

The political significance of ‘presentism’ in Annaud’s *The Name of the Rose* (1984)

Adrian Konik

Department of Journalism, Media and Philosophy; School of Language, Media and Culture; Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
Email: akonik@nmmu.ac.za

Against the backdrop of Laclau and Mouffe’s perspectives on radical democracy, this article focuses on the way in which the phenomenon of ‘presentism’, or the retrospective historical projection of the axiology of the present onto the past, which occurs within mainstream cinema, impacts negatively on both the possibility of the formation of what Laclau and Mouffe call a Left-wing hegemony, and, thereby, on the emergence of radical democracy. That is, this article argues that, while the formation of such a Left-wing hegemony is only conceivable on the basis of effective forms of negotiation, the dominant contemporary notion of the ‘confessing’ subject plagued by *latency*, along with the contemporary prejudice against any alternatives to such a notion of the subject, problematize both the efficacy of any attempt at negotiation and, thereby, the possibility of the formation of a Left-wing hegemony. As such, this article advances that the presentism that occurs within mainstream cinema, insofar as it facilitates the endorsement, rather than the dissolution, of such a notion of the subject and such prejudice, should not be regarded as an innocuous cultural phenomenon, but rather as a significant political factor that inhibits the emergence of radical democracy. To illustrate this point, this article uses the example of the tensions that orbit around the themes of confession and subjectivity, as they are represented in Eco’s novel *The Name of the Rose* (1983) and the narrative of Annaud’s 1984 cinematic adaptation of Eco’s text, in an effort to draw into conspicuousness the manner in which the presentism that pervades the latter fulfils a political function, by virtue of its negation of the historical alternatives proffered through the former. Finally, this article concludes not only by suggesting that, because of its political function, such presentism should be resisted, but also by suggesting that such resistance should take the form of an increased critical thematization of the subtle discursive shifts that preceded the dominant discourses of the contemporary era.

Key Words: Radical democracy, Left-wing hegemony, neo-conservatism, presentism, genealogical analysis

Die politieke betekenis van ‘presentisme’ in Annaud se *The Name of the Rose* (1984)

Teen die agtergrond van Laclau en Mouffe se perspektiewe op die radikale demokrasie, fokus hierdie artikel op die wyse waarop die verskynsel ‘presentisme’, of die retrospektiewe historiese projeksie van die aksiologie van die hede op die verlede, wat binne hoofstroomfilm plaasvind, ’n negatiewe impak uitoefen op beide die moontlikheid van die vorming van wat Laclau en Mouffe ’n linksgesinde hege-monie noem, en daarby op die verskyning van ’n radikale demokrasie. Hierdie artikel argumenteer dus dat, terwyl die vorming van so ’n linksgesinde hege-monie slegs voorstelbaar is op die basis van effek-tiewe vorme van onderhandeling, die dominante kontemporêre nosie van die ‘belydende’ subjek wat geteister word deur *latentheid*, asook deur die kontemporêre vooroordeel teen enige alternatiewe vir so ’n nosie van die subjek, sowel die effektiwiteit van enige poging tot onderhandeling en, gevolglik, die moontlikheid van ’n linksgesinde hege-monie, problematiseer. As sodanig voer hierdie artikel aan dat die presentisme wat by hoofstroom-film voorkom, in soverre dit die bevestiging, eerder as die ontbin-ding van sodanige nosie en sodanige vooroordeel vergemaklik, nie beskou moet word as ’n onskade-like kulturele verskynsel nie, maar eerder as ’n beduidende politieke faktor wat die verskyning van die radikale demokrasie inhibeer. Om hierdie punt te illustreer, gebruik die artikel die voorbeeld van die spanninge wat rondom die temas van belydenis en subjektiwiteit wentel, soos verteenwoordig in Eco se roman *The Name of the Rose* (1983) en die narratief van Annaud se filmiese aanpassing in 1984 van Eco se teks, in ’n poging om die aandag te trek op die wyse waarop die presentisme wat laasgenoemde deurtrek, ’n politieke funksie vervul uit hoofde van die negering van die historiese alternatiewe wat deur middel van eersgenoemde aangebied word. Ten slotte suggereer die artikel dat, as gevolg van sy politieke funksie, sodanige presentisme teengestaan moet word, maar ook dat dié weerstand die vorm moet aanneem van ’n toenemend kritiese tematisering van die subtiële diskursiewe verskuiwings wat die dominante diskoerse van die kontemporêre era voorafgegaan het.

Sleutelwoorde: Radikale demokrasie, linksgesinde hege-monie, neo-konserwatisme, presentisme, genealogiese analise

Dreyfus and Rabinow, in *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (1983), contrast Foucault’s genealogical endeavours, which analyze how certain ‘meticulous rituals of power’ travelled an arbitrary and discontinuous path towards their positions of dominance in the present, with “the well-catalogued error of ‘presentism’ in historical analysis” (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1983: 118). In short, they define the latter as a tendency to

read...present interests, institutions, and politics back into history, into other epochs...[, and to] claim...that these institutions in earlier times had anything like their current significance...In the presentist fallacy, the historian takes a model or a concept, an institution, a feeling, or a symbol from his present, and attempts...to find that it had a parallel meaning in the past[, which amounts to]...‘writing the history of the past in terms of the present’.
(Dreyfus & Rabinow 1983: 118)

Presentism, along with finalism, or the attempt to “find...the kernel of the present at some distant point in the past[, to]...show...the finalized necessity of the development from that point to the present” (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1983: 118), are both regarded by historians as deeply flawed methodologies. Yet, arguably, the latter, more than the former, has been associated with problematic political events. With regard to this, perhaps the most grotesque political employment of finalism, and the instance which most readily springs to mind, is that of the use made of the Aryan myth within Nazi propaganda, in terms of which a largely fictitious past was advanced as *necessitating* the legal instantiation and propagation of brutal racial prejudice in the present. However, in certain respects, presentism can also be associated with the instantiation and propagation of prejudice. This is especially the case when it involves an eclipsing of the historical precursors to those discursive practices that inform subjectivity in the present, and the concomitant implicit advancement of the contemporary form of subjectivity as a ‘timeless and universal’ phenomenon. Through this process, presentism not only implicitly advances the discourses of the present as valid for *all* periods in history, such that it dissolves the possibility of understanding contemporary discursive practices as the products of arbitrary and discontinuous discursive shifts. That is, it also thereby endorses the idea of the current notion of subjectivity, informed by such contemporary discursive practices, as something atemporal/universal, and hence, ‘incontestable’. Arguably, the political significance of such presentism for the project of radical democracy is immense. In short, while the emergence of radical democracy depends on the formation of a Left-wing hegemony,¹ and while such a Left-wing hegemony can only come about through the development of a highly dynamic and efficacious process of negotiation, the dominant contemporary notion of the ‘confessing’ subject plagued by *latency* severely problematizes any attempt at negotiation. This is because, insofar as the ‘confessing’ subject is plagued by *latency*, he/she is robbed of the capacity for self-transparency and self-decipherment, as any truth confessed remains “incomplete, blind to itself, in the one who spoke,...only reach[ing] completion in the one who assimilate[s]...record[s, and]...verif[ies] this obscure truth...within the regular formation of a scientific discourse” (Foucault 1998: 66-67). As such, the dominant contemporary notion of the ‘confessing’ subject constitutes a significant obstacle to the formation of a Left-wing hegemony, because the *latency* that ostensibly underpins it always casts a shadow of doubt over any process of negotiation. This is primarily on account of its constant intimation of the existence of powerful but nameless hidden psychological agendas, which derive from ‘unconscious’ issues, and which may always covertly inform even the most overtly sincere words and gestures. Understandably, democratic *parrhesia*, which was predicated on the idea of a subject capable of both frank and insightful sincerity, and which prevailed from the 5th century BCE to the 5th century CE, “can no longer occur in our modern epistemological framework” (Foucault 2001: 14). Yet, it is nevertheless important not to forget that such an idea of the subject once existed.² This is not only because, when compared to the present model of the ‘confessing’ subject plagued by *latency*, the model of subjectivity that is indissociable from such democratic *parrhesia* is far more conducive to the process of negotiation demanded by any Left-wing hegemony. It is also because, its present dominance notwithstanding, the modern epistemological framework, which excludes the possibility of such democratic *parrhesia*, is not cast in stone but rather held together by, amongst other things, an ignorance of alternatives.

