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IN THE COMPANY OF CHEATERS OR RELATIVISM IN DUELS
HOW SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ARISTOCRATS RESEMBLE TWENTIETH-
CENTURY GANGSTERS IN FRENCH LITERATURE AND FILM

by

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A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of French and Italian
Brigham Young University

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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE COMMITTEE APPROVAL

of a thesis submitted by

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This thesis has been read by each member of the following graduate committee and by majority vote has been found to be satisfactory.

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As chair of the candidate's graduate committee, I have read the thesis of M. Cammeron Murdock in its final form and have found that (1) its format, citations, and bibliographical style are consistent and acceptable and fulfill university and department style requirements; (2) its illustrative materials including figures, tables, and charts are in place; and (3) the final manuscript is satisfactory to the graduate committee and is ready for submission to the university library.

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ABSTRACT

IN THE COMPANY OF CHEATERS OR RELATIVISM IN DUELS HOW SIXTEENTH CENTURY ARISTOCRATS RESEMBLE TWENTIETH- CENTURY GANGSTERS IN FRENCH LITERATURE AND FILM

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Department of French and Italian

Master of Arts

This document contains a meta-commentary on the article that I co-authored with Dr. Corry Cropper entitled “Breaking the Duel’s Rules: Brantôme, Mérimée, and Melville,” that will be published in the next issue of *Essays in French Literature and Culture*, and an annotated bibliography of primary and secondary sources featuring summaries and important quotes dealing with duels, honor codes, cheating, historical causality, chance, and sexuality. Also, several examples of *film noir* are cited with brief summaries and key events noted.

The article we wrote elaborates on two instances of cheating in duels: one found in Brantôme’s *Discours sur les duels* and the other in Prosper Mérimée’s *Chronique du règne de Charles IX*, and the traditional, as well as anti-casual, repercussions they had.

Melville's *Le Deuxième souffle* is also analyzed with regards to the Gaullist Gu Minda and the end of the aristocratic codes of honor that those of his generation dearly respected but that were overcome by the "commercial world of republican law and order."

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Although I would have loved to have done this on my own, I did not. I therefore liberally thank my wife for enduring the stresses of such a draining task. Secondly, but not by much, I thank Dr. Corry Cropper for his stalwart optimism and belief in me and this project even in the darkest hours. I thank my parents for their constant support throughout my education. I also thank Dr. Robert Hudson and Dr. Daryl Lee for their expertise and assistance during this project and also for their sacrifices in examining our article (and this paper) in order to give us direction and feedback. Finally, I thank my Father in Heaven for answering my many supplications with regards to this project and this program. There would be nothing but a blank page here if it were not for the assistance I have received from all of these sources.

Thank you.

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Preface

In order to fulfill the thesis requirement, I co-authored an article “Breaking the Duel’s Rules: Brantôme, Mérimée, and Melville,” with Dr. Corry Cropper. I also wrote this meta-commentary and annotated bibliography concerning relevant sources to our topic of cheating, duels, and honor codes in sixteenth and nineteenth-century France. The article was accepted in April 2009 to be published in the refereed journal *Essays in French Literature and Culture*. I had the specific responsibility to research Brantôme’s first two instances of cheating in his *Discours sur les duels*, to find other similar instances in literature and film, to write summaries of my findings, and to write drafts of conclusions and connecting material. I submitted these drafts to Dr. Cropper and he then selected and synthesized our article from these summaries along with research of his own. This process took several months and culminated in our final article.

I found and documented several instances of cheating in duels and or duel-like situations that were not included in our article, some of which are contained in the following annotated bibliography. I was also responsible for the preliminary research done with our secondary sources. Dr. Cropper reviewed my findings and included relevant information in the final draft of our article.

In order to “stay on the same page”, as it were, we worked on the article using an interactive Google document that allowed for simultaneous alterations. This facilitated our effort and also proved to be a very effective learning resource for me as to how a finished scholarly product is sculpted from raw research and summaries.

Dr. Cropper and I met weekly over the course of several months in order to coordinate our efforts, to share drafts, and to discuss potential avenues of study. These meetings were also highly motivational and instructive and proved to be an effective tool for breaking up this rather large task into manageable segments.

Introduction

Codes of honor have been, and continue to be, a prevalent part of society. In sports, business, marriage, and everyday affairs, adherence to honor codes and rules is generally encouraged, and infractions are normally punished. Given that punishment is by and large avoided by most, knowledge of significant honor codes is often sought after and beneficial. Just as traffic codes and marital laws are widely known in our day, chivalric codes of honor and rules concerning duels were well known during the Renaissance and among twentieth-century mobsters.

