increasingly obsessive devotion, as the collector is drawn into a particularly "overlooked" historic "romance" held in these active objects (45). Much as the objects of Marsh and James's narratives take on a life-like and an active quality of their own, Lee's resonant items are enervated by the "strange figure of a woman," perceived to have "appeared from the dry pages" of historical accounts to possess a range of material items. And it is these haunted, active things that increasingly draw him away from his duty, and in to an obsessive relation with things.

Specifically noted for their influential, almost infectious quality, they emerge from the locations in which they have been secreted out into Spiridion's narrative one at a time, and initially somewhat obscurely:

Three or four I have, however, been able to find – one a miniature in the Archives, said to be that which she sent to poor Prinzivalle degli Ordelaffi in order to turn his head; one a marble bust in the palace lumber-room; one in a large composition, possibly by Boraccio, representing Cleopatra at the feet of Augustus. Augustus is the idealised portrait of Robert II (51).

Each of the images fall across the collector's path as though willing themselves to be found. His personal perception of Medea remains effectively awed, and even as he notes the "exquisite work" of the representations, and her great "beauty," he remains aware of the dangerous nature of this "terrible being" who is reaching out to him through things (51). In looking to access the "true" past, Trepka abandons the safe document analysis that granted historians mastery over their sources. Animation, or re-animation of these retained traces increasingly becomes for Spiridion something to be desired, however destructive the results.

The intoxicating satisfaction of his discoveries drives him to acquire an increasing collection of items imbued with Medea's identity. As this need escalates, and his contact with the particularly evocative items of the past rises, the objects begin to break out of their static state, and the divide between past and present is ruptured. Trepka is enraptured by a woman encountered in artistic impressions and unexceptional correspondence, who takes on a quality that exceeds all experiences and relations of the present. Brought into contrast with the remarkable yet distant figure of femininity of the past, he finds that "I never could find a woman to go mad about, either among the ladies, chattering bad French, or among the lower classes," consequently opting to "steer clear of Italian womankind, its shrill voice and gaudy toilettes" (54).

Claiming instead to be "wedded to history, to the Past, to women like Lucrezia Borgia, Vittoria Accoramboni, or that Medea da Carpi, for the present" (54-5), he increasingly distances himself from the modern and the social, in favour of an

increasingly emergent and isolating experience of the past. This allegiance to the past is

embodied in a relationship that he desires and envisages between himself and Medea, a

relationship based on subjugation to a glorious, dangerous femininity. His devotion to

the objects associated with Medea is as consuming as his desire for "a woman out of

whose slipper to drink, and for whose pleasure to die." Trepka voluntarily bows before

"that extreme distinction of beauty" and "that terribleness of nature" with which Medea

herself and her remaining things are imbued (55).

　　　As Trepka's subjugation increases, the objects related to Medea take on a

progressively active role. They appear with increasing frequency as Trepka's search

proceeds. Letters, "found in the Archives, unknown of course, to the Director," find

their way into his hands alone, and contain a lingering sense of her physical presence, as

he imagines "that there hangs about these mouldering pieces of paper a scent as of a

woman's hair" (58). From, initially, mere businesslike letters, the manifestations

progress to a "dramatic, uncanny" encounter with a portrait of such life-like quality as

to cause him to blanche "as white, I think, as the ghost I expected to see" (61). Images

take on a new life and fascination, appearing suddenly, and commanding attention.

Apparently everyday correspondence gives way to mysterious notes, on authentic

antique paper and in the lady's hand, addressed to Spiridion himself.

　　　In response to this direct address from the past, he elects to submerge himself in

the collecting activities, motivated by an obsession that he notes runs to extremes, and

that he dismisses as "[f]ine sentiments […] for a professor, a learned man" (55).

Beyond the inappropriate nature of these romanticised fantasies, the obsession becomes

dominant enough that he is unable to free himself from it. Quickly it dominates his

"mornings in the Archives," and his "solitary evenings," overcoming his pursuit of a

grand historical narrative, bypassing an accepted methodology, and yet leaving him

confident in the sense that "I understand her so well; so much better than my facts

warrant," and much more intimately than any grand narrative would deem appropriate (55-6).

Far from seeking to comprehend or master these items, Trepka embraces both the taxonomic ambiguity and the fluidity of the myth of Medea. It is the traces of the legendary historic figure that Trepka seeks, and it is the confrontational quality of the animated and active artefacts that enrapture the collector. The collector's escalating interactions transgress the barriers of time and space, as Medea herself appears to step out of the frame of history, into the present, re-enacting a cycle of seduction and destruction from beyond the grave. Recognising the inevitability of his ruin should he continue in the escalating interaction with these objects and with her physical trace, he nevertheless courts her presence, drawing her closer and effectively inviting in his own doom. Known for bringing the men who devote themselves to her to an untimely and violent end, famed for her ruthless cruelty, his pursuit of Medea through these collected things assumes a self-destructive quality.

The perilous potential of Lee's cultural objects has drawn critical attention. Vineta Colby has analysed the "culture ghost" of Lee's very first ghost story, "published in 1881 in *Fraser's* Magazine," and titled "A Culture Ghost; or Winthrop's Adventure." Given "the variety of scenes, subjects, and moods in her stories," Colby suggests that "we may only conclude that the culture ghost was some manifestation of art – painting, sculpture, music – that gives each story its unique flavour." This haunting presence betrayed a continued preoccupation with the significance of art objects (242). Referring specifically to the "Bronzino portrait in "Amour Dure"," amongst other things, Colby suggests the significance of objects to a haunting sense of the past in Lee's fiction. This reading is taken further by Nicole Fluhr who, in "Empathy and Identity in Vernon Lee's *Hauntings*," describes the dangers of interacting with such haunting and haunted historical objects. Lee's "empathetic identification that allows

one to understand history," comes at the price of a "loss of self," and threatens "death or compromised autonomy" (288). While Colby describes an undesirable haunting, and Fluhr the danger of a loss that must be defended against, Spiridion Trepka voluntarily subsumes his social and intellectual identity into an established history, sacrificing the positive associations arising from his identity as a historian in his quest to understand Medea. These things that he pursues are Medea's legacy, drawing in new victims from across the ages, yet he pursues them with a genuine desire, in the full knowledge of the likely consequences, asking to be haunted, to be consumed. If "understanding another means losing oneself" as Fluhr suggests (288), then giving in to the obsession for collection may be seen to speed if not facilitate this process, drawing Trepka in to an intimate personal relationship with the things that maintain a connection to Medea herself.

In channelling and even manifesting the initially vague and distant figure of Medea, Spiridion brings about a temporal collapse, and appears to voluntarily lose himself, finding "everything vague and unsubstantial about me, as if time had ceased." Her influence, even as it enlivens the material things, has a deadening effect on Trepka, occupying him so entirely that he finds "nothing could happen, my own desires and hopes were all dead, myself absorbed into I know not what passive dreamland" (74). With his own individual agency removed, the tangible manifestations of this narrative of the past appear of their own volition, against his will. The figures of Medea's past victims and lovers, emerge into his path, warning and threatening the submissive Spiridion as he moves towards an all but inevitable destruction. Her ultimate manifestation (the reward for his devoted, obsessive efforts) brings nothing but death. The "step on the staircase" of his beloved Medea is the death knell of "the late Spiridion Trepka," found "dead of a stab in the region of the heart, given by an unknown hand" (76).

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Ultimately the fragility of this male academic's identity, and his persistent self-doubt, are presented as leaving him open to the threat of an obsessive passion. Uneasy with his role as historian, and with the constraints imposed, he opens himself up to a fugitive interest that claims his life. His collecting activities, and the intimate, reciprocal influences that arise around it, act to animate the loaded physical traces of the past, even as they grant his life activity and meaning. Trepka is no longer an academic among his fellows, but rather another victim in the long line of Medea's conquests. The force of her identity allows her to infiltrate and destabilise the fixity of the scholarly space of the archive, along with the scholarly identity of the historian. She bursts out of the images and documents that should contain and secure her. Material objects, scholars, and a temporal gulf are insufficient neutralising forces, and as such the young collector finds himself emasculated, subsumed within the ongoing story of Medea. The ultimate result is destruction, and, what's more, a destruction that is courted by Spiridion. Turning his back on his duty as an historian, he embraces the objects associated with Medea, despite their haunted and even sinister qualities. His drive to collect is ultimately thwarted by the terribly resistant nature of the things he desires.

Conclusion: Needless suffering? The Masochism of Acquisition.

Richard Marsh, M. R. James, and Vernon Lee depict collectors who endure suffering and even death as a result of the agency of the objects that they acquire. Poisoned, pinched, slapped, stalked, haunted, even murdered, these collectors claim curios that are distanced from the market and the museum by their uncomfortable individuality, and transient materiality. This might suggest that the texts mount a straightforward critique of market or classificatory forces, and certainly they have something to say about consumption, desirability, and object-mastery. But beyond this, they utilise the objects to explore the limits of enlightenment rationale, and to test the

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viability of a particular masochistic model of productive masculinity that informed the nineteenth century.

Particular critical attention has been paid to Victorian masculinity, and the various expressions in fiction and non-fiction of gendered reactions to cultural pressures. Women and particularly the New Woman, empire, shifting class dynamics, have all been shown to exert psychological pressures on gentlemanly identities. But what is intriguing in these texts is the manner in which Marsh, James, and Lee deploy the figure of the collector and the act of acquisition, in order to test models of productive masochism. Each of the masculine collecting identities described gains validation from an element of personal suffering in the name of public or national contribution. Dilettanti, antiquarians, and historians who expended time, money, and effort, often travelling considerable distances, provide a model for positive collecting, that could be rewarded with the reinforcement of their identities as productive, masculine members of society, capable of striving for excellence and suffering for the greater good.

Pugh, Tress, Dennistoun, Denton, and Trepka each court authentic, highly individual objects that are worthy of further study, public exhibition, or that might yield publications. They are pursued by established collectors, with a history of successful acquisitions. In the course of the selected narratives, however, submitting to their desire to collect these exceptional things unleashes the malevolent agency held within them, necessitating their suffering in the pursuit of historic, aesthetic, and culturally worthy items. As such, the knowing aspect of their submission to these things, coupled with the pleasure-pain dynamic, suggests their participation in a masochistic relation to often personified material objects. This linking of productive aims and an element of masochism, with an investment in masculine identity can be related to nineteenth century models of imperial masochism.

Martin A. Danahay has observed masochism as "a common and disturbing feature of Victorian masculinity," evidencing "sublimated anxiety," and contrasting against "the accepted construction of the Victorian male as hyper-masculine, ready for action, and in possession of the potential for violence" (92). Masochism operated as both a tool of self-formation, and a coping mechanism through which to process anxieties, externalised often in a female other. But rather than simply allowing the nineteenth century male to process his anxieties, masochism in the context of empire could be made more generally productive, by being united to a spirit of action and adventure. John Kucich presents a reading of class and empire that observes the "sadomasochistic logic beneath those British codes of masculinity that mandated displays of one's indifference to suffering" ("Sadomasochism and the Magical Group: Kipling's Middle-Class Imperialism" 41). Quite simply, if one's submission to suffering was undertaken in the name of Empire or the greater good, it could be considered heroic, necessary, and an affirmation of masculinity rather than a concession. This reading suggests the complicity of the masochistic subject in a masochistic performance of male duty, serving the Empire by willingly enduring personal suffering.

By allying their collectors to productive identities, and then complicating their acquisition of curious items with varying degrees of suffering and sacrifice, the narratives analysed in this chapter play on this framework of productive masochistic masculinity. Imbued with a particular personality, the things of these texts are animated by a mischievous or even devilish intelligence. They enter in to a masochistic dynamic with collectors, whose identities rely on the mastery of objects, but who find themselves in a submissive relation to things that bring them varying degrees of pain. As late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century collecting narratives, however, written in a period in which acceptable object relations were imagined to be premised on

unequivocal mastery, the masochistic relations depicted are ultimately unproductive and emasculating.

"Masochistic abasement," as Gary Farnell notes, is nothing new in literature. It is "the condition to which nearly every Gothic hero or heroine" from the beginnings of the genre through to Victor Frankenstein "is driven, at least for a time" (119). But with its "peculiar prominence in Victorian culture, especially after mid-century," it became, according to Kucich, an "unstable" concept that was "both pathologized and normalized" ("Melancholy Magic: Masochism, Stevenson, Anti-Imperialism" 364). Pugh, Tress, Dennistoun, Denton, and Trepka desert any possibility of productive albeit masochistic collecting when they yield to their desires for disturbing curios, and suffer at the hands of things that betray their static state and question the ability of the collectors to collect. While this may appear as a price that must be paid for true individuality and authenticity, the fate of the objects and the collectors belies this. Their masochistic suffering at the hands of a sadistic external agency gains them nothing, and when taken in context this failed relation to things becomes even more pronounced.

Within the Victorian period, Donna Loftus argues, the interrogation of masculine identity was expected to produce a specific manner of narrative, evocative of a certain type of success, with positive, tangible, or recordable consequences for the wider world. In "The Self in Society: Middle-class Men and Autobiography," she suggests that male narratives and representations of the self in the Victorian era were presented as a space to demonstrate oneself as secure and successful (69). Each of the collectors pursue utterly singular items, embracing and willingly submitting to their violent influence in the name of a pursuit closely associated with both the market and the museum, and their ideologies of mastery and productivity. With such cultural capital held in things, and with the validation of social bodies available to the man of means and status, the established collectors of these narratives should have everything

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to gain from their continued practice. The experiences of collecting in the selected

texts, however, reveal instabilities that thwart demonstrations of productivity.

The models of productive successful masculinity, and the expectations that they

engendered, find oppositional form in the narratives this chapter has analysed. These

texts respond to anxieties surrounding masculine identity, the viability of productive

masochism, and ideas of unacceptable acquisition. The threat of "bad" collecting, as

Anne Anderson notes, loomed large in the period, and particularly in the spectre of the

effeminate aesthete. The "sentimental consumer" who "invests his persona in things, as

mementoes and souvenirs" was contrasted against the positive collector, "acquiring

objects as a sign of social achievement or furthering academic knowledge," in a

dynamic of manly over "unmanly" subjugation to "female susceptibilities" determined

by luxury, exoticism, and novelty (Anderson 248). While emasculated aesthetes might

give in to "sentimental" consumption, the emasculated collectors of the narratives

analysed betray aims of "social achievement or furthering academic knowledge" by

being overcome by the apparent malevolent agency of the objects they acquire.

The collectors depicted slip in the course of the narratives between their

masculine roles as dilettanti, antiquarians, or historians, and an emasculated position in

which their attempts to collect are thwarted. They remain associated with symbols of

homosociality: the club, the institution, the gentlemanly society. But in response to the

dominance of the objects, become increasingly distanced from fellow members and the

masculine affirmations these bodies offered. Their collecting activities become

increasingly unpredictable and unproductive as their methods and motivations shift.

While there is pleasure to be gained through their struggle to collect such utterly

singular items, the unproductive outcome of each narrative raises questions as to the

role of collecting, and indeed of masochistic relations, in the formation of masculine

identity. The taint of emasculation and their weakness for novelty threatens to infect otherwise resolutely bachelor identities, and relations to things.

The objects themselves are central in these narratives of unproductive masochistic collecting. For the collector, Jean Baudrillard theorised, the material realm provided the possibility of stability, allowing the individual to present a narrative of the self, and to the self, through solid, unchanging objects (Baudrillard 22). Yet, these supposedly controllable material elements prove to be resistant to male sovereignty in each of the narratives analysed in this chapter. The collector's mastery of the collection Baudrillard observed is always "a fragile one," imperilled by "the superior authority of the real world" that "lurks behind it as a constant menace." This "very sense of disappointment," for Baudrillard is, however, "part and parcel of the system," so that "disappointment and satisfaction emerge as the stages of a cyclical process" (19). In such a dynamic the gratification is matched, or even heightened, by the contrasting sense of disappointment that so often proves to be the result of the collector's essential devotions. Implied is a sense of balance, and an overall impression that the result will be satisfaction in spite of the harsh realities of the world. In the selected literature, however, the cycle itself appears to be broken, and the collectors invite in things that offer no sense of future satisfaction or success, but merely a finite and destructive end.

The things depicted in these narratives stimulate the collectors' desires, and are pursued through suffering, haunting, and punishment in search of satisfaction that is nevertheless denied. The collectors are able to acquire the items, yet they never find true enjoyment in the act of possession. Gert Buelens's "Henry James's Oblique Possession: Plottings of Desire and Mastery in *The American Scene*" explores the "spatiality of desire" and the elements of materiality and space that allow "[t]he very shape of rooms, buildings, and spaces" to become "invested with a libidinal charge" (301). He sets a precedent for a reading of relations between masochism and

materiality, in which material things are implicated in a "richly erotic dynamic of mastery and surrender," and in giving "an account of (sexual) identity in which the assertion of one's self-possession takes place in the very act of submitting to the erotic power of another force." The nature of this force is of particular note, being not specifically constituted or pigeonholed, but alternately "nonhuman," "human," or "indeterminate" (301). The selected literature raises the possibility that objects might yield such thrilling satisfaction. Each of the collectors has a history of collecting, and betrays an excitement born of objects and the act of acquisition. What is at stake in these collecting texts, however, is masculine identity rather than sexual identity, which is questioned in a series of subservient relations of collectors to collectables that undermine rather than affirm male identity. Whilst stimulated by the objects, and affirmed in their position as collectors by gendered cultural codes, submitting to the often malevolent forces of these curios is neither advisable nor rewarding.

Common to each of the narratives is the tendency of these desirable but "indeterminate" material things to threaten, damage, or defy their collectors, who are described as occupying an increasingly subordinate relation to externalised forces. This suggests a masochistic dynamic. But while the subjection to such powerful things may be voluntary, the ultimate result of this power dynamic is the most fleeting satisfaction, and a sense of failure that arises as a direct result of the cultural expectations attached to their identities as male collectors. As men of knowledge and experience, they are familiar with the process of collecting, and accustomed to the Enlightenment privileges of knowledgeable mastery. They experience the satisfaction, the "wave of euphoria and appreciation of the object's features, which becomes part of the 'story' of the acquisition" (Steketee and Frost 54). Yet, as each narrative demonstrates, the transition of the object from the acquisition to the possession stage is complex.

These items are never subject to the "subtle rituals" that Gail Steketee and Randy Frost suggest "accompany newly acquired objects" (54). They implicitly resist the personal aspects of the act of collecting, preventing the collector from imprinting himself on their biography, and from shoring up his identity through things. These men experience a fundamental failure connected to their identities as collectors, following an initial break with a social identity, a double blow for men so entwined with material culture. Whether noble and publicly minded, or selfish and undertaken for the purposes of self-fashioning, the activities of these collectors indicate the resistance of the curious objects. They will never be fit for display in a museum, for use by a society or academic institution, or for personal and domestic use.

With their sovereignty challenged, their identity as collectors undermined, and their relation to social bodies broken down, these texts ask questions of the nature of masculinity in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century. The fluidity and the tendency for change found in the things of the narrative are reflected in the identities of the gentlemen themselves. Paul Eakin refers directly to the relationship between identity and the physical realities of existence, in his suggestion that "our lives in and as bodies profoundly shape our sense of identity" (xi). The collector, it can be argued, enjoys a very particular kind of relationship with objects. Mieke Bal, in reference to Susan Pearce's *On Collecting*, identifies a spectrum of motivations for collection: from what she terms "relative luxuries like aesthetics," to "needs as 'deep' as extending body limits, constructing gender identity, and, climactically […] achieving immortality" (103). Aware of the need for self-fashioning, and for presenting themselves as productive, masculine members of society, the objects of the collector should provide the ultimate medium for "constructing gender identity" and telegraphing this publicly. These men, who should be the ultimate embodiment of the enlightenment principle of

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mastery over the material, equipped with the ability to exert a very assured sovereignty over things, are instead subsumed beneath the force of the agency-laden things.

The purposeless and unproductive suffering of Pugh, Tress, Dennistoun, Denton, and Trepka destabilises their gendered identity as they struggle in vain to actualise their assumed sovereignty. The late nineteenth century male, as John K. Noyes observes, was conceived of as being "in a difficult position." In a manner related to imperial masochism, Noyes notes that "Imperialist man" was simultaneously seen to "boast his strength," whilst in actuality perceiving himself as "a giant in bondage," suffering but revelling in the opportunities for demonstrating masculinity (106). For Noyes this was an interminable struggle, which made the imperial male an "ambivalent and embattled construction" (106). The unproductive masochism of these collecting narratives suggest, not an unceasing oscillation between suffering and the reward of perceived strength, but a trajectory firmly toward destruction and loss.

However much Pugh and Tress suffer the physical assaults of a haunted pipe and a mysteriously preserved hand, however Denton and Dennistoun face the perils of demonic and deviant personas from the past, and no matter the sacrifice of an enthusiastic academic who pays for his new knowledge with his life, these things refuse to resolve into productive artefacts, and the efforts never yield beneficial results. The narratives do not chart the quests of experienced collectors, triumphing in the acquisition of museum-worthy items. Instead, the objects transgress the boundaries of their materiality, and betray the identity of the collectors, by problematising the very act of acquisition.

The collecting depicted by Richard Marsh, M.R. James, and Vernon Lee is remarkable for the oppositional responses imagined to an ideological framework of social collecting, productive masochism, and market and museum imperatives. This chapter problematises gender and identity affirming object relations by exploring a form

of collecting that departs from the gendered models allied to the Enlightenment ethos of mastering the material world, dispelling fear, and extending knowledge. Possessed by a desire for things that insist on their individuality and their agency, troubled by the ambiguity and personified malevolence of these curios, the selected narratives explore the potential consequences for male collectors of interactions with things that turn their desire against them.

Forced to suffer by the objects they acquire, isolated from the communal associations with social bodies, Marsh, James, and Lee explore the problems and possibilities of the space created by a distance from the market and the museum. They imagine collectors drawn away from social models of collecting, and in to obsession with curiously active objects. Where collecting should offer a means for gentlemen to make a public contribution, the suffering that these collectors experience is characterised by an unproductive masochism that yields nothing, and conflicts with late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century models of productive, imperial masochism. Where collection should ensure the sovereignty of the collector over his things, facilitating identity formation and presentation, these men are challenged by the proliferation of meanings and possibilities generated by these hybrid items. And where acquisition should mark only the beginning of an interaction with things brought into the collection, for these collectors, unstable things ensure that acquisition marks a terminal point characterised by crisis.

Chapter Two

From Gentlemen to Madmen: Degenerating Collectors and Dangerous Things.

Introduction

Chapter One analysed the unproductively masochistic relation of bachelor collectors to destructively active collectables, with a focus on individual objects that surprise and defy. By considering items that impede acquisition and isolate their would-be collectors, it identified the role of curious objects in the emasculation of established collectors associated with Dilettanti and Antiquarian societies, and academic communities of historians.   The analysis of acts of acquisition indicates the manner in which departures from Enlightenment rational and social models of collecting allowed for explorations of gendered identity, before considering the consequences for collectors of an inability to collect. Chapter Two will elucidate problems of possession, and pathological extremes of collecting behaviours: collecting mania, fetishism, and bibliomania. Depictions of mad collectors are constructed in relation to a conception of more normative collecting that informed late Victorian culture, and are expressed through objects within extreme and curious collections of physical and artistic oddities, torture devices, and books.

While the collectors of Chapter One were increasingly unwilling to make their collecting productive, pursuing instead personal interest and provokingly curious objects, the collectors of this chapter are unable to contemplate a positive outlet for their collecting. The mentally, physically, and psychologically sick collectors appear distanced from any sort of social role or responsibility. They collect in error the "right" things to excess, or the "wrong" things with unrepentant devotion, and in each case with a pathological intensity that excludes worldly concerns and a mainstream Victorian culture of collecting. In this respect, the selected late-nineteenth and early-twentieth

century texts suggest an anxiety as to the powerful pull of things on individuals, unmediated by the rules of the sort of societies and institutions outlined in Chapter One. The narratives allow us to ask questions, not just of what people collect, but what they are doing with the collections.

As Chapter One suggested, and as this chapter will develop, models for productive gentlemanly collecting in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century were by no means in short supply. Even apparently compulsive collecting could be rationalised, excused, and held up as worthy of emulation, when undertaken for the "right" purposes. The self-serving and obsessive collecting of the characters analysed in this chapter, is described in relation to a productive masculine norm that presented a compulsion to collect as a stimulus to market circulation and a source of museum-worthy objects. In the selected texts, however, the extent of this compulsion and the harmful effects of the objects accumulated make the collectors and the collecting appear pathological. Consequently, masculine identity, which should be affirmed by the Enlightenment ideologies of collecting premised on mastery of the material world and freedom from fear, is compromised (Horkheimer and Adorno 3). By drawing on the discourse of degeneration, Wilkie Collins, Arthur Machen, and George Gissing can be seen to indicate the dangers of a compulsion to collect and of a proliferation of objects for men whose collecting threatens to both exacerbate and transmit their degenerate maladies.

The writers selected for analysis in this chapter may not appear to be obvious choices, Gissing in particular being concerned with the gritty realities of life for the urban poor, rather than material culture and the essentially privileged activity of collecting. The selected texts, however, evidence a concern as to the extremes that collecting may run to when undertaken by degenerate men, transgressing the productive limits laid down by museum and market ideologies, and advancing beyond the

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normative quirks of individualism. The narratives describe pathological identities and extremes of collecting that serve absolutely no productive purpose, and instead appear corrupt and corrupting, degenerate and infectious. The chapter will suggest that this oppositional fictional figure of the aberrant and abject collector personifies the preoccupation with loss of control, chaos, flexibility, and instability that imperilled identity and also, as Tony Bennett, Thomas Richards and Ruth Hoberman amongst others indicate, lurked behind the museum's façade of masterful object relations. The resultant collectors and collections defy rationale and classificatory logic, complicating the drive to master material culture, and comprehend and combat aberrant psychologies and identities.

A Productive Compulsion to Collect and a Threat of Excess

Throughout the history of collecting, from the early modern period to the present day, images of extraordinary, apparently fanatical collectors and unusual collections have captured the popular imagination. Patrick Mauries's *Cabinets of Curiosities*, Arthur MacGregor's *Curiosity and Enlightenment: Collectors and Collections from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century*, and Christine Davenne's *Cabinets of Wonder*, have each analysed shifts in the nature of collecting from the early modern to the modern period, through descriptions of fascinating collections notable for their quality, their quantity, or the curious nature of their objects. Blending cultural histories and a biographical approach, they have identified common traits of "panoramic vision" and "encyclopaedic knowledge," which have indicated how the vast quantities of objects yielded by a compulsion to collect could serve a productive function in constructing "inventories of the world" (Davenne 6).

From the famous early modern collections of the Tradescants, and the wonders of the Ashmolean, to the oddities of the nineteenth century Pitt Rivers collection, and the Soane collection, both later museums, the range of objects, and the manner in which

they were seen to dominate the lives, the identities, or the domestic spaces of these men have warranted critical attention. They have been examined for the distribution and dominance of objects within the space of the home, and the transition from personal collection to public museum (Elsner "A Collector's Model of Desire" 155). The excesses of the collector and the range of the collection have been analysed as symptoms of a flourishing "luxury goods" market, and a system of patronage relationships that had its beginnings in the seventeenth century (Peck 153). Through what Dafydd Kidd refers to as a process of "painstaking detective work," collectors and objects have been placed in a cultural historical narrative of circulating objects in a global market, of evolving collections, and museum acquisitions (104). The extent of the collections testifies to the sheer volume of objects available to the collector, while the eclecticism reveals the variety of objects in circulation as the market for collectables flourished. In different ways, vast and varied accumulations have been imagined as demonstrations of the productive possibilities of unchecked collecting, which through a connection to the museum and the market might be made publicly beneficial.

To say that compulsive collecting was normalised in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century would be an overstatement. But an impression of excess can be seen to circulate around images of normative collecting at all levels of society in the period. At its most innocuous, the infectious and dominating urge to collect might take the form of a "craze for collecting," spreading from the continent to "the drawing rooms of Chelsea and Kensington," and expressed in the fashionable collecting of blue-and-white china (Margetson 111). At its most refined, "the acquisitive mania of the wealthiest aristocratic collectors," expressed in compulsions such as bibliomania, could symbolise an investment in "collective national heritage" (Connell 28). While "worship" of the home could be expressed in the homeowner's excessive acquisition of fashionable items, "heavy furniture and an army of ornaments and knick-knacks,"

behind which the domestic middle class "barricaded" themselves (Gardiner 5). At different levels of society, whether expressed as a symptom of fashion or a marker of refinement, collecting appears as a captivating and compulsive urge that found expression in a need to possess an array of objects.

In *Victorian Patrons of the Arts: Twelve Famous Collections and Their Owners*, Frank Davis has particularly demonstrated through a biographical approach to historic collections and notable collectors, how an overpowering compulsion to collect might prove publicly productive. He describes how George Salting's combination of "[a]mple means and a natural flair enabled him to fill his rooms at the Thatched House Club in St James's Street with fine things of many kinds until he was compelled to look around for further space in which to house them" (80). The result of this excess was that in 1874 he began "a series of loans to the South Kensington Museum," which "in due course" became the "Salting Bequest" (80). Despite a general impression of "wealthy squalor, of ageing bearded, self-centred shabbiness" that became Salting's legend, his compulsion to collect became useful when his collections were brought within the limits of the museum as exemplary objects for public viewing (80).

Sir Thomas Philipps, Bart, demonstrated an unfettered urge to possess enormous quantities of objects, and was seen to have "accumulated – that is the only word one can use – the greatest library in Europe" (Davis 85). His manner of collection was less considered and measured than frantic and compulsive, in that he "bought recklessly, relentlessly and omnivorously throughout his long life" (85). A man of little personal appeal, and central character in a "grotesque story", his "maniacal acquisitiveness" nevertheless ensured that "thousands of documents, whether on vellum or paper, many of great historic interest, many of exceptional aesthetic value, were saved from destruction" (92). His compulsion to possess vast quantities of things safeguarded a series of rarities, redeeming somewhat the memory of a man notoriously selfish and

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unpleasant. Despite unrefined taste and flawed methods, an obsessive drive to collect might be turned to the public good, by locating and preserving objects that could then be disciplined and presented according to the museum's ethos.

Writing on "The Use and Abuse of Museums," W. S. Jevons describes collecting as an act generally worthy of approval for its ability to enhance aesthetic appreciation, educate taste, and advance knowledge. It was, he claimed, "difficult to collect without gaining knowledge of more or less value," and as such Jevons goes so far as to suggest that collecting should be a universal pastime, so beneficial was it to the mind. He recognised, however, the many "extravagances and absurdities" collecting may run to, and acknowledged the tendency for even famous institutional collections, such as the South Kensington Museum, to present an excess of objects, as though unable to hold anything back (61). Excess and compulsion appear constantly to have haunted the practice of collecting, and the institutional collection. Examples of excessive collecting made productive, however, suggested that aberrations might be overcome, while a sustained belief in the museum's regulatory and emulatory function allowed Jevons to hope that it might yet present the perfect example of collection and presentation as a guide to wayward and impulsive collectors.

In the age of the museum, states Barbara Black, "possession promised self-possession and civility," making nineteenth century "Museum culture" both in the home and in public displays "for the people's own good" (*On Exhibit* 37). The disturbing collections of the pathological collectors analysed in this chapter are constructed in opposition to this principle. They appear as fictional imaginings of collections devoid of a productive function, and collectors that spread emasculation and antisocial tendencies where the museum bred self-possession and civility. The collectors are never redeemed as their objects are never channelled in to the museum, their compulsion to collect therefore proceeds unchecked. Instead, the objects remain to

drive the collectors' degenerate weakness for collection, communicating the full extent of the pathologies that define their identities.

The selected texts engage with creeping, intoxicating, infectious impulses to collect, that take hold of men to the extent that they are harmful. They take the chaos and excess that continued to trouble the public museum, and revel in the incongruities and superfluities offered by the objects of the collection. Unchecked, this staggering profusion and surprising selection emphasises the degeneracy of the collectors and the pathological nature of their collecting. Wilkie Collins's *The Law and the Lady* (1875), Arthur Machen's "Novel of the Iron Maid" (1890), and George Gissing's "Christopherson" (1902) present images of mad collectors emasculated and degenerated by their collecting. They attach recognisable symptoms of degeneracy and pathology to their collectors, which mark them out as negative aberrations, but test the efficacy of a diagnostic gaze. The lines between conscious eccentricity and unconscious compulsive relations to material culture, between the acceptable and the unacceptable are blurred. In short, they play upon all of the fin-de-siècle fears as to the difficulties posed by degeneration, and through highly unpredictable, escalating instances of pathological collecting indicate the threat that collectors and collections might pose to a modern society so saturated with material culture.

Degenerate Collecting and Pathological Identities

When Max Nordau laid out in *Degeneration* (1895) the principle features of the malady he believed was plaguing society at the turn of the century, he included a small but decisive reference to the degenerate's propensity for compulsive collecting, suggesting that engagements with material culture revealed otherwise hidden degeneracy by signalling a characteristic loss of control. Max Nordau was, according to P.M. Baldwin, "a household name whose most popular books appeared in scores of editions in a dozen languages." Nordau perceived an innate pathology in mankind. He

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suggested that with "only an indistinct impression of the external world," individuals often essentially remained "irrational" and therefore "egotistically trapped by a pathological concern" for themselves alone (102). His principal fear, however, was of "cultural exhaustion," emerging in an insidious malady he made the subject of his famous text, *Degeneration*.

As Baldwin notes, Nordau's "individual degenerate" was "marked by pessimism, dissatisfaction, mysticism, emotionalism, egotism, unwholeness of personality, unsociability, impulsiveness, lack of thought, incapacity to adapt, blindly destructive tendencies, scepticism, and disrespect for tradition" (Baldwin 105). But as Nordau himself noted, degeneracy might also be expressed in a relation to things. An "irresistible desire among the degenerate to accumulate useless trifles," he suggests, casts "new light" on the "present rage for collecting," turning a harmless and even beneficial pastime in to a vision of indiscriminate "piling up, in dwellings, of aimless bric-a-brac […] fondly called *bibelots*." Such a collector is unpredictable, and "neither buys enormous quantities of one and the same thing," nor remains indifferent to matters of price, but essentially is "simply unable to pass by any lumber without feeling an impulse to acquire it" (27). Rather than a fashionable and controlled pursuit, for Nordau collecting appears as a symptom or "stigma of degeneration," that may be diagnosed as "oniomania," or "buying craze," an uncontrollable compulsion (*Degeneration* 27).

Nordau's non-specific reference to the "rage for collecting" acknowledges none of the nuances of the practice, but raises a question as to where the line may be drawn between a fashionable pursuit and a degenerate "piling up." Certainly, the Victorian period was characterised by a complex set of normative relations to things, often typified by a degree of (to modern eyes at least) excess. Notable collections, such as that of Sir Richard Wallace, Bart, gave the houses in which they were displayed the

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appearance of "uncomfortable overcrowding," with "paintings from floor to ceiling and furniture in serried ranks" (Davis 50). As Peter Conrad noted in *The Victorian Treasure House*, the nineteenth century domestic interior was notable for the sheer volume of things presented there. Both Conrad and Gardiner describe a layer of bric-a-brac and fashionable décor that was popularly imagined not as a marker of pathological excess, but rather as a representation of the impulse to create a layer of insulation around the home, protecting its occupants from the "rude shocks" of the outside world (72). Excess in such a scenario has become embedded in a popular consciousness as typical of the Victorian interior.

Both the compulsive collectors applauded for their contributions to public museums Frank Davis describes, and Nordau's degenerate collectors, as they appear in his broad and ambiguous definition, indicate how the lines between normative and pathological collecting behaviours were not firmly drawn. With excess and eclecticism imagined in normative instances of nineteenth century collecting, the nature of the objects and the intentions of the collectors prove necessary indicators of pathological motivations. The collecting characters of Collins's *The Law and the Lady*, Machen's "Novel of the Iron Maid," and Gissing's "Christopherson," ask questions of the impulse to classify or control collecting behaviours and identities. They explore the possibilities of objects and the permutations of collecting they made possible, in experiments with masculine identity that draw on concerns with material culture and pathological psychologies.

Collections in normal circumstances were demonstrations of cultural capital, evidencing the "taste, skills, knowledge and attitude" of the "aesthetically accomplished individual" (Hallum 27). The cluttered domestic spaces in the selected texts analysed in this chapter are, however, overwhelmingly dominated by items unlikely to generate "objectified cultural capital," or proclaim the "embodied cultural capital" of the

collectors (Hallum 29). Instead, they appear as symptoms of pathological relations to material culture, and markers of degeneracy. Pathology, according to the OED's colloquial definition, is "a quality or trait" exhibited "to a degree considered extreme or psychologically unhealthy." It also carries medicalised connotations, referring to the study of physiological "abnormality or malfunction" as a result of disease. The degenerate collectors analysed in this chapter blend the two definitions. They evince "extreme and psychologically unhealthy" collecting compulsions that are symptomatic of a psychological weakness and biological decline, brought on by a disease-like and transmissible cultural malady, degeneracy.

Robert A. Nye has suggested that a contemporary perception of a developing series of deviant identities and flawed object relations gave rise to a psychiatric and medical "gaze" that was turned on pathological behaviours at the fin de siècle (13). Degeneration and pathological psychology were linked, as symptoms of "perversion" were taken as indicators of a "progressive degeneration" that needed to be classified and defined in order to halt its progress (19). From an ontological viewpoint, Robert Mighall argues, the gaze that accompanied "nineteenth-century medico-legal science" took on "a regulatory function – conjuring deviance in order to construct or defend an explicit or implicit (bourgeois) norm" (168). The unpredictability of deviant identities and pathological maladies as they were imagined in the nineteenth century, however, continued to trouble the certainties offered by bourgeois norms and a regulatory gaze.

Around Degeneration, as Jeanette Roberts Shumaker explains, there sprang up a complex discourse, and a myth of degeneracy, which through "Evolutionary theory, physics, and medicine, suggested models of entropy that made degenerationism seem plausible to Victorians" (Shumaker 2). This most plausible of maladies has been interpreted and analysed in many ways, indicating its essential ambiguity and unpredictable fluidity. "Individual moral degeneration" for instance was, according to

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Fred Botting, "considered as a problem of class and social structure in that capitalist modes of organisation produced a society in which individuals were parasitic upon each other" (89). For Jenny Bourne Taylor dual perceptions of degeneracy coexisted, identifying it as "a form of mental pathology bound to hysteria, leading to the narcissism and will-lessness of the modern artist," as well as a symptom of "industrial capitalism" and "deep class divide" (14). While Richard Dellamora has noted that "degeneration of the species" was held responsible for the rise in "insanity," insanity that was "both symptom and effect" of the pervasive malady (118). Whatever the causes and symptoms variously identified in relation to degeneration, the need to address the pervasive sickness, and the pathological mentalities it brought about remains constant.

This chapter takes Nordau's perception of the rage for collecting as a symptom of a developing degeneracy, and considers how the selected texts respond to the potential implications for enlightened object relations of the pathologies it engendered. It will assess how through pathological collecting behaviours and Gothicised galleries, museums, and libraries, objects are implicated in a threat of infection. Understood in opposition to the guiding examples of museum and market, these aberrant collecting behaviours eschew productive examples of the practice in a manner that emasculates the collectors and threatens those around them. Chapter Two will, therefore, identify pathological collecting identities, unacceptable behaviours, and hidden degeneracy. It will draw out the ebb and flow of chaos and order surrounding perilous and pathological engagements with material culture, and consider how the constant negotiations that this yielded were imaginatively resolved with dramatic, destructive conclusions.

Collecting Mania in Wilkie Collins's *The Law and the Lady* (1875).

     Wilkie Collins's *The Law and the Lady* anticipates some of the defining characteristics of degeneracy outlined by Nordau's famous text. Lurking at its heart is the physically and mentally degenerate collector Miserrimus Dexter, a marginalised but invasive and disturbing figure, whose degenerate nature and pathological collecting are revealed most clearly by his associations with material culture. Within his collection, paintings, examples of historic and exotic dress, a series of photographs, and a range of curios, all testify to years of successful collecting, and even considered emulation ,of artistic forms and museal modes of presentation. The particular nature of some of these items, however, and the manner in which they are grouped together and presented by the collector, gives his collecting the impression of pathology. Dexter's at once beautiful but warped physical form, and his intriguing but troubling collections, suggest a degenerate and harmful quality that may lie beneath an outwardly acceptable surface, in both objects and individuals. In combination, the things of the text, Dexter's home, his collections, and his physical form itself, maintain and even exacerbate his aberrant characteristics, becoming more pronounced with time, and with their unveiling throughout the narrative. By accessing the Gothic exhibitionary spaces of Dexter's home through the eyes of a rational Valeria Macallan, Collins is able to explore oppositional responses to the image of the productive collector, and the ideologies of the museum. Through the unrepentant devotion of a collecting maniac to awful objects he tests the boundaries between enthusiastic and pathological collecting.

     Everything about Miserrimus Dexter as he is encountered within *The Law and the Lady* tends toward extremes, including his varied and disturbing collections, which in a catalogue of terrible items and disturbing experiences pathologise the collector's relation to material culture. Dexter betrays in the whole breadth of his accumulated things an "insatiable relish for horrors," expressed in a mass of disconcerting items. If

the hideous "pictures in the hall" were not sufficient evidence of this, the photographs representing "the various forms of madness taken from the life" cement the sense of his taste for the grotesque. In a catalogue of nightmare items, Valeria reveals a selection of objects worthy of a cabinet of curiosities, including "[a] frightful little skeleton of a woman hung in a cupboard, behind a glazed door" and "casts (after death) of the head of famous murderers." The horror of these discoveries is only exceeded by "a shirt (as I took it to be) of chamois leather" that "hung in loose folds." Finding it "softer than any chamois leather that my fingers had ever felt before," it seems simply a curious addition to his collection. However, its true nature, demonstrated by "a ticket pinned among" its folds, reveals its true nature, it being the "Skin of a French Marquis, tanned in the Revolution of Ninety Three" (247-8).

