

## Roger Boyle's *The Tragedy of Mustapha* and English Restoration Politics

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### Abstract

In this article, I argue that Roger Boyle's *The Tragedy of Mustapha* (1665) can be considered as an early alarm that warned of the dangerous consequences of the succession crisis in Restoration England. The play represents a broad range of English political expectations and concerns behind a smokescreen of a modified version of Turkish history. Boyle made use of his long political and military experience to diagnose the political dilemmas of early Restoration period. In addition, Boyle took advantage of Charles's interest in theater to deliver certain political messages to the king and the political nation. Boyle used the allegorical story of Sultan Solyman and his sons to touch on the upcoming succession crisis that would endanger the whole nation. The play stresses the importance of having the process of succession performed without foreign interference in order to avoid chaos and infighting.

### Keywords

Roger Boyle, *The Tragedy of Mustapha*, Muslims on English Stage, Restoration Period, English Succession Question

## I. Introduction and Literature Review

On the surface, the play under consideration in this study tackles issues about conflicts that seem detached from events happening in Restoration England. However, Roger Boyle skillfully used the characters and events of his play as allegories for relevant internal crises in England. Prominent among these political concerns was the succession question, specifically oriented around the fact that Charles's lack of a legitimate heir meant that his brother James – openly known as a Catholic – was next in line to the throne.

The succession question haunted the politics of the Restoration during the reigns of Charles II (1660-1685) and his brother James II (1685-88). In fact, the restoration of English

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monarchy in 1660 did not provide a clear settlement in terms of the old claims of power between the king and Parliament. Charles II, who had sought an absolute rule similar to that of his cousin Louis XIV of France, faced a stubborn Parliament which strove to monitor the King's domestic and foreign policies (Bucholz and Key, 2004, p. 287).

During the 1660s, the succession was not the major pressing concern for the nation. Instead, Callow (2000) explains, the relationship between the Court and Parliament focused on the religious settlement, land settlement, and taxation. However, the second decade of the Restoration period brought new tensions and more serious concerns to the political nation. In 1673, the king's brother and heir created anxiety when he refused to take Anglican Communion. Parliamentarians and zealous Anglicans feared a disastrous scenario in which England would be ruled by a Catholic king (pp.144-45). This fear was bolstered by the fact that the years James spent in France –the prominent fortresses of Catholicism in Western Europe – had introduced him to the beliefs of Catholicism.<sup>2</sup> James made the bold move from Protestantism to Roman Catholicism in 1668 or 1669, although he managed to keep his conversion secret for some time and maintained an Anglican identity during the first half of the 1670s.

The growing fears of the increasing Catholic influence at court, in general, led Parliament to introduce the Test Act of 1673. This Act required all civil and military office-holders to take an oath to subscribe to the Anglican liturgy and ceremonies. After he had failed to subscribe, James resigned from his post of Lord High Admiral as his Catholicism was no longer a secret (De Krey, 2007, p. 104-6). His marriage to the Catholic Mary of Modena, an Italian princess, only added more fears about the Catholic influence at the English court.

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<sup>2</sup> See Miller (2000) for more about French influence on James.

The fears of a potential Catholic monarch were increasing during the second part of the 1670s. As Charles – in his forties at that time – had no legitimate heir, Parliament struggled to exclude James from succession. In addition, the "Popish Plot," which broke out in 1678, spread scares about the menacing Catholic danger. In 1678 Titus Oates, an Anglican clergyman, warned of a Popish conspiracy to kill Charles in order to hasten James's succession. Oates's fabricated plot acquired great national credibility and posed more attention to the sensitivity of the succession issue. The Earl of Shaftesbury, a leading figure in Parliament during the crisis, attempted to ensure the exclusion of any future Catholic heir from succession to the English throne. Shaftesbury was among the prominent architects of the Exclusion Bill of 1679 that aimed to exclude James from the succession to the throne (De Krey, 2007, p. 156). Harris (2005) points out that the name of the Protestant Duke of Monmouth, one of Charles's illegitimate sons, was circulated also in the Parliament as a possible alternative to James (p. 74). In 1679, Charles II dissolved Parliament to prevent the passing of the Bill. The two following Parliaments of 1680 and 1681 faced the same destiny as opposition Parliament members insisted on passing the Bill. The Exclusion Crisis had one major consequence: the emergence of two political parties - the Tories, who supported the king and his supreme authorities, and the Whigs, who supported the Bill, opposed the king, and called for more power for Parliament. Although the Whigs failed to "secure" the throne, James was isolated and deprived of holding his office in the government. Eventually, the Stuart brothers succeeded in securing the "legitimate" heredity of succession as James succeeded to the throne after Charles's death in 1685.