Honor codes and duels were as important in the dealings of twentieth-century gangsters as they were to sixteenth-century aristocrats. The importance of these codes, however, did not make them unassailable. While aristocrats and mobsters generally evoke dissimilar images, codes of honor and lethal contests are key components of both cultures. Both parties took justice into their own hands with regards to their honor and notwithstanding established legal systems. Neither group trusted their official legal establishments to do them justice with regards to honor and consequently went against these systems to carry out their own form of justice. Sixteenth-century aristocrats, as seen in Brantôme's *Discours sur les duels*, went against the kings' rulings (and at times desperate pleas) against duels and engaged in them in spite of royal interdictions. Twentieth-century gangsters, as portrayed in French films like *Du Rififi chez les hommes* by Jules Dassin, *Le Samourai* and *Le Deuxième souffle* by Jean-Pierre Melville, go against republican law by enforcing their own honor codes in turning to duels or

execution when offenses of honor or trust were committed. One could say that both groups were “cheating” the system, but more traditional cheating was committed by members of each of these groups as seen in the accounts to follow. Whether it was throwing dirt into an opponent’s eyes or hiding a spare revolver before a shootout, cheating played, and still plays, an important role in contests of honor.

Despite the crucial constituent of honor involved in these codes, or perhaps because of it, cheating inevitably took place in both *milieus*. Since duels were often held in order to avenge an insult which was deemed unmerited, the offended party would defend his or her honor via the duel. If the offended party was justified then the offender could be deemed capable of going against the accepted social mores, which could place this person in the same category as those who cheat. Furthermore, if the offended party exaggerated or bore false witness concerning the offense they could then be considered no better than the offender and, subsequently, in the company of cheaters.

Similarly, in today’s contests of honor (namely sporting events), cheating can and does occur. Though modern athletics are not normally instigated by a specific retaliation concerning one’s personal honor, they carry similar implications and produce similar effects. In many sports, for example, athletes or even coaches have been known to say or do something before meeting their opponents in their respective arenas to, in effect, turn the game or match into a duel of sorts (albeit not a mortal one), wherein the athletes and the fans might feel that their team must win in order to defend its honor. And while sporting contests generally come to non-lethal conclusions, a phenomenon comparable to the situations seen in several *films noirs* mentioned in this document is currently visible

in gang related “duels” or shootouts that continue to occur, and be portrayed in literature and film, across the globe. Therefore, I contend that the issues studied in our article and in this thesis continue to be of interest.

As seen in our article, cheating can also play an anti-causal role with regards to history, especially in Mérimée’s story of Bernard and Comminges, in which the cheater reigns victorious despite his recourse to magic and the traditional (casual) outcome is thwarted. This event can also be tied to the dichotomy between Catholics and Protestants in sixteenth-century France and how revolutionary Bernard, the Protestant protagonist, truly is.

In order to fully explore these concepts of honor, codes, and duels with regards to French literature and film, and so as to facilitate the continued study of these topics, I have compiled a list of documents with short summaries that could prove useful to research concerning similar topics. The following articles contain analyses on or references to honor, codes of honor, chivalry, duels, duel-like encounters, death, chance, cheating, treachery, violence, masculinity and other themes found in the primary sources cited in “Breaking the Duel’s Rules.”

Annotated Bibliography

Primary Sources

Bourdeille, Pierre de, seigneur de Brantôme. *Discours sur les Duels*. Arles: Editions Sulliver, 1997.

Brantôme recounts many duels in this compilation, the first two of which illustrate instances of cheating. In the first, the baron des Guerres throws dirt into the seigneur de Fandilles' eyes when he (the baron) realizes that he may be beaten in this duel. The baron heeds the council of his entourage amidst the confusion caused by a fallen bleacher (which counsel also constitutes cheating whereas the participants as well as the onlookers were under oath to say nothing during the duel). Brantôme's second story depicts another act of cheating. Brantôme cites Messire Ollivier de La Marche as he tells the story of Mahiot and Jacotin Plouvier. Mahiot killed a relative of Jacotin Plouvier but Jacotin claimed that Mahiot ambushed his relative and should therefore be punished to the fullest extent. Mahiot maintains that he killed in self-defense during a fight. A duel is scheduled to resolve the dispute. Brantôme describes several rituals performed to prepare for the duel and the duel itself. Mahiot eventually throws sand into Plouvier's eyes then delivers a blow to his forehead. Jacotin is the stronger of the two and takes Mahiot to the ground, gets on top of him, gouges his eyes, and then

defeats him. Mahiot is condemned to the gallows by the judges and later hanged. This original source document is a well known resource for any research on duels, chivalry, honor codes, or dealings in sixteenth-century French court.

La Chanson de Roland. Paris : Flammarion, 1993.

The duel between Thierry and Pinabel that is arranged to determine Ganelon's fate reveals the subjective character of the aristocratic code of honor and is an instance of a challenge to hegemonic power structures. The duel also attracts spectators, which indicates that the duel can be seen as a sporting event. Pinabel ultimately loses, resulting in Ganelon's (and his family's) execution. This strengthens the argument that the duel was also considered "le jugement de Dieu," as referred to in Diderot's *Encyclopédie* and that very early on in French culture and literature it was often used to determine a just course of action sans judges per se.

Chatauillard, Comte de. *Essai sur le Duel*. Paris: Edouard Proux et Comp., 1836.

