

Perspectives on Violence, Human Cruelty and Messy Morality

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Abbes Maazaoui, Editor

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**Perspectives on Violence, Human
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The Lincoln Humanities Journal

(LHJ)

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Introduction

ABBES MAAZAOUI
Editor

Evil is a problem that reduces all philosophy to hopelessness.
Pierre Bayle

For thousands of years, poets, philosophers, filmmakers, religious scholars, and every evil-struck victim have pondered the meaning of evil. Yet, despite the scores of novels, essay collections, memoirs, films, and TV series about what “evil” is and is not, it seems as if the concept cannot be exhausted, as we are constantly bombarded by new forms of evil (real or imagined) that amplify, twist, and reconfigure our thinking.¹

These changing realities of evil keep this “messy” topic current and problematic². In this introduction to the *Journal*, we will briefly look at four themes: the overall logic of evil and cruelty; evil and morality; the curious fascination with evildoers; and possible responses to the existence of evil.

¹ See, for example, the just released *Report* (film documentary on US torture); *Maleficent: Mistress of Evil*; *The Changing Face of Evil in Film and Television*; *Understanding the Dark Side of Human Nature*; *Learning from the Germans: Race and the Memory of Evil*. For new acts of terror, consider the recent wave of mass shootings in the U.S. and around the world.

² Cf. *Messy Morality* by C. A. J. Coady.

What is Evil?

The concept of evil is intrinsically linked to human suffering that is due either to natural causes,³ such as diseases, earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes and tsunamis, or to human agency, such as hate, torture, sexism, rape, racism, genocide, tyranny, and homicide. In this issue we are concerned only with the latter type of evil.

While there is no consensus among scholars about the origin of human wickedness, it is possible to sketch two major tendencies of thought regarding this matter. For some scholars, evil is part of human nature, as unavoidable as one's heartbeat. In his 1920 book *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Sigmund Freud asserts that humans are the site of a conflict between two rival innate and biological urges: Eros and Thanatos (the principles of love and death).⁴ The drive toward death seeks aggression, sadism, destruction, violence, and death to self and others. Given "the ubiquity of non-erotic aggressivity and destructiveness," Freud writes in 1930, "I adopt the standpoint, therefore, that the inclination to aggression is an original, self-subsisting instinctual disposition in man" (*Civilization* 311, 313).⁵ Similarly, for some modern neuroscientists, evil is just a biological lack of empathy, a neurological malfunction in the empathy circuit of our brain (Baron-Cohen, David Eagleman).⁶ For other scholars, such as Niccolò Machiavelli, Karl Marx and Hannah Arendt, evil is a social construct, "something that exists not in objective reality, but as a result of human interaction."⁷ As a product of communal living, relational morality, and social obligations, evil is dependent on many factors and can take various shapes and forms.

But whether defined as a biological or societal phenomenon, evil generally refers to acts that cause suffering

³ Insurance companies call these phenomena "Acts of God."

⁴ See also Freud's *Civilization and its Discontents*, p. 75-79, 92-97.

⁵ Cited in https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Death_drive#cite_note-38

⁶ Simon Baron-Cohen and David Eagleman's theory on the neurological basis of evil has gained popularity among some fMRI enthusiasts, but has been contested and condemned by many scientists (Stephen Morse, Jonathan Marks, etc.). See Ron Rosenbaum.

⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_constructionism

and pain: war, mass shootings, genocide, torture, sexism, rape, tyranny, oppression, bullying, injustice, etc.

Evil and “Messy Morality”⁸

Most scholars agree that systems of morality (beliefs about what is right and wrong or good and bad) can be very different from one person to another and from one society to another. Good and evil may mean “something different, not only in different times and places, but even to different individuals at the same time and place” (McBride 2). The changing face of good and evil can lead to destructive beliefs and thoughts, which can be used to justify oppression and suffering. For instance, Kate Manne argues that men’s misogyny is based on the belief that women should act in a certain way towards men. When women deviate from these expectations (i.e., act ‘bad’), men become outraged and morally motivated to punish the wrongdoers. This “virtuous violence,” to use the title of a book by Alan Fiske and Tage Rai, is at work in many other contexts. It is not uncommon to see ‘reasonable’ people justifying colonialism,⁹ apartheid, bigotry, racism, slavery, torture, and homophobia. How many wars and genocides are regularly unleashed in the name of freedom and justice, both apparently noble causes?¹⁰ As Hannah Arendt asserts, groups and states, whether dictatorial or democratic, can transform individuals into controlled zombies that commit evil actions, thanks to a kind of “moral inversion” in which, according to de Charles

⁸ This expression, used also in the title of this special issue, is coined by C. A. J. Coady.

⁹ See the example of those in France who seek to re-write the history of French colonialism: “In France, the history of colonization and genocide particularly in Africa is often obscured and ignored in favor of a more upbeat interpretation of the past, with a focus on the expansion of French culture and civilization. It is quite revealing that, in an attempt to formalize denial and impose a form of superposition, the French National Assembly even passed a law on colonialism in 2005, requiring high-schools to teach the ‘positive values’ of colonialism to students” (Maazaoui VIII).

¹⁰ In an interview, Paul Bloom discusses the moral quality of violence: “when people who do bad things think they are doing the right thing, out of a sense that they are morally right. Morality explains a lot of the terrible things that we do to one another” (“The Best books”).

Mathewes, “the form of morality—the language of duty, honor, conscience, right and wrong—is retained even as the content—the actual meaning of those terms—is utterly inverted” (120), and where doing good requires disobedience and self-sacrifice (whistleblowers, etc.).

In fact, this moral inversion is at work in many contexts. Human ability to engage in evil actions is confirmed by numerous scientific studies including the Stanley Milgram experiment on obedience to authority figures at Yale University (1961),¹¹ which showed that only fourteen participants out of forty refused to engage in excessive and lethal cruelty, or the Stanford prison experiment (1971), in which a number of student participants enjoyed inflicting pain on their classmates. These experiments illustrate how power structure, context, social roles, and peer pressure can become agents of vilification. They also prove that our sense of what is right and wrong is fickle and easily manipulated.

The potential ubiquity of moral inversion calls into question the validity of ethical consideration. For instance, Friedrich Nietzsche argues that morality and the concept of good and evil are no longer useful categories: not only “different things are good for different people” but “what is right for the one might certainly *not* be right for the other” (*Beyond Good* 228).¹² While Nietzsche seeks new categories of good and bad, Niccolò Machiavelli embraces the dark side in an unprecedented attempt at “divorc[ing] politics from both morality and religion” (Harrison). He famously writes, “It is necessary for a prince wishing to hold his own to know how to do wrong.”¹³ His defense of the ruthless use of power stems from his belief that people respond always better to fear and intimidation than goodness and kindness:

A question arises out of this, namely: Is it better to be loved than feared or better to be feared than loved? Well, one would like to be both; but it’s difficult for one person to be both feared and loved, and when a

¹¹ The experiment was repeated many times around the globe, with fairly consistent results.

¹² Cited in Robertson (3).

¹³ Cited in Harrison.

choice has to be made it is safer to be feared. The reason for this is a fact about men in general: they are ungrateful, fickle, deceptive, cowardly and greedy. As long as you are doing them good, they are entirely yours . . . ; but when that changes, they'll turn against you. . . . And men are less hesitant about letting down someone they love than in letting down someone they fear Fear affects their behaviour through the thought of possible punishment, and that thought never loses its power. (Machiavelli 36)

Machiavelli's ideas are at work in today's politics. In the film documentary, *The Fog of War*, Robert McNamara states that one of the principles in conducting foreign policy is, "In order to do good, you must engage in evil." After the September 11 attacks, scores of political pundits discussed the need "to get dirty" and emphasized the moral validity of resorting to torture, assassination, and other human rights violations (Ignatieff, "It's Time"¹⁴ to cite an example).

At its core, the fear of retribution for Machiavelli, and both the desire for revenge and the fear of harm for Ignatieff may not be unrelated to the often observed fact that, in general, people are fascinated with the figure of the 'bad' guy, whether real or imaginary.

Fascination with "Bad" and Aptitude for Evil

In *Evil Men*, a book of interviews with Japanese perpetrators of war crimes during the Sino-Japanese War, James Dawes likens people's fascination with horrific atrocities to their fascination with horror movies. Since their inception, Hollywood and the media have understood this fascination, and produced a series of highly popular evil men and women capable of doing "bad".¹⁵ This fascination extends to real people who manage to become larger than life in their misuse of power. According to Ian Bremmer,

¹⁴ Ignatieff writes in "It's time to fight dirty": "To defeat evil, we may have to traffic in evils: indefinite detention of suspects, coercive interrogations, targeted assassinations, even pre-emptive war."

¹⁵ Not all horror movies are complete fiction. Many terrible narratives imitate life.

We're now in the strongman era . . . In every region of the world, changing times have boosted public demand for more muscular, assertive leadership. These tough-talking populists promise to protect 'us' from 'them.' Depending on who's talking, 'them' can mean the corrupt elite or the grasping poor; foreigners or members of racial, ethnic or religious minorities. Or disloyal politicians, bureaucrats, bankers or judges. Or lying reporters."

Not just strong men, but strong women too. According to Elizabeth Wurtzel, some women have understood the power of bad. For them, a woman has to be bad to be seen as strong: "In the pageantry of public life, in places where women invent personae, the one statement a girl can make to declare her strength, her surefootedness, her autonomy—herself as *self*—is to somehow be bad" (3). When a woman forcefully projects this kind of intensity, "she is *somebody's* idea of a bitch" (10-11). Wurtzel adds that "If fascination with fabulous women of great mischief were not a real phenomenon, the media probably would have invented it" (9).

Bad fascinates.¹⁶ An illustration of this fascination may be the modern semantic shift of the adjective *bad*: "the word *bad* has gradually acquired the connotation of a compliment and hence means *good* in some sense" (Baumeister 7), a strange telltale of our time. But this fascination is not as concerning as the ability in both men and women to engage in evil actions.

What to Do to End Evil

"Evil is a moral problem for everyone, difficult to acknowledge in ourselves, hard to understand in others, and difficult to defeat without committing lesser evils" (Ignatieff). Psychologists have long concluded that education and knowledge are not enough to change people's minds

¹⁶ See "Why Americans Are So Fascinated by Serial Killers" by David Schmid. September 1, 2018 (Web). See also, "Our Curious Fascination with Serial Killers. Why we are captivated by 'celebrity monsters' in fact and fiction" by Scott A. Bonn. Oct 23, 2017 (Web).

about what is right and wrong, true or false. It is reasonable to assume that, by extension, education alone is not sufficient to combat evil. Think of the Good Samaritan study, among others, which demonstrates how well-educated participants (Princeton students studying to be ministers and ready to lecture on the Good Samaritan story from the Bible) were lured away from a deed of compassion and refrained from helping the “victim” on the street (Darley and Batson). This speaks to the fact that the hardest challenge for people is to recognize evil in themselves. In his book, *Evil: Inside Human Cruelty and Violence*, Roy Baumeister argues that “most people who perpetrate evil generally do not consider what they are doing as evil. Evil exists primarily in the eye of the beholder, especially in the eye of the victim” (2). For instance, today’s widespread hostility towards immigrant children and refugees is embraced and condoned by many so-called go(o)d-abiding people. They see whatever malice or cruelty that is inflicted on others as “some sort of justified response to a difficult situation” (Bloom “The best books”). After all, they are on the side of the good and/or the law, while others are on the side of evil.

So, it might be that the first thing we need to do to combat human malice and cruelty is to stop calling others evil or subhuman. In *Less Than Human*, David Livingstone Smith studies the roots of human cruelty and explains how dehumanizing people (particularly in the media) makes us capable of atrocious acts. Throughout history, using words like “brute,” “cockroach,” “lice,” “vermin,” “animal” and “rodent” has made war, genocide, torture, xenophobia, and racism possible.¹⁷ As Alan Wolfe argues in *Political Evil*, our use of the language of evil makes us feel self-righteous. “To call others wicked is to give us a moral privilege we may not deserve and a moral permission we are likely to misuse. The language of good and evil only seems to create moral clarity: It actually creates moral entitlement” (Ignatieff).

For Marx, the solution to the worst kinds of evils, such as poverty, armed conflict, slavery, and colonialism, is relatively straightforward, at least in theory. Because they are the direct result of social inequality and economic

¹⁷ See chapter I “Less than Human,” and particularly the detailed section on “Dehumanizing in the Media” (Kindle).

exploitation, eliminating them would require the reformation of material and social conditions.¹⁸ Material abundance and human fellow-feeling in a (utopian) communist society would make evil disappear.

For Michel Foucault and other modern thinkers, the biggest threats to mankind continue to be organized entities (groups, states, etc.). After all, endless wars, slavery, occupation, mass starvation, and genocide are perennially perpetrated by governments and/or organized groups. If this is true, then resisting evil should be focused on these entities. This resistance could take the following forms: denouncing all kinds of moral inversions no matter what justification is presented; reserving the right to disobey; voting for leaders who have a proven track record of recognizing and fighting their own evil tendencies; and supporting all initiatives for dialogue, peace and sustainable prosperity for all.

It may be a cliché to say that human survival is more at stake than ever. But as Freud notes at the conclusion of *Civilization and its Discontents*, human beings, following Thanatos, “have gained control over the forces of nature to such an extent that with their help they would have no difficulty in exterminating one another to the last man.”¹⁹ What is worrisome today is the fact some nuclear-armed countries do not hesitate to brag about their willingness to use nuclear weapons (for various reasons, including preventing other countries from possibly acquiring nuclear weapons). The so-called preemptive action is proposed, in an ultimate irony, as a ‘good’ justification in favor of such an apocalyptic, morally shortsighted or hubristic policy (after all, the argument goes, prevention is better than cure, isn’t it?).²⁰ McNamara puts it best: “The indefinite combinations of human fallibility and nuclear weapons will lead to the destruction of nations.”²¹

These are complex topics, but unless humans are willing to confront their own demons, question their not so

¹⁸ For a discussion of evil and Marx, see McBride.

¹⁹ Translation cited in Sigmund Freud, 1930. <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/freud/ex/180.html>

²⁰ This raises a tough question: Why is so much evil perpetrated in the name of good? Cf. . Grant. See also Sterba.

²¹ *The Fog of War* (DVD). https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Fog_of_War

glorious thoughts and deeds, and renounce the illusion of moral clarity, suffering will continue to be humanity's curse. As so often happens, when making decisions, "our rational selves choos[e] between the alternatives as best we can, calculate[e] where we can, but often fall[] back for a motive on *whim or sentiment or chance*" (Keynes 161; my emphasis). The odds are not in favor of making sound ethical decisions.

Content of this Special Issue

The articles in this collection are grouped into four sections that represent different perspectives on evil and the misuse of power in fact and fiction.

The first three essays examine the figure of the tragic villain in three different literary modes: the Greek drama, British theater, and the nineteenth-century French novel. The first case is presented by **Mina Apic**, who traces the evolution of the figure of the villain in ancient Greek drama. She points out that tragic villains are both criminals and victims of a divine/family curse. Their villainy is usually the result of either hubris (Aeschylus and Sophocles) or passion (Euripides). Their doomed lineage places them often at the center of divergent destructive forces that they tend to unleash on others and themselves. The second essay is by **Philip Goldfarb Styr**, who revisits the sixteenth-century debate over the conflicting issue of obedience and resistance: whether a subject has the right (or even the duty) to disobey a ruler who commands evil. Arguing that this debate informs Shakespeare's *Henry V*, he analyzes Henry V's speech before the battle of Agincourt against the French. In a veiled attempt to relieve himself of all the evil acts that may take place in his name during the war, the king calls on his soldiers to take responsibility for all that happens and decide for themselves whether to fight or leave. **Roxane Petite-Rasselle** looks at the ambivalent figure of the executioner. She argues that for Alexandre Dumas, the executioner is both a monster and a victim. While the executioner is devoted to inflicting corporal punishment as part of the precise performance of his duties, Dumas's depiction of him as a tormented, brilliant, and misunderstood character

appears to suggest that he is more the casualty of a cruel judicial system than simply its agent.

The second section deals with the political trivialization of evil. **Kaitlyn Grube** examines the use of the witch hunt metaphor in modern political discourse, specifically president Trump's ironic appropriation of the metaphor. While Trump genders himself hypermasculine and runs his campaign and presidency on the doctrine that "only a sexually powerful man can make a politically powerful nation" (Friedland), he uses the legacy of these bloody trials, which were mostly directed at vulnerable women (~40,000 women were burned at the stake), as a tool in his claims of innocence. **Abderrahman Beggar** tackles a similar issue of 'trivialization' of evil, or what Zygmunt Bauman and Leonidas Donskis call "liquid evil" in his discussion of the role played by military drones in downplaying war, killing civilians, and minimizing ethical considerations. War morphs into a video game where technicians, not soldiers, are in charge of the killing game, and where machines, not humans, are doing the killing with impunity and without feelings of anxiety, guilt or responsibility. This digital outsourcing of war both asepticizes and intensifies colonial hegemony by pushing it to extreme levels. **Raymond Delambre** analyzes the figures of tyranny in Chinese cinema. He brings to light various forms of violence through a distinguished Chinese moviemaker's multi-layered lens.

The third section of the *Journal* deals with moral failure. **Sara Schotland** addresses Margaret Atwood's dystopian novel *Oryx and Crake* and its depiction of an arch villain, a mad scientist named Crake. Crake's superpower is a combination of multiple devilish forces: biotechnology, capitalism, and, according to the novel's disputable attribution, Asperger's Syndrome which is ascribed as the source of his nihilism and lack of empathy. Instead of rescuing humankind from a serious ecological collapse, Crake decides to destroy it and create a new, sub-human species. **Eric Sterling** examines the ideological complexities of female baby killers, aka, baby farmers in Victorian England. He shows how infanticide becomes a business thanks to the crippling stigma associated with out-of-wedlock babies, and pro-male, anti-poor women

legislation. While Charlotte Winsor's and Amelia Dyer's evil acts of butchering babies go against the prevailing gendered view that women are incapable of gruesome crimes, the reality is that, not unlike men, women find a way to justify to themselves their savage cruelty.

The last section of the *Journal* deals with villainy and magic. **Benjamin Steingass** analyses Aimé Césaire's rewriting of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Prospero, a villainous and imperialistic colonizer, manages for a while to exert tyrannical power based on rhetorical tricks and false claims of magic. He ends up losing that power when his main victim, Caliban, simply stops listening to him and recognizes his tricks as nothing more than a means to enforce submission. **Taylor Ordner** sees in *Celestina* a lesson in the dangers and destructive power of intemperance. Villainy ensues when men and women reject reason and move beyond the boundaries of regulated passion. Celestina, a bawd who pretends to possess mystical powers, makes no attempt to hide the fact that she is the devil's agent. Falling in love with her is falling in love with the devil.

To use the title of a recent book by Steven Pinker, may this issue of the *Journal* be a hymn to the "better angels of our nature."

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PART ONE
TRAGIC VILLAINS

Villains Seen as Victims: Tragic Transgressions in the World of Attic Drama

MINA APIC
University of Novi Sad, Serbia

In Attic drama, the term “tragedy” generally refers to the tone of high seriousness in the representation of the misfortunes of the mighty. Being high-born, of a noble and politically significant lineage is largely seen as essential to the tragic hero in Aristotelian tradition, within a network of social values and ethical norms. However, if the hero is not morally deficient, he is flawed in some way, and often represented as a particular kind of villain, transgressing traditional social norms and suffering a momentous reversal of fortune. His downfall arouses spectators’ pity. He is a noble, dignified “villain”, belonging to a royal or aristocratic lineage, raised with high ethical standards and a moral and political consciousness. However, this is not enough to shield him from crime. No law—no matter how just or fully internalized—is a sufficient guard against misfortune. No ethical system seems a solid enough defense, even if strictly followed. Following Lukacs’s line of thought, Goldman defines tragedy as a “universe of terrifying questions to which a man has no answer,” in contrast with another one of the two great classical literary forms, epic poetry, which has all the answers given already, before the progress of spirit and the course of history made the formulation of these questions possible (Goldman 125).

In his study, *The Conflict of Modern Culture and Other Essays*, Georg Simmel considers that “in general, we

call a relationship tragic—in a contrast to merely sad or extrinsically destructive—when the destructive forces against some being spring from the deepest levels of that very being” (43). For Eagleton, however, the stress on the “immanent, ironic and dialectical nature of the tragic, in contrast with the purely extrinsic or accidental” is relevant only for some tragedy but not for the genre as such. So, he asserts, “the downfall of Goethe’s *Faust*, or Pentheus in Euripides’ *The Bacchae*, may be sprung in just this way, but it is hard to argue a similar case about the death of Shakespeare’s *Cordelia* or Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina*” (Eagleton 5). We can view Simmel’s definition as a perspicuous insight into the nature of Attic drama, which contrasts with the later European tradition mentioned by Eagleton. Our aim in this work is the exploration of the ironic and dialectical notion of the tragic in Attic drama, especially the representation and significance of the villain-victim complex. We will trace the complex’s similarities and differences in the theater of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. In these plays, villains frequently belong to a doomed lineage and fatal events happen mainly within the family nest, concentrating the experience of the tragic and elevating spectators’ pity. Therefore, the “villain” is inevitably afflicted by the deed he commits and himself becomes a victim.

Emperor Xerxes, protagonist of the oldest preserved play, Aeschylus’s *The Persians*, cannot really be considered a villain, not on a personal level at least. However, symbolically, he can be considered as such, being the representative of an unjust political system, eastern despotism. Xerxes actually symbolizes the inevitable defeat of imperialist hubris, and the rage of the despotic ruler signifies his final impotence. A once haughty and godly figure, he now appears as an incarnation of defeat: ragged and downtrodden. It is the spirit of his father, defunct emperor Darius, invoked by his widow, Atossa, who specifies the tragic guilt of Xerxes: his enterprise of conquering Greece revealed a hubris detested by the gods. Hellespont enchained by Xerxes is a poetic image of his haughty endeavor. As Albin Lesky observes, the emperor’s spirit speaks of Ate, terrible mental blindness which brings ruin

upon a man.²² One of the fundamental thoughts in Aeschylean poetry is revealed to us here: “man’s existence is constantly exposed to the temptation of hubris, which, as mental blindness, Ate, harasses a man and destroys him” (Lesky 87). Xerxes, a despotic ruler responsible for the misery of countless souls subdued by his insatiable will, is the first in a series of characters whose hubris causes their own downfall and misery. Although the Persian emperor is not really a complex tragic hero (he defends no actual set of values, and the role of the hero in this play is accorded to the whole of the Greek people), Xerxes’s reversal of fortune inaugurates a long line of characters whose hubris will be their ruin, making them villains and victims at the same time.

The Persian emperor is a villain on a symbolic and political level, and his appearance in the play is reduced to its final part. It is not necessary earlier, when the play stresses the disastrous effects of his hubris upon both himself and his army. However, if Xerxes’s presence can be reduced to its practical effects, there also arises a case where the villain is not even present in the play. In Aeschylus’s *The Suppliants*, the actual villains, Aegyptus’s sons, who pursue the daughters of Danaus in order to force them into an incestuous marriage, are not even present before the eyes of the public at any moment during the play. This is an extreme situation, as is the fact that the chorus, represented by the Danaïds, is actually the protagonist of the drama. However, the menace the Aegyptus’s sons represent to the Danaïds is heightened by the presence of their herald, who is said to be arriving with his slaves to imprison the girls. The king’s announcement of the Argo’s people’s decision to accept and defend the Danaïds brings this first part of the trilogy to an end. The next part, however, is based on the total reversal of the positions between the villains and the victims. The persecutors manage to obtain the acceptance of the desired wedding, which turns into a bloody one, as the bridegrooms are slaughtered by their brides, with one exception,

²²Lesky stresses in Aeschylus the recognition of a godly as well as a human part in tragic guilt: “The suffering which is brought about in this way, has a profound sense, it is a path which leads a man to knowledge and enables him to understand the eternal importance of godly order” (Lesky 87-88).

Hypermnestira, who spares her husband, Lynceus. However, this text is lamentably lost for us, and the fragments preserved can only be used as an indication of this generally accepted way of reconstruction.

If the Danaïds are among the most atypical tragic transgressors, a much more typical image is a king abusing his power. This emblematic figure is presented to us in the character of Creon in Sophocles's *Antigone*. Many interpreters have adopted Hegel's understanding of this drama, expressed in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. According to Hegel, Sophocles treats a conflict between two spheres of values. Antigone defends the family's values and Creon the state's, and it would appear that the actions of both opponents are equally justified. Read more closely, the text shows us that state and godly laws do not stand in opposition, a sort of thesis and antithesis. Even though Creon pretends to be defending the state and its laws, he acts as a villain, abusing his power and authority. His order not to bury Polyneices is outrageously strict and whimsical, averse to any expression of public will, since the chorus of Theban elders, as well as the other characters, opposes his decision. As a newly enthroned king, Creon reveals a preoccupation to become the very enforcement of his authority; his act is a clear example of hubris, and therein lies his tragic guilt. Neither Creon's son Haemon (who is Antigone's fiancé), nor the chorus of Theban elders can influence the tyrant's will.²³ The citizens oppose Creon because his order disrespects an old Greek custom concerning burial.²⁴ Besides, Polyneices is neither a criminal nor a traitor, and he had attacked Thebes in order to recuperate his right to the throne, denied to him

²³ This assertion of free will in a character who pays no heed to the importuning of others is a common strain in the tragic hero/villain. It is not only an expression of hubris but of a character's liberty to decide, which shields him from any possibility of being seen as a mere marionette in destiny's or Gods' hands.

²⁴ The Greeks believed that the soul could only go to the underworld if the dead body was covered with the earth. Otherwise, the soul would remain errant, destroying the crops, causing illnesses, intimidating the living and demanding the burial. The last respect was given even to enemies, and the Athenians were proud to have buried the Persian dead at the battle of Marathon. The burial was indeed denied to the traitors and profaners of the temples, but their relatives were allowed to bury them outside the city walls (Đurić 313).

by his brother Eteocles (Muller 29-30).

Hubris is what Creon shares with many a Greek hero. Ajax, Oedipus, Orestes, and Agamemnon are each at the same time heroes and villains, noble transgressors of divine norms. In Sophocles's oldest play, *Ajax*, a quarrel for Achilles's armor follows his death, and the Greek leaders bequeath it to Odysseus. This decision plunges Ajax into a torment of profound dishonor, triggering the tragic action. As Campbell puts it, "drama owes its unfading interest to the poet's profound realization of the effect of wounded honor on the mind of a soldier" (32). In the *Iliad*, Ajax is represented as a colossus carrying his shield like a tower, the only man who marches like Achilles and never stoops before any man. Ajax is proud of his military achievements, but to speak the language of Aristotle, he exaggerates his virtues. His bravery turns into excessive intrepidity, *tolma*, *thrasos*.²⁵ Ajax is also radically obstinate; he refuses to obey the ruling family and the generals. His intrepidity, haughtiness and rigidity are at the very core of Ajax's tragic guilt (Đurić 244-245).

After the disaster with the cattle, Ajax's concubine Tecmessa is unable to deflect his will to take his own life, since his decision is profoundly embedded in his character. (Lesky 136). On the other hand, Odysseus's sobriety makes him the opposite of Ajax, who has to perish since his arrogance and rage turn him into a villain intent on killing his compatriots. Such a radical affirmation of one's own individuality, without any consideration for the rights of the others, amounts to the destruction of the foundations of any human community. To be a man means to stay within the limits of what is human. Ajax threatens to disturb that balance and this is why his insanity manifests as a retribution of the cosmic order itself.

²⁵ Pride originates in self-consciousness, which is the correspondence between one's subjective estimation of one's virtues and their objective, factual value. For Aristotle, pride is the highest degree of virtue, a universe of virtues. It is his ethical ideal, containing and surpassing all other virtues by adding to their elements a specific trait of grandness. Ajax exaggerates this virtue, turning it into vanity and haughtiness. Even anger is a virtue, necessary for self-defense, but Ajax luxuriates in it. It becomes a terrible, indomitable torrent, and such a state of mind transforms his vindictive intention into a criminal one.

However, the paradigm of a hero who turns out to be a villain is Oedipus, revealing himself as the transgressor par excellence of the social, biological and godly laws. While Aeschylus's interpretation is closer to the mythical pattern, Sophocles concentrates his play entirely on Oedipus's self-revealing as the unintentional villain. In an endeavor to find and punish the murderer and help the plagued city of Thebes, the hero discovers the culprit in himself.

During the actual course of events in Sophocles's tragedy, Oedipus does not commit any of the crimes responsible for the plague or his tragic suffering. That is why so many modern critics found that he suffers unjustly. Moreover, Oedipus's ethical rigor in investigation reveals that his own dreary acts are committed in mental blindness, not in full consciousness of the deed. What then is the ultimate source of the tragic? Close to Socrates's celebrated belief that men would do right if only they knew the right thing to do, Aristotle maintains in his *Poetics* that the hero capable of inspiring the highest degree of pity and fear in the public is the one who commits an error without knowing it.

However, some critics have been determined to prove that Oedipus is not exempt from guilt. O. Miller situates Oedipus's tragic guilt in his tempestuous nature. Oedipus murdered Laius without knowing that he actually killed his own father, but he never regretted having murdered a stranger in an outburst of rage. The deep meaning of the oracle's prediction does not consist in making Oedipus wary of killing the very man who brought him into existence, but in helping him reach the awareness of the injustice of killing, and in admonishing him to avoid murder as such. Finally, Oedipus is not represented as an entirely innocent man, for if it were so, his tremendous suffering would inspire revulsion, *míaron*, according to Aristotle's distinctions of the character types in tragedy, and the play would therefore miss its purpose (Đuric 278).

Therefore, Oedipus's patricide and incestuous marriage are neither pure accidents nor the fulfillment of unalterable destiny; his tragic guilt is, to an extent, the reflection of his inner nature. The heroes of Greek tragedy are usually represented as free agents, not as slaves of their destinies. Sometimes, however, they are shown in a more fatalistic view. (Eagleton 109; Taplin 6-7). The necessary

condition for tragedy, according to Peter Dewes, is both the distinction and the connection of the human and the divine (21.). The two realms are caught up in an intricate logic of collusion and opposition. Frightened with the prediction, Oedipus decides to leave Corinth. But, ironically, he does so only to fulfill his destiny. As Eagleton puts it, “in his case, ‘I was fated’ and ‘I doomed myself’ come to much the same thing” (109).

Oedipus’s mental blindness could be seen as revealing the deep tragedy of human existence. “That our purposes are outstripped by their effects, that we may not measure up to our own actions, that we always to some degree act in the dark, that understanding is always after the event—these are insights common alike to Hegel²⁶ and Sophocles” (Eagleton 108). This dislocation between impact and intention is what the Greeks mean by *peripeteia*. The concept suggests more than a reversal. It involves “a kind of irony, double effect or boomeranging, aiming at one thing, but accomplishing another. Some tragic actions do this on a grand scale, bending themselves spectacularly out of shape; but in doing so, they write large an indeterminacy which belongs to the structure of everyday conduct” (108).

Another one of Sophocles’s characters shares the misfortune of being an unintentional villain. If Oedipus’s transgression reveals the utmost limits of what it means to be human, the unintentional crime of Heracles’s wife Deianeira is situated on a far more personal level. Heracles’s decision to make the beautiful princess Iole a co-wife to Deianeira causes her immense pain, but she has a remedy for it: the blood of the centaur Nessus. Dying, he tells Deianeira that sprinkling it on Heracles’s shirt will guarantee her his eternal love. Remembering this, she sends the sprinkled shirt to Heracles as a gift, unaware that Nessus’s blood has been poisoned, which is the centaur’s secret revenge. Once informed of the terrible consequences of her act, Deianeira decomposes and takes her own life. In Oedipus’s case, we speak of a certain amount of subjective guilt—he killed an

26 “For Hegel, it is this disjunction between the self-understanding of human subjects and their actual social and historical positions, between the actions embodied in human practices and the processes set in motion by them, which is the very dynamics of social development” (Eagleton 108; Dewes 62).

elderly man over a trifling dispute at a crossroads. In Deianeira's case, any subjective guilt is entirely out of the question. We can also note the distance which separates her deed from the one committed by Clytemnestra, who ruthlessly kills her new rival, the young Trojan princess Cassandra. Deianeira never thinks of such a thing, as she is not motivated by deadly jealousy. Overwhelmed by pain, she simply believes she has found an innocuous remedy to it. Despite Euripides's influence on the play, the difference between Deianeira's fatal deed and Fedra's *crime de passion* is clear. As Lesky observes, the catastrophe is not brought about by the passion raging in Fedra's heart, but by the Sophoclean incongruity between man's intent and his deed (Lesky 148).

If Oedipus unwittingly provokes the death of his father, this is not the case with the misfortune he brings to his sons. Aeschylus's play *Seven Against Thebes* represents the culmination of Oedipus's curse, wherein his sons must divide their heritage with swords in their hands. Polyneices's attack against Thebes has been neutralized, but the inimical brothers kill each other. Once again, it is impetuosity, arrogance and obstinacy that spur the hero into transgression, transforming him into a villain.²⁷ Eteocles's readiness to shed his brother's blood is undoubtedly a sign of the fulfillment of the curse, and yet, it is shown as a free act of will at the same time (Lesky 91). This is underlined by his obdurate negligence of the quire's admonitions, which transforms the inevitable into an undoubtedly willed act. In fact, this decisiveness instigates him into becoming the first real tragic hero of Attic drama, a self-conscious and free individual who overcomes the necessity by incorporating it into his own free decision (Đurić 120; Leski 91). Yet, it is in this very way that he becomes a tragic villain, opting to commit a fratricide although the very representatives of his people implored him not to act in this way. The chorus of Theban girls is intended to calm Eteocles's impetuosity and

27 The gods punish forcefully the descendants of the transgressors of their norms, a vision embedded in the Greek unity of a lineage through generations, but in Aeschylus the idea of the curse is deepened. It is not transmitted from generation to generation as a meaningless accident to destroy the innocent, but it is always revealed as a guilty action accompanied by its punishment (Lesky 88).

persuade him to avoid the fratricide, but they are unable to deflect him from his goal and prevent the fatal act.

While the history of Laius's family is strewn with terrible transgressions in the form of unintentional infringement upon holy natural law, the history of Pelops's descendants presents us with all manner of vice and criminal acts. Pelops's sons, Atreus and Thyestes, are not only rivals for the throne, but Thyestes also commits adultery with Atreus's wife, Aerope. As an act of revenge, Atreus kills Thyestes's sons and serves them to him for supper. This is the source of Aeschylus's trilogy *Orestia*.

The entrepreneurial and fearless Clytemnestra in *Agamemnon*, the first part of *Oresteia*, is a demonic vindicator of her daughter's death, and whose murder of her husband leaves the most profound impression in spectators' and readers' hearts. *Choephoroi* (*Libation Bearers*) presents us with Orestes's and Electra's joyful recognition at Agamemnon's tomb, followed by Orestes's explanation of Apollo's requests of revenge accompanied by terrible threats. Contrary to Electra, he is torn by heavy moral doubts, as later will be the case with Shakespeare's Hamlet. When Clytemnestra reminds him of her breast that fed him, he puts down the sword. Before the fatal act, the hero wavers and asks his friend Pylades whether he should have mercy on the one who birthed him. Pylades reminds him of Apollo's order. Not only are Orestes's doubts an example of the impossibility of knowing the right thing to do, which looms over human existence and men's misfortunes on a global, ontological scale, but this hesitation elevates Orestes to the very status of a true tragic hero. At this very moment, he does not act in blind submission to the divine order, but stops to reflect on his situation and, aided by his friend's advice, finally opts for complying with Apollo's request.

However, Aeschylus's treatment of the subject differs sharply from the one we find in Sophocles's *Electra*. Here, in a decisive confrontation between daughter and mother, Electra unmasks Clytemnestra's motives for Agamemnon's murder. From Sophocles's perspective, Clytemnestra's motive is not the revenge of Iphigenia's murder, but her illicit passion for Aegisthus. Clytemnestra's murder of Agamemnon is now presented as a cruelly egoistic and coldblooded act, which absolves both Electra and Orestes

from any subsequent expiation. Sophocles focuses on Electra's inner drama, with her gradual liberation from despair and her increasing determination to commit vindictive matricide. It is only when she decides to do it that her brother presents himself before her eyes. Sophocles leaves no room for any possible hesitation on Orestes's part, whose vengeance strikes Clytemnestra even before Aegisthus. As Lesky signals, although the matricide does not stand directly in the center of events, as is the case with Aeschylus, Sophocles does not entirely avoid the question of its justification. The confrontation in the central part of the play and the final scenes present a coherent whole, with the adulterous Clytemnestra condemned for the murder of her husband and the rejection of her children. Orestes's murder is thus unequivocally presented as just punishment, and no Erynies will come out of the depths to haunt him (Lesky 159).

