

MASOCHISTIC RITUAL AND REBIRTH IN FERNÃO MENDES PINTO'S *PEREGRINAÇÃO*

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In his study of piracy and parody in Fernão Mendes Pinto's *Peregrinação*, Carlos Jorge Figueiredo Jorge makes the seemingly straightforward point that “[n]o fundo, uma das grandes aprendizagens do protagonista é a de que para sustentar os valores da vida são necessárias todas as humilhações, o espezinhamento de todos os códigos que pareciam fornecer um valor e um sentido à vida” (86). This statement may be read on one level as a reiteration of António José Saraiva's thesis (shared, albeit significantly reworked, by Rebecca Catz) regarding the mordant social commentary that runs through the *Peregrinação*. As Saraiva has it, Mendes Pinto's text is a picaresque work that seeks to develop an alternative model of morality based not on frameworks of institutional religion and social doxa but rather on the primary ethical responsibilities that emerge in settings of human contact and interaction.¹ Catz would later raise the ante somewhat, setting aside Saraiva's picaresque frame while characterizing Mendes Pinto as a “relentless satirist” (*Sátira e Anti-Cruzada* 27) and the *Peregrinação* as a “corrosive satire in which the author attacks all the religious and political institutions of sixteenth-century Portugal” (“Introduction” xv).

Beyond the satirico-moral discourse that runs just below the surface of the *Peregrinação*, Jorge's comments on humiliation, violence, values, and the *grandes aprendizagens* that

¹ In employing terms such as “responsibility” and “interaction” I have in mind—though I admit that Saraiva almost certainly did not—the philosophical work of Emmanuel Levinas, for whom “in discourse the divergence that inevitably opens between the Other as my theme and the Other as my interlocutor, emancipated from the theme that seemed a moment to hold him, forthwith contests the meaning I ascribe to my interlocutor. The formal structure of language thereby announces the ethical inviolability of the Other and, without any odor of the ‘numinous,’ his ‘holiness’” (*Totality and Infinity* 195).

shape Mendes Pinto's narrative reveal a haunting paradox at the very center of a text that makes known from the very start its ambivalence with respect to experience and suffering.² What is at work in this paradox is the fundamental role of suffering, violence, and humiliation in the processes of rebirth and regeneration by which older, institutional values and laws are cast off in favor of newer, more relational ones. As Jorge argues, to prioritize life in the *Peregrinação* often enough implies the acceptance of specific acts of (frequently violent) humiliation and the willful trampling of authoritative codes that the protagonist and others had once believed to give value and meaning to life. In this sense, humiliation and suffering are ineluctably linked to themes related both to the law (new and old) and to human regeneration. Following Jorge's argument to its logical conclusion, in fact, what we find is Mendes Pinto fashioning within the *Peregrinação* not a picaresque indictment of seigniorial privilege or a moral rhetoric of satire from some stable, univocal deictic *origo*, but rather something resembling a masochistic contract drafted within the paradoxical—and wholly interactional—frameworks of power and deferred pleasure that characterize all such contracts. The point here is that the humiliations that Jorge mentions, as well as the “trampling” of various social and religious codes, inevitably have a deeper function that involves generating new forms of law sustained by rituals of suffering and violence. In this sense, the *Peregrinação* can certainly operate as satire, but through very different mechanisms than those elaborated by Saraiva and Catz.

The present study, in a very literal sense a focused exploration of Jorge's comments regarding the ontogenetically productive role of humiliation and violence within the *Peregrinação*, has at its center a concern with what I see as a series of masochistic rituals encoded within Mendes Pinto's narrative. Focusing on two specific episodes in the text—

² The ambivalence to which I am referring has its roots in the narrator's complaints about fortune at the very beginning of the *Peregrinação*, which are followed directly afterward (and introduced by the phrase “mas por outro lado”) by a statement regarding the mercy shown by God in keeping him alive.

both of them ritual murders—I wish to show how the *Peregrinação* employs the logic of the masochistic contract, and the rituals that sustain it, in strategic ways. The goal of such an analysis, it should be made clear, is not to contradict the broader arguments of Saraiva and Catz, but rather to put them on more relational and intersubjective ground.

