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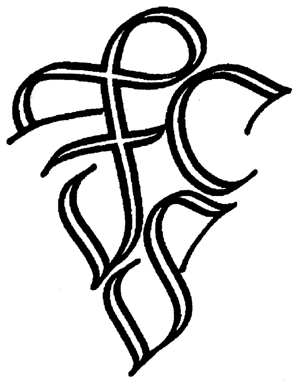
Volume 27



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Fifteenth-Century Studies

Volume 27

A Special issue on
Violence in Fifteenth-Century Text and Image

Edited by
Edelgard E. DuBruck
and
Yael Even

CAMDEN HOUSE

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Preface

What is violence? The word is derived from Latin *violentia*, itself from *vis* = force. The term usually denotes either great or excessive force as well as constraint.[1] The diverse and multiple ways in which various societies handle violence, today as in the past, make us aware of the internal and external problems of men and women living with foreigners and with one another. We notice that at the dawn of the twenty-first century we are not as civilized as we may envision ourselves as being, when we encounter xenophobia, adolescent brutality, private vengeance, and domestic abuse, for example. The threat of chemical warfare, hurricanes, floods, wars, holocausts, road rage, and the easy availability of guns and drugs—all present dangers of violent consequences, as attested in daily news media. Often, violence engenders violence.

It is no wonder, then, that the last two congresses on Fifteenth-Century Studies had multiple sessions on "Violence in Fifteenth-Century Text and Image." We have selected the best papers for a collection of essays on this evocative theme, essays which will interest the student of the late Middle Ages and the early Renaissance, the humanities, art history, sociology, anthropology, and even the general public. In addition, we have invited some experts in the field of violence studies to contribute their latest research on the subject. By chapters, we highlight medieval warfare and justice, violence in family and milieu (court, town, village, and forest), ethnocentricity and xenophobia, the relation between the genders and sexual violence, brutality in hagiography and historiography, both in literature and on the stage, and the relationship between text and image (for example, violence depicted graphically, in color, stone, or wood).

During the Middle Ages and early Renaissance, the increasing confidence, wealth, and power of some European countries resulted in extraordinary campaigns of aggression against their neighbors. In addition, remarkable trading exploration was often backed up by force, deep into the sub-Arctic and Atlantic. It is sometimes forgotten, for example, that the Americas were discovered by Europeans who still believed in conquest and slavery.[2] Wendy Childs explains that in commerce and trade, contraction occurred in the first part of the fifteenth century because of demographic changes, bullion shortages, and wars, while, beginning in the 1460s, this crisis was mitigated with the opening of sea routes to Africa and Asia, culminating in the discovery of America.[3] During these tumultuous yet fruitful centuries warfare was often characterized by long-distance campaigns; religious and political ideas, artistic motifs, new weapons and tactics, all followed in the footsteps of armies, merchant caravans, and trading ships. Despite occasional examples of extraordinary devastation, however, the destruction wrought by late-medieval land warfare tended to be localized; paradoxically, while these local skirmishes brought incredible scenes of violence, they also often served as vehicles for cultural exchange.

The civilization of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was beset with grave difficulties, wars, famines, epidemics, and general uncertainty, as has been pointed out by Johan Huizinga and by many scholars inspired by him, while others suspected some exaggeration in his *Waning of the Middle Ages* (1924).[4] However, based on what was known of late-medieval texts and images during Huizinga's time, the Dutch scholar's "Violent Tenor of Life" (title of chapter one) must have been real and present. Most of the illustrations in our volume *follow* narrative texts, and only the chroniclers and their miniaturists have undertaken to *interpret* the events. We analyze the general characteristics of violence, as well as the manner in which these forms of violence were perceived by the populace, described by late-medieval writers (and depicted by painters), and utilized both then and now as political or social vehicles for possible reform. Our field of research includes paintings and sculpture, woodcuts and miniatures (in manuscripts about history and religion, in literary and legal texts), the stage and daily life with their associated needs, defenses, sexual or xenophobic violations. In art, according to Paul Crossley, during a century suspended between Paris-centered Gothic and Rome-based high Renaissance and early Baroque, or between the international style of c. 1400 and the naturalism of Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo in the last quarter of the century, two discoveries prepared the way for the next two hundred years in European art: systematic linear perspective (used in Florence) and oil painting and aerial perspective (shown in the Netherlands).[5] Depending upon our sources the images of violence remained incomplete, yet some spoke eloquently about the subject chosen.

A second important source is the historians, for historical consciousness was born during the fifteenth century, as humanism eventually provided a language and ideology of liberation freeing history from the narrow confines of theology and law. Certain disruptions of human life had violent consequences. Famines, epidemics, storms, floods, and even wars were registered still by some historians and in municipal accounts as disturbances of the providential order or even as God's punishment before the Last Judgement. Violent acts against nature which people committed (as documented in historical sources) were self-mutilation and suicide; outwardly-directed abusive behavior, for instance acts of abduction, assassination, infanticide, fratricide, patricide, regicide, collective murder (in battle or pogrom), and revolt—were uprisings against the providential order, an order soon to be claimed by royalty.

When the king, or, in turn, the state became a perpetrator, innocent people were sacrificed on the battlefield or in their homes, starved during sieges or imprisoned for ransom.[6] The upper classes began to consider wartime violence a necessary component for maintaining royal prestige and leadership.[7] Olivier Ellena studied Froissart's *Chronicles* as commissioned by Louis de Gruuthuse in the fifteenth century. The arrests, executions, and assassinations showcased among the nobility (in decline) were meant to be a lesson (taught by Louis), to avoid present and future insubordinations against the monarch. In all wars or feuds, a lord's vassals were helpless, and so were frequently the families of lords and feudal tenants. As yet, in the Hundred Years' War (1337–1453), many battle actions and sieges remained local and reflected feudal courage and honor,—as manifested through violence. Erich Auerbach showed a scene from Antoine de La Sale's *Reconfort de Madame du Fresne* (c. 1460), where Monsieur du Chastel sacrificed his own son (a hostage/pawn for his father's promise to the English enemy to yield his besieged castle); when du Chastel decided to renege on his promise, he had his own thirteen-year old boy killed—in vain, because the English enemy discontinued the siege anyway. The father now made more than one hundred prisoners, of whom twelve aristocrats were hanged and the others had to lose their right eyes, ears, and hands, as revenge for his son's death. This incident had nothing to do with the honor of France, but remained strictly local. La Sale's text was sent as a letter of consolation to Madame du Fresne, a mother who had lost her child! Even if that tale sent as a consolation were fictional, it nonetheless depicted through vivid realism a scene from the great war and has been compared by Auerbach to episodes of cruelty in Froissart's *Chronicles*.[8]

Slowly, firearms replaced bows and arrows causing changes in military protection and strategies; didactic treatises on warfare and sieges were among the first imprints. Even slight wounds on the battlefield resulted in death for lack of adequate medical help; one century before Ambroise Paré, the father of modern surgery, amputations were performed during the patient's inebriation with alcohol.[9]

In general, illuminators of chronicles were far more interested in individual deeds of courage than in the movement of troops. In combat, the infantry's role became increasingly important, while opposing cavalries continued to inflict violence upon both man and beast. Heaps of cadavers depicted in miniatures were mostly those of the state's enemies; on the role of blood see below, where we discuss the consequences of violence. In the history of warfare, in battles and sieges, slowly ruse was applied; thus, in *Reynard the Fox*, the lion-king's physical force was challenged by the fox's repeated tricks, as Rita Schlusemann eloquently shows. The crafty animal (like Till Eulenspiegel) eventually challenged the entire establishment.