If Sophocles's Electra is intended to commit a crime, and if another one of his female protagonists, Deianira, actually commits one, Euripides will delve more deeply into the dark forces within women's psyche, presenting us with the two most memorable female villains of all antiquity: Medea and Phaedra. Both of them are distressing victims of their own raging passions. In *Medea*, Euripides innovates the mythical content to a significant level, presenting the main character as a suffering woman rather than as a demonic witch. However, this tormented woman will commit the most terrible of crimes: infanticide. The poet carefully elaborates his innovative elements, such as the outpouring of Medea's pain. When the chorus of Corinthian women asks her whether she really wants to murder her own children, her answer reveals her full awareness of the atrocity of her willed act, leaving no doubt about the motif as well: do the greatest harm possible to the one who despised her love and sacrifice. However, her natural feelings surge against her unnatural plan, and the struggle is immense: motherly love will lead an excruciating struggle with the limitless force of her vindictive rage. Euripides presents it in a long inner monologue, one of the most intense in all of Greek theater. This internal battle is so intense that Medea changes her mind four times. Distraught by the pain of eternal parting, she holds the dear little bodies for the last time, and then all

her torments condense into one single revealing phrase: “I understand too well the dreadful act I’m going to commit, but my judgment can’t check my anger, and that incites the greatest evils human beings do.”

Although the very end of the play shows Medea triumphing over her distraught husband, as she leaves carried off by dragons, this image cannot erase the dreadful torments this woman has inflicted on herself, as illustrated by the immensity of her suffering throughout the whole play.

Eros as a personal passion rather than as a natural or cosmic force, and the exploration of its pathological potential, is one of the decisive, revolutionary innovations in Attic tragedy introduced by Euripides’s work. Phaedra is another one of the great representatives of the victims of Eros’s destructive power, and one of the tragic villains whose terrible vengeance is their own ruin. In his play *Hyppolitus*, Euripides introduces Aphrodite and Artemis as the instigators of tragic events. Hyppolitus’s virginity is shown as haughty indifference to love, unforgivable disrespect of a great force of life. This can be designated as his particular hubris, the source of his perdition, as Phaedra’s passion and subsequent vengeance will be triggered by Aphrodite. In one of the greatest scenes preserved from the work of the first great explorer of human psychology, we see Phaedra in torment, pale from illness in front of her palace, determined to preserve her secret passion from the world. This inner struggle brings Phaedra close to Medea; they are both well aware of the destructive potential of the forces inside them and oppose a resistance to them, and both fail in this intent. When the nurse reveals her secret to Hyppolitus and he despises her, Phaedra’s humiliation spurs her into a terrible act of vengeance. Taking her own life, she takes Hyppolitus with her, as he will perish from his father’s curse when Theseus reads Phaedra’s incriminatory letter. Only by destroying herself could Phaedra destroy Hyppolitus—the cause and the witness of her shame, severe judge of her passion and its very object.

The development of Attic drama has given rise to different types of tragic villains and transgressors of cosmic and social laws, whose fatal deed causes their own misfortune as well as the disgrace of others. In the course of our exploration some constants have undoubtedly appeared.

As Lewis Campbell points out, reminding us of Baron Bunsen's work, *God in History*, the principal motive of ancient tragedy appears to be "the retribution following upon some exaggeration of self" (Campbell 9). We can situate most of our villains under the omen of this tragic fault. However, we must point out that hubris, the most characteristic trait of tragic villains, appears predominantly in Aeschylus and Sophocles, while for Euripides the source of greatest evil is passion. So, it is either hubris or indomitable passion that causes our heroes' misfortunes, and the pain they inflict on others as well as on themselves. This leads us to a deeper distinction. While Socrates's creed that man would do the right thing if only he knew what was right hews close to the perspective of the first two great Attic dramatists, the third one is closer to what was later developed in stoic philosophy: the belief that human serenity is acquired only at the price of dominating one's passions. If transgressors in Aeschylus and Sophocles often do not see the right thing to do, Euripides's tragic villains see it very well, but their hearts do not care.

Another constant is that tragic villains in Attic drama usually belong to a doomed lineage and commit their crimes within the family, exceeding the limits of what is seen as essentially human. This is how their acts and their consequences designate the outline of our common humanity. Its contours are drawn in blood, but this heightens our awareness of the limitations and potential of our own condition.

However, the diversity of tragic villains we have analyzed is equally significant. If Aeschylus's transgressors eventually reach a more profound knowledge and a reconciliation at a higher level, Sophocles's exploration is concentrated on the unswerving determination of the rebellious characters, while Euripides's villains, with Medea and Phaedra as his most famous representatives, are mainly victims of an exuberant passion, beyond any possibility of reasonable reconciliation. If tragic villains generally have a regard for moral norms and ethical laws, their transgression in Aeschylus and Sophocles is usually due to the clash of different systems of values and priorities, while in Euripides it is their failure to master the torrent of their passions, whether it is love, anger or jealousy.

The motive of excessive revenge is a constant in the

work of the three writers of Attic drama. It is present in Aeschylus's dramas with Clytemnestra's excessive revenge on Agamemnon, and in her murder of Cassandra, while in Zeus's revenge on the Titan the motif of excessive revenge is transposed even to the realm of the gods. This motive is also developed in the second part of the trilogy about the Danaïds, with the murder of their husbands on their wedding day. In Sophocles's work, this motive is central in the treatment of Ajax's desire to kill the Greek leaders who dishonored him in denying him Achilles's arms. Creon's refusal to bury Polyneices's body can also be seen as an excessive revenge over the man who attacked the city under his rule. Oedipus's unintentional patricide is also a consequence of an excessive retribution for a blow he received from an elderly man at a crossroads. In Euripides, this motive is developed most disturbingly in his representation of Medea and Phaedra. He has deepened the exploration of this motif and focused on the readiness to do the utmost harm to oneself in exacting vengeance on another. In his treatment of Medea's crime, his exploration goes the furthest and reaches the most distressing point. However, while Aeschylus and Sophocles suggest that the violent tearing of family bonds entails the decomposition of the human being (Orestes goes mad, Oedipus blinds himself and becomes a monstrous outcast), it is not exactly the case with Euripides. His vision is more pessimistic, as if being human inexorably means bearing a certain amount of inhumanity within oneself.

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Shakespeare's *Henry V*, Reformation Resistance Theory, and the Moral Burden of Power

PHILIP GOLDFARB STYRT
St. Ambrose University, United States

When John Knox met with Mary Stuart on 4 September 1561, they met as near equals. Mary was the queen of Scotland, but Knox was the spiritual leader of the Scottish Protestants, and particularly of the rebels who had suspended and removed Mary's mother as regent. Mary had summoned Knox to meet with her in order to question him about the nature of her authority and his denial of it. She asked him first about his arguments against the legitimacy of female rulers, then about his support of Protestantism against her own Catholic faith. Finally she came to her most important point: "think ye (quod she) that subjects having power may resist their princes?" (Knox 178).

Knox did not hesitate to answer that they could, "if their princes exceed their bounds" (178). Indeed, he told her that to do so was "no [dis]obedience against princes, but just obedience" [brackets in original] to them (179).²⁸ Mary was shocked, and sat, as Knox later wrote, "amazed for more than the quarter of an hour" (179).

This debate was not limited to a Scottish preacher and his queen. In fact, despite Mary's shock, the issue of the reciprocal duties between monarchs and their subjects, and the conditions under which either side might violate them, had a long history in the Christian tradition, from the apostle Paul through Augustine, Aquinas, and notably in a British context, John of Salisbury, whose twelfth-century

²⁸ I agree with the Cambridge editor that here "obedience against" should be read as disobedience to princes.

Policraticus explicitly allowed for violent resistance to tyrannical rule (Salisbury). But the question of resistance to royal power truly came of age around the Reformation, when it became bound up in the religious politics of the period.

In Britain, home to two successful Protestant reformations but also, in the 1550s, to two Catholic queens named Mary, this issue was particularly pressing. Nor did it cease to be of interest after Elizabeth I and James VI came to their respective thrones; memories linger, and the threat of Catholic counter-reformation was never far away. As such, while the official government line never wavered from a belief in the fundamental requirement of obedience to the monarch (as seen in the Elizabethan official homily “Against Disobedience” from 1570 or James VI’s own *The True Law of Free Monarchies*), a stream of books, pamphlets, and speeches kept up the idea that, in some circumstances at least, disobedience and even active resistance could be justified against tyrannical monarchs who tried to impose their will on their subjects’ souls. The first of these, dating from the reign of Henry VIII, was William Tyndale’s *The Obedience of a Christian Man*, but there were many publications on the subject throughout the sixteenth century, from Christopher Goodman and John Ponet in England to George Buchanan and the aforementioned John Knox in Scotland. Other work poured in from continental Europe, including works by Martin Luther and John Calvin.²⁹

This flood of words in turn called for a response from the side advocating obedience, a response that would directly address their foes rather than simply stating the truth of their own cause. In some cases this was a gradual change: Richard Strier has pointed out the shift in the titles of Anglican homilies about the topic over the course of the century, from the Edwardian homily on “Good Order and Obedience to Rulers” to the Elizabethan one “Against Disobedience and Wilful [sic] Rebellion” (Strier 171). In other cases it happened rapidly: Thomas More’s 1523 *Responsio Ad Lutherum* and 1532 *Confutation of Tyndale’s Answer* are both (as is clear from their titles) more

²⁹ This process has been well-documented by various authors. For the period as a whole, see Skinner. For the specifically British context see Greaves 23-34 and Strier 165-177.

concerned with rejecting what is seen as false doctrine than promulgating a correct one. In either case, the theorists of obedience began to position their ideas in direct contrast to the other side of the debate, the side that argued for a fundamental right to disobey or even resist an ungodly monarch.

One major aspect of this new awareness was a focus on the conditions under which the theories of obedience functioned. There was a tradition of exceptions to obedience in the case of usurpers and invaders, but this tradition became particularly pronounced in the sixteenth century, as the theorists of obedience tried to distance themselves from accusations that their theories would require men to obey such tyrants. Jean Bodin's *On Sovereignty* argued firmly for obedience but acknowledged that resistance might be allowed against a ruler who had "encroached upon sovereignty by force or fraud" (111). John Christopherson's *Marian Exhortation to All Men to Take Heed and Beware of Rebellion* called for obedience only to "lawful Princes" who could claim to be "anointed of God" (206). Even James VI of Scotland argued that the king must be king by "the lineal succession of crowns" for his theories to apply (80). This type of argument became frequent because of its utility in the debate over resistance: it was important to make sure that those to whom obedience was mandated did not include monsters like Richard III. In fact, Christopherson specifically used this argument to allow himself to condemn Richard III and glorify Henry VII, exempting Richard from the right to the obedience due to the "sovereign" because he had "smothered" his predecessor, Edward V, in the tower and was thus a usurper (213, 212).

I wish to track the awareness of this sort of debate about resistance and obedience in William Shakespeare's *Henry V*. In particular, I intend to show that the play as a whole is alive to the debate, especially as it relates to Henry's guilt for ordering the war, and that considering this current in the play produces a very different reading of the St. Crispin's Day speech—and thus of Henry's character. In the context of this debate, Henry's great speech to his army serves two purposes: it is of course a rallying cry, but it is also a prophylactic against the burden of responsibility he must shoulder as a king, and as a king whose title is not quite

as sound as he would like it to be. This gives us a Henry V who is very similar to the Hal of the *Henry IV* plays: a Henry who is always playing two games at once.

I will first attempt to demonstrate that the play as a whole is alive to the debate about resistance and obedience. This awareness appears in three primary places, all of which I will touch on briefly: the scene when Henry punishes the nobles who have tried to sell him to the French (Act 2 scene 2), the “little touch of Harry in the night,” and Henry’s soliloquy immediately before St. Crispin’s day (both parts of Act 4 scene 1).

The first of these scenes, Act 2 scene 2, presents a pageant of obedience. The traitorous Scrope, Cambridge, and Grey are first tricked into urging severity over mercy, then are presented with Henry’s knowledge of their crime and punished for their treason, with Henry refusing them mercy because they had counseled him against it. Throughout the scene, Henry’s language mirrors that of the theorists of obedience.

Henry’s primary symbol for the inclination towards disobedience to the monarch, ending in treason and murder, is the devil: “treason and murder ever kept together / As two yoke-devils” (2.2.102-3).³⁰ These particular devils were assisted by further fiends who encouraged the plotters in their treason: Henry announces that “whatsoever cunning fiend it was / That wrought upon thee so preposterously / Hath got the voice in heaven for excellence,” and mentions “other devils who suggest by treasons” (2.2.108-9, 111). The repeated invocation of the devil echoes the theorists of obedience, for example Christopherson, who had warned, concerning a traitor, that “the devil do[es] move him to rebel and fight against his Prince,” and had cautioned the prince against the man who is “by the devil thoroughly persuaded to rebel against his prince” (28, 96). Christopherson’s warning that avoiding rebellion will “save our souls from damning” (40) is reflected in Grey’s sudden joy in being “prevented from a damned enterprise” (2.2.159).

³⁰ All quotes from *Henry V* are cited from *The Norton Shakespeare: Based on the Oxford Edition*, edited by Stephen Greenblatt et al. Norton, 1997, pp. 1445-1524.

Similarly, when Henry calls this treason “another fall of man,” he invokes a frequent trope of obedience theory (2.2.139). The aforementioned Elizabethan homily *Against Disobedience and Wilful Rebellion* told its audience that obedience was the “principle virtue,” a failure of which was the cause of the fall of both Satan and Adam (209).³¹ By comparing plotting his murder to eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge, Henry shares the rhetoric of the theorists of obedience.

This is particularly effective political theater when we recall, with Graham Holderness, Nick Potter, and John Turner, that the conspiracy here unearthed historically represented those who still supported Richard II’s line against Henry IV’s, and thus against Henry V as his son (70-71). By redirecting the narrative of a civil war in which Henry’s legitimacy is in question into the rhetoric of doctrinal obedience, Henry and his followers recast potentially harmful questions about his right to the throne as treason suborned by the French. Cambridge reminds us of this in his comment that “the gold of France did not seduce” him (2.2.150) though the play does not immediately follow up on this. Instead, we are presented with the *fait accompli* of their arrest and condemnation in the midst of a pageant of obedience: even Cambridge follows up this near-reminder of the earlier civil war with the obedient thought that “God be thankèd for prevention” of his rebellion (2.2.153). Although the play here dramatizes an attempt at resistance, the king’s overwhelming and easy victory over that resistance re-inscribes the importance of obedience.

With these echoes of obedience theory in the air, I will now turn to the later part of the play that deals more explicitly with the topic, beginning with the “little touch of Harry in the night” when the disguised Henry visits his soldiers on the night before Agincourt. In the part of this scene on which I will focus, Henry talks to two soldiers, Williams and Bates, and discusses with them the morality of the war they are fighting. In the process they touch repeatedly on the question of whether that morality affects whether the king must be obeyed—and whose soul is in peril if an unjust war is fought.

³¹ “Principle” here means both “first” and “most important.”

In the exchange between Henry and his soldiers, they all agree that a king must be obeyed. Indeed, in the space of forty lines all three of them state a version of the basic theory of obedience: Bates says “we know enough if we know we are the king’s subjects,” Williams acknowledges that “to disobey [the king] were against all proportion of subjection,” and Henry, in disguise, claims that “every subject’s duty is the king’s” (4.1.124-5, 138, 164-5). It is clear that all three of these men are on the same side of the debate in this respect: we have no radical Calvinists or regicides here.

But from this agreement they move to a slightly different question: whether that law of obedience places a moral obligation on the king, particularly in relation to war. Henry is the one who initially raises this point, seemingly inadvertently, by bringing up the question of whether the king’s “cause [is] just and his quarrel honourable” (4.1.122). In doing so he exposes the question not only of whether a subject’s obedience should change depending on the justice of the king’s cause but of whether the king’s own moral burden depends on that fact.

The standard answer by the theorists of obedience to the concern that Henry raises here about the importance of the justice of what the king commands—whether it matters if the quarrel for which he sends men out to kill and die is “just” and “honourable”—was ambivalent, leaving the question of the moral burden somewhat open. The strongest version of this position is expressed most clearly by James VI, later James I of England, who makes it clear that under the doctrine of obedience the king will “be judged only of God,” and so it is none of his subjects’ concern whether his commands are just (66). It may be his responsibility to wage a just war, and he may bear a moral burden for failing to do so, but only God may judge him for that; his subjects must follow him into battle regardless of the merit of his position.

However, this emphasis on having God alone as a judge must be viewed in its context as a move in the debate between obedience and disobedience. Theorists of resistance had guarded themselves from charges of treason by making a similar claim: that, in William Tyndale’s words, tyrants “must be reserved unto the wrath of God” for their punishment (181). But they also claimed that “neverthelater, if they command to do evil we must then disobey and say we

are otherwise commanded of God” (Tyndale 181). In other words, for Tyndale and his fellow theorists, the king could be judged on earth even if he was only punished by God, and that earthly judgment could lead to at least passive disobedience if not outright rebellion. James VI and other theorists of obedience responded by hammering at the narrow distinction between these two kinds of judging, arguing that to make the judgment of whether the king had in fact commanded evil was also reserved to God alone, and that therefore the theorists of resistance had wrongfully taken on God’s role themselves. By invoking “only . . . God” at all levels, the theorists of obedience wished to remove the possibility of an earthly judging of a king’s actions, and thus also remove the possibility of even a passive resistance that was based on judging the morality of the king’s actions.

In its insistence on leaving the matter to God, this answer leaves the question of *how* God would judge the king open to consideration. It is in this context that we must read the turn in the conversation by the campfire towards the king’s own responsibility for the war. Bates makes the first move, saying that “if his cause be wrong, our obedience to the king wipes the crime of it out of us”—not out of the king, but out of his subjects (4.1.125-7). In Bates’ reasoning, then, the king might still be culpable for the wrong of an unjust war even as his subjects are not. Williams picks up on this, arguing more explicitly that “if the cause be not good, the King himself hath a heavy reckoning to make, when all those legs and arms and heads chopped of in battle shall join together in the latter day” (4.1.128-131). His point is that if their common theory of obedience is correct, and the subjects must obey their king no matter how unjust the cause, the king’s own responsibility for the war expands to include what happens to (and what is done by) his subjects in that war, because they could not disobey him. Precisely because they are not permitted to resist in order to save their souls, the moral charge that might accompany their suffering or their action must fall to the king instead.

It is this point that troubles Henry. While he answers at length a related point that Williams raises—whether the king is responsible for the souls of those who “die unprovided,” i.e. without last rites, having their sins still on their heads—he never addresses the critical question of his

own responsibility as king for the fact and manner of their deaths or their behavior during the war (4.1.162). He is convinced that he is not responsible for their sins or damnation—“every subject’s soul is his own” (4.1.164-5)—but he avoids mention of his own soul’s responsibility for their deaths and suffering.

That is, he avoids mentioning it until he is alone onstage. Then he is troubled by the idea that the people wish to, in his words, “our lives, our souls, our debts, our care-full wives / Our children, and our sins, lay on the King” (4.1.213-4). In the discussion beforehand he had sought to shrug this burden off, and to a certain extent he succeeded: the soldiers agreed that “every man that dies ill, the ill upon his own head” (4.1.173-4). But he cannot truly shrug off the burden of being responsible for the loss of “our lives” and in his self-pity he admits, royally, that “we must bear all” (4.1.215). His soul is burdened with the possible deaths of all those whom he commands into battle if the cause is unjust or his position unmerited.

This moment of guilt leads him into his soliloquy on ceremony and the useless burdens of being king. But the moral concern remains in the background, and he returns to it when he turns to the question of his own legitimacy. Here we must remember the constant disclaimers in sixteenth century theories of obedience that denied usurpers the right of obedience. Because of this repeated caveat, the potential that Henry’s reign was illegitimate would raise two fears: the first, that his subjects would disobey him and refuse to fight; the second, that if they did fight for him it would not be because they owed him duty by natural law but because he either compelled their obedience or gained it by falsehood, thus exposing him to the further moral burden of having brought about their death and suffering through force or under false pretenses.

Given the immediately prior discussion of obedience in this scene, I argue that we should see this subtext in Henry’s desperate prayer to God to “not today, O Lord, / O not today, think not upon the fault / My father made in compassing the crown” (4.1.274-6). Henry’s sudden rush of guilt about his father’s usurpation is not just a moral quibble; it is also the prayer of a man who has realized that the legitimacy of his position could easily be challenged, and who

is begging God to overlook that fact. He wants his soldiers to obey him by right, and when they do he wants the exemption from blame and sin that he had just argued for in the exchange with the soldiers to apply to him. Of course, Henry *could* simply be having an oddly-timed qualm about the fate of the long-dead Richard II, but in light of the previous exchange, and when considering the theories of obedience that echo throughout the play, Henry's sudden turn to prayer appears to have a more self-interested motivation as well—especially for an audience that might still be thinking of Cambridge's reminder of the continued existence of the Ricardian faction back in the second act.

In that context, Henry realizes that all his prayers can never be enough. As he himself admits, “all that I can do is nothing worth / Since that my penitence comes after ill / Imploring pardon” (4.1.285-7). God will not wink at Henry's potentially illegitimate title because the fault has already happened. He and his family are already either usurpers or not in the eyes of God, and this prayer will not actually solve the difficulty.

The famous St. Crispin's Day speech arises from precisely these worries that Henry has explored in the privacy of his own thoughts. There is a double meaning in Henry's offer to have his nobles “proclaim it presently through my host / That he which hath no stomach for this fight / Let him depart” (4.3.34-6). Certainly this is grand rhetoric of glory and heroism—let those who have the guts to fight, fight, and if you are too cowardly you can go home—and it is highly effective as such. We see this in Warwick's immediate response to the speech: “perish the man whose mind is backward now” (4.3.72). The very declaration that men have the right to leave if they want creates the conditions under which they will choose to stay.

But the speech is not just rhetorically glorious; it is politically canny. We have seen Henry's thoughts evolve from the idea that he has a right to command his men to war, to the realization that if his quarrel is unjust his soul may be in danger, through the thought in his soliloquy that he is in fact not a legitimate king and therefore might not have even the right to command a just war to this: the final declaration that any man may choose to leave if he wishes.

In this context, we can see the St. Crispin's Day speech as a final shifting of guilt for this war off of Henry's own head. After this speech, in a certain sense, the soldiers' presence in the battle is no longer predicated on their obedience to Henry's legitimate (or illegitimate) will, but on their own voluntary choice to stay. Henry clearly inspires his troops in this speech, and the language would be effective even if he had no qualms about his right, but at the same time he also clears his conscience along the way. Of course, the St. Crispin's Day speech cannot make Henry's war just or honorable. But it can and does protect him from the moral consequences if his war fails either of those two criteria. Even if God does not ignore the faults in his title, Henry has positioned himself as blameless for the deaths of his soldiers: they are there by their own volition, and have all become (technical) volunteers. At the same time, of course, he inspires them to want to stay; the double game works perfectly. As Jelena Marelj has suggested in relation to other speeches in the play, Henry's ambiguous rhetoric results from the embedding of multiple, sometimes conflicting meanings within a single speech (2). Henry here manages to simultaneously position himself as the conquering hero who fears nothing and protect himself from the one very real fear we know he has of becoming responsible for his soldiers' souls through waging unjust wars or improperly possessing the crown. He neatly sidesteps the actual issue of whether this is a just war, as well as the issue of his own legitimacy, and places the moral burden squarely on the troops who have now (according to this logic) chosen to be there.

It is here, I suggest, rather than in the earlier scene where Henry claimed that every subjects' soul was his own, that we see the radical side of Henry's kingship that John E. Alvis has identified, in which he offers some freedom of choice to the people in exchange for disclaiming his moral responsibility for his citizens (133-135). After the scene with the soldiers he was clearly still troubled about his moral position, if not more troubled than he had been before. Now, in the morning before the battle, he takes care of that concern by positioning himself as only leading those to war who truly want to participate, and therefore as not responsible for their fates as their king, regardless of his legal

claim, the justness of his cause, or any other concern that might burden his soul with their deaths.

This second meaning of the St. Crispin's Day speech is only accessible to us in the context of the debate over obedience and resistance. It opens up for us an alternative Henry that may recall the more calculating Hal of the *Henry IV* plays: a man who can make a single speech and play two angles, who can simultaneously disclaim all responsibility for his subjects' presence in the battle and inspire them to stay with him regardless and fight their hardest for him. The Henry we see through the lens of this debate, then, is simultaneously a more complex and a more impressive figure, and one with a more obvious link to Shakespeare's previous versions of the character.

But we should not rest there. While the debate about resistance can illuminate *Henry V*, *Henry V* reflects some of that light back onto the debate. The seriousness with which Henry seems to take the exemptions from obedience inserted by the theorists of obedience suggests that we should examine those exemptions with greater care. The conditions under which a theory operates can be just as crucial to how it operates as the actions it dictates when in operation are. The exceptions carved out of the general theory of obedience are not merely rhetorical gambits to defeat an opponent in debate, but serious points of theory themselves. Not all *de facto* rulers are to be obeyed, even under theories that at first glance would seem to dictate such a course. This in turn may guide us towards the importance of the work by George Buchanan and various French Calvinist theorists of resistance who spent substantial time examining the constitutional foundations of their respective polities: if a king's right to rule has substantial impact on his right to command obedience, it makes good sense to pay close attention to the source, or lack thereof, of that first right.

At the same time, this reading of the play also asks us to think about what it means for a theory of obedience to disclaim any interest in the justice or injustice of the monarch's cause or even, in this case, his right. Henry's concerns for his soul are stirred by the consideration of whether the war he has embarked on is honorable and just. But these concerns are ultimately dismissed not by grappling with the difficult nature of that question (made all the more

difficult by the audience's knowledge of the bishops' scheming in Act 1 of the play and Henry's own impetuous response to an insulting gift of tennis balls from the French Dauphin) but by ignoring it entirely. In the St. Crispin's Day speech, Henry sets up a situation in which it does not matter whether or not he is right to go to war with France: his soul is clean of his soldiers' deaths—few though they are—no matter how we feel about the justice of his cause or his possession of the throne. Instead, he reflects his moral burden back onto his subjects, whose unwillingness to flee the battlefield the hour before a battle is turned into willing acquiescence with his war aims by the powerful alchemy of his rhetoric. While Henry is obviously satisfied with this conclusion, we must ask ourselves: how heroic is Henry, really, and how comfortable are we with a king who sidesteps his own moral sense in this way?

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Pas si méchants: les bourreaux d'Alexandre Dumas père

ROXANE PETIT-RASSELLE

West Chester University of Pennsylvania, United States

La peine de mort est rare sous l'Ancien Régime où elle constitue à peine 5% des arrêts prononcés (*Histoire de la peine de mort* 12), soit une moyenne de cent cinquante exécutions annuelles. En revanche, la ville de Paris compte à elle seule plus de trois mille exécutions entre mars 1793 et la fin de l'été 1794 (Guyon 33). La guillotine laisse derrière elle un souvenir traumatisant, hantant les mémoires des contemporains de la Terreur—comme René de Chateaubriand et Charles Nodier—et celles de la génération qui leur succède. Comme l'a remarqué Loïc Guyon, l'utilisation de la guillotine sous la Terreur devient une source de "fascination morbide et de remords"; sa présence dans la littérature romantique témoigne d'une obsession et d'un besoin "d'expier la faute commise par le passé de manière à apaiser la conscience collective et individuelle" (55). Pour Guyon, les œuvres contre la peine de mort sont nombreuses et peuvent être rangées en trois catégories: celles qui n'ont aucune velléité abolitionniste mais qui ont participé à l'évolution des mentalités en ce sens, comme *L'âne mort et la femme guillotinée* de Jules Janin; celles dont l'objectif est de dénoncer la pratique de la peine de mort tout en ne prononçant aucune prise de position, comme *Le Parricide et l'exécution* de Lefèvre; celles qui, enfin, comportent un discours explicitement contestataire, révélant le militantisme de leur auteur, comme *Le Dernier jour d'un condamné* de Victor Hugo³² (Guyon 137-38). Persuadés

³² Édition préfacée de 1832.

que “représenter, c’est agir sur la société” (Pelta 12), les Romantiques se chargent de dresser les portraits des acteurs du système légal et judiciaire: les décideurs, le geôlier, le confesseur et le bourreau (Guyon 159-185). En dehors de la nouvelle école fleurit aussi une littérature qui met en scène l’exécuteur. Joseph de Maistre en parle le premier dans les *Soirées de Saint-Pétersbourg* (1831). Son discours est suivi des *Mémoires pour servir à l’histoire de la Révolution française* (fin des années 1820),³³ de la *Biographie universelle, ancienne et moderne* (1847) consacrée à Charles-Henri et Henri Sanson (Bastien, *Sanson* 7),³⁴ et des *Mémoires de Sanson. Sept Générations d’exécuteurs* (1862-1863).³⁵

A la différence de Victor Hugo, Dumas n’a jamais milité ouvertement contre la peine de mort. Cependant, ses écrits (romans, mémoires, récits de voyages, etc.) diffusent son opposition par petites touches. Par exemple, il considère, dans son épilogue au *Comte d’Hermann* (1849), que l’exécution *en place publique* est inutile: “elle ne corrige pas, . . . elle n’instruit pas, . . . elle endure à la mort, voilà tout” (*Mémoires* Vol. 2 458). Il avoue encore qu’il lui serait “impossible à supporter un tel pareil spectacle” (*Mémoires* Vol. 1 685), tant la violence lui fait horreur depuis les affrontements de 1830 auxquels il a participé (*Suisse* 260). Dumas dénonce encore le système judiciaire et ses pratiques avec *Le Comte de Monte-Cristo* où la question de la/l’ (in-) justice est prégnante, entre Dantès emprisonné sans jugement ni recours possible, la justice qui ne peut être rendue qu’en dehors du système légal, et une pléthore de commentaires attribués aux personnages et à la voix narrative. Cet article se propose de démontrer que Dumas a tenté d’influencer ses lecteurs en faveur de l’abolition grâce à une stratégie d’écriture axée sur le bourreau, cela dans des œuvres appartenant à la seconde catégorie répertoriée par Guyon. Il se penchera notamment sur la figure du “bourreau blanc,” c’est-à-dire, du bourreau bienveillant, lequel fut développée dans un très bel article par Colette Juillard Beaudan. Il mettra au jour la stratégie d’écriture dans *Les*

³³ Elle fut préparée par Louis-François L’Héritier.

³⁴ Par Louis-Gabriel Michaud.

³⁵ *Les Mémoires de Sanson* est une œuvre apocryphe.

Trois Mousquetaires (1844) et *La Reine Margot* (1844-45)³⁶, en examinant comment Dumas récupère la stigmatisation de l'exécuteur pour mieux amener ses lecteurs à remettre en question leurs propres convictions, le système judiciaire et la peine capitale.

Tourmenteur et tourmenté

Appelé exécuteur, maître des hautes œuvres, tranche-tête ou encore tourmenteur, le bourreau est à la fois réclamé par la société pour accomplir la justice, et rejeté pour ce qu'il représente: la mort, le supplice, sans compter toutes les légendes populaires qui alimentent sa triste réputation. Grand lettré, Dumas a certainement lu *Les Soirées de Saint-Pétersbourg* où les questions soulevées par Maistre illustrent la perception générale du bourreau:

Qu'est-ce donc que cet être inexplicable qui a préféré à tous les métiers agréables, lucratifs, honnêtes et même honorables qui se présentent en foule à la force ou à la dextérité humaine celui de tourmenter et de mettre à mort ses semblables? Cette tête, ce cœur sont-ils faits comme les nôtres? Ne contiennent-ils rien de particulier et d'étranger à notre nature? . . . A peine l'autorité a-t-elle désigné sa demeure, à peine en a-t-il pris possession, que les autres habitants reculent jusqu'à ce qu'elles ne voient plus la sienne . . . Est-ce un homme? Oui: Dieu le reçoit dans ses temples . . . il n'est pas criminel; cependant . . . nul éloge moral ne peut lui convenir, car tous supposent des rapports avec les hommes et il n'en a point (Maistre 5-7).

³⁶ Pour rappel, les Mousquetaires veulent débarrasser l'humanité du démon, incarné par Milady: elle a déshonoré Athos, empoisonné la maîtresse de d'Artagnan, et enfin elle a commandité l'assassinat du duc de Buckingham. Les mousquetaires font appel au bourreau de Lille, qui s'avère être celui-là même qui avait marqué Milady de la fleur de Lys. La diablesse sera jugée sommairement, et décapitée. Dans *La Reine Margot*, les comtes de La Mole et de Coconnas se lient d'amitié. La Saint-Barthélémy les transforme brièvement en deux ennemis. Ils ferrailent à la mort; Maître Caboché, bourreau de Paris, les soigne et les réconcilie. Plus tard, les deux hommes sont faussement accusés de régicide. Caboché devra les torturer et enfin les décapiter.

La moralité de l'exécuteur paraît infâme et voilà pourquoi on l'isole. La description dumasienne va dans le sens de Maistre et du public en déshumanisant la figure du bourreau. Les *Mousquetaires* et *Margot* présentent un personnage à l'allure bestiale. La voix narrative des *Mousquetaires* insiste sur "des cheveux" et une "barbe noire[s]" (764), avec des "favoris noirs" (774). Celle de *Margot* décrit "des cheveux noirs qui descend[ent] jusqu'aux sourcils et une barbe noire qui, contre la mode du temps, couvr[e] tout le bas de son visage" (276). "Contre la mode du temps," à savoir, atemporel: il est le stéréotype de l'homme des bois ou de l'ogre qui traverse le temps. Ces descriptions visent à perpétuer un sentiment de malaise, de dégoût ou d'horreur auprès des lecteurs du XIXe qui ne connaissent que trop bien la peine de mort.

Dumas savait bien l'histoire et ses détails qu'il n'hésitait pas à modifier pour mieux servir l'intrigue et ses personnages. Comme l'a montré Pascal Bastien, l'habit du bourreau se banalise dès le XVIe siècle. A partir de cette époque, il ne se distingue ni du militaire ni du gentilhomme mais ressemble à un bourgeois: il passe inaperçu. Dumas, qui connaît fort bien les bourreaux et leur métier,³⁷ choisit de signaler ses personnages en les revêtant de rouge. Alors que maître Caboché porte une "espèce de justaucorps de cuir tout maculé de taches brunes, des chausses sang-de-bœuf, un maillot rouge . . ." (*Margot* 276), le bourreau de Lille se remarque par sa cape cramoisie (*Mousquetaires* 774). L'inexactitude descriptive, si elle ne correspond pas à l'histoire, a la double fonction de rendre le bourreau visible et identifiable des personnages comme des lecteurs, et d'affermir auprès de tous la stigmatisation dont il est l'objet.

Dans les pas de Maistre, Dumas s'attarde sur l'isolement de l'habitat de l'exécuteur. Selon la réalité historique, il situe le logement de Monsieur de Paris au cœur de la capitale, dans le pilori de la place de Grève, alors que le maître de Lille réside à l'extérieur de la ville comme tous ses confrères de province. Cependant, l'auteur, qui s'est toujours

³⁷ On remarque, par exemple, la précision historique des *Mousquetaires* et de *Margot* qui mettent en scène deux techniques véridiques de décapitation: à deux mains et de haut en bas pour le premier roman, et d'un revers pour le second.

dit incapable de décrire ce qu'il n'avait pas vu, décide de faire état du pilori dont il ne reste presque rien en 1844, date de publication de *Margot*. On sait, par Hugo, qu'il ne subsiste plus qu'une "tourelle" "sinistre" dans "l'angle nord de la place" en 1831 (*Notre-Dame* 80). Mise à part cette "tourelle," Dumas ne possède aucune source visuelle. L'inconnu lui donne la liberté non de décrire, mais de produire un effet de dégoût, voire d'effroi. Il dépeint le pilori comme "une maison informe, bossue, éraillée, borgne et boiteuse, au toit taché de mousse comme la peau d'un lépreux, [qui] avait, pareille à un champignon, poussé au pied de cette espèce de tour" (*Margot* 286). Bref, au lieu de donner un tableau détaillé, Dumas préfère personnifier le pilori en lui attribuant des traits qui pourraient tout autant convenir au bourreau: ceux d'un lieu abject aux allures dangereuses qui ne s'intègre pas dans son environnement. Décrivez plus loin, la tour du Pilori "se dressait . . . comme un géant sombre et informe, envoyant une lumière rougeâtre par deux barbicanes qui flamboyaient à son sommet" (734). L'habitat du bourreau et les activités qui lui sont imputées s'imposent comme une menace permanente sur la ville et ses habitants.

