

ALL'S FAIR IN LOVE AND WAR?

Machiavelli and Ang Lee's *Ride with the Devil*

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Ang Lee's *Ride with the Devil* (1999) is a film about war and love. It is a common belief, captured in the proverb "All's fair in love and war,"¹ that when it comes to war and love, there are no rules.² The ends—winning the war, and winning the heart of one's beloved—are supposed to justify any means whatsoever. In particular, they are supposed to justify deception.³ In this chapter I will address the question of whether *Ride with the Devil* endorses the view that when it comes to war and love, deception is justified.

In *Ride with the Devil*, the war in question is the U.S. Civil War—in particular, the border war between the antislavery Kansas jayhawkers and proslavery Missouri bushwhackers. The love in question is that between a young widow and an immigrant German boy fighting for the Southern bushwhackers. I shall first provide some historical context to this war, explain why this war interests Lee, and why he is sympathetic to the Southerners. I shall then argue that his true sympathy is for the outsiders on the Southern side and show that it is these individuals who form the moral core of the film. Because these same people engage in deception, I shall consider what the film has to say about deception. I shall argue that unlike the great Chinese military strategist Sunzi, the film does not endorse the view that all deception is justified in war and love. Instead, it can be shown to agree with Machiavelli that even in war, there are limits on when deception can be practiced. It can also be shown to suggest that in love, it is honesty that is ultimately required. According to Ang Lee's *Ride with the Devil*, all is not fair in love and war.

General Lee, or Yanqui Go Home

The War between the States, otherwise known as the Civil War,⁴ is thought of as a war fought in the South and the East of the United States. However,

the prospect of the creation of new slave states in the Midwest contributed to the outbreak of the Civil War, and the war was also fought in the Midwest. Before the war, a dispute over whether Kansas should be a slave state or a free state led to a series of violent clashes between Southern (largely Missourian) pro-slavery Border Ruffians, and Northern antislavery Free Soilers or Free Staters settlers, in what is referred to as Bleeding Kansas, Bloody Kansas, or the Border War. Although the violence had abated by 1859 and Kansas entered the Union as a free state in January 1861, with the commencement of the Civil War in 1861, the border war erupted again. Missouri did not secede from the Union, but the governor refused Lincoln's call to send volunteers to invade the South. The governor and the state legislature were deposed, and they fled in order to avoid arrest. The Missouri state guard actually fought against the federalized militia. As another commentator has said, "Only a massive build-up of Union troops and a lack of support from the Confederate government in Richmond kept Missouri in the Union. In an effort to preserve their lives, property, and sacred honor, many rural Missourians either joined the Confederate army or fought their own guerilla war against the invading forces."⁵ Those who fought their own guerilla war against the invading forces of pro-Union irregular jayhawkers, as well as the Union federals, were known as the bushwhackers.⁶

Ang Lee's film about this border war between the jayhawkers and the bushwhackers came about by chance. In 1987, a woman named Amy Carey read Daniel Woodrell's *Woe to Live On* (1987),⁷ a novel about three people—an immigrant, a former slave, and a young widow—caught up in the cross-border fighting.⁸ Years later, Carey was working for a production company associated with Lee and gave him the novel. Lee read it "in 1994 while attending a screening in Deauville, France, of his recently completed *Eat Drink Man Woman* [1994]."⁹ According to James Schamus, Lee's long-time collaborator and the author of the screenplay, "he got so engrossed in it that it interrupted his reading of the script for *Sense and Sensibility* [1994]. He knew right away that he had to make this movie."¹⁰ As Woodrell himself tells the story, Lee wanted to get out of making domestic dramas: "He said he'd like to make a film that wasn't all domestic drama, she gave him the book, he read it in one night and they bought it."¹¹ Another author has even said that Lee "wanted to make a macho film."¹² Lee confirmed that he had wanted to do a movie that had action in it, but he said that the adaptation gave him the chance to combine action with domestic drama: "At first I wanted to get away from a family drama and do something with more action

and scope, but it turns out [*Woe to Live On*] does both. Family values and the social system are tested by war. It's a family drama, but one where the characters represent a larger kind of 'family'—the warring factions of the Civil War and the divisions in the national character."^{13,14}

The focus of the film is on the bushwhackers. They were fighting in what James Schamus has called an American Vietnam:

Once the war got underway, Missouri ended up as something of an American Vietnam, occupied by Union forces and under martial law during most of the conflict, with local populations giving support and cover to loosely organized gangs of Southern "Bushwhackers." These guerillas terrorized Union sympathizers and preyed on Northern patrols and supply lines.¹⁵

As he points out, these bushwhackers "became increasingly desperate and bloodthirsty, devolving eventually into criminal gangs that had little interest in or regard for the politics of the conflict that spawned them."¹⁶ From the bushwhackers came some of the most notorious criminals of the West, including the Younger Brothers and the James gang.

It should be noted, however, that the jayhawkers they fought against were not principally, or even particularly, interested in abolishing slavery. As the novel puts it, from the mouth of the protagonist, Jake Roedel, "Jayhawkers said they raided to free slaves, but mostly they freed horseflesh from riders, furniture from houses, cattle from pastures, precious jewelry from family troves and wives from husbands. Sometimes they had so much plunder niggers were needed to haul it, so they took a few along. This, they said, made them abolitionists."¹⁷ It can be agreed by all that in his adaptation of Woodrell's novel, "Lee's sympathies are clearly with the bushwhackers."¹⁸ *Ride with the Devil* is a movie that, as one author has put it (presumably with no play on words intended), "adopts the unusual position of focusing on the losers of the American Civil War."¹⁹ Why would Lee make such a movie? One possible reason is that Lee himself was a loser in another civil war.

Lee's family members were wealthy landlords in Kiangsi province in mainland China. At the end of the Chinese civil war in 1949, however, the Communist Party of China defeated the governing Chinese Nationalist Party and divided China into the People's Republic of China (mainland China) and the Republic of China (Taiwan, which had been under the control of Japan until the end of World War II in 1945). The entire family of Sheng

Lee, Ang Lee's father, was executed. Sheng Lee, himself a district commissioner, managed to escape the communist forces who were after him, and he fled to Taiwan. There he married another orphaned survivor from mainland China, Su-Tsang Yang. Together they started a family, the eldest child of which is Ang Lee.