In this "*code du Duel*," Chatauillard illustrates many of the duel's regulations and sets the rules of the duel up as a code, which attempts to justify its very existence. In the preface of his book, Chatauillard boldly defends the need for a universal code concerning duels and, by extension, defends the duel itself. He commences his argument by writing: "Si le code du Duel [note the capitalized "D"] est en dehors des lois, s'il ne peut y avoir de code que celui sanctionné par la loi, n'hésitons pas, cependant, à donner ce nom aux règles imposées par l'honneur,

car l'honneur n'est pas chose moins sacrée que les lois gouvernementales" (5). His closing argument reminds the reader that despite the many efforts of powerful men and institutions to stop it, the duel continues for "rien n'a pu en arrêter le cours" (6). He further argues the validity and necessity of the tradition of the duel by saying: "Chacun est exposé à cette dure nécessité de risquer sa vie pour venger une offense, une injure" (5). By submitting that the "Duel" is a necessity for every man, Chatauvillard evokes a certain "droit universel" quality that (he hopes) will make the lawmakers see the inevitability and the universality of this ancient practice of defending one's honor and to ultimately establish these rules so further fraud and unnecessary bloodshed will be avoided. Chatauvillard claims that this, the prevention of further unjust killings and careless but fatal errors by seconds and duelers themselves, is his sole desire in writing this essay that expounds and itemizes the rules of the duel. Chatauvillard's piece also gives very detailed rules for nearly all imaginable duels. He gives guidelines for duels with the acceptable types of swords, daggers, and pistols. The rights of the offended and the offender are enumerated as well as the responsibilities of the respective seconds.

Le Deuxième souffle. Dir. Jean-Pierre Melville. Perf. Lino Ventura, Paul Meurisse and Raymond Pellegrin. 1966. DVD. Criterion Collection, 2008.

An unwritten code of honor is a strong thread that runs through this film. Gustave "Gu" Minda (Lino Ventura) accepts one last job that will give him a comfortable retirement. Paul Ricci (Raymond Pellegrin) is in charge of this platinum heist but informs Gu that he will have to shoot one of the police officers accompanying the

armored car. Paul knows that this is much to ask (since this action will blatantly contradict an unwritten code of honor) but Gu accepts. This unwritten, unspoken rule manifests itself through the tone of voice and body language of these men. The viewer sees that premeditated murder of a police officer is to be avoided not only because of the legal consequences that could follow but also because of the moral implications within the code. However, when it comes to retaliation for unfair treatment and ruse, no holds are barred. Gu demonstrates a perfect illustration of this concept when he escapes from the hospital after having been “questioned” by some police officers. Gu was set up by Inspector Blot (Paul Meurisse) from Paris and named some names. Gu dies in a fire fight with police while reestablishing his honor as he is confronting Jo Ricci (Marcel Bozzuffi) and his associates after forcing the Marseille police chief, Fardiano (Paul Frankeur), to confess his unscrupulous interrogation methods. This film illustrates the changing of the guard that took place as the old *milieu* of the 1930’s was replaced by the new generation of intermixed “collaborationist” gangsters and police officers.¹

Mérimée, Prosper. *Romans et nouvelles* Vol. 1. (Paris: Garniers frères, 1967).

A prolonged duel between Bernard de Mergy (the protagonist) and Comminges (his rival) illustrates the element of chance that deposes the idea of logical historical causality found chez de Vigny and Guizot and confirms the existence and importance of chance in history. An example of cheating in a duel is also

¹ See Margaret Atack’s “L’Armée des ombres and Le Chagrin et la pitié: Reconfigurations of Law, Legacies and the State in Post-1968 France,” on the following page.

exemplified as Bernard has recourse to magic in accepting a talisman from madame de Turgis. This discombobulates the “hegemonic forces” of the Catholic Church and the perceived weaknesses of the Protestant protagonist. The connection between this refusal of historical causality and the Catholic vs. Protestant dichotomy that is explored in our article is also visible in this story.

Secondary Sources

Adler, A. J. "Resistance, Rebellion, and Death: Jean Pierre Melville's *Army of Shadows*." *Bright Lights Film Journal* 53 (2006).

Adler explores the existential nature of this Melville film and cites Albert Camus' comments on the subject. He claims that Melville's film is one not about the French Resistance alone but rather resistance in general and not as a political act but rather an existential one.

Atack, Margaret. "L'Armée des ombres and Le Chagrin et la pitié: Reconfigurations of Law, Legalities and the State in Post-1968 France." *European Memories of the Second World War* (1999): 160-174.

Margaret Atack says that the film “was not uncontroversial for its transplantation of the *film noir* gangster genre into a resistance story” (161). She says that it is “ideologically ambiguous” and criticizes Rousso's statement that “L'Armée des ombres” bears no trace of the events of 1968 (161). Rousso claims that the film is

discreetly Gaullist and that it is “incompatible with the abstract and timeless idea of ‘Resistance’ honoured by de Gaulle and Malraux” because of the strong focus on individual roles (161).

Billacois, Francois. "Notule sur le Discours des duels de Brantôme." *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* (1970): 425-426.

Important dates are discussed in this piece. François Billacois states that Brantôme’s *Discours des duels* was probably not finished until 1607 (died in 1614). He refers to Brantôme’s equestrian accident that led to his forced retirement in 1582 (426) and concludes by hypothesizing that this book was written in a period of twenty or more years, from 1582-1607. He cites one reference from Brantôme that would situate at least one of the excerpts in 1598 (20 years after a duel that happened in 1578) (426).

Bowles, Brett. "Documentary Realism and Collective Memory in Post-War France, 1945-1955." *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* (2007): 251-258.

