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The Macaroni's 'Ambrosial Essences': Perfume, Identity and Public Space in Eighteenth-Century England.¹

The late eighteenth-century male anti-type, the Macaroni, has received a good deal of scholarly attention over the past twenty-five years. Appearing in London during the 1770s, these symbols of effeminate, venial, unpatriotic masculinity have come to stand for a variety of developments in the historical examination of gender, consumerism, social status and class, and the role of the spectatorial 'gaze' in eighteenth-century life.² The historiography of eighteenth-century pleasure gardens has developed in a very similar way, concentrating on the role of sociability and class mixing in the gardens and the way in which 'looking' and 'gazing' figured within the these 'enclosure[s] of visuality'.³ The pleasure garden was ultimately the space where Macaronis were most often said to lurk and where individuals most often described encountering them. This connection was further demonstrated in the 1772 Vauxhall affray, a confrontation between a cleric and three Macaronis in Vauxhall pleasure garden, which ended in both physical and epistolary fists being flung.⁴ Both Macaronis and pleasure gardens have, fundamentally, been understood in terms of the visual.

Whilst vision did play an important role both in the understanding of the macaroni as a phenomenon and the pleasure garden as a space, to focus on vision to the exclusion of other

senses and embodiment is to miss an important means of understanding both Macaronis and pleasure gardens. We must understand the pleasure gardens and Macaronis as multi-sensory. In particular, I show that olfaction was a crucial means of understanding the Macaroni's place within the pleasure gardens. Pleasure gardens were a place of sensory pleasures and dangers where one was expected to and attempted to cultivate one's senses in particular ways. Macaronis were frequently described in terms of their perfumes and essences and yet none of the extensive work on Macaronis has interrogated this. In the space of the pleasure gardens Macaronis were dangerous since they threatened the senses with an overload of information and destabilised boundaries between environment and person, and the space between individuals. They used their senses in the wrong ways and threatened to make ill use of the senses of others. This exposed the tensions in a number of contemporary discourses. Firstly the discourse and experience of masculinity that increasingly depended on understandings of bodily control, self-regulation and independence, and secondly discourses of sensibility, which mapped an increasingly uneasy relationship between 'feeling' and 'senses'. By 're-embodiment' the Macaroni and pleasure gardens in terms of other senses, particularly olfaction, we attain a more nuanced depiction of both. In doing so we can also further understand the relationship between perfume, identity and space in eighteenth-century culture.

Both Macaronis and pleasure gardens have been interpreted in terms of an eighteenth-century 'public sphere'.⁵ Work on the public sphere has overwhelmingly focussed on textuality and vision. The lack of attention to somatic and embodied elements of the public sphere has left unrecognised the tensions that sensory modalities, particularly smell, might generate within public spaces.⁶ The conversation and interaction that has been said to characterize the 'public sphere' during this period needs to be 're-embodied' and more particularly 're-odorized'. This article therefore builds on recent 'embodied' approaches and

calls for histories of ‘sensations’ and ‘sensibilities.’⁷ To address smell and the issues it raised for eighteenth-century individuals about personal space and individual atmospheres complicate what being in ‘public’ means and serves to bring the private body into public space in revealing ways. This demonstrates the utility of taking a multi-sensory approach, called for by Mark Smith in a recent issue of this journal, to subjects like the Macaroni and the pleasure gardens. It also shows, as the contributions to that issue demonstrated, the ability of a sensory perspective to reinvigorate well-examined areas of historical inquiry.⁸

This article will begin by refocusing our understanding of the pleasure gardens in terms of other sensory modalities, including sound and smell, going beyond the previous concentration on the visual. It will then proceed to illustrate how smells and sounds interlinked the pleasure garden with other urban spaces and how the presence of numerous bodies-in-public complicated the experience of the public body of the pleasure garden. Finally it will use this new understanding of the pleasure gardens to rethink the Macaroni, one particular type of body-in-public, in terms of the olfactory threat it posed to sensory cultivation and masculine bodily style.

i. Pleasure Gardens: An Eighteenth-Century ‘Menagerie of the Senses’.

In theory and practice pleasure gardens were multisensory spaces. Works on gardening, aesthetics and the pleasure gardens all emphasised the multiple sensory pleasures that should and would meet individuals on walking around such spaces. These texts often emphasised the *harmony* created by different sensory impressions. Pleasure gardens were invoked as places in which individuals actively cultivated their senses and in which the gustatory and olfactory frequently helped marked out social distinction in ways which vision could not.

The harmony of many senses in gardens was often alluded to in aesthetics throughout the period. Though on their own smells might not be the focus of aesthetics, when combined

with other impressions they could contribute to an overall idea of harmony and uniformity. Edmund Burke emphasised that smells could form part of the sublime if they were married to other 'images of an allowed grandeur'.⁹ Lord Henry Kames more specifically explained the effects of sensory harmony when he discussed a landscape

comprehending hills, vallies, plains, rivers, trees, &c. The emotions produced by these several objects... are in conjunction extremely pleasant. And this multiplied effect is felt from objects even of different senses; as where a landscape is conjoined with the music of birds and odour of flowers.¹⁰

Sensory harmony was also emphasised in work which took gardens and gardening as its specific focus. In the latter half of the eighteenth-century continental garden theory invoked a multisensory experience of harmony with odoriferous shrubs, the sound of running water and chirping birds, and the visual appeal of 'fresh foliage and smiling prospects'.¹¹ Such multisensory experiences also concerned English writers on gardening. Tom Williamson has emphasised that a movement was underway throughout the eighteenth-century towards more 'irregular, asymmetrical and 'natural forms' of gardening'.¹² This movement meant that gardens and descriptions thereof increasingly 'modelled, elicited, and dramatized the spontaneity and movement of free subjectivity', a subjectivity that was allied with a distaste for visual uniformity and a move towards greater variation in odours, sounds and sights. As one anonymous poet-gardener argued, the impression of symmetrical uniformity in gardens with a 'dull regularity of style' meant that subjects