## 2. Roger Boyle

In this tense political atmosphere, many new plays questioned and discussed the issue of succession as a direct response to the nation's worries. As early as 1665, Roger Boyle dramatized such concerns in his *The Tragedy of Mustapha*. Boyle's play was an early response to how the succession crisis became a source of national polarization. What follows is an investigation of Boyle's life, particularly his political allegiances that caused him to address such a sensitive issue.

Roger Boyle, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Orrery (1621 – 1679), was a dramatist, a military leader, and an active politician who was elected in English Parliament during the Commonwealth and Restoration periods. Boyle had a unique political experience that enabled him to be a political adviser of Oliver Cromwell during the Interregnum and then, when Charles II was restored in 1660, to rise as one of the King's favorite courtiers and poets. Boyle was a zealous Protestant politician and, as might be gauged from his role in the Irish Confederate Wars, known for his antagonism towards Catholics (Lynch, 1965, pp. 72-5). This reputation and attitude encouraged him to speak of his fears and concerns regarding the possibility of having a Catholic king on the English throne.

Boyle's political life and involvement with the major historical events of his time needs to be examined with some detail since his military and political activities are key points to understand the representations of Muslims in his play *The Tragedy of Mustapha*. Lynch (1965) points out that Boyle had good connections with Charles I's government as his family aided the king against the rebellious Scots during the first Bishops War of 1639. The significant role of Boyle's family in this war enabled the young man to get acquainted with the Stuart's court and its concerns (pp. 21-4).

Despite his good connections with Cromwell and the Parliament during the Commonwealth period, where he served to subjugate the Irish, Boyle succeeded in building a strong relation with the restored monarchy. His service to Charles I as well as his wide military and political experience made the reconciliation with Charles II possible. In fact, the prominent event that helped reestablish the connections between Boyle and the English monarchy was Boyle's offer to restore the exiled king in Ireland (Uglow, 2009, p. 70). The king was about to accept Boyle's invitation when a better alternative was presented to him: the king chose to return to England instead in response to General Monck's offer in 1660. Nonetheless, Charles rewarded Boyle by creating him Earl of Orrery in September of the same year. Moreover, Boyle was appointed Lord President of Munster and Lord Justice of Ireland. This was followed by many other grants from the young king to Boyle and his other loyal subjects (Lynch, 1965, p. 109). Charles dealt with Boyle as a trusty advisor and their personal friendship grew as time passed.

Interestingly, politics was not the only subject of the numerous meetings between the two. Both Charles II and Boyle showed interest in literature in general and drama in particular. Boyle knew how to take advantage of that mutual interest. Maguire (1992) states that Boyle wrote *The Generall* in 1661 at the king's request (p. 34). Charles was so pleased with the play that he wrote to Boyle as follows:

I will now tell you, that I have read your first play, which I like very well, and do intend to bring it upon the stage as soon as my Company have their new stage in order, that the scenes may be worthy the words they are set forth [. . .] I have no more to say to you at the present, but to assure you I am | Your very affectionate friend | Charles R. (as quoted in Airey, 2012, p. 39)

The King's words show the exceptional status that Boyle achieved at the court. Lynch (1965) points out that along the same lines as *The Generall*, Boyle's *Black Prince* (1667) was written at the King's request, too, and Charles and his courtiers attended the first performance of the play (p. 148).

It is obvious that Boyle employed his talents in writing to speak of his political positions. His literary production during the early years of the Restoration period reveals the man's increasing tendency to use plays to comment on the most contemporary topics. Tomlinson (2015) observes that the Restoration stage "provided a unique opportunity for a Restoration courtier playwright such as Boyle to examine some of the most pressing political issues of his day in the presence of the king" (p. 560).