Exotic instruments, foreign and antique clothing and jewellery, his own artwork, strips of embroidery, outlandish recipes, images of death, destruction and madness, and human curiosities, a range of things litter the decaying mansion. The extreme nature of many if these items is remarkable, and implies that his interest lies with objects not typically encountered in the mainstream marketplace. Instead Collins's collector concerns himself with artefacts and oddities that carry no outward desirability or perceptible value, and with items constructed by and for the collector himself. Items that would otherwise be discarded or branded repellent crowd the dilapidated mansion and spill out of the cabinets and cupboards. Invested in these things to an unhealthy degree, and dominated spatially by them, Dexter's collecting may be defined as collecting-mania, and communicates with a more modern definition of pathological hoarding.

Despite the flexible boundaries of these pathologies, their key characteristics can be diagnosed as an excessive enthusiasm for and participation in a selected activity, pushed to the extent of mental illness. Both collecting-mania and hoarding impact upon

both the actions of the collector and the variety of objects collected. The hoarder's attitude to things, write Gail Steketee and Randy Frost, is notable for its "intensity and broad scope". In *Stuff: Compulsive Hoarding and the Meaning of Things*, they suggest that hoarding results from an exaggeration of the collector's discerning engagement with objects. The hoarder's view of the "physical world" is "different and much more expansive then that of the rest of us" (15). The inclusivity of this vision manifests in a sense that "every object is rich with detail," opening the pathologised individual up to an extreme compulsion to accumulate.

The negative and marginalised behaviour of the hoarder is marked out as pathological by its lack of limits, limits based on ideals of tasteful selection and material mastery that reinforced enlightened masculine identities. Reminiscent, in its compulsive quality, of Nordau's oniomania and the attendant danger of succumbing to any old "lumber," this diagnosis implies the hoarder may be drawn to any and all objects, apparently inexplicably, but nevertheless intensely (*Degeneration* 27). Such a collector is emasculated by this lapse in his fundamental power of selection, and with his usual discernment removed, his filters gone, apparently meaningless or unsavoury objects take on significance, with the result that any and all material things may be drawn in to the collection. Such a relation to material things sheds a new light on the acquisitive urge and cluttered interiors fostered by a nineteenth century commodity complex.

Dexter's fleeting and varying engagements with things echo somewhat this sense of the overmastering of the collector by objects. Sharing the same space are items that have no apparent relation to one another, that clash and contrast, and yet are brought together by a collector apparently unable to let them pass him by. As a collecting-maniac subject to an impulse akin to hoarding, Dexter is driven by an uncontrollable urge to possess. As an established collector, however, the items appear

somewhat thematically linked, consciously invested with qualities of an increasingly abject Dexter himself. They evoke in different ways an increasing sense of horror that is emphasised by the collector's manner of relating to these things. Yet, behind his pathological relation to objects, he betrays a trace of the productive and engaged interest in things that defined his collecting before it escalated to the extent of pathology. He retains an interest in his things that reassert his identity as a collector.

Unlike the objects and the collectors of Chapter One, Miserrimus Dexter uses his objects like props, performing with them to indicate the facets of his identity, flitting from interest to interest, passion to passion, and activity to activity. At one moment, "[a]n elegant little basket" containing "a strip of embroidery partially finished" occupies him; at the next a collection of culinary accoutrements demonstrate that he is well travelled and betray a supposed cultural interest. When he decides to show off his skills he changes the entire orientation of the things with which he surrounds himself. He moves beyond the painful and uncontrollable need to possess an increasing range of things, things that only Dexter would want. In the act of possessing these items he appears to obtain satisfaction, acting "under a new excitement of some sort," receiving pleasure from a range of possessions (232). But the nature of his objects and the jarring eccentricity of his pathological identity imply that his relations to material culture fluctuate constantly between the conscious and the unconscious, as betrayed by the exaggerated sense of the objects' extremes.

Shock value plays a part in Dexter's relation to his possessions. The items of clothing that he reveals to Valeria Macallan might appear at home exhibited in a case in a museum as an illustration of historic dress. Within the collector's Gothic house museum, however, in which things refuse to remain inert, they appear strikingly alien, emasculating the collector who dons them in order to maximise their full effect. His "extemporised cap of white paper," his "ruffles […] tucked up," and his "clean apron

[…] thrown over the seagreen coverlid" appear as a costume. The "inveterate oddity of his dress" that so strikes Mrs. Macallan is an exaggerated symptom of both his research and his warped relation to his things. He is described as wearing a "jacket […] of pink quilted silk," and a coverlid that "matched the jacket in pale sea-green satin," completing "these strange vagaries of costume" with "massive bracelets of gold, formed on the severely-simple models which have descended to us from ancient times!" (232). Dexter presents these quirks in dress as proof of his knowledge of these possessions, greeting his guest briefly before swiftly launching in to an explanation for his appearance:

> I have dressed expressly to receive you, in the prettiest clothes I have. Don't be surprised. Except in this ignoble and material nineteenth century, men have always worn precious stuffs and beautiful colours as well as women. A hundred years ago, a gentleman in pink silk was a gentleman properly dressed. Fifteen hundred years ago, the patricians of the classic times wore bracelets exactly like mine (232).

Grounded in a degree of rationality, his behaviour and the items he interacts with nevertheless appear outlandish. The pretty, beautiful, precious items in which he adorns himself might demonstrate his historical and cultural knowledge, yet they also betray his increasing emasculation and degeneration. His collection is perpetually balanced between an acceptable and an unacceptable expression of the collector's practice. Looking to distance himself from the "ignoble and material" age in which he finds himself, his historical knowledge and his things offer him a degree of escape. He has an eye for beauty even in practical items, offering his guest "a goblet of ancient Venetian glass with a purple red liquor, beautiful to see" (244). He presents Valeria with "The King of Wines," and Truffles "stewed in Burgundy." To all intents and purposes he demonstrates his refined taste and an experienced collector's knowledge;

and yet his collections do not provoke satisfaction in the viewer once brought into relation with the disturbing collector, and his other horrifying items (245-6).

Dexter appears to synthesise an expression of himself composed of a mixture of obtained and personally made things. By including a significant number of self-made objects he appears to actively engage to an even greater extent than normal in the "enterprise of abstract mastery" Baudrillard describes as pivotal to collecting, "whereby the subject seeks to assert himself as an autonomous totality outside the world" ("The System of Collecting" 8). Within the closed and controlled space of the collection individual identity could be constructed and asserted. Collecting, as Michael Camille notes in his introduction to *Other Objects of Desire: Collectors and Collecting Queerly*, is after all "a performance." This performance can be read in both the things themselves, and also in "the very structure of relations through which" they have been "inherited, bought, sold, exchanged and enjoyed" (1-2). The facets of identity revealed, however, are not always positive or socially acceptable. Dexter takes full advantage of the multiple meanings and extensive histories that may be held in things. Unable to content himself with fashionable practices or popular items, he apparently isolates himself, and bypasses the market. He pushes to extremes the particular practice of collecting, acquiring extreme objects in remarkable numbers, and then revelling in the performance of them before an unsuspecting audience.

Both Baudrillard and Camille imply a conscious quality to this mastery and performance of the self through things. Collins's collector, however, takes this control and mastery, and imagines a Gothic alternative in the oddities of Dexter's house museum. Both typically collectable items and particularly repulsive objects are presented by the collector with a considered touch illustrated in their labelling. Affixing such commentaries to the items in question as the "cynical inscription placed above the skull – 'Behold the scaffolding on which beauty is built!'" – cements his personal

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imprint on these things, and their role within the collection. While, the commentary on the French Revolution and the nobility – "Who says the nobility are not good for something? They make good leather" – reinforces his self-positioning as intellectual commentator on society as he sees it from his position of dislocation or isolation. These curios, complete with a sense of their history, a particular narrative, and an impression of their worth, might suggest that amongst the collection are items that will one day find their way in to the institutional repository. Yet, their infection by a degree of the collectors escalating degeneracy indicates that this will not be a possibility.

Mrs. Macallan ventures through the hallways and rooms of Dexter's home as if guided from display to display, from exhibit to exhibit in a home-made parody of the public museum. The hallways of his mansion are his private gallery, housing a series of paintings, presented with a "painted inscription in many colours, just under the cornice of the ceiling," informing the viewer that "the works on the walls were the production of the all-accomplished Dexter himself." Displayed, ordered, labelled, this element of Dexter's collecting gestures to the methods of the public repository. Accessing Dexter's collections through untainted, respectable eyes, Collins engages on multiple levels with discourses of material culture. He mobilises the figure of the discerning viewer and museum visitor; he draws on the assumption that the collection can be read as an expression of a self-constructed narrative; and he acknowledges a classificatory tendency to "diagnose" pathology through the individual's relations to things. The surety of the medicalised gaze, however, becomes increasingly insecure as the destabilisation arising around the collector's degeneracy escalates.

While Dexter's "[c]ollecting forming," to use Anne Anderson's term, might be said to emulate "the respectability of museum practices," it lacks the fundamental quality of "permanence" offered by such collections (247-8). Rather than being representative of a historical or cultural moment, and therefore granted a degree of

permanence by their connection to history proper, the items Dexter collects communicate only a trace of the collector himself, his various moods and interests. At the termination of his already degenerating identity, their significance will be lost. What may remain and be conveyed to the viewer, however, is the terrible effect of the experience of the degenerate collection, which parodies and twists the organisation and public facing ethos of the nineteenth century museum.

Things within Dexter's house museum are presented in a manner that startles, and baffles the visitor, and her powers of understanding. These things are intended to challenge the viewer immersed in an experience of them, so as to prevent their detached appraisal. Of course, Dexter's emphasis on remarkable things is, in one sense, not out of the ordinary. Histories of collecting indicate that the practice often prioritised extraordinary items, as the most exotic, the most ancient, the most accomplished specimens attracted the notice of the collector. Collins's collector observes such a principle, but in doing so the character allows him to mount a critique of the dangers of aberrant object relations. Anne Anderson has identified an engagement with "bad collecting," in *The Woman in White* (1859-60). In anticipating themes and tropes commonly encountered in late-nineteenth-century literature, *The Law and the Lady* extends this idea, so as to reflect concerns with both the museum's model of object mastery and a range of pathological identities that arose around objects where this failed.

The things that Dexter presents are consciously displayed, and invite the gaze of the viewer, pre-preparing them with attached information and signage, pivotal tools of information and effacement at the curator's disposal (Greenblatt 44). Through the application of labels to exhibited objects undesired information could be erased and replaced with a desirable history, or a new set of significations. As cultural studies of the museum have shown, the viewer as well as the object was shaped within the walls of

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the institution by the regulatory and classificatory structures in place. The nineteenth-century museum-goer was the product of a civilising and educating institution, which trained him or her in the art of proper viewing (Macdonald 4). As an increasingly pervasive presence, the modern museum was designed to physically and mentally manipulate the populace, shaping their interactions with material culture and training their gaze, showing them the right objects, the best things, the way to behave, and the power of self-regulation (Bennett 1). In "The Use and Abuse of Museums," W.S. Jevons suggests that exposure to positive examples of collecting would alter the viewer's perception, preparing the visitor to cast a discerning eye over the massed objects of the displayed collection (61). The modern British museum-going subject should be adequately versed in the etiquette of the institutional space, and prepared to benefit from the intellectual and inspirational functions of the exhibition and its objects.

Upon discovering Dexter's gallery, Valeria Macallan deploys a rational and analytic approach, reading and assessing the paintings. Moving through the collection, she remarks on the "diseased and riotous delight of the painter in representing Horrors," passing judgement on his objects (230). Her progress through the collection is slow and analytical, taking in aspects of the subject, style, and composition of each image. But these things do not lend themselves to a classificatory gaze. The unnatural "Daubs," thanks to the general absence of recognisable technique or admirable artistry, have little to offer beyond a reflection of the collector's eccentricity. The uncomfortable items make Dexter's gallery a mockery of the splendour of the public repository, and the educational demonstration of taste and technique presented there.

The implications of this power of presentation and influence falling in to degenerate hands are alarming. As carriers of the collector's infectious degeneracy, the transmissible qualities of the objects are magnified in an exhibitionary environment. Brought in to the Gothic museum space Valeria Macallan's resolutely objective and

rational approach is overcome by the sheer force of the unpredictable collector's pathology. The effects of these objects becomes significant enough to draw from Mrs. Macallan the exclamation that the "idea of trusting myself alone with the man who had painted those frightful pictures, actually terrified me; I was obliged to sit down on one of the hall chairs" (231). Proximity to these expressions of Miserrimus Dexter's psyche negatively affect her, it taking "[s]ome minutes […] before my mind recovered its balance, and I began to feel like my ordinary self again" (231). Valeria's experience of his pathological relation to things warns of a significantly problematic facet of the highly unusual Dexter's identity, which makes his corrupted collecting a public threat.

"Prince Dexter's Palace," as it is ironically dubbed, is a "long, low, and ancient house" in a partially constructed, but largely abandoned, suburb north of London (201-2). It is purchased by the collector in a clearly decayed and dilapidated state, a virtual wreck, slipping into a state of increasing ruin without any efforts to check its progress. In its topographical marginalisation, and its state of decay, it is a consciously adopted symbol of the collector's identity, a theatrical background against which to perform. In the light of such artifice, his objects appear as props. But the manner in which the collections (plural) are revealed successively, bit by bit, a cluster of items at a time, throughout the text gives them the appearance of secrets being revealed, breaking out from where they have been held in order to expose the collector. Each cluster frames the collector in a way that highlights certain symptoms of his pathology, and despite their number and range, each and every item carries a deeply personal significance for Dexter. The sheer variety of these items signals a deviant relation to things, indicating the "wild excess" of his "desires" and "passions," directed with "enthusiastic admiration" to a range of things that might otherwise be deemed undesirable. In this respect they testify to a genuine mania, rather than a self-conscious parody of museum-based collecting practices alone.

Despite the element of performance in the collector's relation to things, the experience of his collections, and of the collector himself, is quite genuinely disturbing. Exposure to these objects, which are a pathological parody of recognisable collecting, creates an uncomfortable response in the viewer. His gallery is full of self-created works, taking familiar themes and subjects making them unrecognisable. The series of escalating images focus largely on terrible acts of violence, gesturing to a troubled mind revelling in horrors. Although they are described by the artist himself as "efforts of pure imagination," the horror they induce is only magnified by the knowledge that they have emerged from Dexter's mind, on to the canvas (229). These physical products of his fancy are presented with a degree of theatricality and ordering by the man himself in two separate series, apparently intended to be encountered one after the other in dimly lit halls that are the reverse of the well lit and uncluttered spaces of the ideal modern exhibition (Richards *Imperial Archive* 4). Blending deviancy and the possibility of conscious consideration creates a dangerous ambiguity as disturbing as the pathology itself. How far is Dexter a victim of degeneration and pathological mania? And to what extent is his eccentricity a product of a weak degenerate's exposure to the quantity and range of nineteenth-century material culture?

The grotesque aspects of the man's character persistently break through, but increasingly in a manner that influences his visitor. From the music and poetry that assault Valeria's ears, to the proposed meal of "that incomparable French dish, Pig's Eyelids and Tamarinds," and the general mental impression felt, Collins's narrator is penetrated by the transmissible elements of the collector's pathological things (270). The suggestion remains that contact with Dexter's things might fundamentally taint even the most determinedly rational visitor. What becomes significant is the limitless potential for transmission of the collector's degeneracy, which might be conveyed through his portable property unchecked.

Given the widespread practice of collecting, the threat remained that pathological collecting might be detected in the passionate desire of any number of collectors. Expressions of pathological collecting such as hoarding are, according to Gail Steketee and Randy Frost, "far from rare." Despite its popular perception as "a marginal affliction," and "an 'underground' psychopathology," the actions of a hoarder are magnifications of normal collecting taken to extremes (11). Defining the compulsion is, therefore, not simple, hoarding blurring the "boundaries between normal and abnormal," blending the "passion of a collector, the procrastination of someone who hasn't taken the time to put things away, the sentimentality of one who saves reminders of important personal events" (14). The wrong objects acting on a weakened individual might tip the collector over in to outright pathology, making circulating collectables a potential trigger for anyone with a weakness for objects.

The things of Dexter's collections indicate an oppositional fictional response to the norms of collecting. They present twisted versions of recognisable collectables, and atypical versions of the curator's acts of selection and display. The parody of a gallery, the exotic and ancient artefacts, all brought together within his decaying home, appear as magnifications of normal collecting behaviour. The medicalised portraits and casts, reminiscent of Lombroso's documentation and characterisation of visible criminology, and his "museum" of "delinquent" art and literature, are disconnected from any rationalised context (Pick 111, 117, 150). All of these items, and the collecting behaviours Dexter's collecting relates to, are made strange and uncomfortable in the mad man's collections. Dexter taints and corrupts them, turning them against the values and associations that typically define them.

Dexter's duality brings out the double nature of hoarding and collecting-mania as pathologies, at once normal and yet abnormal in their extremity. When faced with this duality, and the threat of his degeneration spreading through his readily circulatable

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things, Collins appends to his collector a series of escalating symptoms by which he might be identified. Dexter appears at one minute "a mild, thoughtful, melancholic man," and at the next a "raging, shouting creature" (231-2). When combined, his startling physicality, often described as more animal than man, his mental instability, and the scope of his material interests, indicate that his behaviour has moved beyond any semblance of masculine mastery and control, and in to compulsion and harmful pathology.

Dexter is described as being subject to "latent insanity," manifested in "all sorts of odd things." His stable state in portions of the narrative, in which "he has his mind under the control of his will," is diagnosed as purely temporary. Much like Mr Fairlie, Collins's neurotic collector in *The Woman in White* (1859-60), Miserrimus Dexter is subject to the effects of his "highly sensitive" nerves, which are assaulted by modern life. Collins's use of language in describing Dexter carries a hint of medicalised terminology. As "a man in a state of delirium" (200), he connects with fin-de-siècle concerns with male "insanity."

As Richard Dellamora notes, nineteenth-century medical opinion held that male madness was often "regarded as a product of the increasing demands that modern progress exacts on the nervous system," of expectations and over-stimulation. He cites Dr. John Hawkes of the Wiltshire County Asylum who, in "On The Increase of Insanity" (1857) stated that:

> [i]n this rapid pace of time, increasing with each revolving century, a higher pressure is engendered on the minds of men and with this, there appears a tendency among all classes constantly to demand higher standards of intellectual attainment, a faster speed of intellectual travelling, greater fancies, greater forces, larger means than are commensurate with health (Dellamora 118).

Collins's evocation of the increasingly mad Dexter draws on the physical and mental faults of the degenerate modern mad man. Irrational, unstable, and eccentric, Dexter appears to suffer the extremes of fancy, force, and intellectual striving that engendered madness. He condemns the ignorance, the mundane normality, and the brutality of the modern age in which he finds himself, envisaging himself as a man out of his time, and exaggerating his impression through his things. But if male madness is related to depletion of masculine force by modern life, connecting Dexter's collecting to hoarding indicates the significance of excessive passion and the unchecked direction of male energy toward engagements with material culture.

Dexter's weakness and the "bad habits" evidenced by his collections ensure that "his way of life" has "already damaged" his health, making "madness (if he lives)" of "little or no doubt" (281). Beyond his mental incapacity, Collins's collector betrays something of the imagery of infection or illness most commonly applied to mania (Harold 46), but permeating discourses of degeneracy, and definitions of pathology, as they impacted upon things also. Steketee and Frost describe the "sympathy" or "mutual influence" between things, and the "contagion" that spreads the "magic in objects," driving the hoarder to continue to collect (45). Stephen Harold has observed the "remarkably plentiful" presence of references to the "bug," the "passion," and to a language of "disease and related associations," in addition to images of "addiction, obsession, carrying a cross, slavery, and prison," in "discourse about collecting" (44-5). In such images, Harold argues, the "[m]ania or madness" of collecting "comes from outside the individual," taking possession of the collector and compelling him to "untoward, deviant activity," to the "eccentric," "peculiar" and "excessive" (45). Yet, Collins never fully removes the possibility that at least some aspect of Dexter's pathological collecting is driven by a conscious desire, which then takes hold thanks to his degenerate weakness.

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From birth, Dexter's marginalisation has arguably been seen, written in to his physicality. It hides no deeper than beneath the coverlet that obscures his congenital deformity. It is, however, when the performance of his identity as both unfortunate gentleman and marginalised collector slips that his true degeneracy is revealed, accentuated in physical imagery. Dexter is a confused mixture of attractive masculinity and troubling mutability. Described as "literally the half of a man," and a "strange and startling creature," he is otherwise "unusually handsome" and "unusually well-made" (173). His "horrible deformity" appears, in Major Fitz-David's account, to be symptomatic of, or at least tied to, his unhinged state, and both factors make him unsuitable to be "introduced to a lady – to a young lady especially" (191). To a man who has known him for years, his "mind is as deformed as his body," containing something of "the tiger and the monkey," animalistic descriptions that communicate with "'degenerationist' anxieties" that "a 'savage', 'ape', or 'beast' was latent in everyone and was threatening to get loose" (Ruddick 191). While "brilliantly clever," and clear of the sin of ever having "committed any acts of violence," his instability remains ever present, a lurking threat that "one moment, he would frighten you; and at the next, he would set you screaming with laughter" (191).

Described in very physical terms, Dexter's projected breakdown is acknowledged as of dual origins, the madness being both inherent in him, and also somewhat self-induced. Excitement of his nerves, indulgence of his peculiar penchants, will eventually cause "the whole mental structure" to "give way," causing him to finally "drop […] into madness or idiocy" (282). His journey of decline is charted from intelligent and cultured masculinity, to broken manhood, and while this could have been dismissed as a self-destructive trait, the threat of infection, of the spread of his madness and degeneracy through proximity to him or to his objects makes his collecting dangerous. While Valeria may claim to shake off the troubling effects of her encounter

with his things and his creative flights of fancy, those who know her well fear a far more considerable effect of her time spent with Dexter: "I declare to heaven […] I believe that monster's madness is infectious – and you have caught it!" (319).

The only fitting, moral end is to punish the collector and reward his potential victim with the trappings of respectable femininity: with domestic security, matrimonial happiness, and some well-earned stability at the end of the narrative. Dexter is prevented from continuing in his private performance of collecting, and is equally unable to rise from the predicted process of degeneration. The latent instability, hinted at by his collecting behaviours, and his disturbing things, is finally inscribed on his physicality. His last appearance in the novel reveals him to be a shadow of his former self, with "[h]is features […] pinched and worn," his whole face "wasted strangely in substance and size," his "once firm hands" now "withered" and trembling. From his initially firm and masculine appearance, he appears diminished, "[t]he paleness of his face" presenting "a sodden and sickly look – the fine outline was gone" (329). As his physicality deteriorates, his narrative too undergoes a breakdown, his boasted art of storytelling stuttering to a halt. Falling into a state of utter abstraction, the things with which he surrounds himself remain as a testament to the man and his maladies, performed or genuine. But his punishment is a loss of the power of possession and control. Having been so central and so deliberately obstructive to the investigation that drives the narrative, his extreme and misguided passions disappear at last, any flashes of intelligence vanishing along with the former "softness in his eyes," now set in "a piteous and vacant stare" (282).

For Collins, the terrible and unpredictable extremes of the pathological collector can be truly understood through the analysis of his relation to things. By marking him out as physically handicapped and mentally unstable, diagnosing his degenerate identity becomes a possibility, reinforcing the idea that his relations to material culture are

aberrant. Yet, his role as a collector belies the compulsive quality associated with pathological collecting, and his particular engagement with things, while undeniably degenerate, breaks the bounds of strict definition. Theatrical, self-conscious in his possession and performance of terrible things, which parody the methods and the control of the museum, his deviancy nevertheless tips over in to genuine pathology, ending in the abstraction of madness, and the loss of his grasp of these significant possessions through which he expressed his identity.

Fetishism in Arthur Machen's "Novel of the Iron Maid" (1890).

In contrast to Wilkie Collins's earlier collector, whose congenital deformity and psychological abnormality mean that his degeneracy is rendered in increasingly physically striking terms, Arthur Machen's collector effectively disguises his pathological identity behind a façade of unremarkable and even productive masculinity. He lives in an unexceptional neighbourhood, appears as a gentleman, even attends a club. However, in much the same way as Miserrimus Dexter, Mr. Mathius's pathological relation to objects is revealed in a manner that connects him to a recognisable degenerate identity. Certain fetishistic traits in his object-relations are revealed through the intrusion of the unfamiliar gaze of a visitor, fashioned in this instance as a potential victim, who realises the troubling effects of his deviant behaviour. What Machen's narrative betrays is the weakness for collecting it was suggested degeneracy engendered, and the remarkable complicity of objects imagined in such relations. With an audience in place the collector's pathology escalates swiftly, until ultimately, in a mockery of the fetishist's relation to things, its grip on the collector is literalised in the grasp of one of his disturbing collectables.

The collecting of Machen's Mr. Mathius is concerned with objects that could never be expected to warrant the attentions of an institutional repository. They are

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items too obscure, too laden with negative connotations, too indecent to merit their consideration or appreciation by a civilised audience. There is, therefore no redeeming feature in the extensive and spatially dominant collection, which entirely serves his specific desires. Mathius's unexceptional outward appearance belies a fetishistic relation to animated and obscure objects, to torture devices that fuel his fantasies and fill his idle hours. Despite his apparent expertise and extensive study of this very specialised subject, magnified by his presentation of the items to an unsuspecting visitor, the nature of the objects render his specialised house museum a Gothic space, haunted by the sadism and suffering of the past. While, as Chapter One began to suggest, collecting was a popular activity for single gentlemen based on safe and productive principles of object mastery, for Machen's collector, a fetishistic relation to the wrong objects unleashes their harmful qualities, demonstrating the pathological nature of this degenerate gentleman's collecting.

"The Narrative of the Iron Maid" is one recollection in a series of object-laden, interlinked tales entitled *The Three Impostors*, and narrates the terrible experiences of Mr. Burton, the agent and collector who is revisited in "The Incident of the Private Bar," analysed in Chapter Three. While Burton actively proclaims his identity as a collector in the latter narrative, in the "Novel of the Iron Maid" the collector who comes to dominate the narrative does not outwardly demonstrate his interests. Where Burton fuses his private desires with his public persona as a professional collector, Mathius is on the surface a reputable and fairly innocuous gentleman, with no discernible link to the practice of collecting. His devotion for "many years to collecting curiosities" is, however, a symptom of a far more pervasive and overwhelming compulsion to possess. His attentions, he confesses, have been directed towards the "really curious," and to the extent that the objects of his extensive collection dominate his existence despite a lack of outwardly perceptible symptoms (189).

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Mr. Mathius's collecting appears utterly removed from the chaotic variety of the collecting-maniac or hoarder. In this respect it reflects a different facet of the pathological and emasculating collecting that characterises this chapter. Where Collins's collector is characterised by a rapturous indulgence of his taste for the strange in all its variety, Machen's collector is a specialist, but a specialist whose particular penchant marks him out as corrupt. Through his pathological, fetishistic collector, therefore, Arthur Machen describes particular perils of object relations distanced from market and museum ideologies, and undertaken by a collector with a degenerate weakness. A language of excess and illicit passion has, according to Jean Baudrillard, long surrounded collecting, emerging in criticism and the collectors own affirmations. He notes, for instance, that "[c]ollectors are forever saying that they are 'crazy about' this or that object," couching their need for certain things as excessive and connected to behavioural aberrations. He states emphatically that all collectors, "without exception – even where the perversion of fetishism plays no part – cloak their collection in an atmosphere of clandestineness and concealment, of secrecy and sequestration," all of which is suggestive of "a feeling of guilt" (Baudrillard "Subjective Discourse or the Non-Functional System of Objects" 49).

Although already wreathed in secrecy and a sense of the clandestine, added to Machen's vision of pathological collecting is a degree of ecstatic fervour and single-minded fixation that exceeds these typical responses. Arthur Machen selects for his nightmarish tale of awful objects and strange collectors a sadistic collector of torture devices. Mr. Mathius's collection dominates his rooms, crowding, covering, and lining the space, so that every corner houses his "instruments of torture." These things, which are utterly removed from the typical items of interest to a collector, do not appear to demonstrate any discernible aesthetic value. They are not appealing to the eye, and they do not communicate taste or worth. Yet, they retain value for the collector as a means

of stimulating his very particular tastes, tastes that unfortunately for Mr. Burton require a fellow participant in his performance of the objects' true purpose. In this way Machen escalates the immediate impact of these objects by placing his narrator in the role of victim, completely unprepared for his encounter with these things. Wilkie Collins's discerning and analytic Mrs. Macallan sets out to appraise the man, and encounters Miserrimus Dexter's things forewarned of the collector's eccentricity. Mr. Burton is granted no such luxury, blindly stumbling on the horrors hiding in suburbia.

The particularly deviant collecting behaviour of Mathius appears as a terrible secret, successfully hidden from public view. In this way he is able to perform his normality and lure in the unsuspecting narrator, whilst expressing the true extent of his degeneracy through the clandestine display of his vast and terrible collection. Burton describes Mr. Mathius as nothing more than a "mere casual club acquaintance," and his discovery of the innocuous character's collecting is a chance occurrence facilitated by the collector himself. Burton is invited in to the collector's space in the depths of the night, following their unexpected meeting when he finds himself far from home. Entering the confines of the bachelor's apartments, he finds that "from every corner and space there seemed to start a horror," striking the eye of the reluctant and unsuspecting visitor. Unprepared for the spectacle that greets him, he is effectively assaulted from the first moment by the full force of the discovery, for which there is no clear point of comparison to normal behaviour, and no suitable response other than horror.

Unfamiliar items in form and nature, appearing from everywhere, strike Burton as menacing despite their incomprehensible strangeness:

> Great wooden frames, with complicated apparatus of ropes and pulleys, stood against the wall; a wheel of strange shape had a place beside a thing that looked like a gigantic gridiron; little tables glittered with bright steel instruments

carelessly put down as if ready for use; a screw and vice loomed out, casting

ugly shadows, and in another nook was a saw with cruel jagged teeth (189).

By thrusting the baffled Mr. Burton in to the midst of these extraordinary things, the

collector places himself in a position of power, and unleashes the full terrifying

potential of the possessions that make up his museum of horrors. To this extent, then,

his collecting could be seen to satisfy the essential masculine desire for mastery offered

by relations to material culture. In reality, however, Mathius remains frustrated.

Despite the differences in presentation, interesting comparisons can be made

between the utilisation of the domestic space in Collins's and Machen's texts. Dexter's

home is initially encountered as something of a Gothic museum, which the visitor

traverses alone, guided by the collector's notes, labels and annotations. Mrs Macallan

remains distanced from the exhibits as a visitor, or as spectator viewing his performance

of pathology. Mathius, in contrast, appears to have in mind a guided tour with a sinister

element of audience participation. He demands that the visitor take on an active role,

bringing to life the full horror of his things, and pulling the visitor in to the performance

of his very own torture chamber.

The element of conscious presentation in the arrangement of the devices, and the

implication that they are "ready for use," injects an element of performance in to Mr.

Mathius's presentation of these otherwise inert things, suggesting that they wait only for

a victim. His objects, in the same manner as Dexter's collectables, appear to reveal a

twisted and grotesque element of the collector, which in this case takes the form of a

greatly frustrated sadistic urge to actualise the so far figurative and fetishistic animation

of his collectables. The collector's pathology is both genuine and dangerous, and is

made more so by his façade of normality. Within the regulated and controlled space of

his home, Mathius looks to "inflict" his collection on his acquaintance, tricked in to an

acquaintance with a man so efficient at hiding his degeneracy.

In engendering the pain and the terror held in the authentic items, Mathius describes to Burton how "[s]ome – many, I may say" of his collected items "have been used." He draws him through the dimly lit rooms from one terrible device to another, bringing the torture chamber to life and revelling in the interaction (189). Not content with revealing the collection, which in fact stretches across two separate rooms, he revels in the act of storytelling, recounting an imagined history and evoking the full atmosphere of the objects' original context. With a captive audience in place, he begins to bring the objects to life indicating, for instance, "that sort of collar, something like a big horse-shoe," and evoking the full usage and atmosphere of "those queer garrets under the leads" (189-90). The insidious threat lurks behind his act of displaying the collection that his visitor will become the victim of his sadistic and fetishistic desires, pulled in to the performance of his objects' potential for terrible and efficient destruction.

Machen's collector, much like Miserrimus Dexter, demonstrates a very particular knowledge, in this case born of research in to the tools and practices of torture throughout history. The negative associations carried by the objects, and the obsessive fixation on this particular variety of things, are suggestive of a marginalised identity that prioritises a personal, eroticised attachment to things. The understated nature of the gentleman, his apparent normality, belie Mr. Mathius's true state, as a man who, in his moments of reflection, fancies "I see the faces of the men who have suffered, faces lean with agony, and wet with the sweats of death" (190). The sadistic, or at least somewhat voyeuristic, desire to possess authentic torture devices and to see them animated is for Mathius both a source of pleasure and of frustration. These fantasies appear real to him, "growing distinct out of the gloom", as does the satisfaction he receives from them, as he imagines the things active in their intended purpose (190). In this relation to

ambiguous objects, animated and granted a self-gratifying significance for the pathological collector, Machen appears to evoke elements of fetishism.

Discussions of fetishism frequently describe an active role for objects, in which they come to reflect an aspect of the collector. Daniel Brown's discussion of fetishism draws attention to the "spectrum of fetishistic transpositions" that take place in relations to objects, giving the example of the fetishist's glove, which "takes on various lives of its own," each constructed in relation to the individual (160). While object-focused literary studies such as Bill Brown's "Thing Theory" have emphasised the agency of objects, the "ambivalent significance" and material unpredictability of items once acknowledged as a fetish object can be comprehended as a product of the fetishist himself (160). These things become an expression of the "narcissistic self-engrossment" of the fetishist, "who collects and eroticizes his own being, evading the amorous embrace to create a closed dialogue with himself" (Baudrillard 19).

The stimulation the fetishist experiences is the product of a closed relation between man and an eroticised, objectified aspect of his psyche. As a bachelor collector, whose contact with the sort of masculine clubland identified in Chapter One is characterised by detachment, Mathius creates and peoples a world formed around his collection, over which he might maintain his mastery and dominance through the possession of these things. Regardless of the deviant desires implied in fetishism, its effects should be contained, thanks to this inward-looking relation to the self. Yet the suggestion remains that, in prioritising his possessions, and looking to obtain the full satisfaction of these items, his escalating desires may drive him to reach out beyond the "closed dialogue with himself" to draw in a genuine victim.

In significant ways Arthur Machen's depiction of this pathological collector draws out the ambiguities of such marginalised identities, emphasising the unpredictability of object-relations by signalling subtle departures from characteristic

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behaviours at one moment, and at the next affirming their blatant pathology. In reference to Susan Pearce's definition of fetishistic collecting, John Windsor describes the fetishism of objects as "the removal of the object from its historical and cultural context and its redefinition in terms of the collector" (50). Mr. Mathius embraces the historical and often exotic qualities of his objects, seeking to re-embed them within the context from which they were taken, to recreate an authentic sadistic moment from history. Yet, aspects of the narcissistic reorientation of the collection are unmistakable. He increasingly looks to place himself in the rediscovered scene of the torture chamber, emphasising his involvement in the fantasy that is a refiguring of reality.

Mathius places himself within a personally stimulating but utterly pathological scenario, as master of the torture chamber, and knowledgeable collector of terrible artefacts that dominate his consciousness to the exclusion of all healthy, genuinely productive concerns. He seems to desire an appreciative audience, and yet freezes Mr. Burton with horror from the moment he enters the collection. He boasts of the extent of his collection, and indicates that, on both a cerebral and a sensuous level, he looks to improve himself and extend his knowledge through the experience of his things. But to a man confused and overwhelmed by the horror of the murderous items, there is nothing to appreciate in the collector's commitment. His supposedly intellectual but overwhelmingly fetishistic endeavours become a threat.

Mathius's version of aspiration extends to a desire to extend his collection to take in the "ingenious" methods and complex "contrivances" demonstrated by the "Orientals" (Machen 190), the inventive proficiency of which would be imagined in terrible detail in Octave Mirbeu's *Torture Gardens* three years later. If, as Sara Knox suggests, "fetishism describes (and collection exemplifies) […] the 'objectification of subjectivity,'" then the subjective expression in Machen's text is demonstrative of a highly pathological and escalating relation to fetishised objects of torture (296). His

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desire to build on his collection so far implies this relation is not static, but instead risks

being extended and intensified, as he consciously adopts further objects and behaviours

in to his collection and his pathological identity, fuelling his need for experimentation.

An unlucky visitor, Machen suggests, might enjoy the delights of the oriental torture

chamber, all in the collector's pursuit of satisfying knowledge.

By the time that Burton stumbles across the collector's path, the particular

frisson that Mr. Mathius appears to experience through his things is carried with him

beyond the limits of the collection. It preoccupies him in his leisure hours in the club,

when he "would sit silent in an arm-chair for hours, neither reading nor smoking"

(gentlemanly occupations), but merely "now and again moistening his lips with his

tongue and smiling queerly to himself" (188-9). Although apparently limited thus far to

the boundaries of the collection and the realms of fantasy, his pathological collecting,

and the desires connected with it, are escalating.

Fetishism as Roy Ellen describes it, and as the Oxford English Dictionary's

definition indicates, was primarily an interior or self-reflective process concerned with

"sexual inversion" and "substitution" (OED "Fetishism"), and "an ambiguous

relationship between control of objects by people and of people by objects" (Ellen 219).

These highly subjective, personal interactions and reactions, were reflected in a

fluctuating dynamic between object and subject, which manifested and controlled

desire. The transgressive escalation of Mathius's fetishistic relation to things is

demonstrated when he moves beyond this relation to objectified desire, seeking to map

his desires on to an unwilling living subject. Suddenly his time spent musing at his

club, apparently abstracted, appears less innocent. His innocuous exterior is dangerous,

allowing a sadistic, pathological collector to seek, at best a viewer to horrify, and at

worst a victim for his very own torture chamber. Without the willing submission of a

sadomasochistic relation, Mathius extends beyond fetishism in to utterly sadistic

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pathology. Even now, however, his identity as a collector, and his proud need to perform his collection, asserts itself as he moves to unveil his latest item. And it is through this item that Machen imagines him being punished.

While the category of object to which he has been devoted is clear from the start, Mr. Mathius's attachment to a single expression of his fetishistic desire appears most pronounced at the climax of the short story, with the introduction of his latest acquisition. This sense of his single-minded preoccupation, and the stimulation it generates, appeals to Mieke Bal's psychoanalytical definition of fetishism as "a strong, mostly eroticised attachment to a single object or category" (105). This object personifies the violence latent in the collection as a whole and presents an embodiment of the collector's sadistic desires. As an idealised female figure his latest specimen taps in to a literary tradition of fetishised female forms and animate statues, as discussed at length by Barbara Johnson in her chapter on "Romancing the Stone" (109-130). From the idealised female form of Ovid's Pygmalion (114), to the nineteenth-century Parnassian "cult of form" often represented in poetry as "love for a statue" (117), and the sadistic, statuesque female of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's *Venus in Furs* (1870), these figures have spoken of desires, passions, and literary and cultural moments, all fuelled and yet resisted by the sadistic object of desire.

Stood beneath a lamp on a wooden platform, this female figure "might well have been intended for a Venus" (190). But the particular nature and purpose of the object in question allies it particularly to the sort of Goddess figure of Richard Marsh's *The Goddess: A Demon* (1900), a subsequent depiction of a particularly malevolent class of feminised object that enslaves and then destroys male devotees. Marsh's terrible item, designed for human sacrifice, is seemingly animate despite its material status as an object, pushing the boundaries between animate and inanimate item, object of devotion and weapon of destruction. The intended purpose of Machen's object is allied to that of

Marsh's goddess. It is an instrument of pain and death. Yet, this capacity is for Mr. Mathius a source of stimulation, equal to that of his other objects, making its feminine qualities initially appear almost incidental. Nevertheless, in the final stages of the narrative, Machen gives face and form to this object, imparting a degree of consciousness that questions his collector's powers of possession.

Mathius's goddess figure arrives from Germany packaged and with a "letter of advice" attached to it. It is a desired object, actively acquired, and an exciting prospect for the collector to explore and understand. Much like Marsh's Goddess, it is a strange mix of inanimate object and unpredictable animation. It presents the ultimate incarnation of the fetish as "a decadent object," as Charles Bernheimer describes, emphasising the etymology of the word to draw out the sense in which it encapsulates an "artificial, skilfully contrived" item (Portuguese), or that which is "made by art" (Latin) (63). This cunning artifice is, in Machen's text, something to be applauded, making the item worthy of its place amidst the other efficient devices of the collection. Having already sought to animate his collection, this object imparts another degree of instability. As a fetishist and a collector Mathius is utterly convinced of his position as master of his possessions, and of his home-made torture chamber. But his desire to draw in a viewer, to bring the objects to life, and even to seek a genuine victim on which to practice the historic act of torture has unexpected consequences for the collector's relation to his things.

