

*The Raped Anti--*

ZHANG XIAN

Translated by Li Guo

*Playwright's note*

From beginning to the end only one male character is speaking in the play. He seems to be speaking to a woman and to himself as well. The naked woman, whose appearance is that of a stone statue, remains silent all through the play. She is making very slow, almost imperceptible movements. Throughout the man's monologue, we come to gradually realize that she seems to be Antigone in Sophocles' play, while the man seems to be Creon, King of Thebes.

In fact, however, this is not the story of Antigone and Creon, but an abstract fable about politics in the East. The man mutters under his breath, making his words highly suggestive. This is also one signal feature of Zhang Xian's plays. Another one is that each monologue ends up with a fadeout into darkness, as an interval between the monologues.

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*Translator's Note*

"The Raped A-N-T-I"---in translating this play, the title was the first problem I struggled with. The female character's name, "A-N-T-I," suggests that this play, partly derived from Sophocles's story about Antigone and Creon, is rather independent from the original story. After discussing this with Zhang, we decided nonetheless to use the current title, which indicates its mythical connection, and more importantly, achieves an estranging effect.

As a political fable, the original version relies heavily on the official rhetoric of the authorities in China. (For example, "foreign reactionary forces" "international reputation of our country" etc). To translate these political terms into idiomatic American or British English expression would restrict the context of the play to certain countries. For example, "Separate Church from the State" indicates more of a Western cultural context than "Separate politics from religion". For Zhang, the play is not specifically about China, but may apply to many nations under various cultural contexts. Considering this, I kept the translation as a deliberately "ambiguous" text with regard to its national, cultural and racial backdrop.

Iowa City, October 2004

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1.  
You have two minutes.
2.  
Put on your clothes.  
Hurry, put on your clothes.
3.  
You are deliberate.  
You want my guards and secretaries to see us.  
You want the cooks, the cleaning women and all the staff here see us.
4.  
This place is haunted by scopophiliacs.  
Peepers are hidden in each of the darker corners.  
They have seen what happened.  
Soon rumors will fly all over the country.
5.  
I am not afraid.  
I will not avoid them.  
The door of my bedroom is never closed.  
I fucked the daughter of the former king.  
For no reason, just to fuck you.
6.  
You should have noticed the changes in customs.  
In other words we gradually resumed the ancient tradition of respecting nature.  
Sexual life outside the bounds of the administrative system is not a problem for the voters.  
They would be greatly satisfied to see that the man they trust is still human.  
My wife, that is, your Queen does not care if I have one more lover.  
Likewise I don't care if she will run for the first President of democratic elections after I resign \
7.  
To bury your brother's body is asking for punishment by death; you knew, but would not listen  
If you do not obey the nation's laws, I swore I would use private punishment; still you wouldn't listen  
I had no choice but to fuck you; you asked for this.  
But on a sudden impulse I gave in to passion and saved your life.  
My body's interference kept you safe in the palace; no one dared to execute you.  
Even though this was rape, it turned into a rescue; you should be grateful for that  
Rather than lingering on here naked wordless, making a fool of yourself.
- 8  
I imprisoned you secretly because you abused my candidness  
After what happened I felt at ease but you lost your self-control  
I laid bare my heart, allowing you to make demands

In return you used silence to lay out your vicious scheme step by step  
 You deliberately insulted yourself, violated yourself  
 To insult me to humiliate me to hold me up to ridicule  
 The palace is troubled with the rumor that the king raped a whore  
 The king raped and imprisoned a filthy schizophrenic whore

9

My rendezvous with you spared your life.  
 People knew that you were the king's woman.  
 No one will further pursue your violation of the law.  
 No one will raise a question about this matter.  
 This is not to say that I am the only person who overrides the law in this country.  
 But that people are afraid of slander of subversion of having their residences confiscated in the name of Law  
 Remember before the legislation I was the master of Law after it I am the servant of Law  
 Meanwhile don't forget the king is also human  
 Don't forget the king is the servant of the people in other words a common person  
 Because of the special conditions of the nation we took the lead in legislation  
 Each citizen has the legal right to deal with whatever has taken place between his body and others'.