The first episode that I will analyze occurs in chapter three of the *Peregrinação* and involves the execution of a Christian convert to Islam (*renegado*) somewhere in the Red Sea by a group of Portuguese sailors. Calling on the logic and performative features of an Inquisitional *auto-da-fé*, they ask the *renegado* to convert back to Christianity. When he refuses, they kill him and loot his ship, sending both to the bottom. The second episode occurs near the end of the *Peregrinação* (chapters 191-92) and recounts the execution of the Galician adventurer Diogo Soares. Arrested in the Burmese kingdom of Pegu for crimes including theft, murder, and attempted rape, Soares is handed over to a mob that summarily stones him to death and then tears his body to shreds. Prior to his execution, however, Mendes Pinto lingers almost lovingly over the Christ-like transformation and rebirth that Soares effects on his way to the killing floor. Framed explicitly as a *via crucis*, Soares's passage to execution is in a very real sense a rebirth achieved through violent humiliation. In both episodes, the first occurring at the beginning of the narrator's journey, and the second taking place near its end, we see not a progressive intensification of the masochistic contract forged (both end in violent death), but rather only a change in setting and the means of punishment. In this I would disagree with Jorge's argument that the transformative power of humiliation is something that the narrator learns over the course of his travels in Asia. I would suggest, in fact, that it is something that the narrator already carries with him at the beginning of the story as he runs away from the service of his *senhora* to the caravel that will first take him overseas, for at the center of each of these episodes—the narrator's initial flight, the Red Sea *auto-da-fé*, and Diogo Soares's execution—is a feminine Other

whose exercise of power exacts a steep price even as it puts into motion the transformation of the masculine subject.

Inquisition, Desire and the Sublime

Scarcely away from Lisbon, Mendes Pinto's first-person narrator comes to serve aboard a Portuguese foist christened the *Silveira* and stationed at the Gujarati port of Diu. Ordered along with another vessel to sail into the Red Sea to gain intelligence regarding the movements of the Turkish fleet, the foist and its companion become caught in winter storms that force them to find shelter on the island of Sacotora (roughly 150 miles northeast of the Horn of Africa). There they acquire some provisions from a community of Christians before once again setting off. Nine days later, helped along by good weather, the two foists arrive at Mitsiwa (Eritrea).

At sunset of their first day at Mitsiwa, the two ships sight an unidentified ship and chase after it, hoping to gain information about the movements of the Turkish fleet. Pulling alongside the ship, the Portuguese call out that they wish to speak with the vessel's captain; the only response they receive, however, is a volley of cannon shot, a chorus of shouts and insults, and the waving of banners, turbans, and unsheathed swords from the ship's poop deck as it sails away. The Portuguese foists give chase, launching deadly artillery shots at the ship throughout the night. By morning, sixty-four of the vessel's original crew of eighty are dead, and all but five of those remaining throw themselves overboard, preferring to drown rather than burn to death at the hands of the attacking Portuguese and their gunpowder grenades: "e os que ficaram vivos quase todos se lançaram ao mar, tendo este por melhor partido que morrerem queimados com as panelas de pólvora que nós lhes lançávamos" (*Peregrinação* 9).

One of the five survivors (all of which are badly wounded) is the ship's captain, who confesses under torture the movements of the Turkish fleet. During the course of this interrogation, the captain first claims that he is from Jeddah, but he then confesses that he is a Mallorcan from Sardinia

who had converted to Islam only four years earlier in order to marry a Greek Muslim girl with whom he was in love: “[e]ntre algumas que nos disse, nos veio a confessar que era cristão renegado, maiorquino de nação, natural de Cerdenha, filho de um mercador que se chamava Paulo Andrés e que não havia mais de quatro anos que se tornara mouro, por amor de uma grega moura com a qual era casado” (*Peregrinação* 9).³ At this point the Portuguese captains ask him if he would be willing to convert back to Christianity. His response to this question, as the narrator describes it, is a violently negative one: “ele respondeu tão duramente e tão fora de toda a razão, como se tivesse nascido e sido criado sempre naquela maldita seta” (*Peregrinação* 9). At this, the Portuguese captains lose their temper and order their men to bind the *renegado*'s feet and hands, tie a heavy stone around his neck, and throw him overboard: “encheram-se de cólera, com um zelo santo da honra de Deus, e mandaram atar os pés e mãos, e vivo foi lançado ao mar com um grande penedo ao pescoço, donde o Diabo o levou a participar nos tormentos de Mafamede, em quem tão crente estava” (*Peregrinação* 9-10).

