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**‘Prince Harry’:
performing princeliness**

ABSTRACT

This paper combines visual studies and jurisprudence in a reading of popular images of a princely body. Last year Prince Harry threatened to bring the Royal Family into disrepute after a certain night in Las Vegas. Grainy phone images, and the accounts of Olympic swimmers and party girls all drew a picture of debauchery and orgiastic display. On the other hand Prince Henry (Harry), like certain Shakespearean Henrys, is the perfect warring prince, leading his men in Iraq in an outpouring of princely virtue and Renaissance civic humanism. The mass media have publicised shots of Harry in his white steed, an Apache helicopter.

The sovereign body has recently been revisited in jurisprudential scholarship from Agamben to Pierre Legendre. The sovereign body is a site of refusal or failure of symbolic interpellation, like the grand criminal or terrorist. The sovereign body marks the mythical site of law’s authority. One small group of performance artists, the English royal family, live the fantastical structures of the law as their quotidian reality. In a democracy such an icon of transcendental founding of the law in sovereignty is suggested but often repressed by the ‘post-ideological’ trappings of the administered or disciplinary society. What Harry does, like Agamben and Legendre, is to uncover this Renaissance (Romano-Christian) image magic in modernism.

KEYWORDS

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What I see in Japan, and maybe this is my own myth, is that behind all these notions of politeness, snobbism etc., the Japanese are well aware that something that may appear superficial and unnecessary has a much deeper structural function. A Western approach would be: Who needs this? But a totally ridiculous thing at a deeper level

might play a stabilizing function we are not aware of. Everybody laughs at the English monarchy, but you'll never know.

(Lovink and Žižek 2004: 47)

This paper focuses on the fascination with Prince Harry. What he highlights perhaps most clearly of any member of the Royal family, is how desire is part of our subjection to and belief in the law. Law and sovereignty are not only constitutions and speeches but, parties and beautiful Royal bodies. So when I recently saw an E Entertainment special: The two faces of Prince Harry, I thought that is exactly right. The law has two faces, its public face, and a private more transgressive and desirous face. The subtitle was: A look at the two sides of Prince Harry examines his most controversial moments, along with his charity work and his life in the military. What they failed to describe was how these two sides are actually quite natural to the sovereign body. The sovereign body as Giorgio Agamben has suggested is an exception to the law; it is paradoxically the place marker of (public) law and always somehow outside of the law.

As the public law the English Royal Family is all charity and army. Prince Henry (Harry), like certain Shakespearean Henrys, wanted to lead his men in Iraq in an outpouring of princely virtue and Renaissance civic humanism. On the other side like the great criminal they are the subject of Hollywood fascination. As someone that we imagine is not obligated to the law in the way we are as citizens we want to see the royal family act out again like a Renaissance King. So for example when Harry was found in naked pictures in Las Vegas last year, this is part of what we expect and want to see of someone not beholden to the law as a citizen but outside the law as sovereign. Even his tricks with an apache helicopter this month at an air show showed an incredibly free and excitingly transgressive life. Like a Renaissance king riding a white steed at a joust, our Prince Henry throws a multimillion dollar Apache around, again here not in combat but in showy play. Don't forget either my favourite story of how Prince William picked up Catherine for a date in military helicopter as he 'got in flying hours'. Although in all these cases the media brought down harsh criticism and called for sanctions my argument is that in all these cases the performance of the sovereign is enacted. The sovereign is connected to desire and transgression.

Following Lacan I treat the sovereign body as an icon of law. A sublime object of ideology, and that this functions in the same way whether you are in a democracy a communist state or a constitutional monarchy. Whether the sovereign as denoted by the monarch or as the sovereignty of the people, the authority of the state is still a sacred, unrepresentable object. Importantly, the process of 'personifying' the void still occurs

through 'bodies' and images, which can be explained empirically or through Lacan. Michael Walzer concisely writes, '[Because] the state is invisible...it must be personified before it can be seen, symbolised before it can be loved, imagined before it can be conceived' (Walzer 1967: 194). In the work *Nowby* Maurizio Cattelan in 2004 he presents an effigy for democracy; John F. Kennedy (JFK) lies barefoot like a prophet, perfectly recomposed from his trauma, a sublime object of ideology for democracy. This analysis helps to explain why the symbolic body has survived in contemporary politics as a fantasy structure connected to what Lacan sees as a 'master signifier', the cipher. In this case Harry is one of these bodies that covers over the gap, an effigy.