In light of the above, Eco’s novel *The Name of the Rose* (1983) emerges as particularly

valuable for the project of radical democracy, insofar as it problematizes the presentist orientation of mainstream culture by illustrating the antecedents to both the current discursive terrain and its concept of subjectivity. In doing so, it effectively reveals the dominant contemporary notion of the ‘confessing’ subject plagued by *latency* to be a relatively recent discursive construct rather than a ‘timeless and universal’ phenomenon. As such, a strong resonance exists between, on the one hand, Foucault’s focus on different forms of confession in *The Will to Knowledge* (1976), *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* (1981), *Fearless Speech* (1983), *The Use of Pleasure* (1984), and *The Care of the Self* (1984), and, on the other hand, the characterisation of confession as a *changing* phenomenon in Eco’s *The Name of the Rose* (1983). This is because, with regard to confession, Eco’s novel illustrates what “Foucault demonstrates[, namely that it]...did not have the same meaning in the thirteenth century, the seventeenth century, or the nineteenth century as it does in the present” (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1983: 119). Through this, Eco’s *The Name of the Rose* (1983) not only intimates that the ostensible limitations of the contemporary ‘confessing’ subject, on account of the concept of *latency*, are a discursive construct. In addition, it also, thereby, becomes indissociable from a broader discursive process that is generating the possibility of a *new* form of subjectivity, namely one that would render the individual capable of exercising, if not democratic *parrhesia*, then at least a significantly increased degree of both self-transparency and self-decipherment.³

The political significance of such genealogical insights for the project of radical democracy is enormous. This is for the reason that, in contrast to the idea of a subject underpinned by *latency*, the idea of a subject who is capable of both self-transparency and self-decipherment is well suited to the complex processes of negotiation upon which the formation of a Left-wing hegemony rests, precisely because of the greater belief in the possibility of sincerity that would accompany such a subject. Yet, notwithstanding the consequent *political* value of Eco’s novel on account of its intimations concerning the possibility of such a subject, the popularization of this literary work, which occurred through Annaud’s film *The Name of the Rose* (1984), was concomitant with the dissolution of all the above mentioned critical insights. That is, through Annaud’s film, the presentism that informs much of contemporary mainstream cinema was simply allowed to usurp the genealogical orientation of Eco’s text. In effect, this article seeks both to counter the negative political impact that Annaud’s *The Name of the Rose* (1984) has had on the project of radical democracy, and, *more* importantly, to oppose, or at least initiate criticism of, any similar processes of co-optation that may occur in the future. In short, it does so by drawing attention not only to the subtle historical discursive shifts that were eclipsed by the film, but also to the nuances of the presentist orientation of the film, which made its occultation of such discursive history so effective.

Admittedly, the above begs the question as to why it is necessary, more than twenty years after its release, to focus on Annaud’s *The Name of the Rose* (1984) in this fashion, especially in light of the fact that many other more recent and more expensive mainstream cinematic productions have been informed in far more overt ways by presentism than Annaud’s film. For example, in Peterson’s *Troy* (2004), which attempts to relate the narrative of Homer’s *Iliad*, the character of Achilles (Brad Pitt) is thoroughly divested of the attributes of a Homeric hero, and, instead, cast in the mould of a quasi-heroic member of the bourgeoisie, resplendent with a penchant for confession and thoroughly heterosexual predilections.⁴ Similarly, in Stone’s *Alexander* (2004), which attempts to relate the story of the rise and fall of Alexander the Great, the character of Alexander (Colin Farrell) comes across less as an ancient hero and more as a British field commander during the era of the Raj.⁵ However, the above two examples of presentism within mainstream cinema, although quite severe, are arguably not severely politically problematic. This is because, although aspects of the narratives of both films are in tension with the literary and historical sources from which they are derived, the discursive momentum behind the ‘original’

literary and historical texts is immense, on account of their entrenched status within the Western cultural tradition. As such, although Peterson's *Troy* (2004) and Stone's *Alexander* (2004) do, perhaps, manage to eclipse the 'important' aspects of Homer's *Iliad* and the historical accounts of, amongst others, Quintus Curtius Rufus, Plutarch and Arrian,⁶ namely those aspects which shed light on previous world views and life practices that are markedly different from those of the current era, such occultation can only ever be a momentary affair. That is, ultimately, such occultation is condemned to submersion beneath the far more formidable discursive impetus already possessed by the 'original' literary and historical texts, which, moreover, continues to be engendered through the various academic endeavours associated with, and orientated around, such texts.⁷ In contrast, even though Eco's *The Name of the Rose* (1983) is similarly valuable for the current era, insofar as its genealogical orientation thematizes the arbitrary and discontinuous history of both the discursive phenomenon of 'confession' and the dominant contemporary notion of the 'confessing' subject, its status and influence remain considerably *precarious* when compared to the above mentioned 'classical' texts of the Western cultural tradition. It is precisely because of this considerable *precariousness* that the co-optation by Annaud's *The Name of the Rose* (1984) of Eco's *The Name of the Rose* (1983) may be construed as severely politically problematic, in a manner that sets this film apart from the likes of Peterson's *Troy* (2004) and Stone's *Alexander* (2004). Consequently, the following criticism of Annaud's *The Name of the Rose* (1984) for its presentist orientation, although late, should by no means be viewed as *too* late, especially insofar as it provides a model for the criticism of similar processes of co-optation that may occur in the future.

In short, the first section of this article concerns the way in which Eco's *The Name of the Rose* (1983) represents the ritual of confession as an arbitrary and discontinuous *changing* phenomenon that informs subjectivity in different ways at different times. In doing so, it draws attention to the manner in which Eco's novel problematizes not only the ostensible atemporality and 'universality' of the dominant contemporary notion of the 'confessing' subject plagued by *latency*, but also the legitimacy of the contemporary prejudice against any alternatives to such a notion of the subject. In turn, the second section of this article concerns the way in which, through its presentist orientation, Annaud's 1984 cinematic adaptation of Eco's *The Name of the Rose* (1983) effectively eclipsed the above problematization. Finally, against the backdrop of such discussion, this article concludes by advancing that films like Annaud's *The Name of the Rose* (1984) should not be regarded as innocuous cultural phenomena, but rather as significant political factors that inhibit the emergence of radical democracy. Moreover, as a consequence of this, this article calls for both more vehemence and more precision in the critical thematization of those subtle discursive shifts that preceded the dominant discourses of the contemporary era, and which are otherwise eclipsed by the presentist orientation of mainstream cinema. This is because, at least for the moment, such critical thematization constitutes the primary means of resisting this negative political factor.

Foucault's *History of Sexuality* (1976-1984), Eco's *The Name of the Rose* (1983), and the changing 'face' of confession

In order to appreciate the ways in which Eco's *The Name of the Rose* (1983) thematizes both the arbitrariness and discontinuity of the discursive shifts associated with confession, along with the role of such discourses in the formation of subjectivity, it is, arguably, necessary to digress briefly in order to consider the analyses provided by Foucault's *History of Sexuality* (1976-1984). In short, Foucault gives an account of the discursive shifts that occurred from the 'deployment of alliance' to the era of 'pastoral power', and from the latter to the 'deployment of sexuality'. This is important insofar as, to a large extent, the tensions between the central

characters in Eco's novel, namely William of Baskerville and Adso of Melk, over the issue of confession, derive from the different ways in which their respective subjectivity has been differently informed by changing discourses.