So eager is the collector to present to his horrified acquaintance this newly acquired, prized item that his position as master of the controllable and objectified realm is undermined. His desire for experience and understanding overmasters him. Failing to read the "letter of advice" and the warning that comes with the Venus figure, Mathius finds himself tasting at first hand, the power of the Iron Maid's embrace. The fetish object takes on a life of its own, much as the collector desired, but in a manner that

defies its supposed relation to the fetishist it is meant to reflect (190). The satisfying

and self-reflexive fetishism is abandoned. Sealing her crushing embrace with a final

fatal kiss, this particular device of execution (and Marsh's titular Goddess also) can be

seen to demonstrate the fetishistic emotiveness that Roy Ellen outlines. Appearing as

something of an avenging angel, the Venus figure gives the impression that it "may

sometimes be said to see, hear, understand and act." Subject to almost "human passions

of anger, revenge," Machen's object halts the escalating activities of his collector (224).

His fetishistic collector fully indulges his particular tastes through things, yet, the

control that the material realm could be expected to afford is taken away when he is

brought in to the presence of this item.

In describing his collector of torture devices Arthur Machen appears to draw on

some of the behaviours and the relations to things that may be classified as fetishistic.

His objects possess some of the qualities of the fetish. Yet the narrative highlights the

perilous ambiguity of pathological object-relations. The collector's engagement with

things, and indeed the nature of the collectables themselves, defy the classificatory

impulses and "medical 'gaze'" that Robert A. Nye notes were directed toward fetishism

at the fin de siècle (13). "[D]ocumented and named by doctors and psychiatric

specialists in the 1880s and 1890s" (13), fetishism was assumed, along with "any

symptoms of 'perversion'" to be an illustration of "the presence of a progressive

degeneration that, if not arrested, would produce increasingly serious and bizarre

behaviour" (19). This need to identify and arrest degeneracy makes Machen's

departures from definable symptoms all the more significant.

Machen describes a collector who takes up a fetishistic and deviant relation to

things. Mr. Mathius's collecting demonstrates an escalation of symptoms, and an

emphasis on bizarre objects and damaging relations to things, that suggests the dangers

of such maladies going unchecked. He is driven by compulsion, brought to devote his

home to his accumulated torture devices, and his waking hours to their contemplation, and yet, as a collector, there remains a degree of discerning involvement with things that questions the unstoppable compulsion implied in degenerate collecting. What the particular objects and the fetishist's relation to material objectifications of desire allow Machen to explore, are the instabilities of power relations surrounding acts of collection, possession, object mastery, and control. Whilst kept in touch with more normative, albeit specialised modes of collecting, the increasing unpredictability of the collector engender a corresponding question as to the role and stability of his objects.

These things take on a life and a significance of their own, appearing as dominate and unmasterable incarnations of the collector's own fetishistic, destructive pathology. Things offer stimulation of a very particular nature to the pathological collector, and lay bare a hidden facet of his identity, exposing the deviancy that is otherwise undetectable within the respectable shell of his gentlemanly self. Yet, his desires are no longer satisfied by the collection alone, which frustrates rather than satisfies his desires. Inge E. Boer discusses the "absence or lack" that is "just as much a part of the fetish" (169). The "seductive incompleteness" arising from this absence is, for Mathias, imagined quite literally as the terrible torture devices that only lack a victim. The potential of the devices remains unrealised until the alien gaze of a visitor is introduced. But activating and realising the animate qualities of the collectables shifts the power balance between object and subject, emasculating a collector who can neither master nor fully enjoy the objects of his collection.

The fetish "as *objet chargé,*" Boer suggests, "acts upon those who behold it and holds them in its grip" (169). For Mathius, this is actualised in the restraining, tearing, breaking capacity of the devices he collects, the literalised grasp of the items that also figuratively hold the fetishist in their grasp as well. Machen imagines a pathological collector, whose desires threaten to become murderous as the fetishised collectables

take on a new life, and as he begins to seek new victims, and promptly halts his progress through an accidental execution. While his objects remain able to circulate far and wide, however, the transmissable element of the collector's pathology remains to claim further victims. Torture devices may not be particularly popular or indeed practical collectables, yet, as Machen suggests, while degenerate weakness prevails, pathological collecting may follow.

Bibliomania in George Gissing's "Christopherson" (1902).

Unlike Mr. Mathius, George Gissing's titular collector, Mr. Christopherson, is outwardly marked by his degeneracy. Described as a fallen gentleman, his history is notable for its material, class, and financial decline, the effects of which are written in to his decrepit physiology and in to the history of his collections. Gissing's narrative hangs on the collector's pathological book collecting, drawing on the ambiguity between definitions of bibliophilia and bibliomania, emphasising the fluidity of boundaries between normative and pathological collecting. Where Collins and Machen introduced unconnected visitors to the collections of Miserrimus Dexter and Mr. Mathius, Gissing introduces Mr. Christopherson's collection through a fellow enthusiast, and increasingly fond friend, a young man whose early efforts contrast against the extremity of his older counterpart's overwhelming and decidedly pathological behaviour. Furthermore, unlike the narratives of Collins and Machen, Gissing's short story is as concerned with loss as possession, detailing the collector's relation to collections that he continues to build as well as those things he has lost.

George Gissing's short story "Christopherson" begins with an act of collecting, following the evening wanderings of the narrator, a young gentleman who describes perusing the "rows of volumes," until a "certain book overcame me" (57). His casual tone belies a compulsion to collect, but in a text that emphasises possession, it is

significant that this act of active collecting is carried out by the young counterpart of the pathological Christopherson. In the course of this young collector's wanderings, reminiscent of the flâneur's meanderings through the labyrinthine metropolis[3], the young gentleman appears compelled to turn his steps toward the stalls and shops of the back streets to satisfy a very specific desire for books. He is actively involved in collecting, driven by his burgeoning bibliophilia, in a positive image of golden sunshine, pleasurable meandering, and gratifying acquisition.

The meeting place between pleasurable bibliophilia and pathological bibliomania is illustrated by Gissing through the introduction of a particular object. It is in the act of satisfying his compulsion by buying yet another book, that the young collector acquires a specimen with the name inscribed "on the flyleaf" in a very fine hand, "W.R. Christopherson, 1849" (57). A love of book collecting connects the two men, but the contrast of success and loss, ascendancy and decline, is crystalised in this moment and in this object. The young man acquiring the particular specimen, still bearing the identity of its former possessor, while the older gentleman looks on effectively indicates early on the cost of pathology. Presenting the item to Christopherson as a gift further highlights the powerlessness of his position, as a spectator rather than an active collector, no longer able to collect for himself, yet still driven by his relation to things. In this way Christopherson is instantly contrasted with this vision of the hobbyist's collecting. His experiences of collecting are no longer productive, and rarely satisfying, but continue to be driven by a destructive compulsion. The collector is a troubling, haunting presence, marginalised by his inability to participate actively in market exchanges.

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[3]See Bruce Mazlish's "The Flâneur: From Spectator to Representation," David Frisby's "The Flâneur in Social Theory," Robert Alter's *Imagined Cities: Urban Experience and the language of the Novel*, and Walter Benjamin's *The Arcades Project*, particularly section "M: The Flâneur" (416-455).

Christopherson's history as a whole is a story of possession and loss, coloured by a sense of failure, as symbolised in this initial item. The "sale of the Christopherson library," referred to as if the event garnered some notoriety, and through which this item re-entered the market, marked the loss of some "24,718" items, formerly owned by the collector. The scale of this collection implies not only Christopherson's success as a collector, but his financial position, as a man capable of purchasing and housing such a significant collection. Yet, at the commencement of the narrative, his collecting appears to be a thing of the past, the collector having plunged into a degenerate and dysfunctional state. He indicates for the narrator the house "which *was* mine," a respectable residence on an "imposing terrace," with the mournful whisper that "[t]he window to the right […] that was my library" (58). By his own admission, his fall is the result of his own "folly," as driven by his pathological compulsion he overextends himself, admitting that "I had enough for my needs, but thought I needed more." His weakness spells disaster for his class, status, wealth, and for his identity as a gentlemanly collector. His collecting now is principally no longer active, his collection consisting of "a few books" to which he is "very rarely indeed" able to add (58).

The contrast of successful, pleasurable collecting with compulsion and decline, and the specific emphasis on books as an object of desire, connects Gissing's text to a particular pair of collecting identities. In the sense of his collecting as a compulsion, and in the extremity and ferocity of this depicted desire, Gissing appears to draw on the images of the bibliophile and the bibliomaniac, and the pathological characteristics associated with each. Just as hoarding can be classified as pathological when it begins to impede the individual's existence by causing "distress and dysfunction" (Steketee and Frost 12), definitions of book collecting indicate that the threshold of pathology lies at the border between passion and perdition, at the moment when desire becomes the collector's torment. While both bibliophilia and bibliomania denote different degrees of

pathology, the extremity that collecting is seen to run to ensures that even the comparatively benign bibliophilia is popularly presented as running to madness. Bibliomania, as the name indicates, was considered to be a consuming passion regarded as "simply a 'mania'" by "most persons" viewing it from the outside. This perception was formed in the popular and diagnostic mindset, and promoted by imaginative responses that explored the various symptoms of the behaviour as a hobby and as pathology (Brown *Bibliomania* 3).

The bibliomaniac skews away from the "normal", away from "balance". The language surrounding Holbrook Jackson's description of the "abnormal" is provocative. Bibliomania is "acute, restless," "anxious" (523), it is "obsession," "inordinate, extravagant, excessive" (527). The bibliomaniac is "intemperate," they are "addicts," "slaves," "drudges for the time, madmen, fools, dizzards, beside themselves" (527). Yet, it is never clear just who may be affected.

Aside from this diagnostic ambiguity, the expression of the behaviour was also uncertain. While bibliomania was undoubtedly a malady that those with a desire to collect might be subject to, and that often had a detrimental effect, it was nevertheless imagined that such a furious pursuit of items could have less negative effects. Mild mania might breed an entertaining form of collecting, amusing to the connoisseur, while the diligent and considered pursuit might yield productive and far-reaching benefits. As John Taylor Brown suggests, "even what are commonly regarded as the oddest and most fantastic of their proceedings, often possess a foundation of intelligent interest which the very dullest must comprehend as soon as it is point out to them" (Brown *Bibliomania* 4). Gissing's engagement with the figure, however, appears increasingly decisive. His bibliomaniac betrays no glimmer of positivity, and furthermore becomes actively damaging to the collector and to those brought in to close proximity with his collections.

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Typically approached in a whimsical or amused fashion, with anecdotal evidence of the absurdities collecting may run to, accounts of the practice of book collecting nevertheless betray an uncontrollable extreme lurking behind the popular pursuit, and behind collecting generally. Richard Marsh would draw on this popular image of the excessive collector in his reference to "the china maniac" ("The Adventure of the Pipe" 7). Stella Margetson notes the "Parisian craze for collecting blue-and-white china, which spread to the drawing rooms of Chelsea and Kensington" in the nineteenth century (111). In "The Use and Abuse of Museums" W. S. Jevons described collecting as a "passion that "runs into many extravagances and absurdities," giving the example of the "mania" for "postage stamp collecting." Stamp collecting, he suggests, while "not to be despised or wholly condemned," risks descending in to "mania" where a desire to collect overmasters the effective presentation of the objects (61). Writing specifically in relation to the passion for books, Max Sander suggests that "[s]ome people" think of "collecting old books" as "a kind of mild insanity" (155). What these engagements indicate is the tendency to perceive a danger of excess in even the most fashionable of collecting practices, and to marginalise these behaviours as deviant and extreme, whilst seeking to define and to classify it.

Sander does this explicitly when he identifies stratifications of book collecting, falling under different definitions according to the extremity of the individual's collecting. "The bibliophile," he proclaims, "is the master of his books, the bibliomaniac their slave." The "friendly, warming flame of a hobby" felt by the bibliophile, becomes for the bibliomaniac "a devastating, ravaging wildfire, a tempest of loosened and vehement passions" (160). Christopherson's over-reaching, and his resultant disastrous fall (a product of a failed financial gamble), tip Gissing's collector over in to the realms of collecting mania, placing him in the category of bibliomaniac, as a collector who is subject to a damaging passion for the objects of his desire.

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The question arises, therefore, as to what catalyses the transition from pleasurable passion to destructive pathology. The physical indicators of Christopherson's presentation suggest a latent weakness. Described as "about sixty years of age," with "his long, thin hair and straggling beard […] grizzled," a "somewhat rheumy eye," and a "bloodless, hollowed countenance," this "shabbily clad" individual retains a touch of his formerly respectable state. This hint of former respectability only serves to highlight the extent of his degeneration. A "fallen gentleman," betrayed as such by his accent if not his outward appearance, he combines in his manner of address both "intelligence" and "good nature," with "a pathetic diffidence". The lingering trace of the "class he originally belonged" to remains about him, imprinted despite his evident fall from grace, just as his former success is written quite literally in to objects that in fact only attest to his loss. Gissing embodies fears of degradation and degeneration in his fallen collector.

While tapping in to the imagery of decline and degeneration, Gissing privileges the objects of the narrative and Christopherson's impulse to collect, connecting the text to concerns regarding material culture and pathology, and suggesting that degeneracy leaves the collector open to such conditions. Once subject to such mania the collector's degeneracy appears boundless. Despite having already sustained significant losses, Mr. Christopherson is threatened with further decline by continuing to indulge his desire to collect. The sense of decay demonstrated in the man himself is echoed in his remaining collection, in the sort of relation that is, according to Daniel Cook, readily identifiable in literary depictions of libraries in literature, where both scholars and texts are imagined as being subject to the "ravages of history and the degradations of the body," each declining in proportion (2). The true extent of the ravaging of both collector and collection is only fully illustrated, however, when the young collector views Christopherson's remaining things.

Christopherson invites his fellow collector into his home, not to meet his wife, not to show off his apartments, but to gain the affirmation of having his collection viewed. His perturbation, when he hesitates on the threshold of his rooms, is not with the size of the dwelling, not with its modesty, or even with his wife's ill health that the pair have so lately been discussing, but with the fact that "I haven't space to show my books properly" (59). The small space in which he now resides is utterly unsuited to the collector's purpose. Having passed up a "narrow staircase," when the viewer moves through the door on the "second floor landing," he opens a window onto the true extent of Christopherson's supposedly reduced collecting. The description Gissing gives is worth quoting at length:

> On the threshold I stood astonished. The room was a small one, and would in any case have only just sufficed for homely comfort, used as it evidently was for all daytime purposes; but certainly a third of the entire space was occupied by a solid mass of books, volumes stacked several rows deep against two of the walls and almost up to the ceiling. A round table and two or three chairs were the only furniture – there was no room, indeed, for more. The window being shut, and the sunshine glowing upon it, an intolerable stuffiness oppressed the air. Never had I been made so uncomfortable by the odour of printed paper and bindings (59).

The trappings of domestic life are largely absent, and those that remain are forced into the smallest of spaces, representing the bare minimum necessary for everyday use. The care taken in the collection of the imposing mass of volumes is clearly not mirrored in the selection of such practical things as adequate or comfortable furnishings, which do not warrant any descriptive detail. The single living space is crowded uncomfortably, and rendered oppressive by its "intolerable stuffiness." Even for a fellow bookworm, the atmosphere is "uncomfortable," almost miasmic.

Writing on the efficacy of efficient collecting and presentation of objects, W.S. Jevons notes that ordering, usage, and selection determined whether a collection could be "despised" or "condemned" (Jevons 61). Overcrowding hindered the efficacy of collections, making moderation an ideal quality in a collector or a curator. At all times "mania" and the all-consuming "passion" for collection could turn an efficient and productive collection in to a chaotic mass of compulsively acquired "lumber" to use Nordau's term. A book collection should be a solid and positive investment for a man of wealth, taste, and sufficient learning. The influence of pathology on a degenerate individual turns a worthy collection in to a source of suffering and loss. No longer a functioning member of his rightful class, Christopherson sacrifices all, devoting his energies to his favoured pursuit, rather than to mastering the skills that would have maintained his financial and social position. The "misfortune" that has brought about the ultimate downfall carries an unavoidable sense that it is connected to these ultimate and all-consuming desires, and the seductive draw of things.

When Christopherson gives in to his pathological compulsions, not once but twice, he is described as failing on several fronts. Quite significantly for perceptions of book collecting, he defies assumptions connected to his gentlemanly status. Susan Stewart notes in *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, the line between positive and negative book collecting could be drawn in relation to class. Citing "the juxtaposition of D'Israeli's criticism of the bibliomania of those who collect books for their own sake with his approval of the 'tasteful ornamentation of books'," she notes that "[o]nly 'taste', the code word for class varieties of consumption, articulates the difference here" (34). Those with the privilege of taste were, according to such a reading, less likely to be seen to fall in to bad patterns of collecting. Yet, in Gissing's narrative, through the fall of Christopherson, the stability of such a differentiation, and the security of the class boundaries it implies are

eroded. Christopherson's downwards slide is a warning of the sweeping and infectious nature of the desire to possess.

As dangerous and potentially deviant as the drive to collect has already been shown to be in Chapter One for gentlemanly collectors, when activated within the degenerate individual, the expression of the collecting desire can be perceived as potentially all the more disturbing. The scale and the nature of Christopherson's collecting appears to imbue the collected objects themselves with a degree of malevolent agency, or an infectious characteristic all of their own. However, they are never animated or active in the manner of the objects of Chapter One. The emphasis remains on the pathological collector and his infectious malady that is held within his things. The response to this transmissible quality of the collection is, in the manner this Chapter has illustrated so far, to ally the problematic behaviours to a diagnosable pathological identity.

Certainly, Christopherson's collecting could be said to adhere to the "primary symptom of bibliomania," that is the tendency "to dote on books without any desire to read them; to accumulate copies for the sake of hoarding them; to be concerned about external condition rather than internal quality" (Jackson 559). There is no indication that Christopherson ever truly valued the texts he acquired for the knowledge they contain, or even for the quality of the editions. Yet, Christopherson's collecting does not entirely communicate with a definition of bibliomania.

Christopherson is undoubtedly motivated by the sort of ""*avarice*" or "*animal instinct*" that drives the actions of the bibliomaniac beyond the normal limits of collecting. Holbrook Jackson's description of the bibliomaniac's succumbing slowly and "*almost insensibly*" to a diseased "*inclination to expand and diverge,*" similarly resonates with Gissing's presentation of his collector, who is no longer the "owner of a taste, but the victim of an insatiable passion" (Jackson 528). Christopherson's mania

does not, however, entirely occlude his sensibilities as a collector. Gissing does not entirely write off his collector as the subject of an insensible and utterly undiscerning drive to acquire. Despite the extraordinary number of texts in his initial collection, he is able to identify a specific volume that he had formerly possessed, years after the initial loss of the item. He may not look to utilise the knowledge held within the things, he certainly does not appear to have personally benefitted on an intellectual level from the texts, yet they are not valued as a fashion statement, or for quantity alone. Christopherson, it is implied, may be overwhelmed by the full force of the collection, but he retains an intimate knowledge of each and every book.

If Christopherson is, then, not entirely dismissive of, or insensible to, the objects that he collects, if he in fact retains an encyclopaedic knowledge of each and every item, both presently possessed and lost to the market, then his behaviour is difficult to dismiss as pure pathology or unbridled compulsion. He is not accumulating "lumber," indistinguishable and unrelated trinkets, as Nordau suggested the degenerate collector typically did. Rather, he is pursuing a specialism, albeit to extremity. In the absence of his failed financial gambling and his many losses, his efforts might have been admirable. But his innate weakness, and his inability to master market investments, results in an increasing marginalisation that drives him from the mansion and the library, to the impoverished domicile overcrowded with poorly stored things. The things of his collections appear as spores, scattered to the wind, each with the potential to transmit a trace of both the collector and his pathology to those with a weakness for collectable books. Christopherson demonstrates to the younger collector the risk inherent in collecting, suggesting that, as with hoarding, bibliomania may be a question of escalation, bibliophilia becoming bibliomania in a manner that is difficult to distinguish.

Marginalised collecting behaviours could escalate beyond personal suffering, in to truly unacceptable acts. Gissing places his collector on the spectrum of pathology, yet, by emphasising his identity as a collector, he falls short of relegating him distinctly to the maniacal end of the scale. Bibliomania, Sander states, has "produced more than one crime interesting enough to be remembered" (Sander 155), yet equally spawns "harmless maniacs" notable for their entertaining eccentricities rather than their criminal extremes (Sander 160). While it might be viewed as a mere hobby, it might equally supply intriguing case studies of "pathological, irresistible" mental compulsions, which make it "most interesting to psychiatrists and criminologists" (Sander 160). The position that the book collector occupies on this spectrum could vary from one moment to the next, escalating or diminishing, and thereby making the afflicted gentleman a constant threat for his potential susceptibility to criminal urges.

The physical damage experienced by Christopherson's ailing wife, whose very life appears to be threatened by her impoverished state, her overwork, and her proximity to the mouldering collection, threatens to identify Christopherson as a harmful pathological collector. Despite being offered what amounts to a chance to save her, on the condition that he give up his collection, he cannot bring himself to commit to a complete rejection of his identity as a book collector. His relation to things identifies Christopherson's collecting as deviant, and indicates that he is unlikely to overcome this particular malady in to which he has slipped for a second time. His collecting appears as an addiction, and while he is unable to rid himself of this need to possess, his compulsion will continue to damage both himself and those exposed to it.

By pairing his collectors, young with old, bibliophile with bibliomaniac, Gissing highlights the relation between these stages, suggesting an insidious progression toward outright mania. In a period that looked to classify, clarify, order and contain, one might expect Gissing's collector to be identified, and therefore understood, his compulsion

contained, and mastered. Yet, where this pathology is concerned, and much like the concept of degeneration as a whole, it constantly threatens to spread, infect, escalate, and evade comprehension. As Holbrook Jackson indicates, a wide range of characters might be "afflicted" by this "malady": "for some are wise, subtle, witty; others dull, sad, and heavy, some intelligent, some ignorant; they are moody and miserly, vain and bragging." Connected only by the degree to which they succumb to their desires, in that they are "all mad insofar as they are unduly obsessed," the implications of such a pathology rendered transmissible through things are terrible (Jackson 522).

Collins and Machen describe collectors revelling in the things of their collection, yet suffering through the overwhelmingly pathological relations, in which the objects seemingly participate in their demise. Yet, Christopherson's pleasure in the pursuit appears to be a thing of the past. He suffers with the ultimate curse of the bibliomaniac, who "can never be said to enjoy his books," being "too anxious, too passionately inclined to hunt," and yet, despite regularly perusing catalogues, he is no longer able to actively collect (Jackson 522). He appears as the most unreservedly fallen and degenerate of the three collectors, whose pathological collecting genuinely spreads its negative effects beyond the collector himself, resulting in the loss of his family's status, and the severe decline of his second wife. Just as his narrative begins with an emphasis on loss, it concludes with a sense that Christopherson's pathology has stripped him of everything, the emphasis on possession finally giving way entirely to loss.

Conclusion: Moralising and the Pathological Collector?

If the collectors of Chapter One demonstrated a deliberate departure from gentlemanly models of social collecting behaviours, then the collectors of this chapter represent a more extreme deviation from acceptable norms, targeting terrible collectables unrepentantly or recognisable collectables to excess, and betraying a marginalised and pathologised behaviours. Positioned so as to be removed from

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society, and threatening to spread their influence beyond the limits of the collection, each of the characters analysed demonstrate their dangerously transmissible degeneracy through their pathological collecting. Wilkie Collins's *The Law and the Lady* (1875), Arthur Machen's "Novel of the Iron Maid" (1890), and George Gissing's "Christopherson" (1902), each present characters whose collecting behaviours are characterised respectively as collecting-mania, fetishism, and bibliomania. The mentally and physically degenerate collectors appear as a negative presence within the texts, possessed of a disturbing demeanour, and a taste for problematic objects, ranging from human curiosities and torture devices to apparently innocuous, but nevertheless harmful quantities of books.

The narratives gesture to degeneracy as a pervasive cultural malady, generating a weakness in men for collecting, in a similar manner to Nordau suggested in reference to the "craze" for collecting. This weakness might be expressed in an excessive devotion to acceptable objects, escalating to a degree that is harmful, or equally might emerge in a mistaken devotion to unworthy objects. The nineteenth century has increasingly been analysed as an age of objects, and understood as defined by a complex and fluid series of relations to material culture. Opportunistic acquisition, collecting to excess, and succumbing to fashionable "crazes," could all be symptoms of a pervasive commodity culture and a dominant idea of the museum. By being in some respect conceived of as productive, extreme collecting behaviours could be brought in to relation with models of object-mastery promoted by the museum and the market. For those invested with an innate or a developed weakness, however, the age of objects and its range of wares might inspire pathological collecting behaviours, distanced from the Enlightenment rationale and masculine mastery defining museum and market both.

In responding to the unlimited possibilities and the many permutations of such deviancy and such protean objects, the texts imagine the full impact of the impulse

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toward decline and dissolution on the collectors and their possessions. The narratives chart a series of oscillations between outright mania and consciously contrary collecting, encouraging and yet frustrating diagnosis. A rational presence in the texts, embodied in the narrators, record and analyse experiences of the pathological collectors and their collections. They observe the extremities collecting may run to, and the threat it may pose to collectors and visitors alike, indicating consequences beyond the self-destruction of the collectors themselves. The capacity of objects to circulate adds a new level to the possibilities for transmission of degeneracy. As such, Collins, Machen, and Gissing prioritise in their narratives the objects of these men, which question the possibility of possession for men whose identities necessitate a trajectory toward decline.

With a spectrum of objects circulating through late-nineteenth-century Britain, ranging from "discarded trash at one extreme to priceless heirlooms at the other" as Ruth Hoberman puts it in her discussion of the modern museum, a plurality of institutions and approaches to material items allowed them to take on "wildly vacillating meanings and values, according to how they were presented and exchanged" ("In Quest of a Museal Aura" 467). These acts of presentation and exchange, equally figured on a spectrum, ranged from the positive, productive, aesthetically brilliant collection, to something far more negative, insular, and even grotesque.

Wilkie Collins's collecting-maniac, Arthur Machen's fetishist, and George Gissing's Bibliomaniac have each devoted themselves to collecting items that appear marginalised and unsavoury, in their own right and in their relation to the pathological collectors. *The Law and the Lady*, the "Novel of the Iron Maid", and "Christopherson," published in 1875, 1890, and 1902 respectively, can be seen to present engagements with significant concerns regarding masculinity and materiality. Concerned with pathology and possession, they imagine objects and collectors in opposition to

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normative models of collecting, the men emasculated by the apparent agency of things that overwhelm them and overspill their bounds. They explore the material instabilities arising around degeneration, pathology, and the possibilities and shortcomings of a diagnostic, medicalised gaze, as they related to collecting and the identity of collectors.

Collins, Machen, and Gissing describe the breakdown of their collectors' lives, the shattering of any semblance of respectability, and the prioritisation of a single facet of their identity, determined by their pathological collecting impulse. Perhaps, through Miserrimus Dexter, Mr. Mathius, and Christopherson, the texts look to produce something positive by writing in enough discernible symptoms to allow the reader to "diagnose" the degenerate individuals and their pathological collecting behaviours. But by accessing the perspective of the degenerate collectors through an experience of the collection, the texts indicate the chaotic realities of such material relations, the instability of identity it breeds, and the fear that is consequently generated that Enlightened mastery is an impossibility.

The full danger of the inconstancy of material things, and of mankind, was explored in the discourse of degeneration, a response to an insidious weakness that it was feared, had taken hold of humanity at the end of the century. "Like disease," Jeanette Roberts Shumaker notes, "degeneracy was thought to be gradually spreading through late-Victorian societies, imperilling their future" (2). This fear was built on a sense of the "destructiveness of time and the fatality of decline," and spawned "terrifying visions of corruption and sinfulness," as a "malignant world" descended in to "the dominion of absolute evil" (Calinescu 151). Each of the collectors is subject to compulsion, and betrays a degree of escalation in their relation to their possessions that betrays the effect of popular drive to collect acting on a weak mind. Significantly, they are each encountered at the crisis point of their decline, when the pathological behaviour

and the destructiveness it threatens to bring spill over and contaminate or cause damage beyond the objects and the collectors themselves.

The potential links to degeneration and decadence, and the pathological behaviours of each collector, provide both a need for them to be punished, and a means of doing so. In two of the three texts, the hazardous nature of these characters is indicated in the physicality of the collectors, engaging with the assertion that "[f]acial and bodily deformities might be warnings of degeneracy" (Shumaker 2). Yet, these characterisations indicate that fluctuations in the symptoms of pathological identities could not be relied upon. Degenerate collectors, and degenerate individuals more generally, were capable of performing normality in order to avert notice. They might mask their mania behind a popular practice such as the fashionable craze for collecting. The pathological collectors depicted reinforce Jeanette Roberts Shumaker's suggestion that the "most dangerous degenerates," and indeed their works of art and literature, might go undetected, "helping them to spread their degenerate thinking to the general population" (2). By channelling their maniacal fervour in to the acquisition of terrible, circulatable objects in an age notable for its popularisation of collecting at all levels of society, the collectors of the selected texts analysed in this chapter become a danger to society and to fellow collectors susceptible to the mania.

Acknowledging the dangerous nature of their collectors, Collins, Machen, and Gissing neutralise their threat by emphasising the self-destructive quality to their pathological collecting. By the end of the three texts Dexter has slipped in to unresponsive madness no longer aware of the world around him or his collections, Mathius has died in the grip of his terrible Venus figure, and Christopherson has failed to prevent the worsening of his wife's already declining health. Each man has suffered for his excessive and pathological devotion to objects.

The Collectors of Chapter One betrayed a masochistic, self-destructive quality to their collecting, that excluded them from social relations and forced a redefinition of their identities in terms of certain sado-masochistic models of masculinity. Their activities and indeed their sufferings were limited to themselves, and as such never warranted their active expulsion from society and their marginalisation within the narratives. In each case analysed in Chapter Two, however, the collected things, the processes of collection, and the collectors themselves appear deviant, and even dangerous. Their existence threatens to draw in, taint, or threaten others, infecting or at least affecting those who breach the limits of the confined domestic space.

Through a language of infection, disease, illness, or marred mentality, these texts express the dangerous side of a reciprocal relationship existent between man and object in collecting scenarios. By drawing others in to proximity with the collection the collector invites in another perspective, that of the visitor, who casts new light on the collection. The consequence of accentuating the pathology of the depicted collectors, however, is the opening up of the collection and the introduction of another potential victim of the infectious pathology.

In an encyclopaedic age, when the study of psychological deviancy and criminal behaviours spawned new disciplines, classifications of pathological identities offered a means of bracketing and even treating marginalised individuals. And it is the breaching of this comforting power of classification where the collections are concerned, or diagnosis in the case of the collectors, that I would suggest the degenerate gentlemen are punished for. While the depictions borrow from recognisable pathologies and modes of exhibition such as the gallery, the museum, and the library, the collectors each deviate in different ways from such certainties. Men whose relations to their possessions question classificatory knowledge, and threaten to spill over to damage those around them are punished through the loss of their mastery of their things.

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The emphasis in these texts on collectors indicates an interest beyond the aberrant physiological and psychological symptoms of pathology and degeneration. Concerned with pathological collecting, the narratives explore challenges to the Enlightenment principles of classification and commodification that came to characterise normative engagements with material culture. Degeneracy, and the pathologies that developed in those it weakened, provide the basis for gothic extremes of both collectors and collections. As such, these marginalised identities and behaviours indicate a pronounced reaction to the "framework" of "reductive and normalising limits" imposed upon relations to material culture and bourgeois "modes of production" (Botting 89).

Collector and collection appear as the locus for concerns with masculinity and materiality that preoccupied a turn-of-the-century mindset. The pathologies depicted break down the "framework" within which men and material culture were understood to interact productively and safely. As effective slaves to their collecting desires, a compulsive element to their collecting fights with the conscious adoption of their identity as collectors. As such, the texts play on the assumed interrelation of collector and collectable, which indicates that degeneracy will be detectable in their things. The surety of the classificatory potential of objects, which made them a tool for a diagnostic gaze is compromised, however, by the ability of the collectors of the texts to hide in plain sight.

By tapping in to the language and imagery of decline, the narratives seek to dismiss their collectors as deviants, their collecting as something disturbing, and their pathology as a symptom of compulsion. In each case, however, the emphasis on a particularly discerning quality of their character's powers of possession and their engagement with things complicates the assumption that these behaviours are strictly unconscious. What marks each of the collectors in this chapter out from the others

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analysed within this study is the degree to which the collector's relation to his things appears consciously contentious, pushed to the extreme. Each man seems aware of the dominance of the negative things with which they are associated, yet they continue in their very specialised collecting.

The response to this suggestion that the deviant collecting behaviours are at least partially a matter of conscious indulgence is to punish the collectors through their things, compromising their pivotal powers of possession and mastery. Collecting, utterly free from the shackles of expectation or a sense of decency, breeds a degeneracy that is socially damaging, and that requires the reinforcement of the collector's marginalisation through an emphasis on material and physical indicators. One may mistake a degenerate physiognomy, a torture device or shirt of human skin, however, is not as easy to mistake. To halt the spread of degeneracy and the "rage for collecting" Nordau identified as a threat to fin-de-siècle culture, Collins, Machen, and Gissing escalate the pathology of the collectors to a crisis point in which their activities are terminated by the objects they so desire. By making the degenerate's desires self-destructive, a solution could be seen to the pervasive threat in which a marginalised degenerate might be consumed by his own dangerous passions. While through his things, the degenerate might be identified and necessarily avoided.

CHAPTER THREE

Collectors, Dealers, Desire and Dissemination: The Museum, the Market, and the Protean Unpredictability of Things.

Introduction

Chapter One analysed depictions of men who distance themselves from social bodies or institutions and from the expectations regarding collecting that they promote, by masochistically seeking out terribly active individual objects. These men found their identities as collectors challenged both by their increasing isolation, but also through the objects that impede acquisition, making it difficult and increasingly perilous for the collector to collect. Chapter Two analysed isolated collectors in the distinct although related context of pathological masculinity at the fin de siècle, through established collections that emasculate their collectors by thwarting their control, and threatening to overspill their bounds. This chapter assessed the impact on interactions with material culture of terrible individuals, marginalised identities, and pathological behaviours. Thus far, then, I have been concerned with extreme and highly individualised instances of collecting on a relatively small scale, and the manner in which it allowed these writers to test the frameworks of safe and productive collecting. By identifying standard bodies and institutions concerned with collecting, and the typical means of diagnosing and making-safe aberrant expressions of object-relations, these initial chapters have established aspects of Victorian culture that inspired an imaginative leap in to a Gothic world of threatening objects and haunted subjects.

Chapter Three once more explores departures from modes of collecting modelled on the Enlightened ideals of the market and the museum. It analyses professional and scholarly collectors in Bram Stoker's *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, and Arthur Machen's "The Incident of the Private Bar" and "Novel of the Black Seal," who

are haunted by their objects. In contrast to the initial chapters, however, Chapter Three looks at great objects and good men, gainfully employed in contributing to a knowledge economy represented iconically by the museum and a thriving market for collectable things. The collecting takes place on a far grander, even global scale, which is reflected in collections that are larger and considerably more public minded, and in masculine collecting identities that are fundamentally compromised by an inability to disseminate the knowledge and value held in collectables.

Bram Stoker's *The Jewel of Seven Stars* was, according to Lisa Hopkins, "first published in 1903 […] and was reissued with a new and quite different ending (which may or may not be by Stoker) in 1912" (135). This study uses the 1903 text in which attempts to resurrect an Egyptian Queen lead to the death of all but the principal narrator, Malcolm Ross. Arthur Machen's two short stories "The Incident of the Private Bar" and "Novel of the Black Seal" are both taken from *The Three Impostors* (1895). This collection of short stories and false identities is a composite of previously published and new material; the "Novel of the Black Seal" itself was subsequently published separately, facilitating a study of the narratives as related but distinct. The leading characters in each of these narratives are established collectors, men whose public face and gendered identity is founded on their contribution to a thriving, expanding market, trading in knowledge and objects, and spawning dealers, agents, ethnologists, Egyptologists, professionals and scholars. But the productive lives of these men descend within the texts in to troubling stories of unstoppable circulation, overwhelming historical significance, and failure to successfully disseminate the value and knowledge in things.

Collectors, the Museum and the Market for Things

As Martin Lawn has noted, in "Sites of the Future: Comparing and Ordering New Educational Actualities," "[i]n the nineteenth century, in education, the museum,

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following the world exhibitions, was a comprehensive model of the future, and an active agent and catalogue of modernity," as well as a stimulus to "[t]rade, invention, production and innovation" (16-17). Museum and market were interconnected symbols of enlightened mastery. They engendered mechanisms for the mastery of material culture and the comprehension of the modern world that were both dominant and pervasive, as testified to by the "prodigious net growth in the total number of collections, collectors and sites" that emerged in increasingly rural regions in the nineteenth century, as Sam Alberti relates (309-310). This proliferation of sites brought the museum's ethos of improvement through exposure to institutionalised displays of objects, to the populace at large. But the reach of the museum's model, as the succession of world exhibitions indicated, extended much further.

With the museum serving to "legitimate Britain's power at home and across the globe," and "housing the spoils of colonization," Barbara Black argues that "[m]ost curators of the age readily acknowledged that it was Britain's imperial obligation to collect in order to exhibit" (12). Behind the collecting activities of individual men around the globe lay the imperatives and the power structures of the British Empire, facilitating the acquisition and transmission of collectable items by way of a global economy. Writing on nineteenth century Indian collections of meteorites, Savithri Preetha Nair observes that "during the production of science, knowledge-making institutions such as museums were sometimes strongly linked with coercive institutions such as the police" (97). An authoritative, often colonial force might be utilised to lay claim to specimens deemed collectable, compelling the participation of locals and collectors in the scientific mission.

Nair describes a complex landscape of collectors and collections in which conflicting ideals competed. Despite the "emergence of public museums in India," born of the influence of their British predecessors, this emulation of the institutional form

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resulted in key institutions beginning to "compete with the British Museum for the possession of locally formed collections." The "patriotic aspiration to build a national collection in London" was in such cases utterly occluded (97). Asserting an individual identity and looking to form "exemplary" collections of their own, "[c]olonial geologists and zoologists protested against the domineering attitude of the British Museum," resisting the centripetal pull of such an emblematic British institution, whilst still acknowledging the validity of its form and the usefulness of its function (Nair 117).

As always with the practice, however, turn-of-the-century colonial collecting remained complex. While Nair may have observed a decline in the transmission of scientific objects toward Britain, Ruth Hoberman has observed that the flow of artefacts continued, buoyed particularly by key events such as the "1882 occupation of Egypt" ("In Quest of A Museal Aura" 467). As the excesses of symbolic spaces like the British Museum's basement implied, and which Thomas Richards amongst others analyses at length, key institutional sites were not short of exhibits. Their storage spaces, filled to capacity with the material by-products of historical, cultural, and world survey missions, hinted at the flood of items and information passing through such institutions (*The Imperial Archive* 11).

As in the field of ethnography, collecting of both "body parts" and "cultural products" was for the Victorians a "means of 'knowing' other peoples and places" (Franey 219). Comprehending the vastness and variety of Empire and advancing the great intellectual endeavour of the nineteenth century, required things and therefore the skilful efforts of experienced collectors. Despite Gavin Lucas's claim that in the "transitional period from the end of the nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, collecting came to be downplayed in British ethnography," he nevertheless notes that in the discipline's "museum phase," a "staff" of "amateurs" and

"professionals" went out in to the field to collect, "purchased material from local collectors," and "bought collections from amateurs" (233).

In the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century objects and knowledge, market and museum were interconnected in an economy fuelled, as chapter one began to suggest, at least in part by private collectors. The role of these institutions, and therefore these men, in late-Victorian culture should not be understated. Collecting for the museum made the collector part of the machinery of modernity. The Museum's upkeep and its development was a matter of national productivity, inculcating in a broad spectrum of collectors a drive to contribute to an index of progress. As Lara Kriegel has described, the "mid-nineteenth-century movement for design reform," and the arts and crafts movement that followed it, connected museum and market, designers, producers, consumers, and reformers, in a mission to "transform" relations to material culture, and mould "elevated subjects, skilled producers, and discerning consumers" (1). Participation in the founding or expansion of such collections was a noble pursuit for the collector, who could channel his personal aptitude in to the great national, imperial, Enlightened project of mastery and improvement. In such a way, a variety productive masculine identities could be constructed in relation to both market and museum.

The museum and the market for collectables necessitated the activities of a network of individuals, of "donors, loaners, dealers and swappers" such as Chris Wingfield observes made the formation and operation of the Pitt Rivers Museum possible (119). Britain had people placed all around the globe, in a professional or amateur capacity, who were able to capitalise on these "particularly fruitful" opportunities for acquisition and the dissemination of an expanding range of objects that came with Britain's international endeavours (Hoberman "In Quest of Museal Aura" 467). This nexus of individuals were engaged in the great epistemological mission of making the world knowable through its things.

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Objects, collectors, collections, and the markets and museums that made them profitable, perpetuated a productive mechanism of acquisition and dissemination beneficial to the individual and also to the nation and its imperial interests. Connected to economies of knowledge and commerce, the exhibition and the museum negotiated a powerful position related to prosperity and modernity in the age of objects. A whole series of generally masculine, material-culture-based roles as academic specialists, dealers, curators, collectors, and agents were built on the museum and the market, and the mastery of material culture that was intrinsic to their function. By the nineteenth century, Gavin Lucas notes, "collecting practices remained embedded in commercial transactions and connected to the market," a market driven by collectors (232). For those individuals assuming a position in relation to this market for objects and knowledge, the culture of classification, mastery, presentation and representation had implications for their self-fashioning.