Bowles argues that René Clement’s *La Bataille du rail*, Melville’s *Le Silence de la mer*, and Alain Resnais’ *Nuit et Brouillard* share a neo-realistic aesthetic and an identical archival challenge created by a lack of period footage. He also states that these “docudramas” were “essential to restoring France’s damaged credibility and ensuring its status as a major player in post-war international politics” (252).

Bowles says that these films served the same purpose as most of the other docu-dramas through the late 1960’s in supplanting “collaboration in collective

consciousness by erasing the traumatic audio-visual memory of wartime French-language newsreels produced by both Vichy and the Nazis” (252). Bowles addresses what he calls “France’s repressed collective guilt” with regards to Resnais’ film and then ties to Max Ophus’ film *The Sorrow and the Pity* (256).

Cocula, Anne-Marie. "Brantôme, Un Soldat et la politique." *Les Ecrivains et la politique dans le sud-ouest de la France autour des années 1580* (1982): 173-184.

Cocula begins by comparing Brantôme and Montaigne and finishes by stating that it was Brantôme’s realization that the king himself was less important than the monarchical principal that he represented that led to Brantôme’s transformation from a soldier to a politician. Cocula also mentions the decline of the “moyenne nobles” in the second half of the sixteenth century (183) and cites Henry the third’s refusal to pass on the heretofore traditional rights of *sénéchal* to Brantôme, along with his equestrian accident, as main factors contributing to Brantôme’s retirement and eventual overt interest in politics.

Cottrell, Robert D. “Brantôme's Prose Blason: A Key to His Imagination” *Romance Notes* (1968): 302-305.

Cottrell shows that the female legs described in these *blasons* reveal Brantôme as “voyeuristic,” (303) and that Brantôme’s vision of the leg is not static (as other *blasonneurs* were) but that his pictorialism “is an attempt to fix and define, not the structural reality of the leg as a concrete object, but rather the state of expectancy and tension aroused by the disappearance and sudden reappearance of a tantalizing vision” (304). Cottrell ends by describing Brantôme’s final

imaginative quality of “erotic fantasy ” (305) with regards to these legs, which coincides with the established argument cited in our article that des Guerre’s leg wound carries sexual implications.

De Ley, Herbert. “‘Dans les reigles du plaisir...’ Transformation of sexual knowledge in seventeenth-century France.” *Onze nouvelles études sur l’image de la femme dans la littérature française du dix-septième siècle* (1984): 25-32.

De Ley asserts that Foucault’s primary thesis in *La Volonté de savoir* is “that the history of sex from the late seventeenth century through the so-called Victorian period is not a history of repression but ... the history of a prodigious explosion of discourse, a tremendous expansion in the insistent study, classification, and codification of sexual activity” (26). He then summarizes key points from Ovid’s *Ars amatoria*, and Aretino’s *Ragionamenti* illustrating published examples of sexual content and concludes that they both “primarily present satires of mores, castigating the well-known social foibles, ironies, and evils of worldly society” (26). He mentions Brantôme’s descriptions in his *Dames galantes* as an example of a Foucauldian reduction regarding sexual discourse. He determines that there are two types of seventeenth-century sexual discourse: “the satire of mores and the play of resemblances,” and “the classification of sexual technique” (31). He also underlines that this (feminine) sexual revolution “is the transformation of sexual knowledge into an enumerated, classified, hierarchised, and hence objectified domain apart from other life pursuits” (31).

Germa-Romann, H el ene. "Les Gentilshommes franais et la mort selon Brant me."

Nouvelle revue du 16e si cle (1995): 215-238.

Germa-Romann argues that the French nobles of the "Ancien R gime" viewed an honorable death as a vehicle for their long-standing traditions. She states that, above all, these nobles concerned themselves with dying well, that is to say honorably, and that they even used death, ignominious or praiseworthy, as a teaching tool (215). She further states that "La belle mort," or "la mort au combat," was highly regarded but hard to come by in the sixteenth century era of artillery and that gentlemen were deprived of glory because of the availability of firearms. Germa-Romann defines "la bonne et la mauvaise mort" (221) and says that this obsession with a valiant death is a proof of personal honor (218). She even ties the noble "race" to death and purports that "une bonne mort est le signe d'une bonne race" (219). The absolution of past sins is also attributed to a noble death (221). Several examples from Brant me are cited and death is further categorized in a spectrum from shameful to glorious to remember. She later shows that the gap between the first half of the sixteenth century and the second is minimal with regards to glorious deaths but that the number of dishonorable deaths mentioned in Brant me's writings increased from eighteen to thirty five in the later half. Germa-Romann uses these figures to support her claim that honor was not as strong a driving force in the latter half of the century and that Brant me said it was the end of chivalric rules and the Christian republic (236). She finishes by saying that "les gentilshommes se conduisent en assassins," and that this might have influenced Brant me to choose a life of solitude, surrounded

by his memories of the glorious and honorable nobles of the past (236-37). She also gives an appendix of statistics concerning the occurrences and details of deaths mentioned by Brantôme.

Kavanagh, Thomas. "The Narrative of Chance in Melville's *Bob le flambeur*." *Michigan Romance Studies* (1993): 139-158.

