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Years of Teaching Dangerously:  
Interfacing Thomas Cromwell in Canon and Fandom,  
Michael Drayton, “W.S.,” and Hilary Mantel

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*I can see no good Reason, to alter my Opinion, for excluding such Books, as Almanacks, Plays, and an infinite Number, that are daily Printed, of very unworthy matters and handling. . . . Haply some Plays may be worthy the Keeping: But hardly one in Forty. . . . This is my Opinion, wherein if I erre, I think I shall erre with infinite others: and the more I think upon it, the more it doth distaste me, that such a kind of Books, should be vouchsafed a room, in so Noble a Library.*  
(Sir Thomas Bodley, letter 1612)

*Perhaps they do not matter—after all, these are only novels. Except that they are not: they have somehow become a cultural phenomenon*  
(David Rundle, blog 2015)

*Nothing of him that doth fade / But doth suffer a sea-change / Into something rich and strange*  
(William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*)

Could humanities pedagogy benefit from a “sea-change” that integrates the “something rich and strange” of popular fandom into humanities study? There are ethical, theoretical, and existential reasons not to dismiss this question with a quick, defensive “no.”

Prevailing ideologies have disdained popular literature as an object of academic or cultural value, from Sir Thomas Bodley’s seventeenth-century letter prohibiting “Baggage Books” in his newly founded Bodleian Library<sup>1</sup> to historian David Rundle’s twenty-first century blog dismissing Hilary Mantel’s “Cromwellian novels.”<sup>2</sup> Bodley and Rundle may well see themselves as guarding the value and status of the humanities against popular culture. Eileen Joy has described the humanities as a “guarded (and self-regarding) competitive-agonistic staging ground of cultural authority.”<sup>3</sup> Authorization has been effected in binary terms opposing the canonical, tasteful, and elite against the non-canonical, distasteful, and popular. Such agonism has formed the basis of literary criticism, which Terry Eagleton has characterized as a type of class-based, taste-based, authoritarian criticism that divides and discriminates.<sup>4</sup> Its judgments are accepted on a type of faith in the critic’s aesthetic taste or “distaste” for what “may be worthy the Keeping”<sup>5</sup> or worth the excluding.

In a letter dated 15 January 1612, Sir Thomas Bodley sought to exclude popular literature or “Baggage Books”<sup>6</sup> from the Bodleian Library. Bodley’s use of “baggage” to describe popular

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Bodley, *Reliquiae Bodleianae: or Some Genuine Remains of Sir Thomas Bodley, Containing his Life, the First Draught of the Statutes of the Publick Library at Oxford, (in English) and a Collection of Letters to Dr. James, &c.* (London: John Hartley, 1703), 277-278, <http://bit.ly/20NReUa>, 278.

<sup>2</sup> David Rundle, “Cromwell on the Box,” *Bona Litterae: Occasional Writing from David Rundle, Renaissance Scholar* (blog), January 25, 2015, <https://bonalitterae.wordpress.com/2015/01/25/cromwell-on-the-box/>, paragraph 3.

<sup>3</sup> Eileen Joy, “Nothing Has Yet Been Said: On the Non-Existence of Academic Freedom and the Necessity of Inoperative Community,” *Punctum Books* (blog), May 1, 2015, <http://punctumbooks.com/blog/nothing-has-yet-been-said-on-the-non-existence-of-academic-freedom-and-the-necessity-of-inoperative-community/>, paragraph 10.

<sup>4</sup> Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2008), 20-24.

<sup>5</sup> Bodley, 278.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

literature is a multilayered insult denoting “spoken or written trash, rubbish, rot” and pathogenic “purulent or corrupt matter, pus.” Festering in this usage is anti-Catholic sentiment as it was “contemptuously applied after the Reformation to the rites and accessories of Roman Catholic worship.” Also lurking in Bodley’s “baggage” is a class-based view of vernacular publications as “dregs, offscouring, riff-raff”<sup>7</sup> or useless residue, sediment, excrement, or scum. Bodley hoped to bar such “riff raff Books” from his library shelves,<sup>8</sup> and although “Bodley’s restrictive acquisitions policy did not prevail for long,”<sup>9</sup> distrust of popular literature in academic circles has continued.

In a blog dated 25 January 2015, historian David Rundle seems baffled at how a living, popular novelist like Hilary Mantel has eluded the gatekeepers of the British Library. Mantel’s painted likeness hangs “at the top of the stairs to the British Library’s Manuscripts Reading Room. How has she become such a household name? Has she filled a gap left by the end of J. K. Rowling’s time as favourite author?”<sup>10</sup> Rundle’s leading questions imply that Bodley’s worst fears have been realized in the library and in contemporary culture. Proliferating on the scale of Bodley’s “infinite Number, that are daily Printed,” popular authors achieve a level of influence unmatched by authoritative academically-mediated culture. Traces of the agonistic contest between academically-mediated culture and contagiously-circulating popular culture ghost in Rundle’s reference to Mantel as “a household name,” suggesting that a name everyone knows may be *less* authoritative for its notoriety: if a book is popular in the home, is it “worthy the Keeping”? Linking Mantel’s historical fiction to Rowling’s fantasy fiction insinuates that Mantel’s Tudor England is as fantastic as Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. It is understandable that a historian would bristle at an inaccuracy like the printing date of Niccolò Machiavelli’s *Il Principe*; however, a date-based quibble does not diminish the deeply human impact of Mantel’s Thomas Cromwell narratives.<sup>11</sup> Suggesting that Mantel’s status as “favourite author” is something like a passing fad diminishes the new and the popular merely for being new and popular without articulating how the older, authorized humanities sources actually impact twenty-first century human beings.

Behind Rundle’s bemusement at the popular impact of Rowling and Mantel may be larger and understandable concerns for humanities programs, which, ironically, have yet to more fully engage with the complex diversity of human experience that should constitute humanities study. People queue up to buy popular fiction and to attend fan conventions like Comic-Con in ways they have not been queuing up for humanities study. We could hide from this trend, but what would happen if we worked to change it? Dichotomous thinking reduces humanities studies into either/or binary contests when humanities could be enriched by the more inclusive “and . . . and . . . and” approaches of affect theory.<sup>12</sup> What sea-changes could be effected by employing and deploying theory rather than criticism? What if we ask not if a text is “worthy the Keeping”<sup>13</sup> or worth the excluding but how texts move people?