The pursuit of "authenticity," as Beverley Butler explains, granted "custodial authority" first to "amateur" and subsequently to "professionalized" collectors, in an "'expert' culture" of "scientific proof" and "material analysis" (466). Once imbued with such authority, as Carol A. Breckenridge explains, "the act of collecting and the building of a collection" might create "an illusion of cognitive control" over experiences in imperial locations such as India. The individual might lay claim to professional status, scientific validation or cultural superiority and thereby create a sense of mastery over the material world. The museum and the market provided the framework around which such identities were formed whether removing things "out of their economic circulation" and rescuing them "from unappreciative neglect," or sourcing specimens for a knowledge economy fuelled by material proof, collectors were aided in their self-fashioning by these modes of collection and dissemination (Belk "Collectors and Collecting" 534).

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Arthur Machen's pair of collectors, Mr. Burton and Professor Gregg, and Bram Stoker's associates Mr. Corbeck and Mr. Trelawny have all, we are informed, accumulated a range of things over the course of their careers, both at home and abroad. While Machen's "The Incident of the Private Bar" and "Novel of the Black Seal" have largely escaped analysis for their use of things, David Seed notes the "writing of empire" into Stoker's narrative through the "depictions of collected objects" (Seed 188). Seed is concerned with objects as indications of "purchasing power" and of "the extent of his [the possessor's] travels in exotic countries." The items in such a reading act much like souvenirs as Susan Stewart describes them, holding personal memories and experiences in physical form through "the invention of narrative" and the internalising of "external experience" ("Objects of Desire" 135). They grant cultural capital, testifying to the extensive travel and experience of the possessor, and indicating a particular type of consumption, made possible by a wider "quantification of foreign cultures." The objects in Seed's house museums are a reflection of the individual's power and control (189).

Seed thereby conducts a very valid reading of personal gratification and imperial quantification implied in the act of possession. Building on this analysis, Chapter Three will suggest that both Stoker and Machen's narratives are interesting for the connection of the collectors to the decidedly masculine labour of disseminating objects and knowledge undertaken in the period. Trelawny, Burton, Gregg, and Corbeck are individual collectors dedicated to the imperatives of the market and the museum. They each actively proclaim their participation in an economy of objects, or are directly associated with the museum's knowledge producing aims. They are agents, dealers, Egyptologists, and ethnologists, operating at home and abroad to source a range of objects and turn them to productive ends. While their lives and their relation to things are shaped by the centripetal forces of market and museum, however, the collectors

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remain essentially independent operators. They are not curators of established public museums, or proprietors of curio shops, but rather pursue the items and interests they deem most profitable or beneficial to themselves first and foremost. As such, the depictions merit consideration in light of collecting practices outside of the museum's walls. A far more striking feature of their collecting warrants attention, however.

Despite decades of experience in their respective specialist fields of collecting, the collectors depicted in the narratives this chapter will analyse increasingly find themselves troubled by the objects with which they interact. As the recent wave of object-centred studies have indicated, things have never quite known their place. Practical problems relating to literal objects, such as the meteorites that Nair argues were fought over by institutions, were accompanied by issues with the symbolic significance of things. The "fugitive meaning" held in objects, as Elaine Freedgood has termed it (1), has increasingly come in for debate, and warranted a range of critical approaches, from Thing Theory, and Object Theory, to histories of collecting, and cultural studies of the museum addressing the vagaries of meaning and presentation. The disorderly realities of the exhibition Bennett observes (1), the flaws in the supposedly comprehensive catalogues of exhibition sites Richards describes (*Imperial Archive* 142), and the range of issues that troubled the encyclopaedic intentions of such institutions that Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor illuminate, all indicate the complexities surrounding collecting and collectables (xvii). Those looking to disseminate knowledge through objects would continue to be plagued by the troubling capacity for chaos of things.

Collectors endeavouring to disseminate the value and knowledge held in ordered and marshalled objects continued to be plagued by forces that opposed them. Each of the four collectors that this chapter will analyse identifies himself as a professional or a scholarly collector with links to the methods and the ethos of the market and the

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museum. Each of them claims to pursue an aim that relies on the circulation of things, be they museum worthy pieces, or objects of ethnological interest. They aspire to disseminate, in one manner or another, the objects themselves or the intellectual and financial worth that lies within them, and in this way ultimately seek control and advancement through material items. Yet, in these narratives, it is these aspirations, the way of life they encourage, and the processes that they necessitate, which compromises the collectors with terrible consequences.

From archaeological artefacts, exotic trinkets and curios, to fragments of monuments, and a wealth of replicas, retrospective analysis of the trade in such exotic items has described it as fraught with questions of taste, rightful possession, damage or effacement, and cultural or historical superiority (Reid 57). These moral and methodological debates shed light on nineteenth century practices. They reveal opportunistic individuals, and networks of dealers and traders, supplying the increasing demands of a desiring public with authentic items or mass produced fakes, smuggled treasures and stolen rarities. Issues with sourcing filtered in to issues with display, and the manner in which the so-called biographies of objects could be erased or made subservient to the narratives of a dominant global centre (Henare 13). Stoker and Machen both describe collectors who are engaged with this global economy. They lay claim to valuable objects and culturally significant things, which they acquire in expectation of turning them to productive ends. The narratives analysed consider the dislocations of objects, the mobilisation of things, and the conscious decisions made to address these realities of collecting that concerned a late-Victorian imaginary. In doing so they animate or empower the things themselves, making them complicit in the destructive chaos that plagues the collectors.

In *Museum Trouble: Edwardian Fiction and the Making of Modernism*, Ruth Hoberman conducts a reading of museum objects in literature, noting the impulses that

escape from things supposedly mastered within the controlled museum space, and terming this "Museum Gothic" (78-108). Objects in images of Museum Gothic express a negative, haunted characteristic that communicates with the curious things explored in this chapter. Hoberman's Gothic outbreakings emerge within the rigid confines of the public museum, breaking out of cases, and troubling the logic that makes them useful resources. By focusing on collections outside of the institutional space, however, the unfortunate and confrontational outbreakings appear as desirable qualities for the individual agents, dealers, Egyptologists, and Ethnologists depicted. It is the spark of historical significance, the association with a particular character, or a remarkable provenance that makes them valuable. The collectors rely on the active, unpredictable qualities of the objects they interact with, and on the hope that traces of past peoples, places, and events might be lying beneath the surface of apparently inert things. What is discouraged as an unwanted excess in the museum then, is encouraged in the field. Relying on the exceptional individuality of these objects, however, comes at a price, and provides the basis for a critique of both market and museum.

In their complex use of objects by scholarly and professional collectors, the narratives betray a common concern with Enlightened masculinity and object-mastery that is expressed through material relations increasingly distanced from the market and the museum. Dealer, agent, Egyptologist, ethnologist, these men are enmeshed in the processes of survey, circulation, collection, study, and exhibition that gave a multitude of individuals purpose, and provided the material by which the British nation affirmed its position as a global power. Through the objects of the narratives, however, contemporary concerns with professionalism, methods of acquisition, and the nature of knowledge are brought in to focus. The agency or obscurity of the objects described, prevents their mastery, denying the collectors their productive function, and

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compromising their gendered identity. Circulation becomes unstoppable, knowledge arcane and disconcerting, objects active.

Professor Trelawny, Mr. Corbeck, Mr. Burton, and Professor Gregg, all seek out, trade in, collect, or donate to museums the sort of items that Maxine Berg notes have since "early times […] been endowed with artistic, religious, and magical properties." These desirable properties saw them "traded over long distances," and sought out by a range of individuals (177). But the protean, unpredictable qualities of the particular specimens courted by the collectors quickly exceed the subject-object relations promoted by the museum and market to become overwhelming.

This chapter identifies the highly curious qualities of objects and collectors that should serve museum and market needs. Productive identities fashioned in relation to enlightened imperatives, and collecting undertaken by collectors who profess to have served their needs, are frustrated by things that defy and resist, and processes that remove them from the productive relations fostered by professional and scholarly men. Frustrated by their associations with market and museum, the collectors and their objects are compromised by unstoppable momentum of market circulation, which thwarts the museum's function to "resacrilize" and re-embed objects within "tradition" and "ritual" (Hoberman "In Quest of a Museal Aura" 468). Or by their remarkable objects, whose surplus potential and remarkable resonance refuses mastery in the name of knowledge production. In each case, the stimulating impetus of these protean objects presents obstacles to the knowledge and profit producing endeavours of professionals and scholars alike.

"The Incident of the Private Bar": Arthur Machen's Mr. Burton, Agent for Curiosities

Arthur Machen's collector laden text *The Three Impostors* presents an array of personas adopted as plausible cover identities for the titular impostors. It is a testament to the culturally pervasive nature of the figure of the collector that so many of these identities, and their related narratives, are concerned with collecting. In "The Incident of the Private Bar," Mr. Burton, who also narrates his experiences in the "Novel of the Iron Maid" (see Chapter Two), introduces himself as "an agent for curiosities and precious things of all kinds," establishing his professional link to the market (179). His affinity with things, he suggests, proclaimed itself at an early age. "I have always been fond of things queer and rare," he remarks, and in his adulthood, with the professionalization of his collecting, he finds that it has taken him to "most quarters of the world" (179).

Machen's collector embraces the possibilities of the curio trade or curio market. He expands on his natural taste and collecting ability, professionalising his identity, and diversifying his interests, from the "half a dozen" collections from his home shores, to the bounty of the East, and most notably the "Khan opal" and the "highly valuable antique gem" that dominate the narrative (179). As Robin Torrence and Anne Clark have noted, in "Suitable for Decoration of Halls and Billiard Rooms: Finding Indigenous Agency in Historic Auction and Sale Catalogues," a direct "consequence of western commercial expansion" was "the development of a market for ethnographic objects or 'curios.'" This trade, "[b]eginning in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries," had extended to "literally tens of thousands of objects" by the nineteenth century, sourced from around the globe and "sold to museums and private collectors, often through catalogues produced and distributed by auction and sale houses" (Torrence and Clarke 29-30). A thriving trade in curios had long provided a network of varying

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individuals with a means of sustaining themselves. Companies, such as the Indo-China Curio Trading Company, established by Edgar Gorer in the 1890s, and its rival, run by brothers Joseph and Henry Deveen, organised these individuals, giving the practice a public face ("The Indo-China Trading Company").

Such companies ran shops, supplied notable private individuals, and publicly exhibited their wares, as an invitation from the Indo-China Trading Company to view their "most Unique Collection of Japanese and Chinese Works of Art, comprising Ivory Carvings, Gold Lac Ware, Bronzes, Pottery, Enamels, Furniture" and much more, at the 1898 Earls Court exhibition demonstrates. With depots in "Bombay, Calcutta, Hong-Kong, and Nagasaki" as of 1898, and a shop in Regent Street, the company spanned the globe, providing items for a market first in England and then in America ("The Indo-China Trading Company"). On a more individual level, Jonathan Batkin has identified networks of hundreds of collectors employed in order to provide objects and artefacts for stores, and to fulfil mail orders from catalogues that did a roaring trade on both sides of the Atlantic in the late nineteenth century. In England, periodicals such as *The Connoisseur: A Magazine for Collectors* catered for those operating on a smaller scale, offering a forum for collectors to advertise or request "a specific article or collection actually in existence […] in the possession of a private individual" (VII.25. 1903, 2).

With a fashion for the oriental and the exotic, the market offered something for everyone. Stores such as *Liberty's* boasted oriental departments that presented a plethora of authentic objects and mass produced cheap alternatives to a broad demographic (Lancaster 13). As Asa Briggs observed, the advent of mass production not only made fashionable items accessible to the more limited budget, but standardised somewhat the quality of objects (23). This was not, however, always the case. Objects were not always what they seemed. The market was flooded with items purporting to be from far-off shores. The Indo-China Trading Company itself came under scrutiny

according to *The Standard*, whose issue of July 12th 1899 reported on the court case of an "amateur collector of curios" seeking to recover money paid for a number of bronze vases falsely guaranteed as antique ("London" Issue 23413, 6). And appended to the expanding mass production of replicas or fakes, was a danger of declining quality (Adburgham 23).

In tapping into this moment in which collectables became big business in an increasingly professionalised manner for agents in the field, trading companies, and department stores, Mr. Burton's narrative emphasises the authenticity of its objects by prioritising an act of acquisition in the field. It is the collector's active role in sourcing objects and looking to supply the wants of an object-fuelled age that Machen explores, considering how proximity to the market could problematise the dissemination of value and of objects themselves. The market and the emergence of commodity culture in the nineteenth century drew much contemporary debate, suggesting different results of the relation between man, objects, and concepts of value. As Dianne Sachko Macleod has noted, links between art and money, established by figures such as "Adam Smith, in his *Wealth of Nations*," suggested that "acquisitiveness and the pursuit of money was essential to the health of a mercantile country." This conception, she argues, was seconded by Bernard Mandeville, David Hume, and other "philosophers of the Scottish enlightenment" (10-11). Mr. Burton's role as an agent actively sourcing and disseminating collectables could, therefore, be construed as a positive contribution to the necessary circulation of objects and capital. Through his emphasis on a collector, however, Machen is able to challenge the mobility necessitated by an economic system.

Burton's professionalism, and his proximity to the market, is initially presented as something negative that is mitigated by financial necessity, and the true nature of the collector. Mr. Burton is at pains to establish his status first and foremost as a gentleman, born to collect. From a young age, he describes an aptitude, claiming "I

have always been fond of things queer and rare, and by the time I was twenty I had made half a dozen collections." As a young collector he rescues unvalued items unearthed, quite literally, in an incidental fashion:

> It is not generally known how often farm-labourers come upon rarities; you would be astonished if I told you what I have seen turned up by the plough. I lived in the country in those days, and I used to buy anything the men on the farms brought me; and I had the queerest set of rubbish, as my friends called my collection. (179)

As Peter Melville Logan notes in *Victorian Fetishism: Intellectuals and Primitives*, agricultural labourers had a significant part to play in the emergence of archaeology, a highly material culture based discipline, serving as "ordinary excavators" with a particular knowledge of working with soil (441). But Machen's labourers are mere accidental contributors to the discerning Mr. Burton's collections of items, saved from the rubbish heap and granted new value. Perceiving "rarities" where others see "rubbish," and uniting greedily acquired "queer" and "rare" items within the collection, Burton is the hero who grants the objects a privileged position and preserves them, encouraging those around him to participate in the direction of objects in to the collection.

His origins are arguably ideal for the young collector, carrying echoes of W.S. Jevons's conception of self-improvement through active collecting of objects wherever possible in context. The "best Museum," Jevons argues, is that which a person forms for himself." Possessed of "a suitable specimen which can be kept near at hand to be studied at any moment, handled, experimented and reflected upon," he claims it is difficult "to collect without gaining knowledge of more or less value" (61-2). With a natural impulse to collect, and such early experience of the practice, Burton's later success as a professional collector should come as no surprise. Within Machen's

narrative this early promise, and the knowledge gained, are turned to a necessary engagement with market processes.

After the fond recollections of his early passionate pursuit of things, Burton's description of his links to the market appear comparatively cool, and driven by circumstance. He describes his role as "an agent for curiosities" as "[a]n odd employment" (179). While it is a product of his abilities as a collector, he is quick to assert that he was not "[o]f course, […] brought up to the business," but rather "gradually fell into it" as a professional practice. For a respectable man of taste and practical collecting skill, it appears as a deviation, as something that he has slipped in to, to his detriment. Necessity is at the heart of his interactions, most particularly the financial necessity of securing an income, which drives Burton to the market. He is "compelled" to inquire into issues of "ethics" as they relate to the acquisition of objects, "just as I was forced to master a system of book-keeping." The commodity market necessitates certain skills that must be learnt and adapted to in order to be able to "conduct a business such as mine." Rather than a successful attainment of skills and knowledge, Burton describes this process as a descent in to the market, taking him further from the figure of that young collector, rescuing neglected objects.

As his narrative progresses, however, the market infiltrates his passion for collecting, changing his relation to things. Positioning himself as a proficient hunter, running to ground his prey, his natural urge, or inbuilt pursuit, becomes a "business" he is able to "get the scent of." A straightforward desire for "knowledge" is turned "to account," to "add to my income" (179). As his thoughts turn to his current collecting endeavours, his language swiftly changes from a tone of pleasurable reminiscence, to a register far more evocative of market economy, with emphasis on value and circulation. It is the "valuable things" that have "passed through my hands" that concern him, and that fuel the chase that has taken him to "most quarters of the world" (179). Machen

presents a collector who couches his activities in terms of necessity, who has succumbed to the infectious lure of conquering things, and who has found his reward through his contribution to the market. Yet, this professionalism appears as something with which Mr. Burton himself and also Mr. Dyson, to whom the tale is told, remain somewhat uneasy.

An ongoing dialogue regarding professionalism and collecting infiltrated the popular press and the discourse surrounding public collections in the nineteenth century, as Jim Endersby notes, writing particularly in relation to botanical collections. With models of selfless practice initially based on the figure of the "eighteenth-century ideal of a gentleman […]aiding nation and empire in the process but not enriching himself," the practice of "being paid to do science" and to collect was, Endersby argues, "not entirely respectable" (2). Charting the collecting activities of Joseph Hooker, Endersby notes that the associations between "receiving payment and low social standing lingered well in to the second half of the century" (3). The concept of professionalism remained uncertain also, as "during these later decades of the century, the question of who was a professional was, if anything, even less clear than it had been previously" (26). Collection, payment, and professionalism when brought into relation carried questionable connotations for the collector. It is in to these debates that Burton is brought. He ameliorates his proximity to the market as a product of necessity, and a fulfilment of innate skill, and beyond this compensates for the potential taint of professionalism with an element of masculine heroism.

A sense of threat, an air of menace, an implication of sacrifices made, and risks run, suffuses Burton's tales. He endeavours to generate a sense of daring and bravery, of cunning and finesse, with which to bolster his identity as a collector and distance him from a self-serving rather than selfless manner of consumption. Burton claims to operate in a fraught environment in which he is forced to be "ever on my guard," being

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"sensible that unless I watched every step and weighed every word, my life would not last me much longer" (179). He acknowledges the precarious nature of the process, and the "defeats" that he has sustained in dealing with the ignorant out in the field (180). Burton makes it clear that he has suffered in the pursuit of valuable items, and striven to overcome the obstacles before him. But what becomes increasingly apparent is that behind his fighting talk and superior attitude lie methods unbefitting a heroic gentlemanly collector.

Burton speaks proudly of his "diplomatic" skills, of his engagement in "difficult and delicate negotiations," but his methods prove devious and deceitful to the extreme. Rather than masculine adventures undertaken with noble aims, they appear underhanded and obscure. His methods of acquisition are compromising, and his attitude that "there is room for" what he cryptically terms "diplomacy in the traffic I am engaged in," makes it clear that his acquisition and movement of objects is not necessarily always above board. Veiled in dark hints, it is these "let us say, imaginative and diplomatic powers" that gain results in the market, a fact that is made explicit in the case of his latest acquisition.

Mr. Burton's proudest achievement is unseating and acquiring the "Khan opal," or "The Stone of a Thousand and One Colours" as it is known in "the East," a feat achieved by altering its identity. For Machen's collector it is "the stone of a thousand and one lies", tainted by an appended falsified history. In order to displace the gem from "the Rajah who owned it," Burton falsely grafts a fictional biography on to the object, inventing "a cycle of folk-lore" in order to change the way it is perceived, and separate it from its possessor. In this respect, Machen's narrative betrays a nineteenth-century interest in the nature of value, and the messages or narratives objects may carry, an interest addressed in more recent object-oriented cultural criticism.

Burton alters the biography of the object, to use Igor Kopytoff's term, manipulating what Mieke Bal has referred to as the narrative potential in things, that is the story that the item may be said to contain or tell of itself. In changing the biography he changes the provenance and therefore the identity of the object. Moving in to a foreign culture fraught with myths and superstition, Mr. Burton perceives the narrative in things as a weak spot, ripe for exploitation in his engagements with the stone's possessor. He sets in motion a series of events playing on this quality: "I subsidized wandering story-tellers, who told tales in which the opal played a frightful part; I hired a holy man – a great ascetic," paying for the generation of a false history around the object. Manipulating the fears of the collector as to the active and threatening potential of objects, Burton claims to have "frightened the Rajah out of his wits," by turning the potential of the object for dangerous resonance against it. Once mobilised he is able to claim it.

This method recurs more than once in the agent's career, and the principle events of the narrative demonstrate the full implications of such actions. He recounts how an antique gem, once again in the hands of a foreigner, tested his ability to mobilise things. To acquire the item he must make it undesirable, and break into its narrative. His means of doing so in this case involves manipulating market based identities as well as the perception of the object itself. In a two pronged attack, he disguises his "assistant" as a "low-class dealer in precious stones," and has him demonstrate his ignorance and want of taste. Burton, meanwhile, infiltrates the society and the home of Signor Melini, establishing himself as a gentleman of discerning taste and considerable experience. Exaggerating both extremes of the professional trade in things, ignorant dealer and knowledgeable collector create conflicting views of the object. Burton capitalises on his class, passing off his knowledge of the marketable object as a product of exposure to such things in "our Museum at London" (181).

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Proclaiming the jewel that the pair seek to sell to the dealer "a rather bad forgery,"

produced by "a very unskilful hand," and the price offered by the travelling English

trader far more than its worth, he changes the perception of the object. The unique

specimen is brought back in to relation with the market, as an item of value rather than

intrinsic significance (182).

As Burton would have it, the folly of the object's possessor makes the

manipulation of the object possible, and invites punishment by the collector, justifying

his actions. But the intervention of the collector inflicts damage on the object as the

agent writes himself in to its history. As Chris Wingfield has explained, "the sale or gift

of objects by the person who made them, their purchase and sale by local dealers, sales

at auction houses, gifts from one collector to another and even an object's inheritance

by subsequent generations of the same family," are important factors that influence an

object's value and therefore warrant analysis (121). Every step that the object takes en

route to its position within a collection continues to be significant, colouring the way it

is perceived. What Machen's agent introduces to the narratives of the Khan Opal and

the antique gem is a trace of his questionable methods, methods that require excuses and

necessitate a particularly flexible morality.

Responding to Burton's tale, Mr. Dyson comments that "I can imagine the

Puritan shrinking in dismay from your scheme, pronouncing it unscrupulous – nay,

dishonest." Burton's response is to expound upon his own system of morality, a

quantified balancing of positive consequences and compromising coercion. He

dislodges the "highly valuable antique gem" to save it from "the possession of persons

who were ignorant of its real value." Furthermore, he claims to have been devoted to an

aim that excuses his methods, that of making "a whole nation happy." Talking Dyson

through the logic of his actions, he claims:

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I conferred happiness on myself by obtaining (as I thought) possession of the gem; I conferred happiness on the Melinis by getting them eighty lire instead of an object for which they had not the slightest value, and I intended to confer happiness on the whole British nation by selling the thing to the British Museum, to say nothing of the happiness a profit of about nine thousand per cent would have conferred on me (184).

For Burton, ends would apparently justify the means. He is an agent for order, redistributing assets to yield the greatest benefit to all, and his aim of contributing to the national collection is presented as justification for his actions, increasing the utility of the object exponentially with the number of people able to view it (Jevons 61).

It is significant that Burton looks to establish an affiliation with the museum at the conclusion of his anecdote. By claiming he would contribute to the public store of objects he professes noble ends. The selfish delight of the collector, however, remains prominent. Despite his professed aim to bring the object safely in to the museum's protection, his links to the market prioritise the mobility of the objects before their role as desirable specimens. The "Khan opal" represents a key "conquest" and his "greatest achievement." Yet, it is not in the possession of the object, but in a fleeting moment of its transition that he gains his satisfaction. The thrill is in the chase, the reward primarily financial. Positioning himself as the positive alternative to a credulous, superstitious, and ignorant Rajah, he embraces the fluidity of "social identity" in a "colonial context" and the possibilities of objects in the "process of creative recontextualisation," which shaped identity and value through "appropriation and exchange" (Harrison 57). He is able to fashion a sense of self that validates his collecting endeavours. But the consequences of his actions destabilise the objects and the positions in which he casts himself and his victims. In attempting to disseminate the value of the object the fate of the stone becomes unclear.

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The dichotomy of the "low cunning" of the unintelligent, and the "intelligence" of rightful possessors, refuses to hold as the mobilised objects defy the collector's best laid plans, refusing to come to rest (180). A myth of forgery and valuelessness appears to genuinely unsettle and devalue the object, a fact that Burton himself is all too aware of as it falls in to the hands of Robbins:

> I had rescued one of the most perfect and exquisite specimens of antique art from the hands of ignorant, and indeed unscrupulous persons, only to deliver it into the keeping of a man who is evidently utterly devoid of the very elements of commercial morality" (183)

Arjun Appadurai notes, in *The Social Life of Things*, the manner in which objects deviate from their accepted course, suggesting that "the diversion of commodities from their predestined paths" can lead to an increased sense of value (26). But by unseating the item, plunging the gem in to the hands of an unscrupulous dealer, and in to the obscurity of the market, the rarity of the item is lost. Its value is decreased rather than increased as things go terribly wrong, and the steps taken away from the object's origins erase its true state.

Betraying a gentleman's agreement and breaking the partnership, Robbins denies the collector this "perfect" and "exquisite" object. Removed from unappreciative owners and seen again as a magnificent, aesthetically appealing item, Burton suggests that the gem could have been redeemed. Given the proper presentation in the British Museum, it could have been preserved and appreciated. Its origins and history could have been established, and its context explored. But, as an agent, prioritising the circulation rather than the stability of objects, Burton's act of breaking the gem's moorings proves to have permanent consequences. Once placed in circulation, the mobilised object is hard to reclaim. Sold by its owners for a pittance to a disguised William Robbins, Burton loses track of the object he supposedly intended to save, his

accomplice disappearing with the prize having been last seen by a pawnbroker of Burton's acquaintance, lingering over a glass of "four-ale" (182). The object is lost to the collector, and to the museum he claims he would have submitted it to, when Burton is unable to halt the circulation he puts in motion.

With the introduction of a pawnbroker to Burton's list of associates, Machen engenders a further sense of downward mobility and a "threatened or actual fall." Sexual, moral, or financial, Elizabeth Coggin Womack notes that this fall was often "fetishized" in literary depictions, and presented "in a pawned item – a physical token" that "hovers between home and the marketplace as a symbol of a character's uncertain fate" (1-2). Machen, however, with his cast of collectors, agents, dealers, and pawnbrokers focuses on the item drawn in to the space between the museum and the marketplace. The fate of the objects with which Mr. Burton interacts is to be undermined by his processes, as he looks to convey them from possessor to market to museum. The implications of such a warped, mercantile, and falsified relation to things spreads, however, beyond those immediately involved in the transaction.

A further transgression, broader and perhaps more significant, appears to trouble Machen's collector. Aside from devaluing and losing prized collectables, he fears the damaging effects of his and his assistant's actions on the unschooled population inhabiting the area around the Melini residence. Objects of little worth, brought to the notice of the rural individuals have a lasting, damaging effect on their concepts of taste:

> A day or two later I heard that the English pedlar [his assistant in disguise] had gone away, after debasing the minds of the country people with Birmingham art jewellery; for I admit that the gold sleeve-links like kidney beans, the silver chains made apparently after the pattern of a dog chain, and the initial brooches, have always been heavy on my conscience. I cannot acquit myself of having indirectly contributed to debauch the taste of a simple folk (182).

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In a corruption of the desired effect of the museum, the presentation of lesser specimens of the jeweller's art as if they were objects of great beauty, taste, and worth, imprints the ignorant public with a flawed set of standards. Contact with such things blunts the taste, and debases those who know no better, just as Burton's engagements with lesser methods of acquisition appear to debase him as a collector.

Objects carry and transmit narratives and impressions, including their journey to the collection, and consequently Burton's illicit actions can be seen written large on the objects he would make use of. By the conclusion of the narrative he has descended far from the young and enthusiastic collector who could find something to cherish in things that others would discard. Despite his prime position as an experienced collector, able to traverse the globe and exploit the prejudices and inequalities of Empire, his interactions with objects undermine rather than advance his status and the enlightened mission of the museum. In making his living by forcing static objects in to market circulation, he compromises the objects that pass through his hands, and in the process himself. Keen to describe his masculine mastery of collectable objects, and cunning, even heroic, exploits in the field, he aspires to an association with the museum that will affirm his productive function. His proximity to the market, and his exploitation of the protean plasticity of the objects with which he interacts, however, brings in to question the nature of value. He takes museum worthy objects and demonstrates that the narratives with which they are invested, and the historical or aesthetic significance that may be attributed to them may in fact be illusory. Neither market nor museum provides an adequate means of affirming the identity of a collector faced with the troubling practicalities of professional collecting and dissemination of objects.

The Jewel of Seven Stars: Bram Stoker's Mr. Corbeck, Agent in the Field

As a collector, Mr. Burton appears to be compromised by the financial necessities of life, so that his perception of objects and transactions is increasingly allied to a commercial language. The things that he acquires and looks to disseminate are damaged by the act of bringing them in to proximity with the market. As such, he is determined to assert redemptive motives, and particularly an aim to collect worthy objects for the benefit of the nation. Bram Stoker's Mr. Corbeck similarly betrays an uncomfortable but necessary relation to the market. Stoker's agent asserts himself as an inspired collector, with a natural scholarly bent, yet as a gentleman receiving payment to collect, he finds himself negotiating a sense of self as professional and scholar. This instability in his identity is reflected in the unstoppable circulation of the Egyptian objects he collects, which obscures the productive and historical function of the items.

Such is his exposure to the wonders of Egypt that "[e]arly in life," Corbeck notes, "I fell in with Egyptology," an obsession that continues to possess him. Placing such material within reach of a curious mind allows an intellectual infection to take hold. He describes being "bitten by some powerful scarab, for I took it bad," to the benefit of his "interests and pleasures," but to the detriment of his "pocket." Unlike Burton, whose natural aptitude is quickly made profitable, and despite the contemporary flourishing of archaeology and Egyptology in the period, Corbeck finds his particular interest economically unrewarding. It drove him out in to the field "tomb-hunting," allowing him to learn "some things that you can't get out of books." But his collecting, much like Burton's early accumulations of "queer" and "rare" things, does not pay, and while he claims to have "managed to get a living of a sort," the pursuit of Egyptology leaves him "in pretty low water."

From the moment he moves in to the field, Mr. Corbeck discovers that behind the intellectual pursuit lie a range of financial concerns, and as with Machen's agent,

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these are addressed by making his skills as a collector pay by putting them on the market. Unlike Machen's agent's self-determined and largely solitary endeavours, however, Stoker's collector is required to operate under the direction of a fellow collector. His chance meeting with Mr. Trelawny introduces the possibility of patronage and the direction of his natural abilities to the professionalised pursuit of Egyptology. The premise for such a relation had long been established. Linda Levy Peck has identified a network of interrelated patrons and practical field-based collectors that was well established by the seventeenth century, when exploration of the globe saw collectors utilise agents based abroad in order to obtain desirable exotic objects (172). As Jim Endersby has noted, such collecting networks, and the practice of employing collectors placed far and wide, extended into the nineteenth century, particularly in the practice of scientific collecting (3).

Throughout the history of such collecting practices, the interactions of collectors at home and collectors or agents in the field operated as a negotiation between those with the means and those with the opportunity. From fleeting and opportunistic transactions, to extended and dedicated patronage relations, public institutions and private collectors drew on the expertise and opportunities of men in the field. Bram Stoker's professional collector participates in this network, and capitalises on a moment in which his particular skills were most marketable. "Modernity and the 'West'," according to Beverley Butler, were "synonymous with the forward march of history, of capital and of imperial ambition," all of which were interrelated in a complex "heritage discourse" that can be traced "across rational, romantic and colonial imaginations" (465). As an agent of an acquisitive, enlightened West, imagined in opposition to an irrational and unproductive East, Mr. Corbeck is placed as the first step in a mechanism of acquisition and dissemination, which fed such a progressive model of history. His skills and his developing experience serve to fuel institutional spaces, academic

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research, and also a late-nineteenth-century imaginary, consumed by ambition and a sense of its own progressive modernity.

The late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century broadened the field in which professional collectors operated. As Ruth Hoberman has noted in "In Quest of A Museal Aura," the "New Imperialism" and the expansion of the British Empire brought a flood of "artefacts from other continents" in to museums, "with the 1882 occupation of Egypt proving particularly fruitful." The "professionalization of archaeology" too diversified the range of artefacts finding their way to Britain, and encouraged the "expansion of museums" to accommodate the flood of historical things making their way back to the Imperial centre (467). Beyond collectors such as Burton with an eye for a profitable object, specialists like Corbeck could identify apparently innocuous items with a historical resonance that made them museum worthy.

This growing taste for all things Egyptian presented opportunities for professional employment, and for the individual collector's contribution to a grand historical narrative. But as Burton's tale suggests, professionalism with its necessary interlinking with the market was a complex concept up for debate, which sat somewhat uneasily with the boundaries of propriety for the nineteenth-century gentleman. As Jennifer Ruth suggests, these concerns were dramatised in "rise-of-the-professional narratives," most of which described "how the modern professional transcended the market by taking on an aura of disinterest" (33). Stoker's professional collector treads the line between professionalism and gentlemanly disinterest. He embraces the opportunities offered by the expansion of the empire and the flourishing market, turning his ability to collect to productive ends by sourcing objects for a patron. But while he relies on this economy to sustain him, he looks to distance himself from its associations by allying himself with a scholarly collector's museal ideals. He works to assume an identity as a scholar contributing to the enlightened project of affirming modernity, and

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remains concerned with distancing himself from the actual practicalities of interacting with the market for collectables.

Mr. Corbeck claims to have served the efforts of his "patron" and "chief," a man who has accumulated and disseminated his "rare knowledge" to a receptive public (59-60). In tying himself to a recognised scholar and his private museum he connects himself with the imperatives of the educational repository. He brings his own abilities in the field, and his knowledge of the market to bear on a broader, intellectual aim, and participates in an encyclopaedic endeavour. But connecting the activities of the market with those of the museum was, according to Ruth Hoberman, considered to be a terrible risk. Exposure to the broad spectrum of objects on display might prove dangerous for the unprepared consumer unable to perceive quality and authenticity. "Nineteenth-century commentators," she notes, "worried that museum-goers […] would fail to recognize the difference between museum displays and the mass-produced commodities on sale outside" (Hoberman "In Quest of A Museal Aura" 468). The fluidity and flexibility of meaning and value held in objects might prove the undoing of the age's enlightened projects. It might prevent the mastery of the material world necessary to allaying the fears of those overcome with the sheer scope and profusion of information and material items that characterised the period. Consequently, in imagining a reactive alternative to the stability of an ambitious modernity, Stoker describes a collector troubled by his objects, and by his position as a professional, operating between the museum and the market.

The recounted episodes of Mr. Burton's collecting career hold an element of exoticism and racial stratification, as he goes about misleading Rajahs and deceiving wealthy Italians. Yet these interactions lack the true sense of immersion, exoticism, and peril that Mr. Corbeck's adventures convey. His most recent expedition has been prolonged, lasting "nearly a year" until ultimately his skills in "the finesse of Eastern

trade" ensure that "the Jew-Arab-Portugee trader" in possession of the precious lamps "met his match." This act of besting a hostile adversary is taken to the extreme. Rather than simply selecting the seven lamps from amidst the "masses of rubbish" from his stock, he acts to shake "the imperturbability of my swarthy friend by the magnitude of my purchases." In a single transaction Corbeck "nearly cleared out his shop," to the extent that "he nearly wept, and said I had ruined him; for now he had nothing to sell" (110). This act, much like Burton's cheating of the Mellini's, appears as punishment for the possessor's failure to read the true nature of the objects.

The hardships of life in the field, and the trials of dealing with such ignorant individuals, make rescue efforts a trial for the would-be scholar. His exploits, and "all that I've gone through," are marked on the man himself as clearly the character traits that mark him out as a collector:

> A short, sturdy man, brown as a coffee-berry; possibly inclined to be fat, but now lean exceedingly. The deep wrinkles in his face and neck were not merely from time and exposure; there were those unmistakable signs where flesh or fat has fallen away, and the skin has become loose. The neck was simply an intricate surface of seams and wrinkles, and sun-scarred with the burning of the Desert. (58).

Corbeck has physically suffered in the pursuit of collectables, enduring the privations of life in relatively uncivilised or hostile regions. In this respect, he can be connected to the model of productive masochism that the collectors of chapter one were imagined in relation to.   John Kucich suggests the significance to imperial and class discourses of the image of the masochistic imperialist, capable of enduring great suffering "stoically – or even ecstatically" for greater ends (*Imperial Masochism* 9). Victoria Carroll also indicates a model of the productive collector as explorer, enduring hardship and braving danger in order to collect. In *Science and Eccentricity* she discusses scientific collectors

of the late-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century, who played upon their eccentricity in exciting anecdotes of successful exploration and acquisition. Men like Charles Waterton, an "avid collector and taxidermist" who risked life and limb in search of a "perfect cayman specimen for the museum at his country house back in Yorkshire." This quest took him in to the "wilds of Guiana," and for Carroll was part of a wider practice of self-fashioning that included acts of collection, writing, performance, and storytelling (1).

Corbeck's appearance suggests his suffering in the distant reaches of empire; yet, he is keenly concerned with making his success, his superiority, and his ability to best both the environment he finds himself in and those he has been forced to deal with known. "[T]his man," it is suggested, "has learned the lesson of the Eastern bazaars; and with Western intellect has improved upon his masters!" (65). But in placing himself out at a distance from Western practices, in a foreign market fraught with devious men and methods, he is forced to absorb the questionable morality to which he is exposed. Mr. Corbeck's treasures have been obtained, he guardedly remarks, "either by my exploration or by purchase – or – or – otherwise" (60). And there was no shortage of other, often questionable methods, of acquiring Egyptian objects in the late nineteenth century, methods that became a concern for governing bodies of the time.

Donald M. Reid has drawn attention to efforts to stem the flow of Egyptian antiquities to a voracious Europe. A remarkable demand saw tombs desecrated, objects removed and scattered (Reid 57). "Tourists," he notes, "were indeed carrying out shocking acts of vandalism," citing an 1890 issue of the *Graphic* in which "an illustration of tourists attacking temple columns with chisels" for souvenirs demonstrated the casual desecration of historic sites (Reid 183). A "brisk business in stolen artefacts has thrived" Shapiro and Kemp note, "since the first collector offered lucre for loot," making the urge to collect synonymous with a degree of unscrupulous

opportunism and blatant immorality (152). By bringing money in to the equation

Corbeck is compromised, and placed in to relation to the complex market that emerged

as demand increased and supply rose to meet it.

Just as with professionalism, a dynamic emerged between those collecting for

noble reasons, and those with merely financial motivations in mind. Donald M. Reid

has remarked on the accusations levelled at those who looked to claim Egyptian

artefacts "not out of antiquarian interest, but for 'solid cash'." In direct contrast, praise

was afforded to those "delivering antiquities 'out of the house of bondage' to the safety

of European museums" (Reid 77). Mr. Corbeck's actions, however, confuse the

distinction. He serves a master who funds him, collecting for remuneration. His

motivation is, therefore, always on one level monetary, and his methods are at times

questionable enough to warrant censure. Yet, his interest in Egyptology is genuine, and

in satisfying the requirements of an established scholar he allies himself with a noble

end. Market and museum are inextricably intertwined for Stoker's professional

collector.

Preoccupied as he is with the acquisition and transmission of objects, for Mr.

Corbeck as an agent, collecting means entering the markets and bazaars, haggling and

negotiating, it means that prices have to be assigned and paid, bills settled, and duties

fulfilled. The tremendous pull of the market has already done its damage in many

cases, so that as Corbeck makes clear not all of the objects he acquires are located in

situ. The moment of collection for such a man, he indicates, is often a matter of

rediscovering what has been unwittingly lost to the market – removed long ago from the

burial places and tombs that would unlock their significance. This act of rescue,

achieved at great personal cost, provides a means of redeeming himself.

When Corbeck arrives at the doors of his patron, he has just returned from

sourcing lamps essential for Trelawny's collection and the experiments he looks to

conduct with them. "With incredible labour and through many dangers, I followed them," he recalls, in an image of the collector hunting and running to ground desired objects that is reminiscent of Burton's descriptions (63). Corbeck's endeavours demonstrate a personal element of care and suffering: "I have carried them about my body," he says of the lamps, "in the desert, for three months; I lay awake night after night to watch them! […] I have looked them over with a magnifying-glass, hour after hour, till my eyes ached" (73). Corbeck places himself in the chain of "donors, collectors and dealers […] and transactions of many different kinds" that Chris Wingfield argues surrounded objects and museum exhibits, covering his hazy recollections of suspect methods with tales of bravery (122). The sense of a harmful descent in to the market is, however, unavoidable for both object and collector.

The terrible truth Mr. Corbeck realises is that his noble aims to elevate objects from the indiscriminate circulation of the market are undermined by the mechanisms of acquisition. Having descended in to the market and mobilised the object, halting its momentum is no easy matter. Having reportedly rescued the lamps from obscurity, as just another part of the largely worthless stock of a lowly trader, and returned safely to England with his latest acquisitions, he finds himself contemplating their return to lowly circulation in unappreciative hands. With the objects apparently stolen, Corbeck's ultimate fear is that the priceless lamps have met an unceremonious end, comparable to that of Mr. Burton's antique jewel, which is returned in to the hands of those consumed with value. Sergeant Daw summarises effectively the duality of the relationship to objects that such a theft suggests:

> Now, in the present instance much will depend on whether the thief is a good man – that's what they call a man who knows his work. A first-class crook will know whether a thing is of more value than merely the metal in it; and in such a

case he would put it with someone who could place it later on – in America or

France, perhaps" (65)

Speaking from experience, he perceives stratifications in object relations that extend

through each level, from the lowest of criminals to the museum staff member of

academic.

