

John Stuart Mill Exterminates His Father

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Mill's regulatory philosophy of liberty (or compatibilism) is haunted by the spectre of a father that he maintains in the adjoining room from which he asks for privileges rather than rights; fearful that punishment is only a hastily swung door and booted foot on the floorboard away and while the memory of his father is one of temperance, hard work and virtue he suspects and smells the tinge of unnatural acts under the ill fitting door and on his breath when the father comes close enough to the wood-panes to whisper guidance to his high-achieving son.

Mills suffers from the bowel gnawing sense that having mourned and then hidden his fathers' still spasming body he should have opted to exterminate him and reinvented himself as the hermaphroditic creation of a he / she parent descended from his mothers genetic line. Picture Mills erasing all records of his fathers existence, carrying the body, cut down into small pieces, in heavy-duty plastic sacks to the Ford Focus estate and then driving through the night to a pig yard in Essex where the larger, older fanged porkers would have devoured the body in hours. Or changing his mind whilst winding down the window to let the petrol-scented air out and instead of the pigs option, he breaks into a crematorium on the edges of London and uses the facilities to 'disappear' dad for good. This way there'll be no trace of dad in the food chain and no risk of John re-ingesting dead-dad via a fluke Walls's banger.

Without his 'extermination' Mills runs the risk of his father James plotting against his plans for collectivist ends via the individual. John's father is able in private to develop remote means of affecting the world on the other side of his locked door. After all what he does in private is his own business, is it not? He has connections in business and they know alternative routes back into John's world. They don't use doors, John won't even know they've been there. Alternatively John knows that some form of contract will need to be struck with dad if the projects to go ahead. The individual can freely express his / her opinion as long as dad says it was OK to do so. Even after the 'expressing' has been done. That or exorcise dad completely in the most just and utilitarian way possible. But where's the beauty in that!

John Mill was the son of a man so fearful of passion the he professed the greatest contempt of emotions, regarding them as a form of madness adopting a sterile tutor role towards his son. Mill was also the quasi un-god son of Jeremy Bentham the pan-opticanist whose desire for clarity and teleological reasoning led to statements so reduced to their function that Mill later considered aspects of them to be absurd and ironically lacking in ability to communicate Bentham's principle of a Hedonistic Calculus for making judgements that would bring "the most happiness to the most number of people". Mill later complained of becoming "a Benthamite reasoning machine" (A statement reminiscent or preceding those of Warhol *and* before him a young Artaud).

Mills' precocious intellect was the product of severe hot-housing by his father James Mills who saw the boy as an experiment to be completed by Jeremy Bentham should he himself die before the projects completion. The father acquired a job for his son alongside him at the East India Company that allowed John time to further his intellect. Mills' became effectively second in command of the East India Company a nineteenth century corporation or public private initiative charged by government with running India and reaping the rewards. In my meagre reading of Mill, an experience little acknowledged in his arguments against government interference with the rights of the individual. And in fact Mills argues that business should have the right to sell poisons should it wish to do so and that despotism was fine when "governing barbarians whose culture was in its nonage". This prototype of a division of a multi-national provides the raw materials for John's vision existing as it does in its pristine early Nineteenth Century condition of empire only to suffer a crisis of confidence and moral authority later in the century as trade looks towards being simultaneously unshackled from the pre-requisites of liberty but empowered by the notion of liberty.

John nears nervous breakdown induced by defending dad and crazy one eyed Jeremys ideas and seeks solace in strange French sects that foresee organic periods of history promising to deliver John from the hell of arid critique. Meanwhile the East India Company bureaucratically and relentlessly exercises the passions of Empire and with its long arms of virtue places a pillow over the screams of terror and ecstasy issued by its assets and agents as its philosophy is inscribed upon their skins in some dark quarter. And John carries on bureaucratically occulting the business and machinery of government all the time sure that hedonism *can-not* be got from brokering a good deal abroad but through the discrete cultivation of ones senses.

