

LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, AND INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

INDIGENISING ANTHROPOLOGY
WARLPIRI RHECTORICAL VORTICITY
IMPENETRABLE SUBJECTIVITIES
ALFRED HITCHCOCK
ETHNOGRAPHY
DISCURSIVE TRADITIONS
MODERN SELF
SECULAR TRANSLATIONS
SHAKESPEAREAN MOMENT
THEATRUM MUNDI
ETHOS
EMBODIED KNOWLEDGE
BODY STUDIES
COVID-19 VACCINATION
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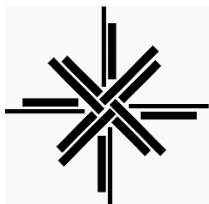
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Editors' Note | v–vii

Contributors | ix

Reconfiguring Corporeality in 21st Century

Embodied Knowledge and Impenetrable Subjectivities: Lowndes's and Hitchcock's, *The Lodger*

Robert Preslar | 1.1–1.19

Special Submissions

Kinetics of Argument: Rhetorical Vorticity of Ethos within COVID-19 Vaccination Narratives

Alexia Charoupa-Sapsis and Andreas Karatsolis | 2.1–2.27

“The Shakespearean Moment” in American Popular/Political Culture: Editorializing in the Age of Trump

James S. Baumlin | 2.28–2.43

Book Reviews

Secular Translations: Nation-State, Modern Self, and Calculative Reason by Talal Asad
Emre Keser | 3.1–3.6

[RETRACTED] *Indigenising Anthropology with Guattari and Deleuze* by Barbara Glowczewski

James Perez | 3.7–3.11

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The central thematic of Body Studies—deliberated as far back as the Platonic dichotomy of spirit and flesh where the latter is the physical and of the earth, while the former belongs to the realm of heaven and consciousness (Finol 5)—decisively places the body at the centre of modern discursive practices. At the outset, Body Studies challenges the idea of body being relegated to the margins and subordinated to the “thinking” entity, that is, the mind (5). René Descartes, hailed as the forbearer of modern rational thought, enduringly privileges mind over body to advance his philosophy of dualism: “a thesis which supposes that man consists of two essentially distinct substance, body and soul, which separates at death” (Spicker 8). In this formulation, body is reduced to a vessel or a tool for the mind. It is perceived as an object of study—purely biological or physical, even pre-cultural—and the mind becomes the consciousness, the only way to understand or confirm body’s existence in the world. Elizabeth A. Grosz critiques in a similar manner when she writes that this “dichotomous thinking necessarily hierarchizes and ranks the two polarized terms so that one becomes the privileged term and the other its suppressed, subordinated, negative counterpart” (3).

Body Studies pursue a sustained critique of Cartesian dualism as developed in phenomenology and articulated in the thought of Maurice Merleau-Ponty who discounted any distinction between the thinking ‘I’ of the mind and the experiencing ‘I’ of the body (Morris 111). Life is made possible not only through the activity of the brain but also through body’s material existence. The two cannot be conceived separately since they are intermingled. Philosophical tendency of the twentieth century, therefore, insists on the idea of embodied experience where the body cannot be separated from the experience of the world itself. Drew Leder comments that the experience of the “lived body helps to constitute this world-as-experienced. [...] The lived body is not just one thing *in* the world, but a way in which the world comes to be” (25). In other words, the world is disclosed to the experiential domain of humans as a world that is constituted by way of embodied existence, which is to say, to be human is to be embodied.

Embodiment, moreover, extends the possibility of an intersubjective and intercorporeal experience insisting on the interactive nature of existence. The world is configured through “the manner in which bodies interact with each other, in the overall context of intersubjectivity” (Moran 286). Recognizing the presence of thought and experience of other bodies within space and time, a lived body assumes an intersubjective experience *per se*. The reciprocity between lived bodies is developed through intercorporeal functions of body in action towards other bodies, which is fundamental to sociality and has an important position in meaning-making of the world through perception, agency, and relations.

The first Issue of Volume 6 of *LLIDS* on Body Studies seeks to engage with how embodied experiences critique the duality of body and mind. Under the theme “Reconfiguring Corporeality in 21st Century,” Robert Preslar’s contribution titled “Embodied Knowledge and Impenetrable Subjectivities: Lowndes’s and Hitchcock’s, *The Lodger*” addresses this concern via its exploration of how ‘embodied knowledge’—which one may not be rationally aware of—plays out in the novel and its consequent adaptation. The paper traces the differences in the way Marie Belloc Lowndes’s novel and Alfred Hitchcock’s adaptation of *The Lodger* deal with the issue of embodiment through different media. The author shows how embodied experience becomes the primary source for the protagonist’s knowledge in the novel, whereas the film brings out the impenetrability of the characters’ subjectivities.

The Special Submissions Section consists of two research articles, the first of which is “Kinetics of Argument: Rhetorical Vorticity of Ethos within COVID-19 Vaccination Narratives” by Alexia Charoupa-Sapsis and Andreas Karatsolis. Grounded in exploring one of the key frames of rhetoric in contemporary times, it maps the dynamic mobilization of ethos employed in the context of COVID-19 vaccine drive in Israel and Greece to appeal and persuade their citizens for vaccination. Recognizing the to-and-fro movement of ethos from situated to kinetic, which the paper calls “rhetorical vorticity,” it presents a nuanced analysis of how the political leaders of the two countries used several tropes to persuade their citizens into desired action. The second paper in the Special Submissions, “‘The Shakespearean Moment’ in American Popular/Political Culture: Editorializing in the Age of Trump” by James S. Baumlin, picks up the news media’s editorializing to understand what is meant by “Shakespearean” with respect to current American politics. The paper discusses how Shakespeare becomes a critique of our times as we, the audience of this political theatre, become its active participants, and how the different archetypes of Shakespeare—Hamlet, King Lear, Macbeth—characterise the Western self at various junctures of history. In particular, he argues that today’s politician lacks what Shakespeare’s characters had: a capacity for self-reflection.

In the Book Reviews Section of this Issue, Emre Keser’s review of Talal Asad’s *Secular Translations: Nation-State, Modern Self, and Calculative Reason* (2018) brings out how the concept of the secular has been delineated in the book as well as how it critiques the liberal secular understandings of language and translation. James Perez, in his review of *Indigenising Anthropology with Guattari and Deleuze* (2021) by Barbara Glowczewski, discusses how the book presents the author’s more-than-four decades of work with the Warlpiri community, to bring to light questions regarding representations and research methodologies in dealing with indigenous communities.

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Embodied Knowledge and Impenetrable Subjectivities: Lowndes's and Hitchcock's, *The Lodger*

Robert Preslar | Fukuoka Women's University

<https://ellids.com/archives/2024/04/6.1-Preslar.pdf>

Abstract | This essay traces issues of embodiment through Marie Belloc Lowndes's 1913 novel *The Lodger*, to the 1927 film adaptation of that novel, *The Lodger: A Story of the London Fog*, directed by Alfred Hitchcock. Despite the fact that Hitchcock's adaptation departs from Lowndes's novel in important ways, it is a work which builds upon and recontextualizes, rather than reconstructs, its source text. Further, among Hitchcock's filmography, relatively little attention has been paid to *The Lodger*, and even less attention has been paid to its relationship to its source text. By focusing closely on the treatment of embodiment in both works, this essay demonstrates that the human body becomes a site of inscription and aesthetic production in ways that reflect the respective mediums of novel and film. In Lowndes's novel, much of the narrative is conveyed through the embodied experiences of the protagonist, Mrs. Bunting, and the novel's villain uses the bodies of his victims to inscribe his beliefs into culture. In Hitchcock's film, the audience's inability to access the protagonist's innermost thoughts, even as the protagonist behaves in increasingly suspicious ways, highlights the limits of visual representation.

Keywords | Embodiment, Marie Belloc Lowndes, Alfred Hitchcock, *The Lodger*, Adaptation Studies, Film Studies

The Lodger: A Story of the London Fog (1927), based on Marie Belloc Lowndes's 1913 novel *The Lodger*, is Alfred Hitchcock's third film as lead director. As Maurice Yacowar points out, it is also Hitchcock's first work in the "suspense genre for which he became famous" (20), and Hitchcock himself referred to *The Lodger* as "the first true 'Hitchcock Movie'" (Truffaut and Scott 43). If, however, *The Lodger* may be seen as a film which inaugurates Hitchcock's authorship, it must be noted that that authorship is, from its inception, rooted in the practice of adaptation. It is only fairly recently, with texts like *Hitchcock at the Source: The Auteur as Adaptor* (Palmer and Boyd) and *Hitchcock & Adaptation: On the Page and Screen* (Osteen), that Hitchcock's films have received attention as adaptations. *The Lodger* is no exception in this regard; not only has the relationship between *The Lodger* and its source text been left largely unexplored, but the film itself has received little critical attention compared with other Hitchcock films.

Before beginning an analysis of both the works, it is helpful to clarify some of the terms this paper relies on, specifically in relation to adaptation studies and embodiment. This essay investigates the relationship between Lowndes's novel and Hitchcock's film by focusing closely on the treatment of embodiment in both works, and does not consider one work as maintaining authoritative privilege over the other, but instead recognizes that readings of both works contextualize and recontextualize each other. This perspective, in which both source text and adaptation are treated as mutually influential, is opposed to analyses which would treat one work as having established a standard of authorial intent, originality, or artistic merit which the other work is then evaluated against. One example of such analyses is often referred to as "fidelity criticism,"¹ in which adaptations are evaluated based on how faithful they are to their source text. With respect to Hitchcock films, however, it is far more common to come across analyses which diminish or ignore the influence of the source texts upon which those films are based in favor of elevating Hitchcock's status as a director. For example, in Robin Wood's 1965 book, *Hitchcock's Films*, Wood's argument for treating Hitchcock films to a book-length critique relies, in part, on his insistence that "Hitchcock is no more limited by his source texts than Shakespeare was by his" (18). Here, Wood not only alludes to Hitchcock's superior artistic merit by comparing him to Shakespeare, but describes the

¹There is some debate as to the actual prevalence of fidelity criticism. In Kamilla Elliott's 2020 book, *Theorizing Adaptation*, Elliott argues that the supposed predominance of "fidelity criticism" within adaptation studies is a myth, and that relatively few critics throughout history have evaluated adaptations based on their faithfulness to their source texts. Elliott writes, "My history of theorizing adaptation does more than (yet again) refute the fidelity myth: it explicates its persistence in histories of field theorization, arguing that the myth of fidelity criticism is the product of humanities theorization's centuries-long preference for difference and abiding hostility to similarity." (18).

potential influence of Hitchcock's source texts as that of *limitation*.² The flaws of such critiques are clear—in judging one work as inferior to another, the relationship between both works is obscured and adaptation is seen as a one-way process in which an unremarkable text is transformed into a Hitchcock film.

This paper's understanding of adaptation is based, in part, on definitions provided by Linda Hutcheon and Siobhan O'Flynn, who state, "seen as a *formal entity or product*, an adaptation is an announced and extensive transposition of a particular work or works" and "as a *process of creation*, the act of adaptation always involves both (re-)interpretation and then (re-)creation" (7–8; italics in original). Adaptations are not complete products which, having subsumed or transmuted the contents of their source materials, obviate any analysis of those source materials. Rather, adaptations are the results of processes in which, as Robert Stam writes, "[t]he source text forms a dense informational network, a series of verbal cues that the adapting film text can then take up, amplify, ignore, subvert, or transform" (68). Stam refers to the relationship between works as "intertextual dialogism," and in this conceptualization both source text and adaptation act as parts of an ongoing dialogue. Rather than answering how, exactly, Lowndes's novel served as the source material for "the first true Hitchcock movie" (thus implicitly establishing the Hitchcock film as a standard of artistic value), this paper explores the relationship between both the works with a focus on the ways that embodied experiences and roles outline changes and similarities in both the novel and the film.

In order to examine presentations of embodiment in Lowndes's novel and in Hitchcock's film, this paper relies, in part, on the conception of embodiment developed by Carrie Noland. Noland suggests that culture is inscribed into embodied experience in the form of embodied gestures like a manner of walking, moving, or sitting. These are gestures that we are often unaware of. In contrast, Noland uses the term "*kinesthesia*" to refer to a developed awareness of the ways one's embodied experiences are informed by culture. For Noland, kinesthesia is "sensory stimulation produced *for the self*," which "opens up a field of reflexivity in which the subject becomes an object (as body) of her own awareness" (10). Through kinesthetic awareness, one becomes aware of oneself as capable of producing significations through gesture. The body, then, is seen as both object and subject, that which inscribes and is inscribed upon.

With Noland's conceptualization of embodied experiences, differences deriving from medium-specific aspects of Lowndes's novel and Hitchcock's film become clearer, as do the ways that embodied experiences in each work signify. Lowndes's novel, for example, is largely presented through the embodied thoughts and experiences of its protagonist, Mrs. Bunting, whose proprioceptive experiences alert both herself and the reader to the fact that her gentleman lodger may be a dangerous murderer. It would be difficult, if not impossible, for a film adaptation to represent such proprioceptive experiences, and Hitchcock's film makes no attempt to do so. Rather, in Hitchcock's

²Thomas Leitch discusses similarly imbalanced critiques in reference to courses covering Shakespeare on film, which are "often courses *in Shakespeare through film*" (*Film Adaptation and Its Discontents*, chapter 1, paragraph 8, emphasis added). Leitch then notes, "even potential methodological inversions of Shakespeare on Film—Hitchcock's Literary Sources, for example—would have enshrined Hitchcock the auteur, film studies' version of the literary classic, in place of Shakespeare as the locus of meaning and value" (chapter 1, paragraph 9).

film, the audience is continually confronted with the impenetrable subjectivity of the characters on screen, and with the fact that we cannot know exactly what the film's protagonist, known in the film only as the Lodger, is thinking. Thus, while issues of embodiment in Lowndes's novel elucidate the ways that Mrs. Bunting navigates her relationship with her lodger, in Hitchcock's film issues of embodiment highlight the differing significations produced by the body on screen.

Discussions of embodiment in this paper also rely on discussions of the status of the body on screen which can be found in some of the earliest writing on film and adaptation. For example, in George Bluestone's seminal 1957 book, *Novels into Film*, he writes, "The face becomes another kind of object in space, a terrain on which may be enacted dramas broad as battles, and sometimes more intense. Physiognomy preempts the domain of nonverbal experience" (27). Facial expressions allow for some insight into a character's innermost subjective thoughts. However, such visual expressions can never convey the same range of information conveyed by the internal monologue in prose. Additionally, the human body on screen is never only a representation of human subjectivity, but also an object which signifies in relation to other objects.³ Hitchcock's adaptation also draws attention to embodied roles, such as the roles of hero or villain, and the ways that such roles are often at odds with what we perceive to be a character's true intentions. In Hitchcock's film, the conflict between the Lodger's gestures and his supposed internal subjective feelings is never fully resolved, meaning that the audience's understanding of the characters on screen is fundamentally limited.

By focusing on issues of embodiment, this paper demonstrates that presentations of embodied experiences in Lowndes's novel are recreated and incorporated in Hitchcock's film in ways that reflect on the means of representation in film. Thus, such issues of embodiment can help us to better understand the processes involved in adapting Lowndes's novel to film. If, as William Rothman states in *Hitchcock: The Murderous Gaze*, Hitchcock's viewpoint as a director is "at once a philosophical one on the conditions of human existence and a critical one on the powers and limits of the medium and the art of film" (7); *The Lodger* is a film which meditates on the limitations of its medium. That *The Lodger* is a silent film, constrained to expressing dialogue through sparsely inserted intertitles, only adds to the challenges in adapting Lowndes's novel. Both Lowndes's novel and Hitchcock's film share concerns over issues of guilt, cultural and gendered roles, and violence, yet both works present these issues through presentations of embodied experiences in ways that are specific to their respective mediums.

Before discussing the ways that embodied experiences are presented in each work, it is important to briefly describe the broader similarities and differences found in the source text and adaptation. Although Hitchcock's film maintains the narrative premise of Lowndes's novel, important characterizations and major plot points are changed. In both Lowndes's novel and in Hitchcock's film, a gentleman comes to stay at the lodging house of the impoverished Mr. and Mrs. Bunting. Both works feature a fictional serial killer known as the Avenger, and in both works the Buntings slowly begin

³As is discussed later in the paper, this is illustrated in an early scene in *The Lodger* in which Mr. Bunting's fall from a ladder (16:00) becomes an environmental cue among other environmental cues which characterize the Lodger's arrival to the Bunting's home as bringing danger or bad luck.

to suspect that their lodger may be the person responsible for The Avenger murders. While Lowndes's novel is focused on the subjective experiences of Mrs. Bunting, Hitchcock's film lingers on the impenetrability of the Lodger's subjectivity and encourages the audience to fixate on behaviors which align him more and more closely with the Avenger. The tension surrounding the Lodger's culpability is further heightened by his romance with the Buntings' daughter, Daisy—a romance which is only hinted at in Lowndes's novel—and by the fact that the “real” Avenger never appears on screen. If Lowndes challenges her audience with a protagonist who sympathizes with and protects a likely murderer, Hitchcock problematizes the audience's identification with a protagonist who acts and presents himself in ways that invite comparisons to the film's villain.

While both the novel and the film conclude with the Avenger being brought to justice, both works also leave certain troubling aspects of the protagonists' relationship to the Avenger unresolved. In Lowndes's novel, for example, Mrs. Bunting continues to care for and shelter Mr. Sleuth even after she is certain of his guilt, and laments, “If only I could put out a bit of supper for him somewhere where he would get it” (215). Although Mrs. Bunting is horrified by Mr. Sleuth's actions, she never condemns Mr. Sleuth or questions her relationship with him, and the novel ends with a strangely upbeat tone in which Mr. and Mrs. Bunting continue to lie to detective Joe Chandler in order to hide their knowledge about Mr. Sleuth. Additionally, there are hints that Mrs. Bunting does not wholly condemn the motives behind Mr. Sleuth's crimes, such as her shared attitudes against alcohol consumption and her feeling that women should not enter public houses alone. In Hitchcock's film, the Lodger is shown dressing and behaving like the Avenger, and his romance with Daisy is characterized by the Lodger's fixation with blonde hair (a fixation shared with the Avenger, who only kills blonde women) and gestures which indicate violence. At one point in the film, the Lodger uses a knife to brush a bit of dirt off of Daisy's stomach (24:25), at another he holds a fire poker pointed towards Daisy's head (26:44). In both works, then, the influence of the villain's violence towards women lingers beyond the closing of both narratives. In Lowndes's novel, Mrs. Bunting indirectly abides Mr. Sleuth's murder of young women by refusing to share her knowledge with the police, and in Hitchcock's film, the Lodger exhibits many of the gestures and mannerisms of a villain. Further, in both works, tensions concerning the protagonist's relationship with the Avenger are raised through bodily reactions.

The Buntings' embodied experiences are emphasized from the beginning of Lowndes's novel. It is immediately made clear that the Buntings are living in poverty, having sold off nearly all their valuable possessions, and the prices of everyday items, such as tobacco, food, and newspapers are described in detail. For the Buntings, tobacco and newspapers are an unaffordable luxury, and Lowndes carefully describes the embodied experience of their lack:

As the shouts came through the closed windows and the thick damask curtains, Bunting felt a sudden sense of mind hunger fall upon him. It was a shame—a damned shame—that he shouldn't know what was happening in the world outside! Only criminals are kept from hearing the news of what is going on beyond their prison walls. (5)

Lowndes's term "mind hunger" suggests that information is a luxury only in the strictest sense, and that its deprivation imprisons the Buntings within the walls of their own home. Later, when Bunting gives in to his desires and buys a paper, it is again spoken of in terms of embodied experience: "Thanks to that penny he had just spent so recklessly he would pass a happy hour, taken, for once, out of his anxious, despondent, miserable self" (7). The paper offers him a brief escape from the limits of his immediate material reality.

If the Buntings are all but imprisoned by their destitute financial state, the Avenger appears to enjoy a kind of uncanny freedom. In Lowndes's novel *The Lodger*, also known as *Mr. Sleuth*, is in fact the Avenger, and we learn that he is very particular regarding his own habits of consumption. He abstains from alcohol, as do the Buntings, but he also abstains from "flesh meat" (18) and "[does] not often care to look at the public prints" (184). Considering that Mr. Sleuth readily pays one month's rent in advance, however, even these self-restrictions describe the luxury of one who can afford to choose what not to eat and what not to read. Moreover, in creating the Avenger avatar and perpetrating the serial murders of young women, Mr. Sleuth serves as the architect of the news stories which Mr. Bunting and so many others like him use to distract themselves from their daily lives. If Mr. Bunting is momentarily freed by the indulgences offered by the newspaper stories of the Avenger, Mr. Sleuth is the master and originator of the domain of the Avenger murders, and while he is hidden within the Bunting's own home, Mr. Sleuth remains unthreatened by the highest legal authorities. Only Mr. Sleuth's own paranoia, as well as his growing intimacy with Mrs. Bunting, threaten to stop Mr. Sleuth from continuing his "great avenging work" (211).

In addition to describing Mr. Bunting's desire to read the papers as a "mind hunger," Lowndes describes Mrs. Bunting as experiencing bodily reactions to knowledge. Elyssa Warkentin points to Mrs. Bunting's body as a particularly female source of information, citing several instances in which Mrs. Bunting's embodied experiences alert her to new pieces of information before she has consciously acknowledged their relevance. Warkentin writes, "Throughout the novel, Mrs. Bunting accesses a form of embodied information about her lodger. As we have seen, Lowndes employs a metaphor of illness to describe her relationship with the lodger, and Mrs. Bunting's physical reactions always speak the truth" (par. 24). Here, Warkentin refers to several passages in the novel in which Mrs. Bunting experiences physical reactions to information which connect Mr. Sleuth to the Avenger murders, such as a "fluttering" (39) sensation upon hearing that the Avenger carries a bag like that of Mr. Sleuth's, or when, upon reading a public flyer asking if the reader knows the Avenger, Mrs. Bunting turns "sick and faint" (161). The significance of Mrs. Bunting's physical reactions is further illustrated by a scene in which Mrs. Bunting accidentally knocks something over inside of Mr. Sleuth's cupboard. When a "dark-coloured liquid" seeps out of the cupboard door, Mrs. Bunting grows "chalky white," presumably thinking that the red substance is blood, before she admonishes herself: "It was only a bottle of red ink she had upset—that was all! How could she have thought it was anything else" (77). Later, however, Mrs. Bunting's physical response to the incident makes it clear that not even she wholly believes that the red substance had been ink:

Yet under that still, almost sullen, manner, how fierce was the storm of dread, of sombre anguish, and, yes, of sick suspense, which shook her soul, and which so

far affected her poor, ailing body that often she felt as if she could not force herself to accomplish her simple round of daily work. (80)

Ultimately, Mrs. Bunting values first-hand experience above all other forms of knowledge. From the beginning of the novel, Mrs. Bunting harshly judges her husband's habit of reading newspapers: "There he was, doing nothing—in fact, doing worse than nothing—wasting his time reading all about those horrid crimes" (31). However, as Mrs. Bunting becomes more and more certain of Mr. Sleuth's guilt, she not only begins to investigate her Lodger's activities, but also begins reading the papers herself, hoping to prove her suspicions wrong. While Mr. Bunting reads the paper to escape his embodied experience, Mrs. Bunting uses the newspaper to confirm her assessments of her sensate experiences of her immediate material reality.