Thomas M. Kavanagh explores the question of chance and its key role in this film. Kavanagh argues that chance is the driving force of the storyline and that, much to Bob's chagrin, *tuche* ultimately conquers over *techné*, which leads to the foiling of Bob's dream heist by this "blind accident" known as chance (145).²

Kilgour, Raymond L. "Brantôme's Account of Sixteenth Century Chivalry." *Harvard Studies* (1937): 119-150.

Raymond L. Kilgour writes about Brantôme's descriptions of what a great knight should be and the rise and fall of chivalry. He mentions that "bien mourir" is a key aspect of la noblesse de l'Ancien Régime. He compares Brantôme to Froissart and Montaigne and even says that though Brantôme did not purport to be depicting himself "his (Brantôme's) portrait stands out with greater clarity than that of his rival" (119). Kilgour later explains that Brantôme was especially disgusted with the honor that Montaigne received when he was awarded the insignia of Saint-Michel (the knightly order established by Louis XI) (126, 127).

² The fact that Bob broke his promise not to gamble until the heist was over also relates to the "*jugement de Dieu*" aspect of the duel. Perhaps the gods of chance respect honor and punish disrespect for it.

He notes that *Vies des Grands Capitaines* shows “comment les nobles perçoivent, attendant et espèrent cette mort” (216). He states that “Loyalty is a paramount quality in the knight” (150) and that: “Devotion (religious) easily becomes bigotry, which is unworthy of a true knight; hence he should be moderate in his piety and not display undue respect for the clergy, which is usually corrupt” (150). He gives this insight into the driving forces behind duels: “the knight must have a scrupulous regard for the point of honor and be ready to defend it vigorously in the duel. This punctilious conception of honor is the heritage of every true nobleman” (150). Kilgour hypothesizes that Brantôme was a knight himself and says that “While the great nobles trampled chivalric idealism under foot in the pursuit of their ambitious aims, the lesser nobility preserved it as their proudest ornament, since it offered them equality of honor, if not of wealth, with their suzerains” (150). This citation exposes, to some extent, the validity of the argument made in our article that duels were a political device. He finishes by stating that Brantôme was a major contributor to chivalric ideals and their survival (150).

LaGuardia, David P. *Intertextual Masculinity in French Renaissance Literature: Rabelais, Brantôme, and the Cent nouvelles nouvelles*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2008.

LaGuardia opens by stating that sexual desires (of both men and women) represented in Brantôme’s *Dames galantes*, Rabelais’s *Tiers Livre* and the *Cent nouvelles nouvelles* conflicted with the civil and ecclesiastic legal codes defining marriage. LaGuardia proposes to uncover the reason behind the popular use of the

cuckold in diverse European cultures and its significance in “popular and public imaginary of the time” (2). He also addresses the importance of sex in and out of marriage as well as marriage itself. He argues that the rules and codes concerning sex, and especially their limitations, were “masculinist” in that their objective was “the maintenance of the definition of men *as men*” (2). His fourth chapter is an analysis of selected stories from *Dames galantes* in which he argues that these stories show how “early-modern masculinity constructed itself through the display of masculinist emblems in and around the women’s bodies” (12). He also says that this dispersion of signs “transforms the male body’s virility into economic commodities” that Brantôme calls “distillation spermatique” (12). He asserts that masculinity is not and never has been a “solid and stable entity,” or “monolithic” (13). LaGuardia’s text also treats homosexuality, which could be applied to the argument made in our article about des Guerres homosexual actions and leg wound.

Nogueira, Rui. *Le Cinéma selon Jean-Pierre Melville*. Quetigny: Seghers, 1996.

In an interview conducted by Rui Nogueira on *Le Deuxième souffle*, Melville recounts the film’s genesis and gives key insights into its importance and background. Melville illustrates a clear demarcation between his films and himself (except for a two-minute scene in *L’Armée des ombres* that is from his personal life) (141). Melville answers questions such as: “Is Blot in love with Manouche?” to which he responds in the negative (144), and other such inquiries. Melville assures the reader that *Le Deuxième souffle* is a *film noir* and classifies

Bob le flambeur as “une comédie de mœurs” (137). Near the end of the interview, Melville says that when Gu shaves his mustache he is in essence committing suicide and that Blot is essentially resigning in dropping the notebook for the reporter to find after Gu’s death (147).

Savarin, Brillat de. *Essai historique et critique sur le duel, d'après notre législation et nos mœurs*. Paris: Caille et Ravier, 1819.

Brillat de Savarin refers to the power of honor in his work: “Les lois de Louis XIV, quoique inefficaces par rapport à leur but principal, nous ont cependant offert la preuve de la puissance que peut avoir un appel à propos à l’honneur français” (111). He cites the law that was written by Louis to condemn the practice of having seconds participate in a duel but it is the reference to honor that is of interest to this study.

Supple, James. “Brantôme, chevalier humaniste?” *Marguerite de France, Reine de Navarre et son temps* (1994): 171-180.

