

Authority and
Displacement
in the English-
Speaking World

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*(Volume I: Exploring Europe/
from Europe)*

Edited by

Florence Labaune-Demeule

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PREFACE

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In the eponymous essay of his volume of collected non-fiction, *Step Across This Line*, Salman Rushdie commented on the photograph he had chosen for the cover of his book: taken by Sebastião Salgado in the USA, it shows a running man chased by other men in cars, or, as Rushdie makes clear, it shows an illegal immigrant, pursued by border patrollers, running back towards the wall of separation with Mexico. He is trying to “get back, to unmake his bid for freedom.”¹ Salman Rushdie, who in different texts has celebrated the ideas of migration, of flight, discovery, transgression, uprootedness, is also very much aware that travel is a luxury reserved for the rich and the free. He knows that for many desperate people migration is a vital, necessary displacement, a dire choice between certain death if one stays, or unknown dangers and hypothetical death if one leaves, even if those migrants are perfectly aware that they are most unwelcome wherever they go. Rushdie insists that the “free” countries of the West have become “exclusive, increasingly well-guarded enclaves”, and “freedom is now to be defended against those too poor to deserve its benefits,” defended by walls, watchtowers, tight frontiers and armed men, by “the edifices and procedures of totalitarianism.”²

Ironically, if so many human beings are ready to risk their lives in order to save them, it is most often because the rich, free world which is trying so hard to keep them out is responsible for their predicament in the first place, and this for many different reasons, such as supporting dictators in exchange for economic and neo-imperialist favours, or buying up land to replace subsistence crops with cash crops destined to be exported, or because the indulgent way of life of Westerners precipitates climate change. Indeed, the ironic injustice of “global” warming is that it most affects those who are the least responsible for it, those who produce hardly any greenhouse gases, but happen to live in the least temperate

¹ Salman Rushdie. *Step Across This Line*. New York: Random House, 2002, 355.

² *Ibid.*

areas. Similarly, Rushdie constantly celebrates *métissage* and hybridity, the fruitful commingling of cultures, and yet he is well aware that many migrants, daunted by a new culture, a new language, the strange habits of a new community, and faced with “the sheer alienness and defensive hostility” of the people among whom they must henceforth live, choose to retreat “behind the walls of the old culture they have both brought along and left behind” thus leaping “into a confining stockade of [their] own.”³

However, if the far-right political parties of the West vituperate against the “invasion” of migrants, and lobby for the authority of the state to put a stop to it, history has shown that most “displacements” of “natives” occurred when a European power chose to “claim” the land where they were living. In other words, the poor and “insignificant” often find it inevitable, but very difficult, to emigrate, to “displace” themselves, but they can very easily *be* displaced. In a powerful text entitled *Exterminate All the Brutes*,⁴ the Swedish writer Sven Lindqvist reminds us that in the 19th Century, Europeans bent on conquering new colonies tended to consider the “natives” as an annoying hindrance that had to be got out of the way. Not content with depriving them of their land and livelihood, the colonisers killed indigenous peoples massively, or displaced them, herding them into inhospitable zones where they were left to die of thirst and starvation. The title of the book is a quotation from Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*. In this original mixture of memoir, history, and literary history, Lindqvist argues that Hitler and Nazi ideologues grew up at a time when racist ideologies and social Darwinism were rife, and when “a major element in the European view of mankind was the conviction that ‘inferior races’ were by nature condemned to extinction” (20). At that time many believed in “the beneficent law of nature, that the weak must be devoured by the strong” (139), and for such people the genocides perpetrated by European colonisers, in Africa, in Australia, in America and elsewhere, were a source of inspiration. Sometimes the displacement and extermination of the “brutes” was carried out under the solemn authority of high-ranking army officials, as when, in 1904, the German General Adolf Lebrecht von Trotha ordered that every single member of the Herero people should be annihilated. The Germans did not even need to use their ammunition: about seventy-five thousand people were herded into the desert and abandoned without food or water in sealed off areas

³ *Ibid.*, 356.

⁴ Sven Lindqvist. *Exterminate All the Brutes*. (1992); translated into English by Joan Tate (1996), in *The Dead Do Not Die*. New York: The New Press, 2014. This volume also includes another book by Lindqvist, *Terra Nullius*, published in 2005, and translated into English by Sarah Death in 2007.

(Lindqvist, 157). Sometimes the “authorities” left adventurers and petty officers to their own devices, as when, in 1898, a French captain called Paul Voulet was asked to head an expedition in Central Africa, in an area destined to be placed under French “protection”, but was given no instructions by the minister for the colonies. As Lindqvist remarks, “Voulet was given a free hand to use the methods for which he had made himself notorious” (170): murder, looting, burning villages. Lindqvist demonstrates how affected Conrad was when the horrors and lies underlying the adulation of British colonial “hero” Henry Morton Stanley became known, and shows how precise historical details were used in Conrad's fiction, like the “twenty-one” cut heads of punished natives that adorned Captain Rom's garden (38), or the heads, impaled on stakes, that Voulet used “to frighten the population into submission” (173). Lindqvist concludes his text by insisting that Conrad did not need to spell out the atrocities hinted at in *Heart of Darkness*, because they were widespread, repeated, certainly not limited to the Belgian Congo, and because everyone “knew quite enough” (178).