On a superficial level, this episode reads more or less smoothly as a narrative of Christian expansion and crusade. While the narrator admits that the Portuguese captains lose their temper before executing the *renegado*, at no point do they step outside of the boundaries of what might be considered by Portuguese readers to be just and reasonable. The narrator explains their loss of temper, in fact, in wholly orthodox, Christian terms (“encheram-se de cólera, com um zelo santo da honra de Deus”). The response of the

³ In her English edition of the *Peregrinação*, Catz asserts that the *renegado* is from the Pyrenean county of Cerdanya, which had been part of the short-lived Kingdom of Majorca until 1349 (*Travels* 533 n.22). By the sixteenth century, the brief incorporation of Cerdanya (and Roussillon) into the Kingdom of Majorca would have been a distant memory (the Kingdom of Majorca itself only existed from 1276-1349). More likely is reading of *Cerdenha* as *Sardinia*, and the *renegado* as the son of a Mallorcan merchant who had moved to Sardinia. In this sense, the *renegado* would be both Mallorcan by *nação* and a native (*natural*) of Sardinia.

renegado, on the other hand, is presented as “completely irrational” (*fora de toda a razão*) and what might be expected from someone who had never before been a Christian rather than someone who had converted to Islam only four short years earlier.

The execution itself is also, in spite of its brutality, a perfectly legal action that corresponds to the jurisdiction of the captains. As book five, title two of the *Ordenações Manuelinas* (promulgated in 1521) makes clear, the intervention of the Church in such cases was limited to investigating the evidence of apostasy where this question was in doubt. Cases of admitted apostasy, however, fell strictly within the jurisdiction of secular officials, given that there was nothing for the Church to determine:

Peró se alguã Christaõ leiguo, que ante fosse Judeu, ou Mouro, quer nacesse Christaõ, se tornar Judeu, ou Mouro, ou a outra secta, e assi lhe for provado, Nós tomaremos conhecimento de tal como este, e lhe daremos a pena segundo Dereito, porque a Igreja nom há ja aqui que conhecer se erra na Fee, ou nom; e se tal caso for que elles se tornem aa Fee, ahi fica aos Prelados de lhes darem suas penitencias espirituas. (15)

Since the *renegado* has already confessed to being an apostate, all that is left for the captains to do is to give him the chance to convert back (after which, one might imagine, he would be punished in some non-lethal way and Church officials back in Diu would further assign him his “penitencias espirituas”). When he refuses to do so, however, the captains, moved by righteous anger, have him executed. Filled with choler and zeal for God’s honor, the captains transport the politico-theological laws of the Portuguese crown to a crippled Turkish ship floating in the Red Sea and enforce them. Far from an act of vigilantism or a wartime atrocity, the execution of the *renegado* plays out precisely as royal law would have it.

Beyond the imperial logic that gives the two captains jurisdiction in this case, the episode also contrasts the irrational and insulting refusal of the *renegado* with the rational execution of royal law by the Portuguese captains. The final phrase underscores even further the crusading tone

that runs through the episode: “o Diabo o levou a participar nos tormentos de Mafamede, em quem tão crente estava” (*Peregrinação* 10).