Les descriptions du maître et de son logis coïncident ainsi avec l'imaginaire des lecteurs du XIXe siècle. D'ailleurs, les commentaires des personnages fictifs renforcent leur effet en évoquant l'"aspect terrible" (*Margot* 732), ou "infernale" du bourreau devenu stéréotype. En reproduisant et en perpétuant les perceptions collectives, Dumas exploite les ressorts de la littérature populaire: il s'assure l'identification—et les bonnes grâces—de son public qui, devenu tout acquis, n'en est que plus malléable. Dumas lui expose alors la position du bourreau dans la société: d'un côté, le bras de la justice fait adhérer le peuple au Pouvoir qui châtie, de l'autre, il horrifie par les supplices qu'il inflige—la mort étant bien peu de chose par rapport aux tortures qu'il pratique. Dumas met en lumière ce que Emmanuel Taïeb qualifiera plus tard de "paradoxe du bourreau," un paradoxe dont est bien conscient l'exécuteur: "beaucoup aimeraient mieux voir le diable que de me voir!" (*Margot* 287). L'apparence physique du bourreau avait laissé anticiper un individu brutal et sadique; Dumas crée un effet de surprise en lui attribuant une psychologie complexe: c'est un personnage tourmenté et incompris. *Margot*, comme

auparavant les *Excursions au bord du Rhin*, développe le ressenti du personnage, accablé par la solitude et la répulsion du peuple à son endroit. A Coconnas qui lui serre la main et qui l'appelle son "ami," Caboche répond: "Il est probable que si vous me connaissiez, vous ne le feriez pas" (*Margot* 287). Coconnas plonge alors un sac d'or dans la main du bourreau qui réplique: "J'aurais mieux aimé votre main toute seule . . . car je ne manque pas d'or; mais de mains qui touchent la mienne, . . . j'en chôme fort" (288). Le maître finit par "la touch[er] timidement . . . quoiqu'il fût visible qu'il eût grande envie de la toucher franchement" (289). En donnant une dimension humaine au bourreau après l'avoir stigmatisé, Dumas le transforme en paria, c'est-à-dire, en une figure romantique. Il montre, dans la mouvance de la nouvelle école, que l'exécuteur est moins un tueur que la victime de l'ordre social (Guyon 183), il dénonce l'hypocrisie générale que les romantiques ont tant cherché à démasquer sous la Monarchie de Juillet (1830-1848) et tend un miroir à ses lecteurs.

Une figure supérieure, un système remis en question

Après avoir appelé son public à la compassion et à la réflexion, la stratégie dumasienne réinvente le rôle du bourreau. Certes, "il est laid d'être punissable mais peu glorieux de punir" comme l'écrivait Michel Foucault (16) et le métier d'exécuteur et de tortionnaire rejailit défavorablement sur le personnage. Pourtant, il est remarquable qu'en une période où voyeurisme et sensations font vendre un feuilleton littéraire, Dumas, qui raconte dans le détail l'atrocité de la Saint-Barthélemy, ne dépeint nullement la question et le marquage au fer infligés par le bourreau. Dans *Margot*, La Mole subit la torture du brodequin et doit être suivi de Coconnas. Pour le premier, la voix narrative ne donne aucun détail, évoquant seulement une "plainte sourde" (704). Si les gestes de Maître Caboche sont précisés pour le second, c'est parce qu'il *fait semblant* de le supplicier et qu'il n'entraîne aucune souffrance. En épargnant l'imagination des lecteurs, la voix narrative libère le tortionnaire de sa culpabilité. A l'apparition de La Mole, brisé, le public peut envisager les pratiques du bourreau dans

toute leur horreur. Cependant, il lui faut un effort d'imagination et une démarche rétrospective que la rapidité de lecture, inhérente au roman populaire, ne laisse pas toujours effectuer.³⁸ Non seulement les tourmenteurs de *Margot* et des *Mousquetaires* ne font pas souffrir, mais ils excellent encore dans l'art de décapiter du premier coup, alors que, comme l'indiquent divers témoignages et études historiques, il n'était pas rare qu'un bourreau se reprenne plusieurs fois avant de décoller son client.³⁹

La stratégie narrative réoriente la perception du public en l'amenant progressivement à admirer les bourreaux, l'admiration étant un sentiment habituellement généré par le héros. Rompant avec leur physique d'ogres et leurs pratiques barbares, ils surprennent par leur grandeur d'âme, leur intuitivité, leur culture et leurs connaissances scientifiques. D'abord, Caboché dédaigne le lucre (735), lui préférant de véritables valeurs, comme l'amitié.⁴⁰ Il ne revend ni les cadavres, ni la graisse de La Mole et Coconnas selon l'usage (puisque les cadavres devenaient la propriété du maître), mais arrange leurs dépouilles avec sentiment. Sensibles, les bourreaux dumasien devinent aussi les pensées et les craintes de leurs interlocuteurs auxquels ils savent s'adapter (*Causeries*⁴¹ et *Margot*). Ce sont des lettrés: dans *Margot*,

³⁸ Voir l'étude du suspens par Jean-Yves Tadié: "La phénoménologie de lecture est donc au coeur de l'étude du genre [le roman d'aventures]. Tout, dans la narration, est organisé en fonction du lecteur. L'idéal est que la lecture du roman soit ininterrompue, qu'on ne puisse reposer le livre sur la table . . . Ce qui s'impose à l'attention des lecteurs au point qu'ils ne puissent sans peine interrompre leur lecture, c'est le suspens, c'est-à-dire le procédé de narration qui fait attendre et désirer la réponse à une question posée. Ce procédé n'est pas propre au roman" (*Le Roman d'aventures* 7-8).

³⁹ C'est le cas du bourreau des *Excursions au bord du Rhin* qui ne parvient pas à décapiter le condamné parce qu'il est en proie à l'émotion.

⁴⁰ Il connaît, d'ailleurs, une similitude certaine avec son confrère des années 1830, que Dumas rencontra pour obtenir des renseignements sur l'exécution de Louis XVI. L'auteur pénétra chez Sanson sous couvert d'une pommade à acheter pour un parent. A sa question, "combien?", Monsieur de Paris répondit: "c'est selon: votre parent est-il pauvre ou riche? [...] s'il est pauvre, ce n'est rien; s'il est riche, c'est ce que vous voudrez."

⁴¹ Ainsi, dans les *Causeries*, le sourire de l'exécuteur qui ouvre sa porte à Dumas: "ce sourire voulait dire: vous êtes un curieux, je le vois bien; que puis-je faire pour satisfaire votre curiosité?"

Caboche chante mélancoliquement une ode de Ronsard du haut de son tombereau (271). Quand Dumas rencontre Sanson vers 1832, il apprend que son fils, qui pratique le même métier, connaît ses dramaturges, passe son temps au théâtre et raffole des drames de l'auteur (*Causeries* 132). On pourra soupçonner celui-ci de vanité, ou bien, voir dans les préférences romantiques de l'exécuteur les inclinations d'une âme tourmentée avide de rimes.

La description de l'habitat comme un lieu d'ignominie et de souffrance concordait d'abord avec la perception générale du public. La stratégie narrative défait cette première impression en faisant pénétrer les lecteurs dans l'antre de la connaissance:

L'homme . . . fit entrer [Athos] dans son laboratoire, où il était occupé à retenir à des fils de fer les os cliquetants d'un squelette . . . tout le reste de l'ameublement indiquait que celui chez lequel on se trouvait s'occupait de sciences naturelles: il y avait des bocaux pleins de serpents, . . . des lézards desséchés . . .; enfin, des bottes d'herbes . . ., sans doute douées de vertus inconnues au vulgaire des hommes, étaient attachées au plafond. (*Mousquetaires* 764)

Le bourreau est donc un savant. On comprend alors que son usage de la torture, et sa connaissance de la souffrance des corps, lui sont révélés par l'étude de l'anatomie. Il est ce que Pascal Bastien appelle un "technicien des corps" (131), qui ne donne pas seulement la mort: il peut rendre la vie, les "bottes d'herbes" et les "lézards desséchés" indiquant aussi ses talents de pharmacologue. Dix ans avant de déclarer qu'"en Allemagne, [on] appelle généralement les bourreaux docteurs . . . en France, on appelle . . . les médecins bourreaux" (*Causeries*), Dumas établit la supériorité du personnage. De fait, le grand Ambroise Paré apparaît sporadiquement sur une durée de 800 pages dans *Margot* (Dumaître 253): on fait appel à lui, on le nomme, on le cite, on le recommande. Mais la vedette lui est volée par le bourreau qui occupe des séquences entières du roman, et qui est introduit d'emblée comme "le confrère de maître Ambroise Paré" (titre du chapitre XVII): "maître" Paré, grand chirurgien du roi, tout comme "maître" Caboche,

exécuteur. Il semble, au départ, y avoir égalité. Toutefois, le bourreau prend rapidement le dessus et se lamente face à l'échec thérapeutique du médecin: "Si l'on avait suivi mes ordonnances, au lieu de s'en rapporter à celles de cet âne bâté que l'on nomme Ambroise Paré!" (277). Et la voix narrative d'insister sur l'efficacité des drogues de Caboche (280, 285) tandis que le choix lexical connaît une progression: d'"homme" (276), le bourreau devient "docteur" (279, 280), pour être enfin rebaptisé "Esculape," le dieu romain de la médecine. Sa science semble sans limites.

Ainsi, conformément à l'histoire, l'exécuteur de Dumas est à la fois un guérisseur dont le pouvoir s'avoisine à la magie et au divin et un "technicien des corps" préférable au chirurgien (Bastien 139). Selon les traditions, il se fait aussi le double des souverains auxquels on attribuait des pouvoirs curatifs, à la manière des rebouteux (Delarue 32). L'auteur représente bien cette croyance dans *Margot*, où la reine éponyme peut soigner les grands malades en tant que "fille de France." À pouvoirs et à connaissances égaux, le bourreau et ses souverains forment donc un couple médical, lequel entre en tension avec la fonction légale de ce même couple, l'exécuteur étant aussi le bras de la justice royale. En effet, il peut, à l'instar des monarques, rendre la vie ou la prendre, mais il est contraint de tuer alors que son inclination le porterait à ressusciter les corps: son pouvoir s'arrête là où commence la volonté des princes. Dès lors, la figure du bourreau dumasien, tourmentée, généreuse et supérieure, soulève une question essentielle au roman: qui tue véritablement? Ce n'est pas la main du bourreau mais bien plutôt la "Justice." D'ailleurs, les ornements du logement de Caboche mettent en exergue l'hypocrisie derrière ce qui paraît un couple légal: il y a d'abord le brevet patibulaire, qui porte le sceau du roi et "l'épée flamboyante de la justice" (*Margot* 735) par laquelle le maître décapite. Cependant, la proximité d'"images grossières" vient troubler l'ordre établi: elles représentent des saints martyrisés par toutes sortes de supplices que, seuls, des hérétiques ont pu leur infliger. Juxtaposées aux symboles royaux, les illustrations religieuses leur associent immoralité et cruauté, et dégagent le bourreau de toute responsabilité.

Dissidence

Non seulement Dumas démasque l'hypocrisie du système judiciaire à travers le bourreau, mais il se dresse encore contre la peine capitale dans la mouvance dissidente de la nouvelle école. Il y a, bien sûr, le chapitre LX de *Margot* qui vise à émouvoir le public, avec le parcours du tombereau vers la Place de Grève, les dernières paroles échangées sur l'échafaud entre La Mole et Coconnas, la foule excitée, et les têtes qui roulent sous le glaive. Toutefois, la position de Dumas et sa stratégie se précisent dans les *Mousquetaires*. L'auteur n'écrit jamais sans avoir préalablement pris connaissance de personnages et de situations par une multitude de lectures. Pour construire ses exécuteurs, il a lu *Le Dernier jour d'un condamné* de son ami Hugo et les mémoires apocryphes de Sanson, éditées et partiellement écrites par Balzac. Il s'inspire aussi d'un personnage véridique qu'il découvre lors de son voyage en Allemagne, dans les années 1830: dans ses *Excursions au bord du Rhin*, Dumas rapporte comment Karl-Ludwig Sand, sur le point d'être décapité, rencontre son bourreau. Le condamné veut être décollé du premier coup et, pour se donner toutes les chances, il tient à répéter l'exécution dans sa chambre. La voix narrative écrit: "Alors commença la répétition de l'horrible drame de l'échafaud, répétition pendant laquelle les forces manquèrent, non au patient, mais au bourreau, car déplacé ainsi de son terrain, la fiction lui parut plus horrible que la réalité" (369). En d'autres termes, l'échafaud et son décorum transforment l'exécution en un rituel qui ne semble pas un homicide, mais la froide application de la loi. Sur l'échafaud, c'est l'Etat qui tue et qui rend le meurtre acceptable. En dehors de cette mise-en-scène, c'est l'homme. Il suffit d'un glissement de contexte pour que le bourreau et les lecteurs réalisent qu'il s'agit là d'un crime.

Dumas utilise le même procédé pour l'exécution de Milady. Ici, pas de tombereau ni d'échafaud: la jeune femme est "traînée" par les valets (778) auprès de la rivière où son corps sera jeté après sa décapitation. Les chapitres consacrés au jugement et à l'exécution (LXV et LXVI) produisent d'abord une illusion de légitimité: Athos affirme qu' "il importe que cette femme soit jugée et non assassinée" (771); les chefs d'accusation sont exposés méthodiquement et la

peine de mort réclamée unanimement. Les Mousquetaires deviennent une sorte de justiciers accomplissant une mission morale et divine,⁴² tandis que l'exécuteur se justifie: "le bourreau peut tuer, sans être pour cela un assassin . . . c'est le dernier juge, voilà tout: *Nachrichter*, comme disent nos voisins allemands" (779), sauf que le procès n'est pas équitable, les plaignants s'étant constitués juges. Il s'agit donc de la parodie d'un jugement. D'autre part, l'exécution de Milady pourrait procurer une jouissance de lecture propre au roman populaire avec le voyeurisme produit par l'isolement de la scène et les descriptions détaillées, et avec le public qui, par processus d'identification aux héros, se voit enfin vengé. La mort de la diablesse pourrait aussi apparaître comme une punition et un retour à la normalité, apportant de la sorte un relâchement dans la tension narrative. Au contraire, la terreur de Milady, ses supplications, ses hurlements, ses affaissements successifs, le démembrement de son corps dans un lieu perdu, ajoutés à la froide gestuelle du bourreau ne sauraient satisfaire pleinement le public transformé en témoin d'une scène insoutenable:

Alors on vit . . . le bourreau lever lentement ses deux bras, un rayon de lune se refléta sur la lame de sa large épée, les deux bras retombèrent; on entendit le sifflement du cimenterre et le cri de la victime, puis une masse tronquée s'affaissa sous le coup. Alors, le bourreau détacha son manteau rouge, l'étendit à terre, y coucha le corps, y jeta la tête, le noua par les quatre coins, le chargea sur son épaule et remonta dans le bateau. Arrivé au milieu de la Lys, il arrêta la barque . . . et il laissa retomber le cadavre au plus profond de l'eau, qui se referma sur lui (782).

Les acteurs de ces chapitres n'en ressortent pas indemnes: les mousquetaires deviennent de tristes sires et leurs chemins se séparent. Le bourreau, quant à lui, est rongé par le remords pendant vingt ans (*Vingt Ans après*

⁴² "Anne de Breuil, vos crimes ont lassé les hommes sur la terre et Dieu dans le ciel" (777).

Vol. 1 379).⁴³ En somme, l'exécution est sanctionnée par la stratégie narrative: elle brise l'amitié que le récit avait construite sur huit cent pages; avec elle meurent l'insouciance et la gaité qui constituaient la fabrique du roman. La démarche abolitionniste de Dumas est certaine. S'il développe le jugement et l'exécution sur deux chapitres sans répondre pleinement aux attentes des lecteurs, s'il transforme une exécution en crime en la sortant de son contexte officiel, et si le remords du bourreau remet en question la légitimité de son geste, c'est parce que Dumas cherche à influencer son public.

Dumas compose des exécuteurs marqués, comme lui-même, par la dissidence. Dans *Margot* comme dans les *Mousquetaires*, le respect des bourreaux pour la justice royale est clairement établi: Caboche orne ses murs du brevet patibulaire dont son glaive est le pendant, et le maître de Lille refuse d'exercer son métier sans ordre officiel (*Mousquetaires* 765). Pourtant, chaque personnage s'avère incapable d'assumer son rôle et décide de s'émanciper de la justice et de la fonction dont elle l'a investi. Dumas propose deux types de libre-arbitre. Dans *Margot*, les "images grossières" juxtaposées aux symboles de la justice illustrent les doutes de Caboche: quand s'arrête la justice? Où commence le martyr? Qui sont les tortionnaires? Or, ce même bourreau doit infliger la question extraordinaire à Coconnas, le seul personnage qui lui a témoigné un peu d'amitié. Derrière les murs, loin des regards, il épargne la souffrance à celui qui a touché sa main, par loyauté, affection et reconnaissance. Ses principes et sentiments prévalent sur l'autorité du roi. *Les Trois Mousquetaires* retracent un autre type de libre-arbitre. Le maître a enfin obtenu l'ordre scellé pour exécuter Milady. Toutefois, sur le point de passer à l'acte, ce n'est pas la justice royale qu'il invoque, mais son passé, son devoir, la morale et la religion. Son véritable motif est la vengeance, qu'il a déjà pratiquée dans sa jeunesse en marquant la jeune femme de la fleur-de-lys. Symbole de la justice royale, cette dernière devient l'instrument non plus d'un exécuteur mais d'un usurpateur. L'encadrement du récit le confirme: le roman débute avec Richelieu, surnommé "le

⁴³ Blessé à mort, le bourreau avoue souffrir "de l'âme bien plus que du corps" (*Vingt Ans Après* Vol 1. 379).

duc rouge,” et s’achève sur l’exécuteur, “L’homme au manteau rouge.” La loi du bourreau s’est subrogée à celle du ministre, lui-même le double de Louis XIII. On a vu que la fin du récit et le repentir du bourreau dans *Vingt Ans après* montrent qu’aucun prétexte, aucune autorité, ne justifie une exécution: c’est un crime qui, en tant que tel, ne peut rester impuni. Pourtant, malgré la manière dont le bourreau de Lille s’émancipe du système légal et de l’autorité royale, il rejoint Caboché dans une même fonction. En effet, au début de chaque récit, la stigmatisation dont le maître était la victime le plaçait d’emblée du côté des opposants. En le détachant de l’autorité, la stratégie textuelle le transforme en adjuvant: il fait cause commune avec les héros. Ainsi le glaive de l’exécuteur de Lille qui pallie à l’impuissance des mousquetaires. La stratégie lui fait aussi suivre un parcours parallèle à celui des héros, car ces derniers, chez Dumas, ne le deviennent qu’à partir du moment où ils se libèrent du pouvoir et se dressent contre lui. Comme eux, mais à un degré moindre, les bourreaux suscitent tantôt l’admiration, tantôt l’identification du lectorat. En leur octroyant une fonction actancielle à part entière et une évolution évoquant celle du sujet, la stratégie narrative pousse le public à repenser ses idées préconçues quant à l’exécuteur, et à travers lui, le système légal, l’hypocrisie de la justice et la peine de mort.

Clef de voûte du récit, le bourreau-adjuvant participe, bien sûr, à l’élaboration comme à l’éclatement du Sujet. C’est par ses soins que La Mole et Coconnas s’unissent, c’est par son glaive qu’ils meurent et que l’amitié des Mousquetaires prend fin. Toutefois, la fonction de l’exécuteur ne saurait se limiter au récit: elle façonne la lecture du public et agit hors les pages. Il y a d’abord la frustration des lecteurs, provoquée par l’œuvre du bourreau: l’exaspération est d’autant plus grande que ce dernier, devenu une figure admirable, est doté d’une conscience. Ensuite, le bourreau permet aux héros de ne pas mourir tout à fait, au récit de ne pas s’achever et à la réflexion de se poursuivre, même quand on a fermé le livre. En effet, lorsque Caboché noue les mains des dépouilles de La Mole et Coconnas, l’amitié des deux hommes prend un lien éternel qui n’est pas sans rappeler Tristan et Iseult, pérennisant de la sorte le souvenir tragique de leur exécution. Le maître de Lille entraîne une démarche

comparable: la mort de Milady, et l'amitié brisée des Mousquetaires, laissent le lecteur sur sa faim tandis que son meurtre hante le deuxième volet de la trilogie, et les mémoires de tous. *La Reine Margot* et *Les Trois Mousquetaires* sont censés appartenir au genre du roman populaire, connu pour satisfaire les attentes du public. La figure du bourreau les transforme en "œuvres ouvertes" et "problématiques" c'est-à-dire, en œuvres qui appellent à la réflexion parce qu'elles proposent des "fins ambiguës" en remettant en question les notions acquises de Bien et de Mal (Eco 19). La figure du bourreau dumasien ne saurait se limiter à une fonction actancielle dans le récit: elle devient l'adjuvante de l'abolitionnisme.

Conclusion

Quelques années avant de rédiger les *Mousquetaires* et *Margot*, Alexandre Dumas a formulé le vœu d'agir sur la société: "Semons . . . la parole, et les croyances . . . repousseront" (*Midi* 275). Nombre de ses contemporains ont nié son engagement dans les domaines de la politique et des problèmes sociétaux. Certes, il n'a pas milité ouvertement à la manière de Hugo, et c'est peut-être par prudence: après tout, il s'est déjà battu les armes à la main dans la révolution de 1830 et, à plusieurs reprises, son opposition politique lui a fait encourir la prison. La volonté de "semmer la parole," c'est-à-dire d'influencer son public, reste bien présente dans son œuvre. On ne saurait affirmer que *Margot* et les *Mousquetaires* aient été écrits dans le seul but de dénoncer la peine de mort: ils soulèvent d'autres questions chères à Dumas, notamment celle de la démocratie dans les *Mousquetaires*. Constituant un thème récurrent dans les deux œuvres comme dans *Monte-Cristo* qui fut écrit à la même époque, la peine capitale rend compte du positionnement de l'auteur et de sa volonté de diriger le public contre une pratique inique et barbare. Comme nous l'avons vu, les *Mousquetaires* et *Margot* accueillent toute une stratégie. La voix narrative s'approprie les perceptions et convictions des lecteurs pour mieux les orienter contre la peine de mort: l'exécuteur apparaît comme une âme tourmentée, géniale et incomprise; c'est une victime de l'hypocrisie du système judiciaire, de l'autorité et de la

société. Ce n'est pas dans le pilori ou dans les bois de province qu'il faut chercher le bourreau: celui qui tue, le véritable assassin, c'est la Loi. Pour s'assurer la pleine réception de ce message, la stratégie narrative s'emploie à briser les règles du roman populaire en ne répondant pas aux attentes du public. Dès lors, il semble légitime de remettre en question le genre des romans d'Alexandre Dumas qui, sous le masque de l'amuseur, a cherché à changer la société.

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PART TWO

POLITICS AND THE TRIVIALIZATION OF EVIL

The Appropriation of Female Pain in the Use of the Witch Hunt Metaphor in Modern Political Rhetoric

KAITLYN GRUBE

North Dakota State University, United States

Reports of the Russian government influencing the outcome of the 2016 presidential elections brought the term ‘witch hunt’ into popular political discourse in January 2017 (Wolf). President Donald Trump called the reports “[t]he greatest Witch Hunt in American History” (@realDonaldTrump). The president’s use of the term on social media platforms has sparked a rash of witch hunt allegations by other political candidates. By calling something a witch hunt, politicians are implying that the accusations of wrongdoing from opposing political parties are founded on false claims. The unconscious association of this term with the early American and European witch trials calls to mind a period rife with false accusations and innocent deaths, implying that the accusations against these politicians must also be false.

The history of the witch hunt narrative in political discourse is much more complex than a simple metaphor would suggest. Acknowledging the original witch trials is not enough; we must also understand the complex social structures that allow this metaphor to exist within the grasp of primarily male political candidates, in this case President Donald Trump. The gender performativity inherent in the witch hunt metaphor must be studied and acknowledged in current political rhetoric to really understand how the witch hunt metaphor influences society.

History

The history of the witch hunts as a physical act garnered impressive amounts of attention in previous scholarship. Scholars have found interest in the history, the sociopolitical outcomes, and the possible causes of the trials. The term ‘witch’ as defined by Merriam-Webster Dictionary is “one that is credited with usually malignant supernatural powers; *especially*: a woman practicing usually black witchcraft often with the aid of a devil or familiar” (“Witch”). This definition finds its roots in the European witch trials, which ran from “roughly 1450 to 1750” in which “thousands of persons, most of them women, were tried for the crime of witchcraft. About half of these individuals were executed” (Levack 1). The witch trials, however, did not come from nowhere. Political and social change seems to have been one of the instigators of the frenzy of accusations. The witch trials came at a time of major social upheaval, a time when conflicting social orders tried to assert themselves.

Attempts to regulate the rapid social changes resulted in the first major treatise addressing witch trials. Heinrich Institoris published *The Malleus Maleficarum* in 1486. While the *Malleus* did “not directly inspir[e] a frenzy of witchcraft prosecutions, nevertheless [it] did make an important contribution to the development of the entire European witch-hunt” (Levack 56). Institoris uses the example of the *Canon Episcopi* (hereby referred to as the *Canon*) in his explanation of witches (Institoris 48). The *Canon* doesn’t mention “workers of harmful magic” though it does mention “silly women [who think they ride with Diana]” who seem to have powers in conjunction with those of a witch (Institoris 48). Institoris believes this passage talks about witches, which indicates a gendered aspect to the term because the *Canon* specifically refers to “silly women,” not silly people or silly men. Later in the *Malleus*, the gendered reading of the term ‘witch’ is specifically addressed when Institoris states that:

[t]he reason determined by nature is that [a woman] is more given to fleshly lusts than a man, as is clear from her many acts of carnal filthiness. One notices

this weakness in the way the first woman was moulded . . . from this weakness one concludes that, since she is an unfinished animal, she is always being deceptive. All this is shown by the etymology of the word [“woman”], because *femina* is derived from *fe* [faith] and *minus* [less], since she always has less faith and keeps it [less]. (Institoris 75)

In this passage, Institoris indicates that women are not only weaker in faith than men, but they are also physically unable to resist the lure of, in this case, witchcraft. Not only does this perpetuate the idea of a strict gender dichotomy, as Judith Butler states in *Gender Trouble*, it also “refuses the multiplicity of cultural, social, and political intersections in which the concrete array of ‘women’ are constructed” (*Gender Trouble* 19). Women are not human beings with an infinite possibility of personalities in Institoris’s eyes. Instead, women are a static, predictable being, never changing.

Instead of suggesting that anyone could sell themselves to the devil and become a witch, Institoris indicates that female persons especially are vulnerable to this type of wrongdoing. The ‘witch’ in this section is defined as a woman who “co-operated with an evil spirit” and entered into “a pact whereby the witch really and actually does offer and bind herself entirely to the Devil, not just in her fantasy and imagination. She is obliged, therefore, to co-operate with the Devil physically and in reality” (Institoris 48). Translator P.G. Maxwell-Stuart mentions in his annotation of *The Malleus Maleficarum* that “although these women think they are riding with Diana, they are actually riding with the devil . . . witches are obligated to obey the evil spirit in everything” (Institoris 48). The freewill many of the accused women portrayed in their everyday lives became synonymous with slavery to an evil spirit that is engendered male. The women viewed as witches were outside the control of the traditional male household; therefore, there needed to be a male who directed their actions, even if that male figure was a demon.

A large majority of women who worked outside male control were women who sold herbs and potions to the sick. Women, “[d]enied the ancient role of clergy or the newly emerging one of doctor . . . drew on their own networks of

information and skills inherited from their mothers to serve as privileged counselors and practitioners” (Barstow 109). The powers that women possessed in this position put them between the position of priest or doctor, a position entirely its own. This unique position is what put these women in such danger in the first place. As the witch trials gained momentum, the “records speak eloquently of the fear of the wise women that developed, especially in men. The role of the healer, long respected and even seen as essential, became suspect” (Barstow 109). The popular representations of women in the witch trials followed the strict dichotomy of the ‘angel’ and the ‘monster.’ The dawn of Christianity brought about the image of the Virgin Mary, “a mother goddess . . . the eternal type of female purity was represented not by a Madonna in heaven but by an angel in the house” (Rivkin and Ryan 814). The performativity of womanhood started to change from healer and spiritualist to angel. The angel in the house became the “interpreters or intermediaries between the divine Father and his human sons,” in which the purpose of a woman was inextricably tied to the servitude of her male relatives (Rivkin and Ryan 815). Women accused of witchcraft were often “old, ugly, or bad-tempered,” women who were outside the control of their male counterparts (Whitney 79). The dichotomy of the mother Mary and the fallen woman Eve becomes evident in the witch trials when the so-called fallen women, the monsters, are persecuted.

The persecution of women who fell outside the careful definition of ‘angel of the house’ can be seen specifically in the witch trials of the Flower family in England in 1613. The Flower family consisted of a mother and two daughters, Margaret and Philippa (Barstow 97). The women were indicted on accusations of witchcraft from a powerful earl (Barstow 98-99). As women outside the traditional household run by a male relative, the Flower women did not fit into the definition of an angel in the house. They performed a separate aspect of femininity by working as housekeepers and washers, a femininity that allowed for the pursuit of monetary independence from male counterparts (Barstow 97). Because they performed a different aspect of femininity, their freedom from male control became a sign of witchcraft, of a monster. Outside the traditional household,

the women didn't have the protection provided by the property laws of the time. The three women were persecuted after they were fired from their jobs working for the very same earl that accused them of witchcraft, a man who blamed them for the loss of his youngest son only a few months later (Barstow 98). All three Flower women ended up dying as a result of the witch trials held against them. Mother Flower died before her trial, "raising the possibility that the prisoners were maltreated" (Barstow 98). The two sisters were both hanged as a result of confessions that suggested "they were threatened with torture" (Barstow 98-99). Maltreatment was not an uncommon factor in the death of women accused of witchcraft as oversight committees feared the women just as ardently as their hunters.

The treatment of women during the witch trials went largely unacknowledged in scholarship until the 1970s. The gendered aspects of the witch trials didn't receive proper academic research until author E. William Monter acknowledged that "witchcraft accusations could best be understood as projections of patriarchal social fears onto atypical women, that is, those who lived apart from the direct male controls of husbands or fathers and were therefore defenseless, isolated, and unable to revenge themselves by the more normal means of physical violence or recourse to law courts" (Whitney 80). It wasn't until the mid-1990s that there is an acknowledgement of the gendered language in witch hunt scholarship. Elspeth Whitney points out that "there is a tendency . . . to use the generic male pronoun for everyone . . . except in the case of the witches themselves for whom the generic female pronoun is used" (Whitney 82).

This brief overview of the historical aspects of the physical witch hunts is by no means a complete establishment of the literature available, only a review of aspects necessary to understand the implications of the witch hunt metaphor in current political rhetoric. While the historical documentation of the witch trials is important to our understanding, it is also important to look at "utterances of any kind and in any medium, including cultural practices—in terms of specific historical and contextual meanings" (Scott 35). It is important, then, to look at the continued use of the metaphor of the witch hunt in twenty-first century political discourse to fully understand the

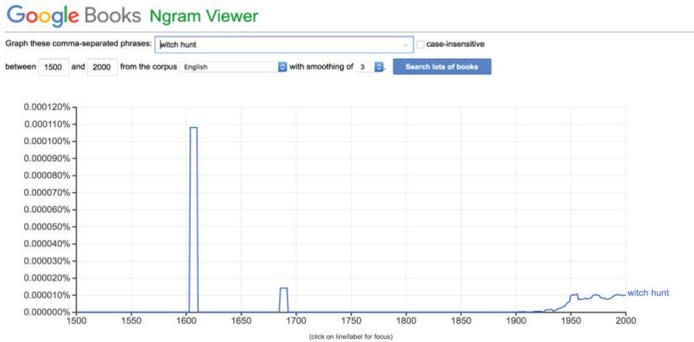
gendered codification of the term ‘witch’ and how male politicians use this term today.

The Political Metaphor of the Witch Hunt

Politicians use metaphors often in speeches, public addresses, and statements. Oftentimes, these speeches erupt from a theatricality intended to persuade an audience to some belief. The metaphors used in these speeches often invoke an ideology or myth that appeals to conscious and unconscious schools of thought influenced by cognitive associations. Metaphors are “effective because of their ability to resonate with latent symbolic representations residing at the unconscious level” (Mio 130). The use of the witch hunt metaphor in modern political discourse represents a call back to the devastation of the witch trials in the United States and beyond. Addressing issues by using a metaphor can help simplify complex issues and make them understandable to the general public (Mio 118).

The issue that comes from political metaphors is that metaphors *do* simplify complex issues. The historical, social, and institutional “structure of statements, terms, categories, and beliefs” all contribute to the discourse surrounding a subject and the understanding of that subject (Scott 35). George Orwell’s 1938 memoir *Homage to Catalonia* specifies “No doubt the leaders had always realized that the party was likely to be suppressed, but they had never expected a wholesale witch-hunt of this description” (Orwell 166). Previous to Orwell’s usage, the term ‘witch hunt’ wasn’t often used in print culture. The Google NGRAM algorithm found that instances of the phrase ‘witch hunt’ spiked in the early 1600s with the rise of traditional witch hunts. The phrase spiked again from 1685 to 1692. Both of these spikes are represented in Figure 1. In the early seventeenth century, at the start of the witch trials, the term is once again brought into popular print culture.

Figure 1:



The metaphor of the witch hunt came back into popular circulation in 1897 and continued to become more commonly used, as shown in Figure 1. In the 1940s and the 1950s, McCarthyism engaged in a political ‘witch hunt’ against communist sympathizers where the term spikes and stays in political rhetoric. This is the last instance of a witch hunt involving a wide spread physical hunt in the United States. Between the 1950s and the 1980s, the term witch hunt evolves into a political metaphor. In the 1980s, child sexual assault cases against daycares produced a ‘witch hunt,’ and in the last year the president of the United States has used the witch hunt narrative in reference to ongoing investigations by the FBI and news media rhetoric.

The political metaphor of the witch hunt became a metaphoric description for unfounded accusations against a person or group of people, a metaphor that no longer accompanies a physical act. This is the narrative encountered in political discourse today. The term ‘witch hunt’ is used by politicians as a call back to the original witch hunts and is meant to indicate unfair prosecution from an opposing political party. Most curiously, male politicians use the metaphor more often than female politicians, even though accusations of witchcraft were levelled primarily against women.

Current Witch Hunt Metaphor Usage in Social Media

The use of the term ‘witch hunt’ on President Donald Trump’s Twitter from 24 April 2019 stated “. . . Congress has no time to legislate, they only want to continue the Witch Hunt, which I have already won” (@realDonaldTrump). This use references the allegations of Russian interference in the 2016 presidential elections. The first tweet referencing the witch hunt by President Trump came on 10 January 2017. As of 3 August 2018, President Trump used the term ‘witch hunt’ a total of 84 times on Twitter alone (Paschal). President Trump continues to deny allegations, “although a number of his former aides and campaign officials have pleaded guilty to lying to federal officials or have been indicted” (Wolf). Whether these allegations are truly false remains to be seen.

Response to the term ‘witch hunt’ being used in the political arena has been mixed. Twitter user @krassenstein wrote, “NEWSFLASH: The “Witch Hunt” found 10 instances of Obstruction” The “Witch Hunt” showed that your campaign was embracing the help of Russians as they attacked our democracy. The “Witch Hunt” indicted 15 people, many of them from a hostile government” (@krassenstein). Twitter user @krassenstein is referring to the Mueller investigations and the ensuing results where multiple workers for the Trump campaign in 2016 were indicted. The workers may or may not have been working under President Trump’s orders, but no charges have been levelled against the president. Another Twitter user, responding to the same tweet by the president, says; “Catchphrase #1! Catchphrase #2! EXCLAMATION POINT! Ellipsis with a random number of dots to be followed a good amount of time later by another statement that begins with an ellipsis with a random number of dots! REPEAT!” (@texastabx). This Twitter user specifically calls out the performativity of President Trump’s social media interactions. President Trump’s tweets involving the witch hunt accusations are often framed by multiple instances of exclamation points, ellipsis, and random capitalization. To some social media viewers, this theatricality rings false. To

other viewers, the frame of the tweets provides much needed consistency.

Some social media users display their support avidly. Twitter user @Dorothy43751615 responded to President Trump's tweet with "I have been praying that all the evil people in the government will leave or be taken out by you President Trump or by God. Thank you for your service to our country" (@Dorothy43751615). Twitter user @Dorothy43751615 is showing her support for the current president and, in turn, accepting the metaphor of the witch hunt as an accurate portrayal of the overall investigation. The term "evil people" indicates that @Dorothy43751615 considers the accusations against President Trump to be false claims, thereby not only accepting, but perpetuating the metaphor of the witch hunt (@Dorothy43751615).

Since metaphors bring to mind unconscious associations, President Trump's use of the term 'witch hunt' simplifies the investigations by associating them with previous witch trials. Investigations where little to no evidence of wrongdoing ended in "50,000 legal death penalties" between 1400 and 1800 (Behringer 156). This unconscious association assumes that Mueller seeks to unfairly victimize those connected with the 2016 Trump campaign. Used in this way, the metaphor seeks to make "guilt and innocence . . . irrelevant" (Bergeson 223). In this case, the use of the term avoids discussing the actual guilt or innocence of the accused, instead focusing on distrust of the accuser. In the case of the Mueller investigation, President Trump is promoting the distrust of a man in a position of political power, a position close to the position of the accusers of witches in the medieval period.