In a similar vein, Maguire (1992) argues that many of Boyle's plays reassured Restoration audiences that Charles' order and rule had triumphed over the Commonwealth chaos (p. 94). Furthermore, it is noted that in many of his productions, Boyle used his talent to strengthen his political position by flattering Charles and his court. In his Prologue to *The Black Prince* (1667), for instance, Boyle attacks the French and scorns their monarchs who cannot be compared with "great" Charles and his victorious army,

Their frightened lilies shall confess their Loss,

Wearing the crimson Liv'ry of your Cross;

And all the World shall learn by their Defeat,

Our Charles, not theirs, deserves the name of Great. (Prologue 27-30)

Interestingly, Boyle took a unique stand in which he was loyal to his king but, at the same time, opposed Catholics and Catholicism to whom Charles showed considerable sympathy and indulgence.<sup>3</sup>

### 3. The Play

In *The Tragedy of Mustapha* (1665), Boyle addresses one of the prominent political concerns of his time, i.e. the succession question. This crucial political concern gained enormous attention, especially because Charles was still childless after years of his marriage to Catherine of Braganza. Boyle touches on this political issue by using a sophisticated political allegory. The court of Sultan Solyman, the setting for his play, was an astute choice that could convey much of Boyle's views. The plot of the play revolves around Roxolana, Sultan's wife and mother of Prince Zanger, who was second in line of succession. Roxolana plots to murder the rightful heir to the throne, Mustapha, in order to have her son declared the new Sultan. The play is set in Buda, Central Europe, where Turkish court life is the subject of most of the Acts. The use of Buda as a setting of the play holds great significance for the Restoration audience. In fact, Medieval Hungary resisted Ottoman advances and formed an advanced Christian frontier during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. In fact, the Habsburg monarchy realized the importance of having a strong defense system to stop any further Ottoman conquests in Europe. Palfy (2000) points out that during the early decades of the sixteenth century the Hungarian border defense systems of fortresses were built to protect not only Hungarian territories but also the Austrian lands and the vast German Empire (p. 3). The Habsburg Empire was at that time supported by the Holy Roman Empire and Habsburg Spain.

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<sup>3</sup> See Susan Owen (1996), especially pp. 37-8, for more about Charles's indulgence of Catholicism.

The historical setting and moment that Boyle dramatized in his play require deep understanding of the history of people represented. In 1526, the Ottoman Empire forces, led by Sultan Solyman I, defeated the Hungarian armies under King Louis II at the Battle of Mohacs near the southern borders of Hungary. The fallen king died shortly without a legitimate son; as a result, the kingdom experienced a period of political chaos. Both Janos Szapolyai, one of the most influential political figures in the aftermath of the Battle of Mohacs, and Ferdinand Habsburg, Louis II brother-in-law, demanded the throne of the kingdom. The Hungarians witnessed a short but destructive civil war in 1527 that ended with the victory of Ferdinand (Curtis, 2013, p. 68). Sultan Solyman deepened the wounds of the war-torn kingdom and launched a large military attack in 1529 that ended with conquering vast territories of Hungary under the rule of King Ferdinand Habsburg. In 1541, Sultan Solyman occupied Buda and absorbed the central areas of the Kingdom of Hungary into the Ottoman Empire. Meanwhile, western and northern parts of Hungary remained under the rule of King Ferdinand I.

It took about 145 years for the Christian forces to expel the Ottomans from Hungary. The first remarkable outcome was the victory at the Battle of Saint Gotthard in 1664, one year before Boyle's play had its debut. The Habsburg army defeated the Ottomans and forced them to negotiate the Peace of Vasvar (Parry and Cook, 1976, p. 170). In 1684, Pope Innocent XI established the Holy League that included, in addition to the Holy Roman Empire forces, Poland and Venice with the intention of driving the Ottoman Turks out of Europe. The 15-year war between the Holy League and the Ottoman Empire was known as the Great Turkish War. The Christian League gradually expelled the Ottoman forces from most of the Hungarian territories they captured during the sixteenth century and forced them to cede the rest of the territories

to the Habsburg Monarchy in the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699 (Parry and Cook, 1976, p. 170). Beginning in this year, the Ottomans retreated to the south and abandoned more European lands to the Habsburg monarchs.