In the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, namely *The Will to Knowledge* (1976), Foucault identifies the 'deployment of alliance' as the previously dominant discursive practice that informed the power structures found before and during the Middle Ages, namely those organized around bloodlines.⁸ That is, in this period, "power spoke *through* blood: the honor of war, the fear of famine, the triumph of death, the sovereign with his sword, executioners, and tortures; blood was *a reality with a symbolic function*" (Foucault 1998: 147). As such, while the principal societal concern was orientated around the maintenance of established social hierarchies that were, in turn, dependent on the sustenance of the 'prestige' of blood, such blood, by virtue of its nature, was something "precarious...[which could be] easily spilled, subject to drying up, too readily mixed [and]...quickly corrupted" (Foucault 1998: 147). The result of this, in turn, was that, within the ambit of Christendom, the questions posed during the practice of confession, for the most part, concerned permitted and forbidden *physical* relations, such as incest and adultery, or any other relation that threatened to 'contaminate' the bloodline in question, and thereby destabilize the existing social hierarchies. In other words, motivations, intentions, desires, feelings, etc., were all of *secondary* importance to the physical act of sex and the question of whether or not it had taken place, as sex was only considered to be an act that could affect power relationships, rather than something that was, itself, possessed of an elusive and enigmatic power.

Although Christendom had always, via the Hebrew tradition, been acquainted "with the metaphors of the Shepherd-God and his flock of people[,]...Christianity...g[a]ve them considerable importance, both in the Middle Ages and in modern times" (Foucault 1979: 138). The significance of this cannot be overemphasized because this new focus on the "development of power techniques orientated towards individuals and intended to rule them in a continuous and permanent way [made]...pastorship [an]...individualizing power" (Foucault 1979: 136). A crucial feature of such pastoral power was the 'birth', in the 13th century, of Christian theology, under the influence of Aquinas and others, which claimed "to be rational reflection founding a faith with a universal vocation, [and which]...founded...the principle of a knowing subject" (Foucault 2005: 26). Almost concomitantly, pastoral power required such knowing subjects "to kneel at least once a year and confess to all their transgressions, without omitting a single one" (Foucault 1998: 60). Initially, this met with a negative response from certain marginalized conservative elements within the Church, which resisted the idea of change and hankered after the perspectives and practices that had dominated before the 13th century.⁹ However, ultimately, these changes proved unstoppable, and, in effect, constituted the first adumbrations of a new

phase of in-depth Christianization. The period that stretches from the Reformation to the witch-hunts, passing through the Council of Trent, is one in which modern states begin to take shape while Christian structures tighten their grip on individual existence. What took place with regard to penance and the confession...can...be described in the following way...[T]he sacramental armature of penance is explicitly maintained and renewed, and then, within and around penance in the strict sense, an immense apparatus of discourse and examination, of analysis and control, spreads out. This takes on two aspects. First of all, the domain of the confession is extended and...almost all...of an individual's life, thought, and action must pass through the filter of confession...Second, there is an even more pronounced intensification of the power of the confessor corresponding to this formidable extension of the domain of confession...Hence the formidable development of the pastoral, that is to say, of the technique offered to the priest for the government of souls. (Foucault 2003: 177)

However, importantly, as was the case in the earlier 'deployment of alliance', in terms of confession of transgressions against the Sixth Commandment, or confessions of the sin of lust, the orientation of confession was still 'relational'. In other words, it still "concern[ed] the legal ties between people (adultery, incest and abduction)[,]...the status of individuals[, and]...the

form of the sexual act” (Foucault 2003: 185) in the case of sodomy or masturbation. Yet, from the 16th century onwards, “the relational aspect of sexuality is no longer the...fundamental element of penitential confession[, as] now...questioning concern[s]...the movement, sense, pleasures, thoughts, and desires of the penitent’s body” (Foucault 2003: 186). In short, this resulted in the presentation, by the Christian pastoral, of sex as “the disquieting enigma: not a thing which stubbornly shows itself, but one which always hides” (Foucault 1998: 35).

All of this, in turn, became supplanted, in the 18th/19th century, by the ‘deployment of sexuality’, which differed from ‘pastoral power’ insofar as it involved “a political, economic, and technical incitement to talk about sex[, in the interests of]...analysis, stocktaking, [and] classification” (Foucault 1998: 23-24). Moreover, in addition to the already formidable discursive parameters of ‘pastoral power’, there occurred a veritable explosion of discourses on sex that breached the banks of the realm of religion and entered the secular domain, insofar as they “took form in demography, biology, medicine, psychiatry, psychology, ethics, pedagogy, and political criticism” (Foucault 1998: 33).¹⁰ Further still, because, through the ‘deployment of sexuality’ modern society became increasingly concerned with descriptions of both the bodily sensations and the mental experience of sex, sex was increasingly transmuted into something enigmatic, which, residing ‘outside’ of discourse, was fathomable only through the breaking of its ostensibly elusive secrets. In effect, this transmutation involved the increasing use of devices for “speaking about [sex], for having it be spoken about...[and] for listening, recording, transcribing, and redistributing what was said about it” (Foucault 1998: 34). Ultimately, all of this culminated in the notion of *latency*, discussed in the Introduction, in terms of which one confessed “not merely because the person to whom one confessed had the power to forgive, console, and direct, but because the work of producing truth was obliged to pass through this relationship if it was to be scientifically validated” (Foucault 1998: 66).

In many ways, the narrative of Eco’s *The Name of the Rose* (1983) thematizes both the arbitrariness and discontinuity of the above mentioned discursive shifts associated with confession, along with the different ways in which they informed subjectivity at different times. Arguably, in this way, it problematizes not only the contemporary dominant notion of the ‘confessing’ subject plagued by *latency*, as something atemporal/universal, and hence, ‘incontestable’, but also the contemporary prejudice against any alternatives to such a notion of the subject.

This begins to emerge into conspicuousness when it is recalled that the novel is set in the latter half of the 14th century, in other words, *after* the 13th century shift towards theology and the expansion of the imperative to confess. It therefore plays out against the backdrop of the negative reaction to such change by certain marginalized conservative elements within the Church, but *before* the subsequent intensification of penance, in the 16th century, and its shift away from purely ‘relational’ and doctrinal transgressions, towards an increasing preoccupation with physical pleasure and thoughts of desire. With regard to this, the narrative is possessed of a high degree of historical accuracy, insofar as the subjectivity of the character of William of Baskerville is overtly presented as informed by the discourses that prevailed during this period. This much is evident, firstly, from William’s advice to Adso, after the young monk confesses that he has had ‘illegitimate’ sexual intercourse with a peasant girl. That is, his advice, in fundamental opposition to the psychological/sensual tenor of Adso’s confession, endeavours to subvert Adso’s proliferation of discussion about sex in the belief that it will facilitate his salvation. In short, and presumably because the girl’s lowly status prevented their intercourse from negatively affecting any established socio-political alliances, while William confirms that the young monk has sinned against the 6th commandment and reneged on his vows, he also concedes that the occasion presented an immensely powerful temptation that few could

have resisted. As such, although he cautions Adso against engendering desire for, and engaging in, such activities in the future, he does not consider the past act as something for which he should berate himself overly much in the present, and suggests, instead, that they speak of the matter no further (Eco 1998: 252-253).¹¹ Thus, arguably, a version of the ‘deployment of alliance’, mediated by Christian morality, continues to inform William’s views on sexual transgression, with the result that he focuses only on the ‘relational’ aspects of the transgression and refrains from attributing much significance to the thoughts, feelings and impulses that either preceded or succeeded the act. Secondly, William, in keeping with the sentiments of the marginalized conservative elements within the Church, mentioned earlier,¹² whose ascetic/contemplative ‘practices of the self’ he engages in,¹³ appears to remain both suspect of the legitimacy of confessing *doctrinal* transgressions, and heavily conscious of the pantomimic aspects associated with such a ‘ritual of power’, which often facilitate an endless proliferation of fictions.¹⁴ Evidence for this occurs in his explanation to Adso that, when under the imperative to confess, it is as though one is in a state of intense and bewildering intoxication, as all that one has read and heard return to one’s mind in a hellish maelstrom, with the result that one not only says whatever it is that the inquisitor wants one to say, but also whatever one believes might appeal to him (Eco 1998: 59).¹⁵

