

**“LIFT THE LID, THERE’S LOTS INSIDE!” A BAKHTINIAN READING OF
TANVIR’S *CHARANDAS CHOR***

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Abstract

Habib Tanvir’s ripping play Charandas Chor celebrates the charismatic domain of ‘inside-out’ of carnivalesque as well as delves deeper into the subversive stratified society where everything is in Bakhtinian ‘upside-down’ order. This inverted order is mapped not only through the exteriorities of society but it is inextricably intertwined within the very texture of societal hierarchy. The entire play is written in a hilarious tone to tear the hypocritical mask of the society and to turn upside down the societal hierarchical norm only to normalize it. Paradoxically the play is about a ‘thief’ but from the very beginning the thief is on his way to unmask different people from different walks of life. It unfolds the journey of Charandas, a thief towards his attainment of Truth at the very cost of his life. Ironically Charandas, a thief’s erect ethicality is not mowed down by different Foucauldian punishments which are meted out by the stigmatized state. Charandas’s quest for Truth enables him as the representative of Bakhtinian ‘lower stratum of the body’ where new life is generated. Vis-a-vis Bakhtinian inside-out Charandas probes ‘inside’ the characters only to bring ‘out’ pungent souls of themselves and the very society itself. The Queen’s order of different ‘punishment’ fails to ‘discipline’ (dominate) Charandas as he is so rectitude within himself. The ‘ascent’ of Bhaktinian ‘grotesque realism’ is represented in the ‘ethics’ of a ‘thief’ and the ‘descent’ can be seen in the ‘politics’ of a Queen. The ‘ascent’ of morality (attainment of Truth) finds its ground on the ‘descent’ of hierarchical social structure (in the body of Charandas, a thief).

Habib Tanvir’s ripping play *Charandas Chor* celebrates the charismatic domain of ‘inside-out’ of carnivalesque as well as delves deeper into the subversive stratified society where everything is in Bakhtinian ‘upside-down’ order. This inverted order is mapped not only through the exteriorities of society but it is inextricably intertwined within the very texture of societal hierarchy. The entire play is written in a hilarious tone to tear the

hypocritical mask of the society and to turn upside down the societal hierarchical norm only to normalize it. Paradoxically the play is about a 'thief' but from the very beginning the thief is on his way to unmask different people from different walks of life. It unfolds the journey of Charandas, a thief towards his attainment of Truth at the very cost of his life. Ironically Charandas, a thief's erect ethicality is not mowed down by different Foucauldian punishments which are meted out by the stigmatized state. Charandas's quest for Truth enables him as the representative of Bakhtinian 'lower stratum of the body' where new life is generated. Charandas's figure reconfigures the very essence of Truth as the lower stratum of the societal body.

Bakhtinian world of 'inside- out' and the vitality of its lower strata is reflected in the folklorian world of *Charandas Chor* from the very beginning of the play. Mister Babu Das, havaladar of the old cadre tries to catch the thief of the golden platter and grabs Charandas but he befools him. Though a policeman he is not much interested in grabbing the thief but sharing the booty. This very incident reveals the truth of the society when Havaladar discloses that a golden platter has been stolen. Later we find Charandas appears before a Satnami Guru and takes four vows: "I'll never eat of a golden plate ... I'll never mount an elephant and lead a procession ... I won't ever marry a queen, guru-ji ... If all the people of a country get together and beg, 'Charandas! Be our king, take the throne,' I'll refuse. I'll say, "no, I won't be your king." (Tanvir 73) Guruji insists Charandas to give up telling lies as it would cure his habit of thievery. Taking the Guru seriously Charandas takes the magical vow: "Guru-ji, I swear in front of everyone gathered here from now on I'll never tell a lie. That's a solemn vow. I stand by it." (Tanvir 75) By swearing this vow he ultimately very truthfully and unintentionally unmasks the very religious profession of his Guru.

