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E-Journal
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Languages and Functions of the Heroic

Staging Admiration in John Dryden's *Indian Emperour*

Negotiations of admirability in
English Restoration dramas

Between Triumph and Myth

Gay Heroes and Navigating the
schwule Erfolgsgeschichte

Humouring the Hero

The Uses of Melancholy
among Military Nobles in
Late Elizabethan England

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Barbara Korte and Birgit Studt

Introduction: Languages and Functions of the Heroic

This special issue assembles articles derived from one of the annual symposia for doctoral students and academic staff held by Queen Mary, University of London and the Humanities Graduate School of the University of Freiburg. The symposium held in April 2013 was dedicated to “Languages and Functions of the Heroic” and so brought together the special research interest of the Freiburg collaborative research centre on heroes, heroisation and heroism with current work from our London colleagues in history and literary and cultural studies.

The modern and postmodern world has been described as a “disenchanted” one, and in this context the heroic has been declared outdated and even obsolete. There is also evidence, however, that heroic templates have never been completely devaluated as a means of cultural imagination, orientation and identification. While provoking mockery and resentment, the heroic evidently caters to basic desires and needs of individuals as well as communities. Indeed, the heroic appears to be experiencing a conspicuous renaissance in the post-9/11 world, while not being restricted to the military or other openly heroic communities such as firefighters. Discourses of the heroic permeate an impressively wide array of situations and emotional regimes that require cultural negotiation. Heroic figures and figurations of heroic action also have a remarkable longevity, being continually transformed and (re-)invented within and across cultural borders.

The 2013 Queen Mary-Freiburg symposium therefore focused on various “languages” (textual, visual, performative) in which the heroic has manifested itself in Europe from the Middle Ages to the present. Apart from the discursive potential of the heroic, its affective quality and emotional impact were of special interest. The articles in this issue cover a wide thematic ground and raise essential questions pertaining

to the heroic, its functions and its various modes of representation: How and why have images of the heroic changed over time, and where can we locate continuities and ruptures? How does the heroic function in different societal fields, and how does it intersect with gender and social status? What appeal does the heroic have for the arts and popular culture? The articles collected here take different approaches to these wider issues.

Following **Ronald Asch**’s critical survey of key research questions and the agenda of the Freiburg centre, **David Harrap**’s article addresses a special case of the relationship between heroes and saints: that between Saint Ninian and the late-medieval English monarch who, in Shakespeare’s play about him, declares himself to be determined to prove a villain. Harrap shows that the historical Richard III was pious and cites the collect of Saint Ninian in Richard’s Book of Hours as evidence that Saint Ninian, a famous deliverer, provided Richard with spiritual comfort. **Andreas Schlüter** explores changing modes in the heroisation of (English) noblemen and reveals an unexpected connection between military heroism and melancholy that became fashionable among English nobles around 1580: As Elizabethan and early Stuart noblemen found their autonomous political space endangered by the growth of the monarchical state, they extended their patterns for heroisation from the physical immediacy of aggressive action to the refined heroics of ascetic endurance for the sake of spiritual values. **Jakob Willis** discusses Pierre Corneille’s drama *Nicomède* (1651) in terms of the emotional regimes of heroic communities, claiming that literature both illustrates and produces emotional regimes. The protagonist of Corneille’s play, inspired by the Prince of Condé, a historical hero of the Fronde rebellion, stands at the centre of a heterogeneous heroic community and is admired by the people, adored by a woman, feared

by his enemies and envied by an ageing king. In this way, the play contains the full range of the emotions of the heroic. **Christiane Hansen's** contribution is dedicated to the same period and asks how admiration is staged in an example of English "heroic" drama by the Restoration playwright John Dryden. As outlined in Dryden's preface to *The Indian Emperour* (1667), the effect of heroic drama on its audience depends on its success in exciting emotions and raising admiration for the hero or heroine. The *Indian Emperour* does not only put on stage an "admirable" figure but explores the complex dynamics of admiration which organises the entire plot and interrelation of the play's characters. In particular, Dryden draws attention to the instability of admiration and its intrinsic proximity to dread, rejection and even disgust.

The second group of articles engages with forms of heroic discourse in contemporary culture. **Craig Griffiths** investigates gay heroes and a "schwule Erfolgsgeschichte" (gay success story) in Western societies such as Germany: Ever since its gradual emergence, gay and lesbian historical scholarship has been driven by a desire to reclaim the "hidden" history of homosexuality, to give a voice to those denied one, to celebrate same-sex attraction and identity, and to challenge the overwhelming heteronormativity of popular and academic history. Griffiths argues, however, that the heroising constructions that have subsequently developed in this regard elide as much as they reveal, and that we need to counter the teleological drive implicit in the success story as well as be alert to attempts by hegemonic forces to appropriate this history for their own ends. **Kathrin Göb** discusses the contemporary image of the war correspondent and how the traditionally heroic (self-)image of this kind of journalist has been deconstructed in the wake of the war in Iraq. Göb focuses on *War Reporting for Cowards* (2005), the memoirs of the young British reporter Chris Ayres, and shows how the author employs literary devices such as parody and irony in order to deconstruct heroic depictions of the war reporter. In the final article, **Barbara Korte** discusses an instance of popular entertainment culture, pointing out that *Skyfall*, the latest James Bond film to date, has a pronounced meta-heroic discourse. The film does not turn a blind eye to the more debatable sides of hyper-masculine action heroism but at the same time re-constructs Bond as a patriotic hero for contemporary Britain.

Ronald G. Asch

The Hero in the Early Modern Period and Beyond: An Elusive Cultural Construct and an Indispensable Focus of Social Identity?

I

This introductory essay outlines some of the objectives of our collaborative research centre and the intellectual problems we are trying to address.¹ In doing so, my point of view is that of a historian, not a sociologist or a literary scholar, and my perspective is very much that of an early modernist. So my remarks, which are somewhat impressionistic, will elucidate certain aspects of our project while others may receive less attention. However, as this journal has been designed to present work in progress as well as final results, this may be a legitimate course to follow.

What we focus on in our research centre is not the individual figure of the hero or the heroine. Entire libraries have been written about Hercules and Alexander or Joan of Arc and similar prominent figures. We are more interested in how societies or social groups within societies define and negotiate their norms, values and even their identities with reference to such figures. As Steffen Martus put it during a panel discussion we held when we started our project, heroes are figures that are important for society because they enable us to deal vicariously with norms which we accept somehow as valid but which we can never aspire to live up to in real life. Heroes in this somewhat oblique and potentially controversial sense often serve as symbols for what gives coherence to a social group.² Like other symbols, however, they remain ambiguous in their meaning: the meaning of a life and a deed – whether fictional or historical is at first glance of secondary importance – cannot be spelt out in so many words. The hero belongs to the imaginaire of a society and not to the world of arguments and systematic thought; that is both his strength and a weakness.³ The German philosopher of religion Klaus Heinrich already pointed this out in the 1970s in his great series of lectures on Hercules and his labours as a mythological subject.

Heinrich sees the hero as a semi-divine figure that can bear and sustain conflicts which would tear apart a normal human being. The hero is not constituted by rational thought or theological discourse,⁴ but through the story of his (or her) life and death. It is a web of various and sometimes contradictory narratives – attached to the myth or story of the fictional or historical hero – that gives meaning to this figure. The hero is in this sense a mediator, a figure that mediates, as in the case of Hercules, between untamed nature and civilisation, but also between conflicting values or between gods and men. He gives an example of how to live with conflicts which, at a rational level, cannot be resolved (Heinrich 8, 208–211, 218, 285–256, 307).⁵

There may be cultures and periods of history that can do without the hero, like the mostly resolutely post-heroic societies of post-war Western Europe. In a country like Germany, the very idea that it might be possible to sacrifice one's life for an idea is in itself seen by most people as verging on fanaticism these days (Münkler 742–752; see also Klonovsky). Germany offers an extreme example of a tendency visible in other European countries today as well, but in a broader historical perspective such societies are probably the exception rather than the rule. Nevertheless, one may perhaps say that the hero becomes a distant and even obsolete figure when impersonal social institutions are sufficiently strong and powerful to give stability to society, to integrate conflicting interests and to defuse tensions, and when these societies do not actively have to defend themselves against serious external threats. However, when the rules a community lives by are less clear or do not find their expression in stable political and legal institutions, the hero can again become an important focus for the aspirations and loyalties of an entire society or at least distinct groups within such a society.⁶

II

One question which confronts our project is, of course, how to define the hero. The problem here is that each culture has its own notions in regard to what constitutes a heroic life or deed. What is clear is that in the past most Western societies have found it difficult to do entirely without heroic figures to define particular virtues or aspirations, in particular in moments of crisis. Despite the great diversity of such figures, in the Western tradition the examples taken from ancient mythology and history but also from the Bible have exerted for a very long time such a strong influence that we can, for the purpose of creating a working definition, assume that all heroes – at least within the European cultural tradition – have some sort of “family resemblance”. This is an expression which Wittgenstein employed in order to explain that certain objects could all be considered as members of a class of entities despite the fact that one cannot find a single feature which all objects invariably have in common (Wittgenstein 56–58; see also Bangu 53–73). Thus, one can identify a number of elements which constitute the hero or heroine, but they need not be manifest all at the same time and in each of a variety of different cultures; the emphasis on any one of these elements can vary considerably.

If one looks at older, historical attempts to define the hero and his place in ethics, one is admittedly already confronted by a certain ambiguity in most definitions. Thus, a run-of-the-mill seventeenth-century German dissertation comes to the conclusion: “Heros est persona divinitus excitata, et donis singularibus commune hominum sortem excedentibus donata, actiones edens mirabiles, caeterisque hominibus inimitabiles, cumque successu longe felicissimo conjunctas” – “The hero is a person called forth by God and one who possesses extraordinary gifts exceeding the common condition of men. He accomplishes miraculous deeds that other mortals cannot imitate, deeds which produce the most triumphant success” (Matthiae and Pfankuch 210, my translation). According to the author of this thesis, no hero is conceivable without some kind of divine inspiration. The “*afflatus divinus*” is indispensable for real heroic virtue. At the same time, heroes are not to be judged by the same rules as other human beings; their actions often infringe on rules which other mortals need to respect and obey (Matthiae/Pfankuch 210–221; see also Schottelius 585–595, Disselkamp 24–47 and, for the Catholic tradition, Hofmann). Thus, heroic greatness has an element

of transgression; it transcends everyday moral rules. If heroes are difficult to envisage without this potential for transgression, this is also due to the fact that great passions are the material heroes are made of; that, at least, was the received wisdom among early-modern writers and poets, but it is a position which is prevalent in other ages as well. Even those who tried to design the model of a specifically Christian hero, such as the seventeenth-century French Jesuit Pierre Le Moyne, pointed out that without strong passions, and, notably, an excess of love and rage, the heroes which a writer depicts and celebrates would remain “*des heros insensibles, des braves stoïques*” and in one word, “*des souches revetuës de fer*” – “wooden stumps covered with iron”. To Le Moyne, virtue should control the passions, but these passions should still remain visible (sign. O vi verso, see also O ii verso). Such notions of heroic virtue ultimately went back to Aristotle. They could be employed as important elements in a discourse of heroism which freed both the heroic monarch and the aristocrat from the restraints which the prevailing moral code forced other human beings to respect. They thus established a hierarchy between the mediocre virtues fit for ordinary people and the heroic, magnanimous ones fit only for the exalted few (Scodel 168–169).

It remained somewhat unclear, however, whether mere stoic fortitude in resisting the vicissitudes of fate or in suffering physical or mental torments or, even more questionably, the contemplative virtue of the sage were enough to constitute a claim to heroism, or whether some visible spectacular action was required to give substance to such a claim.⁷ Thus, even in the early-modern period, an age where one would expect to find a much more homogeneous system of values than in contemporary pluralistic societies, there were conflicting models of the hero and of heroism as a pattern of behaviour competing against each other. Nevertheless, as long as we find some sort of continuity between the – admittedly multi-layered – ideas which antiquity had associated with the character of the hero and later models and concepts (that is, in Western societies, probably at least until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries), certain *topoi* and commonplaces emerge in the various discourses delineating the semantic field of the heroic and of human heroism which we can take as the foundation for a working definition of the heroic – always bearing in mind the frequently changing semantics of the idea of the hero and the ever present internal tensions of the concept.⁸

The hero or heroine is seen as a super-human figure; he or she performs works or deeds which no normal mortal can ordinarily perform. However, superiority over others, strength of character, physical perfection, fortitude and magnanimity as such are never sufficient. There must be some sort of conflict or battle, be it in the literal sense or in a more metaphorical sense as in the psychological or spiritual conflict between reason or faith on the one hand and the passions and human frailties on the other, in which these virtues and perfections can be demonstrated in action.⁹ In fact, in one way or another the most common type of hero is a man of action or – more rarely before the twentieth century – a woman of action, even when intellectual or moral achievements can be constructed as actions as well, as for example the intellectual integrity and the strength of character required in a battle for knowledge and wisdom against the powers of darkness and superstition (Steadman 60–108, in particular 64–74).¹⁰

The hero may be a lonely outsider, perhaps in revolt against society even, but no hero is imaginable without some sort of following, without a community which venerates or acknowledges him or her at least posthumously. The story of his or her life needs to be told and retold; otherwise there are no heroes, and who should tell the story if not some kind of community? If this is true, however, the media which are being employed to tell the story are equally important, and they have their own logic. A picture which shows Alexander in battle against the Persians produces a different kind of hero than an opera or a poem or, a further alternative, a story told by a historian.¹¹ Finally, although heroic figures may embody the values of a society, they also, as has already been pointed out, tend to transgress moral boundaries. A hero who just possesses the same virtues as other human beings, only to a greater degree, would not only be somehow too normal to be recognised as an exceptional figure. He would also not be exciting enough and would fail to fascinate a potential audience. There must at least be some temptation or inner struggle to transform the would-be hero into a personality that captures our imagination; this is another element which adds to the ambiguity of the hero as a figure.¹²

III

Heroes are in one sense or another constituted and constructed by the societies or social groups that look up to them for inspiration or at least acknowledge them as exceptional figures. For the modern scholar it would hardly make sense to ask whether a person or historical figure really is or was a hero outside the cultural or political context, the “social configuration” (von den Hoff et al., 9) that allows him or her to be extolled and accepted as such. One man’s hero is often another man’s villain or terrorist, and even popular heroic figures are easily forgotten once the cause they have fought for has lost its supporters. However, as far as historical figures, for example war heroes or political leaders, are concerned, it of course remains a question of considerable interest why certain constructions are successful and persuasive at the time and others not. As a historian one is interested in the resources which the construction of historical figures (fictional characters may be a different matter) as heroes or heroines has to rely on, and not just in the rhetoric, the language and discursive patterns of such constructions, important as these aspects may be. Such resources cannot be produced out of nothing; they have to be available in some way, have to be provided by a combination of events or the successful self-fashioning of an individual, even perhaps his or her distinct charisma. One should not forget that at least in aristocratic societies those powerful enough have through the ages tried to create and project an image of themselves if not as heroes then at least as men – or, more rarely, women – who were capable of imitating the deeds of heroes. This image, which was to give them a special claim to honour (and the idea of honour is central to most kinds of heroic self-fashioning) and status, was part of a wider quest for a cultural hegemony that these elites pursued. This holds true for the aristocracy of Greek city states as much as for the nobilities of early-modern Europe.

However, constructions and self-representations can be plausible or they can be implausible. There are more than enough examples of strategies of glorification or self-glorification that failed to convince those who were supposed to be their audience. Moreover, in following the tendency to see all historical phenomena as mere constructions, as something which is created and engendered by mere discourse and cannot be analysed or even be conceived beyond this discourse, a certain caution may be helpful. Such an approach, if taken to its extremes, can

be rooted in an urge to debunk all kinds of history which in the past managed to give substance to political or cultural identities, and such an urge is the manifestation of an ideology just like any other ideology. Or, as the great intellectual historian John Pocock once put it: “There are forces in our world that do not wish us to say ‘we’ or act on that basis – since to do so might impede their selling us a new ‘identity’ tomorrow – and since saying ‘we’ and saying ‘I’ are intimately linked, they discourage the Self from believing it can manage its own history, just as they discourage the society from believing it can manage its own history” (Pocock, “Conclusion” 310).¹³

Such an approach might be seen as inherently hostile to the idea that a heroic vision of life could ever have had any deeper legitimacy or foundation outside the realm of discourse, under any circumstances whatsoever. The rejection of such a vision of life is perhaps reinforced today by the tendency to give priority to the victims and their fate and not to the agency of figures who could plausibly be seen as heroes fighting for a common cause; and of course somebody who would argue today that the fate and predicament of the victims of history is equally a mere cultural construct would immediately tread on very dangerous ground indeed, in particular – and rightly so – if such an approach were applied to phenomena such as the early-modern Atlantic slave trade or ethnic cleansing and extermination in the twentieth century.¹⁴ However, perhaps for the very reason that, in the past, heroic narratives or images of one kind or another played such a crucial role in constituting the “we” one wants to dissolve, they are today rejected or at least seen as part of an exotic, alien past, a mental world of signs which no longer have any real meaning for us. Moreover, the figure of the hero is possibly the strongest expression of the sovereign Self, the autonomous individual. And this idea of the sovereign Self as such may be seen by many contemporaries as a dangerous obstacle to the construction of new, post-modern, sufficiently malleable identities.¹⁵

The historian is undoubtedly in deep water when he is confronted by the implications his research may have for present-day societies, and even more so when he takes sides in debates which may have a political impact. Nevertheless, if one is inclined to resist the idea that there is no reality outside discourse for the very reason that this idea is itself the expression of a distinct ideology (and the present author is inclined to do so), one will be likely to say that, in the same way in which it may be helpful to have some kind of a nation-

al past already if you want to construct one, it may be helpful if you have a figure at hand which already possesses some sort of charisma and some particular aura based on great victories or achievements if you want to create a hero.

This is not to deny the fact that achievements which in one culture are perfectly serviceable as material for a heroic narrative may be seen as far too flimsy in another culture and under changed circumstances. Nevertheless, to give just one example, Elizabeth I of England was promoted in the later sixteenth century as a heroic figure despite the fact that her generals and admirals lost so many battles both in Ireland and in their fight against Spain abroad or committed unforgivable blunders which led to an enormous waste of lives and military resources. People bought into this hero worship because it was, in different ways, in their interest to do so (Montrose 113).¹⁶ Elizabeth’s ability to gain the loyal support of both moderate and, for a time, radical Protestants and even some “church Papists” as well as her later victory against the Spanish Armada in 1588, however, were indispensable preconditions for the renown she enjoyed in her own time and in later ages as a heroic monarch. And this victory was real enough although it was perhaps brought about more by bad weather than by courage and military superiority and although it did by no means end the threat of a Spanish invasion as people have sometimes assumed. Had the English been defeated in 1588, Elizabeth could at best have become a heroic victim and martyr like Mary Queen of Scots but not a David-like figure as she did become in the end for so many of her subjects and for militant Protestants in later ages.¹⁷

IV

I have already mentioned the fact that there are cycles of hero worship and of the rejection of the heroic, a sort of continuous boom and bust of heroic values and patterns of behaviour. The military hero in particular easily becomes a figure of controversy in times which see their ideal not in conquest and military glory but in peace and prosperity. Thus, the eighteenth century is a period when in many countries the great men (benefactors more than warriors) and, much more rarely and controversially, some great women replace the hero in the pantheon of virtue (Bonnet; see also Bell 107–139). But criticism of the hero and his rejection as a moral paradigm cannot be reduced to a mere aversion to warfare – if only for the reason that even for aristocratic cultures the military hero is only one example of

the heroic in the broader sense. What is at stake in debates about the role of the hero is often the place of the exceptional, the life which cannot be subjected to the normal rules of society, in the moral universe as such. Is there a place in society for human beings who through their actions, their way of life or even their mere suffering fundamentally transcend the norms which are valid for everybody else and who embody some extraordinary zeal which is unattainable, perhaps unimaginable to most people? The idea of the hero is not easily compatible, for example, with an anthropological approach which sees human actions as motivated exclusively by fear and self-interest. Thus, in the seventeenth century both materialists such as Hobbes and radical Christian moralists such as the Jansenists found it difficult to see men and women as being capable of truly heroic feelings and actions, though the Jansenists may have made a – reluctant – exception for those inspired and guided immediately by God's grace (Zarka 41–44; Strauss 65–75; Bénichou 97–111; Chaline, "Port Royale" 163–175 and "De la gloire" 95–108).

Furthermore, institutions such as forms of government or religious communities like to appeal to heroes as founding figures in the past, but consider them and their personal charisma as dangerous in the present and therefore reject them. To give just one example: In France after the end of the Wars of Religion there was a marked reaction against any sort of heroic fight for religious objectives which could be seen as overzealous because it had been exactly such a zeal which had destabilised both the country and the monarchy before 1598. This led to a redefinition of the place both martyrs and mystics held in society, as Antoinette Gimaret has demonstrated recently in her book *Extraordinaire et ordinaire des croix*. Saintliness was now to be demonstrated by performing works of charity and by displaying all those virtues which even ordinary Christians were deemed to possess, only to a greater degree. In fact, saintliness now seemed more accessible for women than for men. The more masculine militant piety the warriors of the Catholic League had displayed was replaced by the internalised heroism of ascetic piety and charity of the nuns of Port Royal, one might say. The heroic self-sacrifice of the martyrs suffering physical torments was no longer seen as appropriate and was in fact suspected to be inherently subversive of the traditional established order (Gimaret 9–28, 120–128, 799–803).

One should not forget that the heroic figure always had considerable subversive potential. In comparison to a heroic leader, a hereditary monarch who had to rely on the charisma of his office could all too easily be seen as lacking in heroic virtue; more generally, it remained dangerous to praise the monarch him- or herself too much as a hero. "To celebrate the monarch as military hero would be to invite the possibility of celebrating a military hero as monarch", as James Garrison put it many years ago in his book on Dryden, the English Restoration poet (115).

In England, figures such as the 2nd Earl of Essex, who was executed in 1601, and much more starkly Oliver Cromwell in the 1640s and 50s, had demonstrated sufficiently the tensions which could emerge between a charismatic leader in the fight against the country's enemies and popery on the one hand and a monarch who could rely on a sacral aura bestowed on him by tradition and hereditary right but who lacked any credible heroic achievements on the other (Gajda; Hammer; Knoppers). Historians have often argued that early-modern monarchy owed its real success to its ability to emasculate aristocratic heroism and have interpreted the poems and plays of the seventeenth century in particular as a reflection on this death of the aristocratic hero, at least in France, where the names of Corneille and Racine spring to mind (Cornette, 9–42; Bannister, *Condé in Context*; Stegmann). In the seemingly absolute monarchies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there appears to have been no place any longer for the heroic warrior of noble descent who pursued the quest of honour and glory on the battlefield. In fact, it seems that with the advent of modern standing armies, made up as they were of soldiers systematically recruited among the rural and urban poor and commanded by officers to whom war had become a profession and was no longer primarily a *rite de passage* on the way to honour, the time for the flamboyant display of heroic courage was over; both chivalry and a particular mode of heroic warlike masculinity were now in terminal decline, or so we are told.¹⁸

However, as Hervé Dréville has pointed out, while noble military heroism was indeed transformed over the course of the seventeenth century, it became by no means obsolete. In one of his more recent books, Dréville has drawn our attention to the figure of d'Artagnan, one of the heroes of Alexandre Dumas's cloak-and-dagger narratives but also a real historical figure: Charles d'Artagnan de Batz-Castelmoré, a nobleman from Gascony. The real d'Artagnan

died during the siege of Maastricht in 1673; nothing could, it seems, be less heroic than siege warfare, where technical superiority and the prudent and cautious outmanoeuvring of the enemy counted for much more than the flamboyant display of individual courage. However, even in the trench warfare of the seventeenth century there was room for the sudden assault and charge, only that *la belle mort* of the knight *sans reproche* was now no longer sufficient in itself; such a death had to serve a military and political purpose, and it had to fit into larger calculations. But in the end, as Dré villon states: “C’est précisément dans la confrontation avec la raison technique que le culte de la témérité prend tout son sens” – “It is in the confrontation with the rational logic of military technology that the cult of audacity and courage finds its place”. D’Artagnan’s heroic death is, however, different from that of late medieval or Renaissance knights and warriors, because it gains its significance within a system of values dominated much more strongly by the desire to serve king and country – and to be seen fighting for such a cause – and not just to excel within an autonomous community of nobles: “Le sacrifice de d’Artagnan abandonnait ainsi le registre de la ‘belle mort’ où le fait d’armes s’insérait dans un système de valeur autoréférencé, où l’action héroïque se suffisait à elle-même” – “D’Artagnan’s sacrifice abandons the language and register of the beautiful death where the military action is part of a self-referential system of values and where the heroic deed is self-sufficient” (Dré villon, *Batailles* 164 and 167, my translations).

I am quoting Dré villon in detail here because we in our project in Freiburg are easily confronted with the argument that at least the classical hero, and the chivalrous warrior in particular, who provided an entire social group with its *raison d’être* for centuries, was already a figure of the past in the late seventeenth century, if not earlier. All later images of the heroic were, one might argue, just expressions of an idle nostalgia rooted in the wishful thinking of a strictly disciplined, increasingly middle-class society focussed on the rational pursuit of utilitarian and often merely economic ends – a society, in other words, which left little room for flamboyant individual actions of any kind.¹⁹ This society therefore projected its longing for the morally or aesthetically exceptional onto figures who through their courage and their sacrifices seemed to overcome the humdrum routines of modern life, be it the explorer, the national freedom fighter, the artistic genius battling against a hostile society or even, more lately, the iron female politician (herself

the perfect embodiment of middle-class values) vanquishing both the trade unions and South American dictators, at whose somewhat controversial funeral all the most militant and patriotic church hymns of the nineteenth century were being sung to evoke a model of Christian heroism in adversity.²⁰ The latter example shows, by the way, that in a country like Britain the model of the heroic political leader has not yet entirely disappeared, although such figures tend to be deeply divisive, more perhaps than ever before.

There is certainly some truth in an approach which emphasises the extent to which traditional models of heroism, such as that of the chivalric warrior, lost their moral authority and coherence from the seventeenth century onwards if not much earlier, but one should not underestimate the extent to which older languages of heroism and the heroic could be remodelled, reconstructed and revived in later ages. With regard to chivalry it has been stated that it was “a language, not a political position, and there is abundant evidence that it was a language that continued to be spoken by any number of early modern men and women well into the seventeenth century, that it continued to be a persuasive and plausible mode of self-presentation” (Davis 239). Even later, in the nineteenth century for example, chivalry could be revived as a code of heroic conduct to give substance to a new ideal of “muscular Christianity” or to the glorification of commanders and imperial proconsuls bearing “the white man’s burden” in distant colonies (McKenzie 109–139), for the very reason that “one of the most remarkable things about chivalry seems to be its capacity to sustain repeated – indeed innumerable – deaths and rebirths” (Davis 236).

Admittedly, from the eighteenth century onwards the models for a heroic mode of life have become much more diverse and pluralistic. No one model – such as that of the chivalric warrior revived by a romantic evocation of the medieval world – was generally accepted in the nineteenth century, and even less so in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. There are now heroes – or are they mere idols or stars? – for almost every occasion and every walk of life, both male and female, none of them uncontested. Moreover, at least in the post-heroic societies of Western Europe even those who acknowledge and venerate “heroes” often do not take them entirely at face value. Their “cult”, if such it can be called, is frequently rather part of the “rubber cage of disenchantment” (Gellner), a half-ironic re-enchantment of a world disenchanted by science and rational thought, which many people tend

to indulge in these days. The constructionism of sociological analysis or of cultural studies, mentioned earlier, is in some ways internalised by the very men and women who identify with modern-day heroes. It is implicitly accepted that they are only symbolic figures, mere social and cultural constructs, and that the story of their lives is, if not devoid of any real cognitive content, at least free of much significance for the real world of power and profit. They are worshipped all the same because their status as idols is seen as serving a social function or because of the emotional surplus value such worship has, some kind of feel-good factor, in the same way in which people consider religion these days often as a useful ingredient in a wellness treatment for their psyche without taking the doctrines of such a religion in any way for real.²¹

Nevertheless, even in this diluted, half-ironic and possibly self-conscious form, hero worship can provide models not just for actions and behaviour but also for the management of emotions, though perhaps not to the same extent as in the past. Let us assume with William Reddy that cultures and society all have their particular emotional regime, or perhaps more often than not several competing emotional regimes. Such regimes provide individuals with a language not just to express but to define and evoke emotional responses to particular events and challenges. Reddy uses the word *emotives* in this context. What he means is it that there are certain set formulae which we use not just to express but to explore our own emotions. Such formulae have a certain performative potential in that they can evoke what they are describing and give shape to an otherwise very diffuse bundle of emotional impulses (Reddy, *Navigation of Feelings* 63–111). However, according to Reddy, who is a cultural anthropologist, the world is more than mere discourse or text. There has to be some raw material, some resources which can be formed and shaped; otherwise the words which we utter remain just that and we notice that we are not able to evoke the emotions in ourselves which we perhaps try to demonstrate by using certain formulae or gestures (108–110; see also Reddy's "Against Constructionism", 327–351).

Where do heroes and heroines come in here? They can clearly provide us with a model for exploring and for defining our own feelings, but also for bringing them under control. This applies in particular to feelings such as fear and pain but also rage, pride and shame. The hero as a figure in works of art and literature but also as a figure in historical narratives is meant to show that cer-

tain emotions can be mastered and controlled, can in fact be transformed into moral sentiments which form a framework for our actions. Expressing emotions is to some extent the acting out of a role in a play, and our culture provides us with such roles complete with the pertinent *emotives* which we can act out in moments of particular emotional stress. Members of the French social elite may not necessarily have felt the same emotions that the heroes and heroines of Corneille's and Racine's tragedies displayed on stage, but their works provided them with a language they could use to explore and control their own feelings, and the chivalrous novels or the biographies of great soldiers such as the life of the Chevalier Bayard, which were still reprinted in the seventeenth century, may have had a similar effect (Drévilion, *Batailles* 138–140 and Rubel 83–108; see also Bannister, *Privileged Mortals*).

The space is not sufficient here to pursue this line any further, but I hope to have shown that at least as an object for research the hero or heroine is by no means an obsolete figure, even in a society so passionately post-heroic and anti-heroic as the modern German one (for Britain the description as post-heroic would perhaps be much less convincing). This holds even more true given the fact that such societies are these days confronted with the moral codes of other cultures which have never abandoned older, more aggressive models of masculinity and the ethos associated with the cult of martial heroes. It may well be the case that Islamic ideas of Holy War and heroic, possibly suicidal death in the battle against the infidels are in their present form much more deeply influenced by nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Western ideas and ideologies such as radical nihilism or unbridled ethnic and cultural nationalism than we care to admit (Gray), but they nevertheless pose a fundamental challenge to societies that in general leave very little space for the heroic individual in the real world as opposed to that of the media. Such challenges certainly demonstrate that heroes, even if they are mere cultural constructs from a certain scholarly perspective, remain very real and an important focus of collective identity to some people. But that is another subject, which may perhaps be addressed at a future workshop.

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1 This introduction is a modified and extended version of the short lecture I gave at our symposium. The original form of an improvised outline of our research agenda – instead of a more systematic approach – has been largely retained.