Boyle does not then present a fancy setting in his play. Instead, he calls a setting that was, to some degree, familiar to the English audiences, who learned about the Ottomans and their history from travelers' accounts and history books. The latter, in particular, supplied the English reader with numerous accounts about the Ottoman Empire. For example, Richard Knolles's *Generall Historie of the Turkes* (1603) with its several continuations discussed official Anglo–Ottoman diplomatic documents. In addition, the 1631 edition of the *Historie* contained episodes in Anglo–Ottoman trade issues. Also, piracy in the Mediterranean was among the concerns of the fifth edition of Knolles's book that appeared in 1638 (Ingram, 2015, pp. 96-100). In fact, the unpleasant news about the Ottoman's expansion in Europe during the sixteenth century, the collapse of the Kingdom of Hungary, the subsequent taking of Buda, and the Ottoman siege of Vienna stimulated great interest in continental accounts about Hungary. Ingram (2015) adds that this country was considered as an anticipated battlefield between Christian Europe and the Ottoman Empire. Thus, the Hungarian front was a source of disquiet for the Holy Roman Empire and led the Pope to call for a new Crusade in Hungary (p. 30).

History books supplied Englishmen with numerous accounts about the conflict in Central and Eastern Europe. The fall of Buda and collapse of the kingdom of Hungary initiated "an unprecedented spate of English works" that reported to Englishmen detailed accounts about this part of Europe (Ingram, 2015, p. 23). Knolles's work was undoubtedly the most prominent and widely read account of the history of the Turks to be available to early modern English readers. Knolles (1610), in the course of his account of Solyman the Magnificent, presents a

thorough account about the fall of Hungary in the face of the Ottoman army (pp. 404-428). Many of the historical accounts about the Ottomans and their conquests in Eastern and Central Europe supplied the early modern reader with a considerable level of awareness of the demography as well as the geography of Hungary mixed with a strong anti-Islamic discourse calling for Christian unity and spiritual repentance in the face of "infidel" advance. This anti-Islamic discourse was reflected clearly in seventeenth-century literary works.

Knolles's *Historie* (1610) was the first comprehensive work in English on the history of the Turkish Empire. The book is an extended survey based on various sources of what Knolles calls "the present terror of the world" (p. 1). The book explains to the English reader how Christians, in many parts of Europe, suffered from Turkish conquests. The major part of Knolles's book comprises detailed accounts on the lives of Turkish sultans from the rise of their empire to the time of Mehmed III, who was still in power when Knolles finished the book.

Matthew Birchwood (2007) points out that Knolles's *Historie* is more likely to be Boyle's main source in relating the fall of the Kingdom of Hungary in the hands of the Turks (p. 132). Nevertheless, when examining Boyle's version of the story, we can find considerable differences between the play and Knolles's account. It is clear that Boyle departs from Knolles's account which states that,

The fame of Solymans coming directly from Belgrade to Buda, so terrified the Citizens of Buda, that they almost all forsook the City and fled unto other places further off [...] so that at his first coming he entred the City (almost desolate) without any resistance. (p. 410)

In addition, Knolles describes, in much detail, the brutal end of those who remained in the city.

Knolles writes,

For whatsoever fell into the Enemies hand, was lost without recure; the old men were slain, the young men led away into Captivity, Women ravished before their Husbands faces, and afterwards slain with their Children, [...] with many other incredible Cruelties, which were then by the merciless Enemy committed. (p. 411)

In contrast, the play mentions nothing about the city's citizens fleeing as the Hungarian Queen offers the city to the Sultan in an attempt to obtain good surrender terms. This particular modification in the story enables the playwright to design a glorious portrayal of the Hungarian queen and makes the restoration of her throne something possible and linked to the Sultan's generosity.

From a historical perspective, Boyle departs from Knolles's account in including the story of the infant prince and the Queen Mother of Hungry. The sources Boyle used indicate that the playwright was aware of the importance of building strong parallels between the historical story he chose and the contemporary political concerns he intended to discuss. The negotiations between Queen Mother and the Sultan enable the playwright to present the magnificence of the Sultan/ Charles II. The Muslim setting here is meant to serve as an allegorical setting to deliver certain political messages about succession issues. The components Boyle used for his plot, whether historical facts or an imaginative aesthetic, delivered one clear political message of the playwright, i.e., the infighting among brothers/citizens over succession could only bring about internal strife and miseries.