James Supple asserts that Brantôme was a humanist because he understood the connection between durable glory and literature. Supple specifically cites Brantôme’s instructions concerning the posthumous publication of his works to illustrate his point: “Brantôme n’apprécie que trop sa valeur de la gloire littéraire, comme le prouve son testament où il donne des instructions précises concernant la publication posthume de ses œuvres : “autrement je serois frustré de ma peine et de la gloire qui m’est due” (171). Supple concludes by showing that Brantôme realized that palaces crumble but writing lasts eternally (180). He gives more

proof of Brantôme's humanism: "Brantôme aurait compris, comme Montaigne, que les livres sont 'la meilleure munition à cet humain voyage' " (171). Supple also says that Brantôme lauded Guillaume du Bellay as being a great combatant and author (174).

Vulson, Marc de, sieur de la Colombière. *Le Vray theatre d'honneur et de chevalerie, ou, Le Miroir heroique de la noblesse*. Paris: Chez Augustin Courbé, 1648.

Through his writings, much like Brantôme, Colombière incites his fellow nobles to action. This original text contains a particular quote that illustrates the perceived sense of duty to country and king that these duelists (tournament fighters who seemed to have participated in duels of honor) exhibited in defending their honor (and their ladies). Near the beginning of his book, Colombière writes that the nobles of olden times were much more robust and full of vigor and that a look into this "heroic mirror of the (ancient) nobility" should be gazed into by modern (at that time) nobles in order to understand the "true theater of honor and chivalry," as stated in the title. There are several recountings of notable tournaments and even a few "tournois d'outrance," and then this quote used in the article with relation to the motivation behind duels: "L'honneur de leur Nation, la gloire des Rois, ou la beauté & le mérite de leurs maîtresses, étant les principaux aiguillons qui les incitaient à ces honorables Emprises" (266). The "honorables Emprises" are the honorable and noble tournaments in which the knights were engaged, and even the "duels" of honor in which they participated.

Other Relevant Sources

Bob le flambeur. Dir. Jean-Pierre Melville. Perf. Daniel Cauchy, Roger Duchesne, Guy Decomble, André Garet Isabel Corey. 1955. DVD. Criterion Collection, 2002.

This “*comédie de mœurs*” shows how vice can gratify and destroy (Nogueira 137). Bob (Roger Duchesne) is a rundown *voyou* hooked on gambling but the promise of one last great heist motivates him to snap back into action and put his gambling on hold. However, he forgets his promise and gambles the night of the heist. He rushes to his post but only in time to see his protégé shot down. Melville himself said that Huston’s *Asphalt Jungle* forced him to delay and modify his plans for this film (Nogueira 67). Dr. Riedenschneider’s (Sam Jaffe) comment that one cannot account for “blind accident” is also believed to have influenced the theme of chance that pervades this piece (Kavanagh 145). These two ideas, that honor and chance play vital roles in this story, support the thesis in our article as well.

The Earrings of Madame de.... Dir. Max Olfus. Perf. Charles Boyer, Vittorio de Sica, Jean Galland, Mireille Perrey, Paul Azaïs, Josselin, Hubert Noël, Lia di Leo Danielle Darrieux. 1953. DVD. Criterion Collection, 2008.

Monsieur le baron Donati (Vittorio de Sica) is chasing Madame de... (Danielle Darrieux) and she eventually falls for him. They spend quite some time together but Monsieur de... (André) (Charles Boyer) eventually has enough of Madame’s

obsession over the earrings that keep finding their way into his possession and tells her it's over. She is mortified and ceases to function normally. André (le générale) decides to take care of this situation: he finds Donati and confronts him about something he (Donati) had said concerning the army and its generals. This confrontation finishes in a duel provoked by the general. Louise (Madame de...) tells him that meeting André in a duel is suicide. Both Donati and Monsieur de... are willing to give their lives for their honor much like the aristocrats of old. No cheating took place in the duel; however, this film remains pertinent because of its themes of aristocratic honor.

Guitry, Sasha. *Mémoires d'un tricheur*. Paris: Gallimard, 1935.

This text contains several pertinent references to chance and cheating. While the protagonist is in Monaco, he mentions that the “vieilles dames” didn't lose their money to the casino but rather entrusted it to the “dieu Hasard” (78). This relates to Brantôme's use of “la fortune” as a god-like force (Bourdeille, *Discours sur les duels* 47). He also mentions that these ladies were convinced that they understood the system and that chance was not a factor in their gambling (78-79). The protagonist also states that the founder of Monte-Carlo, François Blanc, “occupait son temps à demander au Destin si le hasard allait ou non le favoriser” (80). With regards to the winning streak that his future wife had while he was working the roulette wheel, the protagonist states : “Mon intention n'était pas d'embarquer Dieu dans notre aventure et de lui donner une part de responsabilité dans une action délictueuse, en somme – et j'attribuais tout bonnement ce miracle à