Ang Lee has often said that he does not consider himself to be a native son of anywhere. He is not a native son of Taiwan, where his parents fled after the communist revolution; he is not a native son of communist China, where his parents would have been killed had they stayed; and he is not a native son of the United States, his adopted home: "To me I'm a mixture of many things and a confusion of many things. I'm not native Taiwanese, so we're alien in a way in Taiwan today, with the native Taiwanese pushing for independence. But when we go back to China, we're Taiwanese. Then, I live in the States; I'm a sort of foreigner everywhere. It's hard to find a real identity."²⁰

As another author has pointed out, "Lee's outsider status is something he jealously guards, although in the past it was a great burden. He assiduously maintains his Chinese roots, never having applied for American citizenship."²¹ With his dispossessed family background in Taiwan and his immigrant status in the United States, Lee's choice to direct a movie about dispossessed Southerners looks less surprising. Indeed, Lee has said that he identifies with the Southerners against the Yankee invasion:

I grew up in Taiwan, where older people always complained that kids are becoming Americanized—they don't follow tradition and so we are losing our culture. As I got the chance to go around a big part of the world with my films, I heard the same complaints. It seems so much of the world is becoming Americanized. And when I read the book *Woe to Live On*, on which we based our movie, I realized the American Civil War was, in a way, where it all started. It was where the Yankees won not only territory but, in a sense, a victory for a whole way of life and of thinking. The Yankee invasion has not only a surface meaning—Yankees continue to win militarily and economically—but also an internal meaning. It changes you, in a kind of unstoppable way. Everyone is equal, everyone has the right to fulfill themselves—this is the Yankee principle. . . . This is what the Civil War meant to me—and I think it meant this as well to the boys in the movie, who are also non-Yankees. So the Civil War is not only on the surface, of blood and guts, it is also a personal war

that leads to the new world in which we are living today—the world of democracy and capitalism.²²

There is a scene in *Ride with the Devil* that would appear to capture Lee's sentiment about the Yankee invasion. Mr. Evans, the father-in-law of Sue Lee Shelley, is a loyal Southerner (he has already lost his son in the war) who agrees to let the bushwhackers wait out the bitter winter on his land. He invites them to his house for supper one night. There he tells them an anecdote about the Yankification of the entire country:

Have you ever been to Lawrence, Kansas, young man? . . . Before this war began my business took me there often. And as I saw those Northerners build that town, I witnessed the seeds of our destruction being sown. . . . It was the schoolhouse. Before they built a church even, they built that schoolhouse, and lettered every tailor's son and farmer's daughter in that country. . . . My point is merely—that they rounded every pup up into that schoolhouse, because they fancied that everyone should think and talk the same freethinking way that they do, with no regard for station, custom, or propriety. And that is why they will win—because they believe that everyone should live and think just like them. And we shall lose because we don't care one way or the other about how they live or think, we just worry about ourselves.²³

Lee's displacement from his native China and his critical attitude toward America has the result that *Ride with the Devil* "presents the southern side of the war with greater sympathy and comprehension than has been attempted in the past."²⁴ The audience "is asked to side with the losers who are, to our current way of thinking, in the wrong. These Southerners genuinely feel they were losing their freedom to prejudiced, corrupt, racist and psychotic Yankees."²⁵

Band of Outsiders

Although Lee does sympathize with the Southerners, he is most sympathetic to the misfits among them—those Southerners who are not fully accepted by the other Southerners. All of the main characters of the film are, in some way, outsiders.

Jakob “Jake” Roedel, the sixteen-year-old protagonist of the film, is called “Dutchy” by the other bushwhackers. His nickname is a corruption of “Deutsche” because his father, Otto Roedel, is a German immigrant who settled in Missouri. Otto works at the mill owned by the Chiles family, and he remains loyal to the Union.²⁶ Jake refuses to go to St. Louis with a friend of his father for safety, telling him, “I told you, I’m not goin’ to huddle with all the other Lincoln-loving Germans in St. Louis” because “these are my people.” His father insists, “You will always be a Deutschman, a German, to them, no matter with who you are friends.”²⁷ Although he was born in Germany, Jake grew up in Missouri, and he considers himself a Southerner, like the other natives.

After Asa Chiles, the father of Jack Bull Chiles, is killed by jayhawkers and Jack joins the bushwhackers, Jake turns his back on his father and joins the bushwhackers too, fighting the jayhawkers and the Union troops.²⁸ His estranged father, Otto, is later killed by a Union soldier (released as a result of Jake’s intervention) because, as Jake is later told, “he was mainly known as your father, Dutchy. You got a reputation now.”²⁹ Despite his fighting for the bushwhackers and the loss of his father to a Union soldier, the other bushwhackers continue to call him Dutchy, and some continue to question his allegiance to their cause.

Daniel Holt, a character who gradually becomes Jake’s close friend, is a former slave who rides with his former master, George Clyde, whose life he has saved in the past. Despite the fact that Holt is a free man and is clearly loyal to his former master, Holt is not trusted.³⁰ He is still considered “Clyde’s pet nigger, but don’t call him that in front of George. No, George don’t like that.” He is not allowed to carry a gun unless Clyde gives him one: “He’s a damn fine scout, and spy—and, when George tosses him a gun, a good Yankee-killer, too.” He is even mistrusted, originally, by Jake himself, who says that “a nigger with guns—it still is a nervous thing to me.”³¹

Both Jake and Holt, then, are outsiders: “Roedel is a German immigrant seeking to gain acceptance into the world of southern civility, and Daniel Holt is a free Southern slave who travels with his former owner.”³² Among the bushwhackers, their outsider status is clear: “They soon realize that they are outsiders, both in this war and in the South. They both entered the war out of a misguided sense of loyalty to a side that despised them.”³³ The outsider status of both Jake and Holt is confirmed in a gruesome game of poker played by the other bushwhackers. When they run out of money, they

continue to play using the captured scalps of blacks and immigrants: "That's two nigger scalps—I'll see you with one Dutch scalp."³⁴

Finally, Sue Lee Shelley is a young, native, white Southerner—but she is also a widow, her husband killed in the Civil War after being married to her for only three weeks. She is also an unmarried single mother, with a baby girl out of wedlock by Jack Bull Chiles (who himself is killed before his daughter is born). Although the Brown family takes her in, they will not stand for her to remain unmarried. As Orton Brown says, "I can't have it in my house the way it is."³⁵ She must be married.

The three main characters, then, make up an outgroup of misfits. Indeed, Lee himself has characterized the main characters of the film as outsiders: "The story starts with the Southern boys' point of view; the perspective of those who will lose to the Yankees. But then it gradually changes to focus on the points of view of the two outsiders the German immigrant and the black slave—as well as that of the young woman. Through them we come to experience the changes that freedom will bring. It is their emancipation that the film becomes about, their coming of age. So, as a Taiwanese, I can identify with the Southerners as the Yankees change their way of life forever, but I also identify more strongly with these outsiders, who grasp at freedom, and fight for it."³⁶

The story of the film is the development of the relationship between the three people, who, if not literally orphans, do not have a home and come to rely on each other: "Issues dividing the North and the South are not what primarily motivate these three; it is their loyalty to one another and their fight to stay alive in a world gone mad."³⁷ Jake and Holt become good friends, and they become more disaffected with the bushwhackers, who eventually try to kill Jake. After their friends are killed in the fighting and they themselves get injured, they join Sue Lee and the Browns to recuperate. Eventually, they decide not to rejoin the bushwhackers. Jake marries Sue Lee and becomes a stepfather to Chiles's daughter. They head off to California to start a new life. Holt joins them for part of the way, then leaves for Texas to find and free his slave mother.