When asked whether "any other skilled person – at the British Museum, for

instance, or a dealer, or a collector like Mr. Trelawny, know the value – the artistic

value – of the lamps?," Mr. Corbeck is certain that "[a]nyone with a head on his

shoulders would see at a glance that the things were valuable" (65). Such is their

obvious quality, that any rational (by implication British) individual would be drawn to

them. Yet, despite this, the monetary value of the objects risks outweighing their

historical and cultural significance. In a moment, the "incredible labour" and "many

dangers" through which the collector was forced to pass in pursuit of the collectables, is

erased. Hints of "other methods" employed in the name of collection, indications that

Corbeck has risked his respectability by employing underhanded methods, all of this is

for nothing if the objects are lost to the generalising effects of the market, and the

unstoppable force of circulation.

Removed from the collector's possession the chances of rediscovering their

story and their true significance are lost. The fact remains that as an agent Corbeck

cannot offer the objects the fixity of the collection or the affirmation of their

rediscovered biography. Corbeck is ignorant of Trelawny's reason for wanting them,

and his ultimate designs. In serving Trelawny he is denied the privilege and stability of

possession, being concerned only with the objects in motion, as something to be

acquired and disseminated. Without these preserving methods, the objects remain in

motion and in flux. In a moment they might be reduced to their base metals, by a "thief,

ignorant of its historic worth" and looking "to cover up his crime" by then having it melted (64).

In the world of undiscerning exchange, value is a relative concept, and worth is determined according to perception. A lamp can be worth its weight in gold for one man, but worth "ten, twenty, a hundred, a thousand times its intrinsic value" to a collector, who would pay any price rather than have it destroyed (64). As with Burton's objects, once brought in to relation with the market the objects appear to be imbued with a dangerous mobility that risks sweeping them up and carrying them away to an ignoble conclusion. In the end, even the authentic object is troubled with the taint of the poor echoes that permeated the market, the speculation being introduced that the items finally discovered in Trelawny's own home are the "originals," while Corbeck's hard won items "may have been the copies," a theory that Corbeck actively discounts (73). Redemption for both objects and collector may only be contemplated by emphasising Corbeck's scholarly credentials, the extent of which may just be enough to eclipse the market's lowly realities.

Just as Mr. Burton looked to present himself as a born collector and as a gentleman determined to benefit the museum and the greatest possible number, Stoker's professional collector looks to distance himself from the market and ally himself with the scholar, Mr. Trelawny, and his knowledge producing ends. He is determined to disassociate himself from those who see materials, money, and the notion of the market. What Mr Corbeck has that Burton does not, however, are the academic credentials. When he comes to fully introduce himself to Mr. Ross and Miss Trelawny he emphasises his not inconsiderable achievements at length:

> My name is Eugene Corbeck. I am a Master of Arts and Doctor of Laws and
> Master of Surgery of Cambridge; Doctor of Letters of Oxford; Doctor of Science
> and Doctor of Languages of London University; Doctor of Philosophy of Berlin;

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Doctor of Oriental Languages of Paris. I have some other degrees, honorary and

otherwise, but I need not trouble you with them (59).

The intellectual aptitude demonstrated by these qualifications indicates his fitness to

pursue the artefacts of the narrative with an educated, enlightened approach. These

mental attributes are echoed in his "physiognomy," which showed 'rationcination',"

"language," "energy" and "resolution" (58). In an age in which "Britons and

Frenchmen almost monopolized Egyptian excavation in the 1880s and 1890s," before

"Germans, Americans, and Italians came in," Corbeck embodies the British agent,

possessed of worthy characteristics, and ready to bring his formidable strength of mind,

will, and body to bear on an alien land (Reid 196).

Without the luxury of possession, however, Corbeck is never truly able to exert

his powerful intellect on behalf of the imperial project. The particular manner of

collecting this aim necessitated relied on possession for the successful presentation and

comparison of specimens of material culture. Rodney Harrison has identified a

particular manner of collecting that responds to the perceived or projected dominance of

the imperial master over the subject and his things. What he terms "'Systematic' or

'representative' collecting" emerged from a position of power, and "involved the

acquisition and classification of representative items of the whole range of material

culture from individual 'primitive' cultures." This mode of collecting, Harrison

suggests, was related to "nineteenth and early twentieth century anthropology, and the

colonial project in general" (60). But Mr. Corbeck, while participating in the colonial

consumption of a wealth of items, and a knowledge producing endeavour, is denied the

bigger picture. He either does not perceive, or is not granted access to the broader

encyclopaedic aim, even as he provides the mechanism for its enactment, on the ground

and in the field.

This drive to collect provides Corbeck with an income and employment. But it makes him a part of the acquisitive urge in the West that "encouraged Europeans from the consuls on down to make a mockery of the export ban" imposed in the 1880s to prevent the loss of priceless Egyptian artefacts. A by-product of the age of the museum, the vast displays of Britain's Egyptological expertise necessitated a wealth of authentic artifacts, removed from the sites and the nations within which they were discovered and conveyed by a range of individuals to a voracious British market. Dark hints of terrible methods bring him in to relation with notable figures who helped themselves to significant items – "a bas-relief" from the "tomb of Seti I," "the Abydos table of Kings," and the "Karnak table of kings," for instance, whether for personal satisfaction or public edification (Reid 57). The museum offers Corbeck a means to address this negativity by prioritising the scholarly, knowledge generating results of such acquisitive acts. The associations, however, prove impossible to shake. Stoker's professional collector participates in the circulation of objects out of context, but with the express aim of re-embedding them in a whole. In a collection possessed by another, that looks to rediscover their true purpose, their potential and the biography that they carry may be brought out once more. But in pairing his collectors, professional with scholarly, Stoker exaggerates the repercussions of Mr. Corbeck's relation to the market, ending his role when he passes these things to his "patron" and "chief."

The Jewel of Seven Stars: Bram Stoker's Mr. Trelawny, Scholar and Egyptologist

If a necessary brush with the market threatens professional collectors Mr. Burton and Mr. Corbeck with disaster, then the scholarly endeavours of Bram Stoker's Mr. Trelawny and Arthur Machen's Professor Gregg prove equally perilous. Both Trelawny and Gregg are recognised as scholarly gentlemen. An Egyptologist and an Ethnologist, they are each understood to have contributed significantly to the British store of

knowledge in their respective disciplines. Their contributions to the knowledge economy have not, however, been produced by them alone. Each text makes some reference to a network of individuals who have been involved to a greater of lesser extent in the production of the collections that fuelled this work. This network allows Trelawny and Gregg to be publicly recognisable collectors, whilst operating at a distance from the market, and instead remaining allied to the museum's methodologies and imperatives.

Unlike Burton and Corbeck, Trelawny and Gregg are able to actively prioritise the rigorous encyclopaedic reckoning of Egyptological and ethnological information gleaned from the collection as a whole. But, as scholars, distanced from the market, they face different challenges. Rather than the relentless circulation of the market, they encounter the limitations of the museum's modes of collecting, either in their unsuitability to contain highly resonant objects, or in the dull stagnation imposed on the items. Consequently, in the course of *The Jewel of Seven Stars* and the "Novel of the Black Seal," Trelawny and Gregg follow the narratives of the items they acquire out of the stable limits of their academic house museums, turning their back on recognised avenues of research, to pursue highly experimental field work and forbidden knowledge.

Trelawny's particular Egyptological collection has at its heart the mummified Queen Tera. The mummy as an object attracted renewed attention in the late-nineteenth century, when the manner in which it was consumed, something which has evolved over time from a literal to a visual process, entered a new phase. As Nicholas Daly notes, sixteenth century merchant-travellers sold "mummy flesh" to apothecaries for use as "a sovereign remedy for bleeding;" in the early nineteenth-century the "scientific spectacle" of "unrolling" mummies became popular; while by the last decades of the century, an age that saw "the appearance of mummy fiction," the "spectacle" of the

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mummy was "confined to the museum" (24-5). The mummy was brought within the confines of the museum space in the late-nineteenth century, only to emerge in a new way in the popular conscious, breaking out in fictions of haunting and reanimation. Its ambiguity related to its status as an object, and as a human curiosity.

As a physiological specimen, Stoker's mummy might be considered in light of racially specific readings of the object. Charles D. Martin notes that by the "mid-nineteenth century, the mummy was a racially contested body, oscillating [...] between whiteness and blackness," object and specimen. As an object, its status as "the focus of early Egyptology" ensured that "the mummy suffered the indignities of public unrolling." As a physical, human form, and "the central specimen of racial science," it allowed the "ancient Egyptian" to be "excessively studied, measured, and theorized upon" (Martin 122). Such artefacts then were connected to issues as diverse as medicine, ethnicity, history, consumption and spectacle. This contested status extended in to a cultural imagination. In literature, Daly reads mummy fictions as symptomatic of "changes in the material culture of Britain," and particularly a reaction against the increasing mechanisation and mass production of modern manufacturing (26). Aviva Briefel has suggested that the disturbing nature of such objects as mummy hands in literature arises from the manner in which they evoke artisanal or arcane production methods (267). As material things they took the temperature of object-relations in a given period, drawing in broader ontological and epistemological concerns. Surrounded with contested states and perspectives, the mummy is, then, hard to resolve into a static item, imbued as it is with a range of meanings that are difficult to contain.

The mummy in Stoker's text has been read as the embodied force of "an ungrateful feminine demand for power [...] fantasized as the power to destroy," and symptomatic of Stoker's antifeminist liberal nature (Glover 91); and as a manifestation of "the mysterious powers associated with past periods" triumphing over science (Senf

73). Within this particular Gothic text, however, the troubling and haunting mummy, as an object and as a part of a collection of Egyptian artefacts, participates in a critique of the museum as a legitimate model for the private scholar's mastery of material culture and dissemination of knowledge. Whilst engaging with ways of treating the mummy, Stoker's object-laden text is interested in the effects of a collection, an accumulation of things that is more than the sum of its parts. His home is compared to the museum space. The mummy, for Trelawny, is an object with narrative potential, dissociated from its commodity status and made perilously active when brought back in to the collection as a whole.

Trelawny's affiliation with the methods and the ethos of the museum can be detected in both the scope of the collection, and also in its presentation. His collections are presented in the rooms and halls of his house museum, turning the domestic spaces over to the startling range of exotic and historic things.   The whole of his domestic interior is given over to storing up these objects, and mapping out the relation between them and the great Queen who lies at their centre. So apparently authentic, flawless, and complete is his collection that it even surpasses the essential function of the collector Ezio Bassani and Malcolm McLeod identify. In "African Material in Early Collections" Bassani and McLeod have noted how collecting activities across the empire safeguarded artefacts that would in all likelihood have been lost, preserving them for the ages (337). This inadvertent by-product of imperial expansion made the spoils of conquest a matter of cultural legacy. Stoker's collector makes use of the global movement in an imperial age, offers a glimpse of a particular moment in the history of Egypt, and reinvigorates a trace of a particular individual's life. His collections not only preserve a sense of the past, but recapture in remarkable detail an uncanny imprint of ancient magic.

With the great collection at his fingertips, Trelawny demonstrates a relation to things that presents him as expert curator, responsible for the acquisition, presentation, and dissemination of the collection and the secrets it holds. The objects, when brought in to proximity with the collector, "take on a new interest" as a product of his life's work, giving "some idea of the vastness of his enterprise in the world of Egyptian research" (67). They come to be representative of a time, a place, a civilisation, but also of Egyptology as a whole, and of the gentleman's considerable contribution to the field. By placing the collection within the home, however, and retaining the strong link to the collector's biography, Trelawny himself remains integral to the presentation and the perception of the collection. The fact, then, that the collector is introduced in a state of unconsciousness, imperilled by his collection on the brink of its completion is significant.

Nothing about Trelawny's collecting is opportunistic, or a mere by-product of his adventuring days. His agent, Mr. Corbeck, says decisively of him that "Trelawny knows what he is doing," and throughout his time as a collector, he has collected and ordered things with a "definite purpose in all that he did." His mysterious unconsciousness at the commencement of the narrative is the first key indicator that his control is slipping. Mr. Trelawny, as scholar, Egyptologist, and collector, has single-mindedly pursued a historical and scientific aim that has taken him across the globe, made his name in the field of Egyptology, and dominated his life. He has ventured out to Egypt himself on more than one occasion, but while Mr. Corbeck has had to deal with traders, with objects taken out of their context and plunged in to the market, Mr. Trelawny's active collecting has been far closer to that of the amateur antiquarians of Chapter One, or to the practice of archaeologists, discovering objects in situ. In forming his house museum, therefore, Trelawny enjoys the twin benefits of the sense of

adventure and achievement that come with collecting in the field, whilst avoiding compromising interactions with the market.

This determined alienation of market and museum was, argues Ruth Hoberman "[o]ne of the first discursive tasks of the museum" with which Trelawny's collection is allied. In "presenting itself […] as a last bastion for the aura," as Walter Benjamin termed it, the institutional collection was required to address the commodification of its objects, and "mask" a key contradiction in its existence, that is its reliance on the market, "by contrasting its own disinterestedness with the commodification outside" ("In Quest of Museal Aura" 224). Trelawny's almost complete collection vividly evokes an exotic and ancient sense as of Tera's tomb. Its objects constitute a whole, rather than a series of distinct items, or disparate valuables. Both the emphasis on completion, and on recreating the configuration of Tera's tomb, distances the scholar from a market and value oriented relation to things.

After the museum, which prioritised "an artwork's embeddedness in tradition and ritual," Stoker's Egyptologist records evidence from his own fieldwork, researches historic practices, and looks to re-embed Tera within her things, and her things within the collection as a whole (Hoberman "In Quest of A Museal Aura" 468). Trelawny, then, is concerned with the museum's mission as Hoberman describes it, that is the "efforts to resacralize displayed objects to compensate for the large-scale, society-wide 'decline of the aura'" (Hoberman 468). In *The Jewel of Seven* Stars, however, these "traditions" and "rituals" are far more literal, pertaining to the long-held beliefs and magical practices of the Egyptian Queen. Only by righting the wrongs of market circulation that have divided the collection can its true potential be realised. The aim of Stoker's resacralization is scientific experimentation with occult practices, not the simple accumulation and presentation of objects favoured by the museum. The result for Stoker's scholar of reuniting and experimenting with the whole, however, is a

fraught and perilous experience of the past made animate, as the collector is overwhelmed by the imprinted agency emerging from these things.

In the effective absence of the collector the objects appear increasingly obscure. Without the guiding influence of the collector, the scale and nature of the items become baffling. Mr. Trelawny has surrounded himself with things, littered his home with "curios," ranging in size and scope "from the great sarcophagi down to the scarabs of all kinds in the cabinets" (67). Profusion is significant, and in Trelawny's rooms "truly there were enough things […] to evoke the curiosity of any man" (17). Stoker dwells at length on the significance of the effect of the whole collection, making Trelawny's home a gothic inversion of the modern museum space.

Trelawny's estranged daughter, new to the house and the company of her father, appears to find the effect of a home "filled with magnificent curios, chiefly Egyptian," somewhat disorienting (17). In an age that "dreaded simplicity" and "yearned for elaboration" (Margetson 91), and in which objects in the interior could be perceived as insulation from the shocks of the modern world (Conrad 72), or a personal expression of security and prosperity (Logan *The Victorian Parlour* 184), these things appear to the young woman both unsettling and strange. The message that they convey is masked to the uninitiated eyes of Mr. Ross and Miss. Trelawny, but the collection as a whole conveys just enough of its hidden significance to trouble those surrounded by it with its secrets.

Surrounded by the mummified Queen and cat, and a host of Egyptian items for a period of time, Malcolm Ross discovers dangerously active qualities to the collection that exceed the limits typically set by the museum. The objects affect a multisensory attack on the unwary Mr. Malcolm Ross, eliciting sensations of hallucination of, or even transportation to, an alien and exotic past. Not only Mr. Trelawny, but also a hired nurse fall victim, to different extents, to the soporific effects of the so-called "mummy

smells," forcing the others involved in the mystery to don respirators whilst in the vicinity of the sick room and the collection. Again and again, the exhalations of the objects arise to trouble the narrator and his fellow characters with "[t]he Egyptian smell" that "had seemed to get on my nerves – on my memory – on my very will" (24). This effect is described as a characteristic side effect of treating the mummy as an object for display. As Stoker notes:

> You may put a mummy in a glass case and hermetically seal it so that no corroding air can get within; but all the same it will exhale its odour. One might think that four or five thousand years would exhaust the olfactory qualities of anything; but experience teaches us that these smells remain, and that their secrets are unknown to us. To-day they are as much mysteries as they were when he embalmers put the body in the bath of natron (24).

The objects thwart the expert efforts at containment of the museum.

Stoker describes objects that defy modern efforts to control them and make them useful as static exhibits. Mummies hold secrets, hidden knowledge, ancient and occult significance, which seeps out of the collection and is literalised in the sensory effects that trouble those who view them. Their quantity only adds to their problematic quality in the house museum, Ross observing that "[t]here were so many mummies, or mummy objects," assaulting the senses with their "penetrating odours of bitumen, and spices and gums – 'Nard and Circassia's balmy smells,'" that seem to "cling for ever" to the objects, that "one was unable to forget the past" (23).

While the essence of exotic scents and the spirit of the past they conjure resist the museum's control, the effect of the collection's dominant presence in the property connects Trelawny's home with the institutional space to the extent that Margaret Trelawny exclaims "I sometimes don't know whether I am in a private house or the British Museum" (22). This is not the museum as a regulated and educational space,

however. Rather it is the receptacle for a frightening range of objects and impressions, the extent of which make it a dark and dangerous alien environment. Without the controlling force of the collector, the objects appear free and unchecked, taking on a new animation, so that "[t]he room and all in it gave grounds for strange thoughts" (23). Rather than the message of knowledge that might be expected from the respected Egyptologist, Trelawny's things are "so many ancient relics that unconsciously," rather than deliberately, draw the viewer "back to strange lands and strange times" (23).

Mr. Trelawny, although ostensibly successful, even noble in his scholarly quest for things and for the knowledge they carry, nevertheless risks the problems of proximity to dangerously resonant items, and the taint inherent in his searching for arcane knowledge. Even before his great experiment commences, Stoker's collector is effectively punished for the mere act of seeking, struck down by an unknown force connected to his own collection. Curiosity, a term effectively inextricably intertwined with collecting, is inherent in the acts of looking and acquiring, and carries with it a network of contextually determined associations. As Barbara M. Benedict has noted, over its long history, curiosity has run the risk of being perceived as an act of "looking beyond," driven by "threatening ambition" (2). In electing to look beyond, to delve in to the lost, the unknown, and the defiantly different through these objects, Trelawny betrays a trace of the curiosity that Benedict notes was marginalised as compromising. What becomes unclear, however, is whether this curiosity originates with Trelawny or the collection's prior owner.

With the completion of his collection, Trelawny determines to undertake the great experiment Queen Tera first created it for. And as the realisation of this objective approaches, events no longer seem to be determined by the collector's will. As Nicholas Daly notes, "[t]he British Museum came to represent the ideal of the collection in the period, a world of exotic objects under a domesticating taxonomic regime." It was

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able to subjugate "the unruly parade of foreign objects to the strict discipline of classification," assuming that exposure, and being "brought face to face with the objects of empire would disperse the mystery surrounding them" (31). This preventative measure was intended, according to Daly, to prevent the "museum's transformation into a forbiddingly exotic, even Gothic space" (32). The familiarising mission of the museum finds oppositional form in Stoker's curious scholarly collection. In this space, allied to the museum and distanced from the market, a curious interaction between active objects and frustrated scientific aims is played out. The claimed object colonises the collection as a whole, and the collector.

Trelawny's house museum revels in the strangeness of its things, and draws its viewers in by piquing their curiosity, rather than dispelling their perception of mystery. Trelawny's home is a "veritable storehouse of marvels of antique art," objects of the type to make "a collector's mouth water" (67). But although Stoker's collection is reminiscent of the museum's exhibition halls, it does not demonstrate a mastery of "the plethora of sensations, vibrations, movements, and intensities that constitute both our world and ourselves" (Wohl 126). Although extensive and representative of Egyptology so far, Trelawny's things refuse to be marshalled, ordered, or rewritten in to a modernised narrative constructed in the process of collecting (Harrison 61). There is no negotiation "between the world as it is in its teeming and interminable multiplicity," and "the world as we need it to be or would like it to be: open, amenable to intention and purpose, flexible, pliable, manipulable, passive" (Wohl 126).

The objects resist the messages of progress and order that such a collection might be expected to produce. While Charles D. Martin observes that "[t]he mummy's silence inspires the Egyptologist to fill the void and establish his own authority as a scientist, as a man, as a Caucasian," Stoker's objects, and most particularly the mummy of Queen Tera, refuse to remain silent (126). They do not offer the opportunity for the

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collector's voice to be heard, and instead insist on their narrative. They remain, at heart, Queen Tera's things. By establishing the division of labour between an agent, Mr. Corbeck, and Mr. Trelawny as the possessor of the collection, Stoker associates his scholar with a degree of control denied to his associate. It remains, however, unstable.

The strength of the historic narrative that these things carry, and the potential that their history and even their initial production for the great Queen Tera imbued them with, remains to unite and govern them. In a text concerned with astral bodies, terrible familiars, and awful methods of returning life to the dead, these things are haunted, never having been fully relinquished by their first possessor. Tera, it seems, had great plans for the collected items hidden away within her tomb, and Trelawny appears to have been driven by her lingering presence to chase down these scattered items, and recreate the whole.

Stoker envisages a collector driven by the powerful "catalyst" of memories of "lived experience" held in collections. His actions ensure that, in the same manner as the museum, the "knowledge and incidents or events" surrounding Tera's life and death are not neglected or forgotten (Allen 211). But the identity and the knowledge that Trelawny awakens, and the narrative he looks to continue by bringing the Queen back to life, threaten to unleash the long-dead Queen on an unsuspecting modern world (Senf 90). The transgressive nature of his intellectual and historical pursuit is further emphasised by the spatial barrier that is broken when the action shifts to the outlying and alienated region of Cornwall. The final break with productive aims, modern methodologies, and the museum occurs with the move to this marginal location.

Shelley Trower has described how "Cornwall's peripheral position as neither quite inside nor outside the imperial mainland of England" made it susceptible to "apparently poisonous atmospheres from other, far flung regions overseas" (200). In "On the Cliff Edge of England", Trower observes in Stoker's depiction of Cornwall in

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The Jewel of Seven Stars his use of place in the provision of a peripheral and permeable region, in which the "English explorer" or even "tourist" could negotiate an experience of alienation or exoticism (201). Cornwall provides a suitably isolated and resonant space in which to channel arcane knowledge and unleash the ancient Queen, so long contained within the collector's home, in the confines of the museum-like space.

The collector's motivations lie in both his need to appease the great Queen, and seek ultimate glory through discovery and the fulfilment of the collection's potential. After "twenty years of research, and danger, and labour," the rewards expected by the collector are not inconsiderable. He looks to identify "things that have been hidden from the eyes and the knowledge of men for centuries; for scores of centuries," things that require the collector and scholar to face the reality that "great danger" of an unknown kind lurks at the heart of the process. The personally driven motivations of the collector are presented as giving way to the public minded motivations of benefitting "science, and history, and philosophy," by turning "one old page of a wisdom unknown in this prosaic age" (124). But these noble aims are overwhelmed by the will of Tera, whose knowledge extends beyond that of Trelawny, leaving him to surmise that "[w]e must keep our eyes fixed on the scientific side, and wait for the developments on the psychic side" (138).

Writing on "the instability of the dominant culture" in relation to an unquenchable "colonized" force, Catherine Wynne notes that, "[i]n Stoker's oeuvre, the intrusion of other knowledges is simultaneously signalled as a threat and as a rightful, if aggressive, assertion of cultural difference" (45). "[M]esmerism and the occult," argues Catherine Wynne, are forces that emerge "from the margins of the imperial centre" to trouble the security of "the mind's autonomy," and expose "the limitations of conventional science." The "battle for control" of such forces, Wynne notes with reference to *Dracula*, was tied up with a scientific/ non-scientific debate, most notably

surrounding mesmerism (47). A sense of this incursion of questionable knowledge in to a rational centre, and the battle for its control between scientific Western and Occult and non-scientific powers, is echoed in *The Jewel of Seven Stars*. Here the paraphernalia through which it is accessed and wielded is apparently wrested from Queen Tera and placed in scientific, rational hands, before being definitively reclaimed (47). Despite the masculine, authoritative act of mummy unrolling that takes place in the novel's final stages, and Stoker's apparent mastery of the collection as both Egyptologist and scientist, Queen Tera remains the "guiding light" of the experiment (178).

Enclosed within the chamber hewn out of the rock beneath Trelawny's house Kyllion, the logic of the modern scholarly collector is abandoned. Scent and light once more are the markers of significance, and with the casket illuminated, and the room flooded, first with a scent strong enough to make them glad of their respirators, and then with black smoke, the chamber comes to act as a tomb for all of the party involved, with the exception of Ross. Out of these objects, believed to grant life, springs only death and destruction for the collector, and for those he brought into contact with these particularly dangerous things. Unable to contain and control the objects within his house museum, or re-write the objects of the collection in his experiment, Trelawny embraces their potential for activity and for the generation of new knowledge. But in moving further away from modernity, and the reassuring, if limiting, practices of the museum, Trelawny finds himself subject to the ancient and occult powers they house.

"The Novel of the Black Seal": Arthur Machen's Professor Gregg, Ethnologist

Stoker's text began with a compromised collector, an Egyptologist rendered unconscious by a malign influence arising from his collection. Arthur Machen's "The Novel of the Black Seal" begins with a dead collector, the ethnologist Professor Gregg, led by objects and his research to his death in the field. While Mr. Trelawny has a

history in the field, Professor Gregg, the fourth and final collector that this chapter will analyse, does not initially betray a history of daring, danger, skill, and experience. Where Trelawny moves from field, to stable museum space, and back out in to an alien, marginalised environment, Gregg has remained firmly within the confines of the personal collection. The things Machen describes are dry, dusty, static items, in collections formed long ago. Gregg's objects are tamed, ordered, regimented, and subjugated to his methods of presentation and dissemination, and his scholarly identity. Highly successful, and recognised for his publications, Professor Gregg's things are as firmly bound up in the domestic spaces of his home as the knowledge they contain is between the covers of his books. Machen's text, however, explores the reaction against this fixity.

"The Novel of the Black Seal," one of many collectorly narratives within *The Three Impostors*, sees one of the titular impostors describe the last known exploits of a famous ethnographer. As an "authority on ethnology and kindred subjects," Professor Gregg's work is well known, and much respected by Mr. Phillipps, to whom the tale is recounted. It might, therefore, be expected that "The Novel of the Black Seal" would present a predictable and masterful interaction with objects, and an affirmation of the knowledge economy and the market that fuelled it. For the man who produced the "Textbook of Ethnology," converting objects and observed data in to knowledge and exhibits is the fundamental process on which he has built his career. By targeting a particular aspect of ethnological research, however, Machen is able to turn the scholarly collector's accumulated material traces against his more rigorously scientific nature.

"Gregg," as his secretary and governess to his children Miss Lally notes, "was a man whose one thought was for knowledge" (142-3), and whose career has been devoted to becoming "somewhat of a specialist […] in the studies known as ethnological" (164). "The object of ethnological study," according to a definition in

Victorian Britain: An Encyclopedia, "was to trace the geographical distribution of, and relations between, the peoples or races that constituted the human species." Its categorising approach noted "physical or racial characteristics, moral beliefs, social customs, material cultures, and historical records," all of which were treated as evidence relating to "the broad chronology of human history" ("Ethnology" 271). With the evolution of specialist fields such as ethnoarchaeology, furthermore, material culture became increasingly illuminating, as ethnoarchaeologists made use of "ethnographic data to assist their interpretation of archaeological remains" (Lane 402).

In his "ordinary work" the Professor is described as moving "step by step, testing every inch of the way and never venturing on assertion without proof that was impregnable" (148). His home is filled with an accumulation of evidence on which his work is based, held in texts and objects. His career is testified to by this accumulation of long-held data and collectable specimens that fill his home, items key to the credible pursuit of ethnological scholarship. The ethnological reading of mankind's relations to objects came to appreciate the interaction of man and material things as a symptom of progress. Peter Logan describes how the "philosopher of positivism" Auguste Comte outlined a "doctrine of primitive fetishism" in *Cours de Philosophie Positive* "published 1830-42." Comte, he argues, posited that "primitive fetishism was the first moment in the universal pattern through which societies developed from infancy to adulthood," making relations to things a key point of observation. Material culture provided observable phenomena that when sat alongside physiological data offered a means to measure cultural progress.

Machen's collector has apparently based his scholarly endeavours on the measurement and comparison of conveniently portable objects, capable of reflecting culturally, temporally, or spatially distant peoples. The mobility and resonance of material items, which John Plotz in *Portable Property: Victorian Culture on the Move*

has suggested served the interests of imperialists keen to convey a sense of England abroad, allows Professor Gregg to pursue his ethnological endeavours without venturing out in to the world, as the materials he requires are conveyed back from the distant reaches of Empire and in to his collections. Rather than serving as badges of travel and experience, of the movement of individuals out in to the Empire, such as David Seed describes (94), Gregg's intellectual efforts and accumulation of materials represent a return of objects.

The Professor's collections and considerable body of work are suggestive of a market in collectables that fuelled a knowledge economy. Premised on the assumption that one could encapsulate and freely convey a selected culture or people through its material items, analysis of objects provided measurable evidence of levels of modernity. Taken from their point of acquisition, and placed in the hands of scholars able to discern and disseminate the information they contain, objects could be made useful. Machen's collector has apparently taken advantage of the portability of specimens, which allows him to have them at his fingertips in the comfort of his home. Yet, in the course of the narrative, Professor Gregg begins to rebel against the spatial limitations of such a relation to objects. The items Gregg collects, though they are the key pieces of the puzzle by which a lost race may be uncovered, do not easily yield their secrets. They require the efforts of a network of individuals aiding the scholar, but also a final phase of fieldwork, and an experiment as dangerous as that of Trelawny.

Gregg's collection is a testament to Logan's claim that such a developmental narrative as Comte laid out was "subsequently absorbed into British ethnology," and from this "gentleman's hobby" was developed in to "professional Victorian anthropology" (*Victorian Fetishism* 30). Professor Gregg represents the scholarly and highly successful face of the practice of collecting and disseminating ethnological objects and knowledge. The rational, scientific practice of ethnology, was both a

legitimate means of forming a comprehensive sense of the world and a diverting hobby, which was normalised and developed over the course of the nineteenth century. As the chapter so far has indicated, the means of acquiring specimens for study varied. A market arose supplying the wants of museums and scholars, but fieldwork remained a possibility for men such as Trelawny and Gregg.

When Machen's Professor, so long reliant on information and items apparently supplied to him through the efforts of others, determines to engage in fieldwork, however, this step out of civilisation takes the form of an illicit determination. He admits to coveting "the renown of Columbus," and to a desire to pursue his research in to "stranger things" through an expedition to the West of England. In making this confession he is forced to placate Miss Lally's fears as to the dangers of this mission. He soothes her with the assurance that his "little expedition" is "quite commonplace; no more exciting than a day with the geological hammers." The risks involved are no greater than those encountered "on the commonplacest excursion" (162). The realities of his material culture fuelled explorations, however, indicate Machen's interest in the pursuit of dangerous knowledge, exemplified in this collecting narrative by determined academic endeavours beyond the spatial limits and rigorously academic methods of the museum.

Trelawny was able to profess to his credit an experience of work in the field. Although not immediately comparable to the scorching wilds of Egypt, the particular nature of the discovery that Gregg looks to make brings the possibility of peril and of a spirit of adventure to his simple expedition. Looking, as he does, to reveal the presence of a heretofore obscured race of beings that have made small but threatening contact with the recognizable world since ancient times, he renders a supposedly familiar landscape strange, and marked with obscure physical traces. Rather than recounting the accumulation of successive signs of ethnological interest, Machen hints obscurely to

secrets held in things and horrors lurking in our midst. The acts of a collector looking to satisfy his piqued curiosity would ordinarily be of little consequence. As a famous scholar, however, the ramifications of his quest for dark and dangerous knowledge, founded on tenuous evidence, are far greater.

Professor Gregg's academic credentials and public platform grant his work the semblance of credibility and speed its transmission to an expanding market. With the popularisation of ethnology and related disciplines, and the corresponding rise in popular publications, the reach of such work was extended. In the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century a market for "encyclopedias, histories, and self-educators," comprehensive texts surveying a range of subjects, and "popular reference works," emerged and diversified. Behind this increased transmission of knowledge lay the fear that such texts might be a medium for communicating information, altered by a "distorting process," which would negate their potential for education (Lorimer 227). False or warped knowledge was, therefore, increasingly acknowledged as a peril threatening the enlightenment project of disseminating knowledge and asserting mastery over the material world. The potential consequences of pursuing and disseminating knowledge made the direction and presentation of the scholar's researches a matter of moral judgement. In turning his personal interest in curious phenomena to public ends, therefore, Gregg's collecting risks communicating information to the public that should remain obscure, and that is premised on tenuous information and lax methodology.

If a museum is only as good as its objects, and a scholar as good as his sources, then the inspiration for Professor Gregg's current research does not at first glance appear promising. Scattered and apparently unrelated, the objects and clues that drive his interest are vaguely connected to both the market and the museum. It is suggested that a network of contacts and sources have provided the somewhat tenuous clues for the collector to follow, which call him out in to the field. Reports of deaths, a

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"primitive stone axe," the Black Seal of the title found "near the site of the ancient Babylon" by an "agent in the East," a similar object discovered in a museum, which provides the key to a mysterious inscription, this strange series of events, items, and discoveries are the basis for his current endeavour (168-9).

Significantly, the materials are not understood as related, and the articles are not fully comprehended by those who encounter, display, or trade in them. Rather, they are by-products of intellectual endeavours, the activities of "agents," and accidental encounters with curious objects and cultures. It is based on these things, and his "vagrant thoughts and half-formed fancies of many idle and speculative hours," that Gregg develops "a certain hypothesis." Unlike his former mainstream work, this idea, "wild and fantastic in the extreme," is "nothing that can be set down in hard black and white." Rather than a product of systematic analysis it is largely a result of "curious investigation" and "long and tedious failure" (171). His things provide a faint chain of evidence, "a thin crust" on which to base his research. These material items inspire a departure from his usually assured scholarly work.

Gregg's obscure objects and his methods are constructed in relation to normative modes and familiar engagements with things. His collaborative efforts, and his impulse to pursue his researches in the field, are symptomatic of a move toward the increasingly rigorous pursuit of ethnology, anthropology, and related disciplines in the period (Riskord 34). His transition from established scholar surrounded by static collections, to active explorer out in the field could be read as symptomatic of "the desire for better evidence" that characterised later nineteenth century practices (34). He describes turning his back on the "old bones and stones and rubbish" that make up his collection so far. But reinvigorating his pursuit means the termination of his years of "grinding away at facts," in favour of the pursuit of "fancies." It is a personal quest that drives him to effectively turn his back the rigorous pursuit of his discipline. His latest avenue of

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study would seem to be as much about his identity as a collector as his work as a scholar.

In an echo of Machen's language in describing Mr. Burton, Professor Gregg considers himself to be possessed of "the heat of the hunter," positioning himself as the predator, running his prey to ground. Much like Corbeck he is infected by the escalating collectorly passion, which emerges from the artefacts in a similar manner to Trelawny's collectables, to infect Miss Lally with the "lust of the chase" (143). Yet, what she perceives as a journey from the darkness of ignorance to the light of discovery, that will allow them to "unshadow" great mysteries, actually appears as an increasing descent into moral and intellectual darkness, a product of the "monomania" she fears Gregg may be "cherishing" (148).

His move in to fieldwork is hinted at as a symptom of consuming passion "barring out from this one subject all the scientific method of his other life" (148). Amidst his "more sober and accurate studies," Professor Gregg begins to show signs of "a something hidden, a longing and desire for some object to which he did not allude" (143). Lying beneath the surface of this scholarly gentleman is "desire," "longing," and an objective that keeps him "entranced" by "some distant prospect of adventurous discovery," to which he is "summoned" (143). This summoning force, while not personified as in Stoker's text, gives his current work the impression of being a Gothicised corruption of his life and work so far. It is a reaction to the framework of normative values and modes of collecting that have defined his existence to date. Possessed of these mere traces, Gregg is able to formulate and consider testing a theory that is founded on "vague hints" and on "[h]alf a dozen pieces of evidence," the only indications gathered together in twenty years of secret work by the scholarly collector. His end goal, he confesses, appears as a "haze," a potential "mirage or *terra incognita*" lying like a land "across deep waters" (145). Both Machen and Stoker's scholars put

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their faith in a final climactic experiment, gambling on the potential of their objects despite the very real possibility of failure. Both collectors are required to physically move from the containment (successful or otherwise) of the museum-like collection to the liminal space of different regions of the comparatively wild West of England.

The profound success of Gregg's previous efforts at museum-like stasis has utterly banished the "forbiddingly exotic, even Gothic" impressions an "unruly parade of foreign objects" might be expected to engender (Daly 31-2). Subjected to a "domesticating taxonomic regime," they have been made useful by the collector who has extracted and disseminated the information that they contain. Gregg's existing collections appear the picture of completion and ordering, his "inner study" alone being lined by "a nest of pigeon-holes, every drawer neatly labelled, and the results of years of toil classified in a few feet of space" (144). He is associated with spaces crowded with the markers of his endeavours, with a house that "teemed with books, and cabinets full of strange, and even hideous, objects," that "filled every available nook in the vast low rooms" (142). The impression of order, and the extensive evidence of his work, contrast with the "few scraps of paper […] and a lump of black stone, rudely annotated with queer marks and scratches," all located within a drawer of "an old bureau, a piece fantastic and faded, which stood in a corner of the room." His success so far, however, makes his departure into the mythical, the obscure, and the Gothic more pronounced.

Just as in the case of Mr. Trelawny's collection, without the knowledge of the collector, these things appear impenetrable, and while potentially intriguing, are largely devoid of obvious meaning. Only the collector can make them a collection, but similarly, only the collector could fall victim to their dangerous inspiration. As a scholar he will put them to the test. But his aim to explain the "facts that would not square with orthodox scientific opinion" will only threaten the enlightened stability of his discipline (164). His secrecy and his reticence to disseminate his knowledge

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indicate he might be aware that the discovery should remain obscure. Consequently, the professor feels compelled to justify his actions to his companion, to a scholarly community, and to the world. He provides an explanation in a letter to Miss Lally. Delivered in the event of his mysterious disappearance, it explains the course of his studies as a product of "[a] somewhat extensive course of miscellaneous and obsolete reading," in fact, of the sort of false or misused knowledge it was feared might corrupt the minds of those with an academic interests.   Led away from modern methods and a scientific focus, he strays in to a belief based on the premise that "much of the folk-lore of the world is but an exaggerated account of events that really happened" (164-5).   In this way he becomes convinced of the existence of a "race which had fallen out of the grand march of evolution," retaining "as a survival, certain powers which would be to us wholly miraculous." His sources are varied, leading him to believe that he seemed "to gather confirmation from every side": "from the spoils of a tumulus or a barrow, from a local paper reporting an antiquarian meeting in the country, and from general literature of all kinds" (166). His disappearance indicates that the scholar himself has become a victim of questionable information, lingering in print long after its initial presentation.

Of more pressing concern than the scholar's disappearance is the import of this event, which demonstrates that his speculations were correct. Gregg leaves behind a number of objects, and identifies a range of strange physical traces, that operate as "contact zones" with an alien race (Mason 25) .[4]   These items indicate the threat that subsequent collectors might be brought in to contact with "a long-dormant or suppressed past" (Clausson 64). They suggest "anxieties" as to its troubling re-emergence, a key feature of fin de siècle gothic as Nils Clausson describes it (64). By

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[4] For more on the use of this concept to describe interactions between communities and cultures, see Rhiannon Mason's "Cultural Theory and Museum Studies." Here she describes how the term is borrowed from Mary Louise Pratt (1992), and has been used by James Clifford (1997) in reference to the museum (Mason 25).

indicating that deeper truths about the nature of being and the haunting presence of the past, lie behind his research, this work to which Gregg holds "the true key" becomes a matter of consequence to humanity as a whole (144). It remains Gothically haunting, however, having never been subjected to the taxonomic rationalisation of museum processes.

What is remarkable is that with all his experience, and with so many scholars and hobbyists devoted to the study of ethnology and related disciplines, sufficient credible evidence has not been obtained of this lost people. Without this material Professor Gregg is induced to pursue his interest in a non-traditional manner, in an intellectual twilight of outdated scholarship and vague material traces. In the end, the pressures of his publicly acknowledged academic existence appear to force his hand, restricting his time in the field, and pushing him in to a final effort to seek out and meet with the people of this hidden civilisation. Fearing "ridicule as a madman and a quack," should he voice his theories without proof, he disappears into the wilds unprepared, and never to return. He risks terrible danger and death in order to seek further material evidence of what the objects of the collection hint at, but all to no avail.

