

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/364321215>

The Demonic Image of Autoimmunity in Dan Brown's Angels & Demons

Research · October 2022

DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.21301.96482

CITATIONS

0

READS

66

2 authors:



Inam Hashim

University of Baghdad

15 PUBLICATIONS 0 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)



Amany Abdulkadhom Abdulridha

University of Baghdad

3 PUBLICATIONS 0 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)

The Demonic Image of Autoimmunity in Dan Brown's *Angels & Demons*

Amany Abdul Kadhom Abdul Ridha

Amani.Abd1207a@ircoedu.uobaghdad.edu.iq

Ass.Prof. Inam Hashim Hadi, PhD.

Inam.hashim@ircoedu.uobaghdad.edu.iq

University of Baghdad–College of Education for Human Sciences/ Ibn–Rushd

ABSTRACT

Autoimmunity is a philosophical term that enhances the fields of life–sciences, and links out to the unnatural behaviour of an individual. It is caused by the defenses of an organism that deceive its own tissues. Obviously, the immune system should protect the body against invading cells with types of white blood cells called antibodies. Nevertheless, when an autoimmune disease attacks, it causes perilous actions like suicide.

Psychologically, Jacques Derrida (1930–2004) calls autoimmunity a double suicide, because it harms the self and the other. In this case, the organ disarms betraying cells, as the immune system cannot provide protection. From a literary perspective, Derrida has called autoimmunity as deconstruction for over forty years. Autoimmunity is an animalistic behaviour that makes a sufferer strive to change the current political system, because s/he believes to have a better democratic system.

The purpose of this paper is to explore Dan Brown's novel *Angels & Demons* (2000), to reflect how people should always expect autoimmune attacks. Worse attacks should be expected in the future, because more people want to revolt against current political systems. That is why autoimmunity is considered to be political terrorism.

Keywords: Autoimmunity, double suicide, animalistic behaviour, the self and the other, political terrorism

الصورة الشيطانية للمناعة الذاتية في رواية "ملائكة و شياطين" لدان براون

اماني عبد الكاظم عبد الرضا

ا.م.د. انعام هاشم هادي/بغداد/جامعة ابن رشد

الملخص:

المناعة الذاتية هي مصطلح فلسفي يعزز مجالات علوم الحياة ويرتبط بالسلوك غير الطبيعي للفرد. وهو ناتج عن دفاعات الكائن الحي التي تخدع أنسجته. من الواضح أن جهاز المناعة يجب أن يحمي الجسم من غزو الخلايا بأنواع من خلايا الدم البيضاء تسمى الأجسام المضادة. ومع ذلك، عندما يهاجم أحد أمراض المناعة الذاتية، فإنه يتسبب في أعمال محفوفة بالمخاطر مثل الانتحار.

من الناحية النفسية، يسمي جاك دريدا (1930-2004) المناعة الذاتية بأنها انتحار مزدوج، لأنها تضر بالنفس والآخر. في هذه الحالة، يقوم العضو بنزع سلاح الخلايا الخائنة، حيث لا يستطيع الجهاز المناعي توفير الحماية. من منظور أدبي، دعا دريدا المناعة الذاتية على أنها تفكيك لأكثر من أربعين عامًا. المناعة الذاتية هي سلوك حيواني يجعل المريض يسعى لتغيير النظام السياسي الحالي، لأنه يعتقد أن لديه نظام ديمقراطي أفضل.

الغرض من هذه الورقة هو استكشاف رواية دان براون "الملائكة والشياطين" (2000)، لتعكس كيف يجب أن يتوقع الناس دائمًا هجمات المناعة الذاتية. يجب توقع هجمات أسوأ في المستقبل، لأن المزيد من الناس يريدون التمرد على الأنظمة السياسية الحالية. هذا هو السبب في اعتبار المناعة الذاتية إرهابًا سياسيًا.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المناعة الذاتية، الانتحار المزدوج، السلوك الحيواني، النفس والآخر، الإرهاب السياسي.

Jacques Derrida's Autoimmunity

Certain human psyche conditions trigger unexpected states and cause irritable behaviors and thinking. Among such conditions appears doubt, which is the starting point of autoimmunity. Doubt is a stage wherein an individual reflects “a feeling of uncertainty” (Stevenson, 2010, p. 9692). While doubt penetrates the human psyche and manipulates actions and thoughts, skepticism dwells in the remote nooks of the psyche and delivers man to perpetual process of disbelieving and rejecting almost everything. Skepticism is therefore more complicated than doubt, because circumstances are transformed into much more daring problems. Thus, skepticism is “the philosophical attitude of doubting knowledge claims set forth in various areas” (Maartens, 2006). It removes a person’s determination and refers to the technique of judging and criticizing. As doubt can be eliminated with proof, it is almost impossible with skepticism, because a discussion with a skeptic turns out without a conclusion (Fleming, 1857).

Furthermore, unexpected violence may occur with skepticism. Those with risky conditions are filled with hazardous hatred. Dangerous skeptics may harm those who practice her/his opposing beliefs. At the peak of hatred, s/he is even ready to die herself/himself, so as to get rid of them. This mental sickness lets the skeptic suffer a distorted immune system that cannot protect her/him from the self. According to French philosopher Jacques Derrida (1930–2004), such a person is ill with an autoimmune disease. Accordingly, doubt develops into skepticism, and with further abhorrence, it desolately transforms into an autoimmune disease against the self and the other.