<sup>7</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “baggage,” accessed November 21, 2015, <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.achcu.talonline.ca/view/Entry/14622?redirectedFrom=baggage>.

<sup>8</sup> Bodley, 82.

<sup>9</sup> Lukas Erne, *Shakespeare and the Book Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 194.

<sup>10</sup> Rundle, paragraph.3.

<sup>11</sup> Hayden White, “The Historical Text as Literary Artifact” in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent B. Leitch et al (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), 1715-1717, 1722-1723. The power of stories is not necessarily in their coincidence with fact, and the operations of academic historians may be closer to storytelling than to science as the work of Hayden White has shown. Historians “emplot” a narrative from historical evidence, and how events are emplotted changes the narrative arc.

<sup>12</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1987; reprint Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press 2011), 25.

<sup>13</sup> Bodley, 278.

In their “magic” of moving people, Mantel’s Thomas Cromwell narratives and Rowling’s Harry Potter narratives are a lot like William Shakespeare’s dramas. A pop-cultural dramatist before he became a central figure in the literary canon, Shakespeare’s popularity derives not from his historical accuracy (which can occasionally be as incredible as Hogwarts<sup>14</sup>) but from his human impact. Like Mantel and Rowling, Shakespeare moves people, not just to read/watch but to actively engage in fandom.

Fandom is an amorphous and flexible community of people who share a common devotion to literary, film, or television works, and they often express their devotion through creative paratextual assemblages. For example, fans create art depicting their favorite characters; they retell their favorite episodes, dress up as their favorite characters (cosplay), and they fill in narrative gaps in/between/across beloved works by writing fanfiction. Fanfics circulate, rekindling interest in canon by building the fan-base and by inciting debate. Through active, spirited, and even dangerous engagements, fans preserve canon through the work of fandom. This work includes artistically- or corporate-driven television and film productions like *The Tudors* or *Wolf Hall*, *A Man for All Seasons*, or *The Other Boleyn Girl*. Regardless of historical accuracy, these productions raise awareness of and interest in renaissance England. Instead of seeing fandom as a threat to humanities studies, what if we think of fandom as an opportunity? Fans invest a great deal of time, effort, thought, and money in the stories and fandoms they love, and fandom’s ethos, enthusiasm, and effort could be a model to humanities faculty and students.

Academic fandom is a type of co-performance in which texts, whether canon or fanon, become a live event or a playing field.<sup>15</sup> Bringing texts to life through (re)performing, (re)reading, (re)writing, and/or (re)viewing them can be dangerous. Enacting this type of fandom, decentralizes authority through active co-performativity in which it is not possible to isolate academic, popular, group, and personal influences. In the classroom we focus creating enriching connections rather than getting it right. We cultivate “danger” by embracing Shakespeare’s *Henry the Eighth* alongside our experiences with *The Tudors* and *The Other Boleyn Girl*, by illuminating Shakespeare’s Wars of the Roses dramas with *Game of Thrones*, by inviting our experiences with *Wolf Hall* and *Bring up the Bodies* to resonate through our readings of renaissance depictions of Thomas Cromwell. This type of co-performativity worlds a stage/field/classroom on which text and reader work together to create not authorized and agonistic but personalized and open-ended meanings that involve and evolve beyond the closure of a given text. This means there is no single text and no single reader but assemblages of texts and readers that unfold and infold readers and texts, bodies and ideas, in intellectual and creative experiences. The “something rich and strange” of popular fandom is what students hope to find in their university study; they hope to experience the study of literature as fandom that both takes them out of this world and empowers them to change the world. Such observations are not condemnations of students; instead, they are opportunities for teachers.

Fandom is not purely recreational or imaginative; it is also socially conscious, engaging in the work of holding texts and society to account. Teaching dangerously both challenges and affirms the continued relevance of early modern texts in the contemporary world by empowering

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<sup>14</sup> William Shakespeare, *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, ed. David Bevington (New York: Pearson/Longman, 2008). For example, *The Life of King Henry the Eighth* airbrushes four of Henry’s wives out of history, and through the magic of Shakespeare’s hindsight, Cranmer, in christening the infant Elizabeth, foresees Queen Elizabeth’s prosperous reign and future death as “the maiden phoenix . . . [whose] ashes new-create another heir” (V.4.41-42). In *Henry IV (Part I)* Shakespeare transforms Owen Glendower into a sorcerer, magicking him into an “‘unhistorical’ scene, as invented by Shakespeare, Glendower is host throughout” (note on V.1 805).

<sup>15</sup> Text denotes any narrative form from Drayton’s poem to W.S.’s drama, Mantel’s novels, the television adaptations of *Wolf Hall* as well as series like *The Tudors*. Text also includes fan fiction, song lyrics, personal blogs, and student writing.

students to ask questions like: To what extent, if any, do early modern texts matter in a diverse, complex, and unequal world? How exactly are the writings of (mostly) European men who lived in a classist, misogynist, homophobic, xenophobic, and religiously intolerant world still relevant today?<sup>16</sup> How can these old problems and old texts help to reimagine academic study and contemporary society?

This chapter describes one example of teaching dangerously through assemblages of canon and fandom, traditional and non-traditional literary depictions of the historical character Thomas Cromwell (c.1485-1540): Michael Drayton's poem *The Legend of Thomas Cromwell, Earl of Essex*, the apocryphal "W.S." drama *The Life and Death of Thomas Cromwell, Earl of Essex*, and Hilary Mantel's novels *Wolf Hall* and *Bring up the Bodies*.

### Early modern canon and fanon

Michael Drayton and the mysterious "W.S." are writers of fan fiction: that is, fiction written about previously written works, settings, or characters by someone other than the original author. Shakespeare's history plays are similarly a type of fan fiction about Plantagenet and/or Tudor characters whose stories are reopened and retold; for example, the monstrous character of King Richard III in *Henry VI* (Part 3) and *Richard III* or the spider-like character of Cardinal Thomas Wolsey in *Henry the Eighth*.