Commenting on Mrs. Bunting's investigative efforts, Warkentin asserts, "[in Lowndes's novel women] are not victims—or at least, they are not solely victims—but are competent wielders of power and active collectors of information" (par. 26). It must be noted, however, that Mrs. Bunting never uses the information she gathers about her lodger to prevent his violence towards women, and even when she is certain that Mr. Sleuth is responsible for the Avenger murders, she treats him with kindness and sympathy. Mrs. Bunting's concern for Mr. Sleuth is clearly demonstrated when she warns him of the heightened police presence in their neighborhood: "'Oh, I wasn't thinking of revellers [*sic*], sir; I was thinking'—she hesitated, then, with a gasping effort Mrs. Bunting brought out the words, 'of the police'" (169). At the end of the novel, when Mr. Sleuth has disappeared into the city of London to escape the attention of the authorities, Mrs. Bunting laments, "If only I could put out a bit of supper for him somewhere where he would get it" (216). Despite Mr. Sleuth's belief that Mrs. Bunting has betrayed him and led him to be captured by the authorities, Mrs. Bunting never violates his trust.

Although Mrs. Bunting maintains a sympathetic alliance with Mr. Sleuth throughout the novel, Mrs. Bunting's reliance on embodied knowledge is continually contrasted to the attitudes and behaviors of Mr. Sleuth. While Mrs. Bunting is portrayed as obtaining and processing knowledge primarily through her body, via sensate reactions to her immediate environment, Mr. Sleuth obtains information through a more abstract form, through text, and he inscribes his readings of the Bible into broader society through his violence against women. This is hinted at early in the novel, when Mrs. Bunting overhears Mr. Sleuth reading a Bible verse: "'A strange woman is a narrow gate. She also lieth in wait as for a prey, and increaseth the transgressors among men [...] Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death'" (26). From this passage, we may infer that Mr. Sleuth views his victims as the type of "strange woman" who "increaseth the transgressors among men." In one sense, since some of Sleuth's victims are women who were last seen intoxicated at public houses, we might read "strange women" as referring to women who go out alone at night to drink alcohol. This is supported by the fact that Mr. Sleuth has very strong opinions against the consumption of alcohol: "He was queer about the drink—one might say almost crazy on the subject" (76). However, the full passage of this Bible verse, as found in the *King James Version*, for example, makes it clear that this verse also refers to women who engage in prostitution. Thus, issues of morality are conflated with male desire and the female body. The subtext, here, implies that Mr. Sleuth sought the attention of such "strange women"

at local pubs in order to “avenge” their moral transgressions. The female body becomes a site of moral contest, and with the murder of his victims, Mr. Sleuth denies them embodied agency and intends for their bodies to be read as a warning against transgressing his own strict moral code. The status of the female victim's body as something to be “read” is further reinforced by the “three-cornered pieces of grey paper” (30) found pinned to the victims' skirts and on which are written (in red ink) the words “The Avenger.” Mrs. Bunting notes that “Certain pages of Cruden's Concordance were covered with notes written in Mr. Sleuth's peculiar upright handwriting” (77), and the bodies of female victims are given similar annotations in the form of a hand-written calling card denoting the intent behind Mr. Sleuth's violence.

The passage concerning “strange women” also compares the female body to the structure of the home. Accordingly, Mrs. Bunting's management of her household is of key importance to Mr. Sleuth, and for both Mr. Sleuth and Mrs. Bunting the unscrupulous admission of guests is a grave error. While Mr. Sleuth forms his moral judgements from his understanding of biblical scripture, Mrs. Bunting's sensate experiences lead her to form similar ideas about her own role in the maintenance of her home. As Mrs. Bunting's suspicions about her lodger are confirmed, she is still primarily concerned with the potential intrusion of outsiders:

To her sharpened, suffering senses her house had become a citadel which must be defended; aye, even if the besiegers were a mighty horde with right on their side. And she was always expecting that first single spy who would herald the battalion against whom her only weapon would be her woman's wit and cunning. (81)

Crucially, Mrs. Bunting arrives at this determination through her “sharpened, suffering senses,” and she is certain that her only defense against such intrusions is “her woman's wit and cunning.” Of this passage, Ellen Turner writes, “Despite her horror at the realisation that her lodger is liable to be a serial killer, Mrs. Bunting's abhorrence is outweighed by her compulsion to guard her house-guest against the force of the law” (60). However, more than only portraying Mrs. Bunting as being opposed to legal authorities, this passage also draws comparisons between Mrs. Bunting's sense of duty to protect her home and Mr. Sleuth's apparent belief that the home of a strange woman “is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death” (26). While Mrs. Bunting recognizes “something very awful” (Lowndes 26) in the passage quoted by Mr. Sleuth, Mrs. Bunting nonetheless embodies the basic tenets of Sleuth's beliefs—she abstains from alcohol (88), she takes great care in maintaining the social respectability and general upkeep of her home (12), and Mrs. Bunting also holds a negative view of women entering pubs (88).⁴

Of course, Mrs. Bunting's feeling that it is her duty to protect her home from the intrusion of legal authority does not indicate that she condones all of Mr. Sleuth's misogynistic beliefs. Nor are Mrs. Bunting's attitudes towards Mr. Sleuth at all simplistic. Mrs. Bunting views Mr. Sleuth favorably in part because he is a gentleman,

⁴When Mr. Bunting says that “Hanging'd be too good for [the Avenger],” Mrs. Bunting insists that the Avenger, likely being “a madman,” does not bear responsibility for his actions, and further states, “Not but what it's a good thing if these murders have emptied the public-houses of women for a bit” (88).

“belonging by birth to the class with whom her former employment had brought her in contact” (11). It is also explained that Mrs. Bunting “had had some sinister experiences with men and women—especially women—drawn from that nameless, mysterious class made up of the human flotsam and jetsam which drifts about every great city” (11). Early on, then, it is suggested that Mrs. Bunting’s favorable experiences with her former employers, along with her unfavorable experiences with the poor living in her neighborhood, have led her to form certain preconceptions about the upper and lower classes. For the Buntings, Mr. Sleuth is the first lodger in a long time whom “they could think of taking into their respectable house” (12), and when Mrs. Bunting learns that Mr. Sleuth intends to pay a month in advance, she “felt sick with relief” (16). Mrs. Bunting’s protective behaviors towards Mr. Sleuth are clearly motivated by Mr. Sleuth’s social standing and the financial security he provides, in addition to the social and legal perils which Mrs. Bunting associates with the intrusion of legal authorities into her home.

In addition to explicating the relationship between Mrs. Bunting and Mr. Sleuth, the Bible passages about “strange” women also link Mr. Sleuth’s fundamentalist, Christian views to the more widespread views exhibited by Mr. and Mrs. Bunting (for example, their abstaining from alcohol and Mrs. Bunting’s disdain for women who drink or go to pubs) and, thus, by society at large. In both Hitchcock’s film and in Lowndes’s novel, the motives associated with the Avenger’s violence overlap with beliefs espoused by characters who are more representative of the public sphere. That Mr. Sleuth and Mrs. Bunting share similar values is hinted at when Mrs. Bunting assures Mr. Sleuth that both she and Mr. Bunting abstain from alcohol. Then, upon learning that Mr. Sleuth “had a queer kind of fear and dislike of women,” Lowndes notes that “Mrs. Bunting had no very great opinion of her sister woman, so that didn’t put her out” (34). Further, Lowndes later connects the passage concerning strange women to a public consciousness of famous incidents in which guests have been murdered by their (often female) hosts. Mrs. Bunting and Daisy listen with fascination as their family friend, detective Joe Chandler, recounts several such stories:

One woman, whom all the people round her believed to be a kind, respectable soul, had poisoned no fewer than fifteen people in order to get their insurance money. Then there had been the terrible tale of an apparently respectable, contented innkeeper and his wife, who, living at the entrance to a wood, killed all those humble travellers [*sic*] who took shelter under their roof, simply for their clothes, and any valuables they possessed. (105)

Here, Mr. Sleuth’s fanatical disdain for what he believes to be immoral women is linked to a broader, societal fascination with the recorded history of such crimes. Although Mr. Sleuth is later described as “A religious maniac” (215), Mr. Sleuth’s greatest fears and concerns are reflected in society at large.

If the passage concerning “strange” women marks women’s bodies as sites of moral contest, describing sexual relations with certain bodies as leading one to “the chambers of death” (26), then Mr. Sleuth avenges the injustices these bodies threaten. Mr. Sleuth believes himself to be “an absolutely sane man with a great avenging work to do in the world” (211). He approaches the Bible from a fundamentalist perspective, and his application of the Bible’s teachings is absent of metaphor. When Mrs. Bunting accidentally knocks over Mr. Sleuth’s bottle of red ink in his cupboard, it is even

suggested that Mr. Sleuth may use the blood of his victims to write his notes, as well as the Avenger calling cards. We also learn that Mr. Sleuth conducts experiments in one of the Buntings' rooms: "I am a man of science. I make, that is, all sorts of experiments, and I often require the—ah, well, the presence of great heat" (15). We do not learn much about his experiments, except that they leave a "strong, acrid smell" (116), and they suggest that Mr. Sleuth hopes to gain some knowledge through the bodies of his victims.

Mr. Sleuth's attitude towards the bodies of his victims marks a fundamental difference in Mr. Sleuth's and Mrs. Bunting's modes of embodiment. Mrs. Bunting practices a kind of embodied hermeneutics in which her understanding of the world derives in large part from her own bodily reactions to the information she receives. Mrs. Bunting feels a "fluttering" sensation in part of the novel, and feels "sick and faint" in another, and in both instances these sensations mark her implicit understanding that her lodger, Mr. Sleuth, is the person who has committed such horrible acts of violence against young women. If Mrs. Bunting reads the world largely through her bodily reactions to events and knowledge as they unfold, Mr. Sleuth behaves in an inverse manner, inscribing his beliefs into culture through the bodies of the women he murders. If Mrs. Bunting's sensate, embodied experiences inform her understanding of the world, Mr. Sleuth attempts to impose his own understanding of the world by depriving his victims of embodied agency.

In comparing issues of embodiment in Lowndes's novel to those presented in Hitchcock's film, the inherent constraints of the respective mediums of novel and film must, of course, be re-emphasized. As far back as 1957, George Bluestone noted that in novels, words are "filtered through the screen of conceptual apprehension," while "the moving picture comes to us directly through perception" (20). The contrast between prose in novels, which is often used to explicate a character's conscious or even subconscious thoughts, and a silent film like *The Lodger*, which tells its story almost entirely through the interaction between the camera, the environment, and the bodies on screen, is crucial. It should also be noted that *The Lodger*, perhaps more than any other Hitchcock film, shows the influence that German filmmakers of the 1920s had on the young director. Only a few years before the release of the *The Lodger: A Story of the London Fog*, Hitchcock had briefly worked on a film in Germany, and the work of the German expressionists had so strongly influenced him that he later remarked, "My models were forever after the German filmmakers of 1924 and 1925. They were trying very hard to express ideas in purely visual terms" (Spoto 68). The desire to "express ideas in purely visual terms" is fully evident in comparing Lowndes's *The Lodger*, which richly details Mrs. Bunting's innermost thoughts and feelings through its third-person narrator, to Hitchcock's adaptation.

Although Lowndes's novel takes the Jack the Ripper murders of 1888⁵ as its implicit subject matter, much of the novel ruminates on the Buntings' concerns over their social and financial standing. Lowndes's narrative does not focus on the Avenger murders themselves, but instead on Mrs. Bunting's ability to manage her relationship

⁵Jack the Ripper, whose identity has never been confirmed, is believed to have killed at least five women in Whitechapel, London, in 1888. Judith Walkowitz's essay, "Jack the Ripper and the Myth of Male Violence," provides an excellent account of the ways that the news media and the London public of the time responded to these acts of violence.

with her gentleman, serial-murderer lodger while also protecting her home and her family from the intrusion of the legal and public spheres. That Hitchcock's adaptation focuses on the Lodger rather than on Mrs. Bunting may be symptomatic of the inherent constraints of silent film, insofar as a purely visual portrayal of Mrs. Bunting's experiences couldn't hope to reach the depth of characterization achieved in Lowndes's novel. However, Hitchcock's adaptation does not attempt to mitigate the constraints of silent film, but rather emphasizes the audience's inability to access the subjectivities of the characters on screen, and continually confronts the viewer with the limitations of their understanding. This is clearly demonstrated from the opening of the film, which presents the audience with a first-hand perspective of an Avenger murder.

In the opening shot of Hitchcock's *The Lodger*, the camera closely frames a woman's screaming face, her eyes and mouth open in terror, as she is attacked by whatever occupies the space behind the camera (2:01). Being made to share the Avenger's perspective, the audience is immediately implicated in the violence on screen, and the intertitle which follows this murder, an advertisement reading, "TO-NIGHT GOLDEN CURLS" (2:13) suggests that there is something sexually alluring in the spectacle of violence, and that this allure is shared by the general public. While the "GOLDEN CURLS" intertitle refers to a burlesque show in the film that features young women performing in blonde wigs, we only see the members of this burlesque show once (8:02), and the burlesque show itself has little relevance to the plot. Rather than referring only to a burlesque show, the "GOLDEN CURLS" intertitle indicates both the cinematized violence of the Avenger murders and a public desire for young, blonde women. The public's appetite for violence is highlighted by intertitles which describe news of the latest murder in titillating language, with one intertitle reading, "MURDER, WET FROM THE PRESS" (5:57), and another reading, "MURDER, HOT OVER THE AERIAL" (7:30). Using similarly titillating language, the "TO-NIGHT GOLDEN CURLS" advertisement promises both violence and the appearance of another young, blonde woman.

The Lodger's opening shot establishes the visual language of murder used throughout the film, in which a blonde woman's face fills the frame of the screen with her eyes upturned and her eyes and mouth wide open. The Avenger is, of course, the implicit author of this series of images, and throughout the film the Avenger maintains his privileged relationship to the camera, always remaining just beyond the frame of the screen but briefly coopting the camera to reiterate this visual language of murder. Of equal importance, however, is that this shot highlights the impenetrability of the victim's subjective experiences: As closely as we see the victim's face and as clearly as we may read her terrified expression, we cannot know what she sees, and thus we cannot know the Avenger's identity. The tension between what the audience is shown and what they cannot know is further exacerbated by the fact that the Avenger never appears on screen and is never portrayed by an actor, meaning that viewers are encouraged to scrutinize the embodied behaviors of the characters who *do* appear on screen.

Unlike in Lowndes's novel, in which the Avenger's motives are explicated through the character of Mr. Sleuth, Hitchcock's Avenger remains an abstract entity that is only identifiable through the triangular calling card and instances of sexualized violence towards blonde women. Because the Avenger lacks a singular embodied

identity, any character on screen has the potential to reveal themselves as the Avenger. In another sense, the lack of a single identity results in the Avenger as being read as *disembodied*, as they are always behind the camera and only ever revealed in the form of a certain relationship between the camera and blonde women on screen. In Lowndes's novel, Mr. Sleuth's murder of young women marks his victims' bodies as being legible, as objects—no longer subjects—which are intended to be read as a warning against violating Sleuth's fanatical Christian beliefs. In Hitchcock's film, however, the Avenger murders denote issues of representation and embodiment in film. Not only does the Avenger lack an individual embodied form, giving him a kind of ghostly, almost nonhuman presence within the film which threatens to intrude onto the screen at any moment, but the Avenger's murders co-opt the bodies of his victims to create a type of directorial authorship. The Avenger's violence always result in his victims assuming the same pose, and the camera always captures the victims' expressions of fear in the same manner, almost as though the act of murder were a pretense for eliciting just these gestures. In a manner like that of a director, the Avenger forces the young blonde women he targets to embody the roles of victim, and this embodied role is inscribed on screen through the cooperation of the camera.

To better understand the film's disembodied villain, viewers are left to analyze the visual designs of the Avenger murders and the triangular calling card, and to scrutinize the behavior of the film's protagonist, known only as the Lodger, and Daisy. Thus, when the Lodger first appears in the film and perfectly matches a witness's description of the Avenger, the audience is already primed to question every aspect of the mysterious figure's appearance and behavior. From the moment the Lodger approaches the Buntings' home, a number of environmental cues and embodied gestures suggest that the Lodger is to be mistrusted. First, the lamp in the Buntings' hallway grows dim and we see the unlucky number 13 on the door. When Mrs. Bunting opens the door to reveal the Buntings' new guest, the Lodger's appearance, as William Rothman writes, is "so much the picture of mystery that the effect is comic" (16). The Lodger's face is covered with a scarf, his arm crossed anxiously over his chest, and upon seeing Mrs. Bunting the Lodger's eyes widen in alarm (15:07). Then, as the Lodger steps into the home, Mr. Bunting (who is reaching precariously for a bottle on a shelf) falls to the floor, a cuckoo clock strikes the half hour, and Daisy, upon seeing her father, begins to laugh (16:00). This sequence establishes the seemingly opposed characterizations of the Lodger that will run throughout the film: either the Lodger is a deeply sensitive, eccentric man whose furtive mannerisms and paranoia happen to give him the appearance of the film's villain, or he is, in fact, the Avenger.⁶ Further, in this sequence, the vivified local environment acts in concert with the embodied movements of actors on screen to alert viewers to potential danger. Although the gas lamp grows dim to emphasize the Buntings' poor financial state (14:17), suggesting that they can scarce afford gas for the lamps, it also likens the Lodger's presence to an impending darkness. In one sense, the chime of the cuckoo clock is banal, but in another sense, it punctuates Mr. Bunting's fall

⁶The feelings of contemporary audiences towards the Lodger would have been further complicated by the fact that the actor who portrays the Lodger, Ivor Novello, was "a matinee idol of the stage, the romantic lead in a series of popular operettas in which no psychopathic murderers walked the boards" (Rothman 15). In fact, Hitchcock's plans to end the film with the Lodger's "innocence or guilt never clearly resolved" were changed due to Ivor Novello's "enormous popularity" (Spoto 85).

and highlights the uncanny synchronicity of the sequence of events. Even Mr. Bunting's fall, precipitated by the Lodger taking a step into the hallway, marks a destabilization of the Buntings' environment, and here Mr. Bunting's body signifies less as a site of individual subjectivity than as an object acting in relation to other objects. While we may interpret Mr. Bunting reaching for a bottle of alcohol as raising issues of consumption and abstinence also present in Lowndes's novel, his fall signifies as a visual indication of potential catastrophe relating to the Lodger's arrival to the Bunting's household, rather than to Mr. Bunting's personal misfortunes.

The task viewers are charged with—determining the Lodger's guilt—is continually frustrated by characters who embody or identify with the roles of villain or victim, and by environmental cues that can only be understood as nondiegetic red herrings or as uncanny premonitions. The inscrutable nature of the characters on screen is particularly evident in the Lodger's romance with Daisy, which is continually tinged with expressions of violence. In one such scene, Daisy has brought breakfast to the Lodger's room, and while Daisy isn't looking, the camera focuses on the Lodger's hand, which grips a knife. As the Lodger brings the knife towards Daisy, we are briefly allowed to imagine that he will attack her before the Lodger uses the knife to flick away a speck on Daisy's dress (24:22). Here, the camera's focus on the Lodger's oddly intent expression highlights the impenetrability of the character's subjective experiences.⁷ As Rothman notes, such a shot “announces that we have come to a limit of our access to the world of the film” (22). Just as the shot which opens the film confronts the viewer with the impossibility of knowing what the Avenger's victim knows, the shot of the Lodger's expression as he points a knife towards Daisy's abdomen only allows for speculation.

In their next scene together, Daisy and the Lodger play chess in front of the fireplace in the Lodger's room. When Daisy knocks over several of her chess pieces, the Lodger bends down to help her pick them up but is distracted by a fire poker, which he points towards Daisy. Once again, the Lodger acts *as though* he were about to embody the role of the Avenger, and before we can see what the Lodger intends to do with the fire poker the camera cuts to a shot of detective Joe arriving to the Bunting's home downstairs. The next shot shows the Lodger innocently stoking the fire, then staring at Daisy and remarking, “beautiful golden hair” (27:55). Along with the breakfast scene, the scene with the fire poker establishes a pattern in which the Lodger's attraction to Daisy is expressed alongside violent gestures. The Lodger's unusual fixation with Daisy's blonde hair also marks him as an Avenger-like figure, and suggests that his attraction to Daisy may derive in part from the fact that Daisy, as a young, blonde woman, perfectly fits the profile of an Avenger victim.

In the final third of Hitchcock's *The Lodger*, a flashback reveals that the Lodger's sister was murdered by the Avenger at his sister's coming out ball, thus providing the audience a chance to recontextualize the Lodger's suspicious behaviors. The Lodger tells Daisy that his mother, on her death bed, urged him “not [to] rest until the Avenger has

⁷Thomas Leitch describes the intense yet obscure depiction of subjectivity in Hitchcock films as “ironic detachment” (“Hitchcock from Stage to Page” 30). Regarding Hitchcock's 1958 film, *Vertigo*, Leitch writes, “The challenge of reading Scottie's growing obsession with Madeleine through representational codes which, like Madeleine's actions, seem more transparent than they are make the film's presentation both intensely subjective and critically detached” (25–26).

been brought to justice" (1:19:30). Thus, the Lodger's furtive behaviors, his apparent knowledge of the Avenger's movements and the dates of the Avenger's next attacks, may be attributed to his mission to take revenge for his sister's death. Even the Lodger's act of dressing like the Avenger might be rationalized as an attempt to understand the Avenger's logic. Finally, the audience may take the film's ending, in which the Lodger and Daisy are shown embracing in a palatial home across the Thames, as conclusive proof of the Lodger's innocence.

Despite the Lodger's explanatory flashback, however, and despite the announcement that the "real Avenger" has been caught, certain aspects of the Lodger's behavior remain unresolved. The best example of this behavior is found in the scene in which the Lodger attempts to enter the bathroom while Daisy is bathing. The camera shows Daisy singing and wiggling her feet as she bathes, making it clear that the Lodger must be able to hear her and is thus aware of her presence, and then cuts to the Lodger approaching the bathroom door (56:10). This sequence is shot using the visual language of the Avenger murders, with the camera taking the Lodger's perspective as his hand, isolated in the frame, tries to open the door. The Lodger, then, is momentarily presented as an Avenger-like figure, with his hand moving surreptitiously towards the handle of the door, and being filmed in a manner that has, so far, been associated with the Avenger. Although the Lodger's attempt to intrude into Daisy's bath is in no way commensurate with the Avenger's murders, it nonetheless reveals a predatory aspect of the Lodger's character that is hardly subsumed by the film's romantic ending.

Upon close inspection, even the Lodger's flashback fails to clear the Lodger of guilt. If we take the flashback as a cinematization of the Lodger's account, it must be noted that the Lodger omits his actions during and immediately after his sister's murder, with a shot cutting from the Lodger and his sister dancing in the hall, then to a disembodied hand switching off the lights, and back to the Lodger's sister, who performs the familiar pose and gestures of an Avenger victim. David Bordwell notes that "*the range of knowledge in the flashback portion is not identical with that of the character doing the remembering*" (25, italics in original), and here we are shown more *and less* than the Lodger knows. The camera captures the Lodger and his sister at a close distance before panning back to reveal its position outside a window, as though to indicate the presence of an unseen voyeur, and in depicting the death of the Lodger's sister the camera once again produces the visual motif of the blonde victim that is developed throughout the film. Not only does the flashback fail to provide the Lodger with an alibi for his sister's murder, but it further confuses the Lodger's relationship to the Avenger. For example, if the camera portrays the Lodger's recollection of events, why does the camera closely frame his sister's face at the time of her murder? The flashback presents itself as a rare view of the Lodger's subjectivity, but instead offers an account littered with conspicuous omissions and odd editing choices.