Autoimmunity is a philosophical term that enhances the fields of life–sciences, as it points out to the eerie behaviour of a human being. It is philosophical because it is caused by the defenses of an organism to

deceive its own tissues, and is treated via reasoning sufferings. A patient explains how s/he feels and expresses her/his puzzling disorder by reflecting her/his identity (Anderson and Mackay, 2014). Naturally, the immune system is supposed to protect the body against invading micro-organisms with antibodies, which are types of white blood cells. Yet, when an autoimmune disease strikes, it may cause risky actions like suicidal attempts. Unveiling autoimmunity's affections on homo sapiens, shows that it influences the self from biological, psychological, political and philosophical angles. This disorder is effected by evil psychological illnesses that impact in a destructive manner. So the 'self' is infected by the 'other' and produces an inappropriate self. This hazardous transformation is called an "auto-affection that auto-infects itself" (Andrews, 2013, p. 6).

In *Key Concepts*, Derrida determines that "[a]utoimmunity refers to the inherent capacity of every immune system to turn upon itself and suicide, mistaking the self (the body's own cells) for the other or the non-self (foreign antigens)" (2015, p. 146). The biological self breaks down, so the attacker loses control over the self. Autoimmunity starts by protecting people but in return, it destroys them through the self. So it is a cyclonic action that starts out well, but ends up in disorder. Therefore, autoimmunity has a bond with life, death, survival, and self-destruction (McKim, 2019). From a literary perspective however, autoimmunity has been coined by Jacques Derrida. He has been calling it deconstruction for over forty years. Autoimmunity haunts sufferers with death, until they actually perform suicide at what they see as the right moment. When a political system does not suit them, they struggle in any way to force their laws instead. With this ignorance, they challenge against politics, and believe that their system is more beneficial than the current one (de Ville, 2011).

Derrida states that autoimmunity is an animalistic behaviour which only leads to horrifying happenings in the present and the future. Derrida gives the example of 9/11 as an autoimmune attack. America has planned this symbolic suicide with its own minions, who are the hijackers. Also, it has attacked its own people within the buildings, so the attack has swept away the self and the other at the same time. Terroristic strategies of manslaughter are called “autoimmunitary movements. Which produce, invent, and feed the very monstrosity they claim to overcome” (Borradori, 2008, p. 99). Such violence is accomplished by terrorists, acting in the name of victims and announce “war on terrorism” (108). These kinds of wrongdoers want to cover the aggression to protect the self as an autoimmunitary misrepresentation. This is a harmful jeopardy that does not take the form of an evil force, yet leads to a pure pandemonium in disorder. Derrida states that people with an open autoimmunity have no future, as nothing good is to be hoped for when it comes to their own political or religious thinking (Haddad, 2013). Sadly, because terrorism is mostly acted in the name of God, people see that religion is at the heart of violence. This is obviously not true, but when violence prevails, peace escapes.

Autoimmunity is thus, a series of dialectical rapport a person holds with the self. It entails personal parameters and environmental conditions, and constitutes them to form a hidden force within the human psyche. This force lies quite far in the nook of that psyche, and can be detected through the lens of behaviour, action, feeling, and discourse. Autoimmunity is an attack upon the self, and the innocent others are automatically involved in it (Borradori, 2008). A similar autoimmune incident can be observed in Brown’s *Angels & Demons*.

Angels & Demons: The Terror of Autoimmunity

Dan Brown's *Angels & Demons* (2000), mirrors the character named Janus as a demonic image who is infected with an autoimmune disease. Derrida mentions that it does not necessarily mean that it is a virus, but that the autoimmune sufferer gets rid of those who are part of the self to protect the self from further damage. So autoimmunity controls a healthy person "without necessarily resulting in disease" (Mutsaers, 2016, p. 44). This symptom can be seen in Janus, who misuses the Hassassin as his personal assassin. Through his puppet, Janus gets rid of his own fellow church members to protect himself from a dark secret that he is hiding.

Robert Langdon is the novel's protagonist, and is introduced as a professor of symbology who is on a quest to solve a crime of murder. The victim, Leonardo Vetra, is a scientist who tries to mend science and religion into one experiment. Maximilian Kohler is Vetra's manager, and wants Langdon to be involved, because he is the perfect example who is capable of solving symbols. Vetra has a brand of "Illuminati" (Brown, 2000, p. 11) on his chest; it is a secret society that carries out autoimmune attacks upon others, even if they are its own members. Here, the Illuminati represents the body, whereas the member is a part of the body, like a cell is a part of an organ. Because this part harms the base, the body has to get rid of its own cell to save the self from further damage (Zagami, 2019).

Vetra has gone through a vicious crime which is not only a murder, but also cruel torture. His eye is missing, because it opens the lab that holds the antimatter; an experiment that mixes science with religion. Clearly, the attacker is against blending the two fields together, so protests against what he sees as blasphemous. Langdon explains that in 1668, the Catholic Church has similarly branded four scientist's chests, as a warning to those who wanted to join the Illuminati. At that

time, religion was the ruling system, but the Illuminati wanted scientists to be freethinkers, hence opposed the religious institution. The Church would not allow other associations to strip them off of their ruling power, thus punished Illuminators (Hill, 2005). Since history is known to repeat itself, Vetra is tortured in the same manner. Also, his experiment of the antimatter is stolen, and Langdon learns that it is in the Vatican. Langdon and Vetra's daughter, Vittoria, go to the Vatican and meet the camerlengo.