As mentioned above, the effects of grave physical harm upon all those involved were observable during the Hundred Years' War between the English, the Austro-Burgundians, and the French;[10] while pillages and massacres happened, these ravagings were rarely mentioned by chroniclers, because such unstrategic bloodsheddings were not allowed in the code of chivalry. Generally, the aristocracy received a considerable jolt during the period between 1400 and 1500. New elites became competitive as the nobility itself degenerated, to become part of the bourgeoisie. The justified fears of the Naples aristocracy with regard to its own demise, for example, were shown in Michael Papio's *Kean and Violent Remedies. Social Satire and the Grotesque in Masuccio Salernitano's* Novellino (1457).[11] In war (still the preoccupation of nobility) material damage was considerable, even though such vast destruction may have been interpreted by commoners as God's punishment. The theft of livestock as well as the destruction of fruit trees, harvests, or bridges, was legion, as were egregious acts of barbarity. Yet such desecrations as fire, rape, mutilation, and murder as inflicted by victorious armies, were left unmentioned, except in local records. The illuminators of chronicles were interested instead in illustrating blood shed in the ranks of enemies: forty-one percent of violent images in general showed a profusion of blood. While in new monarchies kings were not present at executions, this taboo was slowly broken, and blood began to fascinate the audiences of passion plays, as Jody Enders has shown. Christ's suffering body was covered with blood in religious iconography of the fifteenth century, according to Robert Mills; and suffering, fear, and resignation could be read in gestures and facial expressions portrayed in paintings and on the stage.[12]

What was the role of medieval justice confronting violations that occurred in daily life? As Edelgard DuBruck points out, late-medieval royalty prided itself on its judicial institutions, sometimes in order to conceal arbitrariness and denial of justice; actually royal justice appears to have been severe and cruel. Often, control over violence as shown by the executive branch went so far as to cut into Church jurisdiction. The development of trials dealing with matters of destruction or physical harm can be studied in the registers of the Parisian parliament, for example, where procedures frequently ended in letters of remission for perpetrators, however. There are many images of capital punishment, especially for crimes committed against the state, unless the sentence meted out were for exile or entry into a convent (thereby to "eliminate" a prince's competitor to dynastic succession). In the latter case, blinding completed the job, even though some criminals were still decapitated after that. To get rid of a rival, incarceration was convenient, following confiscation of the prisoner's belongings.[13] Whereas artistic renderings were parsimonious with respect to torture, that did not mean that physical pressure was not used: judicial torture certainly existed since antiquity and became a law as late as 1533 (*Constitutio Criminalis Carolina*, by Charles V). In fact, torture became public entertainment, like the Spanish *Autos da Fé* with all their irony. Andrew McCall noted that in the fifteenth century, the people of Mons paid a large sum of money, in order that they might enjoy watching a convicted brigand being quartered while, in 1488, the citizens of Bruges were so pleasurably excited by the sight of various tortures inflicted on some magistrates (who were suspected of treason) that the performance was extended, long after it had achieved its desired ends, for the sole purpose of the viewers' gratification.[14]

What happened in the case of regicide? Sanford Zale reported that this crime of lese majesty, even as far removed in time as the killing of Childeric II in 675 by his own people, would be a blemish on a nation's reputation. Therefore, after eight centuries of silence, two French historians of the fifteenth century omitted the episode altogether, while (astonishingly!) fifteen others preferred to tell the truth and depicted the murder. A struggle between an historical fact and ideology was thus won in fifteenth-c. historiography.

In medieval and early Renaissance towns and out in the country, justice was brutal compared to modern judicial procedure. The different kinds of capital punishment included decapitation for convicted rapists (or live burial, or impaling); live burial, boiling, or lowering into a swamp, were used for sodomists; attempted suicide resulted in boiling or drowning.[15] The 'laws' became relative according to various jurisdictions (municipal and/or clerical); in both, one could be hanged for simple theft. For an in-depth view of rural violence, see Robert Muchembled (*La Violence au village [XVe–XVIIe siècle]*),[16] who highlighted a violent society, rituals which became crimes, seasonal brutality, territorial fights, xenophobia, fear of mercenaries, generational conflicts, violent rites of passage, and general fear and pessimism. On the insecurity of travel, see "Fahren: Leben in alltäglicher Not und Gefahr," 66–84 in Ernst Schubert, *Fahrendes Volk im Mittelalter*.[17] Schubert's chapter on the rowdiness of mercenaries, outcasts in a time before regular armies, featured homeless individuals who lived off booty and theft (often after murder, 415–36).

Fear of reprisals in gender-related situations determined the education of young girls who were warned of transgressions in their future role as wives and mothers. An unruly temper toward a husband sometimes resulted in a wife's being gang-raped; adultery, in her having both legs broken. The illustrations were graphic. Physical abuse within families was committed, as it is today, behind closed doors, but the news of its having been done spread soon to the community. Nancy Virtue examined two versions of a French novella which showed a woman being raped in the presence of her husband. While the earlier version assumed that God moved in mysterious ways, the fifteenth-c. tale reflected socio-legal attitudes toward rape and assured the reader of the act's injustice.

On the other hand, violence was the desirable norm for male (noble) heroes; sexual violence was idealized in the European renaissance culture, as attested by illustrations of rape and abductions, according to Yael Even. Italian panel- and fresco paintings glorified male protagonists and virtuous female victims as portrayed in scenes reflecting classical or biblical episodes of history and/or mythology; however, such depictions of sexual violence were toned down during the quattrocento, while they became explicit in the 1500s. Judith, as female executioner of Holofernes, showed female virtue and power, as Carol Janson proved. In addition, Even demonstrated how the violently explicit characteristics of the thirteenth-c. *Fortitudes*, inside and outside San Marco (Venice), evolved into the more peaceful and even placid traits of Jacobello del Fiore's fifteenth-c. *Enthroned Justice*, an image associated with both Venice and Mary as the Seat of Wisdom.

The cruelty perpetuated on those who refused to renounce their faith was the topic of paintings and miniatures. Claudia Krülls-Hepermann showed that in both, the Spanish sentimental romances and hagiographic accounts, violations of norms occurred, as well as conflicts of opinion which resulted in confrontations and punishment so severe that human bodies were dismembered. Marla Carlson added to this topic the torture and spectacular suffering of Fouquet's *Apollonia*, whose image may have been influenced by a saint play, leading the audience to engage in self-examination and other emotive responses.