10

If you will not put on your clothes at least mind your manners  
 Your demeanor is inappropriate and even disgraceful  
 Do you know how despicable you are now  
 Even an undressed hooker will be decent enough to put on her clothes  
 You disappoint me with your filthy nature  
 The fact that you were born tainted made me sick  
 I remember your father killed his father and married his mother before he was enthroned  
 Your birth to the world is filthier than my treatment of you  
 Your mother who is my elder sister killed herself because of this unprecedented shame  
 She did not drown you in a stool because she knew the way of life  
 We are all filthy  
 Otherwise there will be no us

11

I should hold your hand tightly  
 Hold your hair  
 Kick your ass  
 Seize your throat  
 I know what you want  
 You want to blackmail me  
 You want your "status"  
 Like many rotten bitches who could not wait to blackmail me right after they got out of my bed  
 I don't have to tell my people about this they will jeer at your daydream and scorn your shamelessness  
 You don't have to usurp the Queen's position by risking so much  
 You don't need to follow the example of my Queen who organized her own party without permission to  
 campaign for presidency  
 Take your time you could marry my son I will manage to make a king of him

As the future queen you could hold court from behind the curtain and give orders to your impotent husband  
 If you are still unsatisfied when you rig the national election and ascend the throne you will have done nothing  
 but follow my example

12

Marriage as a formality has little importance  
 Marriage is not more than a piece of paper  
 You are my lover  
 My beloved  
 This is the status that I raised you to  
 If you want it publicized it will be nothing more than this  
 Not an emperor's concubine not an adulteress  
 Not a secret lover not a mistress  
 Anyway what is the point in having a formal marriage with you  
 Have you schemed for long to usurp the Queen's position of my country?  
 If every ejaculation ejects a queen this city would have been teamed with queens in streets  
 I agree on marriage  
 Agree to marry you even though you wish to become the queen  
 So long as you put on your clothes  
 And stop this rascal behavior and revolting prank  
 But divorce takes some complicated process  
 It involves Emergency Congress Legislation Debates Final Veto Power

13

If you would not put on your clothes, or at least mind your manners  
 Your demeanor is inappropriate, even disgraceful  
 Do you know how despicable you are now  
 Even an undressed hooker has decency enough to put on her clothes  
 You disappoint me with your filthy nature  
 The fact that you were born tainted made me sick  
 I remember your father who killed his father and married his mother before he was enthroned  
 Your birth to the world is filthier than my way of treating you  
 Your mother, my elder sister, killed herself because of this unprecedented shame  
 She did not drown you in a commode because she knew the way life is  
 We are all filthy  
 Otherwise there wouldn't be

14

You are becoming the most lascivious woman among those in the pornographic profession in this city  
 You have degenerated into a prostitute whom no one cares to purchase even for a dollar  
 How dare you violate yourself make yourself a free public lavatory  
 How dare you change this secluded cave into a den of obscenity crowded with frequent visitors spreading  
 rumors from mouth to mouth  
 I cannot understand why you have so much hatred for me  
 I tainted you once merely out of habit

I operate the state machine I am the state machine  
 Day after day year after year I have lost human feelings  
 If I do not exercise the lower part of my body a little I can not prove myself a human being  
 In fact the lower part of my body never belongs to myself  
 It is dedicated to the country just like the upper part  
 I took possession of you but do not really have you  
 I returned all the women to themselves  
 I only touched you once  
 Yes I touched all people as I wanted to  
 But I have never met anyone like you  
 What you have done takes extreme hatred and vicious belief  
 What is your hatred for what is your belief  
 Nothing can hinder you  
 You have already succeeded in destroying me by destroying yourself.

15

You want to restore yourself by revolting against me?  
 You restore yourself so what  
 For me to restore oneself is least meaningful  
 I have been learning to become others.  
 I have become others  
 Become everyone except myself  
 I am a tyrant and liberalist  
 A conservative and reformist  
 I am even a revolutionist  
 I achieved the separation of religion from politics  
 I promoted the constitutional monarchy  
 I called off royal interference of administration  
 I abolished royal throne succession  
 I transplanted multi-party political systems  
 I joined the election personally.  
 I myself became the expert on state administration.  
 I reduced the ideological character of the party  
 I cultivated a generation of non-moralized technicians to govern the country  
 I resolved the philosophical dilemma of choosing between morality and intelligence  
 I will further apoliticize private affairs in office  
 For example the trainees could have oral sex with others in governmental offices like having oral sex with  
 others at home  
 So long as the state is well-run everything else is insignificant.