The wicked crime of Vetra's murder and misusing the antimatter to vanish the Vatican out of existence is an autoimmune attack sketched by Janus. He is a church member who should protect his fellow church members instead of killing them. He thinks that he is the rightful owner of the Papal throne, and wants to rule the Vatican with his own democracy. Still, to get rid of those who stand in his way, Janus orders the Hassassin to kill them. Furthermore, he expresses a desire to abolish the whole city, the Vatican. He situates himself and his followers in a destructive situation, but in this autoimmune case, he does not care about his attacks and protects the self against those who harm him (Johnson, 2010).

Because the Pope has recently died, one of the preferiti (four of the most important cardinals) should be elected as the next Pope. The same attacker who has mistreated Vetra, calls the camerlengo to inform him that he has abducted the preferiti. The caller is the Hassassin who says that he also possesses the antimatter, and has planted it to eliminate the whole city. Until the bomb explodes, the Hassassin tells the camerlengo that he will brand the preferiti's chests with symbols of the elements of science; Earth, Air, Fire, and Water. Because the action is a scheme from Janus, it is an autoimmune assault against his own people and city. He is considered to be the body, while his people and

the city are parts of him. He feels that his parts are blocking his way to be the next Pope, so therefore performs a self-protecting and self-destructive attack at the same time.

In *Rogues*, Derrida says that autoimmunity attempts to “protect itself, the organism destroys itself, thereby playing the roles of both medicine and poison” (2005, p. 36). Hence, Janus protects his core by eradicating his own fellow church members. In *Key Concepts*, Derrida categorizes autoimmunity to terror, brutishness and fear that destroy the self through harming the others. The process of protecting and defending the self at the same time bears both horror and loss (2015).

Langdon has to save the four men before each one might be branded and killed by order from Janus, as each one will be tortured to death starting from eight o'clock. Derrida explicates that autoimmunity appears when one is in a degree of insanity, because the inner-self starts to treat an auto-immunized self against terrors of long-lasting diseases. It is shadowed with evil and thoughts of death, as this wickedness makes an autoimmune sufferer struggle for the rest of her/his life, until death is the only option left to be taken (Andrews, 2013). That is why Derrida warns people that they should always be prepared for upcoming autoimmune destruction that results in political terrorism. Such assaults happen precipitously, when nobody anticipates it may truly take place. Derrida says that autoimmunity gets stronger every time, so one should continuously presume the worse (Naas, 2008).

Langdon has to decipher a four-line poem by John Milton, which will lead him to the locations of the cardinals' brandings, and to the secret location of the Illuminati lair. At eight o'clock, the first poetic line brings Langdon to the church of Santa Maria del Popolo. Following a scent of death, Langdon and Vittoria descend the stairs and find the first cardinal half buried in the earth. The body's throat is stuffed with dirt, and his

chest is branded with the symbol of 'Earth.' This is the first autoimmune attack that Janus has performed on his own cell. He has ordered the first cardinal's slaughter, because he is in Janus's way of becoming the next Pope. Derrida declares that such a vile action is terroristic paranoia, in which autoimmunity adds tyranny, and "ends up in producing, reproducing, and regenerating the very thing which seeks to disarm" (as cited in Hu, 2015, p. 20). Hence, Janus is creating his own route towards his demise. Until then, he continues to repeat his autoimmune attacks on other victims, but in different ways. This action makes him disarm harmful cells that do not serve his schemes.

At nine o'clock, the second line of Milton's poem leads Langdon and Vittoria to the Chigi Chapel, where the second cardinal falls off the stairs in St. Peter's Square. His chest bears the symbol of 'Air,' and has puncture wounds on each side of the brand. Because he has punctured lungs, he gasps for air until he dies. With the second harmful cell out of Janus's system, he has eliminated his enemies from a distance, because the Hassassin is doing his dirty job.

In *The Limits of the Self*, Pradeu explains that an autoimmune disease is "an organism's immune system [that] triggers a destructive response against its own organs or tissues" (2012, p. 88). Because Janus possesses a weak immune system to stop autoimmunity, death is the only option left to stop this madness. Still, death is a route that an autoimmune sufferer cannot imagine would happen. However, s/he is ready to die for her/his goal when time comes, and when there is no more chance to escape the truth.

The Hassassin: Janus's Autoimmune Minion

'Hassassin' is a corrupted term which later developed into the European term of 'assassin'. Its origin comes from the Arabic word 'Hashashin,'

which means hashish smokers. The Hassassins and the Jews were counted as ‘others’ by the Crusades. The latter were church members who believed that the Jews crucified Christ. The Hassassins disguised themselves in order to kill as many Christians as they could. That is why Europe called them professional murderers (Stanton, 2012). The Hassassin in *Angels & Demons* acts in a similar way to achieve his autoimmune goal.