Pleas'd for a moment we the scene survey,

And then disgusted with it all away.¹³

This regularity would be replaced with the harmony of many different senses at different points throughout gardens. Mark Laird, for example, has detailed the integral role of sweet smelling shrubs and flowers in eighteenth-century gardening and their coupling with auditory and tactile impressions.¹⁴ Descriptions by walkers in these gardens detailed the effects of gardens on all the five senses. On walking through the garden at Envil Joseph Heely described a shrubbery which breathed ‘ambrosial gales from every surrounding bush and flower’ and where the ‘soft moss-grown carpets’ were accompanied by the ‘sweeter modulations’ of birds and the sight of nature’s ‘silky dress’.¹⁵ Garden manuals similarly emphasised the role of all the senses in the experience of the garden. Importing sensory delights into gardens helped bring the ideas of numerous spaces into one, creating a heterotopic space. Thomas Watley, in his *Observations on Modern Gardening* (1777), noted that

nothing is unworthy of the attention of a gardener... whatever is agreeable to the senses or the imagination, he may appropriate to the spot he is to improve: it is a part of his business to collect into one place, the delights which are generally dispersed through different species of country.¹⁶

Pleasure gardens once again drew on this idea of multisensory harmony and visitors recorded their experiences in similar ways. Whilst decrying the ‘sensual, unpolish’d, frolic turn of the English’ displayed in the fairs on the edges of London, Henry Fielding described how the central grove at Vauxhall ‘gratified almost every sense at once’ and ‘exhausted all that Art and Nature had to boast of’.¹⁷ Oliver Goldsmith similarly emphasised, from the point of view of a ‘Chinese Philosopher’ that ‘upon entering the gardens, I found every sense overpaid with more than expected pleasure’.¹⁸ The range of other sensory delights on offer could destabilise

vision as they competed for primacy. In his 1752 *Sketch* of Vauxhall, John Lockman described how

So fondly ev'ry Sense is charm'd

O whither shall I turn my Eye!

Each roving Faculty alarm'd,

In sweet Amaze enrapt I lie.¹⁹

Guides to pleasure gardens frequently noted the other pleasures on offer beyond the visual. A 1762 description of Ranelagh noted that amongst the gardens ‘fragrance and beauty are so agreeably blended, that with a pleasing variety and sweetness they delight the eye and smell’.²⁰ The author of *London and its Environs* described how ‘flowers and sweet smelling shrubs’ surrounded the rotunda at Vauxhall.²¹ Lockman describes the fragrance of a nosegay picked from the flowers at Vauxhall and the soundscape of the gardens.²² The blending of sounds, sights and smells in the space of the pleasure garden also depended on the association between one and the other. Historians and contemporary neuroscientists have suggested that the sight of an object or the reading of a text can set off olfactory sensations previously associated with that object.²³ Having smelt the flowers, foods and fauna of Vauxhall one might recollect them upon seeing them from a distance when walking around the gardens. Hence, as the description of Ranelagh put it ‘fragrance and beauty are so agreeably blended’.

The blending of sight, sound and smell was also evoked in the songs sung at the gardens, which were meant to evoke the pastoral tradition to which the gardens allied themselves.²⁴ In these songs scent and sound combined to link the gardens to an Arcadia of love and beauty:

When the blossoms of spring shed their fragrance around,

And Nature's best songsters enliven each grove;

As we scent the perfume, as we hear the soft sound,

'This, this!' we exclaim, 'is the season of love'.²⁵

This trope appears in numerous songs sung at the gardens that referenced the soft scents of nature, the sweet breaths of young women and the sound of trickling streams.²⁶ These songs not only described an imagined pastoral scene but also referred to the gardens themselves with their scented shrubs and flowers. The other senses were not excluded from representations of the pleasure gardens at the cost of a focus on vision, rather descriptions of the gardens aimed to delineate the harmony of the senses in a way similar to writers on gardening and aesthetics.

Yet visitors the gardens also had to use their senses carefully. Pleasure gardens were spaces where the use to which individuals put their senses and the sensory impressions they themselves diffused said much about social status. Hannah Grieg has recently pointed out that 'the close... quarters of the pleasure garden may have crystallized rather than diminished the perception of social difference'.²⁷ Vision and looking played an important role in the generating of social distinction within the pleasure gardens. However taste and smell could play an equally important part. During the eighteenth-century the increasing 'play' with identities and the challenging of social boundaries in a range of, particularly urban, situations led to the growing belief that one could not trust sight or first glances alone as a means of social discrimination.²⁸ Marc Lalonde and David Howes have posited that this distrust of vision led to the increasing importance of olfactory and gustatory languages and means of social discrimination. As social boundaries became ever more confused 'the discursive space devoted to the proximity of the senses (taste or smell)' increased 'at the expense of that normally reserved to the distance senses (sight and hearing)'.²⁹

An olfactory means of social distinction could work between the pleasure gardens and other 'lower' spaces. A writer to *The Scot's Magazine* in 1771 noted that spa towns and London's pleasure gardens could help to 'wash away the plebeian scent of Thames-street' in the city where the 'Cit' might make his money. But these distinctions also worked within the space of the pleasure garden. One anonymous writer noted in 1783 how in Vauxhall 'the smart shopman, having shook off the humility of his morning countenance in submissive Cheapside, struts with flowing chitterling and beruffled knuckles, as great and as proud, as a new-made Lord'. The writer continues, adding that 'The smell of the Poudre d'Or leans, and Lavender Water, distinguish the great from the little, but the Devonshire sash is common to all'. Where vision fails the smell of perfumes and powders could demarcate the 'great from the little'. In this context, the article adds, 'blindness' had been 'for these several years, one of the most distinguishing qualities which a Man of Fashion can possess.'³⁰ Smell constituted an important 'way of knowing' within the pleasure gardens.