The only other possible source Boyle might have used was Henry Marsh's *New Survey of the Turkish Empire*, published only in 1663. In fact, it is unlikely that Boyle relied on Marsh's book

due to its concern in discussing merely religious differences between the English and the Turks.<sup>4</sup> In contrast, Knolles's *Historie* pays more attention to the political and social aspects of the Turkish Empire. While there is no clear indication that Boyle had the chance to read Marsh's book, Knolles's *Historie* is more likely to be the major source of the play as the book was the main source for readers about Turkish history for many decades after the death of Knolles. Ingram (2015) points out that the book appeared with several continuations extending the original work by various authors in the years 1610, 1621, 1631, 1638, and 1687 (p. 95). Undoubtedly, the *Historie* remained an influential basis for future historians of the Turkish Empire. The effect was the same however; new generations were now exposed to the same prejudices against the Turkish empire.

Purposefully, the plot of *The Tragedy of Mustapha* places much emphasis on the English belief – rooted in the accounts of historians like Richard Knolles and Henry Marsh – that when a new Turkish Sultan ascends to the throne of the empire, he has to eliminate all of his brothers. This practice is meant to prevent any possibility of dissent or rebellion in the country. Roxolana foresees such a horrible scenario:

Oh cruel Empire! That does thus ordain  
Of Royal Race the youngest to be slain,  
That so the eldest may securely reign;  
Making the' Imperial Mother ever mourn  
For all her Infants in Succession born. (p. 72-3)

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<sup>4</sup> See Matar's "Britons and Muslims in the Early Modern Period: From Prejudice to (a theory of) Toleration" (2009).

The play's love plot concerns Mustapha's and Zanger's love for the Queen of Buda whose army was defeated by the Sultan's forces. Roxolana shows her nobility and mercy when she manages to grant the safety of the defeated queen and her infant son. Roxolana, in particular, is one of the most complicated characters in the plays as she plots to murder a prince (Mustapha) and stands firm to protect another (the infant prince of Buda). McJannet (2006) claims that much of the criticism of Roxolana and Rustan, the Vizier Bassa at the Sultan's court, is an attempt to find excuses for Solyman as well as to "stabilize the [Ottoman] political situation" after the death of the two princes (p. 145). Eventually in the play, after both sons of the Sultan are killed, Roxolana confesses her part in the royal tragedy. The Sultan forgives her, but sends her into exile.

Boyle starts his play with an image of a victorious leader who is about to conquer his enemies. This can be read as an allegorical representation of Charles II. This is figured through Solyman's address to his generals who wonder about his hesitation to complete the invasion of Buda:

You both mistake; my glory is the cause  
That in my Conquest I have made this pause;  
Whilst *Hungary* did pow'rful Foes afford,  
I thought her Ruine worthy of my Sword;  
But now the War does seem too low a thing,  
Against a Mourning Queen, and Infant King; (p. 55)

In fact, this image of Charles as lofty and tolerant is a complex one. It combines both praise and criticism. Owen (1996) argues that the praise of Charles's mercy to his enemies in Royalist drama is "often a backhanded way of criticizing him for being 'soft' on the opponents of his

royalist supporters" (p. 7). This was expected from the majority of courtiers who hoped for more rewards for their role in the Restoration process. In the play, Rustan, a vizier Basha, appears to be speaking with an English Royalist's tongue. He expresses his views as he addresses the Sultan: "But he who Conquests wisely has design'd, / Does never leave an Enemy behind" (p. 56). Owen adds that this can be understood as a hint to the old Cavaliers' complaints during the 1660s of the King's leniency towards the rebels and his unwillingness to punish them (p. 111). Rustan believes that no mercy should be extended to Commonwealth supporters and leaders. Boyle did not push hard in supporting the punishment of Commonwealth supporters because he had supported Cromwell and his regime after the execution of Charles I.