Arundhati Roy included in her single novel to date, *The God of Small Things*, many intertextual allusions and references to *Heart of Darkness*; they add depth and brilliant irony to her reflexion on the legacy of colonialism in India and on the ravages of castism. She has also read *Exterminate All the Brutes*, and she obviously agrees with Lindqvist, whom she quoted in a lecture on “genocide, denial and celebration” delivered in 2008 in Istanbul. Like Lindqvist, she is afraid that displacement and genocide are still topical, urgent issues. She describes an India where the very wealthy upper class and the growing middle class have “seceded” “to a country of their own,” a “Kingdom in the Sky,” “hermetically sealed from the rest of India.”⁵ From thence, the “Sky Citizens,” as she calls them, plot to displace the indigenous people, the Adivasis, from their ore-rich mountains, as well as the Dalits and Muslims, who “sit” on prime land in Nandigram, because “when the Sky Citizens cast their eyes over the land, they see superfluous people sitting on precious resources” (153). India has the largest population of internally displaced people in the world, probably the second largest after China. The people are displaced “with court-decrees” or “at gunpoint by government-controlled militias” and they are “herded into tenements, camps and resettlement colonies where, cut off from a means of earning a living, they spiral into poverty” (154-155). Those who resist the theft of their land and

⁵ Arundhati Roy. “Listening to Grasshoppers: Genocide, Denial and Celebration” in *Listening to Grasshoppers*. London: Penguin, 2009, 152.

take to arms are treated like terrorists, and Roy analyses the language used by the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh when calling for what he obviously deemed to be their necessary eradication: “‘Choke.’ ‘Cripple.’ ‘Virus.’ ‘Infested.’ ‘Eliminate.’ ‘Stamp out.’ Yes. The idea of extermination is in the air.” (160) As always, it is easier to first dehumanize those whom you would displace.

In 1977 Chinua Achebe published a lecture given in 1975 in which he accused Joseph Conrad of xenophobia and racism, dwelling on what he considered to be Conrad's alleged narrowness of mind, which prevented him from telling his readers anything except about himself. The 1987 version of this article was only very slightly amended. Even if A. Roy has reservations about Conrad's attitude towards African “natives,” her references to *Heart of Darkness* in *The God of Small Things* are much more nuanced and subtle than Achebe's. Personally I would argue that many elements in his novella manifest his humourous distance and his capacity to displace or reverse his point of view. One can think, as an illustrative example, of Conrad's treatment of the “Cannibals”, of his ability to look at the greedy, stupid, “unappetizing” Belgian “pilgrims” through the eyes of the “savages.” In other words, Conrad did possess that capacity of empathy which is essential when you want your books to change a reader's complacent worldview. A recent article in *The Independent*⁶ presented the future itinerant Empathy Museum, which will open in London in September 2015, following a concept inspired by Henry David Thoreau's writings (and more particularly by that famous question of his “Could a greater miracle take place than for us to look through each other's eyes for an instant?”). The philosopher Ronan Krznaric will inaugurate the museum, and the first exhibit will invite people to step into somebody else's shoes, somebody else's skin, in order to see the world differently. Krznaric quotes instances when empathy *has* made a difference, as in the discussions fostered by Parents' Circle between bereaved Palestinian and Israeli families, who begin to communicate with those whom they used to think of as their bitter enemies. Sven Lindqvist retains a rather wary and bitter outlook, believing that we all know what imperialism implies, but we lack “the courage to understand what we know and draw conclusions” (Lindqvist, 179). Arundhati Roy, on the other hand, looks “Empire” straight in the face, and by Empire she means the might of globalized corporate business, the collusion of fascist Hindu

⁶ Sophie Morris. “Empathy Museum”, *The Independent*, Thursday 25 June 2015. <http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/features/empathy-museum-to-understand-others-we-need-to-walk-in-their-shoes--literally-says-philosopher-roman-krznaric-10346326.html>

nationalism with massive privatization, the hypocrisy of the countries of the North that make sure that business transactions are globalized, but not the free movements of people, not human rights, not justice. We *can* confront Empire, she asserts: “Our strategy should be not only to confront Empire but to lay siege to it. To deprive it of its oxygen. To shame it. To mock it. With our art, our music, our literature, our stubbornness, our joy, our brilliance, our sheer relentlessness—and our ability to tell our own stories.”⁷

It is precisely within the context of culture and the arts that this collection of essays questions the concept of “authority” and explores the manifold meanings of the word “displacement,” thus contributing to the necessary questionings and explorations that alone can help us to open up the universe, to push back our horizons, to stop meeting only people who are very similar to us, and to stop believing that “our” lives matter more than “theirs.”

⁷A. Roy. “Confronting Empire”, in Roy, A. *The Ordinary Person's Guide to Empire*, London: Flamingo, 2004, 77.