l'ascendant physique et singulier que cette femme avait sut moi. ” (109). He decides that he wants to have some kind of contract between them but wonders: “quelle est, devant la loi, la valeur d'un contrat ayant pour objet le partage d'un vol” (110) ? He marries this woman, makes detailed plans to cheat at the casinos but fails : “Donc, j'avais *voulu* tricher, mais je n'avais *pas pu* le faire, malgré tous mes efforts” (115). He is fired when he is unable to cheat while he's trying to (how ironic) and subsequently decides to become a professional cheater: “Quelle est la première pensée qui peut germer dans la cervelle d'un homme puni pour n'avoir pas triché ? Triché ! Parfaitement. Et voilà la raison pour laquelle je suis devenu tricheur” (116). He divides cheaters into three categories and the last one (the “tricheur de profession) into three more sub-categories (119-122). He gives a definition of cheating : “Ce n'est pas seulement s'opposer à l'œuvre du hasard, c'est se substituer à lui” (122), then states “Je triche – donc, le hasard, c'est moi” (122). Detailed description of how to cheat at roulette and at chemin-de-fer: (124-135). Finally, he becomes a “jouer” despite his previous disdain for them (122) because of the “charbonnier” that saved his life in 1914. Finally, he loses all his “earnings” (that he'd accumulated over 7 years of cheating) in a few months of gambling without cheating (149).

Du Rififi chez les hommes. Dir. Jules Dassin. Perf. Carl Möhner, Robert Manuel, Jean Servais. 1955. DVD. Criterion Collection, 2001.

Dassin's film illustrates the crucial idea of an unwritten code of honor. After Tony (Jean Servais) finds his friend and associate Mario (Robert Manuel), and his wife,

Ida (Claude Sylvain), dead in their apartment, he goes to Grutter's nightclub in search of Pierre (Marcel Lupovici), Rémy (Robert Hossein), and Louis (Pierre Grasset). Instead, he finds César (his Italian safe-cracking accomplice) (Jules Dassin) tied to a pillar but no Grutter brothers. Tony says to César: "I liked you, Macaroni. But you know the rules." He then shoots and kills his Italian friend for making the terrible mistake of giving his lover the ring he had taken from the heist and especially for double crossing Mario and Ida. In contrast to César, Mario and Ida never did "talk" (the viewer knows this because when Tony went to their place he found the jewels right where they had been stashed).

Le Samourai. Dir. Jean-Pierre Melville. Perf. Alain Delon, et al. 1967. DVD. Criterion Collection, 2005.

Melville's film exhibits similar themes of honor and a dying breed of those who observe its conventions. Jef Costello (Alain Delon) is a samurai-like hit man, motivated by a peculiar sense of honor difficult to comprehend by most in his context. Jef has several duel-like encounters with the blond-haired man and his employer. Jef commits a sort of samurai suicide in the end by remaining faithful to his personal code of honor all while sparing Valérie's (Cathy Rosier) life in the process. Jef Costello values honor in a similar fashion as Gu and ultimately gives his life in defense of principles of honor. Jef Costello is also linked to some of Melville's other characters in *L'Armée des ombres* by Margaret Atack when she states: "They (Philippe Gerbier and other group members) know their mission will lead to their deaths, and are the blood brothers of *Le Samourai*," and further

expounds on this idea by saying: “They bear their suicidal knowledge, that their only end is death, and they will continue to act by their codes of honour and loyalty” (171).

Sample of Changes

Working together via our Google document proved especially beneficial to me in the final stages of our revisions when I could see exactly what Dr. Cropper was doing to the sections that I had written in order to make them more scholarly. Seeing this gave me a clearer picture of how to go about writing a publishable piece. For example, Dr. Cropper's section in the article on Brantôme is easy to follow and contains several key arguments that were lacking in my original drafts. He introduces the connection between Marie de France's *Guigemar* and Brantôme's baron des Guerres and explains that the leg wound that des Guerres suffered is similar to Guigemar's wound and that this carries implications of a sexual nature.

There is also a clear demarcation with regards to our respective writing styles. Dr. Cropper breaks up the in-text citations and inserts his arguments in a much more digestible fashion. In general, I lean towards longer quotes from the original texts and then try to expound after giving the reader the quote that inspired my comments. The following example will illustrate some of these observations.

Dr. Cropper wrote this paragraph which concisely creates a broad foundation for the ensuing paragraphs while citing pertinent historical information in which to frame the argument:

Pierre de Bourdeille, seigneur de Brantôme, the great chronicler of sixteenth-century France, in addition to describing the loves of the *dames galantes* and the *hommes illustres*, studied contemporary issues of

masculinity and codes of honor in his numerous accounts of duels. One account, dating from the reign of Henri II (who would himself be killed in a joust), features the rare act of a nobleman cheating during a duel. The baron des Guerres, accused of sodomy by the seigneur de Fandilles (“le sujet est fort salle, car il touche la sodomie” [44]), challenges Fandilles to a duel. Because Henri II, who is still upset by the death of a friend in a duel (a friend who died as a result of the now famous “coup de Jarnac”), will not allow duels on his lands, the two take their dispute to Sedan, a then independent area governed by M. de Bouillon, who graciously sets up a stadium for the “amusement” of the “force dames et demoiselles, gentilhommes et autres, qui s’y estoient mis pour veoyr ce cruel passe-temps” (46).