2 Martus, 80: “Der Held reflektiert die Möglichkeiten des ‚Menschlichen‘ und operiert in diesem Sinn grenzwertig. [...] Vielleicht dient dies der Verwaltung unlebbarer Normen und Werte, die gleichwohl lebensleitend sind.”

3 See also Lucien Braun’s comments on the figure of the hero: “Il n’est plus question ici d’image en tant que réalité représentative, mais du travail imaginaire lui-même, transformant le spectaculaire, lui conférant sa dimension symbolique. C’est pourquoi il n’y a pas à proprement parler de pensée héroïque mais plutôt un imaginaire héroïque, c’est-à-dire un dynamisme héroïco-politique, échappant à toute détermination, agissant selon des voies simples, mais inconscientes et jamais nommées” (Braun 26).

4 In Heinrich’s opinion, there is an important difference between the heroes of ancient mythology and the Christian Saviour. Here it is the word, the *logos*, the message of God’s revelation that is at the centre and which promises to resolve all conflicts. In the story of the pagan hero, by contrast, these conflicts remain alive but are held in suspense; they are made bearable through retelling the story of the hero’s deeds (Heinrich 319).

5 See in particular the following statement by Heinrich: “Daß Herakles widersprüchliche Funktionen, Positionen und Rollen zugemutet werden, und er dennoch diese eine *Figur* bleibt, zeigt, daß in ihm ein Konfliktzusammenhang, den er halten soll, vorgestellt wird [...]. Wenn die Beschäftigung mit der Figur des Heros einen Sinn haben soll, dann den, daß das in ihr konzentrierte, scheinbar zeitlich entfernte Konfliktpotential als noch immer virulent erkannt [...] werden kann” (208–209). Following Hegel, Heinrich notes further: “Für den Begriffsdiagnostiker Hegel – ich sage es kurz und knapp – war die figürliche Dialektik die große Methode der Vergegenwärtigung von Spannungen und Konflikten; und in der Tat repräsentieren Figuren der Dialektik Spannungsverhältnisse und Konfliktzustände bis auf den heutigen Tag” (209).

6 Thus already Hegel, 243–45; see also Giesen: “Although – as we have stressed – heroism itself is immortal, the places for heroes are fading away with the expansion of money, law and science. If rationalization drives the modern world, the sacred becomes, indeed, an impersonal order which is less embodied in persons than in principles that have no special place anymore but are everywhere” (42).

7 On this debate in seventeenth-century France see Fumaroli 323–348. For the model of the “heroic soul” as being compatible with the *vita contemplativa* see Steadman on “Bacon and the Scientist as Hero” (60–108, esp. 64–74). For the non-martial hero, Odysseus, the great sufferer, could serve as a model. If one followed this model, artists such as Michelangelo or scientists such as Bacon or Galileo could claim heroic greatness in the same way in which an aristocratic warrior could:

8 For what follows, see also the research agenda of SFB 948, as summarised in von den Hoff et al.

9 Yuval Harari argued in his 2008 study that from the mid-eighteenth century onwards, the torment – both physical and psychological – a soldier suffered in war could be constructed as part of a process whereby he discovered his “true self” and how this process was now seen as an almost indispensable part of true military heroism.

10 Lutheran authors in Germany often tried to show that the leader of the Protestant Reformation was himself a quintessential hero. Kaufmann points this out for publications of the early reformation, but see also later texts such as Bürger’s *De Virtute Heroica Lutheri...* (1683) and also Matthiae and Pfankuch (212).

11 Kirchner (333–94) discusses the impact which a crisis of traditional models of heroic greatness during the seventeenth century had on poetry and the visual arts, albeit in quite different ways.

12 For the debate on this tension in the seventeenth century see West (in particular 218) and also Owen, who comes to the following conclusion: “However much moral and political force the idea of absolute loyalty is felt to have, there is something unconvincing about the spectacle of ‘quiet’ heroes.” (200).

13 For Pocock’s own position see his “New British History”: “I am prepared to assert that there can be no sovereignty without a history. I see identity, history, sovereignty and politics as under attack, on a front probably global and certainly European, and I oppose the project of multipolitical history to the project of absorbing states and their histories into a global culture of commodification enforced by its attendant bureaucracies” (300).

14 See Apostolidès. His book, which identifies Christianity in a somewhat narrow perspective with the cult of the victim, may be overstating its case, but all the same it is an important contribution to the debate on the role of the heroic in present-day societies.

15 For the hero as a model for the autonomous self see Gehlen. See also Frevert on the rise and fall of heroism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Thiele discusses a specific variety of the cult of the heroic individual in Nietzsche’s philosophy. Nietzsche is also considered by Früchtl in “Science Pulp Fiction” and *Das Unverschämte Ich*.

16 Or, as Louis Montrose puts it: “I construe the cultural phenomenon of Elizabethan royal pageantry and iconography primarily as an ideological apparatus operated by those who constituted the political nation” (113).

17 On Elizabeth as heroine see Hackett; Doran and Freeman; Levin; and Stump, Shenk and Levin, among many other studies.

18 See Drévilion, *L’Impot du sang*, 338–339 and 324–327 on the changing models of military heroism to which the French nobility subscribed; see also Brioist, Drévilion and Serna 264–273 as well as Wrede.

19 A good example for this is, of course, Thomas Carlyle’s *On Heroes*; see also Calder.

20 St. Paul’s Cathedral London, The Order of Service for the Funeral of Baroness Thatcher.

21 On the post-modern predicament of separating the symbolic realm from the world of cognitive judgements (“decognitivation”) while validating cultural constructs – which are now recognised as such – because of their social functionality or psychological usefulness, see Gellner, in particular his remark on autofunctionalism: “Autofunctionalism consists, as the name implies, of a kind of turning in upon oneself of the functionalist insight. The functionalist looks at strange beliefs and institutions and notices, that, notwithstanding their surface oddity, or even absurdity, they are in their context highly functional, or even ideal. He concludes that [...] they should be accorded a kind of functional validity, a validity in virtue of function (rather than in virtue of overt message, which would not warrant it)” (160).

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A Saintly Rescuer for a Shakespearean Villain: The Hours of Richard III and Saint Ninian

I

Richard III (1452–1485) is one of England's archetypal anti-heroes, a mendacious and ambitious, fratricide and infanticide whose usurpation of the crown incurred just punishment. His reputation for wickedness had developed even before he died and became an enduring cultural legacy in Shakespeare's play (Hanham). Despite historical criticism of this characterisation, Richard's anti-heroic notoriety remains the context in which historians hoping to comment on Richard's personality often work. Among the fragments of information that allow the historian to approach the issue of Richard's psyche are a number of documents pertaining to Richard's devotion to Saint Ninian of Whithorn (Galloway) (4th–5th Century). Richard's interest in this 'Scottish' saint is usually presented as having origins in Richard's ambition to conquer parts of lowland Scotland. However, such an analysis largely sidesteps discussion of Richard's character, except in implying political ambition, tacitly accepted to be uncontroversial. While these motives should not be wholly dismissed, they are unlikely to have been the sole or even the most important grounds for Richard's interest in Saint Ninian. In worshipping Ninian, Richard displayed a style of devotion that was, for his time and social context, entirely conventional, suggesting not political concerns, but pious motives. The only element of Richard's religion that actually appears unusual was the choice of Ninian himself, and even that may not have been particularly odd in the context of late-medieval, northern-English devotion to the saint. This article will address some of the issues that have arisen from Richard's anti-heroic fame and will then proceed to analyse his devotion to Ninian and the possible and probable significance of this manifestation of a particularly medieval Christian form of 'hero-worship' for our understanding of Richard's character.

II

Richard's personality has captivated commentators and historians from his own time to this. Yet the awareness of the tenuousness of the myths and models of his character has an almost equal longevity. Thomas More, for example, writing on Richard's motivations for usurping the crown opined that "whoso diuineth vppon coniectures, maye as wel shote to farre as to short" (Sylvester vol. 2, 9). This self-consciousness has extended to some of the more recent commentaries on Richard's religious beliefs. In their 1997 study of what remains of Richard's library, Sutton and Visser-Fuchs explicitly avoided using his books to make more than very tentative claims concerning Richard's piety. Here the response to the cultural legacy of Richard was reactive, engendering great, perhaps overmuch, caution into the analysis of Richard's religious behaviour. They concluded that while there are possible indications of an independent mind, evidenced by his possession of an English paraphrase of the Old Testament and a Wycliffite New Testament, his books do not allow one to draw any definite conclusions concerning his character (Richard III's Books 82–85). By contrast, Jonathan Hughes was more directly influenced by the idea of a historical anti-hero, and he deployed Richard's book of hours to construct for the king a persona through which his usurpation of the crown could have been rationalised as the consequence of religious zeal and a sense of personal destiny. However, his claims are difficult to accept in full. They are based on the belief that a speculative reading, derived from a limited number of texts that survive from Richard's library can be said to be authoritative (Hughes 25–26, 131 and 104–153). Richard's literary and cultural legacy has stimulated a fascination with personality that his historians have always had to negotiate, even if it is not the focus of their studies.

Richard's anti-heroic reputation need not constrain historical writing. In similar cases from the later middle ages, where relatively substantial documentation pertaining to the piety of an individual exists, the evidence is usually perceived by historians to function less problematically as a window onto an individual's religion, or that of their immediate social milieu. Such evidence tends not to engender such grandiose extrapolations as some of those which have developed out of analyses of Richard's piety. Michael Hicks's examination of the will of Lady Margaret Hungerford (d.1478), for example, illustrated that personal documents may be used to reach conclusions on the religious complexion of an individual without undue speculation. Similarly Kathryn Smith's treatments of fourteenth century books of hours demonstrates the potential of these texts to shed light on the religious lives of their users. While Hughes relied heavily on conjecture in his analysis of Richard's book of hours, he argued correctly that it was a document that could shed light on his private religious life. This book of hours and specifically the Collect of Saint Ninian (Lambeth Palace MS 474, fol. 1r), when examined in relation to Richard's religious foundations and to his policies in the north of England, can yield revealing insights into his personal beliefs and concerns, even if those beliefs and concerns should turn out to have been largely conventional.

III

Richard acquired his book of hours at a time when such texts were at their most popular. Books of hours were a remarkable fifteenth-century phenomenon; greater numbers of them survive from this period than any other kind of book, including the Bible (de Hamel ch. 6; Wieck). They were essentially an adaptation and abbreviation of ancillary devotions from the breviaries used by monastic orders to celebrate the eight liturgical hours of the day: Matins, Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers and Compline. Each service consisted of a number of psalms, hymns, canticles, lessons and prayers with antiphons and versicles with their responses, arranged according to a 'use' particular to a given region or institution (Duffy 209–11). In England, the most common uses were those of Sarum (Salisbury) and Eboracum (York), but there were uses peculiar to the Dominicans, the Franciscans, the Augustinians and others. The form of worship embodied by the books of hours was modelled on official liturgy, but was also distinct from it. It was flexible and adaptable; books of hours might be used in private but could also be used to follow

the divine service as it was performed by members of the clergy. A book of hours would have simultaneously enabled a kind of religious independence while signalling spiritual attachment to the forms and practices of the official church.

Richard's book of hours was unusual in a number of particulars. Produced in the 1420s, it had not originally been made for Richard himself; given the rather complicated and heavily abbreviated instructions for seasonal variations in the hours of the Virgin on fols. 9–14, the first owner probably had clerical training. Before Richard acquired it, almost sixty folios of additional prayers were added to the book (Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, *The Hours*). Though none of them was itself unusual, the prayers and their rubrics promised divine aid for a wide range of spiritual and worldly problems. Taken as a group, their number and comprehensiveness was uncommon and may have formed part of the book's attraction for Richard. Sharing the belief of his contemporaries in the instrumentality of prayer, that is to say in the intrinsic power of a particular form of words to request the help of divine grace, Richard may have wanted a book of hours that offered a full range of choices (Duffy 218–20).

Richard acquired the book of hours after his accession to the throne in 1483. Among his additions was an entry in the calendar for his birthday on the second of October where he refers to himself as *Ricardus Rex*, and a long prayer (fols. 181–83) in which he is again referred to as king. In addition to these changes, Richard also added a long, litany-like devotion at the end of the book (fols. 184–184v). Yet the most prominent of his additions is the collect of Saint Ninian on the very first page (fol. 1). Translated, the prayer reads "O God who converted the people of the Picts and the Britons through the teaching of holy Ninian your confessor to the knowledge of your faith, grant of your grace that by the intercession of him by whose learning we are deepened in the light of your truth we may obtain the joys of heaven. Through Christ our Lord. Amen".¹

IV

As the collect states, Saint Ninian was reputed to have converted the Picts in the fourth or fifth centuries before the arrival of Saint Columba (521–597). His shrine was at *Candida Casa* (the White House) at Whithorn in Galloway. He is thought to have been a Northumbrian development of the historical Finnian of Movilla, a sixth-century Irish missionary to the Picts (Clancy). There is a short record of Ninian's life in Bede's (c. 673–735)

Historia Ecclesiastica (c. 731), but the origins of the shrine's popularity as a pilgrimage destination seem to lie with the twelfth-century *Vita* written by the Cistercian abbot and author Aelred of Rievaulx (1110–1167) (Colgrave 222; Clancy 23). By the later middle ages, Ninian appears to have been a fairly popular saint of localised significance within the Scottish borders. It was unusual, though not unheard of, that Richard as an Englishman should have chosen to associate himself with Ninian; devotions to Ninian have been used in the analysis of other books of hours as evidence of manifest Scottish ownership (Deswick 109). Yet, not only did Richard locate Ninian's collect prominently in his book of hours, on the very first folio, the saint was also specified in the foundation charters of all four of his religious foundations. These were the chantry at Queens College Cambridge (1477), and the colleges of priests at Middleham (1478) and at Barnard Castle (1478), all of which pre-date clear evidence of Richard's aspirations to conquer lowland Scotland, and the college at York Cathedral (1483).² At all four, Ninian was either a dedicatee or a principal feast and Ninian was the only saint mentioned in the foundation documents (where we have them) of all of them (Searle 89; Raine, "The Statutes" 160–70; *Victoria County History* vol. 2, 129–30; Horrox and Hammond vol. 1, 201).

The collect locates Richard in a decidedly Northern-English *milieu*, where there was interchange between Scottish and English devotional cultures; it invokes the ancient peoples of both kingdoms, "*populos pictorum et britonum*". The text in Richard's book of hours matches almost word for word a collect recorded in the 1491 Arbuthnott missal, the only complete manuscript source for the liturgy of the medieval Scottish use (Forbes 369). Richard was directly or indirectly in contact with the cult in Scotland (Higgitt 202). From 1470, Richard became the Warden of the Western March towards Scotland, guarding the borders against Scottish incursions (Horrox 37). It was almost certainly here that Richard acquired his devotion to the saint. Though many of Richard's biographers have followed Paul Murray Kendall in arguing that his affection for the north of England began with his time spent in the household of the Earl of Warwick, before 1469, this northern adoption only really found material expression after 1471 and his acquisition of most of the, then deceased, Earl of Warwick's lands (Kendall 52; Hipshon 56–57). However it may have happened, Richard became a northerner rather than being born one and so it is safe to suggest that his devotion to Saint Ninian

was part of his enculturation (Hicks). Sutton and Visser-Fuchs have stated that Ninian was the patron saint of the Western March, but there does not seem to be any clear evidence for such a claim, saving that of the March's proximity to the shrine (*The Hours*, 37).

Carlisle was a natural stopping point for pilgrims travelling from England to the shrine. The royal fortress of Carlisle was only ninety miles from Whithorn and Richard, it seems, was known there, since he donated money to the cathedral chapter and aided the rebuilding of the castle (Summerson 101–102); it may have been through his connection to this location and its connection by pilgrimage routes to Ninian's shrine that Richard developed his interest in the saint. The full extent of this traffic from England is unknown. In 1414 the King of Arms for Ireland requested that after his death a man should make pilgrimage on his behalf to a number of shrines, including those of Saint Mary in Carlisle and Saint Ninian in Whithorn. In 1472, a similar request was made by William Ecopp, rector of Heslerton (East Riding of Yorkshire) (Pollard, *The North of England* 92; *Testamenta Eboracensia* vol. 3, 199–201). Pilgrim traffic to Whithorn from England seems to have been substantial enough in the early fifteenth-century for James I of Scotland to try to regulate it, commanding in 1427 that visitors to the shrine from England or the Isle of Man should wear insignia signalling whether they were coming or going, and that they should not stay for more than fifteen days (Paul 20). This traffic was also of long continuance; in 1506 William Tyrwhit, described as a "knycht", obtained safe-passage for himself and a party of sixteen other "inglishmen" to visit the shrine (Livingstone vol. 1, 185–86). It is surprising, considering this traffic, to find that archaeological records of Whithorn do not suggest very great economic interaction with England. Almost none of the English coin finds are of the fifteenth century, nor indeed has analysis of skeletal remains suggested a high proportion of persons foreign to the west coast of Scotland outside the ranks of the clergy (Hill et al. 350–51 and 551; Lowe 63 and 83). However, the fourteenth-century Scots *Life* of Ninian suggested, probably somewhat exaggeratedly, that the saint enjoyed Europe-wide fame, with pilgrims coming to the shrine from all countries west of Prussia. Perhaps more illuminating is the fact that among the miracles that are attributed to Ninian by the Scots *Life* that had not been simply copied from Aelred's *Vita*, at least two are said to have been performed for Englishmen. This suggests a persistent, if alien, English presence in the thinking

of the cult's Scottish adherents (Metcalf 63, 68–72 and 72–81). Though there is no evidence that Richard ever made the pilgrimage, there evidently was a cultic connection between Whithorn and the North of England.

Further expressions of English interest in the saint are comparatively rare.³ Yet Richard was not alone among Englishmen in venerating Saint Ninian;⁴ though Ninian was a rather idiosyncratic choice as a principal focus for Richard's devotional life, his devotion to this saint was far from unique. While often thought of as a Scottish saint, Ninian belonged to multiple worlds. He was the product of the eighth-century Northumbrian church, before the kingdoms of England and Scotland existed. No records concerning the saint's work pre-date Bede's brief account in the *Historia*. Clancy has suggested that Bede's source for Ninian's life was probably Pethelm (d.735/6), the first historical Bishop of Whithorn. Ninian, represented as a Roman-trained British bishop, would have been the ideal precursor for Pethelm, himself a reforming Anglo-Saxon bishop. It is likely that Ninian was created to reinforce the cause of the Northumbrian Church in southern Pictish territories. Ninian's cult originated with Aelred's *Vita*, after the writing and dissemination of which topographical names and church dedications in Scotland began to appear (Clancy 6–9). Subsequent writing on Ninian relied heavily on Bede and Aelred, including the fourteenth-century Scots poetic *Life* and the lessons and prayers in the 1510 *Aberdeen Breviary* (Metcalf 41–83; MacQuarrie et al.). This English connection was reflected in the notional subjection of the bishops of Whithorn to the diocesan authority of the Archbishops of York. Only with the erection of Saint Andrews into an Archdiocese in 1472 were Whithorn's official ties to the Church in England severed (Oram 74–75). Ninian's Scottish-ness was, by Richard's time, a relatively novel development. Thus, when considering Ninian in Richard's piety one must be tentative about assigning a national character to the saint at a time when the Church was international and borders were fluid (Ditchburn 193).

V

In spite of Ninian's supranational origins, Richard's veneration of this 'Scottish' saint has repeatedly been cast as a reflection of his ambitions to conquer lowland Scotland.⁵ Richard's enmity with the Scots is well known; he led the 1482 invasion of Scotland, and in 1483 Edward IV (1442–1483) awarded him an hereditary wardenship which entitled him to hold, as

a palatinate, as much land as he could conquer from the Scots within a limited area of Western Scotland, including the West March and Galloway (Grant 115). This argument certainly cannot be dismissed, but does not really get to the nub of why Saint Ninian's collect occupied so prominent a place in so personal a document as Richard's prayerbook. Neither does it necessarily reflect political and cultural realities of Anglo-Scottish border relations in Richard's time. It was under the traditional banner of Saint Cuthbert rather than by public invocation of the blessing of Saint Ninian that Richard went to war against the Scots (Pollard, "St Cuthbert" 117–18). The dates are also problematic; Richard's first displays of devotion to saint Ninian were in 1477 and 1478 at the Cambridge and Middleham foundations. At this time, Anglo-Scottish relations were still in *détente*, with Edward IV paying annual advances on his daughter's dowry to James III (1451–1488) (Grant 119). Alexander Stewart (1454–1488), who would become Edward's ally and pretender to the Scottish throne in the 1480s, was still extremely hostile towards the English in the 1470s (Grant 120–21; Tanner). Richard may have had different intentions to those of his brother but wars of conquest were an unrealistic prospect at the time that his devotion to Ninian became prominent.

In light of this, and of Ninian's Northumbrian and, later, English connections, the question may be raised as to whether Richard regarded the saint as distinctly Scottish at all; there is nothing in his devotions that suggests that he did. Richard owned a history of Britain called the *Fitzhugh Chronicle*, in which Ninian was very briefly mentioned. The chronicle, later published by Twysden as *Brompton's Chronicle*, copied Bede's account of Ninian and the saint is presented as "a Brittonic Bishop of Rome" – "*episcopum Britonum Romae*" (Twysden col. 786). It is entirely possible that for Richard, Ninian was part of the British heritage, adopted by the English aristocracy from writings such as those of Geoffrey of Monmouth (c.1100–c.1155). While this does not explain Richard's devotion to Ninian, it does, perhaps, show that devotion in a different light, one less overtly connected to his military ambitions in Scotland.

A contemporaneous display of devotion to Ninian also suggests the weakness of the argument that devotion to Ninian was an expression of English claims to lowland Scotland. Hugh Hastings (Richard's steward of the manor of Pickering), making his will in 1482 before going to war in Scotland alongside Richard, left wax to be

burned before an image of Saint Ninian at Tickhill friary; the war and the bequest have been presented as connected (Hughes 37). However, the context for this devotion does not appear to have been the upcoming invasion of Scotland, but rather that of Northern English piety. The wax left to Tickhill was given alongside identical gifts to other Northern-English shrines; those of “Seynt Thomas of Loncastre” and of “Seynt Petir of Millen” in Pontefract and that of “Seynt Marie Virgyn” in Doncaster (*Testamenta Eboracensia* vol. 3, 274). Though Ninian rarely enjoyed English interest, it does not follow that what interest was shown must express a desire for Scottish conquests; most Englishmen who fought the Scots showed no interest in Saint Ninian. In the case of Hugh Hastings, that interest is as likely to have been a manifestation of his connection to Richard and of their mutual northernness as of a desire to subjugate the Scots.

Linked to the accepted argument is the assertion that Richard was channelling the claims of the Archbishops of York to metropolitan authority over Whithorn. In 1464, a long notarial instrument, detailing precedents for the submission of the bishops of Scotland, including that of Whithorn, was composed by the Church of York. A copy of this seems to have been obtained by Richard in 1484 as it is included in *Harleian Manuscript 433*, Richard’s Signet Register. Such claims to ecclesiastical authority were inextricable from those of political authority, the Archbishop of York being a major servant of the English crown, though the text actually assigns the duty of implementation to the Scottish monarch (Horrox and Hammond vol. 3, 89 and 76–98). While one could easily imagine the claim being advanced in the likely event of war (Richard was evidently reluctant to make peace with the Scots while he was king), it was not used in this or in any other way. It may well be that its inclusion in the Signet Register represented a *quid pro quo* in which, in exchange for being allowed to found his college of priests at York Cathedral, Richard would, in the event of war with the Scots, advance to metropolitan claims of the Archbishops of York. In which case, the document represents the political interests of York Cathedral, rather than Richard’s. Regardless, the actions that Richard took, founding chantries and, in particular, placing the collect into his book of hours, do not have the character of political statements, excepting perhaps his 1484 grant to the Church of York for a massive college of one hundred priests to sing “in the worship of god oure lady seint George & seint Nynyan” (Horrox and Hammond vol. 1, 201). This may just as easily have

been a preparation for his intended burial in the Cathedral as Dobson has suggested (*Church and Society* 250–51). Additionally, Richard’s choice of the Use of Sarum for his Queen’s and Middleham foundations and indeed for his book of hours problematizes these actions as statements of support for York. Richard’s appropriation of Saint Ninian seems to be connected rather to his own hopes for salvation rather than to his ambitions of conquest.

VI

The prominence of Saint Ninian in Richard’s book of hours was bound up with the saint’s prominence in Richard’s religious foundations. Just as the book of hours, in its pristine state, was an adaptation of liturgical practices to suit the requirements of private devotion, so too was Richard’s incorporation of the collect into his book of hours a sign of this interpenetration of official and personal religious performance. The placement of the collect within the detailed liturgical routine specified by Richard in the statutes for the Middleham foundation is suggestive of a twofold role for Ninian in Richard’s devotion: as a this-worldly protector as well as a post-mortem intercessor. According to the statutes, after matins is sung, the anthem of Saint Ninian and the collect (almost certainly the same one as in the book of hours) directly follows the anthem *Libera nos* and again, subsequent to evensong, a memory of Saint Ninian immediately succeeds the said anthem (Raine, “The Statutes” 164–65). *Libera nos* comes from the canon of the mass; in the use of Sarum it sits between the *Pater noster* and the *Agnus Dei*. It echoes many of the themes of the *Pater noster*, invoking the deliverance of God through the intercession of Mary, as well as Peter and Paul and all the saints: “Give graciously peace in our days and mercifully help us with your assistance and may we be ever free from sin and from all troubles secure” (Legg 225).⁶ The anthem of Saint Ninian (probably one that is the same or similar to the anthem in the Arbutnott Missal as no other is recorded before the sixteenth century) itself contains similar themes saying of Ninian: “You throughout the lands and throughout the sea do not cease to free Christian captives from their harsh fetters. Be our spiritual guardian, delivering us, the inhabitants of this place, from evil things” (Forbes 369; Dreves vol. 40, 299).⁷ Richard singled out Ninian as a named intercessor, to go alongside Mary, Peter and Paul as a source of help in the face of worldly tribulation; a particular advocate to help him in this life.

This choice may have been connected to contemporary developments in the cult of Saint Ninian. Ninian's symbol was the chain; a later medieval development and nothing, it seems, to do with his early cult but rather a result of a growing desire for rescue miracles. His cult may have been influenced by that of much more well known Saint Leonard, whose shrine at Saint Leonard de Noblat, near Limoges, was filled with votive offerings of the fetters of freed captives (Higgitt). Richard, it may be speculated desired this kind of sacred protection, for him Saint Ninian was to be a deliverer in times of trouble. This preference echoes the tone of the litany-like prayer that Richard had included on folios 184–184v. Adapted so as to mention Richard by name, this prayer probably originated in the fourteenth century and it invoked Scriptural examples and the events of the Passion as part of a request for divine help. Though the rubric is missing in Richard's Book of Hours, it likely promised, as per the rubric for the same prayer in other books of hours, deliverance from worldly calamity (Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, *The Hours* 67–78). This rescuing quality was not unique to Saint Ninian, Richard's devotion to him seems to have been an instantiation of a preoccupation with protection from danger and affliction that was conventional for the time and which was addressed by other sources of religious solace. However, the choice of Ninian himself was most likely a consequence of Richard's personal identification with the religious milieu of the north of England.

VII

Though the relief that Saint Ninian was reputed to give seems to have been predominantly of a this-worldly variety, Richard's liturgical specifications show that he felt Ninian to be a prominent part of his security in the next world. Both the Middleham post-matins and post-evensong liturgical sequences proceeded, after their respective invocations of Saint Ninian, to use prayers and psalms connected to prayer for the dead. The post-matins sequence continued with the *De profundis* (Psalm 130/129), which was usually sung as part of the *Placebo* (Vespers for the dead), and then the collect *Fidelium* from the mass for all the faithful departed (Legg 442). Richard specified that after he died, this sequence was to be embellished with the collect *Deus cui proprium est*, also from the mass for all faithful departed, and a further collect for the repose of Richard and his wife, Anne Neville. Similarly, the evensong sequence was finished with the psalm *De profundis* (Raine, "The Statues" 164 and 165). In the case of the post-matins

sequence, this would also have followed the *Dirige* (matins for the dead) on Richard's obit; Ninian's anthem and collect would have come in the midst of prayers for the dead. However, *Fidelium*, *Deus cui proprium est* and *De profundis* were all invocations of divine, rather than any kind of intercessory aid, so the connection to Ninian might have been looser. Nevertheless, Ninian was to be Richard's companion in death as well as life; it was a relationship that he clearly envisaged as an eternal bond.

Richard had a keen interest not only in the form but also in performance of liturgy. For example, he empowered Richard Mellonok, gentleman of the chapel, to procure for him skilled musicians and child singers (Horrox and Hammond vol. 2, 163). The Middleham statutes were concerned for the proper performance of the liturgy: "the said deane, prests, and clerks shal distinctly, nother hastily ne to tarryingly, bot measurable and devoutely kep divine service daily". Commands were also given for the form of singing, whether descant or "fabourden" for example (Raine, "The Statutes" 164). Richard's high-minded view of the liturgy expressed in the Middleham statutes is also evident in the statutes for Queens', though they were less detailed (Searle 89–91). It seems safe to argue that Richard was, in matters of his salvation, ecclesiastically and even liturgically minded and sought spiritual safety in the practices and routines of the Church. Dobson has noted that in northern England there was a pronounced investment in the idea of a chantry, noting that in 1483, there could have been no cathedral in the realm that matched York's 150 or so perpetual chantries ("Politics and the Church" 13). It is possible, perhaps extrapolating from Ninian's role as a liberator, that Richard believed the saint to be particularly effective in securing release from Purgatory; one might venture to say that Richard was interpreting the delivering power of the saint through 'northern' English eyes.

The presence of this Collect of Saint Ninian within Richard III's book of hours would have presented for the king a material connection to his foundations and his provision for his salvation. Rather like the pilgrims' badges and flysheets from saints' shrines that found their way into other books of hours, this collect could be thought of in terms of a reorientation of the rhythm of the book of hours towards a point of personal presence within it (Stevenson 111). With its prominence on the first page of the text, it might have been intended as a prelude to the rest of the book; a reminder, perhaps encountered every time that he opened it, alerting Richard to the sacred

company in which he stood and the protection that he enjoyed. The collect was an emblem of his spiritual and material investment in his collegiate foundations and in Saint Ninian; a form of words that made present the places, people and the liturgies contributing to his salvation. In this way, Richard would have been able to carry with him, wherever he went, the saving effects of his collegiate establishments. If nothing else, the presence of the collect in his book of hours reinforces the notion that Richard had an intense personal and emotional investment in the power of chantry foundations.