The Hassassin remembers when he united with his master Janus, who ordered him to kill the cardinals. The Hassassin calls the camerlengo and threatens him to kill his churchmen, but the camerlengo says that the abducted cardinals are men of faith and do not fear death. The caller announces how Vetra was in the same position, yet he feared death. Vittoria yells that Vetra was her father, so the Hassassin is interested to abduct her as well. Again, Vittoria is in danger, as Janus should protect her as one of his people, but he ignores the case, and does not care what the Hassassin would do to her. She is another threat in Janus’s way, and wants to get rid of her.

Janus’s attitude lets the “immune system response against its own ‘self’” (Wortham, 2008, p. 2). Autoimmune attacks are double movements, wherein the committer harms the self and the other. Destruction affects both the self and the other, as the sufferer tries to force her/his policy on others, even when lives have to be paid. Knowing that it is an illegal procedure, the attacker does not even mind to harm the self, as long as his democratic system will take place. Janus looks innocent publicly, but his autoimmune attacks are in the process without anyone’s awareness. He has a double face; an angelic and a demonic one. The angelic face is worn in front of people, while the demonic one is buried deep underneath innocence and his religious cloak.

Next, the Hassassin calls a BBC reporter, telling him that the last Pope did not die due to natural causes, but was poisoned by the Illuminati. Not anyone can enter the Pope's place, so commander Olivetti understands that the killer may be someone from inside the Church. Olivetti can tell that it is a clear autoimmune attack, because killing the Pope and causing damage against the self is a double attack without limit. Nobody expects such an attack, and that is exactly why Derrida tells people to always consider the unexpected in the upcoming future (Pociot, 2004). Autoimmune sufferers strive to win their happiness through madness, as they are "sick souls, who must be twice-born in order to be happy" (James, 2008, p. 120). Because Janus is dissatisfied with the current democracy, he savagely gets rid of anyone who supports the present system. To please the self, he forces his own democracy through power, while he is out of the scene.

Since Langdon can decipher symbols, he wants to utter where the next crime will take place, but Olivetti stops him from talking, because the killer may be anyone. Therefore, the camerlengo sends Olivetti with Langdon and Vittoria. Meanwhile, Janus calls the Hassassin to warn him that three people are chasing him, and orders his minion to kill them if necessary. Autoimmunity lets one commit crimes against the ones they should protect, but when they fear that such individuals may corrupt their plans, or get more powerful than the self, they decide to eliminate them through double suicidal outbreaks. This is thus a battle between two different regimes, as the stronger seizes domination.

At nine o'clock, the third line of Milton's poem brings the trio to the church of Santa Maria della Vittoria. The third cardinal is hanged above the church with his wrists connected to cables. He is burnt alive, and his chest is branded with the symbol of 'Fire.' Langdon runs to his aid, whereas Vittoria suddenly sees Olivetti's dead body with his head

twisted 180 degrees backwards. The Hassassin appears and abducts Vittoria, taking her to the Illuminati lair as his prize. Having ordered Olivetti's demise, and being unconcerned about Vittoria's state, Janus has a disorder of demonic autoimmunity. He does not care if his victims are women or religious men, as long as he can achieve his goal. Therefore, he is a threat against those whom he should protect, while those who should be part of him can never imagine he could be the wrongdoer. It is an exploitation against Janus's own cells, as his witty thoughts tolerate him to get rid of his own cells that harm him in negative ways (Hunter, 2008).

Without Olivetti and Vittoria's existence, Langdon understands from Milton's fourth and last line that the final crime will take part in Piazza Navona, specifically the Fountain of the Four Rivers. Once there, Langdon sees how the Hassassin kicks the fourth victim into the water. The last cardinal is wrapped with heavy chains, so time is short before he drowns. Without hesitation, Langdon shoots off the Hassassin's toe with his gun, and the attacker tries to drown Langdon as well. Janus's minion is persistent and does not care for his own agony, but ignores it and continues his duty. It shows how autoimmunity fails one to go through the process of "discrimination between self and non-self" (Anderson and Mackay, 2014). The Hassassin represents Janus and also does not recognize anything other than what he is ordered to do. Thinking that Langdon has drowned, the Hassassin sprints to the Illuminati lair where his prize is awaiting him.

Luckily, Langdon comes up to the surface, and rushes to help the cardinal, but the victim has drowned, and his chest is branded with the symbol of 'Water.' Langdon absorbs where the Illuminati lair is, and hurdles as fast as he can to save Vittoria before it is too late. While the Hassassin is committing crimes, Janus is staring from afar. In

“Autoimmunity,” Derrida explains that this bizarre mode is a “quasi-*suicidal* fashion, [wherein] ‘itself’ works to destroy its own protection, to immunize itself *against* its own immunity” (2008, p. 94). With this being said, autoimmunity is the act of suicide of both the internal and external dreadfulness that harm the base before it becomes more serious and harms the organ as a whole.

In *Of Spirit*, Derrida points out that autoimmunity gives birth to an “evil genius which slips into spirit’s monologue to haunt it, ventriloquizing it and thus dooming it to a sort of self-persecuting disidentification” (1987, p. 62). The Hassassin covers up Janus’s malicious face and represents the evil actions and words of his Illuminatus master. It is only natural that Janus allows his minion to be in danger, and does not even care if he meets his end. This is because Janus can always replace the Hassassin with another underling to continue his evil schemes against humanity until he completes his mission to be the next Pope.