There is a stark generation gap between these three people and the parental figures that surround them. In consequence, they become a family themselves: "Although on one level *Ride with the Devil* operates as a butch, manly film with shoot-outs and big battle scenes, it is still basically an intimate family drama. The 'family' are not related by blood but are brought together by their emotional journey."³⁸ This new family—the immigrant, the

young widowed mother, and the former slave—appears to be a metaphor for the new America. As Lee says, “So our story is about the very heart of America, even as this heart was—and still so often is—torn apart by racial and other conflicts.”³⁹

In the end, *Ride with the Devil* is about the creation of a new American identity, free of the past and old family ties: “Over and over again Lee shows us how cultural, national, family and individual identities contradict each other. This sensibility creates the underlying focus of Lee’s work—that of identity.”⁴⁰ In that sense, *Ride with the Devil* is like other classic westerns, such as *How the West Was Won* (John Ford, Henry Hathaway, and George Marshall, 1962). As Schamus says, it is “a kind of un-Western, a rereading of the myth of the West in light of the violent racial and regional and sexual politics that informed it.”⁴¹

Sympathy for the Devil

Jack Bull Chiles and George Clyde, both Southern gentry, become bushwhackers because their families are killed by jayhawkers. Jake and Holt join the Southern bushwhackers out of loyalty to these friends. However, their friendships with Chiles and Clyde respectively become strained because the bushwhackers are not welcoming to outsiders: “In their small-town environments they could be friends, but once they leave their home environment it becomes all too clear that a ‘dutchy’ and a ‘nigger’ are not Southerners. There is a strong level of discrimination against foreigners.”⁴²

There is also an important difference in moral outlook between Jake and the other bushwhackers. A number of incidents reveal this. Early on in the film, the bushwhackers trick a group of Union soldiers at a store into thinking that they are Union soldiers, then shoot them. They also shoot the storekeeper for “doin’ business with the Yankee invaders.” Although they refuse to shoot the storekeeper’s wife, they—in particular, Pitt Mackeson—decide to burn the store down. They are deaf to Jake’s pleading on her behalf: “We took her man. Leave her the store.”⁴³

Later in the film, at a bushwhacker encampment, Jake sees that a former neighbor from his hometown, Alf Bowden, is now a Union soldier and is being held prisoner. The leader of Jake’s group of bushwhackers, Black John, wants to secure the release of two bushwhackers who are being held by the Union forces. Jake persuades Black John to send a prisoner to the Union forces with the offer of an exchange of prisoners. He releases Bowden and

gives him the message to give to the Union soldiers, telling him, "You are spared, Alf."⁴⁴ (Seeing what has happened, Mackeson says, "I am on to you, Roedel."⁴⁵)

What these two incidents reveal is that Jake is merciful and will try to help those he can. Jake is also the only bushwhacker who knows how to read and write. When a sack of Union mail is found, he refuses to read the letters aloud to the others, on the grounds that "it's someone else's letter."⁴⁶ Threatened by Mackeson, and encouraged by others who say that there may be military secrets in the letters, Jake does read one letter aloud, from a Northern mother to her Unionist son. The effect of reading aloud the letter is to convince listeners that, as one young bushwhacker says, "She sounds about like my mother,"⁴⁷ and that the true differences between the young men fighting on opposite sides are negligible. Importantly, Jake's initial refusal to read other people's private mail indicates his greater respect for the rights of others than the rest of the bushwhackers.

The incident that most reveals his difference in moral outlook from the other bushwhackers, however, is the raid on Lawrence, Kansas. This occurs in the summer, after Chiles has died from a gunshot wound. William Clarke Quantrill, the leader of all of the "sons of Missouri,"⁴⁸ and, at least according to some, the devil of the title,⁴⁹ gives a rousing speech to the bushwhackers. Responding to the news that a number of women who were sisters or cousins of the bushwhackers were killed or injured when the jail in which they were being held collapsed⁵⁰ (the bushwhackers themselves do not keep women prisoners and have a "code of honor where women will not be harmed"⁵¹), he says to them: "Men of the South! Our enemies are sleeping. Just as our sisters slept in that Kansas City jail until the walls fell down and crushed the breath right out of them. Good women whose lives were cut short by Yankee treachery. But now our Southern sisters' souls fly forth to transmogrify into the fire and steel that will destroy our enemies! Yes, my boys, the abolitionists of Lawrence sleep under the heavy blanket of guilt that covers their shame."⁵² He convinces them to follow him in a dawn raid on the Union town of Lawrence, Kansas, fifty miles away, in what seems like a suicide mission. However, when the 440-odd bushwhackers arrive, they completely surprise the town and are met with little or no armed force.⁵³ They proceed to kill at least 184 men and boys (whoever was judged old enough to carry a rifle), to loot the town, to rob the bank, and to burn down most of the town's buildings. In the midst of this carnage and slaughter, Jake, accompanied by Holt, decides to get breakfast. One of the raiders, drunk,

tries to knock Holt down. Only Jake's cry—"It's George Clyde's nigger, you fool"—stops him.⁵⁴ While having breakfast in a boarding house, a group of bushwhackers, led by Mackeson, bursts into the boarding house and tries to bring an old man and a young boy out into the street to be executed. Jake pulls a gun on Mackeson and tells him to leave them alone. Mackeson backs down and leaves the boarding house with the others. Riding back to Missouri, however, Black John tells Jake, "I told you not to spare."⁵⁵ George Clyde promises to do what he can for Jake, but in the ensuing fight with the pursuing Union cavalry, Clyde is killed. Mackeson also deliberately shoots at Jake.

Jake and Holt, both injured, manage to escape and make it to the farm where Sue Lee now lives with the Brown family. After they have recovered from their injuries, they decide not to rejoin the bushwhackers. Jake says to Holt, "You know, I probably got only one more fight in me—I'm gonna kill Pitt Mackeson, either when he comes here or when I can get up to find him out," but when asked by Holt about joining the fight again, he says, "Fight for the cause? What about you?"⁵⁶

The raid on Lawrence is the turning point for Jake. He no longer has any sympathy for the bushwhackers and their cause. For Holt, the turning point comes immediately after the raid, with the death of his former master, Clyde. As he says, "I don't right understand it, but it come to the day George Clyde took that Yankee bullet, *that* was when it made me feel the somethin' new. . . . What I felt was diff'rent. What I felt was now—now I was gonna be free. Oh that George Clyde—I loved him sure. But his friend was no diff'rent from being his nigger—and Roedel—I never, never again gonna be nobody's nigger."⁵⁷ Holt finally asserts his freedom. He decides that he is going to go his own way, for once in his life. He will not return to the bushwhackers. That was his former master's cause, not his. He is "going to find [his] mama. I believe she was sold to Texas, so that is where I will begin. If she was sold there, I will go there and pay for her freedom."⁵⁸

Jake's moral development in the film, and his development from boy to man, dictates that he take two further steps. First, he marries Sue Lee. He becomes a husband and a stepfather, and he accepts responsibility for a family. Second, although he is eventually provided with a chance to kill Mackeson, the man who tried to kill him, he decides to spare him. As he says to Holt, "It ain't right and it ain't wrong. It just is."⁵⁹ By now, Jake has cut off his hair, one of the marks of being a bushwhacker, as he said he would do: "I said I'd never cut my hair 'til I was finished with the war."⁶⁰ His transformation is complete. As another author has said: "Over the course of the film,

Jake Roedel is transformed very realistically from naive boy to emotionally mature man. In addition, both Roedel and Holt exhibit traits of mercy, gratitude and civility which make them stand apart from the other characters . . . the two stand out from the crowd as the true vestige of decency and integrity in a world turned upside down by war and conflicting loyalties.”⁶¹

The Blue and the Gray

James Schamus has said of *Ride with the Devil*, “The movie doesn’t present the usual image of the Civil War, of easily identifiable hordes of gray- and blue-clad soldiers clashing on the field of honor in the fight either for or against slavery,”⁶² and another commentator has written, “Ang Lee avoids the clichés of a typical gunpowder-and-uniform Civil War movie.”⁶³ There is a great irony in the claim that the film does not depict Civil War battles between one side wearing blue uniforms and another side wearing gray uniforms. The irony is that the main tactic used by the bushwhackers is to wear the blue uniforms of the Union army, and to hide their long hair under their blue army hats.