The blossoming of occult literature and movements - The Order of the Golden Dawn - and occult

influenced literature, Conan Doyle for example, at the end of the Nineteenth Century signals attempts at divining, performing-out and doubling the nature of a new more fluid and A-social, technologically driven economy. These narratives are then picked up again in the early 1970's by a cinema informed by another wave of occult hobbyists escaping mainstream entertainment and commodified ideas of play. In fact the filthy, grinning father and polished son appear again and again in the films of Hammer - a cinematic event horizon where utilitarianism meets the arid logic of De Sade in the ABC cinemas and front room of a newly democratic, polyester Britain.

Hammer Horror movies have been seen as having a number of objectives and drives:

- an opportunity for making and profiting from a thinly disguised flesh flick – for example, scan the credits of one Hammer movie and read – ‘Virgin 1’, ‘Virgin 2’ and ‘Women with Whip’ and quickly understand the dominant economy employed by a production company that raised capital via the cleavage sodden poster image and then wrote a screenplay to fit.
- a warning against the excesses of science, mechanisation and the copy.
- A barely sublimated warning against the dangers of psychoanalysis popping open a can of unwanted manias.
- and a cathartic playing out of the traumas of war and a dissipating echo of the holocaust made mock-heroic.

Hammer regular and Hungarian emigré Ingrid Pitt, starred in *Countess Dracula* which tells the story of infamous serial killer Countess Elizabeth Bathory a 16th Century Hungarian aristocrat determined to retain youth by the capture of virgins in whose blood she bathed. A female Sadeian counterpart to both Christopher Lees’ *Dracula* and the infanticidal, infernal tower inhabiting Gilles de Rais; antecedent to the Tale of Bluebeard. There were no doubt, attempts by Pitt to use the occasion of making the film to re-perform and construct scenes and sensations experienced as a child during the war including witnessing the dead and dying crew of a crashed Bomber while on the run with her mother from a Hungarian Prisoner of a War camp. Pitt admitted in interview and in conversation attempting to insert more gore, blood and sadistic acts into the script of *Countess Dracula* not as a conscious act of cathartic tragedy but because she enjoyed it. To underline this taste for the macabre Pitt published in 2000 *THE INGRID PITT BOOK OF MURDER, TORTURE and DEPRAVITY*. For Pitt like Ballard whose childhood wartime experiences inform his fiction; her interest in violence is both pathological, unsentimental and unapologetic.

Hammer drew upon the renewed uptake of occult practices and its media coverage in the UK including the activities of the self-professed 'King of Witches' Alex Sanders and the episode of the Highgate Vampire that culminated on Friday March 13, 1970 with the televised storming of Highgate Cemetery by a media-prompted mob joining the hunt to stake and behead a vampire-like figure that had been reported roaming the catcombs by aspiring and tragi-comic, occultists Sean Manchester and David Farrant. This event is cited by folklorists as a classic case of 'legend tripping' or 'ostension': a term also employed by crop circle makers. The term 'Legend Tripping' describes the often teen-ritual of returning to the site of a traumatic event and in the process threatening to disinter the event and invite a repeat of the same act. The term 'ostension' applies to the acting out of an event suspected to be fiction. This act is then adopted by advocates of the original story as proof of its veracity. Whilst pseudo-ostension occurs where and when a knowingly fictional event is acted out and made real.

"King of the Witches" Alex Sanders (seen here leading a "skyclad" dance during a sabbat ritual) was the son of a Mancunian music hall entertainer who suffered from alcoholism. Sanders like Crowley before him, claimed to have created a "magical child" that was apparently born during a rite of ritual masturbation with the aid of a male assistant. The baby disappeared shortly after its creation and grew up as a spirit called Michael". Sanders claimed it was "Michael who was responsible for forcing him to act badly at wild parties, insult people, and generally act in an abominable way".