In the Illuminati lair, the Hassassin threatens Vittoria with the same knife that he has used to pluck out her father’s eye. Luckily, Langdon bursts in, and the two men fight, until Langdon’s gaze is fixed on a box with six brands instead of five. It means that there is still one more crime of branding to be committed. This is what Derrida hints at by expecting that the worst is yet to come in the future. Langdon has anticipated that the fourth and last cardinal was the final crime, but unexpectedly, there is one more similar torturous crime up ahead. Hägglund quotes that autoimmunity “ties possibility to impossibility, success to failure” (as cited in Attridge, 2010, p. 139). Janus holds that his autoimmune disasters are impossible to strike him back in a negative way, whereas it is in fact possible. Also, his confidence makes him believe that his schemes are a great success that should lead him to the Papal throne.

Confidence is a major characteristic that might describe autoimmune attackers, as they think that failure will never find its way to demolish their path to success. Yet, most of the time, success lasts for a short period of time, for autoimmunity strikes back to come full circle from its starting point. Kant thus demonstrates that such thoughts may lead to movements that result baseless philosophies of illnesses that are hard, or most likely impossible to be cured. Kant agrees that autoimmunity affects the sufferer's frame of mind with evil theories that plant skeptical ideas beyond common sense (Guyer, 2008). Langdon understands that the last symbol, which is the Illuminati Diamond, will be used by Janus on the camerlengo. Langdon gets angry, and the Hassassin fights with all his might. Langdon is pushed out to the balcony, and hangs on to the railing. Fortunately, Vittoria buries a flaming torch in the Hassassin's back. The angry evildoer runs towards her to kill her, but she shoves the torch in his eye, and hisses "[e]ye for an eye" (Brown, 2000, p. 490). Quickly, she pushes the attacker over the railing, and he falls to his demise.

The death of Janus's minion shows that it is the best option to end autoimmune sufferers who refuse help from others. Death halts further murders and other crimes against humanity. Here, the immune system betrays the self, and cannot afford protection to let the attacker survive. As the Hassassin has always been ready to die at any point, the body cannot recognize the self, since it is possessed by wrathful autoimmune thoughts. Therefore, autoimmunity is the dark opposite of immunity, and puts the self as well as the other, in a non-stopping war until death ends the conflict of this diseased system.

Janus: The Autoimmune Planner

Because Janus is a Roman god known for having two faces, Brown's character has the same characteristics. In order to carry his autoimmune

attack without anyone's awareness, he decides to cover up his evil face with an angelic one. Thus, he can freely accomplish his wish to be the next Pope, without others blaming him for his vicious crimes against the Vatican.

When the camerlengo takes Vittoria to see the late Pope's body, she is surprised to see that the victim's tongue is black. This means that the Pope's death is truly an autoimmune attack, and that he was killed by someone who is close to him. The camerlengo goes out to the crowd in St. Peter's Square, and tells them publically that the Illuminati has won the war between science and religion. He shows his angelic side in front of his people, yet his darker nature is revealed when alone. The whole route until Janus's demise is a continuous chain that links the past, present and future. In the autoimmune sufferer's past, autoimmune attacks have been studied and sketched. It may take years of planning before the action is taken seriously. The present is when the action is actually practiced, wherein the autoimmune planner sees nothing than success. Positivity and confidence blind the attacker and s/he cannot imagine defeat. That is why the sufferer sees the future can be brighter with her/his own democratic system instead of the current one. Janus follows the exact steps, and wants to survive all the misery that he puts the Vatican in (Attridge, 2010).

Now that all the four cardinals have been ferociously murdered, the antimatter is about to explode, which will wipe the Vatican out of existence. All of a sudden, the crippled Kohler comes into the scene, and demands a private meeting with the camerlengo. When they meet, Kohler accuses the camerlengo of Vetra's murder. The camerlengo admits his crime, and says that Vetra was a blasphemous man for mixing science with religion in his experiment of the antimatter. The camerlengo has finally revealed his demonic autoimmune face in front of

Kohler. Now, the camerlengo refuses Kohler to ruin his autoimmune attack any further, so decides to get rid of him. This way, his path will again be cleared out of strange cells that block his autoimmune plan. The camerlengo is in a state that he can no longer recognize the self, and expresses his wild thoughts openly to Kohler. This shows how the camerlengo is filled with evil plans against humanity (Trifonas, 2000).

As a matter of fact, autoimmunity happens while nobody knows the true nature of the attacker. Hence, when such outbreaks take place, fingers cannot be pointed at anyone (McKenna, 1992). Because of the camerlengo's devilish tendencies, Kohler points a gun at him, but the latter slickly runs to the fireplace and takes out the scorching symbol of the Illuminati Diamond. The camerlengo brands his own chest and starts screaming out of agony. This is the moment when the guards burst in, and kill Kohler. This scene is convincing enough for everyone to believe that the camerlengo is an innocent man, and that Kohler is the evildoer all along. This animalistic behaviour is defined by Claudia Card (1940–2015) as “foreseeable intolerable harms produced by culpable wrongdoings” (as cited in Schott, 2007). Because the camerlengo has an angelic face in front of the world, it is impossible to think that he is behind delinquencies of slaughter. Such people are “ceased to be human; given that he cannot pass into a divine condition, he is turned into a wild animal” (Moorhead, 2018). Again, that is why Derrida warns people to expect the unpredictable in the future. The more the world steps forward into the future, the worse autoimmunity gets.