If the sensory markers of exclusivity went beyond vision, so too did the *use* of one's senses in marking out social status. Steven Connor, coining the term 'menagerie of the senses', has pointed how menagerie, with its original meanings of 'management' can help us think about the way in which the senses are refined, educated, or extended through their limitation or intensification. Pleasure gardens as a space constituted a 'menagerie of the senses' in which one learnt to use one's senses 'properly'.³¹ Music, sculpture and food could 'improve' the mind through the exercise of the senses.³² Goldsmith uses his description of Vauxhall in the *Citizen of the World* to mock this disciplining of the senses or 'miserable refinement'. Here a pawnbroker's widow, who thought the supper and music 'excellent' is corrected by Mrs Tibbs the wife of a 'second rate beau'. After suggesting that the wine was 'abominable' and that the singers had 'neither ear, nor voice, nor judgement', Mrs Tibbs forces the Widow to realise that 'she had no pretensions in the world to taste, her very senses

were vulgar'. The widow, her senses being admonished for their ill use, is 'content to yield the victory, and for the rest of the night to listen and improve'.³³ It was not only smells, sounds and tastes that marked out the worse from the better in the pleasure gardens, but the way in which one smelled, listened and tasted. Social status in the pleasure gardens was not simply a matter of glances and gazes but of embodied *habitus*, to use Pierre Bourdieu's phrase, 'a permanent disposition, a durable manner of standing, speaking, and therefore of feeling and thinking' that was therefore determined by one's reaction to the sensory stimuli the gardens presented.³⁴

ii. Eighteenth-Century Pleasure Gardens: Sensory Heterotopias.

If the pleasure gardens were a menagerie of the senses in this respect, they were also a space in which sensory stimuli threatened to evoke spaces beyond the pastoral paradise that the owners sought to create. Pleasure gardens were heterotopic spaces 'capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible'.³⁵ This can already be seen in the way in which the pleasure gardens, particularly Vauxhall, dramatized elements of British histories, patriotic fantasies, and imperial riches. Here a series of temporally and geographically distinct spaces were joined within the pleasure garden, with tensions often resulting.³⁶

However it was not just the spaces invoked by the proprietors of pleasure gardens that determined the heterotopic nature of the gardens. Pleasure gardens existed within, and were not hermetically sealed from, the wider urban milieu of eighteenth-century London. Sounds and smells from outside could enter the gardens and hence reference spaces other than those invoked by the gardens' owners. Michel de Certeau has outlined the way in which walking in the city generates its own rhetoric and logic that resists those of city planners.³⁷ In a similar

manner the outside sounds and smells that entered the pleasure gardens served to resist the cultivation of the senses that the gardens were ostensibly engaged in.

To take one example, the pleasure gardens were part of the wider urban soundscape of London. John Lockman, who, as we saw earlier, described a Vauxhall in which ‘Each roving Faculty’ was ‘alarm’d’ illustrated how the soundscape of the gardens intersected with the city surrounding it. As he moved through walks he heard ‘(alternately or together) the distant Music of the Orchestra, the Philomelas in the Thickets, and the Peal of Bells from St Mary Overs’. The visitor to the gardens had to try and address these sounds individually, often a difficult task:

The Concert, Bells, and Woodland Lays,

So sweetly in Confusion mix,

The various Sounds (by Turns) we praise,

And know not on which kind to fix.³⁸

The intersection of other sound and smells within the gardens in some measure contradicted the ‘aim’ of the proprietors of the gardens and their apologists. The ‘creation of a sublimated public body without smells, without coarse laughter, without organs, separate from Court and Church on one hand and the market square, alehouse, street and fairground on the other... was Vauxhall’s task’. However the ‘public body which Vauxhall created retained the imprint of its vulgar heritage’.³⁹ The bells of Southwark Cathedral testify further to the difficulty of this task of sublimation.

More importantly, this task was also rendered impossible because the ‘public body’ of Vauxhall was made of numerous public bodies whose sounds, attire and smells might reference spaces and ideas outside of those intended by the likes of Dan Tyers, Vauxhall’s

proprietor. For example, the smell of tobacco from smoking and the clothes of those who smoked were both the subjects of complaints by visitors. One visitor to Vauxhall in 1771 felt particularly aggrieved by a certain individual and attempted to inform him that ‘tobacco would give his cloaths a disagreeable scent’, particularly among ‘the ladies’ in the garden.⁴⁰ The simple roughness of smoking did not fit with the aura that the gardens sought to create. Smoking was associated with a plain talking masculinity, coffee houses and after dinner conversation. It was believed that women could not stand its smell. The scent ‘of tobacco smoke on clothing, in the mouth and in the hair, announced the arrival or return of menfolk.’⁴¹ The association of the smell of tobacco with the coffee house and serious discussion goes back to the 1670s. In Sir George Etheridge’s *The Man of Mode*, first published in 1676, Sir Fopling Flutter and Mrs Loveit are overcome with the smell of tobacco from four men who had come from a nearby coffee house. Sir Flutter, taken aback, exclaims ‘It overcomes our Pulvilo – Me thinks I smell the Coffee-house they came from’.⁴² The items of clothing worn by visitors to pleasure gardens, particularly wigs, were particularly susceptible to the absorption and transfer of such odours.⁴³