The Lodger, then, remains an ultimately inscrutable character whose attraction towards Daisy is irrevocably linked to an Avenger-like obsession with blonde hair, and is frequently expressed in conjunction with the violent gestures of a villain. Yet, the film also encourages the audience to view the Lodger as a heroic figure, as a vigilante investigator of the Avenger who seeks justice for his sister's death, and whose romance with Daisy culminates in an apparently happy marriage. In reading *The Lodger: A Story*

of the *London Fog* as relying on the themes of the Persephone myth, Lesley Brill insists that the Lodger's status as the hero of the film is necessary to understand the film as a whole. For Brill, Daisy fulfills the role of Persephone, while the Avenger corresponds to Hades. In this reading, the threat of Daisy being attacked by the Avenger also signifies as Persephone being caught by Hades and being transported to the underworld. It is the Lodger's task to rescue Daisy from the underworld, represented in the film by the dark and foggy streets of London. However, scenes which emphasize the ambiguity of embodied roles, the impenetrability of the characters on the screen, and the tendency of sexualized violence to pervade romantic relationships bar the audience from perceiving the Lodger as being *only* misunderstood. As Richard Allen suggests, "the Lodger is alluring in virtue of his possession of these concealed predatory desires, desires that are romantic precisely to the extent that they remain contained and concealed within the mask of respectability" (25). Most importantly, associations between the Lodger and the Avenger are central to not only the development of these characters but to the ways that the Avenger and the visual motif of the blonde victim signify throughout the film.

As in Lowndes's novel, the significations associated with the Avenger and the Avenger's victims are reflected in depictions of the public sphere as well as in the protagonists themselves. This is made clear throughout the Lodger's and Daisy's romance, but it is also evident in the "TO-NIGHT GOLDEN CURLS" intertitles which link the sexual allure of young, blonde women to the spectacle of violence. Daisy herself works as a model, and several scenes portray young models using makeup, dress, hair dye, and certain mannerisms to produce the image of the sexualized blonde, just as certain configurations of the camera and the victim's embodied gesture work to produce the visual motif of the Avenger victim. Further, Daisy not only plays the role of a blonde model, but also embodies the role of a blonde victim in a scene halfway through the film. In this scene, Detective Joe is discussing the latest Avenger murder with Mr. and Mrs. Bunting, when they hear a scream from upstairs. The camera cuts to a shot of Daisy reproducing the pose of the Avenger victim, with her eyes upturned and her mouth opened wide in a silent scream (42:01). When Joe and Mr. and Mrs. Bunting rush upstairs, they find Daisy and the Lodger embracing one another and smiling. Daisy explains that she was "silly enough to be scared by a mouse" (42:50). However, it is Daisy's ambiguously affectionate attitude towards both the Lodger and Joe, and the ways that she seems to intentionally set both characters in conflict against one another, that is of particular note. Moments after embracing the Lodger, Daisy allows Joe to apologize to her for losing his temper and even allows Joe to embrace her and kiss her. Here, Daisy appears to employ differing embodied roles—such as the role of an Avenger victim, or the role of a misunderstood, injured lover—in order to encourage the Lodger and Joe to embody the roles she wishes them to play.

Daisy's self-aware embodied agency is also depicted in the bath scene, in which the camera shows Daisy wiggling her feet in the water from a first-person perspective (56:29). This shot is particularly intriguing because it is shot from Daisy's point of view. This is one of the few shots in the film in which the camera identifies with a female character, and it is one of the only shots, excepting the shots of the Avenger murders, which takes a first-person perspective. In relation to embodiment, this shot presents the inverse configuration of the shots depicting the Avenger murders: Rather than showing a woman who is made to perform the gestures and expressions of a blonde victim, here

Daisy is shown performing a kind of kinesthesia. To again quote Noland, Daisy expresses a form of “sensory stimulation produced *for* the self.” Although these shots convey an innocent, playful aspect of Daisy's character, they also portray Daisy enjoying her own embodied subjectivity, and in this sense, Daisy seems to embody Noland's description in which the “subject becomes an object (as body) of her own awareness” (10). The trope of the victimized/sexualized blonde, then, is not entirely an aspect of culture that is imposed (or inscribed) upon the bodies of women, but, rather, a mode of embodiment through which Daisy, at least, exerts a sense of embodied agency.

The broad cultural appeal of both the sexualized blonde and the news of the latest Avenger murders is made clear throughout the film. After the Avenger murder which opens the film, Hitchcock depicts the processes by which that murder is commodified and narrativized for an eager, innumerable public. Seeing Daisy take interest in the news of the latest Avenger murder, Joe remarks, “I'm keen on golden hair myself, same as the Avenger is” (12:45). Further, the Bunting's home is filled with portraits of young, blonde women, which are dispersed throughout the home after the Lodger asks for them to be removed from his room. If the Lodger exhibits a particularly acute fixation with blonde women, it is a preference shared to a lesser degree amongst the general public, including Mr. and Mrs. Bunting.

Unlike in Lowndes's novel, however, the Avenger's goals remain abstract. Rothman writes, “I take it that he calls himself ‘the Avenger’ because he sees himself as exacting retribution in a world where women dominate men” (19). In the absence of any narrative exposition of the Avenger's motives, however, the Avenger and the Avenger's triangular calling card are characterized primarily by their opposition to and their appropriation of the “GOLDEN CURLS” trope and the image of the sexualized blonde. As established in the film's opening shot, the Avenger always remains beyond the frame, an entity that is only ever fully perceived by the Avenger victims. Thus, the Avenger denotes a particular relationship between the camera, the audience, and the characters on screen. In using the close-up shot of a woman's face to denote the Avenger's activities, the Avenger murders emphasize the impenetrability of the victims' subjective experiences, and highlight the ways in which blonde women in the film are made to embody and reproduce the gestures and expressions of the blonde victims. This forcible loss of embodied agency is contrasted to the freedom and agency achieved by the disembodied Avenger, who appears to maintain a unique relationship to the camera. It is the Avenger's disembodied status that lends him such a powerful presence over the movie, but this presence is unique to the medium of film, and is achieved through careful configurations of camera, subject, and environment. Perhaps, just as the Lodger is unable to tolerate the portraits of blonde women in his room, the film's villain seeks to avenge the tantalizing exhibition of the sexualized blonde. Then, however, one must question why the Avenger murders culminate in the most repeated and emotive imagery in the film, in which the blonde victim's expression of fear is captured in extreme close-up. Although we cannot be certain as to what is being avenged, the Avenger murders themselves subvert the “GOLDEN CURLS” motif in order to produce a visual trope of sexualized violence.

Conclusion

Of the many differences between Lowndes's novel and Hitchcock's film, no change to the plot is more profound than the decision to portray the Lodger and the Avenger as disparate characters and to leave the Avenger as an unidentified, yet imminently threatening presence which hangs over the characters on screen. In Lowndes's novel, Mr. Sleuth, on an outing with Mrs. Bunting, sees the Commissioner of Police and wrongly assumes that Mrs. Bunting has tricked him into being caught (209). Mr. Sleuth then flees from the building, and the Buntings never hear of him again. In Hitchcock's film, an intertitle reading, "The real Avenger was taken red-handed ten minutes ago" (1:23:33) officially clears the Lodger of guilt. There is a brief chase scene in which the Lodger is chased by an angry mob, culminating in the Lodger being beaten as he hangs onto a fence (1:24:40). Finally, the film ends with a scene of Mr. and Mrs. Bunting visiting the Lodger and Daisy in their new home across the Thames (1:28:20), and the film closes on a shot of the Lodger and Daisy embracing in front of a large window (1:29:35). The "TO-NIGHT GOLDEN CURLS" sign which flashes behind the embracing couple serves as a potential joke about the consummation of Daisy and the Lodger's marriage, but also as a hint as to the pervading threat of sexualized violence which the Avenger posed.

In both works, issues of embodiment are central to understanding the ways that the characters view themselves and their relationship to the world. Hitchcock recontextualizes issues of embodiment presented in Lowndes's novel, figuring the Avenger as a disembodied, immaterial entity that remains beyond the frame of the screen. While in Lowndes's novel, Mr. Sleuth's activities are linked to a hermeneutics of the body, Hitchcock links the Avenger murders to the cinematization of violence, and figures the subjective experiences of the characters on screen as being fundamentally impenetrable. A close reading of issues of embodiment in both works reveals that Hitchcock's adaptation does not merely transform or absorb issues presented in Lowndes's novel, but rather reconsiders issues of guilt, gendered roles, violence, and agency through the medium of the silent film.



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Kinetics of Argument: Rhetorical Vorticity of Ethos within COVID-19 Vaccination Narratives

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<https://ellids.com/archives/2024/04/6.1-Sapsis-Karatsolis.pdf>

Abstract | During pandemic times, when vaccination-induced herd immunity is presumed as the sole remedy, government officials engage in wide-reaching persuasive moves to promote vaccination. Within this context, governments and government administrators assume the position of persuasive actors, or rhetors, undertaking the major task of mobilizing their entire population to vaccination action, accommodating even citizens skeptical of vaccination requirements. How can, however, the whole population of a country (and the world) be moved into action? Analyzing the rhetorical models that two countries (as rhetors) employed in early 2021, as the world still grappled with a crippling pandemic while vaccines were becoming available, our research argues that this coveted movement to action is primarily achieved through the appeal of *ethos*. Aristotle himself was singularly concerned with *ethos*, treating it as “the most important kind of *pistis*,” that is, means of persuasion. His core understanding of *ethos*, though, was not merely that of “the most important” but that of the most “authoritative, effective instrument of persuasion”—a nuance that evades translation. In closely rereading and reappraising *ethos* within a social constructionist framework, we attribute *ethos*’ dominance over the other appeals, as bestowed by Aristotle himself, to its inherent ability to be reinvented according to the intended audience. We specifically examine the ethical appeals generated in Greece and Israel, two countries with the highest early vaccination rates, as they attempted to motivate their first citizens to be vaccinated against COVID-19. This analysis of *ethos* as a *kinetical*, living organism chiseled in and through discourse reframes the traditional approach to a rhetor’s character as a fixed, solid entity into an ongoing, unraveling, happening, and becoming at once, and produces what we call a “rhetorical vorticity of *ethos*.” The implications of this work are significant for the design of persuasive messages by institutional or government entities to appeal to vast, often negatively predisposed, audiences.

Keywords | Ethos, Invented ethos, Situated ethos, Rhetorical Vorticity, Kinetical ethos, Persuasion, Character, Rhetor, Audience, COVID-19, Pandemic, Greece, Israel, Vaccination, Aristotle

Introduction

In recent years, the inquiry into *ethos* (or the appeal through the character of the speaker) has gained fresh prominence, with many arguing that we live in a burgeoning culture of *ethos* (Fortenbaugh; Niu and Ying 43), an “Age of Ethos” (Baumlin and Meyer 21) that has sidelined the once dominant *logos*. At the same time, in the field of Public Policy, collaborative governance through reasoning and persuasion is gaining traction, leading Vivian Bradford to claim that we live in a “discursive economy” (13). Such assertions seem to position discursive *ethos* as the keystone of our times, re-establishing the status it carried in Aristotelian times. In fact, Aristotle’s own particular interest in *ethos*, as constructed by means of speech, was defined in the *Rhetoric* as “the most important (*kyriotaten*) kind of proof (*pistis*)” (qtd. in Garver 173), that is, means of persuasion. Etymologically, “most important” in the Ancient Greek text does not mean merely more important compared to the other two appeals, that is, *logos* and *pathos*, but “having power, being a lord, a master” (Liddell, et al.), being “the most authoritative, effective, instrument of persuasion” (Aristotle qtd. in Meredith Cope’s Commentary 31)—a nuance that evades translation. Indeed, *ethos* has been thriving in its bestowed dominance throughout rhetorical history, albeit in a way not fully explored or understood, with the overwhelming majority of *ethos* studies being descriptive in nature. Treating the Aristotelian maxim as a definitional quest rather than a causal or evaluative one, these studies readily indicate a gap in the extant literature: Why is *ethos* the most important-dominant kind of *pistis*? In this paper, we attempt to provide some preliminary insight by attributing the dominance of *ethos* to its potential for movement (*kinesis*) and, hence, its ability to resolve arguments in ways that the rest of the appeals of the Aristotelian theory of persuasion cannot. Our analysis is principally theoretical and explanatory. However, to instantiate our thesis, we will use two examples of attempts at promoting COVID-19 vaccination through mass persuasion by governments in two distinct cultural contexts, Greece and Israel.

In the first months of 2021, while the world was grappling with a crippling pandemic, a historic moment took place: The availability of the first mRNA vaccines against COVID-19. In this much anticipated move that contained, in concentrated form, humanity’s hopes for the end of the pandemic, governments and government administrators assumed the position of rhetors and undertook the major task of moving their entire population to vaccination action. To do so, they scanned their available means of persuasion in the given rhetorical situation (*endechomena pithana*) to “select with care” (Enos and Agnew) logical, emotional, but most importantly, ethical appeals to quickly mobilize their citizens to vaccination action. However, the common assumption of *ethos* as prior reputation, or a unified set of fixed social information entrenched in the social conscience that the rhetor may activate to rework the audience’s perceptions

(situated *ethos*), is especially problematic: People in opposition to the governing party, or authority in general, are highly unlikely to be moved into action through such an appeal. As Jacqueline Royster underscores, speakers not infrequently “come to a rhetorical task with a reputation, that is, with a situated *ethos* more often than not deeply compromised” (65). In these exigences, *ethos* needs to be (re)invented on top of situated *ethos*. Rhetors, then, need to forsake the solid but static nature of their situated *ethos* and invent a credible character for the given audience with words. This discursively engineered *ethos* leads to an ephemeral or, rarely, more permanent reconceptualization, or refashioning, of a speaker’s credibility. Ultimately, such a move generates the coveted invention mode needed to move the non-supportive audience (government officials’ ideological opponents and vaccine-hesitant citizens) toward action. Every time this reinvention/refashioning happens, situated *ethos* alternates with invented *ethos*, and invented *ethos*, after some period of stabilization and habituation, is reinvented anew. *Ethos* is motivated by *kinesis*, creating a character-based persuasion in motion. To unravel this movable/mutable nature of *ethos* and associate it with the principal role Aristotle assigns to it in the *Rhetoric*, we comparatively analyze the vaccine compliance *ethos*-based arguments that Greece and Israel employed in early 2021 to bring their population to vaccination action as the COVID-19 pandemic was moving into its peak phase. We specifically narrow down to the two countries’ Prime Ministers and Greece’s health care professionals wherein *ethos* was enacted in different ways.

Within this framework, the primary objective of this study is to reevaluate the idea that *ethos* is a notion with *kinesis*, versatility, and instability, and highlight it as a powerful tool for the design of persuasive messages by institutional or governmental entities to appeal to vast, often negatively predisposed, audiences. Essentially, we aspire to show that situated *ethos* and invented *ethos* are locked into a perpetual orbital dance, producing a unique form of *rhetorical vorticity*, which in turn produces forward movement for the whole population of a country. Our goal in this paper is to explore how this movement is accomplished. Towards this objective, the paper has been divided into three parts. The first part is concerned with the conceptual framing of our research within the current state of knowledge surrounding *ethos*. Reviewing the manifold theoretical and empirical strands of *ethos*, we trace explanations in the extant literature as to why *ethos* is the “most important kind of *pistis*.” We position ourselves within the social constructionist epistemology and argue for *ethos*’ dominance because of its non-static/generative nature. *Ethos*, we contend, emerges as the vortical flow achieved by the concatenated but juxtaposed movement between situated and invented *ethos*. In this sense, *ethos* generates the motion that moves the audience along into action, essentially creating persuasion. To fertilize the ground for our proposition, we provide some definitions of *ethos*, which lead to a review of previous treatments of the concept of rhetorical *kinesis* as associated with *ethos* in literature. Also, we lay out the theoretical underpinnings of *ethos*, the conceptual edifice upon which the two countries-rhetors’ arguments will be analyzed. In the next section, we present our preliminary results from the *ethos* appeals of the two countries. In this section we analyze in depth the ethical plasticity of *ethos* that facilitates the ethical vorticity. The final part concludes with a discussion of the three key points of our study. These are a) invented *ethos*’ desire to participate in the different social situations, a desire accomplished by the workings of language to change self-narratives and create consequent, new social realities; b) the

concept of *kinetical ethos*, namely a character that oscillates between a state of existence (that is, situated *ethos*) and a state of inventiveness (that is, invented *ethos*) due to the exact desire and potency of invented ethos for social immersion in the different rhetorical environments. *Kinetical ethos* in this sense is a property of the *ethos* construct; c) the concept of *ethos' rhetorical vorticity* itself. Due to this property of *kinetical ethos*, *rhetorical vorticity* is created, being the immediate effect of *ethos'* aforementioned property, and the tangible outcome of *ethos'* employment in communication and persuasion. Similar to *kinetical ethos*, *rhetorical vorticity* delineates *ethos'* movement (*kinesis*) from a situated *ethos*—that is, the narrative an individual uses about themselves as a result of society's story sharing about them, and a metanarrative of the individual's narrative in the community—to an invented *ethos*—that is, a productive cognitive framework for recreating the speaker's character by way of communicative action—to another situated *ethos*, and so forth. This movement happens not only once but in an ongoing circular, vortical fashion in which one type of *ethos* invokes and builds atop the other. However, more than this delineation of *ethos'* circular movement, *rhetorical vorticity* describes the effect of using the *kinesis* and vorticity of *ethos*, both upon the perception and knowledge created in the audience and upon communication at large, ultimately showing how ideas *progress* and change through *ethos*. *Rhetorical vorticity* is, in this sense, one of Rhetoric's many ways for “the progression of ideas through the speech,” as Hepler-Smith (19) writes.

Conceptual Framing

Is *ethos* a state or an activity? An “overarching and definable core self” or “an endless sequence of self-presentations structured for different audiences” (Fliegelman qtd. in Bradford 11)? Character formed before words or character cultivated in words? An inert or a generative condition? A long tradition of understanding a person, that is, a pre-understanding, or a re-understanding of the person after some discursive performance and labor? An act of looking back or an act of looking forward? History or story? *Stasis* or *Kinesis*? *Ethos* is both fixity and variability: *Situated ethos is to presume character; invented ethos to assume character*; “authority” is “conferred” but also “constructed” (Lindquist 9). This paper proposes that *ethos* is, within social constructionism, an ongoing whirlpool and circulation between the two *ethe*, uniquely driven by the dynamic properties of invented *ethos*, profoundly allowing for a continuous transmutation of audience's thoughts, and a reengineering of social perception. This is why *ethos* is the most important means of persuasion. This metaphor of the whirlpool within the purview of communication has been an age-old concept. Marshall McLuhan, in his landmark '60s study on mass-age media, unveils the media maelstrom engendered by “advertising and persuasive messages” to lure the audience into an endless swirl of deliberate disorientation. McLuhan critiques the charmed circle of *Mad Men* who, driven by their intention to gain intimate access to “the collective public mind [...] in order to manipulate, exploit, control,” made persuasion illicitly take the shape of a propagandistic and treacherous whirlpool (Soules 1–2). However, persuasion as this propagandistic maelstrom is not the only form of audience mobilization. Persuasion is also, and probably first of all, a whirlpool that advances ideas, life, and humans themselves by putting them in a healthy and conscious orbit oscillating between stability and dynamism, that is, between situated and invented *ethe*, as they are co-created by the rhetor and the audience.

This kinship of rhetoric with circulation is celebrated chiefly in Mary E. Stuckey's essay, "On Rhetorical Circulation," which, among others, is attentive to how "by performing and circulating performances of [...] social roles those [...] roles are created" (609). Significantly, these circulated/repeated performances of social roles are closely comparable to the incipient form of situated *ethos*, a concept Stuckey overlooked. Our literature review below illustrates this circulation of situated *ethos* and also delves into the progressive development of the concept of *ethos* in chronological order. Starting with the most remote progenitor of *ethos* depicted in the Homeric work, we move forward to how *ethos* came to be viewed in WWII, the '60s, and the '90s when it started acquiring a *kinetic*, social, and flexible flavor within a social constructionist approach. This is where our own analysis is positioned.

The earliest form of situated *ethos* coupled with the circulation and repetition of social roles had its genesis in the *Iliad*. It originally amounted to the public moral character that audiences expected from a particular speaker, a character-reverberation of the shared communal values, social routines, and tribal presuppositions (A. B. Miller; LeFevre; Baumlín and Baumlín). To put it another way, situated *ethos* represented the customary actions the person was known for, civically applauded for, and crucially, existed in the society for. Character, then, had its own grammar of accustomed characteristics—a grammar of being. Before anything else, character was enshrined in the community, denoting both translucent mirrorings of a social role within a given cultural system and its entailing communal thinking dispositions, and shapings/makings of that role. An archetypical example was Nestor, the embodiment of *mythos* (that is, counsel and wise speech) that was the expected situated *ethos* and social template for the elderly (Frobish 22). Nestor, the oldest and wisest of all, is invoked five times to consult the military leaders (23), and each time his *mythos* is enriched and echoed by a previous one, his *ethos* being not only an expression (mirroring) of a social role but, most elementally the formation (shaping/making) of this role (Halloran 63)¹: Enacting social roles generates these roles. Consequently, Nestor's presence and behavior are a structured, recurrent orbital dance and his *ethos* one that strengthens with repetitive performance; a sequential positive reinforcement of *ethos* or what Mary Hoffman and Debra Ford perceive as an "identity maintenance," reminiscing Paolo Vivante's identical conception of situated *ethos* as "the sheer recurrence of certain positions and motions" (qtd. in Frobish 26). This 'conservation' of *ethos* and rhythmic replication of the same stereotypical/predictable *ethotic* pattern—principally, an identifiable, formulaic response that has garnered communal consensus—implicates an inherent circularity and inner, endogenous, and intrinsically-induced vorticity between an *ethos* and its subsequent, more bolstered version: a confirmed and reconfirmed *ethos*, an echoed and reechoed *ethos*. What really renders *ethos* a more complex and sophisticated notion of rhetorical circulation, however, beyond situated *ethos*' internal vorticity, is the circulation of *ethos* instigated by the Aristotelian invented *ethos*, a character that is not reechoed, re-invoked, and repeated but rather storified, constructed, and reconstructed through discursive acts so as to respond to a rhetorical situation for which situated *ethos*' fixed credibility is inadequate. Rather than a re-echoing of the past, this *ethos* is an echoing of the present

¹"The ritual acts that manifest [...] *ethos* are the very same acts that form it" (Halloran 63).

and sociality as it is constructed with specific rhetorical orientations toward the immediate social moment and audience (Liu in Niu and Ying 43).