CHARANDAS: Well, I steal at night, in the dark, stealthily, entering home through holes in the wall-while you sit here in broad daylight, openly, with a crowd of people around you. And you make much more than I do. (Tanvir 75)

The guru is not so much interested in his disciples' transformation. He only cares for the 'guru dakshina' by which he can survive. Before Charandas the guru had already a drunkard, gambler, smoker as his disciples but they don't take their vows seriously - they "surreptitiously begin to indulge in all the vices they are meant to have renounced. The drunkard takes a swig from a bottle tucked into his waist, the gambler deals out from the deck of cards he had placed before the guru and has since slyly retrieved, and the smoker lights up and starts puffing away." (Tanvir 70) Though a thief, Charandas keeps his vow till his death; Charandas embraces death like a martyr only to keep his vow before the Guru. Ironically the disciple becomes a Truth-Speaker as well as a Truth-Seeker. We can take cue from A.B. Dharwadker's oft-cited observation in the book *Theatres of Independence: Drama, Theory, and Urban Performance in India since 1947* (2005):

... Charandas is flanked by two antithetical male figures – the foolish havaladar (constable), who is a type of defunct authority, and the Satnami guru, a charismatic yet ambivalent male ideal ... the constable is the stock gull who provides vicarious release for the villagers' pent up emotions against the governmental machinery of "law and order". Belonging to an older world of ascetic discipline (symbolized by his white robes and beads), the religious guru imposes his own code of conduct and makes uncompromising demands on a succession of dysfunctional males – a thief, a drunk, a gambler, a drug addict – who stumble across his path. But he succeeds in "reforming" no one except Charandas and seems to be motivated largely by a callow interest in *guru-dakshina*, the disciple's traditional material tribute to his master." (346)

It is also interesting to note that in spite of the presence of authority, social exploitation and perversion is rapidly going on in the village. It can be testified by the Peasant's speech which is full of pity and agony in Act I Scene iii:

PEASANT: There's a terrible famine in the village. Many of us have starved to death. My own children haven't eaten a thing for three days. Not a crumb ... There is a big landowner in our village. He has fields in ten villages, a tubewell, a water pump, electricity-his crop is flourishing. But he won't share even a kilo with those of us who have nothing. If anyone goes near his godown, his hirelings beat them off with their lathis. (Tanvir 78)

In his confrontation with the Landlord Charandas shows that he is as loyal to his profession of thieving as to his vow truth-saying. Charandas openly challenges Landlord to rob him of his rice altogether.

CHARANDAS: I'm warning you-you'd better listen to me or I'll rob you of all your rice ...

PEASANT: Do as he says, malik, or he'll turn things upside down. (Tanvir 81)

From the very saying of the peasant and particularly from the very use of the phrase 'upside down', it can be said that Charandas is the very force of carnivalesque societal upheaval. Ironically a thief becomes a legend to resist the ongoing oppression on the common people. Disguised as a Rawat dancer Charandas steals the sacks of rice for the poor villagers. In this way Charandas becomes an Indianized Robinhood to protect the poor from the tyranny of the rich. This avatar of Charandas is summed up beautifully in the choral song:

Oh listen, brothers and sisters, to what we have to say.

Charandas is not a thief, not a thief, no way!

Palaces and mansions, he'll break into and steal,

The poor man's hut is safe from him, he gives us a good deal. (Tanvir 84)

In Act I scene v Charandas makes his foray into a temple. Charandas donates a basketful of jewellery and gems on the offering plate. He confesses blatantly before the priest that he has

come to garner more wealth from there. The Priest gives shelter to him only to be befooled at the end. Charandas steals all the valuable things including the golden idol. If the golden idol in the temple is to be considered as the symbol of Truth then it can very aptly be said that Charandas is not happy with the snippets and snatches of truth but he wants to take hold of the full-fledged glory of Truth.

Charandas's pinnacle of thievery is the plan of robbing the royal coffers. Charandas befools not only the Havaladar for innumerable times but also the very Minister with the assistance of his Guru. Even the Munim is beguiled by assuming him as the Minister. Charandas steals only five gold coins to make his presence felt to the Queen. Munim, the guard of the coffer steals another five gold coins. This very incident of Charandas tears up the facade of societal structure and reveals before everyone that he is 'chor' by profession but everyone around him is thieving in their own way. In his own way Charandas unmasks each and every character to highlight the troublesome truth of the society.¹

The text nurtures anti-establishment and anti-institutional theme candidly. It lacerates the society in several parts only to reveal its putrid nature. Before looting the coffer Charandas reveals before the Guru that the very governmental agent and protector of society is his friend or pal. The ironical fate of the society itself is revealed when the Minister is garlanded to the extent of closing his eyes and to be guided by the Guru, the thief's aid:

MINISTER: But I can't see a thing! My eyes are totally covered!

GURU: Don't worry maharaj. I'll be your eyes. (Tanvir 94)

Charandas regards his profession as his 'Dharma' and wants to excel in it not in terms of acquiring wealth but in garnering name and fame as an excellent thief.