There is, however, another aspect to this episode that warrants further attention, and central to teasing it out are the reasons for and conditions under which the *renegado* converts to Islam in the first place. As Mendes Pinto tells it, the *renegado* converted “por amor de uma grega moura com a qual era casado” (*Peregrinação* 9). This is not a minor point, as it is through this short phrase that Mendes Pinto leaves open the possibility of reading this episode not only as a triumph of Christian crusading, but also as the culmination of a long masochistic ritual of transformation and rebirth. Seen one way, the *renegado* converts to Islam (just) out of love for a woman and then senselessly refuses to convert back to Christianity when given the chance only four years later. It is this refusal—seen more as a profanation than a mere violation of “universal” law—that justifies (if not necessitates) the *renegado*’s execution. When we shift our focus away from the Portuguese and toward the *renegado*, however, this execution emerges as something much more dramatic than a profanation of the law: it is also a final, dramatic attempt to transcend it through a parthenogenetic rebirth that can only be achieved, as was the case with Christ himself, through torture and death.

In framing the *renegado*’s execution and the events that lead up to it in this way, I am expanding upon Gilles Deleuze’s examination of the narrative works of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch and the forms of desire that have come to bear Masoch’s name. What most interests me here about Deleuze’s reading of Sacher-Masoch is the emphasis that the former places on the masochist’s link between ritual torture and rebirth:

When the torture is inflicted upon the hero, that is to say the son, the lover or the child, we should conclude that what is beaten, foresworn and sacrificed, what is ritually expiated, is the father’s likeness, the genital sexuality inherited from the father—however miniaturized he may be. This is the real ‘Apostasy.’ To become a man is to be reborn from the woman alone, to undergo a second birth. [. . .] The masochist practices three forms of

disavowal at once: the first magnifies the mother, by attributing to her the phallus instrumental to rebirth; the second excludes the father, since he has no part in this rebirth; and the third relates to sexual pleasure, which is interrupted, deprived of its genitality and transformed into the pleasure of being reborn (Deleuze, *Coldness and Cruelty* 99-100).

The pleasure of masochistic punishment is thus the expected sublime enjoyment of rebirth, of a future renaissance wholly divorced from the paternal order and mediated by the requirements and punishments of the feminine. Masochistic pleasure is thus not about the pain, but what will come as a result of the pain: the freedom of a new self, unstained by the law of the father.

Based on the information that Mendes Pinto feeds us, the *renegado* began his process of rebirth at least four years prior to his execution. His conversion to Islam, a process that would require ritual circumcision—a wounding of the phallus that serves as an indelible sign of the *renegado*'s contract with the *grega moura*—as well as the taking of a new, Muslim name (not to mention the various forms of strict corporal discipline that must be learned by any convert), seems to imply this. It should be kept clearly in mind, as well, that the *renegado*'s participation in all of these rituals of conversion have at their center the *grega moura* and his commitment to her, and not necessarily any deep-set affinity for or belief in Islam itself. The narrator states this explicitly (and this is all he says on the matter): “não havia mais de quatro anos que se tornara mouro, por amor de uma grega moura com a qual era casado” (*Peregrinação* 9). As Mendes Pinto frames it, it is the *grega moura*, as the *renegado*'s beloved, who puts into motion these conversion rituals and gives them power, even if it is not she that cuts his foreskin or stands before him as he performs *sajdah*. Through his short life with the *grega moura*—a life that is made up of various rituals of conversion and servitude (ostensibly to God)—the “son of the merchant Paulo Andrés” (Mendes Pinto does not tell us the *renegado*'s name, only that of his father) has initiated the process of becoming someone else. He is in a very literal sense on his way to becoming a “new man” wholly divorced from the law of his father and governed instead by that law

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embodied and presided over by his wife. For while it is in several cases men that cut and constrain him, it is she nevertheless that stands behind and above them, the object of his love and the mistress of his redemption.