In 2012, despite his Las Vegas antics, or because of them, Prince Harry was named Tatler's man of the year. On Tatler's list of the good and the famous, he ranked 72 this year with again the double voice:

Tatler's man of the year for 2012, Harry is the life and soul of any bash - and usually has the best fancy-dress costume. He enjoys loo-roll-related party games, playing the tambourine and, er, Vegas. But he does have a serious side too. A top Apache helicopter pilot, he's already done two stints in Afghanistan and, in spite of the dangers, shows no signs of settling for safer pastures. He's currently dating Cressida Bonas (Gabriella Wilde's little sister). He's a sucker for a pretty blonde.

The Tatler cover for 2012, the first by a Prince since Prince Charles in 1992, is a metapicture for this paper (Plate 1). It highlights the three main modes in which Harry embodies the effigy: the prince as perfect constitutional prince; the prince as the law as desirable image; and finally the prince as the site and ringleader for a nightly, underground transgression. With its beautiful Prince, retouched to give the prince even more piercing blue eyes, they present a colossus. A princely effigy in military garb. The symbolic markers of his position are clear, the beret, the sash. On the cover, he is also though the object of desire and love. We learn to believe and love the law, and our nation through these images. Finally, the moniker Dirty Harry, is a perfect pun, which nods to the bifurcated legal construction. It means Dirty Harry from the movie, a hard fighting soldier, who is trying to do right in the world but also it relates to the transgressive, Dirty Harry, who cavorts with Las Vegas call girls.

These three positions for the sovereign effigy come from a reading of the mediated image through a Lacanian frame. The effigy represents in a straight forward way the gap produced by a transcendental big Other. The other two, the desire and transgressive prince, relate to how we are interpellated by the law through symbolic castration. Žižek's reading is

that we are all in ideology and therefore the use of the political fetish becomes something else (1994: 296-321, 327). For Žižek, there is still the need as part of our belief in the master signifier for an ‘uncanny spectral supplement’ (1994: 20). When we are brought into the law through the repression of our desire, the law produces desire in us. This creates the second mode of falling in love with the law through princely bodies and other seductive spectacles. It also produces a guilt that we allow for this repression, which in turn produces fantasies of those that are not repressed, the grand criminal, the playboy, and the Prince. This produces the third mode of engagement that Harry embodies, the transgressive Prince, unfettered by law but who nevertheless, like a nationwide Godfather, creates a community around him.

THE PRINCE AS CONSTITUTIONAL PRINCE

The first is the straight, public law, Prince. As a representative of the sovereign effigy, Harry is bedecked by markers of the public, Symbolic Order. Like Charles and William, he is positioned as the virtuous warrior Prince. A captain in the air force, who flies apache helicopters, it would be only half the story to link this work to active work within the symbolic order. As image of virtu Harry is still not a normal soldier but a highly symbolic one. Although Harry’s latest tour in Afghanistan saw him see active service, Prince William and Charles show how in fact the military career should be seen primarily as symbolic. Talking of his recent return to active service in Afghanistan Harry suggested that it had ‘allowed him to step back from the public eye’ [that is Las Vegas leaked photos] and reiterated that his father ‘always reminds me of my birthright’ [that is being a sovereign heir].

In this image recently released the media showed how Prince Harry has dreamed of being a soldier since he visited the Light Dragoons in Hanover at the age of 8. Another way of looking at this is that the media has producing images of the warrior prince since he was 8. His symbolic role in a recent visit to the United States, involved not only Polo but, a wreath laying ceremony at Arlington ceremony. Even the Polo I link to the symbolic, public face, of princely virtue; it is a heroic, Olympian body.