It should also be borne in mind that Richard may have envisaged saying the prayer at the services performed by the priests at Cambridge, Middleham and at his planned foundations at Barnard Castle and York. His itinerary for 1483–1484 shows that he spent time at all these places; his foundation of a college of priests at Barnard Castle was to have been only part of a much broader scheme of remodelling the fortress between 1483 and 1485 into a place of residence (Edwards 1–7, 15 and 18–22; Pollard, “St. Cuthbert” 109). If, as Dobson has suggested, Richard might have wanted to be buried at York, then one might tentatively suggest that Richard was establishing a series of habitations, culminating in a final resting place. This reinforces the idea that the collect in the book of hours was meant to provide a kind of reminder, a piece of this network of intercessory institutions that Richard could keep with him when his itinerary took him away from these sites of spiritual security. It would, perhaps, not be surprising if, as tradition holds, the book was part of the loot taken from Richard’s encampment following the Battle of Bosworth in 1485 (Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, *The Hours* 39; Jones and Underwood 68).⁸

VIII

Thus an impression of Richard’s religious life and the relative importance of particular aspects of worship begins to emerge. The Collect of Saint Ninian was part of a network of private and liturgical worship that reveals both Richard’s personal investment in collegiate foundations and also in the cultural heritage of northern England. If Richard was not a northerner before 1471, his attachment to Saint Ninian perhaps reveals how much of a northerner he was by the time of his accession. Ninian was never referred to in any of the texts associated with Richard as a ‘hero’. Yet the role that he fulfilled in Richard’s life, as an interventionist rescuer may be broadly characterised as heroic. If so, then his case demonstrates

the importance of the trans-temporal formation of medieval saints when examining and locating this form of medieval ‘heroism’. Anchored in the narratives of his life produced by Bede and Aelred, Ninian’s heroism in the fifteenth century made present an aspect of a Northumbrian identity that preceded the harder borderlines that developed between the kingdoms England and Scotland. Ninian was part of the Brittonic heritage of both England and Scotland and could evidently be adopted by either nation without necessarily implying antagonism toward the other.

No historical pronouncement on Richard III, let alone one limited to his devotion to Saint Ninian, could ever be expected to validate or dispel the spectre of Richard’s reputation. Anti-heroism, like heroism, is a product of the collected memory of communities, which is often shaped by forces largely independent of historical writing. What this analysis, hopefully, has shown is that there is a middle way to be trod in history writing, between overly diffident and overly speculative responses to an anti-heroic reputation when interpreting the historical Richard’s religious beliefs. Richard can be shown to be what he was, a conventionally pious Medieval Christian, who sought the protection of the saints in both this world and the next. Though it is tempting to try and explain Richard’s devotion to Saint Ninian as a reflection of his political ambitions in lowland Scotland, an explanation that rests less on ulterior motive and more upon religious preference sits better with the pattern of Richard’s actions. In short, Richard constructed a piety out of unusual components and highly personal preferences that was nonetheless, conventionally orthodox.

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1 “*Deus qui populos pictorum et brito-/num per doctrinam s[an]c[t]i Niniam con-/fessoris tui ad fidei tu[a]e noticiam conu[er]tisti: / concede propicius. ut cuius erud[i]cione verita-/tis tu[a]e luce / perfundimur eius intercessione ce-/lestis inte gaudia consequamur: Per [christum]/d[omi]n[u]m n[ost]r[u]m. Amen.*”

2 Middleham was of short continuance and the Barnard Castle and York foundations were proposed but apparently not completed before his death:

3 The only known dedications of churches in England are the chapels of Saint Ninian in Whitby (Yorkshire) and in Fenton (Cumbria) (Dowden 156; Woodward).

4 This is shown by the scattering of bequests in contemporary York wills (*Testamenta Eboracensia* vol. 3, 274 and vol. 4, 116–117 and 128–129). Images of the saint existed at Tickhill friary, and in the churches of Stokesley (Yorkshire) and Saint Crux in York, and in 1496 Margery Salvin donated a bone of saint Ninian (possibly his arm) to the Greyfriars of York (Summerson 93; *Testamenta Eboracensia* vol. 2, 199–201). There seems also to have been an altar to Ninian at York Cathedral by 1483 (Raine, *Fabric Rolls* 305n; Gee 347–48).

5 Historians such as Dobson, Higgitt, Hughes, Grant, Pollard, Sutton and Fuchs have all suggested that Richard's appropriation of Ninian was related to "claims that the English might have to the regions of Scotland that Ninian Christianised and civilised" (Dobson, "Politics and the Church" 249 n.85; Higgitt 202; Hughes 37; Grant 116; Pollard, *North Eastern England* 192; Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, *Richard III's Books* 62). This is a compelling argument in light of the see of York's lapsed claim to sovereignty over Scottish bishoprics, in particular that of Whithorn (Horrox and Hammond vol. 3, 76–98).

6 "Da propicius pacem in diebus nostris ut ope misericordie tui adiuti. Et a peccato simus semper liberi. Et ab omni perturbacione securi."

7 "Tu per terras et per mare/ Dire vinctos liberare/ Non cessas Christicolas./ Esto nobis spiritalis/ Tutor, salvans nos a malis/ Loci huius incolas."

8 Lady Margaret Beaufort (1443–1509), the mother of Henry VII (1457–1509) is known to have come into possession of the book after Richard's death. The Stanleys received the spoils from the battlefield at Bosworth, they displayed the hangings from Richard's tent in the hall of their Lancashire residence at Knowsley, and being married to Thomas Stanley (1435–1504), it is likely that it was as loot from Richard's camp that this Book of Hours came into Lady Margaret's hands.

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Humouring the Hero: The Uses of Melancholy among Military Nobles in Late Elizabethan England

The interest of this article is twofold: first, to establish and explore the intricate connection between two key concepts in the fashioning of English military nobles: the *hero* and *melancholy*; and second, to explain their usages and usefulness in the last decades of the sixteenth century, when both terms were used a lot more frequently than ever before in the English language (see, for *hero*, Simpson et al. 171 and Low 23–24, and for *melancholy*, Babb 73). It is possible to link this increase at least partially to the advancement of one particular *social figuration*¹: the generation of young courtiers of Queen Elizabeth I who were born around 1560 and stepped into the courtly sphere in the 1580s and 1590s. As I will argue, the use of both terms by these persons and for these persons was connected with the way they fashioned themselves and the way they were fashioned by others. I will use the term *self-fashioning* from Greenblatt to refer to the ability of early modern individuals to produce fictions or performances of the self in order to influence hierarchical power relations between persons (1–9). Thus, I will propose that fashioning oneself as heroic or as melancholic could be used as a resource for a person's social advancement.

1. A Social Figuration and Its Use of Heroics

This article will focus on the paradigmatic figure of Philip Sidney (1554–1586) who, from adolescence, was viewed as being extremely gifted and charismatic and happened to be the nephew of the ageing queen's childless and ageing favourite, the Earl of Leicester. Thus, Sidney was widely expected to eventually succeed to the politically important and economically reassuring role of the queen's favourite. He became the focal point of a political faction in favour of a more aggressive foreign policy against Spain that

involved England with military on the continent from the mid-1570s ("Leicester-Walsingham alliance", Adams 25 and passim). The queen herself referred to Sidney once as "le plus accompli gentilhomme de l'Europe" (Sidney, *Correspondence* II 999). He travelled Europe extensively and brought many ideas and practices of the Mediterranean Renaissance and of the European *republic of letters* into the practical life and behaviour of his generation of fellow court hopefuls, such as Walter Raleigh, Robert Devereux, the 2nd Earl of Essex, and Fulke Greville. In this climate of "intellectual bombardment" by humanist ideas as well as by Calvinist beliefs (Waller 331), Sidney used and exploited both heroics and melancholy for his self-fashioning: He "set the English Renaissance on its course" (Buxton 255) and was soon to be followed by his circle of friends and clients, but also by courtiers of rivaling factions – a social figuration adapting to a new mode of self-display in the context of the court.

The essential text that prescribed how the European nobility imagined the perfect courtier was the *Cortegiano* by the Italian humanist Baldassare Castiglione (1527). Only in the second half of the century did it begin to influence English court society profoundly. In his role as a communicator and adopter of new ideas and practices, Philip Sidney was considered by contemporaries as one of the most perfect personifications of the *cortegiano* (Duncan-Jones 156), and it was rumoured that he never left this book behind when travelling (Matz 59). In essence, being a *cortegiano* meant trying everything to appeal to the prince, withholding any grudges or frustrations, and always acting with *sprezzatura*, a form of nonchalant grace, without ever exposing any strain from pressure. The court became the space of dissimulation (Asch 56). By the 1590s, the ideal of the *cortegiano* had assumed a firm cultural influence over the late Elizabethan court

figuration, shaping a “dramatistic identity” for the courtiers, who “each, in his own way, emulated the queen’s artistic self-display” (Javitch 74). The male courtiers presented the theme of politicised love in gendered terms to the female monarch, the target of the sublimated erotic longing of the courtiers. The different forms and means of fashioning oneself as a courtier constituted the Renaissance ideal of the *uomo universale*, the man well versed in any graceful kind of activity, which could comprise the erudite sphere of literature and the arts as much as the military sphere. In fact, the *cortegiano* was expected to choose his “chief business [...] to be arms” (Castiglione 72).

In the decades before the 1580s, young, aspiring nobles had tended to use an almost exclusively military model of heroics to display their readiness to serve for the monarch (for brief surveys, see Low 22–27 and Evans 361). This model could provide them a good name and make them powerful friends at court as well as among the noble elites with their traditional monopoly on waging war and using violence (especially when the monarch was a woman who could not lead the troops into battle herself). By acting on the battlefield or training for it in tournaments, an aspiring noble could focus the attention and the expectations of a group to his person. By displaying readiness to sacrifice oneself while performing heroic military deeds, the self-fashioned noble warrior hero could accumulate social capital.

Whilst the *Cortegiano* prescribed for courtiers to excel as soldiers, the figure of the hero does not fit the job description completely: When the courtier finds himself in a battle, he should do what is constructed as heroic – “do the outstanding and daring things that he has to do” – but only when “in the sight of all the noblest and most respected men in the army, and especially [...] before the very eyes of his king” (Castiglione 72). Thus, all success depended on the visibility of the deed and on the impression given to the superiors, not on the actual accomplishment: “I have known men who, though very able, were stupid on this score, and would risk their lives as much to capture a flock of sheep [...] – which is something our Courtier will not do” (ibid.). Disimulation lay at the core of the courtier warrior’s behaviour; not the actual will to sacrifice. And while there is no simple definition, a core of elements that constitute a hero can be determined: A hero is a figure constructed by a community of followers using him (or her) as a focal point of admiration or of exemplarity; the hero acts on their behalf and with the will to sacrifice himself.

The hero also has the transgressive element of the liminal figure who is able to collect, focus and transcend the values and imaginations of a given group of admirers (von den Hoff et al. 8). Thus, the hero may embody the frictions and problems of social groups and may open up perspectives to resolve them. This is not easily reconciled with the well-functioning courtier, who is constructed as subordinate to an authority with whose demands he eagerly tries to comply. As Alan Hager puts it: “The courtier works by indirection, the hero not” (33).

2. The Late Elizabethan Crisis and the Malady of Melancholy

However, even this courtier mode of the traditional military hero was being challenged in late Elizabethan times (Matz 155 n13). The nobles’ fields of action were coming under pressure in the last decades of the sixteenth century. Although Lawrence Stone’s thesis of a “crisis of the aristocracy” has been deeply transformed – and in military matters firmly rejected –, the state, religion and society of the late Elizabethan age changed profoundly (for an overview, see Gajda 13–19). The rise and consolidation of the early modern state set in motion a dynamic of centralisation and put the political spaces and possibilities of autonomous aristocrats under duress. The pre-modern personalised way of governing, which depended on the cooperation of nobles with their monarch, was giving way to a more hierarchical political style which threatened the role of the nobility. Interlocked with this political development was the increase of confessional concerns as a factor of public life in general. The struggles between the different confessions consolidated the dogma and institutions of the respective churches and transformed individual sets of belief into collective ideologies. State and church required their subjects’ complete adherence and extolled pressure on the individuals to conform. Alongside these underlying structural changes, there were problematic developments that burdened the political climate from the late 1570s. The many problems facing late Elizabethan political culture made it “rife with [...] political discontent” (Kitzes 15): the fear of an assumed Jesuit infiltration of Protestant England, threats of invasion from Spain and rebellions in Ireland, and the precarious state of Protestants in the Netherlands and in war-torn France, all of which seemed to diminish hopes for the establishment of a peaceful European order. This amounted to rising fears of civil war on English soil and contributed to an increase in emotionally expressive

language among elite writers. In the late Elizabethan years, an “affective vogue” (Paster 6) was using melancholy as a semantic code and as an aesthetic expression of the changed emotional display among aristocratic elites.²

What was the cultural consequence of all these developments on the social figuration of military nobles aspiring to political careers? I wish to argue that these nobles turned the problematic circumstances into an aesthetic advantage: As long-standing traditions were being marginalised, ideas and practices from the former margins were incorporated into the dominant cultural display – particularly through an extension of the noble self-fashioning to include the aesthetic form of melancholy. In no small part because of this, during the last quarter of the sixteenth century talking about melancholy “changed from virtually irrelevant to tremendously important” (Kitzes 15). It is the nobles’ emotional display only that is examined here, rather than the question of whether this was felt authentically or not. In what follows, I will therefore concentrate on the aesthetics of melancholy as it created interaction with a courtly public – which could activate a “vicarious feeling” for the person on display (Brady et al.) and thus form a joint “perceptual community” with the person on display (Daniel 5).

Melancholy was received from classical medical thought as one of the four bodily fluids that were thought to be responsible for the (static) character of persons, as well as for illnesses when one of the four fluids was predominant. The four temperaments attributed to humans (choleric, sanguine, phlegmatic and melancholic) derived their names from the fluids; an excess of black bile (in ancient Greek *μελαγχολία*) could lead to a melancholic character as well as a suffering of the mind. This pathological state was usually associated with disease, suffering, old age and death. Among many Renaissance humanists, be they Aristotelians, Platonists or Stoicists, it was common to believe that the melancholic state of a person signified his or her failure to live virtuously. In particular, the evils that were associated with withdrawal from society and from human company were attributed to melancholy (Gowland 112–114).³

In the extended correspondence Philip Sidney maintained with his Huguenot mentor Hubert Languet, melancholy is frequently mentioned as a malady. In the 1570s, for instance, Languet wrote that “I was very troubled [...] that you are not in very good health and even more

melancholy than usual. I beg you to take care of your health, and not to spend so much time on your studies” (Sidney, *Correspondence* I 87) or to “take pleasure and dispel that sometimes excessive melancholy” (ibid. 101). Sidney himself confessed that “I am often more melancholy than either my age or my activities demand; but I have fully proved by experience that I am never less liable to moods of melancholy than while I am pitting my weak mental powers against some difficult challenge” (ibid. 106), obviously meaning a kind of disease of the mind that he felt the need to legitimise. Languet also wrote that Sidney’s many continental admirers “fear that the pleasure of a long retreat will weaken that passion of yours to pursue the noblest goals, and that a love of leisure you used to despise will gradually steal into your soul” (ibid. 998). Even in the learned *res publica litteraria*, leisurely melancholic contemplation was viewed as a threat for the promising young courtier. At the same time, a political undertone needs to be noted here: Exhortation against melancholy was triggered by the fear that a future statesman who was supposed to hold the fate of European Protestantism in his young hands would not manage to act according to the plans of his continental friends.

Sidney was by no means the only of his courtier generation to mention inner states of pathological melancholy. Jonathan Gibson has remarked on the “glut of excessively melancholic patronage letters” by courtiers such as Walter Raleigh and the Earl of Essex in the 1590s (456). Robert Devereux, the 2nd Earl of Essex, was Sidney’s successor as the head of the militant faction of young courtiers after the latter’s death in 1586. The Earl of Essex is usually considered as a man giving in aggressively to untempered passions. But he has also been described as being of melancholic temperament. John Dover Wilson has pointed to his “moods of profound melancholy” (105). One example of this is a letter by Essex to his sister Penelope Rich, probably dating from early 1589, in which he uses melancholy as a vehicle to express dissatisfaction with his courtly advancement: “I am melancholy, mery, some tymes happy and often discontented. The Court [hath] as many humors as the rayne bow hath collores. The tyme wherin wee liue, more vnconstant then women’s thoughtes, more miserable then old age ytself, [...] breedeth [...] people [...] that is violent, desparate and fantastickall” (Daybell 117–118). The use of melancholy here serves a political purpose: to illustrate for his aristocratic circle – of which his sister was an active part – the dissatisfaction at the court, which in his view deformed its courtiers and their humours in all

conceivable ways. Essex's melancholy temper allows his displayed mood to oscillate between happiness and discontentedness.

Thus, many of the military courtiers wrote of themselves as melancholy in a pathological, suffering way when they turned to their political and social following. This was diametrically opposed to the prescriptions which the *Cortegiano* gave for the successful courtier. The courtly manual states that being a good courtier means being more than a "flatterer", which can only be avoided by

love [... for] their prince [or] their friends, which I wish our Courtier to do above all else [...]. And I would have our Courtier bend himself to this [...] so that his prince cannot see him without feeling that he must have something pleasant to say to him; [...] and, with these precautions in mind, he will never be ill-humored or melancholy before his prince, nor taciturn [...], which is something truly odious. (Castiglione 80–81)

So, to be a "perfect courtier" one had to display nothing but vivid pleasantness to one's prince – otherwise, the courtier would seem "ill-humoured or melancholy". And such a display of discontentedness was something the perfect *cortegiano* was simply not allowed to do. Accordingly, the scholar Pierangelo Schiera sees in melancholy "the main obstacle to the fulfilment of the gentleman ideal" (341, trans. mine).

3. Refashioning Melancholy by Humouring the Hero

Why did Sidney, Essex or Raleigh invoke the state of melancholy so lavishly if it was not advisable at court? The use of melancholy for self-fashioning does not seem to make sense at first glance; and the usefulness of a malady, a sickness of mind, a forlorn state of contemplative or hurtful solitariness needs to be explained. How could this potentially devastating display help a courtier's social advancement? And how could melancholy, the passive state of sadness, solitary contemplation and pleasurable suffering, be used in the courtier's self-fashioning at the same time as military heroics with all its brilliance and assertiveness?

This was achieved by recapturing a thread of melancholy from antiquity which transformed the disease into a rare and positive distinction: The foundation of this process was the *Problema*

XXX, 1, which was then believed to be written by Aristotle. It claimed that all eminent men and heroes like Hercules, Ajax and Bellerophone were melancholic (see Klibansky et al.), thus constructing social preeminence as combined with the genius inspired by noble melancholy. The next step took place in Renaissance Florence, when Marsilio Ficino added to this idea the Platonic thought of divine frenzy. For Ficino, a "conjunction of planetary and humoral influences" is responsible for "solitary episodes of divine frenzy [...]" and extraordinary capabilities in philosophy, prophecy, poetry" that bring about "an exceptional, inspired state of self-alienation [...]" in which the mind is separated from the body", ready to return to the original transcendent unity of all beings (Gowland 107). But according to Ficino, this state is a rare exception; usually melancholy occurs as a pathological state. Thus, only a few eminent men are deemed able to transform this disease into the dignified state that became so attractive for aristocratic self-fashioning.

How exactly these Renaissance ideas came to England is still not known. Many have proposed that Giordano Bruno, an Italian philosopher who spent some years in the 1580s in the courtly circles of London, played an important role (Gatti). According to Noel Brann, who has written the most extensive study on Renaissance theories of genius, "Bruno viewed melancholy as an actively dynamic aid to the heroic will" which served as "a terrestrially based collaborator of the heroic will's divinely instilled drive, on the wings of divine frenzies, to traverse the rationally insurmountable gulf separating the finite from the infinite realm of existence" (319). This view had much in common with Ficino's neo-Platonic ideas and came to be shared also among the military nobles of late Elizabethan England. No paper from Sidney that has survived to this day mentions Giordano Bruno (Gatti 194), and the extent to which Bruno really influenced Sidney is still in doubt (Hillyer chapter 8). At least, when Bruno dedicated his dialogue *Spaccio della bestia trionfante* to Sidney, he wrote, "I would be untrue to myself [...] if I did not express my esteem for your genius and celebrate your many virtues which you made manifest to me" (trans. Howell 35). And the influence of Bruno on many other persons within the social figuration of the courtiers and the networks of their literary and artistic clientele is well known. What can be established is that Sidney and his social figuration learned from continental humanist and neo-Platonic debates and integrated them into their self-fashioning. For instance, Sidney himself incorporated a poem into his *Arcadia*, "O sweet woods, the

delight of solitariness”, which became something of an “anthem” for melancholics (Kitzes 4). This poem advances very similar ideas on the expansion of the mind to higher spheres of knowledge: The woods of solitariness are a place in which “[c]ontemplation here holdeth his only seate: / Bowned with no limits, borne with a wing of hope / Clymes even unto the starres” (*Poems* 68).

From the 1580s on, melancholy was turned into a “mark of status” (Kitzes 123), distinguishing the few noble minds who were able to turn pathological melancholy into something positive. As John Lyly wrote in his play *Midas* (1592): “melancholy is the crest of courtiers’ armes, and now everie base companion [...] says he is melancholy” (MacDonald 151). This illuminates ironically the desire for social distinction by aristocrats fashioning themselves as melancholics, but at the same time shows awareness that “everie base companion” was trying to imitate this behaviour: The socially elevated obviously felt the pressure a growing public sphere was placing on their status – and this meant an increased need for legitimation. These eminent men met this need in part by assuming new roles.

3.1 Writing Melancholy

One role that many of the military nobles of late Elizabethan England added to their repertoire was that of the poet, the creator of literary imaginations – thereby fusing *arma et litterae*, not for the first time in history but with particular vigour after an extensive separation between the military and artistic spheres. This brought about some difficulties as the military sphere was associated with impulsive, aggressive behaviour, with an active life of visible physical expression, while the literary sphere had traditionally been connected with the learned leisure of secluded, solitary contemplation.

Led by a number of nobles, especially Philip Sidney, the court became the place of *courtier poets* (May; Duncan-Jones) in the late Elizabethan era. This is not to say that there were no courtiers before that time who had written and recited literature. However, only when Sidney “had initiated a wholesale transformation of English poetry” starting in about 1577 to “wholly transcend” everything that had been produced close to the Queen’s court (May 69) did a new model for aristocratic poets emerge, a “new Crew of courtly makers”, as George Puttenham put it 1588 in his *Arte of English Poesie* (61). As many of these

poets were active soldiers, they are also known as *soldier poets* (McKeown and Hillyer chapter 1) – in this way fusing the models of courtier, soldier and poet into a distinct model of aristocratic life.

However, Sidney was uneasy about his position as a poet; writing poetry “itself had first to be raised up within the court” by his social figuration (May 202). He even wrote a whole *Defence of Poetry* in response to allegations put forward by Stephen Gosson in his *School of Abuse* (1579). Sidney rephrased Gosson’s critique thus: “before poets did soften us, we were full of courage, given to martial exercises, the pillars of manlike liberty, and not lulled asleep in shady idleness with poet’s pastimes” (Sidney, *Defence* 101–102). Gosson aggressively tried to place the position of the poet in opposition to the martial hero of the battlefield and tried to show that making poetry as a courtier could only destroy military prowess. Sidney responded first by playing down his work as a poet, describing it as a leisurely activity: “in these my not old years and idlest times having slipped into the title of a poet, am provoked to say something unto you in the defence of that my unelected vocation, which if I handle with more good will than good reasons, bear with me” (ibid. 73). But still, in his view, nobles like himself excelled in this field just as in any other without compromising their *sprezzatura*: “I have found in divers small learned courtiers a more sound style than in some professors of learning” (ibid. 118). It was the excellence of his socially elevated group which gave Sidney the means to be a good poet, without even having to try too hard.

The function Sidney ascribed to the poet in his *Defence* was opening up imaginative spaces that could directly influence the readers. For him, poetry had “this scope: to know, and by knowledge to lift up the mind from the dungeon of the body to the enjoying his own divine essence” (82). He used a language that had been associated with the heroic (“divine essence”) and combined it with the striving for knowledge and the imitation of examples with the goal of moving oneself to “honourable enterprises”, in which “rests the heroical”: It is figures like “Achilles, Cyrus, Aeneas” – “Who doth not only teach and move to a truth, but teacheth and moveth to the most high and excellent truth [...]. For as the image of each action stirreth and instructeth the mind, so the lofty image of such worthies most inflameth the mind with desire to be worthy” (98). Thus, the frenzied *ingenium* could actually trigger virtuous action, dissolving the opposition

between the active and the contemplative, and directly associate poetry with the realm of heroes. Sidney even went on to call poetry “the companion of the camps” (ibid. 105), thus linking the possibilities of genial poetry with the resources of martial heroism.

One of the most significant signs of Philip Sidney’s identification with the melancholic *ingenium* is one of his *imprese*: “Macular modo noscar”, “Spotted to be known” (see Coulman). It depicted a sheep marked with the sign of the planet Saturn, which was the marker of melancholy. This *imprese* was used by Sidney for his actual martial performances at the court and before the queen, as well as for his literary alter ego Philisides, one of the figures of Sidney’s pastoral romance, the *Arcadia*. What this enigmatic *imprese* might mean is shown by Sidney’s client Abraham Fraunce, who not only published a book recording all of Sidney’s *imprese* two years after his patron’s death (in 1588) but also provided one Latin poem deciphering this specific one:

When one who is whiter than the swan,
and milder than the young lamb, wears
the sign of the melancholy old man, mortal things [...] are in flux; [...] a new cycle of destinies is being born in the heavens [...]. No blemish is found on the peerless body: there is, and can be, no place for spots. Neither the stigma of dishonor, nor the human hand, has branded this sheep [...]. The signs you see were impressed by the hand of the Sky-thundering old man: he marks this sheep as belonging by right to the gods, as belonging to him.
(trans. Coulman)

Thus, the master of melancholy branded Sidney as belonging to him but in no way stained him: Rather, he marked him as surpassing the sphere of mortals in a time of turmoil, remaining the unspoiled hero. This same *imprese* was used as the device of the “melancholy shepherd” Philisides in the *Arcadia* (*New Arcadia* 482) when he jousts at an Iberian tilt, as a shepherd knight, his armour “dressed with wool”, his lance – bearing the device “Spotted to be known” – looking like a sheep hook (255). In this way, Sidney claimed identity with one of his literary figures, thus bridging the gap between literature and real life, extending his self-fashioning into a literary work.

All this alludes to the powers and possibilities of the genre of the *Arcadia*, the pastoral romance which was traditionally considered to be the place

of peaceful, secluded harmony and also of melancholy. This emerges from Sidney’s description of the *Arcadia* at the beginning of the text itself: “The country of Arcadia among all the provinces of Greece hath ever been had in singular reputation; [...] principally for the well-tempered minds of the people”; and “[e]ven the Muses seem to approve their good determination by choosing this country for their chief repairing place” so that “the very shepherds have their fancies lifted to so high conceits that the learned of other nations are content to [...] imitate their cunning” and their poetry (Sidney, *New Arcadia* 16). This country, which produces such excellent people, becomes “a resort for melancholics” (see Schleiner 225), while at the same time the *Arcadia* followed the adventures and fights of two young noblemen. It thereby became a mixed genre of (melancholic) pastoral and (heroic) epic which fused adventurous chivalric heroics with the inspired heroics of the melancholic *ingenium* under the sign of Saturn.

The mark of Saturn was also used as a means of identification by other courtiers. The Earl of Essex, for instance, used the astrological symbol of Saturn to sign a letter of advice to a fellow courtier, Fulke Greville, Philip Sidney’s best friend, in 1589 (Bacon 211, 797).

Apart from this direct association with melancholy, the main theme of the courtiers’ and soldiers’ lyrics also corresponded to melancholy. Neo-Petrarchan love sonnets, complaining about unwarranted love that usually stood not only for erotic longing but also for political relations, were at the heart of the literary output of these courtier poets (May; Norbrook 141). And exactly this sublimated erotic longing was considered as love melancholy. As Robert Burton explained in his *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), “heroical, or love-melancholy, is more eminent above the rest, and properly called love. [...] It is] called heroical, because commonly gallants, Noblemen, and the most generous spirits are possessed with it” (39). By writing and reciting poems on unrequited love, these nobles could display their “generous spirits”. For instance, in Sidney’s *Arcadia*, the “unluckie love” by Amphialus fills his mind “with melancholie” (*New Arcadia* 441), and a sonnet written “to the tune of *The smokes of Melancholy*” declares the speaker who has “felt the pangs of love” as “the modell of misshape, / Engulfed in despaire”. He asks: “Come learners then to me” and “[t]read in my steppes, or follow not”, thus praising the speaker as a role model for learners of melancholic grief (Sidney, *Poems* 153).

This love melancholy could turn into a more overtly political statement when connected to the social type of the *malcontent* as a “disgruntled or seditious traveler” that was being established in England from about 1580 (Babb 75). In his *Dispraise of a Courtly Life*, Philip Sidney let a “wandering malcontent” speak, “[o]n lamenting wholly set”, who was “[o]nce to Shepheard’s God retaining, / Now in servile Court remaining”. This malcontent stated: “Greater was that shepheard’s pleasure / Then this false, fine, Courtly pleasure”. The only hope remaining for the malcontent is “my two loves’ sake”, his two best friends, “[i]n whose love I pleasure take, [...] / Of all men [...] / Grant me with those two remaining”. Sidney asked the god of the shepherds for the intimate company of friends as the only remedy to courtly disfavour (Sidney, *Poems* 262–263). Similarly, the motif of hindrance was central to Essex’s “utilitarian” poetry (May 109), and Paul Hammer suggests that the poems have a “plaintive nature” more expressive than would be possible to ascribe to literary tradition and genre standards (330). When Essex was in trouble, he wrote about his relation to the queen: “Her thoughts and myne such disproportion have: / All strength of love is infinite in mee; / She useth the advantage tyme and fortune gave / [...] But I, poore I, must suffer and knowe noe cause” (May 254).

As we have seen, by fashioning themselves with the melancholic *ingenium* and by exploiting the genre tradition of heroic love melancholy, the military nobles rendered their own literary activities as being part of the heroic sphere and extended the possibilities of heroic self-fashioning to the melancholic *ingenium*.

3.2 Performing Chivalry, Performing Melancholy

The actual physical sphere of the military nobles was also being humoured. The traditional military culture of nobles was displayed in the language of chivalry (see Davis 235–239). As David Trim notes, there had been “a significant hiatus” in chivalric writing for about a century before the “revival led by Sidney” (110). This revival led to an exuberant display of chivalric modes as the *Cortegiano* required: Whenever the courtier would “engage in arms in public show”, he was advised to “be as elegant and handsome in the exercise of arms as he is adroit, and to feed his spectators’ eyes with all those things that he thinks may give him added grace” (Castiglione 72–73). This advice was carried out in splendid

ways but, I would argue, was also transformed. The knight came to be displayed – not always, but often – in a melancholic way, thus projecting some of the virtues and resources of melancholy (such as pensiveness, solitariness and longing for something not present but neither lost entirely) into the medieval world of chivalric culture.

Sidney’s poetic theory of literature arousing virtuous action was put into practice here – in rituals and other planned performances according to costume and traditions, but also in “dramatic” actions that Raleigh and Essex were known for (Javitch 74): When Walter Raleigh was imprisoned in the Tower in 1592 and saw the ship of the queen passing by on the Thames, he put on such a passionate performance of raging love sickness that Arthur Gorges wrote in a letter: “I feare Sir W. Rawly; wyll shortly growe [to be] Orlando furioso” (Bates 139). And even the queen herself showed one of her leading courtiers, Lord Burghley, that she was able to partake in this chivalric performance of courtly closeness and melancholic retreat: When he excused himself from a public entertainment given for Elizabeth, he cited melancholy as a cause; she would not have this as an answer and, in a mock Chancery charter, demanded Burghley to fulfil his duties as a courtier by attending – and, at the same time, applying the language of melancholy retreat to her letter which entered into the social play of the royal entertainment. She ordered him “too abiure desolacon & mourning (the consumers of sweetnes) too the Frozen Seas and deserts of Arabia Petrosa, uppon payn of fyve hundred despights too their terror & contempt of their torment, if they attempt any part of your hoous agayn” (Heaton 27).