Consequently, on the one hand, William’s subjectivity can be construed as being informed by a post-13th century, but pre-16th century, Christian discourse, which was orientated around, amongst other things, the ‘deployment of alliance’, and hence a preoccupation with only the ‘relational’ aspects of sexual transgression. On the other hand, his subjectivity can also be construed as being informed by conservative opposition to the ‘new’ post-13th century Christian discourse, which was orientated around the pursuit of eternal salvation solely through the acceptance of ideology and the ‘forced’ indoctrination of others. Similarly, in Eco’s novel, the subjectivity of Adso of Melk constitutes a product of the emerging discourses of *his* era. That is, where a conservative discourse whispered through William and yearned for the discursive ‘spaciousness’ of the past, Adso constitutes the strategic point from which certain of the *new* discourses that inform his subjectivity strive towards their own future. This is because, in diametric opposition to William, Adso, in keeping with the relatively ‘recent’ 13th century Christian imperative to confess, exhibits an unequivocal belief in the *value* of such confession, as evinced both by his insistence on telling his master absolutely *everything* about his sexual experience (Eco 1998: 252-253), and by his assertion that the ‘truth’, thereby arrived at, has about it a transcendental status (Eco 1998: 243).

Yet, in addition, Adso also reveals himself to be one of the discursive sources of the first adumbrations of the form of ‘pastoral power’ that, later in the 16th century, would sweep away the focus, within the confessional, on the ‘relational’ aspects of sexual transgression, in favour of a new preoccupation with physical pleasure and thoughts of desire. In short, despite the fact that the tale unfolds in the latter part of the 14th century, the *beginnings* of this new preoccupation are already reflected both through the way in which Adso struggles with a strange compulsion to unfold to the reader the minute details of his sexual encounter,¹⁶ and through the way in which he appears to be mesmerized by the ostensible ‘clarity’ and ‘fidelity’ with which his mind can recall all that he saw, did, felt and thought on the occasion in question (Eco 1998: 243).¹⁷

Arguably, the palpable tension that consequently develops between the discursive orientations of William’s and Adso’s respective subjectivity constitutes a critical feature within Eco’s novel, insofar as it draws into conspicuousness the way in which discursive shifts, far from proceeding in a *teleological* or ‘evolutionary’ fashion, are the products of arbitrary ruptures and discontinuities. Moreover, by the same token, Eco’s novel intimates that the discourses that dominate in the contemporary era, and which inform subjectivity around the concept

of *latency*, in the manner already described, are the inadvertent product of contingency and chance, rather than possessed of any ‘fundamental’ truth value. This much becomes evident in the narrative of Eco’s *The Name of the Rose* (1983) when Adso attempts to confess to William, insofar as the older man listens to the young monk with *indulgence* (Eco 1998: 252). That is, as discussed, not only does William regard sexual transgression in terms of its ‘relational’ aspects, such that he finds Adso’s concern with the thoughts, feelings and emotions that preceded and succeeded the *act* somewhat inexplicable, and perhaps a little childish, but William is also both suspicious of the legitimacy of the institution of confession, and heavily conscious of its pantomimic aspects, which all too often result in a proliferation of fictions. As such, William can only play the role of the authority figure, in terms of the dynamics of confession,¹⁸ with a great deal of *self-consciousness*, such that it is only with indulgence and, presumably, with the trace of a circumspectly raised eyebrow, that he proceeds to listen to Adso’s account of his sexual transgression. Yet, because of this, William’s covertly sceptical assumption of the role of confessor, although it serves to placate the troubled Adso, also, simultaneously, presents to the contemporary reader the poignant image of an old monk who is both critical and unconvinced of the legitimacy of the juvenile discursive developments that are gaining ground around him. This is of immense significance for the contemporary reader because, chronologically speaking, those suspect discourses constituted the infancy of ‘pastoral power’, which, in turn, after reaching maturity, constituted the forerunner of the ‘deployment of sexuality’, the contingent historical origins of which, for the most part, have hitherto been swept under the carpet. Thus, because of the way in which, since the 18th/19th century, the discursive norms of the ‘deployment of sexuality’ have increasingly been presented as entirely legitimate for *all* times and *all* places, in a manner that has marked both the contemporary discursive terrain and the subjectivity of the contemporary reader,¹⁹ the thematization of the *different* discursive predecessors to the ‘deployment of sexuality’, through the narrative of Eco’s *The Name of the Rose* (1983), constitutes an important form of resistance to the status quo.

The presentist orientation of Annaud’s *The Name of the Rose* (1984)

Yet, none of this is reflected in Annaud’s *The Name of the Rose* (1984); in contrast to the narrative of Eco’s novel, in Annaud’s film, notwithstanding the fact that they are still supposed to inhabit a narrative set in the 14th century, both William (Sean Connery) and Adso (Christian Slater) are, in effect, discursively ‘transposed’ to the 20th century. This discursive transposition is evident, firstly, from both the intimate orientation and the informal tone of the confession that William (Sean Connery), figuratively speaking, *squeezes* from Adso (Christian Slater), secondly, from the fluidity of the ‘position of power’ that flows from one character to the other during confession, and from the apparent source of William’s (Sean Connery’s) guilt, and thirdly, from the way in which both William (Sean Connery) and Adso (Christian Slater) implicitly imbue sex with a power and a mystery that border on the sublime, in a manner that only became conceivable *after* the ‘deployment of sexuality’ in the 18th/19th century.

That is, firstly, in Annaud’s *The Name of the Rose* (1984), William (Sean Connery) coaxes an intimately detailed confession out of Adso (Christian Slater), and thereby acts in a manner that is completely incongruous with the disposition of the character of William in Eco’s novel. In other words, instead of adopting the role of confessor with a great deal of self-consciousness and, after hearing Adso’s confession with indulgence (Eco 1998: 252), suggesting that they speak of the matter no further (Eco 1998: 252-253), in Annaud’s film, William (Sean Connery) readily assumes the role of confessor without being asked by his novice to do so, and then proceeds, steadily, to manipulate Adso (Christian Slater) into recounting the intimate details of his sexual encounter with the young peasant girl (Valentina Vargas). Moreover, later, William

(Sean Connery) does not simply hear Adso's (Christian Slater's) confession, in a bearing akin to the character of William in Eco's novel, which, ultimately, functioned to question and subvert the legitimacy of the novice's preoccupation with the images, details, feelings and thoughts associated with his sexual act. Rather, in Annaud's film, William (Sean Connery) goes so far as to encourage Adso (Christian Slater) to recount his transgression with even more *candidness* than would have been required in terms of a 'formal' confession in the 14th century, when he suggests that the young monk confide in him as he would a close friend. These two aspects of this confession, namely its intimate orientation and informal tone, are important; with regard to the former, it was only from the early 16th century and

the rise of Protestantism [that confession became]...no longer a question simply of saying what was done – the sexual act – and how it was done; but of reconstructing, in and around the act, the thoughts that recapitulated it, the obsessions that accompanied it, [and] the images, desires, modulations, and quality of the pleasure that animated it. (Foucault 1998: 63)