Common to Arthur Machen's fiction is a sense of powerful hidden worlds, truths, and meanings, lying behind the "secret language" of nature. Susan J. Navarette indicates the sin of looking to obtain such transcendent knowledge typically breeds disaster for the sinners of his texts. Those who, "either by accident or in a misguided attempt to obtain 'something which was never' theirs" seek forbidden truths, inevitably "repeat a 'Fall' into damning knowledge" which brings only "[d]eath or madness" (Navarette 181). Navarette perceives these figures as "doomed," emphasising the role of the supernatural in an experience of what Aaron Worth terms "deep history," that is "the nineteenth century's emergent deep pasts – evolutionary, paleontological, and geological," which provided materials for Machen's images of "disconcerting

continuities precisely where nineteenth-century historiography had begun to insist upon divisions, lines of clear demarcation" (216-7). By placing at the heart of the text a collector with an ethnological bent, however, Machen's narrative makes objects key to the experience of ethnology and living history, and thereby makes a comment on the relation of material culture to knowledge production.

Professor Gregg asks questions of the possibilities of the static collection, he deploys his modern approach to fieldwork, utilising his skills as a collector and a scientist, yet he also reveals the limits of his abilities. "Material culture," argues Chris Gosden, "formed a series of texts to be read" by archaeologists, and as suggested already, by those in related disciplines that similarly made use of specimens and artefacts. In being "open" to "varying forms of interpretation by people in the past and present," however, this "solid material base gave rise to meanings and interpretations, and was thus ultimately fluid rather than solid" (427). Gosden's reading raises the possibility that objects, as much as strange natural forces, or flawed impulses to pursue forbidden knowledge, might generate the sort of perilous ambiguity that compromises Machen's Professor.

Professor Gregg's experiences bring him to an impression of instability, where past and present merge, "matter is really awful and unknown as spirit," and "science but dallies on the threshold, scarcely gaining more than a glimpse of the wonders of the inner place." Gregg may hold the key to the mystery, but unlocking the secret unleashes something the collector is not prepared to contain. Experienced with the bones, stones, and paperwork of his ethnological researches, his failure to turn an actual encounter with the race he wishes to study suggests the limitations of the scholar. He dies at the hands of a people presented as both cruel and barbaric, without ever attaining higher or occult knowledge. Professor Gregg might contribute to the map of human

development, indicating an unevolved race hidden within the civilised shores of Britain, but the result of all of this is not satisfyingly enlightening, or academically gratifying.

Benedict perceives in the exercise of curiosity an ontological transgression. Curiosity allowed the individual not only to "seek" but to "manifest new realities and reshape their own identities," stating that in consequence "curious people and curious things destabilised the categories and identities of others" (4). There is a taxonomical transgression implied in the narrative, as states of being become destabilised and the collector's ability to classify, organise, and know things is compromised by their fluid nature. Having made his discovery, but lost his life in the process, Gregg becomes infamous, not as the famous ethnologist any longer, but as a victim of a mysterious disappearance. Leaving behind a series of objects that in turn are collected and speculated upon, he becomes part of the obscure accumulation of traces indicating this hidden people.

Machen demonstrates the repercussions of collecting such dangerously resonant objects for a collector of previously sanctioned scholarly things by making Gregg another faint trace in the obscure narrative. On the spot where he vanished are found a selection of things as disparate as the objects of his latest collection:

> "his watch and chain, a purse containing three sovereigns in gold, and some loose silver, with a ring that he wore habitually were found three days later on a wild and savage hillside, many miles from the river. These articles were placed beside a limestone rock of fantastic form […] wrapped into a parcel with a kind of rough parchment […] secured with gut" and bearing "an inscription done with some red substance" in "undecipherable" characters that "seemed to be a corrupt cuneiform" (138-9).

Gregg is well aware of the likely result of his efforts, expecting that "it will be a strange adventure, the last of all, the last demonstration in the chain" (159). The knowledge he

produces, such as it is, is left to Miss Lally, along with the warning that "I advise you to throw it forthwith into the fire; you will sleep better of nights if you do so" (164). As in the case of Trelawny, his sacrifice comes to nothing, as the information terminates with the Professor's secretary, leaving the dead collector with a tainted reputation amongst his intellectual peers, and the tenuous honour of being the last link in a chain of evidence leading to nightmarish realities. A career's work in service to a knowledge economy, and modelled on the ethos of the museum, may have made his name, but it does not provide the stimulation of fieldwork. Nor does it provide a suitable means of utilising the objects the Professor discovers. Once outside of the normative framework of ethnological collecting the objects are granted new activity, but to a degree that the collector is unable to marshal.

Conclusion

The strength of the nineteenth century framework of safe and productive relations to material culture is testified to by the sheer number of sites for the exhibition of collections, and the proliferation of disciplines employing objects in order to make sense of modern experience. The museum and the market encouraged the circulation of artefacts, taken from around the globe and returned to a rational, Western centre, where they were subjected to rigorous taxonomies. Once under a scientific or scholarly gaze, the Gothic potential of a multitude of exotic objects was neutralised, allowing the domesticated items to serve as useful specimens (Daly 31-2). Together market and museum provided the models for a range of productive masculine identities, validated by the acts of mastering the material world, and dispelling fear by making its variety knowable. They established the framework that affirmed the identities of successful collectors, making their efforts vital to Imperial and Enlightenment projects.

The narratives analysed in this chapter each describe great objects and good men, gainfully employed in contributing to a knowledge economy associated with the museum and a thriving market for collectable things. They are established collectors, and men whose public face and gendered identity is founded on their contribution to an expanding market, trading in knowledge and objects, and spawning dealers, agents, ethnologists, Egyptologists, professionals and scholars. The objects with which they have interacted are recognisable collectables, each with an established circulation, knowledge, or spectacle value. Mummies, jewels, a series of Egyptian artefacts, and anthropological objects, all stand in recognisable relation to an economy of knowledge and objects. They are then brought in to relation with the museum and market, through contemporary practices of collectors tasked with disseminating value. The selected texts therefore evidence a framework for safe relations to material culture.

By bringing their experienced collectors in to relation with debates regarding "professionalism," however, the compromising potential of particular engagements with objects is explored with relation to specific collecting identities. Bringing out the unstoppable circulation and overwhelming historical significance of the objects with which they interact, the professionals and scholars experience a fundamental failure to successfully disseminate the value and knowledge held in things. The narratives consequently oppose a framework of scholarly and professional norms.

Properly managed, objects taken by collectors from all corners of the empire were made useful as exhibits within museum displays, as evidence of ancient civilizations, demonstrations of cultural development, or stock for the various department stores. This fact, of which the collectors described are particularly aware, necessitated the firm and expert hand of the collector, to find, mobilise, and utilise objects. Walter Benjamin imagined a dominant relation of collectable to collector when he stated that "[a]s a rule collectors have been guided by the objects themselves"

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("Edward Fuchs" 56). Collectors taking their cue from the collection, and responding to the desire they inspire, are drawn in to the pursuit of particular items by the things themselves. For professional collectors, Mr. Burton and Mr. Corbeck, the reverse appears to be true.

The objects they acquire are placed in a submissive position, as the agents and dealers describe active processes of acquisition based around masking their true value or fundamentally altering the manner in which they are perceived. Furthermore, by serving the market for collectables, and more specifically the British Museum and the Egyptologist Mr. Trelawny, they are driven by outside influences rather than a naturally encountered chain of experiences and associations, as the average hobbyist collector might be. The scholarly collectors, Mr. Trelawny and Professor Gregg operate from an empowered position in which they direct or receive the products of a network of professionals. The activities that culminate in the events of the narratives all begin with the confident exercising of their British privileges of taste and discernment. They select readily desirable things, they often traverse great geographical spans, laying claim to objects and artefacts, and deploying their powers of survey and knowledge production. With the museum and the regulated, ordered collection serving as a tool for the legitimisation of Britain's global power, and a repository for the "spoils" of a colonial age, the collecting of these scholarly gentlemen is a fulfilment of duty and a symptom of obligation (Black *On Exhibit* 12).

Burton, Corbeck, Trelawny and Gregg all respond to differing degrees to the "duty" of the age, by bringing themselves to a greater or lesser degree in to relation with the museum and its totalising mission. The collecting activities described in these texts are undertaken with a degree of entitlement and a sense of superiority that grants the collectors the authority to lay claim to the objects. In being driven by duty, in addition to a fundamental desire to collect, their relation to the items, to the market, and to the

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museum, becomes a matter of necessity that pushes them in to uncomfortable and compromising scenarios. Although apparently undertaken in the interests of the nation, the methods by which they acquire these things do not appear authorised or supported by an "authoritative" and "colonial" force, such as supported the acquisitive efforts of the museum (Nair 97). Rather, these men operate of their own accord, isolated collectors in the field, driven in to engagements with ignorant "natives" and devious traders, and subject to all of the perils of life in the field.

As established professional and scholarly collectors, they have negotiated the pitfalls of the market, they have (supposedly) contributed to British knowledge of the past and of the world in an Imperial age, by adding to the Nation's store of valuable things. Both these methods and the things the collectors are concerned with increasingly compromise the empowered masculine identities of these successful men. Their interactions indicate the dangerous fluidity of things, compromising the professionals and the scholars as objects no longer simply operate as items of value or vessels of knowledge.

This chapter responds to the productive possibilities of objects, and to the supposed masculine mastery of them exerted by the collector. It identifies objects that become frustratingly active, and collectors compromised by both their methods and their things. Bram Stoker's and Arthur Machen's depictions divide the sourcing and dissemination of objects between professionals dealing with the market and scholars housing and utilising the collection, in order to explore the problems and possibilities of museum and market modes of collecting. They introduce agents, dealers, Egyptologists, and Ethnologists who have successfully made a career out of their collecting abilities, and then follow the effects as they break their relations with the models and the spaces of the house museum and the productive processes and valuations of the market. They imagine the mechanism for consumption turned against

the professional collector, who is thwarted by things made inescapably mobile when brought in to proximity with the market. They make the museum-like space of the scholar's home a stifling repository, plagued by the sense of the past that insists on escape in Stoker's text, and deadened by the rigorous control of the process of collection in Machen's narrative. In each case, the flexibility of the objects becomes troubling, as they slip from being static to mobile, passive to active, priceless specimens to commodified objects, cultural artefact to occult instrument, and ethnic curio to invaluable remnant.

The identities of the men as professionals and scholars are, thereby, fundamentally compromised, the individuals emasculated by a terrible loss of control. They are not badges of honour, but physical embodiments of forces to be reckoned with. The flexibility and apparent agency of the items, and the surplus of significations held in the protean objects, actively resist the collectors' efforts to assure their productive function. The professional agent or dealer's objects may remain subject to the momentum of market circulation and the fluidity of meaning and value that their intervention creates. The scholar may find the models for productive interactions with things offered by the museum at once limiting and limited. Rigorously ordered, items may not yield their full meaning. While, broken out of the museum's mastery, the Gothic, haunting potential of objects may arise to overwhelm even the most rigorous and scientific of men.

The narratives imagine the terrible consequences of the constant and escalating influx of objects, made available by the opportunities afforded by expansion of the Empire and annexation of new territories. The control that collecting was understood to afford, on both a personal and a national level, is denied to these men. Despite entire careers dedicated to the acquisition, possession, organisation, and dissemination of objects and the knowledge or commercial worth they afforded, the collectors are

overcome by the objects they encounter and processes they are engaged in.   In

researching, collecting, and looking to disseminate the intellectual or economic capital

held in remarkable, authentic things, these collectors – as researchers, dealers, or agents

– come to demonstrate the perils of curiosity.

At the heart of these texts is a fascination with things that inspire this desire to

look beyond the known world, and to seek out curious objects that warrant and inspire

devotion at any cost. Despite their narrative trajectories that at first suggest a simple

message of 'curiosity killed the collector,' the objects and the impulses that they

generate are not merely condemned or demonised. Utterly intriguing, often highly

desirable, the objects exert the appeal of authenticity, and merit the attentions of

prestigious collectors and researchers. Material stability, and the fixity of meaning, is

removed as the narratives dramatise the mobile and flexible nature of objects distant

from the value-driven circulation of the market, and from the clearly demarcated

parameters of the museum's glass case.

CHAPTER FOUR

Contested Country House Collections: Legacy and Inheritance in Vernon Lee's "Oke of Okehurst", Mary Cholmondeley's *Sir Charles Danvers*, and Mary Ward's *The Mating of Lydia*.

Introduction

The chapters so far have predominantly analysed literary depictions of the individual efforts of collectors, undertaken within their lifetimes. The unproductive masochists, pathological collecting-maniacs, professionals and scholars are followed through an interaction with a particular object, a specific project, or through the course of their life's work. This chapter turns to consider representations of country house collections, and the role of objects, heritage and legacy, beyond the lifetime of the individual. By depicting objects and sites involved in chains of inheritance, and implicated in a national investment in heritage, the selected literature examines the consequences of failed legacies for masculine identities tasked with transmitting, protecting, or creating legacies.

Unlike the things analysed in the previous chapters, which were embraced for their fascinating but frightening characteristics of unpredictability, protean plasticity, and different degrees of necessary mobility, these objects are connected to the specific location of their display, as well as to the characters that collect and inherit them, and are appreciated for their stability. By placing them within the symbolic space of the country house they become more than the accumulation of a single individual. They are family collections, sitting within a property, at the centre of an estate, and modelled on traditional gendered modes of accumulating and exhibiting class, heritage, wealth, and prosperity.

Each of the texts analysed depict a different stage of the processes of inheritance of country houses and collections: Vernon Lee's "Oke of Okehurst" (1886, 1890)

imagines a pristine legacy without an heir to inherit; Mary Cholmondeley's *Sir Charles Danvers* (1889) represents the remnants of an inheritance as it is broken up; Mary Ward's *The Mating of Lydia* (1913) focuses on the moment in which a recently formed collection is first inherited. By troubling these masculine duties of defending heritage sites and passing on a legacy, the emasculated masters, Gothic country houses, and corrupted collections of the selected literature act to haunt a productive ideal of relations to material culture and heritage. Chapter Four will analyse largely unaddressed object-centred and masculine themes in relatively under-researched texts in order to consider how these writers respond to the championing of history and heritage in material culture. Concerned with the Gothic haunting of the country house, and the destabilisation of its collections at the moment of inheritance, the narratives respond to normative relations to material items premised on museum and market models, and their function within historical and heritage discourses that this chapter will set out.

In the narratives analysed the country house is a Gothic site, haunted by ghosts of the past, and by a cultural and historical spirit accumulated over centuries of familial and national tradition. Having drawn considerable critical attention, such late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century properties have been understood as a contested space. In a period that saw a decrease in the building of such structures (Girouard), damaging changes to the legal system of inheritance, including increasing death duties (Habakkuk), and a destabilisation of the class system brought about by an increasingly prosperous and cash-rich middle class (Cannadine), such historic and architectural structures captured a popular imagination. Whether providing the backdrop to domestic dramas in popular fiction, drawing the attentions of the press at notable moments of inheritance, transition, or loss, or meriting the attentions of a burgeoning heritage movement, country houses and their collections remained objects of interest.

Through its provision for private citizens to contribute to public projects, and for private properties to be made public concerns or house museums, the National Trust was invested in a nineteenth century approach to properties and collections that treated them as a means to affirm individual, local, and national identities. Through sites worthy of preservation and emulation, the Trust might shape relations to material culture so as to perpetuate heritage and construct a legacy for future generations. This chapter will analyse the country house collections in the selected literature in light of the ethos of this heritage project, which gained momentum and became established in the last decades of the nineteenth century. As this introduction will go on to establish, along with the National Trust, a series of socially and culturally aware concerns were founded on the premise that historic and beautiful sites were enriching, and worthy of public efforts to preserve and maintain them. Perceived as increasingly under threat, worthy sites necessitated projects to save them, and thereby offered opportunities for establishing positive and productive masculine identities. By participating in the continuation of national, local, and familial legacies, the qualities that the Trust prized and the economic productivity functioning estates could offer might be perpetuated for future generations.

This chapter responds to the productive models for masculine interactions with material culture promoted by an historic estate system and emergent heritage movement. The Gothic incarnations of country houses and collections described in these texts unsettle the image of history and heritage as qualities that are conveyed through inert and useful sites and objects, as most clearly exemplified by the museum. The items and properties depicted resist their use in present-centred and identity affirming processes of constructing heritage and presenting the past. They therefore suggest that uncomfortable outbreakings of an unmanaged, unpreserved, or uncomfortable past might arise to trouble heritage projects and undermine personal,

familial, community, and even national investments in heritage sites and historic specimens of material culture. The next section of this introduction will consider the complexities of defining heritage, focusing the discussion through the identity affirming aspects of duty associated with the nineteenth-century heritage movement, and its attitude to objects.

Heritage is a complex concept that unites fact, fiction, perception, past and present, conceptual and material, in the construction of individually and socially reassuring narratives. While remaining related to "tangible material artefacts" as well as "other intangible forms of the past," for Brian Graham and Peter Howard heritage is "about the meanings placed upon" these materials, "and the representations which are created from them," in short, about an active engagement with historic resources (2). Graham and Howard place specific emphasis on heritage as a construct, open to active intervention, rather than the simple accumulation of "the totality of the inheritance of the past." As such they refer to "heritages" plural, as "present-centred" and "created," "shaped" and "managed" relations to particular aspects of the past (3).

As a present-centred construct, shaping a sense of the past in light of the present, Sara McDowell argues that heritage may be considered "an aggregation of myths, values and inheritances." This mass of fact, material traces, and specific localised fictions that a culture tells itself, offered an opportunity for individual interventions in interpretations of the past, which professionalised history proper did not (McDowell 37). The power structures that determine the nature of these fictions might vary from time to time and place to place. For Laurajane Smith heritage has been gendered, produced by power structures that are "too often 'masculine'," and therefore tell "a predominantly male-centred story" of both past and present (159). But regardless of the gender bias, the lens, or the particular fictions applied, as Smith argues, "we protect, manage, interpret for visitors, and visit heritage sites because they are, in some way,

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symbolic of our identities," and the world we find ourselves in (159). Heritage tells us who we are, but involves us in its active maintenance and presentation of the past that defines us.

The ethos behind the formation of the National Trust focuses some of the particular nineteenth-century ideas surrounding history, heritage, identity, and legacy. The National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty was "registered under the Companies Act on 12 January 1895" (16). The Trust was linked to a greater or lesser extent to the Commons Preservation Society "founded by George John Shaw-Lefevre in 1865" (23), the Kyrle Society, Ruskin's Guild of St George, set up in 1871 (24), and William Morris's Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), founded in 1877 (Waterson and Wyndham 42). Whether dedicated to the preservation of open spaces, the beautifying of urban environments, the construction of museums, or the thoughtful restoration of historic buildings, each of the societies held at its heart a belief that Britain's beauty, history, material objects, and environments could improve the populace, and reinforce identity, through an experience of heritage.

Building on the work of these other bodies, the Trust was motivated by the impulse to "preserve unharmed the haunts of tradition, or the homes of beauty." It emphasised the importance of objects in context, assuming that exposure to beautiful and historic places and objects was a universal right and an inclusive, beneficial experience, akin to that of the museum (Rawnsley 114). By inviting public donations, courting general approbation, and promoting public exposure, the National Trust blended museum and market ethos, established as it was as a Land Company, but "not primarily for profit" (Waterson and Wyndham 29). It invited in the public, making them part of these visions of history, and encouraging them to feel invested in the preservation of something so intrinsic to individual and national identity.

Situating itself within debates surrounding history, heritage, and material culture, Chapter Four will focus on the role of objects and properties in the construction of productive male identities. It will analyse country houses and collections, and the duties of preservation and transmission, for estate holders at a time when stately homes and house museums were increasingly caught up in heritage debates, and opened up to the public. In light of the positive models for masculine interactions with sites and objects offered up in contemporary images of heritage projects, it will explore how the literature analysed questions the possibility of establishing, maintaining, or transmitting a legacy through the country house and the collection. It will then analyse the shift in perspective that occurs when a visitor is introduced to the collections within the space of the home.

This introduction will now establish the productive and reinforcing function of historic objects in the formation of heritage, national and most specifically individual identity. It will identify the particular function of country house and collection, and the tensions existent in this contested space. It then introduces the textual mechanism of mobilising the trope of the visitor, an individual who enters the properties and grants a new narrative perspective on the material relations. When read in light of museum and market influences on productive and gendered relations to these heritage objects and sites, as analysed in both literary and cultural criticism, this trope illuminates the framework of norms against which these collectors, masters, and heirs react.

History, Heritage, and Nineteenth-Century Approaches to Objects and Properties

History, as Louis James has noted, was big business for the Victorians. "[H]istorical works vied with novels in the interest of the general reader," and aided in the construction of national, political, and even gendered identity. A history of conquest might affirm one's position of power. A sense of one's lineage would affirm one's class and status. History, then, was a useful resource, maintaining the spirit of old

England and a corresponding national identity, as the political and geographical landscape changed. Beyond the literary medium, material culture provided symbols of personal and public histories. What Beverley Butler terms a "certain popular 'turn to the past'," prioritised "the material objectification and 'preservation' of the 'vestiges of history'" (464). Things, and the stories held in them and told about them, made history manageable and useful for a present-centred vision.

Alison Booth has described the Victorian age as fundamentally "prosopographical," concerned with the "production of collective portraiture of 'men of the time'," through which the ideals of the period might be evoked and memorialised ("Men and Women of the Time" 41). Monuments and memorials, as Michael Rowlands and Christopher Tilley explain, are obvious indicators of the link to memory and the past made possible by material culture. Such objects exist "as a means of fixing history" and providing "stability and a degree of permanence" that may be accessed by a collective population. "This," suggest Rowlands and Tilley, "is a fairly straightforward understanding of why tangible heritages of objects, archives, museums, monuments and memorials exist," as a means of affirming the belief "in the permanence of identity" (500). In such relations heritage is a cultural commodity, carried in things that testify to individual identities, local and national identities.

In "Agency, Biography and Objects," Janet Hoskins argues for the impermanence of the "biographical object," which "grows old, and may become worn and tattered along the life span of its owner." The "public commodity" on the other hand "is eternally youthful and not used up but replaced." Like the public museum and its exhibits or the memorial, which might be renewed and restored over time, the inherited object or collection could overcome the wearing of the biographical object by the reinvigoration of subsequent generations (78). As in the institutional repository, the

inherited collection remained the constant with which a series of contributors might come to be associated, granting permanence denied to the items of a single lifespan.

While history and heritage had implications for the formulation of national identity, on a local basis, as both the history of the National Trust and studies of the aristocratic estate system indicate, whole communities were invested in the construction and consumption of histories and heritages, and the sites and objects that contained them. History, heritage, houses, and objects were intertwined in a nineteenth-century process of self-formation and presentation. In the case of the country house collection, however, privileging these links with the exhibitionary space might have practical and psychological consequences for the domestic space.

House, Home, Monument Museum: Nineteenth Century Country Houses

The country house and the estate within which it was often set has been an object of study warranting entire histories of the estate system, building rates, the fashions in architecture, and the décor of the home. It has been treated as both a symbolic structure and museum or heritage site, and as a working, familial space. The narratives analysed in this chapter will be considered for the manner in which they imagine the implications of this duality through the moment of inheritance. By acknowledging the country house as both a space for the containment and presentation of history, and as a familial, domestic space, it remains unstable, subject to the will of successive masters, and the whims of fashion across the generations, in a way that the museum may somewhat avoid. It is in this respect the ultimate heritage site, by the definitions given above. Part symbolic structure, part family seat, strong hold of the aristocracy and of an almost feudal system of relations between lord and tenants, the history written in to its fabric is added to and mastered by a current heir from a present-centred perspective.

Among the historic materials through which heritage has been presented, and identities constructed, is an array of objects that have been framed within the spaces of the country house. Old masters, fine china, expertly crafted antiques, historic artefacts, exotic curios, and specialist collections of all sorts, have been conceived of as indicators of heritage, symbolising the "[r]efinement, sensitivity" and other qualities "equated with the aristocracy" that are the legacy of generations of breeding and experience. In a class conscious, consumer culture, one's manner of engaging with material items was illuminating. For the upper classes, an "appropriate display of family wealth, demonstrating self-worth" was acceptable, while the "wanton pursuit of consumption as a form of self-gratification" was lamented and discouraged. The line between the two, suggests Anne Anderson, remained fine, making each generation's selection and presentation within the country house a point of continual consideration and observation (239). Significantly, in a period in which the idea of heritage and identity was debated, "appropriate" collecting would be a matter of family, wealth, and self expression, with complex issues of personal and public value taking precedence over the immediate gratification of consumption.

Beyond the obvious implications of inheritance for subsequent male heirs, with the taking up of particular properties by concerns such as the National Trust, and the conversion of notable sites in to house museums, the repercussions of acceptable or unacceptable collecting might be carried forward beyond the individual. The collection, Russell Belk suggests, had the key capacity to "outlive the collector" once he "ceases to own it." Possessors of considerable country house collections might tread the line between "curator" and "collector," taking on existing items, reorienting, and actively adding to them ("Collectors and Collecting" 535). Retaining a trace of the founding collector, the whole could communicate a family's history, or testify to developing fashions and fluctuating fortunes. The piling up of historical items, laden with identity

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affirming associations, and the assumption that material culture could be used to convey messages beyond the individual lifetime or the span of a generation, formed the basis of various key nineteenth century projects.

As this chapter will go on to elaborate and analyse, the continual presence of the past in ancestral homes combined with the exhibitionary function of the country house, contested the domestic nature of the space. While historically the country house was expected to prioritise the needs of the "kinship family" by supplying all the "privileges of comfort and convenience," a preoccupation with the "grandeur" of past "ancestors and descendants" might compromise the experiences of present heirs, oppressed by the weight of the family legacy (Lewis 341). In an echo of the museum's function as mausoleum of previous collections (Elsner 155), the country house might appear as a memorial to the family's heritage, which resonates in the objects and the structure itself. At risk, however, in maximising this historic, cultural capital, is the individual input of the present generation, the presence, essentially, of the current male heir.

As the nineteenth century progressed, then, objects, monuments, properties, and sites became the focus of debates concerning heritage, the market, and the responsibility for maintaining the physical markers of England's past. In writing "The Politics of Collecting: The Early Aspirations of the National Trust, 1888-1913," Melanie Hall offers up Thomas Carlyle's famous essay *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History* (1841) as an indication of the nineteenth-century argument as to why "people should be interested in saving historic buildings" (348). Carlyle's "promotion of the usefulness of tangible evidence to bring history to life" related to an impetus to "preserve historic houses in Britain, America and continental Europe." Efforts to save "as material examples of emulatory lives" the homes of notable men led to the production of "house museums," tasked with preserving an identity through things in situ. Along with these physical traces of notable figures and historic moments, Hall

suggests, a body such as the National Trust could simultaneously address a "concern with historic institutions," worthy of preservation, and threatened with breakdown in modern times (Hall 348-9). A particular manner of government, a system of class relations, or a political system, could be preserved alongside admirable individual characters in these properties by bringing the museum home.

Bringing the museum home, to paraphrase Barbara Black, was a particularly interesting nineteenth century concept, and offered the possibility of controlling the meanings of things and marshalling the gaze of the visitor within the domestic space. Each of the country houses and collections that this chapter will analyse is explored through the eyes of a visitor, who moves through its spaces, encounters its successive displays of things, and reveals something of the state of the legacy of each of the families. Mobilising this trope of the visitor gives the properties an impression of the house museum, testifying to the fact that, as Sharon Macdonald suggests, "'museological' practices (for example, collecting, assembling, heritage, performing identity via material culture) are not necessarily confined to the museum." As the expanding field of museum studies has recognised, "the museum may shape ways of seeing beyond its walls," influencing the relations to material culture of those exposed to its methods, and the constitution of spaces and methods of display outside of its limits (Macdonald 6). As this chapter will go on to demonstrate, however, its pervasive model of mastering material culture generated interest in objects and modes of collecting that frustrated its ideologies, and in gentlemen unable to fulfil their function as collectors and curators.

Barbara Black has developed the idea of the museum's permeation of the home in reference to nineteenth-century collecting practices, indicating the manner in which its influence was written in to the domestic space. Black argues that texts such as Robert Kerr's *The English Gentleman's House* sought to influence the dispersal of

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objects, and even the creation and demarcation of domestic spaces, by presenting the museum as the ideal model. She reads a "deeper enchantment with the museum" reflected in his instructions to the home owner. This "enchantment," she suggests, was manifested in Kerr's "ceaseless energy for partitions that multiply rooms and specialize their functions," in his "recommendations for collection and display in the library, gallery, and winter garden" that reflected "designs and lighting of the South Kensington galleries," in short, in his quest to "bring the site of the museum home" (*On Exhibit* 2).

Writing on what she terms literary house museums, that is the museum constructed in the homes of notable literary figures, Alison Booth has noted the commemorative function of such spaces, which blend cultural capital and historic function. Through their "associations of cultural tourism and museums with community, identity, heritage and the afterlife," these memorial spaces function as "collective biography." Inviting in and communicating specifically with "the literate traveller," the spirit of the "original occupants," the preserved collection and structure, all allow "[t]he most devout" to "sense the aura of cultural heroes at the mere sight of a handkerchief or top hat in its reverential, referential context." As a "reliquary," the house museum and its contents operate "within a heritage" that figures the initiated visitor as "a kind of lateral descendant or heir" ("Houses and Things" 234). The literary house museum thereby functions as an inclusive space, by which those finding cultural resonance in the work of the author might measure their own worth, and shape their identity, by claiming however tenuous a relation. Entire communities as well as specifically affiliated individuals might be invested in the in the structures, the objects, and the heritages they contained.

Material culture had an important part to play in the construction and presentation of gendered identity within the space of the country house. A range of objects as disparate as "paintings of interiors, advertisements for the household

appliances, visits to museums or retail stores with room settings," could all according to Robert St. George "shape the interiority of individuals in accordance with a commodity aesthetic" (226). Once within the museum-like space and invested with heritage, otherwise innocuous items could develop a new and very specific form of value. In "Subjective Discourse or the Non-Functional System of Objects" Jean Baudrillard observes the development of worth, stating very emphatically that "[a]ll acquired value tends to metamorphose into inherited value, into a received grace" (47). This capacity of objects, Baudrillard argues, took on a new significance in light of contextual fluctuations, and particularly as "blood, birth and titles of nobility" began to lose their "ideological force." Objects, he suggests, took up "the task of signifying transcendence," filling a gap that contemporary developments left (47).

As noted above, the significance of objects to heritage discourses, and to contemporary debates regarding acceptable and unacceptable consumption, placed them in a position to establish and announce identity. By empowering these "material signs," Baudrillard argues, "[t]he past in its entirety has been pressed into the service of consumption" (47). Responding to instabilities in social classifications, material culture offered a new system of manageable signs with market value. Responding to fluctuations in the fortunes of the country house, objects and properties provided the locus for organised efforts to preserve and present these centres of heritage. Compressed in to the material world are history, heritage, personal significations, individual biographies, cultural signals of success, and of gendered identity. Objects and house museums gave these factors physical form and individual specificity, and the collection made them a whole, available for inheritance, and for the contribution of the next generation. This function of objects and properties in a heritage discourse offered opportunities for the creation of productive masculine identities. Imbued with a sense of duty as collectors, curators, custodians of history, and participants in the creation of

heritage, possessors of considerable country house collections were invested in both a broader heritage discourse and a familial concern with legacy.

Vernon Lee's "Oke of Okehurst," Mary Cholmondeley's *Sir Charles Danvers*, and Mary Ward's *The Mating of Lydia*, dramatise transformations arising around country house collections. In the course of these narratives male estate holders and keepers of considerable collections encounter significant issues with inserting themselves in to the history held in these things, and with perpetuating legacies, whether newly emerging, or longstanding and in decline. Lee's Okehurst, Cholmondeley's Vandon, and Ward's Threlfall are introduced as a series of containing devices – estate, grounds, house, rooms, corridors, cabinets, chests, cases, and frames, and the collections contained within them, as layers of time. They have been constructed, or have the potential to operate, according to the principles outlined above, imprinting individual, cultural, and familial identities on objects and spaces that come to function as memorials to the past. But with their simultaneous function as domestic spaces and active collections, the objects and identities, and the nature of the heritage contained within the country house, soon become problematic.

Vernon Lee (1856-1935), Mary Cholmondeley (1859-1925), and Mary Ward (1851-1920) enjoyed varying levels of success over the course of their literary careers, employed differing styles, and addressed a considerable range of often divergent themes in their work. They have shared an interest in the role and depiction of women in contemporary society, and yet their literary productions have been remarkable for their differences rather than their similarities. It will be the contention of this chapter that the selected texts reveal a mutual interest in material culture and collecting, and more specifically in inherited collections and their relation to masculine identity formation. A narrative concerned with negative outbreakings of history and heritage is constructed in relation to contemporary discourses emerging around sites and collections in the late-

nineteenth and early-twentieth century. Through Gothic spaces, unstable objects, and collectors placed in an uneasy relation to heritage and legacy, the models for productive relations to material culture offered by the museum and the emergent heritage market are brought in to question.

Lee, Cholmondeley, and Ward's characters all have an investment in history, but come to be overwhelmed by the overabundance of heritage or the haunting presence of particular identities held in their collections and spaces. Each narrative gestures to the model of the house museum as a means of maintaining, restoring, or rewriting the heritage held in properties and collections, before imagining significant departures through their collections and country houses. These narratives take the ideals of heritage, history, and regulated presentation, and ask questions of its practicability. They send in the visitor who, with a fresh set of eyes, enters the upper class home and exposes the impracticalities of maintaining and preserving such collections across the generations. Within lands and buildings struggling against the effects of time, a shifting economic landscape, and a malfunctioning estate model, they find fault with the implementation of concepts of legacy and heritage.

Part One - Country Houses and Collections: Legacies So Far

Lee's Okehurst: The Seamless Accumulation of Generations and an Impulse to Preserve

The visiting artist who narrates Vernon Lee's "Oke of Okehurst" describes the titular property in suitably historic terms, outlining an initial impression of a "large red-brick house, with the rounded gables and high chimney-stacks of the time of James I" (110). The structure's history goes some way towards indicating the heritage of the Oke family, the full span of which in fact extends far beyond the age of their ancestral home. The current Mr. and Mrs. Oke are cousins, "descended from the same old Kentish stock," and able to trace their ancestors "back to Norman, almost to Saxon times, far

longer than any of the titled or better-known families of the neighbourhood" (120). Lacking in notoriety the Okes may be, but whether they are perceived as a line of "honourable and upright men and women" as they are by Mr. Oke, or a "most flat, stale, and unprofitable family" as they are by his wife, they are remarkable for their endurance (119).

As custodians of the Oke legacy, the heirs are charged with a responsibility that is symbolised in the family home. As Edith Guest wrote of the National Trust in an article for *Hearth & Home: An Illustrated Weekly Journal for Gentlewomen* in 1900, "in days when bricks and mortar threaten to overwhelm all in their on-rushing tide," the architectural and rural landscape was changing. It was, she suggested, "saddening to think of beautiful and stately old buildings disappearing," buildings that, like the house museums discussed by Melanie Hall, "should be kept, even if beyond habitation, as examples and encouragements in this day, of hideous architecture" ("Passing Events").

Okehurst remains as a symbol of good practice, a bastion of historical authenticity and architectural superiority against the onrushing tide of modernity. Before reaching Okehurst, Lee's narrator expounds at some length upon the topic of "the modern Gothic country-house" so typical these days. Formed in imitation, filled with a stock set of predictable objects, "the usual amount of Morris furniture, Liberty rugs, and Mudie novels," it is associated with a lusty and functional, but utterly generic modern expression of the country house and the estate system (109). Having acknowledged this lamentable contemporary fashion, however, Lee sets her narrative in an Okehurst that is authentic, pristine, and most significantly well preserved.

The impulse to "preserve unharmed the haunts of tradition, or the homes of beauty" that motivated the formation of the National Trust, was connected to a sense of national duty to keep "the glamour of old England bright, and its glow of tradition" within the hearts of the people "fresh and warm" (Rawnsley "The National Trust" 114).

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The country house and collection offered a site within which an individual contribution could be made to preserving and extending a sense of old England, kept "bright" and "fresh" in the living history of a space that was both museum and home. Okehurst is a monument to an heir who has done his duty where others have failed, and retained his grip on a family legacy embodied in the pristine authenticity of the home. The structure stands as a memorial to a bygone age, and exists as a house museum within which are gathered the historical traces of the ancient family.

Local, family, architectural, and design history are held within the walls of Okehurst, which with its particular identity as the residence of the Okes operates as a heritage site replete with family myths. Its state of preservation, verging on stasis, lends it to the propagation of these tales, which one could imagine had taken place only yesterday in the medieval hall or one of the many pristine chambers. The structure of Okehurst itself retains its truly individual original features, amidst which Mr. Oke is framed, conversing with the narrator, for instance, in a "large place, panelled and carved, hung round with portraits up to its curious ceiling," reminiscent of a ship's hull (110). Within such remarkable examples of centuries-old craftsmanship, Oke endeavours to locate himself as part of the narrative of the family written in to the fabric of his home, as Mr. Oke, master of Okehurst, carrier of the Oke name. But as his pale and unimpressive appearance amidst the historical splendour implies, the task of making his mark on a wider narrative of inheritance, in a home associated with so many identities, makes constructing and presenting a sense of self in this place problematic.

Successfully presented, the histories and collections of successive generations communicated a sense of the elements of which the familial heritage was constituted, of the related but distinct periods and particular identities that contributed to its formation. In "Career Development: Domestic Display as Imperial, Anthropological, and Social Trophy" Claire Wintle presents a reading of the Temple family collections, an

accumulation of Indian and Andamanese objects formed by successive generations, and most notably developed in the nineteenth century. Presented within the family home, this accumulation of things was deployed as a means of publicly displaying the identity of the imperial officer who commenced the collection, and of his offspring. The layered collections proclaimed the family's accumulated wealth, experience, and status, whilst identifying distinct contributors. While, as Wintle notes, the "domestic display" of the collector was "influenced by popular trends in interior design" that granted a given gentleman's efforts a temporal stamp, these "trends" were manipulated in order that successive Temples might make their own "statements about both himself and the world around him" (286).

Entering Okehurst, the narrator experiences the seamless flow of the property, moving between a series of chambers whose objects and décor conjure up a vision of the past. Rather than a connected series of collections, such as Wintle describes, the whole seems to communicate an unchanging impression of the Okes, past and present, complete and flawless in a manner that makes no concession to trends or popular fashions, manipulated or not. An initial experience of Okehurst indicates that there is simply no room for notable individuality or a modern touch from the current heir, who seems oppressed by the weight of history and expectation.

The sense of the spirit of the past appears to manifest itself, exhaled from the fabric of the collection. Okehurst is a perfect museum of items declaring themselves to the visitor's eye. The huge hall combines an "immense fireplace of delicately carved and inlaid grey and black stone" with "family portraits," a decoration of "heraldic monsters," oak carvings "of coat-of-arms, leafage, and little mythological scenes," "suits of court armour," and rugs "of sixteenth-century Persian make," all housed under the great "vaulted" and "ribbed" ceiling (111). The space is remarkable for its scale and detail, and particularly for the pristine preservation of the historic pieces – things that

appear as if "no modern hand had ever touched them," and that are accompanied by no trace of "to-day" save "the big bunches of flowers and ferns, arranged in majolica dishes" (111). The Okes are written in to the detail, in tastefully selected items, and markers of class and status, yet Mr. Oke seems strangely absent from the fabric of the historic Okehurst.

With any sense of the life and activity one might expect to find in the home apparently excluded, the spaces of Okehurst appear strange and fascinating. Even corridors are swathed in a former master's markers of taste, "hung with leather, wainscoted with carvings, and furnished with big wedding coffers, and chairs that looked as if they came out of some Vandyk portrait" (111). The effect generated by these containing spaces is relatively benign, at once striking the visiting artist with "the strong impression that all this was natural, spontaneous," and simultaneously "that I was being led through the palace of the Sleeping Beauty," from historic tableau to historic tableau, and one inert and emasculated space to another (111). Again, the emphasis is on the sense of successive, naturalised spaces, and on the authenticity of the collection and dispersal of things, in contrast to the "picturesqueness which swell studios have taught to rich and aesthetic houses" (111-2).

The cost of this unparalleled state of preservation appears, however, to be the exclusion of developmental influences, including the contributions of the current master of the house. The accumulation of this remarkable collection ends with the present generation, making the once live and dynamic home a mausoleum to the past. The museum, for John Elsner, typically functions as an endpoint and a "mausoleum of previous collections," embalming and offering a "kind of entombment" for the display of "once live activity" ("A Collector's Model of Desire" 155). As a house museum, the newly static state of Okehurst, with its focus on the past generations and only a limited

sense of its present occupants, makes it a mausoleum rather than an active collection, closed, preserved, but no longer developing or being added to.

Claire Wintle's collectors are described as having successfully constructed an interlocking series of collections, communicating as part of a totality, but speaking of different identities: with "Temple's assortment of Andamanese body adornment […] presented in the anteroom of The Nash and slotted behind his father's Indian collections that adorned the hallway" (Wintle 284). Step by step, Wintle argues, the objects are encountered as "individual collections, each belonging to a different generation and presented in consecutive rooms advancing away from the threshold of the ancestral home." Accumulated, added to, and presented in such a way, the collections amount to "the symbolic accumulation of layers of significance in Temple's family heritage" (284). The Oke legacy is, however, by no means so clearly stratified, nor so active, the identities of the collectors who have contributed to its things being subsumed beneath the whole.