In the play, Boyle makes use of the historical accounts about the political unrest and controversy in matters of succession in the Ottoman Empire. For example, the Turkish "custom" of eliminating all potential successors by the new Sultan spreads distrust among the members of the royal family and occasionally encourages proactive actions. In addition, the interference of court members in some of the most crucial issues like succession creates serious problems. Roxolana intervenes in the succession issues and causes trouble for the Sultan. The play ends with a childless Sultan, a situation very similar to that of Charles II. Boyle compares the instability of the Turkish succession process with that of his own country. This may be regarded as an early prediction of the great English Crisis of Succession during the late 1670s and early 1680s. Boyle, as the advisor of the king and one of the fiercest anti-Catholic courtiers, must have understood the public dissatisfaction with the Catholic influence at Charles's court. To that end, Tomlinson (2015) points out, Boyle struggled to strengthen the English presence in Ireland in the face of the Catholic opposition to English rule (p. 560).

Uglow (2009) points out that *The Tragedy of Mustapha* is a clear attack on Charles II as the play addresses the main obstacles that faced the newly restored king such as the corrupt court and the succession question (p. 402). Accordingly, Boyle highlights the danger of the conspiracies that arose from within the court itself. Boyle uses the character of Sultan Solyman to refer to Charles's court. In the play, the Sultan's court is swarming with many ambitious Bashas who are involved in plots against each other and against the Sultan himself. For instant, Rustan schemes to use Roxolana's fears regarding the ill consequences of the Sultan's death on her son, Zanger. Rustan explains his intentions to Pyrrhus,

Her [Roxolana] heightn'd mind and nature much disdain,  
That Mustapha should over Zanger reign;  
I can assault her only on that side,  
Making her vertue vassal to her pride. (p. 68)

Boyle warns of the dangers of corruption and its disastrous consequences on the court, the succession process, and the whole country. Rustan represents the Machiavellian politician who is able to design complex schemes in order to achieve his goals. He is aware of the defects within the Sultan's court and knows how to manipulate the actions to serve his ends. Early in the play, Mustapha elucidates the corrupt nature of the Sultan's court:

Councils dare do worse than their Monarchs dare;  
For where in evil many bear a share,  
They hardly count, when they divide the guilt,  
A drop for each, though streams of blood were spilt. (p. 60)

The importance of Boyle's play is the fact that it very thoughtfully foresees the succession issue at a very early stage. The corrupt nature of Charles's court was among the prominent reasons

that urged the opposition groups to interfere in deciding the new heir. The opposition leaders believed that the corrupt court was penetrated by foreign forces and therefore unable to act for the good of the nation. Jennifer Maguire (1992) states that by referring to corrupt politicians Boyle hints at the political crisis over Clarendon, Chief Minister 1660-1667. Maguire points out that Clarendon was rumored to be a traitor receiving money from the Dutch (p. 179). As a parallel to that, Boyle creates a cunning advisor who manipulates the Sultan's court and policy. Hayden supports the reading of Maguire and regards the character of Rustan as a reflection of Clarendon, who was viewed as a corrupt and self-serving Chancellor. What we are sure of is that as time passed, Boyle learned to use the theatre as a means to conduct his political views.

Like many other royalist dramas of the period, the play highlights the enduring danger of rebellion and chaos. The plots over the succession of the Turkish throne endanger the stability of the empire and shake its very existence. Boyle warns of this scenario in more than one place in the play. Plotters try to make Solyman jealous of Mustapha's success and popularity. Rustan plays on the fact that Mustapha's courage and valor eclipse his father's past achievements.

Eventually, the Sultan is made jealous, as he acknowledges:

But if he [Mustapha] shines too fully in my face,  
I'll draw a Curtain and his lustre hide;  
His glory shall not make me turn aside.  
The shining Mustapha must change his Sphear;  
He threatens me worse than a Comet here. (p. 83)

Solyman further expresses his worries of a rebellion breaking out in his empire " [...] I hate him [Mustapha] too. / And he, even in my Camp, my pow'r controuls; / I ruling but their Bodies, he their Souls" (p. 98).