Like fan fiction writers, Drayton and "W.S." reopen the character of Thomas Cromwell and retell his story, while printers and later editors contribute to Cromwell fanon by recirculating and publishing, broadening the fan base. Whereas an anthology authorizes a version of a text, teaching dangerously empowers students to decentralize the authority of anthologists and editors by performing as unauthorized anthologists and editors and by considering the politics inherent in anthologies and editions. Performing as anthologists, students seek out renaissance texts about Thomas Cromwell; performing as editors, students grapple with multiple versions of Drayton's *Legend of Thomas Cromwell* and the "W.S." drama *The Life and Death of Thomas Cromwell* available through Early English Books Online database, Google Books, and Project Gutenberg.<sup>17</sup> As they anthologize and edit, students consider the similarities between the various versions and think about how/if these differences suggest an "authorized" text and the limitations of authorizing a single text over creating a textual assemblage; they also consider which text versions would be more likely to appeal to audiences and to what extent they might inspire fandom and/or fanfics.

As students perform as anthologists and editors, they also uncover the history of anthologizing and editing. Both Cromwell texts have experienced two popular afterlives, first in the late eighteenth-century flowering of the English literary canon that sought to inspire a type of popular fandom in Englishness through classic English texts. Thomas F. Bonnell has described the explosion of multi-volume poetry collections and author biographies that mass-produced and marketed English classics to the public between 1765 and 1810. This textual explosion cascaded into Victorian projects like the Oxford English Dictionary and the Early English Text Society, while the late twentieth- and early twenty-first century have seen the mass, digital re-publication of these canonical English works in online versions and platforms.

<sup>16</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, 105.

<sup>17</sup> Students also compare the biographical accounts of authors in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* with the changing biographical accounts accompanying printed and/or anthologized versions from the eighteenth-century through the early twentieth-century.

## Michael Drayton and *The Legend of Great Cromwell*

First published in 1607 and 1609, Drayton's *Cromwell* is a poetic fanfic in *ottava rima*.<sup>18</sup> It was anthologized in *A Complete Edition of the Poets of England volume the third containing Drayton Carew and Suckling* 1794.<sup>19</sup> In the index to the 1794 printing,<sup>20</sup> *Cromwell* is curiously sandwiched between twelve heroic epistles and an eclectic group of ten poems ranging from the historical to the fantastic.

In Drayton's poem, Cromwell is a posthumous narrator who comes back from the dead to protest his untimely death in the manner of Mantel's chapter title: "The Dead Complain of their Burial."<sup>21</sup> Drayton's Cromwell should not be resident in "the sad dwelling of th' untimely dead." His ghostly self cannot rest quietly, and he speaks to ease his "troubled heart" and to defend his "hated name."<sup>22</sup> Cromwell is mis-categorized as base by the social hierarchy, but Cromwell exposes the baseness inherent in the so-called nobility. Cromwell suggests the hallmark of nobility or baseness is not a hierarchic label but how people engage with the world, how they move. Drayton's Cromwell makes a similar observation that "to be always pertinently good, / Follows not still the greatnes of our blood."<sup>23</sup> The new generations of nobility do not support the Reformation for spiritual reasons but for base and ignoble acquisitions. Nobles like the Duke of Norfolk and the Duke of Suffolk merely wish to reappropriate "What their great zeal had lavished before, / On her strong hand violently lay'd, / Preying on that they gave for to be pray'd."<sup>24</sup> Cromwell calls out the baseness of their actions as "ignorant and vile . . . giving yourselves unto ignoble things, / Base I proclaim you, though deriv' d from kings."<sup>25</sup> Though Cromwell is derived from Putney rather than from kings, he is "Belov'd of heaven, although the earth doth hate him."<sup>26</sup> Too generous or politic to fully blame Henry, Drayton's poem ends swiftly: Cromwell is arrested and executed in a space of eight lines. He moves from the council chamber to Tower Hill where "Thus the great'st man of England made his end."<sup>27</sup>

## "W.S." and *Thomas, Lord Cromwell*

Evocatively tagged with "written by W.S.," the drama *The True Chronicle of the whole life and death of Thomas Lord Cromwell* was entered in the Stationer's Register on 11 August 1602. *Thomas, Lord Cromwell* was printed twice, in 1602 and in 1613, presumably to capitalize on the

<sup>18</sup> Drayton's poem and the W.S. drama were OCR-ed and concordanced for further textual analysis. Drayton's *Cromwell* is 7,369 words in length. The "W.S." drama is 14,821 words in length.

<sup>19</sup> Michael Drayton, *The Legend of Thomas Cromwell, Earl of Essex* in *A Complete Edition of the Poets of England Volume the Third Containing Drayton Carew and Suckling* (Edinburgh: Bell and Bradfute and L. Mundell, 1793), 217-226, <http://bit.ly/1oijQ9S>. Thomas F. Bonnell, *The Most Disreputable Trade: Publishing the Classics of English Poetry 1765-1810* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 205-206. Bonnell has noted the change in printers and titles from *A Complete Edition of the Poets of England* to *The Works of the British Poets* which he has characterized as "a biographical muddle" because the ESTC lists these works separately, respectively under t2891 and t152376, "while noting these works are probably the same."

Compounding the muddle, the date listed on the cited version is 1793, though Bonnell dates publication to 1794.

<sup>20</sup> Francis Meres, *Palladis Tamia: Wit's Treasury A Comparative Discourse of our English Poets with the Greek, Latin, and Italian Poets* (1598). Meres observes that Drayton's "Heroical Epistles" were modeled on Ovid's *Heroides*: "Michael Drayton doth imitate Ovid in his England's Heroical Epistles," paragraph 16, <http://www.elizabethanauthors.org/palladis.htm>.

<sup>21</sup> Hilary Mantel, *Wolf Hall* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 2008), 272.

<sup>22</sup> Drayton, 217.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 218.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 223.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 218.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 219.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 226.

popularity of *Henry VIII*. In the late nineteenth-century, *Thomas, Lord Cromwell* was printed in William Hazlitt's *Shakespeare's Doubtful Plays*.<sup>28</sup>