Unlike the references to ‘popular’ culture in Vauxhall’s paintings, which Solkin examines, the smells and sounds, brought into the gardens, or emitted, by individuals could not be ‘cleaned up, softened, rendered comic or sentimentalised’ in the same way that images could.⁴⁴ Smells were largely uncontrollable and belonged to the personal space of the individual, yet they also diffused into public space. Olfaction, then, demonstrates the intersection between the personal space or ‘atmosphere’ of the individual and the space that makes up the public ‘sphere’ around it. Polite sociability depended on the refining influence of women on men in social interactions.⁴⁵ Vauxhall gardens was a space characterised by its sexual mingling and flirtation, an arena in which men and women mixed together, and the proprietors encouraged such characterisations in the songs sung there.⁴⁶ The presence of smell

of tobacco smoke and by extension the intrusion of masculine spaces such as the coffee house into Vauxhall gardens could serve to split up the space in ways antithetical to the goals of the proprietor and the wishes of visitors. One visitor openly advocated that smoking be banned in the gardens for these very reasons. He demanded;

that there be no more Smoking in the Middle of the Company, lest the Stink of the Tobacco should drive some of the Fair Guests into the more private Walks for a little fresh Air, and Conversation may then perhaps grow unaccountably serious.⁴⁷

Both the stink of tobacco and the sounds of ‘serious’ conversation, hallmarks of a masculine bodily style that was more welcome in manly after dinner conversation or coffee houses, could threaten to remake the pleasure garden into a segregated rather than mixed space. The stink of tobacco even threatened to turn from smell event, associated with individuals and crowds, to a smell mark, its scent infusing the space around it.⁴⁸ One commentator, addressing Dan Tyers in poetic form, described eating at Vauxhall ‘beneath your smoak-dry’d leaves’.⁴⁹ The smell of tobacco disrupted that separation of pleasure from economy and clean from dirty that Vauxhall attempted to manage. Indeed the stink of tobacco in Vauxhall gardens was very much ‘dirty’ in the sense that Mary Douglas famously outlined. It was literally ‘matter out of place’.⁵⁰

iii. The Macaroni’s ‘artificial atmosphere’.

But there was another smell that signified the invasion of the pleasure garden by an outside space and this was the scented waters, essences and perfumes of the Macaroni. Between 1770 and the early 1780s Macaronis were the subject of barbed attacks and commentary in the periodical press, a slew of print caricatures produced most prominently by Matthew and Mary Daryl, and the subject of both a confrontation in Vauxhall gardens and a published edition of

the correspondence related thereto.⁵¹ Macaronis were defined by their interest in and conformity to foreign, particularly Italianate, and French fashion, a tendency to gender ambiguity and effeminacy, and a narcissism and self-regard that violated expected codes of polite conduct.

The Macaroni clearly shared the same heritage that characterised other masculine anti-types such as the gallant, fop and beau and often drew on elements of these earlier stereotypes.⁵² However, as Sally O'Driscoll has recently pointed out, the Macaroni also had a longer pre-history in eighteenth-century culture and the Macaroni that emerged so forcefully in the early 1770s was a bringing together of these earlier descriptions. Writing in the *Spectator* in 1711, Joseph Addison used the term Macaroni to refer to the refined wit, manners and outfits of English men who had returned from the Grand Tour. By 1764 Horace Walpole was referring to the 'Macaroni club', which was comprised of all 'the traveled young men who wear long curls and spying glasses'. Loosely associated with the rich young men who gambled at the clubs Almack's and White's, the term spread with Macaroni fashions themselves and eventually came to denote 'a person who exceeded the ordinary bounds of fashion' and was thus used as a 'term of reproach to all ranks of people, indifferently, who fall into this absurdity'.⁵³

Macaronis, covered in perfumes and essences, gave all who met them 'the idea, as well as the smell, of an itinerant perfumer's shop'.⁵⁴ The smell of a perfumers' shop must have been a mingled and powerful concoction of odours and one that emanated into the street outside. One writer even compared the smell of a Macaroni to that of a specific perfume shop. 'Mrs Grey', writing in *The Ladies' Magazine*, described one 'horrid Macaroni' who 'smelt strongly of every essence in Warren's shop', a reference to Richard Warren, perfumer of Mary le Bonne Street.⁵⁵ That the mixture of essences, waters and perfumes the macaroni had about him had been considered offensive is significant. The elevation of 'mixture' to a

desirable and epistemologically useful status in early eighteenth-century culture was followed, in the late eighteenth-century, by a fall in mixture's value and an increasing focus on the separation of bodies and identities into constituent parts.⁵⁶ The offensiveness of the mixed odours of the macaroni testifies to this shift. There are very few indications of the specific perfumes a Macaroni would have worn. The sheer variety of essences worn by Macaronis undermined any attempts to pin down their scented identity within the pleasure gardens beyond the Macaroni stereotype.

More importantly, the fashionable male anti-type of the Macaroni allowed the intrusion of another space into Vauxhall pleasure gardens, the space of luxury consumption connoted by the perfume shop. Miles Ogborn has pointed out that Macaronis were 'very much creatures of Vauxhall and its modern modes of consumption'.⁵⁷ The description of the Macaroni as an 'itinerant perfumer's shop' adds a further layer to this analysis. Macaronis were not only the product of modern consumption but actually represented the space of consumption itself. They were not just creatures of Vauxhall but of the shops of perfumers like Richard Warren, and they served to link the two spaces together. The 'smellmark' of the Macaroni brought another space, the perfume shop, into the heterotopia of the pleasure garden. Henry Bates, the cleric protagonist in the Vauxhall Affray referred to the Macaronis as 'dirty impertinent puppies'.⁵⁸ Like the stink of tobacco the scent of the macaroni was also matter out of place and hence dirty.