INTRODUCTION

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Linking the concepts of authority and displacement may seem surprising at first glimpse. Yet whether one thinks of our modern world or of more remote times, both seem to have been affected—if not moulded—by the interaction between the two.

Displacement is often conceived of in terms of space (places and locations), thus referring to key concepts such as migration, diaspora, the transportation of populations, to more limited forms of displacement such as migration from rural to urban areas, or even to more pleasant forms of displacement (travel, exploration, tourism, etc.). In *Questions of Travel, Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*, Caren Kaplan¹ insists on the fact that displacement also echoes the terms *placement* and *dis-placement*, *location* and *dis-location*:²

In this book [*Questions of Travel*] I inquire into categories that are so often taken for granted, asking how and when notions of home and away, placement and displacement, dwelling and travel, location and dislocation, come to play a role in contemporary literary and cultural criticism in Europe and the United States.” (Kaplan, 1)

Yet each metaphor of displacement includes referentially a concept of placement, dwelling, location, or position. Thus exile is always already a mode of dwelling at a distance from a point of origin. Tourism is travel between points of origin and destinations. Diaspora disperses the locations of dwelling into an interstitial habitus. Nomadism is the most attenuated concept in relation to location. Yet even theories of nomadic rhizomes include ‘nodes’—those sites of intersecting movements or ‘lines of flight’.

¹ See Kaplan, Caren. *Questions of Travel, Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*. Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1996.

² Concerning the concepts of dislocation and dis-location, see Connon, Daisy, Gillian Jein & Greg Kerr. *Aesthetics of Dislocation in French and Francophone Literature and Art. Strategies of Representation*. New York, Queenston, Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2009.

Thus most notions of displacement contain an oppositional notion of placement and vice versa. (Kaplan, 143)

The reasons behind such types of displacement often have to do with the presence of one form of authority or another—whether political, economic, or cultural—which people obey either willingly or by force, for better or for worse. Such authority can at times be opposed, through diverse manifestations of resistance, or it can be subverted and even transgressed.

This also evokes the need to find some form of anchoring, reminding us of the frequently tackled opposition between “routes” and “roots”.³ These very concepts cannot but recall Deleuze and Guattari’s theories too, with the oft-mentioned opposition between the image of the tree and that of the rhizome, with respectively vertical anchoring or horizontal spreading.⁴

It is also commonly accepted that the term *displacement* should be used in different other fields, such as those of medical diagnosis or psychoanalysis,⁵ since it can prove useful to describe conditions such as mental alienation. The latter can be defined as deviance from a norm or a standard viewed as the expression of authority at any particular moment. The concepts of authority and displacement can thus be linked through a more social and cultural meaning of the terms. But is it not also possible to conceive of displacement in a more metaphorical sense, becoming synonymous with life, and death, as the end of one’s voyage on earth? This allows us to come to terms with yet another context in which displacement and authority can be seen to prevail: the social context, in which individual lives and thought processes can be altered by different forms of authority—through the enforcement of cultural values by political or social institutions, for instance. One illustration of the relationships between authority and displacement in that case could be gender theories, that is to say the male vs. female dichotomy, as with the frequent assumptions to be found in patriarchal societies—that men were superior to women in the Victorian era, the latter being often considered as children. Subaltern studies or more recently studies in Dalit literature also

³ See Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic. Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993.

⁴ See Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. London & New York, Continuum, 1992. These images are also often used in Edouard Glissant’s approach to poetics.

⁵ This relies on Freud’s theory, as well as on Lacan’s and Derrida’s. For further information, see Krupnick, Mark. *Displacement, Derrida and After*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983.

highlight another form of imbalance in social relationships based on displacement and authority.

This does not, however, overshadow the primary meaning of the terms: spatial displacement as a form of dis-location can also lead to the dislocation of personality or to cultural dislocation, not to mention the social form of dislocation which can be brought about by the collapse of political regimes or the gradual loss of power of former empires.

This leads us back to another spatial metaphor often used when speaking from a more post-colonial vantage point—that of the centre and the margins, and C. Kaplan again draws our attention to the fact that our contemporary world, characterized by flux, constantly requires new definitions and a new positioning.⁶ Which particular meaning, then, should be given to displacement in what is often called our postcolonial, or globalised, world?