Sometimes, the connection between melancholy and chivalry was also explicitly named through reference to the “melancholic knight”. In 1592, a text was written for a performance, presumably for the second Woodstock entertainment of the same year, *The melancholie Knights complaint in the wood*. It asked: “What troupes are theis, which ill aduised, presse / Into this more, then most unhappie place?” This place was the “verie seate of malcontentednesse: / Ladies with loues, and louers with disgrace / [...] Both malcontent; [...] for our most foolish wooing.” The themes of the courtly love sonnets were thus presented in a visible display in front of the monarch: “Dispaire is all our hope; distrust our staie; / contempt our fauour; our reward disdaine”. Until being released, the knights are passive and are confined to inaction: “Meane-while this groue must be our resting-place; / we knights as

treese, whom rootes of faith doe binde” (Inner Temple Library, London, MS Petyt 538 vol. 43, fol. 300v). And at the Accession Day in 1600, George Clifford, the 3rd Earl of Cumberland, presented himself in his speech to the queen as a “melancholy knight” who “hath made ladders for others to clymbe, and his feet nayled to the ground” and who “now rowleth up and downe, in open feild, a field of shaddow” (Heaton 78): As in the complaint cited above, despite helplessly trying time and again, any movement is futile. That this reworking of the courtly model of chivalric display unravelled not entirely without fractions can be seen from the mocking that gained currency at the turn of the sixteenth century, from Thomas Nashe’s *Unfortunate Traveller* (1594) to Samuel Rowland’s *Melancholy Knight* (1615) (generally, Davis 97, 99–133).

This humourised reading of the chivalric language also gave way to an increased valuation of the contemplative parts of chivalric culture. It is important to note that at the end of the sixteenth century, the radical opposition between virtuous physical activity and problematic contemplative passivity was blurred. Montaigne, for example, demanded to “leave aparte this out-worne comparison, betweene a solitarie and an active life” (Montaigne, *Essays*, trans. John Florio, as cited in Gowland 116). Rather, people concerned with the public good should be able to detach from political affairs and socialise in secluded groups of like-minded learned individuals to foster reflections and exchange ideas for the good of the common weal (Gowland 116–117), as Philip Sidney’s mentor Hubert Languet would advise in 1574: “[F]ind comrades in whose honest company you can take pleasure and dispel that sometimes excessive melancholy of yours” (Sidney, *Correspondence* I 101). And in 1580 he remarked to Sidney: “You sometimes used to say that [...] nothing would give you greater pleasure [...] than to spend your life in civilized leisure with your friends, if that were ever permitted you” (999).

Sidney’s *Arcadia* also suggests a preference for contemplative over active life (Norbrook 82–83; for the opposite view, Lindenbaum 191–192). Here, one of the young protagonists, Pyrocles, exclaims to the elder ruler Musidorus:

yet see I the bounds of all those knowledges, but the workings of the mind I find much more infinite than can be led unto by the eye, or imagined by any that distract their thoughts without themselves; and in such contemplations [...], I enjoy

my solitariness, and my solitariness perchance is the nurse of these contemplations. [...] Condemn not therefore my mind sometime to enjoy itself. (Sidney, *New Arcadia* 50)

This is a redemption of solitariness for purposes of extending the limits of one’s own mind and imagination which fits well with some thoughts of Italian Renaissance humanism: It is a celebration of the *ingenium* which, in turn, is questioned by Musidorus as he “framed in his mind a reply against it in the praise of honourable action (in showing that such a kind of contemplation is but a glorious title to idleness)” (52) but which he did not actually utter because he was moved by Pyrocles’s statement. The *Arcadia* suggests that as long as Pyrocles keeps himself good company, he may enjoy the seclusion (ibid.). Thus, Sidney himself advocated in his literary work the reconciliation of the contemplative sphere with the heroic sphere of the military, as the young protagonist Pyrocles was fashioned in many ways as a hero of martial adventures (Lindenbaum). This created a new space made possible in part through the adoption of melancholy pensiveness as a legitimate mode of noble display.

The traditional model of heroics, as it had been celebrated in engravings, courtly performances such as tournaments, and panegyrics, was connected with the language of chivalry (for its perseverance well into the seventeenth century, see Davis 239). By humouring it – which means: by fusing melancholy into the knight and his performances –, this language of chivalry was also transformed and opened up imaginative and real spaces that had not always been associated with the heroic knight.

4. Conclusion: The Uses of Melancholy

Is there more to this late Elizabethan noble display than “just a fashionably melancholic pose” (for a narrower context, Alexander 187)? If the historical usefulness of late Elizabethan melancholy had been confined to a short-lived fad without any deeper layers of meaning, it would be difficult to explain the enduring presence and increasing popularity of the melancholic fashioning well into the 17th century, for generations and in many parts of Western Europe (Weber, esp. 174–189).

Another claim about the courtier generation considered here is that they used melancholy mainly to display their thwarted personal ambitions,

thus turning the melancholic self-fashioning into a mere superficial expression of individual career planning. This cannot be maintained empirically. Gavin Alexander, for instance, pointed out that the poems of Robert Sidney – the younger and surviving brother of Philip Sidney – were at their most melancholic when his career and finances were at their best (Alexander 187). Thus, by no means may all melancholy display be explained by personal disillusionment or political propaganda.

As L.C. Knights notes, social and economic factors need to be taken into account when explaining the melancholic fashion, pointing at a heightened awareness of death due to wars and plagues or an increase in learned men who did not see enough opportunities for their own advancement (319–332). Some scholars have turned to Hegel and Freud, as Bryan Lowrance has done (121, 183–184, 245–246, 270–271), or to Norbert Elias, as Wolf Lepenies has proposed (47–52 on the “king’s mechanism”), to explain the melancholy of the early modern nobles in response to the rise of the bureaucratic, centralised state and the absolutist embrace of homogenised subjects. Lowrance has put forward the hypothesis that “*political* impossibility is the source of heroism’s *poetic* power”: The crafted hero of literature begins his rise when the “possibility of real-world heroes” is about to be extinguished (20–21). But these insights cannot be upheld when the recent historiography on early modern nobility is taken into account: There was not simply a “crisis of aristocracy” in which the nobility was cut off from military and political service, as Lawrence Stone posits for the decades around 1600. Rather, the need for nobles to administer the still fragmented political regimes and use their patronage networks was great, as was the continuing demand to use their military experience and prowess (Manning 16–24).

By writing themselves, the literary courtiers were able to influence the picture emerging from the representations in which they partook and which formed in an especially powerful way the political culture of the time – literature became, as Colin Burrow notes, “a crucial tool of government” (13). The literary courtiers became the ones steering not only a cultural trend but also crucial political developments. Blair Worden has shown, for instance, that Sidney’s *Arcadia* was a thinly veiled critique against the Anjou match⁴ (as part of a “concerted aesthetic campaign” with other courtiers from the Leicester circle; Burrow 14). And by integrating the retreat as an indispensable part of the aesthetics of melancholy into their

self-fashioning, the courtier nobles were able to legitimise an autonomous space for their own conceits and for court critique. What could have been a refuge, a seclusion, became intrinsically connected with the sphere of military prowess – the very visible sphere in which any male aristocrat could advance to an important position at court. Encompassing suffering and passion, retreat from and return to public life, and literary activity, this self-fashioning enlarged the heroic sphere by means of melancholy. This opened up new spaces for this social figuration and distinguished it from other groups. In the process, different spheres were combined, giving the nobles a chance to appear consistently in the manifold roles they played – from courtier to diplomat, from poet to soldier. Even though Sidney was by no means a “systematic thinker” (Howell 35), he was a coherent fashioner: His displays of the roles and characteristics of young courtiers in late Elizabethan England were bound together by the joint aesthetics of melancholy. Thus, as has been said in a different context, “his figure provides an image of unity in the midst of social and cultural conflict” (Matz 56). This happened without denying the inner struggles and pressures from different sides – because of the extreme openness of melancholy for the most diverse interpretations (Brady et al.). Still, as Adam Kitzes notes, melancholy was a “conglomeration – really, the lumping together – of several different strands of thinking” that were not “entirely compatible with one another” (10).

The melancholic self-fashioning could also help nobles tap into new resources, which I will only mention in passing. The traditional military model of the hero was uniformly gendered as masculine, as virile and physically aggressive – while the accompanying model of melancholy could be gendered as at least more feminine (on positive melancholy as accessible to noble women, see Dawson 96–99 against Schiesari). This, in turn, could open the heroic sphere for women, which is validated by Sidney’s *New Arcadia*. One part of it centres on the heroine Pamela and her steadfastness while suffering in captivity (*New Arcadia* book 3, esp. 418–426). It has been claimed that her action “transforms the heroic life” to a new model (Craft 5–6).

By using the aesthetic language of melancholic display in a heroic mode, the military nobles turned problems into advantages. Not only were they able to give their actions and behaviour, their retreats from hostile environments and their venturing into new spaces a coherent look, but they were also able to regain a cultural advantage by

setting a new cultural paradigm. In many ways the creator of their own appearance, their own story and their own web of significance, these courtier-soldier-poets were weaving and wearing their imaginative fabric with traces of melancholy, humouring the hero they performed. In conclusion, it can be stated that melancholy assumed an important role in the heroic self-fashioning of the social figuration circling around Philip Sidney. Further research will be needed to substantiate its place and importance in connection to other modes of heroisation (like suffering and death in the Christian tradition) and to other social figurations, spaces and times.

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1 Figuration is used as a term for a constellation of people who share a certain social status and cultural codes but are not necessarily a coherent group. The term was introduced by Norbert Elias to describe the court society as a whole. It has been adapted for the research on the social foundations of heroics (von den Hoff et al. 9).

2 See Campana 10: The 1590s were an epoch in which “intense forms of affect and sensation were [...] in flux”.

3 For a concise overview of the Renaissance reception of the antique conceptions of humours, temperaments and especially melancholy that encompasses a lot more thinkers and strands of thought than the classic work by Klibansky et al., see Schleiner 20–28.

4 The Anjou match was the courting of Queen Elizabeth by the French king's youngest son, the Catholic Duke of Anjou, in the late 1570s, which threatened the position of the court party led by Leicester and Francis Walsingham, who strove for an aggressive, militant foreign policy helping the Protestant cause (see Worden 89–114).

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Jakob Willis

Emotions and Affects of the Heroic – An Analysis of Pierre Corneille's Drama *Nicomède* (1651)

1. Approaching Heroism

A hero or heroine is an exceptional figure characterised by virtues and qualities such as activity, courage, strength, power, greatness and sacrifice. Regardless of those distinguishing features, heroes would not be heroes without communities declaring them as such. The attribution of hero status depends on a community's strategies of medial representation and appropriation, and heroes are rarely conceived as being apathetic, nor do they leave anyone indifferent. Quite on the contrary: it is widely acknowledged that heroes live personally through emotions and affects¹ such as pride, anger and compassion, and that they arouse a range of strong emotions and affects among the groups who admire, love, follow, envy, fear or hate them. More precisely, persons conceived and figures constructed as heroes, such as Joan of Arc, Louis II de Bourbon-Condé, Georges Jacques Danton, Napoléon Bonaparte, Jean Moulin and Charles de Gaulle, are considered as personalities "endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities" (Weber 243²), and so are often depicted as charismatic leaders having a strong emotional or affective impact on their entourage. As for Napoleon, both on the level of factual historical testimony and on the level of fictitious artistic imagination, artists from Stendhal and Victor Hugo to Abel Gance as well as historiographers and biographers³ repeatedly place emphasis on the hero's charismatic authority and the emotions or affects involved in the interpersonal relations between himself and his enthusiastic admirers and followers.

The idea of a close link between heroes, charisma and emotions or affects goes back to Max Weber's and Pierre Bourdieu's sociological work on charisma and charismatic authority (Weber 241–250 and 1111–1155; Bourdieu 7–29) and

has recently been applied in the fields of cultural and literary theory by scholars such as Jean-Marie Apostolides,⁴ Bernhard Giesen⁵ and Eva Horn.⁶ Within the context of these approaches and the general framework of SFB 948 (see von den Hoff et al. 8), I intend to analyze the emotions and affects of the heroic in relation to Pierre Corneille's drama *Nicomède* (published in 1651), pursuing two major goals: On a broader theoretical level, this essay deals with different understandings of the terms feelings, passions, emotions and affects, which are still seldom conceptualised with sufficient clarity, and proposes an analytical perspective on heroism which combines approaches from the history of emotions and from the theorisation of affect. On a hermeneutical level of literary analysis, I will then explain the emotional and affective dimensions in Corneille's literary construction of his hero *Nicomède* within the historical context of social norms concerning emotionality and affectivity as well as theories on the emotional and affective impact of theatre in France during Corneille's lifetime.

In one of the paratexts to *Nicomède*, Corneille made a paradoxical assertion: "Voici une pièce d'une constitution assez extraordinaire", he wrote in the letter to the reader preceding the play: "La tendresse et les passions, qui doivent être l'âme des tragédies, n'ont aucune part en celle-ci ; la grandeur de courage y règne seule" (Corneille, *Œuvres II* 639). The heroic figure at the centre of the play, *Nicomède*, is said to be "un prince intrépide, qui voit sa perte assurée sans s'ébranler". He fights courageously against his enemies and never struggles with his tragic destiny, nor does he try to arouse pity: "[I] ne cherche point à faire pitié". For this reason he even "sort un peu des règles de la tragédie" and is one of those rare impassive yet triumphant heroes who "n'excite que de l'admiration dans l'âme du spectateur" (ibid. 641). By thus

emphasising a poetics of admiration – one of the strongest passions in the general understanding of Corneille's time⁷ – the playwright not only contradicts the dominant Aristotelian model of *eleos* and *phobos*, of pity and fear, but also seems to contradict his own claim to have written a play in which love and passion play no part.

Besides the general interest in outlining a theoretical approach for analysing the literary dimension of the emotions and the affects of the heroic, the obvious incoherence of Corneille's assertions concerning his tragedy *Nicomède* serve as a reason for further investigation on the topic.

2. Emotions and Affects of the Heroic

I will now briefly define the terms I am working with and situate them in the current debate in the humanities on emotions and affects. As I will argue, one term with its related theories cannot be used to the exclusion of the other. However, they have to be carefully distinguished from each other in order to be made functional for different levels of the analysis.

First of all, I understand *emotion*, contrary to its colloquial usage, as the social display of what one might call a feeling, an affect, or – in Corneille's terms – a passion. An emotional expression is, as one of the leading theorists on the history of emotions, William Reddy, puts it, “an attempt to call up the emotion that is expressed, an attempt to feel what one says one feels.”⁸ In this sense, emotions do not necessarily reveal what one really feels; instead they have to be interpreted in social contexts of communication, such as literature. If we follow a related definition from Eric Shouse, who also places the emphasis on the social and communicative character of emotions, “[w]e broadcast emotion to the world; sometimes that broadcast is an expression of our internal state and other times it is contrived in order to fulfill social expectations” (n.p.). Regardless of whether or not an expressed and communicated emotion is triggered by an actual personal feeling (which would be better investigated in the fields of cognitive psychology and neuroscience), it must be understood as a special form of social interaction which can be analysed by various disciplines of the humanities, such as history, anthropology and cultural studies. In this perspective, I do not seek to reconstruct the ephemeral experience of a “real” emotion but rather take it as a means of communication and try to understand the aesthetic form

and the social meaning of the emotional message. We will never know what somebody really felt, but we can try to understand why he or she displayed a specific emotion in a specific context of social communication.

In *The Navigation of Feeling*, Reddy defines his concept of “emotional regimes” as “a set of normative emotions and the official rituals, practices and emotives that express and inculcate them” (129; see also his “Against Constructionism”, 332–351). Unlike “emotional styles”, emotional regimes with their norms and penalties seek conformity and are existentially defining for groups and individuals. In a given historical situation, every community, whether on a small and private or a large and public scale, enforces a specific emotional regime according to which its members have to feel or, more precisely, display what they feel. A hero's display of emotions, be it the legendary wrath of Achilles or, quite at the opposite end of the emotional spectrum, the not less legendary mercy and pacifism of figures such as Jesus Christ, Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela, can never be fully understood without regard to the dominant emotional regimes of the cultural configurations in which they lived. Literature and other arts play an important role in stabilising and destabilising emotional regimes: They can demonstrate their normativity, and they can provide “emotional refuge” – another term coined by Reddy – for deviant emotional discourses and practices. Within this theoretical framework I assume that it is possible to identify a specific heroic sub-regime within the broader emotional regime of a given historical community or even an entire society. As we will see, this sub-regime of the heroic has implications for the display of emotions of both heroes and their social entourage – in actuality as well as in literature. More than any other genre of literature, the textual and performative dramatic art both portrays and constitutes a social context of emotional communication, confronting the dominating emotional regime of a specific historical situation with deviant forms of emotional refuge.

While an emotion is to be seen as a phenomenon of communication, language and discourse, an affect is a “non-conscious experience of intensity”, a “passage from one experiential state of the body to another” (Shouse n.p.). Derived from Spinoza's theory of the *affectus*, which focuses on the interaction of bodies, scholars such as Brian Massumi, Nigel Thrift, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Eric Shouse have developed theories on a pre-rational, pre-intentional and pre-conscious mode of interpersonal relations.

Most of these leading affect theorists suggest, as Ruth Ley puts it, that the “affects must be viewed as independent of, and in an important sense prior to, ideology – that is, prior to intentions, meanings, reasons, and beliefs – because they are nonsignifying, automatic processes that take place below the threshold of conscious awareness and meaning” (437).

In this sense, affects are regarded as primordial forces in social life which play an important role in the scale of human experience at any time or place and in any culture. Some affect theorists go beyond the interpersonal relations of organic bodies and extend their analyses to the relations between human beings and animals, human beings and architecture, human beings and works of art, etc. Robert Seyfert, for instance, integrates a wide range of bodies into a theory of social affect which is no longer restricted to the field of human experience but understands affect explicitly as a “transmission between and among bodies” (27) within and beyond a human scale. The modes of transmission Seyfert refers to include “language, symbols, touch, smell, indirect nervous transmissions, electricity, etc.” (35) and do not presuppose a physical co-presence of the affecting and the affected body but can also be intellectual, spiritual and imaginary, as in the case of affective reactions to religious, moral or political ideas (28).

If one takes a heroic figure as a social body capable of affecting other social bodies such as, for instance, human beings, one could try to explain the specific pattern of their interaction. In the context of this essay, which is mainly interested in the interrelationship between the presence of charismatic heroes and the affective responses from their admirers and followers, my investigation of the text will concentrate on the affects triggered, aroused or provoked within these social bodies. As we will see, different intensities in the affective reactions to heroic figures can be identified depending on whether the admirer is alone or in a group, whether he or she is reading a book, listening to a public lecture or attending a theatrical performance.

To summarise: On the one hand I conceive an emotion as an intentional form of a meaningful communicative utterance which can only be understood by means of a historical contextualisation, and on the other hand I follow the definition of an affect as a historically invariable form of pre-conscious, pre-intentional and pre-linguistic interaction between different bodies, such as human beings, symbols and works of art. Even

though an affect as a bodily reaction is prior to human understanding, meaning and sense, I seek to analyse it by rather traditional means of hermeneutical work. As a researcher in the humanities, my aim cannot be to understand the affects of the heroic based on a neural scan of a hero and his or her followers. My intent is rather to try to explain the pre-discursive phenomenon by analysing different kinds of discourses on it. After all, even phenomena sometimes considered to be “Diesseits der Hermeneutik” (Gumbrecht), such as the sublime, the holy, the merely sensual present or the bodily affective, carry meanings of the non-signifying, the pre-rational, etc. As such, they can be included in forms of hermeneutical, semiotic and discursive analysis.

3. *Nicomède* and the Historical Context of the Fronde Rebellion

Corneille’s *Nicomède* is set in the ancient city of Nicomedia located in northwestern Asia Minor around 180 BC. The story is about a young and triumphant prince, Nicomède, and his old and weak father, King Prusias. While Nicomède, who has been brought up and taught by Hannibal in all matters of the heroic,⁹ is winning one battle after another at the head of his army, Prusias falls under the evil influence of his second wife Arsinoé and the Roman ambassador Flaminius. They both are trying to get rid of Nicomède in order to establish Arsinoé’s son Attale as heir to the throne. But the two half-brothers Attale and Nicomède are competing not only for the throne but also for the same woman, Queen Laodice of Armenia.

On both the political and the amorous level, the play can be understood as an extensive discussion on heroic and unheroic behavior, language, emotions and affects. While the main character Nicomède and his beloved Laodice are portrayed as virtuous heroes from the beginning to the end of the play, Attale is introduced as a character full of hatred and envy. He nevertheless cannot but admire his heroic brother and ultimately becomes the second hero of the play by helping Nicomède to escape from the prison in which he is being held by King Prusias, Arsinoé and Flaminius. In an ultimate *coup de théâtre* which, as Corneille points out in the *Examen* preceding the 1660 edition of the text, is mainly a concession to the “gôut des spectateurs” (Corneille, *Œuvres II* 644), these characters also experience a change of heart due to Nicomède’s heroic conduct and his overwhelming charisma,

and the play ends in a melodramatic scene of reconciliation.

When *Nicomède* was first performed on stage in the Hôtel de Bourgogne in Paris in February 1651, France was in the middle of the *Fronde des Princes*, the aristocratic rebellion against Anne of Austria and Cardinal Mazarin, who sought to rule absolutely. The rebellion was led by illustrious members of the aristocracy such as the Prince de Conti, the Vicomte de Turenne, the future Cardinal de Retz, the Mademoiselle de Montpensier and the Prince de Condé, the famous Victor of Rocroi also known as the Grand Condé. He was considered to be one of the greatest military heroes of his time and was supported by a large majority of the population when he and several other *Frondeurs* were imprisoned by Mazarin's troops on 18 January 1650.¹⁰ There is little doubt that *Nicomède* reflects the political situation and can be read as an apologia for the cause of the *Frondeurs* and their leader, the Grand Condé.¹¹ What added considerably to the play's outstanding success at the time of its staging and cannot have been foreseen by its author was the fact that the Grand Condé was released from prison just a few days before the play premiered. The analogies between the fiction of the play and the historical events were striking; for a moment, a touch of real heroic destiny seemed to imbue Corneille's dramatic art.¹²

4. Emotions of the Heroic in *Nicomède*

As I have stated above, emotions always have to be analysed in social contexts of communication, where historically changing sets of knowledge, values and norms play a decisive role. This is why I suppose that it will only be possible to understand the hero's emotions by taking into account the general emotional regime of the play's time of creation or, more precisely, the contemporary emotional regime of the heroic. In doing so, I will try to find an answer to the question whether *Nicomède*'s emotional model can be interpreted as an affirmative expression of the dominant emotional regime of the heroic or rather as a deviant artistic alternative offering emotional refuge from the general normativity.

Already in the very first scene, when the hero is introduced in an intimate meeting with Laodice, we get to know his main emotional characteristic: not love, but fury: "Enflammé de courroux", burning with wrath like Achilles after the death of Patroclus, *Nicomède* hurries to the palace in order to take revenge for the murder of his mas-

ter and heroic role model Hannibal and to end the imprisonment of Laodice.

Lorsqu'à cette nouvelle, enflammé de courroux,
D'avoir perdu mon maître, et de craindre pour vous,
J'ai laissé mon Armée aux mains de Théagène,
Pour voler en ces lieux au secours de ma Reine.
(I, i, 29–33)¹³

The hero then rapidly uncovers more and more of the machinations of his stepmother and the Roman ambassador against the independence of his country and his personal future as the legitimate successor to the throne. In an emotional mixture of fury and pride, *Nicomède* ironically and aggressively confronts his opponents. In his eyes, Prusias is unable to defend his kingdom from Roman influence, Attale is nothing but his mother's puppet, Flaminius is Hannibal's assassin and Arsinoé, the archetypical stepmother, is the personification of all evil.

In act II, scene iii, *Nicomède* interrupts his father in the presence of Flaminius and declares his resoluteness to continue fighting for his own cause and that of his country:

Nicomède

Ou laissez-moi parler, Sire, ou faites-moi taire ;
Je ne sais point répondre autrement pour un Roi,
A qui dessus son trône on veut faire la loi.

Prusias

Vous m'offensez moi-même, en parlant de la sorte,
Et vous devez dompter l'ardeur qui vous emporte.

Nicomède

Quoi ? je verrai, Seigneur, qu'on borne vos États,
Qu'au milieu de ma course on m'arrête le bras,
Que de vous menacer on a même l'audace,
Et je ne rendrai point menace pour menace [...] ?
(II, ii, 624–632)

When Prusias tells his son to watch his tongue, we can only guess that he is in an emotional state of anger and fury greater than ever before. In light of the indignity of his father's behaviour and the maliciousness of Arsinoé, Attale and Flaminius, the young hero displays emotions of indignation, pride, ardour and anger – emotions that are meant to represent his noble character and temperament. Like a proud and dangerous animal – he is actually called a lion in act V, scene iii – *Nicomède* instinctively and violently defends his cause and that of his country. Qualities such as his "orgueilleux esprit" (II, iv, 729), "courage fier" (IV, iv, 1378) and "juste colère" (I, v, 355) as well as his being "prompt et bouillant" (ibid. 357) complete the description of the hero's temperament. For the most part, these qualities

represent the moral and emotional ideals of the French nobility in the first half of the seventeenth century, before a profound transformation on all levels of social life, including the emotional dimension, took place in connection with Louis XIV's rise to power.¹⁴

In his letter to the reader Corneille explicitly refers to the traditional ideals of French nobility when he announces that in the play “tous mes personnages [...] agissent avec générosité” (Corneille, *Œuvres II* 640). I would argue that the term *générosité* is the core element of the emotional regime of many of Corneille's famous heroes, such as the Cid, Horace, Cinna and Nicomède. It derives etymologically from the Latin *generosus* and refers to a man or woman's noble descent and the obligation to act in accordance with the principles of greatness, nobility and magnanimity: “Le généreux est toujours de souche noble et aucun bourgeois ne peut éprouver de la générosité, d'où l'absence de ces deux mots dans les premières comédies de Corneille” (Matoré 650).¹⁵ According to the Aristotelian model, bourgeois characters such as Éraste, Tircis and Alidor could only hold principal roles in Corneille's comedies. By differentiating between a bourgeois psychology and an aristocratic ideology in Corneille's modelling of heroes, Jean Starobinski in his 1954 essay on the playwright also underlines the direct connection of *générosité* and social standing: “[S]elon l'idéologie que Corneille partage avec les nobles, [...] [l]a grandeur et la générosité [...] sont un apanage reçu par droit de naissance” (726).

Even though the heroic aristocratic model of *générosité* and its emotional regime of pride, “véhémence” (Matoré 650) and impetuosity remain prevalent until the end of the *Ancien Régime*, it is primarily characteristic of the heroic ideals of the aristocracy before and during the *Fronde* rebellion. After the *Frondeurs'* final defeat in 1653, the French nobility had to adapt increasingly to the new political situation of absolutism with its emotional regime of courtly as well as urbane *honnêteté*. A fearless, proud and even partly ferocious hero rebelling against his own king was not to be seen on official French stages for a long time.¹⁶

As Margot Brink has pointed out recently, a historical transformation in the semantics of anger took place amidst these political and social changes: Anger, which for a long time was considered a “passion noble et héroïque” and was ostentatiously displayed in public, gradually transformed into a much more private “colère

civilisée”.¹⁷ In fact, the emotional regime of the heroic, as represented in literature, was considerably modified in the second half of the century. Influential authors such as Pascal, La Rochefoucauld, Madame de Scudéry, Madame de Lafayette and Bossuet helped to establish a new heroic regime based on quite different emotions, such as humility, compassion, friendship and love.¹⁸ The new social model of *honnêteté* and devoutness began to replace the more traditional model of feudal *générosité* and introduced its own concept of heroism.¹⁹ In a famous eulogy for the Grand Condé published in 1687, the Bishop of Meaux and court preacher to Louis XIV, Bossuet, begins by recalling the key elements of the emotional regime represented in Corneille's play with terms such as valour, magnanimity and vivacity. Ultimately, however, he does call them illusory and void unless accompanied by the religious emotions of piety and humanity:

A la gloire de la vérité, montrons, dans un prince admiré de tout l'univers, que ce qui fait les héros, ce qui porte la gloire du monde jusqu'au comble, valeur, magnanimité, bonté naturelle, voilà pour le cœur; vivacité, pénétration, grandeur et sublimité de génie, voilà pour l'esprit, ne seraient qu'une illusion si la piété ne s'y était jointe; et enfin, que la piété est le tout de l'homme. [...] Loin de nous les héros sans humanité! (Bossuet 3)

The emotional regime of Corneille's *Nicomède*, which can also be understood as a portrait of the Grand Condé, places the emphasis on quite different aspects of the heroic figure. Within a few decades, radical social and moral transformations (Bénichou 1967) took place which required another culture of emotional expression. This is why, compared to the dominant literary models of the second half of the seventeenth century, such as Jean Racine's tragic heroes and Madame de Lafayette's sentimental ones, Corneille's proud heroes appear as emotional outcasts because of their outdated, sometimes even censored and persecuted conception of strong aristocratic individuality.

5. Affects of the Heroic in *Nicomède*

Having thus analysed the emotional characteristics of the hero Nicomède, I now want to focus on the affective response from his entourage. As exceptional individuals, heroes often thrust themselves into the public spotlight. In doing so, they trigger strong euphoric or dysphoric affects

among their followers and enemies which can be summarised as veneration, admiration and love on the one hand, and fear, shame and hatred on the other. Even though such reactions, be they expressed in reality or in works of art, also need to be historically and culturally contextualised according to the emotional norms and taboos of a given situation, I assume that we are dealing here with a phenomenon of a certain anthropological universality which can be better explained by means of theories on affect than by those on the history of emotions. The strong euphoric as well as the dysphoric reactions so typical of a hero's entourage are direct affective responses to his (often physical) presence. They operate on a pre-rational and pre-intentional level and can thus not be compared with the intentionality of emotional communication. As a figure both fascinating and frightening, a hero belongs, at least to a certain degree, to the sphere of the transcendent, the sacred and the holy, and can therefore be considered a *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* (Otto) which has its effect on the spectators beyond or, more precisely, before their rational, moral and emotional evaluation.