Before dying, Kohler hands Langdon a camera, and tells him to share its contents with the media. The camerlengo however, continues his act and starts to hallucinate in front of the people, showing off his brand, and yells “I hear you, God!” (Brown, 2000, p. 521). Although he thinks to have the power to fulfill his autoimmune plan against those who

oppose him, autoimmunity is actually a disease that “does not express ‘power, independence, and stability of an enduring self’” (D’Cruz, 2008). The camerlengo feels powerful, but most of the time, autoimmunity comes full circle and ends in fatal death.

The camerlengo continues his autoimmune attack in front of the crowd, and utters “Upon this rock I will build my church” (Brown, 2000, p. 528). With these words, he desires to activate his own system instead of the current one, while fooling the crew since he has succeeded to steal their trust. He tells Langdon and the rest that the Illuminati has placed the bomb on St. Peter’s tomb, and indeed, they find it on the same spot. With a double face, the camerlengo has succeeded to trick others with his innocence. In fact, he is a self-protective organ who cares for nothing but the self, even if it means to harm the self for his own sake (Miller, 2009). Dashing to a helicopter, the camerlengo takes the bomb outside, and Langdon joins him against his wishes. Langdon thinks that the camerlengo will throw the antimatter into the sea, but the helicopter is going up to the sky instead of moving away from the city. Before jumping off with his parachute, the camerlengo says that Langdon will be the ultimate sacrifice. Once more, the camerlengo places those whom he should protect into a fatal situation and performs a double suicide. Fearing that the world would know about him, the camerlengo has no other choice than to get rid of Langdon in order to protect the self from whom would damage his autoimmune plans.

Langdon tries to find a parachute to jump off before the bomb explodes, but there is none. Right after he jumps off the helicopter, the antimatter explodes above the Vatican. People suddenly see the camerlengo standing with his arms stretched open wide next to the statues of Christ and his apostles. He stands next to Jesus, showing how he is close to Christ just like Judas. Instead of believing that the camerlengo is saved

by a parachute, people believe that he is miraculously saved by God. That is why the cardinals want the camerlengo to be the next Pope, but the senior cardinal Mortati says that it is against the Vatican laws, for the camerlengo is not a cardinal.

Still assuming an angelic form, the camerlengo is convinced that his plan is going accordingly, because he thinks that Langdon is dead. Through loathing, he forces his physical pain on others and punishes the world singlehandedly. The camerlengo thus holds a demonic self-destructive system, and refuses others' help (Pojman, 1999). Meanwhile in the hospital, Langdon comes back to his consciousness, and remembers the camerlengo's true nature. This is the moment when he realizes that Kohler's camera comes in handy after denying it. While playing it, he is shocked to witness the private meeting between Kohler and the camerlengo. In the video, Kohler says that the camerlengo is jealous of Vetra's scientific experiment of the antimatter, because the Pope approved of it. The camerlengo insists that science and religion cannot be together and defines Vetra's work as a blasphemous experiment. This is the moment when the camerlengo decides to start his autoimmune journey.

In *The Esoteric Substance*, Bonhomme illuminates that one's evil nature like the camerlengo's demonic behaviour, is a philosophy that is rooted in Machiavellianism. That is because pride is a major characteristic in autoimmunity (1974), while the camerlengo feels that nobody understands his views.

Suicide: The End of Janus's Autoimmunity

Autoimmunity ends with death, because there is no other way to stop its harmful attacks. Words do not affect the sufferer since s/he ignorantly thinks that only her/his ideas are accurate. When the sufferer has no

way out at the end, s/he refuses to hand the self over to the other, and prefers a suicidal attempt instead of surrendering. An autoimmune attacker strives to survive her/his own attacks against the self as long as possible until death wins the battle. Until then, the sufferer may live in terror that the self has created. Consequently, suicide is the most common choice to stop one's own autoimmunity when it can no longer be handled (Liao, 2013).

With the strong evidence of Kohler's video, Langdon decides to head back to the Roman Catholic Church as quick as possible. Once there, he plays the video to be viewed by the cardinals, and all are shocked to learn the ugly truth behind the camerlengo. They cannot believe that the angelic figure turns out to be a demonic two-faced Janus. Shockingly, the camerlengo enters and is startled to see Kohler's video. In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida indicates how a

living ego is auto-immune, which is what they do not want to know. To protect its life, to constitute itself as unique living ego...it is necessarily led to welcome the other within...it must therefore take the immune defenses apparently meant for the non-ego, the enemy, the opposite, the adversary and direct them at once *for itself and against itself* (1994, p. 141).

Because the camerlengo's ego is high, it negatively affects his immune system. So whenever an autoimmune attack takes place, the immune system is too weak to protect the self from personal attacks. This is a truth that autoimmune sufferers obviously neglect, and are ready for any attack as long as they manage to defend the core of their lives. They count harmful cells as traitors and enemies, so instead of being a part of the organ, autoimmunity makes sure to get rid of them as soon as possible, so as not to infect the rest of the organ.