In postcolonial theory, the dialectic between authority and displacement seems to occupy a privileged position. When defining the terms *colonialism*, *imperialism* and *post-colonialism*, Ania Loomba, like many other critics, establishes a link between these terms. Colonialism, she says, “can be defined as the conquest and control of other people’s lands and goods. But colonialism in this sense is not merely the expansion of various European powers into Asia, Africa or the Americas from the sixteenth century onwards.”⁷ The creation of ancient Empires, she adds, was different from the setting up of modern ones, notably for economic reasons:⁸

Modern colonialism did more than extract tribute, goods and wealth from the countries that it conquered—it restructured the economies of the latter, drawing them into a complex relationship with their own, so that there was a flow of human and natural resources between colonised and colonial countries. This flow worked in both directions—slaves and indentured labour as well as raw materials were transported to manufacture goods in the metropolis, or in other locations for metropolitan consumption,

⁶ “In the midst of these displacements, new concerns over borders, boundaries, identities, and locations arise. In most theoretical accounts, the influx of immigrants, refugees, and exiles from the ‘peripheries’ to the metropolitan ‘centers’ both enriches and threatens the parameters of the nation as well as older cultural identities. Yet definitions of locations as ‘centers’ and ‘peripheries’ only further mystify the divides between places and people.” (Kaplan, *Op. cit.*, 102)

⁷ Loomba, Ania. *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. Coll. The New Critical Idiom, Second Edition, London & New York: Routledge-Taylor & Francis Group, 2005, 8.

⁸ Loomba, Ania. *Op. cit.*, 9.

but the colonies also provided captive markets for European goods. Thus slaves were moved from Africa to the Americas, and in the West Indian plantations they produced sugar for consumption in Europe, and raw cotton was moved to India to be manufactured into cloth in England and then sold back to India whose own cloth production suffered as a result.

The relationships between spatial displacement and political as well as economic authority are thus made obvious. When used in this sense, colonialism can be synonymous with imperialism. But the major difference that A. Loomba observes between colonialism and imperialism relies on the fact that the latter may be set up without ever being linked with direct political rule, as in the more modern meaning of the term:

In the modern world, then, we can distinguish between colonisation as the takeover of territory, appropriation of material resources, exploitation of labour and interference with political and cultural structure of another territory or nation, and imperialism as a global system. However, there remains enormous ambiguity between the economic and political connotations of the word. If imperialism is defined as a political system in which an imperial centre governs colonised countries, then the granting of political independence signals the end of empire, the collapse of imperialism. However, if imperialism is primarily an economic system of penetration and control of markets, then political changes do not basically affect it, and may even redefine the term as in the case of ‘American imperialism’ which wields enormous military and economic power across the globe but without direct political control.⁹

Therefore, this suggests that the term *postcolonialism* is more intricate than it may seem. It is not only to be used with a temporal meaning (literally “after colonialism”), but also in a more general sense:

A country may be both postcolonial (in the sense of being formally independent) and neo-colonial (in the sense of remaining economically and/or culturally dependent) at the same time. [...] It has been suggested that it is more helpful to think of postcolonialism not just as coming literally after colonialism and signifying its demise, but more flexibly as the contestation of colonial domination and the legacies of colonialism. Such a position would allow us to include people geographically displaced by colonialism such as African-Americans or people of Asian or Caribbean origin in Britain as ‘post-colonial’ subjects although they live within metropolitan cultures. It also allows us to incorporate the history of anti-

⁹ Loomba, Ania. *Op. cit.*, 11.

colonial resistance with contemporary resistances to imperialism and to dominant Western culture.¹⁰

Whatever meaning can be granted to these terms in the field of postcolonial studies, one can observe that authority and displacement are key concepts, lying at the heart of human activities, be they political, economic, cultural, or even religious, and that this has prevailed throughout history to the present day. Stan Smith, following in Margaret Storm Jameson's steps, indeed views displacement as constitutive of the modern individual:

For Jameson, it was the experience of the Second World War that brought about this dislocation in being, in the fabric of reality itself, after which nothing could be the same. The exilic modern subject, unable to root itself down in a particular community or place, was now constructed from those 'moments in and out of time' of which T.S. Eliot wrote in *Four Quartets* [...].¹¹

Therefore authority and displacement, though frequently used in a postcolonial context as shown by A. Loomba's definitions, are concepts that cannot be restricted to this field. More generally, they can be examined together in a broader sense to refer to any situation where one form of power is linked with spatial, social, religious, or aesthetic displacement.

The concepts of displacement and authority can therefore also be understood to affect various artistic and aesthetic fields, sometimes even linking spatial displacement with aesthetic displacement, as in choreography, stage adaptation or opera staging, for instance. Very often, all these forms of aesthetic displacement also remain linked to authority in one way or another: the authority of generic norms, the authority of the artist, of the writer, or even of the director or stage manager; the authority of the audience through the concept of "audience reception", whether it applies to spectators or readers.

This also underlines the crucial role played by language in the relationships between displacement and authority. Language can be a source of authority, of course, and the medium through which authority can be imposed on peoples. Kenneth Ramchand, in *The West Indian Novel*

¹⁰ Loomba, Ania. *Op. cit.*, 12 and 16 respectively.

¹¹ Smith, Stan. *Poetry and Displacement*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007, 1. See also Kaplan. *Op. cit.*, 101-102.