In the play, the destruction of the succession is associated with rebellion. In fact, rebellion has significant associations in Restoration royalist drama. As Owen (1996) explains, rebels or plotters of a rebellion are usually driven by ambition and lust for power (p. 134). The Restoration audiences that watched the performance of the play held strong and vivid memories of the unforgettable miseries of the Civil War. In the play, Roxolana, Rustan, and Pyrrhus are all looking for more power and dominance at Solyman's court. Roxolana reveals the ambitious agendas of Rustan, and Pyrrhus. When the three meet in Roxolana's tent, the Sultana declares,

My favour to the Sultan you implore  
Only for Governments your sought before.  
You sue for Egypt, you for Babylon;  
If I could these procure you would be gone. (p. 103)

Eventually, Rustan, and Pyrrhus's scheme results in the murder of Mustapha. As a result, this bloody act initiates a real rebellion at the Sultan's camp. Haly delivers the unpleasant news to Roxolana,

Madam, the Guards and Train of Mustapha  
Assault the Camp with their united Force,  
And are assisted by Prince Zanger's Horse.  
The Sultan, arm'd against this sudden rage,  
Is now advanc'd their fury to asswage. (p. 118)

Obviously, by presenting the miseries of the in-fighting, Boyle was reflecting on another political issue of his time, namely, the lasting guilt of the Civil War that had destroyed England earlier.

The traumas of the Civil War emerged as a direct outcome of interrupting the English

succession by executing the king and banishing his heirs. Therefore, Boyle used playwriting to express the ill results of the absence of monarchy. Like many other playwrights, Boyle provoked the emotional associations of the regicide of Charles I among his aristocratic audience. This is perfectly expressed through performing the tragic death of Mustapha and the scene of death and sorrow that followed the fierce in-fighting at Solyman's camp. Achmat explains the situation after the infighting,

Then the Victorious threw their Arms away,  
And wept for those whom they did lately slay.  
Some, who had kill'd their Sons, more tears did shed  
For their own guilt, than that their Sons were dead;  
Guilt wrought by Fate, which had the valour mov'd  
Against that Prince whom they for valour lov'd. (p. 119)

The statements over the losses from the in-fighting are very strong in the play. Such feelings would have been so touching especially for the spectators who had experienced the miseries of the Civil Wars. Boyle worked through the traumas of the recent Civil War to prove that any break in the succession line would drive the nation back to a new period of chaos.

The portrayal of Mustapha in the play is worth consideration since it carries many significant insights into England's political life. Mustapha's love for his brother is perfect, and his courage in the battlefield is praised by everyone. In the play, Mustapha submits to his father's commands although he is fully aware of the risks of his decision. Mustapha is portrayed as someone who is moved by honor first and then by loyalty to his father. In the Fifth Act, when the mutes offer Mustapha "a black box with a parchment, the sultan's great seal hanging at it in a black ribbon," he only asks to speak with the Sultan and shows no resistance. When the mutes

deny his request, he defends himself and kills two of them. Solyman enters and refuses to listen to his son's claims of innocence. Mustapha subdues, kneels, and "lays his Scemitar at the *Sultan's* feet" (p. 111). Mustapha desires in his last moments to be executed by his own servants. One of his servants prefers to stab himself before he is forced to kill his master. Purposefully, the death of the rightful heir, Mustapha, takes place offstage rather than dramatized onstage.

Mustapha's tragic end resembles the regicide of Charles I. The sensitivity of the incident could be one of the reasons why Boyle chose the murder to take place offstage. Boyle was among the royalist playwrights who referred to the "martyred king", Charles I, in their works. In one of his letters, Boyle referred to the "barbarous murder of his late majesty, a sin which no honest man could avoid being sorry for," and he also described "the horridest of murders" and "the bloody consequences of it" (as quoted in Maguire, 1992, p. 28). The recurring use of royal martyrs in Boyle's plays can be considered as a strategy to deconstruct the memories of the recent regicide of Charles I and the interruption with the succession line adding to royalty the innocence, nobility, and bravery of a martyr.

In terms of the emphasis on the succession issue in the Turkish court, numerous parallels can be drawn between Knolles's *Historie* and Boyle's plot. For instance, Knolles refers to the story of the two Turkish princes who vow not to involve in any infighting after the Sultan is dead. Knolles (1610) writes "for the mercie shewed by Achmet to his brother Mustapha, so much differing from the Ottoman custome" (p. 758). Boyle shapes this comment into an eloquent conversation between the two brothers:

Mustapha: By our great Prophet solemnly I swear,

If I the Turkish Crown do ever wear,

Our bloody Custom I will overthrow;  
That Debt I both to you and Justice owe.  
Zanger: And her I vow by all that good and high;  
I'll not out-live the Day in which you die;  
This which my Friendship makes me promise now,  
My Grief will then enable me to do.  
Mustapha: My vow is seal'd.  
Zanger: Mine Friendship shall make good. [They embrace.]  
Mustapha: Friendship's a stronger tye than that of blood. (p. 60)

Boyle uses this image of the two brothers to clarify that the succession question has to be privately settled only by royalty, which meant the Stuart brothers, Charles II and the Duke of York.