This circulation is mainly accomplished as situated *ethos* is discursively regenerated/reformed into an invented *ethos* and, in turn, alternates with another situated *ethos* and a successive invented *ethos* anew. The aggregate of this concatenated array of *ethe* has two important entailments. Firstly, a pluralistic character is generated, characterized by adaptability, expansiveness, redefinition, mutability, multifariousness, customizability, and “otheredness” (Dubisar 133), the other character and authority the speaker can inhabit and assume by discourse itself (Halloran 60). We call this character, whose core characteristic is the communicative agility to break away from one, singular, and monolithic identity, *kinetical ethos*. *Kinetical ethos* has at its core the idea that *ethos* works only as a self-multifariousness. It is both the re-narrativization of the speaker in the given social transactions, operations, environments, and scenes (invented *ethos*), and—encapsulated in the collective intelligence—the story of an individual (situated *ethos*). Situated *ethos* is a *stasis*. It is an ex-post instrumentalization in that it operationalizes a preconceived, profoundly ingrained idea the community holds for the speaker and reinforces it. As a reputation, shared socially and denoting the collective intuition and cultivated, collaborative perception that a distinct cultural or social unit has adopted about an individual, situated, stasiastic *ethos* precedes the rhetorical situation. It is, therefore, referred to as established models of being and the credibility associated with this being; a grammar of being as it has been imprinted in the cultural grammar. Put differently, it is a relatively stable self-representation that captures the ‘core’ of the person, being astonishingly consonant with the handling of *ethos* in the Homeric epics as a public stability endorsed by the community, almost pattern-governed and drawing upon that community’s shared reality, meaning-making structures, semiotic and cultural frameworks, and the collective thought architecture. Conversely, invented *ethos* corresponds to *kinesis*. It can be regarded as an ex-ante instrumentalization: a linguistic (re)presentation of the self used to portray a character that recalibrates the speaker’s self-narrative in ways the audience approves and finds effective. Invented *ethos*, rather than a self that is invoked from the past, is a self provoked in the present, and is uniquely *praxis*-oriented, with the aid of which the speaker can elicit the audience’s assent.² While the epicenter of situated *ethos* is the collective consciousness regarding an individual, the primary focus of invented *ethos* is discourse and a character presented through the discursive activity to recreate the speaker’s self-storytelling. Founded on discourse, invented *ethos* pertains to the task of generating meaningful performances to elicit a given audience’s trust. In other words, *ethos* is refitted to be socially elicitable, elicited by audiences, for audiences and by social situations, for social situations. This means that invented *ethos* is forward-looking and anticipatory.

Secondly, the concatenation of situated (*stasis*) and invented *ethos* (*kinesis*) produces a vortical flow, which in turn produces movement and persuasion. By *stasis* and *kinesis*, we refer to the dichotomy of *stasis* and *kinesis*, formulated in Ancient Greek thought, signifying stillness and movement respectively. Otto Alvin Loeb Dieter has provided a thorough account of the terms, from Plato’s treatment of *stasis* as a state of

²As Charles R. Fenno remarks, rhetoric embodies “the analytical, structural, and stylistic processes which writers must control in order to gain reader understanding and assent” (243).

repose, equilibrium, and quietude to Aristotle's interpretation of one term as antipodal to the other, and the Heraclitan delineation of *stasis* as "eremia," meaning an idling condition (Dieter 214–215). This inertia and movement are significant per se, but it is their inter-involvement that has primacy. Sarah Rivière accurately views *stasis* "as one part of a more extended sequence of *kinesis-stasis-kinesis*, where *kinesis* – undirected movement – forms the counter-term to *stasis*" (Rivière 83). Extrapolating this dyad in the *ethos* model, we suggest that *ethotic* persuasion is a seamless interlacing/circulation of situated *ethos*, corresponding to *stasis*, and invented *ethos*, corresponding to *kinesis*. Situated *ethos* as *stasis* finds expression as a coherent self-narrative carrying strong connotations of a psychological anchor that allows the speaker to use it as a continuous and consistent self-presentation. Nevertheless, it is this very staticity that acts as a *groundswell*, an inflated terrain that awaits the action and *kinesis* to spill over and move the audiences forward, and, consequently, calls for the complementarity of its antithetical position. This impulsiveness for *kinesis* (Carter 99),³ effectuated by invented *ethos* and demanded by *situated* *ethos*, serves as a linchpin for the speaker's character development, propelling persuasion forward.

Invented *ethos* is described by scholars as an ensemble of diverse and reactive selves which happens linguistically through the rhetors' mingling with social and rhetorical needs and settings (Bradford 106, 108; Baumlín and Meyer; Schmertz 83, 88; Killingsworth 252; Halloran 60–61; Reynolds 326; Ryan et al. 5–6, 11; Dubisar 132). This process of discursively spawning complementary, new selves is a process of linguistic self-innovation, of retrofitting new selves with old ones. As such, being highly derivative of one another, situated and invented *ethos* collaboratively induce a continuum where one part permeates and flows into the other.⁴ In this interflow and the being/becoming—essence/process dichotomy—the creative or dynamic synergy⁵ of the two apparently contradictory elements is enacted. We regard this vorticity and interfusion as the driving force for persuasion. The dynamic interplay of acting on a character and inventing a new character is a robustly sustained fusion between a preexisting *arete* and a locally intelligent *kairos* (Baxter 15), that is, between "deeds motivated by moral consistency and actions resulting from perceptive responsiveness," between deeds motivated by a conventionalized, situated *ethos* forged by *hexis* (*stable disposition* or *possession* as Pierre Rodrigo notes on the term) (Rodrigo 6) and a socially tailored, invented, *kairotic ethos* that is, by definition, apropos, and propitious to a rhetorical occasion.

This notion of *ethos* as a dynamic and open-ended phenomenon found its first expression in Aristotle's most prominent conceptual forerunner: the Homeric thought.

³The interpretation of *stasis* as a generative condition with *kinetic* impulses is thoroughly treated by Michael Carter who contends that "stasiastic conflict is generative, creating an impetus for rhetorical action" (99). Specifically, *stasis* as "the result of the confrontation of two opposing movements or forces, [...] bears a strong sense of the potential energy of creation and action" (99). Sarah Rivière similarly highlights the 'charged' nature of *stasis* that "creatively enables new and energetic production to follow" (91).

⁴The mingling of *stasis* and *kinesis* has been a focal point of analysis in multiple scopes and disciplines, including literature, architecture, and picture book art (see, Connolly; Rivière; Stephens).

⁵Our proposition echoes Michael Carter's and Sarah Rivière's ideas of *stasis* as a generative source and starting point sparking off rhetorical and social action.

Among other authors, Rachel Ahern Knudsen supplies a broadened understanding of the Homeric texts as “the locus for the origins of rhetoric” (2), with Maria Noussia concomitantly considering them manifestations of “‘pre-rhetorical’/ ‘pre-conceptual’ rhetoric,”⁶ a proto-rhetoric that was bequeathed to Aristotle, materially affecting his own ideas and considerations. Homeric texts have a solid pre-Aristotelian underlying core, Knudsen contends, including the particular employment of invented *ethos* by Iliadic speakers (125), an anachronism that George A. Kennedy also identifies (Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric* 11). As an original illustrative example, Knudsen delineates that “when a need for persuasion arises, Zeus is no match for his consort, who must rely on wheedling and tricky speech rather than on pure authority to achieve her goals” (Knudsen 84). William Fortenbaugh cites the episode in the *Iliad* where Nestor is intervening to wane Achilles’ anger and reconcile him with Agamemnon. Therein the speaker constructs perceived credibility by presenting practical, “teleological” (M. Smith 55) wisdom (*phronesis*), virtue (*arête*), and goodwill (*eunoia*), through his speech choices (Fortenbaugh 211–212): Nestor is two generations older than his Trojan comrades (Dickson 10), an elderliness that confers practical wisdom on him; he is positively disposed, fraternal and congenial toward both Agamemnon and Achilles (he has goodwill towards his hearers); he has fought gallantly in his prime years (he has the virtue of courage). In the Homeric tradition, *ethos* is more than an ingrained, stasiastic authority; it is a consequential linguistic event sufficient to reshape a person’s character. Even in this nascent phase, well ahead of being given lexical existence and vocabulary and well ahead of its formal conceptualization and systematic analysis, invented *ethos* has epistemologically been there in a pre-defined, pre-verbalized, and proto-theoretical form. It precociously but definitively represented the idea of the linguistic generation or provocation of the authorial self within different rhetorical microenvironments and its accompanying begotten credibility.

Hinged on this preludial material, Aristotle recolonized the mind of Homer, and further promulgated *ethos* as an invented, “*ontologically new*” (Bellini 152)⁷ and existentially important, discursive character contrived to infect audiences immune to situated *ethos* alone. To do so, he infused “the doctrine of choice” with it, that is, “the choices evidenced by the speaker in his speech” (Sattler 59), and presented it as an engineerable, adaptive, and obstetric concept. As it ensues from Aristotle’s discussion of *arête* in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, “character is derived from deliberate choice” (C.R. Smith qtd. in Shellenberger 77) and, therefore, invented *ethos* is synonymous with the intentionality of “building the credibility of a speaker before an audience” (C.R. Smith 5).⁸ Within this presumption, “Aristotle changes the ethical tone of rhetorical theory from customary morality to that of reflective morality” (Sattler 64), that is, from a moral character that preexists and reflects community expectations, to one which is a form of cognitive labor (a form of rhetorical meta-thinking or thinking about the audience’s

⁶The locution “pre-conceptual” was first used by John Kirby to display how Hesiod’s work is the preliminary material for the subsequent emergence of rhetoric.

⁷The phrase is used by Bellini to describe, from a phenomenological perspective, the process of *self-shaping*: “far from being only ontologically *new* beings [...] we are also—and first of all—ontologically *innovative* beings” (Bellini 152).

⁸Consequently, invented *ethos* is the judicious, strategic choice to fit *ethos* in its social connectedness through linguistic means.

thinking), specifically composed to “ingratiate” themselves (Burke) with the audience. This marks a move from *ethos*’ invariableness, and its static nature as “the community’s assessment of a person’s habitual practices” (Hawhee and Crowley 108) and the individual’s long-lasting reputation and (favorable) earlier performance (C.R. Smith 15). Crucially, it leads to the transmutation of the rhetor’s self-narrative, which is tantamount to the transmutation of the audience’s perception of them.

The possibilities of human identity⁹ and different selves that are born out of the rhetorical exigence essentially frame character as an inventional act (Sattler 64). In terms of Aristotelian rhetorical theory, the discussion of character as invention centers around the rhetor’s powerful capability to conceive in their discourse an opportune/fit-for-the-task self-projection (Killingsworth 251–252). Following this tradition sociologists and interactionists¹⁰ (for example, Erving Goffman—performed self; Ralph H. Turner—role making; Mark Snyder—self-monitoring; Anselm Strauss—identity transformation in “turning points”; Atkinson)¹¹ as well as rhetoricians within the social constructionist approach (for example, Michael Halloran, Karen Burke LeFevre, Susan Miller etc.)¹² have expanded Aristotle’s arguments. The basic premise for social constructionism, which also frames our research, is that “all thought, discourse, and a priori, all writing take place in some social context” (Olson and Rorty 3). In Kenneth Bruffee’s definition, “social construction understands reality, knowledge, thought, fact, selves, and so on as community generated [...] linguistic entities” (774). By this account, Aristotle’s discursive, invented *ethos* rather than being a stand-alone, asocial/a-contextual entity, is a socially constituted, intrinsically *kinetic* entity deriving its essence by being tied to the local circumstances and interactions. Our rhetorical character is necessarily in a perpetual quest for self-reinvention. In the 1990s, along with the “social turn” in composition studies, the entirely re-constructible, and highly disorderly nature of *ethos* is acknowledged: Nedra Reynolds posits that “*ethos*, like postmodern subjectivity, shifts and changes over time, across texts, and around competing spaces” (326). James Baumlín and Craig Meyer also find that character’s “nature arises in *performance*. The self, in this sense, is a mode of personation—a mask” (5). In this field of social thinking and

⁹The premise that invented *ethos* embodies the ontological possibilities of human identity is reminiscent of Craig R. Smith’s perspective on invented *ethos* as “the realm of linguistic possibilities” (C.R. Smith 13), suggesting that these ontological possibilities are necessarily mediated by the linguistic nature of humanity.

¹⁰For a comprehensive list of the interactionist tradition that refers to the social construction of *ethos*, see, Christopher Philip Moorhouse’s work.

¹¹Erving Goffman’s *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* provides the seminal proposition that there is no core self; self is highly endemic to the contextual situatedness. Our identities are rootless; being rooted only in the contextuality of a given social or communicative moment. Similarly, Ralph H. Turner and Mark Snyder discuss the contextualization/localization/optimization of the self within the ecosystem of social relations, interacting partners and occasions it finds itself in, with Turner proclaiming self’s volatility and with Snyder forming the term “self-monitoring” to emphasize the degree to which individuals have an awareness and control over their public appearance. Anselm Strauss observes that defining life events perturb an individual’s sense of self-image, leading to an identity re-formation.

¹²Michael Halloran examines the quality and effect of the rhetorical, social self. Self, or *ethos*, depends largely on the situational context and interpersonal ‘rubbing’; *ethos* emerges as the synergistic trait of them. “Ethos,” he maintains, “is manifested in rhetorical action,” rather than in “a good reputation” (60). Consequently, invented *ethos* is the idea and opportunity of the re-presentation of the character in the verbal realm. Likewise, in Karen Burke LeFevre’s and Susan Miller’s theoretical frameworks, *ethos* is a linguistic device for self-portrayal locally determined within the micro-context of the communicative event. See also, Fofana-Kamara; Shaver; Dubisar; Schmertz; Nelson Christoph.

becoming, Trevor Parry-Giles and Shawn Parry-Giles point us to the “vulnerability and fluidity of human character” (qtd. in Baxter 15), while a continual process of identity formation is maintained similarly by Stuart Hall, who writes that we are “the social subjects of particular discourses” (5–6). Within this research scope, James McTavish holds that “rhetoric considers the actual practice of character” (66), and he is echoed by Modu Fofana-Kamara who expounds that Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* “provides a system for the praxis of ethos” (20), for a pragmatic (Hawhee and Crowley 108; Li 13), social (Reynolds 327), and adjustable *ethos* that performs rather than is pre-formed. In the same way that Aristotle viewed rhetoric as *praxis*, he deemed character to be a practical character, an intrinsically discursive instrumentality that ongoingly fashions and refashions itself according to the rhetorical context. Ethos is a “performative self” (10), a phrasing that Vivian Bradford supplies, building on Richard Lanham’s consonantly apt term “homo rhetoricus,” signifying a “social self” (qtd. in Bradford 10) that is performed mindful of the social occurrences it lies in. Within this framework, Atkinson views self as “always social, in that it is a property of social encounters and engagements” (18). *Ethos* in action/practice is also further intimately involved in Susan Jarratt and Nedra Reynolds’s postmodernist postulation that the “speaking self” is not “completely known or stable” (53). Analogously, with their conceptually concordant “feminist ecological ethē,” intended to mean plural *ethe*, Kathleen J. Ryan, Nancy Meyers, and Rebecca Jones are quick to discern this non-singularity of *ethos* (11). They argue that feminist scholarship shall “open up new ways of envisioning ethos to acknowledge the multiple, nonlinear relations operating among rhetors audience, things, and contexts” (3). They specifically argue about the “resilience” of ethos, namely a “‘process of rhetorically engaging with material circumstances and situational exigencies’ that is relational, responsive, and potentially transformative (Flynn, Sotirin, and Brady 7)” (5–6).

The governing principle that envelops the postulations of these theorists is to bring *ethos* from a state of *stasis* to a state of continual *kinesis*, as they conceive of *ethos* as a communicative, performative act. Their main concern, which also frames this paper, is to consider how *ethos* performs and acts rather than what *ethos* is. Besides, as Aristotle himself writes, “it [is] important that rhetors [do] not rely on their reputation alone, as ethos is put in play in each rhetorical situation” (qtd. in Ihlen 12). Concomitant is Thomas Benson’s notable grasp of the subject that “rhetorical being is an action; not an essence [...] Rhetorical being is a becoming, both the revelation of an inner condition and the ongoing creation of interacting selves” (320). Rhetorical being or *ethos* emanates from continual adaptation; it is the product of both the dynamically changing lived experience and the shared dialogue of the interacting social actors within that lived social reality. It is the continuous flux from situated to invented *ethos*, rendering the whole construct of *ethos* an adaptive learning system. We have called this phenomenon “rhetorical vorticity” of situated and invented *ethos*. Most saliently, though, we intend to demonstrate that we can appreciate *ethos*’ paramouncy in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* by admitting to *ethos*’ *kinetic*, regenerative nature. This nature is what transforms *ethos* more than once; the *kinesis* is not a one-way movement from situated to invented *ethos* but an incessant *kinesis* between situated and invented *ethos*: a *rhetorical vorticity*. Our point is that *ethos*’ movement—its very nature as a socially intelligent, plastic, and renewable organ—makes it “the most important kind of pistis.”

Analysis of Ethos

Vaccinating Doctors and Nurses in Greece

When it comes to persuasion, the value of an argument rests in acting on it. Nurses and doctors in Greece, the first people to be vaccinated in early 2021, have an established situated *ethos* concerning medical affairs and, for the most part, their persuasive moves lay in exploiting this prior *ethos*. Such moves allow them to build on their medical expertise and present their actions as medically justified, beneficial for the people, and overall effective. In this regard, as soon as they enact their preexisting social identity as medical professionals and endorse vaccination, persuasion should naturally occur: Their situated *ethos*, that is, “the person’s habituated traits” (Baxter 14) and “accepted reputation” (Dubisar 131), has an intrinsically argumentative immediacy, being putatively a ready vehicle for persuasion (Leith 93), autonomous and independent of the mediation of *techné* (technical or artistic appeals) to be viable (Rapp). However, such an *a-technic* (artless) move promoted public trust towards vaccination only for the pro-vaccine audience, being of little import to the remaining, skeptical, and possibly hostile, audience. Skeptical of both inoculation and government officials, this resistant audience would hardly be moved into vaccination action by arguments from people who are a priori untrustworthy to them. Given this settled situation lacking the kind of *kinetic* energy and the kind of inventive and adaptive capacity that can cognitively restructure the hostile audience’s disposition, the rhetors are called to move beyond the traditional use of *ethos* as situated *ethos* and re-frame their self-narratives. Re-architecting self in such a manner entails re-architecting trust: If rhetors appear trustworthy, their vaccination messages will do so as well. Situated *ethos* needs to become situational. Indeed, one type of *ethos* is a mental representation containing the public knowledge about an individual’s identity and reproducing it. This representation, residing in the collective mind, functions as a reputational imprint that derives from the speaker’s social imprint and history as it has been developed through the habitual interaction of the individual in a community (Brahnam 14–15). Situational or invented *ethos* is also a mental representation but one significantly pliable, enabling the individual to regulate through speech acts the human perception and ideas about them, control their self-narrative, and thus compensate for the persuasive inefficacy the staticity of situated *ethos* often ensues. Perceptions have limitations that linguistic maneuverability can rectify. As a result, despite its earlier adamancy regarding vaccination, the hostile audience is re-approached through a different persuasive persona able to change its mind and attitude. But what are the very specific moves the rhetors take to actually cater to this anti-vaccine audience through *ethos*?

When nurses and doctors are inoculated and accompany this act with pertinent utterances, their situated *ethos* is fortified with a new rhetorical “mode of being” (Foucault in Bauman and Meyer 6), an invented *ethos* deployed to encourage vaccination willingness in audiences of lower vaccine acceptance. The first person vaccinated in Greece, Efstathia Kampisiouli, lends herself perfectly to this invention process. Kampisiouli, a critical care nurse, said live on TV right after her COVID-19 vaccination: “This is a great honor for me. In my person, the entire nursing profession is honored, and the honor is a recognition of our work and our contribution. I hope that a new page will start from today, but we have a long way to go. We must follow the measures and be

faithful to our goal, and after we are all vaccinated, we will regain our lives” (Newsroom, our translation). Such utterances, more than just words, are conveyances of the self that impinge on the traditional nurse image. In this character furnished by the social and discursive workings of *ethos*, the nurse’s *ethos* loses its native, fixed undertone. No longer connoting “the speaker’s inherent worth” (C.R. Smith 5), well-established “intrinsic authority” (McIntyre and McKee 66), “innate ethos” (Chamberlain 100) and “intrinsic, habitualised moral character” (M. Smith 53), Ms. Kampisiouli’s *ethos* makes room through discursive expression for a new persona based on invented *ethos*’ intrinsic pliability instead. This *ethos* is meant “‘to open a space’ through language that allows the self to be heard and, saliently, *to be seen*” (Foucault qtd. in Baumlin and Meyer 6). It is character perceived in the language. Significantly, this act of a seeable *ethos* through discourse where character becomes a linguistic article on display in itself¹³ reveals a new dimension of the self, which is not the nurse’s trust in the vaccine. After all, trust in vaccines and science at large is part of her situated *ethos* as a health care worker. The new aspect of her character is that she herself is vaccinated. We claim that doctors and nurses presented as patients, being care receivers instead of caregivers, especially live on network TV, constitutes a *rhetorical reengineering*. At its heart, it is invented *ethos* that most prominently functions as a reimagining of these personas that the agency of words, linguistic ramifications, and some verbal workmanship allowed for.

More concretely, this invented *ethos* arises from emotional underpinnings, particularly from altruistic *eunoia*. There are two considerations of *eunoia* here. Firstly, driven by a profound sense to express goodwill without expectations from the targeted audience, the medical personnel are the first to get vaccinated. By doing so, they make a personal sacrifice on which the audience may rely to get vaccinated themselves. In light of this, doctors and nurses engage in some form of reflective listening of the mute fears and concerns of the audience: They sympathize with them and, being highly aware and cognizant of its inner emotional and cognitive world and worldview, communicate this deep, sensitive, and empathic understanding back to them by being the first to get the vaccine. They enlist empathy and succeed in resonating with the audience’s emotional state, being perfectly attuned to their emotional barometer. This vibrant sign of care incites trustworthiness and puts confidence in the two sides’ interpersonal interaction. Most importantly, it emotionally traverses every single member of the audience and leverages the speaker-audience relationship so that the audience is ‘persuaded’ to continue listening to the story, emulate the story, and, ultimately, get vaccinated. Secondly, aside from this sacrifice, the vaccination of the healthcare workers is wholesome first for the audience, and then for themselves. It is an act of one-way friendship that does not necessitate “reciprocated good” (C.R. Smith 12) on the part of the audience. The rhetor “is wishing good for others for their sake” (12). Such benevolence and beneficence emanate primarily from the term “hope” that Kampisiouli uses. The health care worker invests such an affective commitment in the audience that she feels hopeful not for herself but for the audience. As a corollary, her goodwill is construed as the alignment, psychological connection, and heightened emotional engagement/consonance with the audience. Her goodwill is the *pathos* aspect of her invented *ethos* argument, and goodwill, per se, is the emotional center of invented *ethos*

¹³Or what can be otherwise theorized as a visibly present and conspicuous *ethos*—an *ethos* on view possible through the room that language acts made for it.

(Kinneavy and Warschauer qtd. in Isaksson; Ihlen; Baumlin and Meyer). All in all, operating in this exploration rather than exploitation mode for their *ethos*, these rhetorically invented personas are accorded “discursive authority” (Reynolds) and “authoritativeness” (McCroskey) effective for significantly larger audiences unfacilitated by the original situated *ethos* argument alone. As such, their *ethos* constitutes an unfolding state, made possible by the intertwining performance of stable and discursive, reactive selves, that is, situated and invented *ethe* (Benson 320). Ethos is invariably in action (320) and movement.

