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**TITLE:** DIVIDED NATION, DIVIDED SELF: THE LANGUAGE OF CAPITALISM AND MADNESS IN OTWAY'S VENICE PRESERV'D

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Thomas Otway's *Venice Preserv'd; or, A Plot Discovered* (1682) is an enigma, if judged by the interpretations of scholars who have tried to associate Otway's drama with plots and political parties in England from 1678 through 1682. The often contradictory conclusions that scholars have reached when they try to determine who represents whom in the drama suggest that the nature of the play's characters resists strictly allegorical interpretations. But for all that, the characters answer in personal terms to the politics of Otway's day. I shall argue that in *Venice Preserv'd*, Otway does not recreate historical events as such, but, rather, dramatizes a national neurosis in which England's social and political turmoil, generated by the acceleration of capitalism, surface as symptoms of psychological turmoil in its citizenry. I shall demonstrate that the very neurosis from which the English suffered as a result of these controversies also afflicts Jaffeir, the "hero" of *Venice Preserv'd*, through whom Otway translates the psychological turmoil of a citizenry and a nation into the language of madness.

Otway captures a collective personal history of many English citizens who tried to balance public and private concerns in unstable, "distracted times," a term with which Otway begins his prologue and that he repeats six times in some form throughout the play. Twentieth-century psychoanalytic theorists attempt to define the perimeters of "public" and "private" within the individual psyche through their analysis of language—particularly Jacques Lacan, who views the unconscious as a language in itself. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari expand Lacan's ideas to propose a relationship between individual and group psyches in capitalist economies that proves useful when analyzing the effects of seventeenth-century political events on Otway's drama. In what follows, I will often draw on the work of these theorists.

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The distraction upon which Otway builds has its beginnings in the early half of the seventeenth century when many English citizens found that shifting governmental authority affected their ability to govern themselves in both a public and private sense. Individuals who tried to remain neutral in the conflict between Charles I and Oliver Cromwell by retreating into a private sphere were often dragged into the public fray against their wills. Edward Hyde, first earl of Clarendon, recounts the tale of one lord who successfully withheld funds requested by Charles I only to find his estate confiscated by the new parliamentary regime (2: 53-55). Those who attempted a public role were in equal peril, as Susan Staves notes when she summarizes the political and economic nature of this peril as a lack of "perspective" in which sudden reversals in national affairs stymied citizens' plans and their overall sense of security (23). The crisis did not abate quickly. Henry Neville observed in 1681, the year before Otway published *Venice Preserv'd*, that "We are to this day tugging with the same difficulties, managing the same debates in Parliament ... which our ancestors did before the year 1640" (147).

Most critics concerned with political interpretations of the play attempt to connect Otway's rebels either to the Popish Plot (1678) or to the Exclusion Crisis (1679-81). However, these incidents make apparent two more fundamental crises that were largely responsible for sparking national division in late seventeenth-century England: the failure of Charles II to establish an absolute monarchy and the "rage of parties" in

Parliament. J. R. Jones argues that Charles issued the Declaration of Indulgence (1672), which authorized toleration of religious dissent, in the belief that it would free him from the control of both Parliament and the church (174-79; 197-200). However, Charles was forced to revoke the declaration when Parliament contested his right to such power and when the opposition saw the measure as promoting Catholicism. This defeat, among others, foiled Charles's bid for absolute power and nearly precipitated a revolution. Out of what Jones aptly calls the "general hysteria" of this period emerged a confrontational two-party system in Parliament that effectively divided the nation.

Otway's characters voice the general hysteria of a divided nation and influence what Deleuze and Guattari consider the correspondence between political and psychological operations. Deleuze and Guattari argue for a "flow" between the "social production" of capitalist economies and the "desiring-production" of the individual and group unconscious (28). In short, desire cycles through social and political "machines" and through those of the individual unconscious, joining or further fragmenting partial objects and images that generate production. Deleuze and Guattari view the non-schizophrenic subject as "oedipalized," that is, made neurotic by the contradictory tendency of capitalism to advance production by unleashing desire or "deterritorializing flows," which the agents of capitalism then "reterritorialize" or co-opt through repressive laws and axioms in order to suppress desire. These contradictions create an impression of lack that refuels, yet controls, desire (28-35). The primary oedipal mediator between society and the individual—the family—protects the territory of social production by localizing dangerous psychic desire (320). Deleuze and Guattari's corrective to psychoanalysis is "schizoanalysis," which attempts to relieve the subject of oedipal repression in order "to attain the immediate productive unconscious" (98).