The "W.S." drama depicts the young Cromwell as a talented scholar whose father works "to keep . . . [him] like a gentlemen."<sup>29</sup> He values books and study above wealth<sup>30</sup> and that "the time will come I shall hold gold as trash."<sup>31</sup> Headhunted by the English merchant Master Bowser to serve as secretary for the Antwerp merchants, Cromwell embarks on his European travels.<sup>32</sup> In a sub-plot, the evil English merchant Bagot seeks to ruin fellow merchant Master Banister and his entire family. In Bagot's despicable plot, Banister's body will "rot in prison," and Bagot hopes "after hear his wife to hang herself, / And all his children die from want of food."<sup>33</sup> Having fled to the continent, Mrs. Banister briefly pleads her case to Cromwell, who offers to speak to Bagot on her behalf and gives her "angels" to ease her family's poverty.<sup>34</sup> As Bagot is a jewel-thief, this sub-plot resolves in his apprehension and execution.<sup>35</sup> Cromwell's travels take him to Italy with his servant Hodge. Robbed, Cromwell and Hodge seek alms, and the merchant Frescobald offers them assistance. While in Italy, Cromwell helps the Duke of Bedford escape. Back in England, Cromwell's status rises, but he does not forget his poor background, publicly inviting his father, the Seeleys, and Frescobald (who has fallen on hard times) to a resplendent feast. Although the Duke of Bedford does try to send Cromwell a letter warning of danger, false witnesses hired by Stephen Gardiner accuse Cromwell, Cromwell's own law prevents his speaking out. Cromwell is executed just shortly before Rafe Sadler arrives with a reprieve.<sup>36</sup>

Just as Cromwell inspired Drayton and the mysterious "W.S." to reopen and retell fan versions of his story, Cromwell's character has likewise inspired more contemporary writers such as Robert Bolt and Hilary Mantel to contribute to Cromwell fandom. Rather than fetishizing the early modern texts and rubbishing popular texts, teaching dangerously puts the past into play with the present, implicating students as directors-actors-writers-players-fans in the unfolding drama of the course, the "logic of the AND" of affect theory.<sup>37</sup>

In the classroom the "logic of the AND" means breaking out of binary logic. Breaking out of the either/or means adding options that transform agonistic struggles into learning opportunities. To break out of oppositional power struggles in binary pairs, we embrace triads and exponentiate them; for example, the "W.S." drama, Drayton's poem, and Mantel's novels, or the jobs of anthologist, editor, and fan. Initially, students find all the extra variables slightly disorienting if not unsettling. Then, as students venture beyond either/or methods, they begin to appreciate the sheer complexity of human experience and the activist potential of academic fandom. In thinking about what matters in the classroom, students veer into thinking about what matters beyond the classroom because they do not have to choose either the classroom or the world. How exactly are the writings of (mostly) European men who lived in an intolerant world still relevant today? How can these old texts and old inequalities empower our classrooms and our societies to effect humane and creative sea-changes?

<sup>28</sup> Anonymous, *The Supplementary Works of William Shakespeare Comprising his Poems and Doubtful Plays*, ed. William Hazlitt (London: Routledge, Warne, and Routledge, 1860), 165-205, <http://bit.ly/1Q23y1u>. Cited as Hazlitt.

<sup>29</sup> Hazlitt (I.2.169/1).

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid* (I.i.168/10).

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid* (I.1.169/15).

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid* (I.2.1-31).

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid* (II.2.1-7).

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid* (II.1.1-5; II.1.26-29).

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid* (II.3.46-49).

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid* (V.5.7).

<sup>37</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, 25.

Although we discuss the politics and perils of thinking outside the arborescent, phallogocentric methods dominating academic study, overwhelmingly students embrace the sheer creative opportunity that teaching dangerously affords. Students regularly comment that this is the type of study they hoped for when they signed up as English majors. They note that these approaches inspire them in ways that ordinary literary study does not. Students express joy at not being forced to choose between “geeking out,” “fanboying,” and “fangirling” or being a proper scholar. Affect theory’s “logic of the AND” embraces study not as knowledge as a product punctuated with a period and an either/or dichotomy but as process that keeps opening new questions, performances, and fandoms.

### **Theorizing popular and academic fandom: keeping it real**

Rather than asking what a text means, affect theory describes how textual bodies move and consequently how they move other bodies, human and non-human, ideal and real. Deleuzo-Guattarian strands of affect theory are revolutionary in the ways that a virus is revolutionary to an organism: “A virus . . . can take flight, move into the cells of an entirely different species, but not without bringing with it ‘genetic information’ from the first host (for example . . . a type C virus, with its double connection to baboon DNA and the DNA of certain kinds of domestic cats).”<sup>38</sup> Ideas are also viral bodies, and the viral transmission of ideas can have material impacts on real organisms. Cardinal Wolsey fights the outbreak of heresy by burning textual bodies: “a holocaust of the English language, and so much rag-rich paper consumed, and so much black printers’ ink.”<sup>39</sup> Sir Thomas More, in contrast, burns textual and human bodies in his efforts to eradicate the virulent outbreak of Protestantism that eventually changes the religious and political structure of England. Because students have grown up in a world of viral culture, affect theory’s contagious connections make sense to them. More’s arborescent efforts to contain and control heresy are limited just as are contemporary efforts to regulate the viral circulation of online content.

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari begin “with movement rather than stasis, with process always underway rather than position taken.”<sup>40</sup> In literary terms, we would call this *in medias res*, in the middle of things, but it is not a middle between binaries like beginning/end; this processual middle is an ongoing collision of bodies—viral, textual, ideal, material—in constant change. Change is not a representational idealized image or a binary opposition to stasis; rather paradoxical forces that operate simultaneously yet asynchronously through bodies, culture, and nature: the arborescent, the rhizomatic, and change are one of Deleuze and Guattari’s complicated and complicating triads.

These non-static and always changing triads make processual middles. In the classroom, the moving middle created by the arborescent, rhizomatic, and change (also called the line of flight) can be illustrated by the different Cromwells we encounter. Arborescent structuring forces are in action as Cromwell moves toward someone we think we know or understand; however, what we think we know of Cromwell in the “W.S.” drama deterritorializes with the Drayton poem, and again with Mantel’s two novels and the televised *Wolf Hall*. Cromwell is not a single body but an assemblage of bodies. In the texts Cromwell’s movements often eclipse his identifiable features. His transversal or rhizomatic movements allow him to think outside the tree and behave more

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>39</sup> Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 40.

<sup>40</sup> Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth, “An Inventory of Shimmers,” in *The Affect Theory Reader*, edited by Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 4.

like grass or the weather. Rhizomatic movements are like superpowers that allow a body to move in unscripted and unpredictable ways only describable in retrospect. But alongside Cromwell's many bodies and rhizomatic superpowers, there is another "and": change is always happening on numerous fronts in the different time zones of Cromwell's narratives and in the "now" of the classroom that is always constituting a different, immanent reality for each student. If arborescent approaches limit, grid, and foreclose Cromwell's story or reality into plottable points, as some academic approaches do, adding rhizomatic potential and ongoing change means that Cromwell's story is, like reality, never authorized or closed but open to new performances whether on stage, in class, or through fandom. We are in the moving middle between what has happened, what is happening, and what could happen.