Vaccinating the Greek Prime Minister

Aristotle made the claim that we believe the speaker through his being a certain “kind of person” (Kennedy, *Rhet.* 1377b). In the case of politicians, audiences have differing views about their “kind of person” but the fact remains that they are by default believable for being a country’s elected navigator. Sheltered under this rank and “social standing,” a prime minister’s worthiness of credence transcends the political or governmental affairs and expands into areas outside the exclusive discursive or disciplinary scope where he habitually and professionally engages (Yagelski). For the Greek prime minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, the moment of vaccination was an opportunity to act on his perceived public image in the community (Burke) to communicate that the vaccine is safe, effective, and important. Activating his situated persona would persuade the audience segments that already resonated with this *ethos*, being at the same time unsatisfactory/insufficient for the entire nation of the vastly different audiences, and all the more so, for audiences who would hardly ever decide to get vaccinated simply because their leader admonished them to do so. For this other population with the profoundly antithetical frames of mind, the Prime Minister was called upon to generate a perceptual rearrangement of himself atop his argument of situated *ethos*. This goal was accomplished by his own vaccination (invented *ethos*) while he articulated his pro-vaccine message: “Today is a great victory for science. It is a great victory for the European Union. Today we all smile under our masks [...] Vaccine is the weapon against COVID-19. Vaccine is the only way to convince our hesitant fellow citizens” (ANA-MPAwebTV). This discourse-forged breed of *ethos* effuses an argument of invented *ethos* into the preexisting situated *ethos* of the Prime Minister engendering a new self-portrait: The Prime Minister is vaccinated because vaccination—his vaccination—“is the only way to convince our hesitant fellow citizens” (ANA-MPAwebTV). This is the type of *ethos* that “gain[s] an audience’s ‘filial’ sense of trust” (Baumlin and Baumlin 99) and sense of intimate fellowship and, ultimately, incites vaccination willingness in audiences of lower vaccine acceptance.

Four elements present in the Prime Minister’s statement underpin the invented *ethos*’ construct of “filial” trust. Firstly, the direct reference to the European Union invokes a larger cultural unit: a cultural entity/idea in which all Greek citizens, irrespective of their ideological stance towards vaccination, are enveloped. The placing of all Greeks in that situated collectivity foregrounds a similarity-based fondness in the first place. Secondly and thirdly, the fraternal adjective “fellow” attributed to the vaccine-hesitant citizens and the grammatical choice of the inclusive possessive pronoun “our” (a pronoun that serves to establish group cohesiveness) confer a powerful sense of social closeness, demonstrate communal belongingness between the Prime Minister and that audience segment, and denote membership in the same group. Although that audience

segment has different perspectival points of view, they are still ‘ours,’ still ‘me,’ and still share the same civic fellowship and common identity with ‘me,’ with ‘us.’ Essentially, these discourse-level choices, which conjure up the image of Mr. Mitsotakis ‘bowing down’ to the crowd to be with them, are pollinators of social beingness as much as they are a disguised virtue, which is at the center of his invented *ethos*. This is the virtue of an affective understanding, embracement, receptiveness, and openness towards people who are not ideologically similar peers.

In more detail, there is no better rhetorical vehicle for conferring this virtue of creating unity and shared identity among opposing sides than these lexical choices that carry a critical advantage of unifying people around a common identity marker. To begin with, the use of “our” and the amalgamation of the personal pronouns “I” and “they” into the inclusive “we” brings the engaging parties from a stage of cognitive and emotional alienation to some felt association.¹⁴ This resulting proximity fosters emotional attunement with the ‘different,’ nurtures a relationship, and conveys a cognitive-emotional interrelation between “I” and “they.” The use of the plural first-person possessive pronoun “our,” in this sense, signifies alignment in the same social group, that is, the sharing of a social role, dissolves any distance between ‘they’ and ‘me,’ and, in doing so, promulgates physical, emotional, and cognitive harmonization. The Prime Minister, being equated with the audience and being one with them, is far more virtuous than someone who partitions the audience or, worse, purges it and divides it into “we” and “they.” Next, the phrase “fellow citizens” builds camaraderie, even for audience members in complete disagreement on the subject of vaccination. This transforms alienation into unity, separation into coexistence, a state of being apart into being together, and otherness into oneness. It unifies them around the same, single identity: the concept of civic fellowship they share. Most crucially, it energizes the understanding of “I” and “they” as national beings and foregrounds the point of unison where the individuals’ self-narratives intersect. In this way, the Prime Minister reminds this audience that however disjunctive or irreconcilable their differences may be, their common citizenship will always be the point for their unification.

More remarkable still is the syntactical pattern of the phrase “hesitant fellow citizens,” which further puts the rhetor and the audience in a community of being: a cognitive and emotional enclave where members experience perceived social ‘kinship’ and cultural or socio-territorial belonging that fulfils the psychological need for connectedness to a group. Instead of saying “antivaxxers” or any other noun that would define the essential characteristic of vaccine-hesitant citizens, the Prime Minister converts the noun “antivaxxers” into a semantically positive epithet: In the phrase “hesitant fellow citizens,” “hesitant” is an attribute of “fellow citizens.” This lexical and, most importantly, syntactical framing renders the adjective “hesitant” as a secondary/subordinate sentential unit.¹⁵ It makes the “fellow citizens” gain ascendancy over the adjective “hesitant.” Most crucially, the adjective “hesitant” becomes almost silent, almost inaudible. This deliberate syntactical ploy in the place of the word “antivaxxers” hastily precludes the vaccine-hesitant audience’s alienation. Alongside

¹⁴Drawing from Tajfel’s theory of *social identity*, Francesca Gino and Adam D. Galinsky posit that emotional proximity is highly correlated with belongingness to the same social affiliation and group (6).

¹⁵As Edward Kako proposes, “Syntactic frames could carry meanings much as words do” (563).

these two glossological elements of “our” and “fellow citizens” and their syntactic frame is the phrase “the only way.” This fourth element functions as an auxiliary force in the invented virtue of the speaker. Mr. Mitsotakis now says that vaccine “is the only way” for the vaccine-hesitant group’s vaccination. There is only one possibility, and he wants to embrace it. With this persistence in the exhaustion of the “only” possibly successful scenario, the Prime Minister asseverates that the dissenting audience is still part of his considerations. He recognizes it and caters to it; this is his virtue. Therefore, similar to the health care professionals, the Prime Minister is vaccinated, that is, he builds goodwill, but on top of that, he also builds virtue.

Overall, the image of the Prime Minister being inoculated is an integrated, cross-ethotic technique: He initially activates his establishment in the community identity, an *ethos* ratified in the social perception, and almost immediately augments and transforms it from the invented *ethos* part. The invented *ethos*, then, does not occlude the rhetorical forcefulness of the situated *ethos*. It only enhances and adjusts it for audiences unaffected by the original situated *ethos* argument alone. The interplay of the two is intended to enrich his image, not undo it; escalate it, not dethrone it; supplement it, not jettison it. The two operate synergistically, draw energy from one another, foster communicative connection with the different audiences, and create a social *ethos*, an *ethos* closely aligned with the targeted audience that does “mobilize audiences’ thinking” (Dubisar 131). Ultimately, the Prime Minister’s invented *ethos* is equivalent to the construction of his social believability through performative, linguistic, and reflective acts intended to shape the audience’s thoughts (its perception) and actions (its behavior). It is the social behavior of constructing, through linguistic expression, a new self-concept harmonized with circumstantial rhetorical challenges. And, thus, it is the dynamic rearrangement of the *ethotic* content through the verbal medium in the occasion of a social *peripeteia*: a new social situation, challenge or change of the established order. In this occasion the rhetor constructs a new self-*peripeteia*. By *peripeteia*, we refer to the Aristotelian term denoting “a change by which the action veers round to its opposite, subject always to our rule of probability or necessity” (Aristotle, *Poetics* 23).

At the nexus of situated and invented *ethos*, the Greek Prime Minister achieves *kairotic* unity with his audience. Through speech acts, he retrofits his situated *ethos* with an “ontologically new” persona (Bellini 152) that is ontologically distinct just because it emerges as a result of the performativity of language: the capacity for generativity that linguistic communication holds to bring about social change as it is being produced.¹⁶ The discursively crafted identity through which an agent presents themselves anew formatively shapes the social world. Simultaneously, the social world is itself shaped by that identity. Karen Burke LeFevre underscores that “the inventing ‘self’” is socially galvanized, induced, and extracted (LeFevre x). And it is the very same self that constitutes, in turn, the social reality and environment. Examining the case of the Greek Prime Minister, we can see in *praxis* the social tangibility inherent in language: how discourse acts as a natural conduit for a new existence and, more specifically, how its instrumentalization led to the remapping and re-articulation of the speaker in the social

¹⁶Language as social action—as the linguistic incarnation of a social decision, idea, process, event, or thought—is expansively discussed by William Labov (183), John Langshaw Austin, Judith Butler, Ruth Wodak (18), Norman Fairclough (in Nielson and Nørreklit 204), among others.

landscape. Most importantly, though, we can infer how language itself instigated the social invention of the speaker and the hostile portion of the electorate as collective actors who have come together to achieve common purposes and collective action. Indeed, the linguistic self-transmutation or self-retrofitting of the speaker, a *kairotic* identity at its core, accomplishes social impact in the deployment of language itself: the designation of the speaker and audience as a coherent social team. This identity with the social effects is in and of itself a discursive designation that puts them in a shared cognitive and affective state, instilling a self-perception as members of the same social affiliation or cohort (Neville et al.). This collective self-image and shared identity, specifically the shared citizenship identity, fosters trust and trustworthiness and imparts a shared sense of purpose, spurring the audience to get vaccinated. Such an operation has a significant effect: The speaker's *kairotic* identity creates *kairotic* unity and *kairotic* social impact.

Yet, one more facet warrants our attention: The speaker's *kairotic* identity not only creates immediate social impact but transcends the rhetorical situation, solidifying it into a more permanent form of *ethos*. In essence, it infixes in the collective intelligence a lasting impression of the individual, marked by positive connotations, epitomizing the transformative potential of *ethos* in shaping public opinion, communal comprehension, and collective behavior. This perception becomes so permanent and situated that it represents a tipping point for the speaker's image in the community from that moment forward. In this way, in his discourse, the Prime Minister created a mental space for his self re-portrayal that lasted beyond the duration of the communicative event. This enduring transformation is evident in opinion polls conducted in Spring 2020, gauging Greek citizens' views on handling the pandemic by the Greek Prime Minister. In specific, on a five-point Likert scale in reply to the question, "What is your opinion on the overall presence and activity of Kyriakos Mitsotakis as Prime Minister during a critical period with a pandemic, an economic crisis due to the pandemic, and other problems?" more than half of the study participants (57%) had a favorable opinion about him ("Ερευνα Opinion Poll"). Such polls, in tandem with Mitsotakis' re-election by a large margin, foster a clear understanding of how *kairotic* identity—initially an invented *ethos*—evolves into a stable, situated *ethos*. This case, eventually, serves as a textbook example of how a public figure successfully recreated their *ethos* within the public sphere.

Israel

The Moon Landing Narrative

As 2020 was coming to an end, Israel made global headlines as the nation with the highest vaccination rates. Of course, this was a result of the vaccine's wide availability but also of the government's effective message to its citizens. In addition to the persuasive strategies that the Greek Prime Minister enacted, a situated and invented *ethos* showing *eunoia* and *arete*, Israel performed an invented *ethos* potent enough to engage audiences not responding to its leader's situated *ethos* argument alone. On December 19, 2020, the Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu received the first injection in the country, pairing it with a cultural reference to Neil Armstrong by saying, "One small injection for a man, and one giant leap for the health of us all" ("Netanyahu is 1st Israeli to Get COVID Vaccine"). Neil Armstrong holds a positive reputation in the global community, and the audience, drawing from this name, can assume a unique set of characteristics that

accompany him, primarily characteristics that are tied not so much to the person himself but to what the person stands for, such as innovation and greatness. With minimal linguistic utterances, that is, the phrase “one small injection for a man and one giant leap for the health of us all,” Israel’s moon landing paraphrasis invokes an array of syllogistic reasoning:

Neil Armstrong is a public figure symbolizing greatness.

The moon landing paraphrasis urges us to equate ourselves with this greatness.

By getting vaccinated, we are capable of a greatness similar to the one that Neil Armstrong attained.

In seeing discourse as a canvas for redesigning himself and his trustworthiness, the Israeli Prime Minister presented vaccination as an equivalent accomplishment to the moon landing. This reflexively propelled an enthymematic syllogism: “If being vaccinated is as progressive as the moon landing success, I have to get vaccinated, too.” In other words, if Armstrong displays this *phronesis*, ‘I’ have to display this *phronesis*, too: ‘I’ must also get vaccinated. In essence, the trajectory of Netanyahu’s transformation is done by borrowing Armstrong’s statement, thus equating the charged symbolism of vaccination to Neil Armstrong’s landing on the moon and the greatness of the moon landing to the vaccination. Our proposition warrants a more complete explanation.

Two mechanisms are operating here. Netanyahu firstly reawakens Armstrong’s socially perceived identity. By invoking authority and, in this case, the community-shared authority of the man on the moon—someone everybody acknowledges as an authority—Netanyahu invokes Armstrong’s situated *ethos*. Calling up, as it were, this situated *ethos* equal to an “established authority and trusted persona” (Dubisar 131), he further buttresses the credibility of his own argument and vaccination position, a rhetorical tactic also known as “borrowed credibility” (McIntyre and McKee 66); an added *worthiness of confidence* (McTavish 68) at its heart.¹⁷ Secondly, and of considerable importance, the situated *ethos* of the man on the moon that the Prime Minister invokes cloaks an additional mantle. Tapping into the allowances and the rhetorical liberty of *ethos* to design as many characters expressly configured for each exigence, the Israeli Prime Minister artfully presents the moon landing idea within the vaccination context, creating an *ethotic* persuasive pattern ever more intricate. Netanyahu getting vaccinated is as great a scientific leap as Armstrong’s moon landing, and, in doing so, he acquires a new *ethos*, uniquely obtainable from discourse in that the moon landing *paraphrasis* consists of “the elements of a speech or a text that present the rhetor as trustworthy” (Ihlen 11). This spoken performance yields performed credibility and “performed sincerity” (Andersen and Clevenger qtd. in Kinneavy and Warschauer 186). Before anything else, this invented *ethos*, a dexterous rebuilding/resculpting of the second situated *ethos*, unveils a character on the basis of the lexical-discursive choices the rhetor makes (Walzer 50), adds new layers to the rhetor’s character, and places it in a novel perspective. It gives it meaningful instability, added vitality, and forward thrust

¹⁷Perhaps more pertinent, then, to this particular *ethos*, is situated *ethos* seen as a predetermined, fixed construct that appertains to the credibility of someone else, which is invoked, rather than a chronologically preceding invented *ethos* that, habitually honed, ripens into situated *ethos*. Essentially, this second situated *ethos* is not a product of the preceding invented *ethos*’ maturation, but of a new invocation.

for audiences unmoved by the preceding *ethe*. This discursive vibrancy gives *ethos* a pulse, animates it, fleshes it out, and sets it in motion. More than anything, it showcases the crux of the invented *ethos* idea: Invented *ethos* is *kinesis* per se but also makes *ethos* a *kinetic* entity as it confers *kinesis* to situated *ethos*, generating motion for the construct of *ethos* as a whole.¹⁸ It is due to this *kinesis* of invented *ethos* that a vortex of *ethos* is built, with invented *ethos* alternating a situated *ethos*. All in all, Netanyahu is transformed four times, developing an intricate pattern of two situated and two invented *ethe* in a circular movement: Firstly, the Prime Minister articulates that vaccination is a desirable act, making an argument from the situated *ethos* part. Secondly, he is vaccinated, making an invented *ethos* argument. Thirdly, he invokes the situated reputation of the man on the moon (a new situated *ethos*); fourthly, he associates Armstrong's moon landing greatness with the vaccination action (a new invented *ethos*). Revealingly, Netanyahu's *kinetical ethos* is an osmosis of typified reputation and linguistic act linked to the construction of his perceived credibility within the situational environment. This amalgamated habitual and linguistic performance endows the rhetorical situation with a newly formed trust that marks a cognitive shift that ultimately converts into the audience's newly induced willingness for vaccination. The antidote to the pandemic would first come in words and secondly in vaccines.

To invent *ethos* then means to invent the social world itself, new contexts, new consensualistic forms of social living, new collective imagination, and shared decision-making, and as Halloran has attested no less pertinently, "rhetorical choices define the character of the speaker and of the world" (63). *Ethos* and the social world are interdependent: *Ethos* shapes social reality, meaning, knowledge, values, and norms, but, at the same time, they themselves are shaped by *ethos*. In this sense, Aristotle's *admonition* that ethical proof "should result from the speech, not from a previous opinion that the speaker is a certain kind of person" was not only an *admonition* for the speaker "not to rest on his laurels while looking for the 'available means' of persuasion" (Baxter 13). It was also an *admonition* of sociability, the social nature of *ethos* and its necessity to be an intensely kinetic construct. *Ethos*, for him, is best seen as a versatile cognitive framework that constitutes social identities and worlds through its inherent performative nature. In its most basic sense, Aristotle's admonition was that *the best version of (rhetorical) being is its (rhetorical) becoming*: an arc extending from situated to invented *ethe*.

Conclusion

In the concatenating transformations of *ethos* and their circular/vortical movement triggered by invented *ethos*, it is made evident that rhetors cause their *ethos* to *happen, become, and unfold*. Such an 'unfolding' reveals three salient conclusions regarding *ethos*. Firstly, invented *ethos* is socially driven and linguistically accomplished. It is highlighted as a sophisticated, communicative tailoring that instrumentalizes words and actions singularly faithful to exigences: a perfectly re-narrativizable and versatile construct—a form of retrofitting possible through linguistic choices and acts. This treats discourse as a distinct source of character-building, and, in that treatment, it showcases that with words, we can have different character worlds: the ones that we want, that is,

¹⁸Invented *ethos* is that linguistic force exerted upon the whole 'mass' of *ethos* causing it to move.

the ones that create public value effective for specific audiences. Indeed, adept rhetors—thinkers and doers of their discursive self-reengineering—convincingly frame self as a contextual, social, and interactive entity. *Ethos* is necessarily meant to be socially interdependent, transactional, and interhumanistic, transpiring in the social fabric among social creatures (Ryan, et al. 6; M. Smith 53–4; LeFevre x, 45–6; Baumlin and Baumlin xxii; Baumlin and Meyer 10–12,18). It is carried out in the social coexistence of the rhetorical stakeholders (rhetor and audience) and their civic interpenetration/intertanglement in the contemporary *agora* and *demos*. Within this “hypersociality”¹⁹ of *ethos*, character transcends the boundaries of its deterministic existence, finiteness, and ontological narrowness; it can only be seen as an occurring communicative performance, competence, and act. We can understand *ethos* only as a definitional process originating in a multi-brain communicative, transactional process, only as the culminated result of the joint operation of the rhetor’s and the audience’s minds and the social storytelling they share. This pliable and social nature of *ethos* endows it with substantial *kinesis* able to propel audiences into action.

Secondly, mass audience persuasion flourishes in the heterogeneity of the many habituated and discursive modalities of *ethos* enacted by virtue of the two *ethe*. Persuasion flourishes in an anthology of selves, in a *kinetical ethos*: It is not the Prime Minister who convinces his vast audience to get vaccinated; it is how he invokes and presents the moon landing idea within the vaccination context that persuades. In this conceptualization, *kinetical ethos* constitutes emerging micro-narratives between a static and an invented self that spawn in a given discursive and rhetorical locale. These evolve as the right engineering of the self for situations in which neither situated *ethos* nor invented *ethos* alone succeeds to provide. Thirdly and lastly, in this small-scale cross-cultural rhetorical analysis of governmental messaging about COVID-19 vaccination, we propose that a shift in an audience’s understanding of the issue might be related to the change of the appeal itself, and especially in the vortical flow/movement that is generated when alternating from the static (situated) *ethos* to the *kinetic* (invented) one and back again to the static. It is on this generative complementarity, and particularly the synergistic competition between static-situated and *kinetic*-invented *ethos* that persuasion occurs. In other words, the wrestling ideas of situated and situational identity and how these interact and intermingle is what creates persuasive movement and generates the vorticity that galvanizes audiences into action. The vorticity of ethical argument implies that ethical *stasis* (situated *ethos*) is never a pure *stasis*: Ethical *stasis* seamlessly imbeds vestiges of *kinesis*, being a *stasis* on its way to becoming *kinesis*. So, too, is ethical *kinesis*. In being endosymbiotic, one fills in what the other lacks, collaboratively pushing the character’s development and persuasion ahead. This *kinetic* flow of *ethos* can inform our understanding of how this appeal works: *Ethos* is a *kinetical*, eventful, and action-packed concept. This separation from a state of *stasis* makes *ethos* “most important” (*kyriotaton*). This sets an example for the design of persuasive messages by institutional or government entities to appeal to vast, often negatively predisposed, audiences and concurrently solidifies *ethos* as a key factor in effective government communication strategies. More importantly, it demonstrates that the art of

¹⁹The term is used by multiple scholars and theorists within the cognitive psychology field, as noted by Elizabeth Colbert.

ethos is this vortical flow between situated and invented *ethos*, and the art of the rhetor is to manage this flow and pragmatically realize this action to move the audience.



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“The Shakespearean Moment” in American Popular/ Political Culture: Editorializing in the Age of Trump

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Abstract | This present essay meditates on media deployments of the term, “Shakespearean,” offering an analysis of its political implications. As a micro-instance of Shakespearean appropriation, such TV-editorial invocations of the Bard’s name and writings reflect on the ways that some (not all) American television audiences interpret and respond to the present historic moment. It’s the thesis of this essay that the so-called “Shakespearean moment” makes history visible: In times such as these, we come to recognize that “all the world’s a stage” and that we, as audience/witnesses of the contemporary *theatrum mundi*, are active participants in that political history.

As a corollary to this thesis, the present essay explores the several ironies informing Shakespeare’s tragic archetypes (specifically Hamlet, Lear, and Macbeth); these character-types, in turn, “hold [...] the mirror” (*Hamlet* 3.2.18–19) up to our own political culture and its “players.” Within Shakespearean tragedy, a character’s emotional/moral intelligence—which includes the capacity to distinguish right from wrong (irrespective of one’s choosing right over wrong)—rests in an equal capacity for self-reflection. Within one particular strand of American politics today, this capacity proves lacking. “The Shakespearean moment,” thus, draws politics, social psychology, and stage history into its purview. Perhaps an awareness of the ironies inherent in this moment can give citizens—as audience/witnesses of the *theatrum mundi*—the means to read, critique, and resist the cultish authoritarianism currently promoted by that singular political strand.

As a coda to this thesis, the present essay notes how different Western epochs—Romantic, “high” modern, and postmodern—identify with specific Shakespearean character-types. These shifting identifications reflect the evolving “category of the person,” as charted by Marcel Mauss. The social psychology of personhood remains “in process” today, and Shakespearean drama seems prescient in anticipating our ways of experiencing and representing the self. So, having lived through the first quarter of the 21st century, we might ask: In which Shakespearean character do we discover our current cultural “mirror”?

Keywords | Self, Persona, *Theatrum Mundi*, Shakespearean Moment, Irony, Hamlet, King Lear, Macbeth, Sophocles, Oedipus, Donald J. Trump, New York State Prosecution of Trump, Political Theatre, American Popular Culture

Suppose we have no access to any “essential” meaning nestling within Shakespeare’s texts and awaiting our discovery [...]. Then what can their purpose be? If they do not transmit the meaning intended and embodied within them by their author, what on earth do Shakespeare’s plays do? [...]

[F]or us, the plays have the same function as, and work like, the words of which they are made. We *use* them in order to generate meaning. In the twentieth century, Shakespeare’s plays have become one of the central agencies through which our culture performs this operation. That is what they do, that is how they work, and that is what they are for. Shakespeare doesn’t mean: *we mean by Shakespeare*.