The medieval imagination, fuelled by real-life scenes of physical and mental abuse, shaped the biblical concepts of purgatory and hell to include moments of torture or an eternity of punishments. On hell, Clifford Davidson and Tom Seiler's *Iconography of Hell* (Kalamazoo: MIP, 1992) is an excellent source. Its illustrations are wall paintings, sculpture (cut stone on outside walls of cathedrals), biblical miniatures, Books of Hours, dramatic reenactments, apocalyptic paintings, painted glass. Subjects are hellmouth, devils, hellfire, sounds, filth, and stench. In Marianne Derron's account, medieval *exempla* and anonymous narrations spoke of the psychological power of anxieties about the fate of the human soul after death, where sinful humankind seemed to undergo the terrors of hell already when still alive. DuBruck examined Lazarus's vision of hell before his resuscitation, a passage which appeared in patristic writings and on the fifteenth-c. passion stage, designed to warn humankind of hell's tortures and predicting damnation for the unrepentant.[18]

On the other hand, ethnocentricity and xenophobia resulted in violence of Christians against Jews (as performed on the stage and in real life) at a time when beginning nationalism (Catholic Spain) and the rise of modern economy (Germany) sought to exclude certain minorities and their practices (usury was tolerated when practiced by Christians, if under a different label[19]). Matthew Z. Heintzelman investigated perceptions and prejudices between Jews and Christians in late-medieval drama: German Christians looked at Jews on the stage (and in real life) with anger, hatred, feelings of revenge, bloodlust—and false anxieties. The persiflage of Jews in carnival plays escalated these feelings to a point of obscenity—excesses barely excusable by carnival mirth. Even more serious was the persecution of witches, as Ina Lommatzsch pointed out; thousands of innocent women were burned or impaled after confessions had been forced from them by means of torture (called, by a euphemism, "the question"), as can be gleaned from the *Hammer of Witches* (*Malleus Maleficarum*, 1487). Later, however, by the early seventeenth century, this work on witch trials provided only guidelines for establishing and punishing a crime (according to the criminal code), and the witches' evildoing in general was deemed to be willed by God.

The new bourgeoisie and its stage also excluded wild people (Shira Schwam-Baird), the dishonorable, the homeless, heretics, wandering scholars, actors, and henchmen, and made fun of peasants in violently obscene farces and carnival plays. The wild man motif was popular in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, often representing all that civilized men were not, or were not supposed to be. Wild men were thought of as having unrestrained impulses of lust and violence. The conflation of *bear* and *man* in the folklore tradition of the wild man hunt not only gave Orson his name (*Valentin et Orson*, 1489), but also determined the source of his entry into wildness, namely, the suckling of this quasi-man by a she-bear.

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Notes

[1] *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 19 vols. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), 14: 690.

[2] See David Nicolle, *Medieval Warfare Source Book: Christian Europe and its Neighbours* (London: Brockhampton Press, 1996): 8.

[3] Wendy Childs, "Commerce and Trade," 145–60 (160) in *The New Cambridge Medieval History, VII, c. 1415–c. 1500*, ed. Christopher Allmand (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[4] Johan Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984—a reprint of the 1924 edition). See also: *Herfsttij der middeleeuwen*, ed. Anton van der Lem (Amsterdam: Contact, 1998), original text (1919) and illustrations.

[5] Paul Crossley, "Architecture and Painting," 299–318 (299) in *The New Cambridge Medieval History* (above, note 3).

[6] The information on warfare in this paragraph and the following pages came from Christiane Raynaud, *La Violence au Moyen Age. XIIIe–XVe siècles* (Paris: Le Léopard d'Or, 1990), 31–42.

[7] On the rise of princes and monarchies, see Edelgard E. DuBruck, "Grandes espérances, grandes illusions: les princes dans la littérature allemande du quinzième siècle," 199–211 in: *Le Pouvoir monarchique et ses supports idéologiques aux XIVe–XVIIe siècles*, eds. Jean Dufournet et al. (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, 1992).

[8] "Le Reconfort de Madame du Fresne," ch. x of Erich Auerbach's *Mimesis* (Bern: Francke, 1946). On cruelty, see DuBruck, "Montaigne on Cruelty," 297–305 in *Michigan Academician* 11 (1979).

[9] On medical care and its lack, see the excerpt written by an Arab doctor during a thirteenth-c. crusade:

> They brought a knight to me who had a tumor on his leg, as well as a woman suffering from consumption. I put a plaster on the knight; his tumor opened and became better; I prescribed a diet to the woman to refresh her constitution. But here, a French doctor came and declared: "This man does not know how to cure people," and, turning to the knight, asked him: "What do you prefer? To live with a single leg or to die with two of them?" After the patient had answered that he preferred to live with a single leg, the doctor ordered (the others): "Bring me a healthy knight and a well-sharpened axe!" The knight and the axe arrived while I was still present. The physician placed the leg on a wooden block and said to the (healthy) knight: "Give it a good axe-blow to cut it clean through!" Under my eyes, the man hit it with a first blow, then, having not cut it well, with a second; the marrow of the leg spurted out and the wounded man died on the spot. Examining then the woman, the doctor said: "She has in her head a demon who is in love with her. Cut off her hair!" They cut it, and she began to eat food with garlic and mustard, which augmented the consumption. "This is because the demon has entered her head," the doctor decided, and, seizing a razor, he made an incision into it in the form of a cross, peeled away the skin in order to bare the bone of the skull and rubbed it with salt . . . and the woman died on the spot. I then asked: "You don't need me any longer?" They said no, and I returned after having learned about their medicine many things of which I was previously unaware (Francesco Gabrieli, *Chroniques arabes des croisades* [Turin: Einaudi, 1963, and Paris: Sindbad, 1977], 102–103). Translation: DuBruck.

[10] An excellent summary of this war is in *Atlas of Medieval Europe*, eds. Angus Mackay and David Ditchburn (London: Routledge, 1997), 159–62.

[11] (New York: Peter Lang, 2000).

[12] See DuBruck, "The Death of Christ on the Late-Medieval Stage," 355–75 in: DuBruck and B. Gusick, *Death and Dying in the Middle Ages* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999).

[13] This paragraph is indebted to the subchapter "La Justice," 43–48 in Raynaud's monograph (above, note 5).

[14] See "Crime and Punishment," ch. 3 in Andrew McCall's *The Medieval Underworld* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1979):

> In parts of France and Germany criminals on whom sentence of death had been passed were tortured with red-hot pincers and plates before their execution, while, in different parts of Europe, people were variously boiled to death in enormous cauldrons, flayed to death, racked to death, pulled limb from limb by teams of horses or broken on the wheel. In other cases the particular form of suffering to be inflicted might be dictated by what contemporary opinion considered to be "appropriate." . . . Even after sentence of death had been carried out, the medieval authorities found ways of putting the lifeless carcasses of their criminals to 'good' use. To the colossal gibbet outside of Paris, at Montfaucon, the remains of criminals previously beheaded, boiled or quartered were brought from all over France to hang in wicker baskets beside the people actually executed *in situ.* What was left of the body of Pierre des Essarts, beheaded in 1413, was there pecked to shreds by hordes of carrion crows before being returned, three years later, to his family for burial (74–75).

This report seems to agree with detail in François Villon's "Epitaph of the Hanged" (*Testament,* 1461).