Seen through this lens, the Portuguese captains emerge as unwitting accomplices in the final act of a long ritual of masochistic rebirth shared between the *renegado* and his wife. His refusal to convert back to Christianity would of course be, in this sense, as “irrational” as Mendes Pinto’s narrator claims it to be. It is a refusal based, after all, on the perverse desire to move beyond the paternal order through rituals of violence and servitude to a feminine Other. His horrific death, the final test of his faith in and commitment to that Other, can also be read as something that he chooses and even manipulates the Portuguese into carrying out. Mendes Pinto’s narrator, in fact, seems to leave his reader little alternative to this reading: the *renegado* converted to Islam for love of a woman, and in the absence of any other explanation (save the unconvincing and wholly inverisimilar parting shot about the faith that the *renegado* supposedly had in *Mafomede*), it can only be because of his devotion to her that he refuses to convert back to Christianity. From this it follows that the *renegado* chooses his commitment to, or perhaps more precisely *contract with*, the *grega moura* over his very life, in all probability because it is precisely this life (much as is the case with Mendes Pinto’s narrator) that he is trying to discard in favor of a new one. And so in the end we may imagine what Mendes Pinto leaves us to infer: the *renegado*, sinking to the bottom of the Red Sea, his mouth stretched into just the faintest of smiles as the stone around his neck pulls him down toward death and away from the man that he had once been.

Burma Shave

The second example of violent execution that interests me occurs near the end of the *Peregrinação* (chapters 191-92). It involves the execution of the Galician Diogo Soares de Albergaria at the hands of an angry Burmese mob. Soares had risen to an extraordinarily high rank in the government

of the King of Pegu, and seems to have committed a wide range of abuses. In my examination of the execution of Diogo Soares in Pegu, I would like to focus on the inherently masochistic drama of transformation that unfolds between Soares and his essentialized (and not incidentally, feminized) Asian executioners. My conception of this drama once again stems in large part from the reading that Deleuze offers of the work of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, and I am especially interested in the relation that the former points to in Sacher-Masoch's fiction between Cain and Jesus and the role of the Virgin in the events that lead to the crucifixion. Given Mendes Pinto's own framing of Diogo Soares's execution as a Christ-like *via crucis*, and the veiled claim by the Peguans that Soares had served as a serpent to their Eve, Deleuze's reading of Sacher-Masoch is, I argue, particularly apt.

The episode begins with Soares and his men (Turkish guards) riding by the wedding that a wealthy merchant is putting on for his daughter. Seeing the young woman, Soares decides that he must have her. The bride's father tries to placate Soares with the gift of a valuable ring that the girl wears on her finger, but Soares is unmoved:

Tirando a moça, por mandado de seu pai, um anel rico que tinha no dedo, lho deu com os joelhos em terra, ao que o Diogo Soares, em vez de lhe guardar o decoro que se lhe devia em lei de nobreza e de amizade, como era de condição sensual e desonesto, estendendo a mão, depois de lhe tomar o anel, pegou rijamente nela, dizendo: "Nunca Deus quiera que moça tão formosa como vós, se empregue em outrem senão em mim."
(*Peregrinação* 769)

The father reacts desperately, begging Soares to let go of his daughter and even offering himself and all of his possessions in exchange for her freedom. Soares responds poetically, in a verse of perfect if brutal *heróico quebrado*: "Mata, mata este perro" (*Peregrinação* 770).

Soares then kills the groom and his family, while the father somehow manages to escape. Sadly for all concerned, the bride-to-be commits suicide to prevent herself from being

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raped, causing the *sensual* Soares to lament not his previous actions but only the missed opportunity:

E perdoe-se-me não contar por extenso as particularidades que houve neste feio caso, porque o faço por honra do nome português. Basta dizer que a moça se estrangulou com um cordão que trazia congido, antes que o sensual Galego a pudesse ter consigo, de que ele disse depois algumas vezes, em prática, que mais lhe pesara não a conversar, do que se arrependera de a tomar. (*Peregrinação* 770)

After this scene, the dead girl's father spends four years mourning his loss as an impoverished hermit.

At the end of this four-year period, a new king replaces Soares's royal protector. The new monarch, called the *xemim de satão*, would rule only briefly, but his power lasts long enough for him to have Soares executed for his crimes. The punishment process begins when the dead bride's father pulls the statue of the Peguan *deus da aflição* out of its temple, and walks into the street to cry for justice. His words so move the people that within fifteen minutes a crowd of 50,000 people has gathered:

Ó gentes, gentes, que com corações limpos e quietos professais a verdade deste deus da aflição que em minhas mãos vedes, sai como raios por noite chuvosa, a bradar com vozes e gritos tão altos que rompam o céu, para que a orelha piedosa do alto Senhor se incline a ouvir nossos gemidos, e saiba por eles a razão que temos para lhe pedir justiça deste estrangeiro maldito que nunca devia ter nascido, usurpador de nossas fazendas e desonrador de nossas gerações. E o que comigo não acompanhar este deus que tenho nas mãos, a chorar e gemer um crime tão abominável, a serpe tragadora da côncava funda da casa do fumo lhe consuma os seus dias, e lhe despedace as suas carnes no meio da noite. (*Peregrinação* 771)

When the *xemim de satão*, whom Mendes Pinto characterizes as indecisive and fearful, asks the crowd what they are yelling about, they respond in unison: “É um maldito ladrão, traiçoeiro em suas obras como a maldita serpente que derrubou no deleitoso prado o primeiro homen que Deus criou” (*Peregrinação* 772). Shortly afterward, the king agrees to arrest Soares and turn him over to the crowd to do with him as they see fit.

Upon his arrest, Soares unsuccessfully tries to bribe the *chircá* (the king's lieutenant) who has come for him. When this attempt fails, he leaves with the *chircá* and the 300 men that accompany him. Walking past a bazaar, Soares comes across his son, to whom he confesses that everything seems to him a dream. It is at this point that the two men put into motion the ritual of Christ-like rebirth that will take up the rest of the episode:

E abraçando-se ambos estiveram assim por um grande espaço, chorando um com o outro, até que o *chircá* mandou ao Baltasar Soares que se afastasse, porém ele o não fez, porque se não podia despegar de seu pai; mas os ministros o tiraram dali à força, e lhe deram um tamanho empurrão que o feriram na cabeça, e sobre isso lhe deram muitas pancadas, de que o pai caiu com um vágado esmorecido no chão, e pedindo uma pouca de água, lhe não deram, ao que ele depois que tornou em si, levantando as mãos ao céu, disse com muitas lágrimas: ‘*Si iniquitates observaveris Domine, Domine quis sustinebit?* Mas confiado eu, meu eterno Deus, no preço infinito do teu precioso sangue que por mim derramaste na Cruz, poderei dizer muito afoitamente: *Misericordias Domini in aeternum cantabo.*’⁴ (*Peregrinação* 775)

Upon seeing his son beaten and injured, Soares falls to the ground, asking for water. The water is denied him, and it is at this point that he begins to perform what may rightly be considered his own *officium pro defunctis*. He begins with the third verse of the 129th Psalm (“*Si iniquitates observaveris Domine, Domine quis sustinebit?*”) and ends with the second verse of the 88th Psalm (“*Misericordias Domini in aeternum cantabo*”), a scriptural framing of the death and rebirth that Soares hopes to effect.

Soares is then brought to a large pagoda, where he nearly faints at the size of the crowd assembled to see him die. Looking around him for “um português que lhe consentiram que fosse com ele para o animar e esforçar na fé” (*Peregrinação* 775), Soares exclaims: “Jesus! Todos estes me acusaram diante el-rei?” (*Peregrinação* 775). The *chircá*

⁴ Ribeiro de Mello presents this phrase as “in alternum cantabo.” This is an error on his part, as the 1614 Crasbeeck edition lists it as “in aeternum cantabo” (*Peregrinacão* 249).

then scolds Soares, telling him that it is best for him to focus on the naturally destructive inclinations of a “povo desconcertado” (*Peregrinação* 775). Soares then admits to the *chircá* that he understands that the “desconcerto” of the people stems directly from his sins. The *chircá* closes their conversation by admonishing Soares to be grateful that God has given him the chance, with the brief time that he has left, to repent of those sins: “e praza a Deus que te dê graças para que neste pequeno espaço de vida te arrependas do que fizeste, e quiçá te valerá mais do que te valeu o muito ouro que agora cá deixas por herança a quem porventura te manda matar” (*Peregrinação* 776).