Sanders is seen here again conducting a ritual for the cameras with his wife Maxine 'Queen of Witches' and High Priest Paul King quite possibly in their basement flat in Nottinghill. In 1968-69, Sanders with Maxine appeared in and gave technical advice on a film called "Legend of the Witches" a documentary recording rites and rituals: initiation into a coven, divination through animal sacrifice, the casting of a 'death spell' and the 'Black Mass'.

The Hammer Horror canon of the period including 1973s' *The Wicker Man*, *Devil Rides Out*-1973 (Picture) and *The Sorcerer's* appear to have osmosed the contemporary plethora of occult images in the media and whilst upping the sheen, body tone, costumes and settings contain moments where the thinly disguised dampness and austerity of the production allows the narrative to slip into what appears for a jaunting moment to be costumed-documentary.

The films are characterised by a banality or sense of suburban ennui that arises from both the un-

expressive, flat over-lighting of the sets and the resituating of the Ruritanian countryside in the sandy soil and pine forests of Black Park, Buckinghamshire. A landscape complemented by heavily pancaked drooling peasants and smouldering shacks, all a location managers 'stones-thrown' from Pinewood studios. This strange suburbanisation of spatially over-determined gothic standards (Another credit sequence for example runs: 'Villagers', 'Establishment' and 'Institution'); informed by the experiences of Eastern European actors and producers; partly enabled by the same government quota policy that let rip the *Carry On!* franchise on British audiences, also had a dalliance with swinging psychedelic London (albeit a daily mail version of hippness) that allowed anxieties concerning the apparent breakdown of class divisions and sexual louchness to be indulged. See for example the party scene in *Dracula AD 1972* where in the chintz draped drawing room of a west London hipster, class and ethnicity are seen mixing it up to the rythms of the Stonegrounds; a late replacement band for *The Faces*. The film was originally made under the working title *Dracula Chelsea* or *Dracula Chases the Mini Girls*. Reverberations of the 1963 Profumo affair with its tales of Cabinet Minister Call-girl orgies and the Notting Hill Shebeens of a Colin MacInnes' novel shudder through this and other Hammer films insinuating that power ferments in a cauldron of unnatural relationships, behind a cracking veneer of class and taste, fiscally nourished not by the fruits of manufacturing but by skimming-off of profit from subsidiary and invisible support mechanisms for wealth production.

Another 1972 release *Bloodsuckers* otherwise titled *Incense for the Damned* draws on the then contemporary fascination with Onassis and other greek shipping magnates as a kind of occult like, sex hungry anarcho-capitalist phantoms sucking empire dry of its capital by exploiting and even engineering disaster and war. The plotline sees a holidaying Oxford Don fall into the clutches of a beautiful but 'evil' Greek girl who leads a coven of perverted socialites that practice the black arts; all portrayed through the gauze of lysergic paranoia. Throughout the film, leading man Patrick Macnee's keenly razored and moisturised jawline tenses at each instance of moral dilemma. The extreme stereotyping of the male protagonist in many Hammer films whose staunchly straight almost mechanical personae, signalled by perfectly quaffed hair, a fixed expression of empathetic concern and shop dummy attire acted as priapic, emotionally precarious foils to the violent excitations of the mob below the window that threatened to expel his heterogenous world.

Typically the male actors of the studio are visual Teflon; the smooth faces and well manicured hands are the subject on which the contradictions of empire and capital are played out. Their role

is to act as a form of votive, a doubling or embodiment of attempts at cohesion in post war Europe between economic / political organisation and the anti-religious and a-social organisation of new economies and classes of the rich and entrepreneurial.