The Oke family's tradition of collecting key artefacts of individuals throughout the length of the family's history is illustrated in the "perfect museum of costumes, male and female," a collection described as "a thing to take away the breath of a bric-a-brac collector, an antiquary, or a genre painter." This accumulation of items is contained in a "certain carved oaken press," and covers a span from "the early years of the seventeenth to the end of the eighteenth century" (129). The collection manifests layers of time, reminiscent of Sue Waterman's reading of temporal stratification in geological collections. In writing on the nineteenth century collections of a prominent Belgian family, Waterman outlines a geological model by which objects were displayed, as they were found, in temporally determined stratifications. The Oke collection, representing as it does the layered history of Okes across the ages, gives an impression similar to

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Waterman's "bits of time" (103). It provides a history of the family so far, to be uncovered by an attuned viewer, like layers of artefacts uncovered by an archaeologist.

Much like the rest of Okehurst, however, while the collection may illustrate the changing fashions of successive periods, it does not retain a sense of the divisible identities, distinct and marked by individual character traits. The contents have been personal articles, owned and worn by particular individuals, and even on such emotive occasions as their wedding days. Yet, despite this they are effectively interchangeable. When the collection is revealed by Mr. Oke, two potentially intertwined possibilities emerge as to the cause of this apparent obscurity, and the fact that for the current heir they are of "little interest." On the one hand there may be said to be a failure in the collection, which does not encapsulate clearly the complex heritage of the Oke line. On the other, the "well acquainted" Mr. Oke might be said to have lapsed in his duty to collect and to actively improve and develop the history and heritage of the family. Either way, the contents of the collection now appear static, no longer added to by an heir who dismisses such accumulative impulses as a matter of relatively uninteresting "habit" (129-130). His dislocation from these traditions and from the collection as a whole creates a fault line in the family history, with the break appearing between all that has come before, and the master of the present day. With a contemporary emphasis on the preservation of the historic nature of such sites, however, Oke may be said to have risen to the challenge of resisting the detrimental effects of time and modernity.

The significance of Okehurst and its collections lies in the way in which it frames the history of the family. The successive members of the Oke line, and the various spaces that they have made their own, are so seamlessly presented and well preserved that they generate the impression of being a whole without ever obscuring the true depth of the family's history, or the sense of Okehurst as it was at its construction. Individual objects and specific chambers draw the attention of the visiting artist, and

yet, despite their brilliance, what is most notable in the visitor's experience of Okehurst,

is the powerful impression created by the whole. Okehurst is compelling because it

draws the artist in to the presence of the past in a truly unique way. Its authenticity and

pleasurable quality is such that the visitor professes himself "simply over-come by the

beauty of this house," an experience seldom enjoyed in a "modern and philistine" age.

Stating emphatically that "[i]t was, without exception, the most perfect example of an

old English manor-house that I had ever seen; the most magnificent intrinsically, and

the most admirably preserved," Okehurst embodies some of the key principles and ideas

that the National Trust was promoting as the ideal for promoting heritages (111).

The "Muckross Estate" was a project under discussion in 1899, motivated by a

desire to "preserve the beauty of Killarney intact," complete, and pristine ("Killarney"

1899.6). Damage to great and historic sites, to buildings of note and monuments worth

saving, warranted a response to safeguard for the future "the stimulating knowledge of

great traditions" ("The Vandals" 1896. 4). In this context, the emphasis on the

verisimilitude of Okehurst, and on the preservation of its contents in context, grants the

material things of the narrative greater significance. But despite its apparent perfection,

something more fundamental and related to identity appears to have been lost. There

simply is no room for individuality or progress.

Vineta Colby perceives Lee's architectural and spatial presentation in "Oke of

Okehurst" as symptomatic of the conventions of English ghost stories, dismissing these

details of place as "an appropriate framework for atmosphere and mood." But while it

undoubtedly facilitates a tale of haunting, Okehurst, I would argue, presents an example

of more than just generic "formula" following (235). By emphasising the collection and

drawing on the model of the museum, Lee's narrative questions what can really be

saved and lost in the process of inheritance. By setting up the collection as an active

presence, and the past as a dominating force, the legacy as it stands is heavy with an oppressive weight of history. Perfection has come at a cost for the Okes of Okehurst.

Cholmondeley's Vandon: A Deteriorated Inheritance

The Dare estate and grounds demonstrate the thoughtful hand of careful heirs, dulled by the march of time. It is the glorious exterior the reader first encounters, and which immediately indicates that, unlike Lee's vision of haunting historic perfection, Cholmondeley is concerned with the effects of physical decline on inheritance. The damage inflicted by processes of ageing, financial difficulty, and increasing neglect is played out on a wider stage beyond the country house itself. The estate, littered with "tumble-down cottages" and "neglected people," indicates damage to an inheritance the old magnificence of which is hinted at by Vandon's situation and architecture. Unlike Lee's Okehurst, Cholmondeley's Vandon signals the hope that beautiful sites might be repaired or restored. The realities of preservation and repair, however, question the possibilities of heritage movements where the country house and the collection are concerned (132).

Cholmondeley's Vandon retains the fundamental factors that would make it a landmark in the locality, and a source of pride for the family. It is described as the model country house, sat on "the slope of a gentle hill" with a view of a "sweep of green valley to the rising woods beyond." Superior to the "brand-new" properties, constructed in "imitation of intensely old houses" that are popular "these days," Vandon is the genuine article. It proclaims itself as a historic site, bedded into the landscape, "a quiet old manor-house, neither large nor small, built of ancient bricks, blent to a dim purple and a dim red by that subtle craftsman Time," and possibly "the most beautiful house in --- shire" (132).

Cholmondeley's considered presentation of Vandon's architectural brilliance, and its place as a local landmark, connects it to the sites and structures that occupied the National Trust in its early decades, and to the movement to preserve them that developed. The health and well being of rural sites, and the pleasure afforded by such models of ancient splendour, had become a matter of public interest and organised campaigns by the end of the nineteenth century. Vandon, placed as it is at the heart of an estate and local community, is revealed through the significant glance of members of the local populace, and most particularly Mr. Alwynn, the voice of a local populace that laments Vandon's state of disrepair and the neglect of its tenants. Reports and commentaries on the Trust's activities in the periodical press generate the impression that a local populace was being drafted in to cast a watchful, monitoring gaze over notable properties. This recruitment campaign became a more organised movement that, as an article of 1900 in the *Birmingham Daily Post* indicates, sought to link local societies and associations to the National Trust. Forming an organised and extensive network with the benefit of local knowledge, the initiative offered the possibility of maintaining "a closer and more systematic watch" on places of "historic interest or natural beauty." The local populace might operate as a watchdog, giving "early information" of properties needing "intervention" from the Trust to protect them ("London Correspondence" Issue 13157).

This initiative was put forward in the same year as the "first Bill" of the Trust, which made it possible to "take under its wing any building of historic interest of whatever date," beyond the ancient sites and monuments originally targeted ("Events of the Week" 1900, 5). Extending the limits of what might be deemed worthy of investment and preservation, the intended impression generated in a popular consciousness was one of broadened responsibility for places and things of whatever age. Every discerning member of a local community, such as the concerned Mr.

Alwynn, should feel connected to the local history held in these places and properties. Preserving and restoring the historical sites would give pleasure to a local populace, while the formation of a national trust would secure a legacy for future generations, granting a glimpse of an old England rapidly receding in the face of an oncoming tide of modernity.

Local benefit was presented in an article of 1897 as an argument for the involvement of local Government in the heritage movement. It was hoped that they would provide funds "to be expended in preserving in their own localities objects of interest which will themselves be a museum full of historic association" (Rawnsley, "The National Trust" 1897, 249). By appealing to personal interest it was hoped that a greater majority of the remarkable sites Britain could boast might be turned to the public good, as recreational and educational resources. Cholmondeley accesses Vandon at different times through the perspective of concerned members of the public, assessing and lamenting Vandon's state, and hoping always for its restoration and repair. But these ladies and gentlemen are not able to penetrate further in to Vandon, empty and closed off to the community for so long. Neither local persons of standing nor official bodies or Trusts are able to actively intervene in a process of decline that has been escalating for some time. As such, for most of the narrative only a disembodied narrative perspective gains access to the spaces of Vandon, within which the traces of the Dare family's past remain.

Vandon appears as both historical object and containing device, designed to direct viewers and visitors, and contain messages in the things it holds. The country house and the estate, as Mark D. Larabee notes in "Modernism and the Country House in Ford Madox Ford's *The Good Soldier*," had a history in literature, presenting "particular sources and signs […] established through the literary tradition of country house poetry." Connected to these sites, and revealed in literature, was a "web of

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obligations incurred by estate ownership," given expression in "the country house interior or the routines of ritualized movement through the surrounding landscape" (75). In this respect, the estate and the country house were understood to function as a construct, composed of recognisable spaces, duties and functions, obligations and traditions, all of which centred on the male heir charged with mastering and directing legacy. As both a cultural sign and a heritage object, interior and exterior equally carried traces of the traditions and assumptions written in to them, and of the way they were understood to be experienced and used.

In its day, Cholmondeley's description suggests, the Dare estate had been outward facing. In addition to a well chosen situation, Vandon boasts the planning of a "careful hand," in the "hanging gardens in front of the house," and the "[f]lights of wide stone steps [that] led down from terrace to terrace, each built up by its south wall covered with a wealth of jasmine and ivy and climbing roses." These physical reminders of past activity speak of direction, movement, of guests guided through landscaped grounds towards the great house itself. They indicate a time when Vandon was inviting, and connected to its estate and its local populace. But this time of a socially functional purpose for Vandon is long past.

The exterior of Vandon is littered with things, but each of the symbols of prosperity and taste show signs of neglect and decay, appearing "wild and deserted now." The very hand of history that is celebrated for its mellowing effects on the property itself, threatens to overcome its objects and features in a process that is met with protest by the things themselves. In an extended description the celebrated features sing out their "silent protest" against the steady march of time and nature:

The quaint old dove-cot near the house had almost disappeared behind the trees that had crowded up round it, and held aloft its weathercock in silent protest at their encroachment. The stables close at hand, with their worn-out clock and

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silent bell, were tenantless. The coach-houses were full of useless old chariots

and carriages. Into one splendid court coach the pigeons had found their way

through an open window, and had made nests, somewhat to the detriment of the

green-and-white satin fittings (132-3)

Disuse breathes out of the fabric of the place. Seasons of neglect contrast the silent and

insular present with a prosperous and social past.   Vandon has shrunk within itself, it

no longer invites the involvement of those who made their living on the estate, or whose

society was courted by its former masters. The deteriorated exterior of such a public

concern becomes a barometer by which to measure the state of the legacy. Historically,

as David Cannadine notes, "most landowners had regarded their broad acres as a trust,

an inheritance, which must be preserved […] before being passed on intact and

augmented to the next generation" (89). Vandon's exterior indicates the state of the

inheritance, and the failure of the men charged with defending and perpetuating the

legacy, providing a clue as to the signs of this fall from historic grandeur that may be

found within its walls.

Within Cholmondeley's Vandon lie the physical traces of the successive

generations housed within its walls, and presented through its things. These items and

features indicate the inheritance that still remains to be claimed, the sort of traces that

might inspire efforts at restoration of the untenanted but historically engaging property.

Its "old square hall" bears the marks of authenticity – from its "polished oak floor," and

its walls decorated with "white bass-reliefs of twisting wreaths and scrolls," to its

"stained glass windows, representing the various quarterings of the Dare arms," and a

number of busts presented "at intervals" (134). Much like Okehurst, the Dare family

identity is written in to its house museum, but in a manner that allows individual

identities to remain evident, albeit without the intricate details of each and every Dare.

In the staircase hall "live" the most ancient of the "Dares that had gone before," and in

the "oak-panelled dining-room" are yet "more Dares," each distinctly framed and represented in a series of portraits (135). Chests, cabinets, rooms, halls each hold objects connected to specific individuals, locked away out of sight in what it emerges is a long neglected, and recently uninhabited, property.

Vandon has clearly been a home, and a source of satisfaction and pride, and carries traces of the "[c]areful hands" that "had embroidered, in the fine exquisite work of former days, marvellous coverlets and hangings, which still adorned the long suites of empty bedrooms" (133-4). Every room bears the marks of tasteful former residents, each "old oak chest" contains treasured possessions. These things, like the "court suits, with the tissue paper still in the sleeves," are left apparently in expectation, as if waiting for the return of a former owner. Much as the collections of Lee's Okehurst demonstrate the careful collaboration and elaboration of successive heirs in previous centuries, Vandon has clearly been the cherished legacy of Dares gone by who in their time made their mark. Placement of "*pot-pourri* in tall Oriental jars in the passages," Cholmondeley suggests, had granted "elaborate pleasure" to some now unknown individual, whose small touches remain. While the "Dare who had been an admiral had left his miniature surrounded by prints of the naval engagements he had taken part in," an imprint of an identity amalgamated in to a whole, but evidently distinct.

Cholmondeley's Vandon has been a key location for the construction of heritage as Hilda Kean defines it. The fabric of the very specific encounter with the past it offers is composed of a tissue of personal possessions, successive events, and accumulated memories, conveyed from generation to generation, and placed within a wider historical narrative. In "Personal and Public Histories: Issues in the Presentation of the Past," Kean argues that heritage elevates "personal stories, memory, artefacts and oral testimony" to the level of professionalised histories. Heritage for Kean is an intersection of received historical narratives from "professionally trained historians of

the past," and individual input from "so-called amateurs making sense of their own and their families and community's past" (60). Vandon has been such a construct, made the hub of a whole series of interconnected histories and processes of heritage and identity formation. But Cholmondeley's country house is now silent, and closed to a community that would once have constructed a sense of their own local history that added to the present-centred reading of the past. If, as David C. Harvey argues in "The History of Heritage," heritage is "about the process by which people use the past," then the failure of Vandon's heir to effectively reclaim and maintain the family legacy does become a broader matter, with implications for the heritages (plural) constructed around it. Property and estate are drawn apart, and history and heritage lost without adequate provision for its preservation. Vandon does not now contribute to the active generation or presentation of heritages for the family or the local populace. Instead, the slow depletion of its collections indicates the haemorrhaging of what history and heritage potential remains within Vandon.

With house museums increasing in popularity and illustrating the ideal of preservation of both house and contents, episodes concerned with the legacy of historic properties and collections, such as the events surrounding the fate of Lord Leighton's House, attracted the attention of the popular press   Drawing attention in the last years of the nineteenth century, upon his death Lord Leighton's house and collections were considered as a possible project, to be preserved "as a memorial of an exceptionally-gifted artist." As Marcus B. Huish states, the whole was considered more significant than the parts, to the extent that to "acquire the shell without the contents would very inadequately represent" the full brilliance of the man. "In the house itself," he suggested, was "but one side of his extensive sympathy," while "in its contents we may gauge the range" (Huish. 1896, 2). "It would," stated a fellow commentator, "be a pity to split up such a splendid collection, or to take it out of the frame in which it is set"

("Occasional Notes" 1896). The Dare family's complete failure to maintain its collections amounts to the loss of an entire aspect of the family history, and of the materials through which heritage is constructed and maintained. It represents a fundamental failure in male duty.

While not sustaining any major structural damage, the property as key containing device has been allowed to decline. Far from simply not being added to, it has been allowed to bleed its history and its things. The fate of Vandon has been to slowly shed the constituents that make up the Dare collections. In addition to the damage sustained to the exterior, the interior shows gaps that break the historic narrative of the Dare family held in things.   Despite the best intentions of former masters in laying down the foundations of the legacy through its collections of historical and personal items, and in securing the interest of the local community, the Dare inheritance has been whittled away at and weakened with time. Vandon's prosperous past has been overwritten by recent failure and loss. The legacy Cholmondeley imagines at the point of inheritance is a weight of expectation and an obligation to restore Vandon to its prime, an impossible dream founded on the hope of restoration and repair.

Ward's Threlfall: Fractured History and the Commencement of a Legacy?

The legacy established by Edmund Melrose in Mary Ward's *The Mating of Lydia*, differs from that imagined by Lee and Cholmondeley. Threlfall, or the Tower as it is also known, has a patchy history. Extended periods in which it was uninhabited, stretching almost from its completion, deny Melrose the sort of complex family and local history attached to Okehurst and Vandon. It simply has not been lived in for long enough to generate a sense of history within its walls. By stripping the country house of the roles and identities that are typically associated with the estate, Ward is able to imagine the commencement of an unusual legacy. By putting a remarkable country

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house collection and an extensive estate in the hands of the misanthropic and twisted collector, Edmund Melrose, she describes a Gothic alternative to the identity constructing and imprinting potential of objects, and the framework of heritage relations represented in the ideals of the house museum. With the land, architecture, decorative features, and even the footprint beneath its structure of an ancient fortress, Threlfall has the basic materials for the rediscovery of heritage and the construction of a new phase in the Melrose family's history. What Melrose demonstrates, however, are the dangers of the misapplication of restoration, collection, and exhibition in the construction of a domestic and museum-like space.

Melrose's property is described as a "stately Georgian house, built in a rich classical style, and dating from 1740" (27). Unlike Vandon's soft, mellow, and flattering setting, Threlfall is situated in the harsh landscape of Northern England, amidst the "curves and bosses," "peaks" and "ravines" of Cumbria. Consequently it has been subject to the most extreme elements, and reflects not only the accumulated effects of time but also those of assailing nature (17). While Ward's country house may be relatively new when compared to Lee's Okehurst, an extensive, if uneventful history is attached to the location. The Tower is built "on the site of an ancient border fortress," the structure as it currently stands being erected "toward the middle of the eighteenth century, by the chief of a great family." As a domestic space it carries a "curious" history, characterised by rejection and neglect. Shunned in favour of "more southern and populous regions," it has been largely uninhabited. It has not seen the births, deaths, and marriages of Okehurst and Vandon, and as Ward notes "[t]here could be no ghosts in the house, for nothing but a fraction of it had ever sheltered life." So, while Okehurst is animated by the spirits of the past, and while Vandon sounds a sad lament at the loss of its former splendour, from Threlfall's "architectural beauty there breathed a

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kind of dumb, human protest against the disorderly ill-treatment to which it had been subjected" (17).

This protest sounds particularly loudly when the successful endeavours to rediscover and preserve historic sites are considered. The popular press seized on examples of discovery, rescue, and public acquisition, celebrating the impact of such events for local communities and the nation. Duffield Castle and two acres of its grounds, for example, were made "a public recreation ground by the parish council" in 1900, after attracting attention for their intriguing history. The "foundations of a Norman keep of exceptional size were discovered" in 1886, and were identified as "forming part of the 'Castle of the Ferrars,' raised to the ground in 1266, as a punishment for the rebellion of its lord, Earl Robert de Ferrars." Much like Threlfall, the location has a long history, and has been "the site of an encampment from the earliest times, making it pivotal to local history ("London Correspondence" 1900). But while Duffield was turned to the public benefit, capitalising on such historical traces, the Tower remains a private concern and, in the hands of a man known as "the ogre," is neither investigated, appreciated, nor properly preserved.

The legacy that Melrose looks to establish is a matter of local legend for a very different reason. Ward's depiction of Melrose as the monster at the heart of the estate echoes the Gothic device of the curious, terrible gentleman dominating the mansion or haunting the ancient castle. With its prioritisation of objects *The Mating of Lydia* particularly communicates with Charles Robert Maturin's earlier Gothic villain of *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820). Beside the similarity in the name between Melrose and Melmoth, Maturin's novel is also concerned with a miserly old gentleman, with death and inheritance, in a narrative in which a young man is haunted by a seventeenth century ancestor and Faustian figure, having been tasked with destroying a portrait. While Ward's narrative is less concerned with the terrible melodramatic events

surrounding supernatural occurrences, than with the symbolic haunting of house and collections at the point of inheritance, it nevertheless draws on this dominant male presence, and its effects on the practicalities of productive relations to objects.

The wider history of Threlfall is occluded by the almost theatrically imagined persona of the local villain, the Ogre, whose possession of the property gives rise to speculation rather than any sense of a historical past. It is popularly believed that "the house contained a number of locked and shuttered rooms which were never entered, that Melrose slept by day and prowled by night," that "his sole visitors were occasional strangers from the south, who arrived with black bags, and often departed pursued with objurgations by Melrose, and in terror of the dogs," and most especially that "the Tower was full of previous and marvellous things, including hordes of gold and silver" (54). The legacy Melrose stands to leave is entirely composed of things and lacking in the historic and cultural capital that might be expected.

Beyond gossip, the reality of Threlfall's collections is far less fairytale-like. In a single chamber within the extensive property are observed:

> Pictures, with or without frames, and frames without pictures; books in packing-cases with hinged sides, standing piled one upon another, some closed and some with the sides open and showing the books within; portfolios of engravings and drawings; inlaid or ivory boxes, containing a medley of objects – miniatures, snuff-boxes, buttons, combs, seals; vases and plates of blue and white Nankin; an Italian stucco or two; a Renaissance bust in painted wood; fragments of stuff, cabinets, chairs, and tables of various dates and style. (59-60)

The sheer number of objects is a testament to the fact that "Edmund must have been buying for years" (4). Yet, their state and the manner in which they are presented (or rather not presented) are indicative of Melrose's relation to the legacy he constructs. The Tower when we first encounter it appears "choked" with "packing-cases, boxes of

all shapes and sizes, piled upon or leaning against each other," to the extent that Ward proclaims emphatically that "[n]othing could have been more repellent than the general aspect, the squalid disarray" of the property (4). The intrinsic "architectural and decorative" features are "strangely at war" with the contents. Amidst the chaos, unadmired and unseen are hints of the true extent of the potential inheritance held in Threlfall. A writing table that "had belonged to a French dramatist under Louis Quinze, and then to a French Queen," inlaid with Sèvres plaques, is an indication of the quality of item to be found in the collector's hoard. But this "endless source of amusement and pleasure," remains obscure, marred by the "curious egotism" and limited "artistic engagement" of Melrose, whose lack of classification allows the notable items and features to sink "below the surface of the old man's memory" (167).

Melrose's collecting conflicts with his general attitude to both country house and estate, and his role as master. He at once lays down a truly spectacular collection, whilst making no attempt to present or consolidate it as part of the whole, as part of Threlfall. Adding to the accumulation of things at a furious pace, the true state of Threlfall as a country house is obscured and even marred by the master of the Tower's collections. Threlfall itself possesses "singular architectural charm." Like Okehurst and Vandon, it retains original features and materials: "dark oak" panelling, stucco ceilings, "stately and harmonious" components, "some fine eighteenth-century bookcases, brass latticed" constructed with "delicate precision." Beneath the boxes and cases are selected fine items, from which "all kinds of human and civilized suggestion breathed" (8). The "lavishly incrusted" objects and "graceful" rooms, lie within a house in a state of disrepair, approached with a make do and mend attitude. The components are all there, but the willingness to realise their potential is lacking. They seem simply not to interest Melrose.

Threlfall remains disparate and at war with itself. Despite the "big hole in t'dinin'-room ceilin'," the "shabby-sticks o' things upstairs an' down," and the wares of the "third-rate shop" and "barrows in an East End street" brought in by Melrose, an impression of tasteful opulence and architectural discernment remains in areas of the Tower (7). As William S. Peterson notes, Mary Ward's appreciation for the historic country way of life was reflected in her personal life. Ward purchased the historic "Stocks, an estate near Tring which had been mentioned in the Domesday Book," to which she and her family moved from the country house near Haslemere that had been built "with the royalties from *Robert Elsmere*" (7). In trading in the new for the old and authentic, Ward presumably appreciated the sort of features, "architectural and decorative," that she describes in *The Mating of Lydia*. Yet, Threlfall has not been treasured as it should have been, and retains only traces of the brilliance that could and indeed should have been.

Both the house and the grounds are neglected and even ill treated. The lands are unproductive, a scar on the landscape, the cottages that house its tenants are marked by disrepair and plagued by disease. Melrose's apparent lack of interest in the legacy has more far-reaching implications thanks to the estate system. The whole of Melrose's efforts are concentrated on producing a noteworthy collection over the course of his life. And he has made ample provision for this to be a possibility. Investments, not at home but overseas and in obscure but lucrative opportunities, provide a significant income. The legacy that Melrose has the potential to leave therefore includes "a fortune of rather more than a million sterling – allowing little or nothing for the contents" of Threlfall. But this wealth, obtained through investment, miserly hoarding, and an unspecified "great deal" that he inherited, is all amassed, like the collections, with Melrose alone in mind. It is a hoard to be held on to with a grip of iron, which carries little visible appeal.

Melrose's "hobby," his "passion," his "mania" for collecting, is perpetually uppermost in his mind. Everything is subjugated to this drive, with a necessary resolution that his "personal expenditures" be kept "to a minimum." This sort of collector, characterised by an unbridled acquisitive urge was not without precedent, as Frank Davis describes in his analysis of famous and infamous Victorian collectors, *Victorian Patrons of the Arts: Twelve Famous Collections and their Owners*. Richard Seymour-Conway was reported to have "consistently spent about £40,000 per annum upon works of art, a great portion of which he never saw" (43). John Jones acquired his collectables in bulk, his purchases being "mostly made by the dozen, rather than individually, with a consequent lowering of quality" (72). Sir Thomas Philipps, Bart, "accumulated […] the greatest library in Europe," buying "recklessly, relentlessly and omnivorously throughout his long life" (85). As the central character in a "grotesque story," Philipps combined "maniacal acquisitiveness" with a lack of personal appeal (92). In Davis's analysis these men are contrasted with the shining examples of art patronage and acquisition demonstrated by the Prince Consort (20), Sir Richard Wallace, Bart. (49), and Lady Charlotte Shreiber (a rare inclusion of a female collector) (37), whose collections to some extent benefitted the nation.

Melrose's collecting is imagined in relation to the productive framework of relations to material culture exemplified by men investing in artistic and historic objects. As the master of an estate, however, safeguarding desirable objects is not the full extent of his duty. A man for whom "[e]very sixpence will be important," he nevertheless expends a staggering amount on collectable items, even as he denies his duty to invest in the estate (35). It is not that Melrose is unable to protect Threlfall in its entirety, but rather that he is unwilling, actively resisting the pressures exerted by a popular consciousness invested in an ideal of duty and heritage. While "those who recognise the beauties of England" were engaged in ensuring that "old houses are

repaired and saved from demolition," to the extent that by 1903 one writer claimed that there was "no part of the Kingdom which has not received benefit from the National Trust" ("The National Trust" 1903, 360), Melrose remains untouched by these sentiments. While sites such as "the old Clergy House at Alfriston" were being "carefully restored without any spoliation of its characteristics" ("Chatter by the Magpie" 1900), Melrose initially appears entirely uninterested in making even the smallest contribution to the repair or restoration of his own historic site.

Where others saw opportunity, expectation, and duty, Melrose perceives only a chance for what amounts to conscious defiance. In this respect, he is an exaggeration of a certain "animal" type, unmoved by such resonant sites, who came in for discussion in the popular press. Filling column inches in the regular feature "Chatter by the Magpie" of *Cycling and Motoring*, was a discussion of places of interest in England's countryside, and of the individuals likely to benefit from them. "[P]reservation of a building," an article of 1900 notes, "is only undertaken for the enjoyment of those who love and appreciate such links with the past." These were the sort of individuals who Alison Booth suggests found literary house museums compelling. In opposition to such nationally minded men was an alternative described as a "mere animal without a soul, and with no imagination or consideration beyond his own animal needs." "Museums and connecting links with the past are not for such as he," but rather were the recourse of "those who can feel the sentiment that attaches to them, and to whom past associations are something more than mere myths" ("Chatter by the Magpie" 1900). Edmund Melrose takes a dim view of modern times, and remains unconcerned with family ties, and other malicious drains on his finances. His disinterest in present duties is only matched by his utter lack of consideration for both past and future. He stands on one side of a division between those willing to invest in, and able to appreciate such sites, and those unable to perceive their worth.

Melrose demonstrates no real connection with the "sentiment" that attaches to the site of Threlfall, nor does he look to imbue it or its things with a narrative and history for the future. With the National Trust's initiative of 1900 to enable "a landowner to dedicate land to public purposes of a specific character without parting with its ownership or, except so far as he pleases, with the control of the land," it became that much easier for even the most uninterested gentleman to contribute to the national effort. Even men unwilling to relinquish the pride of ownership could make a contribution to the Nation and to a local community ("Parliamentary Notes" 1900). Melrose's vice-like grip on collection, house, and lands, and his total neglect of tenants and other estate matters, appears in such a context as outright defiance of the expectations attached to the master of the country house.

The wall that surrounds Vandon, the structure of the house itself, and the overgrown shrubbery, all combine with Melrose's actions to prioritise the collector's constructed identity, and obscure the wider nature of Vandon. He sees no further than his own ends, and will not consider himself bound by any duty or obligation to his neglected tenants and the wider community. The world and its expectations do not exist for the Ogre, locked within the Tower, surrounded by his things. His approximation of the state of affairs is comprehensive, taking in the "rascally Chancellor of the Exchequer," his various relatives, not a single one of which "I don't dislike," and even his loyal, if entirely ill equipped, servant Dixon, none of whom he has any regard for (171). While for Mark D. Larabee the country house is an "anachronistic, perhaps even antimodernist space […] with its tweed-clad patriarchy, time-honoured rituals, and placid rhythms of the agricultural calendar," Ward's Threlfall is entirely isolated from the rhythms and traditions that should guide it (75). The legacy Melrose will leave is uncertain, but is entirely connected with his own identity, as a collector, as a

misanthrope, and as the Ogre locked away in the Tower at the heart of the blot on the landscape that is Threlfall.

Part Two - The Moment Of Truth: Troubled Inheritance, Declining Estates, The Termination Of A Legacy

Lee's Overbearing History: Can Heritage Be Mastered?

The temporal collapse of past and present prevents participation in the formation of heritages for the present generation of Vernon Lee's "Oke of Okehurst." The objects long held within the property manifest the presence of identities and events, which exert themselves to the point of overwriting and extinguishing contemporary events and individuals. This is most clearly seen in the person of Mrs. Oke herself, who actively encourages the impression that she is a reincarnation of a former Alice Oke. The visiting artist observes the "very singular resemblance" between the current lady of the house and the portrait of her namesake, dated 1626, and described as "neither very good nor very bad, probably done by some stray Italian of the early seventeenth century" (118). Alice looks to mirror the static image, betraying a determination to made herself "look like her ancestress, dressing in garments that had a seventeenth-century look; nay, there were sometimes absolutely copied from this portrait" (119).

Portraits are telling objects. Early on in his analysis of *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy*, David Cannadine includes a reading of a portrait of the ninth Duke of Marlborough and his family, completed in 1905 by John Singer Sargent, "the culmination of his great series of country-house commissions, consciously rivalling the masterpieces of Reynolds and Van Dyck" (xi). If, as Cannadine suggests, such an image acts as a barometer of the life and health of the family, then Lee's emphasis on imitation, on the past, and the isolation imposed by the act of framing is revealing. In the portrait, Alice Oke appears in a "black Vandyck dress," face to face with her

separately framed spouse, Mr. Oke. The visual separation is mirrored in the spatial division of the current Oke couple, who are similarly spatially divided, and framed within two very separate areas. While Mrs. Oke is associated with the so-called yellow room, Mr. Oke has his study. These are separate spaces linked to the past, and carrying a sense of posed artificiality, much like the portraits.

Mr. and Mrs. Oke retain very distinct identities, embodied in two separate rooms within the domestic space, exposed amidst the general perfection by the gaze of the visitor. In a property defined by its flawless, seamless presentation of the family's past, these areas and the things that they contain are the sole markers of the present generation. They do not, however, represent a positive input to the long-standing legacy. Each space claimed by the spouses conveys a distinct impression, and while Mr. Oke's study implies it is intended for the business of managing the estate's future, Mrs. Oke's "yellow room" is consumed with an artistic and dramatic sense of the past. The two are not integrated, and there is limited interaction or movement between the respective regions, each figure appearing uncomfortable with the overabundance of meanings emerging from the accumulated items in each.

The "yellow room" that in recent times has come to be associated with Mrs. Oke, is known as the room in which "no Oke of Okehurst save [Alice] herself ventured to remain alone." It is possessed to an uncomfortable extent of a sense of the continued presence of the past, more disturbingly active than in the sleeping beauty's palace that is the rest of Okehurst. In this space, the narrator claims, "that vague, haunting something that seemed to fill the place" takes form in both the mirrored figure of Alice Oke, and in the "vague presence" of the infamous murdered "cavalier poet," her namesake's former lover (130). While a gendered dynamic of masculine and feminine decadence, related to production and consumption, has been suggested by Dennis Denisoff in reference to this text (83-4), by considering both the object-focus, and the country house setting, this

outbreaking can also be read as a conflicted meeting of past and present, a conflict born of inheritance and legacy.

Alice Oke privileges a particular series of objects connected to the infamous episode of infidelity and murder that is the isolated scar on the Oke family's otherwise flawless and productive history. In an "old Italian ebony inlaid cabinet" protected by a "complicated arrangement of double locks and false drawers" is a "large bundle of papers, some printed and some manuscript, but all of them brown with age," a "large-sized miniature" dated 1626 depicting Christopher Lovelock, accompanied by a "heap of poems" (128). These items recall the murder that is infamous in the family's history, and while Oke would "have it forgotten" his wife is actively engaged in "raking up ugly things," and subsuming any sense of her individual identity beneath this historic identity (120).

While Mrs. Oke abandons any interest in the present and does what she can to rekindle a particular impression of the past that breaks out and dominates the fabric of Okehurst as a whole, Mr. Oke, so proud of his ancestry and his place as the master of Okehurst, nevertheless leaves a physical trace on the property that is discordant. Lee contrasts the active but backward-looking relation of Alice Oke to the property, with the passive and emasculated engagement of Mr. Oke with an outwardly gendered, authoritative space. The visiting artist describes being taken "into his study, a room hung round with whips and fishing-tackle in place of books," a space that was "very damp" in which "a fire was smouldering" (110). It was in this room that a gentleman coming in to his inheritance took up the Oke legacy, and talked on "the value of crops, the drainage of the estate, the village schools, the Primrose League, and the iniquities of Mr. Gladstone" (139). The accumulation of objects is fitting for a strapping sportsman, and a man who had been "a lieutenant in the Blues before his marriage" (107). Yet it

lacks the beauty, the harmony, the preservation of Okehurst as a whole, and the active useful quality of a working space.

By all accounts William Oke should be the model master, proudly maintaining and extending a legacy that has passed to an active and community minded gentleman. However, the space that he constructs for himself is indicative only of what he "was once." His marriage appears as the dividing line, between the active masculine force he was in his bachelor days, and what he has become since. After this significant event in his history, he states definitively, he had "given up all that," relinquishing his interests and gentlemanly hobbies. He is uncomfortable standing "with his back to the fire, and staring at the polar bear beneath his feet," surrounded by the objects symbolic of his active past (110-111). Isolated, penned up within his study, these things are a reminder of his growing impotence, as he is bowed under the weight of his station, and of the accumulated past.

Jean Baudrillard writes of the relation of collector to collection that the individual subject often serves as the final term in the collection ("The System of Collecting" 10). Despite being brought up to inherit the significant house and collections of the Oke family, Mr. Oke visibly fails to successfully imprint himself on the collection. He has taken up the paraphernalia fitting to his position, but has failed to connect himself, the last term in the sequence, to the whole. This begs the question, from where does this failure arise? What makes his chapter in the Okehurst legacy a matter of frustration? The cause of this dissonance is, I would suggest, a response to a perceived failure of masculine duty. Lee imagines a physical response from the things of the Oke inheritance to the failing of the legacy, in short to the lack of children to perpetuate the Oke name and protect the heritage held in Okehurst.

This fact remains, as haunting as the presence of the spirits of the past, that the Oke line is at an end. The sickly Alice, and her frustrated husband, are unable to

produce an heir. Mr. Oke notes of Okehurst that "[i]t is a nice old place, […] but it 's too large for us. You see, my wife's health does not allow of our having many guests, and there are no children" (112). "The Victorians", John Gardiner notes, "were interested in the past partly on grounds of escapism in the face of a disorienting present," and also as a "springboard for the future, giving expression to their atavism in the great institutions and buildings which they trusted would carry progress into the twentieth century" (87). But while the generations of Okes may have made use of their past, building on the productive base of the family property for the future and for the benefit of the legacy, the current Okes will witness the end of their particular branch of the ancient family. The past consequently ceases to be a positive force and instead overwhelms Okehurst in the present, with the burden of success and the reproach of generations.

In her description of Okehurst and its flawless assimilation of the traces of successive generations, Lee imagines a legacy that offers to incorporate individuals, immortalised in Okehurst's heritage. The manner in which the latest generation and current custodians of the legacy are inserted in to the collection and Okehurst more generally appears incomplete and uneasy. As the head of the household and custodian of Okehurst this dislocation is most clearly expressed through Mr. Oke, who neither embraces the past nor perceives the present clearly. Under the influence of the invading history Alice evokes, and the stagnating legacy, Mr. Oke becomes "day by day more silent and perplexed-looking" (143). The "perfectly conscientious young Englishman," concerned with the "condition of his tenants and of his political party," now ineffectually spends hours in his study, "doing the work of a land agent and a political whip, reading piles of reports and newspapers and agricultural treatises," only to increase the "odd puzzled look in his good healthy face," and the "deep gash between his eyebrows" – the "*maniac frown*" as it is often referred to (117). Walking through

his estate and distractedly commenting on the lack of productivity of the hops this year, he clearly has "no notion of what he was saying": the "dark green bines were covered with fruit; and only yesterday he himself had informed me that he had not seen such a profusion of hops for many years" (147). Whatever its true state, Okehurst appears to him an unproductive wasteland, plagued by the weight of history, and benumbing to a once active and hopeful gentleman.

With his mind turned to the past, and the events of the yellow room being re-enacted all around him, Oke appears dislocated from reality and increasingly emasculated by the active objects around him. Claire Wintle identifies the fundamental processes of object-mastery implicit in the relationship of collector to collection. She says of the collection that "collectors can select, juxtapose, and arrange their objects with calculated precision, addressing both imaginary and actual audiences to convey specific messages" (Wintle 279). This, she notes, was particularly important in a period in which the homes of notable figures were attracting considerable public and press attention. Okehurst appears prepared for such a viewing, presenting the long narrative of a successful family line and a longstanding legacy passed through the generations, it also offers a pleasurable aesthetic experience to the visitor who narrates the story. Mr. Oke, however, is unable to control the particular impressions emerging from the artefacts. Under his management, the past appears increasingly out of control, breaking out uncomfortably. A rare social event, in which guests don some of the costumes held in the trunks and cabinets of Okehurst, ruptures the stratifications of past and present, as historical figures ramble around. The objects and guests produce a riotous sense "as if I were in a madhouse," surrounded by "noisy wretches, tricked out […] as men and women in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries" (138). This episode is only outdone by the apparent appearance of the spectral Lovelock, whose manifestation leads to the culminating murder of Alice by her frantic husband.

The past for Oke and Okehurst is no longer "a commodity to be marketed" as cultural capital, nor is it laced with the "nostalgic overtones" that Gardiner notes characterise heritage nowadays. There is no room for nostalgia with failure imminent and the appreciative audience, in the form of the next generation set to inherit, absent (87). Okehurst engenders, not nostalgia, but an uncomfortable reminder of duty, an impression of haunting rather than a reinforcing approximation of the past. Although the historical and familial foundations are in place, Okehurst cannot provide a solid platform for the perpetuation of the legacy without the future secured. The premature deaths of Mr. and Mrs. Oke merely pre-empt the lingering fall of the Oke inheritance into obscurity and uncertainty. Okehurst is left at the mercy of the modern world of new builds and modern Gothic properties, with the question hanging over it as to the fate of its structure, contents, and the history connected to these physical traces. At the moment when the issue of inheritance is actualised, the master of Okehurst and its collections proves inadequate. In the face of the challenge to marshal the past, write himself in to the history, and pass on the legacy, Oke is thwarted. This failure is made visible in the activity of the material items, in Okehurst's terrible treasures.

Cholmondeley's Rejection of Faded Glory: Can History be Restored?

When we first actively follow a character in to Mary Cholmondeley's Vandon, old Mr. Dare is dead and the inheritance has passed to a young gentleman who has never laid eyes on his ancestral home. We observe, as the absentee heir explores the house and its grounds, the true state of the Dare legacy, no longer couched in optimistic, appreciative terms, but dismissed as irredeemably old and dilapidated. The young gentleman inherits a country house and an estate that have decayed with the march of time, with no attempt to halt their steady decline, or the fragmentation of its collections, which have been sold off as the family's finances have failed. Vandon is incomplete,

faded and old fashioned to the fashionable youth's continental glance, and it amounts to a financial burden, brought to Alfred Dare when the family coffers are empty. As a legacy it is long-marred by mismanagement and misfortune, and taken up now by an heir who will shun the principles of safeguarding and renovation popularly debated in the periodical press, and contested by institutional bodies.

Laurajane Smith remarks on a discourse of heritage, "which has its origins in the nineteenth century," and "developed out of the debates about the desirability of conservation versus restoration led in England by John Ruskin and William Morris" (162). Morris had founded the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings in 1877 on principles that, according to the society's website, continue to be upheld today. The SPAB looked to "defend old buildings" from poor treatment, and "misguided" restoration and repairs. To be avoided was "unnecessary renewal of worn features" and "hypothetical reconstruction of whole or missing elements," making repair the priority rather than restoration. These principles, of "conservative repair" were then taken up in 1896 by the National Trust ("Restoration not repair" http://www.spab.org.uk). Mary Cholmondeley's Vandon, then, is placed in such a way as to access these debates, and to beg the question, repair or restore? And to what extent is either possible?