By referring to Charandas as 'ubiquitous but uncatchable' (347), Dharwadker observes that Charandas' character is multifaceted to reflect the various layers of human psychology. Charandas steals only to sustain himself which again points out the state's inefficiency to provide for its citizens. He is not like the avaricious Havaladar which is clear from two incidents. He finds himself incapable to loot the crying wife of a wealthy merchant and a poor *sattuwalla*. This streak of empathy enables Charandas to ascend the ladder of humanity. Though he takes the vow of truthfulness, he describes thievery as his 'dharma' before the Satnami guru. Dharwadker categorizes Charandas as an 'agent' who dismantles the 'carnavalesque male domain' as Charandas "takes a solemn vow before the guru never to lie and attaches several unnecessarily fantastic oaths to that resolve, the *guru-chela* (master-disciple) relationship turns into an inexorable bond and sets him on a collision course with the female world of act 2." (347)

Act II scene i portrays feminized male member who fear of virtual 'castration' by Rani's authority. It is registered in the Minister's speech after knowing about the theft: "Well you'll rot in jail for this. The Queen's really going to give us hell-and you're coming with me to court, to get your share!" (Tanvir 96) The so long cherished binary formation of public

man/ private woman has been dismantled. Woman controls man's faith in this part of the society. Act II symbolizes masculinized woman in the authoritarian figure of the Queen. The magnificent role reversal is shown through submissive hierarchized position of male bureaucracy underneath the Queen. The hierarchical position is effectively shown through the stage setting:

The royal court. The Queen enters in a rage, accompanied by two bodyguards, followed by the minister, the munim, and the Raj Purohit. The queen is on the platform, with the guards who take position on the platform. The others are on the stage. (Tanvir 96)

Taking cue from Dharwadker we can understand that "Charandas erupts into this world of reversed gender roles because he wants to reach the pinnacle of his career as a thief and flout the Rani's authority at the same time by committing a symbolic theft from her treasury." (347) Tanvir has juxtaposed the male world (Act I) and female one (Act II) just to indicate the gap between the two worlds.

From Act II scene iii it can be observed that there lies an intermingling of ethics and politics in the play. The love- hate tussle between the thief and the Queen finds its way out in the form of erect ethicality of the thief and perverse politics of the Queen. After knowing about the theft in her coffer the Queen summons Charandas. Charandas here blatantly reveals that everyone steals while only he confesses as it is his 'karma' and 'dharma' as well.

QUEEN: So stealing is a good job, is it?

CHARANDAS: Good or bad, everyone steals, rani-sahib.

QUEEN: What do you mean?

CHARANDAS: Others steal on the sly, while I do it in broad daylight, with great fanfare. That's the only difference. (Tanvir 99)

The Queen asks Charandas to lead a procession on an elephant back and to eat of a golden platter but he is so principled and strict to his vow that he refuses even the Queen. Here in this play woman decides as well as derides. Authority never wants to entertain another man's wishes. Here in this play Queen's authoritarian voice wants to repress Charandas's vow: "Look, forget your vow, and obey my command instead ... I order you to eat." (Tanvir 106)² As the play itself is the very embodiment of role-reversal, it textualises a space where the fate of a man has thrown under the pity of a woman. Very surprisingly also the politics of the state here intervenes with the ethicality of a person only to devalue the ethics itself and to undermine a subject's strong determination before a queen as the queen fumes in fury: "Mantri-ji, Charandas has insulted the state. Put him behind bars." (Tanvir 106) Forceful incarceration of a subject is the only way out to impose state's orders and obligations.

Charandas has the guts to refuse the golden opportunity to rise in the existential ladder – such strong rebuttal makes and marks him as the protagonist of the text. The imploration of the Queen to Charandas to marry her is the extreme point of role-reversal and the prospect of

a person in the margin to come to the centre is apprehended. But morally upright Charandas denies the political ladder only to stick to his ethical erectness in spite the queen's repeated request: "My life is empty without you, Charandas! I want to marry you. Look, don't say no. You've refused me everything I've asked you so far. Please agree to this one request. The kingdom needs a King like you. What do you say? Think well before you answer. Don't refuse me, Charandas." (Tanvir 109) Regarding the carnivalesque role-reversal here in this play symbolically the 'clown' (Charandas's agility, vitality and the quality of befooling other relates him to the vibrant feature of a Clown) is for the 'crown'.³ Paradoxically the symbol of centrality as well as state (Queen) is asking permission from a marginal person (Thief) in the society. The ravenous putrid society needs guidance from a righteous purified thief.