*and its Background*¹² speaks of the English language as the master's language, for instance. But language itself also produces another form of displacement, by means of translation,¹³ or by using particular stylistic devices to operate a move from everyday language to poetic language. Thus, Wallace Chafe¹⁴ has noted that

When ordinary language is used to represent the experiences of a distal self, it still passes through the consciousness of the proximal self. [...] In written fiction, on the other hand, one effect of the desituatedness of writing can be a total displacement of the represented consciousness to another self. (Chafe, 249)

He even speaks of modes of discourse as *selfed*, or *de-selfed* writing.¹⁵ This also highlights the etymological meaning of authority—*auctoritas*—and of the *auctor*, insisting both on creation and on authority or power.¹⁶ This refers to a form of literary and poetic displacement by discourse and the use of particular stylistic devices aiming at enforcing some form of authority. But how readers travel in a text and through intertextual references should also provide us with new insight in the relationships between these terms: which position does the very persona of the writer occupy in a literary work? How do narrative entities, which contemporary literary criticism has highlighted¹⁷, interact in literary writing? Which

¹² Ramchand, Kenneth. *The West Indian Novel and its Background*. London, Kingston, Port of Spain: Heinemann, 1983.

¹³ In Latin, “*translatus*” means “carried over” as it etymologically comes from the verb “*transferre*”, which means “to bring over, carry over”, according to the Online Etymology Dictionary (www.etymonline.com, accessed May, 15th, 2015).

¹⁴ Chafe, Wallace. *Discourse, Consciousness and Time. The Flow and Displacement of Conscious Experience in Speaking and Writing*. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994.

¹⁵ “In written fiction, there are two ways to handle this dissociation. One option is for the author [sic] to assume a fictional self, so that the representing consciousness becomes a fictional consciousness that is at home in the fictional world. [...] The other option is for the author to relinquish any self at all, in which case the representing consciousness can be said to be *unacknowledged*. [...] In chapter 19 we will turn to writing with an unacknowledged representing consciousness, a consciousness that has been, so to speak, disembodied or, perhaps more accurately *de-selfed*.” (Chafe, 225)

¹⁶ See the Online Etymology Dictionary: www.etymonline.com, accessed May, 15th, 2015.

¹⁷ See Booth, Wayne C. *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. [University of Chicago Press, 1961], Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1983; Chatman, Seymour, *Story and*

relations can be established between narrator(s), characters or character-narrators, implied reader, narratee, or reader? Such key concepts undoubtedly invite us to analyse the relationships between authority and displacement in the context of literary genres and of the arts. The links between authority and generic norms may then be examined, along with the ways in which they are questioned, and their dissemination, not to mention their interaction through processes of hybridisation in contemporary aesthetic productions. Which effects do they produce on the reader or viewer? Does Umberto Eco not precisely speak of “inferential walks” (“promenades inférentielles”) in *Lector in fabula*?¹⁸

The aim of this collection of essays, like that of the conference, is to lead us to interrogate the concepts of authority and displacement in the English-speaking world, mostly in England and in some former parts of the British Empire. This explains why the approach followed extends in three major directions: the aim pursued in these two volumes is spatial, temporal and thematic. The readers will first come to terms with displacement and authority in the context of the former metropolis and how their treatment evolved over time to the present day by proposing a chronological and aesthetic approach.

Volume One will be devoted to exploring displacement and authority in a British context and will span several centuries, from the Elizabethan age to contemporary times: the first essay, by Geneviève Lheureux, shows how the concepts can be analysed in Shakespeare’s play *Measure for Measure*, by focusing on what can be called “the empty chair policy”. Then, we will move on to a different period, eighteenth century England with Floriane Reviron-Piégay, who introduces us to the field of exploration voyages with John Ross’s *Narrative of a Second Voyage in Search of a North-West Passage*. Our quest will be pursued in nineteenth century England as the article written by Stéphanie Bernard places us at the heart of Thomas Hardy’s Wessex with the study of *Jude the Obscure*. The last essays in Volume One will transport us to the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, and we will first remain in Britain with Emilie Walezak’s analysis of “pretend places” in Rose Tremain’s novels, before moving to Ireland with Vanina Jobert-Martini’s stylistic study of Hugo Hamilton’s novel *Disguise*.

Discourse. Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 1983; Leech, Geoffrey N. & Michael H. Short. *Style in Fiction*. London & New York: Longman, 1984.

¹⁸ Eco, Umberto. *Lector in fabula*. Paris: Grasset/Le livre de poche, 1985.

From Irish literature, our attention will then be drawn by Karine Chevalier to a comparative study of Joseph Conrad's novel *Almayer's Folly* and Chantal Akerman's film "La folie Almayer", an essay which will show how displacement and authority can be dealt with in terms of re-writing and intermediality.

Finally, our point of view will move further, with the fictional world of the Anglo-Sudanese writer Jamal Mahjoub thanks to Jacqueline Jondot's essay: thus, we are to be displaced from the English metropolitan centre to the African margins of a territory which has formerly been placed under the protection of the English army—and governed by General Gordon, notably.

Volume Two, on the contrary, will lead us to new shores, by exploring the concepts of authority and displacement in other parts of the world, all of which were former colonies of Britain in America: thus we will be carried across the Atlantic to discover which meanings can be assigned to these terms in some territories of the New World—first, the U.S.A, and then Canada and the Caribbean. Although history will have to be tackled in the articles under scrutiny, the objects of analysis will mostly be linked with contemporary times—the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Yet the essays will not only be devoted to fiction, and will deal with broader issues, such as social questions or different artistic means.