The arborescent focuses on what has happened and limits what is possible to what has already happened. Deleuze and Guattari challenge the dualistic/dichotomous thinking of arborescent systems. Tree-type bodies have dominated Western thought, and these systemized bodies duplicate themselves through code, whether DNA, language, or ideas. Codes are also called tracings, and they reproduce models of subjectivity, genealogy, and memory that despotically impose "the verb to be"<sup>41</sup> on bodies. Arborescent systems are like the social hierarchies of Tudor England based on ancient genealogies of family or religion: filiation. The problem with Thomas Cromwell is that he "is increasingly where he shouldn't be,"<sup>42</sup> defying the expectations of filiation. No one quite knows what or who he is,<sup>43</sup> and the Cardinal delights in fabricating stories about Cromwell's origins.<sup>44</sup> Stephen Gardener dismisses Cromwell's lack of filiation by saying, "whatever it is you call yourself, these days." Cromwell responds, "'A person' . . . 'The Duke of Norfolk says I'm a person.'"<sup>45</sup> As a person cropping up where he should not be, Cromwell is like a virus in the way he forms unscripted, non-hierarchic conjunctions with other bodies. Also called a plateau or multiplicity,<sup>46</sup> the rhizome creates alliances that effect real change.

The easiest way to illustrate both the alliances and the types of changes that take place in the classroom is with a quote from *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2*. Harry is questioning whether his conversation with Dumbledore is real or just in his head. Dumbledore replies: "Of course it is happening inside your head, Harry, but why on earth should that mean that it is not real?" First, rhizomatic alliances like a Harry Potter quote to explain Cromwell do not follow the arborescent rules of genealogy. Not following the arborescent rules is the only way to create anything new. Second, students often wonder if they have figured out Drayton's "real" intention or if they have discovered who a character like Cromwell really is, as if their internal experience with the texts are somehow not real, as if textual reality is external to what is in their heads. Reality, however, is not just in constant movement: what is real now will be a memory later that will be real but will not necessarily coincide with exterior reality. In affect theory, reality is immanent and co-composed (not just written but made) by each body's movements with itself (arborescent, rhizomatic, and change), other bodies (human, textual, ideal), and worlds (classroom, office, society). Memories are bodies; texts are bodies; we are bodies. In this way, bodies are always unpredictably multiple in their conjunctions with other bodies.

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 12-13, 16, 20, 25.

<sup>42</sup> Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 255.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 168.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 73, 218, 247.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 232.

<sup>46</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, 22.



Unlike the tree, which is reproducible and localizable, the rhizome is irreducible and un-localizable like the well-traveled Cromwell: “He is a person, he is a presence. He knows how to edge blackly into a room so that you don’t see him.”<sup>47</sup> Anti-genealogy and anti-memory, the rhizome is “detachable, connectable, reversible, and modifiable,” with “multiple entryways and exits.”<sup>48</sup> Rhizome-like, Cromwell survives “Walter’s boots,” “Cesare’s Summer, and a score of bad nights in back alleys.”<sup>49</sup> Although Cromwell is known for his accountancy and memory, he is likewise known for his radical creativity and flexibility: “There are some people in this world who like everything squared up and precise, and there are those who will allow some drift at the margins. He is both these kinds of person.”<sup>50</sup> Like Cromwell, the rhizome is made of conjunctions: “the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction, ‘and . . . and . . . and . . .’ This conjunction carries enough force to shake and uproot the verb ‘to be.’”<sup>51</sup> Cromwell not only changes the “to be” for his own life, he eventually forges the language-based tools to change the law, as former Queen Katherine observes: “‘I begin to understand you.’ She nods. ‘The blacksmith makes his own tools.’”<sup>52</sup> Like the rhizome, Cromwell embraces “a logic of the AND,” overthrowing “ontology, do[ing] away with foundations, nullify[ing] endings and beginnings”<sup>53</sup> in his own life and in Tudor England. The power of affect theory comes from forming rhizomes that deterritorialize arborescent power structures. Both Deleuze and Guattari sought to deterritorialize power relationships in their work: Deleuze was a philosopher who resisted the philosophical patriarchy to cite fringe figures like Spinoza, while Guattari challenged the psychoanalytic patriarchy. Through abolition of the doctor/patient hierarchy, Guattari sought to “promote human relations that do not automatically fall into roles or stereotypes” (ATP x). Teaching dangerously is less authoritarian and more experimental, moving away from the teacher/student relationship to co-composers in learning.

Cromwell exasperates the king by refusing a pedigree constructed by the heralds,<sup>54</sup> choosing instead to create his own family assemblage. When his son Gregory is born, Cromwell decides thus: “I shall be as tender to you as my father was not to me. For what’s the point of breeding children, if each generation does not improve on what went before?”<sup>55</sup> Cromwell welcomes alliances: nieces, nephews, wards, kitchen boys, and women like Helen Barr into the his family assemblage. When his nephew Richard asks to take the Cromwell name, Cromwell reflects, “It matters what name we choose, what name we make.”<sup>56</sup> Without a birthdate, Cromwell does not have an astrological fate,<sup>57</sup> and he takes the opportunity to change reality.

For someone like Thomas More, the arborescent system totalizes reality and imposes it on bodies. More is fixated on beginnings and endings; for someone like Thomas Cromwell, reality is immanent, unfolding in/with/through the body as it encounters other bodies in the ongoingness of lived experience. Through Cromwell students engage with the not-yet-ness of what he/they can do in the present.

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<sup>47</sup> Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 163.

<sup>48</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, 21.

<sup>49</sup> Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 92.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 228.

<sup>51</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, 25.

<sup>52</sup> Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 291.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 218.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 43-44.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid 178.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 334-335.

## Affect theory and language

Under the influence of affect theory, literary studies can sound more like science, and sentences become more like bumper cars, particle colliders, or pinball machines with words piling up, colliding with, and bouncing off each other in unpredictable directions that release unforeseeable energies. Compound prepositions such as “in/with/through/beyond” convey complex movements that happen at greater speeds and in more directions than language can express. Hyphenation signals co-performance of word forms together and the contingency of play underway like “a-structure,” “a-system,” “this-ness,” “not-yet-ness”; similarly, abstract nouns like “ongoingness” and “unboundedness” help articulate an ongoing state of play and/or an unfolding experience beyond words. Present progressive tenses play catch-up with movement as it flies past. Finally, the light-switch feature of the forward slash flicks words on and off like roll/role, exploiting both the “either” and the “or” potential, while prefixes like “re-” bend time or initiate process, redirecting words to articulate beyond their normal denotations.