The moment of inheritance, when Alfred Dare, raised on the continent at a great distance from the ancestral home, returns to take on the estate, should represent a return to his rightful place. Cholmondeley sets up Vandon as the seat of nostalgia for the neighbourhood. It is viewed by the various characters who comment on it as a beautiful site, worthy of restoration and preservation. Characters such as Ruth Deyncourt and Mr. Alwynn demonstrate a longing to retain the connection to what has been, to the past, and to a healthful, ideal time or place embodied in Vandon's natural and architectural splendour.

"One fascinating feature" of what John Gardiner has termed the "commodification of the past" has been the "impact on our sense of nostalgia." Gardiner notes its "original sense, coined in 1688 by Johannes Hofer," in which it referred to "the maladies developed by sailors and travellers abroad," and "literally meant homesickness." By the nineteenth century, however, he identifies a shift in the "views of nostalgia," which in a response to the increasing removal "from the 'homeland' of their birth by industrialisation and urbanisation" of great portions of the populace, increasingly became "more abstract and interior" (Gardiner 88). Shifting political, cultural, and physical landscapes bred a longing for an idealised impression of a national identity, awakened by a troubling sense of disassociation.

Cholmondeley dramatises this rupture between nostalgic past and detached modernity in her heir to Vandon, a man so dazzled by modern fashions, and so divorced from the idealised origins of his family legacy that he is unable to connect with his inheritance. The lapse in the determination to take on and perpetuate the legacy appears clear in the relation of Alfred Dare to his newly claimed things. Vandon, its estate, country house, and contents, have long been neglected, and in response appear to reject an heir who cannot see what others so appreciate. As the containing devices of the country house act as a barrier, obscuring rather than framing the objects of the collection, the possibility of reclaiming the lost history of the Dares appears remote. The vague and decaying accumulation indicates that perhaps Vandon is beyond renovation and saving.

As already noted, the heir to the most beautiful house in the county, has been raised abroad, at great remove from the legacy that as a young man he returns to claim. The geographical distance is manifested in a difference in taste, and an inability to read the historical and familial signs that should speak to him. The exterior, which early in the text draws extensive sympathetic description, elicits no such appreciation from the

heir. Passed over in an instant, the interior too is "not calculated to raise his spirits."

His self-professed "elegant taste," for "blue satin furniture and gilding; for large mirrors

and painted ceilings of lovers and cupids, and similar small deer," is contrasted with the

interiors that he finds in the historic property. Dare feels no sympathy, no sense of

belonging when within its walls he explores what remain of Vandon's treasures. No

spirit of the past arises to communicate with him.

He appraises the items he encounters with the detached eye of a visitor entering

a house museum, overwhelmed somewhat by the volume and variety of things alien to

his taste and experience. As W.S. Jevons noted in "The Use and Abuse of Museums,"

"the glancing at a great multitude of diverse things is not only useless but actually

pernicious, because it tends to destroy that habit of concentration of attention, which is

the first condition of mental acquisition" (55). Confronted by the multitude of

remaining things it is as though Dare is denied the point of access to Vandon's things,

the guide to grant him entry in to its full history, a history which would generate the

unity of effect best fitted to the museum. Vandon is unable to transport the viewer to

another time or place through the careful selection and presentation of related things.

The "Pompeian House" and the "Alhambra Court" at the Crystal Palace" were

applauded for allowing the viewer "[f]or a few minutes at least" to leave behind the

present and "realise the past" (Jevons 56). Yet, Dare cannot find a way in to his

heritage, and is blinded by things that are inaccessible.

To his 'tasteful' eyes the "old square hall," "polished oak floor," and walls

decorated with "white bass-reliefs of twisting wreaths and scrolls" serve only to oppress

him. The "busts" presented "at intervals of Cicero and Dante, and other severe and

melancholy personages," hold no interest for him, and the "stained glass windows,

representing the various quarterings of the Dare arms," no meaning. Without a firm

sense of himself as a Dare at the end of a long line, these items that should hail him with

a familiar tone are trivial details. Cholmondeley's lament to the loss of such a meaningful and historic home is made more poignant by Dare's complete failure to appreciate the true import of the situation. "[T]o many minds," she notes, "there would have been something pathetic in seeing a house, which had evidently been an object of the tender love and care of a by-gone generation, going to rack and ruin," yet, Vandon falls into the hands of an heir that she explicitly notes "was not the kind of man to be touched by it" (134).

Dare is insensible to the message held in Vandon, calling him to take up his duty, and so the voices and stories of the past remain indistinct. "The iron-clamped boxes in the lumber-room" are described as keeping "the history to themselves of all the silver plate that had lived in them once upon a time." The "mahogany tomb" of a "great gold racing cup" remains beneath a "portrait of the horse that had won it," though the cup itself is long gone in circumstances now unknown (134). Indications of past prosperity are simultaneously signs of a narrative of loss, of "the cup" that had "followed the silver dinner service," that had "followed the diamonds," that had "followed in the wake of a handsome fortune, leaving the after generation impoverished" (134). He cannot detect what has already been lost from the Dare legacy, and so he is never able to appreciate what is truly required of him in the way of repair let alone restoration.

Mary Cholmondeley's Vandon, a once beautiful country house and museum to the Dares, has failed to ward off the realities of financial obligation and steady decline. John Elsner and Roger Cardinal describe the collection as "the unique bastion against the deluge of time," blending "desire and nostalgia, saving and loss," and ultimately "the urge to construct a permanent and complete system against the destructiveness of time" ("Introduction" 1). But Mary Cholmondeley's Vandon very clearly illustrates that a collection is only as strong as the collector currently possessing it. The

fortifications of the Dare collections are undermined by time, a shifting financial landscape, and the weaknesses of successive heirs.

Louise Pubrick has noted of the exhibited object that, in being "set apart for contemplation" and made useful as "pieces of information," "publicly displayed, objects are isolated." The house museum, however, complicates this isolation and the removal from what she terms an object's "ordinary environment" (Pubrick 54). While the house museum itself is isolated to facilitate both preservation and contemplation, it relies on connecting items within the context as part of a whole. Each cluster of objects within Vandon is a small constellation with a configuration and a character all of its own, functioning as part of an entirety. Yet, so many of the items are not deliberately laid out for contemplation, but instead remain hidden away, secrets asking to be discovered by an engaged and attentive viewer.

Unlike Okehurst, where the conscientious Mr. Oke has fully taken stock of the collections he has inherited, Dare neither seeks out these traces, nor perceives them as the hidden gems they are. Vandon's collections speak with their own voice of times, people, and events that grant them meaning as part of the Dare inheritance. The reveal glimpses of the past prosperity of the line, and the splendour of the property, and yet appear marginalised by the overwhelming sense of decay and the distinct lack of interest on the part of the returning heir. When Cholmondeley elects to access these material items through an heir who appears as a detached visitor, she comments on the validity of the concept of a family legacy, and the viability of the heritage movement as a force to preserve local and personal narratives.

The heritage movement, and particularly the National Trust's interest in historic properties, relied on two factors: the compliance of owners, and the possibility of reclaiming and restoring imperilled heritage. Cholmondeley's character stands in tension with a contemporary perception that "houses were gradually being denuded of

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their treasures, and pictures, books, and precious objects," which were lost to America particularly as "taxes rose" (Cannadine 115-6). He feels no sense of loss, and is consequently not inspired to play his part in rectifying the situation. By contrasting the enthusiasm and investment in Vandon's success of individuals indirectly connected to the estate, with the disinterest of its master, Cholmondeley indicates the obstacles facing those concerned with the loss of England's historic sites. Whilst in private hands they can make no material difference to its decline and destruction. And as the property and its remaining objects suggest, once the significant damage is done to the family legacy, repairing or rectifying this may simply not be possible.

The public minded perspective embodied in the figures of Ruth Deyncourt and Mr. Alywnn, perceives the financial strife that has divorced the family from the great symbol of its history. With "no money anywhere" for renovation, and "interest of heavy mortgages" and basic upkeep draining the money obtained from the rents, with "succession duty," and "long outstanding debts" waiting to be paid, they recognise the imminent conclusion of the Dare legacy, now a burden rather than a gift bestowed on the latest heir. Yet, it responds strongly, and with "great indignation" to "old Mr. Dare of Vandon," a man "who was inaccessible as a ghost in his own house, haunting the same rooms, but never to be found" when sought out on practical matters (149). The mental and physical abstraction of successive heirs, and their failure to uphold their duty as custodians of a heritage site has sealed the fate of the beautiful Vandon.

Mr. Alwynn, the principal voice of quiet concern in Cholmondeley's novel, rather than the heir himself, marks the final abandonment of the estate house, by the community as well as the family itself:

Mr. Alwynn comes sometimes, and looks up at its shuttered windows and trailing, neglected ivy, but not often, for it gives him a strange pang at heart. And as he goes home the people come out of the dilapidated cottages, and ask

wistfully when the new squire is coming back. Mr. Alwynn does not know.

(311)

Vandon is unable to offer up the past as "a commodity, a package offering a sanitised version […] for public consumption as heritage in museums and other 'experiences'" (Merriman 12). The people of the neighbourhood, both on and around the estate, look to make use of "the different and creative ways in which individuals construct their own past from personal experience and memories, and from materials, such as museum presentations, that are given to them by others" (18). But Vandon's history appears to have declined beyond reach of restoration.

Cholmondeley commits to no clear end for Vandon. Emptied of its principle treasures, drained of its historical and financial capital, decayed to the point that it would require significant investment to return it to its prime, Vandon will no longer be the proud home of the Dares. It will not be broken up, sold off, converted, or conveyed in to the hands able to take responsibility for its restoration and preservation. Instead, it will be thrown out on to the market, destined to remain subject to the whims of tenants when such willing individuals can be found. Vandon will remain to haunt the community with, not a nostalgic sense of the past, but a sad and uncertain future of decline, asking the unanswerable question, can we reclaim and renovate our history?

Ward's Questionable Inheritance: Can We Pick and Choose the History Held in Things?

In constructing the character of Edmund Melrose, Mary Ward takes the traditions associated with the estate system, and then imagines a character whose response is to ignore or actively defy these expectations. This is never clearer than in the moments when his identities as a collector and as an estate holder are brought in to conflict. By prioritising his collecting in instances where he is made to confront his

mortality, appraise his collections, and consider the extent of his legacy, he is held in tension with the model figure of the landed gentleman and the possessor of a country house collection.

The master of an estate was, according to Thompson, the "steward of a trust for the unborn generations and temporary recipient of the fruits of his forebears' endeavours" (6). He acts as the bridge between generations, devoting himself as far as possible to maintaining and extending the legacy. Edmund Melrose, as (in his way) a collector par excellence, stands to establish a significant legacy. He compares his unfettered acquisition to a "squirrel hoarding his nuts" (124), and expends an untold amount on collectable items, laying them by in barely classified hoards throughout Threlfall. But these items of which he is collector and steward are never acquired with any discernible intention of conveying them beyond his lifetime, until, that is, he perceives the powerful desirability of his collection and its potential as a bargaining tool.

When Threlfall is renovated to make the presentation of its collections more typical of the country house museum, the things held in the Tower are for the first time expertly presented in a manner that shows them at their best, demonstrates discerning taste, and most significantly makes Threlfall and its things alluring to its intended, very select audience. The collections generate a fine and harmonious impression, such as W.S. Jevons stated was essential in order to make the collection beneficial (55). Yet, this perfect museum to the collector's taste is constructed without the intention of ever making it public. Melrose has no interest in gaining the approbation of the gentlemen and ladies of the neighbourhood. Aware of what is expected of a man in his position, and favoured in terms of décor, he dismisses this as "Luxury! […] useless luxury and expense! that's what every one's after nowadays. A man must be as cossu as a pea in a pod!" (68). His intention in fractionally succumbing to such luxury, is to exploit the

inviting characteristics it offers without ever opening the collection up to anyone beyond himself and his supposed heir.

Melrose is content with his mythical status as the shiftless ogre lurking within the Tower. His transformation of the house and grounds consequently functions only as a mockery of the ideal house museum, sparked, not by a spirit of reform, but by a devious scheme to lure in Claude Faversham (reluctant visitor and possessor of a gem collection Melrose covets). If Faversham leaves, his collection is lost, and so Melrose offers up a vision of what Threlfall could be once its negative history and the influence of the collector himself have been exorcised. The Tower generates "an effect as of an old debt paid, an injustice remedied, a beautiful creation long abused and desecrated, restored to itself," and made finally "after a hundred and fifty years" what "the thought of its dead architect" had always intended it to be (202). But despite this, Melrose's actions and the years of neglect cannot be entirely expunged.

This portion of its history ensures that, despite "the brilliance of effect" there "was not, there could not be, the beauty that comes from old use and habit – from the ordered life of generations moving among and gradually adapting to itself a number of lovely things." In this respect it lacks the appeal of the neighbouring Duddon, and warrants the scorn of Lord Tatham, who is "conscious of the bric-a-brac element in the show" of objects hastily placed rather than bedded in and invested with heritage. Despite this, however, the "fine taste" and "original selection" suggest the potential of these things at the commencement of the legacy, a legacy that begins with Melrose's mock museum (237).

The museum display, suggests Sharon Macdonald, "selects certain cultural products," for "official safe-keeping, for posterity and public display," in a process that "recognizes and affirms some identities, and omits to recognize and affirm others." The "language" of the museum is "spoken through architecture, spatial arrangements, and

forms of display as well as in discursive commentary – of fact, objectivity, superior taste, and authoritative knowledge" (Macdonald 4). Melrose's collections, and the home in which they are contained, are indelibly marked with the collector's identity, communicating through the configuration of space and objects, and even after the renovation, in a language that is specialised, and intended to speak of Melrose alone. By prioritising the collection, Melrose is able to fulfil Baudrillard's remit and include himself as a term in the language of the collection ("The System of Collecting" 10).

Both collector and collection take on an active role that contrasts with Didier Maleuvre's reading of the late-nineteenth century decadent text *A Rebours*, and the relation of its collector Des Esseintes to his collections and his home. Domestic comfort was, Maleuvre notes, "a way of shying away from presence: either one plays dead for the sake of the domestic still life or one plays chameleon in order to match the décor" (146). In such a relation, one makes oneself an absent presence, subordinate to the dominant impression of the interior. Melrose, however, could never be content to blend in to the background of the home. The collector is hard and uncompromising throughout Ward's novel, and his things remain an extension of him, in a one way process of influence. Rather than "sinking in to the illusionist theatre" of the interior in order to avoid "the necessity of having to take one's place in the world," as Maleuvre suggests of the decadent Des Esseintes, Melrose confrontationally constructs a place for himself in relation to his identity as an estate owner. He takes the popular image of all that he should be, even mocking these ideals through the perfection of his house museum, and then continues as the illusive villain, actively shunning the duties conferred on the master of an estate.

Judith Wilt reads a biographically determined exploration of "transition" in Ward's work, highlighting the personal, religious, class, and political transitions

depicted in her first five novels.[5] These narratives, she suggests, indicate that negotiation is necessary in order to construct "the hybrid and theatricalised modern self" (67). Melrose's performance is certainly a theatrical staging of identity. But while the early texts may respond to personal fears born of childhood events and contemporary threats to the aristocracy, by setting "boundaries to the condition of 'transition,'" the later text *The Mating of Lydia* offers no such discernible limits to the extent of this flexibility of identity (85).

Melrose makes use of the expectations surrounding the estate, manipulating Faversham by drawing on his inevitable understanding that the collector would seek out an heir to maintain his collection and take up his legacy. "I want a secretary--I want a companion--I want some one who will help me to arrange the immense, the priceless collections there are stacked in this house," he first claims. He speaks first to the young man's similar interest in collecting, and then to his desire for financial stability, freedom, and prosperity. With a "salary of three thousand a year," the management of the estates, the pleasure of aiding in the arrangement of the collections, he is offered, first "adequate" protection (96), and then "the money and collections" in the event of the collector's death (137). Appended to these great gifts are "[e]ase, travel, a political career, wide influence, the possession of beautiful things," all to be enjoyed if he can only endure "the struggle" of living with Melrose until he can claim "the prize" (141). In short, Melrose offers up everything the legacy and inheritance should encompass, and all that Melrose should be looking to offer. But these expectations, in the case of Threlfall, prove false.

Disowning a daughter and threatening perpetually to disinherit or sabotage Faversham's inheritance of Threlfall, the future of the legacy is opaque. With Melrose's murder the things of the Tower appear frozen in a terrible tableau with the

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[5] Here Wilt is referring to *Miss Bretherton* (1884), *Robert Elsmere* (1888), *The History of David Grieve* (1892), *Marcella* (1894), and "its sequel" *Sir George Tressady* (1895) (85).

collector at its heart. Illuminated by the "lavish electric light in the gallery" that had

been Melrose's latest investment, surrounded by the things that "represented the desires,

the huntings, the bargains of a lifetime," lies Melrose, "tripped at last, silenced at last,

the stain of his life-blood spreading around him (235). The murder of Melrose, and the

dramatic events surrounding his terrible, misanthropic reign, are a scar on the objects,

on Threlfall and on the estate, and may represent the principal feature of his legacy.

William S. Peterson has identified Mary Ward's tendency to present "fictional

heroines" who find "in a traditional country house the fullest expression of a desirable

sense of continuity with the past" (7). The often romanticised and preserved spaces,

associated with heritage and familial identities, offer a comforting experience of the

past, and a happy ending built on these experiences. But while a contentment of sorts is

achieved by the two principle female characters in the text, Felicia Melrose and Lydia

Penfold, its attainment requires these women and the other characters concerned with

Melrose's legacy, to seek to rupture the links with the past, and the heritage Ward and

her contemporaries were assumed to champion.

The complicated tale of a misanthropic collector, forming a significant

collection, turning it in to a legacy to lure in Claude Faversham, rejecting his disowned

daughter when she returns, and finally looking to renege on his agreement with

Faversham, makes the issue of the inheritance complex and uncertain. A million miles

from the ideal of hereditary inheritance, and the "stability, permanence and continuity"

that it conferred, the fate of Threlfall is up for debate (Thompson 6). While the text

acknowledges the possibility of finding something productive in an engagement with

the past, particularly in the contrasting representation of the neighbouring Duddon

estate, it nevertheless indicates a troubling alternative in the masculine domain of the

Tower, to the traditional model of the legacy. Neither of the leading ladies will attain a

traditional fairy tale ending, as the inheritance they come in to contact with is blighted by the events and associations held in the things of the emerging Melrose legacy.

Realising the potential of Threlfall's collections as a genuine house museum offers a possible solution to Melrose's haunting presence, and a compromise, with neither of the interested parties taking full and sole responsibility for the tainted legacy. As described by Faversham, "[t]he personalty is immense; there are about thirty thousand acres of land, here and elsewhere; and the collections can't be worth much less than half a million" (254). Yet, neither potential heir seeks to claim it outright, instead looking to make Threlfall a semi-public property. It is as though they hope the presence of an eager public, and the act of making the collections "of some use to the community," will wipe clean the legacy (256). Even this act, however, exposes the oppositional defiance of Melrose. The collector had disdained the very idea of "a big establishment eating up my income?--with a lot of prying idiots from outside--museum bores, bothering me for loans--common tourists, offering impertinent tips to my housekeeper, or picking and stealing, perhaps, when her back was turned!" (96). Faversham's proposal to open the doors of the spectacular country house to the public as "a great Museum for the north – a centre for students" cannot fail to engender a sense of Melrose's hectoring presence.

The public may finally access the "beautiful house" and its "beautiful possessions," but much like the stain lingering on the gallery floor where Melrose breathed his last, there remains the sense that something of the terrible collector continues to haunt the rooms and the prized possessions of the Tower (256). His very act of opposing expectations means that any positive realised will be juxtaposed against Melrose's infamous negative. For all concerned with the state and the fate of Threlfall, the production of a positive and tenable legacy requires a breach with a past identity.

But Ward suggests that even the model house museum cannot be sufficiently selective in the uptake and exclusion of such a significant identity

William S. Peterson reads this proposed conversion of Threlfall as a fitting answer to contemporary concepts of the need to make private objects of art and culture available to the less fortunate public. Yet, it is hard to exorcise the presence of Melrose from the supposedly happy scene, or to perceive a clear future for Threlfall as a safehouse of history and culture when its (eventually determined) heir, united to the perfectly prosperous and welcoming Duddon, feels no connection to Threlfall as a home or an estate. Ward's narrative paints Melrose as the villain, consciously mocking and defying the principles of selection and display championed in contemporary readings of the museum and the heritage market built on by such bodies as the National Trust.

Writing on the nineteenth century realist novel, Katherine Kearns observes in the proliferation of detail a sense "that there is some felt thing just out of sight that will not stay to be examined, the memory that cannot be recalled." It lurks, this unknowable thing, "about the room, somewhere, but unlike the furniture that may be pushed and pulled into place for a given tableau, its presence is not negotiable" (Kearns 55). Edmund Melrose shies away from the idea of legacy for fear of facing its connection to his own death. Yet, by retaining his vice-like grip on the collection, Melrose's imprint ensures that he will make himself a version of this force, lurking at the periphery, never in plain sight, but always hovering at the edge of the viewer's consciousness. Those entering Threlfall, talking about the Tower and its master, or imagining its treasures, should always perceive about them the non- negotiable presence of Melrose himself. Melrose's legacy will be above all his indelible legend, a warning to those who would take up objects and collections with a past.

Conclusion

In the period from the late-nineteenth century to the early-twentieth century organised efforts on the part of various national and regional institutions sought to solidify the productive role of historical objects and heritage in the construction of identity and the improvement of the populace. Exemplified by the particularly successful National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty, a public effort was made to secure material objects, historic properties, and exceptional sites, that they might be protected from the march of progress, and made useful in present-centred engagements with the past. New duties arose around historic sites, duties to preserve and pass on heritage objects, as a family legacy and part of a national store. This duty fell particularly on male heirs to country houses and collections who were perceived as custodians, representatives of a family name, and sires of future generations, but also as businessmen, and citizens of a nation state, the history and position of which would be determined by the collective efforts to preserve and utilise heritage to affirm appropriate gendered identities.

Vernon Lee, Mary Cholmondeley, and Mary Ward each imagine country houses and heirs afflicted with obstacles to their inheritance, and to the preservation and transmission of a legacy. The estates function as a Gothic haunting of a more productive relation to objects and heritage. The specific roles and duties attributed to these landed men constructed and reinforced masculine identities. The selected texts, however, describe emasculated heirs who are unable to contribute to a family legacy, who are alienated from their inheritance and unable to restore the glory of former days, and who are haunted by an unproductive history from which the collections cannot be extricated. Each narrative thereby questions the possibility and suitability of preserving heritages held in country houses and collections.

"Oke of Okehurst," *Sir Charles Danvers*, and *The Mating of Lydia*, each describe objects and house museums that simply will not conform to expectations, and that do not seamlessly transfer from master to heir. Patrick Mauries, writing on the cabinet of curiosities, celebrates the manner in which "the eclectic profusion of objects" that are "bequeathed to us" allow us to discern the "visions and desires" of collectors. They invite us to rediscover the individual with whom they were connected, and with their tactile qualities invite us to "touch with our own fingers the objects" that other hands have held (7). Much like heritage, which as this chapter so far has recounted, has been described as a consciously constructed engagement with the past composed of material items and both personal and professional histories, the collection for Mauries is an accumulation of personal relations and values bound up in a culturally determined practice. Through these objects these impressions of the past might be rediscovered and engaged with by subsequent generations. The texts this chapter has analysed take this potential, which generally grants the object and the collection value, and then imagine a negative alternative to the nostalgic interaction.

Mr. Oke of Okehurst, and his strange and distant wife Alice Oke, occupy an ancestral home laden with the material traces of their family's past. Preserved to the point that it appears enchanted, the perfection of the property and its collections is oppressive, demanding that the historical presence it generates be observed and marvelled at. The home is dominated by this sense, appearing more museum than family residence. And for a man so proud of being able to trace the Oke line back centuries, William Oke appears overwhelmed by the weight of history and the expectation that he will safeguard the legacy, making provision for its retention beyond his lifetime. Preservation alone, Lee's narrative suggests, simply may not be sufficient to secure the legacy represented by such a remarkable property and such pristine

collections. Furthermore, it may be an obstacle to the present-centred nature of heritage.

Alfred Dare of Vandon simply cannot see the value of the legacy presented to him. His modern, continental tastes are not gratified by its historical and architectural quality. He retains no family feeling, and so is unable to find any interest in the fragmented collections that remain to illustrate the activities and the characters of his forebears. Without the personal connection to the estate and its things, Dare does not possess the emotional investment that might drive him to restore the property and its deteriorating history. While, without the capital behind him, he lacks the ability to carefully and considerately repair or renovate the property, recapture its heritage, and restore the legacy as it stands.

Edmund Melrose obliterates the traces of his past. As an heir to a neglected family legacy, he is not the only of Ward's characters to do so – notably *Helbeck of Bannisdale*'s titular heir sells off the family collections, stripping the ancestral home of the symbolic layers of its history (1898). Melrose, however, is not motivated by the noble or pious motivations of Helbeck. He outright dismisses the philanthropic donation of prized collections to museums as a myth. Reading how the "late Professor William Mackworth has left the majority of his costly collections to the nation" with "no stipulations" to hamper the museums' authorities, he exclaims that people quite simply "don't give their best things to the country" (75). Instead, with no eye to the future, he constructs a collection that shuns personal and local history, that mocks the museum, and that pivotally is never truly secured as an inheritance with an appropriate heir to manage it. In doing so he imprints himself alone on the extensive collection, and leaves a legacy haunted by his questionable character, and marred by uncertainty.

After establishing the properties, the collections, and the characters tasked with constructing, conveying and restoring the legacies, Lee, Cholmondeley and Ward each

test the transmission of country house collections. Through unexpected deaths and unfortunate circumstances, each of the selected texts ask what it means to take up a legacy held within what were popularly perceived as useful materials, that is the collection and the country house. While popular perception and a heritage market held these vessels for the conveyance of history to be both beneficial and useful, they consider the difficulties with mastering history and identity in the manner suggested by the model of the museum and the National Trust. Concerned with negative alternatives to the traditional processes of heritage formation and inheritance, Lee, Cholmondeley and Ward each draw on contemporary debates, and then write back, imagining a response to these certainties and value judgements.

The implications of the rupture in the heritage of such prominent sites extend beyond the individual heirs or their immediate families. For the publicly minded and aesthetically astute, a constant threat to the image of England as an historic and tradition-laden land was perceived in the erosion of its monuments, ancient sites, historic buildings, and beautiful spaces. Museums looked to catalogue, preserve, and contain worthy items, they fought to stem the flow of art objects out of England (particularly to America), even as the National Trust sought funding and support from American tourists and like-minded individuals to continue its undertaking on behalf of the historic and beautiful. Both professional historic study and heritage formation benefitted from the solid evidence of material artefacts, imbued with a trace of the past that might be reinterpreted in light of the present to reinforce or rewrite the character of modern man. The desecration, neglect, or false manipulation of historic items and their heritage potential was, therefore, a crime against identity and national character.

Brian Graham and Peter Howard have argued that "pasts, heritages and identities should be considered as plurals," constructed by, and in relation to, whole communities, and appearing from both legitimised and illegitimate sources (1). Perhaps nowhere is

this truer than in the case of the estate system. A complex nexus of individuals, and therefore, identity-forming impulses, were generated and contained within the estate. Tradition, the museum and organisations dealing in the heritage market guided and instructed on their comprehensive mastery. But despite this, these narratives indicate the doubts regarding these identity affirming methodologies that appear to have preoccupied a popular consciousness. Focusing on the fragility of identity through the destabilising potential of historical items, the narratives question the basic assumptions of heritage projects, reliant on the capabilities of objects and indeed collectors to hold positive and productive associations. They ask, what happens when there is no-one to carry on this message, and protect these accumulated things? Once the trace is lost, can it be restored? And where collections come to carry a narrative that is undesirable, can it be expunged? Each of the texts mobilise the trope of the visitor, entering the country houses and accessing the collections through the eyes of someone unfamiliar with them. In doing so, they are able to imagine an experience of these things, in their context, that anticipates or emulates that of the museum visitor or day-tripper out for a dose of British heritage. These men, however, are unable to access any beneficial experience of history through the country house collections.

At the most basic level, these narratives are concerned with masculine duty and identity formation, responding to expectations and assumptions connected with history, heritage, and objects. In each case they imagine a negative that is emphasised through things. The heirs, unable, unfitted, or unwilling to perpetuate a legacy that positively mobilises the history held in things, find the imprinting potential of material objects cannot so easily be placed in service to a master narrative. They find, in an active incarnation of what Elaine Freedgood has termed the fugitive meaning in things (*The Idea In Things: Fugitive Meaning in the Victorian Novel*), that expressions beyond those intended break out of these objects. They communicate failure, negativity, and

masculine insufficiency, which find their way out to confront those viewing and interacting with them.

What it meant to possess these things, to retain or lose them, for a nation, a family line, and for individuals was being negotiated and redefined. Lee, Cholmondeley, and Ward each question ideas of inheritance and legacy. The texts react to debates as to what is worth preserving, what warrants an intervention or significant financial outlay to save it, and what constitutes a desirable portion of an imaginary Englishness that should be lamented as it is threatened with loss or destruction. They explore whether a certain type of governance, a certain incarnation of masculinity and class identity, or a specific remnant of the past imprinted on places and things, might warrant reverential treatment as a worthy legacy. In asking these questions, they destabilise the assumptions that fueled the museum's mastery of history, and the emergent heritage market.

Conclusion: The Curious Objects of Victorian Literature's Collections.

When Prince Albert laid out in his Mansion House speech his vision for the Great Exhibition of 1851, he revealed a contemporary confidence in the role of objects, collections, and collectors. These key nineteenth-century conceptions were global in scope, and maximised the utility of a world of material culture. Assured of the success of his mission, he laid out the aims of the Exhibition in accordance with successful models of object-mastery that made material culture serve national and imperial purposes. What the actual experience of the Exhibition revealed, however, was the full effect that such a huge volume of objects could have on the logistical and organisational frameworks by which it, and the related project of the museum, was constructed. The dream of perfect order and immaculate presentation, and the ultimate taxonomic mission to know the world and mobilise its things in a global economy, was destined to encounter difficulties that would detract from its totality and its message of success.

This thesis engages with the decline from this moment of imagined cultural confidence. It responds to the overwhelming quality of massed collections, and the inevitable superfluity of significations surrounding things. Sitting in relation to the Museum and the Commodity Complex, it is concerned with literary depictions of male collectors and their collections that contrast revealingly with the powerful and pervasive Enlightenment principles Bennett and Richards identify. The growth of public museum and market economy has been understood to have promoted subject-object relations that defined and empowered a range of masculine identities, "liberating men from fear and establishing their sovereignty" over the material world (Horkheimer and Adorno 3). This study identifies how the drive to classify and commodify the world found oppositional fictional form in a fascinating but frightening world of unknowable, alien objects and abject, emasculated subjects.

In a related but distinct manner to the Exhibition, the museum and the market relied on a series of assumptions as to the usefulness and malleability of objects. The framework of successful and productive relations established by these key nineteenth-century ideologies had implications for the formation of masculine collecting identities. Objects were understood to be complicit in this relation. They would provide the materials for "observational science," which facilitated classification and diagnosis, affirming the mastery and the position of the modern British man in the world (Yanni *Nature's Museums* 11). They would tell us something of ourselves, responding to our interactions with them, so that they might testify to class, taste, expertise, and to personal and national identity (Tilley 61). They gave purpose to the leisurely lives of gentlemanly collectors, and to professionals and scholars who devoted their lives to the practice of collecting, and provided the materials around which social bodies and disciplines developed. Objects materialised historical and cultural significance, and personal desires, facilitating their mastery in service to a present-centred construction of the world to date (Graham and Howard 3). They helped "shape and channel the choices made in the present" (Gosden 440), and made sense of the world as it was experienced in an imperial age by offering observable, material evidence for comparison (Lane 402).

By drawing on the material turn in cultural and literary analysis, this thesis indicates the questions occupying a nineteenth century imaginary as to the nature of the relation of subject to object. Through things, things in the Bill Brownian sense that are both semantically irreducible and confrontational in their tendency to "stop working for us" (3-4), the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century literature this thesis analyses pre-empts some of these critical concerns. The objects depicted are fluid and flexible, both inanimate and yet animate, subject to the collectors will and desires and yet active in their resistance to their acquisition, possession, dissemination, and inclusion within a legacy. In each of the narratives they defy classification, taxonomy, and their

productive function as the materials by which the world was known and masculine

identity affirmed. Against a framework of stable and useful functions for objects,

encounters in these Gothic texts with items that haunt and harm, frustrate and imperil,

emerge to test ideas of the masculine mastery of collections, and prevent their utilisation

as a medium for the projection of a sense of self within the world at large.

Russell Belk and Barbara Black indicate that human history has been marked by

a natural impulse to collect, extending from as far back as cromagnon rock collections

or the "library of Alexandria," and testifying to the productive function of objects and

collections in the formation and presentation of a sense of self (*Collecting in a*

Consumer Society 5; *On Exhibit* 16-17). In the nineteenth century, the museum and

corresponding market for collectables offered a particular means of channelling this

urge to collect productively, and of putting it to public use. Collectors were able to

participate in the attribution and presentation of the value of objects through the display

of accumulated items. United within the bounds of the collection, objects might

generate value on a commercial and an intellectual level, and might be made to serve

the public by being exhibited.

Discerning retailers and educated consumers might set an example, indicating

the distinction between desirable and undesirable goods. While the museum

particularly made it possible for the "'good' objects" to be filtered out from the mass of

highly variable items in circulation (Pearce *On Collecting* 374). The "*exemplary*

objects" that agents, dealers, or publicly minded private collectors might source, could

be conveyed in to the collection and then presented to society at large, as an education

for the masses in the manner of good taste (Preziosi 50), and as a model for emulation

for producers (Kriegel 1). Individuals who found themselves placed in strategic

positions around the globe might thereby aid in the "epistemological triumph over the

immensity of the world" by mapping, objectifying, and sampling (Black *On Exhibit* 16).

A set of relations to material culture modelled on the museum and the market facilitated the construction and presentation of particular messages of the self, the society, and the world.

While in a multitude of ways, the productive union of object and individual was imagined to yield compelling results, as explored in each of the chapters of this study, Gothic object narratives indicate that issues of identity, agency, or material unpredictability continued to preoccupy a late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century imaginary. The exhibition, the museum, and the force of the market were responded to imaginatively in ways that emphasised the unpredictable relation of objects to exhibitionary spaces, the unstoppable circulation promoted by a global economy, and the emasculating relation of collectors to collectables.

Filled with the by-products of a world survey mission, the British Museum's chaotic basement threatened to spill over, making objects of knowledge a tidal wave of unmanageably varied material (Richards *Imperial Archive*). Even within the regulated public galleries, the magnitude of their collections meant that museums might challenge the expertise of curators, baffle the untrained eye of visitors, and by implication appear as a storehouse for a mass of bric-a-brac, (Rydell 139). And while circulation drove the global economy, its overwhelming momentum engendered the sense that the market swept up objects and individuals, commodifying them and their labour alike, until all were invested with "the same unsubstantial reality" (Marx 45). Behind the normalised and indeed necessary act of forming collections lay the constant threat that they might overstep the productive and safe limits imposed on them, to the detriment of the collectors and viewers who would make use of them.

Masculinity is compromised in each of the texts analysed. Each of the gentlemen depicted is a collector of a differing sort, testifying to an extensive and complex late Victorian and Edwardian culture of collecting. The identities of these men

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are, however, shaken by their fundamental inability to collect. The culture of collecting provides models for the productive collecting identities that each man might be understood in relation to. The men find themselves rendered impotent, however, as they and their objects problematise acquisition, possession, dissemination and the inheritance of legacies. In this way, the literature betrays a decline from a moment of cultural confidence at mid-century, and a resultant anxiety as to the stability of male identity, expressed through curious objects and compromised collectors.

Objects, collectors, identities and institutions could all appear unpredictable, as positive object relations were overwhelmed by the quantity and the qualities of the objects and individuals with which they are concerned. This thesis picks up on the peripheral spaces, troubling realities, and boundless potentiality of material culture in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century. It takes as its focus the implications for male collecting identities of the Gothic realities of an age of objects and collecting. The late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century constructed a framework of imaginative ideals concerning the use of material culture. It privileged an impression of masculine and masterful acquisition, possession, dissemination, and legacy formation, that stimulated, satisfied, and affirmed identity on an individual and national level. As this study reveals, however, in the literature of the period contemporary concerns, and oppositional fictional responses to the certainties projected by the market and the museum, allowed writers to experiment with the extremes of identity and behaviour that might be expressed through interactions with curious objects.

The nineteenth century, as it has come to be critically understood, set high standards for the productive and masterful interaction of man and object by normalising and rewarding certain identities shaped in relation to Enlightenment principles and museum and market ideologies. But as the chapters of this thesis have demonstrated, these identities as members of societies and academic communities, as obsessive

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collectors safeguarding valuable objects, as scholars and professionals, and as custodians of family collections, were imagined to be under threat from the collections by which they define themselves. The gentleman collectors of these narratives are catastrophically undermined by the fascinating but frightening collectables with which they interact.

The objects encountered in the literature analysed range from family portraits and valuable antiques, to severed hands and torture devices. Each one dominates the collection, tests the collector, and betrays a potential for activity that arises from the superfluity of meanings with which they are imbued. The objects have a significant part to play in the dissociation of the gentlemen from productive modes of acquisition, possession, dissemination, and inheritance. Whatever the message or purpose of the particular collections these collectors form, and whatever the framework within which they operate, the nature of the objects, the flexibility of value and meaning appended to them, and the interrelation of object and collector, persistently emasculate the various gentlemen.

This thesis has analysed a limited sample of the sort of identities formed in relation to material culture in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, and examined their relation to objects in moments of acquisition, possession, dissemination and inheritance. Given the prominent role of objects and collectors in the literature of the period there are undoubtedly countless other examples that might shed further light on the oppositional fictional responses to productive collecting identities and their varied practices. Given the gender bias of the selected narratives and many of the readings of collecting in the period, female collecting practices and identities formed in relation to them might warrant particular attention. The work might also be taken forward to consider what such objects and collectors indicate about ideas of property and the proper, as implied in the derivation of the word, demonstrating as they do an

interest in the deeply improper. What this study has looked to establish, however, is the role of curious objects and collectors in Gothically inflected literature, in which they indicate reactive extremes to an enlightened, normative culture of Victorian collecting, and emasculate rather than affirm gendered identity.

Whatever the intended function of the collectables depicted, the nature of the objects, the flexibility of their value and significance, and the individuality of the relations of object to collector, comes to compromise enlightened aims. They persistently indicate a Gothic alternative to the market and the museum through emasculated subjects and fascinating but frightening objects, which compel the collectors in to action, and then thwart them with their instability. In analysing this material the thesis draws upon recent work on nineteenth century collections, including specific studies of museums and exhibitions, which have indicated the variety and complexity of the huge range of sites for the display of objects. Neither the museum, nor the market that alternately supplied it, was inspired by it, or imagined in opposition to it, were monolithic structures, and consequently individuals and institutions connected with both experienced them in different ways. While the aims, ambitions, and methodologies surrounding the museum and the global economy continued to proclaim them totalising, rationalising Enlightenment structures, such work has revealed the full extent of the less stable realities of collecting and exhibiting in the period.

The material turn in cultural and literary analysis has emphasised the manner in which objects may be seen to play an active role in contesting these comfortable, masterful relations to things. Specific object narratives have warranted extensive readings, revealing the multivalent significance of things themselves, and within historically and culturally determined subject-object relations. Mahogany, calico, and tobacco in Elaine Freedgood's *The Idea in Things*, or Kashmiri shawls for Chitralekha Zutushi's "Designed for eternity," for example, reveal something of the particular

period in which they were popularly produced and consumed. "Like seeds around which an elaborate crystal can suddenly congeal," as Loraine Daston indicates, "things in a supersaturated cultural solution can crystallize ways of thinking, feeling, and acting" (20). The material turn in literary and cultural criticism has begun to indicate the varied range of items and modes of collecting around which these crystallisations may form[6].

What this thesis suggests is that, while this flexibility of objects made them valuable and adaptable commodities, it also made them the principal battle ground for a range of priorities, and introduced the danger of, to use Freedgood's expression, fugitive meaning. The objects that are obtained directly, circuitously, legitimately, illegitimately, by way of the market or inheritance in these narratives, all share common characteristics. Although appealing to the collectors they are fundamentally troubling. Although connected to the market and the museum they are distanced in important ways. While classifiable as material objects they nevertheless demonstrate a compromising fluidity and flexibility that makes them active agents in the collecting narratives that unfold. Despite the messages of prosperity, dominance, and modernity implied in the enlightenment's ethos, this thesis highlights a Gothic response to collector's relations to objects and to the fragility of male identity that continued to occupy a nineteenth century imaginary.

Examining novels and short stories by Richard Marsh, M.R. James, Arthur Machen, Vernon Lee, George Gissing, Wilkie Collins, Bram Stoker, Mary Cholmondeley, and Mary Ward, the thesis shows how instances of unproductive-masochism, pathological collecting, thwarted professionals and scholars, and emasculated heirs in Gothically-inflected literature broke down the "framework" within

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[6] See the *Handbook of Material Culture* (2006), for instance, for a survey of approaches to material culture, and the subject-object relations and cultural significations it may be said to generate. *The Object Reader* (2009) presents a range of approaches to particular objects and object-relations.

which men and material culture were understood to interact productively and safely. Individual chapters dealing respectively with acquisition, possession, dissemination and inheritance, respond to the recent "material turn" in the humanities, bringing together literary criticism and historically grounded scholarship to reveal the collector and the collection as the locus for late-Victorian and Edwardian concerns with masculinity and materiality.

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