As discussed previously, the witch trials heavily focused on the persecution of female persons. Considering the gendered nature of the original witch hunts, the person using the term 'witch hunt' should be seen as female or feminine while the accuser should be coded as male or masculine. One of the defining traits of a witch is her womanhood or lack of physical and spiritual strength found in men (Institoris 75). The problem with this statement is that it assumes all women are the same and perform femininity the same way. The idealization of gender performativity assumes that the gendered body is "compelled

to ‘cite’ the norm in order to qualify and remain a viable subject” (*Bodies That Matter* 232). To be a woman naturally progresses into performing the “ideals of femininity . . . related to the idealization of the heterosexual bond” (*Bodies That Matter* 231-232). These performances of gender are “not the product of choice, but the forcible citation of a norm, one whose complex historicity is indissociable from relations of discipline, regulation, punishment” (*Bodies That Matter* 232). The social change surrounding women’s rights brought about an unavoidable purge of persons outside the social norms to reinforce the expected gender performance, specifically of women. The witch trials punished women who did not fit into the expected gender performativity that is “tenuously constituted in time” (*Gender Trouble* 191). The women in the witch trials became the victims of a larger social dispute. Instead of reinforcing the diversity of womanhood, the witch trials intended to reinforce the expected social performativity.

This is of particular interest when considering the gender performativity President Trump has engaged in throughout his campaign and subsequent presidency. President Trump runs his campaign and presidency on the doctrine that “[o]nly a sexually powerful man can make a politically powerful nation” (Friedland). President Trump specifically genders himself hypermasculine. His hypermasculinity is based on the idea that other men are “unable to practise [masculinity] in its idealized form” and that people will respond well to a prototypical alpha male (Swain 169). Instead of moving toward a nuanced understanding of what it means to be masculine, President Trump reverts to the traditional role of the masculine male. He is performing the opposite role to the women being tried in the witch trials who tended to be, in some way, subverting the traditional role of the women in medieval society.

In attempting to achieve the idealized masculinity of traditional American society, President Trump made it known that he previously “owned the Miss Universe Organization, which also runs Miss USA, from 1996 to 2015,” the access to beautiful young women engendering him as an example of masculinity (Friedland). This became especially controversial when Trump alleged he was allowed to walk into the dressing rooms of the beauty pageants while the

girls were getting dressed because he was the owner (Merica). Later testimony from various contestants in the beauty pageants revealed that some of the girls were underage and competing for the Miss Teen USA title (Merica). These allegations are in the process of being investigated; however, the continued access to beautiful young women still acts as a status symbol. This isn't the only status symbol President Trump flaunts when it comes to women.

Beautiful women are of no shortage in President Trump's life. Another way President Trump performs masculine tendencies is through his multiple marriages. President Trump has been married three times. His first wife, Ivana Trump, was a New York fashion model and competed in the 1972 Olympics ("Donald Trump Biography"). Together, President Trump and Ivana have three children. President Trump's second wife, Marla Maples, was an actress and bore him one child ("Donald Trump Biography"). President Trump is currently married to his third wife, Melania Trump, who is "over 23 years his junior" ("Donald Trump Biography"). Together, the couple has one son. The continued, unfettered access to beautiful young women becomes a status symbol in this case, especially when the male is married multiple times to women significantly younger than him. Another status symbol tied into President Trump's marriages is the perceived virility of fathering multiple children. President Trumps has five children, at least one with a woman significantly younger than him. Being able to produce a family and provide for a family is a very strong indicator of perceived masculinity.

Having a large family necessitates the ability to provide for that family. Trump's position in society "is determined by an array of social, cultural, physical, intellectual and economic resources" (Swain 171). As of 2017, Trump's net worth was "\$3.1 billion. Of that, \$1.6 billion is in New York real estate; \$570 million is in gold clubs and resorts; \$500 million is in non-New York real estate; \$290 million is in cash and personal assets; and \$200 million is in brand businesses" ("Donald Trump Biography"). While there have been some investigations into how much the Trump Organization is actually worth, the fact remains that

President Trump has managed to achieve a level of financial stability many people can't even begin to imagine.

Financial success, beautiful women, and power are just some of the ways President Trump attempts to engender hypermasculinity. These expressions of overt masculinity appeal to a nation that wants to reaffirm itself as a political patriarchy. The election of Donald Trump to the presidency “was considered a resounding rejection of establishment politics by blue-collar and working-class Americans” (“Donald Trump Biography”). The gender norms President Trump subscribes to play into the “social fictions” of gender identity (*Gender Trouble* 191). His presidency is “a return to the masculine principle as the ground of the order of creation” (Friedland). How do the overt displays of masculinity President Trump bases his campaign on interact with the female coding of the witch hunt?

Once again, we have to consider gender as a performance. Just as the term ‘girl’ “initiates the process by which certain “girling” is compelled,” the term ‘witch’ also brings to mind a certain performance of witching (*Bodies That Matter* 232). In the case of the early witch trials, the performativity of witching included a rejection of social norms associated with femininity. The changing social expectations of early modern Europe meant the feminine roles in society were being reconsidered and the social upheaval resulted in traditionally feminine places becoming suspect. These women, especially the ones outside male control, became the face of persecution. And, in this way, the performance of femininity started to change. However, the changing face of femininity, and gender as a whole, does not explain the ways in which male political candidates have appropriated female pain. The term ‘witch hunt’ is a call back to specific pain experienced primarily by female persons.

The repeated use of the term ‘witch hunt’ by male political candidates not only refers to a full history of female oppression, but also enforces the gender dynamic of the feminine as weak and victimized. Popular theorists like Judith Butler argue that gender is a spectrum and created through performativity, suggesting that everyone performs some form of masculinity and femininity to certain degrees. Gender in conservative political agendas functions specifically as a binary (*Gender Trouble* 19). The line

between masculinity and femininity is a hard line that is never crossed. President Donald Trump enforces the idea of gender as a strict binary throughout his campaign and his presidency. The strict performance of masculinity President Trump engages in becomes subverted with the introduction of the witch hunt metaphor into popular media rhetoric. The word ‘witch’ is irrevocably coded feminine. Current rhetoric and media have created other terms to indicate male practitioners of witchcraft including sorcerer, wizard, etc. These masculine coded terms do not make an appearance in President Trump’s rhetorical discussions involving the Mueller investigations. Instead, the term used to refer to this investigation is ‘witch hunt.’ If we accept the feminine coding of the term ‘witch hunt’ and also accept the hypermasculinity of President Trump’s presentation of himself, how and why does President Trump code himself as feminine in these specific instances and how does this interact with his hypermasculinity?

As stated previously, President Trump viciously enforces a gender binary. The performativity of gender is simply adhering to the sociocultural norms implemented in a time and place (*Bodies that Matter* 95). When President Trump uses the metaphor of the witch hunt, he is calling, perhaps unconsciously, on the collective memory of oppression, violence, and death that affected a large population of women, whether this is what he intends or not. In these instances, President Trump is negotiating his “relationship with larger social constructs” (Mendoza-Denton 475). As he continues to articulate an identity through language, President Trump commodifies and appropriates female pain. His performance is meant as a “process of signification” and “[t]he rejection of textual sovereignty, of authorial or directorial authority” (Reinelt 202). Instead of living in the aftermath of the witch trials in the same way all women must, male politicians use these instances of gendered pain to cloud the very real possibility of significant wrongdoing. In the case of President Trump, the performativity of a victim is inextricably tied to the witch hunt narrative.

The performance of femininity and the appropriation of pain President Trump attempts to articulate in his tweets falls along the lines of a “theatrical performance” (Reinelt

201). The performativity he illustrates within these conversations is a largely empty gesture not meant to raise awareness to the circumstances of the original witch trials, but instead meant to detract from honest accusations of wrongdoing (Reinelt 201). Instead of acknowledging the very real horror of the original witch trials to women, President Trump uses the legacy of these trials as a tool in his performance of innocence. Performativity, specifically gender performativity, is something seen throughout the president's career, not only as president, but as a businessman. His continued performativity of hypermasculinity is just one example of the way President Trump presents himself through gender dichotomies. The most important tool to the continued performance of political rule and identity is language. The language used throughout the social media campaign President Trump put together to prove his innocence necessitates a proper term to denote innocence and wrongful accusations, a term President Trump found in the use of 'witch hunt.' Therefore, President Trump uses female coded language with a history of feminine pain in his defense.

The female pain surrounding the witch trials is not mentioned in this campaign. The unacknowledged history of female pain surrounding the witch hunt narrative leaves an odd space open for interpretation by audiences when the overall assumption of history was that men and women experience history in the same way (Whitney 79-80). As shown previously, some supporters of President Trump believe in his innocence and accept the witch hunt metaphor as fact while others question the use of the metaphor when collusion has been proven, even if only through advisors and staff members related to the 2016 Trump Presidential campaign.

The use of women's history as a shield paradoxically does nothing to damage the president's performativity of peak masculinity. His legacy of overt masculinity stays firmly intact during these conversations. His use of feminine coded language and his continued use of social media to display his opinions becomes "a field of experimentation where [he] can text [his] capacity for and the possibilities of constructing reality" (Reinelt 208). Just as gender identity as a spectrum is a continued construction, so is the reality of political

debate. President Trump, through his metaphors and bragging, supporters and detractors, continues to build a reality that frames hypermasculinity at the forefront of politics (Friedland). The language used in President Trump's overall campaign and social media usage relates to the hypermasculine image he has composed for himself while the term 'witch hunt' falls definitively outside this carefully constructed narrative.

The term 'witch hunt' has been and will continue to be a feminine coded term. The history of the witch hunts in early modern Europe and the continued legacy in the United States is a prime instance of women's history that is still in the process of receiving full recognition. The sociopolitical upheaval of the early modern period resulted in widespread persecution with the prime suspects of witchcraft were "the weakest members of the community" and, more often than not, female (Whitney 79). The call back to the devastation of the witch hunts in modern political rhetoric attempts to recall the persecution of innocent people with little to no evidence of wrongdoing, a persecution that was often carried out based on false accusations. However, modern political rhetoric purposefully refuses to acknowledge the gendered aspects of the original witch trials because the most common political entities using this defense are male politicians in positions of extreme power.

President Trump himself uses the witch hunt defense multiple times to defend himself against accusations of wrongdoing, especially in the case of the Mueller investigations. The overt masculinity President Trump has displayed throughout his campaign and his time in office leaves little doubt that the witch hunt defense is a performative gesture (Reinalt 201). President Trump aligns himself with the accused women in the witch trials even though, historically, he would never have been accused of witchcraft in the first place. In fact, based on historical evidence, President Trump, in a place of rampant political power, would have likely been one of the perpetrators of the witch trials instead of a victim. While the language President Trump uses to represent himself on social media is coded as feminine in some cases, President Trump himself continues to identify himself as overtly masculine. His masculinity detracts from the central idea of his defense, that the

allegations brought against him in the face of possible collusion with Russia are just as false and ridiculous as the early modern witch trials.

Recognizing the performative and theatrical power of language usage is necessary to critically analyze various evidentiary documents. Whether President Trump is innocent or guilty, he has appropriated female pain as a way to deflect investigative attention from himself. The appropriation of female history and female pain in the case of the early modern witch trials in Europe and the United States is unnecessary and out of line with the hypermasculine identity President Trump presents to his audience.

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Drones militaires et mal liquide Colonialité et technologie

ABDERRAHMAN BEGGAR
Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada

Et les drones ne sont pas appelés Predators [Prédateurs] ou Reapers [Éventreurs] pour rien. Ce sont des machines à tuer. Sans juge ni jury, d'un clin d'œil, ils détruisent des vies
Medea Benjamin 28⁴⁴

Depuis Saint Augustin, un ex-adepte de Mani et son manichéisme, la pensée judéo-chrétienne est restée fidèle au principe de la destinée humaine comme étant une lutte continue entre le bien et le mal. Et ce n'est pas pour rien que dans *Par-delà le bien et le mal*, pour exprimer la mort de Dieu, Nietzsche a décidé de s'attaquer à cette dichotomie fondamentale. De toute évidence, le mal a été toujours considéré en termes de déficit. Pour Saint Augustin, il est l'indicateur du manque du bien et ne peut exister que quand son opposé est absent. Pour Paul Ricœur, il est surtout le produit d'une contradiction (sur le plan logique) propre à la foi en un Dieu sensé être bon et capable de tout. Pourtant, il permet au mal d'exister. Pour, quelqu'un comme Terry Eagleton, il est déficit communicationnel, comme ce qui échappe au pouvoir de l'expression et par là à la compréhension. Le fondement d'un tel positionnement se trouve dans le Protestantisme. Ainsi, de l'avis du Robert W. Jenson le mal est "l'incarnation d'un vide . . . La seule description possible du diable ne peut se faire qu'en termes de . . . ses déficiences" (Oldridge 3). Avec Zygmunt

⁴⁴ En anglais dans le texte originel. Toutes les traductions de l'anglais sont miennes.

Bauman et Leonidas Donskis, tout en liant le mal à l'idée de manque, le débat dans ce domaine a pris une autre dimension grâce à l'invention du concept de "mal liquide," en opposition au "mal solide," qui se manifeste par l'impact qu'il laisse sur les victimes de toutes les violences. Quant au liquide, il échappe à toute logique dichotomisante et ne se pose même pas en catégorie. Il liquéfie, érode et abîme les opposés pour les fusionner dans un corps porteur de contradictions au point que la "guerre devienne paix et la paix guerre" (5). Il est ce qui fausse route à cause de sa plasticité et son pouvoir de métamorphose. Il peut même prendre l'identité du bien et se présenter comme ce qui "améliore la vie" dans une "neutralité impartiale" tout en conduisant à l'"amnésie morale" (3) et à l'"abandon de nos sensibilités" (13). Le déficit touche ici les limites et contours qui font les catégories tant morales qu'éthiques.

Colonialité et "violence objective"

Le post-colonialisme et la colonialité sont deux courants de pensée dont les divergences s'inscrivent essentiellement sur le plan historique; si pour le post-colonialisme, l'avènement de l'eurocentrisme remonte aux siècles des Lumières, pour la colonialité, son éclosion date du XVI^{ème} siècle, notamment avec la conquête des Amériques. Ce sont ces dynamiques coloniales qui de l'avis de penseurs comme Aníbal Quijano, Immanuel Wallerstein, Ramoón Grosfoguel et Walter Mignolo, continuent à nourrir les rapports de pouvoir à travers la planète. Ces continuités et résistances ne cessent de reproduire les mêmes hiérarchies sociales, catégories raciales, luttes idéologiques et mécanismes de domination. Pour cette raison, dans leur critique du post-colonialisme, ils remarquent que l'humanité n'a pas encore quitté l'étape coloniale, le colonialisme n'étant pas seulement une présence étrangère reposant sur un corps administratif civil et militaire, mais, surtout, une manière de penser, de voir le monde, de contribuer et d'assumer des rôles (Moraña, Dussel et Járegui). Les idées de Frantz Fanon, notamment dans *Les Damnés de la terre* et *Peau noire, masque blanc*, sur le phénomène de "colonialisme interne," des mécanismes d'internalisation de complexes coloniaux et leur reproduction se retrouvent dans les travaux autour de la

“colonialité du pouvoir”⁴⁵ et même du savoir, du genre et de l’État.

Cette colonialité repose sur ce que Slavoj Žižek, dans le cadre de sa critique du capitalisme, qualifie de violence “objective,” diffuse, sans visage, ni acteurs précis: “[C]ette violence n’est pas attribuée à des individus précis avec de mauvaises intentions. Elle est purement objective, systématique et anonyme” (Žižek 2008 13). Elle se reproduit par elle-même, s’autoféconde, se clone même. D’où l’usage par Žižek du mot “parthénogenèse” pour la définir. Dans le cas des drones, elle cible le fond même de ce qui définit l’homme: l’autonomie. Au dire de Marra et McNeil: “Les drones de demain vont passer de l’automation à l’autonomie.” Toujours selon les mêmes auteurs, ils auront la capacité d’agir sans intervention de l’opérateur humain (1141). Inspiré des travaux d’Achille Mbembe, dans un article sur “The Necropolitics of Drones,” Jamie Allison souligne que l’une des questions principales autour des assassinats ciblés par drones concerne l’option de léguer à la machine le pouvoir absolu de décider quand et où tuer. Selon l’auteur, le débat tourne autour de l’éventualité de voir “une machine à tuer autonome, chargée de prendre une vie humaine en se basant sur des distinctions algorithmiques entre cibles potentielles” (114). C’est le risque que décrivent par ailleurs Marra et McNeil en parlant de la nécessité de créer des lois qui prennent en considération ces changements radicaux. D’autres auteurs, notamment Mark Coeckelbergh, soulignent le fait que ces engins créent une “distance épistémologique et morale” à cause d’une sophistication qui réduit à zéro le rapport humain à la cible, le champ de bataille étant projeté sur un écran nourri de données informatiques qui neutralisent toute empathie. Pire encore, nous assistons à un phénomène de substitution de la cible humaine qui, pour Nina Franz, est tout simplement remplacée par “the data masses” (la masse de données). Ces données sont assemblées

⁴⁵ La colonialité est un concept lié au phénomène de persistance des logiques coloniales qui déterminent les rapports de pouvoirs. De l’avis d’Egla Martínez Salazar, il est ce “système du monde colonial/moderne au sein duquel le capitalisme, le racisme, et l’hétéropatriarchat s’interpénètrent. Ce phénomène ne peut être théorisé ni considéré comme relevant du ‘passé’ ou du ‘post’ [postcolonial], étant donné que le passé fait partie du présent” (5).

et traitées à partir de ce que Kathrin Maurer considère comme des “régimes scopiques” propres au drone, qui est en charge de les “interpréter,” “transmettre,” “médiatiser” et “utiliser” selon une configuration de la violence qui évacue toute norme éthique.

Mal liquide et réinvention de la guerre

Chez René Girard, la violence a été toujours considérée en rapport au “désir mimétique” qui, à son tour, obéit à la structure suivante: “Il y a d’abord l’objet, pense-t-on, ensuite les désirs qui convergent indépendamment sur cet objet, et enfin la violence, conséquence fortuite, accidentelle, de cette convergence” (214). L’usage des drones suit cette même ligne de pensée: d’essence stratégique, l’objet est de contrôler un territoire; un tel contrôle est désiré par plusieurs acteurs, ce qui déclenche des actes de violence. L’élément manquant dans ce schéma est le désirable (souvent confondu avec l’objet du désir), comme ce qui limite le désir en soi: nous désirons à partir d’une certaine imagination d’un futur (comme possibilité) qui dépend de l’acquisition de l’objet désiré. Or, quand il est question de drones, le désirable dépasse l’imagination de la guerre, telle que pratiquée jusqu’à nos jours, au point de remettre en cause le sujet désirant en l’extirpant même de son autonomie.

Pour identifier le désirable, rien de mieux que de considérer le point de vue de ceux célébrant le drone. Il est principalement, pour ses apologistes, la solution miracle qui permet de faire la guerre sans le spectre de la mort chez soi ou même sans le risque d’entrer en contact avec l’ennemi: une guerre aseptisée, télécommandée, secrète qui ne se décrit qu’en termes de gains sans pertes pour soi, une guerre où le champ de bataille est d’abord virtuel, où l’ennemi et son milieu sont tenus à l’écart, livrés à un œil implacable, insomniaque, ambulante et dévastateur, nourri constamment de données électroniques. Le désirable est un oxymore: la guerre sans mal.

Cette manière de voir repose sur une idée ancienne. Ainsi, selon Grégoire Chamayou, l’ancêtre du drone est le “téléchirique,” créé par l’ingénieur John W. Clark en 1964. Il consiste en une machine télécommandée, destinée à effectuer des missions dans un milieu hostile dans une

parfaite symbiose avec son opérateur, au point qu'elle "peut être considéré comme un *alter ego* de l'homme qui la dirige. Sa conscience se trouve effectivement transférée à un organisme mécanique invulnérable grâce auquel il est capable de manipuler des outils ou des équipements quasiment comme s'il les tenait entre ses propres mains" (13).

Le "téléchirique" se présente comme une fusion parfaite entre le vouloir sans bornes propre à la conscience et le pouvoir limité d'un corps humain incapable de s'aventurer dans un milieu inhospitalier. La machine habitée par la conscience, un mariage qui rappelle étrangement la fameuse formule de Gilbert Ryle dans son rejet du dualisme cartésien, "Ghost in the machine" (esprit/fantôme dans la machine), apporte la solution parfaite aux limites et risques que suppose un espace hostile. Toujours selon Chamayou, la conscience, s'arrache du corps qui reste derrière, dans une autre spatialité, au confort d'un bureau, devant un écran. L'organisme humain, avec ses faiblesses et limites, cède devant une machine qui se courbe devant les ordres télécommandés d'une conscience humaine travaillant de concert avec une autre conscience, programmée et liées à des réseaux informatisés.

Le drone est si tenu en estime que les qualités naguère vantées du soldat, tel le courage ou le renseignement ou encore l'exploration, ne sont plus de mode. Pire encore, la guerre devient ludique et son terrain est d'abord le jeu vidéo. D'ailleurs, ce n'est pas pour rien que, dans un article sur la manière dont le drone redéfinit le concept d'humain, Caroline Holmqvist part du principe qu'il dégage l'homme de l'expérience de la guerre en réduisant celle-ci à un jeu vidéo.

Ce "spectacle," loin du champ de bataille, relève d'une hégémonie portée à l'extrême. Si avant, la guerre proxy était l'affaire de mercenaires, de milices locales et, parfois, de gouvernements, maintenant des essaims de drones peuvent, téléguidés de loin et sans concessions, ni alliances, remplir les mêmes tâches de destruction avec le moindre engagement de la part de l'attaquant. L'hégémonie est le fruit d'une double négation du corps; d'abord, celui du soldat (remplacé par la machine) et, ensuite, celui de l'ennemi, détaché de son environnement social et présenté comme une entité abstraite, traquée avant d'être annihilée.

Par le secret qui entoure les opérations, leur déroulement sous forme de frappes rapportées non comme actes de guerre, mais comme simples “exécutions d’éléments hostiles”, ces actes (chacun pris isolément, hors de la perception usuelle de la guerre avec son économie, ses statistiques et ses aboutissements) dépouillent la violence guerrière de sa dimension événementielle; l’événement étant, de l’avis de Badiou, “quelque chose qui n’entre pas dans la loi immédiate des choses” (32). Nous entrons dans une ère de guerres oubliées, avec des conflits *ad eternum*, où le temps ne compte plus à cause d’une invisibilité doublée de froid technologique. Il s’agit bien de parties de “chasse à l’homme” (Chamayou) où le “double tap” (action de tirer un second missile destiné à ceux venus assister les victimes du premier) est monnaie courante, où l’on agit dans des terrains déclarés hors-la-loi, des zones interdites sous états d’exception, selon ce que Achille Mbembe appelle “nécropolitique”, cette souveraineté extrême qui donne le droit de surveiller et de tuer. La guerre se réinvente à partir d’un *no man’s land* éthique avec des pratiques nébuleuses et dévastatrices.

Toute confrontation armée a une valeur sémiologique et sémiotique. On s’entretue pour faire valoir une certaine vérité (autour d’une idéologie, une doctrine ou une territorialité) en même temps que, actantiellement, on veut s’affirmer, tenir un rôle actif et agissant. Un autre point commun: tous les conflits obéissent à une stratégie qui repose sur trois éléments fondamentaux: la mission, les moyens et la méthode. Dans toute guerre, la mission est la même: jouir de tous les “fruits” par la paix (qui dépend soit de la négociation selon une nouvelle donne ou de la capitulation ou, cas extrême, de l’extermination). En soi, la violence n’est qu’un moyen et la méthode est un ensemble de savoirs martiaux appliqués, selon la hiérarchie militaire et les divers corps qui en dépendent.

Colonialité à l’âge du drone

Considérons le conquistador, cette figure emblématique de la conquête des Amériques, qui est parti vers un monde inconnu avec une mission déterminée par le roi, qui consistait à découvrir et “pacifier” par l’épée et la croix. Il

devait adopter sa propre stratégie aux impératifs du terrain, tout en suivant les ordres royaux et en fournissant des comptes rendus sous forme de “crónicas,” ces récits destinés à montrer comment on obéissait aux ordres du souverain. Dans cette logique, dire que le drone est une arme stratégique est fallacieux. Cette attitude n’a rien à voir avec les catégories militaires d’arme stratégique et arme tactique. L’arme ne peut être que moyen, la mission (paix / pacification) étant élaborée selon une volonté politique légitime, surtout quand le pays menant la guerre se revendique comme démocratie libérale et non comme un régime totalitaire, dirigé par une junte militaire. Ce qui rappelle l’attitude de Max Weber à propos de l’État moderne comme monopolisateur légitime de l’usage de la force. Même sous la monarchie espagnole ou portugaise médiévale, le conquistador agissait selon la volonté d’un pouvoir central, incarnée dans la personne du roi ou de la reine qui, à son tour, envisageait les opérations selon une intentionnalité limitée par les moyens à sa disposition et le degré de tolérance de ceux qui en payaient les frais (le peuple et la noblesse, surtout marchande).

Actuellement, avec l’usage du drone, la colonialité atteint des niveaux inédits, surtout que la guerre relève de moins en moins de la volonté collective. L’intention n’est pas de dire que l’État (américain en l’occurrence) n’est pas l’auteur de la mission; au Yémen, en Somalie, en Afghanistan et bien d’autres régions, le drone est présenté comme relevant de la “stratégie de la guerre contre le terrorisme.” Son usage massif date de l’arrivée à la Maison blanche de l’ex-Président Barak Obama. Tenons à rappeler que toute démocratie repose sur un mécanisme de consultation et de reddition de comptes. Même si ces opérations étaient classées “secret défense,” le Président était tenu d’en informer le Congrès. Or, avec son successeur, Donald Trump, même le Congrès est tenu à l’écart: selon un ordre présidentiel, la CIA n’est plus tenu de rendre public le nombre de victimes civiles (BBC). Dans ce cas, la conception de pouvoir central n’inclut pas les diverses institutions démocratiques représentatives, dont la valeur est d’assurer la légalité de toute intervention armée. Le drone est devenu l’arme exceptionnelle (comme dans l’expression “état

d'exception”), une affaire entre le Président, en tant que commandant-en-chef, et ses généraux.

Avec cette arme, on assiste à un retour en arrière dramatique en matière du droit de guerre. Même l'esprit de la *Carta Magna* (datant de 1215) et son rejeton, l'*habeas corpus* (qui assurait le pouvoir d'un juge), ne sont plus respectés (Brisset). Nous assistons à un retour au monde qui préluait la naissance des institutions internationales, en premier lieu la Ligue des nations avec un non-respect accru du droit de la guerre et de l'esprit de la Déclaration universelle des droits de l'homme.

Cette régression n'implique pas seulement la notion de droit. Ce qui distingue la colonialité du colonialisme est qu'elle ne s'inscrit pas seulement dans la dichotomie colonisateur/colonisé; même dans les démocraties les plus puissantes, des élites (militaro-économiques et politiques) peuvent recréer les mêmes rapports que dans une colonie. La colonialité consiste à créer des catégories en vue de déterminer le comportement humain tout en imposant un ordre économique, social et culturel voulu. Si les Européens ont créé la catégorie de Noir c'était pour légitimer l'esclavage et fonder un ordre nouveau où la traite était le moteur. Avec la Révolution industrielle, cette catégorie fut remplacée par celle d'un prolétariat ouvrier croulant dans presque les mêmes conditions (Mignolo). Maintenant, avec le drone, une autre catégorie est créée; elle est constituée d'une main-d'œuvre anonyme (des opérateurs), aux conditions de travail précaires qui prend la place du soldat dans un monde où la guerre perd de plus en plus sa place mythologique et sa centralité dans l'imaginaire social. Les conflits n'ont plus besoin de héros, ni de monuments, ni de rituels. Tout ce qui reste est un prolétariat “ubérisé,” sans discipline militaire, avec comme lieu de travail des parcs de caravanes (Gusterson, Asaro). Cette atteinte au droit du travail et la menace de disparition à long terme du soldat, remplacé par des “joueurs-de-guerre” se fait dans l'indifférence, dans un fatalisme portant des masques aux noms pompeux: “progrès,” “science,” “changement,” pour n'en citer que ces quelques-uns.

L'usage des drones relève de l'exercice d'une souveraineté au-delà de toute mesure. Si, du moins depuis les Lumières, l'État de droit est le fondement de toute

démocratie, à l'heure actuelle, l'autre (même quand il s'agit de ses propre citoyens) est à exécuter extra-judiciairement.

Mal liquide et adaptation

Le mal liquide se manifeste par une apathie généralisée, fruit d'adaptation. Tout se passe comme dans l'histoire du couteau de Jeannot qui change la lame, puis le manche et le couteau reste le même. Un tel processus montre que la mêmeté n'est autre chose que cette amnésie qui entoure la substitution. La guerre est la même si tout a changé, du soldat à la géographie, à l'être humain dans son autonomie, à sa conscience morale et éthique. Tout est à substituer, à commencer par la mémoire.

L'histoire, surtout celle des conflits, se fait maintenant à partir de la conscience qui habite la machine. Cette conscience, appuyée sur l'idée de neutralité et de transcendance de tout ce qui est ethnoculturel ou religieux, cache sa portée idéologique, sa vision d'un monde avec seulement des vainqueurs et des vaincus, où l'ennemi est écrasé sans merci et où la conscience technologique est source d'hégémonie. L'analyse de Žižek de la fameuse expression de Søren Kierkegaard: "Le voisin n'est bon que mort" (3), en référence à la mort comme ce qui assure l'égalité absolue, a beaucoup à voir avec le "complexe du voisin," quand, selon le schéma girardien, le "mimétisme possessif" est incontrôlable. C'est là aussi une manière de dire que l'égalité ne peut se concrétiser qu'une fois toute concurrence est éliminée.

Le sommet de l'adaptation se voit dans la réaction d'une opinion publique américaine majoritairement en faveur de cette technologie (Benjamin 8-9). Cette opinion devient le baromètre de ce qui remporte la bataille contre le droit et réduit les responsabilités de l'État. Il suffit de voir comment les médias à grand public traitent les événements impliquant le drone pour voir comment le silence qu'impose la technologie rend synecdotique l'information. Celle-ci tourne autour de "frappes," de "terroristes" et de nombre de morts, dans une attitude qui banalise tout en dépouillant l'acte de tout sens de responsabilité, l'acteur étant une machine sans visage, dont l'intérêt est l'efficacité et non les conséquences morales, sociales, économiques. Et quand il

s'agit de “révéler” l'omnipissance de la machine, elle est décrite dans les termes usuels de célébration d'une prouesse scientifique comme surgissement dans le temps d'une nouveauté extrême, une possibilité d'exister concrétisée par l'être même du téléchirique (comme exploit d'une conscience humaine dans un cocon technologique) se révélant dans l'immaculé d'une existence extraite de la mémoire et du jugement.

L'une des manifestations extrême de ce mal liquide est quand l'autre est dépouillé même de son espace. Toute carte est politique dans la mesure où elle raconte des modes d'appropriation, de gestion, d'exploitation et de maintien d'un territoire, le tout selon des lois, des accords et traités. Avec l'entrée en scène du drone, cette réalité est niée et la carte est remplacée par celle générée par la machine selon des impératifs purement tactiques en vue de répondre à une seule exigence, celle de tuer. D'où leurs noms si révélateurs du “Kill boxes,” une technologie qui structure un territoire en formations tridimensionnelles et l'offre exclusivement en cible. Le “kill box” est aussi un terme technique qui “permet une attaque létale contre des cibles terrestres sans coordination avec la chaîne de commandement” (extrait du manuel d'entraînement des marines américains: *Manuals Combined* 65). Rien de plus cartésien. Le *res cogitans* se déclare en divinité horrible qui recrée le *res extensa* à partir de l'intention de le détruire. Le drone nie à l'autre d'exister dans son propre espace. Même le conquistador élaborait ses cartes en explorant les mondes inconnus, en concevait les résistances et acceptait l'idée d'une victoire relative. Il faisait même recours à la négociation et établissait des alliances.

Conclusion

Cette “révolution scientifique” se présente ainsi comme une rupture dans le sens d'un inédit qui se mesure à l'aune d'une mission naguère jugée impossible. L'idée de gain instantané et sans frais hypnotise et simplifie. Elle arrache l'événement (dans le sens qu'en donne Badiou, comme introduction de la différence dans la chaîne des continuités) de l'histoire et promet de creuser davantage le fossé entre armées surhumaines (une sorte de *technodivinités*), obsédées par la victoire à n'importe quel prix, guidées par une conscience

transcendant le droit au nom d'une vie à sens unique, et le reste de l'humanité.

Il n'est pas besoin de répéter combien le drone a causé une rupture dans la manière de faire la guerre, rupture dans le sens d'amputation. Ce qui se voit dans une imagination historique hypnotisée par la gratification sans frais. Tout ce qui intéresse est le gain à partir d'une perspective militaire, un gain tactique qui ne s'inscrit pas dans l'esprit de la stratégie, tel que décrit auparavant. Pourtant, n'oublions pas que l'histoire ne peut échapper à une lecture plurielle, marquée qu'elle est par des événements qui en assurent la topographie. Ceux-ci sont le pain quotidien de l'historien et le matériau premier dans la constitution de toute conscience collective. Ces événements s'enchevêtrent, frictionnent, fusionnent, se complémentent et s'opposent, de sorte que chacun est partie prenante d'une articulation événementielle, un corps organique. Pour illustrer mon propos, rien de mieux que de considérer le drone comme une arme miracle. Le miraculeux est le résultat d'un réductionnisme absolu.

La guerre, dépouillée de la peur ressentie par les parties belligérantes, comme élément qui en régule la portée, change de nature. Détournée de ses lieux usuels et de ses jeux de gain et perte, elle est maintenant l'apanage de milices, de bandes armées, ou de "loups solitaires" traqués par une technologie entre les mains de techniciens plutôt que de soldats disciplinés. Selon Chamieux, en l'absence de toute confrontation avec le soldat, le civil devient la cible. Cette "violence objective", diffuse et invisible, qui, selon Žižek dans *Violence*, "agit de nulle part" (10) est le fruit de mécanismes de normalisation propres à cette croyance commune et profonde en la mission de la science comme ce qui nourrit un sens de rupture sans précédent. Le "miracle" est partout. L'homme rapporte toutes les batailles et dompte toutes les résistances. Il dépasse tout, à commencer par ses propres rêves, ses mondes désirables. Néanmoins, une rupture n'est pas automatiquement une révolution, même quand nous avons affaire à des prouesses scientifiques sans précédent. Avant de parler de révolution, il faut que l'inédit s'inscrive dans une articulation événementielle. Si, comme le définit Badiou, en soi, l'événement constitue une rupture avec le cours normal des choses, pour constituer une révolution, il doit faire partie d'une pléthore de forces génératrices d'un

nouvel ordre. Pour “changer les coordonnées du possible” comme le souligne Rancière (8), une révolution doit se nourrir d’oppositions et de revendications, de volonté de détruire l’ancien selon un rêve impliquant plus d’une partie. Sans base solide ni large appui, elle devient une rupture sans lendemain meilleur, au mieux un cheval de Troie pour l’ordre ancien.

Le drone est le rejeton d’un scientisme exagéré, reproché naguère au positivisme, qui rattrape maintenant l’humanité. Cette fois, il se nourrit d’une foi au pouvoir hypnotisant qui dépouille l’histoire de la mémoire, comme ce qui assure un rapport organique des événements dans leur diversité, seule condition pour en assurer l’analyse. L’événement est détrôné par l’avènement, l’excitation consommatrice, l’appel aux complexes, l’exploitation de la paranoïa collective, le télescopage de l’imagination par le gadget. Ce qui compte alors c’est le hasard comme moteur de toute découverte, l’arrivée et non les pérégrinations, le nouveau à tout prix. Et tout ce qui gêne est écarté, à commencer par l’idée même de nécessité, comme enchaînement de causes et de conséquences qui donnent consistance à une narration.

Le drone est l’enfant ingrat de l’histoire, qu’il dévore de l’intérieur comme la larve l’hôte. La conscience qui l’âme ne garde en vue que sa propre mission et le reste est considéré comme autant de masques d’un même déterminisme, propre aux mythes tissés par une humanité vouée à disparaître pour renaître immortelle et toute puissante. La “simplicité,” ce concept développé par Alain Berthoz, est poussé à l’extrême: le complexe rendu simple à coup de formules, détour, codes et devient le principe même qui habite la nature et détermine l’évolution des espèces. La science doit s’en inspirer, mieux encore en faire le guide de toute avancée. La simplicité du drone réside dans son action de réduire le fondement de l’humain, à savoir la complexité et la contradiction. Appliquée au domaine de l’histoire, par son usage, à l’autel de l’efficacité martiale se sacrifient, en premier lieu, les droits humains et avec eux toute éthique, l’autre étant devenu une “vie nue” selon la fameuse expression de Giorgio Agamben.