‘Male lead’ stands in as the sterile Utilitarian father and pre-breakdown John Mill whose repeated disbelief that yet *another*:

- child has been abducted and drowned;
- drunken peasant murdered and disembowled outside the inn;
- virgin raped in the stables –

...strains the audience’s patience to breaking point. Of course ‘Male leads’ ’ hand-wringing is there to provide cover for the audiences interchanging enjoyment of, on the one hand the sadist’s burlesque but nevertheless devastating acts of cruelty and on the other the passivity of the victims hackneyed steps towards prolonged pain and violent death. He is the look-out that ensures the audiences a-moral enjoyment is given a get-out clause. But he is the look-out that the film producers and audience despise and mocks by its pantomiming of his straight maleness.

Popular turn of the century fiction such as Stokers Dracula were written during a period of moral panic concerning the sanctity of the British Empire and were informed by a populist fear of increasing immigration from Eastern Europe plus the suspicion that the British Empires economy was infected by roaming (often Jewish stereotyped) anarcho-capitalist financiers ready to indulge chaos and interfere in government in a bid for profits, sucking the empire dry of its morally clean and geographically loyal capital. Many of these anxieties reappear in the mid sixties and early seventies culture as empire creeps towards its post Suez, American conditioned demise and then began to be revitalised again post 9/11. Think James Mayer de Rothschild, Onassis, jump forward in time to Junk Bond King Michael Milken and then even further forward to current events and picture Bernie Ebbers of Enron and then the market speculating, Hashashin; Osama bin Muhammad bin 'Awad bin Laden. The unnatural family of relationships stemming from the Enron and Imclone scandals for example provide an ample fruiting landscape for paranoid conspiracy theories.

The films during their production can be considered a pageant or Mummings play for the makers

(*mommo* meaning mask in Greek). The end product might in turn be considered the record of a performance. A performance that campily rails against the post war promotion of liberal democratic values. These over-lit cheesball pageants suggest a natural state of being that is non-harmonious and antithetical to the then contemporary demand to just “get along”! The films sense and enact what Hobbes calls a ‘passion of fear’ and provide a means for both the producers, actors and audience to enter a mythic realm where private interests and desires hernia into the space of the community with terrifying results.

The productions often depict fathers being physically restrained by their modern male-lead sons. The excesses of the fathers unlawful desires and indulgences (whether they be expressed via trade: a curse ridden object brought back from a distant colony or science: i.e. an experiment gone wrong) previously thought to be carried out in private and in the confines of a castellated bourgeois vault now threaten to destroy the balance of the public fathers world. The father is *incapable* of not tapping into something outside of the law and needs to be regulated. The productions allegorise the idea of new post war, anti-religious, a-social, economies and suggests that they veil their workings and operate from recursive, subterranean spaces controlling machines and government on the surface through invisible, ancient technological means.

Whilst Hammer employs end of the nineteenth century social mores, anxieties and literature with contemporaneous occurrences of the occult to explore a creeping sense of unease with post war liberal democracy and to ‘legend trip’; Pasolini’s *Salo, or the 120 days of Sodom* made in 1975, shortly after many of the Hammer productions I’ve mentioned provides no such opportunities for *Jouissance* but rails against what Pasolini called the new “False Tolerance”; ‘legend tripping’ via Mussolinis 1943 flight from Rome to the Marches of Ancona where his short lived republic was established.

Salo represents Pasolinis ultimate mannerist parable, a rejection of Gramscis call for cinema as a national popular art and an attack on a neo-conservatism made possible by the then new lefts appeasement with the Christian Democrats in Italy. Instead the Director attempts to make an aristocratically, indigestible and even “optically poisoned” film in the course of which he attacks his former incarnation as poet, flaunting his self-disgust.

The film combines; firstly the Libertines of de Sades original tale who push enlightenments reason and method into the realms of obsession and hallucination *and secondly* Pasolinis Nazis/

Fascist bureaucrat dandys who carry late nineteenth century culture to its end point – an endpoint presented as impervious, crystalline, perfectly symmetrical... deeply imbued with facism, sadism and death. The four powerful Libertines a Duke, a Bishop, a Banker, and a Magistrate revise the methods of torture in a Bauhaus interior suggesting occupation of a villa confiscated from a rich Jewish family. The salon is lined with pictures by Leger, Severini and Duchamp. The setting acknowledges the decadence the Nazis wished to destroy *and* the fascination it exerted on them.