One of the most typical affective responses to the heroic in Corneille's *Nicomède* is the acclamation and admiration of the charismatic hero. As we have already seen above, the hero Nicomède, who acts in accordance with the emotional regime of noble and heroic *générosité*, is a brave and virtuous fighter who wins the admiration of his supporters as well as his enemies. Most of all, however, he is admired by the anonymous people acclaiming him for his extraordinary talents and qualities as a triumphant military leader. Already in act I, scene i, Laodice assures Nicomède that the people love him as much as they hate King Prusias and that it is not the latter but Nicomède who reigns over a large quantity of souls:

Le Peuple ici vous aime, et hait ces cœurs infâmes,
Et c'est être bien fort que régner sur tant d'âmes.
(I, i, 115–116)

While the signs of Nicomède's great support among the people are encouraging for Laodice, they are frightening for the hero's father, the weak King Prusias. He is aware of the fact that "[d]es Héros tells que lui, ne sauraient obéir", and considers Nicomède's unauthorised return from the army as "un pur attentat sur [son] autorité" (II, i, 374). In the presence of the captain of his guard, Araspe, Prusias expresses his fear of the hero's vengeance for the killing of Hannibal and the imprisonment of Laodice:

[N]e nous flattons point, il court à sa vengeance,
Il en a le prétexte, il en a la puissance,
Il est l'Astre naissant qu'adorent mes États,
Il est le Dieu du Peuple et celui des soldats :
Sûr de ceux-ci, sans doute il vient soulever l'autre,
Fondre avec son pouvoir sur le reste du nôtre.
(II, i, 447–452)

Prusias not only calls Nicomède a rising star, which was a symbol often used for heroic political leadership from Roman antiquity until the reign of Louis XIV and even Napoléon Bonaparte,²⁰ he also calls him the god of the people and the soldiers, equally adored in all of his kingdom's provinces. Nicomède is now coming – such is Prusias' terrifying thought – to make use of the strong euphoric affect he has over the people in order to stir up ("soulever") a rebellion against him. And he is actually quite right about that. The rebelling Nicomède becomes more and more aware of his charismatic authority and threatens Prusias explicitly:

Soulever votre peuple, et jeter votre armée
Dedans les intérêts d'une reine opprimée ;
Venir, le bras levé, la tirer de vos mains,
Malgré l'amour d'Attale et l'effort des Romains,
Et fondre en vos pays contre leur tyrannie
Avec tous vos soldats et toute l'Arménie,
C'est ce que pourrait faire un homme tel que moi,
S'il pouvait se résoudre à vous manquer de foi.
(IV, ii, 1247–1254)

While Nicomède still makes use of the subjunctive and does not really stir up the army against Prusias, Laodice soon afterwards actually does. When it becomes evident that Arsinoé, Prusias, Attale and Flaminius are hatching a plot against Nicomède and keep him locked in the castle, she incites an uprising in his name. The intensity of the supporters' irrational affectivity, which becomes even stronger through the effects of group dynamics,²¹ finally leads to a situation of political chaos and instability.

In act V, scene i, Arsinoé claims not to be afraid of the people's mutiny ("J'ai prévu ce tumulte, et n'en vois rien à craindre : [c]omme un moment l'allume, un moment peut l'éteindre", (1479–1480), but Flaminius, her Roman accomplice who knows about the dangerous dynamics of popular uprisings ("Rome autrefois a vu de ces émotions"), is not quite sure that Arsinoé will succeed in calming the excited crowd: "Madame, voyez donc si vous serez capable [d]e rendre également ce Peuple raisonnable." In his opinion, only tough measures can help calm

the “rabble”, as in former Roman days, “[q]uand il fallait calmer toute une populace, [l]e Sénat n’épargnait promesse ni menace, [e]t rappelait par là son escadron mutin” (V, ii, 1539–1549).

As the tension of the situation keeps on rising, the crowd’s fury finally leads to the killing of Métrobate and Zénon, two stooges of Arsinoé. In this situation, Cléone, the confidante of Arsinoé, exclaims:

Tout est perdu, Madame, à moins d’un prompt remède :
Tout le Peuple à grands cris demande Nicomède;
Il commence lui-même à se faire raison,
Et vient de déchirer Métrobate, et Zénon.
(V, iv, 1563–1566)

A short time later, the crowd is even about to storm the palace and fight the King’s guards in order to liberate the hero. In act V, scene v, Araspe, who is watching over the imprisoned Nicomède, expresses his fear of not being able to resist much longer:

Seigneur, de tous côtés le peuple vient en foule ;
De moment en moment votre garde s’écoule ;
Et suivant les discours qu’ici même j’entends,
Le prince entre mes mains ne sera pas longtemps.
(V, v, 1579–1582)

Nicomède has an almost magnetic effect on the people. He attracts his followers from everywhere (“de tous côtés le peuple vient en foule”). In this situation of intense political crisis, the impotent King Prusias acts with a mixture of resignation and defiance and in a strong cynical tone tells his guard Araspe and his wife Arsinoé to “liberate” Nicomède, the people’s “idole”, that is, to kill him and present his head to the crowd:

Obéissons, Madame, à ce Peuple sans foi,
Qui las de m’obéir, en veut faire son Roi ;
Et du haut d’un balcon, pour calmer la tempête,
Sur ses nouveaux Sujets faisons voler sa tête.
(V, v, 1585–1588)²²

However, Arsinoé and Flaminius reject the King’s proposition and pressure him to present himself to the crowd in order to win some time for the evacuation of the prisoner through a secret door of the palace.

Montrez-vous à ce peuple, *Arsinoé* insiste, et flattant son courroux,
Amusez-le du moins à débattre avec vous :
Faites-lui perdre temps, tandis qu’en assurance
La galère s’éloigne avec son espérance.
(V, v, 1621–1624)

Even before the King has the time to do what is asked of him, Laodice, who does not yet know anything about the latest machinations, approaches Arsinoé and makes her a generous offer to protect her and her accomplices. Although she has massively contributed to inciting this affective response from Nicomède’s followers up to this point of the play, she now begins to see the people’s rebellion as a crime and feels obliged to restore “solidarité entre têtes couronnées” (Corneille, *Œuvres II* 1494). The crowd’s furious energy is beginning to frighten her, too:

Et je viens vous chercher pour vous prendre en ma garde,
Pour ne hasarder pas en vous la Majesté
Au manque de respect d’un grand Peuple irrité.
Faites venir le roi, rappelez votre Attale,
Que je conserve en eux la Dignité royale:
Ce Peuple en sa fureur peut les connaître mal.
(V, vi, 1676–1681)

Instead of accepting Laodice’s offer, Arsinoé condescendingly turns it down and callously tells her about the intended evacuation of Nicomède. But in the meantime, the hero has already been freed by Attale, one of his secret admirers, and appears such as a *deus ex machina* at the beginning of the very last scene of the play. Quite contrary to his prior revengeful and violent behaviour, he now presents himself as a pacifier who forgives his enemies and pleads for a merciful treatment of the rebelling people (“Pardonnez à ce peuple un peu trop de chaleur”).²³ Very surprisingly, he even starts to speak about his liberators in a pejorative form which until then was only used by Flaminius, and announces that he has finally calmed the furious “rabble” by going before them personally: “Tout est calme, Seigneur: un moment de ma vue [a] soudain apaisé la Populace émue” (V, ix, 1779–1780).

More than anything else, it is the bodily presence of the charismatic hero Nicomède which has a decisive impact on the affective state of the crowd. In one and the same person, he is the military leader who, in the middle of his army, stimulates and encourages his men and the merciful pacifier who cools the affective heat of the angry crowd. As a matter of fact, in his previous play *Le Cid* (1637), Corneille already put an emphasis on the hero’s power to provoke strong affects through his bodily presence (“J’allais de tous côtés encourage les nôtres, [f]aire avancer les uns, et soutenir les autres” (*Le Cid* IV, iii, 1315–1316), but it is *Nicomède* which more than ever before or after in Corneille’s texts deals with the idea of the affective dimension of

the hero's physical presence. Besides the scene in which the crowd is pacified, numerous other lines from *Nicomède* express this characteristic aspect of charismatic heroism: "[I]l faut votre présence à soutenir ma foi" (I, i, 46); "Tout ce qu'il a fait parle au moment qu'il m'approche ; Et sa seule présence est un secret reproche" (II, i, 419–420); "Le peuple qui vous voit, la cour qui vous contemple, Vous désobéiraient sur votre propre exemple" (II, ii, 511–512). In his famous 1954 essay on the "effet de présence" and various other aspects of Corneille's dramatic work, Jean Starobinski underlines the seminal role of the visual mode of the hero's splendid appearance by interpreting it as the epitome of power: "Qu'est-ce que la toute-puissance, sinon le privilège de n'avoir qu'à se montrer pour être obéi ?" (714)²⁴

But what happens when the text's hero receives a physical manifestation on the stage? Many scholars of French literature have already pointed out that Corneille can be seen as the "inventeur d'un théâtre de l'admiration" (Starobinski 722²⁵), and the playwright himself largely substantiated this thesis by emphasising a poetics of admiration in the letter to the reader that precedes *Nicomède*: Nicomède, the "prince intrépide" who always acts nobly and heroically, "n'excite que de l'admiration dans l'âme du spectateur". Corneille continues to explain this affect with a strong polemic intent against the dominant Aristotelian model of catharsis: "[L]a fermeté des grands cœurs [...] est quelquefois aussi agréable, que la compassion que notre art nous commande de mendier pour leurs misères" (Corneille, *Œuvres II* 641).²⁶ However, the impact on the spectator is not only meant to be affectively and aesthetically pleasant ("agréable"); it is also considered to be morally instructive. In the *Examen* of his 1660 edition, Corneille takes up the core arguments of the letter to the reader and adds a reflection on the moral effect of admiration: "L'amour qu'elle nous donne pour cette vertu que nous admirons, nous imprime de la haine pour le vice contraire" (ibid. 643).²⁷

As Christian Biet and Emma Gilby have shown, various critics of Corneille's time not only saw the pleasure and moral benefits, but mainly stressed the dangers of a poetics of admiration and its potential to provoke strong affects, above all during the public staging of the plays. As an affect, admiration is pre-rational as well as pre-moral and could also lead to the veneration of anti-heroic figures such as rogues, criminals and villains – provided that they present themselves as extraordinary, fascinating and charismatic figures.²⁸

"Au XVIIIème siècle", Biet explains, "l'admiration figure d'abord la stupeur et la surprise devant ce que l'on ne comprend pas" (124). And in *L'œil vivant*, Jean Starobinski comments on the dangerous aesthetics of visual overpowering: "Être fasciné, c'est le comble de la distraction. C'est être prodigieusement inattentif au monde tel qu'il est" (11).

But not only were the affects of admiration perceived as problematic; passions produced in the theatre in general were seen quite critically. In the time of French classicism with its primacy of rational control, the impact of pre-rational affects was commonly considered a threat to mental health and the social order. In their different ideological and epistemological contexts, Jesuit critics such as Jean-François Senault, François Hédelin abbé d'Aubignac and Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, as well as Jansenist critics such as Pierre Nicole and Robert Arnaud d'Andilly, warned of the "contagious nature of passions" (Vinken 53) provoked by theatre performances and considered strategies for controlling affects deemed harmful and lacking any moral or social utility. In a recent article, however, Sylvaine Guyot and Clotilde Thouret point out that the general condemnation of strong affects was actually counterbalanced by an endorsement and "un intérêt accru pour le partage collectif des passions au théâtre" (Guyot and Thouret 238) among critics and writers such as Pierre Perrault and Adrien-Thomas Perdou de Subligny.²⁹ Whether they were full of praise or reproach, writers as well as critics and politicians in seventeenth-century France were very conscious of the ambivalent power that lies in affects. It would be of great interest to investigate accounts from actual experiences incited by the affects from Pierre Corneille's *Nicomède* during its public stagings by analysing letters, diary entries, notes by the theatre companies and other sources, and to compare them to the various other discourses mentioned on the affects of the heroic. However, this large task cannot be performed in this essay.

6. Conclusions

Reading the paratexts of Corneille's *Nicomède*, I wondered about the author's contradictory assertions concerning the status of the passions his play treats and provokes. At the same time, the play was said not to contain any passions at all and to be about a heroic figure one could but admire passionately. When I investigated this intriguing matter somewhat further, I noticed that I could find many "passions" where, according to

Corneille, “grandeur de courage” alone was supposed to reign. As I have shown, there are two different levels of analysis which are of seminal importance for a full understanding of the phenomenon. On the one hand, the play is about a certain set of emotions which are very much influenced by the historical concepts of heroic, that is, aristocratic, conduct (*générosité*) and which can best be investigated using methods from research on the history of emotions. On the other hand, the play is an intense reflection on the crowd’s affects (*admiration*), which are stimulated by the charismatic heroic leader Nicomède and which are best explained by approaches from theories on affect. The *emotions* of the heroic are exposed to historical change and can only be understood in their individual cultural context – the emotions displayed by such acknowledged heroic figures as Achilles, Jesus Christ, the Cid, Joan of Arc, Orlando Furioso, Napoléon, Jean Moulin and Nelson Mandela could hardly be more different. The *affects* of the heroic seem to follow a far more stable anthropological pattern and may possibly have universal validity. No matter where and when, each heroic figure is constructed and conceived as being gifted with some kind of charisma, that is, an extraordinary quality which produces an affective response of admiration and acclamation and establishes the hero’s authority amongst a group of followers.

As I have argued, the double perspective of historicisation and anthropologisation is necessary to come to a full understanding not only of the emotions and affects of the heroic but also of the heroic as a whole. Literary works such as Corneille’s *Nicomède* play a decisive role in both the discursive construction of emotions and the performative transmission of affects of the heroic.



Fig. 1: The frontispiece of the 1660 edition to Pierre Corneille’s drama *Nicomède*, originally engraved by Jean Mathieu.

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1 A differentiation between emotions and affects will take place in the second part of this essay. Until then both terms will be used simultaneously.

2 The citation is taken from one of Max Weber’s central definitions of charisma. While Weber is primarily interested in analysing forms of political charismatic leadership, I have adapted his concept in order to explain different forms of heroic leadership.

3 See Benjamin Marquart’s recent essay on the construction of the heroic Napoleonic legend by French biographers in the time between the Restoration and the Second Empire (15–26, esp. 18).

4 In his essay on heroism and victimisation, Apostolidès points out that “[g]race à son charisme, le héros possède en effet la faculté unique d’être un incarnateur, c’est-à-dire de rendre visible pendant un temps l’enveloppe communautaire soudant ensemble les individus en un groupe spécifique” (45). The essay was first published in 2003 by Exils Éditions in Paris.

5 Giesen writes about the “personal charismatic bond between heroes and their followers” and focuses on the symbolic, ritual and institutional representations and practices of heroes and victims (11).

6 Referring to Weber’s concept of charisma as one form of political leadership, Horn points out that “charisma as *such* (or what he calls ‘pure charisma’) is a political form based on emotions and affects, on the ever-changing tides of trust, hope, fear and promises” (10).

7 In his book *Les passions de l’âme* (1649), René Descartes, a contemporary of Corneille, reflects upon the origins, the functions, and the right way to deal with passions. For him, “l’admiration est la première de toutes les passions”, closely linked to other passions such as pride and humility (see Descartes 190). Similarly, Charles Le Brun points out in his *Conférence sur l’expression des passions* (1678): “l’admiration est la première et la plus tempérée de toutes les passions” (see Le Brun 66). On the topic of admiration in the context of French and German drama theory, see also Biet 121–134 (esp. 124) and Gess 121.

8 William Reddy has developed a theory of *emotives* as types of speech acts with the key concepts of *emotional regime* and *emotional refuge*, which he applies to different historical formations of societies as a whole, specifically the French context between 1700 and 1850. In contrast, Barbara Rosenwein has coined the term *emotional communities*, referring to the possible coexistence of different *emotional regimes*. For a good overview of their theories, see Jan Plamper’s interview with William Reddy, Barbara Rosenwein, and Peter Stearns: Plamper 237–265. Reddy’s quote refers to page 240.

9 The construction of a heroic genealogy is one of the most frequent strategies of a person’s or a figure’s heroisation. This is why in Corneille’s play *Laodice* calls *Nicomède* the reincarnation of his master Hannibal: “vous me feriez peur, [...] [s]i le grand Annibal n’avait qui lui succède, S’il ne revivait pas au Prince *Nicomède*” (Corneille, *Nicomède* III, iii, 909–912).

10 According to Jonathan Dewald, the Grand Condé was a very well-known “popular hero”, above all in the middle of the century (210). In her recent biography, which must be read as a contemporary attempt at heroisation, Simone Bertière has called the Grand Condé a “héros fourvoyé”, a “hero who went astray”, referring to Condé’s role during the *Fronde* rebellion and his temporary alliance with the Spaniards.

11 Nevertheless, Jacques Delon has pointed out that “[l]e personnage de *Nicomède* ne renvoie [...] pas au seul Condé” and that when writing his tragedy Corneille was also inspired by other popular public figures of the *Fronde* rebellion such as the Cardinal de Retz and Pierre Broussel, a magistrate of Paris. As the hero *Nicomède* is above all known for his military achievements, I still assume it more probable that the Grand Condé served as the main contemporary model. As Delon also writes, “[l]e héros de la pièce ne doit pas grand-chose au récit des chroniques latines”, from which Corneille officially claims to have taken his characters (345–346).

12 For a meticulous reconstruction of the play’s historical dimension and its “interprétation pro-condéenne”, see the annotations in Corneille, *Œuvres II* 1471–1476. For an even broader discussion of the political implications of Corneille’s work during the time of the *Fronde* rebellion, see Couton 2008.

13 In her recent paper on heroism in early Irish literature, Sarah Erni has shown that the emotion of fury is also very typical of heroic figures such as the Ulster warrior Cú Chulainn (53–63). The *furor heroicus* is indeed a topos used in the construction of a great variety of literary heroes and heroines (see also Birkhan 9–39).

14 For a discussion of various aspects of these profound changes and their impact on the culture of heroism, see Bénichou as well as Hepp and Livet.

15 See the explication of the term *généreux* by Goerges Matoré in François Bluche’s *Dictionnaire du Grand Siècle*: Matoré 650. For the philosophical implications of the term, see also Schöpf.

16 The semantic change of the word *générosité* reflects this situation. *Générosité* signifies more and more a purely moral disposition which is no longer restricted to the specific social standing of aristocracy. In this sense it is still in use today.

17 See Brink 127–144. In her study on the short novels of French classicism, Roxanne Roy concludes that “[l]’emportement propre à la colère et au désir de vengeance pouvant compromettre l’ordre social [...] le courtisan doit donc apprendre à contenir ses transports violents” (293–294). As Norbert Elias has pointed out, the process of civilisation in seventeenth-century France can essentially be conceptualised as an increase in the moral penalisation of strong emotions such as anger, fury, and hate.

18 Jonathan Dewald explains the evolution of the seventeenth century’s discussions about social values with emotional implications such as friendship and love. His book offers many elements for a historical reconstruction of the constant shaping of new emotional regimes in light of the changing ideas of personal and civic (emotional) life (esp. 104–145).

19 On the topic of a new conception of heroism in the context of the culture of courtly and urbane *honnêteté*, see also Galland-Szymkowiak and Chariatte.

20 See Ernst H. Kantorowicz’s famous essay (published in 1963) on the solar iconography of political leadership.

21 In the context of theories on group and mass psychology from Gustave Le Bon and Sigmund Freud, Eva Horn emphasises the intensifying effect of the affective dynamics within groups admiring and following a charismatic leader (esp. 4–5).

22 The frontispiece of the 1660 edition of the play (Fig. 1), originally engraved by Jean Mathieu, is a visualisation of the king’s unfulfilled wish to calm the furious crowd.

23 The sudden moral conversion of *Laodice* and *Nicomède*, who show mercy to their enemies, is a dramatic turn which, in a similar manner, had already been applied by Corneille in his tragedy *Cinna ou la clémence d’Auguste* (1641). Given that *Laodice* and *Nicomède* are *de facto* in the position which *de jure* only belongs to the ruling king and queen, I assume that, within the dramatic universe of Corneille, mercy (*clémence*) is the most heroic virtue available to rulers.

24 Within the SFB 948, Andreas Gelz and Jakob Willis analyse the semantics of the hero’s splendour, radiance or brilliance in French literature between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries.

25 See also Georges, Biet, Rubidge, Lyons, Merlin-Kajman and Forestier.

26 Bradley Rubidge has shown that there is actually “an Aristotelian basis for including admiration in the category of the tragic emotions” as the latter “also discusses the role of the marvelous (*to thaumaston*) and of surprised astonishment (*ek-plêxis*)” (321). However, these notions were little known and discussed in Corneille’s time.

27 Joseph Harris has brought out clearly that, according to Corneille’s poetics, the moral benefit comes not only from emulation of virtues but also from repudiation of vices (669).

28 The dissociation of heroic and anti-heroic figures is indeed a very difficult, perhaps even impossible task, as the attribution of the respective status is essentially bound to certain perspectives of the followers and enemies of one and the same person or figure.

29 Referring to spectacular representations of power under Louis XIV, Doris Kolesch has explained how the performativity of emotions and affects was systematically used for the construction of social cohesion.

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Staging Admiration in John Dryden's *Indian Emperour, or the Conquest of Mexico by the Spaniards* (1667)

1. Heroic Drama and the Concept of Admiration

The “heroic mode” is considered a signature phenomenon of English Restoration drama. During its short episode of popularity in the 1660s and 70s, it largely replaced tragedy on the London stage. With the re-opening of public playhouses in 1660, authors sought to establish a tradition of theatre adept to the evolving tastes of the capital's nobility as well as the fragile political mood of the early Restoration.¹ However, the heroic plays of the Restoration cannot be reduced to a purely affirmative perspective: As a critical examination of the heroic as a cultural, political and aesthetic concept shows, they are a major medium for uncovering and negotiating the various mechanisms behind it. This essay dedicates particular attention to the staging of admiration as an essential strategy in this process.

According to the preface to John Dryden's drama *Indian Emperour* (first staged 1665/ print 1667), the category of admiration is central to the aesthetic effect of the heroic play:

for delight is the chief, if not the only end of Poesie: instruction can be admitted but in the second place, for Poesie only instructs as it delights. 'Tis true that to imitate well is a Poets work; but to affect the Soul, and excite the Passions, and above all to move admiration (which is the delight of serious Play) a bare imitation will not serve. (IE 5f.)²

A play's effect upon its audience thus depends on its success in exciting the passions. Dryden – coming from a defence of verse in serious drama – outlines a poetic approach of enhanced imitation, which pays respect to the Aristotelian idea of mimesis but shifts it into artistic exaggeration in order to make the performance more effective.

What is essential, however, is not the mere emotional impact of the dramatic action, but the incitement of admiration.

In contemporary psychology, admiration is defined as a “strong emotional response to extraordinarily talented, powerful, or famous people” (Heidt and Seder 4). Considered a non-basic emotion, it appears to be unique in humans and is often understood to have evolved because it provided an advantage for learning. However, in early-modern European philosophy, the concept was far less specific and commonly used in the sense of the present-day “astonishment”, that is, an emotion directed at something which is extraordinary but not necessarily evaluated as positive or exemplary.³ Most prominently, concepts of admiration were discussed in response to Cartesian ideas conceiving admiration as a purely intellectual and thus superordinate passion. Pierre Corneille transferred such paradigms to his theory of serious drama, especially in the influential *Trois Discours* (1660), but also in various dramatic paratexts such as the Examen introducing *Nicomède* (1650). Contesting Aristotelian ideas of tragedy, admiration – in its neutral sense of “astonishment” – was able to attain its central function because of its intellectual nature. The ethical function of tragedy is sustained by splitting admiration into less complex emotions: the audience's admiration thus triggers love for the heroic figure as well as a rejection of the vices causing his (or her) suffering.⁴ In spite of their moral inferiority to the hero(ine) of the play, the spectators are thus significantly involved and influenced in their own ethical decisions.

Various studies have shown how Corneillian ideas were adopted and transformed in Restoration England,⁵ where serious drama similarly started to shift away from traditional concepts of tragedy. Such developments are significantly related to ideas of heroism. However, the

specifically English transformations of Corneille's concept of admiration, and emotion in general, remain somewhat vague in present-day research. And although Dryden's plays may count among the more thoroughly researched works of heroic drama, his theatrical negotiations of admirability on the one hand and the increasingly precarious constructions of the heroic on the other are yet to be explored in detail.⁶

2. The Indian Emperour

I assume that growing discomfort with the heroic, its political instrumentalisation, and the traditional heroisms associated with the fierce, brave, hypermasculine warrior explain the preoccupation of Restoration drama with the dynamics of admiration both as a political and as an aesthetic concept. Dryden's *Indian Emperour* is not so much a play which stages a perfectly admirable character. Rather, it sets out to investigate admiration and astonishment as interrelated processes, analysing how admiration works, what it depends on, and where the concept begins to shift into less positive emotions. The *Indian Emperour* may well be considered an obvious starting-point for such an enquiry. In staging the discovery and conquest of a New World, variants of astonishment would be likely to be relevant, and the prefaces to the play indeed emphasise the greatness of its story matter.⁷ Moreover, situations of conquest have been considered test cases for heroic qualities ever since the archetypical siege of Troy, and are significantly reconsidered within emerging identities of empire.⁸

Dryden's densely compressed plot integrates the political situation of siege and conquest with private conflicts of loyalty and love. Cortez, accompanied by his commanders Vasquez and Pizarro, arrives in Mexico and is led to Montezuma's court. Montezuma, who has just chosen Almeria, daughter of this former rival, as his future queen, refuses the terms of peace offered by the intruders. As both parties leave to prepare for war, Cortez falls in love with Cydaria, the Emperor's daughter. Although the Aztecs are soon forced to retreat within the city walls, they succeed in imprisoning Cortez, and Almeria falls in love with him. When the Spanish take over the city, Montezuma is tortured by Pizarro and a Christian priest, and rescued by Cortez. Both he and Almeria flee to the tower where Cydaria is kept safe. As the Spaniards follow them there, Montezuma takes his own life, and Almeria attempts to kill her rival Cydaria as well as herself. Cortez arrives to save Cydaria and offers

to share power with Montezuma's surviving son Guyomar and his bride. However, they choose exile instead.

While influential readings (especially Hughes' *Dryden's Heroic Plays*) of the *Indian Emperour* have focused on the heroic potential – or indeed heroic failure – of the conqueror Cortez, the Emperor himself can also be read as a figure constantly constructed and deconstructed as admirable. This is emphasised by the fact that he maintains the highest social status within the play, since the king of Spain, merely represented by Cortez, never enters the conquered world. The transfer of power from conquered to conqueror, as it is put on stage, is thus resolved into modes of representation and delegation. Montezuma's exalted status is performed by abundant instances of court ritual and ceremony, ensuring the spectators' awareness of the Emperor's social position. While Dryden generally gives very little information in stage directions, he outlines the ceremonial patterns involving Montezuma in some detail. Certainly, such forms of visual spectacle were extremely salient and attractive for a Restoration audience – and the more irritating as this exaltation throughout the play is counterbalanced with disturbing aspects. Symptomatically, practices of human sacrifice are what the audience learns first about Montezuma's court, and this is followed by various other pagan rituals and customs performed on stage.⁹ The Emperor's admirability is disturbed not least by his hopeless infatuation with Almeria, his obsession with power, and his eminent haughtiness, which he displays as if it were a desirable characteristic.¹⁰ As the drama-as-text lacks any authoritative instance that might guide the audience's judgement, no internal perspective voiced within the play can count as reliable. Most importantly, this is true of Cortez, whose continuously expressed reverence for Montezuma reveals him to be a man of illusions leading to the verge of self-deception. More generally, ideas of illusion and reliability prove central themes of the *Indian Emperour*, intersecting with a pervading awareness of artificiality.¹¹ Artificiality is a major preoccupation not only of the paratexts, which consider both the adequacy of rhymed verse and of dramatic representations of time and space, but also of the opening scene. Dryden here introduces Cortez astonished at the new world unravelled to the conquerors, but his description can also be read metapoetically, as a metaphor for the world disclosed on stage, which proves as illusional as the paradisiacal novelty of Central America.¹²

It is, however, the end of the play which proves pivotal to Dryden's negotiations of admirability. Considering aspects of heroic behaviour in defeat and victory, Dryden here shifts the perspective to the semiotic paradigm of martyrdom and uses this paradigm to evaluate the heroic potential and admirability of his characters' decisions. Montezuma's own idea of heroism in a conquest setting seems to be fairly clear at the beginning of the play; however, the Emperor tends to present himself as a victim of time, fate, or other powers beyond his influence. He asks for the whereabouts of "all my former fury" (IE I, ii, 175), observing that "[m]y Lyon-heart is with Loves toys beset, / Struggling I fall still deeper in the net" (I, ii, 182f.). While pondering on conventional warrior-type ideals of the hero, his thoughts are increasingly preoccupied with death. He announces that he would prefer death in combat as adequate to his status and concepts of dignity,¹³ but remains passive and indecisive for the largest part of the play (an element of character to be mirrored later in the parting Emperor of Dryden's *Aureng Zebe*). This passive commitment becomes most important in the racking scene of the final act, which has attracted scholarly interest mostly because of its ideas on religion (see Detering, Harris, Spurr). However, it can also be read as a scene where paradigms of (military) heroism and admirability are confronted with inflections of suffering and endurance, as related prototypically to the admirable, yet distressingly cruel image of the martyr.¹⁴

Dryden's approach to the scene is characterised by his emphasis on performance.¹⁵ Montezuma and his High Priest are tied to the racks in order to release information about the whereabouts of Aztec gold; the additional attempts to convert the Emperor to Christianity are clearly subordinated to such material interests (and substituting God for gold clearly and polemically illustrates Dryden's conception of the colonial attitudes of Catholic Spain). Dryden uncovers the mechanics of martyrdom by inverting the overall perspective – having a pagan king suffer the torture initiated by a Christian church – and by dissociating the various aspects constituting the martyr's admirability. For example, the act of testimony that is key to Christian concepts (and the etymology) of martyrdom is ironically omitted. Quite on the contrary, Montezuma refuses any forms of testimony¹⁶ and so lacks the exclusive focus on a divine afterlife which characterises Christian martyrs and for which the play does not substitute a secular equivalent: Both the riches Montezuma is tortured for and the future of his country fade against the habitus of resistance itself, which is

meant to determine his personal dignity and his political status as Emperor. Christian martyrs, by contrast, are usually unconcerned about their worldly status.

Dryden's Montezuma also differs from other martyrs in drama by his attitude towards physical suffering. While he is shown as a victim on the rack, his comments reveal little of a suffering human or an expectable physical response to pain. The intensity of torture is reflected instead in the utterances of the torturers¹⁷ and the Indian High Priest,¹⁸ who considers betrayal and, rebuked by his Emperor, dies.¹⁹ This setting allows the play to emphasise the cruelty of torture while underscoring Montezuma's failure to articulate any physical or emotional response. Although this may be interpreted as evidence of his superiority, it suggests above all that Montezuma lacks the internal conflict and effort to overcome pain and humiliation which is typical for martyrs on stage and affects their interpretation as heroic figures: Heroic figures, however exceptional, share basic physical and emotional characteristics with the common humans who admire them as hero(in)es, explicitly including the capacity for suffering (see von den Hoff et al. 8). By reducing Montezuma's human attributes, Dryden draws attention to his distance from the audience, and ultimately his artificiality. Dryden's most critical revision of the martyr paradigm is Montezuma's rescue by Cortez. The idea that Christian martyrdom is incomplete without the victim's violent death was familiar to the (Christian) audience of the play. But within the action of the play, being rescued by a benevolent conqueror also collides with Montezuma's concepts of personal dignity:

Cort. [...] Ah Father, Father, what do I endure

[Embracing Montezuma.

To see these Wounds my pity cannot Cure!

Mont. Am I so low that you should pity bring,

And give an Infants Comfort to a King?

Ask these if I have once unmanly groan'd;

Or ought have done deserving to be moan'd. [...]

[Cortez kneels by Montezuma and weeps.

Cort. Can you forget those Crimes they did commit?

Mont. I'll do what for my dignity is fit: [...]

You're much to blame;

Your grief is cruel, for it shews my shame,

Does my lost Crown to my remembrance bring:

But weep not you, and I'll be still a King.