The camerlengo admits that he has poisoned the Pope silently, because the victim was interested in Vetra's blasphemous experiment. While the camerlengo was holding his hand over the Pope's mouth, he knew that the prey wanted to tell him something, but he never had the chance. In *Rogues*, Derrida defines autoimmunity as a "a strange illogical logic by which a living being can spontaneously destroy, in an autonomous fashion, the very thing within it that is supposed to protect it against the other, to immunize it against the aggressive intrusion of the other" (2005, p. 123). Therefore, autoimmunity is a process of self-protection as well as self-destruction against the self, reacting as poison and potion at the same time. It serves as a contradictory force of weakness within the sufferer's system, and acts like an internal-external menace (Long, 2014). The senior cardinal Mortati takes the lead from here, and announces that he knows what the Pope was trying to tell the camerlengo before dying.

Mortati finally exposes that when the Pope was still a cardinal, he fell in love with a nun, but both had sworn vows never to have sexual relationships. One day, the nun had read about a scientific experiment; that it is possible to have children without intercourse. Eventually, the Pope and the nun were blessed with a child; the camerlengo. This is the moment in which the camerlengo's world collapses, because he learns that he has killed his own father. Also, he cannot believe that despite the fact that he abhors science, he is the product of a scientific experiment himself.

The demonic spirit of the camerlengo has encouraged the self to dream of being the next Pope, for he believes that he can do things better than others. That is why he has ordered the Hassassin to kill the preferiti, as one of them should be the next Pope. Ever since, the camerlengo believes himself to resemble Jesus Christ: "young, vibrant,

powerful...MIRACULOUS” (Brown, 2000, p. 600). These characteristics have vanished in a blink of an eye, and he feels completely defeated. At the time of the crime, the camerlengo believed that his victims were the horror, while he was the hope. Now, he surrenders his pride and finally admits “*No...I am the horror*” (Brown, 2000, p. 600). When an autoimmune sufferer has no more defense from the immune system, death is the best decision to be taken.

Derrida illuminates that autoimmune conditions subdue sufferers into a threatening life and death democracy. All this time, the camerlengo is dreaming of a flourishing future through his democratic system. Now that the missing piece of the puzzle has solved the enigma, his immune system is weakened, that it cannot protect the self anymore. This is the first step towards his demise, as autoimmunity mostly ends in suicide (Mendoza-de-Jesús, 2020). Descartes describes people like the camerlengo as madmen with damaged brains, since they insist on their theories. He believes that they suffer from melancholia, because they are certain that nobody can understand them. For this reason, they become violent against others, while they are out of the picture (Cunning, 2006). In *The Beast and the Sovereign*, Derrida discusses Rousseau’s idea of how autoimmune sufferers like the camerlengo are savages with animalistic behaviour, who stick to their evil schemes until they meet their fatal demise. Rousseau calls such individuals a “cattle [who] become either an enslaved instrument of work” (2019, p. 12), or end up as a prey to their own lunacy.

Derrida actually says that autoimmunity serves more as an interruption instead of a democracy. Autoimmune diseases may beguile the individual to have all the right to express and work on a personal democracy, which is better than the political system. S/he counts it as freedom of speech and action, and believes that it strives for equality.

Such thoughts show how people may lack the meaning of freedom, because in their point of view, equality serves as a personal means instead of a general one (Lipkin, 1990). The camerlengo accepts the truth that Langdon is saved to bring out the ugly truth to the world. As there is nowhere to flee from his demonic inner self, the camerlengo showers his entire body with sacred oils, then swallows the rest, and sets himself on fire in front of the crowd. While he is burning, he utters his last words: “My work here is done” (Brown, 2000, p. 605). Autoimmunity is an endgame, which “targets the immune system itself” (Protevi, 2001, p. 101). After the entire ruckus that the camerlengo has caused to the other, it is time to pay the price through the self. Finally, death stops the camerlengo’s evil path against the self and the other.

In *The Intelligence of Evil*, Calvin Thomas quotes how “power in the end...works secretly against itself” (as cited in Evans, 2014, p. 36). The camerlengo starts with power, but this energy works slowly against the self, until death comes to put an end to his autoimmune plans. Through ancient art, the Vatican reminds its inhabitants: “remember, thou art but man” (Barlag, 2018, p. 14). This is a statement that autoimmune attackers cannot understand, because they consider themselves to be superior to others. Mortati puts the urn with the camerlengo’s ashes beside the last Pope, who seems to be finally at rest, as his son is resting beside him.

References

- Anderson, Warwick, and Ian R. Mackay. (2014). *Intolerant Bodies: A Short History of Autoimmunity*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Andrews, Alice. (2013). *Autoimmunity: Deconstructing Fictions of Illness and the Terrible Future to Come*. Goldsmiths Research Online.
- Attridge, Derek. (2010). *Reading and Responsibility: Deconstruction's Traces*. Edinburgh University Press Ltd.
- Barlag, Phillip. (2018) *The History of Rome in 12 Buildings: A Travel Companion to the Hidden Secrets of the Eternal City*. New Page Books.
- Bonhomme, Denise. (1974). *The Esoteric Substance of Voltairian Thought*. Philosophical Library.
- Borradori, Giovanna. (2008). Autoimmunity: Real and Symbolic Suicides: A Dialogue with Jacques Derrida. *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida*, The University of Chicago Press.
- Brown, Dan. (2000). *Angels & Demons*. Pocket Books.
- Cunning, David. (2006). Descartes and the Force of Skepticism. *Skepticism from Antiquity to the Present*, edited by Diego E. Machuca and Baron Reed. Bloomsbury.
- D'Cruz, Carolyn. (2008). *Identity Politics in Deconstruction: Calculating with the Incalculable*. Ashgate Publishing Limited.
- De Ville, Jacques. (2011). *Jacques Derrida: Law Absolute Hospitality*. Routledge.
- Derrida, Jacques. "Autoimmunity: Real and Symbolic Suicides: A Dialogue with Jacques Derrida." *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida*, edited by Jürgen Borradori, 2008, pp. 85–136.
- . (1987). *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*. Translated by Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby. The University of Chicago Press.