The first sentence of *Woe to Live On* is, “We rode across the hillocks and vales of Missouri, hiding in the uniforms of Yankee blue.”⁶⁴ By wearing the blue uniforms, the bushwhackers can move across the state without getting fired on. In the opening chapter, they encounter an immigrant family while wearing the blue uniforms. Jake relates, “Our uniforms were a relief to them, for they did not look too closely at our mismatched trousers and our hats that had rebel locks trailing below them. This was a common mistake and we took pleasure in prompting it.”⁶⁵ They interrogate the father, a barrel maker, as to whether he is a “Southern man” who supports seceding from the Union. He tells them, in his German accent, that no, he is “Union man.”⁶⁶ When they are about to hang him, he speaks in German to Jake, and Jake relates to Black John, “He says he is not a Union man,” and “He was coddled by our costumes.” Black John replies, without a hint of irony, “Well, he should’ve hung by his convictions rather than live by the lie.”⁶⁷ The man is hanged, and his young son is also killed—a boy who had been “beginning to study our uniforms.”⁶⁸

Wearing the blue uniform of the Union soldiers also allows the bushwhackers to ambush smaller numbers of enemy soldiers. In *Ride with the Devil*, the bushwhackers trick a group of Union soldiers at a general store into thinking that they are fellow Union soldiers, and then, having surprised

them, shoot them. Afterward, in writing a letter to Mrs. Chiles, Jake reveals that these men were the men who killed Asa Chiles—her husband and Jack Bull Chiles's father. As it is narrated: "Often we don the Union blue to lull the federals into a false serenity, and the Yanks pay dearly for their belief in appearances. Under the disguise we wear our Bushwhacker vestments close to our hearts. They may not be regular army uniforms as there is no army out here for us to join, but where we find true Missouri men we make our own army." This narrated letter, which is not in the film's screenplay, and the scene of the bushwhackers tricking the Union soldiers that precedes it are inspired by passages from the novel such as the following:

For a while we went back to wearing Yankee blue uniforms. They were so easy to come by. The trick of it was so simple, but it worked peachy. Twenty or thirty of us would ride up to a scout of Federals and George Clyde would say, "How is rebel hunting today, lieutenant?" and before an answer could be uttered or suspicions raised on closer inspection, we would cut open on them point-blank and pass them through to the next world. The treachery of it was not too noble, but it was a rare day when it failed.⁶⁹

It is important to note that Jake characterizes their wearing the enemy uniforms as treachery, which is not noble. He recognizes the deception that they are practicing. As he says early on in the novel, "In the morning we shed our blue sheep's clothing. Our border shirts came out of satchels and onto our backs. We preferred this means of dress, for it was more flat-out and honest."⁷⁰

When the 440-strong force of bushwhackers rides to Lawrence, they do so wearing the blue uniforms of Union soldiers. Concerning the raid on Lawrence, it has been said by one writer: "Any true Southerner should thrill at the beautifully filmed scenes of Quantrill's men, dressed in navy blue jackets for disguise, riding into Kansas, assembling on Mt. Oread above the town, shedding their jackets, forming into battle lines, and then swooping down with rebel yells on the radical Republican stronghold."⁷¹ What is curious about this description of a scene that should thrill any true Southerner is that it is a scene depicting Southerners wearing the uniform of the North. It is a scene depicting Southerners wearing a disguise, concealing their Southern identity. It is a scene depicting the Southerners engaged in deception.

Machiavelli on Perfidy and Ruses of War

In *The Art of Warfare*, Sunzi (Sun-tzu) says, "Warfare is the art of deceit. Therefore, when able, seem to be unable; when ready, seem unready; when nearby, seem far away; and when far away, seem near. If the enemy seeks some advantage, entice him with it. If he is in disorder, attack him and take him. If he is formidable, prepare against him. If he is strong, evade him. If he is humble, encourage his arrogance. If he is rested, wear him down. If he is internally harmonious, sow divisiveness in his ranks. Attack where he is not prepared; go by way of places where it would never occur to him you would go."⁷² Sunzi seems to equate waging war with (certain forms of) deception. He does not draw a line between different kinds of deception in war.⁷³ Not all authors, however, refuse to discriminate between different kinds of deception in war.

In the *Discourses on Livy*, Machiavelli says, "Although deceit is detestable in other things, yet in the conduct of war it is laudable and honorable."⁷⁴ Although this may seem like a blanket approval of all deception practiced in war, Machiavelli distinguishes between deception in general and the special case of perfidy: "I do not confound such deceit with perfidy, which breaks pledged faith treaties; for although states and kingdoms may at times be won by perfidy, yet will it ever bring dishonor with it."⁷⁵ Perfidy, on Machiavelli's account, means explicitly pledging, as a combatant, to act in some way with the intention of breaking that pledge in order to kill, injure, or capture the adversary. Acts of perfidy would include raising a white flag of surrender and then shooting at the opposing forces as soon as they emerge from their hiding place, or making a treaty with the enemy and then attacking. Perfidy in war is dishonorable.

The kind of honorable deception in war that Machiavelli is talking about is "those feints and stratagems which you employ against an enemy that distrusts you, and in the employment of which properly consists the art of war."⁷⁶ He provides, as an example, Hannibal's deception: "Such was that practiced by Hannibal when he feigned flight on the lake of Perugia (Thrasimene), for the purpose of hemming in the Consul and the Roman army."⁷⁷ Machiavelli considers such deceptions to be a normal part of war, as he reveals in his *The Art of War*:

To avoid being drawn into an ambushade by the enemy, you must be very cautious of trusting to flattering appearance: for instance, if

the enemy should leave considerable booty in your way, you should suspect there is a hook in the bait; or if a strong party of the enemy should fly before a few of your men, or a few of his men should attack a strong party of your army; or if the enemy suddenly runs away, without any apparent cause, it is reasonable to imagine there is some artifice in it and that he knows very well what he is doing; so, the weaker and more remiss he seems to be, the more it behooves you to be upon your guard, if you would avoid falling into his snares.⁷⁸

The act of feigning a retreat or flight, in order to lure an enemy into an ambush, is an example of an act of deception that is called a ruse of war (*une ruse de guerre*). Ruses of war include disguising weapons, supplies, or men (when not fighting), creating dummy targets, sending troops or supplies in the wrong direction, pretending to communicate with nonexistent troops or reinforcements, and simulating inactivity. These ruses of war make use of indices—that is, signs whose meanings are established by experience. They do not involve the use of symbols, or signs whose meanings are established by human convention.⁷⁹ A beard, for example, is an index of being male and adult; the disguise of a false beard may be used to deceive people into thinking that you are a man. To make the assertion, “I am a grown man,” when one is female or a child, with the intention that another believe it to be true, would be to attempt to deceive using symbols (language). Withdrawing troops from a battlefield in order to lure an enemy into an ambush involves making use of an index of retreat (a natural sign of retreat) rather than a symbol of retreat (such as a declaration to the enemy that one is retreating).