In *Venice Preserv'd*, Otway draws a territorial analogy similar to Deleuze and Guattari's "flows" when he conflates the individual and the collective in the figure of Jaffeir's father-in-law, the patriarch Priuli. Priuli's psychological significance in the play is grounded in seventeenth-century England's association of father to king and the absolute authority traditionally posited in both. Any rebellion against either despot, in a country and in a century that had witnessed civil war and regicide, was considered, literally, as madness (126-28). Richard Napier, a seventeenth-century psychologist, demonstrated the extent of the link between father and king: he used the phrase "will not be ruled" or its equivalent nearly seventy times to describe mentally disturbed patients (qtd. in McDonald 127). The psychopolitical conflict in late seventeenth-century England issued in part from the dispute over the extent of Charles's authority and the divisions that affected Parliament and the church. The psychopolitical conflict in Otway's drama issues from the breakdown of Priuli's authority as both familial and political patriarch when he simultaneously fails to control his daughter Belvidera and his protégé Jaffeir.

In Priuli's character, as in Deleuze and Guattari's dictum, the personal and political realms merge. Otway embodies in Priuli what Deleuze and Guattari have identified in anatomical terms as the "paranoiac," "reactionary" response to "the danger that a single organ might flow outside the despotic body ... the organs of the citizen risen up against the tyrant" (211). These organs create "private man ... ejected from the social field" (29-35), the very situation in which Jaffeir finds himself following his unauthorized marriage to Belvidera. Priuli and Jaffeir, respectively, demonstrate what schizoanalysis posits as the two major types of "unconscious social investments," segregative and nomadic, that synthesize capitalism with the unconscious. These investments trigger two "poles of delirium": first, the segregative "paranoic fascisizing" that promotes centralized authority and group inclusion, marking the subject as superior to others; second, the nomadic "schizorevolutionary pole that follows the lines of escape of

desire” and isolates the subject as an outcast (277). When Priuli remarks that “By all men’s eyes” Jaffeir had been “a youth of expectation” (1.1.16), he characterizes Jaffeir as ambitious and capable of moving up socially, a nomadic trait that indicates Priuli’s reason for attempting to integrate Jaffeir into the dominant, segregative group. Priuli personalizes this investment: “My house, my table, nay, my fortune, too, / My very self was yours” (1.1.19-20). Priuli sees Jaffeir’s elopement with Belvidera as a treasonous rejection of his authority and, more specifically, of his trust, a link between the psychic and the economic.

Otway’s language suggests that Priuli’s basis for rejecting Jaffeir and Belvidera is essentially paranoid, an attempt to battle a psychosis that engaged his “very self” as he had invested that self in Jaffeir. Otway couches Priuli’s accusations in terms of anatomical fragmentation: “You treacherously practised to undo me, / Seduced the weakness of my age’s darling, / My only child, and stole her from my bosom” (1.1.24-26). In accusing Jaffeir of treason and seduction, Otway conflates sex and politics, stressing Priuli’s dual authority over public and private issues and his role as a conduit between the two, a theme repeated throughout the play. Deleuze and Guattari associate this familial conduit with oedipalization, society’s “agent of psychic repression” that operates through sexual repression to control desire (118-19). When Jaffeir and Belvidera elope, they prompt Priuli’s rejection by failing to recognize his patriarchal authority to channel the flows of desire.