In a similar vein, Boyle's portrayal of Roxolan is influenced by Knolles's account of the empress's influence at the Sultan's court. Knolles (1610) devotes considerable space to discussing Roxolana's interference in the succession process.

This woman of late a slave, but now become the greatest empress of the East, flowing in all worldly felicitie, attended upon with all the pleasures her heart could desire, wanted nothing she could wish, but how to find means that the Turkish empire might after the death of Solyman, be brought to some one of her owne sons. (p. 759)

Elaine McGirr (2009) claims that for the Restoration audience, who was skilled in making connections between on-stage characters and public figures, it would be hard not to make a link between the powerful and ambitious Sultana and Charles's favorite mistress in mid- 1660s,

Barbara Villiers, the Duchess of Cleveland. Historically, the Duchess had a similar strong character as Roxolana combined by a will to interfere in decision-making (p. 44). Roxolana's punishment and exile in the last scene may be read as a call for the king to stop his sexual adventures with his mistresses that would only result in replacing the current succession line with a group of bastards. The nation witnessed the consequences of Charles's irresponsibility only after his death when Monmouth, Charles's eldest illegitimate son, claimed the crown and fought his uncle, King James II in 1685.

#### 4. Conclusion

Boyle's *Mustapha* can be considered as an early alarm that warned of the dangerous consequences of the unresolved succession issue in England. Boyle had a rich political and military experience that made him capable of diagnosing the political dilemmas of the early years of Charles's II reign. His political position, as well as his literary capacities, qualified him to address, advice, and even criticize the practices of Charles's court in front of the King and the aristocracy. In fact, Boyle knew how to make use of Charles's interest in the theatre to deliver certain political messages to the king and the political nation. Boyle, who witnessed the fall of King Charles I, offered his king the sum of his political experience in the shape of the allegorical story of Sultan Solyman and his sons. Although the character of Solyman – most likely a representation of Charles II – is portrayed as a powerful, victorious, and noble leader, he suffers from some defects that result in the ruin of his family and the rupture of a rebellion against him. On the other hand, the character of Mustapha reminds the audience of the "martyr" Charles I who was murdered by the usurpers of the English crown. Nostalgia for a dead king than a living one may seem ironic, but royalist playwrights used to resort to the model of the "Martyr King" when the defects of Charles II could have weakened their cause. In

the same line, Susan Owen (1996) explains that while some characteristics were perfectly applicable to the character of Charles I, "it seemed disastrously inapposite to Charles II" (p. 10). Purposefully, the play ends with a Sultan with no successors, a message that can hardly be missed by the play's audience. The play stresses the importance of having the process of succession performed without foreign interference in order to avoid chaos. Boyle's message was well received by Restoration audience. Cynthia Lowenthal (2002) points out that *The Tragedy of Mustapha* received warm compliments by theatergoers for its powerful language and strong central characters (p. 181). Elaine McGirr (2009) explains that the plague that emptied London theatres in 1666-67 season did not diminish the interest in the play as the play was the most successful serious play of that season (p. 42).

In a different vein, the modifications Boyle made to the story of Mustapha and the Turkish history in general draw our attention to the idea that the actual lives and history of these people who were allegorized, like Solyman, Mustapha, and the Pashaws disappear in the play. Boyle's use of the political polemics of the Restoration period obscures the actual history of the characters in his allegory. This trend of assimilating the other into the self is further expressed in many other plays which I will discuss in future. Finally, it is important to note that Boyle's *Mustapha* does not represent a clear pre-Whiggish standpoint, nor can it be understood as completely supporting Charles II's politics; instead, the play can be understood as representing a broader range of English political expectations and concerns behind a smokescreen of a modified version of Turkish history.

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