Like Hammer Horror's scenes that employ the Buckinghamshire countryside as Ruritania, Salò opens with quasi-realist shots of the Marches countryside and the sign for Marzabotto, the town in Mussolini's last stand Republic of Salò where resistance sparked a massacre by German troops. Salò's Island of Governance provides an hermetic setting for Facism 'in vivo' i.e. away from life and as a set of performances that adhere to de Sade's fiction but project the rationalism and aesthetics of 'Third way' capitalism into the present with smothering effect. In the sealed Villa spontaneous pleasure *as* conducted by the inmates is censored, even punishable by death. The libertines direct and act out rituals of bourgeoisie life conducting a wedding of two of its inmates whose blond good looks suggest youth as commodity whilst each circle or chapter is presented by famous ageing actresses of Italian fascist cinema. De Sade's revolutionary text is played out as a series of performances and counter performances that attempt to disappear the individual and where the audience and film spectators are made complicit with the combination of metaphor and reality they are presented as gazing upon.

The film, the event of its making, its release and even the film-makers violent rumour-producing murder just prior to its release suggests a pageant that cannot be sentimentalised or functionalised and because of this was seen as intolerable by many liberals, fascists and academics (including Roland Barthes) alike. The event Pasolini constructs is one where the bodies of all the participants in the performance (and these are interchangeable to some degree for the audience) where the logic and aesthetic of Mills Nineteenth Century economy becomes manifest and because of this might be considered a potential weapon rather than an Art-tool for TUC style arbitration.

If both Hammer and Pasolini unconsciously and self-consciously occupied the economies of the film industry to perform-out pageantries of public and privately executed power in all its terrible forms then the Gris Gris drawings of Artuad might be considered a further devolvement of this performance of power downwards to the individual... *or* government as a somatic arrangement in

the form of a morphine deranged coward, incapable of suicide. Put another way if the 'legend tripping', 'ostension', or pseudo-ostension of both Hammer and Pasolini are attempts to enter the realm of mythic power then Artuads method is to attempt to attain power of mythic proportions via the insult, spell or curse. The question arises as to whether these acts are protests, murders or exterminations.

Artuads' Gris Gris drawings were begun in September 1937 and sent from Dublin, Sainte-Anne Hospital and the Ville-Evrard asylum, and later on in 1943 from the asylum in Rodez. The voodoo, New Orleans associated term Gris Gris originally referred to a bag of items with the talismanic power to protect the bearer or bring bad fortune to a subject assaulted with its contents and might include for example, the nine day old shroud of a deceased person; their hair, bones or nails mixed with metal dust and red beans. Artuads' spells were integral parts of written letters and thus constituted magic in an epistolary form directed at an individual. Letters to Jacques Riviere, Andre Breton, the Pope, Dalai Lama, Hitler, Rectors of European Universities and the head doctors of Insane Asylums; combined text with symbols (including guns, knives and swords), and violent lacerations of the page often burning or stabbing the drawing with a lighted cigarette. Artaud insisted on carrying out the drawings in the public areas of the asylum wards, standing up in the midst of chaotic noise and interruption, breaking pens and pencils as he carried out his remote assassinations using ancient wireless technologies.

Gaston Ferdiere the young director of the Asylum in Rodez, South West France in whose charge Artuad was placed in 1943 supervised the 51 sessions of electric shock treatment three of which were un-anesthetised including a session that shattered one of Artuad's vertebrae. A former surrealist poet, Ferdiere's main preoccupations were anarchism, drugs and pornography. The personal conflicts that arose from his new career in mental health induced him to pursue radically new methods of medicine including art psychotherapy and electroshock; choosing Artuad as a choice, star test-site. Ferdiere later went on to claim fame for Artaud resuming work and as a result, his future celebrity candidates for treatment included Hans Belmer and founder of the Lettrist movement Isidore Isou. Artauds verbal, drawn and written attacks on Ferdiere on leaving the asylum were so virulent that it's reported Ferdiere would burst into tears at the mention of them twenty years later. Isou and fellow Lettrist Maurice Lemaitre later called for Ferdiere's arrest claiming he was the new Eichman and was responsible "for all of the social and individual disasters which have taken place in France since May 1968."