The symbiotic relationship between individual and collective psyches for which Deleuze and Guattari argue becomes apparent in Otway’s impressionistic view of the economic changes that were then laying the groundwork of capitalism. As capitalistic practices grew, they transformed the absolute authority of the despotic state into a system that, as Deleuze and Guattari point out, subordinated government

to a field of forces whose flows it co-ordinates and whose autonomous relations of domination and subordination it expresses.... [The state] no longer of itself forms a ruling class or classes; it is itself formed by these classes, which have become independent and delegate it to serve their power and their contradictions, their struggles and their compromises with the dominated classes. (221)

In other words, the capitalist state functions as an oedipalizing agent to the collective unconscious, a role analogous with that of the family to the individual. Jones notes that, by the late seventeenth century, “general and severe repression ... masked the operation of forces making for long-term, structural social changes” in the “economic and social position of the middling and lesser gentry” (71). The gentry saw their well-being threatened by Charles II’s absolutist policies and by the financiers and bankers to whom Charles increasingly owed his solvency. The minor gentry, traditionally independent, usually possessed some reserve assets, probably similar to Jaffeir’s “little fortune” (1.1.92), but with that gone many faced being “sold up” to creditors. Keeping up the appearances of wealth so important to their class identity was often beyond their means. Otway seems sensible of this situation; if Jaffeir “represents” any particular entity from Otway’s time, he may stand in for the minor gentry.

Otway makes apparent through the metaphors of private property how porous the line between classes was becoming by the late seventeenth century and the extent to which economics determined private and public identity. Priuli tells Jaffeir that, as his mentor, “I ... thought you mine”; then Jaffeir “stole” Belvidera (1.1.22-26). Jaffeir commodifies Belvidera when he reminds Priuli that, in rescuing her from drowning, “Tis to me that you owe her / Childless you had been else” (1.1.27-28). Jaffeir “redeemed” Belvidera’s life with the “loss” of half his own, and she “paid” Jaffeir with herself

(1.1.41-48). Otway literalizes this metaphoric system after Priuli sends Jaffeir home, having rejected Jaffeir's pleas for financial support: Jaffeir's reluctance to return home is due to the "gaping creditors" he faces there (1.1.114). But Priuli guarantees through the powers of his public office that Jaffeir will no longer have a home; Jaffeir's friend Pierre informs him that "Priuli's cruel hand hath signed" the eviction notice. Otway indicates how far Jaffeir and Belvidera have fallen socially when their most personal property is tossed into the street by a "ruffian" who was "Lording it" over their belongings, "Tumbled into a heap for public sale" (1.1.237-40). In effect, Priuli "designifies" Jaffeir by stripping him of his private property and thus his social rank, which Jaffeir has maintained in his attempt to treat Belvidera like "the daughter of a senator of Venice" out of his "little fortune" (1.1.89-92). Priuli advises Jaffeir to reduce his expenditures in order to be "fit for thy little state" and to retire to "some suburb cottage" where he may starve in anonymity (1.1.107-10). In these initial scenes of the play, Otway underscores the pervasiveness of the patriarchy in Priuli's public, private, and psychological power.

In Jaffeir's quest for the unity that signification and the satisfaction of his desires pretend to provide, Otway implies that everyone possesses the fascist desire of the unconscious for such unity. But Otway offers Jaffeir the opportunity for a more primal kind of unity in the fulfillment of his desire for Belvidera. With her, Jaffeir returns to what Lacan identifies as the mirror stage of consciousness, in which the subject finds a pre-linguistic identity by assuming an image that "situates the agency of the ego, before its social determination, in a fictional direction" in which the subject "tends to find completion" through a "succession of phantasies that extends from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality" (2-3). After Jaffeir violates patriarchal authority and thus quits the public sphere, Belvidera functions for him not just as a wife; in a sense, she also stands in as a surrogate mother through whom Jaffeir extends his mirror stage. Jaffeir, effectively, becomes de-oedipalized. Otway identifies Belvidera as a mother-figure who "joys" in Jaffeir, "More than did thy mother when she hugged thee first" (1.1.330-31). In this stage, Lacan's "Imaginary Register," Jaffeir is ruled by the "soft authority of Belvidera" and the images that she induces (3.2.25), or what Lacan designates as a form of active narcissistic desire. As Jaffeir tries to mitigate his loss of public identity in an imagistic fissure with another, Otway hints that Jaffeir's narcissistic attachment to Belvidera has become hermaphroditic, a radical deterritorialization that drives Jaffeir closer to madness. Mark Bracher explains that active narcissistic desire leads the subject to "loving and admiring [another] person—to the point of desiring to become corporeally like that person" (32). Otway makes Jaffeir's desire for symbiosis apparent when Jaffeir insists that his life "feeds on" Belvidera (1.1.78); she reminds Jaffeir late in the play that "our stinged hearts have leaped to meet each other, / And melting kisses sealed our lips together" (5.3.29-30). Michel Foucault describes, in terms similar to Lacan's, symptoms of madness in which "images which envelop segments of the body and ideas of the soul" merge in an "absurd unity" (92). The danger here is that these fragments "isolate man from himself, but above all, from reality," or as Lacan would have it, they isolate him from the signifiers of language in which meaning, social relationships—and sanity—are recognized.