—Terence Hawkes, *Meaning by Shakespeare* (3; emphasis in original)

From mid-April through May 2024, Donald J. Trump—the twice-impeached, three-times indicted 45th president of the United States—has campaigned for reelection while on trial in New York state court for unlawfully influencing the outcome of the 2016 presidential election. Never in the 248-year history of the nation has a president faced criminal prosecution. While conservative news outlets seek to normalize Trump’s behavior, portraying him as the victim of a politically biased legal system, most mainstream (in right-wing parlance, “liberal”) media outlets struggle to express the abnormality of these times.

The occasion for this essay comes from a recent cable news broadcast when the TV host, commenting on U.S. lawyer-politicians taking plea deals for having broken the law, declared the moment “truly Shakespearean.” As a teacher of Shakespeare, I found the reference vague and yet somehow apt. She must have relied on her audience’s complicity in that phrase, which (I think) is easier to exemplify than explain. When, for example, some public figure does something monumentally stupid or mean and that act then redounds upon the person’s own head: Is that what the TV host intended by the term, “Shakespearean”? When some politician leads a crowd chanting “Lock her up!” and then gets locked up himself, can we call that “Shakespearean”? Surely there’s some “cosmic irony” in such a moment, when the political “engineer” is “Hoist with his own petar” (*Hamlet* 3.4.210–11) and the bomb blows up in his face. There’s something incredulous, as well. We find it hard to believe that anyone could be so stupid or so mean as to do or to say ... that. “I wouldn’t have believed it if I hadn’t seen it”: Words to that effect invite us to call a moment “Shakespearean.” So I assume. But there’s something more lurking in this usage. It’s not just the actor or the action that defines such a moment; saliently,

the action occurs within a “political theater”—within our own culture’s *theatrum mundi*, of which we citizens are the audience.¹

There is, thus, a broader cultural backdrop in deployments of the term, “Shakespearean.” In *Shakespeare and Modern Popular Culture*, Douglas Lanier writes, “the notion of an ‘authentic Shakespeare,’ [...] is in reality always a social construct, one intimately linked to the history and politics of cultural institutions *and their audiences*, to various protocols of interpretation, and to competing notions of social decorum and pleasure” (19; emphasis added). He cites Stephen Orgel’s “discussion of key moments in the early history of Shakespearean performance” where, in each case, “what is ‘authentic’ turns out always to be ‘something that is not in the text; it is something behind it and beyond it that the text is presumed to represent’ [Orgel 24]” (Lanier 19). In the usage that I’m describing, this “something behind” or “beyond” is indeed a social construction, wherein “Shakespeare” is invoked as interpretant/critic of our own cultural texts and performances. Superimposed upon U.S. politics, “we” are no longer analyzing or critiquing Shakespeare; rather, “he” critiques *us* (or, more specifically here, our politics and politicians). And, in so doing, “he” calls attention to our own active roles in the *theatrum mundi* of our times.

It surprises me that the magisterial Oxford English Dictionary gives no instance of the term “Shakespearean,” ironic or otherwise, deployed in cultural contexts. Web search engines don’t help, either, and that surprises me even more.² American high schoolers are taught three types of irony: verbal, situational, and dramatic. And they’re

¹In a *Washington Post* web article, Peter W. Stevenson offers “A brief history of the ‘Lock her up!’ chant by Trump supporters against Clinton,” Hillary Clinton having been Trump’s opponent in the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign. Stevenson writes, “Nearing the end of his speech at the Republican National Convention” in July 2016, the New Jersey governor Chris Christie “was in the middle of an attack on Hillary Clinton, listing what he saw as her many missteps as secretary of state. After each perceived misstep, he asked the crowd, ‘Is she guilty or not guilty?’ ‘Guilty!’ the crowd thundered back again and again [...]. The chant swelled to a roar, and delegates began standing up from their seats. They waved their red, white and blue ‘Trump’ signs. They shook their fists. They screamed and hollered and made the building shake, in that now-familiar three-beat chant: ‘Lock her up! Lock her up! Lock her up!’” Stevenson adds, “by the next evening, it was a go-to refrain, punctuating every mention of Clinton’s name. It fit right in with Trump’s core pitch to voters: that Clinton couldn’t and shouldn’t be trusted. His fans broke out in the chant at any mention of the Clinton Foundation, the email server or any other of his attacks on her.”

It’s not Christie who would lead later chants, but the likes of Michael Flynn, Roger Stone, Steve Bannon, Rudy Giuliani, and Trump himself. Of these five names, the first three have been convicted of crimes while the latter two remain under federal indictment. As I write, Trump’s New York state trial for election interference has been given to a jury to decide. As I’ve already noted, *The People of the State of New York v. Donald J. Trump* marks the first criminal jury trial of a U.S. president. The 34 felony charges brought against Trump include the falsification of business records aimed at concealing “hush money” payments to pornographic film actress, Stormy Daniels. News of Trump’s alleged affair with Daniels threatened to scuttle his 2016 campaign; hence, payments for the porn star’s silence served unlawfully to influence the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Poignantly, the days of trial testimony given by Michael Cohen—Trump’s one-time lawyer and loyal “fixer” turned state’s cooperating witness—were declared “almost Shakespearean” by two different cable TV news commentators (though here, too, audiences are left to divine their meaning).

²The online urbandictionary.com does offer several humorous (and obviously non-political) uses. These include “Shakespearean drunk,” being “the point of inebriation where one becomes possessed of legendary eloquence” (and which “may or may not involve lecturing people endlessly on things that they probably do not want to hear”), and “Shakespearean sex,” which is “full of sound and fury, / Signifying nothing.” Oh, well.

taught to find these in Shakespeare's plays. The TV example that I've given above belongs to political editorializing and public commentary, and we might question how it fits within these literary-interpretive terms.³

To appreciate the Shakespearean moment as I'm describing it, we must read culture in much the same way that we're taught to read his plays. Recent scholars (Garber, Lanier, and Huang and Rivlin) have focused on appropriation—reinventions of Shakespeare's plots, characters, themes, and language. While many adaptations do make for political commentary, their aesthetic practice differs from my topic, in which popular/political culture is discovering within itself, ready-made as it were, a range of Shakespearean analogs. For the nonce, let's divide the *theatrum mundi* into four parcels: the author, the players, the public stage or backdrop, and the audience. In our contemporary *theatrum*, it's popular/political culture that provides the stage and the players. In the very specific deployment that I'm seeking to describe, there is no author or director standing over the players, providing a script and stage directions; there is, however, that vital creature that we call an audience.

In relearning to read our political culture, we might look to A.C. Bradley for a starting point. In his seminal text, *Shakespearean Tragedy* (1904), Bradley notes the dramatic irony abounding in *Macbeth*:

I do not refer to irony in the ordinary sense; to speeches, for example, where the speaker is intentionally ironical [...]. I refer to irony on the part of the author himself, to ironical juxtapositions of persons and events, and especially to the "Sophoclean irony" by which a speaker is made to use words bearing to the audience, in addition to his own meaning, a further and ominous sense, hidden from himself and, usually, from the other persons on the stage. (338–39)

As professional students of literature, we know how to apply the term, Sophoclean: Bradley shows us how. Of course, media pundits nowadays don't say, "How Sophoclean!" in their editorializing. It's not simply a matter of cultural currency—of the fact that contemporary American audiences maintain some contact still with Shakespeare, whereas the Greek dramatists have retreated largely into college coursework in the classics. Besides, there's a notable difference between Sophoclean and Shakespearean irony, one that rests in the differing cultural *ethoi* of their characters. Here, I'm following Martin Hollis (who is himself indebted to French anthropologist, Marcel Mauss) in charting the evolving Western "category of the person."

³Summarizing Pierre Bourdieu's distinction between "bourgeois and popular responses to art," Lanier notes that "high culture values art for the access it provides to moral and aesthetic universals extracted from experience," whereas popular culture, "by contrast, emphasizes participation, encouraging identification with characters, involvement with the performance, [and] relevance to immediate circumstances" (60). Thus, the aesthetic "distance" (60) central to high-cultural response gives way to a sense of immediacy: Audiences become immersed in (and participate in) the moment when art and history coalesce. I remain unsettled as to which type of aesthetic response is reflected in "the Shakespearean moment" here described. Such a moment invites a "knowing" critical stance grounded in one's acquaintance with "high culture" Shakespeare. As audience/witnesses, do we immerse ourselves in, or stand at a critical distance from, the politics as they unfold? Perhaps our response demands a double vision, one alternating between distance and immersion.

As recorded in Sophocles, the Attic self inhabits a set of socially-determined roles and behaviors, whereas the early-modern self as represented in Shakespeare has evolved through various cultural-historic stages leading from the “social self” of Greek antiquity through the late Roman/early Christian “private/familial self” to the early-modern/Cartesian “hidden self” to the “divided self” of our own Freudian-inflected modernism.⁴ For the Attic self, we can take Oedipus as our exemplar; for the (early-) modern self, we can take Hamlet. (We could add Lear, Macbeth, and others to this discussion, but Hamlet, for now, will do.)

Here’s a forecast of my argument. I begin with an outline of the reflexivity built into Shakespearean character-creation, demonstrating how moments of self-reflection (what Harold Bloom describes as self-overhearing) turn individuals into both agents and *their own* audiences. Though of little news to Shakespeare scholars, such an outline can help contextualize this discussion of contemporary political culture. As I read its use in media commentary, the term “Shakespearean” serves to identify or, more saliently, “to make visible” our own historical moment, when we become aware of ourselves as witness/audience *within* that moment. I’ll end with a coda on the ways that different Western epochs have found their cultural “mirrors” in specific Shakespearean characters. If the high-modernist first half of the 20th century identified with Hamlet, and the postmodernist second half identified with King Lear, we might ask which character “hold[s], as ‘twere, the mirror up” to our experience of the 21st century.

“The Shakespearean Moment” and Its Audience: Bearing Witness to/within History

All the world’s a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts [...]

—William Shakespeare, *As You Like It* (2.7.139–42)

⁴Adapting this model, we chart a further evolution through the late 18th-century Romantic “hypertrophied self” to the so-called high-modern “alienated self”—which remained the dominant (Western) mode of subjectivity reaching from the mid-19th century Industrial Age through to World War II (see Baumeister). This evolution in “the category of the person” continues through our own belated age, which is marked by an emergent postmodern “self-in-process.” I apologize for this detour into theory. It’s justified, I believe, by the patent lack of self-reflexivity shown in instances of our own contemporary political theater and its players. A full discussion merits an essay in itself; here, a footnote or two must serve.

There is considerable overlap in these categories: The accretions to personhood within each epoch become, indeed, part of our own (post)modern birthright. We remain, today, social selves and private, hidden selves and divided, potentially hypertrophied but most definitely alienated economically and politically. As “selves in process,” we negotiate the *Innenwelt* and *Ausserwelt* as we reach toward that great elusive prize (as described in Jungian analytic psychology): individuation. Need we note that not everyone in our species possesses strong powers of self-reflection? Many remain content to identify with (and experience the world through) their social selves, blissfully (woefully?) unconscious of the ways culture and its institutions (political, educational, medical, corporate, etc.), technologies, and structures of economy contribute to one’s self-fashioning.

It is one of the fascinating effects of Shakespeare's plays that they have almost always seemed to coincide with the times in which they are read, published, produced, and discussed.

—Marjorie Garber, *Shakespeare and Modern Culture* ("Introduction")

"O me, what hast thou done?" (3.4.25) cries Gertrude, Hamlet having struck blindly through the arras in her bedroom, killing Polonius. "Nay, I know not. / Is it the king?" (3.4.27–28) is Hamlet's horrifically unreflective reply. In teaching the Shakespearean texts, I've looked for specific moments of insight, typically on the part of characters but often, *as instances of irony*, on the part of audiences as well: As I teach it, the Shakespearean moment arises from within an act of radical self-reflection. Often a character speaks or acts unreflectively, such that understanding comes only after a word is spoken or a deed is done. Hence, the Shakespearean moment unfolds onstage when outward action and inward self-reflection smash together, coalescing.⁵

In that moment, a character becomes his or her own audience, witness, and judge: Often, the actions that follow come as a response to that pregnant moment. I turn again to Hamlet, albeit in a specific production: "Go to, I'll no more on't, it hath made me mad" (3.1.142–43), the prince declares to Ophelia, the "it" being Hamlet's raging against women's infidelity (driven, we assume, by his mother's "o'erhasty" remarriage, with its violation of the rites of mourning). Where most performances stress the prince's rage ("it hath *made me mad*..."), Derek Jacoby—by acclamation one of the great Hamlets of the late 20th century—finds a moment of self-reflection.⁶ "Go to," he yells, shaking Ophelia by the shoulders; but, drawing back, he comes to a realization, "it *hath* made me mad..." By this inflection, "it *hath* made me mad," Jacoby shifts from impulsive action to self-reflection, becoming his own audience and critic.

In my own imaginary direction of the scene, I'd play upon Hamlet's acute sense of being watched. Most of his words in this scene—the ones "made" to sound "mad"—are intended for Claudius and Polonius; these should be spoken in loud raging tones. Yet there are other words—"Get thee to a nunnery..." (3.1.119)—that can be spoken whisperingly though no less urgently, as if for Ophelia's ears alone. Why shouldn't Hamlet want to spare her from the carnage that's to come? Why shouldn't a nunnery (assuming that such a Catholic refuge exists in Hamlet's Elsinore) have a different meaning for Ophelia than for the king or her father? And there are words whose private meanings belong to the prince alone. In such a scene, Hamlet's words make their appeal to four audiences: to the king and Polonius, to Ophelia, and to Hamlet himself—not to mention the audience offstage. This multiplication of audiences is vital in appreciating

⁵"Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell! / I took thee for thy better" (3.4.32–33) are words that Hamlet pronounces over Polonius's body. But it's Hamlet's "rash and bloody deed" (3.4.28), as Gertrude decries it, that here turns the Danish prince from "just" avenger to "mere" murderer. "For this same lord, [pointing to Polonius] / I do repent" (3.4.176–77), Hamlet says later in the scene. Though his contrition seems sincere, surely he knows the fatal consequences of this "rash" act. In a mortal twist of irony, the hunter has become the hunted: Hamlet, having turned Laertes into the "son of a dear father murdered" (2.2.550), has brought vengeance down upon his own head. Even now, Hamlet knows that his own death is immanent: The time remaining to him "will be short" (5.2.73), as he says later to Horatio.

⁶I'm referring to Jacoby's performance in the 1980 BBC television staging of *Hamlet* (Bennet and Gorrie).

the Shakespearean moment, since each audience responds in accordance with its varying levels of understanding.

This irony of self-overhearing was revolutionary in Shakespearean theater, for proof of which we might turn to his friend and fellow playwright, Ben Jonson. In *Timber, or Discoveries* (1630), Jonson offers the following anecdote:

I remember, the players have often mentioned it as an honour to Shakespeare that in his writing (whatsoever he penned) he never blotted out line. My answer hath been, would he had blotted a thousand. [...] Many times he fell into those things could not escape laughter: as when he said in the person of Caesar, one speaking to him, “Caesar, thou dost me wrong,” he replied “Caesar did never wrong, but with just cause,” and such like, which were ridiculous. But he redeemed his vices with his virtues. (52)

In *Julius Caesar*, the passage now reads “Know, Caesar doth not wrong, nor without cause / Will he be satisfied” (3.1.47–48). Frankly, the version recorded by Jonson is far more poignant, precisely because of its ironic self-reversal.

In Jonsonian character-creation, the players’ words reflect an unchanging mind: They know what they intend and they say what they mean. In the version given in *Timber*, Shakespeare’s Caesar begins with a patent lie—that he “did never wrong”—and ends with a half-hearted self-justification (“...but with just cause”). In this seeming “ridiculous” about-face, Shakespeare’s Caesar reveals an irony lying at the core of his character. Far from embodying Roman justice or “just cause,” Caesar shows us mere tyranny wrapped in the pomp of state. Though delusional in his inflated self-image, Shakespeare’s Caesar remains his own most attentive, admiring audience.⁷

Returning to Bradley: As he describes it, there’s a “Sophoclean irony” inherent in the *anagnorisis* or “moment of recognition” that Aristotle sees as an effect of classical Greek tragedy. While the Shakespearean moment shares this same irony, it deepens the Sophoclean model by virtue of a deepening interiority and reflexivity within its representations of character. If we compare Sophocles’s Oedipus to Shakespeare’s Hamlet, we’ll note a real distinction in their character-creation, though in each case their tragedies involve a crisis of knowledge. Oedipus lacks knowledge of his parentage; and that ignorance, conjoined to a willful temperament, leads him to commit the supreme sacrilege of parricide. The discovery of his parentage leads, in Aristotelian terms, to his *anagnorisis* and *peripeteia*—to a “recognition” that brings with it a “reversal of fortune.” By my reading, the most ironic of “Sophoclean ironies” arises in his incestuous mother/wife Jocasta’s desperate plea: To her husband/son’s dogged resolution—“I *will* find out the whole truth”—she rejoins, “Ill-fated man. May you never find out who you are” (77). Though a modern audience shudders at this will-to-ignorance, there’s a

⁷It goes without saying that I accept the Jonsonian version as a legitimate textual variant and, quite likely, as representing Shakespeare’s original intention. In a gloss to his edition of the play, T.S. Dorsch concurs: “It seems probable,” writes Dorsch, “that the Folio version represents an alteration made by Shakespeare or his company, perhaps in deference to a spoken criticism by Jonson” (65).

By the way, Jonson (being a self-taught classicist) would have known the rhetorical term for this sort of self-correction: *epanorthosis*. We see this habit of self-correction—rhetorically, of replacing one word or phrase for another—time and again in Hamlet, as in this early exchange with Gertrude: “Seems, madam? Nay, it is. I know not ‘seems’” (1.2.76).

fundamental difference between Sophoclean *anagnorisis* and that of Shakespeare. In Sophocles, the knowledge that Oedipus longs for *lies outside of him*, delivered by seers and messengers. It is not “hidden” inside the self, somehow divided from ego-consciousness and its capacity for self-reflection. Hamlet’s “mystery,” in contrast, comes from within. It’s an inward self-division that, in his case, “puzzles the will” (3.1.80).

Though I’m inclined to grant ontology to the self—that is, to treat the self as more than “mere fiction,” *contra* postmodernist/deconstructionist criticism—it’s not a mode *of being selves* but the modes *of representing selfhood* that I’m seeking to chart.⁸ Whereas selfhood ascribes an interiority within the individual, personhood describes the point of interface between the *Innenwelt* of the self and the *Ausserwelt* of material-social reality. Within the archetypal psychology of Carl Jung, the persona is precisely that component of the complex psyche that mediates between the inner and outer worlds. As “a kind of mask,” its functioning is both projective and protective, “designed on the one hand to make a definite impression upon others, and on the other to conceal the true nature of the individual” (Jung, *Two Essays* 190). Our societal roles (which include our occupations, social/personal relationships, hobbies, and public haunts) belong not to an inward “authentic self,” but rather to the outward-facing persona. Hence, the healthy ego expresses itself *through* the persona without identifying *with* the persona. Still, it’s by means of our roleplaying that we come to understand ourselves and learn to interpret/respond to others.

Note how the vocabularies of theater and social psychology converge. We are ourselves actors and audiences simultaneously. In point of fact, our role as audience does double duty, in that we watch ourselves even as we watch others. We “know” ourselves as a product of self-reflection, just as we “know” others by external observation. Concomitantly, observation entails judgment and elicits response (the complexity of response leading through the gamut of human action, gesture, and affect). The persona/mask of personhood, thus, mediates between sociology and psychology; the persona is janiform in this respect. The *Innenwelt* is itself divided, as well, in that we become audience/witness as well as performer within an internal drama that constructs and interprets self-experience, hence informing self-identity. In effect, we “know” ourselves as other: Self-identity, thus, is dyadic, in that we observe, reflect, judge, and respond to our own inner voice, even as that voice is inflected by/infected with alien words, images, and affects.

By roleplaying, thus, our lifeworlds translate into a *theatrum mundi*. The masks that we wear or observe in others provide the *dramatis personae*, to which the Shakespearean stage has made hefty contributions. Marjorie Garber makes this point: “In psychological, sociological, and sometimes philosophical terms—as well as in literary studies—it is often Shakespeare who defines character and character types for the modern world” (*Character* 18). In the 21st century, media-driven pop culture supplies its own

⁸Even if it were fictional, the self-concept proves “a necessary fiction” (O’Dair 83). As Greenblatt writes in the personal narrative that ends *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, “to abandon the craving for freedom, and to let go of one’s stub hold upon selfhood, even selfhood conceived as a fiction, is to die. [...] I want to bear witness at the close to my overwhelming need to sustain the illusion that I am the principal maker of my own identity” (257; qtd. in O’Dair 88). A curious effect of this reasoning is to reverse the relationship traditionally assumed between self and persona. Rather than the self fashioning its outward “mask” or persona, the persona here “invents” the self, privileging its (idealized) image as the stable core of identity.

favorite character types; these, Garber notes, “include the Politician, the Athlete, and the Celebrity” (*Character* 47), to which we can add “the News Pundit” and “the Internet Influencer.” In the specific media instance given above (“Lock her up! Lock her up!”), it’s the Politician that dominates. And I’d like to speculate on a shift in the popular/political use of Shakespearean typology specifically: In the 21st century, it’s the political tyrant (à la Greenblatt) that dominates. The history plays give us Richard III, the Roman plays Coriolanus and Julius Caesar (recent revivals of which make specific allusion to contemporary American politicians), and the tragedies give us Macbeth. Before landing in the present age, however, we might glance back through recent decades and their “cultural uses” of Shakespearean archetypes. Indeed, we might pause briefly over the cultural forces (technological, political, ideological) that, historically, inform and condition “the category of the person.”

As for the Politician, the Athlete, and the Celebrity, these are character-types *behind which* the healthy ego may reside. Yet “the danger,” as Jung describes it, is when individuals “become identical with their personas—the professor with his textbook, the tenor with his voice” (*Memories* 416).⁹ A result of such persona-identification, as Anthony Stevens notes, is the sort of “shallow, brittle, conformist kind of personality which is ‘all persona,’ with its excessive concern for ‘what people think’” (43). In this state of identification, “people are utterly unconscious of any distinction between themselves and the world in which they live. They have little or no concept of themselves as beings distinct from what society expects of them” (Dawson 267). As Jungian-archetypal psychology teaches us, the persona can become hardened over a lifetime of repetition-in-behavior/performance, such that the mask and the face seem to dissolve into one.¹⁰ This describes a pathology in which the living individual becomes a mere stock character, largely incapable of self-reflection, much less of change.¹¹ And it’s in this

⁹The citations in this paragraph are gathered from the web article, “Persona.”

¹⁰In Shakespeare’s time, this persona-identification was often portrayed as the effect of “humours” on individual personality. Renaissance humour theory held that individuals were governed emotionally, cognitively, psychologically, and socially by a dominant trait, typically innate and physiological in origin, whose influence on behavior became habituated over time. Shakespeare’s minor, stock characters are often reduced to a single humour, which is then reflected in their cartoonish simplicity. His plays, the comedies especially, have their share of pedants, fools, boasting soldiers, cowards, drunkards, courtesans, and so on. I have no doubt that Shakespeare would cast today’s Politician as a cartoonish stock character.