(IE V, ii, 117–122, 138f., 142–145)

Importantly, Cortez does not only repudiate the behaviour of his fellow Catholic Spaniards and pity the suffering enemy, but also envisages Montezuma in the position of father. This mirrors

the paradoxical asymmetry of status between the two enemies and Cortez' conflicting ideas of loyalty, but the relevance of the father-son inversion to the idea of martyrdom as *imitatio Christi* is evident as well.²⁰

Once again, the Christological implications are limited to the audience's perspective, but Cortez' ambiguous body language, which suggests both admiration or even worship (when he kneels) as well as intimacy (when he weeps and embraces Montezuma), does not befit Montezuma's self-perception as a sovereign. On the contrary, being subject to pity radically reduces his perceived status; he rejects clemency and magnanimity as key Christian virtues. This setting, interrelating emotions and concepts of honour, aims directly at possible audience reactions. While Montezuma, suffering the brutality of a greedy and pretentious Catholic priest, should evoke compassion, the Emperor refuses any form of pity as but another variant of humiliation. Although his resistance to torture might prove him admirable, heroic admirability is alienated by his radical selfishness, which contrasts sharply with Christian ideas of humility, and the absence of expectable human responses to physical pain.

The deconstruction of the martyr pose culminates at the end of the play, where Montezuma, having been refused a martyr's death, dies at his own hand. Whereas suicide is a substantial part of classical Greek and Roman constructions of the heroic, it obviously collides with Christian interpretations of sin and is certainly incompatible with the idea of martyrdom. Contradicting the Emperor's self-perception, the audience is facing an act of highly ambiguous implications, which is accentuated by the fact that it is effectively the passive character's very first instance of active performance on stage. Substituting the martyr's death Montezuma was facing earlier, his ultimate demonstration of agency concurs with self-destruction. The character himself underlines the interdependence of the two scenes by explicitly referring to the torture he suffered earlier:

Mont. No, *Spaniard*, know, he who to Empire born,
Lives to be less, deserves the Victors scorn:
Kings and their Crowns have but one Destiny:
Power is their Life, when that expires they dye.
Cyd. What Dreadful Words are these!
Mont. -----Name life no more;
'Tis now a Torture worse than all I bore:
I'll not be bribed to suffer Life, but dye
In spite of your mistaken Clemency.
I was your Slave, and I was us'd like one;

The Shame continues when the Pain is gone:
But I'm a King while this is in my Hand, ----
[*His Sword.*
He wants no Subjects who can Death Command:
You should have ty'd him up, t'have Conquer'd me,
But he's still mine, and thus he sets me free.
[*Stabs himself.*
Cyd. Oh my dear Father! [...]
Mont. Already mine is past: O powers divine
Take my last thanks: no longer I repine:
I might have liv'd my own mishaps to Mourn,
While some would Pity me, but more would Scorn!
For Pity only on fresh Objects stays:
But with the tedious sight of Woes decays.
Still less and less my boyling Spirits flow;
And I grow stiff as cooling Mettals do:
Farewel *Almeria.* -----[*Dyes.*]
(IE, V, ii, 224–238, 242–250)

Montezuma's perception of death as his ally, and his view that he is still commanding a kingdom, are rather far from a martyr's humble acceptance of his fate. The moral component of a noble death, which came to be understood as essential in the seventeenth century, is conspicuously absent;²¹ instead, death is metaphorically incorporated into Montezuma's self-perception and merged with his political power. Accordingly, it follows the same rules of ritual and symbolic performance.

As in the torture scene, the layout of the suicide scene underscores the element of performance on several levels. Montezuma, Almeria and Cydaria reveal themselves to the Spaniards as well as the spectators of the play in a secluded chamber above the main stage, separated from their followers by several doors. The spatial concept of the scene thus contrasts intimacy with the publicity of a stage. In addition, the rhetorically prominent juxtaposition of viewing directions in the characters' dialogue – looking up and down – metaphorically mirrors the paradoxically entangled perspectives on the defeated enemy, integrating admiration with pity and contempt:

Alm. Look up, look up, and see if you can know
Those whom, in vain, you think to find below.
Cyd. Look up and see *Cydaria's* lost estate.
Mont. And cast one look on *Montezuma's* Fate.
(IE V, ii, 216–219)

While Montezuma and Almeria proudly insist on their superiority, they clearly assign a spectator role to their followers, who – like the actual spectators of the play in the theatre – are restricted to observation without any opportunity to interfere.²² Moreover, Montezuma's monologue as

quoted above is interrupted by comments anticipating possible audience reactions, drawing attention to the emotional dimension of the situation and therefore counterbalancing the very rational self-staging of the Emperor. The proximity to the earlier torture scene is evident, not only in the rejection of suffering and fear, but also in Cydaria's address as "Oh my dear Father" (248), accentuating Montezuma's double role as a sovereign and a human being entangled in human relations. Symptomatically, emotionality and fear of death in particular are not displayed by Montezuma, but shifted to his daughter, thus again externalising the inner conflict between fear and confidence typical of representations of martyrdom in drama: Cydaria's focus is on her own helplessness as a victim, as she refers repeatedly to youth and innocence (V, ii, 257, 273 and 277) and to physical existence in general. Montezuma, on the other hand, compares his death with the consolidation of fluid metals, thus choosing a decidedly un-organic, as well as un-emotional, symbol for his existence. Finally and most explicitly, this is expressed in antithetically arranged exclamations: While Montezuma commands "Name Life no more" (V, ii, 228), Cydaria, being threatened by Almeria, pleads "O name not Death to me" (V, ii, 254), seizing Cortez' earlier words ("Speak not such dismal words as wound my Ear: / Nor name Death to me when *Cydaria's* there" V, ii, 220f.). This strongly gendered²³ contrast is again constitutive to the Emperor's ambiguous admirability, which fails to be resolved at the end of the play. When Cortez finally proposes "Funeral Pomp" (V, ii, 376) for his conquered opponent, he shifts the failed understanding of father-son intimacy back to a stately performance of deference which ritually brings the reign of Montezuma to a close but also irritatingly institutionalises admiration at a point where his admirability has become most questionable.

Quoting dissociated aspects from the paradigm of martyrdom thus turns the remote Aztec Empire into an apparently familiar entity – and at the very same time highlights its fundamental deviations from a world familiar to the play's English audience. Dryden shows how martyrdom loses its semiotic relevance once it is dissociated from the Christian paradigm that provides its meaning, and how it fades instead into irritating affinities with heroic agency, assertions of power and physical brutality. In particular, it is revealed how martyrdom, as well as the admirability of the martyr hero(ine), depends on specific, and especially rhetorical, versions of performance and how potential (emotional and intellectual) audience

reactions to suffering, torture and death are constitutively integrated into such performance processes. The *Indian Emperour* may be one of the plays that established the genre of heroic drama, but it is far from presenting an unbiased defence of the heroic: As he emphasises the artificiality of any heroic figure, Dryden enquires into the potential of theatre for presenting hero(in)es, and also into the limitations of creating hero(in)es on stage. Admiration, supposedly the intellectual passion, and acts of human admirability disintegrate into an equally elusive construction of the heroic.

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1 Book-length studies on the heroic drama include Canfield, Lehmann, Owen, McGirr, Waith, Kamm, Lowenthal, and Hughes, *English Drama*. See Berensmeyer for a comprehensive analysis of literary culture during the seventeenth century.

2 All references and quotations are taken from the 1966 edition by Alan Roper, subsequently quoted as IE (using page numbers for the prefaces and indications of act, scene and lines for the main text of the play). The importance of the *Indian Emperour* for the genesis of heroic drama has been commented on variously. Winn (150–157) holds it to be the definite work for Dryden's positioning as an author, also with respect to his detachment from Howard; it is, however, contested in how far the early heroic plays present more affirmative perspectives on the heroic. Prominently, Hughes (Dryden's *Heroic Plays* 58) states that the *Indian Emperour* "is the most pessimistic of the heroic plays, and one of the most pessimistic of any of the tragedies".

3 See Meier for a broader perspective on concepts of admiration in European drama and dramatic theory, and Clarke on Corneille (esp. 76–116).

4 "Dans l'admiration qu'on a pour sa vertu, je trouve une manière de purger les passions, dont n'a point parlé Aristote, et qui est peut-être plus sûre que celle qu'il prescrit à la tragédie par le moyen de la pitié et de la crainte. L'amour qu'elle nous donne pour cette vertu que nous admirons, nous imprime de la haine pour le vice contraire" (Examen, Couton 643).

5 Apart from the general works already cited above, see Kramer (16–62). The dedication to the *Indian Emperour* refers explicitly to Corneille: "'Tis an irregular piece if compar'd with many of Corneilles, and, if I may make a judgement of it, written with more Flame than Art; in which it represents the mind and intentions of the Author, who is with much more Zeal and Integrity, than Design and Artifice" (IE 25f.).

6 While admiration is obviously not exclusive to constructions of the heroic, it is an essential part of the (un)making of heroes and heroines. As outlined by von den Hoff et al., heroic figures are constituted by groups of followers, and

hero(in)es are not conceivable without these essentially social processes of idolisation.

7 "His [Montezuma's] story is, perhaps the greatest, which was ever represented in a Poem of this nature; (the action of it including the Discovery and Conquest of a New World" (IE 25). The "Connexion of the Indian Emperour, to the Indian Queen" adds that Montezuma, "in the Truth of History, was a great and glorious Prince; in whose time happened the Discovery and Invasion of Mexico by the Spaniards; under the conduct of Hernando Cortez, who [...] wholly Subverted that flourishing Empire" (IE 27). Admiration is, however, not an emotion reduced to the Indian Emperour: Joseph Roach holds that "[a]stonishment is an oft-represented emotion in Restoration performance, perhaps because it was one of the most desired effects, akin to what [...] Corneille called *admiration*" (Roach 25, see also Wheatley).

8 See Brown, Lowenthal (35–75), and especially Orr, for explorations of these aspects.

9 On the use of superstition, ritual and human sacrifice see Armistead and Hughes, "Human Sacrifice".

10 "My haughty mind no fate could ever bow" (IE I, ii, 43) is the Emperor's reply to Almeria's allegation of inhumanity.

11 Hughes in particular has highlighted illusion, the "disparity between Herculean aspiration and human reality", as the major theme of Restoration drama (Dryden's Heroic Plays, 1–2). The general artificiality of Restoration drama has also been discussed at some length; see, for instance, Roach, Powell, Wheatley, and Kamm.

12 This double reading is strengthened by the slightly irritating but structurally salient allusion to birth in the first lines: "As if our old world modestly withdrew, / And here, in private, had brought forth a new!" (IE I, i, 3f.). Surpassing mere resemblance, the new reality discovered depends on the reality beyond it. The paradisiacal appearance of such a "new" world is largely determined by the parameter of time: Cortez asserts that "Here days and nights the only seasons be" (IE I, i, 23); time, in the equatorial setting of the play, is experienced only in a continuous alternation of day and night, and any circularity of the year's seasons is substituted by repetition. Quite obviously, this negation of change proves illusional in the destructive plot of conquest. When, at the end of the play, Montezuma's sons choose exile in a northern *locus terribilis*, seasonal change as constructed in time is merely translated into spatial terms. See Sherman 28–35 for an outline of the heroic drama's consistent preoccupation with change and mutability.

13 "I'll either force my Victory, or Fate; / A glorious death in arms I'll rather prove, / Than stay to perish tamely be my Love" (IE I, ii, V. 200f.).

14 While martyrdom is a central phenomenon all over early modern Europe, the English situation may be considered distinct for various reasons. Recent studies on the importance of martyrdom as a concept in early modern England include Dillon, Monta and Freeman; see also Burschel and the studies compiled in Niewiadomski and Siebenrock or Horsch and Trembl. Freeman particularly argues for a specifically English relevance of martyrdom: Both the national church and various Catholic and Protestant dissenters created competing sets of martyrs and martyrological traditions, including very recent characters; moreover, the political situation and repeated shifts in royal policy made martyrdom seem more relevant. As yet, there is little research on the negotiations of martyrdoms in dramatic texts which do not explicitly stage established martyrs, and on the interference of martyrdom with a general preoccupation of cruelty and spectacles of horror on stage (as outlined, for instance, by Marsden and Thompson). Many readings of Montezuma's martyrdom in the *Indian Emperour* therefore tend to reduce the scene's complexity. See, for instance, Thompson, who draws attention to the interference of torture with the racialised body,

or Brown, who shows how "Montezuma clearly evokes the royal martyrdom of immediate English history, the execution of Charles I in 1649" (72).

15 As Weidner claims, martyrdom in drama does not only reveal how martyrdom is intrinsically related to performance, but the martyr figure may itself generate specific forms of theatricality: "Nichts zeigt deutlicher als das Märtyrerdrama, wie sehr Theatralität und Darstellung dem Martyrium inhärent sind, wie aber auch die Figur des Märtyrers spezifische Formen von Theatralität generiert" (260).

16 Weidner (262) points out the importance of the confessional speech act for the semiotics of martyrdom on stage, drawing attention to the intrinsic ambiguity of confession between an act of faith and the acknowledgement of guilt.

17 See the following lines: "Fasten the Engines; stretch 'um at their length, / And pull the streightned Cords with all your strength" (V, ii, 13f.); "Pull harder yet; he does not feel the rack" (V, ii, 21); "Increase their Pains, the Cords are yet too slack" (V, ii, 98).

18 "When will you end your Barb'rous Cruelty?" (IE V, ii, 23); "I beg to Dye" (V, ii, 24); "I faint away, and find I can no more: / Give leave, O Kind, I may reveal thy store, / And free my self from pains I cannot bear" (V, ii, 100–102). Montezuma, instead, refers to his physicality only to mock his torturers' attempt: "Pull till my Veins break, and my Sinews crack" (V, ii, 22).

19 Dryden's technique of splitting characters and creating symmetries of situation on stage is discussed by Sherman (22–28).

20 In addition, the scene recalls and inverts the first encounter of Montezuma and Cortez (I,ii), where the Emperor, at the height of his own power, believes the intruders to be gods and falls on his knees to express his devotion. The interrelation of both scenes contributes to show admiration as a result of misconceptions and delusions.

21 Germa-Romann shows how for the French aristocracy, the concept of ideal death shifted towards a vision of "bien mourir", incorporating constructions of virtue and ethical behaviour. To my knowledge, there is no systematic study on suicide on the Restoration stage; see, for instance, Wymer on Jacobean drama.

22 More generally, this emphasis on the role of the spectator in theatre might be associated with the specific material developments of the Restoration stage; Powell argues that the "conscious separation of the audience from the play produced a kind of involved detachment that permeated the new dramatic forms the age created for itself" (24).

23 See Howe on the typical forms of victimisation of female figures on stage, including female martyrdom as well as rape and other spectacles of violence, often with ostentatiously physical impact (esp. 43–49). It is worth noting that the dualistic separation of body and mind when experiencing torture and death, as typical for depictions of martyrdom, is shifted to the dying Almeria.

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Between Triumph and Myth: Gay Heroes and Navigating the schwule Erfolgsgeschichte

I

“Did you know that some of the most amazing people in history were gay?” That is the question immediately met by visitors to the website *www.gayheroes.com*, incidentally the first result one finds when entering the search term “gay heroes” on leading search engines.¹ The website’s mission is to communicate “that gay and lesbian people are an important part of the magnificence of the human experience” (Spears). To this end, the website lists a collection of gay heroes, including Alexander the Great, Sappho, Abraham Lincoln, Gertrude Stein, Tchaikovsky, and Laurence of Arabia.² While gay and lesbian historical scholarship has moved beyond parading lists of historical luminaries rightly or wrongly suspected of having exhibited same-sex desire, the impulse to remember and to celebrate remains as strong as ever. From its painstaking emergence in the 1970s, the foundational mission of gay and lesbian history has been to ‘reclaim’ those ostensibly hidden from history, to provide a voice to those who have been traditionally silenced, to challenge the overwhelming heteronormativity of popular and academic history.³ I do not wish to denigrate this mission and do not claim to be unaffected by this approach myself. However, this understandable and necessary counter-movement against heteronormative historical scholarship has created new mythologies and indeed itself privileged certain kind of experiences at the expense of others.

In his 1972 book *Society and Homosexuality* Claus-Ferdinand Siegfried argued that one of the consequences of the social prejudice faced by homosexuals was the fostering of a sense of superiority on the part of the oppressed (24-25). By pointing to a legion of historical figures such as those already mentioned above, some homosexuals internalised the idea that “their kind” was more intelligent or more artistically-gifted than

the general populace. Even those who stressed the essential “sameness” of homosexuality to support their efforts against social discrimination often exhibited a tension between the idea that homosexuality is “neither good nor bad, neither better nor worse than the heterosexual world” and the belief in a fundamental “purity, tenderness, ardency, self-sacrifice and heroism” of homosexual love (Bauer 17-18). Creating gay heroes involves generating gay ancestors: pointing to both the brute existence of same-sex desiring individuals in the past but also to their ostensibly heroic qualities (if you like, ‘quality’ as well as ‘quantity’). This “genealogical impulse” lies not just behind the parading of historical luminaries but also behind the field of lesbian and gay history, forming a “gravitational pull toward writing narratives of collective belonging” (Doan, x). As will be explored in the following, however, this gravitational pull has exhibited markedly exclusionary qualities, and continues to do so.

II

The construction of gay heroes is one manifestation of what Benno Gammerl has described as the schwule Erfolgsgeschichte, or “gay success story” (161). For Gammerl, this story frames the gay liberation movement as responsible for a radical emancipation of homosexuals, offering routes out of their shame- and fear-filled existence and facilitating confident and affirmative displays of their difference (160). As Gammerl states, there is indeed some truth in this analysis, but in exalting the 1970s we run the risk of adopting a particularly bleak perspective on homosexual life before this decade. Additionally, lionising gay liberationists can involve downplaying the role of the social, political and economic developments that provided the context in which they moved or indeed facilitated their activism. Gammerl points to the declining cohesive power of the family

and changes to patterns of consumption, work and living arrangements (160-61). In addition, it should be noted that homosexual law reform in 1969 was not an achievement of the West German gay movement, but a precondition for its subsequent emergence, as was the case for its British counterpart two years earlier (Kandora; Weeks 167). Constructions which stress the heroic agency of gay activists risk neglecting both the role of these structural factors but also disregarding the agency of homophile activists and trivialising the very different context in which they lived (not least, the continuing illegality of male homosexuality).

The *schwule Erfolgsgeschichte* is underpinned by what Elizabeth Kennedy has termed the “metanarrative of Stonewall” (73). By this she refers to the periodisation of gay and lesbian life as pre- and post-Stonewall; the June 1969 riots at the Stonewall bar in New York which have traditionally been seen as the first act of gay and lesbian resistance against repression. As Elizabeth Armstrong and Suzanna Cragge have noted, the Stonewall story is better viewed as an *achievement* of gay liberation rather than as a literal account of its origins, but this has not shaken its symbolic position (725). Conceptualising Stonewall as *the* turning point in gay history affects historical scholarship that pertains to periods falling both before and after this divide. In the latter, emotional and discursive continuities can be elided. In the former, the time before 1969 can be presented merely as an uninterrupted period of repression, relegated in significance to nothing more than the antechamber of gay liberation. Recent historiography has addressed this imbalance: consider Julian Jackson’s *Living in Arcadia*, which seeks to rescue “homophilia” from the “enormous condescension of posterity” (13).⁴ However, even in work that seeks to re-assess the 1950s, Stonewall can still loom large. For example, Daniel Rivers attempts to move beyond a “static, post-Stonewall perspective” in his account of lesbian mothers and gay fathers from the “pre-Stonewall era” (70). Yet his article ends up reifying the status of Stonewall through repeated usages of “pre-Stonewall”, “post-Stonewall”, “pre-liberation” and “post-liberation”. That 1969 represents a “sharp historical divide” (Rivers 64) is not something that should simply be taken for granted, but a claim in need of nuance and a claim whose own history we could usefully historicise.

The “metanarrative of Stonewall” has spatial as well as temporal characteristics, privileging the American national context over others. This is

partly due to the advanced position gained by the disciplines of the history of sexuality and gay and lesbian studies in the U.S. academic system, which has facilitated an impressive body of scholarship. Even though the 1970s is the decade privileged by the Stonewall metanarrative, the historiography of gay liberation in national contexts other than the American remains remarkably underdeveloped.⁵ Indeed, even events outside of the U.S. are often interpreted through the Stonewall gaze. For example, the interruption of a live radio broadcast by French gay activists in 1970 has been referred to as the “Stonewall” of French homosexuality (Jackson 183). This also applies to the West German national context, with the broadcast in 1972 of Rosa von Praunheim’s film *Nicht der Homosexuelle ist pervers, sondern die Situation, in der er lebt* (*Not the homosexual is perverse, but the society in which he lives*) often seen as West Germany’s “Stonewall moment” (Holy, “Jenseits”; Steakley 14).

III

The broadcast of Rosa von Praunheim’s film on the ARD network was delayed by a year due to complaints not just from appalled conservatives but also from homosexuals who worried that the film would merely cement prevailing stereotypes about gay people. The film offered an unabashed portrayal of various aspects of gay life, taking aim at those homosexuals leading hidden lives, in thrall to conventional morality, culture and masculinity, engaging in anonymous sex and prostitution. The film ends with a short clip of a commune of naked gay men, discussing how to go about seeking political change – the concluding parole reads *Raus aus den Toiletten, rein in die Straßen!*, a variant of the famous “*out of the closets, into the streets!*” Writing about Praunheim and the young gay activists who had recently arrived on the scene, Jennifer Evans has argued that “[i]n attempting to construct a positive genealogy of gay identity, these early queer critics found themselves unable to account for the rent boys and aging queens whose image fit untidily in to the new found optics of empowerment and pride” (15).⁶ As Evans notes, despite their many differences and animosities one thing that gay and homophile activists did share was their mutual “denigration of the gutter” (15). Yet alongside prostitutes and “aging queens” there was also no place in this “positive genealogy of gay identity” for these homophile activists of

the 1950s and 1960s, especially those who persisted in the 1970s and attempted to block the film's broadcast.⁷

However, there was space in this genealogy for those male homosexuals incarcerated in the concentration camps during the Third Reich, once this persecution was “rediscovered” in the early 1970s (Holy, “Rosa Winkel”; Jensen). This was made possible by the 1972 publication of Heinz Heger's *The Men with the Pink Triangle*, the first published autobiographical text by a former concentration camp prisoner incarcerated on account of his homosexuality. In the course of the decade, West German gay activists would exhibit a pronounced identification with the homosexuals persecuted by National Socialism, but in tandem with a marked *disidentification* with those homosexuals who were forced to make their lives in the conservative moral climate of the Federal Republic of the 1950s and 1960s.⁸ In attempting to construct a “positive genealogy”, gay activists transmuted the victimhood of the homosexuals who had endured the Third Reich into a source of collective identity in the present. Having been branded with the pink triangle and incarcerated alongside political prisoners, marked with the red triangle, these homosexuals were repositories of identity for the self-identified anti-fascist gay activists of the 1970s, seeking to integrate their activism into the New Left. They were thus compatible ancestors; homophiles of the 1950s and 1960s were not. This involved, of course, the painful irony that these were often the very same people. This collocation of identification and disidentification was perhaps most notoriously expressed by activists from the HAW (Homosexual Action Westberlin), who asserted in a 1974 article that in Berlin at the start of the 1970s the gay movement was re-established “after forty years’ interruption”, thereby drawing a straight line between the 1930s and the 1970s and consigning the homophile movement of the 1950s and 1960s to the historical dustbin (Ahrens et al 5).⁹

A major preoccupation of gay activists in the 1970s was with discrimination and oppression, both in the past, in the Third Reich, and in the present, most strikingly in the form of the so-called *Berufsverbot* or “ban on careers”.¹⁰ Reference to oppression and its fascist legacies was the central means in the movement's attempt to engage with the New Left circles in which it articulated itself (Griffiths). Despite this, the terminologies that we have come to associate with the gay movement are more commonly liberation, pride and hedonism. Gay liberation was not

a “free-for-all”, the impression given by some accounts.¹¹ Vocabularies such as pride and liberation were (and remain) important, but their pervasive use can elide other dynamics worthy of analysis. Consider Rainer Schulze, who inexplicably states:

For most of the Gay Liberation movements, including the one in West Germany, the Nazi past was not much more than a ‘side show’ anyway. The 1970s was a decade of hedonism, sexual liberation and promiscuity; the focus was on the future, on a new gay generation, on coming out, on being gay and proud – in the words of Edmund White: “gay culture [in the 1970s] meant sexual access and abundance” and “industrial quantities of sex.” (32)

Moreover, such accounts are evidence of the Americanising force of the Stonewall metanarrative; Schulze relies on a literary memoir about life in 1970s New York to illustrate a point about the gay movement in *West Germany*.¹²

IV

Gay activists’ attempt to construct a “positive genealogy of gay identity” was taken forward by the emerging field of gay and lesbian history (Love 32).¹³ History-making was understood as an activist mission, much more than may be the case today. Recovering a sense of history was an integral part of efforts to gain representation in the public sphere. In the founding issue of *Schwuchtel*, the gay movement's first national journal, the editorial collective bemoaned the lack of historical knowledge amongst homosexuals. Since the writing of history was overwhelmingly patriarchal, gay consciousness had been “shorn off” (*abgeschnitten*) (*Schwuchtel* 2). Similarly, the founders of the movement's first publishing house, *Verlag Rosa Winkel* (Pink Triangle Press), aimed to communicate gays’ “disrupted historical consciousness” by explicitly referring to the National Socialist persecution of homosexuals through their choice of name (*Schwuchtel* 10). Possibly the first historical work pertaining to homosexual activism before the Third Reich was John Lauritsen's and David Thorstad's *The Early Homosexual Rights Movement*, published in 1974. In seeking to situate contemporary gay activism as part of a historic tradition, they expressed that 1969 “marks a rebirth, an anniversary – indeed, one might say the 100th anniversary of gay liberation” (5).

Activists-turned-historians set about creating and stabilising gay and lesbian identity, attempting to overthrow the cloak of heteronormativity, offering a voice to those denied one. As Heather Love writes, “the field’s powerful utopianism, affirmation of gay identity, and hope for the future resonated with the seemingly magical power of this new movement to transmute shame into pride, secrecy into visibility, social exclusion into outsider glamour” (28). Most queer theorists would point to the problems of anachronistically reading modern and stable gay identities back into the past, but Love moves on to argue that what she has found most problematic in gay and lesbian historiography is rather its “consistently affirmative bias” (45). In her analysis of four modernist texts, she aims to resist this affirmative approach and instead adopts a methodology of “feeling backward” (as per the title of her book), focusing especially on “nostalgia, regret, shame, despair, *ressentiment*, passivity, escapism, self-hatred, withdrawal, bitterness, defeatism, and loneliness” (4).¹⁴

While there has been a significant growth, diversification and professionalisation in the field of lesbian and gay history, this affirmative tendency in its various manifestations has proved tenacious, and for quite understandable reasons. While lesbian and gay historians usually succeed in avoiding heroic or hagiographic constructions, David Halperin and Valerie Traub note the continuing reluctance “to delve into topics that risk offering new opportunities for the denigration and demonization of homosexuality” (11). Accordingly, they (we) “tend to avoid subjects that seem to vindicate antigay prejudice or that simply do not lend themselves to the requirements of gay self-affirmation” (11). An example of the former would be how little has been written about the multiplicity of sexual liberations in the 1970s and the fact that many in the gay movement (and beyond) championed the right of children to sexual self-expression (and concomitantly, supported the emancipation of self-defining paederasts or paedophiles). Given long-standing pernicious associations between homosexuality and child abuse, it is obvious that such research constitutes dangerous territory. Neither does it make for positive press coverage, as the German Greens discovered to their cost in 2013 (*das grüne Gedächtnis*). More profound are the “requirements of gay self-affirmation”. Heather Love is not the only scholar to have focused on “backward” feelings. Halperin and Traub, for example, have called for an interrogation of gay shame in the effort to escape what they refer to as the “increasingly exhausted

and restrictive ethos of gay pride” (5). But the “self” in “self-affirmation” cannot be escaped. Even if we accept that analysing shame (as opposed to pride) would be productive, there remains the question of whether it is possible to “write about the historical force of shame without being flooded in shame oneself” (Halperin and Traub 13).

V

While we cannot hope to fully escape the needs of the present (and our own subjectivities), historians should still endeavour to “feel backwards”. This is easier said than done, however. The central methodology traditionally involved in giving a voice to the ostensibly voiceless has been, of course, oral history. Martin Meeker has argued that gay and lesbian oral history has been characterised by interviewing older gays and lesbians “in a quest for heroes” (227). Viewed from the prism of the present, the very fact that a lesbian or gay person lived through decades past makes her or his life become “an act of bravery in itself”; accordingly, we tend to see them in a heroic light (227). In his 2010 article, Meeker problematises the mythologisation of perhaps the archetypal gay hero – Harvey Milk – by interviewing one of his (heterosexual) political contemporaries, Quentin Kopp, who presents a wheeler-dealer and finagling politician, rather than a heroic grass-roots activist. My project is not oral history-based, but in the interviews that I have conducted so far, I have been struck by how some of my narrators feel compelled to establish their activist credentials in the interview process. Matthias, active in the gay movement from the early 1970s, fended off my question of whether he had taken part in a *Selbsterfahrungsgruppe*, a consciousness-raising group, with “I wasn’t in need of it”. When I asked whether he had been scared of suffering workplace discrimination as an openly gay teacher, Ralf foregrounded collective and personal fortitude rather than fear: “I knew that we were being brave, but I wasn’t scared”.¹⁵

Gerhard, meanwhile, told a somewhat different story. His personal experiences of the 1970s do not fit into the standard narrative of liberation, self-fulfilment and pride. Towards the end of our interview, Gerhard declared that “You cannot say that this gay movement made people happier”. He clearly included himself in this conclusion, as he went on to express that the 1970s had in fact been personally a “catastrophic decade” in which he endured long spells of loneliness and

isolation. Feelings such as these were certainly discussed and acknowledged in the 1970s, but as Gerhard testifies, rarely tackled collectively. It was not intuitively clear what the movement could “do” with these feelings (unlike, for example, rage, passion or indignation, more conspicuously productive emotions). While consciousness-raising groups were widespread and offered the chance to bring individual experiences and feelings into a collective group setting, the effectiveness of these efforts was mixed, with trust between participants and the lack of resources and/or inclination for a trained clinician to facilitate discussion proving especially problematic (Specht; Hanno).

VI

It is feelings such as loneliness, isolation, despair and shame that are rarely offered up for public consumption in the context of gay and lesbian history. Of course, their enunciation can be painful. Yet they are also muted because they clash with the standard narrative of gay liberation, when the shame and isolation of the post-war period was overcome by collective action, by coming together and coming out. Nan Alamilla Boyd has characterised gay and lesbian history-making as a “political project aimed at social uplift” (110). Thus feelings that are perceived as irreconcilable with social uplift, that are not affirmative, can be downplayed or elided in the interview process (by both narrator and interviewer). Neither are other historical methodologies immune to this problem. For one, these types of feelings were less likely to be recorded in the first place. Second, they can easily escape our attention. Thirdly, they can be too much to bear. Archival research can at times be an upsetting and depressing affair. Indeed, while I grasped the import and authenticity of Gerhard’s statements, I was deeply unsure over how best to respond to his sadness. Similarly, regular articles in the 1970s gay press on mental distress and teenage suicide do not make easy reading (*Wenn Sie anderen helfen* 18-19). Researching and writing about heroism, pride and liberation can be a psychologically (by no means intellectually) *easier* task. Emotional continuities, devalued in part because they clash with the Stonewall metanarrative, can also be neglected since the scholarly recognition of these continuities can induce affective responses which recapitulate the very feelings in question. In tracing texts for a “tradition of queer backwardness”, Heather Love also considers the “backward feelings” – such as shame, depression, and regret

– that they can “inspire in contemporary critics” (8). As she writes, “the history of queer damage retains its capacity to do harm in the present” (9).