The result of this isolation, and a corollary from interest in the self, is self-interest. Indeed, self-preservation became a dominant ideology, both religiously and politically, by the late seventeenth century (see, e.g., Ascham and Nedham). Whatever motivates this interiority or self-concern creates the same quandary: the self finds no comfort as it confronts what lies beyond the borders of social signification and being. Jaffeir discerns as much in the scene on the Rialto following Priuli's rejection:

I am here;

And thus, the shades of night around me,  
I look as if all hell were in my heart,  
And I in hell ...

Sure, I'm so curst that, though of heav'n forsaken,  
No minister of darkness cares to tempt me. (2.2.1-10)

Deleuze and Guattari argue that capitalism inaugurates a "reign of images" in which, to each individual, "the universe is just a setting to the absolute little picture of himself, herself ... the narcissistic ego is identical with the Oedipal subject" 265-66). Jaffeir now occupies a psychological no-man's-land to which "capital-money transports private persons to whom the flows of capital are reduced or applied" (267).

In this scene, Jaffeir seems aware that, to look upon himself, he must acknowledge the dual nature of that self. Jaffeir is "of heav'n forsaken," rejected by Priuli, who, as father is thus the signifier in the double sense that he signifies (refers to) God or symbolic being and that he is responsible for signifying or designifying others. In Deleuze and Guattari's terms, Priuli is "biunivocalized," both spoken (by God) and speaking (as God). Jaffeir can only "look as if all hell is in my heart, / and I in hell" (my emphasis). Signification socializes; imagery privatizes. Oedipalized yet designified, Jaffeir is "imaged"—not spoken and speaking, but looked at and looking. He can no longer pretend that Belvidera, his wife-mother, defines his totality; he can no longer "feed on her," economically or psychologically. For Jaffeir, signification no longer represents displaced desire; it represents desire itself.

For Pierre, too, the function of signification has changed. When Pierre repudiates what he sees as a vacillating state and a bankrupt religion, he recognizes that the very language that validates those institutions has also lost meaning. He can no longer rely on the old codes, in which a signifier stood in for a certain absent signified as the displaced representative of desire for the signified. Instead, as Deleuze and Guattari explain, capitalistic representation has begun to replace those codes with "coefficients" that now directly represent desire:

Language no longer signifies something that must be believed, it indicates rather what is going to be done.... The person has become 'private' in reality, insofar as he derives from abstract quantities and becomes concrete in the becoming-concrete of these same quantities. It is these quantities that are marked, no longer the persons themselves. (249-51)

So when Pierre complains that the senator Antonio "bought out [his] title" (1.1.187), Otway indicates how money constructs identity in a capitalistic system. Titles formerly implied rewards for service to the state or a lineage derived from it; Otway demonstrates that, by the 1680s, titles represented merely the desire for such a representation. Pierre protests a code that privileges image over content, style over substance.

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Although capitalism was still inchoate in the 1680s, Otway demonstrates the extent to which its ideologies had already deterritorialized meaning. Pierre declares that "honesty" is now "not to be defined" (1.1.137), its meaning implicitly altered from servicing mankind to servicing a debt, as Otway makes apparent when Jaffeir asks Pierre if he is honest:

'Tis true, I pay my debts when they're contracted; I steal from no man; would not cut a throat To gain admission to a great man's purse, Or a whore's bed; I'd not betray my friend, To get his place or fortune ... Yet, Jaffeir, for all this, I am a villain! ... To see the suff'rings of my fellow creatures, And own myself a man.... (1.1.144-53)

Yet with his own interests at stake, Pierre's language does not bear scrutiny, either. When Pierre learns that Renault has assaulted Belvidera and that she suffered only fondling but no violence, he responds with "Damn him!" (3.2.250). Pierre equivocates: whether he means to damn Renault for attacking Belvidera or for not harming her is unclear. He allows Jaffeir to interpret the remark, whose meaning is pliable.