First, Leland Tracy's essay will take us back to the universe of famous American fugitives at the beginning of the twentieth century, with the iconic figures of Bonnie and Clyde. Then, Véronique Ha Van's article will enable us to understand how the placing and replacing of the Capitol statues in Washington D.C. can be viewed as landmarks to gauge the authority of famous national icons. From this aesthetic approach of art through sculpture, our attention will be drawn to photography, thanks to Danièle Méaux's study of Joel Sternfeld's photographs in *Walking the High Line*.

Travelling through American landscapes and places will be pursued thanks to Elisabeth Bouzonviller's essay on Louise Erdrich's *Books and Islands in Ojibwe Country*, as we will be led to understand more precisely the concepts of authority and displacement from a Native American author's point of view.

From the U.S.A, we will then travel north up to Canada in order to discover Canadian landscapes in transit thanks to Claire Omhovère's enlightening essay.

The last stage in our exploration of American shores will take us to the Caribbean, with emphasis laid on Guianese writers with a comparison of the English-speaking writer Martin Carter with the French-speaking writer

Léon Damas being compared to each other in Kathleen Gyssels's study, while the novel *The Longest Memory* by the British writer of Guyanese origin Fred D'Aguiar, will be analysed in terms of displacement and authority by Florence Labaune-Demeule.

Associating these concepts will then have enabled us to travel through part of the English-speaking world, and to perceive the evolution in the use of these concepts over time and space.

If this critical journey through several English-speaking countries takes the readers to new paths and discoveries, to new knowledge and pleasure, these volumes will have achieved their aim. To conclude, we hope that our readers will finally share what V.S. Naipaul wrote in *The Writer and the World*: "I have no unifying theory of things. To me situations and people are always specific, always of themselves. That is why one travels and writes: to find out."¹⁹

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CHAPTER ONE

AUTHORITY AND DISPLACEMENT: *MEASURE FOR MEASURE* OR THE EMPTY CHAIR POLICY

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Bringing together the concepts of authority and displacement immediately suggests specific areas of research in literature—post-colonial studies in particular—because they can be related to the questions of politically enforced displacement, colonization, exile, transportation, deportation, legal or illegal emigration and to the intercultural dynamics that might ensue. Geographic displacement for instance, might result in linguistic displacement, or cultural denigration and a dislocated perception of the self. Such key notions in post-colonial studies might seem quite alien to Elizabethan drama and as such, irrelevant. However, if we revert to a simpler, elementary definition of the word “displacement” as “the act of displacing”, of “moving something from its usual place” or “removing someone from a post or position of authority”¹, it appears that our conference title could apply to many Shakespearian plots. History plays, for instance, often stage the more or less successful attempts by rival factions to depose their sovereign and some of the greatest tragedies, like *Hamlet* or *Macbeth*, explore the consequences of regicide and usurpation.

*Measure for Measure*² shows how authority, when put into the wrong hands, may be abused. The choice of such a potentially subversive topic for what is believed to be Shakespeare’s first Jacobean play, probably composed between May and August 1604, and performed in front of the newly crowned monarch at Whitehall, on the 26th of December of the

¹ *Collins English Dictionary*. Glasgow: HarperCollins Publishers, 2009.

² Shakespeare, William. *Measure for Measure*. Ed. J.W. Lever. London: Methuen, 1965. All quotes in the article are taken from this edition.

same year, might therefore be quite surprising. But if the Duke, who embodies authority in Vienna, leaves his position at the beginning of the play, it is not because he has been forced out of power by external circumstances but because for fourteen years, he has “left slip” the city’s “statutes and most biting laws” (I. iii. 19-21) and, for that reason, resolved on self-imposed exile. The Duke’s course of action, which, although the phrase is clearly anachronistic, could be literally described as the policy of the empty chair, complicates the plot, based upon well identified sources, in that it initiates a series of substitutions. Characters are displaced, they change places with each other: Angelo replaces the Duke as his deputy in Vienna, Mariana takes Isabella’s place in Angelo’s bed, Barnardine is supposed to lay his head on the block instead of Claudio. All these changes are engineered by the Duke himself so that it seems that displacement in *Measure for Measure* amounts to a political strategy on his part. The situation is clearly ironic: the Duke, who failed to exercise his authority when he was ruling over Vienna, manages to pull the strings once he has left the seat of power, and has turned into a sort of substitute director. But the Duke’s ingenious schemes are eventually defeated when Barnardine stubbornly refuses to be executed and have his head swapped with Claudio’s. In the end, it is only because of the timely death of a pirate, who looks remarkably like Claudio, that Isabella’s brother is saved.