The crossing of boundaries, between luxury and excess, between masculinity and effeminacy, was central to the understanding of the Macaroni.⁵⁹ For this reason it was, in many contexts, the olfactory rather than visual which served to encapsulate the Macaronis most accurately in the minds of those who wrote about or claimed to have met them. The place or exact nature of the 'Macaroni Club', which Horace Walpole first described in February 1764, has been the subject of much speculation but has yielded no firm evidence or

answers.⁶⁰ However one of the few satirical imaginings of what such a club would be like reveals the intimate connection between Macaronis and perfumery. The letter, ostensibly from a ‘complete Macaroni-Man’ and published in *The Weekly Amusement* in 1775, alerts the periodical and the reader to a new Macaroni society. Formed of men ‘known and distinguished by the name of Macaronis’ and ‘constituting a pantheon of Macaronis’ it would be ‘under the name of the Society of Essences and Perfumes’. Meeting as soon as ‘some ships, laden with pomatum, powder and perfumes... are safely arrived in the Thames’, the society was only open to:

Macaronis, and who can evince that they are men, and gentleman philosophers, by explaining, to the satisfaction of the original members of the society, the essence of pomatums and puffs, and the suction and ebullition of powder bellows.⁶¹

The name, membership and time of meeting for this imagined Macaroni club were all to be determined by the appreciation and knowledge of perfumery.

The experience of the macaroni and the description of his person were also governed by smell. It was noted that one might smell a Macaroni first rather than see him and the refrain that he was ‘All paste, all powder, all perfume’ was a frequent one.⁶² His ‘perfumed’ and ‘odoriferous’ handkerchief, ‘which generally is half hanging out of his pocket to display his taste for the *air negligé*’ was another point of interest for commentators.⁶³ Descriptions of the macaroni even took on the form of ‘receipts’ and recipes of the sort that perfumers would have used to prepare their products. The 1775 ‘Receipt to make a MACARONI’ aimed to teach individuals ‘the method’ to ‘To make a macaroni, or smart modern beau’. The penultimate lines adding the final touches, soaking him in perfume;

With scent and perfume, and the Devil knows what,

let him stink full as rank as a Muscovy cat'.⁶⁴

The culture of perfumery suffused the Macaroni and he constituted an olfactory spectacle that matched, and in some cases was described as superseding, the visual one. One commentator asserted, 'you may know a macaroni, when you come near him, by his essences and scented waters' following this with a description of the sight of him. The foregrounding of smell rather than sight suggests once again that sometimes smell was considered more reliable than sight in marking out individuals and their status.⁶⁵

Descriptions of Macaronis drew heavily on contemporary languages of smelling. Eighteenth-century physiological explanations for the workings of smell described odours as made of corpuscles. These 'corpuscles', 'scented particles' or 'atoms' were emitted by objects and, containing the volatile, oily and saline particles of bodies, travelled through the air, often being blown by the wind. They then came through the nose and touched the olfactory nerves which excited smelling. These particles were 'diffused', 'shed' and in poetic terms often 'breathed' from objects.⁶⁶ The cultural weight of such descriptions of smell was exploited in Tobias Smollett's *History and Adventures of an Atom* where references to smells and the 'shape, substance, and quality' of 'the component particles... that exhale from a rose, and steam from a dunghill' are rife.⁶⁷ Such languages suffused descriptions of Macaronis. Ferdinand Twigem, in his barbed satire on Macaronis, called on 'Britons' to 'despise these atoms' and 'dispel these vapours'.⁶⁸ Not only were the Macaroni's 'words all wind' and his scented conversation like 'zephyrs gentle breath' but he himself was made of airy 'nothings' and had to 'keep close within doors, when the wind was pretty high, lest it should carry him away'.⁶⁹ His dress and his conversation 'breathed', 'shed' and 'diffused' like odoriferous particles [See Fig.1]. The Macaroni's 'dress diffuses nothing but essence and perfume... his sentiments breath self-love, affectation, pertness and effeminacy'.⁷⁰ Perfume even seeped into the bodily constitution of the Macaroni. The *Macaroni and Theatrical Magazine* printed a

mock dissection of a Macaroni in which they revealed that the ‘pineal gland, which has been supposed to be the seat of his soul, smelt very much of essence and orange flower water’.⁷¹

The linking of understandings of smell and understandings of the Macaroni built on the fact that both were considered to be grossly material yet ephemeral and insubstantial at the same time.

IMAGE MISSING DUE TO COPYRIGHT

Figure 1. Diagram of a Rose emitting odoriferous particles, decreasing in strength from A through B to C. From Anon, ‘Of the SMELL’, Universal magazine of knowledge and pleasure, 10:4, (1752), p.172. © British Library Board (P.P.5439, p.172)

The boundary crossing, transgressive nature of perfume becomes even more important in the case of the Macaroni when we situate him back within the menagerie of the senses constituted by the pleasure garden. Odour ‘offers an understanding of identity as elusive and constantly diffusing’.⁷² This fits well with eighteenth-century medical and philosophical understandings of odour as the product of process and change in bodies.⁷³ The Macaroni was an ‘evaporating subject’. His perfumes did the work of shattering ‘subject-object oppositions’ and threatening ‘notions of fixed identities’.⁷⁴ The blurring of the perfume shop, the

individual and the pleasure garden was one way in which the Macaroni's perfumes did this. However the Macaroni's scents also blurred the space between environment and individual and between separate individuals. Macaronis were thus described as grotesque figures. Their overflowing, uncontrollable nature threatened to destabilise many of the points around which late eighteenth-century, particularly masculine, identity was built.