[15] See Norbert Ohler, *Sterben und Tod im Mittelalter* (Munich: Artemis Verlag, 1990), ch. 7 ("Gewaltsamer Tod"): 200–34.

[16] (Turnhout: Brepols, 1989).

[17] (Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 1995).

[18] On fear and purgatory, see: Jean Delumeau, *La Peur en Occident. XIVe–XVIIIe siècles, une cité assiégée* (Paris: Fayard, 1978). ———, *Le Péché et la peur. La culpabilisation en Occident (XIIIe–XVIIIe siècles)* (Paris: Fayard, 1983). Peter Dinzelbacher, *Angst im Mittelalter. Teufels-, Todes- und Gotteserfahrung: Mentalitätsgeschichte und Ikonographie* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1996). DuBruck, "The Devil and Hell in Medieval French Drama," *Romania* 100 (1979): 165–79. Jacques LeGoff, *The Birth of Purgatory.* Trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

[19] On usury, see DuBruck, "The Late-Medieval Merchant: Methods, Education, Mentality, and Cultural Significance," in *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 28 (2003); also: Richard K. Marshall, *The Local Merchants of Prato* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), and Jacques LeGoff, *Marchands et banquiers du moyen âge* (Paris: PUF, fifth edition 1972), and *Your Money or Your Life. Economy and Religion in the Middle Ages.* Trans. Patricia Ranum (New York: Zone Books, 1990). Furthermore: "Loans and the Problem of Interest," 157–61 in *Medieval Trade and the Mediterranean World* by Robert S. Lopez and I. Raymond (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990, second ed.).

Edelgard E. DuBruck

Introduction

This special edition of *Fifteenth-Century Studies* expands upon previous anthologies concentrating on violence in late-medieval and early renaissance Europe in that it includes an unprecedented array of studies, each of which is the product of a distinct discipline and methodology. Unlike *Violence and Civil Order in Italian Cities 1200–1500* (ed. Lauro Martines [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972]), a collection of twelve closely-related articles by historians of pre-modern Italy, the present publication provides scholars with seventeen essays which examine the fundamental nature of violence, present its various manifestations, and explore wide-ranging perceptions of this brutal phenomenon in France, Germany, Italy, and Spain. Most articles appear in English, but some are in German and one in French; whereas the majority address late-medieval phenomena, a few focus primarily on early renaissance issues. The essays offer diverse glimpses into subjects which have gone unexplored hitherto and therefore remained little-known: this compilation of articles widens, adjusts, and clarifies our view of the period, representing also the pluralistic character of today's scholarship. In so doing, the contributions build upon such monographs as Robert Muchembled's *La Violence au village: sociabilité et comportements populaires en Artois du XVe au XVIIe siècle* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1989), Christiane Raynaud's *La Violence au moyen âge XIIIe–XVe siècle, d'après les livres d'histoire en français* (Paris: Le Léopard d'Or, 1990), David Nirenberg's *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), Jody Enders's *The Medieval Theater of Cruelty: Rhetoric, Memory, Violence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), and Michael Papio's *Keen and Violent Remedies: Social Satire and the Grotesque in Masuccio Salernitano's "Novellino"* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000).

While the most researched society and culture in the present anthology seems to be that of late-medieval France, the articles discussing violence within this region introduce a broad spectrum spanning royal and public justice, historical culture, religious and secular literature, royal and courtly illuminations, theater and music. These essays addressing France examine not only such texts as the *Mystères de la Passion* and the *Passion Isabeau*, but also the earliest extant version of *Valentin et Orson*, and *La fille du comte de Pontieu*, and such images as Jean Fouquet's *Martyrdom of Saint Apollonia*, miniatures from the *Chroniques de Froissart* commissioned by Louis de Gruuthuse, from *Les Fleurs des Chroniques*, and the *Grandes Chroniques de France*. Edelgard DuBruck's article on justice documents the severe and cruel punishments inflicted upon practitioners of violent crimes; Sanford Zale's essay chronicles the failed attempts to deny the fact of regicide in French history; and Shira Schwam-Baird's research examines the behavioral facets of the wild man Orson's ferocity. Points of intersection provide opportunities for future researchers; for example, Olivier Ellena's analysis of the executions depicted in the illuminations of Froissart's *Chroniques* reinforces DuBruck's conviction that merciless justice deterred almost anyone from insubordination against French royalty. Likewise, Jody Enders's study of the *pleasure* that music accompanying scourging scenes apparently instilled in spectators can be brought into dialogue with DuBruck's investigation of the *fear* that audiences are likely to have felt on hearing Lazarus's description of hell's torments. DuBruck's line of inquiry into how fifteenth-c. people reacted to torture, and what lessons they may have learned from this judicial practice, is representative of similar investigative efforts featured by other authors in this volume.

The different representations of violence in German texts and images are almost as popular as their counterparts in French literature, art, and theater. Marianne Derron's analysis of a tale, in which a wise king demonstrates to his brother the violent fate awaiting sinners after death, proves that Lazarus's recorded testimony was not the only terrifying portrayal of the afterlife in the fifteenth century. The fact that this legendary story appeared in several languages supports her belief that the tale was used extensively by the Church in order to frighten the faithful into behaving virtuously. An especially renowned text, the *Malleus Maleficarum* (1487), which includes descriptions of witches' confessions obtained by unspeakable tortures, is the focus of Ina Lommatzsch's discourse. The usage of this book as a guide by the Inquisition was still in evidence as late as 1610, during the trial of Catharina Winkelmann in Schöningen (Braunschweig). On the other hand, *Reynke de vos* (1498)—the subject of Rita Schlusemann's investigation—presents a witty fox who criticizes a society in which the powerful rule by terror. This mid-low German epic in verse seems to be exceptional and, in a sense, counter-cultural, and may well be the only one to condemn the prevalence of physical violence in the political arena.

The current interest in so-called reception theories is the underlying concern not only of several articles on French society and culture, but also of the studies on German literature and art, such as Matthew Heintzelman's research on German plays dramatizing alleged Jewish acts of terror (in the *Alsfelder Passionsspiel* and the *Künzelsauer Fronleichnamspiel*), and that of Robert Mills on the possible meanings that German proto-expressionistic crucifixes (such as the one in the Corpus Christi Church, Wrocław/ Breslau) may have had for the spectators of passion dramas. While Heintzelman describes the ways in which apparent (or rather imagined) Jewish hatred and cruelty were portrayed and then received by Christians, Mills explores the many possible reactions of Christian communities to horrifically tormented and bloody images of Christ. Mills's remark that "violence was a sanction generally placed in the hands of upper-class Christian males" is applicable to Juan de Flores's Spanish story of *Grisel y Mirabella*, which is the main theme of Claudia Krülls-Hepermann's research. Indeed, the king (and in one example, the queen) punish the protagonists of this sentimental romance by inflicting a series of tortures that are as brutal and horrific as those suffered by numerous Christian martyrs.