With regard to the latter, it was not until the second half of the 16th century that, within the Catholic Church, such candour was allowed to infiltrate its way into confession, with the institution of 'spiritual direction', which involved a practice that was considered to be an addendum to *formal* confession.²⁰ In fact, it was only in the *late* 16th century that 'pastoral power' endorsed

the practice of spiritual direction...alongside the rule of penance and confession...[, in terms of which] seminarists [had to]...see their director from time to time outside of confession [to]...consider with him those things that concern[ed] their advancement in virtue, the way in which they comport[ed] themselves[,]...their external actions...[, and] those things that concern[ed] their self and their inner being. (Foucault 2003: 183)

However, the narrative of Annaud's film does not simply discursively transpose the characters of William (Sean Connery) and Adso (Christian Slater) from their 14th century context, in the narrative of Eco's *The Name of the Rose* (1983), to a late 16th century context, as may be surmised from the preceding discussion; rather, it transposes them to a 20th century context. That is, secondly, the fluidity of the 'position of power' that flows from one character to the other during confession, and which derives from a late phase in the psychoanalytic tradition, mediates the above mentioned aspects of the two characters' verbal interaction such that it imbues their exchange with 20th century discursive nuances. This is arguably the case because, although, in the *early* 16th century, pastoral power did develop a preoccupation with the feelings and thoughts associated with sex, and although, in the *late* 16th century, it did go on to introduce 'spiritual direction', even if the narrative of Annaud's *The Name of the Rose* (1984) had been situated in this period, the spiritual director, namely William (Sean Connery), would have been thoroughly precluded, in terms of the prevailing discursive dynamics, from arbitrarily adopting the role of *penitent* and confessing *to* his young novice. Yet, this is exactly what occurs in Annaud's film. Initially, William (Sean Connery) attempts to conceal his past role as inquisitor from Adso (Christian Slater); however, when provoked by his young charge, he not only angrily indicates that he is haunted by a past he does not wish to elaborate on,²¹ but also, after tacitly acknowledging that the suppression of the 'truth' of his past is causing him anxiety, takes the opportunity, offered to him by Adso (Christian Slater), to confess *to* his novice. In this scene, William's (Sean Connery's) confession is even precipitated by words similar to those which he used earlier to elicit an intimately detailed confession from Adso (Christian Slater), insofar as the young monk suggests that William (Sean Connery), in turn, confide in him as he would a close friend. That such fluidity of the 'position of power' *is* indeed a 20th century discursive nuance associated with the psychoanalytic tradition, emerges into conspicuousness through a thematization of the parallels between the above scene and the pivotal moment in Shaffer's famous play *Equus* (1973), during which the 20th century psychiatrist Martin Dysart

is covertly subjected to a similar form of ‘reverse’ analysis by his patient Alan Strang. This is because, through answering the same questions that he poses to Strang, which Strang in each case reiterates, Dysart is surreptitiously drawn towards engaging with the disturbing meaning of a dream that has haunted him for some time (Shaffer 1981: 228). Similarly, in Annaud’s *The Name of the Rose* (1984), the content of William’s (Sean Connery’s) confession, which concerns both his sense of guilt over an episode where, as inquisitor, he had inadvertently caused the burning of an author who he considered to be innocent, and his consequent disillusionment with those parts of the discursive framework of the Church that had previously propped up his career, bears a strong resemblance to the issues that plague the character of Dysart in Shaffer’s *Equus* (1973), and which inform his dream.²² In short, as a consequence of the ‘reverse’ analysis to which Dysart is subjected through his involvement with Alan Strang, he not only confronts the meaning of his dream, namely that his engendering of ‘normality’ in his young patients has only been achieved through his butchering of their passion and creativity. In addition, he also, consequently, experiences desperate disillusionment with the discursive framework of the medical profession, to which he owes his now unrewarding career, along with deep frustration at his inability to free himself from its language and its assumptions (Shaffer 1981: 210). However, importantly, it was only after 1968 that such perspectives on the illegitimacy of certain hitherto unquestioned overarching discursive practices and, concomitantly, such subjectively orientated experiences of guilt over one’s previous collaboration with such practices, began to emerge and become consolidated as a distinct discursive ‘code’. As such, insofar as the discursive crisis that plagues the character of William (Sean Connery), in the narrative of Annaud’s *The Name of the Rose* (1984), mirrors the discursive crisis that plagues the character of Dysart, in Shaffer’s *Equus* (1973), the former character cannot but emerge as a 20th century figure – in particular, a subject of the 1970s – rather than a figure of the 14th century.²³

Thirdly, this discursive transposition of William (Sean Connery), and for that matter Adso (Christian Slater), from the 14th century to the 20th century, is further achieved through the way in which, in the narrative of Annaud’s *The Name of the Rose* (1984), both of these characters implicitly imbue sex with a power and a mystery that border on the sublime, in a manner that only became conceivable *after* the ‘deployment of sexuality’ in the 18th/19th century. That is, when Adso (Christian Slater) asks William (Sean Connery) if he has ever been in love, the latter, knowing full well that his novice is referring to sex and not love – namely his earlier sexual encounter with a girl (Valentina Vargas) he did not know and with whom he never exchanged words – nevertheless answers that he *has* been in love, and cites, as an example, his love for the works of Aristotle. Through doing so, William (Sean Connery), albeit somewhat equivocally, associates the experience of sex with the profundity of philosophy, even though this is only a perspective that emerged after the 18th/19th century as a consequence of the ‘deployment of sexuality’.²⁴ Moreover, William’s (Sean Connery’s) possession of such a presentist sentiment is not merely a glitch in the narrative of Annaud’s film, because Adso (Christian Slater) appears to share similar sentiments. Evidence of this is the way in which, as an aged monk, he reserves the *final* words of his narrative to hark back nostalgically to the girl (Valentina Vargas) from whom he had, only once during his youth, obtained a fleeting sexual favour. In effect, because these words constitute the culmination of his ‘confession’ to the reader, which has taken the form of the preceding cinematic narrative, they intimate that this one distant sexual experience was possessed of *such* singular power and profundity that it forms the central core around which he has embroidered the entire preceding narrative, and towards which the narrative *always*, ultimately, returns, no matter how many times he tells the tale. However, arguably, this is informed by the ‘deployment of sexuality’, in terms of which it is advanced not only that the “most discrete event in one’s sexual behaviour – whether an accident or a deviation...[– is]... capable of entailing the most varied consequences throughout one’s existence” (Foucault 1998:

65), but also that, ultimately, “it is through sex...that each individual has to pass in order to have access to his own intelligibility” (Foucault 1998: 156). As such, insofar as Adso’s (Christian Slater’s) views on sex mirror those of William (Sean Connery), neither of them can be said to be the discursive products of the 14th century, as it was only after the emergence, in the 18th/19th century, of the ‘deployment of sexuality’, that there occurred a sufficient “hysterization of women’s bodies” (Foucault 1998: 104) to inform and support the perspectives communicated by these two central characters of Annaud’s *The Name of the Rose* (1984). That is, only since the 18th/19th century has the female body been regarded as so “thoroughly saturated with sexuality” (Foucault 1998: 104) that women have come to be understood as the repository of an elusive, enigmatic, yet immensely powerful mystery, the intimate experience of which is capable of indelibly ‘marking’ the male psyche, in the manner described above.