Otway traces the flows of Pierre's and Jaffeir's desires through their investments in one another. When Priuli designifies Jaffeir, Priuli initiates what Foucault calls a "paradoxical manifestation of non-being ... to eliminate from the social order a figure which did not find its place within it" (115). Pierre offers Jaffeir money but, more importantly, a "place" within a new social order in which to formulate a new being. Indeed, by act 4, Jaffeir calls Pierre "my father, friend, preserver" (4.2.269)—all relationships that Pierre occupies by virtue of his investment in Jaffeir. Pierre not only invests his money in Jaffeir but agrees to "trust [him] with a secret." Here again Otway reveals Pierre as an archaic figure whose faith in the spoken word is part of a bygone social system:

Swear that thou wilt be true to what I utter; And when I have told thee that which only gods And men like gods are privy to, then swear No chance or change shall wrest it from thy bosom. (2.3.71-75)

The play abounds in references to oaths, the mark of an oral tradition in which Pierre and the rebels invest. Pierre observes how easily Jaffeir is led and seems to recognize him as a risky investment, admonishing him to "swear" that he will not oscillate, but little recognizing the same tendency in himself.

Pierre's investment in Jaffeir sets off a chain of investments that demonstrates desire-driven capitalistic machinery at work. Once Pierre "owns" Jaffeir (2.3.155), he invests him in the rebellion: "I've brought my all into the public stock; / I had but one friend, and him I'll share amongst you!" (2.3.113-14). Jaffeir in turn uses Belvidera as collateral, a "pledge" he places in the rebels' "trust" in order to join their society (3.1.149-55). But an investment is by nature a fragmentation that displaces a part of oneself or what one owns in a potentially unstable venture. For Lacan, the psychically fragmented body marks "a certain level of aggressive disintegration in the individual. It then appears in the form of disjointed limbs, or those organs represented in exoscopy, growing wings and taking up arms for intestinal persecutions ... as exhibited in the schizoid and spasmodic symptoms of hysteria" (5). Jaffeir expresses his torment in turning over Belvidera to the rebels in terms of the fragmented body: "O my eyes, / Look not that way, but turn yourselves awhile / Into my heart, and be weaned altogether!" (3.1.221-23). Jaffeir sacrifices a maternal relationship for a place in paternal society, and so must repress his desire for Belvidera, which Deleuze and Guattari locate in partial objects "in a state of dispersion, such that one part is continually referring to a part from an entirely different machine" (323). Jaffeir's sacrifice is always marked by the appearance of a dagger, a phallic image connoting a metaphorical cutting of the umbilical cord or, perhaps, castration.

Otway, however, uses the dagger as a unifying symbol in Jaffeir's scenes with Pierre to represent the most significant investment in the play: Jaffeir and Pierre's investment in one another. Pierre offers Jaffeir a new authoritative discourse as well as an imagistic, almost homoerotic relationship similar to that of Jaffeir's hermaphroditic relationship to Belvidera. Pierre's dialogue with Jaffeir is riddled with as many body-fragments as Jaffeir's with Belvidera; for example, he greets Jaffeir with "How fares the honest partner of my heart?" (1.1.121). Jaffeir's shift from interpellation by dominant to subversive discourses occurs simultaneously with shifts in his ego-ideal and, for him, converts the suppressed discourse of the rebellion into the dominant discourse. Jaffeir's vision of himself as "honest" conflicts with Pierre's description of the

senators as “dishonest” in act 1 and serves to dissolve any goodwill that Jaffeir may still harbor for the state. Pierre appeals to Jaffeir’s ego-ideal by appealing to Jaffeir’s image of himself as an honest man; while Pierre replaces Priuli as Jaffeir’s father-figure, his hermaphroditic associations contend with Jaffeir’s imagistic mother-son relationship to Belvidera.