Not all ruses of war are limited to the use of indices or natural signs, however. Transmitting falsehoods over the radio or telephone, moving signs to indicate incorrect locations, planting false battle plans, and using spies and agents—all are ruses of war that involve the use of symbols or linguistic signs.

In the *Discourses*, Machiavelli provides another example of an honorable deception in war:

Such also was the stratagem of Pontius, general of the Samnites, to draw the Romans into the defiles of the Caudine Forks. Having concealed his army behind a mountain, he sent a number of his soldiers disguised as herdsmen with droves of cattle into the plains. These, on being captured and interrogated by the Romans as to

the whereabouts of the Samnite army, answered, according to the instructions of Pontius, that it was engaged in the siege of the town of Nocera. The Consuls, believing it, entered the defiles of Caudium, where they were promptly hemmed in by the Samnites.⁸⁰

Here the Samnite soldiers wear the disguise of herdsmen, allow themselves to be captured, and then lie to the Roman army in order to trap the Roman army in the Caudine Forks. Machiavelli does not consider the soldiers' disguising themselves as noncombatant civilians or the soldiers' lying to the Roman army to be examples of perfidy. What he does not comment on is whether wearing the disguise of the enemy's clothing or armor—that is, wearing its uniform—is an example of perfidy.

According to the Hague Convention of 1907, under “abuse of flag and uniform,” it is forbidden “to make improper use of a flag of truce, of the national flag or of the military insignia and uniform of the enemy, as well as the distinctive badges of the Geneva Convention.” This is to be distinguished from “ruses of war and the employment of measures necessary for obtaining information about the enemy and the country,” which are permissible.⁸¹ Although the language of “improper use” might suggest that “the article does not definitely prohibit” the use of “the enemy's uniform to deceive him, so long as the disguise is abandoned before actual contact and fighting with the enemies begins,”⁸² it has been argued conclusively that the convention does prohibit the wearing of the uniform of the enemy as a means of deceiving the enemy at any time, and not only in open combat.⁸³

The 1977 protocol, which was added to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, states, in “Prohibition of Perfidy,” that “it is prohibited to kill, injure or capture an adversary by resort to perfidy.” It further states, “Ruses of war are not prohibited” and gives as examples of ruses of war “the use of camouflage, decoys, mock operations and misinformation.”⁸⁴ As examples of perfidy, it includes “the feigning of civilian, non-combatant status” as well as “the feigning of protected status by the use of signs, emblems or uniforms of the United Nations or of neutral or other States not Parties to the conflict.”⁸⁵ Under “Emblems of Nationality,” it says, “It is prohibited to make use in an armed conflict of the flags or military emblems, insignia or uniforms of neutral or other States not Parties to the conflict,” then goes on to say, “It is prohibited to make use of the flags or military emblems, insignia or uniforms of adverse Parties while engaging in attacks or in order to shield, favor, protect or impede military operations.”⁸⁶ It does add, “Nothing . . . shall

affect the existing generally recognized rules of international law applicable to espionage or to the use of flags in the conduct of armed conflict at sea.”⁸⁷

By the Hague and Geneva conventions, therefore, feigning civilian, non-combatant status and wearing the uniform of the enemy “while engaging in attacks or in order to shield, favor, protect or impede military operations” are acts of (illegal) perfidy, and not (legally permitted) ruses of war. Because Machiavelli does not consider the feigning of civilian, noncombatant status to be perfidy, he can be said to reject this first portion of both conventions. Although his position on the wearing of the uniforms of the enemy is not certain, it can at least be argued that he would not consider the wearing of the uniform of the enemy to be perfidy either. That is, were the Samnites to trick the Romans by wearing Roman armor, he would, it seems, count that as honorable deception, not perfidy. If this is correct, then Machiavelli would defend the bushwhackers’ deceptive wearing of enemy uniforms in fighting jayhawkers and Union forces.

This does not mean that there is not a distinction to be drawn between perfidy, or impermissible deception in war, and ruses of war, or permissible deception in war, by Machiavelli and the bushwhackers. At one point in *Ride with the Devil*, the bushwhackers are eating in the house of Mrs. Clark and her twelve-year-old daughter. After eating, Jake sits on the porch alone to rest. There are two horses tied up in front of the house. Two Union soldiers creep up on him and draw their guns. One of them asks, “Where’s the other one, you devil?” Jake responds by lying, “I am alone. That’s my daddy’s horse—he was shot off it three days back.”⁸⁸ Such a lie, it seems, would count as permissible deception by Machiavelli.

The soldiers believe Jake is lying to them, but just as they are about to shoot him, the other bushwhackers shoot them from inside the house. The house is now surrounded by Union soldiers. Jake tries to get the horses, but the horses are shot dead, and as he runs into the house, his pinkie finger is also shot off. Inside, he joins the other bushwhackers in shooting at the Union soldiers. From inside, Black John calls a cease-fire and shouts, “Do you kill women? There’s women in here!” The response from the Union soldiers is, “You know we don’t kill women! Send them out now and they’ll be safe-passaged!” The Union soldiers cease firing. One of the bushwhackers says to Mrs. Clark, “Please, ma’am, you and your daughter got to go.”⁸⁹ She walks with her daughter to the door, gingerly opens the door, and then walks briskly with her daughter away from the house. Once they are far enough away, the soldiers resume shooting.

What the bushwhackers do not contemplate doing is using this opportunity to ambush the Union soldiers. If, instead of sending out the mother and the daughter, the bushwhackers had burst out of the door shooting at the Union soldiers, then it seems fair to say that all involved would count this as an act of (impermissible) perfidy, and not a (permissible) ruse of war, and likewise if the Union soldiers had started shooting as the mother and daughter opened the door. It seems that Machiavelli would agree, too. The film does not, then, endorse all deception in war.

Of Human Bondage and Shotgun Weddings

Ride with the Devil is bookended by weddings. It opens with the wedding of Jack Bull Chiles's sister, Sally Chiles, to Horton Lee Jr. It closes (or nearly closes) with the wedding of Jake to Sue Lee. Nevertheless, what the male protagonists say about weddings (or really, marriage), and especially what Jake says about it, is extremely negative.

During his sister's wedding at the beginning of the film, Jack Bull refers to "my sister's funeral—I mean wedding," jokingly characterizing his sister's wedding as her death.⁹⁰ Afterward, Jake says that a wedding is a "peculiar thing." Jack Bull says that it is "no more peculiar, Jake, than slavery." To this Jake replies, "That is certain. And that is why I have often wondered for what cause those Northerners are so anxious to change our Southern institutions. For in both North and South men are every day enslaved at the altar, regardless of their state and color." Jack Bull responds, "It is a type of subjugation. We shall avoid it, Jake," to which Jake responds in turn, "Happily, my poverty ensures my freedom from such a fate."⁹¹

Jake considers marriage to be a form of bondage. Toward the end of the film, Jake goes to Orton Brown's house to recover from his wounds. He is now living under the same roof as Sue Lee, a single mother with a daughter, Grace, by Jack Bull. He is told to marry Sue Lee by Cave Wyatt, another bushwhacker and the nephew of the Browns: "Ort tells me that when you brung that girl here she was already pregnant. You better marry her, boy. It ain't right not to." To this Jake replies, "Me? No, not me. I don't got to marry nobody."⁹²