Like the “re-” prefix, the prefix “em-” allows arborescent language to move more rhizomatically, adding force and more fully potentializing the noun and verb forms of play.<sup>58</sup> With play, “em-” can “put (something) into or upon what is denoted by the n[oun]”; for example, in *Wolf Hall*, Cromwell employs Cardinal Wolsey’s eviction from York Place: “It’s hard to escape the feeling that this is a play, and the cardinal is in it: the Cardinal and his Attendants. And that it is a tragedy.”<sup>59</sup> The prefix “em-” can “bring into a certain condition or state” or “furnish with something,” thus bringing texts into a state of play and/or furnishing them with movement.

As a prefix, “em-” can express “an additional sense of in.” This additional sense would be described as “so meta” on social media. In a news article, Ben Zimmer remarks on “the meta-ness of our current culture, where everything, it seems, can instantly become self-referential, self-conscious, and self-parodying. Observing the frenzied feedback loop of social networking and electronic communication can feel like looking through a dizzying hall of mirrors.”<sup>60</sup> In the tragic employment of the York Place eviction and the Cardinal’s humiliation, there are additional “meta” moments for Cromwell.

In the barge, Cromwell imagines their drama as an “allegory of Fortune” in which “Decayed Magnificence sits in the centre. Cavendish, leaning at his right like a Virtuous Councillor, mutters words of superfluous and belated advice, to which the sorry magnate inclines his head; he, like a Tempter, is seated on the left.”<sup>61</sup> When the barge journey ends in Putney, “the cardinal kneeling in the dirt”<sup>62</sup> takes on a dizzying “meta” afterlife in two employments: the Gray’s Inn drama<sup>63</sup> and a year later “The Cardinal’s Descent into Hell” performed at Hampton Court.<sup>64</sup> Although the Gray’s Inn and Hampton Court performances are farces, for Cromwell they are self-referential reminders of the Cardinal’s downfall. Finally, the prefix “em-” can express “more or less intensive force,” as it will later in *Bring up the Bodies* when Mantel’s Cromwell employs

<sup>58</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “em,” accessed November 30, 2015, <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.achcu.talonline.ca/view/Entry/60686?rsk=6xr6bc&result=4&isAdvanced=false>.

<sup>59</sup> Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 51.

<sup>60</sup> Ben Zimmer, “Dude, This Headline Is So Meta,” *The Boston Globe*, May 6, 2012, <http://www.bostonglobe.com/ideas/2012/05/05/dude-this-headline-meta-dude-this-headline-meta/it75G5CSqi82NtoQHlucEP/story.html>.

<sup>61</sup> Mantel, *Wolf Hall* 55.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 64, 57-61.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 174-176.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 266-270.

the drama that sends to their own real-world hells the play-acting “hand-devils” and “foot-devils” who carried the cardinal off.<sup>65</sup>

As affect theory focuses on forces operating on bodies rather than representational meanings, these linguistic special effects such as the “em-” prefix are essential as language scrambles and torques to convey multivalent, resonating forces. With this background and with the theory to follow, our classroom fandoms begin. Depending on the students’ year, this background and theory is followed up by Deleuze and Guattari’s “Rhizome” chapter, selections from *The Affect Theory Reader*, and selections from *Parables for the Virtual*.

### **Affect: how things move**

Affects are not just emotions. They are the beyond-words, non-human forces of the natural world like gravity, tides, or forces that shift tectonic plates, create weather systems, or cause calamitous: these affects flux, creating and destroying, organizing and disorganizing. These natural forces reverberate in/with/through the forces driving human cultures, and their complex interference patterns make distinctions like nature or culture impossible. In Drayton’s poem and in the “W.S.” drama, Cromwell’s birth exerts a gravitational force on his world. At Cromwell’s birth “Twice flow’d proud Thames, as at my coming woo’d / Striking the wond’ring borderers with fear, / And the pale genius of that aged flood.”<sup>66</sup> In the “W.S.” drama, it is Wolsey’s birth that impacts the world, and Cromwell reflects on the raw, non-human forces that create and destroy culturally defined hierarchies, which are subject to forces greater than themselves.<sup>67</sup> Whether they are called “time and fortune” or “fate,” these raw structuring and destructuring forces of affect mean the world is always a moving, processual middle. In this middle, “riff-raff” and “minions” are rising like the tide; “noble trains” are receding in the swirling, Thames-like ebb and flux of affect. Mantel’s Cromwell senses these reverberative and reverberating affects when the mathematician Kratzer outlines Copernicus’s theory:

the world is turning on its axis, and nobody in the room denies it. Under your feet you can feel the tug and heft of it, the rocks groaning to tear away from their beds, the oceans tilting and slapping at their shores, the giddy lurch of Alpine passes, the forests of Germany ripping at their roots to be free. The world is not what it was when he and Vaughan were young, it is not what it was even in the cardinal’s day.<sup>68</sup>

Affects are not just external forces operating on or registering in Thomas Cromwell’s bodily experience. Affects are also forces arising from his body as it encounters other bodies of all kinds: textual bodies, ideal bodies, animal bodies, object bodies. These body-based affects are a complex and unknowable envelope of forces tethered to individual bodies, and not just human bodies. These affects move the body and “put the drive in bodily drives.”<sup>69</sup> Classroom mini-lectures describe the body’s envelope of affects as a swarm of bees, a halo of angels (not all of them good), or a cloud of mythological beings. This envelope is far more complex than psychoanalytically-narrated drives like sex or death. These body-emergent affects are beyond language and, in that way, are unknown because the unconscious cannot be known through

<sup>65</sup> Hilary Mantel, *Bring Up the Bodies* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 2012), 268.

<sup>66</sup> Drayton, 218/17-19.

<sup>67</sup> Hazlitt (I. 2.30-48).

<sup>68</sup> Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 495.