My version of the same paragraph is much longer and less defined but still touches on many of the main events:

Pierre de Bourdeille, seigneur de Brantôme tells a tale of a cheater in his *Discours sur les Duels*: the seigneur de Fandilles, who was terrified at the sight of the lit fire and the prepared gallows for the enemy of the baron des Guerres but fortune was with him. The baron has the right of deciding the weapon as he is the offended and chooses “une espée bastarde,” or longsword. This choice is then challenged by M. le vidasse, who was the “parrain” of the seigneur, to which it is stated that the Swiss use nothing but this arm in warfare. M. le vidasse can say no more and so the duel

commences. The first blow is a mighty one from the seigneur de Fandilles that cuts deep into the baron's thigh and immediately begins to drain his strength. The baron then opts for hand to hand combat and begins to strike the smaller seigneur de Fandilles despite his wound. Then, fortune would have it that, "La fortune voulut que le combat estant en tels termes de suspension," (46) some bleachers holding the onlookers started to fall just as the baron was about to succumb to his injury. Brantôme's choice to personify "la fortune" reveals his point of view concerning the interchangeability of fortune and God. Amidst all the commotion some of the baron's entourage shouted out for him to throw dirt into the seigneur de Fandilles' eyes and mouth (which thing they never would have dared do if it had not been for all the confusion and commotion caused by the falling bleachers for they knew full-well that this suggestion and the act itself were both clearly against the rules of engagement and would taint the very honor the baron was trying desperately to preserve).

I also submitted the following conclusion to Dr. Cropper for our article. Although it differs from the version in the finished piece, it underscores many of the same ideas with different verbiage:

Cheating stands as an equalizer, a manifestation of rebellion, a celestial tool and a demonic device. Brantôme's cheater is thwarted by the will of God and is ultimately castigated for his dishonorable actions. Mérimée's cheater, however, contravenes the existing religious and socio-cultural

mores and ultimately challenges the very notion of history for those like de Vigny and Guizot, essentially toppling the notion of historical causality. Even dueling itself, and particularly its increased frequency, stands as a quintessential illustration of counter-cultural resistance, standing in defiance to republican justice and seeking preserve ancient practices of aristocratic honor. Melville's protagonist, Gu, is similarly trying to defend ancient practices of honor just as futilely as he fights against the collaborating cops and defecting mobsters in a similar fashion that the duelists of old were fighting against the Republic. The glorification and ennobling of mobsters by film makers is a more modern continuation of this same situation in which the old-fashioned gangsters replace the abolished aristocracy and the officers of the law become the charlatans.

In the end, cheating is a key component of a relativistic cycle in which it acts as both a catalyst and a consequence of the hegemonic powers that be. It is spawned from discontent with current conditions which persist in fundamental opposition to it. It is the fuel for revolution (as per Bernard chez Mérimée) and the fodder of dominion (as seen in *Le Deuxième souffle*). Embrace it or despise it, cheating plays a dynamic role in societies, sub-cultures, history, and duels.

The submitted conclusion is shorter and focuses further on the dynamic nature of the definition of cheating:

If we do not offer here a general, over-arching theory of cheating at duels, it is because the duel, like most sports, changes significance as political pressures and cultural norms evolve. When the duel is an acceptable means to resolve disputes between honorable men, cheating vilifies the law breaker. When the duel is itself a form of lawlessness, cheating becomes a means of undermining the codes of the subversive—if honorable—subculture. The duel may also provide a mechanism for an author to introduce elements of chance or the fantastic into his narrative, making the story that much less predictable and that much more human. In short, an awareness of the duel and its accompanying rules (reflective of a period's values) allow the reader to recognize modes of transgression, forms of revolt, and metaphoric counter-discursive practices employed by authors who take advantage of the duel's cultural currency.

Both of these versions recapitulate the points made in the article that cheating is a method of revolting against established institutions and conventions and that it is defined by the societal and governmental norms of the time whereas Dr. Cropper's version highlights cheating's dependency on hegemonic structures, codes, and institutions.

With regards to the article as a whole, working closely with Dr. Cropper helped me see how to be more concise and explore connections that greatly enhanced the inter-textual richness of the article. Dr. Cropper connects relevant historical contexts as well as other pertinent works to the argument. Many more connections were brought to my attention while doing secondary source research such as the relationship between the shift

that occurred with regards to honor among mobsters in post-World War II France and Melville's *Bob le flambeur* and *Le Deuxième souffle*.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this document should prove useful for further elaboration on cheating, duels, honor codes, or any of the authors or works cited herein. While this study is by no means complete, some pertinent connections between cheating in the sixteenth and twentieth centuries are explored as well as cheating in various domains along with its causes and repercussions. The topics of cheating as an agent of chance and as a dependent and toppling force with respect to hegemonic institutions are examined more extensively in our article while the importance and interconnectivity of honor codes and rules is also a notable vein explored in this study.

Further avenues of research of related topics only mentioned in this study are the change that occurred after World War II among the gangsters and the police officers in relation to their observance or disregard for honor codes; the continuing occurrence of cheating in modern sports and warfare and how they are similar or dissimilar to the examples analyzed in this study; and the fact that duels were fought by men, even when a woman's honor was at stake and how this could be tied to LaGuardia's book on masculinity and how it is defined. In this same vein, the male role in the *milieu* could be analyzed by seeking answers to the questions "What were women's roles in the mob?" "What role did honor play in defining a male mobster?" and "Why did men seem to do most of the 'dirty work'?"

There are numerous possibilities, and this study is far from exhaustive, but I hope that this document will prove useful for further study on these topics.

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