Cave believes that Jake is the father of Sue Lee's baby and that Jake should do the honorable thing and marry her. However, Holt, who knows that Jake is not the father, also believes that Jake should marry Sue Lee. In a scene from the original screenplay that is not included in the film, Holt tells Jake,

“Could be you ought to . . . I’ve thunk about it from several sides, and could be she’d make you a fine wife.”⁹³ Jake’s response is to say, “Even if I *did* want to marry her,” nevertheless “there is one lil’ thing we ain’t mentioning here. It might just be she don’t *want* to marry me.”⁹⁴

At this same time, Sue Lee confronts Jake and asks him, “Jake, what’s this trash I hear about you being my fiancé?” Jake tells her that Cave and the Browns believe that he is the father of her baby. Sue Lee then asks him, “Do you figure I ought to be married?” Jake says, “Yes, if you want to keep fingers from waggin’ in your face,” and also, “They got a name for kids without daddies, you know. It’s not a good one.”⁹⁵ Sue Lee, however, is not concerned about her own disgrace, although she does care about her daughter being called a bastard. Her next question is more intimate. “So, do you want to marry me?” she asks Jake, in the closest she has ever come to proposing to him.⁹⁶

It is clear from everything that Sue Lee says, and does not say, that she wants to marry Jake. She is also too proud to tell him this. It is clear from everything that Jake says that he does not know that she wants to marry him. He is also extremely deferential and shy around women (he is a virgin). His ignorance as to her intentions, coupled with his shyness, leads him to say in response to her quasi-proposal, “Naw. Not too bad.” His response produces a classic example of “the lady doth protest too much, methinks” from Sue Lee, who, after a pause, snaps, “Good. That’s good news. ’Cause I wouldn’t marry you for a wagonload of gold. . . . I wouldn’t marry you even if you weren’t a runty Dutchman with a nubbin for a finger.”⁹⁷ To this Jake himself snaps back, “Fine! That’s damned fine. I wouldn’t want a wife who didn’t keep her place. Anyhow, it is a proven thing that being your man is just plain bad luck, and I don’t need to marry any of that.”⁹⁸

If the matter were left up to them, then perhaps Jake and Sue Lee would never get married. Later, when Jake tells Sue Lee, “You know, that girl needs her a daddy,” Sue Lee (still angry with him, it seems) snaps back, “She had a daddy, Jake, and you ain’t it.”⁹⁹ However, Orton and Wilma Brown do not leave the matter up to the young couple. Orton leaves on horseback for Hartwell. He tells Jake to stay behind and doesn’t tell him where he is going. When Jake asks Wilma why she is preparing a chicken for dinner, she tells him, “Why, nothing. I just know Orton will be mighty tired tonight when he gets back from his ride. I intend to feed him well.”¹⁰⁰ The conspiracy of the Browns allows them to spring a wedding on Jake. Orton returns with the Reverend Horace Wright, and, while still holding his shotgun, tells Jake,

“You’re getting’ married today, Dutchy. You’re getting’ married or you’re getting’ out.” In a last attempt to free himself from the bondage of marriage, Jake shouts out to Holt to saddle his horse. Holt replies, “Oh, no. You should do right, Jake.”¹⁰¹ While not in on the deception, Holt concurs with it.

It is at this point that Sue Lee, who was not in on the deception either, but who does want to marry Jake, brings him around to the side of the house and asks him, “Are you going to or not?” They have the following exchange:

JAKE: I thought you said you wouldn’t marry me for a wagonload of gold ’cause I’m a nubbin’-fingered runt of a Dutchman. I remember you saying that.

SUE LEE: Well, I guess I lied.

JAKE: Are you lying again now?

SUE LEE: No. I wouldn’t lie to you, Jake.

JAKE: You just told me you lied to me before.

SUE LEE: That was different. That was romance.

JAKE: And now is what?

SUE LEE: Now is the truth. This here now is the truth.¹⁰²

Having established that she does indeed want to marry him, Jake marries Sue Lee.¹⁰³

Sue Lee makes a distinction between lying in romance, where it is permitted, perhaps even expected, and lying at the moment of truth in a relationship, where honesty about one’s feelings is demanded. Jake is unpracticed in the ways of romance and does not understand the use of deception by lovers. What he demands of her, in the end, is honesty about her feelings for him. Only if she drops her pretense will he agree to marry her.

Insofar as the film appears to endorse the deception of Jake by the Browns—and even, it seems, appears to side with Sue Lee in judging Jake to be naive about romance—it can be said to endorse a certain amount of deception for the sake of love. However, insofar as the film seems to endorse Jake’s request for honesty from Sue Lee, it can be said to reject the view that all deception in romance is justified. Honesty, in the end, is required.

In this chapter, I argued that Lee’s sympathy in *Ride with the Devil* is for the outsiders caught up in the Civil War. They form the conscience of the film. Because they engage in deception in their fighting and in their romance, it raises the question of whether all deception in war and love

is justified. I argue that the film rejects this view. Instead, it can be said to agree with Machiavelli that even in war, there are limits on when deception can be practiced. It can also be said to suggest that in love, honesty is finally required. Despite what people may think, all is not fair in love and war.

Notes

Research for this chapter was conducted at Princeton University in the summer of 2011 and at Yale University in the fall of 2011. I would especially like to thank the staffs at the Sterling Memorial Library, the Bass Library, and the Film Study Center at Yale University for their assistance. Many years ago I was encouraged to take Machiavelli more seriously as a thinker by Hein Goemans. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Hein for his good advice.

1. Several sources are possible for this proverb, including “Anye impietie may lawfully be committed in love, which is lawlesse” (from *Euphues*, 1578, by John Lyly) and “Love and warre are all one. . . . It is lawful to use sleights and stratagems to . . . attaine the wished end” (from *Don Quixote*, rev. ed., trans. Thomas Shelton, 1620). *Wordsworth Dictionary of Proverbs*, ed. G. L. Apperson, Stephen J. Curtis, and Martin H. Manser (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 1993), 355.

2. In *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (George Roy Hill, 1969), Harvey Logan challenges Butch to a knife fight for the leadership of the Wild Bunch gang. Butch is handed a knife, but he waves it away, saying, “Not ’til me and Harvey get the rules straightened out.” Harvey drops his guard and says, “Rules? In a knife fight? No rules!” Butch then kicks Harvey as hard as he can in the balls, and Harvey doubles up in pain. Then Butch knocks him out.

3. Note that the claim is that deception in war and love is justified, and not merely that it is excused. For more on the distinction between justifying deception and excusing deception, see my “To Catch a Thief: The Ethics of Deceiving Bad People,” in *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo and Philosophy*, ed. Eric Bronson (Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 198–210.

4. It was referred to as the War of the Rebellion by the Northern Unionists and the War for Southern Independence by the Southern Confederates. Other names include the War for the Union and the War of Southern Aggression (on the Northern side), and the War of Secession and the War of Northern Aggression (on the Southern side).

5. Mark Winchell, *God, Man, and Hollywood: Politically Incorrect Cinema from The Birth of a Nation to The Passion of the Christ* (New York: Intercollegiate Press, 2008), 182–183.