In the mid to late eighteenth-century 'commentators were establishing a notion of refined manliness in which social ties were formed through virtuous and refined displays of mutual sympathy, sentiment or sensibility, expressed through less regulated, more emotional actions'.⁷⁵ Such notions implied openness both in the expression of 'emotion' and 'sentiment' and in the reception of 'displays' through nervous sensibility, a discourse that did not close up the body but left it open to the sensory stimulation of its surroundings.⁷⁶ At the same time however a contrary discourse existed which placed value on the bodily integrity, self-control and the independence of men.⁷⁷ The Macaroni's perfumes embodied the values opposed to both of these discourses and the pleasure garden provided a space in which these negative traits could be performed.

In contrast to notions of manly independence and self-control the macaroni was unregulated and open, constantly diffusing perfume or humming music. The macaroni is an unbounded figure that 'picks up the names of painters and vomits them forth on all occasions' and 'affects a rapturous taste for music and is continually humming in Piano'.⁷⁸ The threat of the Macaroni was not a fear of looking and vision but a fear of the invasion of personal space and the dereliction of a self contained bodily style. Even the Macaroni's attempts at oratory and rhetoric, an art deeply implicated with ideas of bodily self-control and independence, turn into an uncontrollable stream of excrement shot;

... like mud from a cart

With the true Ciceronian flow.⁷⁹

Perfume exemplified the Macaroni's lack of bodily control and his disrespect for personal space. In 1772 the parson Henry Bate entered into an extended epistolary controversy with a group of Macaronis, having fought one of their footmen to defend the honour of a female acquaintance that had been ogled by them in Vauxhall gardens.⁸⁰ The letters reveal the important role of perfume in understanding the Macaroni more generally. Bates wrote that Macaronis 'escaped the severities of a noxious climate, by an artificial atmosphere of ambrosial essences'.⁸¹ Here the notion of 'atmosphere' is key. Originally literally meaning a 'ball of vapour' atmosphere is apt for the Macaronis, who, it was said, were made of wind and perfume.⁸² Atmosphere, however, also implies an extension of the body into the space around it and into other peoples' bodies. Schmid points out how 'I recognise the odor when it is inside of me, inside my nose... The Other Odor is not, in fact, other, but me'. This shows how 'olfaction highlights the violent fragility of our identity as the space between I and you/me and other are subverted'.⁸³ The Macaroni's perfumes were thus particularly subversive to notions of bodily integrity and self-command. These perfumes could be breathed in, invade the personal space and body of the individual, and resist control in a way which dress could not. They threatened to seduce and refigure those who smelt them. As one poem on the Vauxhall affray pointed out, describing the macaroni Colonel Robert Fitzgerald;

There's nothing comes before-behind,

But stinks on wings of his own wind;

The Macaroni's perfumes made other spaces and individuals stink too. His perfumes threatened to unmake the atmosphere of Vauxhall gardens, with its sweet smelling shrubs and flowers, and re-focus it around himself;

And so baptize'd with milk of roses,

Which, with his smells, so strike our noses,
That ev'ry gentle air that blows
Brings something new unto the nose;
As if young Sephrus was turn'd pilot,
To waft the sweets of some poor vi'let,
By some unkind mishap disgrac'd,
And on a putrid dunghill plac'd:
So let Dan Zephyr do his best,
The dunghill makes his sweets a pest.⁸⁴

This disgust was the way that writers often argued individuals *should* react to the Macaroni. It was expected that polite individuals should cultivate their senses to disapprove of his overpowering atmosphere. However the Macaroni's perfumes were threatening because, as the above quote makes clear, individuals had little choice about whether to smell them. The smells 'strike the nose' of the receiver and they are powerless to get away. As Immanuel Kant pointed out, using the example of a perfumed handkerchief, the sense of smell is fundamentally undemocratic. Perfume, as Kant argues, 'gives all those next to and around him a treat whether they want it or not, and compels them, if they want to breathe, to 'enjoy' [genießen] [this odor] at the same time'.⁸⁵ In the Macaroni's presence one could look the other way but it was far more difficult to smell the other way.

The Macaroni's perfumes were also threatening precisely because some accepted that they were 'sweet' and hence pleasing. Amelia Rauser has argued that macaroni prints and the Macaronis themselves 'rapidly lost their initial status as cautionary counterexamples and

transformed instead into desirable role models' that depicted 'up-to-date fashions in careful detail'. The viewer is meant to disapprove of the macaroni and yet is enthralled at the same time by his fashionable dress.⁸⁶ Nowhere is this seductive power more present than in the perfumes that destroy the boundaries between self and other. Twigem, in the preface to his satire, noted that he did not fear the harsh words of Macaronis because

they must come with such gentle gales of pomatum and essences, that his senses will rather be refreshed by the ambrosial scent than terrified by the volley of half dipped oaths and castrated monosyllables.⁸⁷

Whilst his high-pitched voice and oaths were repellent, to some the Macaroni's breath was seductive. Others describe the aspirational self-made macaroni as a contagious miasma. Smell played an important role in understanding infection. In the period before germ theory it was firmly believed that smells could spread disease or connote diseased air.⁸⁸ Such discourses found their place in describing the Macaroni. One individual noted with alarm that 'the infection at St James was soon caught in the city, and we now have Macaronis of every denomination'.⁸⁹ The perfumes of the Macaroni not only evidenced his complete lack of self-control, bodily integrity and regard for personal space, but also threatened to seduce and infect the bodies of others and the space of the pleasure gardens around them.