Another contemporary interest reflected in this collection of essays is sexual violence, a *topos* first examined systematically in Susan Brownmiller's *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1975), but which has heretofore remained unexplored.[1] Presenting two distinct, if not contrary, views on this subject are Yael Even's article on Italian art and Nancy Virtue's essay on French literature. Whereas Even demonstrates how Greco-Roman scenes of sexually motivated pursuits and assaults were beautified in quattrocento painting and sculpture, Virtue studies the unflinching realism and almost postmodern sensibility with which the violation of *la Fille du comte de Pontieu* was recounted in the fifteenth-c. version of the novella that bears the protagonist's name. An additional, albeit indirect and shorter, analysis of the period's approach to rape is given in Schwam-Baird's aforementioned paper on wild man Orson, whose unrestrained sexuality was considered the antithesis of a knight's chivalric ideal.

Introducing a different aspect of victimized women and yet another innovative study on so-called reception theories is Marla Carlson's work on the popularity of Jean Fouquet's miniature, *The Martyrdom of Saint Apollonia*, an essay analyzing French spectators' (possible) "multiple responses" to images depicting violated female martyrs. These reactions range from "enjoy[ing] a vicarious sense of power" (for some men), for example, to raising "strength of will" (for some women). Female rather than male violence—an exceptional phenomenon in late-medieval and early renaissance Italian society and culture—is examined by Carol Janson, who reassesses Andrea Mantegna's variations on the theme of Judith's slaying of Holofernes (with the assistance of Abra, Judith's maid). Janson's research is the latest study to interpret painted and sculpted variations on the brave deed of the apocryphal heroine Judith.[2] Even, in turn, analyzes extraordinary personifications of Fortitude at San Marco, Venice, images in which a female protagonist is shown subduing a lion with her bare hands; her essay is the most recent foray into the gendered nature of valor and the violence that female heroism entails. For other perspectives on the topos, readers can refer to two recently published articles, Walter Prevenier's "Violence against Women in Fifteenth-Century France and the Burgundian State" (186–203), and Christopher Cannon's "The Rights of Medieval English Women: Crime and the Issue of Representation" (156–85), both in *Medieval Crime and Social Control*, eds. Barbara A. Hanawalt and D. Wallace (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999). Even's comparison of the San Marco depictions of *Fortitude* with two Roman portrayals of Cyrene, a huntress-nymph who killed a lion, recalls the connections that Enders finds between late-medieval and classical oratory. Indeed, the influence of Greco-Roman culture on late-medieval French drama and early renaissance Italian images is another theme explored in the present volume.

Violence in fifteenth-c. imagery, especially in Italy, has not been sufficiently examined by scholars so far; hence, the art historical studies in this publication should be of special significance to students of the humanities. John Hale's *Artists and Warfare in the Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990) may be the only recent monograph on related issues, and yet that text makes few references to the obviously violent aspects of war, in general, and to unspeakable scenes of carnage, in particular. Although Hale states that "artists were not insulated from the more savage side of human nature," he emphasizes "the self-conscious imposition of harmony and refinement upon observed reality," perhaps suggesting that, under certain conditions, the beautiful and the ugly co-exist. Generally, he follows the example of Leon Battista Alberti's treatise on painting and sculpture (1436) which excludes any mention about representations of battles.[3] The only instances where Hale actually discusses violence are when he studies—almost as an afterthought and much too briefly[4]—quattrocento portrayals of the Massacre of the Innocents. There also he observes that "the tendency . . . to play down the jumbled horror of the Massacre itself and to achieve a lucid overall composition" is a well-known trait of fifteenth-c. Italian art.[5] Hale's apparent disinterest in exploring the visual characterizations of violence appears to be the norm, as his attitude resembles the approach of other contemporary art historians. John Paoletti and Gary Radke, the co-authors of *Art in Renaissance Italy* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1977), have devoted only one page (103) to the subject; and Laurie Schneider Adams, whose *Italian Renaissance Art* (Boulder and Oxford: Westview Press, 2001) has just appeared in press, follows suit.[6]

The scarcity of art-historical discourses on violence in Italian imagery is all the more amazing, given the attention that the subject has received from historians of the period. These studies include Marvin Becker's "Changing Patterns of Violence and Justice in Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-Century Florence" (*Comparative Studies in Society and History* 18 [1976]: 281–96), Guido Ruggiero's *Violence in Early Renaissance Venice* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1980), and Samuel K. Cohen Jr.'s "Criminality and the State in Renaissance Florence, 1344–1466" (*Journal of Social History* 14 [1981]: 211–23). The fact that violent themes are more prevalent in seventeenth-c. representations may explain why the fewer and possibly less gruesome fifteenth-c. scenes have been virtually ignored. Scholars of early modern European art have not yet addressed the issue of violence in fifteenth-c. art, probably because the theatricality with which ferocity has been portrayed during the seicento has become one of baroque art's iconographical staples. Moreover, the relative idealization that distinguishes Italian images from their Northern European counterparts may also have played a role in diverting the debate over acts of violence featured in quattrocento art from their destructive aspects to their often triumphal results. In this sense, Cristelle Baskins's *Cassone Painting, Humanism, and Gender in Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) and, to a much greater extent, Diane Wolfthal's *Images of Rape* (above, note 1) are even more groundbreaking than they seem to be at first sight. Wolfthal studies depictions of rape in Northern Europe, whereas Baskins explores the portrayal of sexual violence on Italian wedding chests (in two of the six chapters in her book). Other research on representations of heroes and heroic deeds continues to shy away from the evaluation of the sheer ferocity that often singles out acts of valor. When Hale mentions quattrocento images of Hercules's Twelve Labors, he prefers to cite the homoerotic nature of such statuettes and paintings as *Hercules and Antaeus* rather than addressing the brutality of the scenes.[7] Likewise, when Elena Ciletti describes Donatello's variation on the actual beheading of Holofernes, she—as well as most feminist art historians—chooses to examine that image from a gender perspective and does not dwell on the goriness of the scene.[8]

While some of the articles presented in this anthology continue an ongoing debate on the nature, manifestations, and effects of violence, others initiate a discussion, thus encouraging more study on these issues. Despite the recently growing scholarship, the subject is so complicated and often still so incomprehensible, that it deserves further research, as DuBruck notes at the end of her essay on justice. The discourses in the present volume focus on the western part of the European continent, excluding England which has been examined extensively in such studies as *The Final Argument: the Imprint of Violence on Society in Medieval and Early Modern* Europe, eds. Donald J. Kagay and L. J. Villalon (Woodbridge, Suffolk, and Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 1992), *The Civilization of Crime: Violence in Town and Country Since the Middle Ages*, eds. Eric A. Johnson and E. H. Monkkonen (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), and *Medieval Crime and Social Control*, eds. Barbara A. Hanawalt and D. Wallace (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

Notes

[1] However, in *Images of Rape: The "Heroic" Tradition and Its Alternatives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 2, Diane Wolfthal states that her book reflects "a generational interest in rape imagery." See also: Kathryn Gravdal, *Ravishing Maidens: Writing Rape in Medieval French Literature and Law* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991).

[2] The most recent discourse on the subject is Sarah Blake Mcham's "Donatello's Bronze *David* and *Judith* as Metaphors of Medici Rule in Florence," *Art Bulletin* 83. 1 (2001), 32–47.