6. The terms *bushwhacker* and *jayhawk* predate the Civil War. The origin of *bushwhacker* remains obscure, although it implied “woodsmen who knew how to fend for themselves in rugged terrain.” “Jayhawkers and Bushwhackers,” in *Encyclopedia of Arkan-*

History and Culture (<http://encyclopediaofarkansas.net>). According to John C. Tibbetts, "Historian Stephen Starr (1973) has said that the term *jayhawk* was first applied to Kansas raiders 'whose sudden and unexpected incursions into Missouri were like the swoop of a hawk pouncing on an unsuspecting and less capably larcenous bluejay.'" Jayhawkers were also referred to as "red legs" because they wore red leggings. Tibbetts, "Plains' Speaking: Sound, Sense, and Sensibility in Ang Lee's *Ride with the Devil*," in *The Literature/Film Reader: Issues of Adaptation* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow, 2007), 319n3. The citations are from Stephen Z. Starr, *Jennison's Jayhawkers: A Civil War Cavalry Regiment and Its Commander* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973). More generally, *jayhawking* came to mean theft.

7. Daniel Woodrell, *Woe to Live On* (New York: Holt, 1987). Woodrell's novel was originally a short story that appeared in the *Missouri Review* in 1983. It was divided into three sections, "Coleman Younger, The Last Is Gone—1916," "I Have Been Found in History Books," and "Only for Them." According to Tibbetts, "The narrator is Jakob Roedel, a second-generation German American who lives with his son, Jefferson, and grandson, Karl, in Saint Bruno, Missouri. Jake has just learned that his old friend and comrade in arms, Coleman Younger, has passed away. Younger's demise triggers Jake's memories of those bloody days of the early 1860s when conflicts between Missouri pro-Southern bushwhackers and Kansas Free-State Jayhawkers resulted in the slaughter of thousands of citizens and soldiers and divided the loyalties of many families. The subsequent novelization appeared in 1987. It expanded the central section of the story and confined the action to the years 1861–1863." Tibbetts, "Plains' Speaking," 321n11. The novel's title was bought, along with the rights to adapt it, but as a studio president at Universal Pictures is supposed to have said, "I'm not spending millions of dollars on a movie with the word *Woe* in the title." James Schamus, "Fragments towards an Introduction," *Ride with the Devil* (New York: Faber and Faber, 1999), xii.

8. The opening crawl of the film reads, "Allegiance to either side was dangerous, but it was more dangerous still to find oneself caught in the middle." The implication here, of course, is that even those characters in the film who join the bushwhackers are caught in the middle of the two sides.

9. Tibbetts, "Plains' Speaking," 312.

10. *Ibid.*, from Tibbetts's interview with James Schamus, March 14, 1988, Kansas City, Missouri.

11. Liz Rowlinson, "A Quick Chat with Daniel Woodrell," *Richmond Review*, 1999, quoted in Whitney Crothers Dilley, *The Cinema of Ang Lee: The Other Side of the Screen* (New York: Wallflower Press, 2007), 115.

12. Ellen Cheshire, *The Pocket Essential Ang Lee* (Harpending, U.K.: Pocket Essentials, 2001), 65.

13. Tibbetts, "Plains' Speaking," 312, from Tibbetts's interview with Ang Lee, March 24, 1988, Kansas City, Missouri.

14. Even though the film had a veritable Brat Pack of a cast, including Tobey Magu-

ire, Jeffrey Wright, Skeet Ulrich, Jonathan Rhys-Meyers, and James Caviezel, as well as singer-songwriter Jewel (Kilcher), Tom Wilkinson, and Mark Ruffalo in minor roles, and even though the film cost \$35 million to make, its main release was canceled after being shown in only sixty theaters. Universal Pictures sent it to video in January 2000. The explanation given by Lee was that the movie had poor test screenings. (Lee no longer allows his films to be test screened as a result.) Lee himself could not do any publicity for the film because he was doing preproduction for *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000). Indeed, Lee was dissatisfied with a number of the decisions made by Universal Pictures, the company who cut the film for distribution. It did not help matters that *Ride with the Devil* was a slow-paced, difficult-to-follow three-hour period movie, with imitation nineteenth-century speech and few battle scenes about a relatively obscure part of the Civil War. Quite apart from finding it overlong and hard to follow, some U.S. critics considered it to be reactionary because it was sympathetic to the plight of the Southerners. The film received better notices in Britain. Perhaps because of its lack of narrative structure, its length, and its dialogue, or perhaps because of its incorrect politics, or perhaps for all of these reasons, this film is considered to be one of Lee's misfires, and it has suffered somewhat from popular and scholarly neglect, although it has become a cult favorite among certain (Southern) audiences.

15. Schamus, "Fragments," xvi.

16. *Ibid.*

17. Woodrell, *Woe to Live On*, 49–50.

18. Winchell, *God, Man, and Hollywood*, 183.

19. Cheshire, *Pocket Essential Ang Lee*, 63.

20. *Ibid.*, 15 (from *Cinemaya*, no. 21, 1993).

21. Emilie Yueh-yu Yeh and Darrell W. Davis, *Taiwan Film Directors: A Treasure Island* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), quoted in Dilley, *Cinema of Ang Lee*, 28.

22. Ang Lee, foreword to James Schamus, *Ride with the Devil* (New York: Faber and Faber, 1999), ix.

23. Schamus, "Fragments," 53–54.

24. Dilley, *Cinema of Ang Lee*, 125.

25. Cheshire, *Pocket Essential Ang Lee*, 63.

26. As Schamus says about such German settlers, most of them "were radical '48-ers'—men and women who had fled Germany after the failed 1848 revolution," and they "were violently opposed to slavery. These Germans . . . were crucial Northern allies in Missouri, and were especially loathed by pro-Confederate Missourians." Schamus, "Fragments," xv–xvi.

27. *Ibid.*, 8.

28. As Woodrell says, "There are things about the Border Wars that might surprise some people. For many of those involved, on both sides of the state line, it was more a question of family . . . than ideology. Even a famous bushwhacker family, like the Youngers, who had started out pro-Union, turned against Free-Staters when they were

roughed up by Union militia. We forget that most of these guys were teenagers. They were coming of age at the wrong time. For another, German immigrants who came to America, like Jake's family, were 90 percent pro-Union, and they were not liked by the Southern side. Therefore, Jake's decision to ride with the bushwhackers is almost as strange, seemingly, as Holt's. Both Jake and Holt were outsiders in the cause, but they both acted on personal loyalties to their mutual friend, George Clyde. My research has revealed that, historically, there were really such characters." Woodrell, quoted in Tibbetts, "Plains' Speaking," 314.

29. *Ibid.*, 43.