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**Xi Jinping versus Zhang Yimou. 十面埋伏,
Embuscades tous-azimuts vs harcèlement
(professionnel & autre)**

和萌 RAYMOND DELAMBRE
AIR⁴⁶ architecture, Paris
Paris XI, France

**Deceptive 张艺谋. Problématique(s), scoop, Zhang
Yimou, maître persécuté**

L'enjeu consiste à analyser les avatars de tyrannie(s) au sein de la grande dictature selon ses représentations cinématographiques, République populaire (de Chine), qui "revendique la finalisation des discours."⁴⁷ Terrain privilégié, l'un des trois plus importants cinéastes, d'autant que nous programmons en festival(s) les œuvres zhangyimouiennes, spécialement au Lincoln, à un jet de pierres des Champs-Élysées (*without yellow vests*).

Afin de ne point remémorer que les *bad guys*, l'article traite des bourreaux, également victimes. Paradoxalement, celles-ci s'avèrent consubstantielles à l'existence de ceux-là. *In memoriam* . . . Originellement, découvrons simultanément le *making-of* sinon la fabrique (*gimmick*) aux tyrans, proies.

Le futur dresseur de quatre Ours berlinois, Lions vénitiens naquit en 1950 à Xi'an, capitale du Shaanxi. Mère doctoresse, surtout père, deux oncles officiers au Guo Min Dang, en relation(s) avec les héros nationalistes présentés par *Jin Ling Shi San Chai* en 2011, *Les Treize Fleurs de*

⁴⁶ Architecture Innovation Recherche.

⁴⁷ Raymond Delambre, "Mythologie du féminisme et du socialisme accouinés sur les écrans en République populaire de Chine," *The Lincoln Humanities Journal*, Volume 6, Fall 2018: 107. Rééducation...

Nankin. La Grande Révolution (anti)culturelle prolétarienne déporta le garçon dès 1966, durant une décennie de travail forcé en ferme, ensuite à l'usine, en raison de son ascendance.

Pendant sa déportation, Yimou s'exerça au dessin sur des portraits du président Mao Zedong. L'expérience de *Zhi Qing*, "jeune instruit" aux champs ne marqua pas seulement "l'artiste." La ruralité concernait *Huang Tudi* en 1984, *La Terre jaune*, *Hong Gao Liang* de 1987, *Le Sorgho rouge*, *Ju Dou* en 1990, *Qiu Ju Da Guansi* de 1992, *Qiu Ju, une femme chinoise*, *Wo De Fu Qin Mu Qin, Mon père et ma mère*, *Yi Ge Dou Bu Neng Shao, Pas un de moins*, tous deux en 1999. Pittoresquement, *Qiu Ju* égale un prénom paysan, certes assez plaisant, Chrysanthème d'Automne.

Biographiquement, *Zhi Qing* retentit sociopolitiquement. L'ex-déporté dénoncera constamment les bannissements, 我的父亲母亲, *Wo De Fu Qin Mu Qin*, qui introduisit 章子怡, *Zhang Ziyi*, captura derechef un Ours d'Argent (berlinois) en 2000, 山楂树之恋, *Shan Zha Shu Zhi Lian* de 2010, *L'amour sous l'aubépine*, 归来, *Gui Lai* de 2014. *De(ux) retour(s)*, récent, autorise à démontrer l'absence de dichotomie à travers (les voiles de) l'œuvre zhangyimouien, ni idéologiquement, ni esthétiquement.

Véritablement, aucune solution de continuité. Il ne convient point de conjecturer une rupture entre débuts, ultimes réalisations. En revanche, des philippiques proférées à son égard se transforment. D'aucuns considéreraient le *master* du 电影, *Dian Ying*, "cinéma" comme affidé d'État totalitaire.

Le "symbolisme" généralement entretenu recèle quelque potentialité transgressive. Détour symbolique, concurremment "recherche artistique" ainsi qu'évitement des foudres censoriales.

Du côté des chefs . . . 英雄, *Héros ou éloge de l'antihéros, au prisme de quelque random violence, d'une expérimentation spectatorielle*

From (super)villains to heroes . . . Le visionnaire continental chorégraphia en 2002 *Ying Xiong*. La *Berlinale* (synonyme

du *politically incorrect, gender evaluation* sans Grâce à Dieu, *peanut picture*) concéda à cette (super)production qui coûtait trente millions de dollars, entraînée par une musique de 譚盾, Tan Dun, un prix inédit, exotique à Berlin, ouverture de nouvelles perspectives dans l'art cinématographique. "Ciné-cimaise," *indeed*. Immense succès, jusqu'aux États-Unis (sinon Philadelphie).

Alors que sept royaumes composaient la Chine au troisième siècle avant Jésus-Christ, le futur empereur Qin, qui régnait sur la principauté occidentale, au demi-sourire joué par 陈道明, Chen Dao Ming, massacra afin d'unifier, pis, uniformiser. Au demeurant, (bien) moins monstrueux que Mao (Zedong). Plusieurs (autres) 英雄 fomentèrent un attentat contre le (violent) despote. Celui-ci craignait particulièrement *Lame Brisée*, interprété par 梁朝偉, Tony Leung Chiu Wai, *Flocon de Neige*, *i.e.* 张曼玉, Maggie Cheung, *Ciel Étoilé*, virevoltant, maussade Donnie Yen Ji Dan.

Emphatiquement, l'arrivée en magnifique char d'époque, fabuleusement réaliste, que nous retrouvâmes à Flushing, New York City, d'un médiocre agent, Wu Ming débuta *Ying Xiong*. Sans Nom, que jouait Jet Li (sans-dents, *yellow vest*), prétendit l'élimination de toutes ces menaces.

Politiquement, la confiance de l'autocrate établit l'objectif. Le dictateur permettrait à Wu Ming, de connivence avec ceux qui (se) sacrifièrent pour crédibiliser ses récits, de s'approcher. Partant, trône à portée d'épée. L'accès à quelque intimité dépend(ait) de certaine crédibilité.

Zhang Yimou, sur son scénario, coécrit par Li Feng, Wang Bin, complexifie en enchâssant des *flashbacks*, intégrant à la diégèse les versions subjectives (ra)contées par (un) Jet Li à contre-emploi, systématiquement souvent benoîtement assis face au tyran. Le gymnaste, acteur toutefois habituellement spécialiste ès "arts martiaux," sous-jouait. Le synopsis de la suspicion, défamiliarisation symboliserait l'historiographie, soumise à (ré)écriture.

Subtilement, justifions le(s) coloriste(s). La narration, fondée, rythmée selon les différentes variantes contées par Wu Ming, explique que les colorations fonctionnent à l'instar du prismatique, déformant. À chaque variation son camaïeu. Des revirements interrogent la notion d'objectivité, une idée

d'Histoire. Impossibilité d'écrire la vérité, rimant avec opacité.

Métafilmiquement, Zhang Yimou sonderait la perte des repères. Les événements (se) décomposèrent en phénomènes optiques. Proposant des *scenarii* alternatifs, cumulatifs en dépit de l'unicité filmique, le coloriste perturbe le lien entre les différentes phases d'un épiphénomène ou prodige, diversement perçu(es), en recourant à une magnificence de couleurs, la confection d'authentiques "peintures filmées."

Globalement, quelque propagande univoque bénéficiant à la domination, dans la mesure où l'assassin pressenti renonce ultimement au meurtre, en faveur d'un certain *statu quo*, ne résume guère. Le codage transmute(ra)it l'idéologie dominante, la subvertirait. Zhang Yimou récuserait une autorité historique.

Si la superproduction manifeste un contenu admissible au regard des canons (communistes), qui prônent une conception unitaire de la société, la forme, éminemment picturale, bouscule des règles (de représentation). Celle-ci tortura la causalité linéaire. Les fresques scénarisées, variétés (attractions) (se) succèdent devant un public censé exercer son choix, à l'instar du souverain écoutant.

Or, l'esthétisation fragilise des énonciations, temporalité (celle-ci, banalité). *In globo*, le style dévie, nie une intention apparemment conformiste, confortant le régime, polysémique(ment). Marianant "arts plastiques," cinématographique, (géo)politique, *Héros*, en multipliant les points de vue, rompt en visière, précisément optiquement, avec l'idée d'une voie unique, à traduire idéologiquement. Point de vain esthétisme.

Culturellement, *Ying Xiong* pratique notre "sinitude." Le caractère multiperspectif du rouleau (chinois) favorise la spécificité, des divergences interprétatives. Zhang Yimou thématiserait les nombreux *flashbacks*, topiques au Céleste-Empire. Ceux-ci correspondent désormais à quelque subjectivité, la pluralité des témoignages relativisant chacun.

Cultivons derechef la sinitude grâce à la calligraphie, ancrant, encrant la spiritualité cinématique. Un pinceau, gigantesque, surpasse(ra)it la nuée de flèches. Lorsque l'armée, à la fois populeuse, équipée par des machines de destruction massive, attaquait l'école calligraphique, "le

vieux maître” professa la continuation du travail. La Chine inventa tout/tant.

Colossales arbalètes. . . *Wen versus Wu*, traits d’écriture vs arbalétriers, gens de traits. *Unprovoked war(s)*.

Autocratie. 滿城盡帶黃金甲, *La Cité interdite, de la dynastie à 1989, Tian An Men*

滿城盡帶黃金甲, *Man Cheng Jin Dai Huang Jin Jia*, que nous transcrivons (par) *L’invasion de la Cité par les armures d’or, Toute la Cité recouverte d’armures d’or*, traduite abruptement par *La Cité interdite*, orchestrée en 2007, éleva un colorisme au sommet, grâce au grain de l’argentique. La pellicule, d’ampleur, de rythme opératiques tout en ne recourant pas au genre “film d’opéra,” présente les conflits familiaux à l’échelle d’un empire, “la (super)production entrecoupe plans larges, macroscopiques, d’obédience macrohistorique, microhistoire.”⁴⁸

Infanticide(s), fratricide(s), sinon parricide. Empereur, 明星, *Ming Xing* hongkongaise, vedette 周潤發, Zhou Run Fa⁴⁹, Chow Yun Fat, usurpateur assassin de sa propre famille. Li Man figure Chiang Chan, cumule des risques, en tant que fille secrète de celui-ci, amante d’un fils impérial, alors que le médecin de la cour, fournissant le poison au tyran contre sa propre épouse, 巩俐, Gong Li, l’adopta (classiquement). Le despote n’épargnera pas davantage la mère (de Chiang Chan).

Le filmeur n’usa d’aucun expédient narratif, musical pour aider au développement de l’histoire, se concentrer sur l’essentiel, le potentat cannibale. Nulle échappée. Nonobstant fuite, chevauchée d’innocentes, leur habileté invraisemblablement digne d’un 武俠片, *Wu Xia Pian*. Méthodiquement, symboliquement la sensation de claustrophobie (s’)imposait malgré la vastitude des décors. Épopée claustrophobique. Oxymore réussi.

⁴⁸ Raymond Delambre, “Mythologie du féminisme et du socialisme accoulinés sur les écrans en République populaire de Chine”, *LHJ* 6 (2018): 104.

⁴⁹ Zhou Ming, vedettariat.

À rebours des attentes, le climax annoncé dès le début n'interviendra point. La cérémonie d'accueil pour l'empereur revenu à la capitale s'interrompt. Une rébellion, écrasée dans le sang en un lent, interminable final(e), aux prises de vue assez statiques, gâcha la spectacularisation de l'harmonie programmée entre dirigeant et peuple. 滿城盡帶黃金甲 exposait l'arrêt, sur image, diégétique, quelque *coitus interruptus*. Le photographe empêcha la puissance politique de jouir, "au spectacle de sa splendeur," d'une harmonisation au forceps. Songez à l'instrumentalisation actuelle de l'hypocrite convivialité dans l'entreprise, administration.

Osons associer le nettoyage diligent d'une place où le massacre éclaboussait, détruisit les copieux pots de fleurs, la propagande occultant les (im)pudiques "événements de Tian An Men," 1989. 安, *An*, paix . . . Concrètement, le cinéaste montre des serviteurs reflleurir le site, à l'instar du nettoisement profitant à Mao Zedong, ses portrait, régime.

Nous ne surinterprétons jamais. Accordons la parole à Xi Jinping, spécialisé officiellement en théorie marxiste ainsi qu'en éducation idéologique, politique. Celui-ci jugea que 滿城盡帶黃金甲 s'étendait trop sur les "mauvaises choses des palais impériaux." Le président (à vie) *dixit* . . . "Des réalisateurs chinois négligent les valeurs qu'ils devraient promouvoir." Le fils "de prince rouge" comprend, révélerait même mieux un potentiel subversif que des commentateurs occidentaux, sectateurs d'un lilliputisme, volontiers démagogiquement hypercritiques à l'encontre de l'artiste.

Terminons par le titre (officiel, français), ne respectant pas, *as usual*, l'original. Surtout, le syntagme "cité interdite" (se) connote négativement, noircit "l'ancien régime," dynastique, convergeant avec une allégation d'ouvriers "esclaves" employés à l'édification pour de pléthoriques palais. Notre ex(partenaire) Xiaolu Guo, malgré son air rebelle, d'apparence peu communiste, déplorait la construction du Palais Garnier par des esclaves. Privilégions violet, *vs* noir, *Zi (Jin) Cheng*.

Du côté de chez les victimes . . . 我的父亲母亲, *Mon père et ma mère désormais politically incorrect (haro sur parents 1 & 2)*

Don't Follow Your Passion . . . Zhang Yimou réalisa en 1999 *Wo De Fu Qin Mu Qin, The Road Home*, produit par le studio du Guangxi, d'après Bao Shi, en compagnie de la débutante Zhang Ziyi qui incarnait Zhao Di, Sun Honglei alias Luo Yusheng, Zheng Hao, Li Bin. À l'occasion de funérailles paternelles, le citadin Luo Yusheng rentre dans sa bourgade natale au Nord rural, matérialisé par la présence d'un *Kang*, lit surélevé, chauffant, grâce à hypocauste, plutôt que simplement en briques. Le 老师, *Lao Shi* Luo Changyu, enseignant, (se) dédia à l'instruction des enfants pendant une quarantaine d'années. Obstinement, la mère exige le transport du cercueil marital depuis la morgue de l'hôpital, lointain, où la dépouille gît.

Yusheng regarde une photographie du couple, amorce pour le *flashback* contant l'histoire entre ses parents. Mise en abyme . . .

Une dizaine d'années avant le sous-continent Wang Bing, son témoin *He Feng Ming*, Zhang Yimou osa remémorer la campagne antidroitiste lancée en 1957, intégra celle-ci à la diégèse. La politique, qui enlevait Luo Changyu à ses bourg, foyer en gestation, causa les séparations.

À l'oreille instruite, une séquence où des paysans déplorait la disparition de leur professeur droitier précisa l'époque. En l'espèce, il ne s'agit pas de la "Grande Révolution culturelle prolétarienne," qui déporta les intellectuels. Luo Changyu se dit volontaire pour enseigner en milieu rural. Vraisemblablement, l'enseignement personnel, confucéen motiva l'incarcération, qui resta hors-champ. Objectivons le libre arbitre, volontariat avec 山楂树之恋.

Contrairement à l'antiféodalisme, les traditions, présumées féodales, ne constituèrent guère des obstacles sur le (long) chemin, sinueux, de l'union entre les tourtereaux. *The Long and Winding Road* . . .

Assez audacieusement, Zhang Yimou montra, certes moyennant retenue, que seule la politiciaille parvenait à désunir les amoureux. Si la maman ne souhaitait pas le

mariage avec un étranger à la contrée, elle acquiesce rapidement au désir de sa fille qui refusa tous les hommes présentés. Point à son goût.

À rebours de quelque surinterprétation, maoïste, signalons que Zhao Di, à dix-huit ans, manifesta uniment sentiments, volonté. “Ne cédon point à l’interprétation féministe, anachronique, fausse.”⁵⁰ Hardiment, la charmante donzelle prit dès l’arrivée (du maître) l’initiative dans leurs *encounters, brief or not*.

La courte réapparition du soupirant afin de voir Zhao Di gravement alitée encourut un sévère châtement supplémentaire. L’incartade de l’étiqueté droitiste occasionnera des années d’exil additionnelles. Finalement, la vieillarde tisseuse s’entête à fabriquer l’étoffe qui recouvrira la bière. Zhang Yimou proposerait une nouvelle version de la légende entre bouvier et tisserande, le Parti communiste brisant les parentèles.

Martyr(e)s . . . 山楂树之恋, *L’amour sous l’aubépine*

Yin Lichuan, Gu Xiao Bai, A Mi composèrent le scénario de *Shan Zha Shu Zhi Lian*, 2010. Zhou Dong Yu, Shawn Dou, Lu Li Ping, Sun Haiying, Qi Ke, Li Qing concoururent à la distribution. Celle-ci (d)énonça les déportations à la campagne, persécutions communistes.

L’amour sous l’aubépine, chef-d’œuvre⁵¹ que nous montrâmes de multiples fois en 2012 dans des cinémas parisiens, évoquait les conséquences fatales de comportements néanmoins bénins. *Ai Qing Pian*, i.e. “film sentimental,” mais pas seulement. Ne dépolitisons point Zhang Yimou. Ainsi, celui-ci tourna une scène de répétition pour un ballet lycéen, “fondé sur les proverbes révolutionnaires des masses du Xingtai.” Des slogans du maoïsme consignent le sentimentalisme intimiste dans un rapport à la société. “Notre parti politique est plus grand que le ciel et la terre,” chorégraphie. *Diktat . . .* Chérir père, mère

⁵⁰ Raymond Delambre, “Mythologie du féminisme et du socialisme accouinés sur les écrans”, *LHJ* 6 (2018): 97.

⁵¹ À ne pas ravalier, comme la cathédrale Notre-Dame (de Paris), au niveau d’un vulgaire “(bien) commun.”

moins que “le président Mao,” rien ne se révélant plus merveilleux que le socialisme.

Guang Kuo Tian Di, Da You Zuo Wei. Forte formule poétisant sans doute les relégations. “Aux grands espaces, il y a tant à faire.” Construire des classes aux champs. Mao (Zedong) *dixit* au premier intertitre. Dès la dixième minute, Zhang Yimou focalisa sur la dureté du travail rural, meurtrissant chair, âme. Bain de lotus . . . Le labeur socialiste endolorit les pieds féminins. Non un bandage (féodal).

Diégèse. Sous la Révolution (anti)culturelle, au début des années 1970, Jing Qiu, citadine de seize ans en dernière année de lycée, accepta son exil à Xiping, village au Hubei, pour apprendre des paysans. Effectivement, vaste campagne de “rééducation,” châtement prolétarien de mauvaise filiation. La lycéenne veut solliciter un poste dans l’enseignement grâce aux écrits empreints de propagande (révolutionnaire) sur un arbre symbolisant la résistance antijaponaise pour secourir sa mère, (intellectuelle) accablée de tâches ingrates, malade, “capitaliste” persécutée, alors qu’elle balaye son école. L’ex-enseignante, qui s’occupait encore de deux cadets, sœur, frère, se livrait à des travaux aux pièces. Les enveloppes à confectionner envahissent l’unique chambre (familiale).

Le cinéaste accusa, moyennant l’image, le racisme de classe. Ainsi, le régime punit tous les enfants de la parenté. Sœurette, cadet en bas âge fabriquaient des pochettes, collaient, pliaient. La mère malingre martelait les futurs “conditionnements.”

Cependant, la rééducation se maria à “l’éducation sentimentale,” suite à la rencontre avec Sun Jianxin, étudiant responsable de chantier géologique, promis à un avenir sans embûches grâce à son père officier dans l’Armée populaire de libération. Une idylle naquit, en dépit d’antécédents divergents (*Don’t Follow Your Passion*).

La bien-aimée cachait ses sentiments. Son père, prisonnier politique déporté dans un camp, subit l’étiquette droitiste. Certes, la mère de Jianxin, étiquetée aussi capitaliste, sinon parachutiste comme (se) moquait le PCC, sauta d’un immeuble quatre années auparavant.

Le prétendant offre pléthore de cadeaux, justifiant au prétexte de devises communisantes. Premier don, bonbon.

Puis, lampe, stylographe remplaçant un autre fuyant . . . Afin de surmonter le refus (féminin), le bienfaiteur dit qu'il ne s'agit pas d'une largesse. Préserver l'encre pour la révolution . . . Zhang Yimou osa le détournement de celles-ci, quelque ironisation.

Typiquement, la scène aux aspects romantiques recèle sous ses atours sentimentalistes une moquerie, dont la commission encourt pourtant de sévères sanctions. L'amoureux attend nuitamment le retour de l'autocar véhiculant son aimée, utilise la propagande pour qu'elle se laisse couvrir par la veste masculine. Le président Mao inculquerait de "se garder chaud au printemps, frais à l'automne." La provocation ambitieuse que si cette expression n'existe pas au *Petit livre rouge*, elle découlerait du camarade Lénine. Or, proverbe typiquement chinois, exempt de communisme, *Chun Wu Qiu Dong*. Une maoïsation tous azimuts, y compris sur certaine *Carte du Tendre*, provoque le rire chez les Chinois(es) lettré(e)s contemporain(e)s.

Précisément, le poète-cinéaste dépeignit la cruauté du sort qui opprimait les *Zhi Qing*, "jeunes instruits." Traduisons littéralement l'expression originelle *Zhi Shi Qing Nian*, vertes années des connaissances. Fâcheusement, l'historicité connote la linguistique, synonymisant relégués aux campagnes, *Zhi Qing*. L'abréviation, typique de la Révolution culturelle, masque bannissements, horreur. La mère rappelle qu'un faux pas ruine une vie entière.

Pendant la Révolution (anti)culturelle, une école confia à l'enseignante nankinoise dévouée la calligraphie d'abondants *Da Zi Bao*, affiches, parce qu'elle peignait admirablement les caractères. Épuisée, la dame se trompa au code des couleurs, écrivit en rouge une critique de Liu Shaoqi, ex-vice-président au Comité central (PCC), ex-président (de la république), déchu puisqu'il risquait la concurrence contre le Grand Timonier, à l'encre noire le nom de celui-ci (au lieu d'écarlate). Conséquemment, la calligraphe pâtit d'un châtement injuste pendant de nombreuses années, envoyée dans une usine à bois. Épouse de lettré polyglotte, fille de préfet, fâcheuse origine de classe. Celui-ci se suicida suite aux persécutions quotidiennes, interrogatoires, demandes incessantes de s'accuser. Zhang Yimou dévoila, avec distance, pudeur, des harceleurs.

Subtilement, quant au supposé enthousiasme (révolutionnaire), Jing Qiu feint celui-ci avec zèle en participant à un spectacle de propagande. “Assurément, la fraîcheur et le présumé naturel ne valent que postures, impostures,”⁵² “notre cinélogie enseigne qu’un rire à l’écran ne consacre aucune innocence. Tout à rebours,” “assignons Pedro Costa, pourfendeur de la naïveté.”⁵³

Élucidons le paradoxe. Effet de leurre . . .⁵⁴ Une peur de la répression incite à l’optimisme facial. Songeons aux sourires artificiels des matelot(e)s en salopettes filmés par Sun Yu dans 乘风破浪, *Cheng Feng Po Lang* (1957), *Grâce au vent briser les flots*. Crainte, collaboration . . . Le musicologue Theodor Adorno ne croyait pas en l’adoration sincère par les Allemands de leur *Führer*. *Communists have more fun* . . .⁵⁵ Zhang Yimou questionnerait, polysémiquement.

Au lieu d’opposer des générations putatives (entre elles), discernons une convergence entre Zhang Yimou, Dai Sijie, Jia Zhang Ke, quant au monstre des Trois Gorges, à ériger en déterminisme. Le barrage déchaînera l’engloutissement de Xiping. Lieu de mémoire, expurgé(e). Zhang Yimou recruta l’écrivain poétesse réalisatrice Yin Lichuan, encore récemment à la mode, pour l’adaptation du roman.

Side Effects, Victimologie de l’impossible anamnèse . . . 归来, De(ux) retour(s), des Âmes mortes

Memory and the Poetics of Remembering . . . Comeback contrarié(s). Coming Home, ghost story grâce à laquelle Steven Spielberg pleura . . . Elle attend qu’il revienne. Il attend qu’elle se souvienne. *Gui Lai* campa en 2014 le visiteur spécifique, mari devenu inconnu. *Retrouvailles* polysémiques, avec les salles (françaises). Première sortie nationale qui exploitait un film signé par Zhang Yimou

⁵² Raymond Delambre, “Mythologie du féminisme et du socialisme accouquinés,” *LHJ* 6 (2018): 92.

⁵³ Raymond Delambre, “Mythologie du féminisme et du socialisme,” *LHJ* 6 (2018): 101-102.

⁵⁴ Abbes Maazaoui, “Leurre littéraire et mensonge romanesque,” *LHJ* 6 (2018): 109.

⁵⁵ Raymond Delambre, “Mythologie,” *LHJ* 6 (2018): 92.

depuis 2007, 滿城盡帶黃金甲. Certes, heureusement, nous programmâmes fréquemment, *inter alia*, 金陵十三钗 de 2011 en festival, *Les Treize Fleurs de Nankin*.

Retrouvailles aussi dans ce vingt-troisième *opus* du *maestro*. 巩俐, Gong Li contribua activement à l'avènement du cinéaste dès "la première pellicule," 红高粱, planté(e) en 1987, *Le Sorgho rouge*, dressant l'Ours d'Or. En revanche, cette diffusion (en France), la coproduction liminaire de 万达, Wanda arborant une signature magistrale, coïncidèrent. Wang Jianlin, qui dirige l'entreprise concurrentiellement immobilière & de distribution, projette la pénétration du marché occidental.

Gui Lai distillait une dialectique entre "histoire" (officielle) et mémoire (individuelle). Amnésie de l'héroïne, sélective. Le passé, terrible, culpabilise. À partir d'une chronique où les destins (individuels) remuaient, Zhang Yimou suggérerait la thérapie collective.

Premier acte . . . Action, "retour" sous forme d'évasion manquée. Lu Yan Shi, Chen Dao Ming, "éducateur droitiste," prisonnier politique en fuite, tenta de revoir durant la Grande Révolution culturelle prolétarienne son épouse Feng Wan Yu, qu'incarnait Gong Li. Laissé hors du logis (familial) par celle-ci, trahi par sa propre enfant, Zhang Huiwen *alias* Dan Dan, séparée dès ses trois ans du procréateur et qui brigait le rôle principal embrigadé au 红色娘子军, *Hong Se Niang Zi Jun, Détachement féminin rouge*, ballet propagandiste, Yan Shi échoue, appréhendé à la gare où il donna par écrit rendez-vous à Wan Yu. Celle-ci désirait apporter effets, 饅頭, *Man Tou*. Un alguazil molesta la mère, qui s'écroule. Tête ensanglantée. Les délicieux, plantureux pains concoctés nuitamment, amoureusement par la femme⁵⁶ roulent sur le sol, en un geste symbolique (de cinéma) à l'Empire-Céleste, singulièrement zhangyimouien.

Deuxième acte . . . Contemplatif. Postérieurement à la Révolution (anti)culturelle, Lu Yan Shi rentra de nouveau, suite à vingt années d'emprisonnement. Hélas, Feng Wan Yu ne le reconnaît pas, nonobstant un décor identique, accroissant l'étrangeté, la tristesse de la situation. Dan Dan, que sa génitrice rejeta, travaille à l'usine. L'époux, patient,

⁵⁶ Exemplairement, Rika Kawaji.

soignant, cherche divers expédients afin que sa bien-aimée recouvre son souvenir. Parce que la fillette découpait systématiquement le portrait paternel dans les albums, une seule photographie réunissant les mariés subsiste. Malheureusement, celle-ci ne provoqua nul choc salutaire. Le piano (désaccordé) non plus, alors que le réapparu s'initie à l'accordage pianistique. Séquence attendrissante.

Yan Shi, assimilé à un *quidam*, voisin bienveillant, porte, lit ses pléthoriques lettres de captivité parvenues tardivement à sa compagne. L'homme en rédigea de nouvelles, qu'il mêle aux anciennes, pour conseiller celle-ci.

Épilogue . . . Des années ultérieurement, (inter)titre (s')éloignant de l'anecdotique. Le mar(r)i, aux lunettes de vieillard, condescendit au rôle d'accompagnateur.

Ne spéculons point sur un *hiatus* au *cursus*. Si l'échelle spectaculaire varie, monnayant des réalisations épiques, Zhang Yimou ne revint guère au "film d'auteur," ne quitta pas ce que nous baptisons le genre auteuriste, son style imprégnant l'ensemble de sa filmographie.

Inscrivons (notre chef-d'œuvre) à une mise en abyme. Métafilm. Réapparition de Gong Li au giron zhangyimouien. Autofiction au regard de l'extraction. Le père du garçon Yimou combattit en faveur du Guo Min Dang, un oncle s'exila à Taïwan en 1949. Yimou, dès ses quinze ans, le début de la Révolution culturelle, interrompit ses études, besogna trois années dans une ferme, sept en atelier de tissage. Évolution de Dan Dan en écho.

Sous-texte . . . Ainsi de la circonstance, l'oubli. Cause(s), brutalité policière, autocensure, "ombre de la censure," déni de responsabilité, du viol, coût consenti pour défendre l'époux avec un bureaucrate . . .

Décelons l'ambiguïté zhangyimouienne. La bandeson, cruciale, atteste. La partition de Chen Qigang reprit des thèmes socialistes, joués par le pianiste 郎朗, Lang Lang, qui chérit ceux-ci. Déconcertant(e) . . . Avantagement, l'ex-chef-opérateur intègre ce chromo cadencé à la diégèse, Lu Yan Shi pianotant.

Gui Lai, "film de survie," *vs gimmick* résilience, luxe du premier monde. Ne point croire au chiffrage de la puissance économique mondiale. *De(ux) Retour(s)* dénote le communisme conduisant le peuple au tiers-monde. Survivante, incontestablement, la gent femelle prédomine.

D'autant à souligner que le roman originel, *Le criminel Lu Yan Shi*, se polarisait sur l'ex-dandy shanghaien.

Dan Dan souffrit d'une certaine complexité. Corps et âme aux répétitions du 红色娘子军. Mixte d'endoctrinement, d'ambition. Métascène où l'étoile en habit écarlate, Zhang Huiwen dégradée en simple combattante se dévisagèrent. L'embuée chez cette dernière exprime colère ou regrets face à son affreuse dénonciation, ne lui permettant pas d'obtenir le rôle convoité. Racisme de classe . . . Une jalousie, métaphilmique, (s')exacerba. Compétition afin de danser Wu Qiong Hua.

Obscénité coutumière des carriéristes, dénué(e)s de scrupules. *The Silence of the Lambs* en 1991, à exhumer. Hannibal Lecter chez Jonathan Demme . . . *I will make you happy. I'll give you a chance for what you love most . . . Advancement, of course.*

En contrepoint, l'intrigue au *Détachement* ne comporta nullement de structure complexe. *Armée féminine de couleur rouge* . . . Sur l'île de Hainan, une domestique rejoignit l'armée communiste lors de la guerre civile.

L'oubliuse Feng Wan Yu, s'efforçant de réécrire proprement, consulte une vieille inscription pour vérifier la graphie d'un caractère. Relative(ment) à la désignation de son ex-compagnon. Comble d'aliénation.

Bai Qing Xin, incarnant la conjointe du violeur et qui désarme, polysémiqument, vitupérant, de sa louche le faible ex-professeur désireux de vengeance, qualifié d'"agent," indiquerait l'obstacle à la guérison. Agent disparu, histoire chamboulée. Une telle intelligence déchiffre probablement le succès au sous-continent communiste. 82,4 millions en yuans, treize millions & demi de dollars le week-end initial, record. Histoire occultée, traumatisme pérenne.

Fâcheusement, Gong Li encouragea modérément quelque quiétude lorsqu'en avant-première (française) elle parla d'une ouverture, à la différence de la période où un désaveu affectait ses films (pré)liminaires en compagnie zhangyimouienne. Caricaturalement, la 明星, *Ming Xing* au statut sûrement mobilisateur, répercute le poncif rationalisant les foudres censoriales par l'inexistence, juridique, d'une classification selon la jeunesse, à la

française. Excusons la comédienne. Ambassadeur de 北京, Beijing avec nous dans la salle.

Martyrologie . . . 十面埋伏, *Le Secret des poignards volants, persécutions religieuses voire contre la Fa Lun Da Fa*

Zhang Yimou cinématographia en 2004 *Shi Mian Mai Fu*, que nous traduisons plus exactement par *Embuscades dans les dix directions*, transposons. *Embuscades tous-azimuts*. Production pékinoise avec des sous-continentaux, Hongkongais, Taïwanais, Japonais. Zhang Ziyi, *w/bitch*, 金城武, 劉德華, Liu Dehua *alias* respectivement Takeshi Kaneshiro, Andy Lau.

À l'époque 唐朝, Tang, des agents gouvernementaux pourchassèrent des rebelles, mus par quelque spiritualité, jusqu'à l'extermination. Un tel scénario mériterait de se commenter politiquement, suite aux massacres perpétrés en 1989, tourments continus à l'encontre de certains bouddhistes en RPC. Résistant(e)s (au féminin), outre des clichés néocoloniaux. Chez l'ambigu réalisateur, les poignards ne se révèlent pas les seuls à virevolter, en volte-face le cas échéant idéologique.

***Out of Asia. De l'ambivalence, PRC vs China*⁵⁷**

“On ne sort de l'ambiguïté qu'à son détriment.” Jean François de Gondi, cardinal de Retz, *dixit*. Zhang Yimou commit des incarnations variées du mal, susceptibles de (se) retourner comme un gant. Spécifiquement, vis-à-vis de l'héroïsme, impérial.

In globo, l'image en mouvement recèle (possiblement) quelque potentiel d'amphibologie. Précisément, certains cinéastes exploitent celui-ci. Différentes logiques éclaircissent. Le censorial, son contournement militent pour les sens cachés. Conjointement, conjurez un didactisme rougeoyant. La promotion contemporaine de la structure

⁵⁷ Raymond Delambre, “Mythologie du féminisme et du socialisme accouinés sur les écrans en République populaire de Chine,” *LHJ* 6 (2018): 103.

absente, l'ouverture, sans fin(alité), clôture, favorise l'équivoque.

Affichant le *politically correct sex-ratio*, la *Berlinale* 2019 éprouverait la turpitude de collaborer à une censure. Lâcheté . . .

Due to technical difficulties encountered during post-production, Yi miao zhong (One Second) by Zhang Yimou unfortunately cannot be presented on February 15 in the scope of the Competition section.

Polysémie . . . L'incertitude d'imagerie livrée sans commentaires (extra)diégétiques autorise une multiplicité herméneutique, à la fois en dehors des représentations officielles, prudemment non explicitées. Zhang Yimou, ni rétrograde ni nationaliste, ne verse pas dans les œuvres de cour. Beauté(s), sans ironie, ce que nous appelons *trashitude*, généralisées, démagogiques. La *doxa* craint indubitablement l'esthétisation, frontale. Un tel 电影 ne comporte certainement pas l'intégralité de ses significations. Une réception complète. Valorisons ces tendances en les qualifiant de "retour à la symbolisation."

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PART THREE
THE FAILURE OF MORALITY

Atwood's Crake: The Aspergic Mad Scientist

SARA SCHOTLAND
Georgetown University, United States

Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* describes a world in which the climate has been devastated, and the cities are contaminated by disease. Genetic engineering, far from solving the problems of the beleaguered population, has produced hybrid animals that pose predatory threats. Resources are insufficient to support the human race. A master "mad scientist" named Crake designs an annihilating virus: to save mankind, he will destroy it. Crake constructs a substitute subhuman species—the "Crakers"—who are physically adapted for a ruined planet but lack intelligence and emotional capacity.

Atwood's rich novel warns that we are destroying our planet and depleting its resources. There has been extensive scholarly debate over whether Crake's actions are justified, but the portrayal of Crake as aspergic has been neglected. Beyond portraying an individual with Asperger's in stereotypical fashion—as brilliant, obsessive, and lacking in empathy—the novel implies that Crake's decision to destroy the human race is associated with his Asperger's Syndrome.

Under the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-5) Asperger's Syndrome is consolidated under the umbrella category of "autism spectrum disorder." ASD is characterized by "persistent deficits in social communication/interaction" and "restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior" along with sensory issues (such as hyper- or hypo- reactivity to stimuli).

Individuals with an Asperger's diagnosis differ from classic autism in that they frequently have good language and cognitive skills and are placed at the high-functioning end of the autism spectrum. However they may exhibit failure of empathy limited or inappropriate social interactions, extreme egocentrism with resulting lack of consideration, poor understanding of one's own and other people's inner states, and impairments in the understanding of complex emotions (Frith).

Atwood presents Crake as the ultimate villain, who conducts reckless experiments, heedless of the consequences to individual human beings and antipathetic to the human race as a whole. Crake decides not to rescue mankind from serious ecological and population problems but to destroy it. In its extreme exaggeration of an Aspergic scientist, the novel does a disservice: implying that an individual with Asperger's could be so lacking in empathy as to engage in mass annihilation.