Belvidera competes with Pierre for Jaffeir’s loyalty by appealing to Jaffeir’s ego-ideal. Bracher explains that when opposing desires clash, the subject will either repress the subversive desire or “the ego-ideal undergoes a change, with one or more of its old signifiers being decommissioned and new signifiers ... being elected in their place” (44-45). When Belvidera discovers Jaffeir’s involvement in the revolution, she asks how he can “Mix with hired slaves, bravoos, and common stabbers, / Nose-slitters, alley-lurking villains?” (3.2.161-62). She thus decommissions Pierre’s signifier, which had associated the men of the revolution with righteousness. Her revelation of Renault’s rape attempt is her trump card; she wounds Jaffeir’s ego-ideal by pointing out his failure to live up to his image as her protector. Jaffeir’s lack of commitment to either Belvidera or the rebels demonstrates what Lacan describes as “inertia,” in which he finds “the most extensive definition of neurosis—just as the captation of the subject by the situation gives us the most general formula for madness” (7).

Otway intensifies his fragmented images of madness through the rebel leader Renault. Renault acknowledges the rebels’ disunity when he complains that “Irregular man’s ne’er constant, never certain” (2.3.12). His associates are men of “giddy tempers, souls but half resolved”; and he wonders “Why are we not together?” (2.3.12-18). Renault disdains the play’s most common expression of unity: “I never loved these huggers” (2.3.146). The unity for which the rebels strive never materializes; their passions always dissolve it. Deleuze and Guattari point out that “revolutionaries often forget, or do not like to recognize, that one wants and makes revolution out of desire, not duty” (344). Otway’s rebels desire liberty, or freedom from the constraint of the state; but they value an individualized liberty that foils their attempts to form a workable union or to conceive a post-revolutionary government. Deleuze and Guattari explain that “only desire ... lives from having no aim”:

How could a formation of sovereignty ... endure being invested for their brute force, their violence, and their absurdity? They would not survive such an investment. Even the most overt fascism speaks the language of goals, of law, order, and reason. Even the most insane capitalism speaks in the name of economic rationality. (367)

This aimlessness allows desire to disperse in all directions, as Renault’s assault on Belvidera illustrates, and prompts Jaffeir to withdraw his investment in the rebellion. But in doing so, he must also consume Pierre’s investment in him and lead Pierre to his ruin.

In Jaffeir’s moments between investments, however—and, subsequently, between identities—Jaffeir’s divided self finds its voice; and here we can best witness Otway’s achievement in psychodrama. After Priuli’s rejection, Jaffeir’s mind takes on the characteristics of the heart, preoccupying itself with Belvidera’s emotions: “when I think what Belvidera feels ... I own myself a coward” (1.1.272-74). In his premonition on the Rialto, he is virtually without identity as he senses that neither angels nor devils will receive him (1.1.1-11). Being without identity opposes our psychological nature, as Bracher argues when he describes the divided subject as “operative in all of the various ways in which we fail to identify ourselves, grasp ourselves, or coincide with ourselves” (41). After hearing Belvidera’s account of the attempted rape, Jaffeir recognizes himself as the target of competing discourses, “tossed and jostled / From

every corner; Fortune's common fool, / The jest of rogues, an instrumental ass" (3.2.212-14). Otway represents Jaffeur's disintegration in images of the fragmented body as Belvidera leads him to the Senate to turn in the rebels: "Every step I move, / Methinks I tread upon some mangled limb / Of a racked friend" (4.1.1-3).

Jonathan Sawday notes that many seventeenth-century theologians considered "the divided individual" as the norm rather than the exception (134). In 1635, for instance, Richard Sibbs recognized the connection between the personal and the political that Deleuze and Guattari would formulate as a response to twentieth-century psychoanalytic theory. Sibbs advised individuals to struggle against the divided self, violently if necessary: one cannot "parlie with it and devide government for peace sake." He urged everyone to "strive against it, not with subtlety and discourse, so much as with peremptory violence silence it" (143). Jaffeur pleads with Belvidera to "Take me into thy arms, and speak the words of peace / To my divided soul that wars within me" (4.2.298-99). But "discourse" cannot save Jaffeur from self-division and self-destruction. His suicide and dying words correspond to Sibbs's advice to silence the divided self "violently if necessary": "I am sick—I am quiet" (5.4.112).