- . (1994). *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*. Translated by Peggy Kamuf. Routledge.
- . (2005). *Rogues: Essays on Reason*. Translated by Pascale– Anne Brault and Michael Naas. Stanford University Press.
- . (2009). *The Beast and the Sovereign: Volume I*. Edited by Michel Lisse, et al. Translated by Geoffrey Bennington. The University of Chicago Press.
- . (2015). *Key Concepts*. Edited by Claire Colebrook, Routledge.
- Evans, Mihail. (2014). *The Singular Politics of Derrida and Baudrillard*. Palgrave MacMillan.
- Fleming, William. (1857). *The Vocabulary of Philosophy, Mental, Moral, and Metaphysical: With Quotations and References for the Use of Students*. Richard Griffin and Company.
- Guyer, Paul. (2008). *Knowledge, Reason, and Taste: Kant's Response to Hume*. Princeton University Press.
- Haddad, Samir. (2013). *Derrida and the Inheritance of Democracy*. Indiana University Press.
- Hill, Mark. (2005). *Shadow Kings*. Trafford Publishing.
- Hu, Tung–Hui. (2015). *A Prehistory of the Cloud*. Massachusetts: MIT Press Books.
- Hunter, Rosemary. (2008). *Rethinking Equality Projects in Law*. Hart Publishing.
- James, William. (2008). *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*. Routledge.
- Johnson, Andrew. (2010). *Viral Politics: Jacques Derrida's Reading of Auto–immunity and Carl Schmitt*. LAP Academic Publishing.
- Liao, Pei–Chen. (2013). *'Post'–9/11 South Asian Diasporic Fiction: Uncanny Terror*. Palgrave Macmillan.

- Lipkin, Robert Justin. (1990). Beyond Skepticism Foundationalism and the New Fuzziness: The Role of Wide Reflective Equilibrium in Legal Theory. *Cornell Law Review*, 75(4), <http://scholarship.law.cornell.edu/clr>.
- Long, Maebh. (2014). Derrida Interviewing Derrida: Autoimmunity and the Laws of the Interview. *Australian Humanities Review*, 54(14), 103–119. <http://repository.usp.ac.fj/id/eprint/5947>.
- Maartens, Willie. (2006). *Mapping Reality: A Critical Perspective on Science and Religion*. iUniverse, Inc.
- McKenna, Andrew J. (1992). *Violence and Difference: Girard, Derrida, and Deconstruction*. University of Illinois Press.
- McKim, Joel. (2019). *Architecture, Media, and Memory: Facing Complexity in Post-9/11 New York*. Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.
- Mendoza-de-Jesús, Ronald. (2020). Another Life: Democracy, Suicide, Ipseity, Autoimmunity. *Enrahonar*, 66(5), 15–35. <https://doi.org/10.5565/rev/enrahonar.1316>.
- Miller, J. Hillis. (2009). *For Derrida*. Fordham University Press.
- Moorhead, John. (2018). Boethius. *The History of Evil in the Medieval Age: Volume II*, edited by Andrew Pinsent, Routledge, pp. 48–66.
- Mutsaers, Inge. (2016). *Immunological Discourse in Political Philosophy: Immunisation and its Discontents*. Routledge.
- Naas, Michael. (2008). *Derrida From Now On*. Fordham University Press.
- Pociot, Flemming. (2004). *CTLA-4 in Autoimmune Disease*. Landes Bioscience.
- Pojman, Louis P. (1999). *Kierkegaard's Philosophy of Religion*. International Scholars Publications.
- Pradeu, Thomas. (2012). *The Limits of the Self: Immunology and Biological Identity*. Oxford University Press.

- Protevi, John. (2001). *Political Physics: Deleuze, Derrida and the Body Politic*. The Athlone Press.
- Schott, Robin May, editor. (2007). *Feminist Philosophy and the Problem of Evil*. Indiana University Press.
- Stanton, Andrea, editor. (2012). *Cultural Sociology of the Middle East, Asia, and Africa: An Encyclopedia*. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Stevenson, Angus. (2010). *Oxford Dictionary of English: Third Edition*. Oxford University Press.
- Trifonas, Peter Pericles. (2000). *The Ethics of Writing: Derrida, Deconstruction, and Pedagogy*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Wortham, Simon Morgan. (2008). *Derrida: Writing Events*. Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Zagami, Leo Lyon. (2019). *Invisible Master: The Puppeteers Hidden Power*. Consortium of Collective Consciousness Publishing.