Andrew Bartlett characterizes the Mad Scientist as a figure who "plays God by trying to re-enact the origin of the human, and disastrously fails":

Insane in its extremity, it is the desire to create a new set of creatures a little like humankind but better than humankind, a new race or species enough like the human to be its rival but sufficiently distinct to outdo it—outperform it, outlast it, outlive it . . . [M]ad scientists in and of the Frankenstein myth desire to prove a point: humankind is not good enough, and materialist science can do better at making humans than the agents sanctioned by religion (or anthropology, or education, or tradition) have ever done. (6)

Rosslyn Haynes lists several characteristics that have long defined the many literary and film portrayals of the mad scientist figure. These include: "the morally suspect alchemist . . . now reincarnated as the sinister biologist producing new species" through genetic engineering; "the unemotional scientist who has reneged on human relationships and suppressed all human affections in the cause of science"; and "the mad, bad, dangerous scientist"

who produces “cataclysmic results on a scale hitherto unimaginable” (6-7). We can see that Crake fits each of these categories. He is obsessed with science, indifferent to the lives of others, engages in reckless experiments, and ultimately determines that a scientific imperative—ecological collapse—requires the creation of a new, non-human species.

Characterizing Crake

In *Oryx and Crake* there are two dystopias: pre-plague and the post-plague. In the pre-plague world, the climate has disintegrated through ecocatastrophe. In response to devastating environmental damage, scientists embark on a dangerous game, genetic engineering of animal hybrids. Sometimes the scientists succeed, too often vicious animals result. The engineers cloned pigoons (pigs crossed with baboons) using cells from human donors that were intended to produce additional extra lifesaving organs. Unfortunately, the pigoons became huge feral monsters who track down their prey with deadly cunning because they are equipped with some human brain cells. The bobkitten was another unfortunate hybrid: “They were supposed to eliminate feral cats, thus improving the almost non-existent songbird population . . . Small dogs went missing from backyards, babies from prams; short joggers were mauled” (164).

Through the eyes of a sensitive young boy, Jimmy, we see what it is like to grow up in this difficult environment: afraid when he has a cough that he will catch a fatal infection and be burned to death like a diseased animal. Jimmy faces an additional trauma: his mother has abandoned her family to join a group protesting the excesses of bioengineering. The novel is focalized on Jimmy, but in many ways, he is a foil used to set up the contrast with his friend, Crake, who has an entirely different reaction to disease, death, and the loss of a mother.

Crake is a young genius whose father had named him “Glenn,” in honor of the pianist Glenn Gould. Gould, who had Asperger’s Syndrome, wrote an opera at age ten in which all of the people died and only the animals survived (Bouson 155). The boys pass their time as internet gamers and voyeurs. Crake, who has renamed himself after an obscure

extinct bird, is obsessed with death and violence. Crake becomes a grand master of the game of Extinctathon “an interactive biofreak game” cataloging the elimination of species (80). They watch kiddy porn and live executions. A reality TV show, Nitee-nite.com, which explained why the individual had decided to kill himself and showed the deed being done, is one of Crake’s favorites. Jimmy is surprised that Crake found the assisted suicide site “entertaining” and “hilarious” (84). While to Jimmy it was unimaginable to end one’s own life, Crake said that it “showed flair to know when you’d had enough” (84). This is a proleptic moment, because Crake as master scientist will ultimately decide that the world has “had enough,” unleash a deadly global epidemic, and engineer the loss of his own life. Crake also lost his mother; in a supposed accident, a “hot bioform that had chewed through her like a solar mower.” (176) Crake’s reaction to his mother’s death shows a morbid fascination with the act of dying:

Crake couldn’t go in to see her, of course—nobody could, everything in there was done with robotic arms, as in nuclear-materials procedures—but he could watch her through the observation window. “It was impressive,” Crake told Jimmy. “Froth was coming out.” (176)

For Jimmy, disease and death are a source of fear; while for Crake the froth that issues from his mother’s mouth is a source of intellectual fascination. Crake’s callousness is incomprehensible to his friend; Jimmy “didn’t understand . . . the thought of Crake watching his own mother dissolve like that. He himself wouldn’t have been able to do it” (177). Clearly, Jimmy represents the mainstream, “neurotypical” response while Crake falls outside normal parameters.

Jimmy is destined to attend a poorly-regarded college, the Martha Graham Dance Academy; the humanities are devalued in this technocratic society. In contrast, Crake attends “Watson-Crick,” a thinly disguised version of MIT. This prestigious university is full of “demi-autistics” (one of Atwood’s neologisms):

Watson-Crick was known to the students there as Asperger's U. because of the high percentage of brilliant weirdos that strolled and hopped and lurched through its corridors. Demi-autistic, genetically speaking; singletrack tunnel-vision minds, a marked degree of social ineptitude—these were not your sharp dressers—and luckily for everyone there, a high tolerance for mildly deviant public behavior. (193-94)

As an adult, Crake rises to the top of a pyramid of species-altering scientists who work in the RejoovenEsence compound on the exciting, risky Paradise Project. Crake and his team of bioengineering wizards test-market new inventions that are intended to make huge profits without knowing, or perhaps even caring, that they are safe. Crake presides over a staff of “splice geniuses” who can “pull capers” like neon-covered herpes and asphalt-eating microbes (298).

Crake hearkens back to Victor Frankenstein in his scientific obsession and promethean arrogance. Genetic engineers in the Compound believed that “Create-an-animal was so much fun . . . it made you feel like God” (*Oryx and Crake*, 51). While it is fun to make an animal, it is even more enjoyable to alter the human species.

Crake tells Jimmy that mankind is “in deep trouble” and is “running out of space-time” (296). It is a case of “sink or swim”: the only solution is ultra-drastic. Crake's newest invention, BlyssPluss, will be falsely (and irresistibly) marketed as providing three-fold benefits: a boost to sexual performance, a prophylactic against sexually transmitted diseases, and a fountain of youth. The investors are delighted that BlyssPluss is distributed worldwide, but the global reach increases the catastrophic consequences when BlyssPluss unleashes JUVE (“jetspeed ultravirus extraordinary”). Unlike the bubonic plague or nuclear bombs which allow some survivors, BlyssPluss is a species-annihilating agent of death. As soon as JUVE is distributed, everyone around the world experiences high fever, bleeding from the eyes and skin, convulsions, and break down of internal organs. Crake, who as a boy admired those who had the “flair” to engineer their own demise, invents an even better brand of assisted suicide.

Crake stages the ultimate gene-splicing stunt: to lure humans to ingest pills marketed as increasing potency, which are in fact designed to eradicate humanity. While Victor Frankenstein created one example of human life, Crake annihilates human kind as we know it and creates a new replacement species devoid of sense and emotion. Crake's Asperger's is implicitly associated with ultimate nihilism—an extreme that turns destructive. Crake “plays God with life,” even if this means that he must “destroy the world in order to save it” (Ingersoll 167). Crake was “sitting in judgment on the world, thought Jimmy, but why had that been his right?” (341).

After the plague, Jimmy issues a statement “for the record” that JUVE was a deliberate act on Crake's part (346). Crake knew what the “effect of BlyssPluss would be”; he adopted “a time-lapse factor” so that “social disruption was maximized, and development of a vaccine was effectively prevented” (346). Although Crake had developed a vaccine with which he inoculated Jimmy, Crake destroyed the vaccine prior to unleashing JUVE. Jimmy surmises that Crake may have caused the death of both his mother and stepfather as a “trial run” for the JUVE virus (343).

Crake's Motivation

What drives Crake to eliminate the human race? Are his motives vindictive, or does he intend to help mankind? Denette DiMarco analyzes Crake under the rubric of *homo faber*, the individual who uses “every instrument as a means to achieve a particular end in building a world,” in this case, eliminating its people (170). Stephen Dunning regards the invention of the BlyssPluss pill as a “drastic therapy to remedy the ills of a world in deep distress” (89).

Three centuries (or more) of technological innovation—effectively unrestrained by qualitative human concerns—have devastated the physical environment, making it less and less viable for more and more species—including humans. The trajectory of environmental degradation coupled with population growth becomes very clear to Crake. (89)

Several commenters cast blame on the intertwined evils of biotechnology and capitalism. For Jay Sanderson, *Oryx and Crake* illustrates “biotechnology gone too far;” because of the wealth and power of these companies the development of transgenic products is unchecked (220-21). For Chung-Hao Ku, “although Crake looks like a cynical misanthrope who would fain rid himself of humankind, he is less a ‘mad scientist’ than a product of the capitalist machinery” (119). “By attributing all cataclysms to Crake alone, people forget that it is the collusion between science and capitalism that may lead to the doom of the human race” (120).

Notwithstanding efforts to mitigate Crake’s conduct, he is presented as an arch villain: one does not destroy mankind to save it, especially when, as discussed below, Crake’s replacement species is subhuman. It is significant that Crake’s actions reflect an absence of sympathy for the animals whose identities he has altered or the humans whose lives are destroyed. In Isaac Asimov’s *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*, and the famous film adaptations of *Blade Runner*, the primary metric for determining human status is empathy for the animal; to the extent that he is indifferent to animal suffering, Crake is depicted as strangely nonhuman. The results of his Blyssplus experiments were disastrous and excruciating for the individual test subjects (295). Crake explains to Jimmy that the human subjects come “from the poorer countries. Pay them a few dollars, they don’t even know what they’re taking . . . Whorehouses. Prisons. And from the ranks of the desperate, as usual” (296). For Crake, the numbers person, the faceless poor don’t “count.”

Crake has been (mal)nurtured in a world where multinational pharmaceutical companies like HelthWyzer contaminate their own medicines. To keep their profits high they introduce hostile bioforms into vitamin pills so that consumers will purchase other curative pharmaceuticals. Crake appears to catch a contagious moral disease from HelthWyzer, learning that it is possible to use a medicine purported to cure in order to kill.⁵⁸

Crake thrives in a society that values utilitarian calculation and ends over means. It is a logical extension of

⁵⁸ In Greek philosophy, *pharmakon* means both cure and poison (Cooke 5).

Crake's upbringing that he would apply a numbers calculus in deciding to destroy mankind in favor of a more practical, adaptable new species. Crake uses the same phrase, "elegant concept," in describing BlyssPluss to Jimmy (295) attributed to CorpSeCorps, the organization that killed his whistle-blowing father. Ariel Kroon rejects the conclusion that Crake is mad or insane; rather he conforms to the "disanthropic attitude" prevalent in his society in which "empathy is constantly disregarded in favor of material gain" (18, 19).

The Replacement Species for a Post-Plague World: The Less-than-Human Crakers.

Crake's absence of empathy is shown not only by his lack of feeling for human subjects but by the abnormal nature of the substitute androids that he designs to populate the post-plague world. Crake's replacements possess physical adaptations appropriate to the decayed environment but have so little intellect and emotion that they are parodies of human beings.

The Crakers are impervious to the carcinogenic effects of sunlight, well-proportioned and smooth of skin. They are fashioned in a rainbow of exquisite skin colors. To achieve population balance, the Crakers mate every three years when their genitalia turn blue. In a world where food is short, they are programmed to eat grass and recycle their own excrement. Like Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden the Crakers wear no clothes, but the ruined planet that they are designed to repopulate is no paradise.

For all their physical superiority, as a result of cognitive limitations their life is useless. Crake explains to Jimmy that the purpose of the Craker mating ritual is to dispense with the mismatches involved in romantic love; the Crakers are just "a bunch of hormone robots" (166). The primary function of the males, except for triennial mating, is to urinate in a prescribed ritual. Ironically, creatures that lack many of the dreaded manifestations of aging like wrinkles and body fat are programmed to self-destruct at age thirty.

Sally Chivers insists on the absence of disability in the novel. She argues that "physical conformity" blatantly dominates; the novel argues that "the eugenic logic that

motivates the pursuit of the new physical normalcy begins with the extermination of disability” (388).” I disagree with her claim. Far from representing an ideal, the Crakers represent an extreme caricature of the intellectually disabled. They cannot read, they cannot write and they cannot think.

Post-plague as (apparently) the sole human survivor, Jimmy, has re-christened himself as the Abominable Snowman, a name that suggests he is ashamed, alienated from other humans, and about to disappear. Jimmy is struggling with multiple threats: desperate hunger, the relentless sun, an untreated infection, and feral threats like wild pigeons. The Crakers are powerless to help him. They mistake the hair growing out of Snowman’s face for “moss” (*Oryx and Crake* 8). The Crakers believe that Crake lives in the sky and has attributes of thunder and lightning (361).

At the very end of the novel, Snowman finds that there are three other survivors, but he is uncertain whether to take the risk of the encounter. One reason Snowman hesitates, I suggest, is that he emerges from a society where there is no expectation that strangers will help each other. We do not know whether Snowman will approach or how the strangers will respond, just as we do not know whether mankind will heed warnings that the climate is headed towards ecological disaster.⁵⁹

The new species of less-than-humans, the robotic Crakers, were designed to lack the full range of human responses. Because they have been designed to lack capacity for romantic love, they cannot form emotional attachment. The Crakers thus represent the embodiment of the ideal species in a new world created by an Aspergic Mad Scientist. If we continue to destroy our climate by neglecting the environment as Atwood fears, the planet will be uninhabitable by ordinary human beings; only genetically engineered soulless humanoids like the Crakers could survive.

⁵⁹ The second volume of Atwood’s *Maddadam* trilogy, *Year of the Flood*, begins with the encounter.

Attributing Violence to Asperger's

As with many other disabilities, autism is often approached as a deviation from the norm, but for several reasons, autism may trigger a special fear. Stuart Murray writes that “because it is seemingly beyond current scientific knowledge, and because it evades a popular idea of the rational, autism appears to be otherness in the extreme and, as a consequence, the source of endless fascination” (xvii). Individuals on the spectrum occupy an enigmatic and unfamiliar space, in contrast to individuals with more tangible and visible disabilities. Yet another reason for fear of autism is that it is statistically on the rise. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control estimates the prevalence of autism in the United States to 1 in 59 children in 2018 (based on analysis of 2014 medical records) as compared to 1 in 166 as recently in 2004 (CDC). Perhaps the greatest contributor to public fear is isolated incidents of mass violence perpetrated by individuals with ASD such as those involving Anders Breivik in Norway and Adam Lanza in Newton, Connecticut.

Despite media coverage and case reports suggesting that individuals with ASD are more likely to engage in violent acts, the facts indicate that ASD by itself does not lead an individual to engage in violent behaviors. “Rather than being the perpetrator of violence, individuals with ASD may actually be more likely to be the victim” (Faccini and Allely 230). “No studies exist which support the theory that individuals with ASD are more violent” and “most people with ASD are law abiding” (230). While there are a very small number of people with ASD who engage in violent offending behaviors, “simply having a diagnosis of ASD by itself does not lead an individual to engage in extremely violent behaviors.”⁶⁰ From their study of mass killers, Faccini and Allely conclude that “narcissistic rage and in particular anarchistic wounds represent the common thread regarding the motives of mass shooters in the United States over the past 15 years” (231).

Sonya Loftis expresses concern that ideas about theory of mind (ToM) can be especially dehumanizing for people on the spectrum. Such ideas presuppose that people

⁶⁰ Stål Bjørkly and Marianne Mordre et al. reach similar conclusions.

on the autism spectrum “do not understand that other people have minds, thoughts, and feelings and are frequently unaware that those minds, thoughts, and feelings may work differently from their own” (9-10). This supposed lack of empathy leads to larger questions about their own humanity.⁶¹ Loftis discusses several literary portrayals of autistics in literature, including the detective genre involving children’s literature, classic detective novels, and fiction depicting autistic individuals as isolated, unable to communicate with the outside world.

Many contemporary literary portrayals of autism are quite benign, including among well-known examples, Mark Haddon’s *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* and Jodi Picoult’s *House Rules*. In both of these novels, the protagonists fashion themselves as detectives, and although in Picoult’s novel the autistic teen is accused of crime, he is innocent. Kathryn Erskine’s *Mockingbird* portrays the efforts of a young child to help her family and other children deal with bereavement in the aftermath of losing a loved one to school shootings.

In contrast, Atwood’s portrayal of Crake stands out because Crake is irremediably violent. He is not merely a killer or a mass killer; he is a species killer. He epitomizes a lack of empathy to an ultra-dangerous degree. Not only is he indifferent to the death of his mother, but also he was possibly complicit in the deaths of his mother and step-father. He is callous in his experimentation not only with animals but with human subjects, culminating in the destruction of the human species. To the extent that he creates a replacement species, the Crakers are deficient in sentience and emotional connection.

Many individuals with autism are strong advocates of neurodiversity and autism pride; they reject the connotation that autism is a pathological disorder (Loftis 4-5). In Atwood’s novel, Crake’s Asperger’s is definitely a disorder, tied to unimaginable evil—contrary to the scientific evidence which does not connect Asperger’s to violence. Disabled

⁶¹ More recent research has challenged this lack of empathy claiming that individuals with Asperger syndrome may have deficits in cognitive empathy; they may indeed be empathetically concerned for others (Dziobek). My concern here is with the prevalent stereotype rather than the evolving medical data.

villains such as Captain Ahab and Captain Hook have often been portrayed as “obsessive avengers” in literature and film (Norden 136). Crake may be motivated by the death of his father, but his implacable hostility exceeds that of Captain Ahab as he is not content to destroy the whale but wants to take down all humanity.

Conclusion

It is a cliché that science fiction is populated by aliens; Atwood has distinguished *Oryx and Crake* as a work of “speculative fiction,” and certainly there are no Martians or similar fantastic aliens from outer space in her novel (“Road to Utopia”). Yet her portrayal of Crake raises a troubling potential linkage between the alien, the autistic, and danger.

Ian Hacking points to a paradox, that some “autists are attracted to the metaphor of the alien to describe their own condition, or to say that they find other people alien. Conversely, people who are not autistic may in desperation describe a severely autistic family member as alien” (44). Hacking expresses concern about associating autistic people with the trope of an alien; the word denotes a foreigner, someone from outer space, or the strangeness of autistic people. Even if the DSM classifies autism as a “mental disorder,” autism “is not madness” (45).

We have come a long way from Victor Frankenstein, who created one creature but denied him a mate lest additional violent monsters emerge. In contrast, *Oryx and Crake* portrays an extremely powerful mad scientist with Asperger’s who is so alienated from the human race that he seeks to destroy it. In her sincere concern to warn against the serious ecological damage to which our world is tending, Atwood created her own problematic monster figure: an individual on the autism spectrum who devises a Final Solution for a species in trouble: mass destruction.

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Desperate Motives for Murder: Mercenary Female Baby Killers in Victorian England

ERIC STERLING

Auburn University at Montgomery, United States

In Victorian society, some murders, such as stabbings, were bloody in nature and involved bitter conflict and aggression; however, other murders, such as poisonings, were passive in nature and often were committed for financial gain. Non-confrontational killing methods correlated with the gender roles women were expected to play. Victorian biologists Patrick Geddes and J. Arthur Thomson believed that men were naturally active beings, while women were instinctively passive creatures—a natural and permanent phenomenon that, because it was “decided among the prehistoric protozoa . . . cannot be annulled by Act of Parliament” (Steinbach 112). Women worked inside the house as homemakers. The kitchen and parlor—interior rooms—served as their primary domain. But danger lurked within the domestic sphere. As food preparers in the kitchen, women had the means to poison their victims. Women used arsenic and antimony inside of the home to rid the rooms of unwanted vermin, but some females employed poison to make money by purchasing burial society insurance (and then murdering the insured) and by maintaining their reputation and marriageability as they rid themselves of unwanted human beings. Most murderesses slew their victims by attacking them on the interior of the body. Lacking the physical strength to overpower a man with a dagger, women considered poisoning a more convenient means of committing murder. Poison, which invaded the inside of the

body, could be handled clandestinely and without confrontation, which correlated with the Victorian stereotype of women as non-aggressive and meek.

Because women committed many poisonings, the Sale of Arsenic Bill of 1851 included an amendment that “restricted the sale of arsenic to adult males” (Knelman 1). Although women were responsible for a large percentage of arsenic murders in Victorian England, they committed a small percentage of the violent slayings. This distinction signifies that the choice of murder weapon relates to the construction of gender roles and the gendering of physical spaces. Because much has been published regarding poisonings by women and far less about violent murders committed by females, another article adding to the abundance of scholarship concerning passive, non-violent murders by Victorian women would be like the arsenic poisonings themselves—taking the easy way out.

Women who committed brutal murders were considered unnatural for killing in a manner usually ascribed to men. These murders were characterized as evil not only because women took human life (mostly infants), but also because they violated the confines, or the “sphere,” of what Victorians considered natural female behavior, subverting socially-gendered constructs with brute force. Contemporaries believed this gendered sphere derived from biological determinism, so when Victorian women strangled infants under their supervision, their comportment was considered to be contrary to the rules of Nature and God.

Murderous women constitute a marked departure from the Victorian ideals of femininity, such as the “Angel of the House” envisioned by Coventry Patmore in his famous poem (1854-1862) of that name. Patmore’s phrase “the angel in the house” created powerful stereotypes of Victorian womanhood, denoting a doting, meek wife and a gentle, loving mother. In “Professions for Women,” Virginia Woolf complains about the constraining stereotype of Victorian womanhood made famous in Patmore’s poem.

[W]hen I came to know her better I called her after the heroine of a famous poem, The Angel in the House. It was she who used to come between me and my paper when I was writing reviews. It was she who

bothered me and wasted my time and so tormented me that at last I killed her . . . She was intensely sympathetic . . . She was utterly unselfish . . . She sacrificed herself daily . . . Above all—I need not say it—she was pure. (141)

Woolf describes Patmore's and Victorian England's conception of ideal womanhood as that of a pure and selfless woman who belongs inside the home and who became a restrictive stereotype. The interior of the house was considered the woman's domain, just as mothers nurtured their babies for nine months inside their bodies before parturition. Because women carried and nourished their babies for nine months, then raised their infants, without assistance from the father, a gendered construct evolved that females were natural protectors of babies.

Mothers and female caregivers were thought to be endowed with the kindness and compassion to serve as guardian angels and protectors, and not to betray that trust by slaying infants. Women who committed infanticide were considered monsters, traitors to their gender. In Victorian England, violent murder committed by women was the ultimate defiance of Patmore's conventional stereotype, subverting the concept of a mother whose main vocation was to nurture vulnerable children. Because "[c]hildbirth was defined as woman's paramount duty and most rewarding purpose in life," killing infants was particularly troubling because it violated the maternal and nurturing instinct that Victorian men believed a woman should possess (Marland 6).

Victorian women who committed infanticide were considered monsters not only because their actions violated contemporary views of motherhood but also because of the late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century cultural views concerning the innocence of children. Poets like William Blake and William Wordsworth characterized the young as innocent children of God in need of protection. Charles Dickens created innocent, vulnerable characters like Oliver Twist and Tiny Tim Cratchit. Childhood specialist Philippe Ariès observed that people believed that "Jesus Christ granted only to children the privilege of having guardian angels" (124), a theme Blake employs in "Holy Thursday":

“cherish pity, lest you drive an angel from your door” (l. 12). Victorian murderesses Charlotte Winsor and Amelia Dyer inverted the concept of a guardian angel upon which young children could rely, and they ultimately drew the wrath of the public by exploiting vulnerable children and destroying them for financial gain. The cases of Winsor and Dyer departed radically from the expected gender profile, not only in their active violence, but also in their horrific disregard for human life, made all the more shocking by juxtaposition with the “angel in the house’s” pure maternal devotion.

Baby Farmers

Some Victorian murderesses, like Winsor and Dyer, worked as baby farmers. Baby farmers promised to take babies into their homes and care for or adopt them for a small fee from the mother. Ideally, the baby farmer could make a small profit by being paid for taking in the child. The infant’s mother, in turn, benefitted because she could work without having to stay home with the baby; and if the baby was illegitimate, as was often the case, a clandestine exchange would allow her to escape the stigma of giving birth out of wedlock and to avoid being kicked out of her parents’ house, losing employment, or being rendered unmarriageable—along with the concomitant poverty that derived from these unfortunate situations. Tragically, most poor mothers lacked the financial means necessary to pay baby farmers to feed and care for their infants; consequently, many of these offspring were given little care at all, and some were allowed to starve to death so that the baby farmer would save money on food—even after Parliament’s passage of the Infant Life Protection Act of 1872. The Act was most likely inspired by high profile murder trials of baby farmers such as Winsor and the resulting public outcry. The Act was necessary after it became common knowledge that baby farming was “closely associated with child murder in the Victorian popular imagination” and that the infants became mere mercenary transactions for profit “whose humanity could be readily disregarded” (Kohlke 139).

In *Dead Woman Walking*, Anette Ballinger notes, “Baby-farming as a profession was both despised and stigmatized, since its existence emphasized the

contradictions between dominant images of idealized motherhood, and its reality for those women whose circumstances did not fit this image” (65). Despite its unpopularity with the general public, baby farming was prevalent in Victorian England because many women who gave birth out of wedlock had no alternatives, because of the strong societal disapproval of illegitimate births, and because of the woeful lack of financial assistance from the State, Church, and infants’ fathers. Baby farmers thrived monetarily and enjoyed great demand for their “services” because Victorian laws and cultural mores punished women severely for giving birth outside the sphere of the holy sacrament while denying them the financial means to care for themselves and their child, and the ability to work for a living while raising their baby.

Unmarried mothers were admonished from publication to pulpit, and social stigma caused them to have few legal and financial alternatives. Unmarried mothers were castigated for having babies out of wedlock while the fathers escaped blame even though Victorians believed that women could not control their desires. Victorian sexologist Blair Bell believed that women had a strong need to feel loved and could not govern their desires because their thoughts were controlled by “internal secretions” (Steinbach 112). Victorians believed that women could not govern their libido, but rather that it controlled them, so, with biological urges deriving from God, women who gave birth outside the holy sacrament deserved their dilemma: late Victorian Austrian sexologist Otto Weininger added that “man possesses sexual organs, but [woman’s] sexual organs possess her” (Steinbach 111). In Victorian society, where many believed that women were literally and biologically unable to control their sexual urges, the financial and social burden should have been placed on men, who were considered more mature and capable, to control their sexual urges and to bear responsibility for illegitimate births. Why punish those considered to be more helpless? Yet the woman alone bore the shame, blame, and heavy financial burden. Unwed mothers alone were required to provide for their baby’s upbringing until the child turned sixteen or face punishment in the workhouse.

The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 included a “Bastardy Clause,” which freed babies’ fathers from their obligation to provide financial support for their children. The purpose of the Bastardy Clause was to make financial conditions for unwed mothers so untenable that females would be deterred from having premarital sex and getting pregnant out of wedlock. Lord Althorp told the House of Lords in 1834 that the previous Act, which encouraged charity to unwed mothers and obligated fathers to support their illegitimate children, “raises up a motive in the breast of the woman rather to yield than to resist . . . [C]ooperat[ing] with the frailty of the sex . . . the seducer . . . has one ally in the garrison ready to beat a parley—her own passions . . . Let the woman be deprived of the advantage which she possesses at present . . . and you will effect a great, and a most desirable improvement in the morals and the happiness of the poor” (Hansard). Althorp believed that charity and child support from the father encouraged females to have sex out of wedlock because they did not have to suffer severe financial consequences for giving birth to illegitimate children. Failing to identify with unwed mothers or associate with them in his aristocratic circle, Althorp ignored the social stigmas that afflicted them and their illegitimate children. Ebenezer Scrooge voices this common belief memorably in Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol*, preaching to two donation collectors for the poor, when he asks:

Are there no prisons? . . . And the Union workhouses? . . . Are they still in operation? . . . The Treadmill and the Poor Law are in full vigour, then? . . . I can’t afford to make idle people merry. [Upon hearing that the poor would rather die than go to prisons and workhouses.] If they would rather die . . . they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population. (14-15)

Lisa Forman Cody notes that Victorians considered poverty a punishment for immoral behavior, “using science [like political economy and eugenics] and evangelical Christianity, both of which stated that worldly success [and failure] rested on spiritual and moral propriety” (“Politics”).

The new Poor Law Act, with its Bastardy Clause, was cruel and onerous to unwed mothers, but Parliament's intention, although perhaps well-intentioned, was naïve: if the consequences of illegitimate births were severe for females and the burden was solely theirs, they would refrain from premarital sex. But Parliament, it is worth noting, never created an Act with the intention of coercing men to refrain from engaging in premarital sex. Michael Diamond observes, "According to the Victorians' double standard of morality, women should pay dearly for their sexual transgressions, but not men" (111). Although creators, such as Lord Acton, of the new Poor Law believed that the law would curtail what they considered immoral behavior (premarital sex), the legislation actually made unwed mothers more desperate than before because they were cut off financially. Unwed mothers now had more reason than ever to find a baby farmer to take in and possibly murder their child. Victoria Nagy mentions that impoverished unwed mothers became desperate because the denial of financial support and the social stigma disenfranchised them from family and work, so infanticide rates increased dramatically (20). Some Victorians lamented that because of the heinous actions of baby farmers, "England was awash in rivers of infant blood" (Arnot 56).

Dickens wrote of the horrible and numerous deaths of the poor caused by a society that had turned its back on them and refused to protect them. In *Bleak House*, the servant Guster is a rare baby farm survivor damaged by her experiences. Clearly Dickens was thinking of the evils of baby farming (as with Guster) when he wrote the novel, for shortly before, in *The Examiner*, Dickens expressed outrage regarding the suffering of the poor in baby farms, "a trade which derived its profits from the deliberate torture and neglect of a class the most innocent on earth, as well as the most wretched and defenceless" ("Verdict"). The poor infants, victimized by baby farmers, were dying every day and washing up in rivers.

Many unscrupulous baby farmers claimed to promote adoption and pretended to raise the children entrusted to them yet failed in both responsibilities. Babies placed with such persons were rarely adopted and were frequently kept in horrific conditions. Baby farmers realized that the parents

of illegitimate children were difficult to trace—and often did not want the police to locate them. The infants lived with little food, clothing, or attention, and were often given opiates to keep them quiet. Anthony Wohl notes that opiate mixtures, like Godfrey’s Cordial (also called Mother’s Friend), suppressed hunger so that callous baby farmers could save money on food, thereby increasing their profit. Babies given such drugs would refuse to eat and waste away from starvation. Hundreds of gallons of such palliatives were sold each year (34-35). The sooner the children starved to death, the greater the profit for corrupt caregivers. Sometimes the successful killing of an innocent victim without being caught, the concomitant acquisition of money, and even the sadistic thrill of watching the prey expire could transform a one-time murderer into a serial killer.

Charlotte Winsor

In 1864, twenty-three year old Mary Jane Harris gave birth to an illegitimate child, Thomas Harris. After Thomas was born, she argued with the baby’s father (a farmer named Nicholls), and when the couple ended their relationship, he refused to provide for the infant. The aforementioned Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 meant that Nicholls was not legally bound to support his infant son financially, so the economic burden lay solely on Harris.

Options were limited for Englishwomen such as Harris in the 1860s, particularly for those with no education or family connections. Often even their own families would not allow these unfortunate single women to remain in their homes because the women had disgraced the family and soiled their own reputation. Once impregnated, poor working women invariably lost their position in the household and were forced to vacate the house, leaving them without income or shelter. Single mothers found it difficult to find or maintain employment because of the social stigma against illegitimacy and because they could not carry out their duties while caring for their child. Jennifer Newby claims, “After the 1834 Poor Law, single women were solely responsible for providing for their children, if they could not face separation from them in the workhouse Many working-class women feared the workhouse above going

hungry” (53-54), so they, like Harris, tried to work while finding someone to care for their baby—on the rare occasions when their employer did not fire them for having an illegitimate child.

The termination of her romantic relationship with Nicholls left Mary Jane Harris destitute and desperate. Harris found a job as a servant, but the pay was low. She wanted to care for Thomas herself, but as a servant, she was not allowed to bring her infant as she worked in her master’s estate. Harris explored several childcare alternatives, but when they proved unattainable, she went to see baby farmer Charlotte Winsor. During their initial conversation, Winsor confided that she had previously murdered several babies, bragging “of carrying on a regular trade in the putting to death of unwanted children, at prices which ranged between two pounds and five pounds apiece. She even demonstrated her method of murder—by placing her finger on the jugular vein of the victim” (Lambert 99). Winsor admitted, “I wonder I have not got myself into it [caught] before” (Homrighaus 36). She felt fortunate that the police had not caught or arrested her yet for slaying babies. Despite her reluctance to leave the baby with Winsor, Harris found no alternative but to hand over Thomas to the baby farmer for three shillings a week—clearly an insufficient amount to raise an infant. Ellen Ross reports, for instance, that a ten-month old baby “consumed well over 2 shillings in milk each week, and also required additional household spending on food, soap, starch, fuel, and sometimes rent” (108). Winsor knew that she would make no profit by taking in Harris’ baby.

As Winsor undoubtedly anticipated, Harris soon ran out of money and could no longer pay the baby farmer three shillings per week to care for her infant. When Harris acknowledged that she could no longer pay Winsor for her services, the baby farmer could have simply returned Thomas to his mother. Instead, Winsor chose to murder him. Winsor offered to murder Thomas for five pounds—a fee that Harris clearly could not pay. Harris possessed merely eighteen-pence, not five pounds, yet the baby farmer strangled the infant for eighteen-pence. Young Thomas was found dead, wrapped in newspaper, in Torquay on February 15, 1865, suffocated under a mattress.

Charlotte Winsor and Mary Jane Harris were tried together in court, but jurors could not decide which of the two had committed the murder because both defendants were present at the murder scene. Months later, the prosecutor tried Winsor again for murdering the baby, but declined to charge Harris again because she was young and attractive; he considered it difficult for an all-male jury to convict a beautiful (and thus, from his perspective, sympathetic) woman. Perhaps some jurors would conflate her physical beauty with innocence and pity her. Therefore, the prosecutor made Harris the lead witness to testify against Winsor, hoping an attractive, sympathetic, and grieving mother would incite the jury's wrath against the baby farmer.

At Winsor's second trial, Harris confessed that she brought her infant to the baby farmer despite Winsor's remark that she had already murdered other infants. Harris acknowledged that because her servant pay was low and she had broken up with her boyfriend, she was soon unable to pay Winsor to care for Thomas, so the baby farmer goaded her into accepting her offer to kill him. On the day of the suffocation, Winsor invited Harris to her home to be present. Winsor suffocated Thomas herself, without Harris' help, but wanted the mother present, for Harris would not report a crime that implicated herself. Harris waited in the adjacent room while Winsor committed the horrible deed. Harris declined to report the crime because she never tried to stop it and was intimidated by Winsor. When Harris was arrested and arrived at the police station, Winsor glared at her and made a threatening hand gesture, suggesting that if Harris turned against her, she would ensure that the unwed mother would hang (Lambert 94). Harris' inaction manifested her vulnerability. Because of the cultural constraints placed on her because of her gender and class, she felt helpless. She had no money to care for Thomas, couldn't bring her to her master's abode, and couldn't rely on charitable organizations or the baby's father for financial or childcare assistance, so she allowed Winsor to suffocate her child. Her inaction indicated not indifference but rather the gendered constraints that bound unwed mothers. In contrast, Winsor violated gender norms by murdering an infant and doing it in a violent way more typically attributed to men.

Shockingly, Winsor engaged in murder for an extremely minor financial gain and had done so previously.

During and after her second trial, Winsor was excoriated by the press, particularly by the *Western Times*. The *Western Times* demanded she be hanged, labeling Winsor “Moloch’s Daughter,” “a miserable looking hag,” a “Satanic nurse,” and “a woman of low life, of no moral feeling, sordid in soul, and covetous of money” (Vronsky 163). The *Western Times’* acrimony arose toward Winsor because after the baby farmer murdered Thomas Harris, she wrapped the corpse in the May 6, 1864 issue of their newspaper (Lambert 94). In Winsor’s house, the police found copies of the *Western Times*—with the May 6 issue missing because she had used it to dispose of the corpse. Thus, Winsor’s gruesome murder of Harris was forever linked to the *Western Times*, a newspaper that not only reported the infanticide but also became part of the crime scene. The newspaper’s vitriol, focusing on what they (and many others) considered Winsor’s ugly appearance (as in “miserable looking hag”), corroborated the prosecutor’s assumption that Harris was too beautiful to convict and that Winsor’s unattractive appearance would render her an easy target for anger and blame. The newspaper’s reference to Moloch links Winsor to the ancient idol whose physical ugliness, as John Milton suggests in *Paradise Lost*, derives from being covered with the blood of child sacrifices (I, 392-393). The press labeled her a greedy monster because of her low social class and physical ugliness.

Intriguingly, the media’s treatment of Victorian murderesses was often dictated not by the violence of the crime but rather by the woman’s physical appearance and socioeconomic class. Winsor was unattractive and poor. Victorians associated infanticide with the poor “because neglect, violence and ignorance were attributable to women who lacked education, moral training and maternal feelings” (Nagy 19). By murdering the baby, Winsor committed an evil act that reinforced Victorian prejudices against the poor. Winsor was initially sentenced to die, but because of a dispute about being tried twice for the same murder, her life was spared.