[3] See especially: John R. Hale, *Artists and Warfare in the Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 157–58.

[4] Although such concepts as struggle and death appear in the index of Hale's book (276–77), the term "violence" is missing.

[5] Hale, 237.

[6] Rather than address the subject of violence per se, Adams includes in *Italian Renaissance Art* a page about mercenaries (125).

[7] Hale, 157.

[8] Elena Ciletti, "Patriarchal Ideology in the Iconography of Judith," 35–70 in *Refiguring Woman: Perspectives on Gender and the Italian Renaissance*, eds. Marilyn Migiel and Juliana Schiesari (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991). See also Yael Even, "Mantegna's Uffizi *Judith*: The Masculinization of the Female Hero," *Konsthistorisk tidskrift* 61, 1–2 (1992): 8–20.

Yael Even

Spectator Responses to an Image of Violence: Seeing Apollonia[1]

Marla Carlson

Jean Fouquet's miniature of the *Martyrdom of Saint Apollonia* (c. 1415/20–1481—fig. 1) represents a moment repeated, throughout late-medieval France and in other countries: an individual being tortured is on the verge of death, while a crowd, seeing the horror, looks on dispassionately, it seems. Two men bind the saint to an inclined plank with taut ropes, and another pulls her golden hair, while a fourth man yanks out her teeth with pliers that are nearly as long as her body. Apollonia's torture became slow and cruel in late-medieval hagiography and iconography, in contrast with the swift and violent tooth-breaking found in earlier versions of the story from the fourth century through the thirteenth-c. *Legenda aurea*, according to Leslie Abend Callahan, who cites a late fourteenth-c. *Passio* as well as Fouquet's illustration. She calls the later representations "an apparent shift in focus from the narration of events to the highlighting of one moment of physical pain and torment."[2] During the same time period, onlookers witnessed similarly painful moments within the dramatic framework of most saint plays and in public punishments.

This article explores three models for response by late-medieval spectators to the theatrical saint's body in pain: seeing the body as object, identifying with it, and entering into a dialogue with it. Each model is interpreted within a fifteenth-c. French context, always taking into account the hypothetical spectator's gender (thereby turning our three models into six). Although we will not consider the implications of a gender switch for the body in pain at the center of the spectacle, we must note that the martyrdom of male saints followed much the same pattern as that which is discussed here.[3] Our goal is also to understand the ways in which spectator response to suffering helped to create France as a nation, as saint plays belonged to the same culture-building mechanism as judicial torture and public execution, which we will discuss in passing.[4] Modern theoretical approaches to the body in performance may indeed lead to understanding medieval culture, provided that they are used with our careful regard for the historical context of this martyrdom. At the same time, late-medieval saint plays and public executions are of particular interest for modern cultural studies precisely because the historical distance makes it possible to imagine a wider variety of responses to the spectacle of physical suffering than were one to consider only modern stagings of the body in pain.

Although pain certainly had pre-cultural components and may be comprehensible across cultures and historical periods, the use of pain in performance unquestionably changed over time.[5] The modern terms "masochistic" and "sadistic" will be avoided, because the literary models for both terms are historically specific, composed as social critique by the Marquis de Sade and by Leopold von Sacher-Masoch well after the period at issue.[6]

Apollonia serves as an exemplary virgin martyr, important for a discussion of spectator responses rather than for the particulars of her *vita* or for analyzing a specific theatrical version of her martyrdom.[7] The same issues of response pertain to Saint Barbara plays, for example; however, the choice of Apollonia provides an opportunity to look at Fouquet's familiar image in a different way.[8] His miniature enjoys great popularity in theater history texts and serves as a topic for debate among theater historians and medievalists. In the most recent bout of critical sparring, Gordon Kipling argues that the event depicted by Fouquet is a Roman martyrdom re-enacted in a Roman theater, and that the theatricality of this devotional image serves a homiletic purpose. In reply, Graham Runnalls defends the widespread use of this image as evidence of a medieval theater in the round.[9] Although both scholars' articles are thorough and persuasive, they do not resolve the questions of what the miniature may represent. Regardless of whether the *Apollonia* illustration depicts a theatrical performance, a late-medieval viewer may have understood the image in various ways. As Mitchell Merback puts it, devotional imagery "furnished a literalized space for the imagination's deployment." Spiritual guidebooks advocated a sort of imaginative exercise startlingly similar to the technique of "substitution" familiar to any twentieth-c. method actor: in order to enter fully into the experience while meditating on the Passion, Christians were advised to imagine familiar people in the roles of Christ and other Passion "players."[10] A twelfth-c. treatise recommended that "the meditator place himself as though actually present at the events, forming detailed pictures through the faculty of the imagination."[11]

I propose that an actor's mimetic suffering at the center of late-medieval mystery plays persisted in the form of the spectators' memory images available for this sort of imaginative contemplation. What cultural work might a moment of extreme suffering (such as that depicted by Fouquet) perform, lingering in the memory of a late-medieval spectator after watching a saints' play? The six hypotheses that follow tease out different strands of spectator response and should not be considered as exclusive of one another; rather, a single spectator might respond in different ways at various times, or in more than one way simultaneously.

Model 1: The Saint as an Object for the Male Spectator

The erotics of power widely found within modern critical discourse, beginning with feminist film theory, posits a male gaze resting upon a female body and providing the spectator with a vicarious sense of power.[12] Robert Potter, for example, applies this model to the saint play and argues that the torture and death of the objectified female saint provide both redemption for the characters who survive and titillation for the spectator.[13] According to Diana Taylor, upon whose analysis of modern Argentinian drama Potter models his own argument, the (female) victim in such a scenario is doubly violated: within the narrative frame she is tortured, while she is at the same time displayed on stage as an object of erotic fascination. The (female) victim's body thus mediates between the (male) playwright and the (male) spectator, both of whom are placed in the torturer's position with respect to the body victimized on stage—in other words, outside its pain.[14] Taylor does not discuss the female spectator; nor does Potter. We will do so, after viewing thoroughly the hypothetical male spectator with whom we have begun.

The material that Potter examines *appears* to support a notion of the disenfranchised medieval woman subjected to the gaze of powerful men, both within and outside of the dramatic frame. He borrows from Jocelyn Wogan-Browne a typical profile for the life of a virgin martyr—and since it fits the version of Apollonia's life apparently represented by Fouquet, we will borrow it as well. The essential elements are a young, beautiful virgin, who is both wealthy and Christian, and a pagan male with power over her—sometimes the emperor or judge, but just as frequently her father. The story begins with the virgin's rejection of sexual advances, which leads to her torture:

> [T]he virgin is threatened, then incarcerated, stripped naked, publicly flogged, lacerated, burnt and boiled, and dismembered in some way . . . Her conduct during all this remains impeccable, her ability to reason unimpaired, and, to the frustration of the tyrant, her bearing and her arguments frequently convert his attendant soldiery and populace whom he then has to martyr as well. Finally, when the virgin and God have displayed enough of God's supreme rule over the world, she concludes her passion by going to formal execution by beheading.[15]

