

'One look and you recognize evil': Lycan Terrorism, Monstrous Otherness and the Banality of Evil in Benjamin Percy's *Red Moon*

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In her influential book *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1963), Hannah Arendt observes of the 1960 trial of Adolf Eichmann: 'Despite all the efforts of the prosecution, everybody could see that this man was not a "monster," but it was difficult indeed not to suspect that he was a clown'. For Arendt, Eichmann's 'clownishness' lies in his persistent reliance on self-justifying cliché, his narrowly institutionalised (and often self-contradictory) thinking and, most significantly, his deferral of personal ethical responsibility to the political and bureaucratic hierarchies of the state. Arendt's dismissal of Eichmann as 'monster' functions as a metaphor for her rejection of Kantian radical evil in favour of her concept of the 'banality of evil', rooted in the Augustinian view of evil as privation.

Benjamin Percy's novel *Red Moon* (2013) navigates this problem of the 'monster' in the context of post-9/11 responses to and representations of Islamist terrorism. Structured around a series of terrorist atrocities carried out by Lycan extremists, Percy's novel employs the werewolf as a figure of monstrous otherness in order to deconstruct the very processes of othering by which the monster is produced culturally and politically. Focusing on the distorted ethical justifications of the terrorists and on the roles of political opportunism and media manipulation in shaping American responses, the narrative allows both Lycan terrorists and their political antagonists to emerge as more clown than monster. This paper draws upon Arendt's account of the banality of evil, and its development by more recent privation theorists such as Charles Mathewes and John Milbank, to situate *Red Moon* within contemporary popular and theoretical discourses of evil and to read the novel as an interrogation of the processes by which our modern political 'monsters' are created.

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