Of course, there remains a need to celebrate, to reclaim. All too often historians remain uninterested in gay and lesbian figures or unknowingly trapped within the prism of heteronormativity; whereby an unhistoricised ‘heterosexuality’ is valorised, to the exclusion of other categories that organise and shape intimate life. The discipline of the history of sexuality continues to be marginalised in some quarters, especially outside of the United States. We should not unduly hasten to discard the ‘success’ from the ‘gay success story’. Some of the changes brought about in the last half-century are dramatic indeed; arguably, the epithet ‘triumph’ is eminently suitable. We still need our heroes, I would argue: there is even a role for gayheroes.com, cited at the start of this article. Indeed, while heroising constructions can exaggerate the role of the individual in shaping history, agency still matters. Not just certain feelings, but certain subjects have been written out of the story. Elizabeth Kennedy writes that one of the features of the Stonewall metanarrative is to privilege a “monolithic gay and lesbian identity, most often understood as white and male” (73). She seeks to trouble this narrative by analysing the role of predominantly working-class lesbian bar culture in “laying the groundwork for the Stonewall rebellion and the gay liberation movement” (65). David Valentine, meanwhile, has argued that the category “transgender” has conferred “stability on the gender of (especially white and middle class) gay men and lesbians” (64). As a result of this “sorting out” of sex and gender, the Stonewall metanarrative insufficiently accounts for the influence of gender transgression in lesbian and gay history.¹⁶

On a final note, agency matters not least because of another manifestation of the *schwule Erfolgsgeschichte*; the conception that Western liberal democracy and sexual and minority rights are somehow inevitable historical bedfellows. The story of gay liberation is not about the benign tolerance and superiority of Western elites, just as the story of slavery and the slave trade must not be reduced to its abolition by supposedly enlightened British parliamentarians, as Catherine Hall has passionately reminded us (28). Welcome as some recent measures may be, we must not allow our history to be appropriated by hegemonic forces for their own ends. They are not the heroes I care to celebrate.

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1 I would like to thank Chris Waters and Christina von Hohenberg for their helpful comments, as well as Jens Dobler from the *Schwules Museum Berlin* archive.

2 The website uses ‘gay’ to refer to both men and women. While this article pertains to gay and lesbian history in a wider sense, my own research project pertains to the West German Gay Movement in the 1970s (rather than both Lesbian and Gay movements). Subsequent references to “gay” (gay activist, gay movement etc.) refer to gay men, rather than gays and lesbians.

3 As reflected in some of the titles chosen; for example *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past* (Duberman, Vicinus and Chauncey).

4 See also Cook/Bauer. On the German national context, Whisnant and Pretzel/ Weiß.

5 There is no English-language monograph pertaining to West German, Italian or French gay liberation. There is also no German-language academic monograph on West German gay liberation (not to deny the significance of various historical accounts in predominantly popular, autobiographical or chronicle form). Although recent scholarship aiming to ‘de-centre’ the West in terms of research on gender and sexuality is much-needed (Kulpa and Mizielińska), we may also be able to advance our understanding of the ‘West’ by ‘de-centring’ the U.S.

6 The term “positive genealogy of gay identity” is in fact Heather Love’s (32).

7 The IHWÖ (International Homophile World Organisation) went to the lengths of writing to the Director of the WDR in November 1971, urging him to cancel the film’s broadcast planned for January: “A federal broadcast [...] is bound to have disastrous consequences for homosexuals [...] and would set us back in our hitherto existing efforts, which have also been supported by your channel.” The WDR replied that the film would not produce any prejudices against homosexuals that did not already exist (*IHWÖ in eigener Sache* 49).

8 This is a major focus of my doctoral thesis, due for completion in 2014 and provisionally entitled “Competing Emancipations: The West German Gay Movement in the 1970s”.

9 This also privileged the role of Berlin. In fact, the first action groups which heralded the emergence of gay liberation were founded in Bochum and Münster, in December 1970 and April 1971 respectively. The HAW was founded in late 1971 (Salmen and Eckert 28).

10 Referring to the 1972 *Radikalerlaß* (radicals’ decree). The policy permitted the screening of current and prospective civil service employees along the lines of current or past membership of radical groups, usually communist. Were sufficient evidence of a lack of support for the constitutional order to be found, individuals could have their applications rejected or contracts terminated.

11 Towards the conclusion of an otherwise insightful article pertaining to the 1950s and 1960s, Robert Moeller cites a litany of political and sartorial choices available to gay liberationists (entering political parties or “legally sanctioned marriage-like relationships”; wearing high heels, mascara, leather, suits or military uniforms) (547). These, however, were all developments and styles of self-presentation that led to vexed (and movement-shaping) contestations in the 1970s.

12 The text in question is Edmund White’s 2009 *City Boy: My Life in New York During the 1960s and 1970s*.

13 I use ‘genealogy’ in this article to refer to what Laura Doan terms ‘ancestral genealogy’ – searching for roots and antecedents in the past – rather than in a Foucauldian sense (Doan 58).

14 The four texts in question are Walter Pater, *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873); Willa Cather, *Not under Forty* (1936); Radclyffe Hall, *The Well of Loneliness* (1928) and Sylvia Townsend Warner, *Summer Will Show* (1936).

15 All interview narrators have been pseudonymised.

16 See Valocchi 458. “If we write back into the narratives the gendered nature of sexual practices and how they are organized, what would the history of male homosexuality look like? What questions would open up and what political possibilities could be imagined if we put community, identity, and liberal politics aside, reaffirm our interests in the plethora of same-sex desires and the subcultures that develop around them, and examine the different kinds of subjectivities, affections, intimacies, pleasures, and affiliations associated with these queerer histories of male homosexuality?”

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Kathrin Göb

Deconstructing the Heroic Myth of the War Correspondent – Chris Ayres’s Memoir *War Reporting for Cowards*

1. The Myth of the Heroic War Correspondent

“As much as I was terrified [...], I also felt slightly elated – heroic, in fact, for agreeing to go to Iraq” (119). With these words, the British war correspondent Chris Ayres describes his feelings upon his decision to report on the Iraq War for his newspaper, the London *Times*, in 2003. As this quote from his memoir *War Reporting for Cowards* (2005) suggests, war reporters not only play a role in the creation of a heroic narrative of war, but are also often assigned the status of heroes themselves. As David Welch notes in the introduction to his study of war reporting, the “popular image of the war correspondent in the public imagination is of a gallant, heroic figure bringing us impartial reports from conflict zones around the world” (xiv), and this image has been the focus of increasing scholarly attention in recent years.¹ The anthropologist Mark Pedelty summarises what he calls the “professional myth” (128) of the war reporter with three catchwords, “adventure, independence, and truth” (39). It is central to the perceived heroism of the war correspondent that he is believed to be motivated by a higher moral cause, that he is risking his life for the selfless aim of exposing the lies of government and military and bringing the public the truth about the events of war. In films and books, war reporters are also usually presented as “lone rebels” (Pedelty 30), as acting independently and with “a great degree of willful agency” (Pedelty 130). In line with the idea of the reporter as an independent agent, the myth of the heroic war reporter is strongly linked to individual reporters who have been assigned the status of icons, for example Martha Gellhorn, Ernie Pyle, Michael Herr or David Halberstam.² In addition, the “abiding cultural fascination with war reporters has been nurtured by public figures such as Stephen Crane, Winston Churchill, Rudyard Kipling, Ernest Hemingway, and Ian Fleming joining the trade”, as Mette

Mortensen notes (332). This list of famous war correspondents also shows that the profession has long been dominated by men and is still associated with traditional ideals of masculinity, even though there are many female journalists working in war zones today.

Autobiographical texts by war correspondents play an important role in the construction of the myth of the profession. As Mark Pedelty observes, these texts generally “portray war correspondents’ work as frenetic, occasionally insensate, yet ultimately heroic. Once past the obligatory self-deprecating statements of the introduction, the focus turns to the reporter’s courage, cunning, and professional conviction” (29–30). The personal accounts that journalists publish after the war do not present an accurate impression of their daily working routines in a conflict zone (see Pedelty 39). Instead, the authors of memoirs necessarily select some past experiences while failing to mention others; they structure and interpret these experiences and thereby create a certain image of themselves (see Depkat 24). In talking or writing about their own war experience, reporters also tend to rely heavily on existing fictional and non-fictional representations of the profession; in Pedelty’s words, “they fit their [...] experiences into the narrative structure of traditional war correspondent legends” (129). In this way, the texts tend to perpetuate existing stereotypes and myths surrounding the war reporter.

Chris Ayres’s memoir about his experiences in the Iraq War, however, clearly present an exception to this rule: He employs the genre to deconstruct the heroic myth of the war correspondent, as will be shown in the following. Ayres was in his late twenties when he received the assignment to cover the Iraq War in 2003, and – like many of his colleagues – he had no previous experience in war reporting at this point:³ As the

biographical note at the beginning of his book tells us, he worked as a media business and Wall Street correspondent before taking over the job of US West Coast correspondent for the *Times* in 2002, a position which mainly consists of covering the Hollywood celebrity scene. Despite this lack of experience, Ayres was asked by his editor to take part in the embedding programme that had been devised by the US Pentagon to give a large number of journalists access to the American troops during the Iraq War.⁴ He was placed with a US Marine Corps unit, which he accompanied in the first week of the invasion. While the *Times's* more experienced war reporters, who operated outside the embedding scheme, were unable to reach the frontlines when the fighting began, Ayres found himself in the middle of the action and was able to observe combat first hand (see Ayres, *War Reporting*, 250 and 260).⁵ His reports appeared in the *Times* almost daily and received a lot of attention.⁶ Nevertheless, he decided to give up his position as an embed after nine days with the Marines. Ayres left his unit and returned home before the American troops reached Baghdad.

Shortly after his return, Ayres wrote an article entitled "The Story Not Worth Dying For" for the *Times 2* (a *Times* supplement), in which he explains his decision to cut his assignment as a war reporter short and calls his premature departure an "act of cowardice" (5). This article later evolved into the full-length book *War Reporting for Cowards*. In publishing his war experiences, Ayres is part of a larger trend on the book market. A whole "surge of war memoirs" (Whitlock 134) by journalists appeared in the wake of the Iraq War.⁷ However, Ayres's text stands out among his colleagues' works: As the book's title already suggests, he has written a parody of the traditional war reporter memoir. In casting himself as an anti-hero, a coward "running away from [...] war" (287), he reflects and questions popular stereotypes of the heroism of war reporting.

2. Ayres's Caricature of the Heroic War Correspondent

Ayres begins his memoir by outlining his pre-conceptions about what he terms "real" war correspondents (105). These "real" reporters, however, are reduced to mere caricatures in his narrative, and their description serves to draw attention to the stereotypical nature of popular images of the war correspondent, as the following passage from the book exemplifies:

My name is Chris Ayres, and I never wanted to be a war correspondent. To me, war reporters were a different species: fearless and suntanned outdoor types who became Boy Scout leaders at school, studied Latin and Urdu at Oxford, and probably knew the correct way to eat a sheep's penis at the table of an African warlord. I felt a mixture of envy and bafflement at their careers. (17)

In this humorous and exaggerated depiction, Ayres takes on the perspective of an average civilian who admires the war reporters' heroic deeds from afar. By describing war correspondents as "a different species", he presents them as men who stand out from the masses, who are distinguished by their extraordinary personalities. In Ayres's imagination, war correspondents are not only courageous, but also physically fit and attractive, and they combine leadership qualities with intellectual superiority. The image of the war reporter eating a sheep's penis with African warlords evokes the exotic setting of a classic adventure tale and serves to emphasise the hero's strong masculinity, considering that in some cultures the consumption of genitals is believed to increase man's virility.

The fact that popular images of war reporters are profoundly shaped by traditional male gender stereotypes is emphasised repeatedly in the text. Ayres refers to countless male war correspondents that he looks up to, but never mentions any of the famous female war reporters such as Martha Gellhorn, Kate Adie or Christiane Amanpour. His role models thrive in situations of mortal danger, endure pain and injury heroically and have a tendency to display macho behaviour. To illustrate this, he cites two famous war reporters of recent times. The first one is "a lunatic called Anthony Loyd" (17), a *Times* journalist who became known for his coverage of the wars in Yugoslavia during the 1990s. Ayres describes Loyd as

a heroin addict who had left his job as a platoon commander in the British Army for a career in journalism because, he later confessed, he saw it as a "passport to war". To me Loyd's life seemed like an endless, heart-pounding sequence from *Apocalypse Now* – but with no "stop" button to end the action. (17–18)

Loyd clearly is what Ayres elsewhere calls a "war type[...]" (119), who – having been a soldier himself – feels completely at home in the military

world. Throughout his book, Ayres draws a parallel between war reporters and military heroes, arguing that both seem to enjoy the excitement of battle and follow an “inverted logic” (78) which is summarised in the formula “safety is bad, danger is good” (78). Described as a heroin addict and a lunatic, Loyd is not only characterised as standing outside society, he is also presented as the epitome of a “war junkie”, who seeks the adventure and danger of war for the personal thrill it provides and lacks a “normal” sense of self-preservation.

The second professional role model Ayres names in his memoir is Martin Bell,

the BBC man in his trademark white linen suit, who took a direct hit from mortar shrapnel while reporting live from Sarajevo in 1992. “I’m all right, I’ll survive”, were Bell’s stoic words as he collapsed into a pool of his own blood. There was a thrilling, implicit machismo to Bell’s work, betrayed by the title of his memoirs: *In Harm’s Way*. Bell, always the self-deprecating hero, could barely bring himself to mention the incident in the book. (17)

Whereas Loyd is represented as a reckless adventurer and “lone wolf”, Bell, in his white suit, is introduced as a British gentleman, who shows a “stiff upper lip” even when being wounded and who risks his own life in order to bring the world the news of the war. However, Ayres associates both reporters with a certain machismo. While Loyd openly admits that he is enjoying the risks of war, Bell seems to downplay the danger in his own self-representation, which only makes him appear even more heroic and thus serves to increase the fascination surrounding his profession.

3. Reflecting the Construction and Perpetuation of the Heroic Myth

In presenting his ideal of the “real” war reporter, Ayres often refers to movies or books. The mentioning of the film *Apocalypse Now* in his description of Anthony Loyd and the reference to Bell’s memoir *In Harm’s Way* are only two of several examples. Thus, Ayres not only highlights stereotypical images of the war reporter, but also points to the construction and perpetuation of these myths in various forms of representation, especially in journalistic self-representation. He tells his readers that he has turned to other war reporters’ memoirs in order to compare his own performance during the war with that of his

famous predecessors: “I searched for books by Pyle, and other war correspondents, to convince myself that my conduct in Iraq hadn’t been a total disgrace” (18)

However, the memoirs in which Ayres is looking for an authentic depiction of the war reporter’s experiences tend to confirm the heroic myth of the war reporter. He shows this by focusing on the cover photographs of these books, which present the war reporters “in action” and which, to Ayres, already reveal the message of the memoirs:

The book jackets [...] provided little reassurance. There was Pyle, his woolly hat and goggles pulled down over his military crew-cut, the cigarette wedged between his cracked lips. He was an “aw-shucks” Everyman – one of the boys. And the boys, of course, loved him. (18)

Ernie Pyle became famous during the Second World War for living and working alongside the troops and telling their story. His popular image as the “soldier’s friend”⁸ has shaped ideas about war correspondents to this day. In describing Pyle’s picture, Ayres not only points out this additional aspect of the myth of the war reporter, he also deliberately turns the reader’s attention to the role photographs play in conveying this myth. He emphasises Pyle’s military appearance in the picture and reveals its connotations: It represents the ideal of the war correspondent as the friend of the enlisted men, who shares their hardships in order to chronicle their experience, thereby gaining their respect as well as their comradeship. Ayres then turns to another photograph which shows Vietnam reporter Neil Sheehan: “He was wearing black aviator shades and sitting, shirt unbuttoned and notebook poised, in front of a rifle rack: [...] the pen pausing for thought; the lip curled in disbelief and disillusionment” (18). Again Ayres concentrates on the fact that the picture represents an aspect of the myth of the war correspondent, in this case one which became dominant in the Vietnam War. While Sheehan’s clothes and the rifles in the background signal that he is at home in the military world, the notebook and the serious expression on his face imply to Ayres that he is nevertheless a reflective critical observer, chronicling and criticising the horrors of war. By describing the connotations of the two pictures, Ayres reveals how the popular myth of the war reporter is encoded in photographs.

Ayres also shows that war correspondents still imitate these iconic images in their self-representation today. He demonstrates this by describing the picture of one of his colleagues who is also embedded with the US military:

I later saw a photograph of Oliver Poole as an embed. Shirtless beneath an unzipped Army flak vest, he was casually smoking a cigarette in front of a blackened mural of Saddam Hussein. To his right, an Iraqi truck was on fire. His Goa necklace, I noticed, was still intact. He looked good – dashing almost. (251)

Posing shirtless and in military gear in front of scenes of destruction, Poole seems to embody the ideal of the courageous male adventurer. His open flak vest and his cigarette suggest a certain carelessness in the face of danger. To Ayres, the photograph clearly implies that Poole is a “war type” who effortlessly becomes part of the soldiers’ comradeship. Ayres thus suggests that Poole’s self-representation confirms the heroic myth of the war reporter and thereby perpetuates it.

4. The War Correspondent as an Anti-Hero: Parodying the Heroic Narrative

In writing a parody of the traditional war reporter memoir, Ayres consciously tries to avoid telling his own experiences along the lines of the “shared narrative of adventure, independence, and truth” (Pedelty 39) that usually shapes war correspondents’ self-presentation. He presents himself as the antithesis to the stereotype of the courageous and tough war reporter, claiming to be a coward, not a hero. He thus appears as an Everyman figure who is thrown into war and completely overwhelmed by its reality. This idea is already conveyed on the cover picture of his book, which shows Ayres standing in front of a line of military vehicles in the desert, wearing a camouflage suit, a bulletproof vest and a helmet. The picture is staged in a similar way to the ones described above. However, whereas his colleague Poole succeeds in conveying a heroic impression, Ayres’s photograph fails to achieve the desired effect because his uniform and helmet are far too big for him, already suggesting that he cannot measure up to the greatness of his role models. This impression is reinforced by Ayres’s own description of his picture:

And then I thought of the picture of me, somewhere in those miserable, windy marshlands, stuffed into an oversized chemical suit with a stupid blue helmet on my head, squinting myopically into the dust and the sun. I had even taken my glasses off, because I thought it might make me look cooler. But the message of the photo is clear: *I want to go home*. (18–19)

Ayres then moves on to explain why he is not suited for the profession of the war correspondent: He depicts himself as an unfit young man, a “neat-freak hypochondriac” (143) with an irritable bowel syndrome (43), who suffers from frequent panic attacks (31). The idea of working in the harsh environment of a war zone provides no attraction to him since he has never enjoyed outdoor activities, as he assures the reader: “In fact I was a camping virgin: I had never slept rough, or toasted a marshmallow over an open fire, in my entire life. What’s more, I had never *wanted* to. I like carpets, central heating and goose-down duvets. Sod the outdoors” (146). He also has no interest in military culture, claiming that even as a child he failed to appreciate “the discipline and camaraderie of a pseudo-paramilitary organization” (147) which he experienced during his brief time with the Boy Scouts. In this self-deprecating characterisation, Ayres expressly presents himself as lacking all attributes that are commonly associated with the heroic war reporter: He shows neither physical nor mental strength and is anything but adventurous. He is simply “not the *type* who would become a war correspondent” (116; see also 136), as his girlfriend puts it.

Ayres achieves a comic effect by juxtaposing descriptions of his heroic role models with depictions of his own failings. For example, he tries to imagine how he himself would have reacted if he had been shot like BBC reporter Martin Bell during the Yugoslavian war: “I hated to think of the piercing, girlish squeal, followed by the involuntary bowel movement, that would have been broadcast into the homes of BBC viewers if it had been me in Sarajevo instead of Bell” (17). During his whole time with the Marines, Ayres remains unable to live up to his ideal of the courageous war reporter. His own inadequacies become especially obvious in moments of danger, for example in a scene in which he is digging trenches in the desert, while suddenly artillery is firing nearby: “Naturally, I tried to react with a mixture of machismo and nonchalance. It didn’t work. Nearly every blast made me drop my shovel and involuntarily scream, ‘WHAT THE FUCK WAS THAT?’” (9). Ayres also claims that he never

managed to bond with the Marines of his unit, therefore failing to follow in the footsteps of his role model Ernie Pyle. He tells us that the captain who was responsible for him “wasn’t happy about having a foreign journalist riding with him on his first combat mission” (11) and describes how the Marines enjoyed making fun of him:

My heavy blue flak jacket [had] the word “PRESS” inscribed on it in large reflective white lettering [...]. Buck, Murphy and Hustler would find it amusing to walk up to me, poke me in the chest, and say, “I’m pressing!” They also enjoyed pointing out that my jacket was possibly the only blue thing anywhere in the southern Iraqi desert – if not the entire country – and was therefore guaranteed to draw fire from even the most junior and inexperienced Iraqi marksman. (6–7)

Ayres interprets these jokes as proof that the Marines – a unit with a pronounced heroic and masculine habitus – do not take him seriously as a war reporter. They clearly perceive him as a civilian who does not know how to behave in a war zone. Ayres thus claims that, contrary to Pyle and Sheehan, he remained an outsider during his stay with the military, unable to really understand the Marines’ experience.

Most importantly, however, Ayres contradicts the traditional heroic narrative by questioning his own agency as a war reporter. In his book he reveals how much his daily work is shaped by the institutional structures of the media world, a fact that is rarely mentioned in war reporters’ memoirs, as Mark Pedelty notes (130). Ayres highlights the pressures he has to face as a young and relatively inexperienced journalist by comically exaggerating these aspects. Large parts of his narrative are dedicated to chronicling his difficult first steps in the profession: He recounts his time as a young and unpaid intern at the London office of the *Times* (chapter 4) and his stint as a business reporter, during which his main task was to rewrite news items published in other media outlets (51–52). He then claims that when his editor Martin Fletcher offered him the chance to become a war correspondent, he felt that he had no choice but to accept this offer:

I didn’t have to do any of this. But I was scared: scared of losing my new career as a foreign correspondent; scared of someone else taking my place and doing well; and scared of squandering an opportunity that many reporters worked their whole

lives to get. It was essentially a form of cowardice that was pushing me to Iraq. (143)

Here Ayres highlights the strong competition amongst journalists and identifies the fear of losing his job as his main reason to become an embedded reporter. Rather than presenting himself as being independent in his actions, he emphasises the professional hierarchies within which he operates, quite without the autonomy often associated with the heroic. His superiors are granted a considerable presence within his narrative, since Ayres gives detailed accounts of the telephone conversations he has with his editors during his stay with the Marines (see, for example, 220, 250 and 260). He also repeatedly mentions his fears that his reports might be rejected by his editors and will not be printed, which in his eyes would signal a beginning downturn in his career (see, for example, 250 and 264). Ayres presents these concerns regarding his career as his major driving force. On the other hand he fails to cite any idealistic reasons for becoming a war reporter, such as a wish to reveal the truth. As a consequence, his depiction – despite being comical – succeeds in foregrounding elements of the reality of the profession that remain hidden in heroic representations of war reporting.

It is not only the structure of the media world, however, that Ayres presents as limiting his agency. He also exposes the problems of being positioned within a unit of the US military, thereby offering a criticism of the Pentagon’s embedding scheme. In several scenes Ayres highlights the extremely passive role he has as an embedded reporter. On the one hand, he is completely dependent on the military for protection. This becomes especially clear in a scene in which the team of Marines he accompanies gets lost in the desert and suddenly encounters an Iraqi. Since it is unclear whether the man is a civilian or an enemy combatant, Ayres fears for the worst:

Shoot him, said a voice in my head. *Just shoot him*. I felt disgusted with myself. The Iraqi was probably terrified; we’d probably just turned his family into “arms and legs and pink mist”, as the faceless infantry commander had boasted. What I *should* have been thinking was, *Interview him; get out and interview him*. But I was more interested in staying alive than staying objective. (226)

Ayres's reaction to the Iraqi indicates that he has completely lost his journalistic impartiality and is unable to stop himself from taking over the US military's perspective of the conflict. The scene also shows that Ayres is in no position to investigate the situation. He is well aware that his task as a war correspondent should be to tell both sides of the story, but he has no opportunity to do so. Instead he appears as a helpless spectator of the events who rarely leaves the protection of the military vehicle. As a consequence, he is forced to rely entirely on the Marines for information:

I had no idea what was going on. Buck made sure that the only information I got was what I heard on the Humvee's radio or saw with my own eyes. [...] My battle-field perspective, therefore, was about as useful as Baghdad Bob's. My mum knew more about the war than I did. Sometimes I felt as though all I did was stand next to the guns and describe how loud they were. *Was that worth dying for?* (258)

Ayres's depiction implies that critical reporting is impossible in his position as an embedded journalist since the military provides hardly any information and he is left without any means to verify it. He has become a mere mouthpiece of the military: "I might as well be paid by the Marines" (258). Ayres self-depiction as an anti-hero thus also serves to reveal how much the American embedding scheme reduced war reporters' agency as well as their journalistic independence.

To conclude, Ayres's unconventional idea of writing a parody of the traditional war reporter memoir can be considered a clever marketing decision, a strategy to make his book stand out among the many autobiographical texts that were published by journalists in the wake of the Iraq War. However, Ayres's use of the parody also shows a high level of journalistic self-reflection. He is aware that any form of self-presentation runs the risk of merely reproducing popular myths about the war reporter. By comically exaggerating existing stereotypes and contrasting them with images of an antihero, he deconstructs the heroic myth of the war reporter. On the one hand, he reveals the popular images of the adventurous male war correspondent to be cultural constructs which are perpetuated in texts as well as photographs. On the other hand, he highlights the institutional structures within which journalists operate (and which limit their agency) and thus succeeds in presenting aspects of the reality of war reporting

that are concealed by the myth. Furthermore, by refusing to present himself as a heroic war reporter, Ayres makes a conscious choice to tell the story of the Iraq War through the eyes of an ordinary civilian. His perspective on the violent events is not that of a brave hero but that of a passive and helpless observer who is completely paralysed by fear. This also means that, despite being embedded with the US Marines and having a limited perspective on the war, he never comes close to glorifying the American war effort or the actions of the soldiers. His use of irony and satire can thus be seen as a means to assert his own critical detachment.

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1 See, for example, Mark Pedelty's anthropological study *War Stories*, in which he contrasts the heroic image of the war reporter with the daily routines and practices he has observed during his field study of foreign correspondents in El Salvador. Also see Barbara Korte, who has analysed images of war reporters in fiction and memoirs.

2 Phillip Knightley's history of war reporting, *The First Casualty*, offers a detailed account of the many legends surrounding these and other correspondents.

3 See, for example, the journalists Oliver Poole and Katherine Skiba, who also published memoirs about their first experiences as war reporters.

4 For detailed information on the embedding scheme, see Lewis et al. In his memoir, Ayres offers an explanation why he received the assignment despite his lack of experience in war reporting. He suggests that before the war most newspaper editors feared that the embedded reporters "would be stuck with units deliberately kept far away from the fighting" (105). Therefore, editors like the *Times*'s Martin Fletcher decided "to put young, inexperienced reporters in the American scheme, just in case they were needed" (106).

5 All page numbers for Ayres's memoir *War Reporting for Cowards* refer to the 2006 edition published by John Murray.

6 His articles even gained him a nomination as "Foreign Correspondent of the Year" at the British Press Awards in 2004 (see Ayres n. pag. [biographical note]).

7 Randy Dotinga aptly summarised this trend in a review for the *Christian Science Monitor* in 2005: "Near-instant memoirs about the Iraq war are all the rage" (14).

8 See Ray E. Boomhower's biography of Pyle entitled *The Soldier's Friend*. On Pyle's image as "the GIs' friend", see also Knightley (357).

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(Re-)Bonded to Britain: The Meta-Heroic Discourse of Skyfall (2012)

A Popular Hero in Popular Cinema

Popular culture is marked by a special sensitivity not only to cultural markets but, even more importantly, the desires and anxieties of its audiences. That some of these desires and anxieties revolve around the heroic is most obvious in popular cinema, where heroes and their counterpart, the villains, are essential ingredients of some of the most successful genres: the Western, the war film, the action thriller, or the comic-inspired superhero movies that came to the fore in the post-9/11 world. Involving its audiences emotionally is a central goal of popular cinema, and its representational strategies intend to make spectators feel with and for the heroes, to be excited by their actions, to admire and sometimes be irritated by them. At the same time, popular cinema can also elicit a more analytic response to its heroes when it highlights qualities and structures of the heroic *per se* – through exaggeration, irony or parody, but also through a distinct level of meta-heroic reflection. The James Bond films are a case in point and a particularly instructive one because their protagonist has become a popular hero in quite a distinctive sense. As Tony Bennett and Janet Woollacott note in their book about the “political career” of 007, Bond appears to have spilled over from fiction into everyday life:

Bond is and, from as early as the late 1950s, always has been more than just the central protagonist in a number of novels and the films derived from them. Rather, the nature of his existence has been that of a popular hero, a term which is often used quite loosely although in fact it refers to a cultural phenomenon of a quite specific type with quite specific – and complex – conditions of existence. [...] It is [...] in being granted a quasi-real status that a popular hero (or heroine)

constitutes a cultural phenomenon of a particular type, quite distinct from the hero (or heroine) whose existence is contained within and limited to a particular and narrowly circumscribed set of texts. Whereas popular heroes also usually have their origins in a particular work or body of fiction, they break free from the originating textual conditions of their existence to achieve a semi-independent existence, functioning as an established point of cultural reference that is capable of working – of producing meanings – even for those who are not directly familiar with the original texts in which they first made their appearance. [...] These figures are lodged in the memory bank of our culture. Functioning as focal points of cultural reference, they condense and connect, serve as shorthand expressions for, a number of deeply implanted cultural and ideological concerns. (13–14)

To Bennett and Woollacott,¹ the popularity of Bond as a cultural signifier has “consisted in his ability to co-ordinate – that is, to connect and serve as a condensed expression for – a series of ideological and cultural concerns that have been enduringly important in Britain since the late 1950s” (18). Bond also works as a trans-cultural signifier, however, and other critics have noted the Bond films’ more general sensitivity to *zeitgeist*:² 007 has been kept alive on the silver screen for more than half a century because, quite characteristically for a product of popular culture, the character has been continually adapted to changing fashions and tastes, and because the films have responded to prominent geopolitical issues (the Cold War, the power of media syndicates and global terrorism) as well as wider societal questions such as the negotiation of gender roles.