However, insofar as the presentist orientation of Annaud’s *The Name of the Rose* (1984) succeeds in communicating the notion that the ‘deployment of sexuality’ is valid for *all* times and *all* places, it not only endorses the dominant contemporary notion of the ‘confessing’ subject plagued by *latency* as an atemporal/universal phenomenon, along with the contemporary prejudice against any alternatives to such a notion of the subject. In addition, it also, concomitantly, eclipses the way in which the narrative of Eco’s *The Name of the Rose* (1983) functions as an important form of resistance to the status quo through its problematization of precisely such notions and such a prejudice. In other words, by virtue of the way in which Annaud’s *The Name of the Rose* (1984) projects the ‘deployment of sexuality’ retrospectively over history, at least as far back as the Middle Ages, it not only eradicates the possibility of the audience, as a consequence of watching the film, being able to engage critically with the dynamics that inform the contemporary discursive domain, but also, thereby, impacts negatively on the emergence of radical democracy. This is because, as discussed, while a Left-wing hegemony can only come about through the development of a highly dynamic and efficacious process of negotiation, to be effective, such negotiation requires critical engagement with the dominant contemporary notion of the ‘confessing’ subject plagued by *latency* (on account of the way in which this notion of subjectivity severely problematizes the efficacy of negotiation). Thus, the presentist orientation of Annaud’s *The Name of the Rose* (1984), or indeed of any *other* film, insofar as it inhibits such critical engagement, may arguably be construed as inhibiting the emergence of radical democracy.

Conclusion

It will no doubt be argued that the above mentioned presentism in Annaud’s *The Name of the Rose* (1984) was necessary for the economic success of the film, insofar as, had the film failed to resonate to a high degree with existing discursive practices and institutions, its popularity, along with its capacity to make a profit, would have been greatly diminished. However, while it is fairly reasonable to assert this, it is distinctly unreasonable to regard matters *only* in such simplistic terms, as though economic sense in itself always constitutes adequate justification for acts that, in addition, limit the horizons of possibility of both subjectivity and, ultimately, democracy. Conceivably, it would be more reasonable to remember that, very often, that which makes economic sense in the above mentioned manner, concomitantly limits both the potential diversity of subjectivity and the development of democracy, by ensuring that our ways of thinking become placed beyond question to such an extent that our frames of reference begin to seem to us immutable (Hebdige 1993: 363).

Arguably, its immense potential notwithstanding, on account of its complexity, the project of radical democracy stands to be most inhibited by such a ‘limiting’ discursive process. This is especially the case when such a process involves the exponential propagation, via the presentism

of mainstream cinema, of both the contemporary dominant notion of the ‘confessing’ subject plagued by *latency*, as an atemporal and universal phenomenon, and the contemporary prejudice against any alternatives to such a notion of the subject. Yet, the future of the radical democratic project does not appear to be interminably bleak, even though it is doubtful that much of mainstream cinema will ever be inflected in a way that is favourable to the formation of a Left-wing hegemony.²⁵ This is because the recent widespread criticism of the historical inaccuracies within both Peterson’s *Troy* (2004) and Stone’s *Alexander* (2004), mentioned earlier,²⁶ seems to indicate a growing public appreciation of both the emancipatory political power of historical awareness, and the dire political consequences that can so easily follow from any dissolution and eclipsing of such awareness. Yet, in the interest of ushering in radical democracy, such criticism will have to grow not only more vehement in its defence of relatively well known historical facts, but also more meticulous in its consideration of those subtle discursive shifts that preceded the dominant discourses of the contemporary era. That is, such criticism will have to become significantly more precise in its dealings with those arbitrary and discontinuous discourses which problematize the ostensible atemporality and ‘universal’ validity of both the current dominant discourses and the type of subjectivity they inform, and which the presentist orientation of mainstream cinema otherwise so readily effaces.

Notes

- As discussed in *Cultural artefacts as places of political contestation: Radical democracy, discursive ‘groundlessness’ and The Name of the Rose*, “Laclau and Mouffe present a new political strategy, the adoption of which, they advance, has become a necessity in the face of the increasingly hegemonic character of neo-conservatism. In opposition to such neo-conservatism, the democracy advanced by Laclau and Mouffe is, firstly, ‘radical’, insofar as it does not simply involve the establishment of ‘an ‘alliance’ between given interests [but rather the]... establish[ment of] an equivalence between these different struggles’ (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 184). In other words, in terms of such an equivalence, each understands their success to be articulated with, and hence entirely dependent upon, the individual successes of a range of other struggles, such that the defence/extension of one’s rights cannot be made at the expense of another’s rights. Secondly, Laclau and Mouffe’s form of democracy is ‘plural’, because it ‘broaden[s] the domain of the exercise of democratic rights beyond the limited traditional field of ‘citizenship’’ (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 185) and, instead, argues for the ‘proliferation of radically new and different political spaces...[, along with] the emergence of a plurality of [political] subjects’ (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 181). Thirdly, their form of democracy involves ushering in ‘hegemony [as]...a fundamental tool for...the Left’ (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 193), rather than as something to which the Left is subject. In effect, instead of regarding hegemony as something that, via a process of ‘resistance and incorporation’, steadily robs the Left of its political efficacy, Laclau and Mouffe state that, ‘It is only when the open, unsutured character of the social is fully accepted, [and] when the essentialism of the totality and of the elements is rejected, that... ‘hegemony’ can come to constitute a fundamental tool for political analysis on the left. These conditions arise originally in the field of... ‘democratic revolution’, but they are only *maximized* in all their *deconstructive* effects in the project for a radical democracy, or, in other words, in a form of politics which is founded not upon dogmatic postulation of any ‘essence of the social’, but, on the contrary, on affirmation of the contingency and ambiguity of every ‘essence’, and on the constitutive character of social division and antagonism. Affirmation of a ‘ground’ which lives only by *negating* its fundamental character; of an ‘order’ which exists only as a partial limiting of *disorder*; of a ‘meaning’ which is constructed only as excess and paradox in the face of meaninglessness – in other words, the field of the political as the space for a game which is never ‘zero-sum’, because the rules and the players are never fully explicit’ [My Italics] (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 192-193)” (Konik 2008: *in press*).
- “*Parrhesia* is ordinarily translated into English by ‘free speech’...and the *parrhesiastes* is the one who uses *parrhesia*, i.e., the one who speaks the *truth*...[In short, t]he one who uses *parrhesia*...is someone who says everything he has on his mind: he does not *hide* anything, but opens his heart and mind completely to other

people through his discourse. In *parrhesia*, the speaker is supposed to give a complete and exact account of what he has in mind so that the audience is able to comprehend exactly what the speaker thinks...[As such,] the speaker makes it manifestly clear and obvious that what he says is his *own* opinion...by avoiding any kind of rhetorical form which would veil what he thinks. Instead the *parrhesiastes* uses the most direct words and forms of expression he can find[. Importantly, the]...*parrhesiastes* says what is true because he *knows* that it *is* true; and he *knows* that it is true because it really is true. The *parrhesiastes* is not only *sincere* and says what is his opinion, but his opinion is also the truth...If there is a kind of ‘proof’ of the *sincerity* of the *parrhesiastes*, it is his *courage*[, insofar as he]...says something dangerous[; that is, either something]...different from what the majority believes...[, or something that could result in retribution, as when] a philosopher addresses himself to a sovereign, to a tyrant, and tells him that his tyranny is disturbing and unpleasant because tyranny is incompatible with justice...[, or something that could result in loss, as when,] for example, you see a friend doing something wrong and you risk incurring his anger by telling him that he is wrong...[As such, while *parrhesia* always involves] a form of criticism...[, this] telling [of] the truth is [also] regarded as a *duty*...That then, quite generally, is the positive meaning of the word *parrhesia* in most of the Greek texts where it occurs from the Fifth Century B.C. to the Fifth Century A.D.” [My Italics] (Foucault 2001: 11-20).