Soares then goes down on his knees and, inclining his face toward heaven, asks God for forgiveness: “Senhor Jesus Cristo, pelas dores da tua sagrada paixão te peço que permitas, meu Deus, por quem és, que pela acusação destes cem mil cães esfaimados se satisfaça em mim o castigo da tua divina justiça, para que se não perca o muito que na salvação da minha alma, de tua parte puseste sem to eu merecer” (*Peregrinação* 776). After this brief pause, Soares ascends the stairs that lead to the platform upon which he will be executed, kissing each step along the way and reciting the name of Jesus three times. The dead girl’s father then raises the idol of the god of affliction above his head and cries out to the crowd: “O que por honra deste deus de aflição que tenho em meus braços, não apedrejar esta serpente maldita, os miolos de seus filhos se consumam no meio da noite, para que bramindo por pena de tamanho pecado, se justifique neles a direita justiça do alto Senhor” (*Peregrinação* 776). The crowd stones Soares to death. Once he is dead, several of those assembled dig him out from under the rocks and, amid much shouting, rip his body to shreds. Some young boys then drag his head and entrails through the streets of the city, piously begging for alms as they go.

The masochistic axis of the Diogo Soares episode lies principally in Deleuze’s argument that the two most important male figures in Sacher-Masoch’s work are Cain and Jesus, and that they are essentially intertwined (96). What

follows from this, according to Deleuze, is the idea first that Cain, who was Eve's favorite, "symbolizes [. . .] the omnipresence of crime in nature and history, and the immensity of man's sufferings" (96). Cain is loved by his mother but not by his father, and so "the mother's favorite [goes] so far as to commit a crime to sever the alliance between the father and the other son: he kill[s] his father's likeness and ma[kes] Eve into the goddess-mother" (96). This abolishment of the father in favor of the mother-goddess is, according to Deleuze, a hallmark of masochism. Jesus similarly abolishes the father through his suffering, but in Sacher-Masoch it is Mary herself that puts Jesus on the cross, ensuring the "parthenogenetic second birth of the son in his resurrection" (97). Here it is not the son, however, who necessarily dies on the cross, but the likeness of the father within him. As Deleuze puts it, "the cross represents the maternal image of death, the mirror in which the narcissistic self of Christ (Cain) apprehends his ideal self (Christ resurrected)" (97). Within this scenario, the mother-goddess nails the criminal Cain to the cross so that he may be purged of the father within him and transformed into the born-again Christ. This is what the "death of God" means for Sacher-Masoch.

Deleuze elaborates on this point further, speaking directly of the transformation that takes place at the hands of the goddess-mother:

But what is the significance of this constantly recurring theme: "You are not a man, I am making a man of you?" What does "becoming a man" signify? Clearly it does not mean *to be like the father*, or to take his place. On the contrary, it consists in obliterating his role and his likeness in order to generate the new man. The tortures are in fact directed at the father, or at his likeness in the son. We argued earlier that the masochistic fantasy is less an instance of "a child being beaten" than of a *father being beaten*.⁵ (99)

⁵ It is also this drama of perversion and rebirth—whereby Cain is transformed into the Messiah—that plays itself out in Cervantes's *Don Quijote*, with its eponymous (and amply narcissistic) hero transforming himself into a *de facto* brigand in the service of a cruel virgin cult that is ultimately, tragically, unable to "make him a man."

The principal themes that Deleuze identifies in the Cain/Jesus pairing are crime, painful punishment, and rebirth. The trick for the masochist, however, is to find a woman (or essence even provisionally gendered as feminine) who is willing to renounce her own desires and become the mother-goddess for the son so that he may be resurrected as his ideal self, beyond the reproach of the father. Masochism is in this sense about crime and punishment, but it is also, as I have argued in the case of the *renegado*, about transcendence and the sublime pleasure that comes from the promise of resurrection.

For Diogo Soares, the Cain part certainly comes easy. He is every inch a criminal in Burma, and it is Pegu itself, rendered a feminine and irrational Eve against Soares's masculine serpent, that comes to serve as the primordial mother-goddess that rises up to strike him down and facilitate his own Christ-like rebirth out of the wreckage of Western empire (a wreckage that I would argue also includes Western notions of reason and metaphysics, in keeping with Martin Heidegger's pronouncements and warnings in his later texts such as *Der Satz vom Grund* (commonly translated, somewhat problematically, as *The Principle of Reason*).