Artaud when describing this period of work wrote – “Ten years since language departed, and in its place entered this atmospheric thunder, this lightning... How? By an antilogical, antiphilosophical, anti-intellectual, anti-dialectical blast of language through the pressure of my black pencil and that is all.” And again: “Like magic, I take my thick breath, and by means of my nose, my mouth and my hands and my two feet I project against it everything that might bother me...”

This overtly romantic, anti-language, anti-materialist, depiction of self is countered by earlier statements including one in 1924 where Artaud describes himself in Warholian terms, saying “ I am a walking automaton” and then elsewhere complaining in the questionnaires completed by him to gain admittance to detox clinics of his; cowardliness, his lack of will, his incapacity of experiencing the slightest emotion.

The late portraits conducted in Paris just prior to his death were considered by Artaud to constitute a protective army that would defend him from further psychanalytical attacks and kidnappings but the Gris Gris drawings consisted of targeted epistles against enemies with no distinction made between those he knew personally *or not*. A fellow artist was placed in the same hierarchy as a geographically distant dictator as if the latter were present through a channel of occult teleconferencing. Rather than assault institutions with well-honed facts and data in a bid to reason via some notion of ‘common sense’ Artaud becomes the law, the de facto judge, jury and hangman... a psychedelic Judge Dread. Via these drawings he assumes a form of sovereign power over the subjects of his spells devoid of any form of contract that might offer opportunities for appeal, deliberation or redress. Instead he is an absolute force that cannot be reasoned with. The drawings take on the delirious hallucinatory quality of a sovereign, unilateral power without geographical or physical limitations. Sensing his own reduction and **d**estruction via electric shock treatment and clinicalisation he turns that rigour outwards and seeks a form of extermination against his subjects that will dramatically suicide him. A morphined, ranting, drawing suicide-bomber. And all this from his stinking asylum ward.

From his Hausman like, dandy-esque, town-house, lair John Stuart Mill realises that his vehement promotion of liberty allied but separated from his excellent bureaucratic skills in mercantile trade have archeologised and made occult government - and that the only course of action available to

him is to exterminate the dad still murmuring and gaffawring obscenely in the next door room. He knows that liberty is a grand idea but that the method is still his father and the method needs wasting. Time to make an executive decision.

John lifts the handgun of the dark chestnut table-top, feels the reassuring weight of the weapon in his hand and moves swiftly towards the now unlocked door, he twists the handle, lifting the hinges up enough to avoid alarming his target. He swings open the door and strides across the room raising his hand and resting the snub end of the weapon on the back of his father's head. He's had just enough time to register that his father is sitting hunched over a table snorting what looks to be a mixture of strickneen and coke off the stomach of a child-like oriental girl laid out across the table, whilst a series of flat screen monitors flutteringly illuminate the scene with live feeds from CNN, Aljezeera and Bloomberg financial news. He squeezes the trigger, sees the cordite flash and... as he hears the percussion of the gun-shot he feels with enormous release the sensation of the bullet exiting his *own* forehead.

Paper originally given at Tate Britain for the conference:

On Liberty and Art: how do artists engage with liberty as aesthetic practice, historical concept and public discourse? Other speakers included: Amanda Beech, Malcom Quinn, Pil and Galia Kollektiv, John Russell and Bob and Roberta Smith.

Revised version subsequently published with the journal MATERIAL
<http://www.materialpress.org/indexnewframe.html>