Potter takes account of the plot line and proposes that a medieval (male) spectator's response to a virgin-martyr drama would be much the same as a modern (male) viewer's response to a helpless, suffering woman. He sees hagiography, like pornography, as part of an oppressive patriarchal structure of representation that provides a pattern for sexual fantasy and sexual response (for both men and women). This structure of representation also shapes broader relational patterns between the sexes, meaning, that men habitually look at women to make themselves feel alive and real. Women are left to imagine themselves as objects to be looked at, yet having no means of constructing a gaze of their own.[16]

The theory of the gaze, developed by feminists arguing against pornography, presumes that spectators imagine themselves as occupying the gender positions available within the pictured scenario. In Fouquet's miniature, Apollonia's suffering body constitutes the central focus for a crowd of onlookers: two of her tormentors look at her, but the other two turn their gaze outward, inviting the vicarious participation of a spectator (presumed according to this model to be male), a surrogate for Etienne Chevalier, who commissioned the miniature. Brigitte Cazelles suggests that the pictorial composition places the spectator within an imagined half-circle that mirrors the half-circle within the picture. She further suggests that this composition would *not* cause Chevalier (or his surrogates) to identify with Apollonia as victim, even if the woman saint is understood as the center of the picture and he is assumed to be occupying the corresponding center of its mirror image. Apollonia's eyes are closed—a point to which I will return. Cazelles argues that viewers are "interpellated" as voyeurs or even as persecutors of the saint—that is, the work draws them into those particular subject positions.[17]

To be interpellated as spectator does not necessarily mean to experience a sense of power; just the opposite can be true. Nell Gifford Martin argues that Passion iconography in the Books of Hours that came into use early in the thirteenth century encouraged their viewers to adopt a disempowered spectator position. Over the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Mary was moved out of the pictorial center to the foot of the cross, and Martin says that these images emphasize the passivity of the viewers by inviting them to share Mary's helpless perspective. By the time the saint plays (we know of) were being staged, therefore, the faithful were accustomed to being interpellated as "voyeurs who are bound to look—are required to look—and are fixed in a knowledge of helplessness."[18]

In this interpretation, the helpless spectator is a model for the acquiescent subject. In other words, one's meditation upon the suffering of Christ, or of the (female) martyr imitating Christ, makes one more ready to accept the authority passed down from God to the King and the Church, and on to every man—in relation to women and children. In this way, the saint play participates in re-organizing France as a unified nation, as does the changing role of pain (torture) influence the legal system. In the feudal society of the early Middle Ages, the ritual framework for trial by ordeal positioned its *human* participants as social equals: when no other resolution satisfied all parties to a dispute, God was asked to resolve it by means of a bodily sign.[19] Then, during the twelfth century, a criminal justice system based on inquisition rather than accusation began to predominate. Physical torment remained an important component of justice, but its purpose changed: torture was inflicted to produce a confession, so that the body subserved the voice rather than being read for signs of truth. Unlike the bodily sign, however, the confession had to be judged. Because the judge who determined its truthfulness was set above the person being judged, and the judgement could in turn be superseded, these changes in the use of pain within legal processes facilitated the development of a hierarchy of authority.[20]

Furthermore, Jody Enders argues that "the medieval understanding of torture both enabled and encouraged the dramatic representation of violence as a means of coercing theater audiences into accepting the various 'truths' enacted in mysteries, miracles, and even farces."[21] Her argument is based on the Nietzschean claim that rhetoric developed initially in order to persuade people to be subject to laws—that is, willingly subjugated—without requiring the exercise of actual physical violence. In order to accomplish this subjection, rhetoric makes use of virtual violence in order to inscribe the law on the memory; then rhetoric develops farther, in theater, in the attempt to condition its target audiences to "*enjoy* being civilized."[22] The objectified female saint can thus help the male spectator learn to *enjoy* feeling powerless. Martha Easton suggests that the male viewer, who idealizes the female martyr and contemplates her wounds, suffers a kind of "spiritual lovesickness." That male spectator sees the suffering victim as powerful and draws comfort from her pain; the female saint is thus superimposed upon imagery of Christians nursing from Christ's wounds, an image so familiar during the later Middle Ages.[23]

Model 2: The Saint as an Object for the Female Spectator

How might a female spectator objectify Apollonia? Wogan-Browne says that the hagiography from which she extracts the virgin martyr profile was in fact aimed at women and suggests ways in which it may have been used. She raises the possibility that the audience for what she calls a "diet of licensed 'body-ripping'" might be "colluding with its own worst interests"[24]—echoing, of course, more recent arguments about romance novels, or "bod*ice* rippers."[25] (Wogan-Browne's conclusion is quite different, and we will return to it shortly.) A female spectator could conflate the saint with Christ as nurturing mother, as described in our first model, creating an image of maternal power that helps to cover up an actual lack of power for mothers and for women generally. This spectator could also adopt the gaze of a male tormentor and perhaps experience a vicarious sense of empowerment in the face of her actual disempowerment—which might, in the end, reinforce the disempowerment. After all, one's subject position need not depend upon corresponding gender, class, race, or any other characteristic. The apparent popularity in the 1990s of masochistic role-playing for men who occupy positions of power in their daily public lives, suggests that *contrast* is a powerful motivation for taking on a vicarious subject position.[26] In fact, there is no reason to believe that a spectator takes on a singular or stable subject position. Without abandoning the possibilities raised by objectifying Apollonia, then, we turn to the implications of identifying with her.

Model 3: The Female Spectator Identifies with the Saint

As a model to be emulated, the saint occupies a special position with respect to medieval social, political, and religious structures. The female saint may be subjected to violence, but she is *not* degraded—her torturers are. Both Elizabeth Lalou and Nerida Newbigin point out that the serenity and faith of the martyrs are set in contrast with the comical frenzy of their tormentors.[27] But even for a female spectator who identifies with Apollonia—eyes closed, powerless before the objectifying male gaze—meaning is not so simply established: there is room for oppositional or resistant reading.[28] For example, Wogan-Browne suggests that the torments withstood by virgin martyrs served to augment strength of will for the twelfth- and thirteenth-c. girls for whom the texts were written. Marriage developed as a sacrament during this period, meaning, that the church took control of marriage away from the secular aristocracy and in doing so made the woman's consent "at least theoretically essential;" hagiographic convention set the terms within which a rejection of marriage could be effective. A reader might look at the life of a virgin martyr, see a critique of the conventions of courtly love, and find the message: "defy authority if it elides you . . . : you do not have to marry, and there is a legitimate career of consecrated virginity available to you with its own emotional and ethical satisfactions."[29] Even if no choice lying outside of patriarchal structures is imagined for women, at least the possibility of choice is made explicit.