We can add heroes to that list because the Bond films are also indicators of shifting cultural relationships to the heroic. The humorous and almost parodic films with Roger Moore during the early 1980s exemplify an ironic attitude (at least in the West) towards the heroic, while the “grittier” films with Timothy Dalton – *The Living Daylights* (1987) and *Licence to Kill* (1989) – have been read by Jeremy Black as symptoms of “the more critical and sardonic, if not sarcastic, attitude toward heroism that could be widely seen on television and film in the period; the popular British television comedy series *Blackadder*, for example, closed in 1989 with programs presenting World War I as futile, cruel and unheroic” (149). I will argue that *Skyfall* (2012), the latest Bond film to date, exemplifies an approach to the heroic that is once more symptomatic of its time: Since 9/11 and the wars “against terror”, the Western world has seen a conspicuous revival of discourses about heroes and heroism from popular culture to academia, and it has led to an inflationary use of the word “hero” in all kinds of likely and unlikely contexts. It seems timely that a film about James Bond – one of the few major popular heroes apart from Robin Hood or Harry Potter which Britain can muster against a dominance of American popular-cultural productions – responds to the phenomenon, and with a pronounced level of meta-heroic reflection for that matter.

Skyfall shares such a level with other more intriguing instances of popular hero cinema such as Christopher Nolan’s Batman trilogy, and it is significant that, like these Batman films, the hero has a “dark” side to him that draws attention to the fact that a hero’s relationship to the community or communities he serves can be problematic: Heroes are admired because they exemplify and (over-)perform the values of a community, but their social meaning is more intricate where they irritate and provoke. The exceptionality, agency and autonomy of heroes can violate the rules and regulations of the social order; heroes transgress norms and boundaries in the interest of a greater good. It is this transgressive element which not only makes heroes outsiders or at least “difficult” members of a community, but which also creates a disturbing affinity to the villains they oppose. While Batman’s darkness results from his status as a vigilante, Bond’s darkness is linked to the fact that he is a secret agent: He is “licensed” to kill for his country like a soldier, but unlike a soldier, he can only act covertly and with “dirty” means, and he cannot be acknowledged publicly until his death. While the conflicted aspects of spy-heroism were over-written in many

of the earlier Bond films, they are brought fully to the fore in the Craig films and especially in *Skyfall*.³ While operating as an entertaining, emotionally gripping and sensational spy thriller (that also equips Bond with an unusual psychological depth), *Skyfall* addresses such questions as the timeliness of heroism in allegedly post-heroic times and the scope for heroism in the order of democratic and egalitarian societies. And quite strikingly, given the fact that the targeted audience of the Bond franchise is an international one, *Skyfall*’s heroic discourse goes hand in hand with a pronounced repatriation of its hero – a re-bonding of James Bond with his country and its national institutions.

Skyfall and the Revival of Bond’s “Patriotic Code”

The pronounced Britishness of *Skyfall* echoes a widespread revival of patriotism in 21st-century Britain whose origins cannot only be traced to Britain’s military engagement in the wars against terror but appear to be part of a wider cultural nationalism.⁴ This revival was staged for a worldwide audience during an event that preceded the release of *Skyfall* and to which the marketing of the film tied in, significantly activating the “patriotic code” (Chapman 158) that has always run through the Bond series, even if sometimes in a tongue-in-cheek mode. During the British-themed opening ceremony of the London Olympics,⁵ James Bond, impersonated by Daniel Craig, had a cameo appearance as a British institution when a short film insert showed him escorting another British institution, the (real) Queen Elizabeth II, to the stadium. The film – entitled “Happy and Glorious” after a line from the British national anthem – was meant to pay tribute not only to Great Britain and the Games, but also to the 60th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth’s ascension to the throne and the 50th anniversary of the first Bond film in 1962. It cited a well-known scene from *The Spy Who Loved Me* (1977) in which Bond jumps with a Union Jack parachute, but with an ironic twist, because here the Queen out-heroes Bond, leaping from the helicopter in front of her official bodyguard. Before this climactic moment, the film took the audience on a flight over London and its major icons and national institutions, including the Houses of Parliament and the (animated) statue of Winston Churchill on Parliament Square.⁶ Bond’s Olympic appearance thus prepared audiences for the conspicuous Britishness with which *Skyfall* unfolds its heroic theme, not without humour, but at the same time with a seriousness reminiscent of

the original Bond figure of Ian Fleming's novels. It is worth staying with Fleming for a while, because his presentation of Bond as a conflicted hero, and specifically one with misgivings about the country he still loyally serves, reverberates in *Skyfall* and reminds one of the fact that the film series with Daniel Craig was intended as a re-launch of the Bond series and a return to the character's origins.⁷ Fleming's Bond figure was linked to the situation of Britain at a decisive point in history, namely the decades following the Second World War, which the novels depict as a time when the heroism embodied by Bond is still needed but no longer properly appreciated by his country's society. In this context, Fleming's Bond figure raises a question that appears to be a fundamental one in all discussion of heroism: Why and when do communities need heroes, why do they admire heroes (or not), and how do heroes relate to "their" communities?

Ian Fleming's Hero

Fleming's Bond of the 1950s and early 60s came out of Fleming's perception of Britain as a de-heroised country.⁸ After its "finest hour" (in Winston Churchill's famous phrase⁹) during the Second World War, fifties Britain is no longer great but patronised by the US and in the process of losing its Empire.¹⁰ In *From Russia with Love* (1957), Fleming lets Bond characterise his country as an egalitarian welfare state and as a former lion that has lost its bite: "the trouble today is that carrots for all are the fashion. At home and abroad. We don't show teeth any more – only gums" (176). In *You Only Live Twice* (1964), England is described as a sick and lethargic nation that saw its last heroic "community effort" (248) during the war; that this verdict comes from the villain Blofeld does not make it less true but even more devastating.

Adapting terms by Herfried Münkler, one could describe Fleming's vision of wartime Britain as that of a heroic society, while post-war Britain has turned into an unheroic society whose security depends on remaining heroic communities within its midst.¹¹ Britain's war after the war is a "cold" one whose fighting is delegated largely to a small group of secret agents, and in consequence, the public has lost its instinct for true heroes. In *Moonraker* (1955), for instance, Britain's loss of a collective heroism is revealed by the fact that the public permits itself to be deceived by the villain Drax – the evil "dragon" it mistakenly admires as a hero who will provide it with a powerful defence weapon while he actually plans to destroy the country right from in-

side of one of its national icons, the white Cliffs of Dover. In *From Russia with Love* Britain's incapacity to distinguish and appreciate heroes is once more diagnosed by the opponent when a member of the Soviet secret service pronounces that the English are no longer "interested in heroes unless they are footballers or cricketers or jockeys", while the true heroes are unrecognised: "This man Bond is unknown to the public. If he was known, he would still not be a hero. In England, neither open war nor secret war is a heroic matter. They do not like to think about war, and after a war the names of their war heroes are forgotten as quickly as possible" (48–49).

Fleming, then, created Bond as an agent who acts heroically in a context in which traditions of the heroic have become precarious. In this context, heroics often remain unappreciated, and the qualities of heroism have become so diffuse that even the hero is unsure about his heroic status. The very first novel of Fleming's series, *Casino Royale* (1953), communicates the precariousness of Bond's heroism in a torture scene in which the villain attacks Bond's genitals with a carpet beater (the *Casino Royale* film with Daniel Craig includes the scene with only slight variations), thus not only humiliating him, but severely threatening the pronounced masculinity which, in Fleming's view, seems inextricably linked with Bond's heroism and is accordingly staged in all of the novels.¹² The experience leaves Bond prostrate for weeks, and it is on his sickbed that he has a long and disillusioned discussion about heroism with his friend and colleague Mathis. As Bond tells Mathis, he finds it hard to define heroic behaviour at a time when the polarity of heroism and villainy has become disturbed: "The hero kills two villains, but when the hero Le Chiffre starts to kill the villain Bond and the villain Bond knows he isn't a villain at all, you see the other side of the medal. The villains and heroes get all mixed up". The Cold War and its dark practices have also devalued the patriotism through which the agent-hero's "dirty" methods might still be legitimised: "Of course [...] patriotism comes along and makes it seem fairly all right, but this country-right-or-wrong business is getting a little out-of-date" (158–160). This "out-of-dateness", the apparent anachronism, of Bond's heroism is emphasised in Fleming's novels by repeated comparisons between Bond and heroic types of antiquity and the Middle Ages.¹³ This is played out to grotesque dimensions in *You Only Live Twice* (1964), where Bond has to fight Blofeld in the villain's pseudo-medieval castle. Here Bond has to act like St George, the English national saint, enter the "Castle of Death and slay the Dragon

within" (105). What makes the theatre for heroism in this novel even more bizarre is that it is set in Japan, a country which Fleming portrays as a counterpoint to his de-heroised Britain. Japan, it is claimed, has preserved its tradition of heroism even though it lost the Second World War, and it therefore provides a suitable scenario for Bond's heroic performance, which in this scenario is also particularly spectacular. Bond's escape from Blofeld's exploding castle is rendered as a piece of swashbuckling heroics that ends with an injured Bond hanging from a balloon from which he drops into the sea, against a backdrop of fire:

There was a light night breeze and he felt himself wafted gently over the moonlit park, over the glittering, steaming lake, towards the sea. But he was rising, not falling! The helium sphere was not in the least worried by his weight! Then blue-and-yellow fire fluttered from the upper storey of the castle and an occasional angry wasp zipped past him. [...] now the whole black silhouette of the castle swayed in the moonlight and seemed to jig upwards and sideways and then slowly dissolve like an icecream cone in sunshine. The top storey crumbled first, then the next, and the next, and then, after a moment, a huge jet of orange fire shot up from hell towards the moon and a buffet of hot wind, followed by an echoing crack of thunder, hit Bond and made his balloon sway violently. What was it all about? Bond didn't know or care. The pain in his head was his whole universe. Punctured by a bullet, the balloon was fast losing height. Below, the softly swelling sea offered a bed. Bond let go with hands and feet and plummeted down towards peace, towards the rippling feathers of some childhood dream of softness and escape from pain. (254–255).

Not only with its hero's fall from the sky does *You Only Live Twice* appear to be an indirect pre-text for *Skyfall*. Bond is also believed dead here after he has survived the explosion of Blofeld's castle, and his obituary is published in the *Times*.¹⁴ And Fleming's novels in general seem to anticipate *Skyfall*'s motif of outdated heroism and its inquiry into the hero's vexed relationship with the two communities that frame the scope of his actions: first, the secret service, and second, his country and its institutions at large. The hero's troubled relationship with the communities he serves was already indicated in the first two films of the Craig series, *Casino Royale* (2006) and *Quantum of Solace* (2008), both of which

emphasise Bond's violence, unruliness and the (failed) attempts of his superior M and the government to discipline him.¹⁵ In *Skyfall*, however, Bond is seriously alienated from his service and has to be restored and re-instituted not only as an agent, but also as a hero for the country he serves.

The Heroic Argument of *Skyfall*

Bond's fall as agent and hero in *Skyfall* is staged in the pre-title and title sequences of the film. Accompanied by a female colleague (the still anonymous Moneypenny),¹⁶ Bond is in spectacular pursuit of a man who has stolen a hard drive with the names of British agents who have infiltrated terrorist organisations around the world. The operation is watched in real time by M via satellite, who observes Bond's man-to-man fight with the enemy on the roof of a moving train and orders the female agent to shoot Bond's opponent even though Moneypenny does not have a "clean" shot. As a result, she hits Bond by mistake, and he falls from the train, into a river and down a waterfall. While Bond is believed dead, M writes an obituary in which 007 is praised as "an exemplar of British fortitude", as the audience learns at the end of the film. By this time, Bond has lived up to this characterisation again, but the first part of the action portrays him as a fallen hero alienated from the MI6 because he feels betrayed by M and the way she has risked his life. He has therefore chosen to stay "dead" for a while and spends this time in the tropics, nursing his personal crisis and ruining his constitution with the excessive consumption of drinks, sex and dubious substances. Bond only returns to London after Silva, the film's cyber-terrorist villain (played charismatically by Javier Bardém), has blown up M's headquarters. Silva has also got hold of the stolen data and begun to kill British agents, leaking images of these killings to the British media. The film shows how Bond has to re-build himself in London, physically, mentally and attitudinally, as the agent he was, and his final restitution is staged at "Skyfall", the ancient family home of the Bonds in Scotland. Here Bond is fully reborn, in a scenario of mythic dimensions, and in a scene that echoes his fall from the beginning of the film he even literally rises from the ground of a lake.

Indeed, when Bond is shot at the beginning of *Skyfall* this event suggests a metaphorical reading as the fall of an agent who is not permitted to fully perform his heroic agency. The reason for this failure does not lie with Bond but in the fact that he is being observed by M, who can

therefore take decisions out of his hand. M's fatal decision to have Moneypenny shoot, which is "punished" by the loss of the secret data to Silva, is the outcome of a new relationship between the government and the secret service. MI6 is meant to be placed under greater control and turned into a more civil, bureaucratised and transparent institution – one that fits a modern democracy but which would also, as the film suggests, be less heroic. The British government as portrayed in *Skyfall* stands for the "anti-heroic affect" (Bolz) that has been diagnosed for modern bourgeois and democratic societies whose social order and security are meant to be maintained by the state, and this anti-heroic affect is coupled with a belief that the old ways of MI6 have become obsolete. Politicians faced with new wars and new threats such as cyber terrorism no longer wish to depend for their security and that of their citizens on a community in their midst that operates with heroic individuals and their dubious practices. Instead, it believes in the value of transparency and relies on the open presence of security forces and on surveillance technology to ensure safety. Like Bond, M stands for an allegedly outdated secret service, a heroic community which a post-Cold War society no longer wants, and she is therefore to be pensioned off. It is Mallory (M's later successor as head of MI6), who is meant to supervise the implementation of change in MI6, and he spells out to M: "We're a democracy. We're accountable to the people we're trying to defend. We can't keep working in the shadows. There are no more shadows" (1:05:13–15).¹⁷ Bond significantly dismisses him as a bureaucrat (0:51:47), but the further course of the action shows that Mallory, who proved his own heroic spirit in the fight against the IRA, can be converted. When the killings of the first agents are shown on BBC World television and the government is embarrassed by "the greatest internal security breach in modern history" (1:04:46), M has to face an inquest ordered by the Prime Minister. Here she is challenged by an aggressive (female) minister: "It's as if you insist on pretending we still live in a golden age of espionage where human intelligence was the only resource available. Well, I find this rather old-fashioned belief demonstrates a reckless disregard for ..." The politician is here interrupted by Mallory, who wants to give M a chance to reply (1:32:43).¹⁸ As the audience knows, however, it is precisely the new fashion of transparency and control that has prevented Bond from fulfilling his mission at the film's beginning and thus made it possible for Silva to pursue his terrorist aims. And M knows this, too, because Bond has already reproached her for her decision: "You should have trusted

me to finish the job" (00:25:12), meaning that she should not have restricted the agency and autonomy that form the basis of heroic action.

Accordingly, during her inquest M defends the necessity of old-style heroic battle even in modern societies which, in her opinion, cannot be protected by transparent means:

Our enemies are no longer known to us. They do not exist on a map [...]. They're not nations. They're individuals. Our world is not more transparent now. It's more opaque. It's in the shadows. That's where we must do battle. So, before you declare us irrelevant, ask yourselves, how safe do you feel? (1:35:20–55)

And the film's rhetoric affirms M's position through its editing. While the head of MI6 is being questioned, the spectators see Silva and his men approaching the inquest room and eventually breaking into it. As a man from the shadows (1:05:26), the villain has been able to outwit all security measures through which the state tries to protect its institutions and its citizens and approached Westminster by Tube and in a policeman's uniform. All official security measures have failed, and only Bond, another man from the shadows who has pursued the villain through London's public space, can come to M's rescue.

The Westminster scenes are particularly significant for the film's defence of "old-fashioned" heroism. They establish Bond at the core of his country's governmental institutions, and they also inscribe him in a history of heroism that has left its imprint on icons of British cultural production. Following her claim that 21st-century Britain is still involved in a battle against the shadows, M cites key lines from a poem that belongs to the canon of English literature and is well-known at least to a wider British audience: The speaker of Alfred Lord Tennyson's "Ulysses" is Odysseus, who has finally returned from his adventures and taken up his duty as ruler of Ithaca. Odysseus is now an old man, unknown to his people, who are unaware of his heroic status and lead unheroic lives themselves: "[...] I mete and dole / Unequal laws unto a savage race, / That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me" (ll. 3–5). Since his new, post-heroic existence does not satisfy him ("How dull it is to pause, to make an end / To rust unburnished, not to shine in use!", 22–23), Tennyson's Odysseus and his followers decide to leave Ithaca once more and seek new adventures, their heroic spirit revived:

Though much is taken, much abides; and though
 We are not now that strength which in old days
 Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are—
 One equal temper of heroic hearts,
 Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
 To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield. (ll. 65–70)

Tennyson wrote this poem in 1833, and it was published in 1842, at a time when attitudes towards heroism had also become precarious in the context of a more democratic and egalitarian bourgeois society. In 1840, Thomas Carlyle published his influential lectures on *Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*, in which he complained that his time had forgotten how to admire heroes: “I am well aware that in these days Hero-worship, the thing I call hero-worship, professes to have gone out, and finally ceased” (12). When M cites Tennyson in *Skyfall*, she makes a similar statement about her own society, while maintaining that true heroism persists even when it is no longer appreciated.

Earlier in the film, soon after Bond’s return to London, the heroism embodied by Bond is inspected in another scene impregnated with cultural capital. A grey-bearded Bond meets a new, young Q who believes in hi-tech rather than old-fashioned gadgets and heroic stunts, and this juxtaposition of generations takes place in front of a famous painting in the National Gallery. Like Tennyson’s poem and composed at almost the same time, William Turner’s painting *The Fighting Temeraire*, first exhibited in 1839, shows how an old ship that fought bravely in the Battle of Trafalgar (1805) is towed off by a modern steamship in order to be dismantled. Q describes the scene as “a grand old warship being ignominiously hauled away for scrap” (0:37:25). However, Turner’s painting precisely does not portray the Temeraire as an ignominious wreck. On the contrary: the ship is depicted in an idealised manner, with all its sails blown up. The official website of the National Gallery offers the following interpretation:

Turner’s painting pays tribute to the Temeraire’s heroic past. The glorious sunset is a fanfare of colour in her honour. It can also be seen as a symbol of the end of an era, with the sun setting on the days of elegant, tall-masted warships. The Temeraire is already a ghostly shape, fading away behind the solid form of the squat little steam tug that pulls her along to her fate. [...] Turner wanted viewers of his painting to think about how the Temeraire

had served her country in the past, and how Britain now seemed to have turned its back on her. (“Heroine of Trafalgar”)

This reading can be transferred to the Bond we see in front of the painting, whose appearance – exhausted and visibly aged – is part of a whole sequence of images and motifs through which the film addresses the apparent outdatedness of Bond and the kind of heroism he embodies. Indeed, for quite some time, Bond’s body proves unfit for heroism because he has not taken care of himself during his time of exile.¹⁹ However, Bond does not permit himself to be scrapped. He re-builds his heroic body and regains the love of his country, as he tells Silva when the villain has captured him on his island in China and, a fallen former MI6 agent himself,²⁰ tries to tempt Bond to betray his community and enjoy full autonomy (“Pick your own mission”) without restraint or control of any kind.²¹ This first face-to-face confrontation between Bond and Silva establishes the disturbing affinity between hero and villain (underscored by the suggestion of homoerotic attraction)²² and the fragile borderline between them, but Bond resists and does not cross the line because of his basic integrity and his “pathetic love of country” (1:09:54).

The film underscores Bond’s patriotism by its prominent layer of British icons and myths. The Union Jack appears repeatedly, (mis-)used by the villain Silva as a background for his messages to M, but also as a sign of honour on the coffins of the agents killed during Silva’s attack on MI6 (evoking similar images of the coffins of soldiers brought home from the post-9/11 wars). Not least, the Union Jack appears on the trashy bulldog figurine on M’s desk – the only item saved, as Bond observes mockingly, from the MI6 headquarters after Silva’s bomb attack, and later M’s only bequest to Bond as a message that he must pursue their old ways because his country needs them. According to the *Oxford Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, the bulldog is a traditional symbol “of what are regarded as British characteristics of pluck and stubbornness, and may generally denote a person noted for courageous or stubborn tenacity” (“Bulldog”). The most important association of the bulldog in *Skyfall* is that with Winston Churchill, the politician who led Britain through what, not only to Fleming, were its last moments of collective heroism during World War II.²³ *Skyfall* refers to this phase explicitly and establishes a link between Churchill’s war and that of MI6. After its modern headquarters have been destroyed, the secret service finds new quarters in the underground tunnels

(“part of Churchill’s bunker”, 0:24:44) from which Churchill governed the nation during the war. In the argument of the film, this is a congenial choice not only because it is another marker of the need for “old-fashioned” heroism, but also because the Churchill association dignifies the fact that MI6 heroes have to operate from “underground” because this is also from where the villain attacks.²⁴

As hinted above, the climactic showdown between hero and villain takes place outside London, in *Skyfall*, a place distinguished not only by its remoteness, but also its pastness. It is here that Bond can overcome the childhood trauma of having lost his parents and make his peace with M,²⁵ but more importantly for the film’s heroic discourse, his battle against Silva also has to end “back in time”, as Bond tells M after he has rescued her after her inquest: *Skyfall* provides a temporality in which old-fashioned heroic figures like her and him still “have the advantage” (1:40:40), and it provides a scenario (filmed in “dated” sepia colours) in which Bond as hero can be fully resurrected with splendour.²⁶ The film presents *Skyfall* as a haunted archaic place steeped in religious symbolism and portrays it in sublime images (notably connected to the elements of fire and water). The laws of the Bond series demand that Bond must survive and eventually triumph. But the ending of *Skyfall* shows more than that: Not only is the hero reborn, but the kind of heroism he embodies – a traditional, individual heroism – is also fully vindicated. This heroism is not outdated, the film suggests, but still relevant for the security of 21st-century Britain. This is a message which Q and Mallory have understood even before the *Skyfall* sequence. Q, whose computers have not been able to resist the villain, assists Bond, and Mallory, whose eyes have been opened by Silva’s attack in Westminster, covers Bond’s and M’s journey to *Skyfall*, thus qualifying as a worthy successor to M, who officially re-institutes Bond in the film’s final scene, where 007 returns to the community of MI6 and does so “with pleasure”. Bond, MI6 and his country have re-bonded, and this is emphasised by the images that precede the final scene in M’s office. They show Bond on the roof of the Ministry of Defence, in front of a glorious panorama with Union Jack, Big Ben (the clock tower of Parliament) and Westminster Abbey (Britain’s national site of commemoration). Bond’s re-institution is thus framed by an impressive array of national institutions. The sublimity of this image is broken with humour when Moneypenny presents Bond with M’s bulldog, but even the reappearance of the bulldog

signifies Bond’s restoration as a British hero. Bond will continue to serve his country – not only as a secret agent, but also as an institution by himself who reminds his country of heroic values and the necessity of heroic action.

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Skyfall is a Bond film whose conspicuous level of heroic discourse responds to a current interest in heroes and heroism that is linked with an equally conspicuous patriotic theme. In both respects, *Skyfall* is a popular action film that speaks to desires and anxieties of a 21st-century Western audience, and notably audiences in Britain and the US, where the wars against terror have contributed to a new recognition and appreciation of military heroism,²⁷ and where patriotism never became as suspicious as in German culture. Nevertheless, the film’s vindication of (Bond’s) heroism also invites critical questions, not only in relation to the film’s treatment of race and gender, both united in the new black Miss Moneypenny, who soon retires from field work after her own heroic appearance at the beginning of the film and leaves heroism to the white, blond and highly masculine Bond. As a simple internet search reveals, Bond – like the American superheroes – has often been discussed as a character with anti-democratic and even fascist tendencies, and the way in which democratic politicians are depicted in *Skyfall* might support such interpretations. One also wonders how the makers of the film would have tried to accommodate the transgressiveness of an Edward Snowden in their vindication of a heroic secret service. It speaks for *Skyfall*, however, that it makes its spectators think about such questions. Like the Bond films before it, *Skyfall* is ideologically conservative, but it does not promote naive hero worship. Rather, by making its audience watch how a hero relates to his narrow and wider communities, the film has the capacity, within the framework of a suspenseful and emotional action movie, to make its spectators ask how heroism can be defined, and in what – positive or negative – ways it is still meaningful in present-day societies and different national contexts.

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1 Bennett and Woollacott are two of a series of academics in various disciplines that have engaged seriously with the James Bond phenomenon. For essential work by other scholars, see Jeremy Black (cultural history), James Chapman (film studies), and Werner Greve (psychology) as well as the transdisciplinary collections of articles edited by Comentale et al.; Lindner; Frenk and Krug; and Föcking and Böger.

2 In a book that accompanied an Ian Fleming and Bond exhibition at the Imperial War Museum on the occasion of the centenary of the author's birth in 2008, Macintyre refers to Bond as "a cultural weathervane" (205); on the transformations of Bond, see also Greve and the contributions in Lindner, *The James Bond Phenomenon*.

3 As Chapman points out, Daniel Craig himself "spoke of finding a 'dark side' to the character" that would make the audience question 007's morals (242).

4 For a critical discussion of "the wave of the new British cultural nationalism", see, for instance, a 2011 article by Jonathan Jones in the *Guardian*.

5 See the description of the ceremony on the official site of London 2012: "On the evening of 27 July 2012, 80,000 spectators inside the Olympic Stadium, and a further 900 million who were glued to their television sets around the world, witnessed the magnificent spectacle of the Opening Ceremony of the Games of the XXX Olympiad. Conceived and produced by renowned British film director Danny Boyle, who chose as his theme Isles of Wonder, the Ceremony was a spectacular and panoramic celebration of the modern history and finest achievements of Great Britain, infused with humour, and the occasional surrealist twist, and played out against a musical backdrop that captured the essence of 'Britishness'" (London 2012).

6 The 10-minute Bond-and-Queen episode of the Opening Ceremony was also directed by Danny Boyle and produced by the BBC. It featured music by Handel, among others, as well as the Dambusters March from the 1955 British war film classic *The Dam Busters*, thus indirectly evoking a heroic World War II theme (see London 2012).

7 In this context, see Christoph Lindner's observations on an element that has lent Fleming's novels a new topicality in the post-9/11 world, namely their representation of large-scale crime: "By first magnifying the scope of criminal vision to include crimes against humanity and then locating those crimes politically in a postwar world order – however fictional and fantastic – Fleming effectively captured the popular cultural imagination with a fear that has been haunting it ever since. Recently, in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks, this fear has been greatly accentuated. As a consequence, the original 007 novels have arguably become more relevant and resonant today than they have been for a long time" ("Why Size Matters", 236–237). See also Black, who reads Fleming's novels as being "primarily tales of antiterrorism, in the sense of identifying a source of terror and then destroying the most visible element of the terror at that time" (85).

8 For a more detailed discussion of heroism in Fleming's novels, see Korte.

9 It was pronounced in a speech in the House of Commons on 18 June 1940 and emphasised a communal attitude: "Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties, and so bear ourselves that, if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say, 'This was their finest hour'" (Churchill, 6238).

10 For a more detailed discussion of Englishness in Fleming's novels, see Berberich, while Chapman discusses Bond's Britishness more generally.

11 As Münkler emphasises, it is characteristic of Western democracies after 1945 that its societies develop heroic communities within themselves but take care that they have clear demarcations towards civil society (328–329).

12 The novels emphasise Bond's heroic masculinity with long descriptions of his physique, sometimes even his nude body, and so quite obviously tie in with traditional concepts of male heroism. The articulation of Bond's heroism with masculinity cannot be discussed here in detail. It should be noted, however, that this element was significantly revived when Daniel Craig became Bond. As James Chapman notes, *Casino Royale* (2006) offered Bond's muscular body "as an object of spectacle" (Licence 249), displaying the character in swimming trunks or in the nude during the torture scene. The attention to Bond's body is also reflected in the physicality of the film's stunts (rather than spectacular special effects as in earlier films).

13 See, for instance, *Live and Let Die* (1954), where Bond's mission is compared to a knight's quest (159), and where Bond anticipates his confrontation with the novel's hero as "a giant, a homeric slaying" (21). For a discussion of this aspect, see also Sternberg as well as Sauerberg (38–45).

14 M's obituary in *You Only Live Twice* praises his bravery ("The nature of Commander Bond's duties with the Ministry [...] must remain confidential, nay secret, but his colleagues at the Ministry will allow that he performed them with outstanding bravery and distinction", 258) and mentions his membership in a distinguished order of knighthood, the Order of St Michael and St George; he is also compared to Nelson, the hero of Trafalgar.

15 In *Casino Royale*, M has Bond equipped with a subdermal tracer chip. In *A Quantum of Solace* in particular Bond has to be disciplined repeatedly because he pursues his personal vendetta for Vesper Lynd's death with excessive brutality and is "running wild", but also because he rejects the way in which British politics is betraying its ethics and supports immoral practices of global trade. During a psychological test in *Skyfall* after his return to M16, Bond suggestively associates "agent" with "provocateur" (30:21), and is diagnosed as a case of "pathological rejection of authority" (1:10:37).

16 There is no space here to discuss the ways in which the Bond films portray women and have attempted to update in this respect as well. It should be noted, however, that *Skyfall* seems to restore Bond to a safely masculine world as Moneypenny gives up field service and M dies and is replaced by a man.

17 All times are taken from the DVD release of *Skyfall*.

18 Ironically, in this respect the politicians concur with the opinion of the villain by whom their country is threatened. As Silva tells Bond while he holds him captive on his island near Macau: "Chasing spies. So old-fashioned [...] England. The Empire. M16. You're living in a ruin as well. You just don't know it yet" (1:12:44).

19 After his return to M16, Bond fails his fitness tests and is, quite literally, on the floor, knocked out by exhaustion. Mallory even suggests that he had better remain "dead" because the secret service is "a young man's game" (33:41).

20 The reading of Silva as a Lucifer figure fallen from "heaven" is suggested not only by the film's title, but also by the fact that Bond first sees him in a lift descending from above. It also makes sense in the context of Fleming's novels, where Bond is compared to an unfallen archangel, St George. The reading of Silva as a Lucifer figure also corresponds to the religious overtones of the film's final scenes at *Skyfall*, where Bond experiences a resurrection and Silva finds it appropriate that everything, including his own vendetta against M, who once gave him up as an agent, should end in a chapel ("Of course. It had to be here. It had to be this way", 2:05:20).

21 On autonomy or independence as a distinguishing mark of the hero (that is restricted in developed states and becomes precarious in “prosaic states of affairs in the present”), see Hegel’s lectures on Aesthetics, especially 183–196. Also see Carlyle, who emphasises the hero’s “free force” (13) and how it is limited with the advance of civilisation.

22 For a general discussion of the Bond-villain relationship, see also Bannen.

23 Even during the war, propaganda posters and caricatures portrayed Churchill as a bulldog. See Rhodes, 111, 212.

24 This is suggested drastically by the scene in *Skyfall* that evokes the terrorist attacks on the London Underground on 7 July 2005: In one of the film’s most spectacular action scenes, Silva crashes an underground train on Bond. The film takes care to let the audience see that there are no passengers on the train; the scene might otherwise have been too traumatic for an entertainment film.

25 The final confrontation of hero and villain is Manichaeic, and M dies in the chapel and in Bond’s arms, like in an inverted pietà. For a Freudian reading of the Bond-M relationship in the Craig films, see De Kosnik. The relationship becomes even more complex in *Skyfall*, as Silva has a similar relationship with M.

26 Fittingly, they reach *Skyfall* in Bond’s old Aston Martin, which is still full of gadgets devised by the old Q, and they defeat the cyberterrorist with distinctly old-fashioned weapons and tactics, assisted by an old game-keeper.

27 See, for instance, a poll by Lord Michael Ashcroft, a Conservative British peer (“Armed Forces and Society”).

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