16

Put on your clothes  
 It's gloomy and cold in the cave  
 You will be sick  
 No one will take care of you if you are sick  
 Now except me the whole state system is longing for your death

I wish you alive because you are one of the two living beings in this country under my administration  
 One is me the other is you  
 To be frank I still wish you could live on and resolve this national crisis  
 In other words the crisis of my image and the crisis of the people's trust in me  
 You know one person tells ten ten tell hundreds rumor flies throughout the country  
 People trudged over long distances to this place helping the aged leading the young just to bid farewell to you  
 My Party has carried a resolution that this was an unprecedented massive immoral scopophilic movement  
 Moral police enclosed all roads to the mountain  
 Your influence has surpassed that of the Oppositional Party  
 Are you from the Oppositional Party  
 Do you know any of them  
 You were used by foreign reactionary forces  
 The international reputation of our country has declined to the lowest point in history  
 If you still have some elementary common sense of responsibility or conscience or sympathy for your  
     motherland  
 Put on your clothes

17

I should squeeze your hand  
 Grab your hair  
 Kick your ass  
 Seize your throat  
 I know what you want  
 You want to blackmail me  
 You want your "position"  
 Like so many rotten bitches who could not wait to blackmail me right after they got out of my bed  
 I don't have to tell my people about this; they will jeer at your daydream and scorn your shamelessness  
 You don't have to usurp the Queen's position by risking so much  
 You don't need to follow the example of my Queen who organized her own party without permission to run for  
     the presidency  
 Take your time you could marry my son I will manage to make a king of him  
 As the future queen you could hold court from behind the curtain and give orders to your impotent husband  
 If you are still unsatisfied when you rig the national election and ascend the throne you would have done nothing  
 but follow my example

18

Your death will bring no change to this world  
 Except that my son killed himself for love  
 Except that my wife killed herself for the suicide of her son  
 Nothing changed  
 Seems that everything has changed  
 When I am walking in the streets the state is not the same as before in my heart  
 What has changed  
 Perhaps you taught the state a lesson  
 The raped made herself filthier than the rapist  
 The rapist becomes the raped at last

In fact it is you who has raped me.

[...]

24

Is self-violation a punishment for your failure

Is self-punishment atonement for your sin

Is self-atonement a sacrifice of your ideal

Is self-sacrifice a tyranny over your life

If so.

Your self-violation is nothing but contempt for God

To show contempt for God is nothing but to oppose humankind

I gave you a chance, you made me lose face

I wanted to save you, you refused to save yourself

You are addicted to revenge and accusation

By doing so you attempted to make an emotional appeal to people

You seemed to have drawn benefits from this and enjoyed doing it

You seemed to have gained moral energy and exercised it like power

You saw that moral power could yoke my politics with gossip

Now the people of the city have begun to shake the foundation of my legal administration

I wish you'd die, so that the trouble could calm down

But you also seem to wish an early death to cause even more slander

You have spun a fairy tale of my hatred and revenge on my people

I was dragged into a dilemma by you and could not find a way out

I will send you to a secret cave in the wilderness

Others will know that you are alive but won't be able find your whereabouts.

Meanwhile I will spread the word that you have converted at last, and are kept in one of my palaces abroad

Every now and then you will show up before my people to testify to my infinite royal graciousness

[...]

30

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You will be sick

No one will take care of you if you are sick

Now except for me the entire state system is longing for your death

I wish you alive because you are one of the two still alive in this country under my administration

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To be frank I still wish you could live on, and resolve this national crisis

In other words the crisis of my image and the crisis of the people's trust in me

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People trudged over long distances to this place, helping the aged and leading the young, just to bid you farewell

My party has carried a resolution that this was an unprecedented massive immoral scopophilic movement

The morals squad barred all the roads to the mountain

Your influence has surpassed that of the opposition party

Are you from the opposition party  
Do you know anyone of them  
You were used by the reactionary forces abroad  
The international reputation of our country has plummeted to the lowest point in history  
If you still have some basic sense of responsibility or conscience or sympathy for your country  
Put on your clothes

[...]

32

Your death will bring no change to this world  
Except that my son killed himself for love  
Except that my wife killed herself after the suicide of her son  
Nothing has changed  
Seems that everything has changed  
When I walk the streets the state is not the same as before in my heart  
What has changed  
Perhaps you taught the state a lesson  
The raped made herself filthier than the one who committed the rape  
The one who committed the rape becomes the raped at last  
In fact it is you who raped me.

[...]

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