This month too media outlets, including Australia’s Woman’s Day reported the piece on Harry in James Wharton’s memoir under the title ‘Harry Saved my Life’. During a 2008 training exercise in Canada, he told Harry, his tank commander at the time of homophobic taunts and threats that he was going to be ‘battered’. Harry declared he was ‘going to sort this shit out.’ Here in a public face of law Harry is framed as the upholder of human rights and moral virtue. Finally in a controversial Channel 4 drama, Harry is shown

captured by the Taliban in Afghanistan. It is a hypothetical, which drew no comment from Harry. The Taliban have repeatedly asserted that Harry is a symbolic target of great value and we know that he was called ‘Bullet Magnet’ in his first tour. The Taliban are good readers of the sovereign effigy and other symbolic structures.

To finish this section of Harry as Public Prince I would see certain controversies surrounding the Prince to be not exactly transgressive or deviant but instead based on a breach of protocol, a breach of this more Public, constitutional persona. When he dressed as Rommel in African uniform to a ‘colonists’ themed party this broke a taboo on the level of public symbolic order. It was not a deviant transgression but a semiotic one [and as an aside besides dressing as a British colonist which would also have been provocative to say the least, Rommel seemed liked a totally reasonable and creative reading of the theme]. Similarly for Australian media readers especially, in 2003 he controversially did not follow Aboriginal protocol relating to the use of images in his A level work which had Aboriginal style lizards.

THE COURTLY, LOVER PRINCE

The second mode then is the courtly, seductive and desirable Prince. GQ suggested this year:

Diana described Harry, prophetically, as ‘the naughty one’. She might also have added ‘the lovable one’, ‘the hot one’ and, best of all, ‘the fun one’. Because, since his mother’s death, something very unlikely has happened to ‘Harry Wales’ — he’s become the most popular member of the House of Windsor. (Not least among women). (2013)

For Pierre Legendre the subject falls in love with the institutions (like St Augustine does with the liturgical order) in what he calls a ‘structure of love.’ Adam Gearey mentions that:

There is a way in which human relationships can be imagined as within law, but constantly challenging the forms of the law that chose to represent those relationships. There is a ‘gap’ between the forms of law at any one time and its possible reinvention, a different phantasm. This follows from the logic of castration and the structure of jouissance. (2001:41)

This Lacanian reading is also explain by Žižek who suggests that there is an obscene hidden supplement to the law, where we enjoy the law, and relate to it through jouissance. Is not love, looking from the other side, always about power and sovereignty? (Kristeva 1987: 125).

So on one level this obscene hidden supplement to the law, can express itself as profane love as it does here or as transgressive, deviant almost criminality. This gap in the power structures interrupts the big Other itself and opens up this space of jouissance.

There is something always outside the Law, the element of the 'real' exterior to it, or to reiterate Žižek's term following Lacan, this is the 'master signifier' here the point of concept of sovereignty. In reality this real exterior to the political may be the founding violence of colonial power, the founding violence of revolution, repression, or capitalist power. The big Other is split at the point of the subject but also within itself. Žižek argues that, 'every power structure is necessarily split, inconsistent, there is a crack in the very foundation of its edifice— and this crack can be used as a lever for the effective subversion of the power structure...' (1996: 3). The split in the law's edifice – this lack – creates an interesting connection to the law. The outcome is that we are not merely ruled by the law but we also desire it. For Lacan, as we are castrated, or submit to interpellation, we must give up our desires, the object petit a. There is a fantasy that the big Other has held this lost object of desire almost on trust and will at some point give it back. Our relationship to the big Other or the Real Thing is then mediated by desire. Žižek's contribution is once again helpful. He shows a supplement to the public law that is a hidden secret law whose overarching power is one of jouissance and superego injunctions. So that, for example, our truest relationship with the 'nation' may be at a sporting event, the Olympics or even a music festival. In *Tarrying With The Negative* Žižek suggests as a master signifier, the subject may not 'know' the nation (as an object of empirical knowledge) but they 'enjoy (jouis) their nation as themselves' (1993: 200-238). The Lacanian term Jouissance is usually translated from French as 'enjoyment' – as opposed to the English idea of 'pleasure' – implying jouissance as a sexualised, transgressive enjoyment at the limit of what subjects can experience or talk about in public. Here I suggest the body of Harry is one of these sites of desire (of nation and of law).