Amelia Dyer, the “Ogress of Reading”

Although many unscrupulous baby farmers deliberately murdered infants, Amelia Dyer is particularly heinous because she not only violated Victorian norms of the maternal female by slaying infants but also crossed gender boundaries in the manner she killed them. Rather than poisoning babies or waiting for them to die of starvation, Dyer strangled several hundred infants in her care.

Women desperately needing someone to care for—or dispose of—their children found newspaper ads or broadsides offering a home, family, or possibly long-term adoption. Unfortunately, ads for humane care were often deceptive, especially in the case of Amelia Dyer, known as the “Baby Butcher” and the “Ogress of Reading” (Rose 161). The nickname “Baby Butcher” pertains significantly to this essay in that “butcher” applies to a villain who murders actively and physically (as in strangulation). Dyer began her baby farming career by helping pregnant young women in desperate circumstances to hide the births of unwanted children, for the mothers could not afford to feed their babies or secure an illegal abortion, a life-threatening procedure. She worked as a midwife in a house of confinement and then, after parturition, brought the infants to infamous baby farmers Margaret Waters and Sarah Ellis to kill (Rattle 42-43). Baby farming, therefore, became a form of post-parturition abortion. Dyer quickly moved to more efficient and lucrative methods for securing income from baby farming by strangling the infants herself.

At an 1869 meeting of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, it was reported that “about 35,000 to 50,000 illegitimate children a year were put out to nurse, and quite possibly to be got rid of” (Vronsky 159). Newspapers began to report on baby farming in a series of exposés in the *Pall Mall Gazette* and the *British Medical Journal* whereas other publications were taken to task for publishing ads that were clear codes for baby farmers. Yet, hundreds of mothers responded to Dyer’s newspaper ads by taking their babies to her for “safekeeping.” Dyer understood what single mothers wanted to read in newspaper ads and in letters written by caretakers for their unwanted, inconvenient children. Also, she understood what many

unwed, poor women wanted: a professional infant killer. Dyer wrote ads such as this one: “Married couple with no family would adopt healthy child, nice country home. Terms, £10” (Rattle 175). She also authored this one: “Respectable Person to Adopt a little Girl three months old. Premium. References exchanged — ‘Secrecy’” (Rattle 53). This one was published in 1879: “Married Lady wishes to have care of a child. Would adopt one — Address Mrs. Dyer, 14 Poole’s Crescent, Bath Road, Bristol” (Rattle 53).

Dyer claimed to have given birth to thirteen children, but unsurprisingly, most failed to survive (Rattle 51). Her life was fairly settled for a time, except for the constant sound of “women in labour” followed by the silence of another “stillborn” (Rattle 52). That same year, the 1872 Infant Life Protection Act stipulated that baby farmers were supposed to register in order to do business, but only if they took in more than one baby at a time. Astonishingly, British Parliament members, knowing the evil actions committed by baby farmers, took a measure to ensure that the women couldn’t murder more than one baby at a time as opposed to abolishing the nefarious practice outright. Clearly, Parliament was mainly interested in projecting an image of caring for illegitimate babies, for their willingness to allow baby farming to continue unchecked signified their disregard for infants born into desperate circumstances.

Dyer circumvented the 1872 Act by taking in babies one at a time and then strangling them. In a documentary on female serial killers that featured Amelia Dyer, Allison Vale, co-author of *Amelia Dyer, Angel Maker*, indicates that “over a thirty-year career, it is estimated that she took, at minimum, over 400 babies into her care” (Martina). Dyer’s ability to murder hundreds of innocent babies for three decades before being caught, with hundreds of infant corpses (not all victims were hers) found in the river, indicates the British government and the Church’s unwillingness to stop baby farming and infanticide, probably because many of these babies were born to poor mothers. Victorians who adopted political economist Thomas Malthus’ views on dangerous levels of population growth caused by immoral and poor unwed mothers, with illegitimate and undeserving children consuming valuable tax resources and spreading disease to worthy and privileged citizens, perhaps even saw

baby farmers as doing a public service. In any event, Dyer's serial killing proceeded undeterred.

Dyer remorselessly strangled hundreds of babies with edging tape, tying knots around the babies' necks until they breathed their last breath. Strangling with tape was one way to ensure that profits were high—a violent act with no food or arsenic to purchase. She was a professional baby killer who actively strangled her victims rather than passively waiting for them to starve to death. Dyer kept dead babies for a length of time to allow their bodies to decompose before disposing of them, rendering it difficult to identify them and trace them back to her. Depositing corpses into the river also eliminated the suspicion of doctors, for they lacked cause to visit Dyer's house to write death certificates because the bodies were not found at her house nor linked to her.

Eventually, the tape Dyer employed to strangle the babies, and an address she left on packing paper to wrap up one baby before dumping its corpse in the river, led to her capture. After murdering approximately 400 babies, Dyer was caught because of her mistake, not because the police considered the mass murder of nameless infants, most deriving from poor, unwed mothers, a priority. She was arrested for killing two infants, Harry Simmons and Doris Marmon, found strangled in a carpetbag she tossed into the river; her murderous trademark, edging tape, was found around the neck of the infants. Subsequently, three more babies were found similarly tossed away. An infant that Dyer wrapped as a parcel and then threw into a river, weighted down by bricks, was found as well. Dyer received “at least seventeen children shortly before her arrest—none of whom could be found alive” (Vronsky 174). After admitting her guilt, she bragged about her modus operandi, “You’ll know all mine by the tape round their necks” (Wilson 241). After her arrest, Dyer transferred her energy from baby farming to pleading for mercy and falsely claiming she lacked the mental capacity necessary to be held responsible for her actions.

Dyer and her family spoke with the press to support her insanity plea. During Dyer's trial in 1896, the prosecution argued successfully against her ploy; several doctors insisted that she was evil but mentally competent. Dyer murdered hundreds of babies not because of mental

illness, but out of cruelty and a lack of conscience. By clearly deviating from the societal view of woman as compassionate nurturer, Dyer was, to a Victorian society, not insane but rather a monster. As the *Berkshire Chronicle* characterized it: “A more diabolical, fiendish slaughter of poor innocent babes has perhaps never been recorded in the history of the nations” (Vronsky 176). The jury took only minutes to convict Dyer. On 10 June 1896, Amelia Dyer was hanged. Dyer distinguished herself as an evil murderess, an unrepentant woman, and the most prolific serial killer in English history. She thrived as a killer under conditions ideal for baby farming: a society that snobbishly rejected unwed mothers and their illegitimate children, feared overpopulation and the possibility of diseases spreading from children of low socioeconomic classes, and ignored a profession that made money by erasing the embarrassing consequences of premarital sex and a cultural prejudice against women and the poor.

Economics of Murder

The sensational nature and the great publicity of the Winsor and Dyer trials altered the public’s view of baby farming. Prior to Winsor’s first trial, the public merely frowned on the practice. During her second trial, however, the horrific news of a woman casually suffocating a baby for money, while intimidating a helpless mother and rendering her too shocked to intervene, outraged English citizens. Although Victorian citizens recognized the prevalence of infanticide, “few were prepared to learn that child-murder [had been] turned into a regular trade. The case verified that infanticide had become a business” (Homrighaus 37). As with Winsor, getting away with murder emboldened Dyer to make a living by infanticide as she transformed into a serial killer. Neither woman considered herself evil and instead rationalized her murderous acts. Winsor “view[ed] the murders she committed as a charity; she told Harris that by killing children, she ‘was doing good’” (Homrighaus 38). She offered her services exclusively to relatives and friends to relieve unwed mothers of their burden. Similarly, Dyer told her daughter that she “was making angels: Jesus wanted the children far more than their own mothers did”—the idea

being that the babies were better off dead and with Jesus because their own mothers did not love them (Rattle 60). Such rationalizations mask the primary reason why Winsor and Dyer became baby farmers. Scholars have discussed the economic issues that underlie baby killings, but they overlook the possibility that the monetary factor shields the disturbing thrill and power that some baby farmers enjoyed by murdering infants. It is plausible that Winsor took in Thomas Harris realizing that she could exploit the mother's inability to pay the fee as a means of intimidating her into allowing the baby farmer to satisfy her thrill of murdering a child. Winsor murdered the baby for "only eighteen-pence, and was it probable that any human being would commit so horrible a crime as that described for so paltry a sum?" (Lambert 101). The profit motive, therefore, obfuscates another motive—inhumane cruelty and the thrill of killing another human being. Ballinger notes that women, like men, can commit horrific acts, and "to deny that women are capable of violence and of experiencing the full range of human emotions is to argue on the same terrain as men who have perpetuated sexist myths regarding women's 'nature throughout history'" (7). Winsor's heinous deeds support Ballinger's argument.

The female killers discussed in this essay had economic reasons to murder, and they acted violently, not passively as did many other women. And without opportunities for employment, the potential for a good marriage, or financial assistance, unwed mothers kept bringing their infants to baby farmers. Many Victorian women possessed limited financial options, demonstrating that economic desperation shaped the lives of unwed mothers and baby farmers. For these women, poverty and social stigmas bred violence.

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PART FOUR
EVIL POWER AND MAGIC

Controlling the Frame: Medium-Awareness, Magic, and Manipulation in *A Tempest*

BENJAMIN STEINGASS
University of Toledo, United States

*One believes things because one has been conditioned
to believe them* – Brave New World

In 1998, Jim Carey gifted the world with *The Truman Show*. For those unaware of this masterpiece, *The Truman Show* revolves around the entirely televised life of everyman Truman Burbank, who is oblivious to the show's very existence. The *Show* itself is his life; the scripts all predetermined by directors and writers who watch his every move. It is only once Truman becomes self-aware of the nature of his reality—an inherently false and arbitrary reality—that he is able to escape and gain autonomy over the actions and fate of his life. Ultimately, *The Truman Show* is less about the experience of watching television and more on the understanding and dismantling of power structures that are created between director, writer, and actor.

Along the same thread, postcolonial studies have often established discourse surrounding the understanding of reality with the understanding of power dynamics, performance, and identity. It is no surprise, then, to see authors rework 'traditionally canonical' works with a heightened emphasis on the explicitly or inherently imbalanced power dynamics that exist in colonial and postcolonial landscapes⁶². One fruitful vein of this study is

⁶² Such as in *Wide Sargasso Sea*.

found in critiquing and examining the work of the English language's most prominent and patriarchal author: William Shakespeare. Postcolonial scholarship has begun to examine the ways in which multiple works by Shakespeare deal with imperialism, power, and race; perhaps the Bard's most prominent play to be addressed by this field of scholarship is none other than *The Tempest*, a drama that interweaves ideas of power and authority with that of magic and sorcery.

In *A Tempest*, Aimé Césaire's reimaging of Shakespeare's late romance, Prospero's "white magic" does not exist as a supernatural phenomenon, but is merely a manifestation of his consciousness that everything is an arbitrary and predestined psychodrama built from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. In his unique perception, his magic is simply manipulating the physical world around, already aware of what events lie ahead in his knowledge of their previous production of Shakespeare's play. As a result, this heightened awareness causes Prospero to gain control and assert his assumed dominance on the stage, while simultaneously instigating his tumultuous downfall at the hands of Caliban.

Theatrical Frames

In order to understand Prospero's privileged position in the show, it is important to grasp the theoretical frameworks around the ideas of performance, metatheatre, and medium awareness,⁶³ especially on a postcolonial stage. The first issue that must be addressed is what sort of framing does Césaire utilize to present his play? Frames are fundamental in our understanding of dramatic performances as well as in our day-to-day interactions. As Elizabeth Bell notes, "frames [are] ways of organizing, understanding, and interpreting experiences in social situation" (35), making them fundamental to establish when viewing or reading a dramatic performance. Essentially, framing a narrative both on and off the stage is asking oneself the question "what is happening here?" Some frames are very easy to identify ("This is a horror movie," "I'm on a date," "She's in surgery"), while

⁶³ As in "media," not "communicator between the natural and supernatural."

some are less trivial (“This is a fraternity meeting with secret codes and meanings”). In this sense, the frames themselves act as a cypher and guide on how to interpret the very performance; they are “meta-communicative” (36). Thus, understanding the differences between frames is imperative in interpreting works; encasing Edward Albee’s absurdist play *The Sandbox* in the same frame as Lorraine Hansberry’s *A Raisin in the Sun* or Albert Camus’ *L’etranger* would result in a warped understanding for both the audience and the actors,⁶⁴ just as inclosing a surgery through the frame of a horror movie would be equally problematic.

From the first stage direction of Césaire’s play we are presented with the complicated frame from which to view *A Tempest*: “[*Ambiance of a psychodrama*]” (7). Psychodrama, according to Peter Kellermann, is a form of dramatic therapy wherein people act out realistic past events of their lives in order to understand the ramifications and significance on the present (Baim 3), often done with a strong insistence on role theory and role adherence (6). They are not based on a fully fleshed out script of a drama, but rather are formed in the moment based on each individual patient. Further, psychodrama is particularly recommended only to significantly benefit one individual; while there may be many actors present in the reliving of past memories, the goal is to bring about understanding for only the catalytic actor-participant. Here, Césaire’s psychodramatic frame is very much different than the Shakespearean text from which he is drawing. By framing the play as a psychodrama, the characters are not about to “run the gauntlet” of a new narrative path. Rather, they must live and *relive* the actions from their own collective past for the benefit of one individual. However, the past events of *A Tempest* are not the memories of one or all the characters. Instead, the narrative has already been recorded for the characters in a previous work, Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*.

With this psychodramatic frame established, should *A Tempest* simply be left at that, it would simply be a literal retelling of *The Tempest*. Although actors in a psychodrama are conscious of their role, the characters they embody and

⁶⁴ I highly endorse reading *The Sandbox*, which has widely been considered one of the worst pieces of theatre ever written.

perform are not. Thus, the characters within *A Tempest* are ignorant to their pasts in *The Tempest*, hold one: Prospero. From the first line of dialogue we are aware that Prospero has a unique role in *A Tempest*. In his premier, Prospero's daughter Miranda initially runs onstage in bewildered screams upon seeing the shipwreck. Prospero, conversely, seems instantly detached from the events as they occur; he carries a megaphone and proclaims, "Come, Daughter, calm yourself! It's only a play. There's really nothing wrong. Anyway, everything that happens is for our own good. Trust me, I won't say any more" (12). Unlike the other characters, Prospero exhibits the theatrical quality of medium awareness, the recognition and fully conscious acceptance of his position as a character within a work of art. This ability, Ewa Wachocka explains, is fundamentally powerful for a character to exhibit. "The protagonists," Wachocka argues, "whatever they are and whom they personify, are fully aware of their illusory existence, which comes true during the performance" (185). As a result, these medium aware characters beget a duality between the character within the events of the show and the character aware of their own participation in the events of a specifically fictitious show. This duality allows for these medium-aware characters to possess a higher sense of both authority of the space and narrative around them in addition to authority of themselves as characters.

Medium aware characters throughout fiction tend to be depicted and portrayed with much more agency than their less conscious comrades. For example, in the show *Urinetown*, one character acts as both the narrator of the story as well as a character within the story he is telling,⁶⁵ a power that ultimately allows him to stay alive. However, unlike these other media aware characters, Césaire's Prospero presents something different. While these characters are aware of their position within the plays, Prospero is aware of his presence on two levels: that he is a character from Shakespeare's *The Tempest* in addition to his role as a character in the psychodrama of *A Tempest*. And yet the question remains, *how* is Prospero aware of his condition

⁶⁵ The character is Officer Lockstall, who is a policeman in a fictional world where one has to pay to use the bathroom.

as a staged entity? Following this line, Caliban's accusation of "science you keep for yourself alone, shut up in those big books" (Césaire 17) does not reference any magic or science, as he might believe. Rather, these books are potentially describing the physical script of Shakespeare's version of *The Tempest* existing within the universe of *A Tempest*, left singularly to Prospero's device.

Within the confines of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Prospero is a magician capable of harnessing supernatural powers. However, Césaire's *A Tempest* version of this "magic" is not magic at all but merely meta-awareness of *The Tempest*. The importance of this unseen book is found in both Shakespeare's and Césaire's version of events. As Barbara Mowat argues, "[*The Tempest*] presents Prospero's always-offstage book as crucial to his rule over the island, the magical instrument that enables him to control . . . [and] torment Caliban and keep him obedient" (1). Additionally, "Prospero's bookish 'art' is often interpreted as a metatheatrical strategy," Harry Newman contributes, "which identifies Prospero's magic with 'illusion created through special effects'" (99). Dramatically, these "special effects" are not just smoke and wires, but the most valuable asset to a character: the *perceived* knowledge of things yet to come. Thus, by reading his "magic book," the physical copy of *The Tempest*, Césaire's Prospero only has to disguise his privileged knowledge of the events to come under the guise of a kind of magic, what Caliban eventually labels "white magic."

Césaire hints at this possibility of *The Tempest* existing in *A Tempest*'s universe throughout his play, noting indications of Prospero's ownership and awareness of a script of the characters' collective events. As Davis Woodman writes, Prospero "illuminates a self-awareness" of "the island's visitors" and native inhabitants (74), not just aware of their physical presence, but their scripted, textual presence in a pre-established *Tempest* as well. In one instant, he angrily rushes onstage to accost Miranda in that "I find your chatter irritating . . . and let me assure you, it's not at all fitting" (23). While potentially being read as misogynistic in regards to the female stereotype of the "chattering woman," it equally shows Prospero's frustration with Miranda as a character and her prescribed lines of

dialogue in Shakespeare's text. "Not at all fitting" in this sense is not referring to her role as a woman, but to her deviation from the strict role adherence that Prospero demands in the psychodrama. This deviation from Prospero's prescribed role for Miranda is so threatening to the control of his reality that he is forced from offstage back onstage (23) in order to preserve his perceived psychodrama's authenticity.

Further imagery of scripts and the theatre are woven throughout Césaire's play. Upon hearing the apology from the shipwrecked Antonio and Gonzalo, the sprite Ariel speaks, "Therefore, let us turn the page" (35), a reference to both the adage and to Prospero's physical book of *The Tempest* which the characters are advancing by means of their actions. Similarly, we see Prospero describe himself in directorial terms, claiming he is "the conductor of a boundless score" (64). Perhaps most strikingly is in Caliban's first appearance, where upon speaking in his native language, Prospero is immediately defensive about this deviation from the script: "Mumbling your native language again! I've already told you, I don't like it" (17). Not only is Caliban deviating from the prescribed role of his Shakespearean character, but also he is refusing to even speak in the language that is written, all the while unaware of this act of defiance⁶⁶. Prospero, in noticing this transgression, immediately puts a stop to any exploration outside of Shakespeare's written path for the characters, threatening Caliban to remain submissive. This threat, however, is not magical at all, it is physical violence: "Beating is the only language you really understand!" (19).

This prioritizing physical violence over his "magic" may initially seem surprising, yet when viewed through the psychodramatic frame of Césaire's work, the "magic" is merely an extension of Prospero's privileged knowledge of the events inscribed in *The Tempest*. In the reality of *A Tempest*, there is not magic at all, just stagecraft, verbal persuasion and threats, and a knowledge of events that he believes are already set in stone through the "strict enforcement" of an already written psychodrama, of which he is both director and actor. Regarding Caliban's role in

⁶⁶ Unaware *at this moment* in the play, that is.

Prospero's own theatrical creation, Roxanna Curto explains that "Prospero feels threatened by any action performed by Caliban that may undermine his own position as director of the events occurring on the island" (166). As Alonso declares in Act II Scene 2, "I have never pretended to be above the human condition" (30); Prospero, though, does exactly that. The only way to force Caliban and the other island dwellers (be it Italian or native) to submit to his own will are through these acts of psychodramatic manipulation under the façade of "white magic." "Shakespeare's Prospero is very much in control of both the island and the spectacle itself," Curto writes, "But in Césaire's version, Prospero is completely demystified: he is no longer a magician, but a tyrant who practices a crude mode of illusion-making with the sole purpose of reinforcing his power through trickery" (165). In the same way colonists upheld their power structures in enforcing the myth of the West (romanticizing a place so far away that it represented an almost mythically perfect location), so too does Prospero retain his authority: through enforcing his magical myth through his stagecraft.

Instances of Prospero's "trickery" throughout *A Tempest* are simply well disguised theatrical misdirection and rhetoric supplied by Prospero himself. Upon the arrival of Ferdinand to the island, Prospero and his servant Ariel immediately take him captive through an extension of Prospero's "magic":

PROSPERO: Poor fool: your arm is growing weak,
your knees are trembling! Traitor! I could kill you now
. . . but I need the manpower. Follow me.

ARIEL: My master is a sorcerer: neither your passion
nor your youth can prevail against him. Your best
course would be to follow and obey him.

FERDINAND: Oh God! What sorcery is this?
Vanquished, a captive – yet far from rebelling against
my fate, I am finding servitude sweet. (23-24)

Not once do the stage directions indicate a magic being performed in this scene. Rather, the only "magic" that occurs is the language spoken by Prospero in a gaslighting style of

hypnosis suggestion.⁶⁷ Essentially, Prospero's only ability is to manipulate others through establishing a false claim of his own supernatural power. And, like hypnotists, Prospero has no supernatural ability, but through his rhetorical suggestion alone is he able to gaslight Ferdinand into submitting to his rule. This is even more enforced through Ariel's confirmation of such power, despite no magic ability being enacted. Ariel merely adds another suggestion to Prospero's commands, "obey him."

Despite this lack of a supernatural magic, Ferdinand fully gives in to this confrontation. Further, he does not view this capitulation to a false "magic" as detrimental at all. Rather, he finds it to be "his fate," the fate that Prospero believes to be solely aware of through his ownership and knowledge of Shakespeare's text. Not only is it presented as "fate," but Ferdinand sees it as "servitude sweet;" an almost immediate internalized oppression resulting from his unquestioning subjugation to Prospero's rhetoric.

Ferdinand is not the only example of this nearly blind compliance to Prospero's assumed "magical" ability. Alonso mentions that he has a "distinct feeling that we have fallen under the sway of Powers that are playing cat and mouse with us" (31). And, much like Ferdinand's immediate diminution, Alonso views this servitude as almost predestined, seeing himself in a "dependent status" (31). Furthermore, and perhaps more indicative of such psychodramatic capitulation, is the capture of Antonio and Sebastian:

ARIEL: Stop, ruffians! Resistance is futile: your swords are enchanted and falling from your hands!

ANTONIO AND SEBASTIAN: Alas! Alas! ...

ANTONIO: If it were men we were up against, no one could make me withdraw, but when it's demons and magic there's no shame in giving in.

(34-35)

⁶⁷ Hypnosis suggestion, being the rhetorical tool that hypnotists employ on their subjects in order to achieve desired results.

Rather than put up a fight against Ariel, or even test to see if what the servant says is true, Antonio and Sebastian simply lament their condition with no protest. Prospero's psychological hold over Ariel is so strong that even Ariel as an extension of Prospero's bidding is capable of mere rhetorical, hypnotic suggestion and coercion—paralleling the system of puppet kings that imperialistic empires put in place in their conquered realms.⁶⁸ Antonio even goes so far as to rationalize the reasoning behind his immediate submission to Prospero, claiming that demonic magic is not only a valid reason, but also one without “shame.” In effect, Prospero has forced his European invaders into positions of “servitude,” “dependency,” and “giving in” merely through suggestion, threats of physical violence, and gaslighting, all while explicitly refraining from a “supernatural magic” that he does not actually yield.

Who is the Master?

Despite Prospero's attempts, there is an overarching feeling of cognitive dissonance in the show. While the characters on stage are held captive by their belief in Prospero's magic, the same is not true of the audience. Those witnessing or reading *A Tempest* are aware that they are not seeing *The Tempest* immediately, if not drawn from the title alone, then from the opening of the show itself with the opening remarks from the Master of Ceremonies:

MASTER OF CEREMONIES: Come, gentlemen, help yourselves. To each his character, to each character his mask. You, Prospero? Why not? He has reserves of willpower he's not even aware of himself As for the other parts, just take what you want and work it out among yourselves. But make up your minds Now, there's one part I have to pick out myself: you! It's for the part of the Tempest, and I need a storm to end all storm ... Will you do that? . . . Good, now let's go. Ready? Begin. (7-8)

⁶⁸ Examples would be the British Empire's puppet placement of the Egyptian King Farouk; the Roman Empire and Queen Cleopatra and King Harrod; Dick Cheney and George W. Bush.

Several revealing points are immediately established in these initial spoken lines. First, as with other Master of Ceremonies characters, this M.C. is medium aware, even more so than the character Prospero within the narrative of the show, conveyed through the M.C.'s direct address to the audience. To address the audience is to be aware of an audience's existence in the first place, and thus to be aware of your existence as separate from the audience. Additionally, as Russell West states, "the distribution of roles demonstrates the arbitrary character of social power and status" (10), forcing the audience to realize that Prospero's superior knowledge or "white magic" is not inherent to his character, but rather a result of both chance and the theatre. This plays into Manfred Pfister's idea that the audience, "from its position of superior awareness . . . is able to recognize the discrepancies between the levels of awareness [in the dramatic characters]" (51), ultimately able to differentiate between the levels awareness of characters like the Master of Ceremonies, Prospero, and Ferdinand from the onset of the show. As a result, the audience wields a similar, if not superior "magic" than Prospero himself, all without the character's knowledge.

The audience's own "magic" of superior knowledge is further touched upon at the end of the Master of Ceremonies' introductory monologue in addressing "the part of the Tempest" (7). While the Master of Ceremonies organizes the storm, the creation of the storm is "removed from the control of Prospero . . . [his] power is 'broken' from the very beginning of the performance" (West 10). The true "magic" of the show is always held by the audience, despite Prospero's misguided perceptions. The audience, either in person by literal stomping of feet and blowing of breath or by the act of turning the pages of the script of *A Tempest*, creates the storm. All is done immediately upon tuning in to the show so as to show just how arbitrary and illusory the events of the shows are, to draw "attention to the merely spectacular, and thus illusory nature of the theatrical representation" as performed by Prospero (West 8).

Nevertheless, the audience is not a character. While Prospero's "magic" of the shows' events does not work on the audience, so too can the audience not interfere with the established psychodramatic frame of the show. Once the

audience performs their prescribed role—the actual tempest—they are knowingly resigned to watch Prospero claim “ownership of the means of production . . . giving him the ability to trick others through the creation of deceptive spectacles” and manipulative rhetoric (Curto 161). Knowing that he is not responsible for the storm, yet knowing nobody will challenge his “white magic” authority, Prospero consequently takes credit for the tempest: “Since I was able to stop [the Italian fleet], I did so, with the help of Ariel. We brewed up the storm you have just witnessed . . . bringing the scoundrels into my power at the same time” (15). Unable to act, both the reading and the viewing audience are thus led to believe that they will merely bear witness to a slightly altered version of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*. The course of the show *seemingly* within the hands and mind of Prospero, constructed through his own semantics, rhetoric, and theatric techniques. It is this “sign of submission” (31) that reaffirms Prospero’s belief in his own power, in his view that “I am Power” (32).

Enter: Eshu

Prospero’s self-identity is thrown off from its authoritative trajectory in a rather monumental way. Whereas things seem to be going to plan for Prospero and his psychodramatic restaging of *The Tempest*, things come to a revolutionary halt in Act III Scene iii inside Prospero’s cave. While falsely proclaiming to Ferdinand and Miranda that Juno, Ceres, Iris, and the nymphs are “by my art . . . called to greet you and to bless you” (47), here enters Eshu, the African trickster deity. Immediately upon Eshu’s interruption of the “festivities” does Prospero’s “magic” façade begins to crack:

PROSPERO (*Softly*): Ariel must have made a mistake.
Is my magic getting rusty? (*Aloud*) What are you
doing here? Who invited you? I don’t like such lose
behavior, even from a god!

ESHU: But that’s just the point . . . no one invited me .
.. (48)

From Eshu's appearance, Prospero begins to doubt his "magic." In this light, the "loose behavior" is not Eshu's graphic language, but rather his poignantly black existence in the show altogether. All for one simple reason: Eshu is not originally in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, or, more fittingly, "no one invited [him]" to Shakespeare's version. This deviation from the psychodramatic script is monumentally worse than any small off-script line of Miranda's or threat of revolt from Caliban. For Prospero, this uninvited guest represents something much worse. "Eshu as an uninvited, disruptive guest is highly significant," Chantal Zabuz posits, noting the clear narrative difference he establishes through his existence: Eshu is "the trickster-linguistic figure of Yoruba mythology . . . In Shakespeare's text, Prospero himself interrupts the banquet" (53), in Césaire's, Eshu does. In this light, Eshu has taken away Prospero's supposedly scripted action and power before he is able to act on the events unfurling. Furthermore, Eshu does so through the very means in which Prospero has been manipulating the other characters: as a "trickster-linguistic figure," and a distinctly "*black* trickster-figure" to the "white magic" of Prospero.

Eshu continues to pop Prospero's proverbial "magic" bubble in later referencing his own tastes: "Your liquor's not bad. However, I must say I prefer dogs! . . . if you're talking about a black dog . . . think of poor Eshu!" (48). While perhaps not the most thematically striking of lines,⁶⁹ they are piercing to the self-awareness and medium-awareness of Prospero. In pointedly referring to dogs of all creatures, Eshu is referencing Prospero's *The Tempest* actions to use dogs in hunting and controlling Caliban: "[*Enter divers Spirits in shape of dogs and hounds, hunting them about, Prospero and Ariel setting them on.*"]" (IV. iii. 281). With this knowledge, Prospero, who once believed he was the sole possessor of *The Tempest* script of the psychodrama, who once believed he was the main actor and director of the events in this show, who proclaimed himself the wielder of "white magic," is forced to reevaluate his perception of the

⁶⁹ Although I will admit that, in any other context, "eating dogs" at face value would be the most striking.

⁷⁰ "Setting them on" meaning, "commanding them"

show. “For one of the play’s most central themes is perception,” describes Brian Pearce, “the audience’s perception as much as the director’s, the actors’ and that of the characters they are playing,” (39); in Prospero’s case, a perception that he is not the only self-aware character in the show, his “white magic” now countered by a specific “black devil-god” (3), as Césaire designates in the opening cast of characters.

Most damaging to Prospero is the meta-depiction and staging of Eshu himself. Not only is Eshu likewise medium-aware, his character is double-cast with none other than the Master of Ceremonies (2). Although the Master of Ceremonies never makes a reappearance after the opening scene, the “master” quality is still manifested through the physical presence of Eshu. In doubling the role, both the audience and Prospero are able to draw intrinsic character parallels through the same actor’s physicality in each role. This Master-Eshu hybridity thus causes the most significant transformation in the show: a universal recognition in the show of the fact that Prospero’s “magic” is only a façade for his knowledge of the supposedly predetermined events of *The Tempest’s* psychodrama. The Master-Eshu is a disruption to the narrative that Prospero believes they are all performing—therein lays the flaw of Prospero’s judgment. Prospero’s ultimate character flaw is the very “white magic” media-awareness: Prospero is not performing Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*; he is performing Césaire’s *A Tempest*.

After realizing his placement within an unfamiliar show, Prospero recognizes that he is no longer in any sort of “magic” control of the narrative. Rather aptly, he states point blank, “Power! Power! Alas! All this will one day fade . . . And what is power, if I cannot calm my own fears? But come! My power has gone cold” (50). In alluding to his previous statement that “I am Power” (32). Prospero has suddenly realized that his powers are nothing at all and are nowhere to be found. Despite this, he still attempts to regain control of his colonial subjects as “the rightful director of others’ actions” (Sato 96), stating that Caliban’s uprising must be squashed as “he’s calling into question the whole order of the world” (50); a world that Prospero founded upon the inherently false idea of his control and knowledge of the world and their shared existence. And yet, from this point

forward, the rest of the play begins to unravel quite magnificently around Prospero, deviating wildly from the flawed, preconceived script of his psychodramatic *The Tempest*.

In the Master-Eshu's disruption of the narrative, Caliban finally gains the autonomy and authority to begin reclaiming his own narrative. Coming upon a trap sprung by Prospero and his stagecraft, Caliban sees through the façade of "magic":

CALIBAN: Those aren't mosquitoes. It's some kind of gas that stings your nose and throat and makes you itch. It's another of Prospero's tricks. It's part of his arsenal . . . He's got a lot of gadgets like these . . . gadgets to make you deaf, to blind you, to make you sneeze, to make you cry . . . (53-54)

Not only does Caliban equate Prospero to the imperialistic and fascist forces that employ airborne chemicals and technological devices to enforce submission, but Caliban finally recognizes them for nothing more than spectacle and stagecraft. Although he admits that Prospero is indeed showing "power" to "impress us" (54), it is no longer the distinctly capital "Power" that Prospero identified with early in the show; it is not "magic," it is just "might," established through the preexisting structure Prospero built before this revolutionary change in events.

Ultimately, all of Prospero's false structures of the show, authoritative rule as director-actor, and "magic" all are brought to their fruition in the final scene. Further deviating from Shakespeare's rendition of the events, Prospero decided to stay and fight Caliban so that "[he] will not let [his] works perish!" (65). Yet, without his "prophetic science" of what Césaire's script has in store, Caliban is finally able to combat his opponent, ultimately seeing that Prospero's presentation of this dramatic world is "false!"

CALIBAN: I don't give a damn for your power or for your dogs or your police inventions! . . . You lied to me so much, about the world, about myself, that you ended up by imposing on me an image of myself: underdeveloped, in your words, undercompetend

that's how you made me see myself! And I hate that image . . . and it's false! But now I know myself! And I know that one day my bare fist, just that, will be enough to crush your world! The old world is crumbling down! (61-61)

Caliban, in the final moments of the show, is finally able to regain control of the frame, which, to McLachlan and Reid, is ultimately the power “to control meaning” (52). In recognizing the ultimate lie inherent to Prospero’s “white magic” is Caliban able to wield the “black magic” of his mother Sycorax (Ozment 183), the natural state of the island and the natural state of his character; no longer is Caliban the Caliban of *The Tempest*, he is Césaire’s Caliban of “negritude.” As Paula Sato states, “Prospero’s high days are over when Caliban simply ceases to listen to him” (97).

This idea is perhaps best embodied by the final line of the show: “FREEDOM HI-DAY! FREEDOM HI-DAY!” (66). Not only does giving Caliban the final words of the play add power to his control of the frame, this line acts as a direct parody of *The Tempest*’s ending, in which the still powerful Prospero claims the audience’s applause will “set me free” (Epilogue 20). Furthermore, it functions as a reappropriation which then sets Caliban free in Césaire’s *A Tempest*. He does not need the audience to set him free, he fully recognizes that his independence is entirely autonomous; he has become the director-actor of his own psychodrama in a show yet to come. It is here we return to *The Truman Show*; just as Truman gains his own autonomy and leaves the constructed reality of the *Show*, Caliban is able to break free from the frame that a distinctly Shakespearean, imperialist Prospero gave him through the means of Césaire’s rectifying and insubordinate work.

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Intemperance and the Path of Villainy in *La Celestina*

ORDNER W. TAYLOR, III
Delaware State University, United States

Fernando de Rojas's 1501 masterpiece, *The Tragi-Comedy of Calisto and Melibea*, later simply called *La Celestina*, is a work that explores the importance of temperance in many aspects. The novel, composed of dialogue—which in some ways reads like a play— from its very origin introduces the importance of temperance, while the finished product unquestionably confirms the importance of temperance in the work. De Rojas's use of technical temperance in the genre and style of the work as well as thematic representations in plot elements shows the importance of temperance in Renaissance society. It appears that de Rojas's work overtly explores the importance of restraint, especially in the Renaissance man, and it exposes the villainy that can exist and manifest itself when man rejects reason and succumbs to unregulated passion. In *La Celestina*, one sees how the intemperate actions of one man set into motion the ruin of many members of the community. After a close and careful reading of *La Celestina*, it becomes evident that Fernando de Rojas seeks to explore and explain how intemperance has the capacity to lead mankind from the road of virtue to a path of villainy and destruction.

La Celestina is the story of a young man, Calisto, who, while attempting to train his falcon, finds himself chasing the bird into the garden of a beautiful woman named Melibea. Calisto is smitten by her beauty and approaches her in a very forward manner. Because Melibea is a woman of good rearing, honor, and a distinguished family, she rejects Calisto

and tells him that his forwardness has offended her. The rejection leaves Calisto heart broken and love sick; and in an attempt to win Melibea's favor, Calisto decides that he is willing to do anything and try any remedy to have Melibea end his suffering. When Calisto's servant, Sempronio, becomes aware of Calisto's love sickness, he sees his master's weakened state as a means for financial advancement. Sempronio suggests that Calisto allow him to contact Celestina, a bawd possessing mystical powers whose magic will cause Melibea to fall madly in love with him. At first, Calisto only endorses the plan with consent, but later he affirms and takes ownership of the plan with money. Sempronio finds Celestina and explains a scheme by which they can fleece Calisto. Celestina is to ingratiate herself to Melibea and slowly persuade her to accept Calisto as a lover, and this persuasion will be presented to Calisto as magic. Celestina will be paid for her services, but Sempronio will be given a percentage of the money for procuring Calisto as a victim of deception. Celestina agrees to Sempronio's plan, and she promises Calisto that she will be able to ensure that Melibea will love him and that the two will ultimately be together.