<sup>69</sup> Gregg and Seigworth, 6.

language; it emerges through movement: “The issue is never to reduce the unconscious or to interpret it or to make it signify according to a tree model. The issue is to produce the unconscious . . . the rhizome is precisely this production of the unconscious.”<sup>70</sup> External and body-based affects operate in/through/with bodies, above and below the conscious level.<sup>71</sup> Because affects swarm, flux, and imbricate, finding an original cause for any single affect is impossible: affect is another moving middle in which bodies are embroiled. When a body with its own envelope of affects comes into proximity with another body with its envelope of affects, the swarms of bees, halo of angels, or mythological beings interact and move each other, toward or away from actions, experiences, things, or bodies.

### **Bodies: how we roll/role**

Bodies, and not just human bodies but animals, objects, and texts, are constantly being impacted but also impacting others. In affect theory, this is the body’s ability “to affect and be affected.”<sup>72</sup> The openness of a body to affect catalyzes the immanent and personal engagement with the body. Affect theory allows students to personally engage with course content because it accepts that embodiment is not just about thinking but feeling and moving. Bodies are irreducible to points on a grid, to names in a story, to positions in a hierarchy; they are always in process, in the middle.

Deleuze and Guattari have argued that signifying systems, which they call “the great dualism machines,” have falsely divided the ideal from the material, the mind from the body: “The question is fundamentally that of the body—the body they *steal* from us in order to fabricate opposable organisms.”<sup>73</sup> This assertion, based in the philosophy of Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677), has catalyzed affect theory. Whereas Western philosophy has privileged consciousness (what the mind can do) over the body, Spinoza famously focuses on what the body can do. “We speak of consciousness and its degrees, of the will and its effects, of the thousand ways of moving the body, of dominating the body and the passions—but *we do not even know what a body can do.*”<sup>74</sup> Deleuze and Guattari assert: “We know nothing about a body until we know what it can do, in other words what its affects are, and how they can or cannot enter into composition with other affects.”<sup>75</sup> These external and internal affects compose a body’s reality, playing roles and rolling in/with/through employments. Through employments, bodies become live stages on/with/through which the class unfolds through co-performance. With students, bodies like Cromwell’s in *Wolf Hall* and in the TV series are where possibility (arborescence), potential (rhizomatic), and change unfold through ongoing collisions with other bodies like the “W.S.” drama, Drayton’s poem, or *Bring up the Bodies*: academic fandom.

Arborescent signifying systems stop movement and miss reality because they position bodies according to systematic and hierarchic grids: their narratives are set to develop linearly through the biological time-line attached to their materiality, through the cultural time-line attached to their emotional, interpersonal, intellectual, economic, and/or social development. In *Wolf Hall* the Duke of Norfolk cannot connect Cromwell to any social hierarchy: “Damn it all, Cromwell, why are you such a . . . person? . . . He waits, smiling. He knows what the duke means. He is a

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<sup>70</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, 18.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 281.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 261.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 276.

<sup>74</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, trans. Robert Hurley. (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1988, 17-18.

<sup>75</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, 257.

person, he is a presence. He knows how to edge blackly into a room so that you don't see him."<sup>76</sup> Cromwell finds it amusing that Norfolk cannot categorize or grid him any more than Cromwell can categorize or grid himself, and he enjoys being off the grid and "where he shouldn't be."<sup>77</sup> This externally-imposed subjectivity is directed, mediated, and explained by language; however, it can only explain a version of what happened to some people after it has happened. Brian Massumi calls this back-formation.<sup>78</sup> Because Thomas More cannot think outside the hierarchic grid, he never sees Cromwell as a threat until too late: "He [i.e., Cromwell] thinks, I remembered you, Thomas More, but you didn't remember me. You never even saw me coming."<sup>79</sup> David Rundle has taken umbrage at Mantel's depiction of More "as a man so ensnared in his conservatism that he cannot tolerate modernity. By some paradoxical twist, that cosmopolitan scholar becomes a parochial stick-in-the-mud, suspicious of Cromwell's well-travelled career."<sup>80</sup> As a humanist, More thinks in arborescent terms and fails to adapt to a rhizomatically-changing reality.

Embodied subjectivity moves, and for Deleuze and Guattari and Massumi, the body is non-unitary and always in process. Conscious knowing moves between moments when bodies, like Thomas Cromwell, are self-aware and agential and moments when they are lost in an experience beyond the self in a process called becoming.

In becoming, a body temporarily loses a sense of self in connecting with the forces, bodies, and things in non-language based experience. These moments are like vortices. Everything is implicated: weather, space, mood, matter in a temporary *thisness* (a *haecceity*): a magical creative act in which map becomes a verb that creates a new world. Like the magical world of Hogwart's, affect theory moves and worlds the impossible through the magic (sometimes dark magic) of becomings, the spontaneous and transitory movements of texts and what these movements world in the classroom. Because becomings are achronological, non-verbal, and non-scripted, bodies are only aware of them when returning to self-awareness. As memories, becomings are bodies that can feed into future action to change arborescent systems. Through discussions, students explore moments when they lose a sense of themselves and get caught up in the story; students also do short writing assignments that give becomings to characters, metaphors, or events that are foreclosed by arborescent ways of thinking.

Elements from Drayton's poem and the "W.S." drama collide with Mantel's novels; this collision begins with an in-class employment prompt: "Find bodies in these texts and make them move like the flying keys in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. How do these bodies move beyond their arborescent roles of being and into unpredictable becomings? How do they take you beyond basic symbolic meaning? How do you form a rhizome with them, and how can they form rhizomes with other bodies to world something completely different?"

Here is an example of the dangerous fandoms created during an in class employment that drops us in the middle. Students remark that exercises like this help them move with/in/through the unpredictable dangers of affect theory.

In *Wolf Hall* the peacock-feather wings that Cromwell weaves for his little daughter Grace initiate a becoming-angel but also a becoming-immortal. Becoming is not about "imaginary resemblances between terms or symbolic analogies"<sup>81</sup> nor playing a role but about rolling or

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<sup>76</sup> Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 163.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, 255.

<sup>78</sup> Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002). 7.

<sup>79</sup> Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 640.

<sup>80</sup> Rundle "Cromwell," paragraph 3.

<sup>81</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, 260.

moving at the speed of what a body is becoming, and in becoming-angel, the angel becomes something else: us.<sup>82</sup> We give Mantel's Cromwell and James Frain and Mark Rylance wings.