There is also some mask of transformation in Rani's characteristic sheds – she is masculine in public appearance but she is feminine to Charandas, playing the stereotypical female submissiveness; she reverts back to masculinity when Charandas refuses to pay any agreement to Rani's grand proposal:

QUEEN: To me you're a god. I'll worship you, adore you, serve you. No other man has ever touched my mind and heart the way you have. Ever since I set eyes on you, I can't sleep, I can't eat or drink a thing! Charandas, take pity on me! Don't refuse me. (Tanvir 110)

Due to the tactful imposition of incompatibility of men world and women world a clash between 'male chastity' and a 'predatory female sexuality' (Dharwadker 347) becomes very much overt.

Righteousness in a thief is so uncommon that the virtue attracts the very Queen enormously. Ironically the reality of the society reveals that deceptiveness in every sphere is taken as a norm, so the truthfulness in a thief astonishes everyone. The adherence to Charandas's own vow and attraction towards the Queen leaves him in a conspicuous conspiratorial conundrum. Charandas falls in such a position that he has to encounter a confrontation and contestation of these two worlds-unavoidable and inescapable situation – for Charandas returning is as tedious as going over: "I vowed never to do four things- and such is fate that one by one each of those things has been offered to me! How was I to know that a queen like you would really want to marry me? Now you tell me, what can I do? ... Sorry, rani-sahib, I can't break my vow. I just can't." (Tanvir 110) Rectitude of Charandas rejuvenates Queen's mind. Being stick to strict ethicality attracts the Queen but she forgets the fact that Charandas is so right-minded that he would not even accept the command of a Queen. The State can appreciate rare virtue but when it defies the very State's orders and wishes then the State doesn't hesitate to vilify the very incarnation of virtue: "Vow! Vow! Vow! Damn your vows! Charandas I'm warning you for the last time! Think it over carefully. Will you change your mind?" (Tanvir 110) But, as expected, Charandas is not ready to change his mind as he is bound by vow of truthfulness to his Guru and to never marry a

queen. Lastly the ironical role-reversal occurs when the Queen, the epitome of law, order and justice, orders a virtuous truthful man not to divulge that she has asked him to marry her. The very Queen, the pillar of justice issues an unjust order only to preserve her own dignity. Charandas's innocence becomes a subject to ruthless regimentation. Ironically Charandas's nemesis becomes his very truthfulness. Ironically enough, Charandas gets death order only for adhering to his principles. This kind of incident is expected from a society when the society loses its stoutness to reveal its stigmatized stature and its upside down order: "*Charandas Chor* is constructed on the principle of *carnavalesque reversal*, the principal of a world *turned upside down*. There is a reversal of hierarchy, particularly on moral and ethical levels." (Malick 13, my emphasis) The following conversation establishes the fact that Charandas is not ready for any negotiation with the Queen:

QUEEN: (rushes to the platform). Dead men tell no tales! Have you lost your desire to live, Charandas?

CHARANDAS: Whether I live or die, I won't go back on my word my guru. I can't break my vow. I beg you, rani-sahib, forgive me! Don't have me killed! Don't commit the sin of murder! (Tanvir 111)

Non-reciprocity of Charandas leads him to his doomed battered fate. Dharwadker reads the character of Charandas as a 'sacrificial victim' who dies for the 'sin of sexual transgression' and such contest between 'a fellowship of ascetic males' and 'the sovereign authority of women' (348) leads to patriarchal impotency. Charandas is true to his self till the end. His body is punished for not being submissive to the state.⁴ This situational juxtaposition of a Queen and a thief reveals before us the working of power relations within society as well as its hierarchical status and central-margin binary. The refusal to the proposal offered by a Queen unravels the power of the Crown over a subject as it is condemned without any crime. Without any adherence to logicity, the Crown establishes its own law and order quite insanelly.⁵

The Queen who was all praise for Charandas turns into a hostile persona and abuses him for not fulfilling her wishes and for his sheer truthfulness. Earlier the Queen addressed him as 'god'; now the 'god' turns into a 'gall of the man' and 'a common thief' (Tanvir 111). Ironically the Queen is all 'praise and abuse' (Bakhtin's observation on Rabelaisian language) for Charandas – most of the time abuse is the flipside of praise; there is a fine line between the two which blurs their distinction very oftenly.⁶ Jilted in love the Queen reaches to a nadir of viciousness. The juxtaposition of a thief's vibrant veracity and a Queen's fetid falsity makes Charandas's murder all the more ironical. The sheer savagery of unrequited love finds its vent in the Queen's order of Charandas's slaughter. The Queen shouts for Guards and orders them to punish Charandas in a severe way. Such instances of authoritarian rage lead us to think the Foucauldian concept of execution:

The public execution is to be understood not only as a judicial, but also as a political ritual. It belongs even in minor cases, to the ceremonies by which power is manifested ... Besides its immediate victim, the crime attacks the sovereign: it attacks him personally, since the law represents the will of the sovereign ... The intervention of the sovereign is not, therefore, an arbitration between two adversaries: it is much more, even, than an action to enforce respect for the rights of the individual; it is a direct reply to the person who has offended him. (47-8)

Very ironically the woman who confesses love to Charandas for his truthfulness orders his death for that vow of truthfulness. The Queen orders almost each and every type of corporal punishment only to appease her wounded monarchical self: "Such a rogue should be slaughtered, sliced into pieces, hung, drawn and quartered!" (Tanvir 112) It can easily be related to the Foucauldian stratification of 'torture' and the 'culmination of a calculated gradation of pain' that begins with 'decapitation' which is followed by 'hanging' and culminates in 'quartering'.⁷ The dramatization of Charandas's execution is taken place in a ceremonial way. The language which is used to describe the execution is very dramatic and ceremonial in its own way: "To slow drumbeats, the centries advance towards Charandas with stylized movements, with their weapons drawn. They close in on him. They attack and fell him. The drumbeats cease." (Tanvir 112) Vis-a-vis this 'momentarily injured sovereignty', the ceremony of punishment, in Foucault's reading, becomes an 'exercise of terror'.⁸ The grandeur of public execution and its validation in monarchical society is established through the murder of an innocent man.

Charandas is strategically murdered. In fact he becomes the scapegoat. It would not be an overstatement to say that the sacrificial death of Charandas is occurred to safeguard the honour of a monarch. The use of Satnamis' worship as dramatic strategy has been very much effective to connote the role reversal – truth is exposed at the cost of the life of a thief. Turning upside down of the societal order is revealed through the worship of a thief. Incidentally, Charandas becomes the legend of self-sacrifice. The ritualistic homage of Satnamis to Charandas's dead body uplifts him to the stature of a martyr:

The lamp is placed where Charandas's head lay. As they leave, the Satnamis, barebodied with white loincloths, carrying their white flags, enter. On the spot where his head lay, they plant the flag on a pedestal, place the lamp on the pedestal, break a coconut, shower the spot with flowers, circling the pedestal, and singing their song. (Tanvir 112)

It is also interesting to note that in spite of the presence of authority (queen), social exploitation and perversion is rapidly going on in the village. Not only Charandas's death indicates hypocrisy/perversion practiced by the queen, but also the severe incidents those precede Charandas's death are virtually akin to social dystopia. Perversion or corruption is practiced in every layer of social strata – from the highest queen to the lowest *habildar*. To

borrow Bakhtin's words, the characters in the play "transfer top to bottom, and bottom to top, both in the literal sense of space, and in the metaphorical meaning of the image" (370). Charandas was exceptional and consequently he has to sacrifice his own life that will appease tyranny and perversion of the world. Charandas as a folkloric hero and his "mercurial personae as amoral thief, trickster, disciple of a truth-seeking guru, and protector of the oppressed" (Dharwadker 346) adds colour to the drama as well as characterization of a legend. The creation of a legend in the truthful marginalized character like Charandas fulfils the demand of a highly destabilized society. Critic like Angshuman Singh has rightly pointed out:

This transference of Charandas into the symbolic realm implies the destruction of the real process of redistribution of material goods and the beginning of the legend of Charandas which (it is hoped) will inspire and propel people towards a better future ... This conceptualization of 'folk' lays down the ideological foundations of the play. It involves the notion that the people, in order to wage an effective battle against the tyranny of the State, need legends and symbols, given their propensity to adore and worship martyrs and saints. (337)

The recurrent use of white colour in the Satnamis loincloth or in the flag represents the Truth – it is the Truth for which Charandas is dead as well as for which he attains martyrdom. The incomparable power of Truth and its essence is musically employed in the song of the Satnamis. Throughout the play Songs play a vital role in conveying the theme of the play – "An ordinary thief is now a famous man" and "His heroic exploits, dear friends, are now immortalized" (Tanvir 112). The Choric closing song of the play unfolds the story of Charandas Chor, a folkloric hero and his attainment of immortalization following the path of truth, in a condensed and concentrated manner. The song also reveals the ironical dichotomy of Charandas's destiny who is referred to, oxymoronically enough, as 'the honest thief'. Though a thief, Charandas's honesty is mentioned recurrently through different characters' speech in the play and this advertisement leads him to the status of a legend and a martyr. His strict ethicality in characterization is mentioned even in the choric song to validate the glory of his persona. At last it can be said that through the ritualistic worship of Satnamis and the last Choral song a sense of social justice and triumph of truth is evoked and invoked after Charandas's death.