The description of the Macaronis as infectious agents of effeminacy sat with the idea of a 'softening' 'plague' of effeminacy that was commonplace during this period.⁹⁰ This was usually described as a softening of nerves and character. Perfumers were often seen as agents of this softening process. One letter in the *Ladies' Magazine* took the perfumer Mr Warren to task for softening 'the rugged dispositions and hands of Englishmen'.⁹¹ The Macaroni was the emissary of the perfumer, composed entirely of his products and himself constituting a walking perfume shop that threatened to infect those within his atmosphere with effeminacy.

The Macaroni and the perfumer were similar beasts, both with malformed senses of smell. One report of a Macaroni described how he ‘wiped his face with an odoriferous handkerchief, that was sufficient to suffocate any man but a perfumer’.⁹²

The Macaroni’s ambrosial atmosphere, as Bates argued, protected his depraved olfactory senses from the noxious smells of the town. Yet his perfumes were both poison and cure. Smell had an uneasy place in discourses of nervous sensibility, a sense of unease epitomised in the Macaroni. Strong perfume was said to make those of a nervous disposition faint and give them fits of the vapours. On the other hand smell was often the cure for such reactions, with smelling bottles filled with salts applied to the nose.⁹³ Even the material culture of smell during the period emphasised the *pharmakon* like nature of smell as both poison and cure.⁹⁴ A smelling bottle in the Victoria and Albert museum’s collections is hinged with the top section containing a stopper for scents and the bottom half containing space for smelling salts.⁹⁵ The Macaroni’s perfumes encapsulated this uneasy reliance on scents. One poem describes how Macaronis;

With perfume and paste, scented powder, and paint,

They their persons besmear' till they're reading to faint

Then by cordial's restor'd, - dress'd for the ball or for play.⁹⁶

The Macaroni exemplified how the place of smell in discourses of sensibility left the body open to infiltration by scented commodities and the atmosphere in which one stood. He also threatened to render other men open to such infiltration through the scent of his perfumes or by turning them into Macaronis themselves. One ‘injured wife’, bemoaning the ‘current trend of men being complete Macaronis’, claimed that women should apply to other men of a ‘more robust and athletic appearance, who would not... swoon at the smell of a lamp lighter, within half a yard of him’. The sensitivities of the macaroni were such that he would

‘detest... the fumes of tobacco’, replacing the manly scent of smoking with the effeminate one of perfume.⁹⁷ Whilst throughout the eighteenth-century perfumery had been used by both men and women in almost equal quantities, the attack on Macaronis’ perfumes suggests a developing separation of perfume from normative masculinities, suggesting that as gender categories became more rigid this ossification extended gendered categorisations into objects and materials such as perfume.⁹⁸

The Macaroni, then, came to epitomise the ill use of the senses and threatened to make ill use of the senses of others. One artistic imagining of the Vauxhall affray, often used by scholars to illustrate articles but not fully interrogated, demonstrates this. On the frontispiece to *The Vauxhall Affray; Or, Macaronis Defeated* is an image of Bate burning three Macaronis as a sacrifice outside a classical temple of virtue, for, as he notes, ‘this incense will revive degraded manhood’ [See fig. 2]. The role of incense here has been missed. Whilst effeminacy played a key role in understanding the prints, there were a variety of other meanings subtly laid over one another within these sources. Here the reference to incense brings to mind Catholicism. This resonated with the Francophile identity of the macaroni and the suspicion that the Macaroni ‘was a Roman Catholic’.⁹⁹ It also, more forcefully, alluded to the classical use of incense through the temple of virtue. The burning of the Macaronis in front of a classical temple of virtue attempts to reverse the effects of their olfactory spectacle. The incense that would revive degraded manhood moves the perfume from wearing to burning, from the individual body to the collective arena of the temple and from idolatrous Catholic vanity to the worship of a wider classical masculine virtue. Within the menagerie of the senses provided by the pleasure garden the Macaronis were sacrifices that provided a lesson in the improper cultivation of the senses and the improper use of scents. They served to reinforce the proper role of smells and smelling in a self-contained masculine bodily style through providing an image of its opposite.

IMAGE MISSING DUE TO COPYRIGHT

Figure 2. Anon, 'The Macaroni Sacrifice', in The Vauxhall Affray (London, 1773), © British Library Board, 1414.e.28, frontispiece

This cultivation of the senses, so central both to the cultural work that the Macaroni performed and to the experience of the pleasure garden, can be seen in the contrast between 'feeling' and 'senses' embodied by the Macaroni. If the Macaroni demonstrated the potential for the nervous body described by sensibility to be opened rather than contained, then he also provided the anti-type against which more refined concept of 'feeling' could be defined. The Macaroni was said to have a sensitive nose and 'such exquisite auditory faculties, that it may hear better, listen to, and admire his sweet enchanting voice'.¹⁰⁰ Yet this was contrasted to 'feeling' and 'none are so credulous as to believe it the indication of thought and sentiment'.¹⁰¹ The Macaroni was sensitive but he used such sensitivity in the wrong way, he had not cultivated his senses correctly. Epicene, the macaroni at the centre of Robert Hitchcock's *The Macaroni, A Comedy* demonstrates this. Whilst concerned with perfume and fine clothes he is less concerned for love which is 'not admitted into our system, because it gave 'so many disagreeable sensations'.¹⁰² Whilst the Macaroni was 'determined to be all body' and hence concerned with hearing and smelling, he was unable to integrate the rather

different types of 'feeling' which sensibility and the 'man of feeling' incorporated. A tactile language of 'feeling' and being 'touched' instead dominated these discourses.¹⁰³