Model 4: The Male Spectator Identifies with the Saint

What might it mean for a male spectator to identify with a female martyr? As Linda Williams points out, in twentieth-c. sadomasochistic pornography it is understood that "the suffering woman has arranged the scenario and has ultimate control of it."[30] The tortured saint is also in control, suffering gladly for God. Perhaps vicariously sharing the martyr's suffering makes it easier for a man to exercise power without considering the suffering of the weak, because that male observer is experiencing the scene emotionally, *as* a victim by virtue of his Christianity. Does an empathetic or masquerading engagement with the victim allow him to forget that he is a victimizer? This is one potential, complicitous response—and a sinister one at that. A medieval spectator would also respond as does the twentieth-c. writer Robin Gorsline, who examines his own complicated erotic relation to the crucifixion and warns against over-identifying with the suffering of the crucified body, when one in fact occupies a position of power.[31]

Model 5: A Male Spectator Engages in Dialogue with the Saint

The notion of interpellation, which we examined earlier, construes the spectator as a passive recipient; however, we can also understand the reception of an image as a *productive* process engaged in by an active spectator. Wendy Steiner argues that images making the viewer uncomfortable can cause one to become aware of one's own response and to examine it.[32] In a similar vein, Barbara Eckstein says that certain disturbing images in political fiction make us "complicit," noting that the root meaning of the word is "folded together": in spite of a spectator's "desire to choose a side or to remain aloof," such images are able to draw the viewer "into a web of complicity" and, in doing so, make the viewer aware of the extent to which his (or her) own desires contribute to the suffering that is depicted.[33] Rather than (or in addition to) objectifying or identifying with the saint, a spectator disturbed by the spectacle of suffering might try on multiple subject positions, using them to engage in self-examination.

A male spectator in late-medieval France, for example, might ask: "Am I a torturer? Am I perhaps one who sanctions persecution, directs it, or merely looks on? Am I a fool, showing contempt for that which I should revere? Do I enjoy that which I should abhor?" An internal dialogue could take place not only during performance but also afterwards, when mental images similar to those engendered by seeing Fouquet's miniature are recalled by the beholder. This sort of dialogical response can result from *any* source, of course. We turn in conclusion to the dialogism built into the *Martyrdom of Saint Apollonia*; that is, the potential for a female spectator's erotic engagement with the saint's suffering body to bring the perceiver's own conflicting desires and injunctions into dialogue.

Model 6: A Female Spectator Engages in Dialogue with the Saint

There is a tension at the center of the saint play, a tension which can be illuminated by Karma Lochrie's discussion of mystical discourse. Lochrie sees the female mystic's imitation of Christ as "a dangerous and unsettling transgression" of late-medieval religious precepts because it "requires abjection through impurity and defilement."[34] From the beginning of the thirteenth century, Christ's physical suffering was increasingly emphasized as an emblem of his humanity. Lochrie discusses the difference between male and female imitation of Christ within affective spirituality, which began to replace contemplative and monastic models of devotion for laypersons in the later Middle Ages. Both medical and theological writing equated male with the spirit and female with the flesh. Lochrie argues for a distinction between the body and the flesh, noting, however, that Augustine and Bernard of Clairvaux both took from Saint Paul the concept of "flesh" as the entire, self-willed human being, separated from the will of God by the Fall. The role of reason is to bring the flesh back into conformity with God; thus, when a man imitates Christ's suffering, he humbles himself with an awareness of his inability to transcend the flesh. Purified by reason and regulated by grace, a carnal love for Christ can provide the means for restoring *man* to God—but what about woman? Would she be under the same rubric? Is a woman's only option to valorize her status as flesh, reinforcing her exclusion from transcendence?[35] The religious woman is advised by the Church and the mystics to close off her body from the earthly world through practicing chastity, silence, and enclosure, and Lochrie says that "Christ's wounds, far from signifying the perviousness of the female body, serve to remind women of the need to dam up their own vulnerable bodies."[36] But the female mystic chooses a different path: she reaches toward purification and redemption through a process of abjection that reminds her of her great dissimilarity from Christ. She speaks, she cries, she starves, and flagellates her body, she drinks the pus-filled water with which she has washed the feet of lepers.

Active emulation of the martyr's suffering was guarded against, and warned against, in devotional literature intended for female ascetics—a relatively sure sign of its popularity.[37] Religious women were increasingly restricted, not only from founding and administering their own religious foundations (as they had done during the tenth and eleventh centuries), but even from dispensing charity. Jo Ann McNamara suggests that these women turned to *spiritual* almsgiving: cloistered, silent, and dependent, they could give only their prayers and their voluntary suffering.[38] As Caroline Bynum argues, suffering was not inflicted in order to destroy or even to punish the body, but in order to comprehend the humanity of Christ at the moment of his dying; both self-mortification and illness served as tools for fusing with Christ, and both merged with the ecstatic imagery of erotic union.[39] Apollonia, eyes shut, presents an emblem of the closed, sealed body recommended by the Church; the silent martyr thus models the silent woman, epitomized by the anchoress but also desirable within society at large. At the opposite extreme is the ecstatic, speaking, crying, and self-torturing female mystic, who exists "squarely within the taboo" (in Lochrie's words). Even while Apollonia's closed-off and inviolate body is shown center stage, the spectator can experience compassionately the pain of torment—and during the Middle Ages compassion did not imply a desire to alleviate suffering; rather, it meant to suffer together with another person.[40] The spectacle of torture, silently welcomed, thus presents both a warning against ecstasy and an opportunity to experience it. In Bakhtinian terms, the silent martyr's body is double-voiced, and neither voice is given the final word; nor do these voices resolve into a dialectical synthesis.[41]

Conclusions

In examining various models for complicity with spectacular suffering in the late-medieval saint play, we have challenged the notion of a unified, predetermined audience response. We have shown that a medieval spectator might have experienced a vicarious sense of power or helplessness, and we explored the cultural usefulness of such responses. Finally, we have argued that a spectator could engage dialogically in self-examination or become aware of gaps in ideology. Understanding the multiple responses evoked by the body in pain is essential to any explanation of the cultural work performed by that body in the theater, in devotional imagery, and at the gallows.

Notes

[1] Earlier versions of this article were presented at the meeting of the Association for Theatre in Higher Education in Washington, D.C., August 2000, and at the International Medieval Congress in Leeds, July, 1999.

[2] Leslie Abend Callahan, "The Torture of Saint Apollonia: Deconstructing Fouquet's Martyrdom Stage," *Studies in Iconography* 16 (1994): 119–38. Callahan argues convincingly that the miniature could as easily represent a performance of public execution as a performance of a saint play. The staging conventions were similar, especially with respect to the arrangement of the audience on scaffolds. She also makes a strong argument for parallels between witches and saints.

[3] Graham A. Runnalls suggests that the staging of torture in *Le geu Saint Denis* would have looked much like the one which Fouquet depicts for Apollonia. See Runnalls, ed., *Le Cycle de Mystères des Premiers Martyrs du Manuscrit 1131 de la Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1976), 49. See also Bernard James Seubert, ed., *Le Geu Saint Denis du Manuscrit 1131 de la Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève de Paris* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1974). Certainly the narrative framework differs from that which is typical for female saints, with different activities and pressures leading up to martyrdom; however, both Saint Denis and the Host in the *Croxton Play of the Sacrament* are subjected to the same sequence of torments as the typical virgin martyr.

[4] For other sorts of spectacle, see, e.g., Colette Beaune, *The Birth of an Ideology: Myths and Symbols of Nation in Late Medieval France*, trans. Susan Ross Huston, ed. Fredric L. Cheyette (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 35–46; Lawrence M.