Multifarious social realities are reflected through the prismatic character of Charandas. Vis-a-vis Bakhtinian inside-out Charandas probes 'inside' the characters only to bring 'out' putrid souls of themselves and the very society itself. The Queen's order of different 'punishment' fails to 'discipline' (dominate) Charandas as he is so rectitude within himself. The 'ascent' of Bakhtinian 'grotesque realism' is represented in the 'ethics' of a 'thief' and the 'descent' can be seen in the 'politics' of a Queen. The 'ascent' of morality

(attainment of Truth) finds its ground on the 'descent' of hierarchical social structure (in the body of Charandas, a thief).

NOTES:

1. In his book on Dostoevsky, Bakhtin notes that man's relation to man has been posited in a new dimension. In the Foreword to Mikhail Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World* (translated by Helene Iswolsky), Krystyna Pomorska very pertinently observes: One of the essential aspects of this relation is the "unmasking" And disclosing of the unvarnished truth under the veil of false claims and arbitrary ranks. (x)
2. At this point we can take help from Krystyna Pomorska's analytical observation in the Foreword to Mikhail Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World*:
Bakhtin repeatedly points to the Socratic dialogue as a prototype of the discursive mechanism for revealing the truth. Dialogue so conceived is opposed to the "authoritarian word" (*avtoritarnoe slovo*) in the same way as carnival is opposed to official culture. The "authoritarian word" does not allow any other type of speech to approach and interfere with it. Devoid of any zones of cooperation with other types of words, the "authoritarian word" thus excludes dialogue. Similarly, any official culture that considers itself the only respectable model dismisses all other Cultural strata as invalid or harmful. (x)
3. "Debasement and interment are reflected in carnival uncrownings, related to blows and abuse. The king's attributes are turned upside down in the clown; he is king of a world "turned inside out." (Bakhtin 370)
4. At this time it would be relevant to mention Foucault's observation in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison*: "... in our societies, the systems of punishment are to be situated in a certain 'political economy' of the body ... the body is also directly involved in a political field; power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs. This political investment of the body is bound up, in accordance with complex reciprocal relations, with its economic use; it is largely a force of production that the body is invested with relations of power and domination ..." (25-6)
5. In accordance with Foucault, "... the body of the condemned man; he, too, has his legal status; he gives rise to his own ceremonial and he calls forth a whole theoretical discourse, not in order to ground the 'surplus power' possessed by the person of the sovereign, but in order to code the 'lack of power' with which those subjected to punishment are marked. In the darkest region of the political field the condemned man represents the symmetrical, inverted figure of the king." (29)
6. "The fusion of praise-abuse belongs to the very essence of the Rabelaisian language. It would be superficial and radically false to explain this mixture by the fact that in

every real part of the existing world, as well as in every real individual. Positive and negative traits are always combined. Because there is always a reason for praise as well as for abuse.” (Bakhtin 416)

7. “Torture is a technique; it is not an extreme expression of lawless rage. To be torture, punishment must obey three principal criteria: first it must produce a certain degree of pain, which may be measured exactly, or at least calculated, compared and hierarchized; death is a torture in so far as it is not simply a withdrawal of the right to live, but is the occasion and the culmination of a calculated gradation of pain: from decapitation (which reduces all pain to a single gesture, performed in a single moment- the zero degree of torture), through hanging ... to quartering, which carries pain almost to infinity; death-torture is the art of maintaining life in pain ... Torture rests on a whole quantitative art of pain... In the ‘excesses’ of torture, a whole economy of power is invested.” (Foucault 33-5)
8. “The public execution, then, has a juridico-political function. It is a ceremonial by which a momentarily injured sovereignty is reconstituted. It restores that sovereignty by manifesting it at its most spectacular ... the punishment is carried out in such a way as to give a spectacle not of measure, but of imbalance and of excess ... The ceremony of punishment, then, is an exercise of ‘terror’... The public execution did not re-establish justice; it reactivated power.” (Foucault 48-9)

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