Note that persona-effects are not entirely absent from the great tragedies, whose major characters have their flaws. Such is the classical-Aristotelian theory, which views a play’s tragic protagonists through the double lens of *hamartia* and *arete*—that is, of a “tragic flaw” counterbalanced by some nobility, virtue, or heightened “power of action.” Yes, Hamlet is melancholy, Othello jealous, Lear vain, and Macbeth ambitious; but it’s more than jealousy that brings down Othello, more than melancholy that brings down Hamlet, more than ambition that brings down Macbeth, and more than vanity that brings down Lear. These great characters, for all their flaws, possess an emotional/moral intelligence grounded in self-reflection. Even Macbeth, tragic villain though he is, suffers from the burden of conscience/consciousness.

¹¹There’s an easy criterion, actually, for judging the extent of one’s persona-identification. Is that individual capable of doing or saying something “out of character”? Can that person say or do something genuinely surprising, not just to others but to the self? A capacity for self-reflection is the first requisite of moral intelligence, the second being the capacity to change one’s mind. Possessed of an “unchanging mind,” today’s political players can do little more than double-down on their dangerous folly, both in word and in deed. At its worst, the character-type of the Politician is never more than a caricature of personhood—in effect, a cartoon.

context that our contemporary Politician, the one who chants “Lock her up!” needs to be seen.

In all likelihood, the person who performs such an act remains blissfully unaware of the irony unleashed by their words and actions. *They* “don’t get” the irony. *We* get it. Our own *theatrum mundi* diverges from the Shakespearean stage on this point: It’s not the political “player” but the audience that pauses to reflect. Culturally, then, the Shakespearean moment is now realized *when we become aware of ourselves as the audience* bearing witness to someone else’s performance. It’s in this moment that we recognize the literal truth that “all the world” *is* “a stage.” In effect, our moment in history provides the scenic backdrop, becoming our theater. And this leads to a further insight, in that the Shakespearean moment empowers us, as audience, to respond to the world’s political “players” and their performances. Though we may be victimized in many respects, we are not entirely passive. For, remember: Theater demands an audience. And our task, which is simultaneously ethical and aesthetic, is to give judgment. As witnesses, we are part of history. Our responses matter. When the ironies unfold and we bear witness to them, declaring their impact on our own recordings of history, surely we ourselves enter into the Shakespearean moment. When our own moment in history becomes visible: That, I would argue, constitutes the Shakespearean moment in contemporary popular/political culture.

This essay could end here, in an explication of the ironies found in media representations of contemporary politics and politicians. There is, however, a larger issue raised within the interpretive history of specific Shakespearean characters and their prominence in an age’s *theatrum mundi*.

Shakespearean Character as Cultural “Mirror”: A Coda

I have a smack of Hamlet myself, if I may say so.

— Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Table Talk*, June 24, 1827

A.C. Bradley found in *Macbeth* more of a “Sophoclean irony” than anywhere else in Shakespeare, meaning by such irony an augmenting awareness in the audience far exceeding the protagonist’s consciousness that perpetually he is saying one thing, and meaning more than he himself understands in what he says. I agree with Bradley that *Macbeth* is the masterpiece of Shakespearean irony, which transcends dramatic, or Sophoclean, irony.

— Harold Bloom, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* (528)

In contemporary culture, Shakespeare’s characters have outgrown the plays that contain them. Falstaff, Hamlet, Cleopatra: Their capacity for extemporaneous self-making seems to exceed the narrow, linear action inscribed in their plots. I’m taking that insight from Harold Bloom, who declares that Shakespeare “invents us.”¹² There’s a germ of truth in

¹²Citing Bloom’s *Western Canon* (733), Joe Barnhart writes of self-inventive powers of Shakespearean character, which separates them from their classical/medieval precursors: “The new (or transforming) self often differs from the old by becoming more intensely conscious. Transformation is a move both forward and inward. In the undiscovered regions of the self, invention takes place with no hard line drawn between self-discovery and self-invention” (367–68).

that brash declaration.¹³ We need, however, to historicize such a claim, since Shakespeare’s continuing cultural importance proceeds from his own historic moment. I’m assuming that Shakespeare’s plays record aspects of European culture’s transit from late medievalism to early modernism. And, in that transit, our species evolved in its social psychology—specifically, in its experience of the self.¹⁴

As I’ve noted, we “see” and “know” self, world, and other through various masks; yet there are moments when cultural forces seem to gather their strength within one particular archetype, or character, or persona, or mask (call it what you will). Historically within Western literary culture, each epoch (Williams) has its cast of characters serving in various roles. But, within each epoch, certain masks emerge most strongly: these “do the work of culture,” if I may use that phrase (see Lanier 97). That is, they provide the interpretive/judicial/ethical/aesthetic frame through which we “see” and “know” self, world, and other.

The history of Shakespearean criticism demonstrates that, from the Romantic Age (late 18th century) through the mid-20th century, the character of Hamlet predominated. We might wonder why it was Hamlet who provided Western culture with its “mirror.” There’s an irony, after all, in Hamlet’s representation of Romantic individualism at a time when modernist forces of alienation—social, economic, political—were arraying against “the sovereign individual.” From Goethe through Coleridge to that “last of the Romantics,” Harold Bloom, the figure of Hamlet represented, not simply the psychology of the “divided self,” but also the sense of alienation inscribed within “the modern condition.” Freud was “invented” (in Bloomian terms) to minister to the Hamlets of the world from the *fin de siècle* 19th century into mid-20th century.¹⁵ And through the first

¹³As Garber (hardly a Bloom aficionado) writes, “not only was the study of Shakespeare’s characters, from very early days, virtually equivalent to the study of Shakespeare, but it also seems as if the characters in effect preceded and then exceeded the plays, proving that Shakespeare knew human nature better than human nature knew itself” (*Character* 17).

¹⁴In this respect, it’s not Bloom but Martin Hollis whom I’d quote: “[It is only] with [Roman] legal ideas about rights, Christian ideas about the soul, and Cartesian ideas about the ego that our modern, categorial self is born” (223). Actually, Hamlet carries the literary representation of selfhood beyond the self-knowing Cartesian ego. Though “hidden” in its interiority, Descartes’s *cogito* is grounded in an experience of self-presence. In contrast, Shakespeare’s Hamlet experiences an alterity within the self, thus complicating and destabilizing the self-present, self-knowing Cartesian *cogito*. Against the Cartesian “hidden self,” the Hamlet-self is “divided” as well as “hidden.” Hence, from the 18th century through the age of Romanticism and onto the 20th century (with its development of depth psychology), Hamlet became the literary-cultural archetype of the modern self.

¹⁵Sir Lawrence Olivier begins his 1948 film adaptation with the non-Shakespearean voice-over, “This is the tragedy of a man who could not make up his mind” (Olivier). Such an interpolation is meant “to explain” the thematics of a production rather thickly layered over with Freudian implications. Beyond Ernest Jones’s book, *Hamlet and Oedipus* (1949), it’s a commonplace that Freud gained insight into his theory of the Oedipus complex from his own reading of *Hamlet*. I’m agnostic as to the presence of Oedipal conflict in Hamlet’s psyche; from my perspective, there are other, more cogent ways to interpret Hamlet’s melancholy and seeming paralysis of will. The passage—

I do not know
Why yet I live to say “This thing’s to do,”
Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means
To do’t. (4.4.43–46)

—gives an insight to Hamlet’s self-division. The fact that he “live[s] to say” these words implies possession of a knowledge that he cannot yet speak or admit to himself: Specifically, that “do[ing]” “This thing” (which amounts to the assassination of Denmark’s duly elected king, irrespective of how Claudius came

five decades of the 20th century, with its wars and economic depression, the high-Romantic Hamlet seemed to deflect some (not all) attention away from the faceless machinery of high modernism. Hamlet came to represent a proto-Romantic figure in an age of technology harnessed to the global politics of war. And when those technologies exploded in an atomic blast over Hiroshima, and when near-skeletal survivors walked out of the Nazi death camps, the age of Hamlet-as-cultural-mirror came to an end. Hamlet's inwardness, self-doubt, and skepticism no longer mirrored the world that the war's survivors found themselves in. It was in Lear, now, that Western culture found its mirror. Garber notes this shift: "In the late 1950s and '60s, [...] the 'meaning' of Lear [...] began to change in response to cataclysmic world events like the exploding of the hydrogen bomb, political turmoil in Eastern Europe and Cuba, [...] and the start of the Vietnam War" (*Shakespeare*, "King Lear"). The play then "became Shakespeare's bleakest and most despairing vision of suffering, all hints of consolation undermined or denied" ("King Lear").¹⁶

So, from the self-divided, self-doubting Hamlet, we proceeded to Shakespeare's horrific image of holocaust-sacrifice, King Lear, whose desecrated kingly image carried popular culture from Auschwitz and Hiroshima through the second half of the 20th century. And now, almost a quarter-way through the 21st century, we might speculate on the possibility of another cultural mirror emerging at this time: that of Macbeth. This is speculation on my part. But there's something in the character of Macbeth that speaks to our own present moment; more so, one might argue, than Shakespeare's other tragic archetypes. That "something" has to do with power and, hence, with politics. This theme is by no means unique to Macbeth. Of course, there's Julius Caesar and Coriolanus and Richard III: power overwhelms their persons, as well. But, of the great characters of the "great tragedies"—Hamlet, Othello, Lear, Macbeth—it's Macbeth whose world invokes the seductions of tyrannical power that, increasingly, has come to mark our own moment in history.

To be fair, Trump was not the first U.S. president to face impeachment, nor was he the first to conceal an extramarital affair. The American Shakespeare scholar, Stephen

to the throne)—is no less than the prince's own death sentence. As often happens in Shakespearean soliloquy (Hirsh 312–14), Hamlet is indulging in some self-deception. A part of him does know the cause of his delay; repression (à la Freud) is operant here. And can we blame him? To give voice to the thought that he here fights to repress—"I am going to my death"—would be soul-crushing.

If Hamlet gives us a fully realized representation of the (early-)modern self, then what makes him modern is his sense of self-division, wherein aspects of the self are "hidden," not just from others but from his own ego-consciousness. Compared to Sophocles's Oedipus, Hamlet's self-division marks a Copernican revolution in our understanding/experience of selfhood. To the extent that we experience the self within these same categories, we can say that Hamlet introduces us to ourselves. He fascinates us, because he mirrors our struggle in self-understanding, our longing to discover our own hidden faces.

And no wonder that he fascinates us, just as his character has fascinated prior generations. For, like Coleridge, we all "have a smack of Hamlet."

¹⁶This, then, is the mid-20th century context in which King Lear came to be read: "After two world wars and Auschwitz," writes Maynard Mack, "our sensibility is significantly more in touch than our grandparents' was with the play's jagged violence, its sadism, madness, and processional of deaths, its wild blends of levity and horror, selfishness and self-lessness" ("King Lear"). The arguments within this paragraph are developed in my previous essay. See, Baumlin, James S. "*King Lear*, Mandel's *Station Eleven*, and the Shakespearean Apocalypse: Meditations on Pandemic and Posthumanism." *Language, Literature, and Interdisciplinary Studies*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2020, pp. 13–33.

Greenblatt, tells the following of Bill Clinton, the 42nd U.S. president and husband to Hillary, Trump’s 2016 political rival:

In 1998, a friend of mine, Robert Pinsky, who at the time was serving as the poet laureate of the United States, invited me to a poetry evening at the Clinton White House, one of a series of black-tie events organized to mark the coming millennium. On this occasion the President gave an amusing introductory speech in which he recalled that his first encounter with poetry came in junior high school when his teacher made him memorize certain passages from *Macbeth*. This was, Clinton remarked wryly, not the most auspicious beginning for a life in politics.

After the speeches, I joined the line of people waiting to shake the President’s hand [...]. This was a moment when rumors of the Lewinsky affair were circulating, but before the whole thing had blown up into the grotesque national circus that it soon became. “Mr. President,” I said, sticking out my hand, “don’t you think that *Macbeth* is a great play about an immensely ambitious man who feels compelled to do things that he knows are politically and morally disastrous?” Clinton looked at me for a moment, still holding my hand, and said, “I think *Macbeth* is a great play about someone whose immense ambition has an ethically inadequate object.”

I was astonished by the aptness, as well as the quickness, of this comment, so perceptively in touch with *Macbeth*’s anguished brooding about the impulses that are driving him to seize power by murdering Scotland’s legitimate ruler. (“Shakespeare”)

We are now a quarter-way through the 21st century. Of the great characters in the “great tragedies,” it’s *Macbeth* whose world explores the crisis of unrestrained power and its human consequences; and it’s that world that, increasingly, intrudes on our reflections upon our own moment in history. Elsewhere, Greenblatt has written that *Macbeth* is Shakespeare’s “most mature and considered attempt *to understand what it felt like* to be a tyrant” (*Tyrant* 109; emphasis added). As the players in our contemporary *theatrum mundi* teach us, it’s an exhilarating feeling, dangerous and addictive. So we might ask: In our seeming drift toward political amorality, autocracy, and personality-cultism, is ours an age of *Macbeth*?

The answer depends, I think, upon our reading of the play and its ironies. For Lady *Macbeth*, the purchase price of tyrannical power is madness; for her husband, it’s despair:

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time,
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life’s but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing. (5.5.19–28)

Macbeth's soliloquy is nothing less than a world history of lives wasted in pursuit of power. I'd so much like to project the faces of our own tyrants-du-jour (both de facto and wannabe: Vladimir Putin, Kim Jong Un, the cult of Trump) upon the person of that "poor player / [...] strut[ting] and fret[ting] his hour upon the stage." Even more, I'd like for that player's time on stage—that is, in our own *theatrum mundi*—to end quickly. An hour of their strutting is, to me, too long.

What separates Shakespeare's tragic villain from today's Politician is, once again, an emotional/moral intelligence marked by a capacity for self-reflection. From the moment of the witches' prophesying, Macbeth has been his own audience, witness, and judge; and, throughout, he has recoiled in horror at his own actions, all performed in pursuit of a crown that could never rightfully be his. Paradoxically, Macbeth's mental/emotional suffering shows his humanity, though diseased and tormented; today's Politician, in contrast, remains little more than a cartoon, unconscious of the ironies surrounding their character, words, and actions.

Here, I'm writing specifically of the American political scene. If ours is, indeed, an age of Macbeth, then perhaps our plotline remains in Act 1 or 2. A political coup was attempted back in January 2021, and some of its leaders have been brought to trial. On either side of the nation's political divide, no one has been hanged (as threatened) or assassinated, yet.¹⁷ In the meantime, the strutting and fretting continues. As the 2024 elections proceed, we seem to be building toward an Act 3 climax, though the crisis has yet to be reached. There's more to unfold, and we don't know how the fifth act will end, whether comically, heroically, or tragically.

While meditating thus on our own historic moment, I await Trump's New York state jury verdict.



¹⁷Here, too, is an irony of Shakespearean proportion. During the January 6 coup attempt, rioters had erected a makeshift gallows near the steps of the U.S. Capitol Building. "Hang Mike Pence! Hang Mike Pence!" became their chant, aiming to prevent Trump's "treasonous" vice president from ratifying the 2020 Electoral College results and declaring Joe Biden winner. The "treason," however, was not Pence's; it belonged to the rioters who had staged their coup on the Capitol steps.

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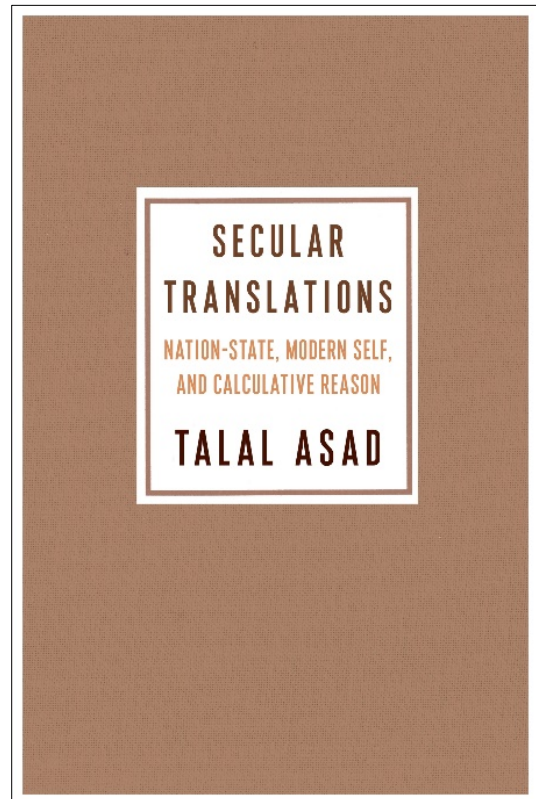
***Secular Translations: Nation-State, Modern Self, and Calculative Reason* by Talal Asad**

Reviewed by Emre Keser | University of California, Santa Cruz

<http://ellids.com/archives/2023/12/6.1-Keser.pdf>

SECULAR TRANSLATIONS: NATION-STATE, MODERN SELF, AND CALCULATIVE REASON. by Talal Asad. New York: Columbia University Press, 2018; pp. 222, \$26.00, ISBN: 9780231189873.

Those who are familiar with Talal Asad's works, in particular *Genealogies of Religion* (1993) and *Formations of the Secular* (2003), will not be surprised that this book too deals with "the idea of the secular" (1). In his previous works, Asad has dealt with the secular by offering genealogical critiques of the binary between the religious and the secular to show that the category "religion" is in fact a construction of the secular itself and the structures it is part of, i.e., colonialism, nation-state, and modernity at large. However, this time, while keeping and developing this line of thought, Asad approaches the issue "indirectly" in terms of translation and language, and he has a new interlocutor: Ludwig Wittgenstein, an early twentieth-century philosopher, whose writings have influenced a wide variety of thought and are currently enjoying an anthropological renaissance. This new Wittgensteinian turn in anthropology fundamentally draws upon the posthumously published work *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), rather than earlier *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1921) where language is mainly discussed from a



logico-metaphysical standpoint in terms of its referentiality and verifiability.

There are two crucial ideas in *Philosophical Investigations* that are key to this turn as well as Asad's work. The first is what is usually called "language games": using language is similar to playing a game. Just like playing a game, in using and learning a language, one follows the rules shaped by a

given context of language use or speaking. Uttering a word or a statement might mean different things in different contexts. Thus, attempts to fix the meaning and reference of a statement and to coin universal concepts miss the everyday, ordinary, “anthropological,” and fugitive nature of language. This is also connected to the idea that universal definitions are always informed by specific, historical circumstances and, in turn, shape specific forms of life. This is a familiar Asadian theme that has been previously conveyed through Foucauldian notions of genealogy and power/knowledge in a different way: universal definitions (universal knowledge claims) are, in fact, produced by historical power relations and, in turn, serve to produce power relations. The second idea from *Investigations* is that speaking a language is part of a “form of life” (2). This means not only that access to a certain language is access to a form of life but also that language itself forms life. It is not a means one uses to make sense of the world, but rather an essential part of the world. That is why Asad suggests that he is not interested in what the subject does with language but what language does with the subject.

The book critiques liberal secular understandings of language and translation, which assume that one has direct access to truth through language that is supposed to be a transparent, universal means of communication. In this sense, translation is simply a cognitive activity of interpretation and “a move from one set of signs to another” (65). Asad challenges this secular understanding of translation on two counts throughout the book. First, drawing upon Walter Benjamin’s notion of translation, he suggests that translation is a challenge both to the receiving language as well as the original. Second, he shows that translation might not be a purely cognitive activity, but there are ways in which “the sign [is] translated into the sensible body through the cultivation of sensibilities” (5).

The book consists of three long chapters, which Asad initially delivered as Ruth Benedict Lectures at Columbia University in

April 2017, plus a short introduction and epilogue. The three main chapters might also be seen as three different essays that the issue of translation and language cuts across. In the first chapter “Secular Equality and Religious Language,” Asad challenges two kinds of arguments: (i) against those who point to secularism as a radical break from “religion,” he shows the religious, Christian roots of secularism; (ii) against those who see liberal secular equality as a Christian gift to the world, he shows how it is far from being a gift. In the first half of the chapter, he critiques liberal secular equality by pointing to different cases where it is either founded on inequality or produces inequalities. This part is perhaps the most familiar within Asad’s oeuvre. He then starts a protracted critique of Habermasian liberal post-secularism. According to Habermas, when believers want to participate in the public sphere, their language must be translated (or *translatable*) into the secular, rational, universal language of the public sphere, where meaningful communication takes place equally between different individuals. This is what Asad terms “secular translation,” a translation from the religious (particular and obscure) to the secular (universal and clear) (43–44).

In Habermas’s accounts of public sphere and communicative action, there is no place for “pre-liberal” or “non-liberal” religions, even for inspiration (46). For him, a secularization that is not destructive could be, and historically was, possible only in the West (47). Obviously, during this secularization and making of the modern state, a “religion” (Christianity in this case) is not simply translated but it is first universally defined as “religion.” Islam is untranslatable because it has not been able to adjust to modernity, as Habermasian accounts implicitly assume, because his theory is normatively grounded in a Western liberal secular order, which presupposes the “rationality,” “autonomy,” and “transparency” of individuals, that has been defined against the tradition-bound, communal, and untranslatable/opaque Islamic selves. Asad suggests that there is no place in this understanding for

“indeterminateness, opaqueness, an evocation of the past, and the impossibility of understanding some discourse without far-reaching shifts in the way that one lives and feels and thinks” (49). For Asad, à la Benjamin, translation must change both the source language and the receiving language—an impossibility in Habermas’s secular translation where a language is simply made intelligible to another one (51). This is, of course, possible only when that language has inherent intelligibility.

In the final parts of the chapter, Asad turns to the headscarf debates in France in early 2000s. He points out how both those who defended wearing headscarf as a right and those who supported its ban in public spaces treated the headscarf as a sign. For the defenders, it was a sign of affirming and embracing an identity while for the latter, it was a sign of religious suppression (53). Then, the headscarf’s “real meaning” had to be deciphered, interpreted, and translated into the language of the public sphere. Yet it was never thought of as something that Muslim women inhabited as part of orientation, as a way of living. Rather, it was either interpreted as a sign of their desire to show identity or a sign of women’s repression by their husbands and fathers. Seeing translation this way assumes an irreconcilable distinction between what one publicly practices and one’s “real” motivation behind embracing these practices that others cannot see, which necessitates the interpretation of signs (of behavior). Also, seeing the headscarf as a sign of inequality in either case, this discussion is telling about the notion of agency guiding the liberal secular understanding. In this understanding, agents are active individuals who are exercising their own will freely. This is the precondition of equality. In reaction, Asad recalls his earlier genealogy of monastic discipline from *Genealogies of Religion* (1993). This discipline explicitly aimed to create a “will to obey” through a program of communal living. The Christian monk is thus not someone who submits to another’s will because of fear or forced dependence, or someone who lost his will. He is a person who sees and practices

obedience as a virtue and this requires setting aside the idea of an autonomous agent (54).

In the second chapter, “Translation and the Sensible Body,” Asad takes up the question of the Qur’an’s untranslatability and the idea of translation of the text into what he calls “the sensible body” (55). This seems to be what is found in Islam as discursive tradition. There is a fundamental secular, liberal attitude toward the fact that the Qur’an is not translated into the language of the praying subject during the prayer, underlying the arguments that exclude Islam from “modernity”: if you do not know what a text says, which you can if you are allowed to read it in your own language, what is the point of reading it and what do “they” try to hide from you by not letting you understand it? Asad suggests that this is a question that relies on the unquestioned conviction that “understanding discourse always requires that it be abstracted,” which belongs to “a particular language ideology according to which a message can always be separated from its medium [...] and the *act* of recitation [is] considered identical to the sheer presence of the *text*” (61).