3. In a sense, Eco’s *The Name of the Rose* (1983) may, perhaps, be construed as constituting an act of *parrhesia*, insofar as, like Foucault’s *Fearless Speech* (1983) seminar series, it functions as a catalyst for a ‘history of thought’. With regard to this, Foucault defines such a ‘history of thought’ as an “analysis of the way a...[hitherto] unproblematic field of experience, or set of practices, which were accepted without question, which were familiar and ‘silent’, out of discussion, becomes a problem, raises discussion and debate, incites new reactions, and induces a crisis in the previously silent behaviour, habits, practices and institutions” (Foucault 2001: 74).
4. The presentist orientation of Peterson’s *Troy* (2004) is most obviously exuded through the way in which the various characters emerge as thoroughly 18th/19th century, and at least to some extent, 20th century, figures. For example, Hector (Eric Bana) is portrayed as a sceptical Enlightenment rationalist when he publicly criticizes the battle ‘prophecy’ of the high priest of Apollo, orientated around bird omens, and

declares outright his doubt that any god will come to the assistance of the Trojans. Similarly, Hector’s (Eric Bana’s) father, Priam (Peter O’Toole), comes across as an 18th/19th century romantic rather than as an ancient king, when he *confides* to Paris (Orlando Bloom) his belief that waging a war for love is more sensible than fighting one for fame, power or wealth. In turn, Achilles (Brad Pitt) strikes a pose more appropriate to a 20th century soldier recalling the horrors of the First World War, when he *confesses* to Patroclus (Garrett Hedlund) the extent to which the many murders he has committed haunt his dreams. In fact, Achilles’ (Brad Pitt’s) words in this scene almost seem to be consciously modelled on the poignant poem *Strange Meeting*, by the renowned World War One poet, Wilfred Owen (1893-1918), in which the latter thematized his analogous regret through overwhelmingly similar images. Finally, perhaps the most blatant element of presentism in Peterson’s *Troy* (2004) occurs through the way in which the narrative of the film text kowtows to 18th/19th century bourgeois morality. That is, on the one hand, the film text characterises Patroclus (Garrett Hedlund) as Achilles’ (Brad Pitt’s) ‘cousin’, instead of as his love interest, even though it has only ever been “traditional to wonder,...in the case of Achilles and Patroclus, who was the lover and who was the beloved” (Foucault 1990: 225). On the other hand, the film text, concomitantly, ignores the way in which, within the Homeric context, a woman captive constituted only one of the many spoils of war, by virtue of its exaggeration of the love relationship between Achilles (Brad Pitt) and Briseis (Rose Byrne) to such a degree that their romance, in effect, puts distance between Achilles (Brad Pitt) and Patroclus (Garrett Hedlund), and, arguably, contributes to the latter’s death.

5. Mercifully, in Stone’s *Alexander* (2004), the undeniable love relationship between Achilles and Patroclus is not shied away from, but rather thematized, and, moreover, embraced by the character of Alexander (Colin Farrell) as the model for his relationship with Hephaestion (Jared Leto). However, this amounts to little more than a gesture in the direction of historical accuracy, because the rest of the film is littered with so many other elements of presentism that the narrative as a whole approximates a rather banal piece of ‘pro-European’ propaganda. With regard to this, Trita Parsi points out the racist bias of the film text and, following this, advances that Stone, throughout the narrative, depicts Persians not from the perspective of the ancient Greeks, but rather from the viewpoint of 18th century Europeans (Parsi 2004: 2). Although

- Parsi goes on to argue cogently for Stone's *Alexander* (2004) as a piece of neo-conservative orientated pro-American propaganda, it should be remembered that, for the most part, Alexander (Colin Farrell) and his comrades all speak with *markedly* British accents; in fact, between them, almost no part of the United Kingdom escapes representation. Similarly, the education to which the young Alexander (Jessie Kamm) is subject is significantly informed by the same principles that underpinned "British public schools of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries...[, where educators believed] in sport as an ethical training ground for the future leaders of the British empire" (Martin 1987: 385). Moreover, while the mature Alexander's (Colin Farrell's) armies display a level of discipline found only later on Napoleonic battlefields, the young Alexander (Jessie Kamm) is informed by his father, King Philip II of Macedon (Val Kilmer), that kings are not born but are rather *formed* through trial and ordeal, which completely disregards the importance of inheritance in the 4th century BCE, and approximates, instead, the 18th/19th century notion of the soldier. That is, around this time there emerged a new notion of the soldier as something that "can be made; out of a formless clay, an inapt body, the machine required can be constructed; posture is gradually corrected; a calculated constraint runs slowly through each part of the body, mastering it, making it pliable, ready at all times, turning silently into the automatism of habit" (Foucault 1991: 135). As such, although it is possible that Stone's *Alexander* (2004) exhibits strong sympathy for contemporary neo-conservative orientated American imperialism in the Middle East, it is, simultaneously, tremendously difficult to dissociate Alexander's (Colin Farrell's) conquest of India from the memory of the British Raj.
6. Three of the main historical sources that provide an account of Alexander's life are, firstly, Quintus Curtius Rufus's *The History of Alexander*, written some time between 41 CE and 54 CE, secondly, *Parallel Lives*, by the 1st/2nd CE historian Plutarch, and thirdly, *The Campaigns of Alexander*, by the 2nd century CE historian Arrian.
 7. This was most obviously evinced through the widespread criticism of the historical inaccuracies within both Peterson's *Troy* (2004) and Stone's *Alexander* (2004), which emerged on Internet sites and in popular magazines soon after the release of each film.
 8. According to Foucault, "relations of sex gave rise, in every society, to a *deployment of alliance*: a system of marriage, of fixation and development of kinship ties, of transmission of names and possessions[, which was dependent upon elaborate]...mechanisms of constraint that ensured its existence and the complex knowledge it often required" (Foucault 1998: 106).
 9. "[D]uring the Renaissance you see a whole series of religious groups (whose existence is, moreover, already attested to in the Middle Ages) that resist...pastoral power and claim the right to make their own statutes for themselves. According to these groups, the individual should take care of his own salvation independently of the ecclesiastical institution and of the ecclesiastical pastorate. We can see, therefore, a reappearance, up to a certain point, not of the culture of the self, which had never disappeared, but a reaffirmation of its autonomy" (Foucault 1983: 278).
 10. The 'deployment of sexuality' emerged in the 18th/19th century, and involved an increasingly intricate interweaving of new ostensibly 'scientific' discourses on sex and, concomitantly, a proliferation of details and definitions of sexual norms, perversions and dangers. In effect, it resulted in "an intensification of the body [and]...a problematization of health and its operational terms: it was a question of techniques for maximizing life[,]...vigor, longevity, progeniture, and descent of the classes that 'ruled'...that were eventually extended to others...as a means of social control and political subjugation" (Foucault 1998: 122-123).
 11. The author has followed William Weaver's translation (Vintage, 1998).
 12. Cf. note 9
 13. That William pursues such 'practices of the self' is intimated by Adso when he describes, amongst other things, how his master used to lie for lengthy periods on a bed in a deeply meditative state (Eco 1998: 16).
 14. In other words, William appears to recognize, albeit tacitly, that such a discursive practice does not involve the retrieval of truth from the 'depths' of one's soul, but rather the *fabrication* of 'truths' in relation to the myth that one possesses such 'depth', with the result that there is no limit to the creation of such fictions.
 15. Significantly, credence is lent to William's sentiments regarding the dubious legitimacy of confessing doctrinal transgressions when, in the narrative of Eco's *The Name of the Rose* (1983), the 'confession' of Remigio, a monk accused of heresy and murder, is revealed to be a product of pure invention. That is, the above mentioned creative 'fictional' dynamic of confession (Cf.