Celestina fulfills her portion of the agreement with Calisto, and Calisto pays her for her services. However, Celestina is unwilling to share her reward with Sempronio as she promised. As a result of her renegeing, Sempronio—accompanied by his fellow servant Parmeno—kills Celestina, and they accidentally kill themselves trying to escape the authorities afterward. Later, while Calisto is visiting Melibea, he falls from a ladder when going to a fictitious battle created by one of Celestina's avengers, who holds Calisto ultimately responsible for her death. Following Calisto's death that evening, Melibea, distraught with sorrow, jumps from her father's tower. The last scene of the work is that of Melibea's father, Pleberio, mourning, lamenting and questioning the death of his daughter.

The structure of *La Celestina* is interesting because it reveals a great deal about how important de Rojas saw the role of temperance. It is conceivable that de Rojas recognized the importance of temperance and balance so much that he not only explored and demonstrated its value with his literary characters, but he also incorporated the theme into

the structure of his work. According to Bonnie Stevens and Larry Stewart in *A Guide to Literary Criticism and Research*, most readers almost immediately, consciously or subconsciously, begin their literary analysis by taking some literary critical approach (5). Many readers, even the most novice readers, may begin by trying to classify a work according to genre for various reasons. In an effort to show the importance of temperance, de Rojas shows a type of technical temperance in his work with *La Celestina* as a twenty-one-act play of fiction that spans more than two hundred pages. This work would not function well as a drama to be acted on the stage; but because the entire work is written in dialogue, it is prevented from simply being neatly placed into the category of a novel: an "extended work[...] of fiction written in prose" (Abrams 130 *Terms*).

In an effort to begin modeling the importance of temperance, de Rojas creates *La Celestina* as a novel in dialogue. And because *La Celestina* is both a drama and a novel that possesses comical elements that end with the deaths of Calisto and Melibea, the sub-genre of the drama is resolved by tempering the title and classifying the work as a tragi-comedy. This Spanish term tragi-comedy differs from the English tragicomedy that is generally associated with and almost restricted to the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods of English literary history (Abrams 215 *Norton*). *La Celestina* precedes those periods by more than one hundred years, but the general idea of mixing elements of the comedy with elements of the tragedy is the similar underlying factor that connects the tragi-comedy and the tragicomedy. In some fashions, this work is a precursor to the English tragicomedy in the same way that *La Celestina* is considered a precursor to the European novel (Mujica 55). Yet with the work functioning as a dual precursor, the issue of genre is not exactly resolved. *La Celestina* is the result of many different genres overlapping, and the work is not dominated by one style or another. June Hall Martin in *Love's Fools: Aucassin, Troilus, Calisto and the Parody of the Courtly Lover* says that *La Celestina* is evenly tempered and "by force of its originality without genre" (71). From a technical perspective, the form and style of the work treat one possible aspect of temperance—a technical temperance theme—which in this case refers to the aspects of balance. This work in terms of its

technical form is not dominated by one style; it is rather the result of the synthesizing of multiple styles and genres that make the case for the technical temperance theme in *La Celestina*.

De Rojas uses the technical temperance of *La Celestina* to show how well things go when they are tempered, and he uses the literary temperance theme to explore the moral consequences of intemperance. The idea of intemperance shows that man's end is ultimately death when he completely succumbs to the fulfillment of worldly pleasures. Fernando de Rojas writes, “. . . compuesto en reprehensión de los locos enamorados, que, vencido en sus desordenado apetito, a sus amigas llaman y dicen ser su dios, asimismo hecha en aviso de los engaños de las alcahuetas y malos y lisonjeros sirvientes.” This phrase could offer two possible translations and readings, which is thought to be the author's desired effect: “. . . which composed in reprehension of crazed lovers who are defeated by their insatiable appetite, call their lovers to be their gods, likewise taking counsel from deceitful bawds and villains and flattering servants”—or— “. . . composed as a lesson about crazed lovers . . .” (Mujica 60 translations mine). The key word in this particular phrase is “reprehension,” which readers of Spanish recognize as meaning both rebuke and lesson. Although Rojas was not a trained author, he was a well-read lawyer who was very familiar with the power and use of words. Believing that he intends both meanings to be understood, Rojas's “reprehension” actually functions as a warning of the impending danger that the Renaissance man will encounter if he lives a life that lacks temperance and discipline. In addition, Stephen Gilman, author of *The Spain of Fernando de Rojas* states, “In any case, taking *La Celestina* as a whole, it is to my mind undeniable that the original intention to reprove and improve was replaced by a much less optimistic moral” (359). De Rojas realizes that the theocentric way of life resulting from the medieval period's theocracy in Spain was not the means to man's true happiness, yet he simultaneously understands the danger of man completely satiating all of his appetites in the new, completely self-centered humanistic Renaissance. For it is within Renaissance humanism that dignity and the central position of the human being are assumed (Abrams 83 *Terms*). It is for

this audience that the idea of temperance must be explained in the perfectly tempered work, *La Celestina*.

La Celestina for the purpose of this discussion is about Calisto's inability to master the art of falconry because Calisto's falconry has literal, metaphorical, and allegorical significance. Calisto's chasing his runaway falcon into Melibea's garden is the beginning of the analysis of the literary temperance theme and the revelations of villainy. Calisto's falcon functions as a metaphor for his unbridled passion, which in this particular case is erotic sexual desire. His inability to master the art of falconry in reality is his inability to control himself. Just as Calisto is led around by the falcon, following wherever the bird leads him, so is he led by his uncontrollable passions. He in fact is a man out of control and enslaved to his baser nature. The falcon is a bird of prey, and also to some degree a representation of the baser passions to which Calisto is enslaved. As such, Calisto himself can be seen as an animal simply trying to fulfill an instinctual appetite such as eating or reproducing. As *La Celestina* progresses, the reader begins to see Calisto much like a predator slowly taking up position on prey that is unaware of his presence. And, it is his untamed, animal like pursuit of sexual pleasure and gratification that ultimately causes the deaths of five people including himself.

In Medieval or Renaissance literature, the falcon and the art of falconry function as metaphors for sexuality and intercourse. Michael Gerli's article, "Calisto's Hawk and Images of the Medieval Tradition," notes how the hawk/falcon image of sexuality is not restricted to Spanish literature, but one that has a place in all Medieval European literature. Furthermore, the hawk/falcon image is one that has sexual connotations within all European literature (86). More specifically, Gerli notes that, "In the Medieval English romances, falconry serves to adumbrate adventures of tragic sexual love" (91). And while *La Celestina* is not an English romance, it is unquestionably an adventure of tragic sexual love.

As the idea of the falcon relates to Calisto, Gerli indicates that, "The lost bird suggests Calisto's imminent loss of liberty to passion and his inability to perceive the known and predictable world" (98). Gerli's metaphor is helpful but incomplete, since it falls short insofar as the final state of the

falcon is concerned. It is reasonable for the reader to conclude that Calisto's falcon is not lost but rather undisciplined. While it is true that Calisto is unable to reign in his falcon, both Calisto and the falcon (at different times) return home. In Act I, the second time that Sempronio speaks, the reader learns that the bird is not lost when Sempronio says, "Your falcon flew home. I have put him back on his perch" (Hartnoll 2).

If one follows the metaphor that the falcon is a representation of Calisto's enslaving passion, then it would seem that whoever controls the falcon would in fact control Calisto, which in reality is the case. Upon Calisto's return home, he discloses his sickness to Sempronio. In "Calisto's Ailment: Bitextual Diagnostics and Parody in *Celestina*," Michael Solomon posits that Calisto's behavior forces Sempronio to act as Calisto's physician; and, after Sempronio accepts the position, he promises to have his master cured. Solomon accurately notes that Calisto does submit to Sempronio, but Solomon is generous to Sempronio when he attempts to make him appear less opportunistic than he really is. Sempronio, the previous controller of the falcon—the metaphor for Calisto's passion and lack of self-control—then becomes the master, and he actively seeks to use his power to exploit his employer.

Calisto for all intents and purposes has been removed from the proverbial scene as a driving force. He is so sickened with love that he is incapacitated literally and figuratively, as well as mentally and physically. His sickness makes him almost schizophrenic in that he is unable to distinguish reality from fantasy. This idea is best expressed within the text when Calisto speaks of his newly found religion. After Sempronio asks Calisto, "Are you not Christian?" Calisto quickly responds, "I am a Melibeian, I adore Melibea, I believe in Melibea, I worship Melibea" (de Rojas I.i, trans. mine). Furthermore, Gerli supports this position when he notes that, "After his brief encounter with Melibea, Calisto does indeed lose touch with reality" (98). Gerli continues by saying, "The lost bird suggests Calisto's imminent loss of liberty to passion and his inability to perceive the known and predictable world. It conveys his increasingly alienating, consuming obsession with love (98)." Because Calisto will not show restraint, but rather tries to

fulfill his lustful appetite, he is doomed to destruction. Calisto, in his intemperance, misses a very plausible resolution to his problem; he could have proposed marriage. But Julio Rodriguez-Luis, in “La pasión imposible de Calisto y Melibea,” speaking of Calisto's attempt to win Melibea, notes that “in no instance is matrimony seen as a vehicle to satiate” the consummation of Calisto's desires (340, translation mine). Calisto does not propose marriage as a possible solution because he cannot. He simply is unable to see the situation reasonably, and he is only able to see the world through the prism of his passion. Because Calisto actively submits to his passion, he also inadvertently submits to Sempronio. Sempronio recognizes his situation as an opportunity for financial gain and does not suggest marriage because it will bring him no profit, but a portion of Celestina's prize will. So, Sempronio directs Calisto to Celestina; and because Sempronio acts as the doctor, Calisto never questions the physician about his methods or motives for healing. It is for this reason that that Solomon's conclusion, that Sempronio is forced “into the rather uncomfortable position of doctoring Calisto's ailment” (Solomon 45), is questionable; the text simply reveals another reality about Sempronio. He not only has villainous intentions, but he also has villainous behaviors.

Returning to the idea of Calisto's sickness, the text reveals that the responsibility for his medical care is transferred to Celestina. Sempronio, after contacting Celestina and making arrangements to share the reward that Calisto would give her, is himself swindled by Celestina. And just as Sempronio manipulates Calisto by promising the satiation of his sexual appetite, Celestina manipulates Sempronio by promising the satiation of his monetary appetite; she feeds off of and into his greed. However, the swindling now takes on a different twist because of Celestina. It is no longer just a scam by Sempronio to get a few gold pieces from Calisto, but now Sempronio and Calisto have gone into business with the devil, or at the very least, have aligned and allied themselves with his/her vices.

Phyllis Hartnoll, in the introduction to her translation of *La Celestina*, describes Celestina by saying, “She is evil incarnate, always about the devil's business . . .” (vii). Moreover, Celestina makes no attempt to hide the fact that

she is an agent for the Devil. She uses the power that he gives her to restore maidenheads to women who have been sexually active, and she even calls for his direct help when trying to discover a means by which to enter Melibea's home. Because Sempronio and Calisto go into league with the devil, the outcome almost seems predictable; there will be destruction and death. Although different than Celestina's direct connection with the Devil, their indirect connection through the vices still unites all of them in a corporation of sin and access to forbidden pleasures. Because of his greed, it would seem that Sempronio is a member to the cult of Mammon. Calisto through his lust for Melibea would seem to be a member of the cult of Venus—who seduces Paris with a mere glance of her physical beauty—though because of the totally destructive nature of the relationship, he may more accurately would be a member of the cult of Bacchus.

This corporation of evil, which provides access to the forbidden fruits—lascivious sexual acts and monetary wealth—is a poisonous group that infects everyone and everything with whom it comes into contact. Martin describes the relationship by saying, “He [Calisto] like Sempronio allied himself with Celestina, that high priestess of cupiditas”⁷¹ (126), and that group can be accurately described as an evil triad in which the Devil unquestionably is the dominant force over the vices, greed, and lasciviousness. Furthermore, from situation to situation each member of the triad contributes more to the overall destruction of all the persons involved in the work; and, as the members of the group attempts to collect their fair shares of the profits of the devilish plan, they inadvertently kill themselves.

Calisto's sickness is the conduit by which the union is formed, and the means by which Celestina gains control over both Calisto and Sempronio. However, Calisto's sickness has yet to be cured or resolved. Solomon is correct when he identifies Calisto's ailment as a two-part sickness which encompasses both Calisto's physical and mental health.

⁷¹ “Cupiditas” was, for the medieval man an inordinate desire for anything that would cause him to turn his vision away from God. Cupiditas is the sin that brings about death of Celestina, the two servants, and Calisto (Martin 114).

Calisto's physical health begins to be restored when he first receives Melibea's girdle, but his mental health continues to worsen as the story progresses. His mental health becomes so bad that at one point he is unable to distinguish between what is appropriate from inappropriate behavior. As Calisto has more encounters with Melibea, his mental health deteriorates more, and he moves farther away from reality. When he finally has Melibea in his grasp, out of public view (but in clear view of her servant), and he is ready to consummate their love affair, Calisto is so absent of his faculties that he is willing to become a sexual exhibitionist. Melibea says, "Lucretia, go a little apart!", but Calisto quickly responds, "Why madam? I am glad that she should witness the consummation of my joy!" (Mujica 67)

In this scene the reader sees Calisto having a two-part rebirth. First, there is the hawk/falcon image of the hunter of weaker prey; he is the more sophisticated worldly man pursuing a less knowledgeable, less worldly weaker woman. Gerli says, "For Andreas, falconry is the specific image that best mirrors the strategies employed by gentlemen of the middle class who incorrectly pursue noble ladies" (86). But more than being reborn in that sense, he is reborn as a man who is completely self-indulgent, disconnected from the real world, and willing to stop at nothing to fulfill his appetites. He is a vision of the newly corrupted and "un-tempered" Renaissance man. He is the Renaissance man who is a failure at the art of falconry, the man who cannot control himself but who instead submits to his most base nature and basic drives of hunger and sexual reproduction.

It is conceivable that de Rojas was able to see a fictional Calisto in the text and how a real person like Calisto might influence the Renaissance world. It is because of this that de Rojas creates *La Celestina*. Calisto in this text is a dangerous person whose danger is not only privately detrimental but publicly perilous, too. His insatiable appetite turns him into a villainous predator who causes the deaths of five people. His failed falconry is grave—very serious as well as deadly, "And it is within the larger context of the allegory . . . that the symbol of Calisto's hawk should be considered" (Gerli 85); Calisto's failed falconry is not only what one sees in the text, it is the story of a young man who is so obsessed with physical beauty that he visibly becomes physically ill

and invisibly mentally ill. Solomon is very accurate in noting, “he associates the end of his suffering with that moment when he acquires Melibea’s love” (Solomon 48), and he is unwilling to be stopped by anything in order to have Melibea’s returned lust/love. Influenced by the Devil, he hunts the prey, tastes the forbidden fruit, suffers the consequences, and falls from life to death and into the hands of the Devil.

Such are the actions of many of the Celestinian characters, even Parmenio, who is described as the “reasonable person or the thinker” (Martin 92). And the way in which each character dies is appropriate because four out of five deaths result in or from some type of fall (131). It is the fall that is the danger, and the danger lies in the fact that man may find himself very much like Calisto trying to satiate a selfish and self-centered desire that takes him out of step with his society and his god. The fall may be the result of a miscalculated leap, as is the case with Parmenio and Sempronio, or it may be the result of a misstep, just as Calisto missteps the rung on the ladder. Martin could not have been anymore correct when noting that the ladder is central in the work because it is both the means to Callisto’s sin and the cause of his death (83). That ladder may very well be seen as the Ladder of Virtue, where life and heaven are at the top, and death and hell are at the bottom. And this work shows that those who fall from the Ladder of Virtue die. Falling from the ladder to one’s death is simply a punishment for one’s sins. In *La Célestine selon Fernando de Rojas*, Marcel Bataillon discusses the banality of the maxim that one is often punished by having the sinned that he/she should avoid, and Bataillon cites Calisto’s fatal fall as the best exemplar of this truth (130-131). Fernando de Rojas creates, with *La Celestina*, a model that members of Renaissance society can use to help govern themselves. Society members can exercise restraint and continue to climb the Ladder of Virtue that will take them to their god and help improve their community, or they can completely give into their baser natures and find themselves destroyed by their own folly and selfishness as is the case with Calisto, Parmenio, Sempronio, Melibea, and Celestina.

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ABSTRACTS

Mina Apic, Villains seen as victims: tragic transgressions in the world of Attic drama

Tragic misunderstanding and representation of destructive forces in the Greek world situates their origins at the deepest levels of the human being. As often is the case in the Attic drama, the hero happens to be the villain as well as the victim. There are, however, different types of tragic villains, and we will explore their main characteristics in the work of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, in order to point out the similarities and differences in their representation. One constant appears as the source of their misfortune: their indomitable hubris, inseparable from their haughtiness and impetuosity. Another constant is that violent acts usually happen within the family: heroes belonging to the doomed lineage of the Atreus become murderers of their most beloved ones, and the same sort of disgrace afflicts the unfortunate lineage of the Labdacus's family. Their tragic guilt lies in most cases in their audacious exaggeration of the self, which leads them to the unforgivable infringement of social and cosmic laws. The motive of excessive revenge is present in the work of the three writers of Attic drama. The diversity of tragic villains we have analyzed is equally significant. If Aeschylus's transgressors eventually reach a more profound knowledge and a reconciliation at a higher level, Sophocles's exploration is concentrated on the unswerving determination of the rebellious characters, while Euripides's villains, with Medea and Phaedra as his most famous representatives, are mainly victims of an exuberant passion, beyond any possibility of reasonable reconciliation.

Abderrahman Beggar, Drones militaires et Mal liquide. Colonialité et technologie

Based on Zygmunt Bauman and Leonidas Donskis research on "liquid Evil", this paper is about the use of military drones by the United States in their "anti-terrorism strategy." First, this technology is treated as a "solid Evil", part of the "coloniality" that determines power relationship since the birth of capitalism. Second, inspired from Slavoj Žižek's concept of "objective

violence” and its encompassing power, the purpose is to see how the “solidity” of Evil starts to dilute and take away, not only gains in the domain of human rights and sovereignty, but also, fundamental human qualities. Such impact concerns both civilians and soldiers, attackers and attacked.

Le propos de cet article est de traiter les drones militaires, surtout dans le contexte de la stratégie américaine de “Lutte contre le terrorisme,” à partir des réflexions sur l’idée de “Mal liquide” chez Zygmunt Bauman et Leonidas Donskis. En premier lieu, cette technologie sera considérée comme “Mal solide” relevant du cadre de la “colonialité” qui détermine les rapports de pouvoir depuis la naissance du capitalisme. Ensuite, en se basant sur l’idée de “violence objective” chez Slavoj Žižek, et son pouvoir englobant, nous analyserons comment la “solidité” du Mal commence à perdre consistance tout en emportant avec elle non seulement des acquis en matière de droits de l’homme et de souveraineté, mais et surtout, des qualités fondamentales de l’homme, qu’il soit soldat ou civile, attaquant ou attaqué.

RAYMOND DELAMBRE, Xi Jinping *versus* Zhang Yimou. 十面埋伏, *Embuscades tous-azimuts vs harcèlement* (professionnel & autre)

Raymond Delambre brings to light violence through one of the most distinguished Chinese moviemaker’s *multi-layered* lens, *lending to multiple readings*, more to highlight both the making of/making-of the tyrants and the victims, the creativity and *the duality* of his subjects. The author introduced the discipline ciné-maisie to the study of aesthetic science, and the sinitude to sinology, jolly significant. The interdisciplinary paper considers the movies along with their practices and the assumptions about society, fundamental issues, *topoi*, problematizes the tension, dichotomy between the status of film and the fake reliability of sources as evidence. In the cultural history across disciplinary boundaries, side effects, philosophy, visual arts, Raymond Delambre reconstructs the soft/hard power and its long-lasting consequences, with a production of knowledge thanks to a cinematic turn. Moreover, *through a questioning of the symbolic approach*, the author teaches how to read (images), *focuses on* concepts such as heroism, rather myths, and beyond. An in-depth analysis of masterworks examines the techniques used to attract and affect audiences, whether by accident or by design. Raymond Delambre chose especially 英雄, 滿城盡帶黃金甲, 我的父亲母亲, 山楂树之恋, 归来, 十面埋伏. *Through a close scrutiny of this cornucopia*, the author explains Zhang Yimou’s position,

disguising his intentions, ambivalence towards the bad guy as a hero and a villain, *embodying characterization, drama, music, costume, make up*. Such reappraisals lay bare the difficulties that a male artist faces in a socialist country for the triumph of creation. An engaging look at the diversity of perspectives and interpretations foregrounds this definitive account of politics in People's Republic.

Keywords: *Theodor Adorno, (Les) Âmes mortes, cardinal de Retz, Chow Yun Fat, ciné-cimaise, Führer, Gong Li, harcèlement, lilliputisme, métatextualité, Nanjing, hard/soft power, réception, Révolution culturelle, sinitude, sinologie, Wanda, Xi Jinping, Zhang Huiwen, Zhang Yi, Zhang Yimou, Zhang Ziyi, Zhi Shi Qing Nian.*

Philip Goldfarb Styrt, Shakespeare's *Henry V*, Reformation Resistance Theory, and the Moral Burden of Power

During the sixteenth century an active debate was waged over the issue of obedience: whether a subject had the right (or even the duty) to disobey a ruler who commanded evil. This debate was frequently connected to issues of religious orthodoxy—although which side advocated for obedience and which for resistance changed depending on who was in power. This essay argues that this debate informs Shakespeare's *Henry V* and in particular the character of Henry. In it, I suggest that Shakespeare's Henry and his subjects are unified on one side of the argument about obedience and resistance—that of obedience—but that their very agreement pushes Henry to consider how his subjects' obedience places a burden on his soul to ensure that he deserves that obedience by rightfully possessing his throne and waging a just war. The moral concerns this raises in turn prompt him to use the St. Crispin's Day speech before the battle of Agincourt to relieve himself of the obligations incurred by compulsory obedience, instead emphasizing his soldiers' free choice to fight. This allows us to see the full extent of Henry's political canniness, as he simultaneously lessens his moral burden and ensures that his men will fight for him regardless. In turn, it causes us to question the morality of Henry's form of kingship, based as it is on this kind of rhetoric.

Roxane Petit-Rasselle, Pas si méchants: les bourreaux d'Alexandre Dumas père

The use of the guillotine during the Terror left behind a traumatizing memory and became a source of fascination and

remorse, leading many Romantics to write against the death penalty. According to Loïc Guyon, there are three categories of authors in favor of its abolition. Some were not engaged, but their works contributed to the evolution of mentalities against capital punishment. Others clearly denounced the death penalty without positioning themselves. Still others, like Victor Hugo, openly advocated against it. This paper examines how Alexandre Dumas exposes the death penalty via the figure of the executioner, therefore belonging to the second category developed by Guyon. While Dumas's strategy comes to light in his memoirs, travel tales and fictional works, this study focuses on two of his novels, *La Reine Margot* (*Queen Margot*) and *Les Trois Mousquetaires* (*The Three Musketeers*). In both works, Dumas holds out a mirror to his readers for them to re-evaluate their own beliefs, showing how the executioner is isolated by a hypocritical society who demands justice, but rejects the one who applies it. Far from being a stereotypical ruthless brute, the executioner is an admirable figure whose moral standards and benevolence contrast with the will of kings and queens, thus bringing out the immoral responsibility of the authorities in the death sentence. As capital punishment appears to be a sanctioned murder, the executioners' impact in and out of the narrative could very well reveal them to be the auxiliaries of the abolitionist movement.

Sara Deutch Schotland, Atwood's *Crake*: The Aspergic Mad Scientist

Margaret Atwood's dystopian novel *Oryx and Crake* describes an obsessive scientist who plays God with life, destroying the human species as we know it and replacing it with a substitute subhuman population. This essay addresses Atwood's evolution of the mad scientist villain. Mad scientists in the past have been evil, arrogant, power-obsessed, and money-hungry; Atwood's protagonist is aspergic. *Crake*'s decision to destroy mankind is linked to an extreme lack of empathy and alienation that the novel ascribes to Asperger's Syndrome. In the popular press, Asperger's has been associated with notorious cases of mass killers—notwithstanding a dearth of evidence supporting the proposition that standing alone (ASD) is associated with increased violence. Today it is offensive to link villainy to ethnic or other social identities; arguably Atwood's novel is disablist in its negative stereotyping and its association of villainy with a developmental disorder. Atwood's portrayal of *Crake* raises a broader issue concern about linkage of ASD, malevolence and danger using the trope of a socially alienated scientific genius.

Key Words: *Mad Scientist, Asperger's Syndrome, Frankenstein, genetic engineering, Atwood*

Benjamin Steingass, Controlling the Frame: Medium-Awareness, Magic, and Manipulation in *A Tempest*

In Aimé Césaire's reimagined "problem play" *A Tempest*, the magician Prospero's "white magic" does not exist as a supernatural phenomenon, but is merely a manifestation of his consciousness that everything is an arbitrary and predestined psychodrama built from the text of William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. In Prospero's unique perception, his magic is merely manipulating the physical world around, already aware of what events lie ahead in his knowledge of their previous production of Shakespeare's play. As a result, this heightened awareness causes Prospero to gain control and assert his assumed dominance on the stage. Through his addition of Eshu, Césaire warps Prospero's understanding of himself in realizing he is no longer in control of the psychodrama he believed to be both acting and directing. From this, the remainder of the play begins to unravel around Prospero. In realizing that Eshu is not in Shakespeare version of *The Tempest*, the script for the psychodrama that Prospero has been adhering to, Prospero then himself transgresses from his assumed narrative arch and decides to remain on the island in order to fight Caliban. Without Prospero's "prophetic science" of what the script has in store, Caliban is finally able to defeat his colonial opponent, ultimately seeing that Prospero's presentation of this world is an arbitrary structure created from a purposely flawed and false awareness of the characters' collective realities within *A Tempest*.

Eric Sterling, Desperate Motives for Murder:
Mercenary Female Baby Killers in Victorian England

This essay focuses on the socioeconomic conditions that led to the rise of the deadly baby farming industry in Victorian England. Gender double standards and the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834's Bastardy Clause, which freed men from financial obligations to unwed mothers who gave birth to their children, placed single mothers in a precarious financial and social situation, causing them to hire baby farmers. Baby farmers took in infants and young children for a fee but often killed these vulnerable children for profit. This essay focuses on two baby farmers who violently murdered their innocent charges. By suffocating and strangling their victims, Charlotte Winsor and Amelia Dyer subverted Victorian stereotypes of women's maternal

instincts and female gentleness, made famous by Coventry Patmore in his famous poem “The Angel of the House.” Baby farming was allowed to continue for decades, partly because the victims of the murders were babies born to impoverished unwed mothers. This essay manifests how systems of oppression can become “moralized” and then legislated and integrated into an economic system. This economy then creates opportunities for criminal profit (in this case, among a subpopulation of those being oppressed) and pushes the most marginalized populations into situations in which they must rationalize criminal behavior to survive.

Ordner W. Taylor, III, Intemperance and the Path of Villainy in *La Celestina*

Fernando de Rojas's 1501 masterpiece *The Tragi-Comedy of Calisto and Melibea* later called *La Celestina* is a work that focuses on the importance of temperance in the lives of an emerging Renaissance society. The selection that promotes temperance through its unique format (technical theme) shows what results from intemperance through its literary theme. This essay explores the characters and events of the work to show how de Rojas depicts a Renaissance society devoid of limitations and a world that shifts from a road of virtue to a path of destruction.

This investigation examines how ideas of falconry, mysticism, love-sickness, and greed give way for instances of villainy and abuse. Readers encounter characters who exploit instances of weakness for personal gain as well as occasions of treachery that metaphorically and literally bring about the deaths of members of the society.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Mina Apić is affiliated with the University of Novi Sad, Serbia. Her most recent publications include: “Patrimoine ou modernité? L’Afrique en tension dans la littérature francophone contemporaine,” *L’Afrique en discours: littératures, médias et arts contemporains, Tome I: Scenarisations littéraires des altérités africaines*, juillet 2019 ; “La dialéctica amorosa en la lírica popular serbia,” *Poesía, poéticas y cultura literaria*, Pavia, Ibis, col. “Cautiverio Suave,” juin 2018, pp.535-550 ; and “La mujer en la épica serbia: imagen y función,” *En Doiro antr’o Porto e Gaia, Estudos de Literatura Medieval Ibérica, Estratégias Criativas*, Porto, 2017, pp.199-210.

Abderrahman Beggar Beggar is a professor at Wilfrid Laurier University, author of nine books (the last in press) and dozens of articles. Translated into Arabic, French and Spanish, his work deals with topics related to the French-speaking world and Latin American literatures. Among his books, three are devoted to the work of Hédi Bouraoui. The last one is *History and memory Bouraouiennes*, vol. I, Toronto: Canada-Mediterranean Center Publishing, York University, 2016. He has also published a volume devoted to the same author: *Hédi Bouraoui and Multicultural Writing* (Review of the Center for the Studies of the Literatures and Arts of North Africa, Skidmore College).

和萌 **Raymond Delambre**, born in Paris (Marais), former student of Michel Serres, graduated from Sciences Po, lives between Europe and Asia. Curator-in-Chief holding no line, longstanding specialist in Asian cinema, civilization, contemporary art, Zhou Xuan, Paul Claudel, and Jules Verne. By closely examining how the movies function, Raymond Delambre sheds new light, thinks the ties, confers to film(s) a dimension, relying on the unveiling of their deeply polysemous nature, the reception and rewriting. An in-your-face attack on the (post)modernist clichés. “J’essayai de gagner son esprit, d’avoir sa vanité pour moi; afin d’être sûrement aimé, je lui donnai mille raisons de mieux s’aimer elle-même”, motto balzacien.

Raymond Delambre teaches at France Direct School. Raymond Delambre is also playwright (Satoshi Miyagi, Daniel Mesguich for stage), screen writer, adapter, master of ceremonies, critic, stars in several films, worked with Golden Lion Su-Mei Tse, Golden Bear Tsai Ming Liang, Golden Leopards Wang Bing, Xiaolu Guo, Mami Kiyoshi, Li Yang. Immersion in aura captures creators or creatures. Raymond Delambre won many prizes, including Fondation franco-japonaise Sasakawa, aide à la création (ministère de la culture), prix Cinéma (Bal de Paris). Through a methodology of the research highly artistic and sociological, creative writing, Raymond Delambre is the author of numerous books and articles, which address major social concerns, imply a multidimensional reading and explore complex interconnections in aesthetics. Special attention detects the subtexts across a range of motifs, symbols and kinetic metaphors. Raymond Delambre writes on topics ranging from the legal system to the media, in order to unpack the rise as a global power. His books include: *Invention (de l'invention) des cinémas*, Beijing, Paris: You Feng, 2019; *(Dé)Construction (de la déconstruction) des cinémas*, Beijing, Paris: You Feng, 2019; *Fabrique (de la fabrique) des cinémas*, Beijing, Paris: You Feng, 2019; *Le cinéma sur les cimaises*, Paris: 7^o art, 2013; *Ombres électriques: les cinémas chinois*, Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf; Corlet: Condé, 2008; and *Neige d'été*, Paris: Théâtre des cinq continents, 2008. His most recent other publications include: "Mythologie du féminisme et du socialisme accouinés sur les écrans en République populaire de Chine", *The Lincoln Humanities Journal* 6 (2018): 91-108; and "Entretien avec Jean-François Mary, président de la Commission de classification des œuvres cinématographiques", *CinémAction* 167 (2018): 136-145.

Philip Goldfarb Styr is an assistant professor in the department of English at St. Ambrose University in Davenport, IA, having received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 2015. His work primarily focuses on the role of audience knowledge in drama, arguing that contemporary expectations about the setting and action of the plays should influence our interpretations, particularly in early modern drama. He has published several articles on this topic, including pieces on *The Winter's Tale* and Reformation resistance theory (in *SEL: Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*) and on *Hamilton* and contemporary teaching of the American Revolution (in *Modern Drama*). He is currently working on a book, *Shakespeare's Settings*, which explores Shakespeare's particular use of setting to create meaning by engaging with Renaissance English narratives surrounding the times and places in which his plays are set.

Kaitlyn Grube is currently a Master's student with the English department at North Dakota State University, where she is also an assistant director of the first-year writing program. She holds a BA in English from NDSU as well with an AA and AS from Bismarck State College. Her areas of interest focus on gender performativity in modern political rhetoric as well as the linguistic evolution of legal terms. Kaitlyn plans to continue into a PhD program.

Abbes Maazaoui is Professor of French and Linguistics at Lincoln University of Pennsylvania. His books include *Making Strangers: Outsiders, Aliens and Foreigners* (April 2018), *The Arts of Memory and the Poetics of Remembering* (2016), *Proust et la claustration*, and *La Rhétorique du leurre dans Les Gommages d'Alain Robbe-Grillet*. He has also edited special issues of the *Lincoln Humanities Journal* on *Alternative Realities Myths, Lies, Truths, and Half-Truths* (2018), *Us and Them* (2017), *Panopticon: Surveillance, Suspicion, Fear* (2016), *Borders* (2014), and *Follow Your Passion: Representations of Passion in the Humanities* (2013). His essays on literary criticism and twentieth-century French and Francophone literature have appeared in *Romance Notes*, *The French Review*, *Romance Quarterly*, *Etudes francophones*, *L'Esprit créateur*, and in various other critical collections. He is the founder and editor of *The Lincoln Humanities Journal*, and a member of the editorial board of the *Revue du Centre d'Etudes des Littératures et des Arts d'Afrique du Nord (CELAAN)*.

Roxane Petit-Rasselle is an Assistant Professor at West Chester University of Pennsylvania. Her area of research focuses on French nineteenth-century studies, with a special interest in Alexandre Dumas *père*, Guignol, Lyon, and the production of literary myths. She has published several articles and book chapters in international peer-reviewed journals and works, edited a collection of articles for *@nalyses* (University of Ottawa), authored book reviews, and presented research papers at various conferences.

Sara Deutch Schotland, J.D., Ph.D., teaches Disability Studies at Georgetown University, Utopia Studies at the University of Maryland Honors College, and Law and Literature at Georgetown University Law Center. She earned her B.A. from Harvard University, magna cum laude, her J.D. and M.A. in Literature from Georgetown University, and her Ph.D. in Literature from the University of Maryland. Her research interests and doctoral

dissertation center on the intersection between disability and utopian/dystopian literature and film.

Benjamin Steingass is a recent graduate of the University of Toledo with a Master's degree English Literature. His interests are postcolonial theory, 19th century transatlantic literature, drama and the history of stagecraft, and educational policy

Eric Sterling earned his Ph.D. in English from Indiana University in 1992. He has taught English at Auburn University at Montgomery for 26 years and serves as Director of the graduate program in Liberal Arts. He has published 4 books and over 80 refereed articles. In 2016, he was named Ida Belle Young Endowed Professor for scholarly achievement over a career. The Association of College English Teachers of Alabama awarded him the Eugene Current-Garcia prize for best scholarship over a career by a professor in the state of Alabama. He has published much on violence and atrocity in literature and history, such as his book *Life in the Ghettos during the Holocaust* (Syracuse University Press).

Ordner W. Taylor, III teaches African-American Literature and World Literature at Delaware State University in Dover, Delaware. His research interests include African-American experiences and the Romantic tradition along with African-American experiences within the Spanish historical and literary traditions. His most recent publication "Horror, Race and Reality" investigates the realities of the cruelties experienced by African Americans during slavery within the context of Gothic and horror literature.

Call for Articles for Volume 8 - Fall 2020

The Lincoln Humanities Journal (ISSN 2474-7726) is requesting article submissions for its 8th special issue, to be published in December 2020, on the topic of **Exploration & Travel Narratives**. Contributors are invited to examine critically the emotional, economic, socio-political, environmental, physiological, and literary aspects of travel (in reality and in fiction; by land, sea and air; on earth and in outer space). We welcome approaches across a broad range of disciplines such as literature, history, political science, anthropology, religion, popular culture, philosophy, visual arts, and social media. Topics may include but are not limited to:

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- Temporary living and/or working abroad (mission, etc.)

Full Article Submission Deadline: **June 15, 2020**. The submissions include an abstract of 200-400 words (in MS Word), a biographical note of 50-250 words (in MS Word), as well as the following statement, “*I solemnly confirm that the attached manuscript has never been published elsewhere, under this, or another title.*”

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Please send your complete proposal to Abbes Maazaoui, at maazaoui@lincoln.edu on or before June 15, 2019. All submissions are subject to double-blind review

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2. Include a biographical note of 50-250 words (in MS Word)
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- A final, fully revised version of the article
- A final, fully revised abstract. The abstract must be in English.
- A biographical note of 50-250 words

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