While it is certain that according to the story in Genesis it was the serpent that *indirectly* brought about Adam's downfall, this was obviously accomplished through the mediation of Eve, and it was actually she whom the serpent first tricked and most directly brought down. In this sense, the direct relation that Soares has to the people of Pegu, as the immediate victims of his brutal and perverse crimes, is more appropriately that of the serpent to Eve, a fact that comes together with a large number of other elements (within and beyond Mendes Pinto's text) to engender the Peguans, and Asia itself, as feminine. The vengeful crowd of Peguans participate fully in this trope in their characterization of Soares before their new king: "É um maldito ladrão, traíçoeiro em suas obras como a maldita serpente que derrubou no deleitoso prado o primeiro homem que Deus criou" (*Peregrinação* 772).

The result is a forceful and gender-inflected Othering of the Peguans, with respect to the Western imperial self; but there is also an equally important feminization that takes place and facilitates the masochistic drama that unfolds. As is often the case with Mendes Pinto (and other writers of Portuguese empire), he here works to mask the deeper perversions of Portuguese expansion into Africa and Asia (in this case masochistic perversions) with one hand while holding them up to the light with the other/Other.

As I have just described in some detail, Soares initiates upon his arrest what is very obviously made to resemble the path of Christ to the cross at Golgotha. He stumbles, is denied water, meets his son along the way (not his mother, as it is the mother that is here doing the killing); lifts his eyes to heaven to question (tentatively) God's support, and then falls to his knees to pray that the "cem mil cães esfaimados" that are about to set upon him might effect his salvation through their cruel punishment. He then bends down to kiss the ground and calls out Jesus's name at each step as he walks slowly to his death.

That death comes swiftly, with the dead bride's father calling out for punishment against the sins of such a "serpente maldita." At that point, so many stones are thrown at the "padecente Soares" that his body is swiftly buried under them (here the agentive Cain is most clearly converted into the suffering Christ at the hands of the Asian mob). Then, with a "tumulto de gritos e vozearias," the crowd digs him out from under the pile and "o fizeram em muitos pedaços que os moços, com a cabeça e as tripas, taziam arratando pelas ruas, a que toda a gente dava esmola como a uma obra muito pia e muito santa" (*Peregrinação* 777).

Through his penitential path to execution, Soares (with the help of Mendes Pinto's first-person narrator) successfully converts the punishment of his crimes into a masochistic theater of suffering and rebirth that strips the Peguans of subjectivity, agency, and reason while simultaneously bringing into question the validity of these same concepts (and the ideologies that support them) within an imperial context. After all, it is not Soares that is stoned to death so much as

the image of the father within him. What precisely is that father? And more importantly, both for any adequate understanding of Mendes Pinto's text, as well as the ideological frameworks that supported Portuguese expansion in the sixteenth century, who is the new man that emerges from under the pile of rocks? If all that is left are the headless, gutless pieces of Soares, then we find a damning critique of Portugal's Asian empire: as would be the case with Cervantes's *Don Quijote* (published only a year after the *Peregrinação*), the perverse desire for rebirth at the hands of a cruel and abstract feminine Other yields only death and no redemption. Certainly this is a reading that would have resonated in post-1578, and especially in post-1580 Portugal. The episode of the *renegado* likewise offers a perverse counter-example to the discourse of crusade and imperial expansion that is so associated with Portuguese literature during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Eduardo Lourenço has argued that the "*Peregrinação* não é uma sátira, é um penitencial. Mas não só dele, do 'coitado de si,' mas duma acção imperial oscilando sem cessar entre a fascinação infernal e omnipresente do ouro e o esplendor inverso e raro do único gesto que a negava e de que Mendes Pinto sentiu por instantes a incorporável grandeza" (xcv-xcvi). In Lourenço's citation, the image of Cain the criminal and Christ the reborn seem to be held together as if in limbo, the one looking back at the other, and both wondering if Asia—and the East more generally—has it in her to generate a new man from the broken bones and torn flesh of an ill-conceived empire.

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