30. There were free as well as slave African Americans who fought on the side of the Confederates during the war, although their reasons for fighting differed. As Schamus says, "Some wanted to prove to white Southerners that blacks could be as loyal and trustworthy as whites, in the hope that after the war, if the South won, the treatment of blacks would improve. Some were fiercely loyal to white friends or masters, whom they often served as manservants. Others saw service in the war as welcome relief from the drudgery of plantation life. And probably for the vast majority, being near the front lines meant being that much nearer the North—and when they got the chance, they crossed the lines and joined forces with the Union army. Some of them performed in active combat duty, though this was rare. But there are numerous accounts of armed blacks fighting for the South, although, politically, Southern leaders were loath to admit their presence in the ranks, no matter how small. Most often, though, blacks served as laborers, valets or teamsters. Many in the South were afraid to arm large numbers of blacks, though by the end of the war, even the President of the Confederacy was admitting that arming blacks was the only way the South had a chance to win. It's often been said that if the South had armed its blacks earlier, it might indeed have won. Ironically, it was wealthy Southern slave-owners who were the most vociferous in their arguments against blacks being mustered into active duty—they were worried about their valuable property being killed in action" (xviii). The character of Daniel Holt is an amalgam of actual historical characters, including John Nolan, who served as a spy and scout for the bushwhacker William Quantrill, who led the raid on Lawrence. As Woodrell himself says about the original source materials he found during his research at the Kansas University Spencer Research Library and the Lawrence Historical Society and Museum, "All the time I had been thinking and reading about the Border Wars, I realized I had a lot of feelings about it and wanted to write about it. The letters, diaries, and other first-person accounts I found at KU were particularly amazing. For instance, there was a hand-written letter from a black man who had ridden with the bushwhackers against Lawrence. That was off, I thought at first—a black man riding with pro-slavery guerillas. But I can understand that. He wasn't thinking about the big political issues, he was thinking about his friends." Tibbetts, "Plains' Speaking," 315–316. Tibbetts adds, "Historian Edward E. Leslie (1996) mentions at least three African Americans who rode with Quantrill: John Lobb, Henry Wilson, and John Noland ('Noland was especially well liked by his white

fellow veterans and was described by them as a “man among men”).” Tibbetts, “Plains’ Speaking,” 321–322. The citation is from Edward E. Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride* (New York: Random House, 1996), 86. For more on African Americans fighting for the Confederacy, see Ervin L. Jordan’s *Black Confederates and the Afro-Yankees in Civil War Virginia* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1995).

31. Schamus, *Ride*, 16.

32. Dilley, *Cinema of Ang Lee*, 116–117.

33. Cheshire, *Pocket Essential Ang Lee*, 68.

34. Schamus, *Ride*, 87.

35. *Ibid.*, 130.

36. Lee, foreword to Schamus, *Ride*, ix.

37. Tibbetts, “Plains’ Speaking,” 313.

38. *Ibid.*, 66.

39. Lee, foreword to Schamus, *Ride*, x.

40. Cheshire, *Pocket Essential Ang Lee*, 13.

41. Schamus, “Fragments,” xiii.

42. Cheshire, *Pocket Essential Ang Lee*, 67–68.

43. Schamus, *Ride*, 13.

44. *Ibid.*, 35.

45. *Ibid.*, 35.

46. *Ibid.*, 39.

47. *Ibid.*, 39.

48. Quantrill was born in Ohio, although he lied about his birthplace. He may or may not have been a deserter from the Missouri state guard.

49. There is some ambiguity here. According to Winchell, “Quantrill has been so demonized in historical writing and popular culture (including at least ten previous films dating back to 1914) that he is clearly the evil referred to in the film’s title.” Winchell, *God, Man, and Hollywood*, 185. There is also a biography of Quantrill entitled *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, by Edward E. Leslie (New York: Random House, 1996). However, in the 1940 movie *Dark Command*, Quantrill is accused by his mother of “fighting for the hosts of Darkness [with] the Devil riding beside you” (Tibbetts, “Plains’ Speaking,” 309). That would mean that Quantrill rode with the devil, not that he was the devil.

50. As Tibbetts says, “On 14 August [1863] several women were killed and many others were badly injured during the collapse of a Kansas City jail. Three of them were sisters of [William T.] ‘Bloody Bill’ Anderson and another was a cousin of Cole Younger.” Tibbetts, “Plains’ Speaking,” 321n14.

51. Cheshire, *Pocket Essential Ang Lee*, 67.

52. Schamus, *Ride*, 88.

53. The actual raid took place on August 21, 1863.

54. Schamus, *Ride*, 102.

55. *Ibid.*, 109.

56. Ibid., 125.

57. Ibid.

58. Ibid., 137.

59. Ibid., 142.

60. Ibid., 138.

61. Dilley, *Cinema of Ang Lee*, 117. It should be noted that the character of Jake in the film is more merciful than the character of Jake in the novel. In the novel, Jake kills a fourteen-year-old boy, the son of a German immigrant barrel maker, in front of his mother and sister, to prove that he is on the side of the Southerners. He tells the other bushwhackers, who are somewhat shocked, "Pups make hounds." Woodrell, *Woe to Live On*, 8.

62. Schamus, "Fragments," xv.

63. Dilley, *Cinema of Ang Lee*, 116.

64. Woodrell, *Woe to Live On*, 3.

65. Ibid., 4.

66. Ibid., 5.

67. Ibid., 7.

68. In the novel, it is Jake who kills the young boy.

69. Woodrell, *Woe to Live On*, 155.

70. Ibid., 19.

71. H. Archer Scott Trask, "A Southern Braveheart," *Chronicles: A Magazine of American Culture*, October 2000, 51, quoted in Winchell, *God, Man, and Hollywood*, 185.

72. Sun-tzu, *The Art of Warfare*, trans. and ed. Roger T. Ames (New York: Ballantine Books), 95–96.

73. To be fair, all of Sunzi's examples of deception could be understood as examples of (mere) ruses of war. Hence, he has no need to discriminate between them. The distinction between such ruses, as well as perfidy, may be implicit.

74. Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livius*, trans. Christian E. Detmold, ed. Max Lerner (New York: Modern Library, 1950), 526.

75. Ibid.

76. Ibid.

77. Ibid.

78. Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Art of War*, trans. Ellis Farnworth, ed. Neal Wood (Indianapolis, Ind.: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), 143.

79. Icons are signs whose meanings are established by resemblance. For the distinction between index, icon, and symbol, see Charles S. Peirce, "Logic as Semiotic: The Theory of Signs," in *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, ed. Justus Buchler (New York: Dover, 1955), 98–119. For more on the relevance of the distinction to lies and deception, see my entry, "The Definition of Lying and Deception," in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (<http://plato.stanford.edu>).

80. Machiavelli, *Art of War*, 526–527.

81. "Convention (IV) Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land" (<http://www.au.af.mil>).

82. Valentine Jobst III, "Is the Wearing of the Enemy's Uniform a Violation of the Laws of War?" *American Journal of International Law* 35 (1941): 437.

83. *Ibid.*, 435–442.

84. "Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), 8 June 1977" (<http://www.icrc.org>).

85. *Ibid.*

86. *Ibid.*

87. *Ibid.*

88. Schamus, *Ride*, 22.

89. *Ibid.*, 23.

90. *Ibid.*, 4.

91. *Ibid.*, 6.

92. *Ibid.*, 117.

93. *Ibid.*, 117–118.

94. *Ibid.*, 118.

95. *Ibid.*, 119.

96. In the original screenplay, the "you" is italicized, and her question is: "So, do *you* want to marry me?" (*ibid.*, 119). However, in the film, the question is asked softly, without any emphasis on "you." The result is that it sounds as though Sue Lee is proposing to Jake.

97. *Ibid.*, 119.

98. *Ibid.*

99. *Ibid.*, 128.

100. *Ibid.*, 129.

101. *Ibid.*, 129–130.

102. *Ibid.*, 131.

103. In the original screenplay, Jake says, "Jack Bull would have wanted that girl to have a daddy. He was like a brother. I guess I'll do it" (*ibid.*). The implication of what he says is that he is doing the right thing out of loyalty to his friend. However, in the film, there is no reference to Jack Bull. Jake is supposed to be marrying Sue Lee out of love.