- note 14) is evident in Remigio's reaction to the inquisitor's manipulative rhetoric, because, although innocent, the monk not only declares that he is guilty of murdering several monks at the abbey, but also voluntarily *creates* numerous other motivations for his avowed transgressions (Eco 1998: 380-387).
16. Arguably, one can understand this strange compulsion as that which, over time, developed into 'pastoral power', in terms of which being guided by the priest, to whom one confessed, "was a state and you were fatally lost if you tried to escape it...As for self-examination, its aim was not to close self-awareness in upon itself but to enable it to open up entirely to its director – to unveil to him the depths of the soul" (Foucault 1979: 143).
 17. Admittedly, in terms of the narrative of Eco's *The Name of the Rose* (1983), Adso's belief in his capacity to accurately 'chronicle' such events is, ultimately, revealed to be an exercise in delusion. Yet, numerous of Adso's contentions nevertheless reveal the *intensity* of his preoccupation with the sexual feelings and thoughts that he experiences (Eco 1998: 57, 240, 243 & 277).
 18. Cf. note 16
 19. "Since the Middle Ages, ... Western man has become a confessing animal" (Foucault 1998: 59).
 20. *Formal* confession, in the Middle Ages, simply required that a priest "hear the sin, and decide whether to apply a penalty according to an obligatory tariff or one chosen arbitrarily by himself" (Foucault 2003: 180). However, from the 14th century on, a "series of supplementary conditions are...added to these simple requirements...First of all, he must promote and encourage the right mood in the penitent...The second rule is that of benevolent attention...The final rule is what could be called the double consolation of the penalty[, involving the]...pain of the penitent who does not like to confess [and]...his consolation in seeing that the confessor suffers pain in listening to his sins...[These conditions increased exponentially after] the sixteenth century...After welcoming the penitent, the priest must look for signs of contrition...He then has to...question him about the preparation of his confession[,]...when he last confessed[,]...if he has changed his confessor and if so why...After this...the priest must proceed to the examination of conscience itself...[and] the penitent must be exhorted to 'picture to himself his whole life'...according to a schedule...Finally,...the 'satisfaction' can be imposed...The penitent must not only accept the penalty, but he must also recognize its usefulness and...necessity" (Foucault 2003: 181-182).
 21. In fact, this attempt, on the part of William (Sean Connery), to keep his past hidden is *only* explicable in terms of the 19th/20th century disciplinary strategy of the *dossier*, or the documentary technique that "makes each individual a 'case': a case which at one and the same time constitutes an object for a branch of knowledge and a hold for a branch of power...For a long time ordinary individuality...remained below the threshold of description...To be...described in detail...by an uninterrupted writing was a privilege...The disciplinary methods reversed this relation, lowered the threshold of describable individuality and made of this description a means of control and a method of domination[,]...a procedure of objectification and subjection" (Foucault 1991: 191-192). Arguably, the unspoken shadowy presence of the *dossier* is what impels William (Sean Connery), in Annaud's *The Name of the Rose* (1984), to attempt to hide his past from Adso (Christian Slater), as though this past were an extant, virtually tangible, discursive *object*, written down in some or other file, that needed to be kept from Adso's (Christian Slater's) view. Needless to say, all of this contrasts markedly with the openness with which the character of William, in the narrative of Eco's *The Name of the Rose* (1983), speaks of, and allows acknowledgement of, his erstwhile role as Inquisitor, for which he had received acclaim because of his insightfulness and because, in *many* cases, he had declared the accused to be innocent (Eco 1998: 29). This, of course, carries with it the rider that, in many *other* cases, William had declared the individual in question to be a heretic, and had ordered him/her to be burned. Yet, because all of this takes place before the age of the disciplinary *dossier*, the character of William in Eco's *The Name of the Rose* (1983) only identifies with the public heroic chronicles of his past, with which his colleagues are familiar. That is, he does not identify with any of his *personal* misgivings about whether or not some of the people he ordered to be burned were *really* heretics, even though such misgivings *do* exist, as is evident from his suspicion of the legitimacy of confession, which he communicates to Adso in the manner discussed earlier.
 22. At one point in the play, Dysart says to the audience that, after meeting Alan Strang, he had a very strange dream; he was a high priest in ancient Greece, where, hidden behind a gold mask, armed with a knife and assisted by two other priests, he proceeded to sacrifice a group of

children. After initially marvelling at his surgical skill, he begins to feel more and more nauseous with each child he processes, and the more ill he feels the more his mask begins to slip from his face. When the assistant priests see his illness they take the knife from him and he wakes up (Shaffer 1981: 216-217).

23. The May 1968 student revolts were “critical of the authoritarianism of...education, they talked in terms of radical democracy; schooled in the various catechisms of the left, they also spoke of class struggle, worker’s control – and permanent revolution” (Miller 2000: 165). Through doing so, these “social movements really changed our whole lives, our mentality, our attitudes, and the attitudes and mentality of other people – [even those] who d[id] not belong to these movements” (Foucault 1982: 173). Arguably, one of the most salient and enduring effects of May 1968 on popular culture is the way in which all subsequent fictional heroes/heroines have been obliged either to have at least a trace element of iconoclasm about them, or to develop towards such iconoclasm. With regard to this, the character of Martin Dysart in Shaffer’s *Equus* (1973) is a case in point, insofar as he emerges as a critical figure through his growing disillusionment with the norms of the ‘establishment’. However, unlike him, the character of William (Sean Connery), in Annaud’s *The Name of the Rose* (1984), only emerges as a ‘pseudo-critical’ figure. This is because the aspect of the ‘establishment’ that he is critical of, namely the Inquisition, would, conceivably, have been similarly criticized by even the most *conservative* or non-revolutionary elements in May 1968; in other words, the very authoritarian elements against which the May 1968 revolts were directed. Admittedly, in the narrative of Annaud’s *The Name of the Rose* (1984), William’s (Sean Connery’s) iconoclasm emerges somewhat more strongly in relation to the issue of sex, insofar as, after Adso (Christian Slater) has confessed his sexual encounter to

his master, the latter muses, in an ostensibly subversive tone, about how existence would be peacefully *dull* without love. However, as will be discussed shortly, because William (Sean Connery) goes on to elevate sex to the level of the sublime, he, *again*, fails to emerge as a critical figure, insofar as he simply perpetuates the status quo of the ‘deployment of sexuality’.

24. In short, in 5th century BCE Greece, the relationship between the *eromenos* and the *erastes* was orientated around a heavily formalized exchange of ‘sex for knowledge’, whereby the younger *eromenos* exchanged his sexual favours for the rhetorical skills and patronage that only the older *erastes* could provide. However, in contrast, as a result of the arbitrariness of discursive shifts and the discontinuity of discourses, the ‘deployment of sexuality’ now propagates the idea that ‘sex *is* knowledge’, or that sex *is* the repository of truth. In other words, on the one hand, in 5th century BCE Greece, “[c]ourtship practices...defined the mutual behaviour and the respective strategies that both partners should observe in order to give their relationship a ‘beautiful’ form...The first was in a position of initiative – he was the suitor – and this gave him rights and obligations[, while]...the *eromenos*[,]... the one who was loved and courted, had to be careful not to yield too easily” (Foucault 1992: 196). Yet, at no time was sex considered to *be* truth. However, on the other hand, in terms of the ‘deployment of sexuality’, from the 18th/19th century on, “we have all been living...under the spell of...sex, bent on questioning it,...[a]s if it were essential for us to be able to draw from that little piece of ourselves not only pleasure but knowledge,...a knowledge of pleasure, a pleasure that comes of knowing pleasure, a knowledge-pleasure” (Foucault 1998: 77).
25. Cf. note 1
26. Cf. note 7

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Adrian Konik is a senior lecturer of Cultural Studies and Film Studies in the Department of Journalism, Media and Philosophy, School of Language, Media and Culture, at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, South Africa.