So where Harry becomes the lover Prince it is one bubbling up of this desire, and love we have for institutions and the Nation. This is a feeling for example you get when the Socceroos make it to the World Cup or when Cathy Freeman wins gold. I would read the huge obsession with Pippa's bottom at the royal wedding in this way. If Katherine Middleton was the all perfect, symbolic Princess, then Pippa Middleton was the seductive supplement; the sexy bottom that we all new and fantasised was underneath the train. We got the public and the obscene in the one mediated image.

THE TRANSGRESSIVE OBSCENE PRINCE

Like Pere Ubu the obscene is part of kingliness. The Prince represents the superegoic injunction to enjoy that we have all lost through our symbolic castration. This method of connecting the subject to law is distinguished from the 'public' law by Žižek and given the term, 'superegoic' law (Žižek 1995: 925-942). Žižek gives examples of this 'nightly law' as the Ku Klux Klan and the 'Code Red' in the 1992 film *Few Good Men*. So for Žižek an important aspect of the law, as a corollary of the lack at the heart of the big Other are these 'inherent transgressions'. The jouissance that these activities create through 'enjoyment' and 'guilt' for Žižek point the subject towards the greater truth of the transcendental master signifier and to borrow Legendre's notion become part of the 'dance' of the subject and the law. Sex and violence, drugs and alcohol are transgressions that are conjoined to our understanding of the nation. Australia has a particularly strong example of this in the annual coin game 'two-up'. On a national holiday (Anzac Day), all hotels are able to organize a game of two-up, a ritualised form of gambling popular during World War I. The transgression helps define the law and the subject's relation to the nation. To conclude the process of castration and interpellation is part of our access to the law as a speaking subject. The jouissance which is sacrificed through castration becomes the socialised object petit a. For Žižek and other post-Lacanian scholars you can bring these ideas to the socio-political makeup of societies. The subject must forego the jouissance in the name of the greater good or for the law (constitutions etc.). For Žižek the corollary of this for is that jouissance grounds the law as well, through hidden transgressions, thus the master signifier is not only a topic of knowledge but of jouissance. As the ring leader of this transgressive outpouring and obscenity Harry shows himself to be the complete Prince who as sovereign has complete access to these transgressions in a way normal citizens can only dream. So this is where we come back to Harry's various antics: his stripper liaison in Las Vegas; his nude swimming in the hotel pool; his various blondes and drunken nights.

It is through the transgressive that Žižek suggests we best form communities and social bonds. This conclusion was empirically seen in the case of Harry's night in Vegas. On the internet through Facebook and other social media people began posting nude photos of themselves saluting under the banner 'Support Prince Harry with a naked salute.' The website this meme spawned was started by Lee Kirton and Jordan Wylie (ex-serviceman) and has now morphed into a charity for 'Walking with the Wounded' for injured ex-servicemen. Originally though the action spread virally as a way of sharing in Harry's nudity. That Harry was reprimanded and obviously publically embarrassed only added to the ability of a

community to form over sharing the joke, of agreeing and forming a consensus that the transgression was ok. Many of the images included the Union Jack to double the connection to nation.

Connected to kingly transgression I would link the media's fascination with Harry's almost James Bond like 'license to kill.' Harry said that he had to 'take them [the Taliban] out of the game.' The Daily Mail proclaimed Harry: I have killed. There is nothing more presidential or kingly than the extra-judicial power to wage war, and it is this obscene supplement to public rational law, the State monopoly on violence and killing that here Harry embodies. The embodiment too is heroic and youthful, and in this way the princely virtue as military hero also has a transgressive and much darker under side. These wars were definitely extra-judicial; the princely soldier embodies clearly this special legal zone of state sanctioned violence.

CONCLUSION

Five months after Las Vegas and his game of 'nude billiards' Harry said in interview 'I probably let myself down.' He then went on to say that it was an action that was 'probably more army than Prince.' In fact it was the perfect supplementary performance to Princeliness: army, Prince and obscene supplement.



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