The intervention of Providence is therefore necessary to bend the plot towards its comic conclusion but the artificiality of the device might alert the spectator to one of the many difficulties in this so-called “problem play”, namely the use of dramatic conventions that it sometimes seems to abide by to the point of absurdity. What is the audience to make, for instance, of the series of forced marriages that conclude Act V, or of the indiscriminate mercy that the Duke bestows on his subjects? Should he not condemn and punish Angelo after all, even if such a development goes against the general principle of reconciliation and forgiveness that normally presides over comic endings? Questioning the very workings of comedy might lead spectators to question the related theme of justice, and more precisely the relationship between justice and lawfulness. When Escalus asks Pompey whether he thinks that prostitution is “a lawful trade”, Pompey replies: “If the law would allow it, sir” (II. i. 222-224). Should we therefore also automatically equate what is lawful with what is just? This paper will be divided into three parts. In the first one, I will briefly go over Shakespeare’s sources and show how he displaced them, as it were, in adding a sort of prologue, or induction, to the existing plot. I will then consider how this initial shift affects the comedy from a dramatic perspective and an ethical point of view.

In the introduction to their critical edition of the play, *Measure for Measure: Texts and Contexts*, Ivo Kamps and Karen Raber³ warn against a too narrow conception of the notion of sources, which exclusively focuses on literary texts and excludes “the wide range of other texts and ideas circulating in Shakespeare’s England”. *Measure for Measure* seems indeed to be based on a collection of rather miscellaneous sources that include legendary motifs (like “tales of disguised rulers” for instance), a specific set of novellas or plays inspired by a famous case, and James I’s *Basilikon Doron*, or “Royal Gift”, a political treatise which had been originally composed for his son Henry, but became so popular that 10,000 copies were produced in 1603⁴.

Shakespeare’s plot broadly follows the outline of a story that inspired the Italian Giraldo Cinthio and the English George Whetstone and was narrated by a Hungarian student, named Joseph Macarius, in a letter sent from Vienna to his patron, Georgius Pernezhith. The letter is dated October 1st, 1547 and deals with a presumably recent news item since it involves Don Ferdinando de Gonzaga, who became governor of Milan in 1546. A man had killed another one in a fight and was sentenced to death. His wife, a very beautiful woman, went to the judge to plead for his life. The magistrate agreed to pardon her husband provided she gave herself up to him. She consulted her husband’s brothers, who advised her to consent to the bargain, and spent the night with the judge. However, she learnt the next morning that he had deceived her and had had her husband executed all the same. She went to the Governor of Milan to complain. Ferdinando de Gonzaga forced the corrupt magistrate first to pay a substantial sum of money to the widow, who had lost her fortune with her husband, second, to marry her to restore her honour. He then had him executed to avenge her husband’s death.

Giraldo Cinthio used Macarius’s account in one of the novellas that composes his *Hecatommithi*, published in 1565. He later adapted the short-story for the stage. The tragedy, entitled *Epithia*, was published posthumously in 1583. Meanwhile, in 1578, George Whetstone wrote a play, *The Historie of Promos and Cassandra*, also inspired by *Hecatommithi*, which he turned, four years later, into a narrative included in his *Heptameron of Civil Discourses*. Finally, the same narrative appeared separately, as *Aurelia*, in 1592.

³ William Shakespeare. *Measure for Measure: Texts and Contexts*. Ed. Ivo Kamps and Karen Raber. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2004, 9.

⁴ Philip C. McGuire. *Shakespeare: The Jacobean Plays*. London: The Macmillan Press Limited, 1994, 40.

Both authors adapted the original story. In Cinthio's novella, the condemned character, Vico, is not accused of murder but of rape. The seriousness of his crime is further reduced in that he declares himself ready to marry his victim. It is not his wife who pleads his cause with the magistrate, but his sister Epitia, which, as Nicolas Bawcutt⁵ points out in the introduction to the Oxford edition of *Measure for Measure* "simplifies matters: instead of being in a triangular sexual relationship between her husband and would-be seducer, the girl is a young virgin who is free to marry if she wishes". The bargain is the same as in the original story, except that Juriste, the governor, suggests that he might marry Epitia, as well as save her brother. Vico himself persuades his sister to follow the governor's instructions but the next morning, Juriste has the young man's headless body taken to Epitia's house. When Epitia complains to the Emperor, he pronounces the same sentence as Ferdinando de Gonzaga: Juriste must marry her then lose his head as well. The story however takes an unexpected turn when, after her marriage to Juriste, Epitia asks the Emperor to spare his life, because she does not want to be thought revengeful. The Emperor relents and the conclusion is worthy of a fairy tale⁶: "And Juriste, bearing in mind how nobly Epitia had behaved towards him, held her ever most dear; so that she lived with him in great happiness for the rest of her life". A wedding, characters living happily ever after: it seems that Cinthio deliberately altered the natural outcome of the tragic story and turned it into a sort of tragi-comedy.

Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra* is much more complex since the play includes a subplot, centred on the relationship between Lamia, a courtesan, and Phallax, one of Promos's officers, but it veers even more firmly towards comedy than its source. Andrugio (Vico's equivalent) is not guilty of rape, he is only accused of incontinence—he has known his future bride before they were married, and as a result, been condemned to death. Promos also proposes to exchange Cassandra's virginity for her brother's life, but he promises marriage to her into the bargain. As in the previous versions, he orders Andrugio's execution after he has slept with Cassandra, but the gaoler takes pity on his prisoner. He sets him free and sends Cassandra the head of another man, whom she mistakes for her brother. She takes her case to the King of Hungary and he condemns Promos to the same twofold sentence as in Cinthio's story, but Cassandra, who has fallen in love with Promos, begs the sovereign to pardon him. The

⁵ William Shakespeare. *Measure for Measure*. Ed. N.W. Bawcutt. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, 16.

⁶ William Shakespeare. *Measure for Measure*. Ed. J.W. Lever. London: Methuen, 1965, 165.

king remains inflexible, so Andrugio, who had come disguised to the trial, reveals himself. Both Andrugio and Promos are pardoned. Promos is even restored to his position as a magistrate.

As we know, Shakespeare chose to keep most of these revisions but he added a few of his own. First, he radically transformed the basic structure of the plot in resorting to a device that he had briefly experimented with before, in *Henry V* in particular, when the king⁷ pays a visit to his army incognito, dressed as “a gentleman of a company” (*H5*, IV. i. 39) on the eve of the battle of Agincourt. The Duke, who embodies supreme authority in Vienna (like Ferdinando de Gonzaga in Macarius’s story, the Emperor, in Cinthio’s novella and the King of Hungary in Whetstone’s play) is no longer reduced to a mere figure of retribution at the end of the play. He actively participates in the unfolding of the plot, since he pretends to leave the city in I. i and comes back as early as I. iii to spy upon his own subjects, disguised as Friar Lodowick. He only returns as his own person at the beginning of Act V.

Shakespeare complicated the storyline further in expanding the religious theme and making Isabella, the condemned man’s sister, a novice of St Clare, about to take her vows. Her situation makes it even more impossible for her to agree to Angelo’s bargain, since she cannot hope to marry him to restore her lost honour, like her predecessors, Epitia and Cassandra. That is why a new character, Mariana, needs to be introduced⁸. She sleeps with Angelo, unbeknown to him (which prompted William Empson⁹ to write that “No man in an Elizabethan play can tell one woman from another in the dark”) thus automatically turning the *de futuro* contract she had entered in with him, into full marriage, despite the loss of her dowry. The deception ensures that Isabella’s reputation remains unblemished, which in turn, marks her down as a potential bride for the Duke.

Shakespeare’s adaptation clearly took the comedy to a higher degree of complexity. Most of Act I focuses on the Duke. If, in scene i, he does not give any reason for his departure, in scene iii, he gives too many, ranging from the personal (“I have ever lov’d the life remov’d” (I. iii. 8)), to the political:

⁷ William Shakespeare. *King Henry V*. Ed. J.H. Walter. London: Methuen, 1954.

⁸ As Lever remarks in his introduction: “Not only must another head be found for Claudio’s, but another maidenhead for Isabella’s”. (Lever, 52.)

⁹ William Empson. “Sense in *Measure for Measure*”. *Shakespeare: Measure for Measure*. Ed. C.K.Stead. London: Macmillan, 1971, 196.

Duke: Sith 'twas my fault to give the people scope,
 'Twould be my tyranny to strike and gall them
 For what I bid them do [...].
 [...]
 I have on Angelo impos'd the office;
 Who may in th'ambush of my name strike home,
 And yet my nature never in the fight
 To do in slander.

I. iii. 35-43

As if the Duke felt that he had to justify himself further, he ends his conversation with Friar Thomas with a promise of “Moe reasons for this action” (I. iii. 48) and concludes:

Duke: Only this one: Lord Angelo is precise;
 Stands at a guard with Envy; scarce confesses
 That his blood flows; or that his appetite
 Is more to bread than stone. Hence shall we see
 If power change purpose, what our seemers be.

I. iii. 50-54

The final lines read like a reassessment of Angelo's disposition, formerly described as “a man of stricture and firm abstinence” (I. iii. 12), in entirely negative terms. The biblical opposition between bread and stone seems particularly significant since it is mentioned twice in Matthew's Gospel¹⁰, from which the title of the play is borrowed, where it is associated with temptation (in chapter 4, Satan challenges Christ in the desert to turn stones into bread to prove that he is the Son of God), and with unnatural behaviour when, in chapter 7, Jesus asks the crowd “[What] man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?”. Angelo will be exposed to temptation in his new office, and he will have to “[confess]/That his blood flows” (I. iii. 51-52) almost word for word before his second interview with Isabella: “Why does my blood thus muster to my heart?” (II. iv. 20), to admit that he has fallen prey to what he calls his “sharp appetite” (II. iv. 160). His desire for Isabella is compared to a monstrous pregnancy: “in my heart the strong and swelling evil/Of my conception” (II. iv. 6-7), an unnatural feeling triggered by the nun's virtue, which in turn will lead him to extremities of vice, as he acknowledges in his first monologue:

¹⁰ Matthew, 4, 1-4; 7, 9.