The pleasure gardens became a space in which the sensory, and more specifically olfactory, elements of discourses such as sensibility and manly self-integrity were manifested and debated in the form of the Macaroni. By re-embodying pleasure gardens as spaces in which all the senses were cultivated, both for pleasure and in the aid of discerning social status, and by reinserting the pleasure garden into its urban context, we can obtain a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between the ostensible aims of the pleasure garden and the way it was experienced by visitors. If pleasure gardens were arenas in which individuals were 'all together and distinct', this article has detailed the tools that structured such perceptions and delineations of status. Where vision failed smell could and did often do this work. The role of perfume and smell in demarcating status is an important corrective to assertions that during the eighteenth-century smell was disregarded as epistemological tool as sight rose in the sensory hierarchy. Smell still constituted an important means of social discrimination.¹⁰⁴

The role of smell and sound in the pleasure gardens also suggests a new way of understanding the negotiation and experience of eighteenth-century urban space. By reinserting other sensory experiences into our understanding of the pleasure garden we can also comprehend pleasure gardens not as static, enclosed, spaces, but as arenas moulded by the smells and sounds of visitors. Odours, as in the case of the smell of tobacco, could rupture the flow of conversation and divide the space of the pleasure garden. The experience of the pleasure garden as a space was heavily contingent on these layers of sensory stimuli which constantly changed with the circulation of visitors and commodities within the gardens. These visitors, who can be construed as sound or smell events, bore the sensory marks of their wider circulation in urban space. It is in this context that the Macaroni should be understood. The

Macaroni was a grotesque inversion of a normative masculine bodily style that demonstrated the tensions between a contained, independent masculinity and the openness of the man of feeling. He threatened to unmake the 'menagerie of the senses' constituted by the pleasure garden through his place as the embodiment of the perfumer's shop. In doing so he aroused contemporary anxieties about personal space and the atmospheric effects of perfume on public bodies. Recognising the importance of urban sensory flows, such as tobacco or the Macaronis' perfumes, allows us to move histories of smell beyond the examination of sanitation to examine the way specific smells were experienced and paves the way for more nuanced engagements with eighteenth-century senses.¹⁰⁵

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⁸⁰Ogborn, ‘Locating the Macaroni’.

⁸¹Bate, *The Vauxhall affray*, p.50

⁸²Boyson, ‘Shelley’s Republic of Odours’, p.110

⁸³Schmid, ‘The Evaporating Subject’.

⁸⁴Anon, ‘The Macaroniad: Or, The Priest Triumphant’, *The Oxford Magazine: Or, Universal Museum*, 10:1, (1773), pp.325-6.

⁸⁵Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, quoted in Robert Mitchell, ‘Cryptogamia’, *European Romantic Review*, 21:5, (2010), p.631-651, 642

⁸⁶Rauser, ‘Hair, Authenticity, and the Self-Made Macaroni’, p.111

⁸⁷Twigem, *The macaroni. A satire*, p.4

⁸⁸Palmer, ‘In Bad Odour’, pp.61-69. Corbin, *The Foul and the Fragrant*, pp.11-22.

⁸⁹‘CHARACTER of a MACARONI’, *The Town and country magazine*, 4:5, (1772), p.242,

⁹⁰Carter, ‘An ‘effeminate’ or ‘efficient’ nation?’, p.435, O’Driscoll, ‘What kind of man do the clothes make?’, p.266

⁹¹‘To the editor of the Lady’s Magazine, on the effeminacy of the male sex’, *The Lady’s Magazine*, 1:9, (1770), pp.81-83

⁹²‘To the MAN of PLEASURE. ANTI-MACARONI’, *The Town and country magazine*, 15:4, (1783), p.210

⁹³Matthew Bramble undergoes both sides of this olfactory *pharmakon* in Tobias Smollett, *The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker*, vol.3, (London: A. Leathley, 1771), pp.135-136

⁹⁴Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson, (London: Athlone, 2004), pp.98-127

⁹⁵‘Scent Bottle’, 1755, Chelsea porcelain factory London, Victoria and Albert museum London, C.443-1927.

⁹⁶Anon, *The Register of Folly*, (London: S. Hazard, 1779), p.44

⁹⁷‘An Injured Wife, 'To the Observer'', in *The Town and Country Magazine*, 14:2, (1782), pp.79-80, ‘A New Description of a MACARONI’, p.173

⁹⁸ Popular histories note the unisex nature of eighteenth-century perfumery, a point confirmed by receipts and periodical literature, see Aytoun Ellis, *The Essence of Beauty: A History of Perfume and Cosmetics*, (London, Secker and Warbug, 1960), p.118, Frances Kennett, *History of Perfume*, (London: Harrap, 1975), pp.151-179. David Kutchka sees a similar change in fashion, see *The Three Piece Suit and Modern Masculinity: England 1550-1850*, (Berkley, CA: UC Press).

⁹⁹Beetham, *Moral lectures*, p.29

¹⁰⁰Beetham, *Moral lectures*, p.28

¹⁰¹‘The Character of a Macaroni’, p.503

¹⁰²Robert Hitchcock, *The Macaroni*, (London: W. Nicoll, 1773), p.16

¹⁰³Beetham, *Moral lectures*, p.29, Van Sant, *Eighteenth-Century Sensibility*.

¹⁰⁴Walter J Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*, (New York, NY: Methuen, 1998), Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, (London: Routledge, 2012). On the continued epistemological importance of smell see Mark Smith, ‘Transcending, othering, detecting: Smell, premodernity, modernity’, *postmedieval: a journal of medieval cultural studies*, 3:1, (2012), pp.380-390

¹⁰⁵ For ‘sensory flows’ see Yannis Hamilakis, *Archaeology and the Senses: Human Experience, Memory and Affect*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp.191-205