Our in class employment plumes move us with Cromwell's peacock feathers at the speed of unmaking and loss: bright feathers unfurling darkness. "She walked up the staircase, her plumes rustling, her feathers fading to black."<sup>83</sup> Grace in Mantel, Grace on tv, Grace in/with/through us. For Cromwell, as for Daedalus, wing-making moves at the speed of mortality; Icarus, like Grace, plummets out of being, imploding Cromwell into a black hole, without Grace/outwith grace. At the speed of murder, we abet Cromwell's peacock-feather wings torturing Mark Smeaton into confession,<sup>84</sup> while Grace also transmigrates into a killer in her becoming-falcon.<sup>85</sup> Cromwell worlds his lost daughters, his wife, and his sister as falcons in his mews; his long-dead loved ones return to him as predators. Grace returns to grip Cromwell's glove, while Anne Cromwell's becoming-falcon allows her to return to Rafe Sadler's glove.<sup>86</sup>

Becoming-falcon engenders a "riot of dismemberment"<sup>87</sup> that fluxes into Queen Anne's own heraldic animal: the falcon. For Anne the falcon it is not symbolic but real; predation is what she does. Like hunting falcons, she takes prey: the head of Sir Thomas More, the "umbles and tripes" of "recalcitrant friars at Tyburn scaffold."<sup>88</sup> The hangman's work carving "innards," "tripes," and fat beads moves into becoming-fashion as Anne's gown ruffles and the macabre pearls. Anne's queenship moves at the speed of the executioner's blade, sprouting hideous inflorescence ("umbles") or corpse flowers. These grotesque flowers, the hideous inflorescence, blossom at the speed of predatory and carrion birds in the *Bring up the Bodies* chapter titles "Falcons" and "Crows." Anne's becoming-falcon torments heretics into immortality; her talons carve out the "false hearts" of dissenters.<sup>89</sup>

During the predatory summer, the king's hat flies off his head while he is hunting, and our becoming-Cromwell worlds it into a bird of paradise.<sup>90</sup> In Cromwell's becoming-demiurge, he stands on uncreated ground recreating Eden/Hell, reworlding the political and spiritual world as he knows it. This becoming-demiurge, becoming-bird flits back into his becoming-angel, the angel of death, uncreating all who disagree with the King's marriage to Anne and all who disagree with the King's new role as head of the church. Cromwell's becoming-angel, becoming-churchman catalyzes the king's becoming-pope, while the Italian pope endures a becoming-snow in the Cromwell household.<sup>91</sup> In their becoming-snow, the pope and the cardinals melt, evanesce into the afterlife of post-Catholic England. To the young boys that construct the snow pope and cardinals, Cromwell moves at the speed of an angel who transforms their lives with education, safety, shelter, and home. In the "W.S." drama, Cromwell moves like an angel in his generosity to the Banisters, Seelys, Frescobald, and his father. Cromwell's becoming-angel veers into finance when he gives a post-rider "two angels, to buy you spurs and wands. / Post: I thank you, Sir, this will add wings, indeed. / Crom: Gold is of power to make an eagle's speed."<sup>92</sup> These becomings-angel, becomings-wing engender types of immortality: Cromwell's loved ones live

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 258.

<sup>83</sup> Mantel, *Wolf Hall*, 176).

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, 274-279.

<sup>85</sup> Mantel, *Bring up the Bodies*, 3-4.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 38.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, 46-47.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, 26.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, 131-132.

<sup>92</sup> Hazlitt (II.1.16-18).

on, while his enemies enter the afterlife. As Drayton's premature angel, Cromwell moves beyond his untimely end. Rhizomatically, Cromwell is where he should not be, ignoring the "to be" of arborescent timelines. Cromwell lives on in renaissance and contemporary texts, in the canon and fanon of Drayton, "W.S.," and Mantel, resisting being history for becoming-history.

These becomings are unstable, unfixed, and always moving; they can spawn other becomings or direct the body back to moments of self-awareness. These movements toward and away from a sense of self de-pedestal anthropocentric idealism in classroom employments.

### **Re)leveling the playing field**

Western thought and humanist culture that (re)arose in the renaissance are idealistic and representational rather than real. Mediated through language, art, film, memories, objects, and symbols, representation cannot capture either the movement of lived experience or the immanent materiality of real life. Representational, language-based narratives/objects are not reality, even though the arborescent systems seek to construct an overarching view of the world. This overarching view is hierarchic and unequal.

Symbols or archetypes like demons, witches, sorcerers, vampires, and werewolves are not real but represent the fears of arborescent society. These are the others that the system shuns, the unprivileged half of the self/other binary, and Deleuze and Guattari use these types of "other" to promote social consciousness. As symbols or archetypes, animals represent what humans fear in themselves, and they function as scapegoats for unacceptable human desires; however, these symbols are not real in the Deleuzo-Guattarian sense but merely projections of bad human behavior.<sup>93</sup>

These representations reveal the inhumanity *in* humanities systems. At least three binaries emerge: first, the human/animal binary that gives humans Adam-Eve like power over creation and power to use and abuse the non-human. Second, the normative/other binary that excludes non-normativity as inferior, and third the superior/base binary that separates those of humanist taste and education from those who are not educated humanists, marking the former as superior and the latter as inferior "baggage" or "riff-raff."<sup>94</sup> Deleuze and Guattari employ/deploy animals, women, and children, and marginalized others to de-pedestalize anthropocentrism knowledge. Becoming-animal, becoming-vampire, becoming-werewolf are all about getting off one's humanist high-horse.<sup>95</sup> All of these becomings involve the shunned, different others who are perceived as inferior by inhumane systems. Deleuze and Guattari make us move away from the flat symbolism of representation/mediation and into inclusive experiences of reality where everyone and everything is equal in becomings. Witches, sorcerers, vampires, werewolves, rats, wolves, "baggage," and "riff-raff" co-participate in reality-generating experiences of alliance and affinity in an interplaying and em-playing fandom.

This type of "magic" is not so far removed from J.K. Rowling's wizardry. Affect theory empowers classroom fandoms that preserve canon: "Nothing of him that doth fade / But doth suffer a sea-change / Into something rich and strange."<sup>96</sup> For humanities teachers and students, there are ethical, theoretical, and existential reasons to effect a "sea-change" through teaching dangerously.

<sup>93</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, 239-251, 259-260.

<sup>94</sup> Bodley, 277-278, 82.

<sup>95</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, 292-294, 299-303.

<sup>96</sup> Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (I.ii.403-405).





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