This language ideology is what Asad criticizes throughout the book, which, he suggests, misses the entire point of Islam and the language itself. He then goes on to point out some ways of thinking about the translation of the Qur’anic language as a translation to the sensible human body, highlighting, once more, that language is not only what we do with it but also “what it does *to us* and *in us*” (64, italics in the original). To account for this, he provides examples from Islamic tradition. He first cites Hanbalis—one of the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*)—and their understanding of reading (*qara’a*, “to read, to recite”) the Qur’an as an act of trust (*imān*, “faith”) toward a power infinitely greater than human beings and uniquely perfect. “Reciting it is [...] the recognition of ideals (mercy, compassion, wisdom, forgiveness, friendship, etc.) [...] In being recited, the Qur’an [...] [is] an affirmation of those ideals as

originating in God in the presence of God” and cultivating those sensibilities in the praying subject (65). The humbleness reflected in the bodily posture when reciting the Qur’an might be an example. The text, through the act of recitation, translates into a sensible body or bodily sensibilities.

Similarly, for Ghazālī, a highly regarded and debated Muslim philosopher from the eleventh century, there is no single principle for exercises such as fasting, worship, charity, and everyday behavior. And there is no prior self but only certain potentialities and tendencies one can continuously cultivate. Unlike the rational, a priori subject of liberalism, who follows principles of his reason, there is no prior self in Islam. Rather, Islamic selves are cultivated through engagement with tradition and multiple temporalities. Effectively, there is no ahistorical principle guiding the practices of Muslims, but they do refer to pasts, presents, and futures. Asad notes that for Ghazālī, “there is no essential self that can guide itself; there are only potentialities of the soul that can be realized through or against a living tradition” (75). This problematizes the secular notion of will or intention that originates with the authentic self because the prior self, as the cause of all actions, has no need for tradition. But Muslim selves are always in the making through or against the tradition. This is the gist of what Asad calls “discursive tradition.”

Asad visits Ibn Taymiyya, a medieval theologian, against universalizing definitions and concepts: “the plausibility of arguments itself depends crucially on the sensibilities, habits, and relationships that articulate individuals—and therefore on what makes sense to them in their lives—and not on a universalizing logic” (94–95). He concludes that language is not separable from “the message” conveyed in it and the message is not simply cognitive. “Don’t look for the meaning (of an enunciation) look to its use [...] not only to how the subject uses language but also to how language uses him or her” (96). This is what we learn from both

Ibn Taymiyya and Wittgenstein. Asad wants to argue that there is no “primary purpose” of language. “The primary purpose of Qur’anic language here is not simply to communicate but to model—with the help of relatives, friends, and teachers—a process in which communication is, of course, an element but an element that cannot be ‘abstracted’” (96). Returning to those “who point out that Christian scriptures have, almost uniquely, been translated into numerous languages for liturgical purposes” (as opposed to the untranslatability of Qur’an and its unadaptable nature), Asad suggests that “the scriptures become less and less relevant to how Christians actually live [...] it is almost impossible to say what kind of life people are actually living simply on the basis of their declared Christian beliefs” (96–97).

In the third chapter “Masks, Security, and the Language of Numbers,” Asad explores the ways in which the concept of a unique, self-governing agent generates uncertainties in reading the intentions of the real self in relation to its public presentation. He discusses how statistical, calculative reason deployed by the state has come to be regarded as an objective translation of social reality and rational instrument for resolving future problems as well as the obstacles inherited from the past. If “culture” is regarded as a space of meaningful signs (and if ritual is just taken to be a presentation to be deciphered) rather than inherited ways of learning how to do things, the life studied by the ethnographer comes to be regarded as a kind of text to be interpreted and translated. Here Asad sustains his earlier critique of the influential American cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz’s universal definition of culture and religion, who likens doing ethnography to reading a complicated manuscript (101). This is closely linked to the idea of “native’s point of view” foundational for anthropology: the anthropologist participates in the activities of a community until he can see from the native’s point of view so that he can later translate this “information” for a purpose foreign to it.

Asad suggests that the interpretation of signs is essential to the modern state and its calculative reason. This partly results from the liberal secular distinction between the public self, or presentation of the self, and the authentic, inner self. This distinction turns modern society into a society of insecurities because everyone wears a “mask” in their public presentation to govern impressions and actions of others. In this sense, we are obsessed with finding and reading signs—signs of treason, betrayal, deception, trickery, abuse, and so on. Interpreting signs into a coherent narrative is a way of reaching the inner self, the true being.

The defining feature of the modern state is that it provides security and protects citizens from external threats and threats inside the national territories. And, precisely for this reason, to sustain its existence, it needs threats, it looks for threats and enemies to the body of the population. This is where Asad’s analogy between the paranoid and the modern state is relevant. Just as there is no contingency for the paranoid because all signs for him make a coherent narrative, a plot against him, the modern state is also invested in the work of reading signs of treason and threat so that it can identify enemies, deviances, crimes, and violations, even before they emerge (118–121). That is why it often appeals to the techniques of profiling (a process of translation through computation) and actuarial techniques, translating contingency into degrees of probability so that uncertainties can be quantified and manipulated if not completely eliminated (124). Another important move here is that Asad, drawing upon Ian Hacking’s notion of “looping effect,” suggests that the state does not only classify the existing categories of threat, but also, and much more importantly, it produces them. That is, when one interprets signs of culture and ritual, one does not just interpret an observable practice but creates objects to be observed and interpreted. Again, Wittgensteinian lessons: not everything in life is waiting to be interpreted and there is no direct access to truth by way of interpreting signs.

As Asad indicates in the epilogue, the book’s aim is to problematize the thinking of the terms “religion” and “secular” too rigidly. Secular reason has failed to understand failure as an essential part of human life when it takes language/translation as the unfailing medium of transparency in the service of the human (155). He thinks, and this is the underlying argument throughout the book, that the failure to understand failure is a manifestation of anthropocentric arrogance (hubris). The failure of secular reason is its conviction that the world (and language) is entirely knowable and controllable. This “failure comes from the attempt to express the inexpressible, to explain the inexplicable, to do the impossible: poetry, as all good translators recognize, is the impossibility of capturing everything expressed in one language into the words of another” (157). Wittgenstein ended the *Tractatus*, the only work published in his lifetime, by suggesting that where one cannot speak, one must be silent. He was not able to speak for a while after writing this sentence, as he took a long break from philosophy following the publication of the work. Perhaps he reached the limits of what he could say but he placed those limits there. In a sense, he followed his own rules. But there is no private language, as he also suggests himself. Asad reminds us that language is a shared experience, a form of life; it is not a toolkit through which one can only produce a bunch of verifiable statements, a way of direct access to reality, and to know, to grasp, to control that reality. Our contemporary failure is a failure to understand this.

This is an immensely rich text, undoubtedly Asad’s tour de force. Hence my extensive summary that misses and risks a lot. And the book left me with two main questions. Are Asad’s “discursive traditions” spatial and temporal “outsiders” of modern Western Christianity? To what extent have Islam and other discursive traditions been Christianized/secularized? Put differently, to what extent is modern Islam *still* a discursive tradition? And, is Islam still working with or against multiple temporalities? These ques-

tions abstract and secularly translate Asad's claims. Abstracting, formalizing, and generalizing claims, most of the time ignoring their specific, metaphorical, figural uses, are fundamental tools of criticism in particular, and academic work in general. Once again, the question: is critique secular?—which leads me to my second question: What does Asad do when he translates these “discursive traditions” into an academic work in English, what kinds of elements are *lost in translation*? What are the failures of this *this-worldly* translation that the translation itself fails to recognize? Or, if he does not translate, what does he do, what is his relationship to especially Islam as a discursive tradition? Is he talking “from within”?

This text speaks to many disciplines and fields; Asad's home discipline, cultural anthr-

opology, is one of them. Religious studies is definitely another natural audience of the book, along with Islamic and Middle Eastern studies scholars. Those who are in the fields of language and literature, especially the ones with an interest in translation, will find the book useful, provocative, and perhaps frustrating. As a fairly accessible text, the book directly responds to multiple discussions that are at the intersection of these fields. Thus, it is another immensely rich contribution to these fields as well as critical theory by Asad on the question, critique, and theorization of the secular, translation, language, the modern state, and subjectivity and selfhood. The book is a very significant addition to theory and critique, which are perhaps mistakenly qualified as “post-secular,” which Talal Asad and his students, such as the late Saba Mahmood, pioneered.



RETRACTION NOTICE

19 November, 2024

The Book Review “*Indigenising Anthropology with Guattari and Deleuze* by Barbara Glowczewski” by James Perez has been retracted by E.L.A. Project, at the request of the editors of the journal, *Language, Literature, and Interdisciplinary Studies (LLIDS)*, <https://ellids.com/>).

Editorial Investigation

A reader brought certain factual discrepancies in the Book Review to the attention of the editorial team, following which an investigation was undertaken into the matter. The editorial team contacted the author of the Book Review with an Expression of Concern. The author acknowledged the oversights in the work.

Retraction Decision

Based on the results of the investigation and COPE guidelines, the editors decided to retract the publication of the Book Review. The author accepted the decision to retract. The article has been retracted by the publisher, *E.L.A. Project*.

We sincerely apologize to the readers.

Author Statement

I, James Perez, agree to the retraction of the book review on Barbara Glowczewski's *Indigenising Anthropology with Guattari and Deleuze* from *LLIDS* journal.

Citation:

Perez, James. [RETRACTED] Review of *Indigenising Anthropology with Guattari and Deleuze* by Barbara Glowczewski. *Language, Literature, and Interdisciplinary Studies*, vol. 6, no. 1, 20 March 2024, pp. 3.7–3.11, <https://ellids.com/archives/2024/03/6.1-Perez.pdf>.

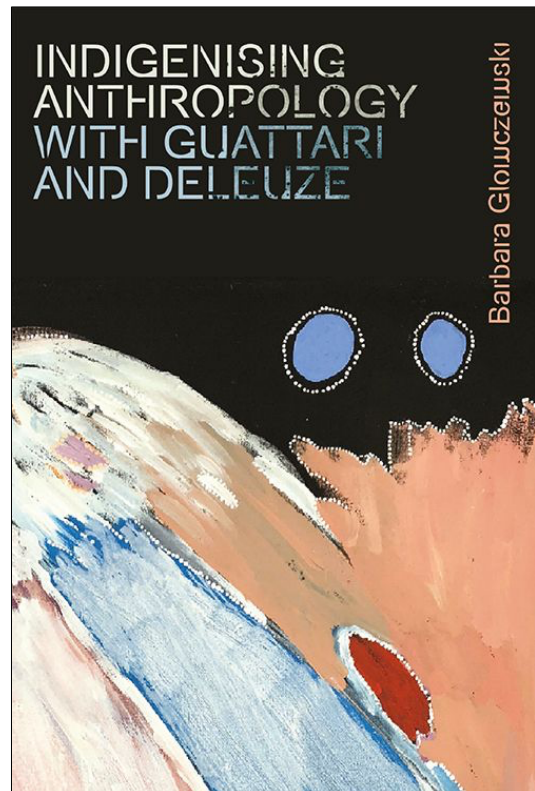
[RETRACTED] *Indigenising Anthropology with Guattari and Deleuze* by Barbara Glowczewski

Reviewed by James Perez | Colorado Mesa University

<https://ellids.com/archives/2024/03/6.1-Perez.pdf>

INDIGENISING ANTHROPOLOGY WITH GUATTARI AND DELEUZE. by Barbara Glowczewski. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021; pp. 446, \$125.00, ISBN: 9781474450300.

Anthropologist Barbara Glowczewski has been conducting fieldwork with indigenous people around the world, focusing largely on the Warlpiri of Australia, since the late 1970s. *Indigenising Anthropology with Guattari and Deleuze* is a collection of essays written by Glowczewski that spans over four decades. The French scholars Pierre-Felix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze are included in the title as Glowczewski was enrolled in seminars with the two men while conducting her early work at the University of Paris. Hence, the ideologies of these two French academics assist in informing the direction of the research. The fourteen essays by Glowczewski are organized into five different sections and follow a chronological trajectory beginning from the early 1980s to the late 2010s. This structure provides snapshots regarding different eras of anthropological research (how fieldwork was conducted and the different theoretical lenses through which people were viewed) and also speaks to how the Warlpiri have changed over time. The text, in its entirety, is currently relevant as grounded theory and postcolonialism are becoming more and more prevalent within



many fields of academia. Ethnographic research is focusing more on creating theories from the data collected (rather than applying theories to data), allowing narratives to speak for themselves, and providing a way for once silent and minority voices to be heard in the traditional Western world. Hence, the assortment of essays by Glowczewski serves as a starting point to discuss where academic research has been, where it currently is, and

gestures towards the possibilities of future work.

Part I of the anthology is titled “The Indigenous Australian Experience of the Rhizome” and consists of two chapters from the 1980s that introduce the concept of *Dreaming* among the Warlpiri. The term *Rhizome* was coined by Guattari and Deleuze and refers to a non-hierarchical way of conceptualizing the world in which all things can be connected. *Rhizome* is particularly apropos when discussing *Dreaming*, since, for the Warlpiri, it encompasses the past, present, and future while connecting people, animals, and non-human elements. While Glowczewski notes that *Dreaming* is a fundamental component to the Warlpiri, she is also cognizant of the difficulty in translating such a term that has no direct translation in Western languages, as the term itself is seen as transcending language. For the purposes of this research, *Dreaming* has been defined as movement, or wandering, in both a physical (territory) and spiritual sense (myth). Glowczewski argues that within traditional Western thought, the history of science and the concept of presenting physical evidence is privileged. However, using Guattari and Deleuze, she argues for a system in which an entity traditionally viewed as abstract (dreams) does not simply function as a metaphor, but links to daily realities. Glowczewski states:

Many Indigenous Australians define the space-time of their Dreamings – Yam Dreaming, Kangaroo Dreaming or Rain Dreaming – as their Law, where the life of human beings is intimately linked with all forms of living beings be they animals, plants, the rain or the stars, but also with a multitude of sites that they are connected to and consider to be sacred. (14)

The ritualistic activity of harvesting yams, for instance, is not simply seen as labor. Such an act, Glowczewski argues, re-actualizes memories regarding the importance of continuing the multiplication of the species. *Dreamings* of sites function to create identity

among the Warlpiri; women have *Dreamings* of such things as food gathering, while men have *Dreamings* of such things as hunting. The women harvest the yams and recognize the interdependence with men with whom they trade food for kangaroo skin. It is important that no transgressions occur within these *Dreamings* as they clearly mark territories. That is to say, men cannot have *Dreamings* of harvesting yams and women cannot have *Dreamings* of hunting. Transgressions are thought to unleash sickness on the individual who crosses boundaries.

Part II is titled “Totem, Taboo, and the Women’s Law” and consists of three chapters from the 1980s. This section discusses the ritualistic differences between men and women among the Warlpiri and how the socialization of the youth functions. The ways in which kinship connects individuals and territories are also addressed. Similarly, the importance of taboos is addressed as restrictions at play are dependent upon variables—gender, clothing, territory, etc. Glowczewski adopts the non-hierarchical classification system of a *hypercube*, proposed by Levi-Strauss, to analyze relationships among the Warlpiri. The author states:

My inspiration came above all from science fiction that speculated about the fourth dimension. My true judges were the Warlpiri: when I showed them the hypercube as a tool to account for the kinship logic of their Dreamings, the elders, custodians of the culture thought it was a ‘good game’! (125)

The hypercube, a four-dimensional object, serves as an abstract structure for modeling kinship. Vertices exist in the cube that connect to one another. Similarly, the author notes aspects of the Warlpiri, such as language, socialization, mourning, and sexuality, all connect to one another in a way that is impossible to represent with traditional Western categories. The hypercube works to evenly distribute eight sides, or perspectives of the Warlpiri in this case, in which no one side is privileged over the other. The hyper-

cube contains various points representing individuals within Warlpiri cosmology and social organization; there exist categories that divide women (matricycles) and men (patri-cycles). Lines are drawn between matricycles and patricycles that ultimately lead to marriages. The complex use of vertices in the hypercube are intended to account uniquely for every individual within the tribe and clearly display their identity.

Part III is titled “The Aboriginal Practice of Transversality and Dissensus” and consists of three chapters from the 1980s and 1990s highlighting the various groups of indigenous people (Aboriginal people refer specifically to Australia) in the region of Australia that are culturally connected by *Dreaming*. Hence, *Dreaming* can be something that transmits information across languages and cultures to many of the indigenous groups in Australia. *Dreaming* can identify individuals by such things as their name, their location, and their family. However, definitions are fluid and can change. This section also discusses the tension between presenting the meaning of artifacts and *Dreaming* to traditional Western museums versus indigenous people. The author mentions that indigenous groups identify themselves with a myriad of aspects such as language, ceremonies, a physical location, and hunting. Most tribes do not identify themselves with the “Western sense of the term ‘culture’ as a cumulative and creative process” (272).

There have been, and continue to be, complexities involved when explaining *Dreaming* to an audience outside of Aboriginal culture. Aboriginal people often feel as if they are misunderstood within such forums and, moreover, are not allowed the means of distribution and control in these situations. Glowczewski mentions the West has shifted from identifying peoples based on corporeal elements, such as skin color or biology, as it is now considered reductionist and racist; hence, the ‘politically correct’ distinction of people is done via culture or location (227). The author mentions Aboriginal people have hundreds of names to

identify themselves given various situations. For instance, an individual identifies themselves differently when they are suffering from an illness; moreover, the sick individual will also identify how they connect to others differently than if they were healthy. Hence, identity becomes an elusive entity in the context of traditional Western ideology. Glowczewski states: “In the present case, they say that the identity of each person is founded on an exterior agency which internally links the person to ancestors, animals, plants and so forth, and to places” (229). The identity of an individual changes within this complex and living system. Guattari and Deleuze are used to discuss how the West often views the world through the lens of emerging technology, such as computers, in which everything on the Web is connected. This creates a global village in which individuals from all over the world can interact with others virtually. However, she argues such reticular, or network, thinking is an ancient practice given the nature of identification practices used among indigenous people for centuries. That is to say, Aboriginal people “project their knowledge on a geographical network, both physical and imaginary” (282). The physical body and spirit are inseparable, so it creates a connection between space and time for these individuals that echoes the Internet.

Part IV is titled “Micropolitics of Hope and De-Essentialisation” which consists of three chapters from the early 2000s into the early 2010s and focuses on structural racism in various locations: Australia, Brazil, Bolivia, France, and the United States of America. All these locations have indigenous people and share issues with promoting multiculturalism, stigmatizing certain groups, and addressing how to realize the interconnectivity of the human experience across all cultures. The author discusses how a seemingly innocuous act, such as offering money to an indigenous people to assist with daily life, can function to replace traditional modes of exchanging goods, thus, destroying native cultures and having them become dependent on Western modernity. Glowcze-

wski argues for a dynamic system that honors differences between cultures and seeks to build upon commonalities everyone shares:

It seems vital that an ecosophic ontology reinvents itself from day to day, to support Indigenous peoples in their ontological becomings that they continuously redefine in synch with new transnational and transdisciplinary alliances that resist and confront other international economic and financial alliances that destroy the planet and all that lives – and stands – on and with it. (356)

The author mentions identity politics are often categorized in one of the two extremes: cultural relativism, as proposed by Levi-Strauss, or universalism. What is proposed is a middle ground which has an anchor point in morality, but also respects differences.

Finally, work from the mid 2010s is presented in Part V titled “Dancing with the Spirits of the Land.” These last two chapters address the limitations of capturing and presenting indigenous people through film and writing as there are a series of paradoxical components at play within rituals: life and death, body and spirit, masculine and feminine, and human and non-human. A film produced by the author, entitled *Cosmocolours*, is discussed which highlights various rituals of the Aboriginal people. In addition, a conversation between Glowczewski and an indigenous healer is transcribed and included in the final section to highlight the connectedness of spirituality within rituals. The author states: “In a way this conversation with a spirit resonates with what was at the heart of Deleuze’s and Guattari’s call for heterogeneous becomings” (60). Differences and complexities that present themselves in various ways can be observed in the performances and language of the Warlpiri. Glowczewski argues that multiple ways of becoming—which can involve spiritual or physical transformations—exist for indigenous people. For instance, the healer, when conversing with the author, shifts perspectives when present-

ing multiple identities that belong to her and others, which she can see all at once, such as a spirit that lives in the wind, a physical Indian man who hunts, and a stem that is planted. While these three items appear disparate, they are all connected to one another, and the healer serves as a conduit for making these connections; these identities do not belong to one person, but are all intertwined. It is these kinds of multiplicities co-existing that present heterogeneous becomings, or multiple ways of transforming and existing. Glowczewski notes the difficulty in transcribing such a conversation given her traditional perceptions of spirituality based on Christian thought; the author mentions that her own understanding of God relies on the fixed nature of God that never changes. However, it is precisely the flux of spirituality for the indigenous people that exemplifies something which escapes representation (60). It is argued that a shift should occur in Western perceptions, so that identity is not simply a negation of something (x is not y). Acceptance of such ideologies may help to preserve indigenous cultures among the current state of globalization.

The overall aim of this compilation is to historicize the shift of how indigenous cultures have been viewed by Western modernity over the past few decades up until recently; in addition, the intent is to illustrate how Warlpiri society has shifted within itself, in connection to other indigenous people, and in relation to the West. As previously mentioned, Aboriginal people are not isolated from others, which creates a multitude of cross-cultural informational transmissions which in turn create complex relationships. By providing insight into the cultures of indigenous people, the hope is to illuminate a pathway to social justice in which these voices may be heard in a traditional Western forum, particularly when political issues, such as voting or land rights, are involved. Glowczewski achieves this aim in her text by allowing the views of the Warlpiri to be articulated as the center of her work. The perspectives, and transcribed words, of the Warlpiri are the narratives found throughout

this collection of essays; the Warlpiri are not analyzed or spoken about in the book, rather they are the orators and curators of the information presented. The issues of indigenous representation, or lack thereof, in Western media is discussed to provide a glimpse into how multiculturalism can coexist in the modern world without suffering the pitfalls of victimizing or objectifying indigenous people. Glowczewski, in conversation with Guattari, suggests a form of creative resistance against modernity which grants indigenous people the means of control and production in terms of how they are represented in mass media: art, film, etc.

The author is self-aware of the limitations of attempting to present Aboriginal (or minority) ideologies unfamiliar to traditional Western thought, since she is a product of Western culture herself. Transcribed conversations with Guattari and Deleuze assist not only with understanding the effect of capturing and publishing such ideologies, but also provide insight to how research may be conducted concerning indigenous identities. For instance, Glowczewski began her work with the Warlpiri by capturing their rituals through experimental film techniques (such as a myriad of close-up shots and angles) that were popular during the 1970s. However, the

Warlpiri mentioned that such representations did not capture their songs or dances properly. Hence, Glowczewski relinquished control of the fieldwork and asked the Warlpiri how to best present their culture to a general audience.

As a result of Glowczewski's extensive amount of fieldwork concerning Warlpiri culture, this collection serves as a hallmark for delving into conversations regarding Aboriginal representation in mass media and ethnographic research. While the author focuses on addressing the lack of Aboriginal voices in Australia, this human experience of being refused acknowledgement within a society extends beyond Australia. Indeed, the author briefly explores how such fieldwork with the Warlpiri can assist with promoting voices all over the world from the indigenous people of Brazil to the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States of America. The book does not contain a great number of in-text citations as many academic works might. Hence, its conversational tone can effectively reach a large audience who may be unfamiliar with either the Aboriginal people or anthropological research methods, or both, and may have a greater impact on the current political climate in Australia and beyond.



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