Of course, Sibbs did not intend to encourage suicide, a serious offense in seventeenth-century England. Jaffeur's suicide represents not just a crime against the king, who had a pecuniary interest in his subjects; rather, to transpose the language of law into the language of Lacan, suicide was a crime against the symbolic order in which individuals construct meaning and identity. John Sym wrote in 1637 that an individual's suicide may lead to the destruction of the dominant order:

If parricide be a grievous sinne ... much more is self-murder abhominable. For, by unitie, things are preserved; and individuals are principally one; and therefore if individuals be divided against themselves, the world cannot stand ... things shall cease to be true. (54)

One might paraphrase Sym: signifiers shall cease to signify. Indeed, the rejected priest—the "Father"—decries Jaffeur's act as a "Damnable deed!" (5.4.99). But the only father that Jaffeur responds to is Pierre, whose hermaphroditic relationship to him makes Jaffeur's suicide understandable.

Appropriately, Otway's psychodrama of narcissistic desire ends with the Narcissus-like madness and death of Belvidera. Deleuze and Guattari argue that schizophrenics commune with the pre-symbolized, the imagistic; and, indeed, Belvidera's words mean nothing linguistically but seem to respond to imagistic flows: "Murmuring streams, soft shades, and springing flowers / Lutes, laurels, seas of milk, and ships of amber" (5.2.150-51). Like Narcissus, who gazes down into a pool of water at his disintegrating image and asks, "Where are you fleeing? ... Let me, by looking, feed my ill-starred love" (83-87), Belvidera struggles to resurrect Jaffeur's and Pierre's ghosts. The cause of her death, according to schizoanalysis, is the uncoded death instinct: "there where the codes are undone, the death instinct lays hold of the repressive apparatus and begins to direct the circulation of the libido.... Death is not desired, but what is desired is dead, already dead: images" (Deleuze and Guattari 337). Belvidera's desire for Jaffeur, then, produces her death: "I've got him, father.... They have hold on me, and drag me to the bottom / Nay—now they pull so hard—farewell—" (5.4.29). Otway seems to sense what Deleuze and Guattari would later argue, that "schizophrenia is not the identity of capitalism, but on the contrary its difference, its divergence, and its death" (246). For Otway, life seems to end in the non-being and non-meaning of schizophrenia.

Consequently, Belvidera's death prompts Priuli's resignation as an authority figure since he can no longer signify or be signified as a despot. As he gazes at Belvedira's body, he surrenders to schizophrenic interiority and enters a latent state of death:

Then guard me from the sight on't:  
 Lead me into some place that's fit for mourning;  
 Where the free air, light, and the cheerful sun  
 May never enter. Hang it round with black;  
 Set up one taper that may last a day--  
 As long as I've to live; and there all leave me,  
     Sparing no tears when you this tale relate,  
     But bid all cruel fathers dread my fate. (5.4.31-38)

Priuli abandons discourse, leaving the telling of the tale to others as a warning to "all cruel fathers" that no authority is absolute except the non-being of madness. If schizophrenia obliterates authority, if the despotic state is evolving into a servant that no longer dictates flows of desire but only coordinates them, then this interpretation casts doubt on the title of Otway's play: is "Venice" really preserved?

Otway's play seems to mirror late seventeenth-century England's neurotic struggle between the dangers of absolute authoritarianism and rebellious factionalism as it played itself out in public and private, in the psyche of the individual and in that of the collective society. In a sense, then, Otway may have effected what Foucault identifies as "a therapeutic operation" in which "we are dealing with a complicity of the unreal with itself" (187). Foucault argues that in theatrical representation, the stage provides a framework in which "illusion can cure the illusory." If Foucault is right, then Otway himself attempts to play a role—that of therapist or "schizoanalyst" to his distracted nation. Venice Preserv'd has proven illusive; nonetheless, the temptation that critics face to unite Otway's characters to political figures in the 1680s is both understandable and, in the terms of Deleuze and Guattari's theory, "fascist." In Venice Preserv'd, Otway does not so much "portray" or "demonstrate," but "reflects," in a narcissistic sense, the psychological distractions of seventeenth-century England as it began its development into a capitalist state.

#### ADDED MATERIAL

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